

**THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST:  
DAWGS REBOUND, TAKE DOWN TIGERS**

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



**MIZZOU PASSER & INTERVIEW DISASTER  
MATY MAUK                      ZACH GALIFIANAKIS**

It was a day of paradoxes. Sony Michel almost singlehandedly kept us in the game early on, but fumbled a kickoff return that turned the game around. Reggie Davis was having his greatest game in Red and Black, but dropped a perfect pass from Greyson Lambert that would have given us a chance to win the game. We couldn't move the ball at the beginning, yet shot out to a big lead. UT's scatter-armed quarterback moved his team through the air throughout the game. The biggest story of the game lasted only a single play, and it may be the story of our season.

I watched the game at home with Studs McMachoman, and we found the game maddening, exciting, frustrating, and ultimately exhausting. We wondered if Lambert was good enough to pull this game out, and it's not his fault that we didn't. The offense put up 24 points, all without Nick Chubb, and therefore played without the game plan they'd designed and repped in practice.

When we got behind, we let Lambert turn it loose downfield, and he threw some good passes, along with some worm-burners and off-target throws on routine passes. I thought that the play-calling was conservative—a lot of inside runs, which produced a lot of three-and-outs. All those quick series kept the defense on the field seemingly forever, and it showed as the game clock counted down.

So, why call plays that are conservative? I ask this question not to question the coaches, but to try to understand why we aren't going downfield more often or using our receivers more in the attack. Studs and I noted that we hadn't heard Blazevich's name called all game, or in weeks it seemed, and only Rome caught a pass from the TE corps. Earlier this year, the TEs were targeted quite a bit and were a big reason the passing attack worked. But not lately.

Why are the coaches taking this approach? I try to imagine how they evaluate their QBs and decide which one plays, and what kind of attack will best take advantage of his abilities. The Dawgs had Jacob Park, Faton Bauta, Brice Ramsey, and Greyson Lambert available this year. Park was the guy from SC who signed with us the same year that Deshaun Watson signed with Clemson out of Gainesville, GA. Watson is now a Heisman candidate; Park was, according to everyone, a cut below Bauta and Ramsey, and now is at Navarro Junior College in hopes of starting elsewhere eventually. Bauta and Ramsey were ultimately found to be a cut below Lambert, and the coaches haven't budged from their preseason decision to go with him..

Bauta seems to have everything but a zip on his pass, and that appears to have placed him at the bottom of the competition. Ramsey has the physical tools, but is, they say, unreliable with his accuracy and decision-making, both perhaps an artifact of his high school days handing the ball off for Jeff Herron in Camden County, and lack of deep experience in reading a pass defense. Those problems, borne out during his playing opportunities, left Lambert at the top; even with Lambert having a very rocky game, Ramsey never got his series as planned in the first half against Tennessee. I think it's clear that the coaches have much greater confidence in Lambert, who has looked tentative, than they do in Ramsey, who is more likely to fire the ball into coverage.

The offense that the coaches have designed around Lambert does not rely on him to take command of a game with his arm. I assume that they have decided this because they don't have confidence in his passing enough to attack a defense through the air and open up the field for the RBs; rather, they remain committed to opening up passing lanes by running first, foremost, and frequently. I can only conclude that they use this strategy because it works best for Lambert's skill set. But if Chubb is out indefinitely, I think we'll have to do something other than run Sony Michel between the tackles.

I had expected our defense to hold Tennessee down, enough that 31 points would bring back a winner. The offense didn't help them out with so many quick, unproductive series, although the kickoff fumble seemed to be the play that changed everything. Even though Leonard Floyd's TD run will be shown on the Jumbotron for a few decades, the D had trouble either tackling UT's huge QB and RB or stopping UT's passing game. Afterwards, Coach Pruitt said that we're a very young defense that is learning on the job. That's true, and presumably these guys will be great over time. But they were on the field for a lot of the game, even with a steady rotation. The fact is that even with 2 OL starters who were freshmen, Tennessee moved the ball on us throughout the game.

Even on a day when our players, coaches, and fans were shocked and stunned on our very first play from scrimmage, and when we dropped a perfect touchdown pass that would have tied the game, we played in a tough road venue in a game that came down to the final play. There's something good in that, even as the loss is painful and the prospect of losing Chubb for the year is devastating. The coaches and seniors have their work cut out for them this week. I hope they're up for the challenge.

## DAWG DOOTS

- ☞ Foghorn Bullhorn has, in the wake of Saturday's loss, come up with a plan by which UGA ends up in the Final Four:

Florida loses to LSU on 10/17.

Tennessee loses to Alabama on 10/24.

Georgia wins its remaining regular season games (and is the SEC East champ).

Georgia beats Alabama or LSU or A&M in SEC championship game.

The selection committee is compelled to select a 2-loss team for the final four.

He did leave out the essential step of Nick Chubb making a miraculous recovery from what is likely a season-ending injury and returning against Missouri, but Foghorn's word is good enough for me.

- ☞ Last season, one pundit argued that Todd Gurley should, following his suspension, tell UGA and the NCAA to buzz off and start training for the draft. He didn't, and after returning, blew out his knee in an injury that now appears completely healed. Myles Jack has pre-emptively taken that course, dropping out of UCLA following an injury to rehab so as to be prepared for the Combine. Scribes are now wondering if Leonard Fournette should take his junior season off and train instead for the Combine and draft. I suspect that Nick Chubb's injury will only amplify that chorus. What I find interesting is that there are two assumptions, both questionable, behind this speculation that more players will begin avoiding college ball to prep for the pros. First, it assumes that these are strictly business decisions: injuries might happen, so avoid them by not playing so as to ensure your sure-fire pro career. This assumption overlooks the fact that these guys love playing football and talk for years afterward about their love for their teammates and coaches (well, not all love their coaches). The locker room, practice field, and games build a sense of camaraderie that is available in few other places on earth. Especially for those kids whose families of origin are fractured and *in absentia*, the team provides the primary relational framework in their young lives. The second questionable assumption is that by skipping a year, they will not lose any football skills. That's pretty dubious. Playing and getting coached up every day, and learning how to study and prepare for games, can't be replicated without suiting up and getting after their asses. So, when adults speculate about the business decisions that 20-year-olds may or not make, remember that they are doing so from a position of advantage not often shared with the kids they're speculating about. I don't think the kids see it quite so unemotionally and business-like. They really love playing college football, and that counts a lot.
- ☞ Missouri up next, after laying 3 points on Florida on Saturday with a new QB to replace Maty Mauk. Clearly, UF is better on both sides of the ball than anyone expected them to be, and Will Muschamp left McElwain with quite a full cupboard of talent. Just as clearly, Mizzou is struggling just as much as we are, and raising weekly questions about who is taking snaps. Should be an interesting game on Saturday, with both teams still seeking an identity, and UGA having a week to rep Keith Marshall so that he does more than give Michel a break.

## THE COVETED DAWGMEISTER GOOD GUY OF THE WEEK AWARD



**David Gattie** is not a football player or coach. However, he's become an important part of the football effort at UGA, all somewhat by accident. David is a faculty member in the College of Engineering, specializing in Environmental and natural resources engineering. In that capacity, he has recently helped demonstrate the devastating impact that [unlimited development has on the planet's resources](#). Before that, he earned Double Dawg status, earning a B. S. in Agricultural Engineering in 1983 and doctorate in Ecology in 1993. David worked in the private sector until 1998, but began teaching math courses as an adjunct professor at a small college and then, in 1996, became a temporary, part-time instructor at UGA before being named an assistant professor in 1999 and earning promotion to associate professor with tenure in 2006. Shortly after becoming a full-time professor, David was invited to a pre-game recruiting event as part of Coach Richt's outreach to the campus community and its faculty, a type of relationship often avoided by high-stakes athletics coaches, who see the faculty as part of the opposition rather than as teammates in a single cause. These pre-game events involve meals, mingling, information about the academic side of college life, and inspiring words from both official and unofficial speakers. At his first pre-game event, when the leader of the festivities asked if anyone wanted to say a few words, David stepped up and spontaneously gave the sort of inspiring, emotional, loving tribute to UGA that since has become a trademark of these events. Once David spoke up once, he was on the program to stay, not only giving motivational speeches but helping with recruiting on Game Day and beyond. Indeed, [we can directly trace the successful recruitment of Quincy Mauger to David](#), who has undoubtedly played a similar role for other prospects without the media attention. Consistent with Coach Richt's dedication to family values, David traces everything good in his life to his wife Zoe (pronounced Zō, not Zoey). As he says: *Whatever good things I've done or accomplished, it's because my wife, Zoe, and our children, Jeremy, Annah Kaye and Buck, are at the very foundation and core of my life. Especially Zoe—I fell in love with her over 37 years ago, I've been dating her since I was 15 years old, and every day of my life she's why my heart beats...I love that girl.* Thanks to David and his family for making UGA such a good place to visit for prospects and such a great place to enroll once they're here.

**GOOD GUY ARCHIVE**

## **THE FORECAST**

### **DAWGS VS. MISSOURI**

We'll have a week to game-plan without Chubb. I hope that Keith Marshall gets more opportunities. He's run hard in his few chances, although hasn't broken one yet. I'd love to see him get a bigger share of snaps, which would save wear and tear on Michel. In any case, here comes Missouri, a team I think that many people have underestimated, even as they've won the last two East championships. I'm sure I have too. What will we look like on Saturday under the lights? Will we struggle to move the ball through conservative play-calling? Will the success of Davis and Mitchell give the coaches confidence that we can use other weapons with Chubb out? Whatever happens, I'm all Dawg. UGA over Mizzou, 24-20.

### **NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: FLORIDA AT LSU**

There are a whole lot of games this week that could go in this slot, but I'm taking the one that SEC East fans are drooling over, another W vs. E showdown with implications all the way down to the Final Four, with a trip to the Music City Bowl if you lose. Florida is looking good, but LSU is at home, and I don't know if I'm betting against that. If I were to bet, that is. I'm taking the Bengal Tigers in Baton Rouge, 34-31.

### **NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: MICHIGAN OVER MICHIGAN STATE**

This game isn't exactly an upset at this point, what with Michigan playing unprecedentedly great defense of late and meeting all the expectations that the Harbaugh hire initially raised. Meanwhile, friends of mine who follow MSU think they're not really clicking, even though they're winning. This should be a great game, and somebody's got to win. I'm taking Michigan at home, 21-20.

*Disclaimer: With Utah beating Cal last weekend, my upset forecast record for the season is now 4-2. I might get my mojo back on Saturday and be right again. But don't bet on it.*