

**THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST:
DAWGS UNLEASH FURY ON MISSOURI**

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SEPARATED@BIRTH?



**TURDY NERD
AL ONOFRIO**

&

**DIRTY BIRD
ARTHUR BLANK**

SEPARATED@BIRTH? ARCHIVE

Mrs. Butts left home early on Saturday for her annual Boar Hunt with the Ladies Club. While packing her Dangerous Game Rifle and Skittles, she asked me how I felt about the Florida matchup. My reply: Not confident. I really didn't know what sort of team we had. In October the offense, without Lawrence Cager and at times seemingly without a focus, had looked ordinary. As one story put it: "The primary complaints [about UGA] were all about the Georgia offense: the new-look receiving corps was a failure; the offensive line was underachieving; coordinator James Coley had to go; and former golden boy Fromm was suffering by comparison to Georgia transfer Justin Fields, now off conquering the world at Ohio State after backing up Fromm in 2018."

The narrative followed these assumptions: This was Florida's year, under certified genius Dan Mullen, to end our run and represent the East in Atlanta. We just didn't have the firepower to compete, our QB is a game-manager who can't throw, the Gators were getting their NFL-ready injured defenders back to crush our feeble offense, they had 2 weeks for the crafty Mullen to figure out our defense and scheme us off the field, we would run a predictable and easily defendable offense that their incredible athletes would anticipate and dominate, and Florida would justify its higher ranking and celebrate on the bus back to Gainesville.

I wasn't quite so gloomy, but nor was I confident. I read less press coverage in the last 3 weeks than I do in a dead month in May, because the negativity was so great after the SC loss and the solid win over Kentucky in a Biblical flood that nonetheless left the fan base and national press doubting our team. Even after the win over Florida, one of the studio analysts I saw later that evening said, *Georgia wins games, but they don't look good*

doing it, and today, what matters most is style points. I'm sure that Ohio State fans would agree. How we emerged as the betting favorite in Las Vegas escaped me.

The stories Sunday morning were all about redemption and vindication, at least in Athens. In Gainesville, "Third and Grantham" had the fans howling about their defensive coordinator, who coaches there the way he did here. You would not call me a high-volume Twitter reader or a Grantham troll, but [the digest here](#) finds that their fans have noticed what we saw during his term of service under Mark Richt:

Georgia converted a season-high 12 third downs vs. Florida, its most against a ranked team since the 2014 Belk Bowl vs. Louisville.

Todd Grantham was the defensive coordinator in both games.

12+ Third-Down Conversions vs. Ranked Team - Georgia Last 2 Instances

	2014 Belk Bowl	Saturday
Opp	Louisville	Florida
Defensive coordinator	Todd Grantham	Todd Grantham
Conv-Att	12-for-18	12-for-18

After the game, the wily genius Dan Mullen said that UGA's first TD was the biggest play of the game, forcing Florida to adjust its game plan. In my view, the biggest play came on the game's opening series after Florida moved the ball easily to begin their drive, crossing midfield in 3 plays and soon reaching the Dawg 40. That's when they got stoned on fourth down: Florida, anticipating the way their run game would get dominated, did not even pretend that they could get it on the ground, put the game in Trask's hands, and threw a pass that Rich LeCounte batted away. We then began our extraordinary run of 3rd down conversions and got close enough for a Roddy B field goal to take the lead for good. To me, that was a huge shift in momentum that never quite shifted back. Off their drive to open the game, UGA got the points, and the confidence that they were the better team. And they were, although if Florida plays true to form, they will say for the third straight year that they have the superior roster.

The player of the game? Everyone. Of course Fromm, Cager, and the OL got a lot of credit, and the defense finally earned Kirby Smart's praise after he'd questioned the validity of their impressive statistics. Brian Herrien made a catch that will be on the Jumbotron for decades. But this win was achieved up and down the roster and deep into the coaching and support staffs. We could have run better—Florida was committed to stopping the run, and has a lot of talented players in the box—and we could have defended the pass better at times. But I'm taking 3 straight in Jacksonville, 3-0 vs. Florida for the junior class, and a straight path to Atlanta. The SC game was a complete disaster, but it appears that the team is now straightened out and headed for glory.

A recurring theme of the season has been the idea that we are playing against a whole schedule of backup QBs, raising questions about how good our defense actually is; and yes, we have played against a lot of backups. But then, this season backup QBs are starting everywhere, because starting QBs are getting knocked around so much. Meanwhile, Jake Fromm came out of a game against what is reputed to be one of the nation's best defenses without getting his uniform dirty, and has taken few hits all year.

Obviously, the OL and Jake's underrated athleticism have a lot to do with that, along with our season-long emphasis on establishing the run.

But there's more to it, I think. The college game these days relies on QBs to run. I've watched Texas, Oklahoma, Ohio State, and many other teams expose their quarterbacks to a lot of contact of the sort we don't subject Jake Fromm to. So far, those guys are still standing, but a ton of others are wearing headsets and carrying clipboards after taking the R option in the R-P-O schemes. Sometimes—Florida's a good case—the backup is more reliable than the starter and the change has been for the better. Sometimes the 3rd and 4th stringers get it done, as Purdue did vs. mighty Nebraska on Saturday. On the whole, though, it's the risk you take when you turn the QB into an RB and subject him to contact.

Missouri's Kelly Bryant has missed time this season after getting his knee blasted by Troy and injuring a hamstring against Kentucky. I can't tell if he'll play on Saturday. But it's a sign of the times that the backup needs to be ready to run onto the field at any moment, as wet-behind-the-ears Jake Fromm did 2 years ago, never to come off.

SAT PREP SESSION

SAT Question of the Week: What do the following people have in common?
Cameron Erving, Hroniss Grasu, Shaq Mason, Max Garcia, Andy Gallik, and Austin Reiter

- A. Each uses "Lock her up!" in a Donald Duck voice as his cell phone ringtone.
- B. Each lives in Columbia, MO, in the summer to take advantage of the cool, dry weather.
- C. Each identifies Branson, MO as having America's finest hotel accommodations.
- D. Each has gotten a free Waffle House coupon book from Phil Fulmer.

Answer: In the 2015 NFL draft, each of these college centers was selected, while the New England Patriots signed undrafted free agent David Andrews.

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

Your contribution to **WUGA** helps the station expand and deepen its service to the community. The Fund helps provide staff development opportunities through participation in professional conferences and training. Staff members in news, engineering, programming, operations and business disciplines are able to increase their knowledge and expertise in many facets of public broadcasting, thanks to your support of the 1987 Club. WUGA's community outreach enriches the lives of citizens in this area through special events. Many events are developed in partnership with non-

profit service organizations and other events are focused on visits of national public radio broadcasts to the Athens area. Programs such as Mountain Stage, eTown, Marketplace, New Letters on the Air and Story Corps bring their productions to Athens, thanks to your contributions.

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DAWG DOOTS

- ☞ Brian Herrien will never have to buy his own beer in the state of Georgia. What a warrior.
- ☞ I'm looking forward to Dan Mullen's off-season trash talk, which is his main opportunity to tell everyone how he'll kick Georgia's ass next time.

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

When **Rashad Roundtree** committed to the G out of Lakeside HS in Evans, we appeared to have our next dominant defensive back. He was a can't-miss prospect all the way: a consensus 4-5 star recruit, the nation's #3 safety, 2-time first team All Stater in 5A, AJC Super 11, Under Armour All American....he couldn't miss. The next Greg Blue, Thomas Davis, and Sean Jones was on the way. Everyone wanted Rashad Roundtree for football, and he was also an outstanding student and first-class citizen. But football never panned out for him. He played 2 years as a reserve, alternating between safety and linebacker, and then, due to a series of head injuries, was forced to hang up his cleats, announcing, "As a result of a number of concussions, it is with a heavy heart that I announce that my journey in the path of football has come to an end. As a child, all of my dreams involved playing football and it deeply saddens me that I can't play anymore." A lot of guys brought in to play football would have had their bags packed, because the classroom is an alien place to them. But Rashad came here to get a degree as much as to blow up offenses. He also stuck with the team, getting himself a whistle and coaching up his teammates during practice. The transition was painful: "It's been hard," he said. "Setting football aside and focusing on a professional career has been a challenge. But Georgia has done a great job of giving me support, like this internship opportunity [at RaceTrac's corporate headquarters] right here. Just because my football career is over doesn't mean my career is over." The internship has blossomed. It began through a UGA networking initiative first known as the Paul Oliver Network under Mark Richt, and now called The Georgia Way. To no one's surprise, Rashad's done a terrific job with RaceTrac, as a company official has said: "Rashad has come in and worked really hard and had a really good attitude. What we've realized is student-athletes, and specifically football players like Rashad, have qualities that translate really well to the work force, like passion and drive and work ethic. Everybody here just loves him. We hope we can get him in the future." His future is now, with a degree in sport management in hand and companies like RaceTrac recruiting him the way Richt, Saban, and Meyer recruited him out of high school. His reflection on picking the Dawgs out of high school suggests that he's a very mature young man: "When I was being recruited, my father (Richmond County Sheriff Richard Roundtree) said, 'If you took football out of it, what school would you want to go to? That was the University of Georgia. It's

unfortunate what happened, but I'm still happy with my decision of going to the University of Georgia. I love what they've done for me." To recruits he advises, "Don't take it for granted. Work hard every day and do as much as you can every day. It's what you love to do and what you've been working for. But realize it's not going to happen for everybody. So use the resources you have. Take advantage of it and try to help those that are trying to help you. Georgia wants to see you succeed." Succeeding is no problem for this Good Guy, with or without football. And the Dawg Nation is the winner.



THE FORECAST

DAWGS VS. MISSOURI

There was a point in the season when Missouri looked like a challenger in the East, but that's behind us now. After a lot of optimism and a top 25 ranking, they are close to tanking; [the Columbia sports press describes them as being at a crossroads](#), and possibly pulling a U-turn. This is a team that Grown Man Football teams should take care of, and that's what'll happen. Dawgs 31, Tigers 13.

NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: ALABAMA OVER LSU

One of the great matchups of the season. Can LSU dink and dunk its way past Alabama, or will the Tide have a plan to cut them short? Auburn defended LSU pretty well, in spite of mammoth passing stats for Burrow; yet it was a very short passing game, so the completion percentage and yardage seem more impressive than they really were. Alabama has better personnel and I think will do enough damage. Bo Nix had a lot more trouble with LSU's defense than Tua will. Alabama 34, LSU 31.

Oh, and unbeaten Princeton will beat unbeaten Dartmouth at Yankee Stadium for Ivy League supremacy, 48-41.

NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: TCU OVER BAYLOR

The latest ex-Temple coach to fall will be Matt Ruhl. I actually sorta like him, but you can't walk out on The Owlmeister and stay in my good graces for long. The Horned Frogs throw another monkey wrench into the national and league standings with a win over the Bears: TCU 28, Baylor 24.