

## **THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST: *DAWGS KO GT***

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### **SEPARATED@BIRTH?**



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After his dramatic, game-saving tackle against Tennessee, Brett Thorson was given the day off by Coach Smart. The team hopes he'll get Friday off as well.

It was another noon game, and another very slow start by the defense against a team in turmoil over its coaching change, itself a consequence of a lot of losing. It was a bit shocking that an awful UMass could move the ball so easily. Fortunately, the offense was clicking. Their whopping yardage and point totals should make us smile, but should not make us feel as if we have accomplished something great. The opponent just wasn't very good.

Which makes the lackadaisical defensive effort so difficult to understand. To Coach Smart, there might be a benefit to the defense's underwhelming afternoon: "Probably the best thing we need for a wake-up call." The greatest cost to the defense's showing was that reserves only got in for a few series, instead of playing the majority of second-half snaps as anticipated.

Coach Smart's appreciation of a wake-up call was a consequence of an uninspired effort by the defense: "We did not tackle well, but it was more than just tackling. It was—like, I hate to say it, I just don't think that our guys were ready to play and energized to play as their guys were. Their guys wanted it more than us, and it's very rare that I could sit up here and say that. Like, they were playing harder, they were moving us, they were playing physical. They had some nice RPOs and some nice play designs, but it wasn't about that. It's, I want to—like, desire. That's the biggest thing."

At least the Tech game will be at night. No wake-up calls required.

Meanwhile, the rest of the SEC continued to play rock-paper-scissors, and three-and-out continued to mean more than a bad series. Mississippi and Colorado, see you in the Pop-Tarts Bowl. And bring your popcorn. Alabama and ATM U, I guess it's the Gator Bowl and Citrus Bowl—no championship playoff for you. And don't weep too much about Indiana making the field when you're not.

It's been that kind of year. Auburn fans stormed the field after their upset of ATM U, a sign that their program is now in the business of rejoicing over wins they used to expect. One more win and they clinch an invitation to the Famous Toastery Bowl. Ditto Oklahoma's field-storm after inexplicitly stomping Alabama to become bowl-eligible, something they usually wrap up in October. Next week's Iron Bowl is now a game of great interest after Auburn's win and Alabama's near-skunking in Norman, [called by local wags the worst loss in program history](#): "Let me be the first to apologize to Vanderbilt. You did not hand Alabama the worst loss in its history. Oklahoma just did. That was an absolutely embarrassing and inexplicable ass-kicking of a team that controlled its playoff destiny by a team with one SEC win."

In the remote world beyond the SEC standings, according to Coach Deion Sanders of Colorado, their 8-3 record had produced a rather stinky form of rat poison, leading to their loss to 5-6 Kansas: "We were smelling ourselves. That's on me. They can't stop reading the stuff about who we are. That's tough. So you try to humble everything around you including yourself." Humility is Coach Sanders' trademark quality, as is avoiding publicity and keeping a low profile in order to focus on game preparation. The loss, according to Coach Sanders, followed from the players letting down their immaculate coaches: the Buffaloes "gotta do what [defensive coordinator Rob Livingston] called." Meanwhile, Travis Hunter's post-TD Heisman poses are going to be this year's Cheshire Cat: All that's left when he leaves will be the pose.

Next up: A game shaping up to be of national importance when Georgia Tech comes to town. Nobody's guaranteed a win, although home teams do seem to have the advantage. The coaches have some work to do to convince the defense that showing up isn't sufficient. Tech is a dangerous opponent and believes it will win. 93,000 Dawg fans beg to differ. It'll come down to the hand-to-hand combat between the hedges. Will the chapel bell ring at the end? Can't wait to find out.



The color combo suggests that this is actually an ad aimed at Tech fans. [And does your dog bite?](#)

### Disconcerting Signals

U.S. Rep. Virginia Foxx, the North Carolina Republican who chairs the House Education and Workforce Committee, said Friday that Georgia Tech should have ended the arrangement between Georgia Tech and Tianjin University in China because of the threats the agreement posed to U.S. national security, including trade secret theft and research collaboration to advance China's military. "The captain of the Titanic didn't get a gold star for passing out life vests, and it shouldn't have taken a congressional investigation to spur Georgia Tech to end its partnership with a blacklisted Chinese entity," she said in a statement.

### 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 **Athens-Banner Herald Empty Stocking Fund** raises funds annually to help those in need in our community. The Athens Area Community Foundation manages the funds for the Empty Stocking Fund and proudly partners with nonprofits across the Athens area to distribute funds. Nonprofits work to connect vulnerable community members to financial assistance, helping with needs such as rent and utility bills, medical bills, and other urgent expenses.

How Does it Work? Individuals or households contact local nonprofits, churches, or schools for financial assistance; Local organizations vet needs and submit a referral form to the Athens Area Community Foundation; The Athens Area Community Foundation provides Empty Stocking Fund support to the organization; and, Within five days, referring organizations receive funds to help pay for the individual/household's needs.

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### SAT PREP SESSION

**SAT Question of the Week:** What distinction do the following scholar-athletes have?

Bryce Young  
DJ Uiagalelei  
C.J. Stroud  
Evan Prater  
Ja'Quinden Jackson  
Hudson Card  
Malik Hornsby  
Harrison Bailey  
Luke Doty  
Haynes King

Ethan Garbers  
Hunter Dekkers

**Answer:** In the 2020 recruiting class, 247 provided this rank-order listing of the high school quarterbacks considered better prospects than Carson Beck.

**Bonus Question:** Who was ranked immediately after Beck?

**Answer:** Anthony Richardson

**Double Bonus Question:** How about after that?

**Answer:** Chubba Purdy

## **DAWG DOOTS**

- How telling is it that Georgia Tech had [Jahmyr Gibbs](#) for two seasons under Geoff Collins, and they still stank?
- Recruiting note: 4-Star running back Anthony “Turbo” Rogers has decommitted from Alabama and will decide between Georgia and Ohio State on Signing Day.
- “And wouldn’t it be neat to have Nitro and Turbo on the same team?” ~ Little Woolly
- Disturbed by the playoff rankings issued early in the week, on Wednesday Dawg fans filled Sanford Stadium and threw garbage on the field to try to convince the committee to rank the Dawgs higher.

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

**Carson Beck** originally committed to Alabama coming out of Mandarin High School in Jacksonville, where he won a state championship and was named the 2018 Florida Mr. Football while being a camper at the Elite 11 Finals his senior year. He originally attended Providence HS but transferred after 2 years, not to a powerhouse but to a team coming off a 2-8 season, a team with nowhere to go but up. He also excelled as a pitcher on Mandarin’s baseball team, with a Florida Gator offer to take the mound in Gainesville. Fortunately, he came to his senses and changed his commitment to UGA after Jim Chaney, who didn’t like Carson’s throwing motion, left for Tennessee and the new Dawg staff saw a great prospect and went after him. Georgia, he said, “was always the school I wanted to go to ever since eighth grade, seventh grade. I absolutely fell in love with the place.” His dad Chris had once been stationed in Athens, and the family felt the vibe and wanted to hum along. A guy with such talent and recognition might easily end up with a big head and exit a crowded QB room shortly after entering it. But Carson knew where he belonged and toughed it out, a competitor all the way. As Coach Smart put it when Carson finally was named the starter in his fourth year on campus, “He’s done the best job. We communicated that to the other quarterbacks, and we’ve kind of been operating that way. The other guys have done a tremendous job in terms of competing, and they’re going to continue to do that.” Iron sharpens iron, as Coach likes

to say. Even back in high school, Carson knew that competition makes for a better player: “I always played with a chip on my shoulder. Sitting behind someone I felt I could have started over freshman and sophomore year [in high school] made me that much better.” And then he did it again in college. In an era of swelled egos and social media hype, Carson is a refreshing change, always putting the team first and presenting himself as humble and appreciative of his opportunities. He’s supported his Sport Management major with a Carl E. Sanders Football Scholarship and a Loy D. Thompson IV Football Scholarship, showing excellence in the classroom. And he’s turned out pretty well in football too. His future is wide open, and he won’t need a tight-window throw to navigate it successfully. He’s a winner and one we’re glad to have in Athens.



## **THE FORECAST**

### **DAWGS VS. GEORGIA TECH**

Earlier this year, we played at Mississippi in what was called the biggest game in the history of the program. This week may not be the biggest in GT history, but it’s the biggest, I think, of the last decade or two. Their win over Miami was huge, but mostly as a league game against a team that was unbeaten yet with a very dodgy performance in too many games. GT is mighty fired up for this one after going unbeaten at Bobby Dodd Stadium at Hyundai Field in front of crowds averaging about 38,000 in a stadium holding 52,000 (for you math majors, that’s 73% of capacity). Their coach hates UGA and no doubt has convinced his players, even the ones who transferred from UGA so they could get some game reps, that they should hate their in-state rival as well. Sorta like the way the C students resent the valedictorian at graduation.

UGA has been uneven while still winning against as hard a schedule as anyone has faced lately. The Tennessee game started poorly and ended with a magnificent rout of a team that believed it was going to win and secure a playoff berth. They left whining about referees (conveniently ignoring the calls that went UT’s way) instead of taking a hard look at why they lost the line of scrimmage going both ways.

Now Tech has to come to our house. They don’t have a superb record, but beating Miami has made them believers in the Brent Key Way. Their late and dramatic win over 5-6 NC State before 34,591 ecstatic fans, many of them pulling for Tech, has them giddy to take on a ranked team. (For you math majors, that’s 67% of capacity.) It’s good to see a revival of Good Old Fashioned Hate instead of the annual Good Old Fashioned Beatdown of an Inferior Opponent, although we may see the latter again on Friday. How



will Tech perform with a mob of 93K screaming to the accompaniment of a scoreboard that blasts noise (I'm a few notes short of calling it music) as loud and long as it can between plays? It can be unnerving, as many teams have found out while visiting our green oasis between the hedges. I think the fans will truly play a 12<sup>th</sup> man role and put the Good Guys over the top and into the playoff. The Hate will be in the air, along with the ball as Carson Beck shreds the Tech defense: UGA 31, GT 14.

### **NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: TEXAS OVER ATM U**

This one's shaping up to be a huge game in terms of tournament consequences, not to mention the SEC championship game where each hopes to play Georgia. UT fans and seemingly every guy in a booth believes that Arch Manning should be playing QB, because his uncles and gramps were good, in spite of the fact that their QB1 has beaten every team but Georgia. ATM U has managed to put together a big winning record to make up for the years of high expectations and low performances under the well-paid Jimbo Fisher. Here's the interesting part: Per [an article handily provided by the Catmeister](#) up in Lexington, neither team has a single top 25 win this season. They have great records, but against very weak schedules (sorry about that loss to Auburn, ATM). How would either team have done with UGA's schedule, the Texas game not included? Not so well, methinks. So here they go, facing off in a game pitting two teams who've gotten far playing nobody. One will surely win. I'll go with the Horns over Aggies, 38-21.

### **NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: SYRACUSE OVER MIAMI**

Miami has been playing with matches all season, while Fran Brown has made the Kirby Smart Coaching Tree proud by turning around the Orange in one season with no prior head coaching experience, or even a coordinator job to prep him to lead a program. I think Miami will do what they did against GT and underperform when they had to win. Cam Ward has been terrific, and Kyle McCord has played some of the worst games of the season, but I'm picking Syracuse anyhow. Cuse over Canes, 24-21.