

The Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast: Week 12, Southern Hospitality

The Recap: Following Saturday's shellacking of Auburn, Georgia will play in the SEC Championship Game for the 5th time in Mark Richt's 12-year tenure, an achievement they'd never reached before he came to town. That's the most of any SEC East team during the Richt Era, and tied with LSU for the league lead.

UGA has now won 6 of the last 7 against Auburn, with the War Eagles' only win coming during the season they rented Cam Newton and beat everybody. Saturday was the first time Auburn had been shut out in 15 years. It's probably also the first time in memory where we've played at Auburn and, for the duration of the fourth quarter, played on offense with the football equivalent of the white guys who come off the bench to finish a basketball blowout.

Said Aaron Murray, "We looked up midway through the third quarter, and I was, like, 'Man, we've got more fans here than they do right now.' It is great to see how dedicated our fans are. ... To get to celebrate with them after the game was awesome." Even Jeff Schultz is impressed, although of course that response is only in effect if we keep winning, he being a shameless frontrunner. If we lost from here on out, all the way through our bowl game, he'll be back in negativity mode as if he'd never relented from his endless effort to take superb athletes and coaches and reduce them to his level of competence. Let's hope that the 10,000 hard-core fans who went to Auburn on Saturday, who provided the game's only attendance through 4 quarters, and who were awesome in their support, set the tone for the other 83,000 who fill Sanford Stadium the next couple of weekends. Let's hope the lesson learned from watching fans boo their own team with 100 or so prime recruits in attendance resonates and keeps our eyes on the considerable prize that may await us this season.

I've got to be impressed with Todd Grantham for channeling his inner Vince Dooley all week by talking about what a fearsome offense Auburn would bring and enumerating the many talents of the freshman quarterback we would have to stop, if somehow we could. I would also like to get the post-game opinion of whichever studio talking head said before the game that Van Gorder's and Martinez's familiarity with Mike Bobo's offensive approach might spell trouble for the Dawgs on Saturday. Instead, it spelled "self-administered asskicking."

Coveted Dawgmeister Game Balls are awarded this week to Aaron Murray and Ty Frix, who were named to the Capital One Academic All-District football team selected by the College Sports Information Directors of America this week.

Coveted Dawgmeister Game Balls are also awarded to all of the guys on defense who could have declared for the draft last year, but decided to return for another year to play for a championship in Red and Black. We will now play for the league championship, although the NCAA championship game might have evaporated with TAMU's win over Alabama on Saturday afternoon. Of course, I had hoped to see Alabama win so that our victory in Atlanta would propel us into the national title game. But at the same time, I'm so tired of hearing the Lamestream Sports Media gush and fawn over Nick Saban and convince each other that he's the greatest coach in history and that his players never make mistakes and they they are better prepared for games than any other team could possibly be and that Alabama deserves to start out every season

ranked #1 and that his players never have any trouble in the classroom or with the law because he recruits only the young men of finest character and provides such a wholesome environment that their rectitude only improves under his wise guidance—instead of noting that they never get in trouble because that’s not possible in Tuscaloosa as long as Nick controls all decisions and information. Much as it hurts our chances of a final #1 ranking, I was pretty pleased to see Alabama lose. If we wanted to end up #1, then we should have beaten South Carolina when we had the chance. I’m mighty happy that we are in the position we’ve earned, even with that loss.

Coveted Dawgmeister Game Balls additionally go to the offensive line, which completely manhandled Auburn’s defense. Big whoop, you might say, given how bad they are. But when Auburn beat out the Dawgs for DTs Jeff Whitaker and Gabe Wright, who thought they were signing with a big winner, we were concerned that when this day came, we’d regret not working harder for their signatures. Anybody want to take this pair over our guys now?

Coveted Dawgmeister Game Balls go to our freshman kicker and punter, who nailed it every time their feet met the ball on Saturday.

Dawg Doots:

- Last week I misstated something in a way for which I would like to publicly apologize. In trying to convey the distance between The Scowlmeister and Foghorn Bullhorn in Sanford Stadium, I compared the expanse to “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.” I deeply regret this phrasing, and apologize to noses everywhere for this offensive suggestion about their complicity in The Swine’s porcine behavior. I meant, of course, *snout*.
- News item: Tennessee freshman defensive back Deion Bonner, a former teammate at Carver-Columbus HS of Isaiah Crowell and one of the nation’s most prized prospects before being arrested with two other CCHS prospects after stealing nearly \$2,000 worth of electronics from UGA players’ lockers during a recruiting trip, is now a suspect in the theft of a cell phone. These guys sure make CCHS alum Jarvis Jones’s ascendance as a team leader and man of character all the more impressive.
- Johnny Manziel’s chances of winning the Heisman Trophy as a freshman sure went way up on Saturday, didn’t they? Even the staid *New York Times* took notice. The *Times* customarily reports sports stories with all the passion they would bring to a Bergen County municipal officers’ weekly briefing, e.g., “Mr. Manziel, after executing a triple toe loop to escape the grasping appendage of an opposing defender, ambulated to his left and hurled the spheroid to a teammate, who secured it for the score.” But on Sunday, they opened their report of TAMU’s win over Alabama with a reference to “this phenomenon called Johnny Football.” It’s one thing to beat Alabama; it’s another entirely to get the *NYT* to remove that pole from its ass. That Manziel cat can play.
- People up in Knoxville have written Derek Dooley’s UT coaching obituary many times over, and are salivating over the prospect of getting Jon Gruden to be their next head ball coach because his wife attended Tennessee 30 years ago. By that logic, the Dawgmeister should be in line for the head coaching job at the small women’s college attended by Mrs. Butts in her blossoming youth. As I see it, UT is much more likely to get Jay Gruden than Jon, and neither would change much up there except their wardrobes (Derek’s orange

pants should be available on Ebay soon). I now offer my free counsel on the guy they should be shooting for next season: a young, dynamic guy with head coaching experience, a UT background, and a reputation as a recruiter of great energy and creativity, who may well be available at season's end. I refer, of course, to Lane Kiffin.

- Speaking of the brash young coaching dynamo, we all knew from his year at Tennessee that he had soft balls, so it's a bit delicious to hear him denying any knowledge of his rogue assistant's deflation of game balls a week ago. Like Lane, I'm shocked, shocked I say.
- Meanwhile, Arkansas grad and Fox studio analyst Jimmy Johnson actually said of his alma mater: "If they want an outstanding coach, they ought to bring back The Swine or hire Butch Davis. And people say, 'Well how in the world can you bring back The Swine?' I said, 'Listen, you forgave Bill Clinton.' Forgive The Swine. Forgive The Swine for making a bad decision. Give The Swine an opportunity to coach again. I mean The Swine wants to get back into coaching, and The Swine is a great coach, and The Swine made a mistake. This whole country, it's built on forgiving people and giving them second chances. And I think the fan base would love to bring The Swine back. But if they don't bring The Swine back? Butch Davis, give him an opportunity." Maybe they'll get really lucky and Butch will bring John Blake along with him. Ol' Jimmy must be pining for those long lost glory days of ethical purity when Lou Holtz coached the Hogs, especially for his famed inspirational words to his players, "Mfshfntzxyrxzwnflssshnvl!" which means (at least as translated by Little Woolly), "The guy in the fedora in the players' dorm parking lot with the thick envelope will take care of you."
- While we're on the topic of coaches with spotty records of integrity, it's fascinating to hear that UT and Auburn are possibly considering hiring The Swine to take over their programs after they clean house next month, or sooner. Guys like Petrino and Kiffin remind me of Jim Harrick: They come in, get everyone excited, win (well, Kiffin wins against bad teams because he recruits effectively, if not legally), then leave under murky conditions such that people are angry and the institution has a decade of mess to clean up and an indelible stain from all the Kiffins and Petrinos left on the carpets. In the long run, it's just not worth it. Give me Mark Richt any day.
- Studs McMachoman has referred to Keith Marshall as an "angle eater"—meaning that he's so fast that guys think they've got an angle on him in the open field, but he outruns it and they end up behind him, where they remain as he explodes toward the endzone, as he did on Saturday. Great to see Gurshall have a big game on the road against a team wearing Auburn's uniforms, if not playing like an Auburn team.
- News item of the week if you are Robert Nkemdiche and you and your momma want you to play with your older brother in college: "Expect a lot of unfortunate attention to Ole Miss as a result of a rabble of immature students reacting badly and crudely to President Obama's re-election. They shouted racial epithets and burned Obama signs until University of Mississippi police arrived and dispersed them. According to news accounts, hundreds of Ole Miss students exchanged racial epithets and violent, politicized chants in response to the announcement of the re-election of President Barack Obama." Lots of headway y'all have made in Oxford since 1953. I hope the Nkemdiche family of Nigerian origin is paying attention.
- Speaking of recruiting, Auburn presently has the [#10 ranked recruiting class](#) shaping up for February, 2013, including Carl Lawson, Reuben Foster (both national top 5 prospects,

with Foster a summer Alabama move-in from Georgia, completely above suspicion as long as you live in Lee County, AL), and three other Georgia kids. Let's assume that if they actually attend Auburn, it won't be to play for Coach Chizik and staff. Maybe Lawson and Foster looked forward to playing under Brian Van Gorder, he of surgically-reconstructed face, according to Mrs. Butts's patented cosmetic rhytidectomy facial analysis (see [here](#) for someone in need of a posteriorectoscopy). Maybe Foster's contract with Bobby Lowder does not include an escape clause. It'll be interesting to see how it all works out on signing day. I couldn't find the list of recruits attending Saturday's game without subscribing to an Auburn recruiting website, which Mrs. Butts has informed me is not in the family budget, but the teaser at the website claimed that a huge number of elite prospects would be in attendance. They can't have been too impressed with the fact that [the Auburn administration is already looking for Coach Chiz's successor](#), that the fans were booing the team, [and by the second half kickoff, Auburn fans had deserted the stadium](#) and left it to the celebrating UGA contingent. (OK, that picture is actually from the third quarter of Auburn's incredible beatdown by TAMU, but it was pretty much the same against us.)

Dawg Good Guy of the Week: It seems appropriate the week after wrapping up the SEC East for the 5th time in Coach Richt's dozen years at UGA to recognize the Dawg QB who got it all started, David Greene. #14 took a program that hadn't been a champion since the days of #34, and took it to new levels. Lacking an NFL arm of the sort that Matthew Stafford was blessed with, but equipped with a ton of assets between the ears, DG became the winningest QB in NCAA history and brought championship football back to Athens. Before Richt and Greene, players from Georgia routinely attended Tennessee, where, they said, they could compete for championships. Nowadays, it's pretty surprising to see UT beat UGA for an elite in-state kid unless, like Eric Berry, his dad went there during another era. Greene, however, was not only great in the huddle and between the white lines. He was one of the most highly respected players to come through Athens in any era, both among teammates and with anyone else who came in contact with him or the program. After retiring from his brief NFL career, David and Matt Stinchcomb opened the new Atlanta office of insurance company Seacrest Partners. Said Seacrest president David Paddison, "Their name recognition is exciting, but at some point that loses its luster. We are not looking for a name to attract customers, we are looking for people who are highly technical problem-solvers. We want them to be recognized as insurance pros first, and then, 'Oh, by the way, they used to play football.'" According to Greene, who graduated as a risk management and insurance major from Georgia, Seacrest's emphasis on customer service drew them to the firm: "They take care of clients, and that's something I wanted to be a part of. Insurance is really nothing more than a promise, and they value that the same way we do." Sounds like just the sort of man that Mark Richt builds in his football program. It's great to see one of the greatest of all Dawgs getting it done in the post-football world, and in a career where we need all the honest people we can get.

The Forecast: Dawgs host Georgia Southern. Not much to say here except that I'm looking forward to seeing more of Parker Welsh in action. Dawgs, 51-6.

National Game of the Week: Stanford at Oregon. We need some losses at the top of the rankings, so why not this one? Cardinal, 42-40.

National Upset of the Week: Baylor over K-State. Reason: See National Game of the Week. And hey, if UL-L can take Florida to the wire in Gainesville, why can't Baylor take down K-State on its home turf in Waco's fabled 50,000 seat Floyd Casey Stadium? Bears, 31-28.