

The Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast  
November 27<sup>th</sup> Edition: Pests Exterminated

"We never quit, we kept battling. We never gave up and made the plays when we needed to. We haven't done that in the games we've lost, but this time we did." ~ Mark Richt

"I thought our players played their hearts out." ~ Todd Grantham

"Georgia's my home and it's where I want to finish my career." ~ Mark Richt

Weekend wrap-up: It's hard to say that We Run This State in 2010, but we do Own it for another year. Coach Mark Richt is now 9-1 vs. GT, the greatest decade that the Dawgs have had in the rivalry spanning 117 years. I'm hoping that winning rivalry games counts in people's judgment of Coach Richt's career. The problem is we've got too many rivals. CMR is still up on Auburn, but Florida remains a problem, and South Carolina and Tennessee are sometimes trouble too.

I thought it was a great game, warts and all. Both offenses were clicking and both defenses yielded and compensated with big stops and big plays, none bigger than the play on which Houston forced a bad pitch by the QB as Dent creamed the RB and Houston cleaned up with a TD. Our D's ability to create turnovers was huge and helped overcome our difficulty handling their running game. We all saw the game and I needn't belabor these points or tell you anything we all don't already know. Nothing like a thriller to put the pests in their places, cap a nice 5-2 run to end the season, and put us in a bowl game as we've been in every year under CMR's management.

Stat of the day: the Dawgs had 2 penalties for 10 yards.

Much has been made of GT's rushing total, but both teams averaged 5.3 yards per carry, and that includes sacks, which wasn't a problem for GT but gave Murray -10 yards rushing for the game. Our average was skewed by the fact that Ealey got 54 of his 118 yards on 2 carries, one of which Tech let him run free on to score, but that doesn't mean he didn't make those runs. Remove them and we got just under 4 yards per carry—not great, and it often seemed we just couldn't run the ball. But apparently we did, while Murray played a superb game on all cylinders and the WRs and TEs caught everything he threw. TE prospect Jay Rome was in attendance and I hope he appreciates how we use his position at UGA.

GT has adopted a common backyard pest as its mascot, and in general I find their program to be annoying. Their running game relies on cut blocks, which involve diving at a guy's feet and then rolling around or crawling after another guy's feet. I was talking with a big OL recruit before the game (class of 2012) and we agree that OL is a manly position and that cut blocking is a wimpy way of playing the position. A program guy said that we'd been preparing for the cut blocks by pinning OLs' helmets to the ground after the first dive to keep them from getting in a second block. Admittedly, GT ran up some yardage on the ground on Saturday, and so we didn't quite do enough to stop their attack on our ankles. I just don't see how they recruit OL into that system because it doesn't prepare you to play at the next level unless Alex Gibbs has talked his way into advising the team. The Falcons went with cut blocks when they had the league's greatest athlete

at QB, and he was constantly getting sacked because cut blocks rely on smaller guys who can't pass block. Who would want to go there as preparation for the NFL, or even as a satisfying way to play the position?

And help me out: Why would a WR with talent and ambition ever go to GT???

And why would any player at any position want to play for a team with ugly uniforms and in a dinky stadium off a freeway that never comes close to being full?

In 2008 Paul Johnson coached GT to a 9–3 record including an ACC Coastal Division Co-Championship; and to a 45–42 win in Athens over UGA, Tech's first win against the Dawgs since 2000. He was rewarded by being named ACC Coach of the Year by the Atlantic Coast Sports Media Association and CBSSports.com coach of the year; and by being given a \$17.7 million, 53% raise making him the second highest paid coach in the ACC.

In 2009 GT went 11-3, including the ACC championship game which put them in a BCS bowl game vs. Iowa, which they lost. One of their 3 losses was to UGA in Atlanta.

In 2010 GT went 6-6, albeit without Josh Nesbitt for several of the losses; but then, nobody gives other team the benefit of the doubt when they lose a key starter, e.g., A.J. Green.

So, where do they go from here? Is the gimmick offense something that works better at Georgia Southern than in a major conference, or even the ACC? Note that these impressive records have come in a conference where teams like this year's Tennessee or Ole Miss would be considered formidable contenders instead of weaklings as they are in the SEC. It'll be interesting to see how this experiment in running an offense that compares well to Jeff Heron's Camden County HS scheme, but might have its limits against better teams and coaches after they've had a chance to scout it.

Dawg Doots:

- It sure would be cool if the Detroit Lions used that choice draft pick to take A.J. Green to go with Stafford, Johnson, and Pettigrew.
- I talked before the game with a guy who is In The Know, and he told me that the new compliance guy at NCAA is foaming at the mouth to make the next big cheater a huge example for the rest of the nation, and the SEC is an easy place to look, the needle here being almost as large as the haystack. If the money trail from Auburn to Newton is ever documented, expect the NCAA to unleash the hounds of hell on the prettiest little place on the plains.
- Richt haters might be in the uncomfortable position of knowing that Miami would really like to have him after they dumped Randy Shannon for losing to an in-state team from the Not-Big-3. Coach Richt reassured the huge recruiting crowd at Saturday's game that he's at UGA to stay, however, and he's a man of his word. So Miami can go after other guys (as of Sunday morning, Tuberville, Mike Leach (!), and Brent Venables are being mentioned) while we keep one of the greatest coaches and people in program history right here where he belongs.

- Mrs. Butts observed that Cam Newton will come and go from Auburn with a total of 12 hours of academic credits, and that the only incentive for completing them is to play in a January bowl game. Otherwise, she believes, he'd already have his bags packed and be working with a trainer in preparation for the combine. I don't think that any of those courses among his 12 hours are in ballroom dancing, in the Matt Leinart tradition; no, at Auburn, the only course offering in this area is square dancing.
- I read that Kyle Karempelis of Wesleyan HS might come to UGA as a preferred walkon, all 5-foot-10, 170 pounds of him (and if that's how he's listed, he's probably closer to 5'-8", 165). He's scored 92 touchdowns (5<sup>th</sup> most in state history) and run for over 5,500 career yards with no scholarship offers: small guy at a small school. I've seen him play on TV and he's a terrific HS player, and apparently at least as good a baseball player. Let's get him on campus and see what he can do, as the New England Patriots did with Danny Woodhead. I think we gave a few other small-school superstars a shot here (Herschel Walker, Garrison Hearst, Washaun Ealey) and they did pretty well. With a couple of years lifting weights with Dave van Hallanger, he could get up to 180 lbs. and be a terror.
- Speaking of Coach Van's weightlifting program, which people for some reason think has gone downhill even though the team's weightroom performance is as good as anyone's and keeps getting better every year: He made a presentation to recruits that drew ooh's and aah's from a very crowded room of very elite recruits regarding both the team records (many of them set by current players, raising questions about the questions raised about our weight training program) and the team averages (including walk-ons). If you think there's a problem with the weight program, you might want to go to watch the workouts and look at the performance stats, or look at the bodies of the guys that Van and his boys have trained, and you might just change your mind.
- I heard that the Dawgs might end up in the Liberty Bowl in Memphis against the Conference USA champion (either Central Florida or SMU) Dec. 31 and that Tech might play Air Force in the bowl we all scoffed at last year, the Independence in Shreveport. Someone also said on Saturday that Boise might have dropped all the way to the Humanitarian Bowl, played on a blue field in Idaho somewhere.
- Little Woolly heard someone talking about the "Butts-Mehr Expansion," and he wondered why people don't just use *le bidet*.
- Bobo haters: For a guy who can't call plays, he sure does run up a lot of points (program record 30 or more points in seven straight games).
- I was talking with a program guy before the game when a good-sized kid and his family came up and dropped off some DVDs of his season. Turned out he was a possible preferred walkon at fullback, the one position that's a complete mystery for next season. Other options include Zander Ogletree, who according to my guy plays much bigger than his size (listed at 5'-10", 207), and guys who could get converted during spring practice, which my guy thinks is pretty plausible. No mention of who might go from current positions to FB, but I'm sure it'd be a big athlete who is buried at another position. I'd love to see Artie Lynch at FB next year, for instance, with all the other TEs returning. I'm just making up that possibility, but who knows, it could happen; Artie can already block and catch and weighs in at about 265 lbs.
- Count me among those who think that officials need to tone down their tendency to throw unsportsmanlike conduct flags when guys simply get stoked after a big play. In the Ohio

State game a guy legitimately dived into the end zone for a TD and was flagged; and even I thought that Nick Fairley got screwed on a call after he'd made a great tackle in the Auburn-Alabama game. Spencer Tillman, apparently having forgotten the call against A.J. last year vs. LSU, indignantly considered the Fairley call the most egregious instance of over-officiating he'd ever seen, and Tillman is a guy who'd have been polite to Adolf Hitler.

- On the sidelines before the game: Zach Mettenberger, apparently doing well and sorting through offers for next season. Also some guy named Samuel L. Jackson.
- Recruiting is sure interesting. Last year Da'Rick Rogers bailed on UGA to be with his pal Nash Nance at Tennessee, but UT has gone with another true freshman, Tyler Bray, at QB, which means that Nash will either carry a clipboard for 5 years or transfer.
- In case you missed it, after losing to Notre Dame for the first time in almost a decade, Lane Kiffin has led USC to a 7-5 record, and with losses to UCLA next week and in a bowl game, he will actually surpass (in the negative sense) his record last year at UT. That's two national powerhouses he's made mediocre immediately. I'm sure he's now on Jerry Jones's short list to coach the Dallas Cowboys next year.

**Coveted Dawgmeister Game Balls** go to a whole bunch of guys and gals this week:

Game Ball #1 goes to Quintin Banks, Chris Davis, and Akeem Hebron, all of whom lost all or parts of their UGA careers to injuries. Q has gotten most of the attention because he never got healthy enough to play, but all three have been injured their whole time at UGA, have rehabbed with dedication, gotten reinjured, rehabbed again, gotten hurt again, gone through another rehab, and finally had to watch other guys play in their positions. Chris got the most time as a 3-year starter only to spend much of his senior year watching and waiting for hip surgery. All could have quit many times over but stayed with their teammates, practiced when they could, and did everything imaginable to make contributions to the team however they could manage. Hebron had his arm in a sling on Saturday, yet another new injury—this guy could have bailed on the program a thousand times but not only stuck with it but was playing hard enough to sustain an injury to a new extremity right at the end. Damn Good Dawgs all, and as deserving of our thanks and admiration as anyone on the team.

Game Ball #2 goes to all of the graduating seniors, including all three of the above, making them the first ever double-winners of coveted Dawgmeister Game Balls: Quintin Banks, Clint Boling, Brian Brewer, Shaun Chapas, Vance Cuff, Chris Davis, Josh Davis, Akeem Dent, Demarcus Dobbs, Kris Durham, Darryl Gamble, Chad Gloer, Chris Grund, Ben Harden, Akeem Hebron, Fred Munzenmaier, Josh Murray, Cortney Newmans, Derek Rich, Josh Sailors, Kiante Tripp, Charles White, and Brandon Wood.

Game Ball #3 goes to the academic support team in the Rankin Smith Center for the football program: Ted White, Rhonda Kilpatrick, Wally Richardson, Eric Beverly, and Wendy LeBlanc, plus the tutoring staff they oversee. This is one dedicated team of smart and supportive people, and they do a lot more than keep guys eligible—they get them all the way to graduation. Great people and incredibly important to the coaches and athletes at UGA.

Game Ball #4 goes to Coach Richt, with a tip of the hat to Damon Evans and Greg McGarity, for dedicating themselves to graduating UGA's student athletes. Some of the scholarship players who are graduating never panned out as players, and at many programs—Alabama comes to mind—they'd have been stashed somewhere (injured lists, etc.) and abandoned. At UGA the approach is to take guys who never develop (Ben Harden, Charles White, etc.), hasten them through academically, support them in their coursework, and have them end their careers with a UGA diploma. A person who is very close to the program told me before the game that when it comes to recruiting, UGA is bringing knives to a gunfight because we don't dump guys who don't develop as players and we don't have the kind of cash flow that sustains other programs in the SEC, particularly those in that state to our immediate West. But I'd rather do it honestly and with integrity and deliver on our promises to recruits than to sleaze our way into victories in any which way that works.

#### **Coveted 2010 Dawgmeister Media Awards:**

The David Hale Award for Best Dawg Coverage is a tie between Chip Towers of the AJC for his 10 on 10 and recruiting updates, and Leather Helmet for his daily recruiting update. Fine work men, and thanks for keeping us informed. Now if only we could do something about the people who comment on Chip's blog.

The Jeff Schultz Award for Worst Sportswriting, All Categories, goes to Jeff Schultz for his snide, self-serving, and just plain idiotic opinionating on football and anything else that passes between his ears.

The Bob Davie Award for Worst Broadcasting of Games goes to Bob Davie, who inexplicably keeps getting propped behind the mike to share his interesting opinions about Facebook, text messaging, and other critical football material.

The Gary Danielson Award for Best Color Commentary goes to Gary Danielson, even though he did pull his punches during the UGA-Auburn game regarding Nick Fairley's incredibly dirty play. Even with that flaw, GD is by far the most insightful guy calling college games ever.

The Lou Holtz Award for Worst Studio Anchor is a tie between Lou Holtz and Mark May for their incessant drivel and anti-Dawg sentiments, and especially to Holtz for claiming to be a Doctor, which makes me a Coach I guess.

Best Studio Anchor goes to Robert Smith because he's not Lou Holtz or Mark May. Spencer Tillman is too bland, although I'll digress here and say that people at Oklahoma, where he played RB, still talk about Tillman in the same reverential way we talk about David Greene at UGA: As the guy who represents the best of what the program is on its best days: smart, classy, and balanced.

Most Pathetic Loser Award goes to St. Simons of AJC blog comment boards.

Best Site for Dawg Fanatics: The Dawgbone. What else?

Some friends and I have been discussing the question, will Aaron Murray eventually be regarded as the greatest UGA QB ever? I should also acknowledge that at least one AJC commenter (anonymous, of course) on Chip Towers' blog thinks that Murray's a bum, and can't wait till Christian LeMay arrives so we have a real quarterback, and I'm sure is already anticipating the arrival of Eddie Printz, Jr. two years later so that the bum LeMay can take his seat on the bench as well, where he belongs.

So here's one look at Murray in comparison with other Dawg greats:

He will not win as many games as David Greene, although he might eventually have the same elevated status as a leader and great human being.

He will not end up a punchline like Quincy Carter.

He will have a much greater window of opportunity than the guy he most resembles, D. J. Shockley, and therefore will have a much better shot at the NFL. I think we all regret the timing of D.J.'s career at UGA and would like to have seen him get a few more years under center.

Unlike Fran Tarkenton, he won't endorse Hai Karate cologne and after shave products, or any other piece of merchandise he's asked to put his name and reputation on in his Bill-Cosby-esque post-career years.

Like Ray Goff and Mike Bobo, he will be beloved by the fans as a player, but unlike them, he won't be despised as a coach, unless he becomes one, in which case he will.

He'll be better than Joe Cox.

He'll be favorably compared with Eric Zeier, and that's pretty good.

Unlike John Rauch, he probably won't be credited with helping to develop the West Coast Offense.

Unlike Zeke Bratkowski, he won't have a hillbilly's name or be tall.

Unlike Matthew Stafford, he won't start as a true freshman or leave after 3 years as the top pick in the draft.

Unlike Buck Belue, he won't have Hershel Walker to hand off to.

I may have left off somebody's favorite, but these seem to be the guys most often mentioned as among UGA's greatest, plus a few others. Tarkenton and Rauch are in the College Football Hall of Fame, and it's hard to be better than that. Many of these guys made NFL teams and a couple were NFL stars and Pro Bowlers (9 times for Tarkenton). So one thing that stands out is that UGA has had a lot of really good QBs over the years. Aside from Cox, all of Richt's have had NFL shots and Stafford has star power that I think we'll see for many years as he leads the lowly Lions back into contention.

You'd have to say that Tarkenton has set the gold standard so far, although I think that Stafford is the most talented guy I've seen back there, and would have had a great career at UGA with a redshirt and 4 years under center—probably the greatest we've had.

Here's Murray's stat line for 2010:

Stats Overview		Passing									
YEAR	CMP	ATT	YDS	CMP%	YPA	LNG	TD	INT	SACK	RAT	

2010                    188 304 2851    61.8 9.38    66 24    6    21 162.72

Here's what's listed for Ryan Mallett, who is a tremendous NFL prospect:

YEAR	CMP	ATT	YDS	CMP%	YPA	LNG	TD	INT	SACK	RAT
2007	61	141	892	43.3	6.33	97	7	5	12	105.69
2009	225	403	3627	55.8	9.00	83	30	7	24	152.52
2010	242	364	3592	66.5	9.87	89	30	11	21	170.53

Aaron didn't throw nearly as much but I think was pretty close in production, and with more dinky passes from the Petrino playbook could easily have had a really high completion percentage. What's most impressive I think is the TD/INT ratio of 24:6 or 4:1 (Mallett's is about 3:1), which is usually the Achilles' heel of a young QB, and half of Aaron's picks came in one game (Florida, unfortunately).

If you're not impressed yet, here are the top-rated QBs in the nation:

RK	PLAYER	TEAM	ATT	COMP	PCT	YDS	YDS/A	LONG	TD	INT	SACK	RAT
1	<a href="#">Kellen Moore, QB</a>	BSU	311	221	71.1	3269	10.5	83	30	5	5	188.0
2	<a href="#">Cameron Newton, QB</a>	AUB	218	148	67.9	2254	10.3	94	24	6	21	185.6
3	<a href="#">Ryan Mallett, QB</a>	ARK	364	242	66.5	3592	9.9	89	30	11	21	170.5
4	<a href="#">Scott Tolzien, QB</a>	WIS	245	182	74.3	2300	9.4	45	16	6	11	169.8
5	<a href="#">Andy Dalton, QB</a>	TCU	293	194	66.2	2638	9.0	93	26	6	8	167.0
6	<a href="#">Greg McElroy, QB</a>	ALA	296	209	70.6	2767	9.3	85	19	5	30	166.9
7	<a href="#">Andrew Luck, QB</a>	STAN	349	245	70.2	3051	8.7	81	28	7	5	166.1
8	<a href="#">Jeffrey Godfrey, QB</a>	UCF	190	128	67.4	1875	9.9	60	12	6	14	164.8
9	<a href="#">Aaron Murray, QB</a>	UGA	304	188	61.8	2851	9.4	66	24	6	21	162.7

10 [Bryant Moniz](#), HAW 465 308 66.2 4249 9.1 80 32 10 31 161.4  
QB

Terrelle Pryor is #13, Landry Jones is #23, Matt Barkley is #30, Jake Locker is #79, Jeremiah Masoli is #86, John Brantley is #90, Kyle Parker is #94. (See [http://espn.go.com/college-football/statistics/player/\\_/stat/passing/sort/collegeQuarterbackRating/year/2010/group/80](http://espn.go.com/college-football/statistics/player/_/stat/passing/sort/collegeQuarterbackRating/year/2010/group/80) for the full list.) Not bad for a guy who was written off after spring practice because he threw one really bad ball.

Note that only 5 of the guys with higher ratings played against comparable competition week in and week out. And 3 of those 5 are SEC guys who'll be gone next year. This kid had one impressive year.

So, will Aaron be UGA's best QB ever? I think he'll have 4 years to prove it, and that his improvement over the course of 2010 suggests that he'll keep getting better. With only Green, Bolling, and Durham departing for next year from the O (admittedly, one catastrophic loss, one big loss, and one key loss), he'll have plenty to work with. Mike Bobo's critics don't give him much slack on anything, but he's a terrific QB coach who will only help Aaron improve his game, as he has with every other QB he's coached up. At the next level, it's hard to tell whether Murray will be the next Drew Brees or the next Ty Detmer. But for UGA fans, I do think that we'll be looking at a guy who'll be remembered in the same category as Tarkenton, Zeier, and others who have legendary status as undersized guys who dominated games and won plenty.

OK, I'll be back with a Bowl Game forecast, so I live to write another day. Meanwhile, take good care of your family and enjoy the holiday season.