

The Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast
November 5th Edition: Homecoming Cupcake Edition

“At the beginning of the season, I didn't want to be the star or the player everyone talks about. I just wanted to help contribute to the team in any way possible. That's what sparked my decision to come back to running back from linebacker, and to be able to make clutch plays, like get the first down or touchdown when my team needs it.” ~ Richard Samuel

The Recap: This one will go down as The Day of Redemption. On an afternoon when Aaron Murray struggled with accuracy, Blair Walsh continued his season-long effort to find the area between the goal posts, Drew Butler shanked a couple of punts to give Florida the ball well within our territory, and the return game was balanced grotesquely in favor of the Gators, we gutted out a historic win that keeps us on track for the SEC title game in December. Down 17-3 in the first half, entering the 4th quarter down by three with limited confidence in the kicking game, the Dawgs rallied and came home winners. I couldn't be prouder of a team than I am of this one. Both UGA and Mark Richt were written off as losers after 2 games, but now we look like one impressive football team.

You might say that UF has lost 4 straight, that Vandy is Vandy (but don't ask Arkansas about that one; and after next week, you might ask Florida how bad they are), that Tennessee is a bottom feeder this year, that the Mississippi teams will bring up the rear of the SEC West, and that Coastal Carolina and upcoming New Mexico State are scheduled to add a couple of W's to the season's record. But look around and you could say something similar about most of the other teams who are bowl-eligible, and they haven't played SEC teams to pad their records. I'm taking what I see here: A team that got legitimately beaten in Game 1 by a national top 5 team, lost its second in a game where we gave them a bunch of gift points, and then settled down and started playing, as Coach Richt would say, The Georgia Way.

Right now, The Georgia Way means playing some of the best defense of anyone in the country, Alabama and LSU included. Tennessee and Florida might be struggling, but they combined for about -40 yards rushing against Coach Grantham's guys. That includes sacks, of course, but I hope nobody's complaining that we're getting an excessive number of sacks. We allowed a few nice completions on Saturday, but otherwise Florida just could not move the ball. So even on a day when Murray had a number of whiffs, we were always in the game thanks to the D.

But Aaron made big plays on great calls by Mike Bobo. Those 4th down TDs were magnificently called and executed, and they won the game for us. Richard Samuel ran like a stallion, and his success was my favorite part of the game because he's such a terrific guy who has made every sacrifice you could imagine for his team in his 4 years in the program. Even The Guy Who Sits Behind Me, who I believe thinks that we couldn't beat the Athens Academy Freshman Team on Saturday, had to love his bruising runs that got us a critical TD and then the tremendous 9-yarder that ended the game and put him on crutches for the celebration. Or, maybe he thinks that, as he is fond of saying, especially just before we score a touchdown, that we just weren't playing with any urgency. Well, you can't please everyone. Right, Scowlmeister?

Florida's drive summaries are pretty telling. After the first two drives, they barely moved the ball. Take a look:

1	00:56	FLA 7	4	72	Field Goal Missed	
12:00	1	04:26	FLA 21	11	80	Passing Touchdown
06:51	1	02:11	FLA 13	3	-25	Punt
00:00	0	00:12	FLA 0	12	99	
12:16	2	02:10	FLA 39	7	35	Field Goal Good
03:40	2	01:53	FLA 20	3	5	Fumble
01:28	2	01:28	FLA 30	5	12	End of Half
13:00	3	02:12	FLA 1	3	3	Punt
08:26	3	00:40	FLA 17	1	9	Fumble
06:00	3	01:06	FLA 26	4	3	Field Goal Good
01:00	3	00:25	FLA 20	3	-10	Punt
13:18	4	02:05	FLA 34	6	9	Punt
10:16	4	02:13	FLA 45	3	3	Punt
05:55	4	00:23	FLA 36	4	-5	Turnover on Downs

One thing to keep in mind is that, after last year, a whole lot of people would have been thrilled if Mark Richt had been fired and the great Will Muschamp, the hot young assistant coach and ex-Dawg, had been hired to replace him. Or Kirby Smart, or The Guy Who Sits Behind Me, Knute "Bear" Lombardi. Anyone want to take that deal now?

Coveted Dawgmeister Game Balls go to the coaches, players, support personnel, academic counselors, and everyone else who contributed to this win. Although he's not the most popular fellow in the Dawg Nation, I'll also award one to President Michael Adams, who after 2 games was hearing a lot of negativity and calls for dumping the coach, yet persistently said, Let's play all of the games before we panic. Well done Dr. Adams.

Challenges of Realignment:

I'm assuming that Texas A&M and Missouri will soon move up to the SEC. I heard someone say that Missouri might be placed in the East for balance, which Little Woolly's Geography teacher finds a wee bit puzzling. So, with geography out the window as a conference formation factor, some leagues are moving to non-geographic division names, such as the Big 10 (with a revolving number of teams, sending numeracy the way of geography), now organized according to the classifications of Legends and Leaders. WTF? I hope that the SEC can come up with more fitting categories. My modest proposal follows, with two suggested ways of reorganizing teams according to a more sensible approach to boutique division names than the one so pathetically attempted by the Big [fill in today's number].

Proposal #1: Mascot Classification Scheme, which has a certain elegance to it. One possibility was to have a Cool Mascot Division, with only UGA in it, and a Snoozeworthy Mascot Division with everyone else, but something was off with the balance. So I modified the idea as follows:

Cats & Dogs Division

UGA Bulldogs

Mississippi State Bulldogs

Missouri Tigers

LSU Tigers

Auburn Tigers

Kentucky Wildcats

Tennessee Volunteers [mascot is a Smokey, a Bluetick Coonhound]

People, Pigs, Phallic Symbols, & Leather-Skinned Beasts Division

People

Mississippi Rebels

Vanderbilt Commodores

Texas A&M Aggies

Pigs

Arkansas Razorbacks/Petrinos

Phallic Symbols

S. Carolina Gamecocks, a.k.a. "the cocks"

Leather-Skinned Beasts

Alabama Crimson Tide [for some reason, symbolized by an elephant]

Florida Gators

Proposal #2: Pro/Am scheme, which may be compromised by my fact-gathering process, which involved using The Google to search for universities and their probations, a process that might have missed crucial data in constructing these divisions:

Pro Division

Note: The first two universities are unassailably members of the Pro Division and are among the nation's elite programs in terms of cheating and getting put on probation.

Auburn [The Pride of the SEC, with [seven major infractions cases in the last 50 years](#), which is approximately how long Bobby Lowder has been involved in Les Affaires d'Auburn.]

Texas A&M [The Pride of the old Southwest Conference and Big 12, among the national leaders with an impressive record of 7 separate probations.]

Note: The next two programs merit inclusion because they hired Lou Holtz, who [put four schools \(including Arkansas and South Carolina\) on probation](#), and then had the chutzpah to write [a memoir about life's moral imperative](#).

South Carolina [See note on Lou Holtz, above.]

Arkansas [The Holtz Factor; plus a three-year probation in 2003.]

Note: The final spots in this division were determined by multiple probations and infractions. I'll work with Mike Slive on the final division assignments, given that I might have undercounted some teams presently listed in the Amateur Division, an oversight for which I apologize in advance to their devoted followers.

Kentucky [Primarily a basketball violator, with special recognition to Eddie Sutton, who returned to his alma mater, Oklahoma State, after leaving UK on probation and was met

with the same celebrity Barry Switzer enjoys at Oklahoma after getting them put on a massive probation. But the primary factor in this classification is the Hal Mumme 3-year probation of 2002. Mumme was sufficiently odious that he personally moves UK into the Pro Division.]

Tennessee [Hiring Lane Kiffin automatically classifies UT for Pro Division status, particularly in that he's now whining about Pete Carroll's cheating which put USC on probation, and especially in conjunction with the hire of Bruce Pearl and UT's 1966 probation for football violations.]

Alabama [In 2009, they were sanctioned and forced to vacate 21 football victories during the terms of Mike Shula and Nick Saban, which has not stopped them from building a statue of Saban outside their stadium, an act that nudges the Tide past LSU into the Pro Division, especially given that Bear "Paul" Bryant set the standard for player payola in the SEC.]

Amateur Division

Vanderbilt [Apparently, no probations in athletics, ever. More evidence that they don't belong in the SEC.]

Florida [From what I can tell UF is the only university in the state of Florida never to be sanctioned. Man these guys piss me off.]

Missouri [The University of Missouri School of Medicine was placed on probation in 2009.]

Mississippi [Only one probation I could find, in the mid-1990s.]

Mississippi State [4-year probation in 2004, but this process does not include a review of their admissions standards]

Georgia [In 1985, a one-year probation; dodged bullets with the Jan Kemp and Jim Harrick incidents. Harrick embarrassed President Adams, I think, to the point that he's pretty attentive now to character issues in hiring. Or at least that's what I'm hoping; otherwise, we might challenge for the Pro Division.]

LSU [Probations in 1986 and 2011]

OK, that's my proposal; either of these classification schemes makes more sense than Missouri in the SEC East, except maybe Boise State in the Big East. But perhaps you can do better? Mike Slive awaits your proposals.

During various broadcasts over the last couple of weeks, I heard announcers refer to players by their Blotter Reports. So-and-so scored a touchdown, but was suspended for 2 games for having a pipe full of wacky tobacky in the passenger seat (and, on a related matter, don't these guys have some place to kick back other than a car that they're driving? Don't they have rooms in which to escape the pressures of academics?). Etc. etc. etc. Anyhow, that transgression then seems to become what defines the player: Jones, the guy who got caught smoking dope and got suspended—what a bum. I've always contended that these are college kids who aren't doing much that other college kids aren't doing, they just get in the newspapers for doing it. I also think that there's a whole lot more to these guys than the one dumb thing that they did and got caught at. The announcers rarely say, "And that touchdown was scored by Jones, who got a B+ on his Leisure Studies mid-term last week," even though a lot of these guys are decent students as well as elite football players. So, in that spirit, I'm going to shift from the sort of negativity associated with student athletes and begin to award the Coveted Dawgmeister Good Guy of the Week

Award, which is available to any Dawg Nation member: current or past players, support personnel, coaches, or anybody I else deem worthy of this recognition, whether they are a guy, gal, or anything in between.

The inaugural Coveted Dawgmeister Good Guy of the Week Award goes to Kregg Lumpkin. Kregg came in as a national top-2 RB from Stephenson HS. Reggie Bush was the consensus #1 that year before getting USC put on probation for taking advantage of Pete Carroll's generous benefits program, and before becoming famous as Kim Kardashian's boytoy of the month. Kregg arrived at UGA with all the hype that has accompanied Isaiah Crowell, Caleb King, and a few other "next Hershel" recruits, although without the multitude of automobiles provided to Bush under the Carroll car dealership arrangement. Kregg had a terrific true freshman year and spent most of the rest of his career injured. Guys like that often disappear from the program (see Caleb King), but Kregg persevered and always looked as sculpted and well-conditioned as any guy on the team, even while too injured for contact. Ted White would point to Kregg as an example of how to conduct yourself as a student-athlete when he wanted an underclassman to understand the kind of person he could become with the right frame of mind, work ethic, and intelligent approach to his life. Kregg went undrafted, signed with Green Bay and made the team, was cut the next year following more injuries, and now is the starting RB for Tampa Bay, at least until some injured guys return, at which point he'll return to his role as third-down back who's good in pass protection and can catch the ball out of the backfield. He's a great story of perseverance and application and of how to build yourself back when all seems lost. Congratulations to Kregg for all he's accomplished and for winning this coveted award.

Dawg Doots:

- There must be room in the postseason bowl schedule for the You Must Be Sh!tting Me Bowl matchup between Minnesota and Kansas in a game between the two worst power conference teams in the world.
- I read about Doug Flutie rooting for Tim Tebow to do well in his breathlessly awaited move into the starting role at Denver, because Tebow has an unusual skill set to go with his unusual beard, and Flutie (5'-10", 180 lbs) can relate to God's Gift in that capacity. Actually, I imagine that Flutie is rooting a bit harder for Kellen Moore, who towers over Flutie at 5'-11" and probably will get a similar treatment from NFL scouts and coaches. Flutie played a lot of pro football for a guy who is too small to play:
 - New Jersey Generals (USFL) (1985)
 - Chicago Bears (NFL) (1986-1987)
 - New England Patriots (NFL) (1987-1989)
 - B. C. Lions (CFL) (1990-1991)
 - Calgary Stampeders (CFL) (1992-1995)
 - Toronto Argonauts (CFL) (1996-1997)
 - Buffalo Bills (NFL) (1998-2000)
 - San Diego Chargers (NFL) (2001-2004)
 - New England Patriots (NFL) (2005)

But Flutie's quite a rarity; he's no 6'-0" bruiser like Drew Brees or Aaron Murray, and Brees was also too small to play, as I recall. Moore probably doesn't have either Flutie's or Brees' arm, but can he play? Or is he more like David Greene and Josh Heupel, fabulous college QBs who were a few skills shy of sticking in the NFL?

- LSU just keeps trotting out hard-nosed RBs. Suspend Spencer Ware, and a couple more just like him take his place. One back out, next one in. Where do they get these guys?
- Andrew Luck may well win the Heisman Trophy, but he ought to be flagged 10 yard for every play where he wears that stringy beard, which makes Tim Tebow's beard look as though he plays in ZZ Top.
- Hate me if you must, but I can't help pulling for Dabo Swinney at Clemson. If they don't give him a lifetime contract, they're nuts. Where else will they find a guy who loves the school so much, represents the institution so well, and wins games at a small state's ag school, even if they did lose on Saturday to that rinky-dink program from Atlanta?
- In case you can't understand why I think that Mark Bradley and Jeff Schultz are such losers, consider their coverage of Georgia Tech this year. Tech beat the snot out of Kansas and ran their easy part of the schedule, and those two were leading the bandwagon celebrating what a tremendous program they have become under Paul Johnson. They lose a couple and suddenly they think GT stinks, the coach is a bum, etc. I just can't stand frontrunners who only love today's hero. These two guys have no integrity in terms of establishing a perspective and sticking to it; all they do is latch themselves onto the winners and pick on the losers from week to week. Pretty pathetic. These guys represent the Lamestream Sports Media at its worst.
- Jarvis Jones manages to be a high-impact player without seeming to stand out in memory. I think it's because he's such a fluid athlete that he doesn't make high-impact hits, and so is of limited YouTube viral power. But he's pretty disruptive and ends up on opponents' backfields a lot. Just ask John Brantley.
- It's too bad that Sammy Watkins went to an ACC school. There was considerable hoopla accompanying AJ Green and Julio Jones when they both signed with SEC schools, were close in size, and then both wore #8; and ultimately were drafted almost consecutively at the top of the NFL draft. And now we've got Malcolm Mitchell and Sammy Watkins, two guys of similar size and ability playing a short drive apart at UGA and Clemson. It'll be interesting to track these two dynamos over their college careers and see how they turn out relative to one another. Let's hope that Malcolm heals up and is ready to run when Auburn comes to town. The rest of the rotation is filling his role admirably, but this kid's a gamebreaker.

The Forecast: A bye week both before and after Florida—one with no game, one with a J.V. game. These games are hard to forecast because it's hard to say how Hutson Mason and Ken Malcome will play. Dawgs romp, 48-3.

National Game of the Week (2 ranked teams): LSU at Alabama: I've always felt that Nick Saban is the most overhyped coach in the nation, and Les Miles is the most underappreciated. The Lamestream Sports Media's worship of Saban always seems to overlook Saban's dismal stretch in Miami where he went 15-17; his first season at Alabama where the Tide went 6-6, including a four-game losing streak, a home loss to Louisiana-Monroe, and a loss to Auburn; an embarrassing bowl game rout at the hands of Utah; the fact that last year, as preseason #2 pick, they finished 4th in the SEC West with one of the best 2-RB rotations the college game has ever seen (one Heisman winner backed by a guy a lot of people think is better) and an experienced 5th-year senior at QB, along with a defense full of future NFL players; his 6-6 record in bowl games; and his reputation as a merciless over-signer of recruits and betrayer of the trust of those

from whom he eventually rescinds scholarship offers. A couple more 4th place finishes, and we might be treated to this sight:



Saban's career record in college is 142–53–1; Miles's is 70-17. He turned Oklahoma State from a doormat into Oklahoma's toughest game of the season until he left for LSU, where all he's done is win. His bowl game record is 6-3, his teams are always tough as nails, and his lowest finish in the SEC West is 3rd, to go along with 2 firsts and 3 seconds. I'm going with the team with the better coach in this one. Bengal Tigers in a game for the ages, 16-14.

National Upset of the Week (unranked team over ranked team): Iowa over Michigan. This one's easy. Michigan starts fast, finishes slow, and why should I think this year's any different? Hawkeyes, 35-31.