

The Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast
September 23rd Edition: Ole Miss You While You're Gone

The Recap: One of my game day companions wondered if the Chanticleers—or Big Bulging Roosters, as they're known to Anthony Weiner—were the worst team he'd seen at Sanford Stadium since he began attending games during the Roosevelt administration (Theodore). Now, that's a silly question. Georgia Tech is the worst team to play at Sanford Stadium. What was this guy thinking?

Of course, we can't take games like this too seriously. My only observation worth sharing is that Mark Richt did something uncharacteristic, which was to keep the hammer down even when we had a big lead. I've seen him start to run out the clock in the third quarter on bad teams, but on Saturday we were throwing deep with the game well in hand. I suspect that the opening losses prompted him to keep the throttle open in order to build confidence and momentum. I believe that the team now knows that if we play another team this bad, we'll beat the living snot out of them.

The guy who sat behind me this week kept yelling for the coaches to run Carleton Thomas up the middle more often, and in the second half, they obliged. Some of these guys calling plays from the stands really know what they're talking about, it turns out.

Dawg Doots:

- Mrs. Butts noted that two plays seem to have been dropped from the playbook this fall: the flanker screen and the fade pass near the goal line. They worked pretty well with A.J. Green, so they must be good plays, right? I could see guys like Malcolm Mitchell running the flanker screen pretty effectively, especially considering that this year's receiver corps blocks pretty well; and I'd like to see the taller wideouts and TEs try the fade. If we return to the emphasis on running the slant routes that worked so well against SC, the flanks might be vulnerable. But then, Coach Bobo has yet to consult me on these matters.
- I ran into ex-Dawg OL and DGD Chris Davis before the game. Chris is now coaching and teaching at West Hall HS in Gainesville. He still has a lot of the hip pain from the primary injury among many that ended his career early in his senior year after he had started about 35 consecutive games at guard. Let's hear it for a guy who sacrificed his body to open the holes that Moreno, Brown, and company ran through for several years.
- Speaking of ex-Dawgs and RBs, Kregg Lumpkin is apparently doing pretty well with Tampa Bay after spending most of his UGA career on crutches. He came in with much of the same hype as Crowell and played well when healthy, and it's great to see him getting a chance to play in The League. Also of course kudos to other ex-Dawgs now making their mark in the NFL: Stafford, Green, and many others.
- My counterpart at Temple, The Owlmeister, picked his Hooters to beat Penn State on Saturday, and they almost did. Beating PSU was out of the question just a couple of years ago, or even coming within 60 points, when Temple was annually one of the ten worst teams in the country. Nice rebound for this HBC (Historically Basketball College).
- This week was not a premier event for recruits, but Alabama commit and Dallas Lee's brother Dillon Lee was there with his parents and looking very, very comfortable. I have

no actual inside information, but our thinness at ILB and his familiarity with the players and coaches gives us a nice shot at reeling this kid in by signing day.

- I watched a bit of other games upon returning home to the Big Screen, and had to endure Craig James and Mike Patrick doing the SC/Navy game. ([And really, we must pray that our Texas Tea Party can come up with a senatorial candidate better than this doofus.](#)) They are the second-worst announcing combo after Bob Davie and Mark Jones. I also had to suffer through the studio babbling of tin-voiced Jesse Palmer and of course the two stooges, Holtz and May. How do these guys possibly hang onto these jobs? There must be 50,000 ex-jocks and ex-coaches who'd love to have these gigs.
- What do Jay Cutler, Rex Grossman, Peyton Manning, Eli Manning, Matthew Stafford, Jason Campbell, and Cam Newton have in common? Each is an SEC QB starting in the NFL. The Big Ten has Orton, Brees, Brady, & Henne; the ACC has Hallelbeck, Ryan, Schaub, Vick, & Rivers; the Big 12 has Freeman, Bradford, & McCoy; the Pac-10 has Sanchez, Cassel, & Rogers; the rest are from other conferences. These listings are somewhat problematic because of realignments; Hasselbeck actually played for BC when it was in the Big East, and after they put teams in a shaker and sort them randomly for next year's leagues, who knows what the landscape will be. I'm also counting Peyton Manning (SEC) rather than Kerry Collins (Big 10) in Indy. But I can safely conclude that, for all the passing stats racked up out West, it looks as though the NFL looks to the Southeast for real quarterbacks.
- One recruit's dad talked with me about recruiting at UGA and our competitors. He noted quite a difference in academic expectations between institutions. At UGA, they get walked through the palatial Rankin Smith academic support building and its many tutors, its technology affordances, its 7AM study hall requirements, its graduation rate, its expectation for graduation rather than eligibility, and so on. At some notable competitors (hint: the university names begin with "A" and stand geographically to the west of Athens) his son was told: Just pick a major, and we'll take care of the rest. And people wonder why, in 1939 upon the occasion of University of Chicago president Robert Maynard Hutchins' decision to drop its successful football program in 1939—having won a national championship and being nicknamed The Monsters of the Midway long before the Chicago Bears co-opted that name—he said, "In many colleges, it is possible for a boy to win 12 letters without learning how to write one."
- President Adams' public support of the team this fall is quite noteworthy, I think. He grew very impatient very quickly with Jim Donnan, in spite of Donnan's habit of winning 9-10 games a year, and abruptly fired him to clear the way for Coach Richt. He also showed little sentiment in dumping Vince Dooley and bringing in Damon Evans, who immediately began producing tremendous profits for the Athletic Association before going the Bimbo route and ceding to McGarity. Now, let's set aside your personal feelings toward President Adams, who is not a great favorite among the university's sports aficionados. I haven't discussed the matter with the good President, but if I were to conjecture, I'd say that Coach Richt's personal life has earned him a pretty long leash in the President's office. CMR represents the university in an exemplary fashion, the present dip in 10-win seasons notwithstanding. Given the negative attention that college sports programs have brought to their institutions of late—from [a Sports Illustrated appeal to Miami to drop football](#), [to the recent Atlantic essay by respected historian Taylor Branch on corruption in college athletics](#), to the opinion of just about anyone who's paying

attention—having an admirable human being and outstanding representative of the university who mostly wins as head football coach is pretty rare. Following a rough start, Donnan got the program winning, and was a winner when Adams fired him; but as I understand it, ex-Switzer protégé Donnan could be pretty abrasive and didn't always interface with administrators, alumni, or the general public in a fitting manner. (Switzer was a thorough embarrassment to OU by dating undergrads, having an affair with assistant coach Larry Lacewell's wife and many others, boozing prolifically in public, overseeing a program fraught with criminal activity, etc.; but that hasn't stopped OU from constructing a massive Barry Switzer Center as an extension of their stadium.) At a time when college football is generally regarded as a sewer, Richt's personal conduct and his pristine conduct of the football program have earned him unusual leeway in terms of rebuilding the program. For recognizing that quality and understanding how these things contribute to the university's image and priorities, I've got to tip my hat to the President.

- With every major change in a program, some people have trouble adjusting. I've talked to a couple of people associated with van Halanger's strength and conditioning program who think that the OL have gotten too big to be as effective as they could be. Of course, it's easy to write that opinion off as disgruntled beliefs from people whose approach has been abandoned. I can't say I know the answer, but it's something to watch for as the season unfolds.

The best thing about the beginning of the NFL season is that the Lamestream Sports Media has cut way back on their coverage of the Denver Broncos' 3rd string quarterback. Just as the Lamestream Lamestream Media believes that we need continual updates on Justin Bieber and Kim Kardashian to fill the 24-hour news cycle, the Lamestream Sports Media believes that people really want to know how close the 3rd string QB came to throwing a football near one of his receivers during a practice, and whether or not he remains a virgin. He is now the author of an autobiography, and I decided to see how it's doing compared to other autobiographies listed on Amazon.com. Here is a sample, along with their Amazon sales rank, of autobiographies written by notable figures across history:

One Day It'll All Make Sense by Common #52

Through My Eyes by Tim Tebow #1,008

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin #5,752

An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments With Truth by Mahatma Gandhi #5,896

First Step 2 Forever: My Story by Justin Bieber #6,535

From This Moment On by Shania Twain #19,139

The Confessions of St. Augustine, The Modern English Version #29,242

Mein Kampf by Adolf Hitler #46,026

Up Till Now: The Autobiography by William Shatner #483,939

Notably, the guy playing behind Kyle Orton and Brady Quinn is of greater interest to the reading public than Ben Franklin and Mahatma Gandhi, not to mention Adolf Hitler; and Hitler is much more popular than William Shatner. Little Woolly has decided that if a 24-year-old third-string QB on a team whose second-stringer is a career washout can write a best-selling autobiography, then it's time for him to get started on his own life story. *Through My Eyes* was actually "written" only in the sense that Nathan Whitaker recorded the "author's" interview and edited it into actual written language, suggesting possible grade inflation at the University of Florida.

Little Woolly has begun telling his life narrative to Wags, the family bulldog, who has been listening intently and slobbering wantonly at the good parts, but who has not yet written anything down. Little Woolly's stated goal is to outsell *Mein Kampf*, but he would settle for William Shatner.

However, this just in: Jesse Oaks of Independence, KY said that he and seven of his friends plan to spend \$10,000 on two billboards in downtown Denver to support their view that the third-string quarterback should be the Broncos' starter. Good thing nobody's out of work these days, so this expenditure makes perfect sense. So perhaps the Lamestream Sports Media is onto something.

On this subject: After seeing Cam Newton personally win the national championship last season for Auburn (investigation pending), and then start to rip through NFL defenses as though they were Coastal Carolina, I've got to wonder: What was Urban Meyer thinking, starting Tebow over this guy?

The Forecast: Dawgs go to Mississippi, which got crushed by 3-0 Vanderbilt on Saturday. Mississippi is the poster program for why you should not fire a successful coach when his record takes a dip. They went from SEC West doormat to contender under Cutcliffe, then the program dropped off following Eli Manning's graduation and he was fired promptly to make way for Ed Orgeron, who soon made way for Houston Nutt, who is now keeping the seat warm with excitement till they fire him in December and bring in the next guy. Cutcliffe, like Jim Donnan, is apparently not the world's most jovial fellow, and apparently that didn't work in his favor. Ed Orgeron is plenty jovial, but you've got to be able to do more than recruit or be friends with Lane Kiffin to be a head coach; and I doubt if Houston Nutt is very jovial these days. Nutt's tried everything from importing a QB so sleazy that even Chip Kelly at Oregon wouldn't have him on his team, to oversigning, to who knows what is going on under the table, but Old Miss can't get it going and is back to where they were before they hired Cutcliffe long ago. I suspect that they are going to be experiencing low morale and will fold if something starts to go against them, such as Crowell running for 100 yards in the first half. I think that the Dawgs go in ready to play and come out a winner. Good Guys, 38-17.

National Game of the Week: There are several top-25 matchups, but the one that SEC fans are most interested in has Arkansas at Alabama. Great O vs. Great D on Alabama's field. It's hard to pick against the Tide at home, and so I won't. Alabama, 24-21.

Upset Special of the Week: Yes, a new Dawgmeister Feature that picks an unranked team over a ranked team. How about Vandy over S. Carolina? OK, so my definition of "The Nation" is pretty much the SEC, but then, that's the way it is, right? Marcus Lattimore may average 200 yards per game this season, and may well get that on Saturday. But hey, a guy can dream, and we need for SC to lose a league game or three. So that's my pick: Commodores, 27-24.

Caution: The Dawgmeister's forecasts are not recommended for wagering purposes.