

THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST: DAWGS WARP EAGLES

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**ROLLS THE DICE
TOMMY TUBERVILLE**



**SOUL IS NICE
MR. ROGERS**

Jacob Ice. Mighty nice.

This was a huuuuge game for Kentucky. With Florida getting hammered in Fayetteville, they controlled their own destiny toward a showdown with Alabama, and in a rare display of fan support, sold out their refurbished and expanded stadium. Even basketball fans were stoked to see them take down our reeling Dawgs and continue their march toward a championship rematch with the Evil Empire from Tuscaloosa, a.k.a. the IMG Academy of college football.

The pregame broadcast focused on Kentucky's dynamic offense with its versatile QB and wildcat permutations. It's always interesting to me to see where pregame hype is focused. Given that Kentucky's uplifting season narrative is such a rarity, and that Florida's loss suddenly made UK this Saturday's Team de Jure, or at least the best storyline the SEC had to offer outside Baton Rouge in the evening slot, it made sense to make their versatile, run-oriented offense the epic story on which to build a broadcast. And what would Brent Musburger do without a compelling narrative? Prep for the game so he could get the players' names right? Naaah. As he said, he spent the afternoon watching other games, and then spent half of ours watching the Alabama-LSU game. At least Kathryn Webb wasn't in attendance.

The pregame focus on UK's O did not leave me quaking. I am pretty confident in our defense, and didn't think that a one-dimensional team would give us such trouble that we'd have to score just to stay in the game. And how about that. When it was all over and the fans left Commonwealth Stadium blue both inside and out, the stat line read: UGA, 42 carries for 215 and a 5.1 ypc, and UK, 40 carries for 186 and 4.7 ypc. And we doubled their passing yardage to boot. Is our offense now repaired? On Saturday, it worked well

enough to get to 5 Ws and produce such a great vibe that Coach Smart was effusive in his praise of his team's character and performance. It seems that a little humility from our awful stretch of games has given him an appreciation for his players, a feeling of respect that we have seen little of since December. It's something I've been hoping for, and that I believe is only the beginning of a new stance in the program.

I started this week's forecast with Jacob Ice, and will end with a note of admiration for his outstanding play. Although his completion percentage is not off the charts, he has an excellent TD/INT ratio for a true freshman in a beastly league, and his percentage might be accounted for by the fact that he actually throws passes away when the receivers are covered, that he still has a lot of drops among the WR corps, and that his blocking hasn't served him well for the most part. Yesterday, the OL both protected the passer and opened holes for the runners. Maybe it's because it was Kentucky, but maybe it's because something's clicked for them. Well, I've hoped that before, and Auburn will be a tougher test.

But we began the 4th quarter in arrears, and he put us ahead and beyond with a pinpoint 2-point conversion pass. Then UK tied it late, and he moved the team down the field and into short FG range with little clock to play with, and with 0:00 left when he was done. Michel was superb on the drive, but Jacob's rocket on a deep out to Terry Godwin was a pass that few college QBs can throw. We don't win this game without a Man in the pocket, and Eason once again showed that he's at his best in a tight game with the clock ticking down. This cat can play.

- 🏈 A Coveted Dawgmeister Game Ball goes to TE Isaac Nauta, not only for his catches, but for the pancake block he threw to free up the final yardage on I-Mac's TD catch.
- 🏈 A second Coveted Dawgmeister Game Ball goes to the guy of whom Kirby Smart said while the camera's were running after the game, "We've got a damn good field goal kicker." Here's one Dawg who'll never get flagged for running onto the field with his helmet off: Roddy B, well after kicking his game-winner, with helmet still chin-strapped to his head, and Go-Go-Goggles still on and ready to go just in case, being interviewed by the game's resident eye-candy sideline reporter.



DAWGMEISTER GOOD WORKS OF THE WEEK

The Weekend Forecast is offered as a free service to its readers; neither the Dawgbone nor The Dawgmeister profits financially from its publication. If you read the Forecast and want to contribute something back to our communities, please consider making a donation to this week's featured Good Works service. There are many people living in needy circumstances, and every dollar helps to support them through another day, week, month, and year. This week's featured Good Works organization is

Attachment Parenting International, an Alpharetta-based foundation that promotes parenting practices that create strong, healthy emotional bonds between children and their parents for life so they can take those bonds with them into their adult lives and share them with their children, who can do the same through a life cycle of compassion and connection. A 501c3 non-profit organization supported by memberships, donations, and volunteers, API accomplishes a great deal with efficiency, incurring only minimal expenses by employing a small staff, engaging a large devoted volunteer base, and managing the organization in a virtual office environment.

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DAWG DOOTS

- ☞ Quicken Loans has a sponsorship in which it names two Quicken Loans Scholar-Athletes of the Week, an award that provides each university on a broadcast with \$1000 for their general scholarship fund. A thousand dollars??? What did they compute that tuition rate from, 1950? Here's what college costs. You'd think that the 2nd largest mortgage lender in the United States, and largest online mortgage lender, could maybe pony up a little more for getting their logo on the screen for 30 seconds of broadcast time.

	Georgia Resident	Out of State Resident
Tuition and Fees	\$11,634	\$29,844
Typical Residence Hall	\$5,660	\$5,660
Typical 7-Day Meal Plan	\$3,956	\$3,956
Estimated Books, Supplies & Living Expenses	\$4,958	\$5,668

- ☞ Will Muschamp's term of service at Florida started strong and finished with a thud. The jury is still out on whether or not he can direct a program over time. But in retrospect, he brought a ton of talent into Gainesville, and Jim McElwain has won a lot of game with it in spite of Saturday's thumping in Fayetteville. Just in terms of defensive backs, two juniors on the current squad, both Muschamp recruits, are projected as first rounders, with one universally regarded as the top DB in the draft. And in Mel Kiper's midseason NFL All-Rookie team, you'll find ex-Gators Brian Poole and Keanu Neal, one undrafted and the other much-maligned by the Falcons' fan base on draft day but now one of the top DBs in the

NFL. It'd have been interesting to see what Will would've done if he'd had a chance to coach them.

- ☞ But good Lord, Florida has struggled to recruit a decent QB. They've had a few top prospects, but they've mostly been washouts. Del Rio was awful vs. Arkansas, and I think he showed everything he's got.

THE COVETED DAWGMEISTER GOOD GUY OF THE WEEK AWARD



Richard Samuel had a frustrating career at UGA. He came in as a great athlete whose main question was whether he'd star on offense or defense. At Cass HS he was a 2008 *SuperPrep* Elite 50, All-America, All-Dixie teams, *PrepStar* Top 135 Dream Teamer, 2007 *AJC* Super 11, All Stater as a linebacker, #24 player in America, #4 RB in nation, #12 player in the South, #1 player in Georgia, and more. He began on offense, and had some brilliant games with a style that was all cannonball, with no wiggle or adjustment to the hole, just a blast ahead, hell-bent-for-leather approach to punishing defenders. This approach had its limitations, and after a switch to defense, Richard returned to the offensive backfield, mostly in a reserve role. His greatest moment came when he carried the Dawgs to a rare win over the hated Florida Gators, a game in which he injured his ankle on a TD run and never regained his spot in the rotation. Richard also excelled in the classroom, being named to the SEC Academic Honor Roll, the Director's Honor Roll, and Athletic Director's Honor Roll, and earning two Peter and Kay Amann Football Scholarships. For his outstanding dedication to the team, he was named the UGA Sportsmanship Award winner as well, no doubt because he was still all-in for the team, even after having his carries cut down to mop-up duty his senior season. Richard got some NFL looks, but then began his post-gridiron life with several internships. He has now found his calling with the opening in 2015 of the [Richard Samuel Performance Training](#) center in Athens. I can't imagine a better young man for helping others develop themselves physically. Richard was always a physical specimen and a smart fellow with high character. I am confident that this enterprise will flourish and serve the Athens community well for some time. Great Guy, Great Dawg: It's great indeed to have Richard Samuel around and available to the people of Athens and UGA to help them in their growth through life.

GOOD GUY ARCHIVE

THE FORECAST

DAWGS VS. AUBURN

This game is always critical for both teams. Although we'd need math from another solar system to win the East this year, we're still chasing down 8 wins and a better bowl experience. Auburn controls its own destiny in the West, although the system seems rigged against them given the competition. But the history of this game does not favor going on past records to predict the winner. I like us at home, somewhat of a foreign land to us in this season's weird scheduling to this point: 2 neutral site games, 4 road games, and 3 bizarre games at home that produced 2 losses and the near-meltdown vs. Nicholls. Hmm, maybe I shouldn't be so happy that we're at home. But I'm hoping that the crowd can set aside past games and get Sanford Stadium loud and rowdy and let our boys know we're behind them. Auburn's got a good team, and should be pretty fired up to play us. But I'm counting on a good game from our lines, ball protection from our skill players, another well-coached and ferocious defensive effort, and a winning game at QB. The Dawgs will be barking on Saturday afternoon: UGA 27, Auburn 24.

NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: BAYLOR AT OKLAHOMA

There's a special place in Hell set aside for Baylor's football team for wearing black uniforms on Saturday to protest the firing of Art Briles, on whose watch, and with whose blessing, players created a culture of sexual abuse and violence toward women. I wore red on Saturday to represent the blood of women assaulted by his players, whose conduct was always fine with him as long as they helped this fine Christian school win football games in the name of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. These deplorables are doing little to promote the Baylor University mission "*to educate men and women for worldwide leadership and service by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community.*" Good luck with that, now that your beloved football program has committed this new outrage on top of the old. If your savior was wearing black yesterday, it was in mourning over the state of grace in Waco. Now, OU is hardly a vestal virgin, what with Bob Stoops allowing Joe Mixon to remain on campus after slugging a woman his freshman year. But that doesn't come close to Baylor's systemic culture of sexual assault, battery, and just plain evil. Their eternal damnation begins on Saturday. OU 85, Baylor 0.

NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: TEXAS OVER WEST VIRGINIA

In Austin, every week is Save Charlie's Job Week, and this game will keep him employed for another 7 days. I'm just not convinced that WVU is as good as advertised. We'll see when the whistle blows on Saturday. Horns, 28-27.