

The Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast  
November 21<sup>th</sup> Edition: Kentucky

*Community Service note: The Food Bank of Northeast Georgia will join The Atlanta Community Food Bank during the "Beat Tech Food Fight" between the University of Georgia and Georgia Tech to see which school can raise the most food for its community. Any business, individual, or organization wishing to help the "Beat Tech Food Fight" can call (706) 354-8191 or visit [foodbanknega.org](http://foodbanknega.org) for information. The drive will be held through Nov. 25. For fans who can't start their own food drive or get to the Athens area to make a donation, a virtual food fight has been set up through [foodbanknega.org](http://foodbanknega.org) where monetary donations can be made. Donors also can deposit dry food items in barrels at Walmart on Epps Bridge Parkway, Athens Printing on Cedar Shoals Drive, Pawtropolis at 130 Whitetail Way in Bogart, The Classic Center at 300 N. Thomas St., County Inn and Suites at 236 Old Epps Bridge Road, Elbow Room Self Storage at 925 Danielsville Road, Stop and Ride at 803 Lee St. in Jefferson and The Lodge of Athens at 211 North Ave.*

The Recap:

In the first quarter, the fans were booing the team, and it looked as though we were heading for a terrible home-field blowout on the order of the Auburn game that helped to cost Jim Donnan his job, in 1999 I think, when Ben Leard spent the evening imitating Joe Montana. The fans around me were screaming to rotisserie Richt, burn Bobo at the stake, boil Martinez in oil, send the position coaches back to West Idaho Polytechnic State University at Fruitland or wherever they came from, disband the Redcoats, fire the cheerleaders, neuter Uga, make Sonny Perdue the president of UGA, and dismantle Sanford Stadium brick by brick. Maybe keep that twirler with the flaming batons who performs at halftime. But everyone else must go. I thought I was sitting in the middle of an internet chat room moderated by Jeff Schultz and St. Simons.

We couldn't get a first down and were drawing flags that killed our drives and helped theirs, and I thought that we might be in for a long night. Aside from Cox's terrific sales job to the flank on A.J. Green's long TD catch—oops, make that Israel Troupe—and the signs of perhaps the beginning of a running game, the offense really stank throughout the first half—107 yards, with almost half coming on Troupe's TD catch.

But like everybody else, I stayed in the stadium and pulled for our boys to focus and get back in the game. And it was that much-maligned D, and its much-maligned coordinator, that made the adjustment that UGA fans say that Martinez can't make; and suddenly Auburn couldn't move the ball, and we got our groove back by hammering the RBs between the tackles and creating space elsewhere for plays. Marcus Lattimore might have been there with the other recruits, but I'm really starting to like the Ealey/King combo and think they'll give us quite a running game the next two years.

The Player of the Game? That one's easy: The Team. We've had stars before, but in this one our Star of Stars played one quarter, and we still played a magnificent game after the first quarter, aside from the kickoff return that made this one close. The radio guys said that the locker room celebration was as raucous as any they'd ever seen (no penalties for excessiveness, thank

goodness), and I think it was because all units hunkered down, rotated guys without dropoff, and played together. I couldn't have felt more proud of a team than I did on Saturday night.

The Dawgs now are in the driver's seat to nail down second place in the SEC East. You laugh. But aside from two elite teams in the SEC and one that's near-elite (and that we beat in Sanford Stadium, only to have an official flag our game-winning catch and give LSU a short field from which to score), guess who's the next best team? Right now, it looks like UGA:

Standings	Conference			Overall			
SEC - East	W-L	PF	PA	W-L	PF	PA	STRK
<a href="#">Florida</a>	8-0	221	96	10-0	339	105	W10
<a href="#">Georgia</a>	4-3	207	218	6-4	275	259	W2
<a href="#">South Carolina</a>	3-5	144	195	6-5	227	228	L3
<a href="#">Kentucky</a>	2-4	122	165	6-4	268	217	W2
<a href="#">Tennessee</a>	2-4	138	135	5-5	306	212	L1
<a href="#">Vanderbilt</a>	0-7	55	160	2-9	180	249	L7

Standings	Conference			Overall			
SEC - West	W-L	PF	PA	W-L	PF	PA	STRK
<a href="#">Alabama</a>	7-0	182	64	10-0	309	109	W10
<a href="#">LSU</a>	4-2	122	95	8-2	250	137	W1
<a href="#">Mississippi</a>	3-3	128	112	7-3	311	159	W2
<a href="#">Auburn</a>	3-4	179	193	7-4	374	297	L1
<a href="#">Arkansas</a>	2-4	162	179	6-4	376	255	W3
<a href="#">Mississippi State</a>	2-4	118	166	4-6	245	252	L1

It's been that kind of year, where a lot of teams are beating each other. (Note that I'm focusing on conference games, because the non-conference schedules are so hard to compare.) If we beat UK next Saturday, we're the 4<sup>th</sup> best team in the nation's best conference, where the best two are also 1-2 in the nation, and the third is in the top ten (and which we beat). So although this is not a championship season, nor methinks is it the washout that people complain it is. The Tennessee

game was indeed awful, but just about everyone's had games like that. In fact, Tennessee had one on Saturday. Not to excuse it, of course, but I'm really starting to admire the toughness and resilience of this team, and think that it's possible that they could really end it memorably in the next two weeks.

From the above graph, here's the Georgia line, and I think that it helps explain some of the anger out there about the team. The 207/218 and 275/259 ratios refer to points scored/points allowed, in the conference and in all games respectively:

4-3 207 218 6-4 275 259 W2

So in conference games, we've actually been outscored, even though we've got a winning record vs. SEC teams. It might appear then that in an area where I see us being behind only nationally elite teams in the SEC, others see us giving up more points than we score which suggests that on the whole, we're being outplayed. We're ahead of the game in the ratio of points scored/yielded with nonconference teams, which is probably a Tennessee Tech effect. But we've got fewer of those teams on our schedule than do others, so it does count. And with Florida and—hold onto your hat—Tennessee (including -25 vs. Ole Miss) the only East teams who've outscored their SEC opponents, we're solidly the #2 team in the East and #4 team in the league, with the three ahead of us nearly unbeatable, even though we beat one of them.

Random thoughts:

The latest in prudent officiating: Purdue scored on a 9-yard run by Ralph Bolden, and Bolden was given an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for hugging mascot Purdue Pete after the run. Must be the GA connection: Bolden is from Charlton County High School in Folkston.

Washaun Ealey is one thick kid. If you get to the stadium early and see him warming up before the players put their pads on, you can tell he's packing a lot of meat on that frame, top to bottom.

Garbage covers North Campus at the University of Georgia early Sunday morning after the Georgia-Auburn football game. Supervisors with American Stadium Services estimated crews spent at least five to six hours picking up the trash Sunday and about four hours loading trash onto trucks. Post-game campus photo:



For more, see [Football fans make another big mess of UGA campus](#)

As of right now, Bacarri Rambo is believed to have only a concussion. Not only does he have a great name, he's become a really reliable player and has a big future as a Dawg. Let's hope he takes the right amount of time to recover and is ready to go, maybe as early as GA Tech.

I was really happy to see Bryan Evans help break up Auburn's last offensive play in the end zone. He's been blamed throughout the season when our defense has given up points, but I thought he played an excellent game yesterday (even though he dropped a sure INT at one point). Always good to see the good guys do well when it matters.

I loved the way the team came together after A.J. left. People have been saying all year, "We'd be 0-27 without A.J.!!" But here we were in one of the season's biggest games, against a team with a fearsome attack and big winning record, and we won without A.J. Not that I prefer that situation, of course. But the guys pulled together, played with desire, and overcame that gaping absence.

I re-watched the game on Sunday at home on the big screen. The quality of the broadcasting was quite a dropoff from Danielson and Vern "The Duck" Lundquist (mostly from Danielson; well, pretty much all of it). At one point Bob Davie and Mark Jones babbled endlessly about coach's salaries while the Dawgs put together a terrific scoring drive. Inside the stadium during that drive, it was very dramatic and electrifying, especially on Orson Charles' catch of a deflected pass and Ealey's great end sweep where he nearly scored. But Davie and Jones prattled on and on about salaries with the game on in the background. Absolutely terrible.

When Auburn had the ball at the beginning of their final drive, Davies said something like, "From this point on, it's Malzahn against Martinez." Possibly some Dawg fans cringed at the prospect of the unstoppable Malzahn vs. the overmatched Martinez, but as we did for the final 3 quarters, we made the stop.

The cameras helped me see how very physical a corner Brandon Boykin is. He's terrific in coverage but also tackles with authority. I'll be surprised if he doesn't have a good NFL career before long.

Is anyone else shedding tears over USC's blowout loss to Stanford? And has anyone noted that Temple is now 8-2, while USC is 7-3? Time to fire Pete Carroll?

Speaking of coaches, Gene Chizik and Lane Kiffin both walked into comparable situations this year. If you only got your news from the media, you'd think that Kiffin was the better coach, given that he's in the news every day and Chizik gets less media attention than any of UT's assistant coaches. But Chizik has produced a much better, more consistent team, their games vs. UGA notwithstanding.

And speaking of Lane Kiffin, really now, if Nu'Keese Richardson and his merry band attended UGA, do you think they'd still be enrolled in the university, much less still on the football team, after getting arrested for armed robbery?

The Forecasts: This is my last column of the regular season. The Dawgmeister does have a day job, and next week it takes him out of town—to Philadelphia, the Land of Hale—through the weekend and most of the following week. So I'll miss the UK game, which Mrs. Butts will record for me in my absence, and get back just in time to catch the Tech game on the big screen at home—a double-header. I'll therefore issue two forecasts today, and in December (or January) one before the bowl game, and call it a season. I'd personally like to thank all 5 of my readers for hanging with me this fall, and if Deke and the Dawgbone crew will have me, falls to come.

Dawgs host Kentucky: Kentucky has done something I admire: Rich Brooks didn't tear it up when he arrived, and lots of programs fire guys when they start slowly. But they stuck with him and he's built them into a pretty competitive team, and I think they'll give us a good game. Cobb, that QB who ran so well against us last year, is now a multiple threat kid, and I think will again give us trouble. But I also think the Dawgs are recommitted and understand how to win. We are running the ball extremely well and the receivers will have a week to prepare without A.J. Good Guys, 31-21.

Dawgs at Tech: Both teams desperately want this game. Normally GT would have a home field advantage, but not in that rinky-dink stadium. They can score points and probably will; but then, that's what I thought about Auburn. I think our seniors will lead the team to a win in a game that turns this season from a disaster into a success. Dawgs, 35-31.

National Game of the Week: The biggest game out of a mediocre batch looks to be Oregon at Arizona—good weekend to be out of town working. Nice job there by Mike Stoops at AZ; they were awful when he arrived, but their AD stuck with him and now they're pretty competitive. I've seen a little of Oregon this year and when I have, they've looked pretty good. But their record suggests some inconsistency, and they're on the road. Wildcats, 34-28.