

The Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast: Week 13, Tide-y Bowl Time

The Recap:



Not impressed....yet. We've got two games to go, and then she'll smile.

UGA's blowout win was part of a larger burial ceremony in which the SEC thoroughly confirmed the idea that the ACC's best teams would be second-tier programs in a tougher league. Ours was the only thorough thrashing, although we were not playing a top 20, or top 60, team as were SC and UF. But please, enough talk about how everyone's sick of SEC teams winning the national championship. We do because no league is even close.

Like all in attendance—and with GT making the executive decision not to support their team with actual fans, I mean all in attendance—really, as both of my readers can now attest, I've got more readers than GT has fans—I enjoyed Saturday immensely. Well, most of the crowd enjoyed the whole afternoon thoroughly. The Coveted Dawgmeister Sanford Stadium Jackass of the Week Award has been widely distributed this year because Coach Knute “Bear” Lombardi, The Guy Who Sits Behind Me, has only attended one game, and I hope that the reason for his absence is that he's retired to a monastery and taken vows of silence to atone for his overbearing negativity about the team he claims to support. But his place has been amply taken by The Guy Who Sits Too Near Me, who, as the Dawgs were about to go up 28-3, felt the need to mock Mike Bobo's playcalling, even though every play he called seemed to me to work pretty well. He also informed his companion, as we went for an extra point, that our placekicker is undependable, even though that issue has been dead for a long time now.

And so, for the second half, I moved my witness one section over to sit with more supportive company, including The Scowlmeister, Foghorn Bullhorn and his lovely bride Mrs. Bullhorn, and their special guest Rod Biggerstaff, who made the astute observation that Georgia Tech appeared to have been looking ahead to their championship showdown with Florida State next week and so was unprepared for us on Saturday. That explains everything.

What I'd like to know is this: How on earth did Georgia Tech manage to score 68 points on North Carolina, 56 on Virginia, and 40+ on most of the rest of the Assuredly Cruddy Conference on their way to a 5-3 conference record and spot in the championship game? The national chatter has consistently questioned UGA's schedule, but I don't think it presented any fewer challenges than anybody else's. Alabama got breaks when Auburn and Arkansas tanked; and ACC, Pac-12,

Big 10, etc. teams got to play each other instead of Florida and S. Carolina. If we had a weak schedule, then who didn't?

I can't imagine that Tech will want to keep their program heading gradually downward, as it has since Paul Johnson was named National Coach of the Year at the beginning of his appointment. Someone in the stands said that they will probably stick with him because they can't afford to buy him out. Meanwhile, places like Tennessee and Auburn must have 5 guys each that they're paying off old contract for. Maybe if someone actually attended Tech's games, they could finance a new coach. But their running attack is so boring, at least against a good defense, that even nerds don't find its intricacies more compelling than a Saturday afternoon down in the lab.

Coveted Dawgmeister Game Balls go to all of the team's seniors, not just the many stars who stayed to have this shot at league and (therefore) national championships, but the reserves, the walkons, and the scout teamers who provide the weekly preparation that have enabled the team to play at this level.

Coveted Dawgmeister Game Balls go to OL coach Will Friend and the offensive line, who were the team's biggest question mark early on, which included true freshman John Theus who was called out by David Pollack as a "liability" not long ago, and which has provided the foundation for a record-breaking offense. Aaron Murray has had a tremendous season, and beginning with the fourth quarter against Florida might be the nation's best player. Todd Gurley and Keith Marshall have become one of the nation's top RB combos. But Aaron would not be throwing in rhythm, and Gurshall would not be breaking those runs, without great blocking up front, not to mention from the fullbacks, tight ends, and wideouts. Let's make sure that we show our appreciation for these guys as we celebrate this memorable season.

Mr. Pollack, according to The Scowlmeister, also said that even though the Alabama-Georgia winner should play for the championship, Florida *really* deserves to go because they beat more better teams. But Davey, they didn't beat UGA. You've got to stop listening to Jesse Palmer.

Dawg Doots:

- In a scientific study reported by Andrew Oswald, a professor of economics at the UK's University of Warwick, there is evidence for a midlife crisis in great apes. This study corresponds to recent findings in the US that Swines experience midlife crises as well.
- In another scientific study reported by Ivan Maisel, both David Petraeus and Gene Chizik have authored books about their triumphant careers, both sharing the title *All In*. Soon, both will be All Out.
- Georgia and Georgia Tech play annually for the Governor's Cup, which appears to be a golden spittoon with a football player on top. Some rivalries play for the Old Oaken Bucket or Old Brown Jug, or compete in the Iron Bowl or Bedlam or Civil War. We play for the Governor's Cup, which sounds like something a British cricket league would award its winner, after tea of course. Let's just call this thing the Old Golden Spittoon and give this thing some character.
- Random thoughts after watching the Detroit-Houston NFL game on Thanksgiving: (1) That Matthew Stafford, he turned out pretty good; (2) Mighty great to see Ben Jones starting at OG for Houston in his rookie year; (3) Who knew that Nick Fairley would end

up being only the second dirtiest DT on his own team? (4) Who knew that Kid Rock could be considered “entertainment”? (5) If anyone can explain the rule that prevented Houston’s bogus TD from being challenged because the coach threw the challenge flag but the play was automatically reviewed, thus negating both reviews, please call me.

- News item for Bobo haters: Bobo is one of 29 nominees for the Frank Broyles Award for nation’s top assistant coach. He’s one of only two SEC offensive coordinators on the list, along with Texas A&M’s Kliff Kingsbury. Texas A&M and Georgia are Nos. 1 and 2 in the SEC in offensive touchdowns scored with 56 and 54, respectively.
- I’m no talent scout, but I did watch a little of Norcross’s playoff win over S. Gwinnett, and [Kevin Mouhon](#), a junior linebacker for Norcross, sure looked like a major college prospect to me.
- On the possibility that Aaron Murray will go pro after this season: I think you go pro for the following reasons: (1) you play an injury-prone position like RB and need to get mileage out of your body while you can play for pay; (2) you’ve outgrown the college game and are ready for the pro game (see Jadeveon Clowney after next season); (3) you’ve been evaluated and determined to be a first-round pick or first player picked at your position; (4) you are a cruddy student and are only in college to play football to begin with; (5) you’ve taken a redshirt year or sat out a year for transfer or injury, but talent-wise didn’t need one (see Jarvis Jones this year); (6) your family is genuinely destitute and you need to become an earner as soon as possible. I don’t see Aaron in any of these positions. He’s a little small to be a sure-fire success at the next level, like Ty Detmer and many others. He’s still improving as a college player. He’s got a dynamite offense to return to next year, with all but the 2 senior wideouts returning and plenty of replacements coming in. He’s got another free year of graduate studies available to him. He’ll be on the field all season for us, instead of holding somebody’s clip board, unless he gets [drafted by Kansas City](#) or other moribund team where the QB will run for his life all game, every game, until he’s too beaten up to play (see Matthew Stafford’s first couple of years with the Lions). So stick around, Aaron, and you’ll be a hero around here for the rest of your life; see the brief and undistinguished pro careers of Dawg legends David Greene and D.J. Shockley and come on back for another year of glory between the hedges, a good shot at the Heisman Trophy, complete domination of the Dawg record book, status along with Fran Tarkenton as the greatest of all Dawg QBs (not just those measuring in at 6’-0”), and fully-funded progress toward your doctorate.
- Should we be worried that, with Dawg commits Quincy Mauger and Brendan Langley in the defensive backfield, Kell lost their playoff game on Friday to Gainesville, 61- 42?
- Clemson, before their home loss to S. Carolina, came in leading the ACC and sixth in the country with 535 yards a game. They finished with 328 yards, half of which came in the first quarter. Tajh Boyd was 11 of 24 for 183 yards and two picks, the last of which led to SC’s clinching TD.
- On the sidelines before the game: Dawg great Ben Jones, now starting for Detroit in The League. He said that he had to remake his body for the pro game—no more belly, all muscle. He also confirmed that he has retained his pregame practice of walking barefoot on the field before going through formal warmups, although the NFL doesn’t provide SEC climates to keep his toes warm. He’s really looking forward to the Texans’ night game in New England in December to see just how much frigidity his feet can take.

- Recruiting tidbit: Tramel Terry was wearing Red and Black and looking resplendent. A guy familiar with his decision told me that his high school coach is a Clemson grad and is being, shall we say, persistent in steering Tramel toward his in-state alma mater rather than allowing him to honor his “soft verbal” to UGA.

Photograph of loyal Tech fans staying to the bitter end of a fabled rivalry game in their historic stadium last year after the Dawgs’ 31-17 win:



Dawg Good Guy of the Week: Damien Gary was a local kid who made good. After playing for Athens’ Cedar Shoals HS, and tearing up his knee, he redshirted, then became a valuable guy in the WR rotation and remains [UGA’s career leader in punt return yards](#) (but watch out: Rhett McGowan is coming!). Damien came in under Donnan and finished under Richt and was a standout in both systems. He is the author of one of the top receiving games ever against Georgia Tech (11 catches for 126 yards in 2000; amazingly, the only guy to out-do him against Tech did so in the same game: Randy McMichael, with 12 catches for 156 yards). He also produced one of the top receiving years for a freshman in program history (the best Dawg freshmen ever: 56 catches by A.J. Green, 2008; 53 catches by Terrence Edwards, 1999; 45 catches by Malcolm Mitchell, 2011; 38 catches by Mohamed Massaquoi, 2005; 36 catches by Damien Gary, 2000; 36 catches by Lindsay Scott, 1978). Damien is now the running backs coach at UNC-Charlotte, which is starting its football program under former Donnan assistant Brad Lambert and will debut in 2013. I remember sitting in the Sanford Stadium stands with Gary’s family, all wearing #18 jerseys and cheering their man on—nice folks, great kid, and now a man who makes us all proud.

Notes on the Heisman: The Heisman competition, as reported by the Lamestream Sports Media, really reminds me of the Lamestream Media’s coverage of the Republican presidential primary and its “Flavor of the Week” approach. The Lamestream Media shifted infatuations almost by the hour as one candidate became appealing, another gaffed, the public got bored, and another news cycle demanded another fresh new candidate. The Heisman’s coverage by the Lamestream Sports Media has followed a similar pattern: First Matt Barkley, then De’Anthony Thomas, then Geno Smith, then Marcus Lattimore, then Jarvis Jones, then A.J. McCarron, then Manti Te’o, then Johnny Manziel, then Justin Bieber, then Tajh Boyd, then Teddy Bridgewater, then Braxton Miller, then Tim Tebow, then Collin Klein, then Marqise Lee, then Kenjon Barner, then Jordan Lynch, then Stepfan Taylor, then Ka’Deem Carey. Everyone in the country except Aaron

Murray, who has pretty much blown the SEC record book apart over his career and is having a superb season for one of the nation's top teams at its most important position. Why [a guy from Northern Illinois is now listed by ESPN](#) as a possible winner, and Murray is not, speaks volumes to their attention span. Who knows, though, maybe like Mitt Romney he'll emerge as they guy who was never a media favorite but ultimately has staying power over all the other overnight sensations.

The Forecast: According to ESPN, the 5 most important rivalry games on Saturday in terms of their impact on this season were:

5. Auburn at No. 2 Alabama
4. Georgia Tech at No. 3 Georgia
3. No. 4 Florida at No. 10 Florida State
2. No. 19 Michigan at Ohio State
1. No. 1 Notre Dame at USC

Pretty dumb assessment. Alabama vs. Auburn was only theoretically important, given that the Chizik family had already rented a moving van and the Auburn players gave up on this season in about Week 3. Michigan-Ohio State had absolutely no national significance and only reflects the Big 10 bias at ESPN.

The other 3 games did matter, and I'm frankly amazed that anyone outside the state of Georgia was even aware that we were playing a game on Saturday. According to ESPN, "Both teams enter after getting a stroke of good fortune. The Bulldogs benefited from the same aforementioned upsets as Alabama, and has a hand in controlling its destiny for a spot in the BCS title game." Right, we're only in the national picture because of good fortune, not because we've earned it.

I think that the Lamestream Sports Media has been at its absolute worst in the last month or so. Of course, Notre Dame's their top story, as though their ability to beat Big Ten teams means that their quarter-century drought—since, of all things, the era of Lou Holtz, the Lamestream Sports Media's greatest Notre Dame shill—is over and their return to glory is complete.

Meanwhile, somehow Alabama's loss to A&M is treated as an aberration that probably didn't actually happen, while our loss to S. Carolina is proof that we can't win big games. During the LSU-Arkansas game the broadcasters ran a viewers' poll in which 76% of fans put Alabama in the title game. From what I gather, that's about 24% less than you'd find in a poll of the Lamestream Sports Media, which doesn't seem to believe that Alabama can lose football games under the great Nick Saban, who has never lost one before.

One thing that Gary Danielson noted during an Alabama game about a month ago is that they have excellent players but few game-changers. I always defer to Danielson, especially when I agree with him. I don't see a Jarvis Jones out there on their side. They've got some tough RBs on O and a solid QB who somehow gets far more Heisman recognition than Aaron Murray in spite of Aaron's superior play. But A&M beat the "greatest offensive line in the nation" repeatedly during their win, and I've got to think that we can too.

I doubt if we'll see a shootout. Points will be precious, but the good guys prevail: Dawgs, 17-16.

National Game of the Week: Texas vs. Kansas State. It's hard to believe that the University of Texas has not signed an elite quarterback out of the nation's most productive state for QBs since Colt McCoy and Vince Young. Given all their great recruiting classes, in which they get their pick of Texas talent and let others sort through the remains, and given how few elite players K-State signs, this should be no contest. And it will be. K-State, 31-24.

National Upset of the Week: Wisconsin over Nebraska. Why? Because I don't like Bo Pellini, who acts like a dad at a Little League game every week on the sidelines. Well, it's part of a long history of disliking Nebraska for me, going back several decades. That's all the reason I need to take the Badgers, 24-21.