

The Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast: 2012 Kickoff Edition

Greetings! And welcome to the Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast, Year 4, hosted by the greatest Dawg informational site in the galaxy, the Dawgbone. Thanks to Deke and the Dawgbones for providing this space, without charge, which allows me to say whatever flits through my mind for the fall months, and into the winter, about our beloved boys in Red and Black. If you're a hater, then go read Sports & Grits, or if his mother has sent him to be early, maybe Jeff Schultz. Around here, we are **All Dawg, All Day, Every Day**. On behalf of the Butts family—Mrs. Butts, Little Woolly, and yours truly—I welcome you to another season of Dawg victories and great insights into football, life, and the remaining mysteries of the universe.

Speaking of which, Indiana University psychology professor Ed Hirt studies sports fans for a living. It looks as though I must have missed my calling, because a bit too often, Sanford Stadium is to a psychologist what mud is to a pig, or to Bobby "The Swine" Petrino. Just ask Knute "Bear" Lombardi, The Guy Who Sits Behind Me at Sanford Stadium, and he'll tell you all about it, along with his other great thoughts on playcalling, substitutions, effort, recruiting, and other esoteria that he believes the coaches are overlooking and that those around him are just dying to hear about. In fact, hearing his soliloquys on Saturdays is the main reason we attend the games. I look forward to his wise pronouncements as much as I look forward to seeing if Snooki's baby comes out with a tail.

Anyhow, Dr. Hirt has found what we all know: that sports fans' moods are profoundly affected by their teams' success and failures. Now, don't you wish you could get paid for figuring that out? After a win, fans become more confident to the point where they believe in the power of their sex appeal, which explains Athens after hours on a Saturday night in October. I imagine that every fall in Bloomington, IN, where Dr. Hirt does his research, the men on campus feel as sexually potent as a eunuch at a Star Trek convention, which makes me wonder how he found an appropriate sample for studying this phenomenon at Indiana University. However, here in Athens, men take on such a swagger that they are undaunted by their slightest flaw, propelled by the hormonal surges that accrue during a great Dawg victory and come bursting to the fore in their post-game downtown hunting grounds (caution: alcohol involved).

Take this guy, for instance, spotted in the stands at the Outback Bowl in January:



Now, either this guy is a fan of Wags, the Butts family bulldog, and got so excited that he used the silent D at the front end; or he's a Dawgs fan who forgot to attend UGA. The point, though, is that if Dawg fans wish to elevate their testosterone levels during their lives, this is the year to do it: The confluence of talent and schedule have conspired to set the stage for what we hope might become one of our greatest seasons ever.

OK, so that's what we thought a few years ago when another fabulous QB, Matthew Stafford, entered his junior year with a #1 ranked team on his shoulders and Knowshon Moreno and A.J. Green among his weapons, only to lose three games when the team spent more time in the hospital than on the field (about one-fourth of the team was lost to season-ending injuries). So we've gotten excited before, only to have the fates conspire against us.

But who among us is not stoked to see us GATA on Saturday? OK, so it's Buffalo. Some years I don't mind starting with a cupcake, and after we lost to Boise last year to kick off the season, Buffalo is just fine with me. It'll be nice to work out the kinks before going to Missouri the next week.

I must confess that the summer's recruiting season left me feeling a bit worn out. A guy commits today, then decides to take visits, then goes on Twitter to alert us to his latest 18-year-old musings, then has his picture taken with a teammate who's going somewhere else, then wears yet another team's gear in a viral photo, then is the subject of rumors by anonymous commenters who have inside information on his silent commitment, then decommits, then gets a tattoo with a team logo on it, then gets another team's logo shaved into his hairdo, then his high school coach gets hired by Auburn and he's rumored to be a lock, and then he goes to Alabama, where he'll be greyshirted by August of his pre-freshman year. Honestly, I cut down on how often I check the Dawgbone for updates to only a few dozen times a day, I was so turned off by the whole process.

Even the Scowlmeister has been saying with considerable urgency that he's tired of all the talk, and let's get the games begun. Now, the Scowlmeister listens to far too much talk radio for a man of his high bearing and dignity, and I have scolded him repeatedly on this matter. But on the topic of preseason hype and jibber-jabber, he and I are of a single mind, a state of noetic harmony that, however brief, is sufficiently sublime to make the Scowlmeister worth putting up with, scowl and all, at least for a while.

Dawg Doots:

- If you think that OL recruit Trenton Brown is a big guy at 6'-8," 350 lbs., then look at this commemorative bridge, which crosses the Delaware River where the capitol city of New Jersey meets its florid shores:



In my errant youth, my friends and I developed alternative mottos for this center of industry, e.g., “The World Refuses, Trenton Uses”; or “The World Excretes, Trenton Eats.” Perhaps young Mr. Brown will help generate whole new coinages during his stay in Athens.

- Has there ever been a greater Dawg than Richard Samuel? He’s surely among my all-time favorites for the many accommodations he’s made to what the team needs. I hope he settles in at fullback, which means I also hope that Malcome, Marshall, and Gurley are stellar enough to manage the RB load. But if not, expect Richard to play his heart out at RB and deliver some tough yardage and a bruise or two to the poor schmucks to try to get in his way. Apparently he’s mentoring the young backs a little better than Isaiah Crowell did, and it wouldn’t surprise me to see him down the road as a coach. And so the first coveted Dawgmeister Game Ball of 2012 goes to Richard Samuel, and also coveted Dawgmeister Honorary Team Captain for 2012, for the example he sets for every guy who commits to play for the Dawgs and for the sacrifices he’s made for the last 5 years to his teammates, coaches, and The Faithful.
- If you tailgate before the game, and feel you must relieve yourself of your burdens, please remember to deposit your Kiffins and Petrinos where indoor plumbing is available. I hate it when the magnolia trees on North Campus begin to wilt after too great a nitrogen infusion.
- Winner of the coveted Dawgmeister Most Overused Word of the Year Award goes to “meme,” which has come to mean “trend” or something like that, but doesn’t mean that at all.
- Winner of the coveted Dawgmeister Most Overused Phrase of the Decade Award goes to “It is what it is,” which doesn’t mean anything at all.
- Based on what they accomplished at UGA, who could possibly have predicted that the most successful Dawg running backs in the NFL since Garrison Hearst would be Terrell Davis, Patrick Pass, Kregg Lumpkin, and Danny “D.J.” Ware? Who knows, maybe Richard Samuel will have a good NFL career after all, even though he’s never filled the stat sheet and probably won’t in 2012 if he settles in at fullback.
- Apparently, you can get a pretty good cup of coffee at this place:



- One guy UGA will miss is Eric Beverly, former Detroit Lion and Atlanta Falcon and stalwart of the Rankin Smith Academic Center. Eric is taking his talents to Austin, Texas, presumably for a promotion in their academic support program. A great guy and someone the players really looked up to as a former player, father, man, and outstanding counselor as they navigate the academic side of this enormous, complex university. Among his many achievements is The Eric R. Beverly Family Foundation, a non-profit that promotes breast cancer awareness while raising money for programs supporting breast cancer survivors such as his wife. The mission of the foundation is to provide programs and activities that unite both men and women in promoting education, increasing awareness, and providing support and resources for families affected by breast cancer. Now that's a man's man, and a woman's man as well. We'll miss you in Athens, Big Guy, and while I'm at it, I'm going to head over to <http://www.beverlyfamilyfoundation.org/> and cut them a donation.
- It's not commonly known, but The Owlmeister is the world's leading authority on bad hair. He is particularly impressed with the Kid n' Play revival undertaken by this prospect, which the NFL should study for its concussion-reducing potential:



Dawg Good Guy of the Week: Coach Rodney Garner. Ever since he arrived in Athens, Coach G has brought it every day, practice or game, recruiting or getting kids to class. He's one intense man who has survived every coaching overhaul that's surrounded him for the last 15 or so years, and he's never left just for a change of scene or a few extra bucks. If I could have been a fly on the wall for just a short period over the summer, it would have been when he met with Isaiah Crowell, Blake Tibbs, Josh Harvey-Clemons, and Sheldon Dawson after their infamous traffic stop. I imagine that all those tropical storms in the Gulf would wilt compared to what G had to say that meeting and the turbulence that accompanied his verbiage. Coach Garner is a DGD to the bone, and probably the saddest man in town to see Peaches close. Thanks for all you do Coach, and I hope you're around Athens for a whole lot longer.

The Forecast: The only question is, by how much? I don't see Buffalo stopping our O or moving on our D. We'll get to see not only Gurley and Marshall, but Harton and Karempelis. Lots of unis get dirty as the Dawgs start fast and end strong. Good Guys romp, 56-7, with a late Buffalo

score against our 4th teamers putting them on the board as the game winds down, the stands start to empty, and the chapel bell is fixin' to get rung.

National Game of the Week: The highest ranked teams squaring off are Michigan and Alabama, so I'll take this one over the big Villanova-Temple game, with apologies to the Owlmeister. I'm always skeptical of Michigan—supposedly one of the nation's top programs, but not that I can remember. Denard Robinson is a really good player, but I don't see him single-handedly beating Alabama and their mighty mite of a coach. I'll take the SEC team any day. Tide, 23-10.