

**THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST:
DAWGS ENGINEER 9-3 SEASON**

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SEPARATED@BIRTH?**



**LISTLESS SCHMUCK
PAUL JOHNSON**



**CHRISTMAS CROOK
THE GRINCH**

“There was little joy in Dogville this week. The Bulldog Nation was in full grouse-mode after the close call.” ~Chip Towers

It's hard to disagree with Chip on this one. After an opening drive that appeared to set the tone for a good, old-fashioned rout of an undermanned in-state opponent—the sort of which UGA has whopped without exception for the last 87 years—they went flat until they made a stop at the end of regulation and then put the hammer down convincingly in overtime. But between the beginning and end, there were about 55 minutes in which Georgia Southern appeared to be the better team.

What a long, strange trip this season has been. The team is 8-3 and heading to Atlanta to take on a 3-8 rival, and is one dropped TD pass in Knoxville from being a New Year's Day bowl team. Greyson Lambert is hitting 64% of his passes with an 11-2 TD/INT ratio; Dak Prescott, probably the league's best QB, is at 66% and 23/3. The team has persevered through a devastating injury to its best player, and Sony Michel is closing in on 1,000 yards and a 5+ yards-per-carry season in relief. The defense has been stout for the most part and is generally credited with making us competitive and bailing out an offense that struggles to score.

And yet, we are generally regarded as disappointing and underperforming, and it feels that way after Saturday's game.

Teams often let down against perceived weaker opponents; the SEC East illustrated that well on Saturday, with Florida also needing OT to beat an inferior in-state rival, and S. Carolina winding down its dreadful season with a loss to The Citadel, which at least was good at its own level of competition (8-3) and now is winner of its last 2 of 3 games against SC. Those games tend to be viewed as light workouts by the favorites and the Super Bowl for the opponents, and it can show; just ask mighty Ohio State and its close win over Northern Illinois in September. Or how about 10-1 Oklahoma and its only loss to a terrible Texas team, and 10-1 North Carolina starting the season with a loss to a South Carolina so bad that Steve Spurrier quit rather than trying to coach them.

But that never pacifies The Faithful in the stands and on the couch. It's hard to prepare enthusiastically as a fan for GT when the team seemed to play down to the competition on Saturday. The team is happy for the win and wishes the fans would take the W and be content, but in this league it just doesn't work that way. They say that Les Miles and Gus Malzahn, two proven winners like Mark Richt, are coaching for their jobs as the season winds down, and I'm sure there are others out there facing the same problem: There are dozens of programs for whom only championships are acceptable. UGA is among them, and shaky wins over weaker opponents seem to be w's more than W's. I hope that the team is fired up on Saturday in ATL and finishes the season with a 4-game winning streak and a respectable bowl game and opponent. But even in a season where the final numbers look pretty good, it's hard to say that this season is one to brag about.

DAWG DOOTS

- ☞ Georgia Tech researchers this year were awarded the [Ig Nobel Prize](#) for their water-breaking study of how long it takes people to pee. If my experiences in the Sanford Stadium Men's Rooms is any indication, it takes way too long.
- ☞ And given the condition of the floors of the men's rooms by halftime of most games, I think it'd be appropriate to hang up signs over the urinals saying, "Stand closer. It's really not that long."
- ☞ Headline in Monday's paper: **Man in Nick Chubb jersey runs from police**
- ☞ "I'm pretty sure it wasn't Nick Chubb." ~Little Woolly
- ☞ Expectations can be crushing. How about *Sports Illustrated's* preseason championship forecasts: The Washington Nationals winning the World Series, and the Baltimore Ravens (3-7) winning the Super Bowl.
- ☞ A Coveted Dawgmeister Salute to Temple, who blasted Memphis, a team that a few weeks ago was in the Final Four discussion and now has a record identical to UGA's. The Owlmeister is hooting these days, and if his beloved Owls take out UConn next week, Temple plays for their league championship for the first time since the Taft administration.

THE COVETED DAWGMEISTER GOOD GUY OF THE WEEK AWARD



A few decades ago, UGA wasn't much better than its opponents in providing high-quality academic support for its student-athletes. If you don't believe me, ask the Ghost of Jan Kemp, who still floats the campus reminding us that we need to do better academically on behalf of those who come to Athens to play between the hedges, and within our other athletic field borders. In the late 1990s, the academic support center was in a corner of the McWhorter Hall cafeteria, a dump of a location that sent everyone the message that this aspect of the program was a low priority. When Rankin Smith sold the Atlanta Falcons and needed to get some tax relief, he cut a check to UGA to build the [Rankin Smith Student Athlete Academic Center](#) between Foley Field and the Stegosaurus. With this state-of-the-art facility finally standing, it needed some people to run it with dedication and care. That's when, in 2006, Good Guy and [Kris Humphries lookalike Ted White](#) was persuaded to leave his position as Director of the Academic Center for Student-Athletes at LSU and become an institution in UGA athletics. In 2014 Ted was promoted to the title of Senior Associate Athletic Director for Student Development, based on the outstanding job he's done as Sport Facilitator for Baseball and Equestrian and director of the Smith Center. Ted has a West Coast background, with a B.A. in Communication from UC-San Diego, where he also played baseball, and positions as Management Team Member and Director of Academic Support at UC-Berkeley and Coordinator of Academics and Eligibility at UC-Davis; and he's also earned a Master's Degree in Sport Management from the University of Richmond. With Ted at the helm, [UGA student-athletes have been performing at unprecedentedly high levels](#), something that is a source of pride for the whole university community. At most places, the primary concern of the coaches and many fans is eligibility: making sure that, during the season, everyone's ready to suit up and play. Here, the goal is graduation, often before the scholarship period is over. That takes a lot of diligence in tracking progress and performance, and a coordinated team effort from everyone who tutors, mentors, administers, and coaches the players. That can't happen without one dedicated professional running the show. Ted's not just a local hero, either. He's the recipient of one of his field's highest honors, the National Association of Academic Advisors of Athletics (N4A) Distinguished Service Award, for 2015. The Athletic Association's announcement of this award included the following: "During White's tenure, the graduation success rate (GSR) for Georgia's student-athletes has risen from 64 percent to 84 percent. Included that span are increases of 41 percent to 82 percent among football players from 2005 to 2013 and from 19 percent to 71 percent among men's basketball players from 2005 to 2014. This spring, UGA's student-athletes posted a 3.05 grade point average and since 2011, the combined GPA is 3.01. Prior to 2009, UGA student-athletes had never earned a term average of 3.0 or higher. In addition, since

White came to Athens, Georgia has produced 39 College Sports Information Directors of America Academic All-Americans in seven different sports.” Thanks to Ted White, our athletes, no matter how they do in sports, have a credential, contacts, and knowledge that will prepare them for the next stage of their lives. That’s a major value of our Athletics Association, and we’ve found the right man to lead the way.

GOOD GUY ARCHIVE

THE FORECAST

DAWGS VS. GEORGIA TECH

If you didn’t like our season, try being a Tech fan this year. OK, sorry, I didn’t really mean that. I haven’t actually watched them play, but good lord have they stunk. Without their fluke win over FSU—the high point of my season when the Dawgs haven’t been involved—they’d have started 2-0, outscoring their cruddy opponents 134-16 as they always do against teams in the national bottom 10, and then dropped 9 straight to the likes of Miami and Virginia. We might be disappointing, but aside from getting crushed by Alabama and Florida and losing Chubblessly to Tennessee, we have taken care of business. We’ll do it again at noon on Saturday: Dawgs go to 9-3 and come home winners, 24-13.

NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: MICHIGAN OVER OHIO STATE

What an amazing scene after OSU’s tough loss to MSU on Saturday: A coaching staff that’s hardly lost a game in Columbus gets ripped by its own players. And I thought UGA fans were unreasonable. I think that it’s going to be hard for the coaches to know what to do with a backup QB who thinks he’s NFL material based on a handful of starts, or an excellent RB who has already told the team he’s done with them because, in a game that he wasn’t even expected to play in, he got limited carries. It’s always been hard for me to pull for Urban Meyer, but even I wonder about this sort of response after a very rare, and very close, loss to a top team. But I think it’s going to be hard for them to rally to do what they need to do to beat Michigan, given the distractions that two of their key players have created over the past weekend with their mouths. I’m going with the team that stole Princeton’s helmet design: UMich, 21-20.

NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: ARMY OVER NAVY

Army could make a good case for being the best 2-9 team in the country, for whatever that’s worth. Most of their losses have been by just a few points. Navy’s QB is now a Heisman candidate, and I’m sure he’ll get his usual 3 TD runs. But at a time in history when we need both Army and Navy, along with the Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and Airport Security, to be on top of their games, I’m taking the warriors from West Point. Black Knights Matter, 31-30.