

**THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST:
DAWGS ROLL TIDE**

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SEPARATED@BIRTH?



**OFFENSIVE MESS & OFFENSIVE TESTS
DAN ENOS ARNE DUNCAN**

SEPARATED@BIRTH? ARCHIVE

“It was a good feeling tearing those hedges at the end [in 2016], so I want to do that again.” ~ pregame confidence expressed by GT WR Brad Stewart, because GT WRs are the lynchpins to Tech’s 7-win seasons

“Feeling good, asshole?” ~Little Woolly

“It must suck to be a Georgia Tech Yellow Jacket.” ~Granny Butts

And so, Beatdown Saturday is now behind us. All those rivalries, all those routs. Because we have owned Tech for so long, this one probably doesn’t feel as sweet as, say, Ohio State’s demolition of Michigan. But wiping the unstoppable Tech ground game off the field entirely, that feels good. And Tech’s 2-game streak in Sanford has stuck in our craws for 4 years too long, along with Paul Johnson’s gloating about occasionally doing something right against UGA. That was one good week of preparation by Mel Tucker and one disciplined execution by his men. And what an execution it was.

I think people expected us to score plenty on a mediocre ACC defense, so the offensive production was no great surprise, even if the ease of cutting Tech apart might have been greater than the most optimistic of us might have hoped for. Even the goal-line offense ran to perfection.

Only our weird difficulties in the kickoff game following TDs made this game less than 100% glorious. Perhaps Roddy Scholarship’s consistency in kicking the ball out of the

endzone has made the coverage team complacent and out of practice. But even he has shown himself to be human and in need of practice, what with kicks out of bounds in consecutive weeks and, now and then, one that doesn't get walked out to the 25 yard line after landing in the shrubbery. It's hard to know how to evaluate a punting game that appears on the field with such rarity.

But everyone who gave Tech a shot at winning pointed to their option wizardry, aided by that cut blocking technique which should be banned so the rules are in step with other safety measures, as the key to their success. It might have helped if the scheme were populated by talented players, but what NFL prospect would voluntarily play in a system that in no way prepares a player for the NFL game? The GT presence in The League of one OL and one WR, and no other offensive player, answers that question. A 4-game winning streak in the ACC tells me more about the ACC than it does about Georgia Tech.

And so now the games begin. Unless Northwestern takes out Ohio State, or Texas outscores Oklahoma again, or Clemson somehow loses a game in their lesser league championship game, I don't see how the SEC loser next Saturday gets a Final Four bid, unless Sabanolatry is so widespread that he got his appointment in August, as happened last year. Alabama has looked unbeatable this season except for one half against The Citadel. UGA has looked unbeatable except one miserable Saturday in the Shat-On Huge in Baton Rouge.

We owned up to that loss, unlike Florida after we blew them out in Jacksonville, and took responsibility for the problems that produced the loss. The rest of the season showed what can happen when a good team decides to become great by addressing its weaknesses.

Both Georgia and Alabama are rolling into Saturday's play-in game in high gear. Everyone assumes that Alabama has one more gear than UGA. But there's a reason they play the games. Although we'll not be favored by the betting and chattering crowd, we'll be ready to battle.

All in all it's been one remarkable season. We lost a heavy contingent of outstanding seniors last season, largely replaced by one of the nation's youngest, least experienced lineups. The OL was viewed as a strength, but players kept going down, to be replaced by pups who were in high school last year. D'Andre Swift looked ordinary for much of the season until he healed up and reminded everyone of why he was a Heisman possibility in the preseason media blather. A quarterback controversy flared when we had trouble punching the ball in from around the goal line and people had visions of Justin Fields running wild, but Jake Fromm recovered from his one bad game in Red and Black and showed why the coaches and team had such confidence in him.

The DL looked vulnerable until Jordan Davis grew up, lost weight, got in shape, and showed that 3-star true freshmen can anchor a defense. Our ability to cultivate depth paid off when Campbell's freshmanitis flared, and the inside of the front seven rotated in and out of the injury tent. It no doubt helped that Deandre Baker turned out even better than last year when he was surrounded by 4-year starters, and consistently took the

opponents' best receiver out of the game. It's also a tribute to his character and role-modeling that he helped, with JR Reed, lead the defense by example and as on-field coaches.

And another 11-1 season happened amidst national doubters who had trouble accepting this team as legitimate, until we showed up and showed out on the field.

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

Atlanta Mission serves the needs of the 7,000 homeless people in the Atlanta community. While many of them find shelter most nights, as many as 2,000 of them are considered "unsheltered," leaving 2,000 men, women, and children living on the streets.

The number of people in homeless families is on the rise, making up one-fifth of the local homeless population. Atlanta Mission works to end homelessness, one person at a time, via a holistic approach that addresses the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of its guests. They have five facilities, each serving the needs of different segments of the homeless population, including men, women, and children who have lost jobs, been evicted, suffered abuse, battled addictions, experienced mental illness, and faced other challenges to living in stable homes.

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DAWG DOOTS

- ☞ We dropped dawg doots all over Georgia Tech on Saturday. People say that flies are drawn to turds, but it appears that yellow jackets and other common garden pests are, too.

THE COVETED DAWGMEISTER GOOD GUY OF THE WEEK AWARD

GOOD GUY ARCHIVE

Tae Crowder merits Good Guy status simply on the basis of his given name: Dequartavious. But he's also the kind of guy that makes a football program go. He was recruited to play RB when there was absolutely no way he'd get on the field any time soon, what with Todd Gurley, Keith Marshall, Nick Chubb, and Sony Michel on the roster. You've got to admire his tenacity simply in accepting a scholarship under those circumstances, especially given that he was a very good HS player but not an elite college prospect. 247sports composite rankings pegged him as a two-star prospect at either RB or WR, both of which he played at Harris County HS while doubling as a solid basketball player. And sure enough, there was no playing time for him on the depth chart. To no one's surprise, he redshirted as a 2015 freshman and started the 2016 season at RB before moving to inside LB in midseason, a tough transition to a tough

position at a tough time of year, hardly one predicting a major role in the rotation. Yet he hustled his way into the lineup ahead of a lot of 4-star studs and became a regular in his sophomore year. His most famous moment before this year was his heads-up snag of Oklahoma's squib kick in the Rose Bowl that helped Roddy Scholarship nail a monumental field goal that started the improbable comeback that put us in the championship game. This year he's become a regular and example to any other grinder who comes in without accolades but has the desire, smarts, and dedication to work his way onto the field. Tae's been a producer in the classroom as well, with three Richard Young Football Scholarships to his credit, and no doubt more on the way. He's my kind of Dawg: Bite, bark, and enough snarl to patrol the middle of the field in the middle of the nation's toughest conference. Keep an eye on this guy. He's got all the tools to make it in life well beyond football. Just don't be surprised if he ends up in The League ahead of all those superstars ranked well above him coming out of high school.



THE FORECAST

DAWGS VS. ALABAMA

Everyone is picking the Tide in this one, and who can blame them? It might be Saban's best team, or so they say. LSU demolished us, and Alabama demolished LSU on their turf. Of course, that comparative game means nothing in actuality, as our round-robin with LSU and Florida demonstrates. And those games were a while back; we took that off-week after the Baton Rouge disaster and reconstructed our mindset, rotation, and determination. Thinking about Saturday in terms of LSU is a waste of brain cells, which are surely taking a beating in bars and taverns across Georgia anyhow after the GT beatdown.

Forget the LSU game, either ours or theirs; this time it's us against them. I think that a lot of our chances for a win depend on how our OL heals and is ready for their DL, in both the running and passing games. We had Alabama where we wanted them last season, and one breakdown cost us the natty. We can do it again. We've got the will, the players, and the hunger for vengeance. And we will win this game. Dawgs 31, Tide 28.

NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK

They say it's hard to beat the same team twice in one season. We'll be hearing that a lot this week, especially given that nobody seems able to stop Oklahoma's offense. Just like last year before the second half of the Rose Bowl.

Being an OU fan this season must be fun and thrilling. Being an OU defensive player this season must mean you're not much of a defensive player. Changing coordinators in mid-season changed nothing in their performance. These guys just can't tackle, get in position, or read a scheme. So the offense needs to put up another 60 or so to keep them winning, and it probably will. Texas's roster doesn't quite match up, and though they'll score plenty against a team that doesn't even try to stop an opponent, like WVU and OSU of late, they won't quite score enough. Oklahoma 58, Texas 57.

NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK

Two Power Five leagues are going to get shut out of the Final Four, what with the PAC-12's internecine destruction and Notre Dame's impressive run through a competitive schedule. Sorry UCF, you've got to beat somebody to be in this conversation. Which will be the second conference to go down in flames? Nobody is giving Northwestern a shot against the Columbus Wife Beaters, but you're talking to The Dawgmeister here. Maybe I just hate Urban Meyer so much I can't put anything close to karma in his mailbox. I'm taking the Wildcats in a huge upset: 'Cats 40, 'Ckeyes 39.