

The Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast
October 3 Edition: At Tennessee, the Volunteers (and they'll need some)

Disclaimer #1: Please do not confuse any of the following with information that could usefully provide the basis for a wager.

Disclaimer #2: If you are betting money on college football games, and thus putting your estate in the hands and feet of teenagers, then you probably should not be managing your own money anyhow.

Metaphor of the Week: [Light goes out on St. Simons](#). But if you read the AJC football message boards, we knew that already.

News Item of the Week: "Athens-Clarke police arrested an LSU fan for public intoxication about 6 p.m. Saturday after he locked himself in a downtown store's employees-only bathroom and passed out, according to an Athens-Clarke police report." My question: Why do so many LSU fans come to all of our games?

The Recap:

Penalties: "I thought they were well within their celebratory rights." Mark Richt on the flag thrown on LSU

The celebration penalty has gotten so much attention that there's no need for me to add to the discussion. I'll only note that the proof that it was a terrible call comes from the fact that on ESPN's studio show, both Mark "Hawaii over Georgia" May and Lou "phoenixuniversity.com over Georgia" Holtz agreed that it was a completely unnecessary call that affected the final outcome of a big game and screwed the Pooch out of a win.

Still, we didn't take care of business and hold them when we had to. And then they stopped our own short-field kickoff return at the 21, which made a comeback in the last 40 seconds or so much more difficult than their short-field 2-play drive for a TD. I think our chances for holding onto the lead would have been much better, though, if the refs hadn't micromanaged the game by flagging our kids for their celebration of an incredible play that capped an extraordinary, game-winning TD drive.

Otherwise, we did keep our penalties in check. The flag thrown on Orson Charles was marginally defensible, but he's a kid with Moreno-esque exuberance and showed how stoked he was for making a big play. No can do with these officials. As a team, we do seem to be getting penalties under better control heading into the middle of the schedule. I see no reason to find much fault, although the kickoff formation penalty probably has little defense.

The Running Backs: Got to love Ealey's emergence, even if it comes at good-guy Samuel's expense. I'm probably not the only one wondering if Samuel will see his time diminish and get converted to LB in the spring.

Like many of you, I saw Ealey in the high school playoffs his junior and senior years. His senior year he had a bad ankle and didn't dominate, but as a junior he was spectacular—58 TDs and in

the state championship game, about 300 yards and 4 TDs as I recall. I wondered if he could make the jump from small-school ball to the SEC, and the answer looks like YES. The coaching staff has done an excellent job, I think, of playing freshmen when they're ready, but not before. Many fans were impatient to see Wooten, Brown, and Ealey play sooner. Maybe the instant impact of Charles and Smith made the transition from HS to the SEC look easy, and we all know that A.J. Green dominated instantly. But some guys take a little more time, and I credit the coaches with playing guys when they've shown in practice that they have mastered the schemes, know the playbook, demonstrate SEC-level technique, etc. Ealey was dinged up early in the fall and so got behind, but obviously now has caught and passed Carlton Thomas and Samuel and is in the rotation.

Just a word on Caleb King: Last year his pass protection kept him from playing, and now his pass protection is keeping him on the field. In the second half he did a great job of picking up rushers, and that's why he was in there. Watch him on pass plays when he stays in the backfield, and you'll see a guy determined to keep his guy far from the QB. I think he remains an asset to the offense and hope that he and Ealey will give us an excellent combination to juice up the running game.

A.J. Heisman campaign: Really, is anybody out there better than A.J.? Even the ESPN Dawg-haters included him as one of the top two WRs in the nation (I assume that their obligation to over-rate everything associated with Notre Dame leads them to believe that Golden Tate is the greatest, along with their belief that Jimmy "The Emu" Clausen is the world's greatest QB—Notre Dame is the only program in the country that owns two TV networks). Holtz now has a segment in which he goes by "Dr. Holtz." How did he get that degree? Can you just start to call yourself a doctor? Does this mean that I can tell people that I'm "Coach Butts"?

To my knowledge, my column has about 6 regular readers. I'm hoping that those of y'all who reach a broader audience can get an A.J. Heisman campaign underway in cyberspace, if only to set the stage for his junior year. Here's the latest "ESPN Experts' Poll" for the Heisman:

Name	Position	School	Year	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total
Tim Tebow	QB	Florida	Sr.	12	3	0	0	0	72
Colt McCoy	QB	Texas	Sr.	3	10	1	0	1	59
Case Keenum	QB	Houston	Jr.	0	0	8	6	0	36
Tony Pike	QB	Cincinnati	Sr.	0	0	2	6	2	20
Jimmy Clausen	QB	Notre Dame	Jr.	0	1	4	1	1	19
Jahvid Best	RB	Cal	Jr.	0	1	0	2	3	11

Eric Berry	S	Tennessee	Jr.	0	0	0	0	1	1
A.J. Green	WR	Georgia	So.	0	0	0	0	1	1
Jacory Harris	QB	Miami	So.	0	0	0	0	1	1
Ryan Mathews	RB	Fresno State	Jr.	0	0	0	0	1	1
Kellen Moore	QB	Boise State	So.	0	0	0	0	1	1
Eric Norwood	LB	South Carolina	Jr.	0	0	0	0	1	1
Todd Reesing	QB	Kansas	Sr.	0	0	0	0	1	1
Russell Wilson	QB	NC State	So.	0	0	0	0	1	1

Really now, are the guys ahead of Green having better seasons? How about it?

Pretty in Pink: I watched the Dallas-Denver game on Sunday and noticed that many players are wearing pink shoes, gloves, ribbons, and decals to raise awareness for October's Breast Cancer Awareness month. The chances are pretty good that we know someone who's died of this killer disease. I already donate monthly to the American Diabetes Association, following the loss of a loved one to diabetes, and encourage any and all who read this column to pitch in with time and/or money, if you can afford it in these tough times, to help address a disease or other social issue. The Dawgbone and my column come to you free of charge, so if you want to provide some support for your enjoyment, please make a donation to a charity or research effort that will help make our communities less harsh and more humane.

Speaking of the Dawgbone: I dropped by their tent just off Baxter (it was hard to find because the sign was by the sidewalk and the 'Bonesters were not clearly marked amidst the tents) before the game and talked with the guys who provide this terrific service to us information-starved fans. They want to make the website as good as possible for our enjoyment, so please drop them a line via the website with your suggestions on how to improve the information and presentation. One thing I do to chip in is to check the Detroit, Denver, and Cleveland newspapers online for updates on our guys in the NFL, and send the updates to my friends at the Dawgbone. I'm sure they'd appreciate other "bureau chiefs" who can routinely be dependable for info where they might not be looking.

The Coaches: A friend wrote me after the game asking if I thought Coach Martinez would last the season. I thought that was a puzzler, given that the defense kept us in the game, especially the first half when we just couldn't move the ball (one first down, I think) until Scott's great TD run (and yes, it was a great run, much as I hated it). Coaches do make easy targets, but the fact is that Miles and his staff are outstanding coaches, and our guys are too. You can't fire the coaches when you lose a tough game or two to other top-tier programs. I don't view every season when

we don't win the SEC East or national championship as a disappointment, because the league is too competitive to expect that level of greatness. I think that the idea is to consistently recruit and coach well and hope that injuries don't derail otherwise promising seasons (e.g., 2008). Under Richt we've averaged close to 10 wins a season, and eventually we'll break through and win the whole enchilada. Meantime, it's our job to support the program and help these guys in every way we can. Dooley is canonized because he won 1 national title when he had arguably the greatest player in college football history. Give Mark Richt 25 years and he'll do at least that.

The Forecast: Dawgs head to Knoxville. When I think of Lane Kiffin, I always think of the phrase Barry Switzer applied to similar people: "He was born on third base, but thinks he hit a triple." Kiffin is not the Paris Hilton of college football; he is the Perez Hilton of college football. Kiffin is a pre-achievement celebrity, minus the celebrity part.

There was much I couldn't stand about Tennessee football even before they hired this cretin. "Rocky Top" is the worst song ever written. Their uniforms are plug-ugly. And that checkerboard endzone really screams for a visit from the Queer Eye for the Straight Guy team. Their program has fallen so far that, in desperation, they hired a guy so green and unaccomplished that his greatest achievement has been to jump up and down and scream "ME ME ME!!!" just like that kid you really hated in 7th grade. Everybody hates this guy. Not so bad if you're 5-0, but not when you're 2-3 and both of your wins are against cupcakes. His greatest achievement has been to not lose by nearly as much as expected vs. Florida. Or marrying a woman just like Pamela Anderson, without all the brains.

Interesting point: Coming out of high school, Joe Cox and Jonathon Crompton, both from NC, were among the top QB prospects in the country. Crompton, I think, was rated a little higher, and I'm guessing it's because he's about 5 inches taller. They were both Elite 11 QBs in a group listed at <http://collegefootball.rivals.com/content.asp?SID=1144&CID=310335>. As a whole, this group never developed into a cadre of NFL prospects; only Mark Sanchez and Chase Daniels, from what I can tell, made much of an impact even at the college level. The pick of the litter? Ryan Perrilloux.

Cox ended up behind Stafford, while Crompton waited behind Rick (not The Emu) Clausen and then Erik Ainge to graduate to get his shot. I hate to knock these young guys, but Crompton really hasn't been very good once he got his opportunity to play. UT goes only as far as their running game goes. They've got two good runners in Hardesty and Brown, but UGA's best work has come against one-dimensional running teams (aside from GT, but that's a different kind of offense). I just don't see them generating much offense with what they've got.

They do have an established defensive coordinator in Monte Kiffin, though, and they have Eric Berry, who is a tremendous talent. I think we've got a comparable defense and better offense and I hate Lane Kiffin. Dawgs, 20-10.

National Game of the Week: LSU at Florida. Have I mentioned that I hate Urban Meyer and Tim Tebow? That's all you need to know about this pick. I have no idea of how healthy Tim "Two national championships in three years, except that he was a backup for the first and was 9-4 his first year as a starter, including a loss in a minor bowl game" Tebow is. Florida and LSU both

have powerful defenses. LSU has a limited offense, as we showed when we forced them out of their option game and they got nothing trying to pass the ball in drop-back mode. I think that UF has an over-rated offense and under-rated defense. I'm going for the upset (keeping in mind that I am 1-4 in my National picks, and the only win was UF over UT, though not nearly by as much as I picked): LSU, 17-14.