

THE DAWGMEISTER'S WEEKEND FORECAST: *DAWGS BOOT GATORS*

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A wise man once said, “Humility is a week away, guys.” Or maybe he says it every week.

There are a lot of coaches out there saying it after Saturday’s historic shakeup.

Perhaps flying under the radar, the FCS had a topsy-turvy day, too, as 4 top-10 teams lost: No. 1 South Dakota State, No. 4 Lehigh, No. 7 Montana and No. 10 Lamar. The weekend has an official name: Hangover Saturday. Today’s etymology lesson: preposterous means that what goes before (pre) goes after, and what goes after (post) goes first. Welcome to college football, 2026.

My brief review of this historical day’s underdog triumphs, and the words that describe them, isn’t designed to soften the blow of Georgia’s mistake-prone loss to inspired Auburn. No account of Saturday’s game can proceed without acknowledging Auburn’s gutsy performance.

When we quickly went up 14-0, I had visions of seeing the bench cleared as if we were playing a rematch with Western Kentucky. And then Auburn did the unthinkable: 24 straight points against our heretofore ferocious defense to take a commanding lead into the 4th quarter. The Dawgs then had their own moment of resilience to tie it back up. And then fumbled it away at the end to giftwrap a final drive and easy field goal for Auburn. But Auburn earned this win, even if we helped out in tragic ways.

For some reason, I watched a USF game last year, and came away thinking, that QB is pretty good. He was pretty good on Saturday too, largely with his legs, often on escapes from pressure.

Coach Smart said afterwards, “We like to say the Dawgs don’t beat the Dawgs, but they beat themselves today. We helped them, we gave them three turnovers and some really critical, undisciplined penalties.” Like those roughing the QB flags, especially the last one committed by one of our most experienced defenders.

Much has been made of Gunner Stockton’s rough afternoon. His first-play run that shook him up was an occasion for The Scowlmeister to question the play call as risky and unnecessary. It definitely surprised me, and concerned me when the officials made him leave the game for several plays when Ryan Puglisi passed the Dawgs into scoring range, and then later when he forgot that he was the holder on the placekicking team.

The predictable social media outrage has centered on whether or not Gunner played with a concussion the rest of the game, given that, aside from our TD drives at the beginning and end of the game, he wasn’t the same guy whose precision passing had sliced up Alabama and everyone else this season. I’m not an M.D., and wasn’t on the sideline, and don’t know how they diagnosed him, so I’m less qualified than the 5 million people sharing their opinions online.

I watched a replay in slo-mo on Sunday morning, and he landed on his helmet and bent his neck. The coaches characterized his injury as a stinger, a nerve injury caused by impact to the neck or shoulder, resulting in sharp, burning pain down the arm. That might explain his accuracy issues, but you’ve got to wonder if his brain didn’t feel the impact enough to affect his play.

The other social media villain is, of course, Mike Bobo. There remain legions of Dawg lovers who hate Mike Bobo, no matter the outcome or process of a game. As I understand it, he was personally responsible for the Jan Kemp Affair, Jim Harrick Jr.’s final exam, and low attendance during the Covid pandemic. He was also the captain of the Titanic, the pilot of the Hindenburg, and the lead astronaut of the Challenger, and is suspected of being behind the high price of groceries and gas these days. When in doubt, blame Bobo.

Gunner’s turnovers were critical, as turnovers in tight games tend to be. To me, the most surprising thing about his day was his tendency to throw high on passes of any depth, possibly an effect of a stinger that affected his throws. He also threw overthrew long balls when guys were open underneath, possibly an effect of a concussion. He loaded a season’s worth of mistakes into one game, and it still took a walk-off field goal for Auburn to pull it out.

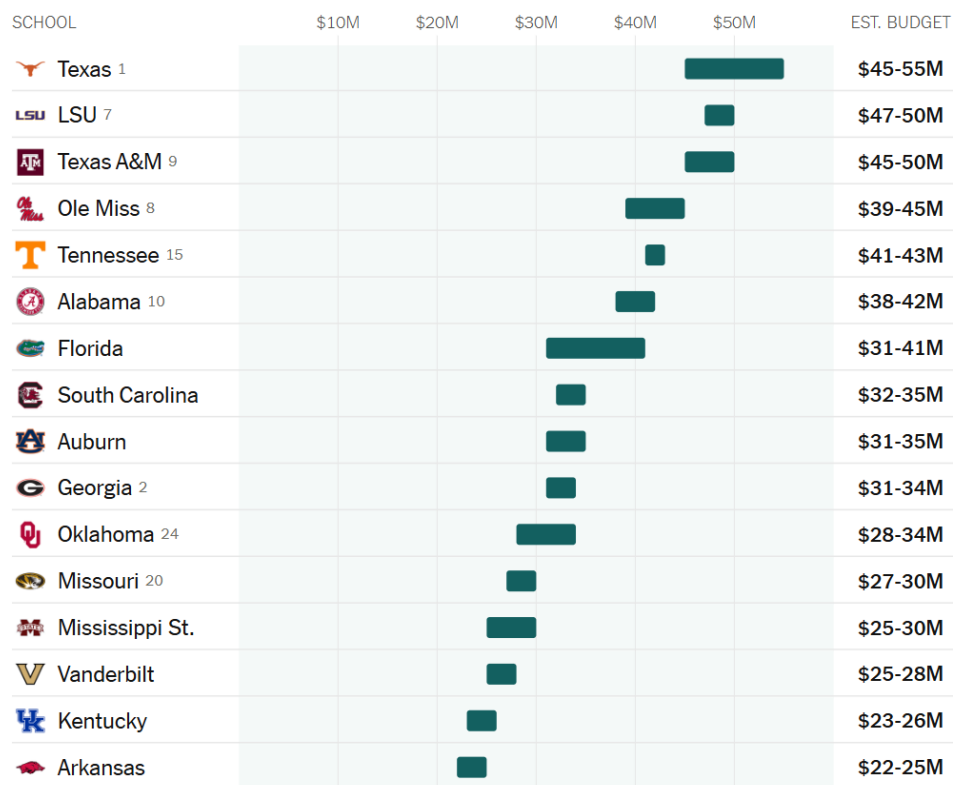
Was his head still buzzing from that hit on the game’s first play? Should, as some social media Sunday Morning Quarterbacks opined, Ryan Puglisi have replaced him for the rest of the game? Nobody was complaining when we went up 14-0 and looked as though

we'd frolic through the beautiful fall afternoon. But losing games can bring out the worst in people.

One of the AJC headlines read, [Kirby Smart seething over Georgia mistakes in loss to Auburn](#). I hope the women and children, and everyone else, weren't around for his post-game locker room remarks to his team.

Finally, after reading Sunday's paper, I learned why we lost. Auburn pays its players more. I'm sure that somebody out there is running correlation tests to see who's getting the most bang for their buck in player salaries. Probably, Kentucky more than any teams from Texas. I suspect that Kentucky's coach is also relatively underpaid.

Estimated college football roster budget ranges for SEC schools



Disconcerting Signals

A man desperate to use the bathroom at a Kroger supermarket in—surprise!—Texas intentionally crashed his 2006 Chevrolet HHR through the building's front doors at 4:30 AM because the store was closed, causing \$50,000 in property damage. His gray compact S.U.V. accelerated past shelves of pumpkin spice Cheerios and Special K cereal boxes and came to rest near a display of Halloween candy after barreling past a sign saying "Thanks for shopping, y'all!" No one was injured in the crash. The driver stayed at the scene and was charged with a third-degree felony. "All he said was the doors were locked and he had to use the restroom," said the arresting officer.

DAWGMEISTER GOOD WORKS OF THE WEEK

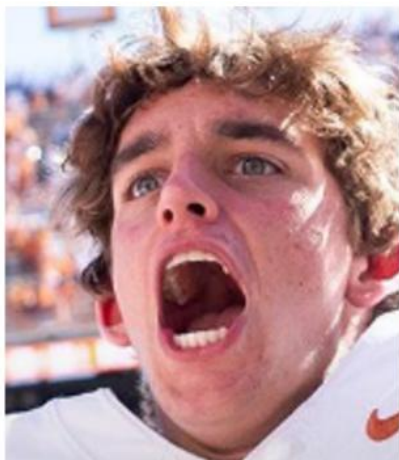
The Weekend Forecast is offered as a free service to its readers; neither the Dawgbone nor The Dawgmeister profits financially from its publication. If you read the Forecast and want to contribute something back to our communities, please consider making a donation to this week's featured Good Works 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

Innovative Solutions for Disadvantage and Disability: We empower kinship and grandfamilies raising children with disabilities or chronic illnesses by providing essential resources, advocacy, and support. Our services are designed to uplift kinship caregivers. Through education, community connections, and specialized services, we help families navigate challenges and access the resources they need to keep their relative children out of the foster care system and in the homes of their loving families.

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DAWG DOOTS

- ☞ Dwight Phillips arrived on campus as a fast, 150-lb, 5'-10" (maybe) running back who was dwarfed by the likes of classmate Chauncy Bowens and soon nicknamed "Peanut" by Will Muschamp. It's the sort of name you give to a little fellow because he's so cute out there with all those big guys in the huddle. At first, he was a gadget guy mainly put in for jet sweeps, which can get predictable. After a couple of years in the weight room where he built himself into a tackle-busting grinder between the tackles, without losing his jets, he needs something more appropriated. Even on Saturday, when Auburn often stuffed the run, he averaged nearly 7 yards per carry. Dwight "The Fright" Phillips? Dwight "The Smite" Phillips? Dwight "Nighty Night" Phillips? Mighty Dwight Phillips?
- ☞ "Everything's going to be evaluated," Sarkisian said after losing to Florida. Including a quarterback change? "Everything means everything," Sarkisian said.
- ☞ Including the head coach?
- ☞ It wouldn't surprise me if Arch Manning followed the path of Carson Beck and took a 5th year with a transfer to Miami.



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- ☞ Unless Bryce Underwood beats him to it.
- ☞ Or Julian Lewis.
- ☞ Lewis, incidentally, is a good example of why a hotshot HS QB shouldn't reclassify and graduate a year ahead of schedule, as he did at Carrollton HS. Those other guys are a lot older than you are, and when it comes to things like reading defenses, it really matters, as QBs who declare for the draft after one year as a starter often learn after leaving college too early. Since it's Florida up next, I'll use Anthony Richardson to illustrate my point.
- ☞ Most in Need of a Facial Hair Intervention: GT & UF QB & Confirmed Dawg Hater Aaron Philo



We're not the Only Team with Injuries

- ☞ Alabama WR Coleman-Williams ruled out for Saturday's game at Tennessee
- ☞ Mississippi State QB Taylor and RB Bothwell are questionable vs. LSU
- ☞ Ducks rule out QB Moore for Sat. vs. Nebraska
- ☞ QB Iamaleava out for No. 12 UCLA vs. Wisconsin
- ☞ Vols assistant coach Inge out of hospital, begins rehab from illness
- ☞ Florida QB Philo questionable, WR Brown could return
- ☞ Illinois QB Houser out 4-6 weeks after procedure on throwing hand
- ☞ Ohio State loses half of RB tandem vs. Indiana with Ja'Kobi Jackson out

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

Mike Fisher came to UGA from Furman, by way of the Bolles School (class of 1976) in Jacksonville. A scholarship athlete at Furman, Mike rolled the dice and walked on at UGA, earning a starting role in the fabled Erk Russell Junkyard Dogs defense as a cornerback from 1978-1980. Like others who've walked on, he played a significant role in the Dawgs' success. Indeed, on the national championship defense of 1980, there were three other former walkons: Nate Taylor, Rob Miles, and Dale Williams. Mike was presented the 1981 McCarthy-Crenshaw Award as UGA's Outstanding Senior Athlete from Florida. In the Florida game that featured the famous "Run Lindsey Run" TD, Mike had 2 interceptions. Then he had another game-changing pick against Notre Dame, which helped UGA to win a natty in the 1981 Sugar Bowl. His picks against the Gators helped to land him a place in the Georgia-Florida Hall of Fame in 2024. Once his UGA career ended, Mike became a successful business executive in the forest products industry in the Atlanta area, including VP of sales for Kruger, Inc., a Montreal-based

company that produces paper-based products for everyday life. Not everyone who comes through the program ends up on an NFL roster, but most learn valuable lessons about work ethic, preparation, teamwork, and resilience. Those qualities are required of those who come in without fanfare or scholarship support and have to earn their way onto the field. Mike's time at UGA prepared him for much more than football, and the payoff has been great in life and career.



THE FORECAST

DAWGS VS. FLORIDA

Nobody asked me, but it sure would have been nice to use the Jax reconstruction project for a home-and-home series. And both of my readers agree.

But, let's take the game for what it is: a critical SEC battle that has national implications. Which Florida team will show up? The one that blazed out of the starting gate to become a media darling, the one that came up lame at the quarter turn, or the one afire with confidence after a road win playing their QB2 at Texas, a game that has the Horn Nation wondering if the right quarterback is playing for them?

After beating Texas, Coach Sumrall said, "I'm like, guys, we suck. I've watched us practice. We're not very good. We still suck. We just suck less. We have to figure out how to suck less each week. We're not a complete team yet." I'll let him do the talking.

Per The Athletic, "Florida is showing that it's [on the right track](#) in Sumrall's first season." In case readers weren't paying attention, they said shortly thereafter, "The bottom line is that Florida is, clearly, headed in the right direction under Sumrall."

Right now, that direction is Atlanta, where they will meet a team that, like their coach, is undoubtedly in a bad mood. With luck, Gunner's head will be clear and his shoulder will be pain-free, Nate Frazier will have returned to form, KJ Bolton will re-establish his role as The Eraser, and the team will understand more clearly that humility isn't just a week away. It's here now. Dawgs earn a measure of redemption: UGA 31, UF 24.

WEEK 8

NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: TEXAS OVER MISSISSIPPI

I had a conversation recently with the brother of a former player about Ole Miss. How good are they? They beat us last year, and are playing well. But it's difficult to evaluate teams that promote an assistant at a time of duress, and give him the fulltime job the next year. How well can they sustain the program's move up the food chain, even if the

impetus was Lane Kiffin? Texas is easier to size up: generally, a disappointing team, with both their infallible QB and crafty head ball coach finally being held accountable for the Horns' underachievement, unless you ask the head ball coach, who is making his players accountable. How, then, will this go? I think that UT has enough to win, even with the game's second-best QB taking their snaps. I'll take Texas in this one, 27-24, as the cannibalization of the SEC continues. SEC, thy name is parity.

NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: AUBURN OVER LSU

Auburn is on a high. LSU is overpublicized but talented, if apparently overpaid, both on the field and in the head coach's bank account. Both teams have new coaches brought in to elevate the program, with LSU having a head start in the talent department. LSU's coach is too bent on getting laid and trolling opponents on social media to take this game as seriously as he needs to, and thus I'll go with the Tigers over Bengal Tigers, 30-27.

WEEK 9

NATIONAL GAME OF THE WEEK: CLEMSON OVER FLORIDA STATE

How could a couple of faded-glory programs possibly qualify for game of the week status? It's because both coaches are in danger, the programs both have a teeny bit of luster to defend, and because the loser will sink into the oblivion of a bowl-less postseason, which Florida State may find a relief given what happened to them against Georgia a couple of years ago. I'm predicting that Clemson will help them along, that their roster of good, home-grown talent will take down the Seminoles' lackluster-but-expensive imports, no matter how closely they played Miami. Clemson wins, 38-28.

NATIONAL UPSET OF THE WEEK: GEORGIA TECH OVER PITT

Pitt came out the gate fast, then stumbled, while GT lost all momentum from last year's impressive run before they ever got going, and currently is riding a momentum thrust straight to the bottom of the ACC. Pitt is no doubt confident that they can bury GT even deeper in the standings while improving their own chances of winning a league that nobody seems to want to win. But upsets have been the lifeblood of the 2026 season. Here comes another one. Sloppy Jalopy 17, Panthers 13.