

## **The Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast**

### **Week 3: Mizzou Executed, Florida Atlantic Next Victim**

On Sunday morning, the sun rose with a passion heretofore unknown to the inanimate cosmos, beaming across the Eastern sky with a great radiance and warmth not felt since the moment of Creation itself. And then I took a second look and realized that this celestial apparition was merely the residual glow of the Scowlmeister's sh!t-eating grin following the Dawgs' great comeback to crush Missouri, powered by the sublime performance of Jarvis Jones.

I was going to open today with something about Grumpy Old Men showing what fundamental, mostly well-executed football looks like, but as Mrs. Butts remarked, the announcers for the game ran that one into the ground by the end of warmups, and so I decided to go another route, lest I be accused of joining the Cliché Death March along with every other Lamestream Sports Pundit reporting or commenting on the game. That, and this morning's golden shower of joy courtesy of the Scowlmeister, gave me the option I needed for more rarified commentary.

I have come to the conclusion that Jones is a once-a-decade talent. I say this because it's been ten years since David Pollack wore #47 for the Dawgs, and the two are of comparable caliber. If you thought #29 was good last year, then wait till we're done with this season. For a guy with a bad groin, Jarvis consistently blew up every play Missouri tried to run. As Matt Millen said at least 500 times, Missouri had no answer for Jarvis Jones. Or as Herc Kirbstreit said earlier in the day, Jones threw havoc to the wind, disrupting the flatfooted James Franklin to the point where he didn't know whether he was coming or going. (And that flatfooted technique was also employed by Franklin's backup, who took the field a couple of times when Franklin and his helmet went their separate ways, which gives Missouri the weirdest coaching philosophy for QBs I can remember.)

And so, the Dawgs, after a rocky start on O, but an inspired game on D for the most part, took care of business on the road in a game that Missouri desperately wanted to win. Murray again started slowly but finished in command. Or as Matt Millen put it, "If you're the real guy, now is the time to be it." One guy who was the real guy at the time it was to be it was RS4, when he stuffed Mizzou's fake punt, completely anticipating it and blowing it up before it got started. A great moment for a great guy and, according to Coach Richt, perhaps the biggest play of the game.

Coveted Dawgmeister Game Balls go to the Dawg secondary, still depleted from suspensions and still playing walkon Connor Norman virtually every snap ahead of highly recruited guys who are still learning their way around. This game was supposed to be the big test of our coverage ability against another Mighty Big XII unstoppable high-octane offense, and a test conducted at diluted strength in their house, which with a capacity of about 71,000 they believed to be an invincible fortress of noise the likes of which SEC teams have never experienced, except when they play their other SEC games in much bigger stadiums. But the secondary held up pretty well, didn't they? Of course, it helps to have Jones in the backfield on every play, but these units are all interconnected, so that's always part of the equation. Got to be impressed by Coach Lakatos for getting these guys ready to play, and by the guys for making that reputedly scary offense look like every other offense that people outside the league keep saying plays exciting football when

they come up against an SEC buzzsaw: about as high-powered as that 1963 Cutlass I drove in the late 1970s after the body had rusted to a Swiss-cheese finish, the brakes needed pumping to bring us to a halt, and anything over 40 MPH left me holding on for dear life as the chassis tried to liberate itself from the axle.

I have often thought Matt Millen is a good announcer, but not on Saturday. We went into our no-huddle right away, which is what we've run a lot of the last 3 seasons, and Millen noted that we were playing up-tempo and taking a page out of Mizzou's book. But that's some poor preparation, given that we always go no-huddle. I think he was going on misguided, misinformed generalizations people often make—in this case, that Missouri plays at a fast pace and UGA is a bunch of plodders with their Old Man approach. But you'd never say that if you'd actually studied any of our game film.

Biggest shocker of the night: Michael Bennett dropping 3 passes.

Biggest reminder that John Theus is a freshman: A couple more procedure penalties and a few times when he whiffed trying to get in front of the pass rusher. This is a great kid and obviously a big talent, but let's remember that he's playing over his head right now and has a ways to go before becoming the star he undoubtedly will grow into. Now, he is a bit gimpy, but most OL are after a couple of games. So, Kudos to Big John for working his way onto the field so quickly, but let's not expect miracles just yet.

Other game of interest: I watched the other SEC Welcome game, in which I thought Florida really showed a lot in taking down Texas A&M. The Aggs started out taking it to the Gates, and their freshman QB looked mighty nifty, even if he is going to (1) eventually, and perhaps soon, get killed running the ball headlong into SEC defenses, and (2) start fumbling once teams watch film and get a load of how carelessly he carries the ball in the open field. Meanwhile, yet another announcer found Jeff Driskel's talents between the ears to be questionable. Turk Herbstreak noted that Driskel is fine if his first read in the progression is open, but if not, then he panics and starts to run. Dr. Lou "Coach" Holtz noted that Driskel's "peripheral vision" is poor as well, which leads him to overlook open receivers when he looks downfield. Little Woolly wondered why none of those talent scouts who ranked Driskel the nation's #1 recruit bothered to see if he could read a defense when anointing him the second coming of Peyton Manning. What I gathered from the first two games is that if you can anticipate Driskel's primary receiver and shut him down, you will beat Florida. The other thing I've gathered is that the Florida coaches will play him over Brisket no matter what each does on the field. What's interesting is that Driskel is a second year starter, but they keep calling him inexperienced and thus prone to bad decisions. But Manziel of TAMU was a freshman and didn't seem to be handicapped as The Decider by having played even less.

Dawg Doots:

- Last season when Auburn went from superhuman to middling, I wondered how long they'd be satisfied with Chisik if they didn't turn around and finish higher than 4<sup>th</sup> in the SEC West, given that they'd run off Bowden and Tuberville shortly after unbeaten seasons. I guess we'll find out.

- Bad announcer metaphor of the week: In their win over Penn State, Virginia had a lineman named Moses, and yes, “Moses parted the Penn State defense” on one play to open a hole for their RB.
- I’ve seen a number of college QBs now, and I think that Aaron Murray puts as much snap on his throws as anyone, and more so than Matt Barkley and other darlings of the Lamestream Sports Media.
- “Everything I’ve seen from him so far has been outstanding. I don’t think he would mind anyone knowing that he got a couple A’s this summer in the classes he took. He’s been showing up to everything that we ask him to, and he does it on time and prepared. He’s had a good attitude, and he doesn’t seem to have any type of entitlement issues. But if a guy starts having a lot of success early, it can maybe change him or make him feel too comfortable too soon. I haven’t sat down with him and talked, but we will keep an eye on him.” ~ Mark Richt on freshman running back Todd Gurley
- How great was it to see Marlon Brown play like Marlon Brown?
- The culture shock of going from Miami, FL to Manhattan, KS is the only way I can explain Miami’s meltdown on Saturday. Will Muschamp might have said of the Texas A&M host city, “You ever been to College Station? It will be the only time you go,” but College Station is not the only Big XII city with a Michelin 1-star rating, given that Manhattan, Lubbock, Stillwater, Ames, and other fine locations populated the conference. But you’re in the Big Time now, boys, and Starkville awaits you.
- And then there are the Owls—from Temple, that is, not Florida Atlantic. The Owlmeister was getting a bit cocky there for a week, given that Temple was a 10-point favorite, but flopped mightily on Saturday against a Maryland team that had beaten William & Mary by one point. Oh well, at least they’ve got Penn State coming up in a couple of weeks.
- 2-0 sure beats 0-2. Now let’s run off 10 more once again before playing the survivor of The West in Atlanta.
- Way too many penalties for the Good Guys (12), but we had a lot of freshmen playing their first away game, which doesn’t explain Kenarious Gates’s 2 illegal procedure flags.
- The Faurot Field at Memorial Stadium (a.k.a. “The Zou”) Jackass of the Week Award goes to, who else, Tiger DT Sheldon Richardson for his well-circulated “Old Man Football” judgment, which concluded, “If we execute, nobody in this league can touch us. Period.” Nice execution there Shel, and where exactly where you on Saturday, since I never heard your name called except when you were quoted? No, check that; he did pile up 2 solo tackles. And nice job of executing him, Dawgs.
- I would like to join Coach Lou “Dr.” Holtz in congratulating the Warthogs of UL-Monroe for beating Arkansas on Saturday. The John L. Smith Era is off to a rousing start in Fayetteville, and it couldn’t happen to a nicer guy. How ironic that he would slip in gigantic puddle of Petrino in just his second week of replacing The Swine. For that achievement, I hereby present Coach Smith with the Very First Clint’s Empty Chair Award for Vacant-Brained Coaching.

In case you’re wondering, here’s Isaiah Crowell’s stat line after 2 games at Alabama State:

Carries: 25

Net yards: 78

Avg. per carry: 2.88

TDs: 3

Here's Todd Gurley's at UGA:

Carries: 18

Net yards: 165

Avg. per carry: 9.2

TDs: 3

Dawg Good Guy of the Week: Just a reminder than in a college sports world in which every flaw of every kid becomes magnified, and in which a lot of kids with no socialization to life in law-abiding institutions attend college to play a sport and end up getting caught doing what comes naturally back home, we need to be reminded that the great majority of college athletes are good guys and gals and take their citizenship seriously. This week we honor, who else, Jarvis Jones. Of course, on Saturday he showed why he might be the best player in the country and might start getting Heisman attention before the season's done. He sure gets my vote as an ad hoc occasional anonymous blogger, a new category of voting created by the NCAA to give The Pseudonymous Fan a voice in these matters. But Jarvis is a great player in part because he's a great guy. Now, Studs McMachoman is a great guy too, but never quite had Jones's quickness off the snap. So great-guyness won't necessarily get you into the NFL. But Jarvis has always been a high citizenship guy. Lots of players are subject to rumors of this or that, get arrested or hang out with shady characters, get crummy grades, and so on. But I've never heard a discouraging word about Jarvis Jones, and if others from Columbus, GA recently awarded UGA football scholarships are any indication, it's not the easiest town to come out of with your virginity intact. Here's a guy who could easily have been one-and-done after last year's remarkable season and the high rankings all the draft gurus threw his way. But it never seemed to enter his mind, and he has stated that NFL teams "know I stayed to get better. They know I stayed to mature and become a better person outside of football. You get some people that are like, 'I would have taken the money or I would have done this.' It ain't all about the money." Doggone right JJ, and we're happy to have you GATA between the hedges for another season.

The Forecast: Dawgs host Florida Atlantic, and I hope they're better than Savannah State. A good time to burn up more suspension time, heal up the injured, get the new guys some snaps, and make the home crowd happy. Not much to say here except I look forward to seeing Christian LeMay get his career stat line underway. The final score in these matchups is always hard to estimate, but I'll take the Good Guys, 52-7.

National Game of the Week (between two ranked teams): It's another week with only a handful of games matching ranked teams. I suspect that the new rankings won't include Arkansas at #8, so I'll go with USC at Stanford. The nation's most overrated and over hyped team goes on the road, and I think they'll step in a big stinky Kiffin and come home 2-1. I'll take the Cardinal at home, 31-28.

Upset of the Week (in which a ranked team loses to an unranked team): I actually got one of these last week with my Arizona over Okie State pick, and that pretty much fills my quota for the season in this category. This time, let's go with Tennessee over Florida. If UF's QB-ing is as shaky as every announcer seems to think, then they'll have a tough game against a desperate team playing at home. Surely if anybody in a booth can figure out that Driskel has talent

everywhere but between the ears, Derek Dooley can too. So, the East starts to sort itself out early, what with Mizzou already down one and either Florida or Tennessee falling back in Week 3. Vols, 27-23.