

THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST: *DAWGS CONQUER MOUNTAINEERS*

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SEPARATED@BIRTH?



**SNUG HUGGLY
VERNE LUNDQUIST**



**PLUG UGLY
PUG**

SEPARATED@BIRTH? ARCHIVE

Lordy, We're baaaaack! Not from the dead. No, from a long and restless offseason. Welcome to Season IX of the Dawgmeister on the Dawgbone. This fact-free service provides you with everything that you don't get anywhere else in the Dawgiverse, in the form of opinions from someone who just makes this sh!t up as he goes along. Actually, that's probably what you get everywhere else too. But who else uses **Georgia** font to say it?

Season II of the Smart Era kicks off shortly, and it can't happen soon enough. We ended last season with a bowl win. But that barely salvaged a season in which we lost the SEC East, lost to Vandy at Homecoming, lost to GT at home in a game we had already won, lost to Tennessee in another game we'd already won, got our asses thoroughly handed to us by Florida again, barely beat Nicholls State between the hedges.....it was one letdown of a season after a ton of excitement following the coaching change and the promise of greatness. Later I'll look a bit at why we were so disappointing last year. Here, I'll cheerlead the charge to a happier 2017.

I'm mighty stoked about this season. Solid and experienced at QB, and possibly historically great. A stable of RBs so talented and deep that we could start our #5 guy and have a strong attack, headlined by two high-character seniors of immense ability and leadership. A deep and talented WR group that also includes RBs lined up in the slot, along with plenty of TEs for multiple purposes. A defense that returns 10 starters and has tremendous depth. An infusion of talent across the roster in the form of the celebrated 2017 recruiting class. Dependable kicking and punting games, and a number of return men just itching to become the next Human Joy Stick.

Seems I'm forgetting something.....Uga? The new stadium bathrooms? Brad Nessler replacing Uncle Verne? The void left by Brent Musburger? Oh, that's right. The offensive line. Everyone from David Pollack to Granny Butts has trashtalked last year's blockers, and well, it sure seemed they rarely won the line of scrimmage. Normally, a line losing 3 starters takes a step back, but most of us believe that we'll upgrade through graduation and replacement. In fact, the success of the season depends on it. Eason can't read through a progression if he's got 2 seconds to throw the ball, and the RBs can't open their own holes. If the OL isn't better than last year's, then last year will look a lot like this year.

But I'm confident that there's a lot more depth to work with right now than we had last season. At least 2 freshmen will play, with one starting; guys like Allen, Kindley, and Cleveland have had a year to mature; and the upperclassmen remaining are smart, versatile, and experienced, if undersized players. D'Marcus Hayes was expected to compete for a starting spot, but is running with the 3's. We should always be able to put 5 guys on the field who can open holes and protect the pocket. We start with an easy one on Saturday, then head to South Bend for a real road test of the system. I think that within a few games, we'll know what we've got up front. Their performance is the only thing that could hold this team back from a championship run.



Refs rocking their official attire, circa 1937, bringing new meaning to the chant, "Ref, you are blind!"

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, to which I am contributing \$10 to get the ball rolling:

The Carpenter House, which supports the development of healthy homes and environments for low income children to thrive and reach their highest potential for academic success. Achieved through a holistic approach that provides access to outstanding mentors, enriching activities and organized

sports to youth while creating a gateway to deliver multigenerational resources, such as nutrition and financial literacy, that aim to break down barriers to creating healthy homes. Our goal is to invest in, build and inspire communities of change. *The Carpenter House* aims to strengthen and empower families from disadvantaged backgrounds by providing access to resources, activities and structured environments that enable them to reach their highest academic and economic potential. We are committed to delivering services that rebuild communities through education, financial literacy, and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

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DAWG DOOTS

- ☞ Rumor has it that Aaron Hernandez intends to transfer to Florida Atlantic University.
- ☞ Too soon?
- ☞ Brice Ramsey's return might not end up with many game snaps, but it seems like one of the best things the coaches could have hoped for. Going into the season with 2 scholarship QBs would make a coach mighty nervous. Having a 5th year scholarship senior in reserve has got to feel better than going with a walkon.
- ☞ I'm not at all surprised that Andrew Thomas was the first of the new OL to hit the field. Not that I know how to break down film like the coaches, but his HS tape showed a gigantic kid with tremendous athleticism. Now that he's here, we know he's intelligent and has his head screwed on tight. He's a star in the making, and at the position where we need him most.
- ☞ The Scowlmeister was mighty disappointed in our recruiting class early in the summer, what with Rachad Wildgoose Jr. only having 2 stars initially and Owen Condon only 3 and no headliners yet committed. Last year's class has him expecting solely 4 and 5 star recruits on this roster, with maybe a 3 star or two as long as he has market value established by the number of other offers, and the stature of the program they are offered from. But he seems a little more pleased of late after the torrent of talent committing to the **G**. He is still losing sleep, however, over Justin Fields and his choice of university enrollment. Because he wants this fine young man to have the very best education possible.
- ☞ A couple of signs that the Smart coaching regime really means business: (1) Rod Blankenship, a first-team freshman All-SEC performer last year, was not given a scholarship because he could have been better, and competition was brought in to improve the kicking game; (2) Tracy Rucker was fired after signing day for not signing the kid he was supposed to sign, 5-star DT Aubrey Solomon, who took his talents to Michigan. You don't deliver for Coach Smart, you find yourself without a job.
- ☞ Sign of the times: Following the recent unpleasantness in Charlottesville, ESPN removed broadcaster Robert Lee from Virginia's season-opening game against William & Mary. Nathan Forrest and Jeff Davis were not available as replacements.

THE COVETED DAWGMEISTER GOOD GUY OF THE WEEK AWARD
GOOD GUY ARCHIVE

Jack Loonam.....not a household name in Dawg lore? That's not too surprising. Jack played tight end for UGA from 2011-2014 after walking on to the team following his solid high school career in Lexington, S.C. If you remember him playing between the hedges, you've got a sharp eye and sharper memory: He played in a total of one game for three plays in a blowout of Charleston Southern in his senior year, which propitiously fell on Georgia's Military Appreciation Day. Loonam was a ROTC scholarship player who, at 6 feet, 217 lbs., was never a threat to beat out the recruited scholarship players ahead of him on the depth chart. The son of an Iraq War veteran, Lt. Col. Tim Loonam, Jack had military blood in his veins and was commissioned into the U.S. Army in 2015 in a Sanford Stadium ceremony after graduating with a degree in management. He was an exceptional student here, earning recognition on Athletic Director's Honor Roll during several of his semesters of enrollment. From there, Jack went off to the Mideast to serve his country. Jack also carries an unusual distinction, having been named the Network of enlightened Women (NeW) Gentleman of the Year after being nominated by Georgia's chapter of the organization. He relates his military training to his approach to discipline: "ROTC teaches us how to approach our life through their class lessons as leaders and be the best person we can be. Then our Army Code of Conduct, which I see acted out every time I'm with them, shows how they take it seriously and it works, which boils down to doing the right thing. Then with football, our Character Ed program was really essential to helping me maintain how I've been in college. We have it every day in our meetings before practice, and Coach Lilly does a great job of every day stressing our lesson of the day to us and how we can go use it or examples of the past pertaining to the word of the day. Coach Richt and Coach Van Halanger have done a great job with it since I've been here. Plus Coach Richt always reminds how we need to conduct and grow ourselves as men and represent the team well." Mission Accomplished, with high hopes that this sort of character training remains a feature of UGA football under Coach Smart and staff.



The 2016 Season and Why UGA was an Ordinary Team

If the NFL draft didn't produce enough evidence that we had very little in last year's senior class, then the old recruiting boards should help explain what went wrong last season when Coach Smart inherited his roster. Here are the ESPN 300 rankings, abridged to feature Georgia kids (who mostly went elsewhere) and UGA commitments, many from out of state.

It's painful reading. But it does help account for why we got physically manhandled by good teams, and were played evenly by weak ones. I stopped at around 100 on the rankings. We just did not recruit the state of Georgia well, and the teams that did ended up playing for championships. **Red font** indicates a Georgia kid who committed here; **blue font** is for out-of-staters who signed with UGA.

2013

National Rank	Player	School	University
1	Robert Nkemdiche	Grayson HS	Ole Miss
2	Carl Lawson	Milton HS	Auburn
13	Montravious Adams	Dooly Co. HS	Auburn
32	Alvin Kamara	Norcross HS	Alabama/Tenn
39	Shaq Wiggins	Sandy Creek HS	UGA/Louisville/Tenn
48	Trey Johnson	C. Gwinnett HS	Ohio State
50	Vonn Bell	Ridgeland HS	Ohio State
53	Demarcus Robinson	Peach Co. HS	Florida
63	Tyren Jones	Walton HS	Alabama/Hutchinson C.C./jail?
89	Trammel Terry	Goose Creek (SC)	UGA/Jacksonville State
100	Kelsey Griffin	Mill Creek HS	S. Carolina

2014

National Rank	Player	School	University
13	Raekwon McMillan	Liberty Co. HS	Ohio State
14	Lorenzo Carter	Norcross HS	UGA
16	Deshaun Watson	Gainesville HS	Clemson
19	Sony Michel	Plantation (FL)	UGA
55	Lamont Gaillard	Pine Forest (NC)	UGA
63	Nick Chubb	Cedartown HS	UGA
66	Kalvaraz Bessent	Camden Co. HS	Auburn
77	Malkom Parrish	Brooks Co. HS	UGA
88	Dante Sawyer	N. Gwinnett HS	S. Carolina
93	Jacob Park	Stratford (SC)	UGA/Iowa State
101	Jeb Blazeovich	Charlotte (NC) Christian	UGA
106	Isaiah Wynn	Lakewood (FL)	UGA

2015

National Rank	Player	School	University
3	Trenton Thompson	Westover HS	UGA
18	Mitch Hyatt	N. Gwinnett	Clemson
21	Chuma Edoga	McEachern	Southern Cal
24	Arden Key	Hapeville HS	LSU
29	Roquan Smith	Macon Co HS	UGA
38	Preston Williams	Lovejoy HS	Tennessee
43	Terry Godwin	Callaway HS	UGA
54	Adonis Thomas	C. Gwinnett	Alabama
61	Jonathan Ledbetter	Tucker HS	UGA
75	Rashad Roundtree	Lakeside HS	UGA
81	Micah Abernathy	GAC HS	Tennessee
84	Jordan Colbert	Griffin HS	Auburn
87	Chidi Valentine-Okeke	Faith Baptist Christian	LSU
88	Mekhi Brown	Carver HS	Alabama

Coveted Dawgmeister Game Balls have been awarded to recent Dawg Diploma Recipients

Chuks Amaechi, Communication Studies
Aulden Bynum, Agricultural and Applied Economics
Reggie Carter, Economics
Jared Chapple, Human Development and Family Science
Rennie Curran, General Business
James DeLoach, Sociology
Ray Drew, Communication Studies
Brandon Kublanow, Real Estate
Kyle LeStrange, Consumer Economics
Brice Ramsey, Communication Studies
Ryne Rankin, Agricultural and Applied Economics
Jonathon Rumph, Human Development and Family Science
Billy Seward, Finance
Glenn Welch, Finance
Reggie Wilkerson, Human Development and Family Science

THE FORECAST

DAWGS VS. APPALACHIAN STATE

Let's hope that App State's days of taking down a giant on the road are over. I think that UGA has so much to prove all over the field that we will come out with nostrils aflame and blow the Mountaineers out of the stadium. It's hard to predict the details, but I do think we'll see all 5 RBs, maybe get to the 3-deep across the roster, and come out smoking. Good Guys, 47-6.

NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: ALABAMA OVER FLORIDA STATE

If there's someone I hate as much as Nick Saban, it's Jimbo Fisher. Well, lots of other opposing coaches too. But with Briles and Freeze—and Bob Stoops sure cut a lot of corners—having been thinned from the herd, there are fewer than there used to be. Anyhow, I'm going with the league on this one, even though there's a strong case to be made that the ACC was a better league last year than the SEC was. It's time to get the swagger back. This should be a great game, and I hate it that it overlaps with ours. But I'm taking the Tide, 31-28.

NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: COLORADO STATE OVER COLORADO

I suspect that Mike Bobo needs these wins to keep his job in this era of rapid results. Who knows, if Jim Chaney can't get his playcalling down this year, maybe Mike will be back next year. But I'm going to take the Rams over the Buffs to get that old Dawg set in Ft. Collins. CSU over CU, 21-20.