

**THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST:  
DAWGS GORE THE EYES OF TEXAS**

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“This is one of the mentally-toughest teams we’ve ever coached.” ~Mike Bobo

“I’ve had more physically tough (teams). I’ve had more physically talented. But I don’t know if I’ve ever had a more mentally tough team. They just keep coming and keep coming, and they never say die.” ~Kirby Smart

“It was a Festivus miracle!” ~Little Woolly

It was indeed. The pre-game prognosticators were mostly picking Texas, with the [exception of Pat McAfee](#). It was going to be an uphill fight from the get-go, and the nation was hoping for the Longhorns to return the Dawgs to land of the mortals. All signs pointed to a Texas victory, with the brilliant Sarkisian outfoxing the Dawgs with his incredible play-calling, Quin Ewers and his stable of running backs shredding our suspect defense, and our sputtering offense failing to score enough to keep up with their offensive juggernaut.

And when the game began, it looked as though they might be right. After that terrible first half on the offensive end, it looked like a game that even a mentally tough team like Georgia would have trouble pulling out. But as they’ve done just about all season, the Dawgs got their act together at halftime and took control of the game.

The first half featured UGA running its Iowa offense, going nowhere slowly and keeping the endzone well-manicured. It seemed that Texas was running circles around us, up to but not including scoring points. A 260-54 yardage advantage and 2:1 ration in time of possession made the 6-3 score seem almost impossible to comprehend. I could hear the

The Scowlmeister kvetching even above the noise of Foghorn Bullhorn berating the officials. But if Dawg fans have learned anything this season, it's not to leave the game early.

That first half, though. Yikes. I wondered, If we continue to play like this, how will the committee view a team that can't move the ball on offense? It seemed pretty gloomy. But then, a look at the scoreboard showed that Texas wasn't taking advantage of its whopping lead in yardage. 6-3 at the half. I'm guessing that the optics, as bad as they were for Dawg fans and its legions of Mike Bobo haters, were magical to SEC haters around the land. People like Shannon Dawson, the Miami OC who sent a [snarky tweet](#) at halftime about our underperforming offense, while watching the game from the couch after Syracuse knocked Miami out of the race the week before. How many points did Miami score on Saturday, Shannon?

Meanwhile, Florida State fans have mounted a social media campaign to deny UGA a spot in the playoff, because, citing precedent, they believe that because FSU was left off the 4-team party list last year when their QB got injured, there should be a permanent prohibition for teams with injured players from playing in the 12-team playoff. I'm sure that makes good sense to Danny Kanell. So do a lot of other strange beliefs.

And not to leave out the Texas fan base: They will whine until the end of time that Arch Manning has remained the UT backup. He has played significant minutes in 2 early-season blowouts and fewer minutes in a handful of other blowouts. In those games he has performed adequately. But enough to bench the QB who got them here? Because his grandpa and uncles were good, and he carries on their name? Kinda like Steve Spurrier, Jr., and Frank Sinatra, Jr.? I guess we'll find out next year. Or maybe we already found out when he carried the load against Louisiana-Monroe:

Date	OPP	Result	CMP	ATT	YDS	CMP%	TD	INT	LNG	SACK	RTG	QBR	CAR	YDS
Sat 9/21	Vs <a href="#">ULM</a>	<a href="#">W</a> <a href="#">51-3</a>	15	29	258	51.7	2	2	56	1	135.4	77.3	1	-4

But back to Saturday's epic championship game. If we've learned one thing about this season, it's that the games include two halves, and then some more when that doesn't settle it. Something happens in that locker room after 30 minutes of futility. The coaches make adjustments. The players get focused. And sometimes, you have to play your QB2, because QB1 can't lift his throwing arm above his waist.

*Resilience*, that's the word that keeps coming up. This Dawg team has shown it over and over. This morning we're also reading about *connection*. You can't make these comebacks without having a whole that's greater than the sum of its parts. And in the second halves of close games this season, that's what our boys always seem to become.

The Dawgs continued to have trouble holding on to passes. The WRs had a single catch in that turgid first half. Kirk Herbstreit made the observation several times that Arian Smith isn't a natural receiver, more a track guy playing football, which accounts for his tendency to hop for the ball and occasionally drop it, instead of catching it in stride. But

I still love him as a guy who hustles to recover disastrous fumbles and is the first guy down in punt coverage, and a scary guy on jet sweeps.

During games I'm always shouting into the void, "Throw it to the tight ends!" Play 3 of them on every down and see if anyone can stop them. But then, the game plan began to work in the second half. Maybe the coaches know what they're doing after all, although you'd never know it from the coaching geniuses who second-guess them constantly on social media, where every play they should have called would have scored a touchdown.

After 60 minutes of intense action, the game went into OT. I felt pretty good at that point, because we are the more experienced team in OTs and have recently gotten live action practice with every 2-point conversion in the playbook. It never reached that point, as once again, the play that worked was a run up the middle. I was a bit surprised to see that on first and goal from inside the five, the power back in the backfield was Cash Jones. But then I realized it was Chaz Chambliss, and he annihilated the guy he was assigned to help create a clear path to the endzone for Trevor Etienne. Game over.

The broadcasters made the point repeatedly that Gunner Stockton had played very little, so was untested and a major question mark. What they overlooked is that he's played against our defense every day in practice for three years. That's the same defense that absolutely stoned Texas's strong running game, an achievement that at times we wasted in the first half by allowing third-and-long conversions by Ewers in the passing game. But calling Stockton inexperienced overlooks his [record-setting HS career](#) and his years working against a lot of NFL-ready defenders from Sunday-Friday.

Sunday morning had a lot of teams claiming that they deserved to make the field of 12. The best way to get into the playoff is to win your games. The Dawgs took care of business so they didn't have to lobby the committee for inclusion. It wasn't easy, but on Sunday morning, it was still a W, and the Dawgs were a #2 seed.

Dawg fans are both ecstatic and concerned as we head into the longest bye week of the season, giving us an opportunity to heal our many wounded warriors, watch some film, and get ready for the playoff. As Coach Smart noted, this isn't his most talented team, and if you watch the Eagles, Packers, and Steelers on Sundays, or peek at a Las Vegas or Chargers game, you know just how many great players those teams had. In my memory, we never lost a game during the great championship run. Every opponent produced negative yardage, every game was a shutout, every offensive series produced a touchdown. In fact, those teams did occasionally allow a score, and would occasionally punt. But the memories of dominance are powerful and can make this year's damn good team seem like lesser Dawgs. But we'll go into the playoff ranked #2 with the nation's toughest schedule behind us. We took down the #1 and #2 ranked teams at different points, and both were known as Texas. Every team left is flawed, all are damn good. Can we win this thing? Hell yes. Go Dawgs. I can hear the chapel bell ringing all the way from home.

### Disconcerting Signals

James Franklin said in preparation of Saturday's Big 10 championship game loss that Oregon's advantageous big-bucks athletics budget has been the foundation of their rise under Dan Lanning: "Oregon . . . is also a place with tremendous resources as well and they've built that thing to compete at the highest level." But Penn State has a 106,572-seat stadium with a waiting list. Autzen Field holds 60,000. PSU earns over \$44 million in ticket sales, the Ducks under \$25 million. The Penn State Collective generated \$13,793,489 in funding, 11th among FBS schools. Oregon was 20th at \$10,623,807. Sure, James. You lost because Oregon out-spent you. Not because you never win big games.

### **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 **Wheels of Hope** program is intended for residents in Athens-Clarke and surrounding counties who do not have the ability to drive due to age, illness, or disability. As a ride sharing program, our network of volunteers provides the rides on an as-needed basis. The drivers are committed to stay with the rider for the duration of the trip, so riders don't have to worry about being dropped off. We provide "door thru door" service and stay with our clients during their appointments or help them with their errands. There is no charge for our service, but we do accept donations.

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### **SAT PREP SESSION**

**SAT Question of the Week:** Who are these cats, and why should anyone care?

Damien Inglis  
K.J. McDaniels  
Joe Harris  
CleAnthony Early  
Jarnell Stokes  
Johnny O'Bryant III  
DeAndre Daniels  
Spencer Dinwiddie  
Jerami Grant  
Glenn Robinson III

- A. These are the backup singers to John Legend on "All She Wanna Do."
- B. These are the most recent ATM U players to enter the transfer portal.
- C. This is Marjorie Taylor Greene's short list to be her Vice President in 2028.
- D. These fellows all have recorded Tik-Tok videos extolling the virtues of Geoff Collins.

- E. Each of these guys has taken a vow of silence until Dan Mullen is restored as Head Ball Coach at Florida.
- F. These are Taylor Swift's boyfriends for the years 2021-2022.

**Answer:** These gentlemen were the players selected ahead of Nikola Jokic in the second round of the 2014 NBA draft.

## **DAWG DOOTS**

- ☞ Wags, the family bulldog, ate all of this week's Dawg Doots.

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

**Reggie Carter** was a 3-star linebacker prospect coming out of South Gwinnett HS; or maybe a 4-star recruit, depending on the service. He had plenty of honors, including being named a PrepStar All-Southeast Region, a 2012 Georgia Sports Writers Association All-State Class AAAAAA first-team defender, and a 2012 Atlanta Journal-Constitution Class AAAAAA All-State defender. But recruiting gurus couldn't tell if he was the #16 overall prospect in Georgia, or the #57 player in the state, or something in between. Reggie started a lot of games at UGA while also taking an injury redshirt to recover from a shoulder injury and extend his college career to five years, while also taking time to recover from concussions. #45 was a dependable player, if not quite an NFL prospect. But what a student. Reggie's studies were supported by multiple David C. Cooper Family Football Scholarships and a Harry Leroy Dukes Football Scholarship. He was an SEC Academic Honor Roll appointee and earned a spot on the Athletic Director's Honor Roll with a major in Sociology, and was the team's representative on the UGA Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). In the classroom, he was an unstoppable force. More recently, Reggie has returned to UGA in the critical role of advising Bulldogs on how to manage the NIL environment through his appointment to the new post of Athlete Marketing Manager. Reggie's job is to help players maximize their opportunities at the local, state, and national levels with the new Georgia Bulldogs Exchange in partnership with INFLCR, a software service designed to help navigate this new and complex world. Said Josh Brooks, "As a Georgia alum, Reggie offers our current student-athletes a unique perspective when it comes to NIL. He is someone who cares deeply about the student-athlete experience at UGA, and we are thrilled to welcome him home." His job involves a lot of networking, suggesting strong interpersonal skills as he helps to coordinate his office with the Georgia Way network, the Georgia Bulldog Club, Georgia Bulldogs Sports Marketing, and other groups contributing to the NIL pool at UGA. As a player, Reggie was known as quiet and knowledgeable, and not too excitable. Rather, he was diligent and led by example and good decisions. Now he's back helping the young pups make good decisions about how to earn money through college football and manage it well. He's managed his own life pretty well, and it's good to have him showing the way for the next generations of Dawg players.



## **THE FORECAST**

And here we go!

The field is set. I missed where Alabama will play. Any help?

Texas vs. Clemson

Penn State vs. SMU

Notre Dame vs. Indiana

Ohio State vs. Tennessee

The Forecast:

Texas over Clemson (winner plays ASU). Sorry Dabo, the dream is over.

SMU over Penn State (winner plays Boise State). James Franklin in a big game? That makes this one easy.

Indiana over ND (winner plays UGA). The only in-state game of the series, and I'll go with the team that plays a league schedule.

Tennessee over Ohio State (winner plays Oregon). Just to see Ryan Day look sad again.