

**THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST:  
DAWGS DAWG CATS**

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**Fulton County Jail Mug Shot of the Week**

I haven't felt this apprehensive during a UGA game since we played South Carolina.

Some think we dodged a bullet on The Plains. I think we took that bullet, and kept on playing.

Every commentary about Saturday's game begins with Brock Bowers' sensational afternoon, as well it should. So I won't belabor the point. That cat is just different. I've now heard him described as Carson Beck's "security blanket" about 100 times. Security blanket? This guy is a Security Force on the rampage.

But there was a lot more to the game than one man's incandescent performance. Kirby Smart had never won a game in which his team had fallen behind 10-0 after one quarter, which has happened 3 or 4 times before, according to the broadcast graphic. Another

slow start, and a stunning way to open the second half: with a fumble on the first play that Auburn converted into a TD in 3 plays, essentially giving them the ball to start both halves, one with a frighteningly short field.

Auburn really came ready to play and keep themselves in the race, and they deserve a lot of credit for competing and taking this game down to the last series. With a predictably rabid crowd behind them, they made this a really stout contest. Kirby Smart heaped praised on Auburn and their fans afterwards, and he's a guy who understands SEC competition as well as anyone. Winning on the road is never easy, and Auburn is a great environment for Saturday games.

But UGA was tough and gritty and never caved, panicked, or got rattled, as Jenny Dell suggested to Kirby Smart was the case at halftime. Some might think that Auburn wasn't all that good, and they do have some deficiencies. Their passing attack was as much a non-factor as anticipated, but they did run effectively, albeit with 28% of their yards on a single play. Dawgmeister Analytics has factored out two stats to get more of a true measure of their success with the run, by tossing the outliers from the calculation. Subtract that one play (which isn't to say it wasn't a terrific call and execution), and Auburn ran 42 times for 158 yards, 3.8 yards per carry. But those carries included 3 sacks, which Dawgmeister Analytics considers a stupid way to count them, so let's add about 20 yards to their re-calculated output, resulting in 42 runs, 178 yards, 4.2 per carry. That's better than our 3.6 ypc, if not as impressive as their reported total and average when you include that 61 yard QB keeper, which of course actually happened, and impressively so.

So it was our passing game that turned this one in our favor. Beck still doesn't connect on deep throws as well as he ought to, but he sure played exceptionally well with the game on the line. He keeps passing whatever tests the games provide him, and taking charge more and more. He won't [win the Heisman and go pro at the end of the season](#), as some projected he might, but he's our QB1 and we're lucky to have him taking snaps. According to our very exacting coach, "I thought Carson played better in the second half, and I never felt like he was rattled. That was a concern coming in was would he be rattled by this environment. To have a quarterback that had never started on the road go to Auburn and not have a procedural penalty or delay of game? That's pretty remarkable." Damn right.

A couple of plays and series really stand out to me in terms of UGA's mental toughness. Behind 10-0 after the first quarter, they tied it by halftime, traded TDs in the third quarter, then turned the game over to Beck and Bowers to win it. That 98-yard drive after an outstanding punt and coverage was as good as it gets. Then they drove 75 for their final TD. The defense delivered with a stop on fourth down near the end of the first half to keep the game close when they needed to keep it close, then closed it all down with a pick by Starks at the end.

I was happy to see Ladd McConkey looking frisky, and I bet Carson Beck was too, as Ladd had three 3<sup>rd</sup>-down conversions. Let's hope he's back for good. He always seems to have a burst and sharpness in his route-running that others just don't.

Peyton Woodring has missed some bunnies this season, and I was worried about our kicking game. But the kid nailed his kicks in a hostile environment in a close game. It gives me a bit more confidence heading into the thick of the SEC schedule.

I don't know yet if this is a championship team. But I know that they play with the heart of a champion. And that's where it all starts.

### **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*

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### **SAT PREP SESSION**

**SAT Question of the Week:** What do the following humans have in common?

Jamal Murray, Brandon Boston Jr., Anthony Davis, Wenyen Gabriel, Jarred Vanderbilt, Bam Adebayo, Tyler Herro, Karl-Anthony Towns, Immanuel Quickley, Julius Randle, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Olivier Sarr, Tyrese Maxey, Devin Booker, De'Aaron Fox, Trey Lyles, Malik Monk

- A. Each earned both an undergraduate and master's degree during his scholarship period at the University of Kentucky.
- B. Each is assiduous in listing their preferred pronouns in all of their correspondences.
- C. Each delayed his NBA career to take a Rhodes Scholarship appointment at Oxford University.
- D. Each took Ashley Judd to the Kentucky Homecoming Dance during his senior year at Kentucky.
- E. Each originally committed to Jim Harrick, Dennis Felton, Mark Fox, Tom Crean, or Mike White to play for The University of Georgia before decommitting and attending Kentucky for its program in Nuclear Engineering.
- F. Each played college basketball at what is known as a football school.

**Answer:** Each of these former Kentucky Wildcats was on a team that qualified for the 2023 NBA playoffs.

## **DAWG DOOTS**

- ☞ Please enjoy [this obituary](#) of the quintessential Kentuckian, who departed this earth over the summer.
- ☞ Please enjoy this elevation of the art of [pissing the home team's logo](#).
- ☞ Apparently it has become fashionable to take sides in the great Ryan Day vs. Lou Holtz national crisis. [Urban Meyer](#) and [Steve Spurrier](#) both have spoken out on this major media clash. Inquiring minds want to know: What for?
- ☞ “If I thought I could win, yeah! . . . If enough people came to me and said to me, ‘you have a legitimate shot to win the presidency of the United States of America,’ I would strongly, strongly consider running. I have no desire to ever be a politician, [to] ever run, but I would tell you I’ve lost so much respect from the nonsense that I see taking place on Capitol Hill, that if somebody said to me, ‘you could win this thing,’ yes I would run for the presidency of the United States of America.” ~Stephen A. Smith
- ☞ World’s luckiest guy: Ken Sugiura of the AJC, who started out his career at the paper assigned to the Georgia Tech beat—that’s the team that just got hammered at home by Bowling Green in a loss much worse than anything Geoff Collins ever visited upon the dozens of fans who attend GT games—before getting promoted to cover UGA.

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

### **GOOD GUY ARCHIVE**

**Richard Tardits** is among the most unique players ever to strap on the red helmet with the power G. In 1985 the kid from Biarritz, France was visiting family in Augusta and decided to walk on to the UGA football team as an exchange student, taking his first-ever footstep on a football field. By spring of his freshman year he was on scholarship, ultimately being the namesake for the “Biarritz Blitz” and “Le Sack.” During his time in Athens, he set the school sack record while only starting seven games in his career, his senior year in which he was named All-SEC. His preparation for football came in rugby, where he was a French junior national rugby team member and a participant in the Running of the Bulls at Pamplona, Spain. He had a future in both sports, playing in the NFL and ultimately in a series of rugby leagues. While still an NFL player, he stayed in touch with his roots, sponsoring a semipro football team in Biarritz and helping the Mystic River Rugby Club in Massachusetts reach the national finals. Like the high-motor player who eventually broke his sack record, David Pollack, Tardis was known as a relentless defender bent on getting to the quarterback. After graduating with two degrees, Richard was drafted by the Arizona Cardinals in the 5th round of the 1989 NFL draft, playing four seasons with Arizona and New England. He then headed off to Hong Kong to play professional rugby, and ultimately helped the US team win the Rugby World Cup in 1999, one of six seasons he played on the squad. He most recently is France’s American football expert. Richard is a great example of how a mix of talent and fierce mental preparation can produce outstanding results. We could all use his

example to maximize our potential and make the most of life. No matter what the sport or endeavor, we had a winner in Richard Tardits.



## **THE FORECAST**

### **DAWGS VS. KENTUCKY**

UK has given UGA a lot of tough games this century, and it's probably going to be another tough, physical game on Saturday. Kentucky's beatdown of Florida on Saturday was really impressive, to the point where [Florida Gators Fans Call For Billy Napier's Head During Ugly First Half In Kentucky](#) and where observers are already figuring out the terms of [Napier's buyout](#) and comparing him to Ron Zook and reporting that he for some reason believes that Florida fans will be patient with a slow rebuild. Personally, I think his bad hair would count as a for-cause fireable offense, but that's not being reported by the Lamestream Sports Media. And is Dawgmeister Analytics the only service that has noticed that both Napier (Clemson) and Josh Heupel (Oklahoma) were once fired as offensive coordinators?

Oops, this is about Kentucky, the team that manhandled and ran Florida off the field on Saturday and will visit Athens next weekend. Before the game, the broadcast team framed the contest in terms of Florida's NFL-ready defensive line, a ferocious group that owns the line of scrimmage. They also talked up UK QB Devin Leary as the guy whose transfer would elevate UK to new heights (also said in yesteryear of Will Levis). Leary turned out to be remarkably inaccurate (9-20 for 69 yards and a QB rating scraping the bottom of Loch Ness), and we all know what Ray Davis did to that vaunted DL. That was one dominating win that should leave UK ranked and ready for next Saturday. I imagine that UGA will be fired up too, perhaps even enough to take the field ready to play.

There is no doubt which program has brought in the best players, and the best players often win games. Although such great minds as Urban Meyer think that UGA's schedule is a disqualifier—by coincidence, the teams he singled out were his main rivals at Florida and Ohio State—Kentucky is never easy, and they have convincingly passed Florida in the SEC East. Mark Stoops is an excellent coach who has done the unusual thing and stuck at a school without a great football tradition, and will no doubt be UK's all-time great when he retires from what eventually might be known as Kroger Field at Mark Stoops Stadium, with free groceries for life. That's not a bad legacy at all. I'm hoping that Ray Davis is tired after running a few miles against Florida—he won't be beat up,



because Florida couldn't touch him—but teams do tend to bring their best against UGA. And that will be enough for a mighty close game that comes down to the fourth quarter. Again. UGA 38, UK 31.

### **NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: TEXAS OVER OKLAHOMA**

The national slate isn't that great this week, so let's take a historical rivalry that, once upon a time, often helped decide the national champion. Texas has gotten a lot of great press, and might even deserve it. OU, I think, isn't so easy a team to figure out, still transitioning from the offense-only approach of Riley to a more balanced approach under Venables, hired because he apprenticed extensively under Dabo Swinney, who himself is the subject of much grumbling at Clemson for his portal-resistant approach to roster building and management. But back to the Red River Rivalry, which I'm glad to say will survive merger mania and remain an annual event. It's really a big game in the SW. I am sorta working in the dark here in that I haven't seen OU play in a few years, but I do know that Riley took a big stable of his best players when he left town under the cover of night. So I'm taking the Horns in a decisive win: UT 31, OU 21.

### **NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: TEXAS A&M OVER ALABAMA**

I rarely pick Jimbo Fisher's teams to win, because I just can't stand the guy. And my personal animus for programs and coaches forms the basis of my predictions of the future, which is why they are so accurate. But really, Alabama just does not dominate the way they did a few years ago. Their defense is solid, but that offense just doesn't click with consistency. Now that they've settled on a scrambling QB, they need to be prepared for him to break out of the pocket at the first sign of a rush and try to run downfield. Sometimes it works. But imagine being a receiver continually running your route but having the QB bust the play and never even see you except as his blocker. You stop running your routes cleanly, because your efforts aren't rewarded, and so a dubious passing attack becomes even less likely to function. Throw in the playcalling of Tommy Rees, and you've got one turgid offense.

TAMU might have similar personnel to Alabama right now in terms of quality. But I recently talked with an ex-Dawg player who thought that Alabama's current staff, especially the two coordinators, can't touch the long series of guys like Kirby Smart, Kiffin, Sarkesian, and even Pruitt who've coached up and schemed up their units in the Saban Era. They're just not scaring anybody right now, because they aren't scary. And TAMU has been a tough win for Saban. Add another to the loss column. Aggies 24, Tide 21.