

Luther Jones joins Owls' first recruiting class

By Todd Forrest
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With Vince Dooley at the controls, Kennesaw State football has hit the ground running during its infancy stages.

The Owls' will begin playing football in 2015 and signed 12 First Team All-State football players to its initial class.

One of those 12 is Luther Jones.

Jones narrowed his choices down to Kennesaw and Mercer but it was the freshness of Kennesaw's new program that drew Jones in.

"I wanted to be a part of a new Division 1 program," Jones said. "I really liked the coaching staff at Kennesaw a lot better than Mercer."

Jones is one of 29 players signed by Kennesaw, each of which will be redshirted before the program plays its first game in 2015.

"Later on down the road I can say that I helped start a Division 1 program and I think it will be a very good program. We signed more First Team All-State players than UGA did and we got the AJC Player of the Year."

Just because Jones is an Owl, that doesn't mean he will forget his Union County roots. Jones plans to build Kennesaw similar to his journey at Union County.

Early in Jones' high school



Luther Jones with parents on signing day. Jones hopes to build Kennesaw State's new football program.

career, the Panthers never won more than four games a year. However, last season, the Panthers got to six wins but just missed the State Tournament. During Jones' senior year, he led the Panthers to their first State appearance in 12 years.

"A lot of us in the recruiting class are in the same boat," Jones said. "Most of us played for pretty good football teams but this year we all took the next step. That will be a big part in building the football program at Kennesaw."

Jones also praised the Union County coaching staff for being supportive, regardless of

what school he chose.

"Coach Allison liked the coaches at Kennesaw, but all of the assistants were very supportive of me as well and they were all happy about Kennesaw."

This fall, Kennesaw was host some inter-squad scrimmages and whenever he has time off, he plans on coming back to Blairsville to motivate the Panthers on Friday nights.

"I've talked to (Coach McBride) about maybe doing a devotional before a game," Jones said.

"I'm going to try and be there for every game that I can. I'm going to support them

and motivate them as much as possible."

As for any future Panthers looking to take the next step to the college level, Jones said to savor the moment and patience always pays off.

"Enjoy your recruiting process and don't make a commitment too early," Jones said.

During his senior year, Jones recorded 33 solo tackles, 32 assists, 22 tackles-for-loss, and 2 sacks.

The North Georgia News would like to congratulate Jones and wish him the best of luck.

Thanks for all the memories #65.

Panthers add Class AAAA's Lumpkin to 2014 football schedule

Union County Football

Head Coach: Brian Allison
Panther Circle: Blairsville, GA 30512
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770 639-7331
ballison@uschools.org

2014 VARSITY FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

August 15	@	Sonorville (scrimmage)	7:00
August 29	@	Towns County	7:30
September 5	@	Lumpkin County	7:30
September 12	H	Andrews NC (Dedication)	7:30
September 19	H	Fannin County (Rec. Night)	7:30
September 26	H	Social Circle (Homecoming)	7:30
October 3	@	Oglethorpe County	7:30
October 10	@	Greene County	7:30
October 17	H	Rabun County	7:30
October 24		OPEN	
October 31	@	Riverside Military	7:30
November 7	H	Washington-Wilkes (Senior)	7:30

Junior Varsity Schedule

September 4	@	Gilmer County	5:30
September 11		OPEN	
September 18	@	Lumpkin County	5:30
September 25	H	Pickens County	5:30
October 2	@	Dawson County	5:30
October 9	H	Fannin County	5:30
October 16	H	White County	5:30
October 30	@	Rabun County	5:30

2-3-14

"GO PANTHERS"

MUSA Spring Registration

Mountain United Soccer Association is ready for spring soccer.



Registrations are currently being accepted for age groups U6-U14. This season we are offering online registration at www.mountainsoccer.org. Registration forms are also available on the website, to print and mail in. The deadline to register is Feb. 15th.

In Blairsville, Cott Beverage is our community host for the soccer fields. In Hiawassee, the fields at the Towns County Fairgrounds are utilized through the cooperation of the local recreation department. The league is grateful for their commitment and support.

The spring season will begin in early March. Anyone who is interested in playing needs to register promptly. In some cases space is limited.

MUSA is a volunteer run

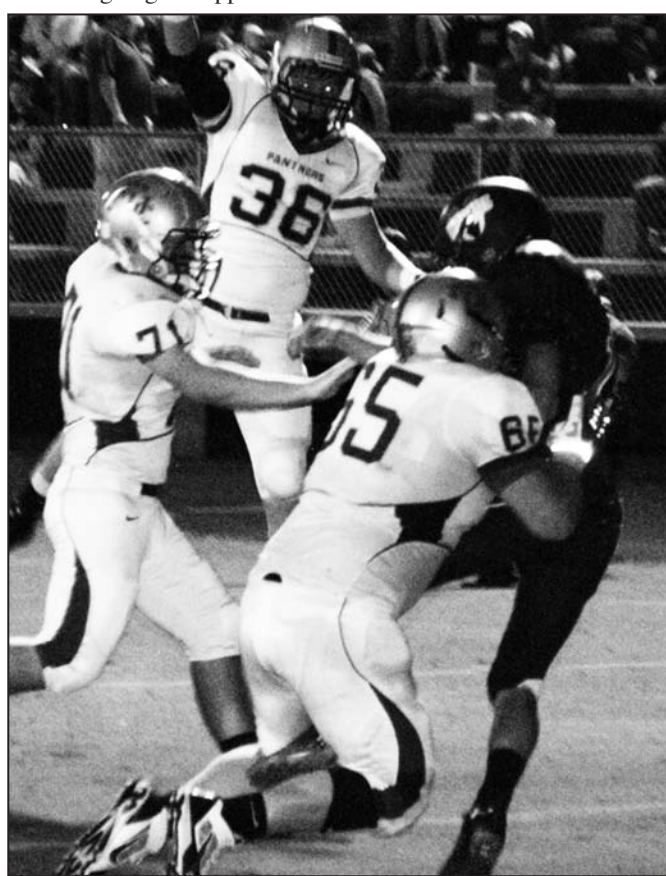
organization and is also a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Any and all donations are directed to the youth player. Field Sponsors, Sign Sponsors and Team Sponsors are always needed.

If you are interested in supporting the youth soccer players in our community through sponsorship and/or donation, please contact the association.

For additional info contact the league at 706-994-4351, musa.soccer@gmail.com or visit us on the web at www.mountainsoccer.org.



Luther Jones scores a touchdown (left) at Social Circle and brings the heat at on the quarterback at Fannin (right). Photos/Todd Forrest



NASCAR 2014

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Shepherd to attempt Daytona 500

The start of the 2014 Daytona 500 is fast approaching, and 72-year-old Morgan Shepherd hopes to be in the field. If he makes it through qualifying, he will be the oldest driver to ever run in a "500."

It's possible. He made the Sprint Cup race last summer at New Hampshire, and completed 92 laps before falling out with mechanical problems.

Shepherd has competed in 15 previous Daytona 500s, with a career-best finish of second in 1992 while driving for The Wood Brothers.

His team is a collaboration of BK Racing, Randy MacDonald of MacDonald Motorsports and Dell Hamilton of Support Military Foundation/HMR. "Whenever you can break a record or make history, it's something special. To have Morgan in the car and the SMF presented on the car we couldn't be happier," said Dell Hamilton. "We are still looking for a presenting sponsor for the race, Support Military Foundation colors will be on the car but we are hoping for a presenting sponsor to come along and help us with this unique initiative."

Shepherd made his Winston Cup debut in 1970 at Hickory Motor Speedway, driving the No. 93 Chevrolet for Bill Flowers. His first Cup win came in 1981 at Martinsville.

SPEED WEEKS COMING UP

More than a week of racing events will commence during Daytona Speedweeks, beginning Feb. 15 at Daytona International Speedway and culminating with the 56th Daytona 500 on Feb. 23.

Weekend Television Schedule:

Sat., Feb. 15: ARCA Racing Series Lucas Oil 200 (80 laps); Starts 4 pm ET; TV: FoxSports1.

NASCAR Sprint Unlimited (75 laps); Starts 8 pm ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Sun., Feb. 16: Daytona 500 Qualifying; Starts: 1 pm; TV: Fox. (Note: Only the top-two fastest qualifiers are locked into the Daytona 500.

The rest of the 43-car field will be determined by the Gatorade Duels, two qualifying races on Thurs., Feb. 20, plus how teams finished the 2013 season in points.

EVERNHAM RETURNING TO HENDRICK MOTORSPORTS

Jeff Gordon's former crew chief Ray Evernham, who created one of NASCAR's most dominant teams in the 1990s, is leaving his position as broadcaster with ESPN and returning to Hendrick Motorsports.

He will serve as a consultant and be involved with the competition department, and while he may be in the pit area for some races, he will not act as a crew chief.

"Now not doing the ESPN thing will allow me to be involved in some of the management and some of the things that they're doing at (Hendrick) Motorsports," Evernham told SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

"The best way to avoid a conflict of interest is to choose one or the other. I'm excited about being able to go and being involved in the management team on the motorsports side. I'll be working with everybody at Hendrick Motorsports. I've met with crew chiefs. I think I've got a good perspective as they face different challenges. I will be going to meetings and be involved in competition things that I've not been involved with in the past three years or so."

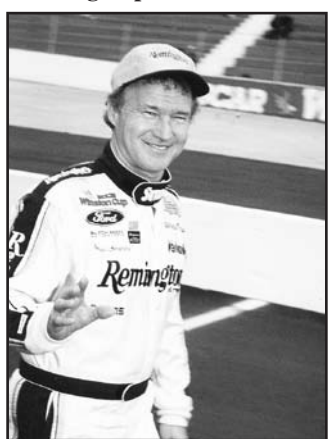
STILL NO SPONSOR FOR DALE JR.

There is still no primary sponsor listed for the 88-car.

A lot of companies might want to have their name and logo on the side of Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s No. 88 Chevrolet, but few have come forward. There are no exact figures, but it is estimated the price would be from \$26-30 million per season, with a multi-year contract.

Rick Hendrick emphasized last week that he has no timetable or deadline to land a new deal.

"We will listen to anybody and we're always looking, but there's no feeling of, 'Golly, we've got to find somebody,' because we've got two really good sponsors," Hendrick said.



Morgan Shepherd in 2003 at Bristol

"I'm wanting a long-term deal that fits and isn't a conflict with the other guys. We don't put any timetable on it. We have plenty of time."

Could you spare a couple million, Mr. Hendricks?

NASCAR CHANGES PENALTY STRUCTURE

NASCAR has restructured its penalty structure and appeals process beginning this season.

In addition to these changes, they also announced the appointment of a new Final Appeals Officer.

"NASCAR's Deterrence System is designed to help maintain the integrity and competitive balance of our sport while sending a clear message that rules violations will not be tolerated," said Steve O'Donnell, NASCAR executive vice president of racing operations. "This (the new rules package) is a more transparent and effective model that specifically spells out that 'X' infraction equals 'X' penalty for technical infractions. At the same time, we believe the Appeals process allows a fair opportunity for our NASCAR Members to be heard, and have penalty disputes resolved by an impartial, relevant group of people with the ability to handle the complexities inherent in any appeal. This system has been tailored specifically to fit the needs of our sport."

Bryan Moss, former president at Gulfstream Aerospace, has been selected as the Final Appeals Officer. Moss will hear matters on appeal from the lower three-member Appeals Panel, and serve as

the last decision on penalty disputes for the sport.

According to O'Donnell, NASCAR's new penalty and deterrence system is easily understood and specifically lays out exactly what disciplinary action will be taken.

The NASCAR statement concerning the changes was three pages long. I consider it too wordy, complicated, and filled with obscure catch-all phrases to attempt to cover it in one news article, in a realistic manner. We'll just wait and see how it all plays out after the first case of cheating is announced.

According to the numbers provided by NASCAR, in 152 appeals heard since November 1999; 107 were upheld, 32 were reduced, 11 were overturned and in two cases the penalties were increased.

Racing Trivia Question: Does Kurt Busch still plan on running this year's Indy 500?

Last Week's Question: Greg Biffle and Carl Edwards' contracts are up at the end of the 2014 cup season. Who do they drive for? **Answer:** Roush Fenway Racing.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at hodges@race500.com.



Interested in hiking? Looking for a place to start?

Mountain High Hikers, Inc. is offering monthly hikes for the beginner hikers. Led by experienced hikers these hikes are easy but interesting. The trails we hike are in the mountains of North Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee. There is no charge for these hikes.

The next scheduled hike on February 14, 2014 is Vogel State Park Sampler. Includes part of Byron Reese nature trail, Coosa Backcountry and Blood Mountain Trail for a total of 4 miles. Meet at Choestoe Baptist Church on Hwy 180 at 10 a.m. Hike leader is Nancy Shofner 706-745-1657.

You can also visit us at our Website for future events: www.mountainhighhikers.org/



2014 Dizzy Dean Baseball & Softball Registration

Participant Ages
5 yrs. to 14 yrs.

Registration Dates
January 20th thru February 21st - 2014

On-Line Register Now Available

- Step 1: Visit - www.unioncountyga.gov
- Step 2: Under Departments - click Parks & Recreation
- Step 3: Click Youth Athletic Programs
- Step 4: Click Baseball or Softball
- Step 5: Click Register Now under League Name
- Step 6: Follow step by step registration process

In-Person Register at Rec. Dept.

310 Wellborn Street, Blairsville, GA 30512

Additional Questions Please Call Rec. Dept.

706-439-6074

Dizzy Dean - "It aint braggin if you can back it up."