

# First place on the line for Eagles, Lions

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Billy Wells has Collins Hill off to a 6-0 start for the second straight season. But the next four games is where it gets tricky for the Eagles.

Collins Hill travels to defending Region 7-AAAAA champion Peachtree Ridge tonight for its biggest game of the season. The Eagles and No. 9 Lions are two of the three unbeaten in region play and are still in the hunt for the region title.

"I think we've had some pretty good wins," Wells said. "Certainly Peachtree Ridge is a big test for our program."

Collins Hill (6-0, 4-0 in region) has Peachtree Ridge (5-1, 4-0) and finishes with perennial region power Norcross. The Eagles have not defeated either team the last two seasons. Collins Hill's only two regular season losses last year were to those teams and they finished with the final playoff spot in the region. North Gwinnett is the only other unbeaten in region play and the Eagles and Bulldogs do not have to play each other due to the region schedule.

"We haven't talked about the region," said Wells, who is 14-3 in his two seasons at Collins Hill. "This game is the most important one because it's the next game. We haven't singled out any particular games."

Peachtree Ridge head coach Bill Ballard has singled out the importance of the game as the Lions finish the season with Collins Hill, Norcross and North Gwinnett. All three teams are playoff squads from last season. Winless South Forsyth is on the schedule for next week.

"This is big for us taking a step to get in the playoffs," said Ballard, who has posted a 25-8 record in his three years at the Suwanee school. "This game pretty much means a playoff spot, so that's big on the line. We've also got a goal of winning a region championship and that's a step toward the region title."

Peachtree Ridge has had Collins Hill's number the last two seasons with back-to-back 21-0 victories. A third shutout tonight will might be tough for the Lions as they try to slow down Charles Perkins, the county's leading

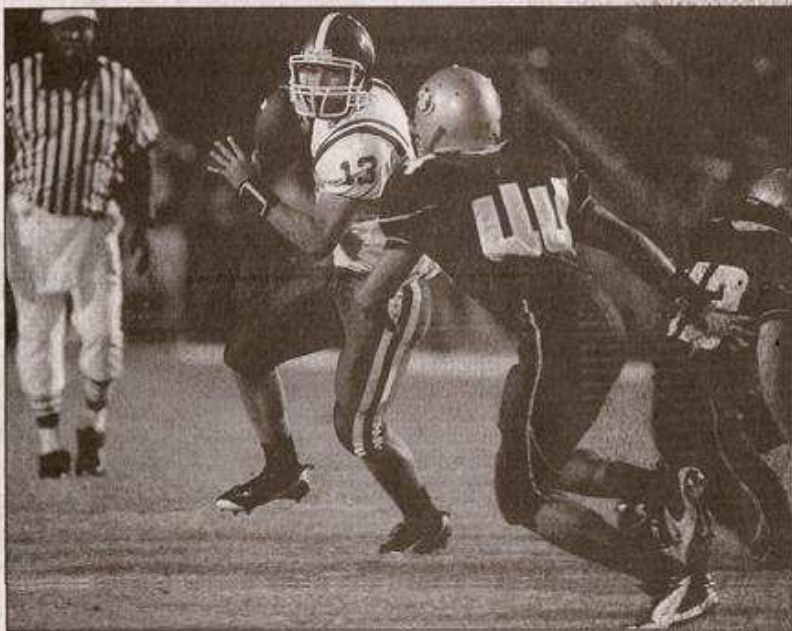


Photo: Anthony Scalap  
Peachtree Ridge's Nick Lombardo (13) scrambles with the ball as Mill Creek's Taylor Coleman (44) closes in earlier this season.

## COLLINS HILL AT PEACHTREE RIDGE

### COLLINS HILL EAGLES (7-AAAAA)

- Coach: Billy Wells
- Record: 6-0, 4-0 region
- Last week: Beat Duluth 37-0

■ When: Today, 7:30 p.m.

■ Last meeting: Peachtree Ridge won 21-0 last year

■ Directions to Peachtree Ridge High School: From I-85, take the Old Peachtree Road exit and go west. School is roughly two miles ahead on the right

#### Series history:

2008: Peachtree Ridge 21, Collins Hill 0  
2009: Peachtree Ridge 21, Collins Hill 0

### PEACHTREE RIDGE LIONS (7-AAAAA)

- Coach: Bill Ballard
- Record: 5-1, 4-0 region
- Last week: Beat Mill Creek 28-0

2006: Collins Hill 3, Peachtree Ridge 3

2005: Peachtree Ridge 28, Collins Hill 19

2004: Collins Hill 41, Peachtree Ridge 0

rusher.

"I don't know if we can shut them down again," Ballard said. "Perkins is pretty good. He's a big back, runs hard and they have a little Wildcat formation with him. He's a tough guy to stop. I think he has gotten a lot better from last year. And that offensive line is a year older."

Peachtree Ridge led 7-0 in the fourth quarter of last year's game before two scores in less than a minute put the game away. Perkins was held to 21 yards rushing on 13 car-

ries as the Eagles offense managed just 109 total yards.

"Each year is different," Wells said. "They are different from last year and so are we. We've looked at some things and have made some adjustments in our game plan."

Since allowing 51 points to state power Lowndes in Week 2, the Lions defense has settled down. Peachtree Ridge has given up seven points in the last four games, which includes three shutouts.

Linebacker Tanner Botts leads the team in tackles with 59 and defensive lineman Eric Mitchell has 4½ sacks. Brad Roby is second in the county with four interceptions and Brian Williams has three. A.J. McDonald is expected to be back this week after being out with a knee injury since the Northview game.

"They are a very good team on defense," Wells said. "It's not just one player that stands out."

Georgia Tech commitment

Perkins leads the county in rushing with 1,138 yards and 13 touchdowns. The bulk of the offense centers around the running back, but first-year starter Taylor Heinke has developed into a nice quarterback. The junior has recovered from a shoulder injury a few weeks ago and has thrown for 749 yards and four TDs this season.

"They got two big tall wide receivers to throw to, a big offensive line they can run behind and the quarterback has a real good passing motion," Ballard said. "They are well balanced on offense and can get in different formations and run and throw in different formations."

Peachtree Ridge does a nice job of changing things up on offense as well. Quarterback Nick Lombardo leads the Lions' triple option offense. Peachtree Ridge's Chris Sawdey (377 yards) and Brandon Stanley (279 yards, 8 TDs) spearhead the running game, while Lombardo is efficient in the passing game. The senior has thrown for 679 yards with five touchdowns. Roby is Lombardo's leading receiver with 13 catches for 260 yards and three TDs.

"They do a tremendous job running the option and Roby is a difficult to stop," Wells said.

Collins Hill's defense has adjusted nicely after the loss of Tulane commitment Zach Davis at linebacker. The Eagles posted their first shutout in a 37-0 win over Duluth last week, the first since 2007.

After adding 20 pounds during the off season, defensive lineman Jimmy Bayer has been on a tear this season and leads the county with nine sacks. Chris Caspari leads the team in tackles with 60 and is tied for third in the county with three interceptions. Travis Parker and Timmy Quinones have 55 tackles each.

PEACHTREE RIDGE  
HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

