

The Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast
November 6th Edition: Announcing the Rally to Restore Insanity

Weekend wrap-up: Man, this one hurts. Much like the Arkansas game, this one saw us roar back from a deficit to tie the game and put us fans in a fit of giddiness, only to have it get away from us at the end. A few quotes from the participants that sum up how competitive the game was:

Mark Richt: "I thought they fought valiantly. I don't think anybody could question their effort, question their competitive spirit. It was just one of those games where somebody had to lose. Unfortunately, it was us. I am proud of the players and the coaches and our fans and the band and everybody else. It was just a great effort by our guys and by theirs too. In the end, they won."

Urban Meyer: "The team that we just beat played their hearts out. They are a much better team than their record indicates. We are a much better team than our record. ... That was a great football game, two teams that were just fighting."

Brandon Boykin: "We played our guts out. We played as hard as we could. It just didn't go our way. Everybody's hurting right now, but we'll be all right."

Aaron Murray: "It was my worst nightmare, especially to know that my team had worked so hard to come back. I wish I could take that throw back and relive it. But I can't. I've just got to learn from it."

I agree on all counts. Somebody had to lose, and it was us. I checked the game stats to see how evenly played it was overall, in spite of periods of dominance by each team, and it was about as even as it gets:

GEORGIA	STATISTICS	FLORIDA
22	First Downs	23
7	Rushing	10
14	Passing	12
1	Penalty	1
53% (8 of 15)	Third Down Efficiency	29% (4 of 14)
0% (0 of 0)	Fourth Down Efficiency	0% (0 of 1)
439	Total Net Yards	450
71	Total Offensive Plays	77
6.2	Average Gain Per Play	5.8
126	Net Yards Rushing	231
34	Rushing Attempts	50
3.7	Average gain per rush	4.6
313	NET YARDS PASSING	219
18-37	Completions-Attempts	18-27
8.5	Net yards per pass play	8.1
2--23	Times sacked: Number-Yards	3--21
3	Had intercepted	1

5-227	PUNTS: Number-Yards	6-281
45.4	Punting Average	46.8
125	TOTAL RETURN YARDAGE	250
2-14	Punt Returns: Number-Yards	1-0
5-111	Kickoff Returns: Number-Yards	6-148
1-0	INT Returns: Number-Yards	3-102
2-25	PENALTIES: Number-Yards	9-54
2-1	FUMBLES: Number-Lost	1-0
30:00	TIME OF POSSESSION	30:00

The obvious difference was in turnovers, and that was what beat us in the end. I'm sure nobody is more aware of the importance of protecting the ball than Aaron Murray, and I believe that this will be his last game as a Dawg where he has 4 turnovers, or 3.

I was really puzzled by Monday morning AJC opinions expressed by Mark Bradley and Bill King that we got outcoached. The stats suggest otherwise. You really have to hate Mike Bobo to think he called a bad game because some plays didn't work or because Murray had such a jittery first half. If he's a bad offensive coach, then what does that make Urban Meyer? Meyer had two weeks to put together a game plan that produced pretty much the same offensive numbers that Bobo's game plan got for us. Meyer also had a big advantage with short fields provided by our turnovers, while the Dawgs had to navigate much longer fields to get their points.

If anything, the game showed pretty clearly two very different approaches to the game, one based on scheming and one based on execution. Meyer was willing to take chances with execution by installing new sets and running them in a high-stakes game, and got a number of procedure penalties in the process (9 total). Bobo went with bread-and-butter sets and relied on execution, and was undermined when Aaron's passing was off the mark on easy throws throughout the first half.

We once again had very few penalties (2) and none that I recall that were procedural. Given that the game went into OT and was lost on a risky pass of the sort that many fans wish we would throw more often, I don't see any big advantage to Meyer over Bobo in game planning or execution. Actually I thought Bobo called some pretty nifty plays, such as the bomb to T. King on first down. But when your QB doesn't see A.J. open on many plays, as Danielson pointed out several times, then planning goes out the window and you've got some film sessions in store for your young guy.

A coveted Dawgmeister Game Ball goes to Tavarres King, not so much for his route and catch on the long TD but primarily for his 100-yard hustle in keeping Will Hill out of the endzone on the OT pick.

Dawg Doot:

- UGA's graduation success rate for the class of 2003 was 77 percent, up 12 points since the NCAA instituted the measure six years ago. The UGA football team's success rate was 68 percent, second-best in the SEC behind only Vandy.

The Forecast: Idaho State is one of the worst teams in the country, effectively giving us a bye week before playing Auburn. But Auburn gets a virtual bye this week as well, so it's a wash. Not much to say about this one. I suspect we'll be deflated and flat and so won't win by 75 points. But win we will. Dawgs, 45-3.

National Game of the Week: Alabama at LSU to see who gets to face off Auburn for the West. My national picks have been surprisingly accurate this season, although not enough to recommend a wager. How about an upset? Bengals, 17-14.