

## The Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast: Week 11 at Timorous Tigers

“The people in this stadium don't deserve this team.” ~Foghorn Bullhorn at halftime, after listening to everyone around him screaming negativity throughout the first half

The Recap: After a flat start following the hugely emotional game in Jacksonville (and see Florida's game-long struggle to put away Missouri for confirmation), UGA got down to business and ran off 37 straight points in the final 40 minutes to blow out a good Mississippi team, or at least a Mississippi team that had won two straight against programs that are sinking like boulders in the SEC West and will be under different management in a month or so. To put it another way, the Dawgs scored at roughly the same pace in the last 2/3 of the game as mighty Oregon scored against Southern Cal and its swiss-cheese defense later that night, even while taking their foot off the gas for much of the fourth quarter.

But in the first half, we sputtered on both sides, and even though we were headed for an 8-1 record and #5 national ranking during what will be a historically outstanding season for the program, the crowd absolutely turned on the team. Continued Foghorn, “We need to come out with a scoring drive to start the second half *to quiet the crowd.*” Yes, that was our own crowd that needed to shut the hell up, or do their screaming on behalf of the team, rather than against it on a day when over 100 recruits, including Montravious Adams and Robert Nkemdiche, were in attendance deciding where to pursue their educations next year.

I found the hostility of the crowd toward our team so repugnant that I actually left my section, where I was ready to commit unprecedented acts of violence on the people around me over their seeming contempt for their own team, and sat with the Scowlmeister for the second half, where we were sufficiently close to Foghorn Bullhorn—just a few sections away, about the distance covered by The Swine's nose as it grew in length when he was trying to explain his biking adventures to Mrs. Petrino last summer—to hear him berating the haters and urging them to support our boys in Red and Black. Fickle folk that they are, they began cheering as we engaged our gears and played The Georgia Way in the second half. Thank you for your support.

That leads me to my Coveted Dawgmeister Sanford Stadium Jackass of the Week. Coach Knute “Bear” Lombardi, The Guy Who Sits Behind Me, again was not present, although his place was amply taken by the nattering nabobs of negativity surrounding me, one of whom most cleverly referred to Mike Bobo as “Bozo” when the clock was ticking down in the first half and we managed it poorly (by Bobo's own admission), impressing me that an adult could employ a third-grade insult with such conviction and cleverness. Then, when Aaron bailed us out with his impeccable work on the TD pass to TK that closed the half, this clown continued to grump and snort about what a terrible team we are, from coaches to waterboys.


But this guy and those like him are not the Sanford Stadium Jackasses of the Week. No, that distinction goes to anyone who booed Marshall Morgan when he missed his field goal in the first half. Marshall's settled down a lot in the second half of the season, especially on extra points which he has driven straight and true for many weeks now after a shaky start where he appeared to be actually aiming for the goal post. His field goal attempt was way off, but it was long and into the wind, and hey, kickers miss sometimes. But booing our own freshman kicker because he

misses? Shame, shame, shame, and if you were among those who expressed their dissatisfaction with their own lives by booing Marshall, you are a jackass of the highest order.

There's a book that my Ohio readership, the Buckmeister, mentioned to me, *The Signal and the Noise* by Nate Silver, which explores the problem of getting to the heart of a problem or issue (the signal) when it's surrounded by so much distraction (the noise), primarily in the political arena. I propose that we have a signal/noise tension at work with our football team: The signal is that we're 8-1, almost certainly will play Alabama for the SEC championship (if we can both take down Auburn, of course), are a top 5 team in the nation, have a record-setting quarterback, have a historically elite head football coach (if winning games counts), and have one of the most prosperous athletic departments in the land, largely from football profits that took off when Mark Richt came to town. The noise? The incessant negativity surrounding such a wildly successful 14-year run for Coach Richt, his staff, his players, and all the many people who support their success. If you can't get behind this team, how on earth can you call yourself a Dawg fan?

Mississippi's game plan kinda surprised me. Their early success seemed to come from blitzing on defense and calling plays at a really fast pace with short passes on offense. They completely got away from both as the game progressed, and their success as a team diminished. In the second half they seemed to try to pound the ball (which went nowhere) and burn clock, which was no way to catch up as we pulled away. I think we handled the blitzing with more max protection (RBs staying in to block especially), which may have changed their strategy. But on the whole, I was mystified by their decisions, which seemed to go away from what worked and toward what didn't, from a coach getting a lot of attention these days for his offensive wizardry.

Dawg Doots:

- Peter King of Sports Illustrated issued his mid-season All-NFL team, which included two recent Dawg grads: Geno Atkins and Justin Houston. Congratulations to both for surpassing all expectations and playing lights out on Sundays. I'm not sure how King overlooked A.J. Green, but I'm very happy for Geno and Justin and how well they reflect on UGA. Champ Bailey was named to the All-Over-30 Team, and the Bears cornerback combo of Tim Jennings and Charles Tillman was named the league's best.
- Memo to Marlon Brown on your catch of Murray's gorgeously executed rooskie pass: The stopwatch called; and it says it wants you to return my 40-yard-dash time.
- Exclusive Dawgmeister Recruiting Insider Scoop: I talked with Stanley Williams, Sr., who affirmed that his son Stanley Jr. is a stone-cold, rock-solid commit to UGA who is not looking around. Stanley Jr. later confirmed that his commitment to the  is unshakable. As Stanley Sr. said, they live 20 minutes from campus and love UGA; to which I'd add that the Williams's are people of character and integrity. Why would they even think of anyplace else? They attend every UGA home game decked out in our school colors, and will continue to do so through at least the next five years as we welcome the second coming of Thomas Brown to the program.
- Spotted on E-Bay: Reuben Foster's Auburn tattoo.
- Auburn's current season appears to provide a fearful demonstration of God's wrath punishing them for the way in which Rev. Newton rented his son's services to them a couple of seasons ago so that renovating his church and supporting other no-doubt

religious purposes could be achieved through contributions from the Bobby Lowder cashbox.

- I think we're finding more and better uses for Keith Marshall, getting him the ball on the flank with short passes so he has some room to move. According to the post-game radio guys, he also excelled in pass blocking, which is something UGA running backs simply must do.
- Am I the only one who's a bit alarmed that I'm part of the target audience for game-day radio broadcasts that feature a bail bond service that appears to be run by the cast from *Deliverance*? Are so many of us being arrested that, in addition to selling us trucks and beer, marketers believe that we need bail money as much as we need a cold one after the game? And that when we get our bail money, the most important attributes of the bondsman are that he be devoid of teeth and married to his sister?
- Although LSU lost, it was good to see Mettenberger play admirably in defeat.
- Good news from the sidelines: Michael Bennett appears to be moving pretty well on his bad knee. Looks like full recovery to me.
- With Abry Jones out, Ray Drew is getting more snaps. It's good to see him starting to live up to the ridiculous hype that followed his recruitment.
- With Craig James and Bob Davie mercifully off the air, the quality of football broadcasting has gone way up this year. The various studio teams who do the all-day analysis are mostly pretty good, with smart and articulate ex-players taking stock of the unfolding day's action. The one continuing exception is at ESPN, which for inexplicable reasons puts Lou Holtz and Mark May in their most desirable position, and which has professional clown Lee Corso as the anchor of its Game Day broadcast. It's beyond comprehension that the world's most visible sports network uses a guy who put three football programs on probation, and whose lips are sewn to his tongue, in front of the screen week after week, year after year, and lets him shamelessly plug Notre Dame; that is, if anyone can understand him.
- I talked with a program guy before the game, and he expressed his opinion on who the greatest option quarterback in college football is. No, he doesn't play for Georgia Tech, or Oregon, or Air Force, or Ohio State, or Michigan, or Arizona, or Nebraska. No, the best option quarterback in college football plays for UGA. Aaron Murray? Hardly. The best option quarterback in college football is Bacarri Rambo, who as a scout-teamer during his redshirt year destroyed our defense in practice while running Georgia Tech's offense as Josh Nesbitt, who on his very best days could only hope to be as good as Rambo.
- Speaking of Georgia Tech, congratulations on beating Maryland, which, as God's punishment for wearing those ugly uniforms, is now down to playing Little Woolly at quarterback, with Granny Butts in reserve.
- Rhett McGowan, said Aaron Murray, is a "lights-out" football player: "When I look out there and see him one-on-one, I'm throwing it to Rhett. He makes plays for us." Mike Bobo added, "Rhett is a very good route runner. He has extreme quickness, does a good job against press coverage and has reliable hands. He's a dependable guy, and every time we've called his number, he's made a play." If you see Rhett without pads on, he in no way resembles the sculpted weight-room marvels that populate most SEC programs. If he weren't wearing his jersey and pads, you'd probably ask him to go get you a water bottle.

But the kid is a confident and accomplished receiver who has filled holes in our rotation with distinction.

- News item: “Running back Tyren Jones, who has committed to Alabama, was diagnosed with Grade 1 MCL knee injury and will miss at least two weeks.” What are the odds he’ll still have that offer from Saban if his knee isn’t sound next August?
- With a name like [Ha Ha Clinton-Dix](#), how did this guy not end up going to Arkansas?
- Many people believe that Lane Kiffin keeps getting coaching jobs because he brings his daddy with him to coach the defense. Against Oregon, and playing at home in their own fabled Coliseum, USC gave up more points (62) and yards (730) than in any game in the history of the program, dating to 1888, the year in which incumbent president Grover Cleveland won the popular vote yet lost to Benjamin Harrison in the Electoral College. Will Lane fire Monte? Inquiring minds want to know.
- In September, coach Darren Crawford of the Tustin (Calif.) Pee Wee Red Cobras team was suspended when former players reported that the coach ran a system similar to that of the New Orleans Saints, in which players were encouraged to injure opponents for cash rewards. His 10- and 11-year-old players received up to \$50 for the "hit of the game" (with last year's grand prize going to the boy who gave an opposing running back a concussion). Coach Crawford is rumored to be in line for the Southern Cal job should Lane Kiffin be fired, as a way to ramp up the program’s integrity.

I am going to begin campaigning for some major changes in the way we operate in the fall. My recommendations include:

1. We need two rules changes to get rid of rules that appear to be artifacts of the days when the college game was believed to require modifications, much as there was once a time when girls played 6-on-6 basketball that restricted each player to a section of the floor, lest they break a sweat or become momentarily fatigued while playing. First: two feet in bounds when catching a pass on the sidelines. Second: End the play with a tackle instead of when a knee touches down, as in the pros. It’s time to man up the rules in a game that’s played by men.
2. Ban sideline interviews with coaches going to and from locker rooms. The questions are always vague and inane (“Coach, how does playing in such a big game affect your team emotionally?”) and the answers are all vague and generic (“We’ve got to get back to basics, be true to our system, and go hard on every play.”). They might as well interview UGA IX while he’s dozing in the DawgHouse about where he likes to deposit his Kiffins and Petrinos most during games.
3. Finally, get rid of the Electoral College so that individuals in Georgia, regardless of party, can actually have their votes count.

Dawg Good Guy of the Week: This week’s Good Guy is Associate Athletic Director Dr. Carla Williams. In high school Carla Green led LaGrange High to two Georgia Class AAAA state basketball titles before lettering for four years at UGA, three as a starter. She finished as the 10<sup>th</sup> leading scorer in program history (now 20<sup>th</sup> after a lot of good basketball players have come through Coach Landers’ program). She also had 425 assists and 285 steals, both ranking 7<sup>th</sup> on the UGA career leaders list. After graduating with a B.A. in Sociology (1989) and Master’s in Public Administration from UGA (1991), she served as an assistant coach for Andy Landers from 1991-1996, then became UGA's Assistant Director of Compliance from 1996-97. From

there Carla worked on her Ph.D. in Sports Administration at Florida State, graduating in 2000, then served as Assistant AD at Vanderbilt from 2000-2003 before being promoted to Associate AD in 2003-2004. Carla finally returned to UGA along with Damon Evans in 2004, where she's served us with distinction as Executive Associate Athletic Director and Senior Woman Administrator. Carla's a regular at football functions, even though football is not among her designated areas of supervision, and provides a superb role model for our student-athletes in terms of what their lives might become after their sports careers are over, which for most will be soon. We are fortunate that she decided to return home with her husband and three kids to become such a critical part of our sports programs.

The Forecast: Auburn's extraordinary season keeps its momentum with another whopping loss. (Sorry, Gene, beating the snot out of New Mexico State just doesn't count.) All news out of Auburn is that Chizik is done, along with his ex-UGA defensive staff of Van Gorder and Martinez. What are these guys playing for at this point? Pride took a beating with their epic loss to A&M. An SEC win? Unlikely. Save their coach's job? Already too late. Kiehl "The Green Mile" Frazier was the National Player of the Year as a high school player, but has been either injured or ineffectual or both, and Cain't Mosely is also now injured, although you'd hardly call him indispensable. They are now going with freshman afterthought Jonathan Wallace, who was a late offer who picked Auburn over Central Florida, the only competitor for his D-1 signature. Wallace says, "Ultimately it's a blessing, that's the way I look at it. It's a tremendous blessing. Coming in I always told my parents and friends that no matter where I go, God is going to take care of me, and He's done that so far." Actually, I see his ascendance to the starting position as Auburn's quarterback as God's punishment for deciding to attend Auburn, because he's going to get his ass kicked up and down the field next weekend. Auburn continues its season of embarrassment, in spite of their achievement of Victory #2 vs. New Mexico State on Saturday, as the Dawgs conclude their 2012 March to Atlanta: Good Guys, 42-10.

National Game of the Week: Alabama over Texas A&M. Johnny Football is one heck of a player, but not that good. It'll be interesting to see if even a Nick Saban team can have an emotional letdown after a big game. I hadn't really seen much of Alabama this year, and had been led to believe by the Lamestream Sports Media that they have yet to yield a first down, or whiff on a block, or make mental mistakes of any sort at any point in any game. But LSU almost took them down, and made them look mighty human at times. They're good, but they're also beatable. Probably not enough to lose to A&M, but I think plenty enough to lose to UGA in Atlanta. Bama, 24-10.

National Upset of the Week: TCU over Kansas State. At this time of year, seemingly unbeatable teams lose their focus and drop one, and it's K-State's turn to clear a little more space at the top of the rankings. TCU hosts, and even though K-State has won some huge road games, the streak runs out on Saturday. Horned Frogs, 28-27.