



Head Coach: Mike Smith (3rd year)

Off. Coord: M. Mularkey; Def. Coord: B. VanGorder

2009 Record: SUR 9-7, PSR 11-5, O-U 7-9

Field: Georgia Dome (71,228) FieldTurf



Longtime Atlanta fans knew the drill; *be prepared for the Falcons to disappoint.* Indeed, prior to last season, never in the franchise's 43-year history had the team recorded back-to-back winning campaigns. Those with long memories recall how the Falcons followed a promising 9-5 season for Norm Van Brocklin in 1973 with arguably the worst offensive performance in modern NFL history in 1974, *scoring a mere 111 points over the course of a 14-game season (!)*, contributing to an ugly 3-11 train wreck that cost Van Brocklin his job en route. Leeman Bennett's playoff teams featuring QB Steve Bartkowski in 1978 and 1980 each responded with wretched performances the following years. Playoff entrants under Jerry Glanville in '91 and June Jones in '95 couldn't follow up with winning records, and neither could Dan Reeves' '99 Falcons, who dipped to 5-11 just a year after qualifying for the franchise's lone Super Bowl appearance. Michael Vick's playoff teams in 2002 & 2004 couldn't get above .500 in their next seasons, either.

So, if hardcore Atlanta fans seem a bit more contented about last season's Falcons failing to follow their uplifting 2008 campaign with another playoff berth, it's because the team was at least able to win its last three games and scratch its way above .500. *It was only 9-7, but no longer can we say that Atlanta has never recorded back-to-back winning seasons!*

Still, they weren't jumping for joy at The Varsity or at Dreamland BBQ up in Roswell just because of that 9-7 mark; *Atlanta fans were expecting more, at least a return to the playoffs after the Falcs hinted at better things to come behind 2008 rookie star QB Matt Ryan.* Especially after the acquisition of TE Tony Gonzalez seemed to solve the one glaring deficiency on offense. Unfortunately, however, free agency had ripped the defense apart fore and aft, and, along with some poorly-timed injuries, depleted HC Mike Smith's stop unit, which endured a difficult campaign until finally gaining some traction in that late December rally to get above .500.

Though 2009 might not have been a significant step backward for Atlanta, it was indeed a reminder to Smith and GM Tom Dimitroff that more work is needed to get the Falcons up to the elite level. And it won't happen unless the "D" makes significant strides after a mostly-disappointing effort a year ago. Major offseason upgrades concentrated on the stop unit; *ex-Texans CB Dunta Robinson was added in a big-money FA deal, while Dimitroff went for defensive help with his first two picks in the draft, landing Missouri LB Sean Weatherspoon and Kentucky DT Corey Peters.* Robinson will be expected to lead a revamped 2ndary that contributed heavily to Atlanta's subpar 28th-ranked pass defense a year ago. Meanwhile, the fast-flowing Weatherspoon figures to get an early baptism at the weakside LB spot, where his short-area bursts are hopefully going to allow the Falcs to deal a bit better with the Saints and other speedy offenses. Smith and d.c. Brian VanGorder also duly noted DE John Abraham's alarming drop from 16½ to 5½ sacks a year ago, and the need to uncover some other pass-rush forces to prevent Abraham from getting tied up in too many double-teams. VanGorder's 4-3 schemes require more push from the DTs to free up Abraham on the edge, and to that end keeping DT Peria Jerry (who impressed in early action as a rookie LY before going down in the second game with a knee injury) healthy will be key; *along with either rookie Peters or holdover Jonathan Babineaux, he'll have to be able to push the pile.*

Perhaps those reinforcements to the stop unit will mean the Ryan-led offense won't have to score 30 points or more every week just to win. It would help Ryan immensely, however, if RBs Michael Turner & Jerious Norwood can stay healthy (*which they couldn't a year ago*), because most of the Falcon offensive strategy is based around Ryan being able to effectively sell play-action. *Noting those durability concerns with Turner and Norwood, expect to see the underrated Jason Snelling edge his way into the RB rotation after serviceable work in relief last fall.* After addressing defensive needs with the early draft picks, Dimitroff then focused upon an OL that too often collapsed in the middle when facing 3-4 defenses; beefy Alabama G Mike Johnson and versatile UNLV C Joe Hawley expect to add some needed manpower in the pits. Meanwhile, the passing game could really soar if another receiver (*maybe Harry Douglas, off knee surgery*) emerges as a complement on the periphery to Roddy White (173 catches and 18 TDs the past two seasons), who has blossomed as Ryan's favorite target. *Also keep an eye on the intriguing and ongoing rumors of none other than Terrell Owens, still unsigned heading into summer; landing in Atlanta*

Bottom line...Mike Smith's 20-12 record since taking over in 2008 suggests the Falcs are for once laying a solid foundation. *Taking the next step to serious title-contending status, however, is a big one, and Atlanta might be a year or two away unless its defensive upgrades deliver immediately.*

PRESEASON NOTES: Smith's Falcs are 6-2 vs. the spread (4-4 SU) in his two exhibition seasons, 4-0 on the road and 3-0 as a dog!

2009 ATLANTA FALCONS

REGULAR-SEASON STAT LEADERS

PASSING	PA	PC	YDS	PCT	TD	INT	RAT
M. Ryan	451	263	2916	58.3	22	14	80.9
C. Redman	119	69	781	58.0	4	3	78.4
TOTAL	570	332	3697	58.2	26	17	80.4

RUSHING	No.	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
M. Turner	178	871	4.9	58	10
J. Snelling	142	613	4.3	31	4
J. Norwood	76	252	3.3	21	0
TOTAL	451	1876	4.2	58	15

RECEIVING	No.	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
R. White	85	1153	13.6	90	11
T. Gonzalez	83	867	10.4	27	6
M. Jenkins	50	635	12.7	50	1
J. Snelling	30	259	8.6	38	1
J. Norwood	19	186	9.8	38	1
M. Booker	16	181	11.3	27	1
J. Peelle	12	115	9.6	32	2
B. Finneran	11	111	10.1	19	0
O. Mughelli	7	51	7.3	21	1
TOTAL	332	3697	11.1	90	26

FIELD GOALS	1-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
M. Bryant	0/0	2/2	4/4	0/2	1/2
J. Elam	0/0	4/4	4/8	3/5	1/2
TOTAL	0/0	6/6	8/12	3/7	2/4

DEFENSE	Total	Tackles	Assists	Sacks	FR
C. Lofton	133	105	28	0.0	2
E. Coleman	116	82	34	0.0	2
M. Peterson	109	82	27	1.0	2
S. Nicholas	80	65	15	3.0	1
B. Grimes	66	62	4	0.0	0
T. DeCoud	68	57	11	2.0	2
C. Houston	47	39	8	0.0	0
K. Biermann	49	38	11	5.0	1
J. Babineaux	47	37	10	6.0	2
J. Abraham	35	30	5	5.5	1
C. Jackson	29	26	3	1.0	1
C. Owens	29	24	5	0.0	0
J. Anderson	27	17	10	0.5	0
C. Davis	22	16	6	1.0	1
T. Johnson	20	15	5	2.0	1
B. Williams	18	15	3	0.0	0
C. Wire	17	15	2	0.0	1
E. Weems	10	10	0	0.0	0
V. Walker	13	8	5	0.0	0
T. Lewis	10	8	2	0.0	0
TOTAL	1042	840	202	28	20
OPPONENTS	1052	860	192	27	17

INTERCEPTIONS	No	Yards	Avg	Long	TD
B. Grimes	6	17	2.8	11	0
T. DeCoud	3	25	8.3	15	0
C. Owens	2	13	6.5	13	0
TOTAL	15	158	10.5	62	1
OPPONENTS	17	306	18.0	83	2

2010		2009		2008		2007		2006	
		(SUR: 9-7 PSR: 11-5 O-U: 7-9)		(SUR: 11-6 PSR: 9-8 O-U: 8-9)		(SUR: 4-12 PSR: 8-8 O-U: 9-7)		(SUR: 7-9 PSR: 8-8 O-U: 4-11-1)	
S.12 Pittsburgh		S.13 MIAMI	W -4 19-7 u44	S.07 DETROIT	W +3 34-21 o41	S.09 Minnesota	L +3 3-24 u35	S.10 Carolina	W +5 20-6 u39
S.19 ARIZONA		S.20 CAROLINA	W -6 28-20 o43	S.14 Tampa Bay	L +7 9-24 u37	S.16 Jacksonville	W +10 7-13 u34	S.17 TAMPA BAY	W -5 14-3 u35
S.26 New Orleans		S.27 New England	L +4 10-26 u46	S.21 KANSAS CITY	W -6 38-14 o36	S.23 CAROLINA	L +4 20-27 o37	S.25* New Orleans	L -3 3-23 u43
O.03 SAN FRANCISCO		O.04 Open Week		S.28 Carolina	L +7 9-24 u39	S.30 HOUSTON	W +2 26-16 o39	O.01 ARIZONA	W -7 32-10 o41
O.10 Cleveland		O.01 San Francisco	W +2 45-10 o40	O.05 Green Bay	W +5 27-24 o42	O.07 Tennessee	W +8 13-20 u41	O.08 Bye	
O.17 Philadelphia		O.18* CHICAGO	W -3 21-14 u45	O.12 CHICAGO	W +3 22-20 u43	O.15* NY GIANTS	L +4 10-31 u43	O.15 NY GIANTS	L -3 14-27 n41
O.24 CINCINNATI		O.25 Dallas	L +4 21-37 o47	O.19 Bye		O.21 New Orleans	W +8 16-22 u42	O.22 PITTSBURGH-OTW	+2 41-38 o37
O.31 Bye		N.02* New Orleans	W +11 27-35 o54	O.26 Philadelphia	L +9 14-27 u45	O.28 Bye		O.29 Cincinnati	W +4 29-27 o45
N.07 TAMPA BAY		N.08 WASHINGTON	W -9 31-17 o41	N.02 Oakland	W -2 24-0 u41	N.04 S. FRANCISCO	W -3 20-16 u37	N.05 Detroit	L -5 14-30 u47
N.11* BALTIMORE		N.15 Carolina	L -1 19-28 o44	N.09 NEW ORLEANS	W -1 34-20 o51	N.11 Carolina	W +3 20-13 u35	N.12 CLEVELAND	L -8 13-17 u41
N.21 St. Louis		N.22 NY Giants-OT	W +7 31-34 o46	N.16 DENVER	L -6 20-24 u51	N.18 TAMPA BAY	L +3 7-31 o35	N.19 Baltimore	L +3 10-24 u40
N.28 GREEN BAY		N.29 TAMPA BAY	L -12 20-17 u46	N.23 CAROLINA	W -1 45-28 o42	N.22* INDIANAPOLIS	L +12 13-31 o41	N.26 NEW ORLEANS	L -3 13-31 u48
D.05 Tampa Bay		D.06 PHILADELPHIA	L +4 7-34 u43	N.30 San Diego	W +5 22-16 u49	D.02 St. Louis	L +3 16-28 o40	D.03 Washington	W +1 24-14 u38
D.12 Carolina		D.13 NEW ORLEANS	W +10 23-26 u50	D.07 N.Orleans	L +3 25-29 o51	D.10* NEW ORLEANS	L +3 14-34 o42	D.10 Tampa Bay	W -3 17-6 u37
D.19 Seattle		D.20 NY Jets	W +5 10-7 u36	D.14 TAMPA BAY-OT	L -3 13-10 u44	D.16 Tampa Bay	L +12 3-37 o38	D.16* DALLAS	L +3 28-38 o44
D.27* NEW ORLEANS		D.27 BUFFALO	W -8 31-3 u41	D.21 Minnesota	W +3 24-17 u43	D.23 Arizona-OT	W +10 27-30 o44	D.24 CAROLINA	L -6 3-10 u40
J.02 CAROLINA		J.03 Tampa Bay	W -2 20-10 u41	D.28 ST. LOUIS	L -14 31-27 o44	D.30 SEATTLE	W +1 44-41 o38	D.31 Philadelphia	W +8 17-24 u43
				J.03 Arizona-P	L -1 24-30 o51				

ATLANTA

NFC SOUTH

ATLANTA 2009 REGULAR SEASON TEAM STATS

	FALCONS	OPPONENTS
TOTAL FIRST DOWNS	330	303
FIRST DOWNS (Rushing-passing-by penalty)	105-192-33	89-197-17
THIRD DOWN CONVERSIONS	91/216	97/214
FOURTH DOWN CONVERSIONS	16/23	8/17
TOTAL OFFENSIVE YARDS	5447	5582
OFFENSE (Plays-Average Yards)	1048-5.2	997-5.6
TOTAL RUSHING YARDS	1876	1711
RUSHING (Plays-Average Yards)	451-4.2	433-4.0
TOTAL PASSING YARDS	3571	3871
PASSING (Comp-Att-Int-Avg)	332-570-17-6.5	335-536-15-7.5
SACKS	28	27
FIELD GOALS	19/29	20/28
TOUCHDOWNS	44	38
(Rushing-Passing>Returns-Defensive)	15-26-0-3	10-25-1-2
TIME OF POSSESSION	29:53	30:20

Atlanta 2010 Draft Picks

Rd	Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	School
1 (19)	Sean Weatherspoon	LB	6'1"	239	Missouri
3 (83)	Corey Peters	DT	6'3"	300	Kentucky
3 (98)	Mike Johnson	OG	6'5"	312	Alabama
4 (117)	Joe Hawley	OG	6'3"	297	UNLV
5 (135)	Dominique Franks	CB	5'11"	194	Oklahoma
5 (165)	Kerry Meier	WR	6'2"	224	Kansas
6 (171)	Shann Schillinger	S	6'0"	199	Montana

PROJECTED OFFENSE

QB	2	Matt Ryan	8	Chris Redman
	4	John Parker Wilson	1	D.J. Shockley
RB	33	Michael Turner	32	Jerious Norwood
	44	Jason Snelling	35	Antone Smith
FB	34	Ovie Mughelli		
WR	12	Michael Jenkins	83	Harry Douglas
	86	Brian Finneran	80	Kerry Meier (5th Rd)
WR	84	Roddy White	14	Eric Weems
TE	88	Tony Gonzalez	87	Justin Peelle
LT	72	Sam Baker	74	Will Svitek
LG	63	Justin Blalock	79	Mike Johnson (3rd Rd)
C	62	Todd McClure	66	Brett Romberg
			61	Joe Hawley (4th Rd)
RG	73	Harvey Dahl	76	Quinn Ojinnaka
RT	77	Tyson Clabo	75	Garrett Reynolds

PROJECTED DEFENSE

DE	98	Jamaal Anderson	92	Chauncey Davis
NT	93	Thomas Johnson	94	Poria Jerry
UT	95	Jonathan Babineaux	91	Corey Peters (3rd Rd)
DE	55	John Abraham	71	Kroy Biermann
OLB	56	S. Weatherspoon (1st Rd)	54	Stephen Nicholas
MLB	50	Curtis Lofton	51	Robert James
OLB	53	Mike Peterson	59	Spencer Adkins
CB	23	Dunta Robinson	22	Chevis Jackson
			24	Dominique Franks (5th Rd)
S	26	Erik Coleman	25	William Moore
S	28	Thomas Decoud	27	Matt Giordano
CB	20	Brent Grimes	21	Christopher Owens
			29	Brian Williams

PROJECTED SPECIALISTS

K	3	Matt Bryant	6	Steven Hauschka
P	9	Michael Koenen		

ATLANTA FALCONS POINTSPREAD BREAKDOWN (INCLUDING PLAYOFFS)

	SUR	Spread	Home	Home	Road	Road	SB	Fav	Fav>3	Dog	After
			SUR	Sprd	SUR	Sprd	Sprd	Sprd	Sprd	Sprd	SUL
2009	9-7	11-5	6-2	6-2	3-5	5-3	---	6-2	5-1	5-3	6-1
2008	11-6	9-8	7-1	5-3	4-5	4-5	---	4-4	1-3	5-4	4-1
2007	4-12	8-8	3-5	3-5	1-7	5-3	---	1-0	1-0	7-8	6-6
2006	7-9	8-8	3-5	3-5	4-4	5-3	---	3-6	3-4	5-2	4-4
2005	8-8	7-8-1	4-4	4-4	4-4	3-4-1	---	5-4	3-3	2-4-1	3-3-1
L5 Years	39-42	43-37-1	23-17	21-19	16-25	22-18-1	---	19-16	13-11	24-21-1	23-15-1

ATLANTA FALCONS 2009

REGULAR SEASON STAT RANKINGS

OFFENSE	TOTAL	RANK
TOTAL OFFENSE (Yds. Per Game)	340.4	16
FIRST DOWNS (Per Game)	20.6	T-10
POINTS PER GAME	22.7	13
RUSHING (Yds. Per Game)	117.2	15
RUSHING TDS	15	14
PASSING OFFENSE (Yds. Per Game)	223.2	14
PASSING COMPLETION %	58.2	22
PASSING TDS	26	T-13
FIELD GOALS	19	T-26
TIME OF POSSESSION	29:54	16
DEFENSE	TOTAL	RANK
TOTAL DEFENSE (Yds. Per Game)	348.9	21
SCORING DEFENSE	20.3	T-14
RUSHING DEFENSE (Yds. Per Game)	106.9	T-10
PASSING DEFENSE (Yds. Per Game)	241.9	28
PASS COMPLETION%	62.5	22
INTERCEPTIONS	15	T-16
SACKS	28	T-26
TOTAL TEAM PENALTIES	78	T-27
TURNOVER MARGIN	+3	T-11

ATLANTA—2009 Game-by-Game Statistics

OPPONENT	OFFENSE					DEFENSE				
	PF	PA	RA-YR	PC-PA-I-Y-P	SK F-FL	RA-YR	PC-PA-I-Y-P	SK F-FR		
Miami	19	7	27/68	22/36/0/213	2 1-0	22/96	21/30/1/163	4	3-3	
Carolina	28	20	37/151	21/27/1/220	0 1-1	25/144	25/41/1/296	1	2-1	
New England	10	26	17/58	17/28/0/199	0 2-1	39/168	25/42/0/277	0	0-0	
San Francisco	45	10	40/148	22/32/1/329	0 3-1	17/100	15/38/1/179	3	2-2	
Chicago	21	14	23/68	19/33/2/185	0 1-0	23/83	27/43/2/290	2	3-1	
Dallas	21	37	26/124	19/35/2/174	4 3-1	28/115	21/29/0/299	2	2-1	
New Orleans	27	35	24/161	19/42/3/281	3 0-0	35/146	25/33/1/291	2	3-3	
Washington	31	17	27/181	17/24/1/125	3 0-0	32/136	19/27/1/176	5	0-0	
Carolina	19	28	29/176	22/41/2/224	0 0-0	34/185	15/24/0/195	0	1-0	
NY Giants	31	34	30/90	26/46/0/262	2 1-1	26/88	25/39/1/368	1	1-0	
Tampa Bay	20	17	26/75	25/44/0/222	6 1-1	26/73	20/30/0/245	1	2-1	
Philadelphia	7	34	22/61	23/44/2/234	2 2-1	26/103	16/27/0/277	2	0-0	
New Orleans	23	26	21/89	23/34/1/303	1 0-0	26/95	31/41/0/296	0	1-0	
NY Jets	10	7	28/86	16/34/0/152	0 0-0	33/99	18/32/3/215	2	1-0	
Buffalo	31	3	37/157	18/35/0/234	3 2-0	18/40	17/29/2/138	2	1-1	
Tampa Bay	20	10	37/183	23/35/2/214	1 2-1	22/38	16/32/2/168	1	1-0	

ATLANTA TEAM STATISTICS 2006-2009 (INCLUDING ALL PLAYOFF GAMES)

YEAR	OFFENSE													DEFENSE																					
	SUR	PSR	PF	PA	FD	RA	RY	YPC	F-FL	T-R-P	PC	PA	PI	SK	YP	YPP	YPT	FD	RA	RY	YPC	F-FR	T-R-P	PC	PA	PI	SK	YP	YPP	YPT	DIF	APR	OPR	TM	TO
2009	9-7	11-5	23	20	21	28	117	4.2	19-8	44-15-26	21	36	17	27	223	6.3	15.0	19	27	107	4.0	23-13	38-10-25	21	34	15	28	242	7.2	17.2	2.2	3.9	4.1	30	+3
2008	11-6	9-8	24	21	20	34	147	4.3	19-11	46-24-18	17	28	13	20	207	7.4	14.5	19	26	125	4.8	17-8	42-18-22	20	34	11	34	223	6.5	16.7	2.1	6.8	5.5	31	-5
2007	4-12	8-8	16	26	16	24	95	3.9	17-8	26-7-18	21	35	16	46	206	5.9	18.6	20	30	128	4.3	21-12	47-12-27	21	34	16	25	228	6.8	13.7	-4.9	11.3	6.4	29	+4
2006	7-9	8-8	18	21	18	34	184	5.5	18-5	32-9-21	14	26	15	47	148	5.7	18.2	20	28	104	3.8	25-14	37-14-20	20	32	12	37	229	7.1	16.2	-2.0	4.4	5.3	29	+6