

THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST: TWO WEEKS TO PREPARE FOR NORTH TEXAS

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SEPARATED AT BIRTH?



Lane Kiffin & The Unabomber

As we all know, the reality is quarterbacks don't win games but they can lose them. My only observation about Murray, who is by all accounts a splendid fellow, bright and well liked, is that quarterbacks make their reputation by leading teams to big victories in important games. Aaron has not been able to do that. Some people ascribe it to a lack of height. Some to a baffling psychological fluke that seems to compel him to often start slowly. Beating Florida is great and I love it. But be honest in that we have beaten them lately when they were in a down cycle and may not have won last year if Jarvis hadn't caused that fumble. Both Spurrier and the pope guy owned us. Beating Florida when they are no threat to win the SEC or anything else does not qualify as a signature win. Neither does holding on against Vandy. David Greene against Tennessee. That was a signature win heralding the beginning of a new era. Stafford in the first "black out." Buck Belue against Florida. Ray Goff in '76 against Alabama. Not saying all these guys are more talented or better quarterbacks than Murray. I'm just saying they all have a big, big win on their resume.

~Written by a Friend of the Dawgmeister, made available to me Thursday by the Scowlmeister

Seeing is believing.

Call me a believer. As all six of my readers know, I always have been a believer in Mark Richt's football program at UGA. But after Saturday, I believe that this team can accomplish just about anything this year. The last 9 minutes of the game, beginning with our inspired goal-line stand and extending throughout the drive beginning at the 6-inch line all the way to the 0:00 point on the game clock, were magnificent. Having Douglas come in and pound the rock on this drive illustrates well one of my favorite annual experiences: seeing which new guys step into key roles. The defensive backs are getting targeted, but I think they're going to be much better at this

by the LSU game and the league gauntlet that follows it. Watching them, and Hicks, and Floyd, and Taylor, and Scott-Wesley, and a slew of others is a lot of fun to behold.

Nonetheless, during my ritualistic visit at halftime to discuss the world's great events with the Scowlmeister, Foghorn Bullhorn, and Foghorn's lovely wife, Mrs. Bullhorn, the Scowlmeister was looking gloomy. Even with the score tied, he said, he felt as if we were losing. His lugubrious outlook followed a second quarter in which we had let a great lead slip away as Connor Shaw kept making remarkable plays, as he often seems to do. Although it seemed that we could score at will, it seemed that they could too.

I'll confess that the 3-and-out with which we opened the second half caused even my own high spirits to droop. But after that, we took increasing control of the game. I rewatched the game on Sunday on the Big Screen, and Blackledge said in the second half that UGA was more likely to become fatigued as the game wound down, because we had played a late, physical away game on Saturday while SC had played a far less competitive home game on Thursday, giving them a much longer recovery time for Saturday. But the goal line stand and subsequent 8 minute drive to end the game suggest that we were more physically prepared for this game.

There were so many great plays in this game, so many momentum shifts, such great coaching decisions, such fabulous support from the 93,000+ in attendance—just one incredible afternoon of football. Clowney made a couple of plays, but in general was neutralized by outstanding game planning and execution. That didn't stop Negatron—who is positioning himself to replace Coach Knute "Bear" Lombardi as 2013 Sanford Stadium Jackass of the Year following the Coach's being raptured at halftime of the 2011 Auburn game—from complaining that Kenarious Gates "wasn't even trying" to block Clowney on one of the few occasions that Lawrence Taylor 2.0 made a tackle. In the Scowlmeister's post-game remarks, he wrote, "I had an A-hole behind me screaming at Mike Bobo every time we didn't gain 5 yards on a play. He seemed to miss the fact that his plan and play selection were amazing; he took Jadeveon Heisman out of the game." How can Bobo be so dumb, and Gates such a matador, on a day when we hung 41 points on a first-rate SEC defense that features the single most fabulous human specimen ever conceived by the Almighty?

Coveted Dawgmeister Game Balls go to just about everyone in the program, from coaches to tutors at the Ramsey Center. With so many plays run by both teams, such depth required to endure the long hot afternoon, and such great coordination required across so many disparate players and units, this one was a complete team victory and a great launching pad for a run back to the SEC title game.

Todd Gurley is a one-man army. One thing I got from watching the TV broadcast was that right up to the kickoff, the trainers were testing his thigh to see how fit he was to play. So he ran hard through a very rugged and talented defense for important and brutal yards on a bad leg. Because he got hurt on his first carry of the season, he's pretty much played both games injured in a vulnerable and essential area.

Here's Gurley's career at UGA so far:

Rushing						Receiving				
YEAR	ATT	YDS	AVG	LP	TD	NO.	YDS	AVG	LP	TD
2012	222	1,385	6.2	55	17	16	117	7.3	23	0
2013	42	289	6.9	75	3	1	8	8	8	1

Here are Todd's 100-yard games as a Bulldog, from highest to lowest. In his cruddiest performances, he still gets about 5 yards a carry. In 4 of his 100-yard games, he averaged over 10 yards per carry.

Date	Victim	Carries	Yards	TDs
8-31-13	Clemson	12	155	2
9-7-13	S. Carolina	30	134	1 + 1 receiving
9-22-12	Vandy	16	130	2
9-29-12	Tennessee	24	130	3
1-1-13	Nebraska	23	125	1
12-1-12	Alabama	23	122	2
10-27-12	Florida	27	118	1
11-3-12	Mississippi	18	117	0
11-10-12	Auburn	11	116	1
9-15-12	FL Atlantic	10	111	1
9-1-12	Buffalo	8	100	0 + 1 100-yd KO return

He is easily the best back to play at UGA since Garrison Hearst. Here are Hearst's 3-year totals at UGA:

Rushing						Receiving				
YEAR	ATT	YDS	AVG	LP	TD	NO.	YDS	AVG	LP	TD
1990	162	717	4.4	50	5	7	45	6.4	16	0
1991	153	968	6.3	69	9	16	177	11.0	24	0
1992	228	1,547	6.8	75	19	22	324	14.7	64	2
Totals	543	3,232	6.0	75	33	45	546	12.1	64	2

Hearst was a college All-American, was the 3rd overall pick in the draft by Arizona, played 10 years for the Cardinals, Bengals, 49ers, and Broncos, had four 1,000 yard seasons in the NFL, and is one of only two NFL players to have won the NFL Comeback Player of the Year Award twice. Gurley is playing with Aaron Murray; Hearst started out with [Greg Talley](#) and finished with [Eric Zeier](#). Murray and Zeier are roughly equal, so neither could be said to have

lower stats because of the quarterback or system. Gurley will be much more productive than Hearst was, so it's been a while since UGA has had an RB this good.

I had to go all the way back to the very early 1980s to find a running back this good in this program. Here's the best guy I could find from back then. A guy named Herschel Kendall Walker had these stats:

	Rushing					Receiving				
YEAR	ATT	YDS	AVG	LP	TD	NO.	YDS	AVG	LP	TD
1980	274	1,616	5.9	76	15	7	70	10.0	31	1
1981	385	1,891	4.9	32	18	14	84	6.0	24	2
1982	335	1,752	5.2	59	16	5	89	17.8	64	1
Totals	994	5,259	5.3	76	49	26	243	9.3	64	4

Walker got a lot more carries and substantially more yardage, especially given that they played a total of 12 games in his day, while Gurley plays 14 if we win the East. But Gurley's yards per carry average is higher. I think that Gurley playing with Murray, and Walker with Belue, explains why Walker would get more carries, given that they are passers of a different caliber and that the offensive plan revolves around the QB's skills. Gurley also shares time with Marshall, and shares the backfield with an emerging star in Hicks, whose role will surely expand in Gurley's last two years here.

At this point, the difference is in how Gurley and Walker are regarded. It's becoming more common for TV guys to say that Gurley's the best back in the country. If there's anyone better, please let me know. There's a growing perception that Todd's a rare player. The question is, though, whether he's this year's Moreno or Ingram, or someone of more elevated stature.

Walker, from his freshman year on, was perceived as being a truly transcendent talent. In hindsight, he stands out from just about every other college running back in history. Wikipedia says: "Walker is regarded as one of the top college running backs of all time. In 1999, he was selected to Sports Illustrated's NCAA Football All-Century Team. On the Fox Sports Net show *Sports List*, Walker was named the best college football running back of all time and was selected as the third greatest player in college football history by ESPN." He won a Heisman and was the star of an unbeaten national champion. Stats aside, that's the level you have to reach to be considered the greatest RB ever at UGA. I hope Gurley does it.

Incidentally, in 1981, Walker's sophomore season, the team went 10-2, but 6-0 in league play to win the SEC in the pre-playoff era. Their only regular season loss was to Clemson. Sound familiar? At season's end, Dan Marino's Pitt team beat them in the Sugar Bowl.

Dawg Doots:

- Days like Saturday can make up for a lot of other disappointments in life. Not only did we deliver a convincing win over a team that's handled us for 3 years against a coach who's owned us over the course of the career, and in doing so gave ourselves the pole

position in the SEC race, the final day's scoreboard showed losses for Notre Dame, Southern Cal, Florida, and Western Kentucky.

- That sound you heard above the stadium noise after our 4th quarter goal line stand was the gasping of my neighbors when Mrs. Butts began twerking on the front porch in celebration. What that woman can do with a foam finger defies the laws of physics.
- Nick Chubb, half of our Sonic the Hedge Dawg RB recruiting coup, played three quarters and rushed for 330 yards and five touchdowns on 24 carries in the first game of the season. As a junior, he had games of over 330 yards 5 times.
- If I didn't see a big white guy back there playing QB for Florida, I'd swear that they were being quarterbacked by [Reggie Ball](#). I caught the first half of their loss to Miami before heading over to the stadium, and he just hasn't gotten any better, and he's never played well enough to justify being a 3-year starter. Meanwhile, the broadcasters keep talking about how talented he is, and how once he improves on just a few more things and starts making better decisions, he'll be fantastic. Just like Tim Tebow, who every year has found a new coach to teach him throwing mechanics and is just about to turn the corner and become an inspiring NFL starting QB.
- Speaking of QBs for teams I hate, [Brent and Herbie](#) called the Notre Dame-Michigan game Saturday night, and they spent an inordinate amount of their analytic time narrating The Tommy Rees Story, which by their account is somewhere between *Brian's Song* and *Old Yeller* in great American biographies. Rees's QB rating for the game was 40.1. Gardner, the Michigan QB who is much better than Rees, scored 87.9. Aaron Murray's rating was 92.9 vs. SC, with 3 of the 6 incomplete passes perfectly thrown but dropped.
- From the *LA Times*: [Trojans are bad; fans are mad at Lane Kiffin; is Pat Haden listening?](#)
- The NCAA has released the following statement: "Iowa State will not face additional penalties from the NCAA following an investigation into impermissible calls and text messages to recruits. Being Iowa State is punishment enough."
- Foghorn Bullhorn made the insightful observation that, when S. Carolina plays an away game at Clemson, and when the SC fans are yelling "Go Cocks!" while Clemson players are fondling the Scrotum Pole following their climactic bus ride around the stadium, there's a moment when the two student bodies meld in a climax of ecstasy.
- According to a recent [Public Policy poll](#), the U.S. Congress is less popular than cockroaches, traffic jams, head lice, root canal procedures, brussels sprouts, used car salesmen, and NFL replacement refs. On the other hand, Congress is more popular than telemarketers, Lindsay Lohan, John Edwards, North Korea, the Kardashians, Fidel Castro, lobbyists, the Ebola virus, meth labs, communism, gonorrhea, and Lou Holtz.
- I wish they had included an item for our Ambassador to the United Nations, Dennis Rodman.
- In the following photograph, voters in Texas are captured urinating on the voting booth in response to seeing Craig James listed on the ballot:



The Coveted Dawgmeister Good Guy of the Week Award goes to WR Chris Conley. Some guys, having concluded their studies for the evening and said their prayers, drive around town with a Glock and bag of weed under the seat. They are, in the memorable words of Johnny Manziel, just being "a 20-year-old kid in college, . . . trying to live a normal life, and . . . just trying to have fun." Chris Conley, a guy whom Mark Richt describes as a workaholic, is a bit too busy for that approach to free time, which for him is not so copious. When he's not studying in his journalism major or advancing his football knowledge and skills, he's out working for one of the many foundations to which he devotes his time: one for a South Georgia kid with cancer, one for his church emphasizing the need to be bold in all aspects of life, one for the NCAA, one for the anti-bullying [StandUp Foundation](#), one for NCAA football, one for the Georgia L.E.A.D. Academy of which he is a member, and one for [Camp Sunshine](#), the Decatur-based program for kids with cancer. Chris is also the SEC's representative on the [NCAA Division Student-Athlete Advisory Committee](#) and is the only player on the 24-person NCAA Football Issues Committee. He thanks his parents, retired Air Force member Charles and teacher Christina, for impressing on him the need to serve others in life, and he has internalized this value mighty well. A great Dawg for the moment, and one for the ages. Thanks Chris!

Other athletes involved with kids' cancer programs are at work as well, and September is National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. More honorable efforts in this area are described [here](#).

The Forecast: It should be the J.J. Green, Brendan Douglas, and Hutson Mason show by the third quarter. The day's major drama will revolve around who follows Mason in the QB sequence: Did last year's pecking order hold up through camp, or has LeMay surpassed Welsh in getting game reps? Do they have a special package for Bauta? The Albanian Bane o' Y'all wears a headset and does relay work on the sidelines, so I don't think he's ready to take the field ahead of these guys. And I doubt if they'll burn Ramsey's redshirt the way they did with Stafford in an early blowout, because they knew that Stafford would probably leave after 3 years even then and knew he was their most talented QB, whereas there's no prospect of Ramsey beating out Murray this year. I also imagine we'll see some of the guys we've heard about but haven't seen much of: Wiggins, Fluker, Rankin, Mauer, Carter, Kimbrough, others. Predicting the score is like

predicting the summer temperature in Denton, Texas—it'll be mighty hot, but it's hard to say just how hot it'll get. I'll go with 55-10, but that's just ballparking it. Dawgs win.

National Game of the Week: What else, Alabama at Texas A&M. Think Alabama will be a little honked off after last year's loss? Think Johnny Manziel will get benched for douchy behavior between now and then? I think I'll be watching this one, and that it'll take A&M more than having a 12th man rooting them on. Jesse Palmer went on, and on, and on about how many people don't like Johnny Manziel, which only makes him more popular among the students and alums of Texas A&M. I think they'll find his antics a bit less adorable after Bama wins, 31-28.

National Upset of the Week: Would you believe Cal over Ohio State? Not if you've been following my previous 2 upset forecasts, in which I'm 0-2. And yet I soldier on. I'm counting on Braxton Miller to be limping a little, the road trip to be demanding, and Cal to play inspired football. The Big Ten is awful this year, and so somebody needs to knock these guys off lest the nation find them in the championship game against Louisville. So what the heck. Bears over Bucks, 34-30.

Caution: Corporate tycoons have gone broke placing actual cash wagers on The Dawgmeister's game picks.