

THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST *DAWGS MUSS WITH GATORS*

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SEPARATED AT BIRTH? ARCHIVE **SEPARATED AT BIRTH?**



WILL & CHUCKY
MUSCHAMP

I was so down and depressed after the Vanderbilt game that all I could muster for the Forecast was the above **Separated at Birth?** feature, and the meager effort was of such little consequence that it didn't even merit a Dawgbone link. My sincere apologies to both of my readers for the ensuing void that this absence left in their lives. After a week of ascetic retreat to the Dawg Cave, I now emerge for my long-awaited commentary on the game.

I'll begin with The Scowlmeister's Sunday email, titled "As Bad As It Gets," in which he expressed his usual *joi de vivre* regarding our beloved Bulldogs:

Quoth the Scowlmeister:

Well, this is as depressing a loss as I can recall. Two of the worst calls I've ever seen and both of them game changers. Losing Josh HC, and perhaps Connelly. What more can be said about special teams? They look like a HS team, and not a very good one at that. The usually stellar Mike Bobo seemed to have lost his mind with his play calling today; was there really nothing more than 10 yards down the field, running on 3rd down when we had to pass? Where was Rumph, the tight ends? The defense continues to be out of position all too often. Damien Swann's twin brother continues to impersonate the guy we loved last year (he did have one good play). Poor Brendan Douglas was a warrior but coughs it up at a critical time for the second week. Simply unbelievable.

At that point, I had decided not to file a forecast about the game, because everything that could possibly be said, some of it even reasonable, had been said by then, from Twitter to the talk shows to the web boards to the blogs. But The Scowlmeister had taken the time to detail his thoughts to me, Foghorn Bullhorn, the surprisingly upbeat Young Scowlmeister, and a few other dignitaries, and so I felt that his Zen-like rumination deserved a reply, which I composed as follows:

What could go wrong on Saturday, did go wrong. I'm sure the haters will be out in force for the next two weeks, both here and in Gainesville (and from what I can tell, just about everywhere after all the upsets).

We entered the season with Gurley and Marshall at RB, and are now playing one guy recruited as a FB and another as a WR/DB, the latter of whom is about 60 pounds lighter than Gurley, and slower, not that he's slow; and the former of whom is about 10 pounds lighter and a whole lot slower. They have done an admirable job, but are not at this point in their careers guys who'll carry us to a title.

We entered the season with a WR rotation of Mitchell, Bennett, Scott-Wesley, Rumph, and Conley. Our rotation now includes 3 walkons. Of the remaining rotation players, Conley is not catching as well as he did when covered by DBs lower on the depth chart; and McGowan can't get open when covered by future NFL DBs as the #2 or #3 WR. There was a reason all these guys except Conley were not seeing the field much except to fill in spots in the rotation. And there are reasons that guys who were able to get open as the #4 or #5 option in the route tree can't get as open against opponents' top defenders. As much as I love anyone wearing the Red and Black, from Murray to the student trainers, there were reasons that the walkons or relatively low-ranked prospects (e.g., Tibbs) attracted little recruiting attention: They just have trouble getting open against guys who run 4.4 forties. (In contrast, Douglas [2 stars] and Bennett [3 stars] were ranked relatively low in high school for a very different reason: They are White skill position players.)

I think that explains the conservative playcalling. You can't run routes for McGowan, Erdman, Tibbs, and Townes that were designed for Mitchell, Scott-Wesley, Bennett, and Rumph. You can't run Douglas on sweeps and expect what you got from Gurley. So, D's are shortening their attention to some of our options while loading up on others. The playbook's just a lot smaller when you're essentially playing scout team guys against other teams' best players, even Vandy's.

The targeting call on Wilson was just abysmal, and indeed changed the game, as did the muffed punt reception and muffed punt attempt. I do think that Drew deserved a late hit penalty, but not an ejection. Wilson in contrast made a text-book hit that was so hard it looked illegal, as the replay and overturning of the call clearly showed. Later in the day Danielson repeatedly pointed out that identical hits were being flagged on some plays and not on others, and that defenders are confused about how to strike a guy. I think that the defense got gun-shy after the Drew and Wilson calls and were hesitant to unload because of the officiating, which led to poor play, which was not helped with Drew and Harvey-Clemons, two of our most productive defenders, out of the game.

I'm sure some will consider these excuses, but I see them as reasons why we lost a close, tough, winnable game.

Since the Vanderbilt game, I've heard many, many solutions to the team's problems. Note that after the LSU game, these same commentators were thumping their chests about playing our way

into the BCS title game. Various solutions have offered, often at very high volume: fire Coach Richt, fire Coach Grantham, fire Coach Bobo, hire a special teams coach, fire AD McGarity if he doesn't fire all of the coaches, play different guys at virtually every position, fire UGA IX, fire Jere Morehead if he doesn't intervene and start firing people, recall Nathan Deal if he doesn't threaten to fire Morehead if he doesn't fire everyone else, impeach Obama, etc.

For those wanting to fire Coach Richt, you'd need a pretty good reason to fire one of the most successful college football coaches in history, just because his team lost two close games, one to a team that remains unbeaten. For those wanting to hire a special teams coach, remember that you're only allowed a certain number of assistant coaches, so you'd have to fire an existing coach and eliminate his position to create space for a special teams coach, and you will not be allowed to gripe and whine when that position begins to underperform in the absence of a position coach. I'll let you make the call to Coach Richt to let him know whom to fire in order to create the special teams coaching position, and how to coach the guys whose coach has been fired. Also keep in mind that most programs don't have a special teams coach, so going out and finding such a specialist will be harder than you think.

Actually, I think that none of these criticisms gets to the heart of what's wrong with the team. Here's what I think is wrong:



This season is sadly reminiscent of Stafford's junior year, which began with UGA on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* with a #1 ranking, and which ended with [18 players suffering season-ending injuries](#), leading to a few losses and claims that all the coaches should be fired, Uga should be put to sleep, etc. The only team that can really absorb so many injuries is Alabama, and that's because they play by different roster-size rules than the rest of us, and so have deep reserves of talent when front line guys go down. Because Coach Richt is honest with recruits, doesn't run off

guys who don't pan out (he graduates them instead), doesn't greyshirt guys he's promised "commitable" scholarships to, disciplines guys when they break team or university rules, and in general does things The Georgia Way, his teams get thin when starters can't play.

THE COVETED DAWGMEISTER GOOD GUY OF THE WEEK AWARD **GOOD GUY ARCHIVE**

This week's Good Guy is Asher Allen. Asher was a big-time recruit coming out of Tucker High School, and always made his trips to UGA accompanied by his parents and siblings. That family orientation is part of what has enabled him to advance his life according to his own priorities, rather than those imposed on him from without. How many of us, after being drafted in the third round and playing three years in the NFL, would walk away from a \$615,000 salary at age 24 and dedicate our lives to the ministry? Asher made that choice in consultation with his wife Brittany following a concussion. After looking around at retired players with half their wits and a tendency toward suicide, he decided to hang up his Vikings helmet and move along. Although he says that the concussions were only part of the equation, he allows that "I was 24 years old and getting out of bed a little differently. We wanted the quality of our lives. I wanted to have a body where I could do more. When I played the game I did it for the love of the game and for fans and the community. We wanted to give back to the community in a different way. We study the Bible with people and decided for our love of God and love of neighbors we wanted to give back to neighbors." Unlike his cousin Michael Irvin, he didn't give back to the community in strip bars and coke-infused hotel rooms. Rather, he's remained in Chanhassen, Minnesota, where he [blogs](#) and [tweets](#) about his passions, food and exercise, and does volunteer ministry work with the Jehovah's Witness faith group. He goes about his ministry without capitalizing on his football past: "When we go door to door we try to emulate the example of Jesus Christ. We focus on the kingdom of God and that's what we try to concentrate on" rather than exploiting his sports celebrity. He's a humble, intelligent, accomplished young guy who has made his mark in life well beyond football, heading down what his conscience and spirit tell him is the road to a good and righteous life. That's what we've come to expect of our Dawgs, and it's hard to find a better example than Good Guy Asher Allen.



Dawg Doots:

- "I've only played with two other players—Jarvis Jones and A.J. Green—that are like Todd in this sense: He literally impacts everyone else on the field. The defense has to gameplan for him specifically. Not that those two young backs haven't done a really good job for us because they have. But Todd is like all three, Keith, Brendan and J.J., built into

one. That's just not normal. He brings so much emotion and energy to the offense. "
~Artie Lynch

- "Todd is by far the best player in the country when he's healthy and he's out there. It's not just what he's able to do in the run game, but the pass game, too. It affects the safeties, it affects the linebackers, catching the ball out of the backfield. He really changes the games for us offensively." ~Aaron Murray
- The Owlmeister informs me that Temple has now won a game, so a big Hoot to my reader in Philadelphia.
- Painful as it might be to make any additional comments about the Vandy game, I was impressed by Vanderbilt's homage to Foghorn Bullhorn after every touchdown when they sounded their great flatulence over the P.A. system.
- Speaking of which, [this fine product](#) will surely make an excellent stocking stuffer for needy Dawgmeister readers, and stuffer of other areas as well.
- One positive thing about watching the game at home on the Big Screen: No Negatron to bitch and whine the whole game about everything and everyone associated with the program, while from what I can tell having no discernible life achievements of his own to fall back on when our football team doesn't win games. And as we all know, feeding his downtrodden ego is the only reason that UGA sponsors a football program.

THE FORECAST

With Gurley back, the Dawgs are back. It'd be nice to have deep threats again, but maybe with a bye week, Davis and Rumph are getting the reps they need to earn Murray and Bobo's confidence with the play book. It's no coincidence that when the deep route runners went down, Murray started throwing a lot more check-down passes to RBs; and although I'm only guessing here, when the RBs run check-down routes, the tight ends are staying in to block, which accounts for why the TEs are getting fewer balls and the RBs more. If the OL can get back to taking care of the line of scrimmage, I think we can get back some of the playbook we lost when guys started taking in games on crutches from the sideline. On D, the line of scrimmage will matter most against UF, and I'm predicting enough of a standoff to keep Gator players from spending much time in the endzone. Dawgs return to the wins that seemed so promising in the first 5 games: UGA 24, UF 17.

National Game of the Week: Miami at Florida State. The Seminoles are looking unbeatable, even if [Dabo Swinney still thinks that Clemson is almost as good](#). At home, I think they'll keep on rolling. Free Shoes, 38-21.

National Upset of the Week: Nevada over Fresno State. Another mid-major plays its way out of the BCS. This time, FSU loses. Wolf Pack, 41-40.