

THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST: *DAWGS WARP EAGLES*

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SEEING RED & KNUCKLEHEAD
JIMMY BRUMBAUGH & MICHAEL WILBON

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I felt pretty good going into this game. Missouri hadn't done much, and had had an emotional wringer of a game against Auburn the week before. We'd had a week to fix up the problems that had made the Kent State game uncomfortably close, and had something to prove. This one had all the makings of a Dawg beatdown of an overmatched opponent.

But when the game started, something was way off. The offensive timing wasn't there. Missouri owned the line of scrimmage for a half. Missouri made some big plays that kept getting them into good position for scores. Thank heaven for Jack Podlesny, who is emerging as one of our most dependable kickers in memory, and we've had a few that landed NFL jobs.

But it's hard to win games when you score points 3 at a time. And it's really hard to win when you fumble twice in the first half against a team that needs this win to save their season, and plays like it. And it's really, really hard to win a road SEC game when you enter the fourth quarter behind by 10 points.

Coach Smart saw a lot to admire in how his Bulldogs played as the game wore on: "We certainly didn't start very well, but I couldn't be prouder of our team. At halftime, nobody blinked, nobody questioned anything, it was the most together I've ever seen our team." At the start, though, it sure didn't look like a night that would eventually have the coach proud of his warriors. After the second fumble of the first half, it looked mighty grim. You can't take anything for granted in college football, where 20-year-olds are

required to act like grown men, and sometimes they act like teenagers. Just ask Pitt. And while you're up, see if Jimbo's boys can stop counting their money long enough to earn it on the field.


And while I'm thinking of it, Desmond Howard, how is your amazing preseason pick that Alabama would play A&M for the SEC championship game looking these days?

There was one oddity to the broadcast. The boys in the booth went on and on about how Missouri blew it with a procedure penalty after starting a drive one yard from the endzone following Cody Schrader's terrific 63-yard run—which was 61% of their ground game for the afternoon. The cost was 4 points, the difference in the game.

But they never mentioned what seemed obvious to me at the time, and what the post-game studio team identified as a great play, and about which Kirby Smart said afterwards, "The biggest play of the night is probably Malaki Starks' tackle on the 1-yard line or maybe 1-foot." And how appropriate that [Ben Watson, he of similar heroic full-field sprint to prevent a touchdown by Champ Bailey](#), was in the studio making the same point. Stark's hustle shows why you've got to be more than just talented. You've got to play with desire and discipline, too. And be well coached. Right, Jimbo?

Daijun Edwards is rightfully getting credited for his rugged play in the fourth quarter. Something overlooked: When everyone in the stadium knew we were going to run the ball on every play, the guy playing WR was Jackson Meeks, a forgotten man in the rotation. I can only assume that the kid can block like a champion. Another 3-star WR who has added a lot of value to the program.

And so, what to make of a game we were supposed to win in a blowout, but needed to come from 10 down with 14 minutes to play to get the W? A few weeks ago, people were wondering if this team might be better than the 2021 group. Probably not, I think. But thinking it is possible was fun, if a stretch. We've got some maturing to do before being that good.

With Jalen Carter taken out by a cheap shot, the DL rotation consisted of guys who were reserves or in high school last year. The defensive backfield has a lot of new guys in the rotation. You can't expect them to match a group of upperclassmen like last year's crew, especially given how well they played together after playing together for several years. After coming out blazing in the first three games, people (perhaps including players) began taking for granted that putting on that helmet bearing the  made everyone an All American. But young and inexperienced teams can be hard to convince of the need to take every opponent seriously. I suspect that now, they will.

They still need to work toward the cohesiveness, the connection, that made last year so special. It's not there yet. If I can see it isn't, so can the coaches. Expect it to improve after becoming a focal point from Monday-Friday.

The other area that has not quite lived up to expectations is the offensive line. They were magnificent in the fourth quarter when Missouri wore down after playing their hearts

out for three quarters. But they're not blowing people out. I'm sure they'll hear about it all week from the coaches.

When all is said and done, UGA is 5-0, 2-0 in the league. The expectations are very high, we exceeded them early, and have fallen short lately. What happens next is anybody's guess. It's time to stop expecting 49-0 games every weekend and get realistic. We're good, one of the nation's best. But we need to execute better and show it more on the field of play to make a playoff or win it.

SAT PREP SESSION

SAT Question of the Week: Who was the winner in a poll of Auburn fans asking: Who is the cutest sideline reporter covering sports on TV?

- A. Erin Andrews
- B. Jamie Erdahl
- C. Katie George
- D. Lauren Jbara
- E. Allie LaForce
- F. Molly McGrath
- G. Pam Oliver
- H. Holly Rowe
- I. Laura Rutledge
- J. Lisa Salters
- K. Jenny Taft
- L. Tracy Wolfson
- M. Jenny Dell
- N. Samantha Ponder

Answer: The cutest sideline reporter of all, according to the unanimous agreement of the Auburn fan base, is Cole Cubelic.

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

100 Black Men of Atlanta is one of eight 100 Black Men organizations based in cities around the nation. Through its programs to support Atlanta's challenged communities, members have become actively involved in educational issues affecting youth, public policy, as well as economic, social and health issues impacting the communities it serves. The organization is often called upon to endorse efforts that support its mission. The members of 100 Black Men of Atlanta are proud of the accomplishments of the

organization and the achievements of its students. They look forward to affecting positive change for Atlanta's challenged communities and its youth for years to come.

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DAWG DOOTS

- ☞ Earlier in the day I saw the legendary Calling of the Hogs before the Alabama-Arkansas game. Give me the fabled Spell Georgia Cheer any day.
- ☞ In the noon slot, Molly McGrath interviewed Lane Kiffin following Mississippi's win over UK. Transcript: "Coach, how are you feeling about the win?" Answer: "Hey baby, not as good as I'd feel taking you home."
- ☞ And on that game: There was a ton of talk from the broadcasters about Will Levis being one of the draft's top 3 QBs, maybe the overall #1. What are they seeing that I'm missing? The studio team wondered the same thing: Why does he look so ordinary against better teams?
- ☞ Former Minnesota Vikings QB [Brett Favre](#), after his house was surrounded by people chanting "Lock Him Up!", has announced that he is running for President of the United States in 2024.
- ☞ Whoever designed the uniforms Baylor wore on Saturday needs to be sent to the front line in Ukraine.
- ☞ Dick of the Day: Ryan Day for calling a fake punt while up by 39 against Rutgers.
- ☞ In a secret meeting conducted by the Georgia Tech Boosters Club, held in an elevator in Bobby Dobbs Stadium, the short list of candidates to replace Geoff Collins was created. Their top candidates are: Steve Spurrier, Jr., Bobby Petrino, Jr., Charlie Weiss, Jr., Skip Holtz, Tommy Bowden, Kendal Briles, Brian Ferentz, Matt Mumme, Joe Schiano, and Knox Kiffin.

THE COVETED DAWGMEISTER GOOD GUY OF THE WEEK AWARD [GOOD GUY ARCHIVE](#)

After earning all-state honors in football and track at Daniel HS in Central, SC, and playing baseball and basketball on the side, **Kent Lawrence** played for Vince Dooley's Dawgs from 1965-1968, back when freshmen were ineligible. #24 was an early RBU star. He led the team to its 1966 SEC championship from the backfield, earning Cotton Bowl MVP honors while setting a program bowl rushing record of 149 yards that held up for most of the rest of the century. His great game won him induction into the Cotton Bowl Hall of Fame. He also returned punts and kickoffs for TDs and great field position in an era when fair catches and touchbacks were far less common. He was inducted into the Cotton Bowl Hall of Fame in 2003. But RB and return man were just two of his roles. He also caught a lot of passes from receiver positions. No reports on how much popcorn he sold in the stands. He busied himself in the offseason on the track, where he set the Georgia record of 9.5 seconds in the 100-yard dash and placed second in the SEC freshman track meet with a 9.4-second run. After UGA, Kent played with the Falcons and Eagles, flying high until his retirement. At UGA Kent earned bachelor's and master's degrees in education from UGA, then after he retired from the NFL, a law degree from the Woodrow Wilson College of Law at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta. His career took him through a position with the UGA police department, a role as investigator for the Western Circuit District Attorney's Office, and an appointment as the first police chief of

the newly formed Clarke County Police Department in 1975. He ultimately was named a judge in Athens-Clarke County, where he presided over State Court from 1985 until his retirement in 2011, Kent was the founder of the county's DUI/Drug Court. Kent passed away in 2020 at age 72, The Georgia Athletic Department established the Judge Kent Lawrence Football Scholarship Endowment to honor him and provide a scholarship for a student-athlete pursuing a degree in criminal justice. He brought plenty of honor to UGA in his adult life, and it's great to see his name live on with an endowed scholarship to help others seek justice in the courts.



THE FORECAST

DAWGS VS. AUBURN

There's a huge talent difference between the rosters, and between the coaching staffs. Auburn has managed to eke out some wins, with help from opponents, yet is still running on fumes with the boosters and fan base, the former of which is far more important on the Plains. Keep on sniffin' there, Auburn. The Dawgs themselves have a lot to clean up and a lot of reckoning to do about what kind of team they are. They have been out of synch on offense, while consistent on defense if you overlook some of the plays in the Kent State game. I think that next weekend, the defense will continue to dominate, and the offense will get in gear. UGA 31, Auburn 0.

NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: TEXAS OVER OKLAHOMA

Another historical rivalry, this one to be preserved following conference realignment. It's not as big a national game as it was when Texas was a bigtime program. Now all they have is a bigtime budget. But OU really took a lot of personnel hits when their coach bolted within hours of losing his final game, and that deal wasn't negotiated quickly; Riley had to have been planning to get outa Norman for some time, probably after he learned that he'd have to win a conference that is stacked with better teams. He might clean up the Pac-12 briefly before having to play Big 10 teams in a few years. Anyhow, back to this game: I'm not sure how rapidly you can reload a team that lost so much after one season, without being UGA, which didn't lose its coaching staff along with its best players. Oklahoma got slaughtered last week by a team wearing purple. I think it might become a trend. Don't bet on it, but I'll take the Longhorns: UT 31, OU 24.

NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: TEXAS TECH OVER OKLAHOMA STATE

We are now in the thick of conference competition, so there'll be no more Middle Tennessee over Miami for a spell. It's actually a coincidence that I'm picking two schools from the same state to go down. Their own days as rivals are now in doubt with more conference comings and goings affecting schedules. I'm always a little skeptical of Oklahoma State, and maybe it's Mike Gundy's hair and general assholery that gives me pause. In any case, I'm going with the Red Raiders over the Pokes. Defense optional. TTU 45, OSU 44.