

**THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST:  
DAWGS GIG FRAWGS**

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**SEPARATED@BIRTH?**



**QUEST FOR THE RING & QUEST OF THE RING  
MAX DUGGAN                      FRODO**

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At the stroke of midnight, the ball turned into a pumpkin and defied the hopes and dreams of the Buckeye Nation as it wobbled and wheezed its way to the left of the uprights to give UGA the victory. And so ended the Ohio State comeback meant to overcome the UGA comeback in a game where I often doubted if the Good Guys had it in them to overcome so many deficits. I must have accidentally put on The Scowlmeister's mud-colored glasses, because when we were down by 14 and the clock was ticking down in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, I felt as though it might not be our night, it might not be our season.

C.J. Stroud was sensational all night, and the OSU receivers seemed to be open by 10 yards on every play for about 59 minutes, 50 seconds. The Buckeye game plan, Stroud said afterwards, was "superb." Ryan Day called the performance "one of [Stroud's] best games" in a career full of great games. And it's hard to argue with a plan that put up points on UGA's rugged defense like no other. He was great when there was no pressure, and mighty good when the pressure was on, especially with scrambles that ended in completions or gains on the ground. The cat was epic in an epic game.

But wait. There was another offense on the field on New Year's Eve. And they fought just as hard and had just as outstanding a game plan. UGA out-ran and out-passed Ohio State on one of the best days their Heisman finalist QB has ever had. Down by 2 TDs with a quarter to play, they fought their way back into the game and over the top in the final minute.

The comeback started with a field goal that some observers thought was too paltry a point total to be worth trying so late in a game in which Ohio State seemed to be able to score at will. But those 3 points shaved the lead enough to provide, along with some

excellent defense, a way back into the game. The Dawg offense put up 18 points in the fourth quarter to take a last-minute lead, helped by a heady play by Brock Bowers to stay in bounds just enough to nail a critical first down.

And so the game came down to one makeable field goal that never had a chance. What was remarkable to me on this fabulous evening was that two of the college game's best kickers missed three field goals between them in an indoor stadium on an artificial surface, providing them with can't-miss conditions in which they kept missing.

Stetson ended with 398 yards in the air, 50 more than Stroud produced on one of his greatest days, yet said afterwards that he'd gone through "a 30-minute period there where I just played bad football." The third quarter produced a total of 32 yards, 2 first downs, 2 punts, and a missed field goal. A team that promised four full quarters of football took the third quarter off. The deficit seemed too big to overcome and seemed even more forbidding as the clock wound down, and there arose a feeling of gloom among the fanbase.

The Dawgs didn't play their best game, and Ohio State was on fire for much of the night. But UGA showed endless grit in coming back to win the game. Coach Smart said afterwards, "Every one of those guys in that locker room believed. I'm so proud of these guys, they never quit, they never said die." And with the injuries piling up by the minute in a hard-fought game, a lot of backups from the 2022 recruiting class were on the field when it mattered most. No doubt OSU is lamenting the injuries to Harrison and Stover; "To say that losing Marv didn't have an impact on the game, it absolutely did," said Ryan Day afterwards.

But McConkey was half of his normal self, Darnell Washington left the game, and we were playing a patchwork of OLBs when Chambliss and Beal went down. McLendon never took the field. Nolan Smith was an assistant coach. This game was not decided by injuries, although losing fan bases tend to remember their own players' injuries much more than those of the winners (see Alabama, 2021). The game was decided by the rosters recruited and coached by their staffs all the way down the depth chart. If you lose because an individual player got hurt, then you should have recruited more players to take his place, because this is a violent game.

Meanwhile, after defeating Kansas State, which beat TCU, which beat Michigan, which beat Ohio State, Alabama coach Nick Saban declared the selection committee's results to be unfair and fraudulent, and stated that the playoff should be voided. He demanded that 2-loss Alabama be allowed to play in the national championship game, or to skip the game altogether and be declared national champions. His lawyer, Gary Danielson, called Mark Emmert to demand that he "find" 2 points to add to Alabama's total vs. LSU and give them the win and thus elevate them into the championship game. Saban is thought to be planning a rally in Anaheim on January 9 to protest the game and restore justice to the land.

"Sure Nick." ~Little Woolly

🏀 A Coveted Dawgmeister Game Ball goes to Coach Nolan Smith, a guy who could have quit school to rehab and train for personal gain, but who has become an essential part of the game preparations and inspiring coach to his teammates while injured.



### **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*

**DrawChange** serves children living in homeless shelters and refugee children, helping them to create art projects centered around sharing with them a vehicle to visualize a break from the cycle of poverty. We empower them to reach their dreams while building confidence. Self-confidence is a sustaining emotional anchor that carries children through times of turmoil and transition that they encounter during the cycle of homelessness and poverty. Our desired outcome when creating art with the children is to provide happiness, awareness of self, empowerment, and a sense of belonging. Through our programs, we prove to the children that you can attain anything you can imagine. Within the United States, we currently have programs in Atlanta, Orlando, and Tucson.

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### **SAT PREP SESSION**

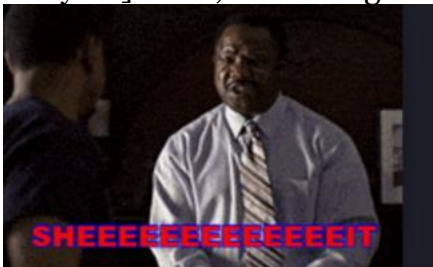
**SAT Question of the Week:** What 2023 recruit was named the **#55 player in Florida** in May, 2022 by *Sports Illustrated*, and the **#53 player in the nation** by 247 in November?

Troy Bowles  
Tyler Williams  
Pearce Spurlin  
Raymond Cottrell  
Brandon Inniss  
Dayquavious Sorey

Answer: [High School Butkus Award](#) Finalist Raylen Wilson was named the #55 player in Florida by [Sports Illustrated](#) before the season, and the #53 player in the nation by [247](#) in November.

## DAWG DOOTS

- ☞ Be afraid. Be very, very afraid. [Georgia Tech offers Georgia 2024 top-50 WR commit Ny Carr](#)
- ☞ The 2022 Coveted Dawgmeister Word of the Year is “curate.” Not long ago, people would make a mixtape of songs. Now, it’s possible to say that you have *curated a themed collection of recordings*. Or maybe you edit the Greatest Hits of The Dawgmeister for the Harvard University Press. But of course you would say that you have *curated The Dawgmeister’s finest work from his greater oeuvre*. Congratulations to this fine word, previously confined to museums filled with things older than The Scowlmeister.
- ☞ Nothing like watching a low-tier bowl game on a slow holiday weekday and finding that in the Raul’s RaceTrac Convenience Store Bowl in Blagoveshchensk, Siberia, between two 6<sup>th</sup> place teams, the broadcasters blow smoke up the teams’ bung-holes by touting the vast number of guys who are All Conference and All Americans and who will play on Sundays and are likely first-round draft picks, and the brilliance of the coaching staffs in getting the teams into a game requiring 6 wins.
- ☞ “You prepare your ass off, fight like hell to have the product you want it to look like. Shit, there’s plays in the game, I’m not sure [Stetson is] the guy. There’s times I call some shit I don’t know if I’m the guy. Sometimes stuff doesn’t work and you’re grasping and trying different stuff; sometimes shit just works. [Stetson] is capable of putting shit behind him and making plays to go win games. My son’s a student coach at Oklahoma State [where Jim Knowles coached last year]. Now, he didn’t give me [anything]. Shit’s sad.” ~Todd Monken



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

**MJ Sherman** came in as a 5-star prospect out of Baltimore by way of St. John’s College HS in Washington, DC. He was a sure thing, the next Big Thing. He hasn’t quite lit up the field the way many people expected. But he’s lit up the team with his attitude and team spirit. MJ has mostly been a special teams player, having a hard time playing past the other studly OLBs on the depth chart. But he’s a special guy as well as bring a special teams warrior. Coach Smart said that “He’s a great kid who does a tremendous job for us. He’s one of the toughest guys I’ve ever been around. He has grown up a lot since he’s

been here. Really enjoyed his recruitment. He grew up living with his sister and his mom, and (I) got to know them through recruiting. Just a great family and a joy to coach.” His father, Varney Sherman, is a Harvard grad and lawyer who returned to Africa as a senator for Grand Cape Mount in Liberia, separating the family. But MJ and his dad have grown closer over time. He says, “The main lesson that I’ve taken from him goes back to one our core traits that we have right now [at UGA]: resiliency.” MJ hasn’t found special teams to be a demotion. Rather, he says, “I take it very seriously. Every day we try to fight for opportunities to show that we’re capable of doing what we’ve got to do on the field. So, just as seriously as you take your 9-5 job, that is how seriously I take my special-teams jobs. Basically, I take a lot of pride in fulfilling my job helping the team win. I feel like I try to do that every week.” He expects no special treatment based on his HS accolades: “One thing about prayer that always works, if you call on God, he will (answer) one side of the prayer for you, but you’ve got to do the other side. He’s going to work his magic, but you’ve got to work yours. . . . So, basically, my simple analogy is that God will place a door in front of you, but it’s your job to twist the knob and open it. And that’s what I’ve been trying to do.” To Coach Smart, MJ “wants to practice hard. He understands discipline and toughness. He’s a great culture guy for our program because he sells out on special teams and just does a great job.” Kirby has built a culture in this program that values every contribution from every player. And the inevitable result is that everyone comes out a winner in the end.



## **THE FORECAST**

### **DAWGS VS. TCU**

TCU belongs in this final. The post-game coverage noted that Michigan appeared to be overconfident and looking ahead to the championship game. They even still think they are the better team, as claimed after the game by Roman Wilson: “They’re a good team. I still think we’re the better team.” But for UGA, there’s no looking beyond TCU. It’s the grand finale to a grand season, and TCU beat the team that clobbered Ohio State, which came within a hair of beating UGA. We will be fully aware of the Frogs’ capabilities and the magnitude of this game, and the preparation it takes to win it.

The game features the two QBs who aren’t supposed to be playing in such big games, the guys with the most moxie in the land, the ones who were courtesy appointments to the Heisman final four. But now it’s the final two, and who could want a better matchup?

UGA definitely has shown vulnerability to a strong passing game, and fixing it will be a big task. I don't think TCU has quite the array of weapons we saw on New Year's Eve, but then that's what Michigan thought too. Nobody's looking past these guys, one of the great stories of this century's college football campaigns.

But UGA has all of the same qualities as TCU, and an uptick in personnel. I don't want to get all Michigan on how much more talent we've got, or toughness, or coaching, or whatever, which is how you lose games like this. But how could you doubt these cats after their inspiring play on Saturday night? On the other hand, how can you doubt TCU, which has been playing tough games all year and winning almost all of them?

And so I'm taking our guys for the natty. It'll be a competitive game, down to the fourth quarter, when we might again have a lot of very young guys on the field. But then, this year's team consists of the guys who were getting their first rotations last year, and they've turned out pretty well. So here we go: Dawgs defend, 45-34.