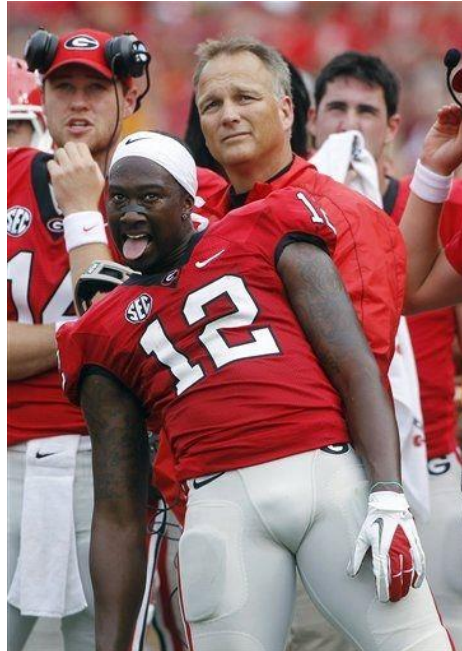


**The Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast
Week 6: Putting the Peckers Back in the Pouch**

“We got to ring the chapel bell, so it was a good day between the hedges.” ~Mark Richt

“We went toe-to-toe with a top-10 team that will be competing for a national championship.”
~Derek Dooley

“That’s my baby, and I’m pulling for Tennessee.” ~Barbara Dooley



TK watching the replay of his TD, which got overturned.

Well, the weekend was not entirely perfect. On Friday afternoon, while we were outside waiting for the stretch Formula 1 racer to deliver Brother Willie and his lovely bride, Fanny Butts-Cheeks, to our home, Wags, the family bulldog, got into the Slim Jims and ate their entire supply for the weekend. Let’s just say that NASCAR was not the only methane-powered entity *chez nous* on Saturday. The ladies nonetheless persevered, surviving solely on pork rinds and the thrill of watching cars driving around in circles for 5 hours. They also got into the Butts family’s special *Chateau Rouge et Noir* wine collection, and so feeling mighty frisky when Brother Willie and I returned home from the recent pleasantries between the hedges.

Brother Willie, incidentally, is now 5-1 on trips to Athens to see the Dawgs, with the only loss the asterisk-laden game vs. LSU in which the refs flagged AJ Green for Being Excited after his game-winning TD catch, assigning a celebration penalty that gave LSU enough field position on the kickoff to score and “win” the game. Now that’s one good-luck charm we have to work with. Next year: South Carolina.

In the absence of Coach Knute “Bear” Lombardi, The Guy Who Sits Behind Me (and whom The Scowlmeister claimed during our halftime visit had migrated over to his section and was sitting

behind *him* on Saturday), I was forced to content myself with the other fans who surrounded Brother Willie and me. For the most part, we all experienced the vicissitudes of this wild afternoon in the same way: thrilled by the home-run hitters occupying our baby backfield, horrified by the turnovers and special teams play, deflated by the second-quarter collapse, reinvigorated by the game-tying field goal just before the half, confident when we again took the lead, concerned that Tyler Bray's uniform had so little dirt on it, a bit fearful that their passing attack was just as good as advertised, wondering if Jarvis Jones's groin injury were severely limiting his mobility and effectiveness, and impressed that Foghorn Bullhorn's booing of the officials could reach us even amidst the general stadium cacophony.

In the fourth quarter, however, with half-a-hundred points sitting on our side of the scoreboard and six minutes remaining, the guys around us began to complain about our offense and Mark Richt and Mike Bobo for keeping the ball on the ground and milking clock. They were particularly distressed on the series where we ran the ball on first and second downs before Aaron Murray threw a perfect third down pass to Rantavious Wooten, who dropped it with a certain first down and a few acres of green space open ahead of him. With the game winding down, the outcome uncertain, and the D beginning to produce the turnovers that secured the win, those surrounding us just couldn't stop complaining about this strategy or the coaches who called for it. Incidentally, it worked.

Jarvis's painful groin really seemed to slow him down. Brother Willie was admiring his physical attributes (Jones's, that is) before the game when the guys were warming up in their Under Armour, but was wondering about his fabled QB pressuring ability once the game got underway. I began watching JJ, and it seemed clear to me that he just couldn't accelerate. Go pull your groin and try chasing a few rabbits around the yard, each guarded by a hippo, and you'll understand what he went through. I hoped for some illumination from the Sunday news accounts, but the Lamestream Sports Media seemed to overlook this key facet of the game.

A Coveted Dawgmeister Game Ball goes to the Sanford Stadium crowd for their raucous support for the Dawgs from the Dawg Walk to the ringing of the chapel bell, in spite of those for whom a huge emotional SEC win over a hated rival on a record-setting night just isn't enough.

A Coveted Dawgmeister Game Ball goes to Tavarres King, who appears to have originated the new "Gurshall" tag for our splendid running backs. TK has become an exceptional WR for us after coming in as the other guy when we signed him and A.J. Green in the same recruiting class. He arrived as a wispy little thing out of Habersham Central, spreading 165 pounds over his 6-1 frame. As a fifth-year senior, he's now a rock-solid 200 lbs. and showed during his short TD catch-and-run (overruled by replay) that he's strong enough to drag a few guys into the endzone when he smells the goal line. And a great kid to boot, one of the senior leaders who won't let this team let down.

TK actually got a suspension during his sophomore year, which led Coach Richt to say of TK and fellow suspendee Dontavious Jackson, "I'm disappointed in their decision-making and lack of judgment, and they will both pay a stiff price. All our players need to understand that it's a privilege to be a Bulldog, and their conduct needs to reflect the standards we expect." That's The Georgia Way he's talking about. Before the game Coach Richt talked to recruits about what they

can expect at UGA, and among those expectations is going to class, getting a degree, and subjecting themselves to their coaches' love, even when that love is tough. Our program is quicker to suspend a player for abusing his privileges than any program I know of, and that's part of the promise our coaches make to prospects and their parents to build boys into men at UGA. If you like what you're seeing this season, then always remember that what you see on the field is only part of how the coaches contribute to the emerging manhood of the kids who enter as teenagers and exit, if they can take the imperatives, ready for the real world of either football or whatever else awaits them.

This observation brings me to the Dawg Good Guy of the Week, who played for Jim Donnan, who it appears was not so assiduous in the ethics department: When Will Witherspoon committed to UGA in the late 1990s, he did so as one of those kids that high schools are built around: best student, best leader, most admired, Homecoming King, most likely to succeed, and a whale of a football player to boot as indicated by his being named the USA Today Florida Player of the Year. He was an Air Force brat whose parents chose to raise their children off-base so that their kids could experience life in more pluralistic communities. Will came in and played up to his potential at UGA, then moved on to the NFL, where he's been employed ever since. But Will's not one of those guys who will retire and wonder what to do next. Like a lot of kids who live overseas, he is fluent in multiple languages, including German, Arabic, and Swedish. Now in his early 30s, he's a married man with three daughters and a thriving NFL career, currently with the Tennessee Titans. In addition to football, Will's taken up grass-fed cattle farming on his 800-acre Missouri land, and has become politically active in supporting a bill that would ban the precautionary use of antibiotics on healthy animals in farming, known as the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act. Toward that end Will has testified before Congress on the hazards of unnecessary drugs in food. He also cares about the people who eat the bovines and the many chemicals that inhabit their meat, visiting schools to promote sustainable living and healthy eating and hosting a charity event, Farm to Table, that will benefit Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee's Children's Feeding Programs. If that's not enough, he's working toward an MBA at George Washington University, saying, "My mom always said you've got to keep improving yourself. There's always something else you can learn." Thanks Mamma: You raised a son who makes me proud to be affiliated with UGA and its athletic programs.

Dawg Doots:

- According to my correspondent in Houston, "Ben Jones is pushing hard for the starting RG spot for the Texans. He has been killing it in the last few games and stealing snaps from the starter, Antoine Caldwell. In Jacksonville and Denver, he played almost half the snaps, especially when we ran the ball and in goal line situations. Your boy is a GEM!"
- Former Tennessee, Browns, and Ravens RB Jamal Lewis was inducted in Baltimore's Ring of Honor. I didn't know that prison sentences counted so much in this accolade.
- I'm sure that some fans are wondering why we didn't run this play when going for the 2-point conversion: <http://kegsneggsblog.com/2012/09/28/video-the-greatest-2-point-conversion-of-all-time/>
- "We are putting the fun back into the point-after-touchdown attempt. People now don't leave their seats for the concession stand until after the PAT is over." ~from the postgame radio show

- The University of Tennessee has suspended a campus fraternity chapter after one fraternity member was admitted to the hospital earlier this week with a dangerously high level of intoxication after receiving an alcohol enema. “So that’s what they call it,” said Da’Rick Rogers.
- Great to see the tight ends getting into the passing game mix.
- No complaints about the stadium experience except for one: The concession lines are incredibly slow and aggravating with people constantly cutting through them. Greg McGarity, who on the whole is a splendid AD, please commission a study to see if these problems can be addressed before Brother Willie’s next return to the stadium. I was among many who spent most of halftime and one series into the second half standing in line waiting to buy a drink on a hot and humid afternoon.
- I’m guessing that we’ve spread Malcolm Mitchell a bit too thin, and will be taking him off return teams, where he’s been surprisingly ineffective when he gets his hands on the rock and has made some horrid decisions about fielding the ball. There’s more to being a return man than just standing there, catching the ball, and running; he’s got to rep with the units, which reduces his time with other units. With the full defensive backfield shaping up and other returners available, I think he’ll mostly play offense from now on, which is just my uninformed guess. For now, we may be going the Logan Gray route with former Calhoun receiver and walkon Rhett McGowan handling punts, and someone else on kickoffs. Gurley’s increasing reps in the backfield might cut back on his return duties, which is only a guess on my part.
- With Georgia Tech getting destroyed at home by Middle Tennessee State U to fall to 2-3 following the preseason judgment that they were “[poised to surge into the Top 25 rankings this fall](#),” our weekend of bliss is complete. Attendance at Historic Bobby Doots Field on The Flats Off the Expressway was 39,270. Here’s how they describe this facility at the ramblinwreck.com website: “Georgia Tech’s storied football facility has been a cornerstone of college football for nearly a century. Cozily nestled among Atlanta’s skyscrapers, Bobby Dodd Stadium at Historic Grant Field is easily one of the nation’s most unique settings for college football. Originally built in 1913 by members of the Georgia Tech student body, Bobby Dodd Stadium at Historic Grant Field is the oldest on-campus stadium in NCAA Division I-A, but the venerable stadium has recently added another chapter to its storied history with a new look and an expanded capacity. Completed in 2003, a two-year expansion and renovation raised capacity to 55,000 seats and added numerous amenities.” Good thing they added those venerable seats to this storied stadium, so even more would be empty on Saturday afternoons in the fall.
- News item: “Thousands of conservative Christians gathered Saturday on Independence Mall in Philadelphia to pray for the future of the United States in the weeks before the presidential election at The America for Jesus 2012 prayer rally. Speakers challenged the crowd to overcome the seven deadly sins of pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath and slothfulness.” Two observations: (1) Don’t these people know that in the Fall, Jesus watches football games on Saturdays? (2) Dawg fans who are dissatisfied with our 15th straight regular-season win and record offensive output this season should do some soul-searching and see which of these sins they are currently practicing.

The Dawgmeister’s Sanford Stadium Jackass of the Week Award goes to the color-blind people in the stadium wearing orange, which my color wheel tells me clashes horribly with our *très chic*

Red and Black. For reasons that escape my fashion sensibilities, their choice of that wretched pastel orange is inexplicable, and the jackasses so attired were cheering at all the wrong times and even seemed to enjoy the tooting of the Junior High School band that kept playing a thumpa-thumpa noise after Tennessee's scores. Who were those people, and what were they doing in our house? And how'd that guy with the ugly orange pants get on the UT sideline?

Speaking of orange, some Clemso-trash was spotted in Sanford Stadium on Saturday, although thank Heaven not wearing their odious gear. Don't these people have their own teams to root for? Although I must admire their taste in trekking to Athens to see some real football.

The Forecast: As we all know, the SC game is the biggest game of the season for us. Even dedicated Spurrier haters have to acknowledge that he's done a masterful job of making SC more competitive than Tennessee and possibly Florida in the East. It's possible he's done a better job of coaching up Connor Shaw than any quarterback he's ever coached. Shaw really manages the game well and makes a lot of nifty plays with both feet and hands. And Lattimore, I'm afraid to say, looks just as dominating as ever, almost as good as Todd Gurley. The announcers for the SC/Kentucky focused on his cutting ability, and that's probably what distinguishes him from other backs with the same considerable physical tools and makes him so dangerous, even when a play is well-defended, because he has the vision to see the opening and cut through it. And the strength of their team is actually their defense. So, we've got one tall order on Saturday.

At the same time, nobody's come even close to stopping our own offensive juggernaut, which is loaded with playmakers and is executing the game plan at Rick Perry levels; and the OL continues to play well and keep Aaron upright and in synch. What we don't know yet is if our D is going to hold their O to executing at Kucinich levels. Brother Willie and I caught a bit of the post-game radio show driving home, and Kevin Butler was defending our D, saying that the short fields and turnovers made our D seem worse than it really played. But, 400+ yards is a lot to yield. Apparently there were coordination problems in the secondary with Tree and Rambo back in the mix, even with their stellar individual play. I'm guessing they'll work out some of those kinks by Saturday.

One other nugget from the post game show: UGA's redzone production has been spectacular, with TDs on something like 19 of 22 possessions. If we counted Keith Marshall's ability to score from the *other* redzone, then it'd be even better.

So, what to expect? A Dawg win, of course. We might not see as wild a game as last year's or Saturday's, but then again, we might. Let's pick the Good Guys to continue their 40+ point production and hold the Peckers to enough to drive home 6-0 and in charge of the March to Atlanta. Dawgs, 45-35.

National Game of the Week: LSU at Florida. An interesting game featuring two QBs whose enrollment produced a great deal of celebration, yet who have not yet performed up to expectations. When I saw Mettenberger's tape, I thought he looked a little slow back there, and SEC defenses are mighty fast to accommodate a QB who's feet are not fleet, no matter what sort of cannon is hanging from his arm socket. Driskell meanwhile appears to be improving, but I don't think that you go from being incapable of reading your progressions in Week 3 to being

ready for LSU by Week 6. So, a low-scoring game, methinks, with Florida using their bye week to prepare for taking down LSU 13-10 in The Swamp and helping to set up one big showdown in Jacksonville.

Upset of the Week (in which a ranked team loses to an unranked team): My upset streak was broken when Nebraska came back to beat Wisconsin on Saturday, so you'll possibly want to take that into account in this week's upset forecast, Miami over Notre Dame. OK, so I'm submitting this forecast before the new rankings come out, and Miami might squeak in, but it'd still be an upset, and I'm sticking with it. Hurricanes, 31-27.

Note: The Dawgmeister's Forecasts should not be used as the basis of actual cash wagers.