# THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST: DAWGS TOTALLY TOSS TIGERS

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ROD BLAGOJEVICH

"Mama, don't let your babies grow up to be coaches."

And in the ninth game, they found the endzone.

Don't let 'em blow whistles and yell at the refs.

UGA is now 6-3 and is bowl eligible for the 15<sup>th</sup> straight year under Mark Richt, with a reasonable shot at finishing 9-3. The teams we've lost to have a combined record of 21-6; late Saturday night, Alabama demolished a powerful LSU team in a dominating game similar to the one in which they destroyed the Dawgs in a downpour in Athens. (Florida, did they play on Saturday?) And if we'd held onto a TD pass at the end of the Tennessee game, we might be 7-2 with only 2 losses, albeit thorough whompings in games we needed to win. Two of those three losses came without Nick Chubb and his penciled-in 160 yards per game.

Based on this performance, Jeff Schultz, whose qualification for being a sportswriter is that he is a sentient being with opposable thumbs, has called for Richt's termination. Mark Bradley also believes that it's time for Richt to go. And The Scowlmeister is ready to move on as well.

Mark Bradley is unconvinced that beating Kentucky has any meaning, since they are a low-tier SEC team. According to Bradley's own self-penned biographical statement, he "is a University of Kentucky grad but grew up rooting for Louisville, which probably says

something." Yes, attending Kentucky and pulling for the university where Bobby Petrino was re-hired, where the basketball coach has found new and compelling uses of pool tables, where the basketball team spends more on strippers and call girls than on tutors, and where the <u>university president has appeared in public in racist costuming</u>—Yes, that does say something. Following the game, Mark Bradley wrote, "Georgia under Mark Richt is still capable of winning games; it just appears incapable of winning a championship." Sorry there, Richt has already won SEC championships, and has had a team ranked #2 in the final polls. How many football games have you won, Mark Bradley?

Make 'em be cowboys and cowgirls and such.

Last week I offered possible head coaching candidates who are outsiders to football. If it works in politics, how could it go wrong in football?

But this week, among the many rumors and accusations, we have heard that UGA under Richt is too soft. Toward that end, I'll suggest some coaching changes that will toughen up the program.

- **Head Coach**: Mack Breed, the Texas high school assistant coach who ordered two of his players to take out the ref who made calls against his team. Chutzpah!
- **Offensive Line Coach**: Richie Incognito, would make sure that offensive linemen did not do pussy stuff like read books.
- **Running Backs Coach**: Lawrence Phillips, multiple assaults and weapons charges, killed his former cellmate. Passionate.
- **Wide Receivers Coach**: Rae Carruth, hired 2 hitmen to kill his pregnant girlfriend, would have players hearing footsteps, day and night.
- **Quarterbacks Coach**: Michael Vick, would motivate Dawgs to play at higher level or be hung, electrocuted, drowned, or beaten to death.
- **Defensive Line Coach**: Mark Gastineau, beat up women, found Jesus, ready to return to beating up men.
- **Linebackers Coach**: Ray Lewis, the possibility that he really did kill somebody will always be in the back of players' minds.
- **Defensive Backs Coach**: Sean "Diddy" Combs, father of and agent for UCLA DB Justin Combs, will also be in charge of the weight room.
- **Special Teams Coach**: Sebastian Janikowski, arrested for bar fights, DUI, reckless driving, bribing a police officer, evidence tampering, and possessing a date rape drug. Wide range of convictions suggests that he is versatile enough to oversee all of the special teams.

They're never at home even when they're around.

One of the commentators wrote that the time has finally come for UGA to pick between The Georgia Way and The Winning Way. Other teams around the conference stock up on guys who get kicked off our team, with Auburn even proud of its "Second Chance U" reputation. According to this perspective, our citizenship and discipline policies make it

impossible for UGA to compete for those championships that Mark Bradley thinks we haven't won.

The person most responsible for this sorry state of affairs, according to this article, is Dr. Michael Adams, former UGA president, who believed that shaping up our sports programs' reputations for things like graduating our student-athletes would enhance the value of a UGA diploma. That emphasis on having the university rise higher in national rankings is making us soft and destined for lower rankings in the rankings that count, those voted on by sportswriters.

Because you just can't have it both ways. Can you, Stanford?

They never, no never, feel loved.

- A Coveted Dawgmeister Game Ball is awarded this week to A.J. and Miranda Green for establishing the A.J. Green Family Football Scholarship to provide support for a student-athlete on the UGA football team, and the A.J. Green Family Scholarships to support two needs-based UGA students; first preference will be given to honor students from South Carolina, with second preference to students from metro Atlanta. All recipients will be chosen by UGA's Office of Student Financial Aid.
- A Coveted Dawgmeister Game Ball is awarded this week to The Albanian Bane O' Y'all, Faton Bauta, who, in the days after getting his one and only shot at being QB1 at UGA and throwing four interceptions, volunteered to play safety on the scout team instead of moping around and feeling sorry for himself.

# **DAWG DOOTS**

Foghorn Bullhorn told me that when he and Mrs. Bullhorn recently visited the Loveliest Village on the Plains, he accidentally left his car window down while parked near the football stadium, and when he returned his car was filled with bags of zucchini and diplomas from the Department of Public Administration at Auburn University.



Ray Drew never quite turned into the Pastor of Disaster we all anticipated when he committed to the Dawgs as a 5-star recruit and national #1 ranked defensive end out of Thomas County Central HS. Ray's career in Athens was more one of the Capable Crusader than Holy Terror. He struggled to fit in with the Grantham system, shifting positions from outside linebacker to defensive tackle and end where he eventually contributed. He was not helped by the fact that he played for a different position coach each year, going from Grantham to Garner to Wilson to Rocker, a revolving door that never cohered into a unified perspective on how to play his ever-changing position. Rather than being the 3-and-out stud that we had in mind based on his incredible high school career, Ray played four years and went undrafted, ultimately signing a free agent contract with Miami. For many college athletes, such a disappointing career might mean a turn toward the streets, but football was always part of his life, not his whole life. As his nicknames suggest, Ray is a man of God, and his faith has sustained him through setbacks that might have left a lesser man in search of his soul. At UGA, Ray used his status as licensed minister to preach the Gospel to Georgia congregations, shuttling from class to practice field to pulpit and carrying the Word with him no matter where he went. Ray answered the call to ministry in the eighth grade. A Baptist by upbringing, he seeks to break down religious barriers that come between people of faith by seeing through denominational differences and urging people to do the Lord's work as one great team. He also admonishes those in the pews to seek a higher purpose than simply accumulating wealth and possessions, believing that they distract people from their mission in life to serve their faith community righteously. Similarly, football is not an end in itself but a means through which to achieve greater goals: "Being on the Georgia Bulldogs football team is an awesome opportunity. I love football, but it also gives me a bigger platform to spread the Gospel and appeal to more people." Ray, however, was not all God and Gridiron. He was an excellent student, earning Watkins Family Football Scholarships each year on campus while majoring in Communication Studies. He also was named the team's Most Improved Player of the Year as a senior when he started 11 games and tied for the NCAA leadership in blocked kicks with three. Although never the immortal star that his high school press clippings suggested, Ray has made his mark in the hearts, minds, and spirits of many he's met along the way. In the long run, that will matter more than quarterback sacks and cheers from the crowd. When the excitement finally fades from sports and it's time to get on with life, this is one Dawg who will commit to a different G, and that will set him well in a different eternity than any football career can provide.

#### **GOOD GUY ARCHIVE**

# THE FORECAST

### **DAWGS VS. AUBURN**

Auburn rotates three quarterbacks: Kerryon "Dead Meat" Johnson, Jeremy "Germy Johnson" Johnson, and Sean "Of the Dead" White. Germy was supposed to be Cam II, and Auburn's preseason Top 5 ranking was based in large part on the anticipation that he would be better than ex-Dawg Nick Marshall, but he now primarily comes in to run the wildcat. It doesn't help that their receivers struggle to catch the ball and that they somehow don't have fearsome running backs.

The other big reason that Auburn had an initial high ranking was their hire of Will Muschamp to run the defense. But as reported in the Alabama press: "Will Muschamp has had deficiencies in his past defenses, but never as widespread as the issues he's having thus far at Auburn. The woes of last season—difficulty developing pass rush, getting off the field on third down and stopping mobile quarterbacks and elite running backs—are continuing to plague an Auburn defense Muschamp . . . said had championship talent."

So, Auburn has struggled on offense, and struggled on defense.....till Saturday, when it all came together for them in a solid win over ranked TAMU, their first win over a good team this season and, they hope, a sign that they've turned it around. Which sets up a fairly intriguing game next weekend, at least intriguing to the fans of the two programs. So often, this game has had national significance, but next weekend, it drew the noon slot, competing for viewers' attention with Tulane vs. Army and other inconsequential games or anticipated blowouts.

Like UGA, in September the Tigers had outsized expectations but enter November seeking an identity. I've even heard rumblings from Auburn about Malzahn being Chizik II, with boosters wondering if he's a long-term answer or a one-hit wonder. I hope that Mark Richt takes comfort in the fact that people's memories are as short elsewhere as they are in Athens.

UGA got their TD mojo back against an OK defense against Kentucky, and in the absence of dynamic QB play, found ways to get the ball moving on the ground with their Wild Dawg formations. Auburn's defense stopped the strength of TAMU, their offense. And UGA's defense played an impressive game against Kentucky, which had scored a good many points behind a QB that some think will be a pro yet who had an awful game against us. Sounds to me like a tight game's a-coming, one whose winner probably gets a special teams break or turnover advantage. Time for the ball to bounce UGA's way: Good guys, 21-20.

### NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: OKLAHOMA AT BAYLOR

It's still hard for me to believe that Baylor got this good this fast. Occasionally, a doormat program gets the right coach—see Bill Snyder, Kansas State—and suddenly they become a powerhouse. This game is huge for both programs, perhaps even a ticket to the Final Four if things break their way. I'm going with the underdog, in this case Oklahoma, which, aside from its incomprehensible loss to Texas, has run it up on opponents with their walk-on transfer QB. Sooners, 51-48.

## NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: MINNESOTA OVER IOWA

Iowa has had the magic touch this year, but it's always hard to sustain. Minnesota has come close a few times this year, and this time gets over the hump. Gophers over Hawkeyes, 24-20.