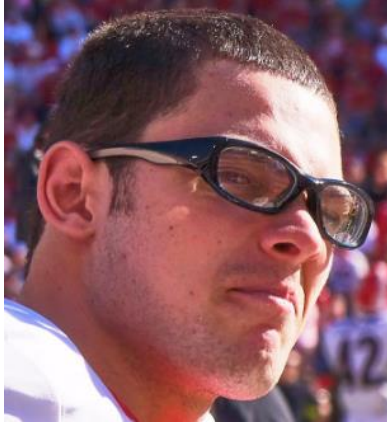


**THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST:
DAWGS LAY IT ON LAFAYETTE**

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**MASTER OF
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SPEEDING BULLET
CLARK KENT**

[SEPARATED@BIRTH? ARCHIVE](#)

Good Moon on the rise at Sanford Stadium



Last week, The Scowlmeister and I talked about the Auburn game with cautious optimism. The Kentucky game showed that we can take the field with both emotion and efficiency. It was just Kentucky, of course. But then on Saturday, Michigan was only playing Iowa, and Clemson was only playing Pitt. Every league win is a good win, and every league team is capable of beating another. Beating Kentucky at their place when they were stoked to take first place and control their destiny in the East? That's a big W in my book.

The Scowlmeister and I felt that our defense had cohered of late, and was playing well. One thing that we were sure of was that in spite of Auburn's gaudy offensive numbers and impressive winning streak, we could hold them down enough for the offense to have a shot at winning. We both agreed, however, that the play of the OL would determine whether or not we could win this game. We were both right, and wrong.

The defense played such a magnificent game that Auburn never had a chance after the first quarter. We thought we'd be good and hold things down. We did not expect a complete shutdown of the sort we were treated to on Saturday. It was as well as I've seen our defense play this century.

And although the offense never got into the endzone, the OL indeed played a terrific game against a lot of defenders we've recruited to play here, including one who accepted the invitation before heading off to Second Chance U. Eason had fairly good protection in spite of a monster game from Montravius Adams, and the backs were able to help us control the clock to a remarkable degree. But the line was at its best, I think, when it moved the chains repeatedly on the 14-play, 65-yard drive that ate up 6:48 of dwindling clock and gave us a 6-point lead with 2:25 left.

At that point, Studs thought that we had it wrapped up, because Auburn just could not move the ball. But I was at the Tennessee game, and don't believe that we can assume a win just because we're ahead and seemingly in control. When Auburn started their final drive with a couple of completions beneath the zone, I thought, Oh No, not a prevent defense! That seems to guarantee that a team will march downfield in 8 yard chunks. But then, the passes went the way of most Auburn passes on Saturday, and we got it back and rooted for the ticking clock the rest of the way. Glory, Glory.

Up in my section, we were very impressed with the game Jacob Eason played. We've seen him bring the team from behind, and Jacob Ice is a thrill to behold when we're down and need a score late in the game. But this was Jacob the Clock Killer. Playing to hold a slim lead requires astute management of every aspect of every play, and he played like a fifth-year senior in helping us add points while running clock and keeping Auburn's offense off the field. Throughout the game, he threw in the face of a pretty fierce pass rush without flinching. I still wish we'd made it into the endzone, of course. But there are other ways that winners find to win games.

On the drive home, I heard Eric Zeier talk about Eason's game. He thought it was a coming-of-age, huge leap forward for the 18-year-old rocket launcher. His downfield

passing was accurate and opened the field for the RBs, as did his scorching passes to the flank that further spread the defense. But to Zeier, it was Eason's maturity in going through his progressions quickly and efficiently, and checking down with touch throws, that demonstrated his growth most dramatically. He just played one hell of a game, as good a game as you can play without producing a touchdown.

I watched the broadcast on Sunday on The Big Screen. The pregame narrative, which was sustained throughout the game, was that Auburn was clicking on all cylinders in every aspect of the game, controlling its own destiny and posing a genuine threat to Alabama once they had run the table all the way to the Iron Bowl. Their elite defense was difficult to move the ball on, and Shawn White runs a remarkably efficient offense, especially his nationally #2 ranked third down efficiency. He is so sharp and accurate, said Danielson, that he rarely misses a receiver, no matter who small the window.

Auburn's main pitfall on Saturday, Danielson emphasized several times, was that Georgia might be a trap game for a team looking ahead to Alabama. Georgia, meanwhile, was described by Danielson as a collection of mismatched parts that had little chance of beating Auburn's well-oiled machinery and fast-paced offense. Danielson said throughout the game that beating Auburn would not salvage this dreadful season for Georgia, only make it a little easier to take.

As the game went on, this narrative remained intact, with two adjustments. When Auburn couldn't run the ball, it was not because we were playing defense with our hair on fire. No, it was because Auburn's RB Pettway was injured, and Shawn White's shoulder had caused him to miss practices. There was no mention that we were missing Natrez Patrick, replaced by Reggie Carter in the starting unit and backed up by lightly-repped reserves Juwan Taylor and Johnny O'Neal. No, it was Auburn's injuries that were making Auburn's difficulties so consequential.

The broadcast team revealed that Auburn's second half strategy would include more throws as a way to soften and open up our defense, given that Auburn had only managed 7 points in the first half running the ball to the tune of 5 yards and a cloud of sideline chalk. And so, Auburn turned to the pass in the second half. Of their 37 yards in the air for the game, a lot came on jet sweeps and 8 came on their final possession when we let them throw underneath. In the stands, Studs and I were ecstatic and quite amazed that they nonetheless kept throwing the ball.

Mel Tucker has now been named the national coordinator of the week. But what I liked was when Coach Smart said on his post-game interview, when complimented about his defense, This is not my defense. This is Mel Tucker's defense, and he's the one who deserves all of the credit. I don't recall Nick Saban ever saying that sort of thing when Kirby was coordinator at Alabama.

By game's end, Danielson proclaimed that Auburn's offensive showing in the second half was the worst game he'd ever seen played by a team with championship aspirations. But not, in his view, the best game played by a defense that needed to play at its finest in order to reignite a program's hopes.

However, I'm with The Scowlmeister, who wrote after the game: "What an amazing second half. Can you recall a better defensive performance? Electric stadium, tons of recruits. My cup runneth over!"

Lighting it up in the fourth quarter



DAWG DOOTS

- ☞ At halftime I talked with Foghorn Bullhorn about the action to that point. To him, the highlight came when the crowd booed the officials for missing the blatant, desperation interference by Auburn on Riley Ridley on a TD throw in the second quarter. No, not the initial booing, he said. It was the lengthy post-timeout booing five minutes later after a timeout that he found so inspiring.
- ☞ I love November, because assumptions about who's going to make the playoff are upset left and right. I mean, who thought that the John Carroll Blue Streaks would break Mount Union's NCAA-record 112-game winning streak, and pull off the win in the Purple Raiders' house?

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

Sober Living America, an Atlanta-based non-profit organization on a mission to educate students and their friends about addiction, and to bring affordable sober living facilities to families in need. Sober Living America offers an affordable alternative to conventional treatment, providing same day admission, housing, recovery, transportation, and career development.
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Jacob Lawrence shows off hand size by palming the head of Class of 2028 4-Star ATH Kenyon Denison

THE COVETED DAWGMEISTER GOOD GUY OF THE WEEK AWARD



Darius Dewberry is from Fort Valley, GA, and played for Peach County HS before finishing his high school career at powerhouse Hargrave Military Academy. He came in as a major recruit. Darius was a pretty good player between the hedges starting a dozen games and getting a lot of reps during a period (2006-2009) when linebacker was a deep position for the Dawgs. He was known as a beast in the weight room, power

cleaning 397 pounds, a hefty load to lift. Darius was an excellent student while handling the demands of football, being awarded an I.V. Chandler Memorial Football Scholarship and two Joseph F. Espy Football Scholarships for his work in the classroom. His one bad moment came when he destroyed \$2,000 in property at St. Mary's Hospital after teammates were taken there after a bar fight, a bad decision that he took full responsibility for, taking on a part-time job in order to pay for the damages. Darius earned his degree in Housing in 2011 and joined the grounds crew that, as he says, "prepped the stadium, painted the field, cut the grass, trimmed hedges. In softball we drew lines and filled in dirt." His old weight room coach Dave Van Halanger was still around then, and in 2013 Coach Van, then Director of Player Welfare and mentor to many players, helped DD get a job in weight training. When Mark Morrison, head strength and conditioning coach for Hendrick Motorsports in Charlotte, NC and former grad assistant to Van at FSU, called looking for someone to strengthen pit crews and other NASCAR workers, DD was the man he recommended for the job. As Coach Richt said when asked for a reference, "He's not a certified strength coach but the guy's a freakazoid. He still looks it." Darius helps with strength, speed, and agility, and says, "I love what I'm doing right now. It really doesn't seem like work." Morrison's only concern is that DD is so good at his job that "He will be a head strength coach for a major college team some day." Look for those pit crews to be pretty well buffed, and for Darius Dewberry to start appearing in a college strength and conditioning program before long, representing the Dawg Nation with pride and distinction.

GOOD GUY ARCHIVE

THE FORECAST

DAWGS VS. LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE

Could this be the game where we play well enough against a weak enough team to have the satisfaction of a home blowout, and push our home record for the season into the winning column? I sure hope so. I don't know much about the opposition except that they are the Ragin' Cajuns, have a losing record in the Sun Belt Conference, and are scheduled here so that we can beat the living snot out of them. I'm going to call this one our one big blowout of the year (caution: that's what I said about Nicholls). Dawgs click on all cylinders and get their game prepped for the common household pests from Atlanta to close it out. Dawgs, 41-6.

NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: FLORIDA AT LSU

This forecast includes the heartbreaking idea that if I'm right, Tennessee might win the East. But between LSU's defense and Florida's quarterbacking, I don't see how the Gators stay in this game. I'm taking the boys from Baton Rouge: LSU 17, Florida 13.

NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: TCU OVER OKLAHOMA STATE

Oklahoma State seems like a poor man's Clemson: Winning but not easily. This time, they fly a little too close to the sun. Horned Frogs over Cowboys, 49-45.