

THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST: DAWGS LASSO LONGHORNS

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In the end, the fans did not storm the field. I think we were all too tired.

Earlier in the evening, the prospects of a win could not have seemed more grim. In looking for consolation throughout the distressing first half, I thought, well, at least we are saving money on fireworks.

Heck, it didn't look so good with four minutes left in regulation. Just ask the fans who started heading for their cars, because when all appears lost, the game is over, and it's time to beat the traffic home. But the first half left the Georgia faithful limp and wondering how the boys could possibly pull this one out. Georgia Tech was moving the ball on our defense easily, and it was another game where we seemed to be behind by 5 TDs but, with GT held to field goals, the game was still in reach. Somehow.

In the first half, the Dawgs were beaten at both lines of scrimmage, and appeared to be getting out-coached. On Sunday morning I read that, according to ESPN analyst Booger McFarland at halftime, "Brent Key and his staff are coaching circles around Kirby Smart and his staff. [Georgia was] a step slow on defense all night. Offensively, they don't scare anyone down the field and can't run the ball at all." And he was right.

Tech came to play. They asserted themselves every which way, undaunted by a crowd that arrived in a jolly mood, expecting to dominate their little brothers down the road once again. It took till after midnight to fight back into contention and start the sweet sound of the chapel bell ringing across campus.

In the first seven overtimes, both teams reached deep into their playbooks to find a tricky play to run from the 3 yard line. Finally, Georgia ran Nate Frazier up the middle, a

basic football play that was blocked exceptionally well and that Nate executed to perfection. He didn't pile up great gobs of yardage during the game, but he's one tough runner who gets what's there, then a couple more.

It takes a lot of resilience to come out of halftime down 17-0, to go three-and-out to start the second half, and then to take over the game. Carson Beck threw a good game, but he can't both throw and catch the ball. The latter is the receivers' job, and drops have been a problem all season. My hat's off to Carson for keeping his composure and never giving up on his team. The running game again wasn't dominant, so a lot fell on his shoulders. And he delivered throughout the second half and overtimes. A great way for a great Georgia Bulldawg to close out his career between the hedges, unless the postseason lands us a game in Athens.

But I've really got to give it up for Tech. Brent Key has built a strong program in short order, with the fumes of the Geoff Collins era now fully cleared and the Jackets playing tough, smart football. Haynes King is a warrior, and they play for him. They are even recruiting fairly well. It's good for our rivalry for them to be competitive and downright dangerous, and every player in our program now knows it. Tech is already talking up next year's game in the Benz. It's circled on everyone's schedule.

The Lamestream Sports Media on Saturday made a big deal of how Georgia struggled to beat "middling" Tech, and how that meant that the SEC is overrated and doesn't deserve wide representation in the playoff. Later in the day, Ohio State, Clemson, and Miami all went down. Clemson's playoff-dream-must-win-game resulted in a loss to South Carolina, one of those overrated SEC teams and the team with my favorite non-Dawg player, LaNorris Sellers, who played a sensational game to nail down a great win.

Maybe some of these writers and their internet boosters might wait for all of the games to be played before they start gloating about that overrated SEC. Maybe, as Coach Smart tends to say, every game matters, and every win is a good win. By Sunday, the national feast was on the remains of Ryan Day and Ohio State, losers at home to a multiple-TD underdog and most hated rival, and poor losers, of whom Michigan's Kaelin Mullings said later, Ohio State's players "gotta learn how to lose" after the Wolverines became one of several teams who started a fracas more violent than the game by planting their flags on the home team's logo.

Ohio State wasn't supposed to lose any games this year after having spent \$20 million in NIL to assemble the nation's most talented roster for their natty-or-bust season. Their loss to Michigan has provided a brief shield from the national spotlight for Clemson, who may have lost their way out of the tournament by losing at home to SC. Rivalry games are like that. An 8 OT win over a determined GT team sounds good to me.

After the game, Key recited the maxim that often issues from the losing locker room: There are no moral victories. But there are victories. This was a win for the ages. Let's take it for what it was: a struggle from start to finish against a rugged opponent who played their hearts out. But the Dawgs fought hard too, and made the plays when they needed them. Ultimately, I don't think that anybody got outcoached or outplayed.

Somebody had to win, somebody had to lose. I'm glad we endured and came out on top. This game will live in memory and in the blood of Dawg fans for a long time.

Disconcerting Signals from Up Above

"Some of the guys I've been so disappointed with, it's been the best thing for us. And some of the guys that we got because we didn't get somebody else is the best thing that happened to us. So God's going to bring the right ones here, and that's how I've always looked at it." ~Dabo Swinney before in-state All-Stater LaNorris Sellers was picked by God to go to South Carolina

A moment of silence, please, for Alabama A&M football player Medrick Burnett, Jr., who died following a head injury suffered during the Alabama State game in October.

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 Anti-Discrimination Movement's mission is to encourage fair treatment of people of all races, bring awareness to inequities, and advocate against systematic practices used to repress or cause harm to particular groups or individuals. AADM strives to break the cycle of systemic discrimination in schools, the criminal justice system, and the business environment with a focus on racial and social issues. To achieve this mission, AADM develops sustainable programs, provides resources, and runs workshops and trainings that foster positive social change.

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SAT PREP SESSION

SAT Question of the Week: What's the story on these dudes?

1. Kyler Murray
2. Trevor Lawrence
3. Vince Young
4. DJ Uiagalelei
5. Terrelle Pryor
6. JT Daniels
7. Deshaun Watson
8. Bryce Young
9. Chris Leak
10. Tate Martell
11. Garrett Gilbert
12. Jimmy Clausen
13. Tim Tebow

14. Maty Mauk
15. Matt Barkley
16. Jake Browning
17. Riley Dodge
18. Josh Rosen
19. Will Grier
20. Demetrius Davis

- A. Each was called a “generational talent” by Rusty Mansell
- B. All were projected by Mel Kiper, Jr. to be the top overall pick in the NFL draft.
- C. All have advisory roles in the CFP committee deliberations.
- D. Each was his high school’s valedictorian.
- E. Each wonders why Matthew Stafford has a Super Bowl ring, and they don’t.

Answer:

They were, [according to MaxPreps](#), the 20 best QBs coming out of high school in the last 20 years, in rank order.

DAWG DOOTS

- ☞ In case you missed it, UGA’s men’s basketball team went to 7-1 with a crushing win over Jacksonville on Saturday. Next up is Notre Dame on Tuesday at 7PM in the Steg.
- ☞ “Sophomore” refers to a wise fool who knows all without knowing much. What do you call a dumb-ass freshman who is not yet even a sophomore? Answer: former Dawg and Tide commit Demarcus Riddick of Auburn, who said of Alabama in preparation for the Iron Bowl that Ryan Williams “ain’t no big-time player to me . . . every rival team I’ve played, I never lost to, and I will not lose to Bama while I’m here. . . . [Milroe] is a good quarterback. He’s fast. But, I mean, he’s not faster than me. He will not get out of that box this week.” Apparently Georgia is not a rivalry game. Nor is Cal, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri, or Vanderbilt. Or Alabama.
- ☞ Speaking of the Crimson Tide, [here is a cogent, nuanced analysis](#) of their current difficulties living up to the Saban standard.
- ☞ Don’t piss him off: [Byron “Whizzer” White](#)
- ☞ The talk of the nation has been Chicago Bears coach Matt Eberflus and his extraordinary clock management against Detroit. Make that former Coach Eberflus. Who’s up next in Chicago’s endless search for a successful coach? Detroit OC Ben Johnson is apparently a media favorite. A fine choice. I also read advocacy for Lincoln Riley and Kliff Kingsbury, because they coached Caleb Williams in college where he dominated weak conference opponents. They’d be great choices if you pull for Green Bay, Detroit, and Minnesota. But I’m going to nominate Thomas Brown, their offensive coordinator and now interim coach, and the person most responsible for Caleb Williams’s midseason turnaround. What’s more important than a coach who can maximize his quarterback’s play? Let’s turn the clock back a couple of decades, when the 5’-8” Brown was a freshman RB at UGA after a stellar career at Tucker HS. I got to know many of the coaches

back then, and one of the defensive coaches told me that Brown was the best player on the team as a freshman. No doubt his on-field performance figured into that judgment, with Brown earning freshman All-SEC honors, Offensive Newcomer of the Year Award, and UGA's Victors Club Award. But what the coach raved about was his focus in meetings. Brown was always the first person there, no headphones, no phone out for texting, all football, intently zeroed in on the game preparation. That is one smart and dedicated dude, one who has always had his head in the game. He played a couple of years in the NFL with the Falcons and Browns, then began the typical itinerant coaching career with 6 college jobs (7 if you count two stints at UGA) and 3 NFL jobs, including Assistant Head Coach for the Super Bowl champion Rams and offensive coordinator for Carolina and Chicago, where he managed to make the Bears more competitive and Williams more effective almost immediately. That's the path to a head coaching job. The Bears have their man already on the payroll. It's time to give him the opportunity he's earned, and give the team a coach who is sharp and experienced and ready to lead them into playoff contention.

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

Every Dawg fan is familiar—at times, too familiar—with Ron Courson, the UGA Athletic Association's Director of Sports Medicine and Senior Associate Athletic Director, and member of the Georgia Athletic Trainers Hall of Fame. His son **John Courson** might be less well-known. But he's been an exemplary member of the football program nonetheless. John played high school ball at North Oconee HS, where he was a 2012 8-AAA All-Region honoree. He really made his name in the classroom, however, being named a National Football Foundation Scholar Athlete, a Northeast Georgia FCA Football Scholar Athlete, and a 2013 AAA All-State Academic honors awardee. He was a Summa Cum Laude student with a 4.0 GPA, and an inductee in the Beta Club and National Honor Society, with recognition as an AP Scholar with Distinction. John walked on at UGA and contributed to the scout team, an important unit in preparing the starters for the next week's opponent. He also took on a Biology and Psychology major with a Neuroscience Emphasis in the UGA Honors Program, an elite academic program. He did mighty well there, honored at the year-end gala as the winner of the Senior GPA Award with a 4.0 academic record. Even with such a demanding major, John made the SEC Academic Honor Roll and was named a University of Georgia Charter Scholar. John was listed as a long snapper in his Athletic Association bio, a position that nobody notices unless the snap goes awry. Since graduating, John hasn't let up. He's worked in the health care industry, now serving as the Clinic Manager at Mercy Health Center, a Christ-Centered Health Resource Center. It's hard to imagine anything but success for John as he continues to grow in his faith and his career. He might not have scored any touchdowns at UGA, but he is now scoring where it matters most.



THE FORECAST

DAWGS VS.

“They're good, they're talented, and hat's off to them because they physically annihilated us.” ~ATM U coach Mike Elko after Saturday's loss to Texas

“Best in the nation.” ~Texas DL Alfred Collins when asked for a self-assessment of the UT D after Saturday's game

It's been a long and amazing season, greatly surpassing the fears that the regular season games wouldn't count so much with 12 teams going to the playoff. If anything, the quality of so many teams has made it a wild and crazy year. And now we're heading to a wild and crazy playoff, beginning with conference championship games that matter a lot to the teams playing in them, and that likely will help narrow the field to 12 teams.

UT/UGA II ought to be a great game. Forget about the first one; that was months ago. Texas's easy schedule won't matter any more, nor will Georgia's win in the first game. Now it's about who shows up next Saturday in the Benz.

UGA has infamously come up short in a couple of areas this year. The receivers have been dropping passes. The OL isn't overpowering DLs in the run game. The DBs always seem to be a step behind the receivers. The QB has thrown interceptions, though not lately. Even at 10-2 we are not the dominant program that won 2 natties with some of the same players.

But then, aside from Oregon and their weekly menu of Northwestern and Maryland, who has been great every weekend? And given how hard it is to predict how any team will play on any given Saturday, what difference do the first 12 games make in a showdown of this magnitude?

Nobody knows which Dawg team will show up, or whether another first-half sludge will be possible to overcome against a Texas team that wants revenge for its only loss. This one will take a laser focus from the opening kickoff through the final whistle and however many overtimes it takes to produce a winner.

Next Saturday, no flag plants on the stadium logo. No rushing the field by an ecstatic fan base. No garbage thrown on the field to protest an official's call. No frosty meeting of coaches for the post-game confrontation at midfield. No post-game brawl between players. This one will just be a fight to the finish between two of the nation's top teams battling for a SEC championship. How will it end? With a celebration in the Dawgs' locker room. Dawgs over Horns, 34-31.

NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK #1: OREGON OVER PENN STATE

Is Penn State really one of the top teams in the nation? I always have nagging doubts. They can beat the likes of Purdue all day long, but always come up short when the competition is better. Oregon is better. That clinches it for me. Ducks over Lions, 35-21.

NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK #2: SMU OVER CLEMSON

I haven't seen SMU this year, so this is another shot in the dark. I'm not ever sure if they're actually in the ACC, what with their being in a suburb of Dallas, and I don't mean Dallas, Georgia. But I'll assume they truly are in the Atlantic Coast Conference. I just don't know about Clemson. I guess we'll find out. 'Stangs over 'Gers, 28-24.