

**THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST:
DAWGS DANDY VS. VANDY**

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SEPARATED@BIRTH?



**VOX POPULI
PRONOUNCER
CHIP TOWERS**



**FOX JOCLAR
ANNOUNCER
CHRIS MYERS**

SEPARATED@BIRTH? ARCHIVE

Chip claims he's better looking.

I report, you decide.

I took in the game on The Big Screen in The Dawg Cave, where the winds were calm and the parking was free. It was a good day to be a Georgia Bulldog. Jesse Palmer noted often how well the OL blocked, both in terms of technique and scheme. Maybe it takes a few games, or the right opponent, for the offensive line to start clicking under a new position coach. SC provided the opposition, and it's pretty clear that the cupboard was left pretty bare for Will Muschamp and his Era. But the righteous moaning throughout the Nation about Pittman's unit following the first set of games should now subside. The way the running game dominated, we may have finally settled on a rotation and settled into Sammy-Ball to have a reliable ground attack moving forward.

Of course, it helps to have #27 alive and well. I really thought that Chubb's aggressive runs on the opening possession energized the whole team. They sure brought a lot of energy into the Dawg Cave. Palmer said at one point that he looked like "the Nick Chubb of old." Now, that's often a death knell for an aging NFL back, as when Steven Jackson would finally break a run for the Falcons and the broadcaster would say, "He looked like the Steven Jackson of old." But usually, that's reserved for old backs who occasionally look young, not young backs who've been sidelined. Here's hoping that the Nick Chubb of old is back to stay.

The game having already been well-dissected by people who actually attended it, I will confine my post-game analysis to two issues. First was the quality of the broadcast team. To paraphrase the great [Silky Johnson](#): Brent Musburger, what can I say about your announcing that hasn't already been said about Afghanistan?

Last spring, Marv Albert took a lot of heat during the NBA playoffs for his shaky hold on such things as people's names, the score, the teams playing, and other basic aspects of the action. On Sunday, Brent Musburger told us about Jason Eason and other nonexistent players, misidentified personnel on almost every play, boomed that Terry Godwin could not return an onside kick as the officials were signaling TD, and in general seemed to be operating from a different program than the rest of us. And to think that just a few weeks ago, I was remarking that with Craig James, Lou Holtz, Bob Davie, and others retired from the booth, there aren't any announcers I hate this season. Thanks, Brent, for reminding me that play-by-play guys can be just as annoying as color guys. Please, retire. You simply cannot do this job anymore. You've always been a weenie. Now you can't even follow the game.

Item #2 is my mid-season evaluation of the QB position. I'll start with Greyson Lambert. What a great teammate. Passed on the depth chart, he's as much an assistant coach these days as a backup QB. He's Eason's biggest fan and supporter. What he lacked in talent, he more than makes up for in dedication to the program. I'm glad to have him on the team.

The pregame hype on the SEC Network was all about Freshman Sensation Jacob Eason, now helping the network to sell trucks and beer by serving as their shiny new product to unveil and promote. He then went out to have by far his worst game in a college setting, and what will probably be the worst game of his college career. The preseason forecast on what to expect from a true freshman was in evidence vs. S. Carolina. When he overthrew his first pass, I thought, it's the adrenaline—it happens to everyone. He'll settle down and start to zip those passes into the right slots once he settles down. But that never happened—he was either high or low all day, and Palmer said that his accuracy was the one thing that really needed work based on a half-season's sample size.

QB just isn't an easy position to step into. After our game, I caught up with the Falcons' game on tape, where Paxton Lynch got his first start. Broadcaster John Lynch said that while talking to the rookie QB during the week, the kid said that running the huddle was the scariest part of the job; once the huddle broke, he was much more relaxed, because then he could just play. Eason is gaining a better grasp of the huddle while still struggling with reading SEC defenses, taking snaps from center, facing a fast and furious pass rush, playing against 85,000 hostile fans, throwing in heavy wind, and no doubt much more. And when Mother Nature howls more than either Will Muschamp or Foghorn Bullhorn, you know it was one windy day in the stadium. The one advantage Eason might have had from being a Seattle-area QB was throwing a wet ball, but he never got into any kind of groove on Sunday, wet or dry. I was glad the coaches stuck with him, because he needs to get experience playing through rough days, as much for the next 2-3 years as for this one.

I think it's useful to remember that our schedule has been unfriendly to a true freshman QB. We are 4-2 with only 2 home games to date, and those road games have been against first-rate opponents for the most part; I'm counting SC's league road-game status as challenging, if not their actual players. And we could easily be 5-1. So in addition to everything else, Eason has played mostly to hostile crowds, or in the undoubtedly novel condition of a neutral field under a dome on artificial turf. Even with Sunday's erratic performance, he's done mighty well.

Here's who Jacob Eason reminds me of a bit: Matt Ryan. Both are about 6'-6" and lanky, both are much more comfortable in the pocket than on the run; and "Jacob Ice" is at his best when the team needs him most (see Missouri, Tennessee). Two key differences (and Matty is a dozen years older): Eason has a stronger arm; and Ryan, according to Chris Spielman, reads the field better than any QB in the NFL. At this point, Ryan is obviously more accurate and more just plain knowledgeable about the game, but nobody should expect otherwise. The future looks good.

Eason seems to run things best when the game is moving fast and he doesn't have to worry about managing the game so much: Call a play, line up, and sling it, as he did vs. Missouri and Tennessee. When he's loose and just playing the game, he's a terror. He never got in that mode on Sunday.

QBs need to get respect in the huddle. I wonder if the preponderance of freshmen in the rotations helps Eason command that respect. We have huddles that include Herrian, Ridley, Nauta, Woerner, and others who came in with Eason, leaving mostly OL who are older and more seasoned. Although that might make the huddle pretty green at times, I'm sure it helps Jacob in terms of running the show.

In sum, then: Eason is the player we all hoped for, still growing into the game's most difficult position, still up and down both within and between games. If the line continues to block well and the backs are indeed healthy, then the rest of the season is lining up to be pretty interesting. Don't give up on these boys yet; don't be like the people who left the Tennessee game with 2 minutes to go because pulling the game out just didn't seem possible. We're halfway there, and if UT loses as expected to Alabama and LSU-Florida gets scheduled as must happen, anything's possible.

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 difficult circumstances, and every dollar helps to support them through another day, week, month, and year. The Dawgmeister himself will pledge \$10 to each organization featured for its Good Works throughout the football season. Please consider doing the same yourself.

This week's featured Good Works organization is

The Georgia Baptist Disaster Relief. I am choosing this as the first of several hurricane relief programs to be featured this fall, not because I wish to promote a specific religion, but because they promise that “**100% of your donation goes directly to the relief efforts!**” In one of the most pathetic and shameful areas of human life, [there are already scammers setting up fraudulent disaster relief collections](#) that are designed to take your well-intentioned gifts and put them in the pockets of despicable lowlifes who would profit from other people’s calamities via these ripoffs. Whether you send your money to the Baptists or somewhere else, please vet the recipient so that you are getting your donations to the people who desperately need it.

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DAWG DOOTS

- ☞ I just don’t get how a celebration call is defined. Some guys pop up after a play and give first down signals, with no penalty. I remember Jake Ganus getting flagged in our bowl game for unsportsmanlike conduct for signaling an incomplete pass. It was just a brief, spontaneous gesture, yet got flagged anyhow. I guess the main takeaway is to never take your helmet off, but still, guys are always hotdogging it after plays without calls. Someone needs to flag those refs for excessive officiating.
- ☞ Brother Willy came down for the Tennessee game, and he’s now been down for both Smellebration call games (LSU when A.J. Green was flagged, and now this one). At one point Tennessee did something dubious, and he attempted to comfort me by saying, “Cheaters never prosper.” This is the SEC, I had to remind him. Cheaters have been prospering down here for a long time.
- ☞ Brian Herrian’s composite high school ranking from the recruiting services: Three star RB, #867 player nationally, #54 RB nationally, and the 80th best prospect in Georgia.
- ☞ Johnny Manziel and his company, JMan2 Enterprises, have filed paperwork with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on Friday to retain his trademark on “Johnny Football.” Apparently “Johnny Rehab” was already taken.
- ☞ Ex-SC Gamecock and current Green Bay Packer Packers tight end “Jared Cook got an unappetizing surprise in his order of chicken wings last week—a fried chicken head. Cook said he found the head Tuesday as he was at home, eating a carry-out order from Buffalo Wild Wings. Cook said when he returned the food, the workers apologized and said that his discovery meant his food was fresh.”

THE COVETED DAWGMEISTER GOOD GUY OF THE WEEK AWARD



“I think the defensive breakout star of 2009 will be **Rod Battle**. Why? Battle has quietly racked up several sacks in practice this year against a solid offensive line and he has something to prove.” This [forecast by Nate](#) was part of widespread anticipation for the defensive end from Atlanta, a prized recruit whose career had been set back by injuries (neck, shoulder, and no doubt other areas). But in the second quarter of the second game, Rod went down with a knee injury, ending his career in Athens and sending him back to rehab. Described by Coach Richt as a “classy human being who was practicing and playing hard, doing all the right things, being a leader,” Rod never quite got the traction he needed to reach his great potential on the field. As a high school student at Frederick Douglass High School in the city of Atlanta, he graduated in the Top 10% of his class and was inducted into both the National Honor Society and the National Beta Club. During his career, he did much more than rush the passer. As a member of a mission to Honduras, [Rod filed reports](#) on his contributions to building a healthier society. Like many student-athletes, he became the first member of his family to graduate college, majoring in Sport Management. Since 2010, Rod has been involved in a different sort of management, managing accounts for FCI in Atlanta, getting it done on another field of play. He’s a great example of how to make something of your life when your first dream comes crashing down and you need to change course. Getting that UGA degree served him mighty well in his life after football.

GOOD GUY ARCHIVE

THE FORECAST DAWGS VS. VANDERBILT

If Vandy is coming to town, it must be Homecoming. Let’s assume that the short week will benefit our opponents. OK, there you go for Vandy’s advantages. I think that those 1960s cheerleaders we’ll roll out will offset that benefit. Maybe this week we’ll get more than 2 backs over 100 yards, and Eason will get his passes closer to his receivers. But maybe or not, the Dawgs will head into the bye week 5-2, not so bad, really. Well, Old Miss was very bad. But otherwise, we’re shaping up nicely for Jacksonville. Dawgs over Commode Doors, 41-20.

NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: ALABAMA OVER TENNESSEE

The Dawgs need this one to have a shot at competing in the East, and I think that Alabama delivers it. Sorry Butch, no more comebacks. Vols fall behind early and stay there. Bama, 45-24.

NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: COLORADO STATE OVER BOISE STATE

Got to pull for the ex-Dawg to make things interesting out West. I’m going with Bobo over Boise: Rams, 28-27.