

Sports

No. 5 Georgia looks for more success after byes vs Kentucky



Georgia wide receiver Jermaine Burton breaks away from a Tennessee defensive back on a long run Oct. 10 in Athens.

By GARY B. GRAVES
Associated Press

Byes have been good for No. 5 Georgia under Kirby Smart, which makes last week's unexpected break very welcome for the Bulldogs.

At the very least, it gave the Bulldogs time to sort out their second-half collapse at No. 2 Alabama. The refresh will be needed Saturday at Kentucky against a team eager to move past its own disappointing performance.

The teams were originally slated to meet last weekend in Lexington before the Southeastern Conference rescheduled several games after COVID-19 outbreaks. Georgia (4-1 SEC) is looking to continue the success its had following an extra week of work and to maintain its half-game SEC East lead on No. 10 Florida.

"I feel like why we're so successful after the bye week is all the preparation," defensive lineman Malik Herring said of the Bulldogs' 4-1 record after a bye under Smart. "We just go hard and focus on each other like camp practices. I definitely have seen that this past week."

Brushing up on defensive fundamentals was a priority for the

Bulldogs, who led the Crimson Tide 24-20 at halftime before yielding 21 unanswered points in a 41-24 defeat. Kentucky (2-3) presents more of a ground threat, but Smart wants his team ready for anything with the Wildcats possibly alternating quarterbacks.

"I'm sure they're over there searching for ways to increase the passing game and do a good job, because they can't be one-dimensional," Smart said this week. "They had great success two years ago against us throwing the ball, especially late in the game, and it was with Terry Wilson. So, with us, we've got to worry about us."

Kentucky appeared to be clicking in all phases of the game after a 34-7 rout at Tennessee before the offense stalled in a 20-10 loss at Missouri last weekend. The Wildcats managed just 145 yards including 47 through the air, creating a long day for a defense that had thrived creating takeaways.

The defense spent more than 43 minutes on the field and allowed 421 yards as a result of Kentucky's stagnant offense. Georgia averages about the same yardage per game (419), requiring a big rebound on both sides of the ball for Kentucky to have a chance.

"The most important thing is you've got to be physical with them," Kentucky nose guard Marquan McCall said of the Bulldogs. "They're gonna come just like we're gonna come, so you've got to be physical."

Other things to watch as Georgia visits Kentucky:

WILDCATS QB CHANGE

Coach Mark Stoops on Thursday said senior Terry Wilson is out with a wrist injury, which elevates Auburn transfer Joey Gatewood to starting at quarterback. The initial depth chart listed both as options to start with freshman Beau Allen next. Allen will now back up Gatewood. An ineffective Wilson was pulled twice at Missouri and replaced by Gatewood, who also struggled but finished the game. Stoops had wanted to see if a banged-up Wilson could practice this week and how Gatewood looked before naming a starter.

NOTHING DOING

Yards and points could be scarce against two of the SEC's top defenses. The Bulldogs allow a conference-low 19.5 points per game, half a point less than the Wildcats. Georgia ranks second in total defense (318.5), two spots ahead of Kentucky (357.2).

FA

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right through the Frederica defender's hands, and the Gators caught it and scored with about 14 seconds left in the game.

"It just went right through our defensive back's hands. He didn't have to jump — he was just standing there just went around through his hands and went right into their guy's hands," Coach Brandon Derrick said. "They caught it with about 14 seconds left to go in the game. We completed a pass down to the 50, and then we threw a Hail Mary that got tipped out of the way at the end, and that's how we lost."

Despite the loss, Derrick said he felt his team gave themselves a good chance to win the ball game.

"We just didn't finish it. I didn't think we did a very good job at times doing the little things," Derrick said. "We had a chance to win the game — you just gotta make plays. You got to score when you're inside the five. When you're inside the five and come away with three field goals — You got to score a couple of touchdowns there."

"We score a couple of touchdowns there we'd probably have put the game out of reach, and it's probably a different mentality. Our kids battled the whole time and gave ourselves a chance to win the game. We just got to make a play on defense and figure out a way to get off the field — we didn't do it. That's a good Bulloch team — they're tough."

Derrick said his team has to go back and make sure they're doing the little things correctly.

"It starts during the day at school — you got to be at school on time. Get there, do what you're supposed to do and be accountable," Derrick said. "It's the same thing at football. If you do all those things at the beginning of the day, the end of the day becomes easy. That's what it is — you got to do those little things, and those little things will take care of the big things at the end of the night, and that's what we got to go back to doing."

Up next for Frederica will be a home game against their last non-region opponent, St. Andrew's. It'll be the Knights final home game of the season before closing out its final two region games on the road.

Wildcats

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red zone. We were feast or famine on defense. We made several good plays in a row, and then we would give up a big play."

The Wildcats got the ball to start the second half, and the Packers forced a three and out. Then the Packers went to work. Their quarterback pulled it down off a zone read, and Camden couldn't contain the edge. He toted it into the end zone for around 60 yards to make it 17-0.

Colquitt scored again early on in the fourth quarter and executed some big punt returns against the Wildcats.

Camden got on the board after a long touchdown pass to Deonte Cole to make it 24-6. However, the Packers

answered with a field goal of their own to go up 27-6. The Wildcats would score once more, but Colquitt's quarterback took another one to the house for around 60 yards to make it 34-13.

"Well, part of me feels like it was a much more competitive game that the score ended up being," Sphire said. "At the same time, we hurt ourselves badly at special teams. We had the blocked field goal that they almost returned for a touchdown — that's a huge swing. They had a couple of big punt returns. We muffed a punt that they recovered. We didn't field a punt that they downed on the one-foot line. It was really a debacle on special teams."

Up next for Camden will be the Wildcats' final home game of the season as they'll face off with region opponent Tift County.



McIntosh County Academy defenders signal after recovering a fumble against Metter on Friday at The Ship.

MCA

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quarter to go up 14-7. Back in front, the Tigers simply rode the top defense in the classification to the finish line.

Metter entered the contest having allowed just 10 points over its first six games — MCA's second-quarter touchdown, a 35-yard heave from quarterback Dalton McClellan to Quan Proctor, was the first against the Tigers before the fourth quarter.

Proctor also ripped off a

42-yard run on the Buccaneers' sole scoring drive. The senior was McIntosh's most effective weapon in the absence of Trenton Johnson, recording 83 of the team's 166 yards on six touches.

Still, Johnson's presence — and his 190 rushing yards per game — were clearly missed.

"Trenton didn't play tonight; that hurt," Warren said. "I felt like Will (Jones) did a great job coming in. He played both sides of the ball, he played defensive line, he played full back and worked hard. Our wing stepped up tonight."

In an effort to generate

big plays without its star ball carrier, McIntosh County Academy took to the air much more often than it has any time this season. The Buccaneers had thrown 23 passes on the year entering the contest before throwing it 14 times against the Tigers.

One pass resulted in a touchdown for MCA, two turned into scores for Metter, and a third interception set up a wild, scrambling touchdown toss that put the Tigers up 20-7 with 6:13 remaining.

"We threw the ball a little bit; we had some success with it, we also had two

pick-sixes," Warren said. "We've got to get better in our decision making, but heck, we're going to get better next week."

The loss snaps a four-game win streak for McIntosh County Academy, but in second in the region, the Buccaneers still have the opportunity to host a game in the state playoffs for the second straight year and make a postseason run.

Who knows, maybe MCA even sees Metter again in the Class A-Public finals.

"They've got a good football team," Warren said. "I'd like to see them again down the road."

GA

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Then on the kickoff, Glynn forced a fumble, and Joseph Beckham fell on it, giving the Terrors a short field. Effingham's defense managed to stop them, but it was within field goal range as Jonathan Sasser kicked a 34-yard field goal to make it 10-0 with 6:50 to go in the first quarter.

After Sasser's field goal, the Rebels got a little momentum going. It didn't take long for the Terrors to rip it away from them as Na'Verious Williams picked off Zach Garcia on 4th and 2, putting the ball right back into the offense's hands.

Glynn's defense held Effingham to 114 total yards on the night, and coach Rocky Hidalgo said he felt like his defense is getting there.

"Every facet of our team has been overhauled in the last four weeks," Hidalgo said. "Our coaches have worked hard. Our kids have worked hard. We've been pushing them, and I think it started showing on the football field. The measuring stick will be next Friday night."

Glynn's offense then scored on the opening play on the next two drives, both



Glynn Academy's Caden Hutchinson runs for a 43-yard Red Terror touchdown.

for 64 yards. The first was a double pass from Lewis to Tyler Devlin, who then chucked it to the wide-open Connor Loveless, making it 17-0.

The Rebels ran out the remainder of the first-quarter clock but couldn't find the end zone as they turned it over on downs.

Glynn took over on the 36-yard line once again, but this time it was all Lewis. He juiced and dodged, breaking three tackles and making four guys miss as he took it to the house for 64 yards. This score gave the Terrors a 24-0 lead with 11:20 to go in the half.

Lewis finished the game with six carries, 107 yards, one score on the ground and 3-for-7 for 72 yards and a score.

"TJ is being decisive right now with the football," Hidalgo said. "He's getting down sticking his foot in the ground and making plays —

that's what he's supposed to do. He's playing great football for us. As long as he's playing like this, we got a chance to win."

The Terrors offense wasn't done yet, but this time, with Devlin at the helm, the Terrors marched down another short-yardage situation. Devlin connected with Ryan Seay for a 14-yard touchdown pass. Glynn would go into halftime with a 31-0 lead.

Even when Devlin came in, the Terrors offense moved with ease, and Hidalgo said he's one of a handful he trusts to run his offense.

"We feel like we have three really good quarterbacks — really going into sophomores with Daniel smiley, maybe five guys who can run our offense. We feel like we have three guys who can run our offense on Friday night with TJ, Tyler and Jaden Drayton. So we're in a great position there with

those guys."

The second half came with a running clock, and the Terrors found the end zone once more as John Moody toted the rock 46 yards for a score giving Glynn the final score of 38-0.

Glynn's defense refused to give up any points to Effingham and earned their first shut out of season.

"I think we played our best football game. I got to watch it on film, but I felt like we got after them from the get-go — from the first opening kickoff. Our kids played hard. I've been searching for continuity and some consistency — I think we're starting to get there. We got a big matchup next week against Richmond Hill — we'll see how we go there."

This win also marked Hidalgo's 100th career victory as a head coach. After the game, he received a gift and had a video played on the big screen, including snippets from various people in the community.

"It was nice to be out here and all these people around me and messages from kids I coached and people I work with — I'm very appreciative of that," Hidalgo said. "They'll put all my wins on the tombstone when I'm dead — I guess I'll worry about them then. It is what it is. It's a work in progress."

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