

**THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST:  
DAWGS MESS WITH UMASS**

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**SEPARATED@BIRTH?**



**PLAYS THE RUN & WEIGHS A TON  
ALEX MILLER WALRUS**

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Prior to the weekend, I could not think of a game that UGA was preparing to play that was surrounded by such uncertainty. Who would run the ball, and could the line create enough space for the backs to move the chains? How would the QB play, and would the line give him the protection he needed to get through his progressions? How would the receivers play, and would they be reliable enough for the QB to throw into tight windows with confidence? Could Mike Bobo recover from an unsuccessful game plan and playcalling against Mississippi to move the ball against a rugged Tennessee defense? Could the DL pressure Nico Iamaleava enough to force bad decisions and off-target throws, and get the sacks and tackles-for-loss to ruin Tennessee's drives? Could the DBs prevent Tennessee's receivers from running wild in the secondary? Would Iamaleava play at 100% or be compromised, and if so, did UT have enough firepower to compensate? Could the punter flip the field, and could the kicker put points on the board when the rest of the offense couldn't? Before kickoff, these questions were about as murky as the playoff selection committee's rankings and reasoning. This game could have just about any outcome, and it wouldn't surprise me.

And then the game began. In a game we absolutely had to win, we started out playing the fifth quarter of the Ole Miss game. A three-and-out on our first possession, an impressive TD drive by Tennessee, then another short series and three more points on the board for the dreaded Orange. The crowd was behind the team, but was getting restless and uneasy, in spite of all the noise we were making. After three drives, Beck was 3-for-9 for 14 yards with at least two drops, and another pass batted down at the

line of scrimmage, not his first for the game and an ongoing problem for a 6'-5" QB. It wasn't looking good, and if we didn't turn things around, it was the Guaranteed Rate Bowl for the Dawgs in 2024.

And then the boys came to life. Glory, glory.

From there on out, UGA outscored Tennessee 31-7 as Beck went 22-31 for 333 yards. The offensive line was good enough in the ground game, and superb in the passing game. After a very shaky start in terms of catching the ball, the receivers made big plays when we needed them, and it was great to see the set of tight ends getting back in the game. Meanwhile, the defense slammed the door on UT's offense, a unit that had not been prolific coming in, but that had been mighty good.

And the guy taking snaps had a fantastic game. If Arian Smith had caught that first long ball, Beck might have had juice from the start. But for the last three quarters, he was the player we thought he'd be coming into the season. I think the key play came when he ran 14 yards for a first down and trucked a defender in the second quarter. That seemed to fire up the whole team. It sure got the crowd pumped up.

After that, UGA played downhill while Tennessee played uphill. Other than one nice TD drive, UT's O didn't get much past midfield. That's a good team we played, and they couldn't put drives together for most of the rest of the game. The Dawgs relied on their most impressive trait, their resiliency, and blew away a 9.5 point spread that seemed much greater than it ought to be for a game against a higher-ranked team that absolutely had to win to make the playoff.

Glory, glory. Ring that chapel bell. Two more wins, one over a payday opponent and one on a GT team that thinks it can win, and we should be an easy call for the tournament and a possible home game to start things off. It was a great evening to be a Georgia Bulldog. And now it's time to make it a great month, even with a terrible loss in Oxford that made for a steep hill to climb. See you at the top.

### **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 StepUp Scholarship Program** recognizes students who have overcome significant obstacles to pursue their education. With the assistance from donors, we are hoping to enable more students who are financially disadvantaged and have had difficult lives with roadblocks to success, to continue on a lucrative path to a prosperous and happy future. Through higher education, students can break the cycle of poverty, and create a brighter and more rewarding future for themselves as well as their families.

The dropout rate for low income and at-risk students is a growing problem in Athens, GA. The cost of college is beyond many students; even those with a full tuition scholarship. Athens/Clarke County is eighth in the country in the disparity between the wealth of the country and the poverty existing in it. The Athens StepUp Scholarship Program was an idea derived from the community and family in which our founder and Executive Director, Hattie Thomas Whitehead, grew up.

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### **Disconcerting Signals: Critical Thinkers Do Their Own Research**

“Have you ever seen a baby pigeon?” How do we know that power lines aren’t pigeon recharging stations?” ~Illinois tight end Tip Reiman

### **SAT PREP SESSION**

**SAT Question of the Week:** What is the common denominator among the following humans?

Jessie Bates

DaRon Bland

Aiden Hutchinson

Jerry Jacobs

Kenny Moore

Segun Olubi

Antoine Winfield Jr.

**Answer:**

Each of these defenders intercepted Bryce Young in 2023.

### **DAWG DOOTS**

- ☞ A team whose fans storm the field pays a fine to the day’s opponent, with the first occasion costing \$100,000, the second \$250,000, the third \$500,000, and if you do a fourth, the fans who do the storming will have to spend the next year at Auburn.
- ☞ Idea from Wags, the family bulldog: UMass fans, put on a red t-shirt and storm the field after the game.

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

#### **GOOD GUY ARCHIVE**

**Travis Jones** played linebacker and defensive tackle for UGA from 1990 to 1992, and after an illness, again in 1994. Dawg fans who tire of ESPN might recall with a certain glee that in the 1993 Citrus Bowl, he recovered a Kirk Herbstreit fumble in the fourth quarter to set up the winning score. Travis was Georgia’s top defensive lineman coming into the 1993 season, but just before fall camp he was hospitalized with rhabdomyolysis, a condition exacerbated by exercise, making football risky to his health. While sidelined he was named to the College Football Association's Good Works Team for his work with Special Olympics and a local homeless shelter. He sat out a

season to recover, then returned for the 1994 season, when he served as defensive captain. Travis played pro ball in the Canadian and Arena football leagues, then packed it in and went into coaching. He started as a GA at UGA, then moved to fulltime coaching jobs at Appalachian State (1998–2000), Kansas (2001–2002), LSU (2003–2004, including a national championship), Miami Dolphins (2005–2007), New Orleans Saints (2008–2012, including a Super Bowl), Seattle Seahawks (2013–2017, including a Super Bowl), and Atlanta Falcons (2018–2019). While with the Saints, he made a terrible mistake that led to his guilty plea in a conspiracy to commit mail fraud in a Texas real estate scam, leading to a suspension by the Saints. Good Guys make mistakes; what happens next is often a sign of their character. Travis has since tried to atone for his bad judgment. Travis has hosted a free one-day youth football camp at Henderson Stadium in Macon, near his home town of Irwinton, where he played for Wilkinson County HS. The camp included a number of Travis’s teammates and local coaches, and served 142 children ages 8-15. Travis said, “Giving back to the Middle Georgia community was truly a gift for me as well. I felt that same anticipation and excitement I did as a child opening presents on Christmas morning. My vision for the camp in the future is to provide a safe and structured learning environment for young aspiring athletes, where athletic as well as personal confidence can be developed, enhanced and transferred into daily life skills. We want to instill in these youngsters personal accountability, persistence and perseverance that will enrich their lives and serve as a building block for achievement both on and off the field.” Giving back, as Travis says, can be more rewarding than receiving a gift, and I suspect he’s not done yet.



## **THE FORECAST**

### **DAWGS VS. UMASS**

We finally get a break in the schedule to play one of the decade’s least successful programs. Not much to say about these games other than I look forward to seeing a lot of guys get their uniforms dirty. Dawgs 52, Minutemen 3

### **NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY OVER OHIO STATE**

Probably not, but I’m taking the Hoosiers anyhow, and in the famed Horseshoe to boot. Indiana has led a charmed life this season, steamrolling a so-so schedule and putting their QB into the Heisman discussion, and the coach into a runaway Coach of the Year competition. Ohio State has taken care of business for the most part. So this is quite a showdown, worth watching. I’ll see if Indiana can conclude their greatest season with their greatest win. Hint: Nobody will storm the field and tear down the goalposts at the end of this one. Indiana 38, Ohio State 35

### **NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: VANDY OVER LSU**

LSU's homefield walloping by Alabama has exposed some weaknesses, South Carolina made them crystal clear, and Clark Lea is set to take advantage of them with this season's great story, Diego Pavia, leading the way. This just seems to be the season where things like this keep happening. And no, no goalpost-tumbling here either. Vandy 24, LSU 21