

**THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST:
DAWGS BELIEVE**

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Fulton County Jail Mug Shot of the Week

“I am worried about the Gators.” ~The Scowlmeister, scowling in mid-bye week

As reported by Mike Griffith before the game: “Billy Napier . . . believes he may have found a competitive edge thanks to his experience coaching in the Sun Belt. . . . ‘I think we’ve come up with a blueprint we’ve used in the past that we’ll use this week.

Ultimately excited about that.” ~Billy Napier, who, like Bryan Harsin, believes that importing a minor league system will revolutionize the SEC

“Physically you’ve got to have a sharp sword. You’ve got to be ready to go. That axe can’t be dull.” ~Billy Napier, not realizing that the sword is still in the stone, and that the sword is not an axe

“Release the Kraken!” ~Little Woolly

Silly me.

For the first four minutes of the game, I wondered, might The Scowlmeister be right to worry? Florida ripped through our defense on their opening drive and took the lead, and I began to think, Holy Moly, maybe the RaginCajunization of Florida might actually work. Maybe the broadcasters were right in saying that Graham Mertz was playing as well as any QB in the SEC, that the Gators were on a roll and aiming to win the East, that the point spread was too generous, that without Bowers we were a team with a massive crater to fill. Maybe, I thought, Florida had stolen our defensive signals and knew what plays to call, what with Mertz going 5-5 on their opening drive for an easy TD.

And then, the Deluge. The rest of the half for Florida: Punt, downs, strip-sack-fumble, blocked-punt-safety, punt, punt. Game Over. At least we know that Billy Napier isn't a signal-stealer.

I caught the Oklahoma-Kansas game earlier, and the broadcasters raved about Dillon Gabriel's 70% completion rate, which might set a new program record at Heisman QB U. I was less impressed when I saw how few of his passes traveled more than about 10 yards in the air, a lot of them screens. Carson Beck threw one pass to a RB, the rest to receivers, and was sharp all day throwing downfield.

Much has been said and written about how UGA compensated for the absence of Brock Bowers, and how Beck and Edwards and McConkey and Delp and so many others filled a void that some felt was too great to be overcome in a game that would end our streak and shake up the SEC East ([thanks, Steve Spurrier](#)).

But let's honor the guys who made it all possible, the warriors in the trenches, a rotation that still doesn't have Amarius Mims but did include Monroe Freeling getting reps that will pay off for years, with Chad Lindberg getting quality reps as well at RT. Beck had all day to throw all day long, and his throws were on target and averaged 11.3 per attempt. Edwards averaged 6.4 yards per carry. That was some determined, well-executed blocking that allowed the glamour positions to shine.

The defensive front seven was not to be outdone. They were all over Florida once that first drive concluded. Nearly half of Florida's yardage, and most of their points, came in the fourth quarter, with the game long out of reach and reserves playing for the team in Red and Black. Dawgmeister Analytics has long scoffed at the way statistics are reported. In the last 3 seasons, many of the points scored on UGA have come against reserves in the 4th quarter. Napier kept his starters in to salvage some dignity, and I guess only losing by 23 is better than losing by 30. But those statistics are meaningless in measuring a team's conditioning and spirit and a coaching staff's preparation and schemes. When the game's over in the third quarter, or half-time, those fourth quarter stats don't mean anything except to observers who don't seem to understand that it matters when a stat is compiled in the overall context of the game, and the quality of the competition against which the stat is achieved.

Heisman ships sinking: Shedeur Sanders, Caleb Williams, Drake Maye, Dillon Gabriel.
Heisman ship rising: Carson Beck. Really, is there anyone playing the position better than our guy? And is there a QB/RB combo playing better than Beck and Edwards?

And is anyone out there still down in Mike Bobo? Any complaints about the game plan, execution, or play-calling? Coach Knute “Bear” Lombardi and your brethren, how’d you like the offensive performance on Saturday?

Afterwards, in full Shane Beamer mode, Billy Napier felt his players lost the game for Florida: “Ultimately, I’ve got conviction about the [Fourth-and-Dumb] call. That’s one of many plays today that probably we’d like to have back. But it’s not necessarily about the plays at times. It’s about the players. It’s about the execution. We can certainly call better plays at times today, but ultimately it comes down to the execution of the play.” Thanks Coach. See you next year for more of the same. Unless, [like South Carolina fans](#), the faithful are fed up with the direction of the program and demand a change.

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 **The UGA Student Emergency Fund** provides limited financial assistance to enrolled students facing temporary hardship related to an emergency situation, such as an accident, illness, death of a family member, natural disaster, or any other circumstance deemed appropriate.*

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SAT PREP SESSION

SAT Question of the Week: Which of the following names is real, and which is fake?

Tennis player Tennys Sandgren
Tennis player Katie Volynets
Quarterback Air Noland
NASCAR driver Lake Speed
Tennis player Margaret Court
Hurdler Marina Stepanova
High jumper Nathan Leeper
Quarterback Chuck Long
Hurdler Vania Stambollova
Pitcher Bob Walk
Basketball player Frank Brickowski

Answer: All are real. Blame their parents.

DAWG DOOTS

- ☞ Somewhat flying under the radar of the recent surge of NFL players coming out of Athens is the play of punter Jake Camarda. In this [preseason ranking](#) he's listed among the top punters in the league. And now in mid-season, he's booted his way to the [top of the heap](#). Meanwhile, Bret Thorson had a total of zero punts vs. Vanderbilt and thinks maybe he should have gone to UMass, or maybe [Iowa](#). Well, at least he got to punt a few against Florida.
- ☞ Bonus punt coverage: Which SEC team had punted the most after 7 games in 2023? Answer: [Alabama](#).
- ☞ Speaking of punters...when I was a wee lad, placekickers booted the ball head-on rather than with the side of their foot. Then somebody figured out that soccer players were good at kicking balls, and "soccer-style" placekickers became more common. Now they are simply known as "kickers." Until recently, punters booted the ball head-on, till someone figured out that Australian footballers were good at kicking balls, and now we have Australian-style punting. And soon, I think, they will simply be known as "punters."
- ☞ "The results were the results." ~ GT defensive back K.J. Wallace after their home loss to Boston College
- ☞ "I really should have paid more attention to Dawgmeister Analytics before going for it on fourth down." ~Dan Lanning
- ☞ "Me too." ~Josh Heupel
- ☞ "Me too." ~Billy Napier
- ☞ "Me too." ~Brent Venables and Lance Leipold, in chorus
- ☞ "Works for me." ~Kirby Smart
- ☞ Just when you thought that Mel Tucker's hand on the throttle was Michigan State's biggest problem, along comes [Spartans apologize for Hitler image on big screen](#).

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

Dominick Sanders wasn't the sort of hotshot recruit we've grown accustomed to at UGA. At Tucker HS, he was a medium-grade prospect, in spite of being named *Atlanta Journal Constitution* 2013 Class AAAAA All-Metro Honorable Mention and Georgia Sports Writers Association 2013 Class AAAAA First Team All-State Defense. Tucker went unbeaten in his senior year in a tough league, losing only in the state finals to Creekside HS. The recruiting gurus weren't impressed, making him a consensus 3-star recruit, perhaps diminished in recognition because some saw him as a WR, some as a cornerback, some as a safety, some as the amorphous ATH. But ESPN's #115 overall prospect in Georgia and 247's #545 player nationally impressed defensive coordinator Jeremy Pruitt enough to earn a scholarship to the home state school as a safety, where he arrived with low expectations from the fans. But there was Sanders, starting in the opening game as a freshman. Said Coach Richt during his freshman year, "He's very conscientious, and he practices with a purpose. He's kind of a no-nonsense guy and is very teachable. He's had his rough days out there, but what Coach Pruitt likes about him is how he goes about his business every day. If he's making a mistake, he's making it full speed." He learned plenty, ultimately setting the UGA record for career interceptions

with 16 and most career interception return yards with 381, and playing his way to the Watch Lists for the 2016 Bednarik Award Watch List, Raycom Jim Thorpe Award, and Senior Bowl. His 54 career starts set the program record for most in history by a non-kicker. Dominick was a highly respected member of the team, being named UGA Newcomer of the Year Award as a freshman, and later earning the Leon Farmer Award and Coaches' Leadership Award. His studious approach to football mirrored what he did in the classroom as a kinesiology major, where he supported his studies with multiple Teka and John Adams Football Scholarships. In spite of this success, he came out of UGA again underrated, going undrafted due to his lack of elite speed. "Bouncing from tryout to tryout," he said, "I wanted to keep going and to know there is a lot of football left to be played, whether it be IFL, NFL, XFL or CFL. Whatever door opens, take that opportunity." That door opened wide for Dominick with the Spokane Shock of the Indoor Football League, his current home. His next opportunity, he hopes, will launch a career in coaching. A guy with his work ethic and resilience, a guy whose lack of measurables required him to excel at mental preparation, will make an outstanding addition to any program. He's a name to watch once he hangs up the cleats and picks up the whistle to teach young men how to play the game right.



THE FORECAST

DAWGS VS. MISSOURI

Missouri is a pretty good team, coming in rested and 7-1 with quality wins over Kentucky and Kansas State. Anybody questioning Georgia's schedule needs to pay attention to how our competition is doing, and while they're at it, take note of other top teams' schedules, which I'm not really seeing as much more challenging. Our guys ought to be sobered by last year's near-loss with all our superstars, and hunker down to be ready for this one. They also might take note of Virginia over UNC, Georgia Tech over anyone, and other impossible outcomes involving teams with great talent differentials. I'm taking them Dawgs to keep their eyes on the prize and come out on top. UGA 31, Mizzou 21.

NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: WASHINGTON OVER USC

With USC exposed by Notre Dame and Utah and almost by 3-5 Cal, this outcome should be expected. Lincoln Riley is the nation's most over-rated coach (sorry Deion, you are only a pretender here; and Jimbo Fisher is no longer over-rated, just over-paid), like most with a lot of flash and not much substance. And [the fans are hoping he'll get](#)

[tarmacked](#) if he doesn't bolt on his own for even greener NFL pastures, although I hear that defense matters in the pros, so maybe that's just his imagination getting out of hand. (Take note, [Julian Lewis](#).) Kalen DeBoer is much less of a showboat and much more of a complete football coach. A lot of people blamed Dan Lanning for demonstrating too much chutzpah in going for it on 4th down three times in their loss to U-Dubb, but there was a whole game involved, not a few plays. These cats are good, and deserving of playoff chatter, in spite of their tight win over near-winless Arizona State. Huskies 54, Trojans 41.

NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: CLEMSON OVER NOTRE DAME

Clemson has fallen on hard times. Unranked at mid-season? Impossible. Trailing Duke, Boston College, and Georgia Tech in the ACC standings? No way. Losing to Miami after a bye week? Nearly unprecedented. Clemson is on the ropes, losing again on Saturday to middling NCSU go to 4-4, even with a [new program savior at QB](#). But I think they still have some football in them and will play well at home. Notre Dame clubbed USC like a wounded baby seal, but that was at home against a one-dimensional team whose only dimension took the night off. They hammered Pitt at home enough for Pat Narduzzi to throw his team under the bus in Beamer mode in the game's aftermath. After losing to Miami, Dabo said, "They found a way to win and we found a way not to win." Can Clemson find a way to win and not not win? I think so, and have I been wrong this season? Well, aside from every week? (I did, like the blind pig that occasionally turns up an acorn, pick Kansas over Oklahoma last weekend.) But you just never know what's going to happen, and I'm picking an upset that will shock the true believers of Notre Dame mythology. I'm counting on Dabo's team to restore some dignity to this sinking ship of a season. Tigers 31, Irish 30.