

## THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST: DAWGS' CONQUERING HORDE TRAMPLES SC

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SEPARATED@BIRTH? ARCHIVE

### SEPARATED@BIRTH?



**LOU HOLTZ & THE APPLE-  
THROWING TREE IN  
THE WIZARD OF OZ**

As the Clemson game sinks in, I increasingly admire Coaches Richt and Bobo for being so patient in letting Gurley out of the chute. Absolutely everybody questioned their decision to play other guys, even as Chubb and Michel played exceptionally well in many facets of the game. The decision to rep the whole first four and backload Gurley's carries took guts, comprised a major risk, and required a deep reserve of *chutzpah*. This was a big game, and it took guts to go toe-to-toe with Clemson for a half with Gurley in reserve. Clemson had come to play, and at halftime I felt a little fortunate that the game was tied. I think that our rotation was the perfect strategy for playing a game on such a steaming afternoon, both in the backfield and across the team. The coaches made the right decision, and rather than Gurley being limited as everyone complained, he blew up the record book of a program that has a good claim to the title of Tailback U.

[Bernie of the Dawg Blawg](#) made the observation that “The offensive line absolutely dominated...in the fourth quarter. Here's one question: Outside of Clemson being dog tired late, why was the blocking so much better for three running backs compared to one? Maybe I'm missing it, but it didn't appear to me that Keith Marshall did anything wrong. But his average per rush is vastly different than his position mates.”

Marshall might be tentative as he goes live for the first time since being injured. But I also don't think that Marshall sees holes as well as Gurley. Marshall is a tremendously skilled athlete who can get big yardage in a hurry when the play's design and execution give him space to work with. But he seems to run to the hole that's designed to be opened, much as Richard Samuel did, and I think as Brendan Douglas does—even when that hole is stuffed by the defense.

Gurley, in contrast, re-evaluates the play once it's in motion and goes to the hole that opens as the play unfolds. Go [here](#) and cue the tape at the 42 second mark; then jump to 1:54. (Of course, you'll end up watching everything else on the highlight reel, too.) Neither play went as designed because Gurley adjusted to the lanes that he saw once the

blockers met the real defense, rather than the one anticipated by the play's design. Now, he does a lot else too, like squeeze through tiny lanes, break tackles, recover his balance after hits, accelerate through holes and beyond with a sudden and shocking shift of gears, and sprint past people and outrun them once he's in the open field. But I think his ability to see what's there and make decisions that allow his physical gifts to dominate opponents is a big part of why he does what nobody else can do. It also prevents him from taking big hits because he runs to space instead of designed holes.

Both Richard Samuel and Keith Marshall, and Douglas too, have been excellent backs with exceptional physical ability who've played some fine football between the hedges. They're also very smart young men of high citizenship and team orientation. If Samuel hadn't hurt his ankle so badly in his great game against Florida as a junior, he might have had a more memorable career here. Like Marshall, he ran each play as designed, and both have run into their blockers when a hole in the defense isn't available as designed. In contrast, Gurley runs into spaces wherever they appear, regardless of where the hole is supposed to be.

I hope that Marshall's low production was simply rust, and that he will join our powerhouse RB rotation as a major contributor, which he had become when he got injured last year. Marshall has been very productive when healthy and would himself be the alpha Dawg had Gurley gone somewhere else and Keith not gotten injured. I hope that the coaches help him to pay attention to how Gurley creates his own holes based on what he sees developing, and that Keith learns to see the unfolding play through Gurley's penetrating vision rather than strictly through the design of the play.

Gurley is an elite athlete, but he's a lot more than just a big fast guy. He's a smart guy in the general way, but when he plays football, he has an uncanny ability to process a play instantaneously. He knows not only what is in front of him, but what's awaiting after he gets past the first line of defenders in the space that the clash of lines opens up for him. Once he's there, it's a big gain or a TD. That's why he's so much better than other big, strong, fast, shifty running backs, of which there are few.

One thing you can't deny about Todd Gurley: He's a runaway train when UGA plays Clemson. Game stats for [2013](#) and [2014](#) combined: 27 carries for 352 yards for a 13 yard per carry average, going for 5 TDs, plus one kickoff return for 106 yards and one TD. I suspect he'll make Clemson's All-Decade Opponents team.

Last comment on Gurley: He is the greatest RB I've ever seen on a regular basis. Back when Hershel and Bo were in the SEC, cable was pretty new, and I didn't have it. You only saw those guys a couple of times a year, if that often, if you lived in a different region, as I did. So I'm not being an infidel by saying Gurley is better than Walker. But I am saying that I've been following college football in person since 1990, and Gurley is the best RB, and perhaps greatest player, I've seen on any field or screen since then.

## **DAWG DOOTS**

- ☞ "He's a beast." ~Nick Chubb, speaking of Todd Gurley
- ☞ "That dude's a beast." ~Todd Gurley, speaking of Nick Chubb

- Ⓔ The SEC Network was considering running a feature on the Scowlmeister's showering habits, but cancelled it when they learned that it needed to be preceded by a parental advisory.
- Ⓔ A new report found that Georgia's adult obesity rate of 30.3 ranks 18<sup>th</sup> nationally. If that rate includes all the weight lost by our linemen, then the rest of y'all better lay off the pork rinds.
- Ⓔ Jakar "The Hitman" Hamilton came to UGA as a superstud safety out of GMC's junior college program, but struggled and transferred to S. Carolina State when he was told he had to sit out a year due to a stress fracture. He's now on the Dallas Cowboys, serving a 4-game suspension for violating the league's substance abuse policy. Too bad Louisville was not an option for him after his year in Athens.
- Ⓔ Little Woolly sprained both ankles leaping heroically from a balcony to save Wags, the family bulldog, from Michael Vick.
- Ⓔ Aaron Hernandez, according to police investigators, is now a suspect in the disappearance of Jimmy Hoffa.
- Ⓔ All three of my readers will benefit from reading [The Dawgmeister's Recommended Rules Changes in Football, Basketball, & Soccer](#).
- Ⓔ I saw that Isaiah Crowell has made the Browns' roster. Hope he's on track to become what he once might have been.
- Ⓔ The Browns kept two QBs, Hoyer and Manziel, and kept Connor Shaw for the practice squad. Shaw is one of my most respected opponents in my time at UGA, and I'd take him in my locker room over Manziel any day.
- Ⓔ The Scowlmeister noted that, in my forecast of the Michigan State vs. Oregon game, I mistakenly referred to Oregon as the "Beavers" instead of "Ducks." I wish those guys out there would make up their minds.
- Ⓔ If you're offended by Native American team mascots, be aware that you've got options:



**A VERY SPECIAL DAWGMEISTER TRIBUTE  
TO SWELLIN' KELLEN**

In January, in a Target parking lot, Kellen Winslow, Jr. was flagged for illegal use of hands.

Winslow indignantly called the allegation whacky, saying that only a jerk off would amuse himself by believing it. He must, he said, beat off lawsuits all the time because people like to service himself with subpoenas. He thought that he could beat his meeting with the judge by flogging the log of the arresting officer and rubbing out his name, but shot his wad long before he could reach this climax.

Winslow acknowledged, however, that [“Mr. Happy” had become a “Funky Monkey”](#) while he was taking his turn at the self-serve station.

Winslow adamantly insisted that the “Junior” following his name does not refer to any particular part of his body.

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

**Jeff Owens** was one of two Dawgs off the DL taken in the 2011 NFL Draft. The other was Geno Atkins, who quickly became the most feared DT in the league before blowing out his knee a year ago. Jeff was rated as Geno’s equal when both came out of Florida high schools to sign with the Dawgs, but Jeff’s injury set him back. At UGA he was team co-captain and named to 2009 Allstate American Football Coaches Association Good Works Team. Jeff also entered the media fray, named as the “SEC’s Best Personality” in 2009, and since graduation, doing sports radio on The Fan Sports Radio in Savannah and cohosting The Jeff Owens Show with his friend from UGA, WNBA player Tasha Humphrey, on the VoiceAmerica Sports Channel. Jeff was an important player for the Dawgs, but his injuries dropped him to the seventh round of the draft, taken by Philadelphia. He was waived, then bounced back to the practice squad, then made the roster, but ruptured his left patellar tendon rupture in a late game against the Vikings and ultimately was waived after failing his physical. So much for living the NFL dream. It didn’t take Jeff long to rebound, however, showing the resilience he’d learned from rehabbing his knee while at UGA. Within a month of being waived by the Eagles, Jeff was on the defensive coaching staff of West Forsyth HS, where his old coach from Fort Lauderdale had taken over the head coaching job. Jeff says, “I always liked Georgia since I came here to go to school, and I’m making this my home. Hopefully I can keep coaching right here at West a few more years, and hopefully when Coach [Hepler] retires, take over.” He said the last part with a laugh, but don’t be surprised if it happens. When Coach Hep talks about Jeff’s high school days, he emphasizes not his great size, but his great intelligence. Just 24 years old, Jeff appears well on his way in the coaching profession, not only with his knowledge and smarts but with the big time enthusiasm he brings to practices. Helper says that “He even gets me pumped up. I can see he’s got the other coaches pumped up and the kids. He does bring some emotion to the game. What you see from Georgia, that’s kind of what he’s bringing, that same excitement. ... He’s bringing a lot to us and he’s great with the kids, so he’s got a real knack for coaching.” Jeff is growing in his understanding of how hard it is to coach, but has the qualities to make it big. He says, “It’s very tiring because I’m yelling and screaming, just trying to motivate the guys and keep pushing the guys. I just want to get

every ounce out of each guy ... I love football, I love the game, I'm very passionate about it. I just want to show guys how passionate I am and hopefully I can bring that passion out of them." Don't be shocked if West Forsyth suddenly starts turning out defensive players who play with that same desire and heads-up approach. They are being coached up in the extreme by one of UGA's finest.



## **THE FORECAST**

### **DAWGS VS. SOUTH CAROLINA**

Both the Owlmeister and Scowlmeister were most impressed by Carolina QB Dylan Parsley's 366 yard, 4 TD game against TAMU, but I was less so. They fell so far behind that they had to throw it. Their running game is mediocre with Davis hurt, so they had to keep chucking it in a desperate attempt to close a scoring gap that only kept getting wider. On defense, I'm not sure which was worse, SC's tackling or their coverage. But it's clear that they have perhaps the worst defense in the SEC, challenged only by Vandy. Maybe they'll get it together by the time we go up to Columbia, but I think not. If they couldn't tackle anyone on TAMU, what on earth will they do when our backfield of beasts stampedes downhill at them through gaping holes blown open by our brutes upfront? Dawgs continue to click, Cocks continue to clunk. Good Guys, 41-14.

### **NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: UCF AT MISSOURI**

It's not a big week on the national scene, so UCF at Missouri is about the best game not being played in S. Carolina this week. UCF is going to have to learn to live without Blake Bortles, but TAMU has shown that you can do pretty well after the BMOC heads off to party his way out of the NFL. George O'Leary might not know how to write a résumé, but the boy can coach. I'm going to go against the SEC in this one. Knightro, 31-28.

### **NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: TENNESSEE AT OKLAHOMA**

I think that Oklahoma's bowl win over Alabama has produced inflated rankings. Trevor Knight had the game of his life vs. Bama, and the expectation is now that he'll do it every week. But he never had before breaking out under the Superior Dome in January. Expectations for Tennessee are moderate, and I see them exceeding them on the road. Upset in Norman: Vols over Sooners, 35-34.

*Disclaimer: If you bet actual money based on The Dawgmeister's forecasts, please get help.*