

## **THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST: WE RUN SOUTH CAROLINA**

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### **SEPARATED@BIRTH? ARCHIVE SEPARATED@BIRTH?**



**CONAN & THE JOKER  
O'BRIEN**

I don't know if it was hotter or louder in the stadium on Saturday. It was so hot that some Clemson fans sitting near me left to go cool and dry down in a sauna halfway through the fourth quarter, along with everyone else dressed in purple and orange. And it was so loud that there were times when the crowd drowned out Foghorn Bullhorn as he was abusing the officials throughout the game.

I don't know what was better, the offense, the defense, or the special teams. The halftime twitter response to Gurley's modest touches showed why people in the stands tweet and people in the locker room coach: The coaches knew what they were doing in preparing for the fourth quarter and not wearing down the workhorse early. And those young pups seem quite capable of carrying the load to keep **TG2** fresh. When I watched the game again on Sunday on the Big Screen, announcer Brad Nessler criticized the coaches for not running Gurley more in the first half, an opinion shared at halftime by Mark May from his perspective in an air conditioned studio, where the oppressive heat and humidity were of no discomfort to him. Nessler then went on to say, in the third quarter, that UGA had "gotten too cute" with their offense by subbing at RB when Gurley should get more carries. When we unleashed the well-rested Gurley for his sensational fourth quarter, Nessler seemed entirely unaware that his low touches early were part of a strategy, actually saying that the coaches must have heard him opining from the booth and finally gotten the message. Meanwhile, booth mate Todd Blackledge kept pointing out how Georgia's "fresh legs" were paying off as we ran downhill without even pretending to have passes in the playbook.

The first drive made me wonder what Grantham was still doing on our sideline. And at halftime, from the comfort of the studio, May's sidekick Dr. Lou shook his head in bewilderment about how disappointing our defense was. But the second half showed that it didn't take long for Pruitt's approach of continual substitution to keep a fresh team on the field was working, even though it seemed in the first half that the defense never come off. We kept the high-flyin' Clemson offense off the scoreboard for the last 41 minutes and kept them from getting any traction at all in the second half; and after

some griping in the stands about the lack of pressure on the QB in the first half, we played the second with stampeding hordes of tacklers in their backfield on every down. When we really ramped up the pressure in the fourth quarter, Leonard Floyd looked a lot like Jadeveon Clowney, if only Clowney had gone hard on every play.

And the special teams were a clear advantage, from Barber's tremendous field-flipping punt when we were reeling early, to **TG2**'s score-flipping kickoff return, to Michel's downfield coverage, to just about any other category you can name. Todd got the yards on his return, but the blocking was so great that he was essentially untouched and was past the coverage well before midfield and free to sprint it out. The only complaint you might register about special teams was that Davis can't seem to get past the first guy on punt returns, but we seem to have others who can step up if he doesn't produce on returnable punts. The Human Joystick might get his chances in Columbia in two weeks.

The crowd was pretty dang good too. There was only one time in the entire game that anybody in my section issued the familiar "C'mon, Bobo!! What are you doing out there, Bobo!" when a play didn't get a first down. And if Negatron was in the house, he was outshouted by people who actually seem to like and support the team. It wasn't quite as deafeningly supportive as the LSU game last year, but it was the kind of game that made me glad that a ton of 4-5 star recruits were in Athens for the evening's pleasantries.

About the only complaint you could make about Saturday was the absence of a vertical passing game—although we threw a few endzone passes early, none was what you'd call The Bomb. But the OL was tremendous in the ground game, so maybe we just didn't need to throw the ball, as the entire second half demonstrated conclusively. OK, one more: I thought that Mason might get to take a bow when we were running down the clock, and that one of the backups, either Faton "The Albanian Bane O' Y'all" Bauta or Brice "The Camden County Cannon" Ramsey, might get some snaps. I suppose we'll wait for Troy for the backups to get experience, maybe even S. Carolina. But it'd have been nice to have seen on Saturday.

Notable stats:

<b>Player</b>	<b>Carries</b>	<b>Yards</b>	<b>Y.P.C.</b>	<b>Kick Ret.</b>	<b>TDs</b>
Gurley	15	198	13.2	106	4
Chubb	4	70	17.5	0	1
Clemson	45	102	2.3	108	2

Keep in mind that Gurley began the day with one carry for -1 yards and one catch for -5 yards. Nice recovery from a slow start, big guy.

During Clemson's opening drive, and for much of the first half, Blackledge was very high on Stoudt, saying that Clemson wasn't missing a beat from last year's tempo. It wasn't till the second half that he looked ordinary, and who wouldn't with Leonard Floyd in the backfield on every play? I've also read about Hutson Mason's "nondescript" game, but on second viewing, he played the game he needed to play. He managed the game, handled the ball exceptionally well (a Bobo trademark), was mostly on target, and did

his job a lot better than the Lamestream Sportswriters who were so unimpressed with his game.

## **DAWG DOOTS**

- ☞ Dan Magill, R. I. P.
- ☞ The volume and selection for musical interludes emanating from the Jumbotron on Saturday had me pining for the good old days of Genesis and Van Morrison. My sense is that our crowds have become increasingly loud in the last few years. But I think it's because of the team and belief in the program, rather than how loudly the speakers can blast percussion-driven noise to the crowd.
- ☞ Speaking of the Jumbotron, whoever was at the controls listed #35 RB A. J. Turman (who was not dressed out) as the playmaker when #35 DB Aaron Davis intercepted a pass.
- ☞ Lou Holtz had some fascinating insights at halftime of the Virginia-UCLA game, when they reported that Ohio State was losing to Navy. According to Dr. Lou, "zsfytrsvystystqfklyzxvqsrhlpzzzffssst."
- ☞ My one suggestion to the coaches is to take a couple of OL who aren't getting reps—guys like Xavier Ward and Zach DeBell—and adding them to the TE rotation as blockers. Given their devotion to reading *The Dawgmeister* for coaching wisdom, I'm confident we'll see this development soon.
- ☞ During recruiting, I named Sony Michel and Nick Chubb **Sonic the Hedgedawg**, a moniker that is much adored by both of my readers but used nowhere else that I can find. Those cats can play. So can my nickname.
- ☞ Many people thought that when Pruitt had Aaron Davis running with the first team in camp, it was to motivate scholarship players to get better. But Davis was out there a ton. Time to shift this narrative from Davis serving as leverage on other guys to Davis being one heck of a player.
- ☞ Our coaches know 1,000 times more about football than I do. That said...I'm surprised that Tramel Terry is a mile deep in the depth chart as a converted DB when we're short of WRs, the position he had been playing and reluctantly gave up at the coaches' insistence.
- ☞ I am further surprised that Texas A&M blew out Spurrier's Gamecocks the way Spurrier's Gators used to blow out Florida A&M.
- ☞ During the LSU-Wisconsin game, Chris Spielman, who knows 500 times more about football than I do, opined that Melvin Gordon of UW is the nation's best running back. He's good, but I agree with Little Woolly: 16 carries for 140 yards and a puny 8.8 y.p.c. just wouldn't cut it in Athens these days.
- ☞ "Pretty much since I've been here, we've been coming up short in big games. Obviously, people will say, 'Wisconsin can't win a big game.' I'm pretty sure we'll be hearing that all year." ~Melvin Gordon
- ☞ Several years ago, Alabama won a national title with Terrence "Mount" Cody at NT, whose 360 pound expanse blocked off the middle of the field. That began a trend to oversized NTs such as John Jenkins, who would do the same for UGA and bring us a championship. But FSU won a national title with a lighter NT, and now a quicker guy like Mike Thornton holds the position in the 290s while 340 pounders wait for second and third team reps.

- ☞ The Owlmeister is most offended at Temple's listing in the [Bottom Ten](#). What does that make Vanderbilt?
- ☞ During the post-game radio show, one of the guys said that Deal and Carter had better watch out because Jeremy Pruitt could be elected Governor of Georgia right now.
- ☞ What a waste of talent that would be.
- ☞ Peyton Manning was fined \$8,268 by the NFL for taunting D.J. Swearinger following a hit that gave Wes Welker a concussion. In other news, the Scowlmeister was fined \$82.68 by the Pessimist Club for insufficient taunting of and swearing at Clemson during the fourth quarter.

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

Thomas Davis is not the only UGA Good Guy playing for the Carolina Panthers. This week's Good Guy can often be seen doing Double Dawg Gang Tackles with Davis on Sundays: **Charles Johnson**. Like Davis, Charles is a small-town sensation—Hawkinsville High School, to be precise—who starred at UGA, left early for the NFL, and is now, at 27 years of age, a stalwart on the Panthers' DL. After coming from a single-parent home headed by his mother, a minimum-wage nursing home employee, Charles is in the middle of a six-year, \$76 million contract. His mother has retired in the new house that Charles bought her upon signing his first professional contract. You won't find Charles going diss for diss against Richard Sherman any time soon. In fact, you're lucky if you've ever heard him speak, given that he's quiet and reserved. Teammate Greg Hardy says that "He's not an outspoken, in-the-media type guy. But he's an instrumental guy in the locker room (and) on the field. He's always rallying us, getting us together, holding us together and just being a team leader." To rival division coach Mike Smith, Charles is "relentless . . . He's a high-effort guy. . . . He's got a motor that doesn't stop." Charles does more these days than sack quarterbacks. He's devoted to little Charles, Jr., and gives back to the community. The [Charles Johnson Foundation](#), along with a variety of corporate groups, recently sponsored the third annual Sports Academy and Community Weekend in Hawkinsville at which he gave out two \$20,000 scholarships, hosted a college fair, gave athletics equipment to his high school alma mater, and provided guidance to over 1,000 kids in a variety of sports through volunteer efforts from Charles' NFL and NBA networks, including fellow Dawgs Thomas Davis, Fernando Velasco, Leonard Pope, Corvey Irvin, and Justin Houston. Charles's Foundation also provided a Community Night that celebrated Hawkinsville and produced meals for needs residents and sports equipment to Hawkinsville HS. With the mission of helping under-served youth reach their potential and support single African American mothers, the Charles Johnson Foundation gives back to his hometown so that other kids can have opportunities to make it in life. A great guy and great Dawg: Charles Johnson.



## **THE FORECAST**

### **NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: MICHIGAN STATE AT OREGON**

The best in the Big 10 faces off against the best in the PAC-12. I'll believe a West Coast team is great when they beat someone besides another great West Coast team. MSU plays some D, something they're unaccustomed to out West. I think they'll play enough to win this one. Sparty tail-slaps the Beavers, 28-27.

### **NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: E. CAROLINA AT S. CAROLINA**

Most teams would love to open the season with 3 home games and the nation's longest home winning streak. Oops, cancel that. Gamecocks will be reeling from getting trampled by TAMU and shortchange their prep for both ECU and UGA by not knowing which game is more important. SC's defense could not stop a canoe full of Care Bears, much less a boatload of Pirates. Avast, Maties: Royal Purple & Old Gold over Garnet & Black, 31-30.