

The Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast  
September 17<sup>th</sup> Edition: Going Postal on Coastal

"Losing's not fun. We certainly didn't enjoy that part. As a head coach, I saw an awful lot of really great ingredients on this football team. I saw guys play through pain. I saw guys be resilient after all kind of adversity or adverse things happening to them. Just a lot of really good things happened, but too many giveaways." ~Mark Richt

"0-2 is awful. Nobody wants that, but we've got a chance to be a really good football team."  
~Mike Bobo

The Recap: I hate losing as much as anyone, but I feel a lot better after the S. Carolina game than I did after the Boise game. In the opener we looked unprepared; it seemed that Boise had been practicing all summer and we'd only shown up on campus the week before the game. I talked to some program guys before the game and nobody could put a finger on why we came out flat and stayed that way. I was genuinely concerned that something wasn't right with the team and that SC would come out and do what Boise did, except with Lattimore and Jeffery, although also with Garcia. I was not confident that we'd win or even be competitive and thought that we might be on the brink of a long, painful season.


But on Saturday, the team came to play. Some pretty obvious stuff, well rehashed at this point, did us in, from a fake punt to a pick-6 to an almost-perfect onside kick to devastating fumbles to a missed sure-fire field goal to a dropped pick-6 by Boykin, who is looking like a first-round pick and must surely be the greatest return man in program history and was sensational all day. Not much for this observer to add, so I refer you to the rest of the Internet for insight.

Mrs. Butts watched the game at home on the Big Screen, and said that the announcers were singing Richt's death dirges all night. But in the Dawgmeistermobile on the way home from the game, the post-game radio show with Zeier, Butler, and others was fairly optimistic. We played a top-12 team toe-to-toe, outgained them, demonstrated improved play in every facet of the game, found that Crowell is already terrific and ought to be spectacular before long, found a crisp slant-based passing game that overcame the protection problems, got a good game out of Richard Samuel, found a bunch of receivers who aren't afraid to go hard after the ball across the middle, did a decent job against Lattimore (in spite of his yardage stats) with little depth at ILB, got a great game out of Jarvis Jones, featured an impressive return of Rambo, showed tremendous resilience, and got much good out of Aaron Murray along with some tragic mistakes. We now enter a portion of the schedule with a lot of beatable teams and are still in this race. Saturday's crowd was really behind the guys and if the fan base can look at what this team can be if the improvement continues and support them wholeheartedly, we could end up with a memorable season.

When Glass-Half-Empty meets Head-Half-Empty: I was most blessed at Saturday's game to sit right in front of Coach Knute "Bear" Lombardi, the World's Greatest Expert on Football, who provided a running commentary on every play from huddle to huddle. The Great Coach took the unique approach of disguising himself as a UGA fan while complaining about everything done by anyone in Red and Black, including not only every play, but every movement of every player

on every snap, even during some of our most dominant moments in the game. He was of that remarkable disposition whereby any thought, no matter how fleeting or relevant, that passes between his ears merits noisome and noisy verbalization for the benefit of those in his seating section. He was one clever fellow, calling Mike Bobo “Bozo”—wow, never had thought of that one!—even as the team put up 42 points against a strong SEC defense and particularly shredded them in the second half after making some major strategic adjustments. Who knows, this guy might actually be Sports and Grits in the flesh and blood, although he looked more like that mean grandpa who keeps Sports and Grits locked in the basement and puts a bowl of thin gruel at the top of the stairs every night for him to devour along with whatever cockroaches and spiders he can catch deep in the bowels of the family abode in his breaks between watching replays of *Glee* episodes.

And perhaps this great Dawg fan and knowledgeable observer sat behind you as well.

A bit of personal revelation: I can be a fairly insular person, and it’s easy to tune out stuff that keeps me from getting my own life’s work done. When things go badly for things outside me, I can always turn to my work and personal relationships to regain satisfaction. But man, that Boise loss left me deflated and a bit morose, and it really forced me to wonder why something “out there” was affecting me so greatly in such mood-altering ways. What I realized through this extended rumination is that, over time, UGA football has stopped being “out there” and is actually a part of me. So when the team plays poorly, I feel it inside, and when the coaches I admire so much are trashed so heartlessly in the Lamestream Sports Media and other fine Internet outlets, I feel their pain, along with the pain of the players who wear my school’s  on their helmets and work year-round to honor it. So this is something I just can’t tune out, the way I tune out political posturing, ESPN announcers, and most everything else in favor of family and work. This thing is in me, for better or worse, and that’s why I care.

Dawg Doots:

- A Coveted Dawgmeister Game Ball to ex-Dawg tennis great John Isner for reaching the US Open quarterfinals in a sport where 3 of the top 4 spots are secured before the tournament even begins.
- A Probably Not Too Coveted Dawgmeister Steaming Pile-Greased Dawg Pile to Athletics Board members Tommy Lawhorne and Bob Bishop for declaring one game into the season their concern for the status of the football program, when there’s much football to be played this season. I suggest that they install a stripper’s pole in their luxury box and enjoy themselves as if they were at Miami. Personally, I would like to register my concern over the status of the Athletics Board and the quality of leadership they are providing the university and its teams.
- A Coveted Dawgmeister Game Ball to the new scoreboard, which got quite a workout on Saturday and represents a remarkable upgrade over the old one, which wasn’t so bad itself.
- A Coveted Dawgmeister Game Ball to Wally Richardson, who left the Rankin Smith Academic Support Center over the summer for a position with greater responsibilities at North Carolina. Wally did a great job with our student-athletes for several years and was a solid member of the UGA community, and I wish him all the best in his new job. He

has apprenticed under two of the finest people in all of college sports, Joe Paterno and Mark Richt, along with Ted White and Rhonda Kilpatrick of Rankin Smith, and has the qualities that UNC will need to erase the wretched memory of the Butch Davis era and the heavy stain it's placed on the integrity of this great university.

- Other changes at Rankin Smith include a shift up the food chain, as Rhonda Kilpatrick ascends in responsibility and 10-year NFL veteran Eric Beverly, who is a model for how to use athletics to move up in the world through ability, hard work, and intelligence, replaces her as director of academics for football from his position of academic counselor. In any position, Eric is a tremendous asset to UGA and a great role model and mentor for our student-athletes.
- Perhaps you know that in Scotland, there is a street named after your Dawgmeister's nuptials with his beloved bride, Mrs. Butts. We and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Wynd, are the namesakes of a lovely lane in St. Andrews:



So honored were we that we endowed a building at the University of St. Andrews of the same name:



We are hoping to raise funds to rename I-75 in the family seat, Butts County, in the same fashion, and are accepting contributions of any size toward this end.

- If you haven't seen Crowell before he puts on the pads, this kid is ripped. Not too many guys come out of high school looking as though they've had three years in an SEC weight room. His upside is unlimited.
- Of all the moving tributes to 9-11, I found [this one](#) to be the most poignant.

- Bobo haters must be beside themselves. It sure seemed to me, and to the stat sheet, that on Saturday he was at least the equal of Steve Spurrier, who is generally considered to be one of the greatest offensive minds in college football history.
- I had a chance to visit with Marshall Morgan and his parents before the game. He'll step into Blair Walsh's role next year and wear #13, his high school number, and so provide the logical evolution of this year's punt/kick duo. There were a lot of committed kids and targets taking visits, and I think that the atmosphere was pretty impressive throughout the game, as long as they didn't sit in front of Coach Knute "Bear" Lombardi and his toxic fuming. John Theus was there on crutches, apparently a minor ankle roll; and yes, he's got a younger brother who plays on the OL and might succeed Nathan as long snapper some day.
- Orson Charles is presently sporting a red Mohawk. Very sharp fashion statement there young man.
- I haven't seen Ray Drew on the field yet, which puts him a bit behind Jadaveon Clowney thus far in their brief careers; it sure was hard to get anywhere outside the tackle box on Saturday. Not sure if he's still injured or if Chase Vasser has outplayed him in practice.
- As both of my readers know, I've been slow to embrace Boise State's rise to elitiness. I couldn't shake the memory of how we destroyed them when they played between the hedges a few years back, and that image has framed my view of them ever since. But they really beat us a week ago, and that now changes everything. They remind me of Butler in basketball: It just doesn't seem possible that they keep winning with non-elite talent over range of their depth chart, but they win with good coaching, tremendous focus, and relentlessly physical play, and now have better talent (according to their website, 14 NFL players currently; UGA is in the national top 5 with about 40, depending on roster fluctuations). Big 10 teams that play Butler in basketball consistently say that they are the most physical team on their schedule, and that's one physical league. Boise seems to take the same approach of being tougher than their opponents, and that's really hard to sustain when for the most part the opponents are weak. They just don't seem to let up or get overconfident because they are accustomed to creaming people. I don't know of any Boise player who's ever left early for the NFL, which gives them the additional benefit of keeping their best players for 4-5 years instead of having the Staffords, Morenos, etc. bail before their most effective play is available. So, my hat's off to them, even as they play routinely in front of small crowds (they set a season-ticket record this year with 23,503, and season's tickets were available at the beginning of the season) against the teams that make up other teams' cupcake opponents.
- <http://awfulannouncing.com/> is devoted to...well, I'll let you guess. They have a Mr. Rushmore of awful announcers and I think it'd be an interesting exercise to come up with my own. Little Woolly and I discussed possibilities for our own monument of rock heads, and along with awfulannouncing, we'd have Craig James up there (and don't forget that [Craig hopes to be a U.S. Senator soon](#), running with the campaign slogan "Nepotism today, Nepotism tomorrow, Nepotism forever!"). Because awfulannouncing's Mount Rushmore is an all-sports monument, they have immortalized Dick Vitale, Pam Ward, and Tim McCarver along with Senator James, and I can't dispute their worthiness. But for football, the Butts Boys have selected Bob Davie and add the ESPN studio clowns of Mark "Dumb" May and Lou "Dumber" Holtz. I really don't see how anyone could possibly argue with these selections.

- This is not a good season to gloat over other guys' misfortunes, but my heart remains intact over Notre Dame's 0-2 start. Actually they're similar to UGA in outgaining opponents but coming up short on the scoreboard. At least we've got a league to compete in to give us a structure for our motivation. I think following an independent would be pretty unsatisfying, because the league race is always such an important part of the competition.

The Forecast: The Dawgs finally get their cupcake after opening with two top-twelve teams, which the post-game show guys noted was the most difficult opening in program history. A nice day to get some uniforms dirty and inflate the stats. Not much to say about these games, so I won't say much except to say that, as UGA President Michael Adams told the boys in the locker room after the game, "Let's run the table" from here on out. Good Guys, 48-10.

National Game of the Week: This one's easy: Oklahoma at Florida State. I have OU roots and always hated Florida State (CMR's background there notwithstanding), so calling the winner here will not tax my intellect greatly. [Note: Dawgmeister forecasts should never be used as the basis for a cash wager.] Although I am an eminently reasonable man, I do let my passions rule when it comes to football. I don't know much about either team except that Jimbo Fisher has taken a Saban-esque approach to program management: "If you want to know what's going on here, I'll let you know when there's something you need to know. Otherwise, stop asking questions, go to hell, and quit wasting my time with your infernal questions. And go to hell while you're at it." Time for Big Game Bob Stoops and Company to slam the door on that approach. Sooners, 24-21.