

**THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST:
DAWGS BURN AUBURN**

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SEPARATED@BIRTH?



**ZIPS' HEAD MAN
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BOUTIQUE DOG**

SEPARATED@BIRTH? ARCHIVE





“[Georgia] came out, they wanted it more. They played hard and hungry.” ~Kentucky safety Davonte Robinson

This is a story about narratives. Throughout the noon TAMU-Auburn game, the announcers kept talking about Jimbo Fisher’s imperative to his players to change the narrative, one in which TAMU falters in big games, a narrative that is presumably in place after they lost to Auburn in a game they controlled early. Mind you, these are not college English professors wearing tweed jackets and talking about literature. This is Jimbo Fukn Fisher.

The pregame narratives for UK-UGA, as they had done the previous week, all favored our opponent, and were amplified in the booth. Kentucky was having a special, historic season. With a team built for this year, they had a destiny that included beating UGA at home and playing in their first championship game since the Truman Administration. That’s before most of us were born. (Not The Scowlmeister, but I digress.) The Wildcats had the high tide of fate on their side, not to mention a lights-out ground game, stifling defense, and home crowd stoked by Times Square neon and pumped by their own players’ boasts. The basketball season opener against the nation’s top teams was an afterthought, a background distraction to the scene awaiting UGA in Lexington. The narrative had an open ending: Would Kentucky play through UGA and into the conference championship game?

Rather than destiny, Georgia’s narrative was about dynasty. Are we building an SEC East dynasty, of which this play-in game was a major piece? Would we play as we did against LSU, or against Florida in our third straight game against a fired-up, talented,

top-ten team? (Note: Florida's fired-up mentality was all in their heads. They forgot the part about preparing for the game.) Were we the hyped team of early season dominance, the over-hyped team that got thrashed by LSU, or the hyper-prepared team that dominated Florida? How would our narrative unfold on frenetic Kroger Field at Commonwealth Stadium in the biggest football game ever played in Lexington? Would we emerge as shoppers, or baggers?

But I've got a different narrative about this team, and it's about talent and depth. Much has been made of our 5-star recruits and their impact on the field. On Saturday, what we saw was the impact of the recruits on the depth chart. When Florida's starting cornerbacks went down, they whined that they'd have won, but their best defenders were out. Kentucky lost top players from both sides of the line over ejections, and they suffered for lack of quality depth, not to mention lack of composure.

Georgia, though, had some real injury issues to deal with on the offensive line. Lamont Gaillard, the league's and perhaps nation's top center, went out early and was replaced by true freshman Trey Hill, who recovered from some early bad shotgun snaps to help clear out Kentucky's DL for those backs to blast for big gains. We played stretches with three freshmen and two sophomores on the OL and continued to dominate the line of scrimmage. These guys are so good that former OL savior Netori Johnson has moved to the DL in hopes of getting on the field somewhere, and where his 325 lbs. won't seem so puny.

Total time of possession stats can be deceiving. Georgia finished with 31:25, UK 28:35. But in the first 22 minutes, Kentucky held the ball for 16:47 to Georgia's 4:50. So after UK's early ball dominance, which produced 3 points, we absolutely stuffed their offense and controlled the ball. Without that nutty TD reception, the only sign of UK destiny on display on Saturday, this would have been one serious blowout.

The most unsung heroes on the roster continue to be the receiving corps. They catch the ball when it's thrown. But they do the dirty work of blocking that makes it possible to throw the ball 4 times in the second half and crush a defense. Swift's 83-yarder was spectacular, but Holloman's crackback block—not a pancake, more a muffin, but one that did the job—sidetracked the safety and created the second-level hole.

Remember how Demetris Robertson was going to come in, dominate the receiving game, and go pro after one year in Athens? The guy can't get on the field because you need a full game to play in this offense. Running past matador defenders in the Pac-12 might have been a breeze, but playing WR in this program, you've got to be a man in every phase of the game. Jadon Haselwood, if you're that good, come to Athens and show it. But you've got to do more than flash a highlight reel of great catches. You've got to be ready to take on a linebacker and knock him back a level or two. Space in the secondary doesn't create itself. Somebody has to be out there doing his job, which is doing his job and getting in a defender's grill.

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

The mission of **Hosea Helps** is to investigate and then raise public awareness about the many problems that are facing families and individuals that are at-risk of slipping into poverty or that are living in poverty, and then to mobilize financial resources, products, and volunteers to solve those problems, or to ease the burden that these problems cause.

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DAWG DOOTS

- ☞ You can't spell San Diego County Credit Union Holiday Bowl without A-U-B-U-R-N T-I-G-E-R-S.
- ☞ The Final Four is shaping up, I think, to be the SEC Champ, Clemson, Notre Dame, and unbeaten Ivy League champion Princeton, which won its own play-in game 14-9 over previously-unbeaten Dartmouth on Saturday, relying on its defense instead of its high-flying, record-setting offense. My interest in Princeton comes from my family's long association with the city and university. Brother Willie is a graduate, as is Sister Wanda, and The Old Man Himself was on the faculty. Brother Willie is coming to town for Auburn, so I hope he brings some Tiger Magic to Sanford Stadium—not of the Auburn variety, but of the true TigerTown sort. His record in Game Day visits is quite solid, and his charm is set to continue on Saturday. Mrs. Butts knows it's a NASCAR day for her as the Boys go out to be Boys and root the Good Guys on.
- ☞ “Satisfied, happy, content: Those are four-letter words to coaches.” ~Tom Crean
- ☞ “A win at Kentucky would keep Georgia on track for the inevitable loss to Alabama in the SEC Championship game.” ~Michael Cunningham, AJC, channeling Jeff Schultz
- ☞ Given that Jake Fromm can't win big games, we've now played 20 small games in the last two years.
- ☞ Florida and their following couldn't accept their loss to UGA as a loss, insisting they were the better team for the second year in a row of blowouts in Jacksonville. [One of the Orlando writers](#) summed it up, saying that UGA should enjoy this while they can because Mullen will have the Gators back on top mighty soon. I guess they forgot to prepare for Missouri, just as they mailed in their preparation for Georgia. But I'm sure they still think they're the better team, and all they need is time for Mullen Magic to put Florida on top. I'll believe it when I see it.
- ☞ Much classier: [Kentucky's response to their loss](#), which acknowledged that they'd been outplayed...and they played us closer than Florida did.
- ☞ After LSU thumped us last month, we had no illusions about being the better team. The score in that game was roughly the score of our rout of Florida. We just know a

loss when we see one, and know that it means you've got to get better. In Gainesville, it seems to mean that you talk more.

- ☞ Brock Huard reminds me of Daryl "Moose" Johnston as a color man. Both are intelligent, knowledgeable, and well-prepared. They both speak proper English and have vocabularies that include words of 3 or more syllables. Both have a strong technical understanding of the game that they explain clearly. And neither has a sense of humor or any personality to make their insights terribly interesting or engaging for fans.

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

Jon Stinchcomb came to UGA from Parkview HS when it was a state powerhouse. He and [big brother Matt](#) were among the moving forces of the program, with Jon named USA Today and Parade All-American his senior year, and ranked among the nation's top OL prospects. It's hard to have a more distinguished career than the one he put together in Athens. Jon was a four-year starter on the OL, but that was only part of the story. He earned All-Academic honors in 2001-02, was one of 11 players to earn AFCA Good Works Team honors for contributions to community service, was a 2002 Walter Camp All-American and All-SEC selection, and was one of six recipients of National Football Foundation scholarship. To top things off, Jon was inducted into UGA's Circle of Honor in 2012, which is about as high an honor as an old Dawg can get. John played from 2003-2010 with the New Orleans Saints, where he had a distinguished career, making one Pro Bowl, winning one Super Bowl, and being named the Saints' Man of the Year in 2008, locking down the tackle position till injuries led to his retirement. Jon credits his Christian faith with his life path, saying, "There's a victory that every man can have. And that's an eternity and salvation and that comes through Jesus. So it gives you that solace that you can go out there and you play your heart out and give it all you have. And at end of the day you'll be a winner no matter what." He realizes his commitment as director of operations for the Gwinnett County-based NG# (Next Generation 3), which promotes the development of character building and chaplaincy programs in local schools. You can catch him, along with Matt, on TV analyzing football games in the fall, and they are among many ex-Dawgs using their expertise to explain the game to use couch-potatoes on weekends. Indeed, he's a winner no matter what he does, and works to help others fulfill their potential. Count me among his many admirers, with gratitude for the glory he's brought to his alma mater in his post-Dawg career.



THE FORECAST

DAWGS VS. AUBURN

It's Big Game time, and this one couldn't be much better in terms of post-season implications. The Dawgs need this one, even with the East in their back pocket, because 2 losses might give some committee member a reason to vote against the SEC, even if we beat Alabama in the championship game. We know we can be beaten when we're not cranking, and this week's practices should emphasize what we need to do to win.

UGA dominated both lines of scrimmage vs. Kentucky, and in spite of their win, Auburn got beaten at the line by TAMU on Saturday. If trench warfare is the name of the game, I like what we're bringing between the hedges. I scouted the Auburn-TAMU game, and I'm sure the coaches are waiting for my report. When TAMU was up early and looked dominant, I wondered if Malzahn would lose his job if he lost that one, and then lost to Georgia and Alabama to finish 6-6. He still might get fired, but at least cooled the discussion for a week. I don't think he's going to continue making his case against UGA on Saturday.

Playing at home, playing dominantly on the line of scrimmage, a healthy Swift, a young team getting increasingly experienced in big games, a jacked-up running attack, emerging weapons in the passing game, outstanding play under center, terrific play in the back 7: it all adds up to a Dawg win. Auburn's best player is WR Darius Slayton, and Deandre Baker is waiting to smother him out of existence. That leaves Tyson Campbell to shut down their Saturday hero Seth Williams. Campbell gets burned occasionally but is also a very tough and physical defender. I don't see Williams winning this game for Auburn, and they are about out of weapons once you get past these two. Stidham has turned out to be a good QB but not the program savior Malzahn has needed. And the Fromm/Fields combo is looking mighty good out there.

Dawgs 38, Wart Tigers 20.

NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: MICHIGAN STATE OVER OHIO STATE

It's not exactly a weekend where there are great games galore, so I'll take one with great consequences. MSU always comes to play, regardless of the talent pool across the line of scrimmage. Ohio State has shown that they're beatable, and can't run the ball. That's not a combo I want to play Sparty with. So I'll take the program where the players assault women over the program where the coaches assault women, cover it up, issue denials, get token suspensions, and keep their jobs anyhow: MSU 41, OSU 40.

NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: BOSTON COLLEGE OVER CLEMSON

BC has played pretty well this year. Clemson has played great all year. I really doubt if BC will win, but this is the upset pick, so something's got to give. The Final Four gets jumbled, as it should in November....Eagles over Tigers, 45-41.