

**THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST:
GATORS GONNA HATE HOW THIS GAME TURNS OUT**

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



**WILL'S SUCCESSOR
JIM MCELWAIN**



**& STILL SUCKS, AS EVER
DA BIEBS**

“Just a gut check the whole way through.” ~Coach Mark Richt

The guys on the postgame show made the point that by the end of the month, nobody will remember the score of this game, only the outcome. When you go twenty years between winning games without scoring touchdowns, you know you've seen something special. This game was special mostly for its utter strangeness in neither team's ability to move the ball and, ironically, turnovers playing a major role in a generally clean game.

The game's biggest play came on the first play from scrimmage—same as last week—when Lambert's pass was picked and Mizzou defender Ian Simon nearly scored. But Kenneth Towns came through with a desperation tackle inches from the goal line, and the D pushed them back to produce a field goal. That's some hustle Ken, and great job of fighting your way into the starting lineup and for sprinting across the field to make that tackle. Ken worked his way into the lineup after starting out as a walk-on a few years ago, and I'm proud to call him My Dawg.

🏈 A Coveted Dawgmeister Game Ball is awarded this week to the Sanford Stadium crowd. In a game characterized primarily by frustration when we had the ball, the crowd stuck with the team and brought the stadium to a roar when Missouri had one last shot at scoring. There was a good bit of often-justified groaning in the stands over our inability to sustain drives, but the crowd stayed behind the team from beginning to end. The team's valiant play through adversity undoubtedly got the faithful going, but I have to think that the Dawg fans' support helped the team keep on keepin' on in a game that seemed to move grudgingly. Great job to all who stayed behind the team through the final whistle.





Athens Banner-Herald cub reporter Fletcher Page, who still appears miffed that the coaches haven't paid attention to his insistence that Brice Ramsey start at QB, has

now dubbed our offense Georgia's 'No Schott' offense. Quoth he: "It makes you miss Mike Bobo. It makes you miss Aaron Murray." And Fran Tarkenton and Charlie Tripp too, but lamenting that our QB from 2 QBs ago has graduated, as college players do, seems a bit quixotic to me. Coach Page is concerned that we didn't go deep enough to suit his need for an interesting game.


Had he prepared for the game the way football coaches and players do, however, he might have noticed something in the film room. Coach Richt explained in the press conference of Missouri's defense, "They just don't give up big plays. It's been their M.O. for a long time on defense. If you're not good enough to consistently drive the ball and continue to make good decisions and convert those third downs over and over, you're not going to get in the end zone." Lambert agreed: "They're not going to give up anything deep so we had to try to dink and dunk our way down and hit a run there. We weren't able to finish those drives."

How about that: Watching game film and studying the opponent helps to construct the offensive attack. To Coach Page, "'No Schott' isn't fun to watch." Strangely enough, however, that's not the purpose of the gameplan.

I rewatched the game tape on Sunday on The Big Screen in The Dawg Cave, and several things stood out:

-  The number of true freshmen who played on defense was extraordinary, especially since the defense won this game for us. These kids are pretty good. According to The Young Scowlmeister, since 2012 we've had quite a bit of attrition in the defensive backfield, which no doubt helps to explain the number of freshman DBs playing this year. The dearly departed or chronically injured include Josh Harvey-Clemons, Trey Matthews, Shaq Jones, Sheldon Dawson, Shaq Wiggins, Tramel Terry, Shaq Fluker, JJ Green, Paris Bostick, Shattle Fenteng, and Kennar Johnson. They had a lot of recruiting stars among them, not to mention 3 different Shaqs. But these new pups are ballers, and I hope that they're better at doing it The Georgia Way than some who've gone before.
-  In addition to the waves of freshman DBs, and along with starter and beast Trent Thompson, Ledbetter and Patrick also got a ton of snaps. Lots to love about this freshman class.
-  This game was just one big slobberknocker. Many in the Dawg Nation are lamenting our offense and wondering about the QB, but on The Big Screen, with replays and commentary (even with Brent Musburger ignoring the cheerleaders occasionally to call the game) and a clearer view of the action, I can only conclude that both defenses played tremendous games. Mizzou's defense is really loaded, and if their DBs could catch as well as they cover, they'd have had 5 interceptions instead of 1.
-  Aside from almost throwing five interceptions, Lambert played better in retrospect than he appeared to play watching the game live. There just wasn't much space out there, and he connected in the short passing game he was given. He's not Matt Stafford by any means, but aside from deep underthrows and a generally low trajectory that at times produces batted passes, he's better than given credit for. It's

clear that the coaches believe that he's their best bet from among the guys we've got in the program this year, so like him or not, get used to him taking snaps.

 Even though we didn't get to the endzone, we got outstanding play from the running backs and wideouts, especially Malcolm Mitchell and Terry Godwin. Those cats came to play. It's great to see Douglas and Marshall moving the chains with their reps. The RB stats ended up with a low yards-per-carry, but tackles-for-loss set back the gains they got on several drives. I don't think it's possible to replace Nick Chubb, but in his absence, it's good to know we've got a couple of tough hombres available to give Michel a break.

DAWG DOOTS

- ☞ In honor of the Florida game and Steve Spurrier's sudden retirement, please enjoy [this list of his most famous quotes](#).
- ☞ On Saturday afternoon I was watching one of the highlight shows where they began with a series of press conference gems by the ol' ball coach, and then cut to FSU highlights featuring Dalvin Cook, whom they were touting as a Heisman candidate. They should have then cut back to Spurrier's declaration: "I've always had a rule as a coach that if you ever hit a girl, you're finished. We've lost two at South Carolina. Fortunately, they were not star players. If they were star players, it would have gone all over the country. So we quietly got them to transfer or leave or what have you. Our players know, if they ever hit a girl, they're not going to play at South Carolina. We enforce that rule."
- ☞ Before moving to Georgia late last century, I followed the Oklahoma team. In the mid-nineties they brought in a JC transfer, Garrick McGee, to play QB. McGee had trouble staying in the starting lineup and ended his career as a backup. They then recruited a Parade All American from Tulsa to play QB, Justin Fuente. Fuente also floundered and ended up transferring to Murray State. Each of these ex-washouts is now among the hottest head coaching candidates in the country, McGee as offensive coordinator at Louisville (though perhaps sinking along with his team), Fuente as head coach of unbeaten and Ole Miss destroyer Memphis. It'll be interesting if either is the latest guy to leap over Kirby Smart for a major job (say, S. Carolina or god forbid, Vandy), who must be wondering what he's got to do to get an HC gig.
- ☞ On this matter, it's probably a good sign for Joe Cox and Joe Tereshinski, and let's throw in Faton Bauta, that starring in college makes no difference when a coaching career gets launched, as Mark Richt has shown. Oklahoma's one championship QB, Josh Heupel, got fired by OU last year for his offensive coordination, and his predecessor in the position at OU, Cale Gundy, has finally become assistant head coach and recruiting coordinator after 16 years as RB coach while brother Mike has become a fixture at Oklahoma State (after, I should note, starring in the same backfield as Barry Sanders). Unless Tennessee tanks and they can Butch Jones and bring in Peyton Manning to save the day, it seems that those guys who spent their careers charting plays instead of running them might be better picks to teach others the game.

THE COVETED DAWGMEISTER GOOD GUY OF THE WEEK AWARD



Kosta Vavlas did not come to UGA as a 5-star prospect, or even a 3-star prospect. Rather, he came as a walkon, hopeful of getting on the field one way or another. Anyone who's watched a kickoff or punt in Sanford Stadium the last few years is now well aware that he succeeded in realizing his dream of playing between the hedges. Kosta earned his way onto the field with a strong work ethic, perhaps borrowed from his father Michael, a Greek immigrant from the island of Kalymnos, who owns a painting company and is responsible for painting the cables on the big bridges in South Florida. Kosta attended Tarpon Springs HS and played for the Spongers, a mascot name derived from the divers who once harvested sponges in the Florida Keys nearly to the point of extinction. Although he was not a D-1 scholarship player coming out of high school, he was one heck of an athlete. Kosta, said Spongers coach George Kotis, "only knows one motor and that's fast." To quote from the local newspaper during his senior season: *"This season, Vavlas, Tarpon Springs' starting middle linebacker, has made his usual assortment of eye-popping plays: hard hits up the middle, heart-stopping blitzes with the uncanny ability to squeeze his muscular 235-pound frame into running lanes to stop a play cold. He also has become the Spongers' most important defensive presence, a bruiser with the tiptoe finesse of a ballerina. He can stop the run with his size and cover the pass with his speed and grace. He is a football aberration, too big to do the many things he somehow does. . . . Kosta isn't just the leader of the defense. He is the leader of the team."* And yes, Kosta was named Mr. Sponger at the Tarpon Springs Homecoming Game (see above), a sign of respect for his athletics, leadership, and smarts, the last of which produced a 4.3 GPA in high school. Kosta never let up at UGA, described as follows by teammate Mike Thornton: "This kid studies more than anybody I know. He's so driven to do what he wants to do in life. He loves ball and he loves kids and he loves med school so that's really where his focus has been since we've been here." Medical school has been his goal since his mother, Nomiki, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis when Kosta was a child. His compassion for his mother and his disposition to care for others turned him to the healing arts. That goal is within reach for the Biological Sciences major, who was voted one of the permanent team captains for the 2014 Bulldogs. Kosta was a regular on the Dean's List and SEC Academic Honor Roll and volunteered for the Special Olympics and Camp Sunshine while serving as President of the UGA Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. Along with softball star Niaja Griffin,

Kosta was a 2015 recipient of The Peach of an Athlete award, which recognizes athletes whose character, scholastic achievement, athletic excellence and commitment to community service closely match the aims and ideals of the Boy Scouts. This Dawg is going far, and it couldn't happen to a better guy.

GOOD GUY ARCHIVE

Notice to all five of my readers: With the bye week coming up, I'm taking next week off myself to heal up the callouses on my fingertips, give my knuckles a rest, and get ready for the home stretch. I'm therefore providing forecasts for the next two weeks all in one batch. All guaranteed winners. And if you believe that, I've got some oceanfront property in Tennessee I'd like to sell you.

THE FORECAST DAWGS VS. FLORIDA

Good lord do we need this game. Picking this game over the years has been risky; for some reason, no matter who's on the sidelines or wearing the uniforms, Florida seem to play downhill when the opponent wears Red and Black. I should confess at this point that I feel kinda sorry for Will Grier, and by implication, Florida, over his whopping suspension for buying something in the drug store that any other person could take without penalty. Dalvin Cook beat up a woman and he's a Heisman candidate. But across the peninsula, Grier buys a perfectly legal product, takes it in the safety of his own home, and gets benched for a season in which he was breaking out and Florida was playing way above expectations. Bummer. On the other hand, [Florida's got its own history of athletic misconduct coverup](#) to make Grier's suspension a form of cosmic justice. After losing Gurley last year and Chubb this season, I'm not feeling overly sympathetic about our opponents' personnel issues. The Dawgs have two weeks to rest up and gameplan for the Gators. I had other things to do and so missed Florida-LSU, but they played great with the kid who killed us last year taking snaps. I can imagine that both teams will take the field with a lot of intensity. Can our defense to in Jacksonville what they did to Missouri? Probably not, since Mizzou has a pretty cruddy offense this year. But can they play well enough to hold the line enough for our offense to find its way and get to the endzone? Man, we'd better. Good Guys, 21-17.

NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK

WEEK 8: TEMPLE OVER EAST CAROLINA

With the rest of the nation appearing to take this week off too, I'm going with this showdown as the nation's top game. The Owls are hooting mightily, off to perhaps their greatest season ever after going unbeaten thus far. The Owlmeister is beside himself, and believe me, one Owlmeister is plenty. Owls howl, 35-21.

WEEK 8: KENTUCKY OVER TENNESSEE

Another week where there are few top-twenty matchups, although the top 20 is getting hard to pick in advance—just ask Ole Miss. Or UGA for that matter. So the SEC game with the biggest implications for UGA gets the call. Kentucky's gotten pretty competitive

this year, so may be ready to help us win the East, while they try to win it too. I'm hoping that they are ready to pull this one out. Wildcats, 30-28.

NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK

WEEK 8: USC OVER UTAH

I heard an announcer say that Utah has a strong case for the nation's #1 ranking when I tuned in for a bit after our game on Saturday. What I noticed mostly was how western teams have some very funky uniforms. I'll go with a traditional look and overcome my usual hatred for the University of Spoiled Children and take the Trojans, 41-38.

WEEK 9: TEMPLE OVER NOTRE DAME

Temple marches on. If I'm picking USC to win, I have a moral obligation to pick Notre Dame to lose. Call me moral: Owls, 24-23.

Disclaimer: Michigan State's extraordinary win at Michigan gives me a 4-3 record in upsets; had the punter handled the snap, I'd be 5-2. I'm on a losing streak, all y'all who wager, so get your insider info from someone who's not just making sh!t up.