

## **The Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast November 23<sup>th</sup> Edition: Exterminating the Pests**

On his Al-and-Tipper-esque post-game smooch with Kathy Richt: "I thought it was a good one. I personally thought she was mauling me. I went there just for a nice, friendly kiss and she started to wear me out. I didn't know what to do other than go with it. That's the way I saw it." ~Mark Richt

The Recap: My Forecast of last week was wrong in just about every regard. To recap: UGA would beat the snot out of Kentucky; Oklahoma would beat Baylor; Ohio State would top Penn State; and in general, it would be an uninteresting week in college football because there were so few big games to anticipate. When will I learn? A couple of years ago, the whole BCS landscape changed in the last couple of weeks of the season when teams couldn't take care of games they were supposed to win. It seems that nobody tells the underdogs they're supposed to slink in and take a licking; for some reason, they practice all week, prepare for the game, and come in ready to make a statement to validate their seasons. So welcome to the reality of games being played on the field, instead of in the imaginations of fans who can't imagine teams that are struggling taking the field with the intention of beating a team whose victory is a foregone conclusion. And count me as one who underestimated the will of the underdogs who came to play over the weekend.

Some real headlines from the weekend's Lamestream Sports Media:

- Iowa State stuns No. 2 Oklahoma State in double OT
- Baylor stuns No. 5 Oklahoma, 45-38
- Southern California stuns No. 4 Oregon
- N.C. State stuns Clemson 37-13
- UAB holds on, stuns No. 20 Southern Mississippi
- Virginia Cavaliers stun No. 23 Florida State Seminoles 14-13
- In a Stunning Coda, Columbia Wins One [over Brown]

Stunningly original phrasing there, Lamestreamers. Little Woolly has already decided not to become a sports journalist, because his vocabulary is too big for the medium. Which brings us to our division-clinching win over Kentucky on Saturday. On a day when four teams that believed they might get to the national championship game each took their second loss, the Dawgs also faced a hungry opponent that was desperate for a win to stay on track for a bowl game. My hat's off to their coaches and players for coming in and trying to win this thing and send SC to the championship game. By halftime, even though we had a slim lead, nobody was feeling comfortable about this one. We were down to our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> string RBs, and without the running game setting the tone, the passing game was not clicking on all cylinders. The defense gave up a TD on a drive that left Coach Grantham apoplectic on the sidelines, trying to get his guys to understand that they had to do more than swagger to beat UK.

And then came the second half, where we showed that we are a tough and resilient team. As everyone knows, the defense simply stopped UK cold after remembering why they are one of the nation's top 5 units and starting to play like it. And the OL seemed to understand that if we were to win, they needed to make more space for guys who previously had not played anything more

competitive than a glorified varsity-JV game at the college level. Even with the fumbles, Harton and Malcome ran tough and hard, and Coach Bobo had enough confidence in them to keep handing them the ball to run clock and maintain possession. You might not like that strategy. But it worked, and we're in the championship game again. It's hard to say that whatever Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Oregon, and Clemson are doing is working any better, in spite of their gaudy offensive stats. As Studs McMachoman would surely say, the W is what matters, and sometimes pounding it between the tackles can be a beautiful sight, even if it's not as glamorous or thrilling as winning 58-55. That strategy of running a 5'-6" tailback up the middle surely brought a big smile to the Scowlmeister, who has to stand on his head to achieve that effect.

I had a complicated week and so was not at the stadium to experience the win, and so had to watch it on the Big Screen later in the day. I therefore missed Coach Knute "Bear" Lombardi, The Guy Who Sits Behind Me, and his insightful commentary on the game. But I'm pretty sure that he opined that we couldn't beat the Inspiring Minds Montessori Pre-School on Saturday, that Bobo ("I call him Bozo") couldn't call a play that works from now until the end of time, that Brandon Boykin is just too small to play cornerback in the SEC, and that we need to get Aaron Murray out of there and find ourselves a quarterback. Winning 9 straight, winning the SEC East, and inching our way back toward the Top Ten just isn't good enough for some people.

I was mighty happy on every level to see Blair Walsh return to form. The fans who've been screaming for him to be replaced got what they wished for, and you'd think that by now, screaming from the stands to replace a guy generally indicates that you haven't been watching the practices, which I do believe that the coaches do in order to decide which guy plays. Nothing against Bogatay, but Blair is the guy we need out there, and I hope that he can finish out the last three games the way he played his first three years, and goes out in a blaze of glory.

I'm sure that this week we'll also hear about what a delicate flower Isaiah Crowell is and how he's just not tough enough for the SEC. I suggest that anyone who believes that head on down to the practice field, strap on some pads, and run against an SEC defense for a few hours, and then tell us about how running backs should play the game without getting banged up. If you don't believe that this is one violent game, then [read this](#) account by ex-DL mammoth Kris Jenkins.

On that note, The Coveted Dawgmeister Good Guy of the Week Award goes to [Eric Beverly](#) of the Rankin Smith academic support center. Eric survived a 10-year NFL career with the Lions, where he undoubtedly suffered plenty of beatdowns, and the Falcons, where life was a little better, with his humanity, mind, and body intact. He's now a role model and academic exemplar for the young guys in our program. He's only a couple of years older than Kris Jenkins, and so they are at comparable life points as recently-retired NFL players looking to start adulthood in their thirties. Going from grizzled veteran to young man in the working world can be pretty hard for a lot of guys, and many struggle mightily with the adjustment—the police blotter is full of their post-career exploits as they try to keep living on a huge salary while unemployed and uneducated. Eric took care of his studies while in college, and began preparing for his post-career life early by participating in NFL internship programs designed to assist in the transition, and is on his way in a whole new career as academic counselor and unofficially as life counselor to our student-athletes. He's one smart guy with his head screwed on right, and we're lucky he's on our side.

Dawg Doots:

- I imagine that a century or two from now, they'll still be playing Larry Munson's most memorable calls in Butts-Mehr Hall and beyond. Rest in peace, big guy.
- [I don't think we'll be signing any of these guys.](#)
- The Owlmeister is most please to see Temple now at 7-4 after their thrashing of Army. Other programs now 7-4 include Florida State, Utah, and Auburn, all recent BCS bowl game participants. Gotta wonder if Al Golden at Miami is getting a little homesick right now.
- The Penn State scandal is horrific, and I've got nothing to add except to say that, like the Catholic Church abuse scandal, it appears that with the first case now out in the open, we'll be seeing many more at all levels of the game. [Here's one](#), and I'll wager it's the first of many we'll be hearing about in the next year or so.
- From Sunday's Lamestream Media: "But now the [SEC East] race is over, and the Georgia Bulldogs are the sacrificial critters who will be handed over in an early December ceremony to an SEC West team that will almost surely make mincemeat of them." I seem to recall something along those lines being said before we dismembered LSU a few years ago under the Dome in the championship game.
- Whatever Carlton Thomas is doing to screw up his career, I hope he quits doing it soon. We need him, and he needs us.

The Forecast: The Dawgs take on the Odious Pests from the ATL. They run almost exclusively, and nobody can run on us. From Monday's ABH: "Georgia Tech averages 324 yards rushing per game. The Bulldogs have given up exactly that many yards total in their last seven SEC games — and Vanderbilt accounted for 200 of those." The UK game might have been well-placed for Kentucky, in that it came between Auburn and GT, and we've fallen into that trap before. I noticed on Saturday that 10 of our 11 starters are Georgia natives (only Jenkins isn't); and the offense is populated mostly by in-state kids as well. So they know what this game's all about. I think we're motivated, coached up, and ready to make it 10 straight in 2011. Dawgs limit GT's running and force them to pass, and that's when the game's over. Dawgs head to the Dome after yet another swatting of the Pests: Good Guys, 27-13.

National Game of the Week (2 ranked teams): Arkansas at LSU for the right to lose to UGA the following week. Arkansas has gotten a lot of good bounces this season, but LSU seems to will the ball to bounce its way too. So I think it comes down to the best team winning, and that's LSU. They seem to have found their QB in Jefferson, and their D is almost as good as UGA's. Got to go with the Tigers here, 17-10.

National Upset of the Week (unranked team over ranked team): Virginia over Virginia Tech. The game's in Charlottesville, and UVA has been pretty good this year. Heck, they even sneaked into the tail-end of a couple of top-25 rankings after knocking off FSU on Saturday, a win that had Wags's tail pounding the floor furiously. So, even though they're technically not unranked, I'll go with this game and take the Cavs: Virginia, 20-17.