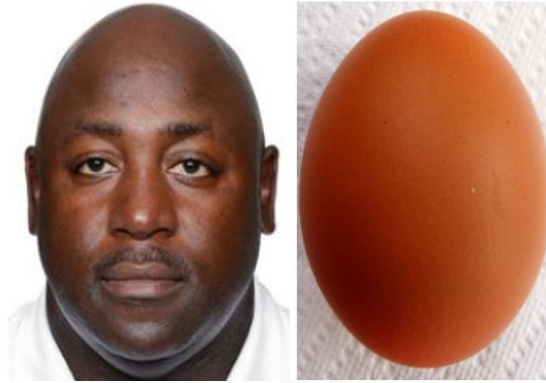


**THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST:  
DAWGS PUT TIGERS IN THE DEEP FREEZE**

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Something had to give.

Georgia had won 42 straight regular-season games, and 21 straight with at least a week to prepare.

Alabama had beaten Kirby Smart's Dawgs 5 times in the last 6 games; throw in the Mark Richt teams, and Alabama had taken care of business 8 of the last 9 times the teams had played.

Something had to give.

And in the first half, it gave.

Kirby Smart rallied the troops to come out roaring in the second half. But in the first half, I was wondering, is this Georgia-TCU all over again, with Georgia in the role of TCU? Will this thing get so ridiculously bad that I will cash in my chips and shut the game off to spare myself further pain and indignity? Is this the same defense that hadn't allowed a TD all year? Am I watching the most dominant, humiliating defeat for UGA this century?

UGA had taken some hits from the Lamestream Sports Media following their tough, close game against Kentucky, presumably a second-tier team. But Kentucky showed on Saturday that they're one tough opponent, and that when you play them, bring your clubs and stones, because it will be primitive. Winning a tight one against the Wildcats

seemed a lot less concerning after they beat up Mississippi and tossed Lane Kiffin's popcorn popper in the dumpster.

But Lordy, that first half. We got sliced, diced, dominated, and humbled. Alabama blew through Georgia like a Category 4 hurricane, and left the Dawgs with a lot of rubble to clean up. Jalen Milroe looked like Jayden Daniels playing like Lamar Jackson on his best day; and this is a guy who, early last year, I thought would never cut it as an Alabama quarterback. And that was the defense, the unit that had gotten us this far in the 2024 season. On offense, the Dawgs were in the doghouse for the first two quarters. Were we headed for a historic blowout? At the half I had to refresh my libations. It was too hard to watch with a clear mind.

And then, the first half's mouse began to roar, and gradually, steadily UGA got back in the game. One score closer. Then another. Alabama left its game in the locker room at the half, and Carson Beck came out smoking. I thought we had them with the Bell TD, and then again when we got into the red zone on the final drive. But we couldn't finish it off. Game over.

I don't feel down and out here on Sunday morning. The comeback turned a blowout into a game worthy of its own hype, which was considerable. We still can't find our running game, but I know it's in there somewhere. All those troubles, and we still almost pulled it out. The team is saying that there are no moral victories, that losses are losses and need to be accounted for. No doubt. But the second half nearly turned this epic game into an epic victory. There's something positive to take out of Saturday night, and I'm taking it.

When our 2024 schedule came out after last season, I thought, No way we'll go unbeaten with this lineup. And now we are carrying a loss into the playoff formula. There's a lot left to play for, and a lot of big games ahead. Winning out will be a challenge, but it's surely possible. And we know who'll be waiting for us at the end of the road.

### **Disconcerting Signals: Auburn Edition**

"Unite Auburn" drew nearly 10,000 people to Neville Arena and resulted in more than 1,000 individuals being baptized in a nearby lake. **Many of the baptisms were performed by men's basketball coach Bruce Pearl, football coach Hugh Freeze**, and baseball coach Butch Thompson.

### **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*

**Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation.** The Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation educates and inspires Georgians to take action every day to improve and beautify their community environments. As a state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, we lead more than 70 city and county programs across Georgia, providing them with the tools and resources they need to engage an average of 100,000 volunteers in environmental preservation efforts each year. We also strive to increase our impact even further by engaging additional communities and individuals in our efforts to end litter, reduce waste, promote recycling, and beautify communities.

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### **SAT PREP SESSION**

**SAT Question of the Week:** Which of these Dawgs does not belong on the following list?

Ray Drew  
Quayvon Hicks  
Dan Jackson  
Taylor Maxie  
Christian Payne  
David Pollack  
Sam Shurtleff  
Trenton Turner  
Andrew Williams

**Answer:**

All but Quayvon Hicks wore #47. Quayvon wore #48.

### **DAWG DOOTS**

- ☞ [Auburn got a raw deal, which doesn't mean Auburn can't win it all.](#) ~Mark Bradley, March 17, 2024, on the upcoming March Madness tournament, for which he picked an Auburn championship, in spite of what he called their "unfair" seeding, which resulted in Auburn losing in the first round to 13 seed Yale.
- ☞ Georgia Tech's mighty victory over mighty FSU in Dublin led their Nation, along with the Lamestream Sports Media, to view them as an ascendent program. Now that FSU has been revealed to be an awful team, and Tech has lost a few, maybe not.
- ☞ Do you think that North Carolina would like a do-over after hiring Geoff Collins to replace Gene Chizik to coordinate their defense, which gave up 53 first-half points to a James Madison team, playing for a new coach with a portal-heavy roster of newcomers, who one week before had hung a total of 13 points at home on 1-3 Gardner-Webb?
- ☞ "We couldn't be more excited to welcome Geoff Collins, his wife Jennifer, and their daughter Astrid to the Carolina football family. Geoff is brilliant defensive mind, who has been successful at a number of different locations as both a head coach and a coordinator. His experience shows that he knows what it takes to lead the men in our program, and he'll utilize that experience for the benefit of

our defense. We were blown away when we interviewed Geoff. He was unbelievably prepared. He had watched all of our games, knew our personnel, and pinpointed the items he'd implement to improve our players and the defensive unit as a whole. I can't wait to get Geoff and his family to Chapel Hill and get to work." ~Mack Brown, January 2024

- ☞ Something you never heard Geoff Collins say: "At the end of the day it's my responsibility. I take full responsibility for it, and I take responsibility for improvement." ~Brent Key after losing to Louisville

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

**Daijun Edwards** came to UGA as one of the most overlooked 4-star recruits in memory. At Colquitt County HS he was considered by 247 Composite to be the #21 running back nationally, the #28 prospect in Georgia, and the #279 prospect nationally, while also being named to the 2019 All-State Class 7A first team offense by the Georgia Sports Writers Association. He led his team in rushing for four years in 7A ball, with 1,000+ yards in his last three seasons, all on a team that held a state #1 ranking and runner-up finish, along with a national rank of #14. But he was still somehow underrated, with a consensus that he didn't have high-end speed and so was not an elite runner. At UGA that belief was reinforced in his first few years in the program, when he developed his game while waiting for the NFL-bound upperclassmen to get their turn and get the bulk of the carries. When his time came, he revealed himself to be an outstanding runner, able to find holes through a combination of patience and exceptionally quick feet, especially in narrow openings. What really seemed to stand out, though, was his quiet determination and low ego. He waited his turn and got better, good enough to lead the team in rushing even while losing time to injuries. He just seems naturally humble, never drawing attention to himself except when running the ball. Gary Danielson repeatedly emphasized how Daijun just gets football, and understands how to play the game and the RB position. He gets it in the classroom too, with a Housing Management & Policy major and financial aid via the Erskine "Erk" Russell Football Scholarship and the Col. Robert L. Jackson Jr. Family Scholarship. He'll be the last guy to blow his own horn, so I'm happy to blow it for him. Daijun has been a great asset to the program, and will continue to live like a champion as he takes his game higher and lifts those around him.



## **THE FORECAST**

### **DAWGS VS. AUBURN**

Auburn just can't seem to get it right since Cam Newton showed up for a year and single-handedly won Gene Chizik his natty. The Hugh Freeze Era was supposed to reverse the decline of the Brian Harsin Era, but it's been stalled in the same low gear. His reputation as QB Whisperer and Genius Play Caller—sorta like Dan Mullen—had The Plains abuzz with talk of a program revival. But it's mostly resembled Buzz, the Georgia Tech pest, in achievement. The unsolicited opinion of former Freeze QB Bo Wallace from his Mississippi days, that Freeze is a self-centered jerk who blames everyone but himself when things go poorly and claims all credit when he wins, has damaged his aura, along with his W-L record. No doubt it's damaged his recruiting ability at the QB position as well.

And that's the state of affairs heading into next Saturday. Auburn looked as though it would take down Oklahoma on Saturday, but a late INT ended their hopes for a W. The broadcasters raved about Payton Thorne's leadership and play until the very end. He played a good game before reverting to Auburn's problem all year, key turnovers. The Tigers have a good RB and some talent in the WR room, so aren't a bad team. They just can't quite put it all together. And I don't think they will next Saturday. UGA will have one demanding week of practice to get ready for their first quality opponent between the hedges for 2024, and I think they are going to be one ornery group. No slow starts this weekend, no punchless first halves. Dawgs come to play: UGA 38, Auburn 13.

### **NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: CLEMSON OVER FLORIDA STATE**

Not to add gas to the fire, but Mike Norvell might be the second-best Norvell coaching a college football team, and the other one, at Colorado State, has the fans screaming for his termination. Who knows, maybe they'll do what some have predicted and fire Norvell and replace him with Deion Sanders. Don't ask me. I'm just The Dawgmeister, and if they make this move, they will get what they deserve: A lot of smoke, and no fire. Anyhow, if DJU, bless his heart, is still the starter—which is like saying “If Billy Napier is still the coach”—expect FSU to continue sinking into oblivion. And since DJU must be demonstrably better than his backups to keep his job so far, expect it anyhow, even after his 12-30, 3 INT performance in their blowout loss to SMU on Saturday. Meanwhile, Clemson's dud against UGA was at this point an eternity ago, and they've come out firing since their opening loss, something nobody's seen out of FSU. Tigers over Noles, 48-10.

### **NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: S. CAROLINA OVER OLE MISS**

I'm still impressed by SC's beatdown of Kentucky, and think that if LaNorris Sellers hadn't gotten injured, they would have taken down LSU too. That cat can play. Lane Kiffin might be the cockiest guy around, but the Cock Pit will drown out him and his social media accounts on Saturday. I think that Beamer Ball will generate a special teams play at some point that swings the game in SC's favor. And the end result? Another loss to another tough SEC opponent, not the set of patsies that Mississippi pounded to open the season, a scheduling effect that had people talking about their

incredible offense as if they were scoring 60 points against good teams. But that part of the schedule is over. SC 21, Mississippi 20.