

The Dawgmeister's Weekend Forecast

Week 4: Anchor Down for the Commode Doors

The Recap: 'Twas a lovely evening at the stadium, especially after the sweatshop conditions of Game #1 in our 2012 March to Atlanta. As the statistics show, and as you'd expect against a 3rd-tier opponent, our offense cut through their D like a hot knife going through butter. Meanwhile, in the first half, their O went through our D like a rusty hacksaw gnawing its way through a stout piece of rebar: slowly but surely, even if it took a long time, often fell out of the groove, and wasn't so pretty. Of course, the second half played truer to form and we all know what the record book says in response. I tend not to take these cupcake wins too seriously, though always find them most watchable and like to see the guys down the depth chart get their chance to run a few plays and give Mama a thrill up in the stands.

I made my halftime trek over to discuss the global state of affairs with The Scowlmeister, who was surrounded by admiring young fans and thus of limited availability. Fortunately, whom should I find nearby but Legendary Dawg Fan Foghorn Bullhorn, whose booming commentaries can be heard above the cacophony at Sanford Stadium as he castigates the officials, whose vociferous support echoes even about the cavernous confines of the Stegasaurus during the basketball season, and who has been known to clear entire villages of their populations who assume that they are being warned of the End of Days through the Voice of God Himself upon hearing Foghorn's mighty voice sounding down upon them.

Now, of my three readers, Foghorn is among the most assiduous, and a fine fellow to boot. At halftime he made the astute point that if the offense had played like the defense in the first half, the fans would surely have been booing Mike Bobo and calling for his head; but dissatisfaction with Todd Grantham is not a sentiment that anyone would care to voice. Fans still haven't taken to Coach Bobo, no matter how many points we score or records we break with him writing the playbook, planning the gamely schemes, and calling the plays. Fans are still mighty quick to voice their displeasure when a play goes awry, or when a play goes well but they'd have called a different one, that is if they had coaching positions of their own. I don't say this as negative against Coach Grantham, who probably is more secure in his job these days than Brian Van Gorder is at Auburn, and who indeed is an incredible asset to UGA. But I do say it as an admirer of Mike Bobo's conception and execution of an offense that never seems to earn him credit among the fans, who inevitably point the blame at him when the offense sputters, even slightly.


A Coveted Dawgmeister Game Ball goes to Chase Vasser, coming off suspension following a DUI to play well for our Jones-less D. He might bear the name of a Dunwoody debutante, but he's a very athletic kid who's not your normal human being. As every player coming off suspension says, he's learned his lesson and can now focus on football. He's ended up being a pretty good player at an important position, and I sure heard his name called a lot on Saturday. Welcome back Chase, and keep up the great work.

A Coveted Dawgmeister Game Ball goes to Artie Lynch, who overcame a fumble to be our #2 receiver and made a highlight-reel stretch for a TD that made all UGA tight end fans smile brightly.

Dawg Doots:

- The FAU payout for the game was \$1 million, which would buy a lot of bourbon, even by Howard Schnellenberger's standards.
- You may have seen that Oregon schoolboy legend and Oregon Duck commit Thomas Tyner ran for 644 yards to set an Oregon state record, also scoring 10 touchdowns, on Friday night in an 84-63 win (and yes, it was a football game, not basketball). Most people are thinking: Another in a long line of Oregon superbacks. I'm thinking: These are the guys who will soon be playing on Pac-12 defenses.
- J.K. Britt, Newnan HS, Sophomore. Save that name for later. He was a visitor Saturday and is one impressive young man. He's already playing both ways for Newnan, along with UGA-bound Tray Matthews, and looked mighty fine in Red and Black.
- I'll confess that I'm a little unsettled that among the steadfast sponsors of UGA radio broadcasts is a bail bondsman who sounds as though he's broadcasting from the set of *Deliverance*. I had no idea that I was included in that market demographic.
- That was one stanky Kiffin deposited by Kentucky against Western Kentucky. Prospective football coaches, update your résumés, if you too want to try to revive a program and get fired in 3-4 years.
- I don't know about you, but if I were an Auburn commit who'd gotten the school logo tattooed on my body, I'd be pretty nervous these days, at least if I wanted to play for the current coaching staff and weren't committed because of the benefits promised and perhaps already accruing from their non-football financial personnel.
- Early in the day, a radio broadcaster was frothing in anticipation of the Tennessee-Florida game, and stated that Tyler Bray is one of the two most physically gifted QBs in the land, second only to Matt Barkley. Needless to say, both laid major eggs in major games on Saturday. Barkley's line: 20/41 for 254 yards, 0 TDs, 2 picks. Bray's: 22/44 for 257 with 2 TDs and 2 picks. Amazingly, people are still asking if Barkley is still in the Heisman race after a game that would eliminate anyone else. The Lamestream Sports Media has become so attached to the Trojan Revival narrative, led by the blue-eyed, blond-haired, God-fearing, strapping young lad of whom they are so enamored. Interestingly, one guy on TV said that with all those glorious tools, Barkley sure does throw a lot of easy passes—flanker screens, etc.—rather than going downfield as someone of his magnificent gifts ought to be doing. Barkley sounds more and more to me like the second coming of Tim Couch, channeled through Matt Leinart, even though I'm sure that the Savior Narrative is so engrained among Lamestream Sports Mediators that they'll keep his Heisman narrative, along with USC's national championship narrative, in the air all season.
- Michael Bennett put another dagger in the "possession receiver" label with his 67-yarder yesterday, during most of which the ball was in the air, except when he outran their DBs to the endzone. Aaron Murray's stats are not built on zippy little passes to the flank, but include a lot of downfield shots that are increasingly on the mark.
- Some were disappointed that last year's recruiting class was under-enrolled, but who could argue with the point that they were well-chosen? Almost all are playing, and a few have already started, with Jordan Jenkins debuting at OLB yesterday (and Josh Dawson also in the OLB rotation). I believe those RBs might turn out pretty well too.
- On the subject of RBs, the freshman Jamison at Rutgers is getting Ray Rice comparisons (he's 5-8 and has the same low center of gravity) after getting 41 carries vs. USF, albeit

for under 4 YPC. Meanwhile, our rotation is getting guys 8-10 carries a game. Whom do you think will hold up longer?

- I saw that Bo Pellini got rushed to the hospital during Saturday's game, although he seems to be fine. He appears to be in the Urban Meyer wound-tight category of coaches who often come in, win, then burn out. Meanwhile, at the Dawg helm we have the steadiest captain in the land in Coach Richt. I think that in terms of overall stability, a program is better off with an even-keeled coach than an explosive dynamo, and I'm happy we've got our guy.
- One more reason that Mark Richt is, as he might say, such a Blessing to UGA: Someone noted before the game that in his dozen or so years as head ball coach, he's graduated more African-American student-athletes than all other UGA football coaches combined. Now, UGA was a segregated university until 1961, and it was another decade before the color line was broken in football by the enrollment of Robert Kinnebrew, Horace King, Clarence Pope, Larry West, and Richard Appleby. So that only leaves 30 years of teams prior to Richt's arrival; and in the 70s the teams in the South were still pretty White. Furthermore, graduation rates weren't tracked as carefully then as they are now, and so coaches could get away without the scrutiny that today's coaches operate under; and at the game on Saturday, a guy who'd attended UGA in the early 1980s told of boosters outside MacWhorter Hall greeting players with handshakes greased with cash, which I believe is no longer tolerated. Coach Richt probably signs a greater percentage of Black players than most of his predecessors, so he's got an advantage there. But the fact remains that he genuinely cares about his players' welfare and works closely with AD McGarity and the Rankin Smith support staff to make sure that if football doesn't work out for these guys, something else will. And so guys like Antavious Coates, Dexter Morant, and other chronically injured players remain financially supported for their studies because that was the promise that Coach made to them when they committed to the .

The Dawgmeister's Sanford Stadium Jackass of the Week goes to The F-Bomber, seated nearby and using F-Bombs in just about every syntactic spot available in the English sentence. Now, your Dawgmeister is no stranger to profanity, having spent many an hour in locker rooms, on road crews, in low-rent taverns, and in other fine locales where tapestries of profanity are woven routinely; and so I'm no prude when it comes to the use of undeleted expletives. The F-Bomber, however, was noteworthy in this regard, bringing his A-Game on Saturday and using some variant on the F-Bomb as verb, noun, gerund, past and present participle, predicate, superlative, interjection, imperative, adverb, adjective, preposition, article, conjunction, diphthong, direct and indirect object, and parts of speech new to the English-speaking world, not to mention in the subjunctive mood, active and passive voices, and on only glorious occasion, even the pluperfect. I had to cover Little Woolly's ears for much of the game to protect his delicate sensibilities from the ongoing barrage. Women and children and men of decency were vacating the vicinity such that by the fourth quarter the entire section of the stadium was nearly empty.

Dawg Good Guy of the Week: Remember how hard it was to watch Blair Walsh last year when he lost his touch? For me, it was hard because not only was it costing us points in games where we needed them, but I'd gotten to know Blair at UGA and really thought he was a terrific guy and so felt his pain. So did the Minnesota Vikings, for whom he's already kicked a game-

winning field goal this season. Apparently they slowed his motion down just a scotch and it's gotten his rhythm back. People at UGA complain about our special teams coaching, but what more do you want than having Kevin Butler and Billy Bennett coaching up your kickers? Anyhow, it's great to see him get his leg back and thrive in the bigtime. Great guy, big future, All Dawg.

The Forecast: My title for this week's column refers to the new phrase up on Vandyland, "Anchor Down," which presumably was developed to inspire the Commodore Doors to Victory. Now, I know they've got those fancy SAT scores up there in Nashville, but apparently there are no courses available in Nautical Subaquatic Physical Dynamics, which is Little Woolly's favorite area of scholarly inquiry. The phrase might be a reference to the fact that Vandy has served as the SEC tugboat since the days of Admiral Farragut. But I gather that they're trying to create a new history under the only coach in the nation who has the same name, and same fate, as Missouri QB James Franklin. As Little Woolly has explained to me about anchors, however, their sole purpose is to serve as an immense, dead weight that brings an enormous ship to a standstill in the teeming and tumultuous ocean. Perhaps it's the closest they'll ever come in Vandyland to our own cherished Munsonism, "Hunker Down," and if so, it's not just a pale imitation, it's a paradox of the first order, given that hunkering and anchoring reference different fighting stances. Hunkering Down is designed to encourage focus, teamwork, and effort for inspired play; the Vandy version is designed to suspend motion altogether. I expect to see the two approaches played out between the hedges on Saturday. The Dawgs are getting stoked for their SEC title run, and I don't think that the Vandy Anchormobile is the team to hold them back. Franklin's done a nice job, but nice is for the ACC. This year we'll have plenty of Jordan Rodgers film to study, so won't be taken by surprise by a whole new offense. Dawgs continue to crank up the D and work out the O. Good Guys, 35-14.

National Game of the Week: Clemson at FSU. I'll believe that FSU is back when they win enough to prove it. FSU never recovered from losing Mark Richt, and just because Ol' Jimbo Fisher once coached under Satan, that doesn't mean they'll ever win the cruddy ACC the way they did under Dadgum Ol' Bobby Bowden, occasionally. Tigers win for Dabo, 35-30.

Upset of the Week (in which a ranked team loses to an unranked team): I'll engage in a brief moment of braggadocio to note that I've actually picked two of these already this year, what with Oklahoma State and Southern Cal losing as forecast. This week, it's Oregon State over UCLA. Jim Mora, you are really a bum for dumping a great kid like Eddie Printz, and for this, I hope you lose every game in the remainder of your pathetic career at UCLA. That makes two recent ex-Falcons coaches—Mora and The Swine—I'll root against for the remainder of my life. Don't ask me what I'll do when UCLA plays that team across town whose head coach is even lower on the ethical food chain than Mora; and both only have jobs in coaching because their daddies were coaches too. If OSU can take down Wisconsin with a near-shutout, they'll blow Jim Jr. and his blue balls out of the stadium. Beavs, 20-17.