

The Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast
October 17 Edition: At Vanderbilt, Los Commodores

The Recap: The Lost Weekend

Well, this one was hard to take. It's one of the few times in the Richt era where we were outplayed and outcoached in just about everything, special teams aside. The team seemed flat the whole game, perhaps a hangover after the LSU game, but you've still got to suck it up and play the next game no matter what. Easy for me to say, since even on the couch I was still a bit deflated from the way the LSU game ended. And now this.

I'm sure that the Internet will be saturated with fan analyses of the game, so I'll limit my observations so that you can get to them more quickly and learn from the experts what went wrong. We all saw the same thing, and it wasn't pretty. I say this as a guy who loves the team and is really disappointed by the way we played. It's way beyond my knowledge, skill set, or pay grade to understand the game of football at this level and in this era. The last time I played, we had about 10 plays, all called in the huddle in the fashion of "23 on 2," which meant that the #2 back ran through the #3 hole, and the center would snap the ball on the second hut. In the passing game, we had the down and out, down and in, button-hook, flag, and post. I think that you have to play or coach the game these days to have a clue what's going on out there. We are now blessed to have thousands of web board commentators who must have been college football players and coaches themselves, given their ability to parse our faults so clearly and flawlessly. I can't explain the game I enjoy so much, but I'm sure that many others gladly will.

Even I could tell from the couch that everything clicked for UT and nothing clicked for UGA. You can't say it was the OL, or the RBs, or the QB, or the DL or LBs or DBs, or this coach or that. This was a team loss; the only guys who are pretty much faultless are Drew Butler and Blair Walsh, who booted us out of trouble repeatedly, only to have us land right back in it almost immediately; and Brandon Boykin and Zach Renner for putting points on the board on special teams play (keeping in mind that these are usually unit accomplishments as much as individual accomplishments). Go ahead and point fingers if that makes you feel good, and scream about which coaches you think should be fired on the spot. Maybe Sonny Perdue will step in and pardon them, as Gov. Crist in Florida has done for good ole Bobby Bowden this week. While you're doing it, just remember that it's your own team you're tearing apart. And while you're at it, make sure that you're doing your own job so well that it's above criticism.

A few random observations:

- How is it possible that Ryan Mallett was playing for both Arkansas and Tennessee at the same time?
- It got so bad that at one point, Peachtree TV actually halted the broadcast, put their logo on the screen, showed part of a Steve Harvey episode, went blank, showed their logo again, and finally returned to the game after a 3-and-out dawg possession.
- When watching our offense, I had an eerie flashback to all those Felton-coached basketball teams where every possession seemed like a grind just to get the ball past midcourt, and then after 34 seconds of guys trying to pass the ball, someone took a bad shot.
- I finally learned why there are no prostitutes in Knoxville: They're all volunteers.

- It got so bad that early in the second half, Mrs. Butts gave up and went upstairs and read a novel.
- Lane Kiffin says that he worked hard to put all the attention on himself to take pressure off his players. I believe that. I also believe that Bill Clinton allowed himself to be pleased by that woman, Miss Lewinski, as a way to relieve Hilary of attention from the press.
- One week ago, it looked as though Washaun Ealey was going to be Da Man. Yesterday he never got any traction and odd-man-out Carlton Thomas was the only RB who could get yardage. But if the OL (in spite of their generally fine pass blocking) can't open a hole, we could have Hershel and Knowshon back there and still have trouble getting a first down. Interesting thing about the OL: Chris Davis came in as a 250-lb tight end; Clint Boling came in as a 255-lb basketball player; Josh Davis came in rated in the 2-3 star range; Vince Vance was a 3-star guy; Ben Jones was a 3-star guy although highly ranked among the centers in his class; Cordy Glenn was a 3-star guy from an unaccredited high school. Justin Anderson and Trinton Sturdivant were big-time recruits but TS will miss at least two straight years with knee injuries. The young guys who aren't playing had much higher ratings from the evaluators than did the guys who are. Even at the end of the game when reserves were playing, Searels wasn't going beyond the rotation of 7 guys. I can guarantee that whatever's not working with the OL, it's not the coaching. I'll leave it to Coach Searels to figure it out, but something's gone wrong since we ran up huge point totals against S. Carolina and Arkansas. One thing to consider: Last year Richt commented on a number of occasions that Stafford, Moreno, MoMass, and A.J. were making the OL look better than they were actually playing. So it's possible that the OL has more experience than quality, something I say while also respecting these kids personally and as athletes far more accomplished than the rest of us could ever dream of being.
- I'll probably have to suspend my A.J. for Heisman campaign, not because he did anything wrong but because his catches didn't do any damage in a game where we got dominated. I did watch the Alabama-Ole Miss game later and saw Bama try a ton of fades to Julio Jones that he didn't catch. Jones is a beast of a player, but at least on that route, A.J. seems more likely to make the catch. But you have to get near the endzone to run the play.
- There's talk of lineup shakeups this week, but nothing we'll know about for a few days. Perhaps we could have fans vote on who plays, sorta like Dancing with the Stars, which would make all the armchair coaches out there happy.
- I still hate Lane Kiffin. But his dad sure can coach.
- Twittered by Michael Moore: "All I can say 2 the dawgnation is don't turn your backs on us. That's it. We need u to support us and times like this is when we need u most." Nuff said.
- Does anyone older than 14 actually read Jeff Schultz?
- Speaking of sportswriters, if the state of Georgia honors an annual Sportswriter of the Year, and someone other than David Hale wins it, we need an investigation into fraud.
- I saw a number of national highlights on Saturday, and it sure did seem to me that a lot of guys out there are celebrating great plays without getting penalized for their excess. As someone astutely noted, if flagging celebrations were evenly distributed, Tebow would get flagged on every play. But that would violate St. Tim's special rules, in which

everything he does well is magnified and everything he doesn't is excused or ignored altogether, and his celebrations are signs of his incomparable warrior leadership abilities and not whatever A.J. Green does when he makes a game-winning catch.

- It may be small consolation to most dawg fans, but in spite of some tough injuries and ongoing rehab, I'm having a pretty good year.
- I flipped back and forth between the Falcons and Broncos games yesterday. The Dimitroff/Smith management team is incredible, and could give us a Schuerholz-esque run for the next decade or two. When the Falcons play, I just expect them to execute and win, and am surprised when they don't. All this for a franchise that has never had back-to-back winning seasons, ever. Please understand that this is not an implicit criticism of UGA's coaching staff; pro and college football are very different games. I imagine that Pete Carroll flopped as a pro coach because of that salary cap, a problem he doesn't have at USC. Meanwhile, the fumble aside, it was great to see Moreno play so well, even if the Broncos' uniforms were the ugliest things I've ever seen, including Georgia Tech's.
- Question of the day: Will St. Simons now be going to FSU discussion boards and posting [49-44 hahahahahahahahaha] every day for the next 364 days?
- Of little interest to most dawg fans: How 'bout them Temple Owls? In a year or two, they might be in the BCS-buster conversation with Boise State and other teams with comparable schedules. (not for wagering purposes)
- You can't go 3-and-out over and over, or turn the ball over in your own territory, and expect your defense to be able to stop a team over the course of a game. We began subbing beyond the normal rotation, I think, because the D was just out there way too long. Branden Smith replaced Boykin on kick returns, and I saw Christian Robinson out there playing LB, which I hadn't noticed in previous games. It's good to build depth by giving the freshmen playing time, but there is a dropoff between the ones and the fours.
- Even though this loss was inexplicable—not that we lost, but that we got destroyed—our wins over S. Carolina and Arkansas look pretty good given how they have played since. I wonder if the LSU game just took the bite out of our dawgs against UT and we didn't have the resilience to play the game wholeheartedly. It's incredible how one anal and overzealous official's unnecessary and admittedly wrong call can affect a team's entire season.

The Forecast: Dawgs head to Vandy ("Music City Bowl Champions," according to their website), who lost a heartbreaker to Army (who is next up for Temple) and themselves are struggling. I just don't know what to expect of UGA right now—the team that outscored Arkansas or the one that couldn't get a first down at UT. It's my job to pick the Dawgs and make the case for why they will win, which is why I never recommend using my forecast for wagering purposes. I don't know much about Vandy except that they're struggling too. At the Geneva Convention they established a law that prevents anyone from hating the Vandy coach; they operate at such a deficit that whoever is in charge has enough on his hands without dealing with opposition hatred as well. Bobby Johnson is a good coach, I think, although to my knowledge Jay Cutler has graduated. I also think that if you are going to go ahead and change players at key positions, it's best to do it for the Vandy game and not the Florida game. I'm picking Vandy's losing streak to continue next week; the Commodores will go the way of Tom DeLay on Dancing with the Stars. Dawgs, 17-10.

National Game of the Week: Oklahoma-Texas, in Dallas. OU is hard to size up because Bradford's been hurt. But their backup, Jones, played well (well, not vs. BYU) and they still couldn't do it a couple of times. I'm guessing that Colt McCoy will take his turn as Heisman winner this year if they win a lot, although people vote for Tebow because he is The Great Tebow, no matter what. He won it while leading UF to a 9-4 record as a sophomore because he had impressive stats while Meyer ran up the score (and his stats) whenever possible; and the case last year, when the stats went down, was based on his intangibles. This year it will be his body of work that has the voters ogling in awe. I do wonder what the chatterheads covering college football will talk about next year with him going on his mission to save humanity, convert the pagans, remain a virgin, and get first downs on third and short, at least until an NFL linebacker drives his shoulders back through his hips. Amazingly, he could win the Heisman while not being the best QB in his own conference—that's Mallett, who I hope decides to go pro early and enjoys his career in St. Louis. Tebow is also not the most overrated—that's Snead. Meanwhile, UF will continue to win because of its defense, and Charlie Strong will continue to be bypassed for head coaching jobs because he married a white woman. Oh yes, I was forecasting a different game and got tebowed, just like everyone else. If he's on Twitter, perhaps I can get minute-by-minute updates on the status of his toenails; or maybe I'll just watch ESPN and they'll keep me posted when they're not celebrating every successfully executed snap-reception by The Emu. Just to reduce Tebow's chances of winning the Heisman, I'll take Texas and hope McCoy wins the thing. Horns, 31-28.