

**THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST:
DAWGS FINISH THE THRILL**

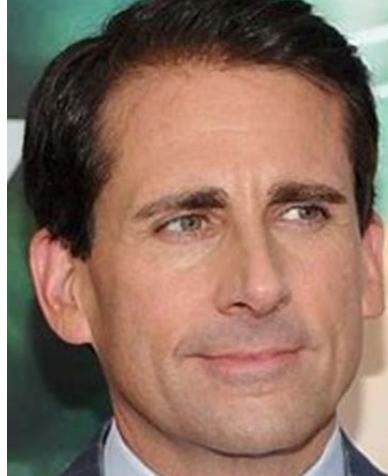
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“The National Weather Service reported a possible brief tornado in Bainbridge, Ga., on Wednesday afternoon.” ~News report, December 29

That South Georgia tornado, a man named Kirby Smart, landed in Miami on December 31 and blew away a team that had rarely trailed this season and that had come to town thumping their chests with pride and conviction. Their greatest season in decades had them believing that they had the talent, grit, and motivation to win the Orange Bowl and keep on winning all the way through the playoff. Their fans were believers, and the national media saw them as the team on the rise, and Georgia as full of question marks. [The Wolverines upsetting the Bulldogs is a popular pick](#). Or so said the Lamestream Sports Media.

Michigan's fans were stoked and ready after packing as much maize and blue into Hard Rock Stadium as possible. Their defensive duo of Aidan Hutchinson and David Ojabo was considered the most ferocious pass rushing tandem in the country, with Hutchinson considered the second-greatest player overall in the nation and likely #1 overall pick in the NFL draft in 2022. Their running game had pounded everyone in the Big 10 into a pulp. Michigan's Joe Moore Award-winning offensive line had dominated every opponent they'd lined up against. The Detroit Free Press opined before the game that [Cade McNamara's leadership may be why U-M has chance at national title](#). Jim

Harbaugh had finally broken through and wasn't going to let anything spoil his redemption for his fan base and final embrace by a once-skeptical sports media.

The Dawgs, meanwhile, were a suspect group. The pregame broadcast focused on how Michigan had blown past Ohio State and Iowa and was on a roll, and how Alabama had blown past the Dawgs and left them reeling. UGA had romped through the regular season only to suffer a beatdown from Alabama that broadcasters earlier in the day referred to as an embarrassing blowout.

The Dawgs were starting an undersized QB who'd surely get engulfed by the great Hutchinson. Georgia's defense had been exposed by Alabama as good enough for Georgia Tech, but not for championships. The SEC in general had been revealed in bowl games as overrated, with only South Carolina preventing a total skunking in the postseason prior to the final game on New Year's Eve. Anyone in Georgia's corner who wasn't concerned and doubtful about the game hadn't been paying attention.

The game then began, and the narratives took a beating. Earlier in the day, one of the broadcasters noted that Cincinnati just doesn't see body types in the American Athletic Conference like the ones in the trenches for Alabama. In the evening game, it seemed clear that Michigan doesn't see athleticism and speed in defenders, or power and execution in the offensive line, close to what they came across against Georgia.



Go Big Blue.

By the fourth quarter, the stands were half-empty and the only color in the crowd was red. I heard Aidan Hutchinson's name called a total of three times all night, at least beyond general hype. But for actual plays: Once he was offside, once he made a good play on the boundary, and once he was held. Ojabo? Did he play? You wouldn't know it from watching the game. There was a great DE/LB duo on the field, but their names were Dean and Smith. Michigan's bruising running game was outrushed 190-91 and Michigan's vaunted OL was the one getting dominated on every snap.

Jim Harbaugh was on his way to yet another roasting, with the loss described in the media as embarrassing, humiliating, a stomping, a hammering, a rocking, a whipping, a

pummeling, a nightmare, a thorough dismantling, a manhandling, a crushing, a demolition, an epic loss, a throttling, a waxing, a mauling, a drubbing, a stoning, a blowout, a beating, and no doubt other terms indicating a thoroughgoing ass-whupping. Their QBs were on the run every snap, and their great runners got nowhere. To the Michigan faithful, the game was a devastating loss. To Jim Harbaugh, it was a “beginning.” If he’s not careful, the end might come soon, [if the fallout from the game is any indication](#). Fans and media only remember the last thing you did, not the things you did to get there.

On New Year’s Eve we got treated to the Dawg team that had shown up for every game except the SEC Championship game, which they now get a second chance to win. On offense, nobody really starred, because so many backs and receivers contributed. The most valuable offensive player was Stetson Bennett, who surely earned it, but the most important players might have been Jamaree Salyer and Warren McLendon, who owned, stoned, and boned Aidan Hutchinson for four quarters.

The defensive MVP was Derion Kendrick because of his two INTs, but it could easily have been any number of other guys, with Nakobe Dean coming to mind. It was a game where the only flaws were the clock management at the end of the first half, Rosemy-Jacksaint’s inexplicable pull-up on a punt he was about to block, and a late TD scored on the reserves. Otherwise, it was a game like pretty much every other win on the season: dominant in every facet of the game.



Reminder of why you should try to play in a non-mayo themed bowl game.

SAT PREP SESSION

SAT Question of the Week: Which players in the 2017 signing class were ranked the #162 QB and #116 athlete?

- A. Rocky Lombardi and Lynn Bowden
- C. Kenny Pickett and Malik Willis
- D. K'Hari Lane and Kadarius Toney
- E. Shabazz Telfort and JaTarvious Whitlow

Answer: These two fellows were Stetson Bennett and Desmond Ridder.

THE FORECAST UGA OVER ALABAMA

There was another game on New Year's Eve, and the winner looked pretty dominant in that one too.

Both Georgia and Alabama showed that they have many ways to win games. Against UGA, Alabama threw for a ton; against Cincinnati, they ran for a ton. The narrative for UGA is that we're a power run team, and we came out throwing to destroy Michigan. Both teams have multiple weapons that make their attack a weekly plan based on opponents' weaknesses more than a seasonal plan focused on their team's strengths. And both teams can play great defense, even if Georgia didn't in the SEC championship game.

But throw that game out. The two best teams will meet, and Game 1 does not predict Game 2. It only gives teams a lot of film to study and a lot of new preparations to make. Alabama's got a good track record of prepping for these games. UGA does too; it now just needs to win the final one. I doubt if this team cares about what happened in the years before they arrived. This is their season, and heroics from the past, including early December, don't matter anymore. It's down to one game, with no history to create anything more than media narratives, of which few pan out once the ball's teed up for the opening kickoff.

Is this our year? Will we finally play through Alabama? I'm saying that yes we can, and yes we will. I'm going with UGA for the natty: Dawgs 34, Tide 31.