



The Red & Black

@theredandblack

@redandblackga

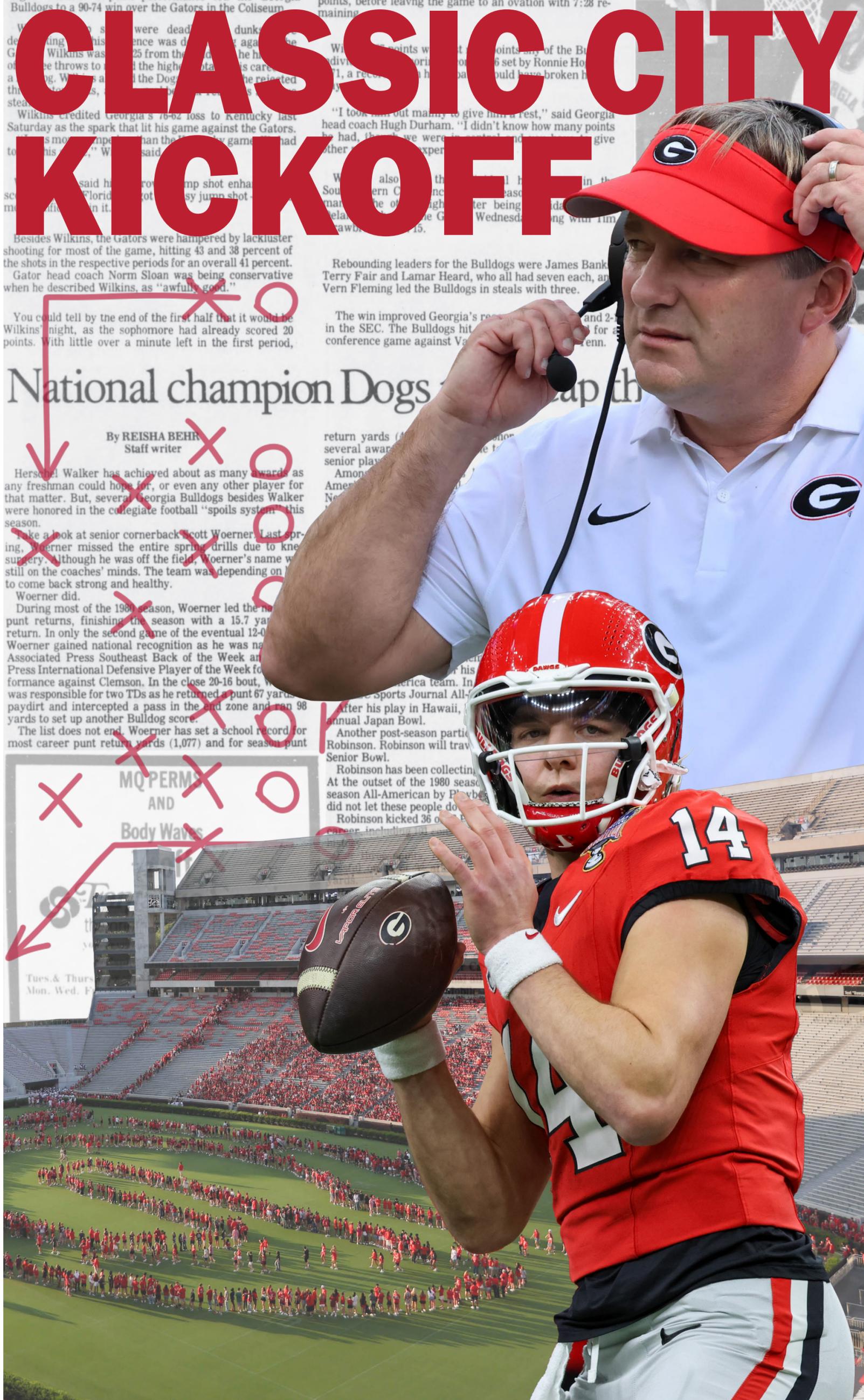
@redandblack

REDANDBLACK.COM

VOL. 133 | No. 2 | Athens, Georgia

Thursday, August 21, 2025

CLASSIC CITY KICKOFF



GRAPHIC/KAIIJA ATCHISON



Proud Partner of the Georgia Bulldogs®



Intense tests, high stakes

Preview of the 2025-26 football season

Riley Baugh

Georgia's 2025-26 football schedule brings early opportunities for growth, mid-season battles with playoff implications and late-season tests that could shape the program's postseason hopes.

With quarterback Gunner Stockton under center, the Bulldogs will look to reassert themselves among the nation's elite after an offseason that saw 13 players selected in the 2025 NFL Draft.

Aug. 30 vs. Marshall

Georgia opens the season at home against Marshall, a strong non-Power Four opponent coming off of a Sun Belt title in 2024. The Thundering Herd lost key players to the transfer portal, but remain more threatening than most teams outside the power conferences. The game will likely mark Stockton's second career start and provide an early look at Georgia's reworked offense and defense in live action.

Sept. 6 vs. Austin Peay

The Governors travel to Athens for the first time since 2018. As Georgia's only FCS opponent this season, Austin Peay is expected to be physically outmatched, which should give the Bulldogs a chance to rotate younger players and evaluate depth before the tougher conference schedule begins.

Sept. 13 at Tennessee

Georgia's first road test comes in Knoxville against a Tennessee squad that, despite losing quarterback Nico Iamaleava to the transfer portal, brings experience and speed on both sides of the ball. The Volunteers' tempo-based offense under head coach Josh Heupel has challenged defenses before and could stress a Georgia defense integrating new starters. An away game in Neyland Stadium will make for an important early-season measuring stick for head coach Kirby Smart and the Bulldogs.

Sept. 27 vs. Alabama

After a bye week, Georgia returns home to face Alabama for the first time in Sanford Stadium since 2015. Arguably the most anticipated home game in the last decade, the Crimson Tide enter the season with questions about offensive consistency and a new quarterback, but still retain one of the nation's best defenses. Georgia's 31-game home winning streak is on the line in what will likely be a top-25 matchup. Both teams are undergoing transition, making this game a key indicator of who will contend for the College Football Playoff.

Oct. 4 vs. Kentucky

Kentucky has long played hard against Georgia, and this year will be no different. The Wildcats are disciplined and strong up front under head coach Mark Stoops, but have not beaten the Bulldogs since 2009. After the physical battle with Alabama, Georgia must prevent an "off-week" to win this one.

Oct. 11 at Auburn

The Bulldogs travel to Jordan-Hare Stadium for the Deep South's Oldest Rivalry, a game that fans should not overlook. Auburn is in its third season under head coach Hugh Freeze and will rely on Oklahoma transfer quarterback Jackson Arnold and a downhill rushing attack. Night games at Auburn are notoriously difficult environments and surviving this test will be crucial for Georgia's playoff hopes.

Oct. 18 vs. Ole Miss

Ole Miss, led by head coach Lane Kiffin, visits Athens with a roster reloaded via the transfer portal after several key departures. Quarterback Austin Simmons flashed serious potential during this matchup last season, and the Rebels' high-tempo offense can be dangerous. Georgia will aim to control the line of scrimmage and force Ole Miss out of rhythm, but this has all the makings of a great game.

Nov. 1 vs. Florida (in Jacksonville, Florida)

The annual rivalry game in Jacksonville, Florida, returns with added interest. Florida, which has not beaten Georgia since 2020, enters the season with quarterback DJ Lagway fully healthy after missing much of last year's meeting. Lagway's dual-threat ability will challenge a younger Georgia defense, especially if the Gators can balance their offense. The neutral site always adds an unpredictable element to what should be a competitive matchup.



Gunner Stockton (14) evades a Texas player during the 2024 SEC Championship NCAA football game between Georgia and Texas at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta, Georgia, on Saturday, Dec. 7, 2024. Georgia won 22-19. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN

Nov. 8 at Mississippi State

This road trip comes between rivalry games against Florida and Texas, making it a potential trap game. Mississippi State returns several veterans and should be more cohesive in head coach Jeff Leiby's second season. Quarterback Blake Shapen returns this season fully healed, something that should be taken seriously. Georgia must avoid looking ahead and maintain discipline to avoid an upset.

Nov. 15 vs. Texas

Georgia hosts Texas in a possible SEC Championship preview. The Bulldogs defeated the Longhorns in last year's title game, and both teams enter this season looking forward to this matchup. According to ESPN Analytics, Texas and Georgia have the highest and second-highest odds, respectively, of reaching the SEC Championship game. Led by quarterback Arch Manning, Texas returns much of its offensive firepower and boasts a physical defensive front. Texas's first trip to Athens is expected to create one of the loudest atmospheres of the season.

Nov. 22 vs. Charlotte

Charlotte will likely be outmatched by Georgia's talent and depth. This game offers the Bulldogs a chance to rest key players and prepare for the season finale.

Nov. 28 vs. Georgia Tech (at Mercedes-Benz Stadium)

Clean, Old-Fashioned Hate moves to Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta this year, giving the rivalry a fresh backdrop. Georgia Tech has improved under head coach Brent Key and returns quarterback Haynes King and running back Jamal Haynes, two of its most dangerous offensive weapons. King's mobility and Haynes' speed present challenges for Georgia's defense. Last season's game went eight overtimes, and while Georgia has won seven straight, this rivalry rarely follows script. Though technically a neutral site, Georgia fans travel well, especially for rivalry week, so a strong red and black presence is expected.

River Club

NOW LEASING FOR FALL

2, 3, AND 4 BED OPTIONS AVAILABLE

CALL TO CHECK OUT OUR SPECIALS

RIVERCLUBATHENS.COM

RIVER CLUB
APARTMENTS & TOWNHOMES

Preiss

NEW SPECIALS!

GROUP LUNCH PACK
3 Friends eat for \$25 with a drink & fries

TEXTBOOK TUESDAYS
15% off any lunch order with Student ID

BURGERS
TURKEY CLUB
BLT
SALADS
FRIED GREEN
TOMATO SANDWICH

Extra!
CREATIVE AGENCY
THE RED & BLACK

AD DESIGN
PHOTOGRAPHY
BRANDING
CANVA TEMPLATES



Georgia running back Nate Frazier (3) smiles during the second half of the Georgia vs. Texas game at Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium in Austin, Texas, on Saturday, Oct. 19, 2024. Georgia won 30-15. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN

A new era between the hedges

Previewing Georgia's position groups

Evan Waldman

The Georgia Bulldogs enter the 2025 season with high expectations and one of the youngest rosters of the Kirby Smart era. Every position group brings a mix of experience, youth and high-end potential looking to power another championship run. From quarterback to the secondary, Georgia's depth and development will be key to maintaining its place among college football's elite.

Quarterback

Georgia's 2025 quarterback room is led by redshirt sophomore Gunner Stockton, who enters the season as the favorite to start after showing his dual-threat ability and poise during his limited playing time in the SEC Championship game and starting the Sugar Bowl. Right behind Stockton is redshirt freshman Ryan Puglisi, who is continuing to develop his game. The former four-star recruit out of high school has a strong arm and lots of potential, but practiced in limited fashion in 2024 due to a knee injury.



Georgia quarterback Gunner Stockton (14) throws a football at the 2025 Allstate Sugar Bowl between Georgia and Notre Dame in New Orleans, on Thursday, Jan. 2, 2025. Notre Dame won 23-10. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN

Rounding out the quarterback room are freshmen Ryan Montgomery, Hezekiah Millender and walk-on Colter Ginn, who are unlikely to see meaningful snaps this season. Other than Stockton playing snaps in the Bulldogs' two most important games last season, the quarterback room, like many others in the SEC, lacks experience. However, this lack of experience does not equal a lack of talent.

Wide receivers, Tight ends

Catching passes for the Bulldogs in 2025 will be a dynamic group of wide receivers and tight ends. Transfers Noah Thomas and Zachariah Branch bring a mix of size and speed. Bulldog fans can expect the 6-foot-5 Thomas to win contested jump balls, while Branch stretches the field with his elite speed.

They join returners Colbie Young, Dillon Bell and London Humphreys, who will look to improve from last year when the Bulldogs led the nation in drops. Joining these veterans are highly talented freshmen Talyn Taylor, CJ Wiley and Landon Roldan, all of whom will look to make an immediate impact in the wide receiver room.

At tight end, both Oscar Delp and Lawson Luckie will return to build on a productive season, as they were both rated among the nation's top 15 tight ends. Providing depth to the tight end room are Jaden Reddell and freshman Elyiss Williams, who stands at 6-foot-7. All together, this group of playmakers offers a strong arsenal for whichever quarterback is under center in 2025.

Offensive line

Georgia's 2025 offensive line is shaping up to be a powerful, big-bodied unit, blending returning players with new addi-

tions. Leading and anchoring the line are tackles Monroe Freeling and Earnest Greene III, who both have starting experience and elite size at 6-foot-7 and 6-foot-4, respectively. Junior Drew Bobo, the son of offensive coordinator Mike Bobo, is the frontrunner to take over the center position after logging some valuable snaps last year. At the guard position, senior Micah Morris and redshirt freshman Daniel Calhoun are both in line to start and bring physicality and depth to the unit. After surrendering 25 sacks and struggling in the run game last season, this revamped offensive line will look to gel under coach Stacy Searels and improve come August.

Defensive line

The defensive line has a strong blend of leadership and youth, but also has concerns about depth and durability. Leading the interior is senior and lone fourth-year player Christen Miller, who had 27 tackles, 3.5 tackles for loss and graded the third highest in returning defensive tackles in the SEC according to PFF College. Supporting Miller is Jordan Hall, the only other player in the group who has spent two full seasons with the program.

On the edge, Georgia will lean on Gabe Harris and Quintavius Johnson, who will have big shoes to fill after the departure of stars Mykel Williams and Jalon Walker. The group's lack of experience could cause true freshmen Elijah Griffin and Isaiah Gibson to impact the game early on. Even though Georgia lost major contributors to the NFL, Georgia still ranks in the nation's top defensive line units thanks to the continued trend of recruiting some of the nation's top prospects.

Runningbacks

The backfield for the Bulldogs in 2025 will be led by sophomore Nate Frazier, who will look to build off a strong freshman year where he rushed for 671 yards and eight touchdowns. Due to injuries to Trevor Etienne and others in the running back room, Frazier was able to show off his burst of speed, vision and physicality while becoming a focal point of the Georgia offense in 2024.

Behind him, veteran Cash Jones returns as a trusted third-down back and a strong receiving threat. In 2024, Jones had 24 catches for 275 yards and four touchdowns and will look to continue having an impact in many ways. Georgia is hopeful that Roderick Robinson II can return to his form after dealing with injuries the past few years. When healthy, Robinson is a talented player who can show impressive power in short-yardage plays.

Young talents Chauncey BOWENS and Dwight Phillips showed flashes in their freshman seasons and got praise from head coach Kirby Smart following spring training.

"I'm excited for them two... They both got better in the spring," Smart said.



Georgia running back Nate Frazier (3) celebrates a touchdown during the NCAA college football game between Georgia and Georgia Tech at Sanford Stadium in Athens, Georgia, on Friday, Nov. 29, 2024. Georgia won 44-42. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN

With a mix of speed and power, this running back room has high upside as Mike Bobo looks to have a more successful rushing attack than last year.



Georgia inside linebacker CJ Allen (3) in action during the NCAA college football game between Georgia and Florida at EverBank Stadium in Jacksonville, Florida on Saturday, Nov. 2, 2024. Georgia won 34-20. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN

Linebackers

The linebackers for 2025 will have a combination of proven veterans and strong breakout candidates. Juniors CJ Allen and Raylen Wilson both possess NFL-caliber skills as they look to build on strong sophomore seasons where they played meaningful snaps all year long. Returning alongside Allen and Wilson are sophomores Chris Cole and Justin Williams, who gained valuable experience last year, with Cole being named to the SEC All-Freshman team.

The linebacker room also welcomes high upside additions like freshmen AJ Kruah and Zayden Walker, who will add needed depth to the position group. With experience, athleticism and defensive coordinator Glenn Schumann continuing to develop elite linebacker talent, this group is poised to uphold the Bulldogs' defensive identity.

Defensive backs

The secondary for Georgia in 2025 is set to be among the nation's best, anchored by returning stars and improved by transfer portal additions. Senior cornerback Daylen Everette returns after a junior year with four interceptions and nine pass deflections. According to Sports Grid, Everette is listed as the 24th-best corner in the nation as he looks to improve his NFL draft stock in his senior season. Alongside him is another reliable cornerback in Daniel Harris, who had 22 total tackles and three pass breakups despite starting only four games in 2024.

At the safety position is SEC standout and FWA All-American KJ Bolden, who will look to grow both as a player and a leader in the secondary. Freshman Ellis Robinson IV and Demello Jones both have had impressive spring performances as they look to secure a spot come August. Georgia also gained depth and competition, adding experienced safeties Zion Branch, Jaden Hovis and Adrian Maddox via the portal. Overall, with elite coverage and ball skills, this secondary looks ready to solve the problem of last year's vulnerability and reassert dominance.



GRAPHIC/CAROLINE NEWBERN

Game changer

New NIL rules transform the college sports world

Liam W. Dreesen

July 1, 2025, marked the beginning of a new era in athletics: the start of colleges being able to pay their players directly through a revenue-sharing structure. Each college will be allowed to pay \$20.5 million, however they see fit. These new changes also brought with them a new age of Name, Image and Likeness regulations.

After decades of profiting off student athletes, universities are now forced to financially compensate them for their hard work. This is a good thing, and most people would agree, coaches and athletic directors included.

The idea is not the problem; fans concerns come with how the implementation of these new rules is going to affect the game they love. Some think these new changes mean you can just pay for championships, and that players will no longer be in it for the love of the game.

Sure, money will help win championships, but this is not new; it is always how college sports have worked. Whether it was under the table or spent on upgrading facilities to attract the nation's top recruits, money talks.

These new regulations will hopefully put more of a cap on what universities can spend, and will help level the playing field. This will depend on the effectiveness of the brand new clearinghouse, NIL Go, to be run by Deloitte.

NIL Go will be tasked with evaluating the real value of NIL deals for players, hopefully getting rid of the days of players getting paid millions by collectives to appear on one billboard. In the data Deloitte shared with coaches and athletic directors, nearly 70% of past deals from booster collectives would have been denied.

The effectiveness of NIL Go and the new enforcement agency, the College Sports Commission, will be the biggest factor in whether this new age of college sports is a success or not.

Players getting paid by the universities they attend for the revenue they help generate is not the issue and is long overdue, and the supposed new regulations on NIL also sound like they more closely align with how NIL was intended to work in the first place.

Another big question with revenue sharing is: how do you

spread the money across different sports? As of right now, the NCAA has not mandated a certain amount of the \$20.5 million to be spent on any particular sport. Because of this, a lot of universities will focus their cap space toward revenue-generating sports like football and men's basketball.

From a financial standpoint, this is the smartest option, but there is an argument to be made for the athletes in other sports that work just as hard as the football and basketball players, who will never see as much money as their student-athlete counterparts.

No solution to this problem will make everyone happy, which is why the NCAA has left it to the schools to allocate the money however they want.

Another issue this revenue sharing creates is exactly what it is trying to solve. By attempting to level the playing field, the NCAA has opened the doors to something that could be worse. Since teams can allocate the money however they want, universities can heavily invest in certain sports in order to gain an advantage over their competitors, who are spending their money elsewhere.

For example, if Georgia wants to stay competitive in football, which they inevitably will, it will be extremely difficult for them to remain competitive in basketball against schools like Kentucky.

Kentucky's lackluster football team and its history of producing great basketball teams will cause it to focus a lot more money on basketball than Georgia could even think to afford. Because of this, Kentucky will struggle to keep a competitive team on the field, and Georgia will struggle on the court. So, in trying to solve an issue, they may have caused a larger one.

Overall, this new era of college sports is good for the student-athletes, which means it's good for the sport. There will be growing pains and things to figure out in the coming years, but there always are with changes this big. So, at the end of the day, fans should support players getting paid money that they are helping generate.

Liam W. Dreesen is a senior majoring in journalism at the University of Georgia.

Bad odds

The hidden harm of sports betting and fantasy leagues

Kaitlyn Harvey

In every casino on the Las Vegas Strip, there is a physical sportsbook. Usually alongside gigantic televisions and toy horse races, a large ticker with statistics and placements of different players and teams races past your eyes in red and green. With it, people's bets move up and down, toying with someone's jackpot. For a long time, this was the only place to legally make your picks.

Today, the sportsbook is available on your phone. Many fans can wait for their parlay to hit right at their fingertips, miles from the nearest casino. Since the removal of federal protection of sports betting in 2018, \$450 billion has been put in the pool. Easy access to sportsbooks has increased the likelihood of gambling and sports betting addictions.

While some forms of gambling are legal in Georgia, sports betting is not. However, popular companies like Georgia-based PrizePicks have found a loophole, putting themselves under Daily Fantasy Sports (DFS), which operates in legal gray areas. DFS is considered more of a game of skill rather than a gamble, since participants don't play against the house and must pick multiple players at a time rather than one.

While not legally considered "sports betting," it's still reliant on chance given the unpredictable nature of sports and prize money for correct choices. Let's call a spade a spade: PrizePicks is betting, no matter how gamified.

This is in no way meant to target those who gamble. Georgia Lottery players are the ones who keep the HOPE scholarship alive and anything can be healthy in moderation. But problem gambling and a reliance on it for your income is an addiction that can hurt more than your bank account. Its hold on the current culture of sports makes it easy to forget how harmful it is to players and fans alike.

In sports fanbases, heavy advertising has made sportsbooks and fantasy leagues impossible to avoid. From sportscasters like Pat McAfee talking about "spreads" and "under betters" to big sports personalities like LeBron James and Stephen A. Smith appearing in advertising, this lends credibility to the game. Enticing sign-up bonuses, like PrizePicks' offer to play \$5 and win \$50 instantly, makes betting seem harmless.

What could start as a simple parlay can spiral into something worse. In an article for the Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal, Melinda Roth explores the detrimental impact of sports betting. With the target demographic being 18 to 40-year-old men, betting prevents the capability to invest long term. California professors have found that in states where betting is legal, the average credit score of consumers has dropped by 0.3%. Many bettors report that gambling problems led to negative impacts on personal relationships, mental issues, problems at work, potential criminal activity and high rates of suicide.



GRAPHIC/CAROLINE NEWBERN

Many players have felt the effects of the rise of sports betting and fantasy sports as well. On May 4, 2024, the NCAA released a statement regarding basketball players' mental health. During March Madness, there have been more reports of abusive social media content toward players, including death threats. Armando Bacot publicly recalled his experience receiving similar messages.

"It's terrible. Even in the last game, I guess I didn't get enough rebounds or something. I thought I played pretty good last game, but I looked at my DMs, and I got like over 100 messages from people telling me I sucked and stuff like that because I didn't get enough rebounds," Bacot said in the press release.

The University of Georgia is not a stranger to this. Under an SEC Country Facebook post talking about Georgia's post-season baseball loss to Oklahoma State in June 2025, many comments expressed disappointment in Georgia's performance.

"Ughhh, they screwed me in my parlay last night, could've won 150 bucks," said one user.

Even though this was specifically seen during March Madness and baseball, pressure is high for Georgia football. Georgia has been picked to be the second-ranked team in the SEC this season in a preseason poll and has previously been first. That is a lot of pressure to come out on top, with many people probably relying on Georgia for the jackpot. What happens when Georgia does not meet the necessary needs of the sports bettor or fantasy league player?

Gambling is turning appreciation into profit, and players into investments, with more than parlays on the line. It shows no signs of stopping, with the gambling industry reaching record profits last year. With the line between fantasy leagues and real performance getting thinner, there is no telling what the future holds.

Kaitlyn Harvey is a senior majoring in journalism at the University of Georgia.

FALL 2025 STAFF

EDITORIAL

LEADERSHIP

EDITOR IN CHIEF Katie Guenther
MANAGING EDITOR Zach Leggio
DEPUTY EDITOR OF STANDARDS AND PRACTICES
Gabby Gruszynski

NEWS

NEWS EDITOR Clary Watson
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR Sophia Eppley
SPANISH TRANSLATOR Nathan Valles

CULTURE

CO-CULTURE EDITOR Caroline Newbern
CO-CULTURE EDITOR Guinevere Grant
EAT & DRINK EDITOR Sidney Josephs

SPORTS

SPORTS EDITOR Owen McDaniel
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR Ben Kule
FOOTBALL REPORTER Romell Williams

OPINION

OPINION EDITOR Caroline Feagin

DIGITAL

CO-SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR Adaleigh Weber
CO-SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR Taylor Greaves
SOCIAL MEDIA VIDEO EDITOR Sophia Davenport
AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT EDITOR Alexia Rule
PODCAST EDITOR Allison Mawn

PHOTO

CO-PHOTO EDITOR Katherine Davis
CO-PHOTO EDITOR Kaleb Tatum
CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER Hosanna Worku

DESIGN

CO-LAYOUT EDITOR Abby Crowe
CO-LAYOUT EDITOR Sophie Keller
GRAPHIC DESIGNER Rylee Toole

RECRUITMENT

CO-RECRUITMENT MANAGER Briar Bundy
CO-RECRUITMENT MANAGER Carmen Olekas

GUIDES & MAGAZINES

GUIDES & MAGAZINE EDITOR Viv Awesome
ASSISTANT GUIDES & MAGAZINES EDITOR
Pride Haggerty

ADVERTISING

SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Ethan Lail
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES Catherine Blanchard, Spencer Polk, Rachel Surber
ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE INTERN Ava Pike
EXTRA ACCOUNT MANAGER Anna Kobbe, Riley Mason, Emma Richardson, Jake Westing
EXTRA NEW BUSINESS INTERN Annabelle Payne
EXTRA SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER Sara Clark, Ella Magda
EXTRA DESIGNER Thames Cranz, Emma Lovell
EXTRA COPY Alan Jimenez, Caitlyn McMullen
EXTRA DIGITAL Nyla Warburton

CREATIVE SERVICES

CREATIVE SERVICES MANAGER Ashtin Barker

BUSINESS/COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER Alexis Derickson
COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT Emma Akang
COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT Anna Kapustay

DISTRIBUTION DISTRO@RANDB.COM

PROFESSIONAL STAFF | 706-433-3000

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Charlotte Varnum
706-433-3009 | cvarnum@randb.com

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER Melissa Mooney
706-433-3007 | mmooney@randb.com

NEWSROOM ADVISER Kayla Renie
krenie@randb.com

MARKETING DIRECTOR Katie Martin
706-433-3012 | kmartin@randb.com

GUIDES & MAGAZINES SUPERVISOR Maddie Daniel
adaniel@randb.com

PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT

production@randb.com

ABOUT US

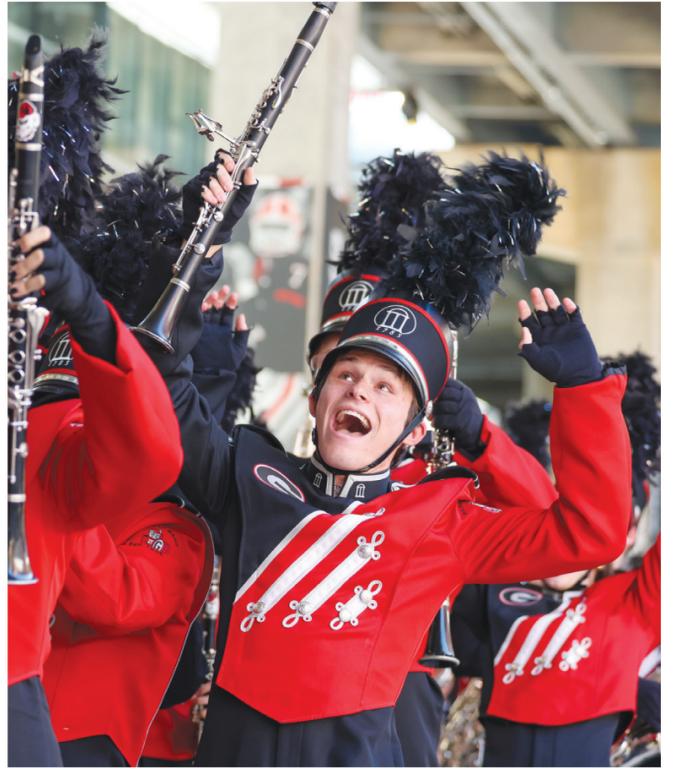
Publishing online daily at redandblack.com and in print each month of the academic year by The Red & Black Publishing Company Inc. Subscriptions: \$84. All rights reserved. Reprints by permission. Opinions expressed are those of contributors and not necessarily those of The Red & Black Publishing Company Inc. The Red & Black has covered the University of Georgia and Athens since 1893. Independent of the university since 1980, The Red & Black is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit company with the dual missions of training students for future careers in journalism and serving our community as an independent news source. We receive no funding from the university and are self-supporting through advertising, events and donations.

CORRECTIONS

As a student-run news organization with the mission of training journalists, we know that mistakes happen and we do our best to correct them as quickly as possible. If you spot a factual error, please let us know by sending a correction to editor@randb.com. Corrections to items in print editions are published in the next possible print issue. Corrections for online-only articles are posted at redandblack.com/corrections.



University of Georgia Redcoat Band members Sarah Manley, Aizhia Poblete, Katja Rintamaki and Luke Dixon celebrate during the Georgia vs. Missouri game in Athens, Georgia, on Saturday, Nov. 4, 2023. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN



Redcoat Marching Band members yell before the Georgia vs. Missouri game at Sanford Stadium in Athens, Georgia, on Nov. 4, 2023. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN

Heart of the Bulldog Spirit

The legacy of the Redcoat Marching Band

Madison Linton

When football season is in full swing, it is common to hear about the sport nonstop. Gameday creates chaos in town. Those visiting Athens for games are worried about parking and tailgating. Fans are consumed by the lives of the players, what they do around campus and their future plans. The score becomes life-or-death for fans, who will be upset at worst, or party afterwards at best. In the noise of wins and losses, the Redcoats remain consistent, ever-present at games to excite the crowd, and bring energy to the game.

Behind the hedges, the University of Georgia Redcoat Marching Band is a massive part of gameday. The Redcoats perform and march to well-known tunes like "Hail to Georgia" and "Battle Hymn of the Bulldog Nation" at every football game. With over 400 members across all different types of majors, the Redcoat Band keeps up with deep traditions, despite students graduating, moving away and having their spots filled by other members over the years.

In 1905, the Redcoat Marching Band was founded as a section of the UGA Military Department, with 20 military cadets with little musical experience making up the band. One of those former cadets was Hugh Hodgson, who became UGA's first official music professor when the school created a specialized music department. The band eventually expanded to involve students outside of the military.

Roger and Phyllis Dancz began their Redcoat involvement in 1955 and altered the workflow of the band, adding majorettes and pushing more students to join by recruiting through high schools. With the 1975 addition of director Gary Teske, a Syracuse University graduate, the band expanded and routines became modernized.

Today, Brett Bawcum directs the band, and the Redcoats annually perform at over 100 various events. Students from all across the university are welcome to join after a successful audition, no matter what year or major.

"My favorite part is definitely performing pregame, especially before night games. It's so much fun. I feel like we're a big contributor to the atmosphere of those home games," drum major Eleazar "Ele" Louis said. "Pregame just kind of gets the crowd ready and all fired up. Especially when we do Krypton, when the team is coming out of the tunnel and just the stadium erupting. It's a great feeling."

For some students, joining the Redcoat Marching Band is their first taste of being a part of a large ensemble. Jim Strength, a fifth-year wildlife and fisheries and wildlife biology major who graduated from Jasper County High School, mentions that there are more members of the trumpet section in the Redcoats than members of his entire high school marching band.

"I've been exposed to so many people from different backgrounds that I probably would not have had the opportunity to meet had I not joined Redcoats, just because I'm not in other campus organizations," Strength said. "The opportunity to meet these people definitely has helped me get better at talking to people and relating to people who, especially coming from a rural area, I wouldn't have had those opportunities."

Strength feels that fans are appreciative of the music. He mentions that there have been fans in the stadiums that wanted photos with him because of his involvement, claiming it as part of the gameday experience.

There is a mixed bag of people who are appreciative of the Redcoats and those who don't get it, according to Louis.

"There's people that don't really understand why what we do is so important," Louis said. "And that's kind of just because maybe they don't really understand why marching bands are important in general, or they're in the mindset of 'Oh, I'm at a football game to watch football, not hear the band.'"

No matter how individuals feel about the Redcoat Marching Band, they are responsible for many gameday traditions, and are here to stay. The next time Sanford Stadium is lit up between the third and fourth quarter, thank the Redcoats for the encouragement.

TheRed&Black
DAILY
HEADLINES

STAY IN THE KNOW
Our daily newsletters
keep you informed.

**NEW MERCH,
SAME MISSION**

Support Our Student Newsroom
REDANDBLACKSTORE.COM

TOTES, T-SHIRTS, MUGS, BAGS & MORE

[@REDANDBLACKGA](#)
[@REDANDBLACKGA](#)
[@REDANDBLACKGA](#)
[@REDANDBLACKGA](#)
[@REDANDBLACKGA](#)

Thursday Crossword - Answer Online FRIDAY Aug. 22

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | |
| 14 | | | | 15 | | | | | | 16 | | | |
| 17 | | | | 18 | | | | | | 19 | | | |
| 20 | | | | 21 | | | | | 22 | | | | |
| | | 23 | 24 | | | | 25 | | | | | | |
| 26 | 27 | | | | | | 28 | | | | | | |
| 29 | | | | | 30 | | | | | 31 | 32 | 33 | |
| 34 | | | | | 35 | | | | | 36 | | | |
| 37 | | | | | 38 | | | | | 39 | | | |
| | | | | 40 | | | | | 41 | | | | |
| 42 | 43 | 44 | | | | | | 45 | | | | | |
| 46 | | | | | | | 47 | | | | 48 | 49 | 50 |
| 51 | | | | | | | 52 | | | | 53 | | |
| 54 | | | | | | | 55 | | | | 56 | | |
| 57 | | | | | | | 58 | | | | 59 | | |

- ACROSS**

 1. Research rooms
 5. North African expanse
 11. Similar type
 14. Nitrogenous waste
 15. Readied
 16. Date or age beginning
 17. Driver's ____
 18. Blow to pieces
 20. Bowler, but not golfer
 21. Fox chaser?
 22. Orbital extreme
 23. Not so cordial
 25. Tot tenders
 26. They're twirled in parades
 28. Rome septet
 29. Take effect, in legalese
 30. Island of entertainment
 31. So ____
 34. Emulated Lady Godiva
 35. Less firm, maybe
 36. Add a kick to
 37. Common tip jar bill
 38. Moisten, poetically
 39. Pulverize
 40. Repaired a shoe
 41. Moves unobtrusively
 42. Worldly, not spiritual
 45. "Haystacks" artist

46. Collar, for cops
 47. Whim
 48. Small handful
 51. Call girl
 53. Bridges of film
 54. Tiny particle
 55. Ducks
 56. Caveat to a buyer
 57. Lacking liquid
 58. Colt's sound
 59. Bank adjuncts
- DOWN**

 1. Opulent
 2. Grounds
 3. Exalted happiness
 4. Created a lap
 5. Future ferns
 6. Pergola
 7. Saber handle
 8. Bud in Burgundy
 9. Shopkeeper
 10. With skill
 11. Celebrity's concern
 12. Not as timely
 13. A couple of big joints
 19. Languishes
 21. One of a trident trio
 24. Compost heap discard
25. Connective tissue
 26. Ball point pen inventor
 27. In a moment
 28. Was optimistic
 30. Sweet or hard beverage
 31. Most flawed
 32. Cause of some scars
 33. Lipstick hues
 35. Family tree entry
 36. Metal deposit
 38. Prop up
 39. Color for the tickled
 40. Files litigation
 41. Hurting the most
 42. Flavorsome
 43. Trial associate?
 44. Close pal
 45. Agrippina, to Nero
 47. Form of pachisi
 49. Injure badly
 50. Cat in boots
 52. Astaire specialty
 53. Bucolic cry



GRAPHIC/CAROLINE NEWBERN

Gameday for dummies

The ultimate Georgia gameday survival guide

Sophia Eppley

A sea of red and black, echoes of “Who’s that coming down the track?” and the steady vibration of music from tailgate speakers. This is gameday at the University of Georgia. Streets are packed, grills are fired up before sunrise and the air buzzes with energy as over 90,000 fans swarm toward Sanford Stadium.

Whether you’re a first-year student or a seasoned senior, surviving game day takes more than just team spirit; it takes planning, patience and the right gear. Here’s everything you need to know to make the most of your UGA gameday.

Park it like its hot

For on-campus parking, UGA Transportation and Parking Services offers seasonal and single-day parking passes, purchased on a first-come, first-serve basis through ParkMobile. Seasonal passes are \$280 for the Carlton Street Deck, East Campus Deck, River Road and the Health/Visitors Center, and Park & Ride is \$1,050. More information can be found on the UGA TPS website.

Parking on sidewalks, grass or landscaped areas is prohibited. Illegally parked vehicles are subject to being towed at the owner’s expense. Gameday parking areas open at 7 a.m. on Saturdays and overflow parking is available at the Intramural Fields.

Fan shuttles from the East Deck on River Road will start running 3.5 hours before kickoff. Shuttles from behind the Intramural Fields will begin running once overflow parking opens. There are many lots to park within walking distance from the stadium; the full list can be found on the University of Georgia Athletics website.

Off-campus parking is offered at The Classic Center and numerous places in downtown Athens. The Classic Center, located at 300 N. Thomas St., offers two season parking packages — which come with either one or two spaces — and single-game passes. Downtown Athens decks and lots also offer season parking passes for \$280. Local businesses, organizations and homeowners may also rent out parking spaces.

Tailgating: perfect the pregame

There are plenty of places to tailgate on campus, including the East Campus parking lots, Myers Quad, North Campus lawns and lots, the Tate Student Center and the Bulldogs Tailgate Club in Reed Quad, which offers customizable tailgate packages with varying catering and tent options — all within earshot of Sanford Stadium.

For tailgating on campus, setup cannot start until 7 a.m. on Saturdays. Only charcoal grills are allowed and tailgaters must bring their own power source. Folding chairs are acceptable but large furniture is prohibited. For those tailgating on North Campus, tailgating can begin only five hours before kickoff, folding tables must be no longer than six feet and kegs, generators, TVs, grills, cookers and amplified music are not allowed. For a family-friendly experience, Campus View Church at 1360 S. Lumpkin St. offers an alcohol-free lot with a playground and restrooms.

Once you’ve secured your spot, settle in and attack the day. Bring games like cornhole or a deck of cards to pass the time, set up a portable speaker and enjoy your favorite songs or munch on burgers, dips and desserts while preparing to cheer on the dawgs.

Don’t forget the essentials

Sanford Stadium permits clear bags smaller than “12x12” or small clutch purses. A full list of prohibited items can be found on the UGA Athletics website under stadium policies and procedures.

First things first: make sure to have your game tickets, a form of ID and parking passes with you at all times. Other items you should find in your clear bag include:

- A hat and/or sunscreen: protect yourself from the sun and heat.
- Water: One unopened bottle is permitted and hydration stations can be found once in the stadium.
- Cashless payment methods: for drinks and food, Sanford Stadium is a cashless venue.
- Portable charger: Make sure your phone is always charged for digital tickets, photos and communication.

Beat the clock, beat the crowds

Now that you’ve found parking, tailgated and packed your essentials, you should be ready to go ... right? Not quite. Getting to the stadium is half the battle.

To avoid stampedes of Georgia fans rushing through the gates at the last minute or being stuck in the nosebleeds, plan to arrive even before stadium gates open. Gates open two hours before kickoff, but to get a good seat in the student section, arrive even earlier to secure a spot in line — especially for big games. For smaller games, arriving an hour early should suffice.

For regular ticket holders, still plan to arrive two hours and 15 minutes prior to kickoff to experience the Dawg Walk and other pre-game traditions.

The Connection at Athens

LIVE. STUDY. CONNECT.

@connectionathens

Free Parking

Private Shuttle Service

In-Unit Washer/Dryer

24-Hour Private Study Rooms

24-hour Fitness Center

Four Resort-Style Pools

Connection to UGA

Join the Waitlist Today!

Fall 2026

255 The Preserve Drive, Athens, GA 30606

877-803-5063

connectionatathensspts.com

AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF NURSING

Master of Science in Nursing

BECOME A NURSE IN JUST 18 MONTHS!

Earn a Master's Degree

Train for NCLEX and CNL Exams

Athens or Augusta Campus

*Non-nursing bachelor's degree required to enter program

augusta.edu/nursing/msn

Calling all dawgs

Get to know your way around Sanford Stadium

Hogan Rigole

Every gameday, Sanford Stadium hosts over 93,000 fans in the heart of campus. Dating back to 1929, Sanford Stadium is one of the most iconic and historic stadiums in the country.

The stadium takes its name from Steadman Vincent Sanford, the former president of the university and chancellor of the University System of Georgia, who pushed for the construction of a new, larger venue on campus. The Bulldogs previously called Herty Field home from 1892 to 1911 before moving to a field with a wooden grandstand until the stadium was constructed.

Sanford Stadium drew its first crowd on Oct. 12, 1929, as the Bulldogs took a 15-0 shutout win over Yale with approximately 30,000 fans filling the concrete stands on the north and south ends of the field.

Since the inaugural season, Sanford Stadium has seen several expansion projects. With the addition of lights on the field in 1940, Sanford saw its first night game in a 7-7 tie against Kentucky on Oct. 26, 1940. In 1967, the stadium's capacity soared to 60,000 when an upper tier of stands was built. Overlooking the North Oconee River, the east end of the stadium was enclosed in 1981, bringing the capacity to over 82,000. Further renovations have continued as recently as 2024, which included a new press box and the 1929 Club, a premium area for UGA athletics supporters.

The field at Sanford Stadium is named Dooley Field in honor of the legendary former head coach Vince Dooley, who served over 40 years in UGA athletics. Dooley is regarded as one of the most prominent coaches in Georgia football history, having brought home a national championship in 1980 and six SEC Championship titles during his career.

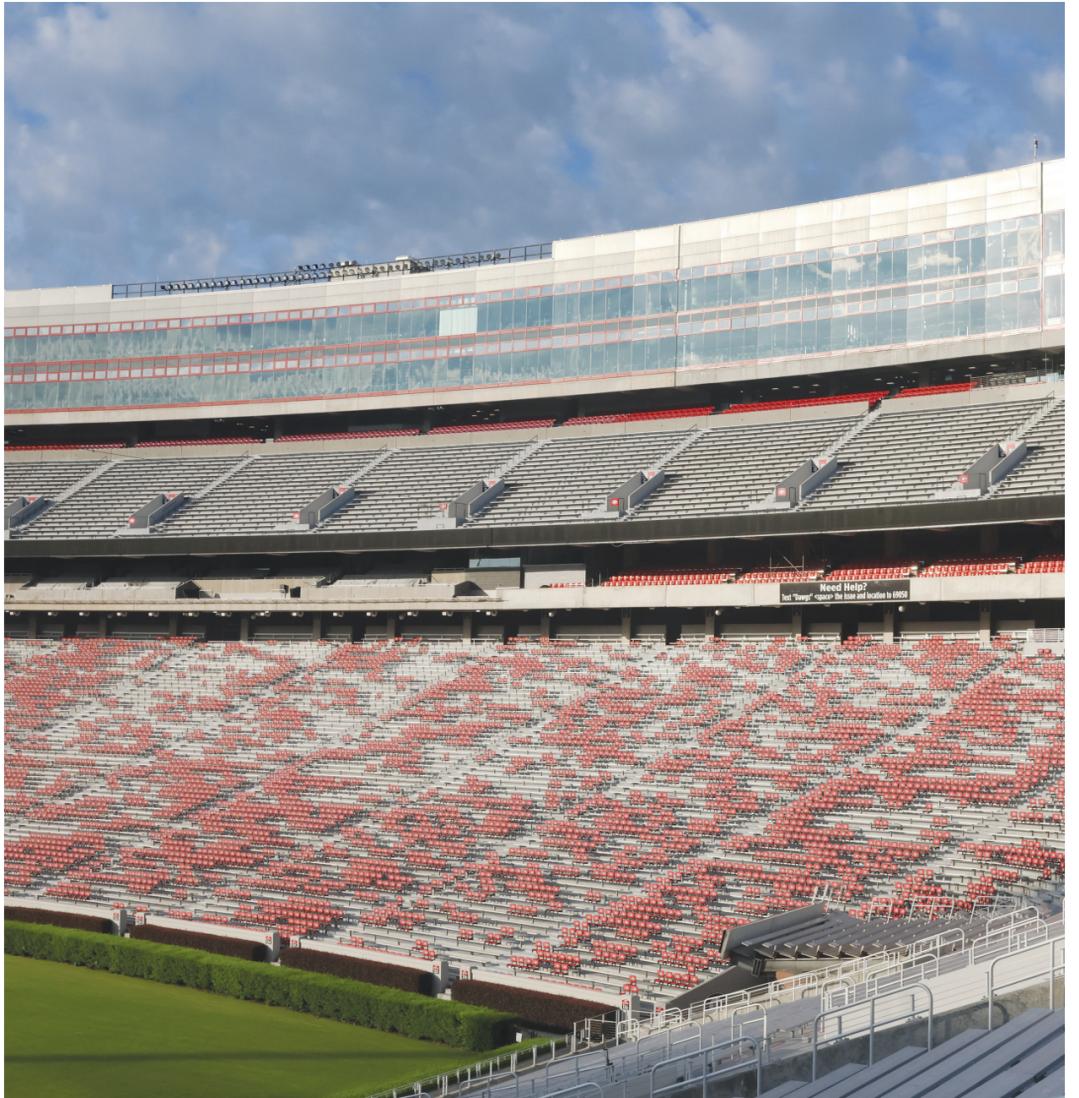
Games at Sanford Stadium have the well-known nickname of being played "Between the Hedges." Just in time for the stadium's first game in 1929, the hedges made their debut. Rose bushes were originally considered for the hedges after they caught the eye of a UGA employee at the Rose Bowl in California, but ended up being unsustainable in Athens' climate. Chinese privet bushes, gifted by a donor from Atlanta, were chosen as a replacement and have been a staple of the university ever since. The bushes have only been removed three times throughout their history, most notably for the 1996 Summer Olympics.

Keith Herndon, professor of journalism and executive director of the Cox Institute at Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communications, has not missed a single home game for 46 years and has witnessed many of the Bulldogs' greatest moments.

Herndon recalls the game against the Tennessee Volunteers on Nov. 5, 2022, where, despite the rain, the roar of the crowd never wavered.

"It seemed like to me the fans got louder when the rain came. So that was a fantastic game," Herndon said. "That's probably the loudest I've ever heard Sanford Stadium. That was an all timer."

Sanford Stadium is a historic place with a long list of traditions, according to Herndon. Before the start of every game, a lone trumpet player of the Redcoat Marching Band rises into the upper stands for the signature "Battle Hymn" solo. The stadium falls silent as those 14 notes play,



Sanford Stadium seen on Monday, July 28, 2025, in Athens, Georgia. Sanford Stadium's most recent renovations were completed in September 2024. PHOTO/FOREST X. DYNES

followed by an eruption of cheers that signals the game is about to begin.

Herndon recommended that both new and life-long Georgia football fans visit the mausoleum located on the southwest corner of the stadium, near Gate 9, where the former English Bulldog mascots, known as Uga, are buried and commemorated with bronze plaques.

The heat of summer lasts well into October with the sun glaring predominantly on the stadium's north side.

"There's no way to say it other than that the sun can be brutal and intense, and if you're not comfortable there in that kind of heat then you need to find some seats on the south side," Herndon said.

To beat the heat, there are water stations across the stadium and concession stands offering cool drinks and food on nearly every level.

Four first aid stations are located on each side of the stadium on the West Field Level behind section 138, South 200 Level behind section 229, North 200 Level behind section 203 and the East 100 Level behind section 119.

Handicap accessible seating is located primarily on the west end zone in section 100 and in sections 236, 226, 214 and 605. Wheelchair accessible gates can be found at Gates 2, 4, 6 and 8.

There is a sensory room located around sections 127 and 128 that is open to all fans when the stadium is operating. The room accommodates people with non-physical disabilities who may need a space for when the sights and sounds of the stadium become overwhelming.

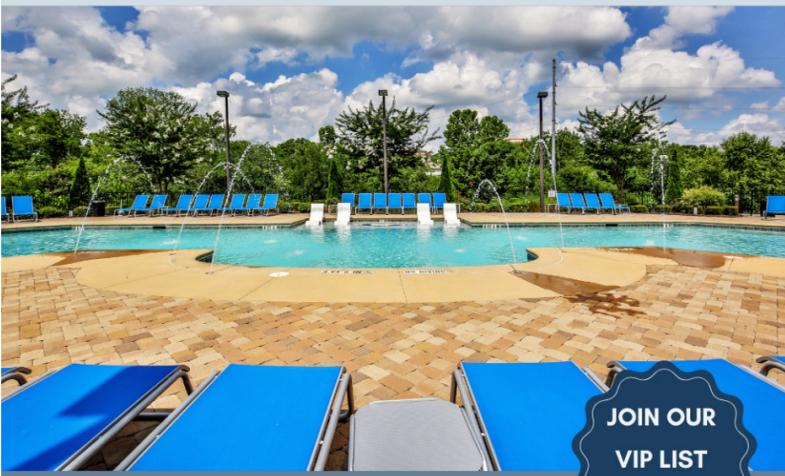
Located near Memorial Hall and Reed Hall are the two student entrances at Gates 3 and 4A. The student section, which extends into the upper levels, is located next to the Redcoat Marching Band in the stadium's northeast corner. Additional student seating is found along the west end zone at Gate 1. Gates open two hours before kickoff but fans should arrive earlier for bigger games.

Just as iconic as those red and black jerseys, Sanford Stadium stands tall as the place to be on Saturdays in Athens. Check out our survival guide for all you need to know about gamedays between the hedges.

THE FLATS AT CARRS HILL

Live in luxury near UGA with spacious bedrooms, ample parking, and amazing amenities. Study in one of our study lounges, take a break at our resort-style pool or break a sweat in our 24/7 fitness center. The perfect off-campus spot for students.

OFFERING 1, 2, & 3 BEDROOMS



JOIN OUR
VIP LIST
TODAY



2026-2027 LEASING VIP LIST

Be the first to know when leasing opens for 2026-2027 apartments! Our VIP list members get notified first about leasing dates, prices and specials! Scan the code and join today so you don't miss out.



COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

- Spacious Floor Plans
- Utilities included (electricity cap)
- Free Coffee
- Fully furnished
- On-Site parking (not limited)
- Walking Distance to UGA
- Private Bedrooms & Baths
- Study Lounges
- Resort Style Pool

IMMEDIATE MOVE-IN AVAILABLE

592 OCONEE ST ATHENS, GA 30605

WWW.THEFLATSATCARRSHILL.COM

706.909.7699



LOWER PRICES ON OVER 1,000 ITEMS



Scan here to learn more.



Proud Partner of the Georgia Bulldogs®





Welcome Back, Students!

As you prepare for the year ahead, remember Grady College has several interdisciplinary certificate programs open for all UGA undergraduate majors to apply:

- New Media
- News Literacy
- Sports Media
- Strategic Health & Risk Communication

Our Public Affairs Communications Certificate is open to Grady College students.

View our website for details and timelines to apply.



Sports Media



Strategic Health & Risk Communication



News Literacy



New Media



Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



Find yourself at the ReStore!

THE BEST **BIG** THRIFT STORES IN ATHENS!

- FURNITURE •
 - APPLIANCES •
 - HOUSEWARES •
- AND MUCH MORE!



Habitat for Humanity®

ReStore®

ReStore West
4125 Atlanta Hwy
across from
Athens Chevrolet

Over 20,000
square feet
of showroom!

ReStore East
532 Barber Street
across the tracks
from Normaltown Brewing

Open 9-5, Tuesday - Saturday



Georgia quarterback Gunner Stockton (14) escapes a defender during the University of Georgia vs. Tennessee Tech game at Sanford Stadium in Athens, Georgia, on Saturday, Sept. 7, 2024. No. 1 Georgia defeated Tennessee Tech 48-3. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN

Gunner takes the helm

A look at Georgia's prospective starting quarterback

Liam W. Dreesen

As cameras pointed and reporters scrambled at SEC Media Days, Georgia quarterback Gunner Stockton sat at his podium, waiting for the next question. The entire time, a boyish grin spread across his face. The Tiger, Georgia native, has come a long way from his hometown of just 429 people to being one of the Bulldogs' media day representatives.

Despite looking happy to be there, Gunner seemed eager to get all of the talking over with so he could do what he loves most: play football. He was asked about college football analyst Paul Finebaum's doubtful comments from earlier in the summer.

"I'm not a big social media guy," Stockton said, still smiling. "I'm not really worried about what people say. Just ready for the season. Can't wait."

Despite the absence of an official announcement by head coach Kirby Smart, Stockton is viewed as the front-runner

first drive of the second half, Stockton and the Bulldogs marched 75 yards in 10 plays to score a touchdown and take a 10-7 lead. Stockton went 3/4, throwing for 36 yards while adding another 12 on the ground.

However, Texas wasn't going anywhere. The Longhorns were able to send the game to overtime after Stockton threw a bad interception late in the game, but he didn't let this interception get in his head. In overtime, the junior accounted for all but six of the Bulldogs' yards on the game-winning drive.

"I think it was a great experience," Stockton said. "Just handling the emotions, the ebbs and flows, it was a great experience. I wouldn't change anything."

The performance did not surprise Smart at all, who said Stockton had been preparing like a starter all year.

"He didn't play in a normal environment where you've got a big lead," Smart said. "He went in against a top defense in the country in one of the biggest games of the season and performed well, for a guy that had not gotten a lot of reps with the ones. So I thought he handled that moment well, and he taught a lot of our young players that you've got to be prepared and ready."

Stockton had prepared for that moment for a while. Growing up a Bulldog fan, Stockton always had dreams of being the starting quarterback at Georgia. He tore up the field in high school, holding Georgia state records in career passing touchdowns, all-purpose yards and all-purpose touchdowns. This earned him a four-star ranking from 247 Sports and an offer from Smart and the Bulldogs.

Stockton stuck around as the backup for two years, just waiting for his number to be called.

"In this day and age, the transfer portal is pretty easy to get into and just leave," Stockton said. "But like I said, it's always been my dream to be the starting quarterback at Georgia."

Even though he has not been named the starter for the upcoming season, Stockton started in the game after the SEC Championship with Beck still out — the second round of the College Football Playoffs.

Despite the loss, Stockton performed fine in his first-ever start, throwing for 234 yards and one touchdown. He still has a lot to learn as a starter, but the Sugar Bowl game against Notre Dame was just the start for Stockton.

Smart never likes to publicly announce starters before the season, but the selection of Stockton to be one of the three players representing Georgia at SEC Media Days is indicative of what Smart thinks about him.

"Gunner is a kid that leads from the front," Smart said. "Gunner is a winner, and he's the kind of kid you want at the front of the line. He's going to be a big part of our program this year in leadership, and doing that with the offensive players."

As a starting quarterback, Stockton will be expected to step up as a leader, something he appears to have no issue with so far. He says the biggest way to do this is just to show up and be himself. Linebacker and defensive leader CJ Allen agrees.

"I think Gunner is just a great competitor," Allen said.

"He wants to win. He comes in with his head down and is always working. There's just something about him."

That competitive nature showed up in the SEC Championship game last year. In overtime, with the game on the

“ In this day and age, the transfer portal is pretty easy to get into and just leave ... But like I said, it's always been my dream to be the starting quarterback at Georgia.

GUNNER STOCKTON | GEORGIA QUARTERBACK

line, Stockton dropped back to pass on second-and-eight, but didn't see any openings and opted to tuck it and run.

As he got closer to the first down, defenders started to swarm, and Stockton had nowhere to go. Instead of opting to slide, as most quarterbacks would, Stockton lowered his shoulder and was met by Texas's Andrew Mukuba. Stockton's helmet went flying as he was knocked to the ground, but he had picked up enough for the first down. The Bulldogs scored on the next play to win the game.

This toughness and determination to win are what leaders are made of, and Stockton has already shown it.

All of these signs point towards Stockton getting his second career start on Aug. 30 against Marshall. It will be his first time walking into Sanford Stadium as the starting quarterback of the Georgia Bulldogs, a surreal moment for a lifelong Georgia fan.

Despite being a non-Power Five opponent, Marshall is not a team Stockton and the Bulldogs will want to mess around with. The Thundering Herd finished last season 10-3 and won the Sun Belt Conference. However, if the Bulldogs can avoid any huge mistakes, they should be able to use the talent discrepancy to roll over Marshall.

Week three will bring Stockton's first true test of the year. An early-season trip to Knoxville, to take on rival Tennessee in Neyland Stadium will be anything but an easy game. It will be Stockton's first true road game, and it comes at one of the toughest places to play in the entire country.

A win here could build momentum for Stockton and the Bulldogs before a home matchup with Alabama offers them a sweet chance at revenge. The outcome of these games could determine whether Stockton becomes a fan favorite or people start calling for redshirt freshman Ryan Puglisi to take over.



Georgia quarterback Gunner Stockton talks with media members during day two of the 2025 SEC Media Days on Tuesday, July 15, 2025, at the College Football Hall of Fame in Atlanta, Georgia.

PHOTO/ETHAN GREENE

for the starting quarterback job after getting some meaningful playing time last season following Carson Beck's injury.

Beck went down with an elbow injury on the last play of the first half in the SEC Championship. Stockton had to take over in the most important moment of the Bulldogs' season: down three points in the second half of the SEC Championship game.

It didn't take much time for Stockton to settle in. On the

The Red & Black
ONLINE CLASSIFIEDS



PLACE
YOUR AD
NOW!

NUMBERS TO KNOW: 2025-26 season

As Georgia prepares for the 2025-26 football season, several key players stand out as pillars for the Bulldogs' success. From emerging stars to experienced transfers, these six players' performances may shape how far Georgia will go.

These players represent the foundation for Georgia's hopes in the upcoming season. Their skill sets, leadership and growth will be vital as the Bulldogs look to remain among college football's elite.

#14

Gunner Stockton, QB

Stockton, a redshirt junior from Rabun County, steps into his first full season as Georgia's presumed starting quarterback. Known for his prolific high school career, Stockton ranks third all-time in passing yards and first in career touchdowns in Georgia high school football history. Though he has only one collegiate start, which was in the College Football Playoff, his combination of arm talent and mobility offers a new dimension to Georgia's offense. Last season, Stockton was called on during the SEC Championship after an injury to Carson Beck and helped lead Georgia to a 22-19 overtime win over Texas. His development under offensive coordinator Mike Bobo will be pivotal as he commands a revamped receiving corps.

CJ Allen, LB

Allen, a junior linebacker, is poised to lead Georgia's defense after a strong 2024 campaign. He recorded 76 total tackles, an interception and several key stops while showing his sideline-to-sideline speed and instincts. Next in line to assume full leadership of the Bulldogs' linebacker unit, Allen combines physicality with football IQ — both qualities that have made him a consistent presence in Georgia's front seven. As veteran defenders move on, Allen's role as a vocal leader and playmaker will be essential.

#3

#4

KJ Bolden, S

Bolden, a sophomore from Buford, Georgia, has developed steadily in Georgia's secondary. Last season, he recorded 59 total tackles, a sack, an interception and a forced fumble, showcasing his versatility in coverage and run support. Having learned alongside standout defensive backs like Malaki Starks, Bolden is expected to take the next step as Georgia's lockdown defensive back. His physicality and range will be critical in containing some of the SEC's top offenses in 2025.

Zachariah Branch, WR

Branch, a transfer from USC, brings explosive playmaking ability to the Bulldogs' offense. The junior wideout caught 47 passes for 503 yards and one touchdown for the Trojans last season. Georgia fans should watch for his speed and agility; he poses a constant deep threat capable of stretching defenses vertically. Branch's ability to create mismatches in space and break big plays is what made him one of the top-ranked transfers and will be a vital component of Georgia's offensive attack.

#1

#5

Noah Thomas, WR

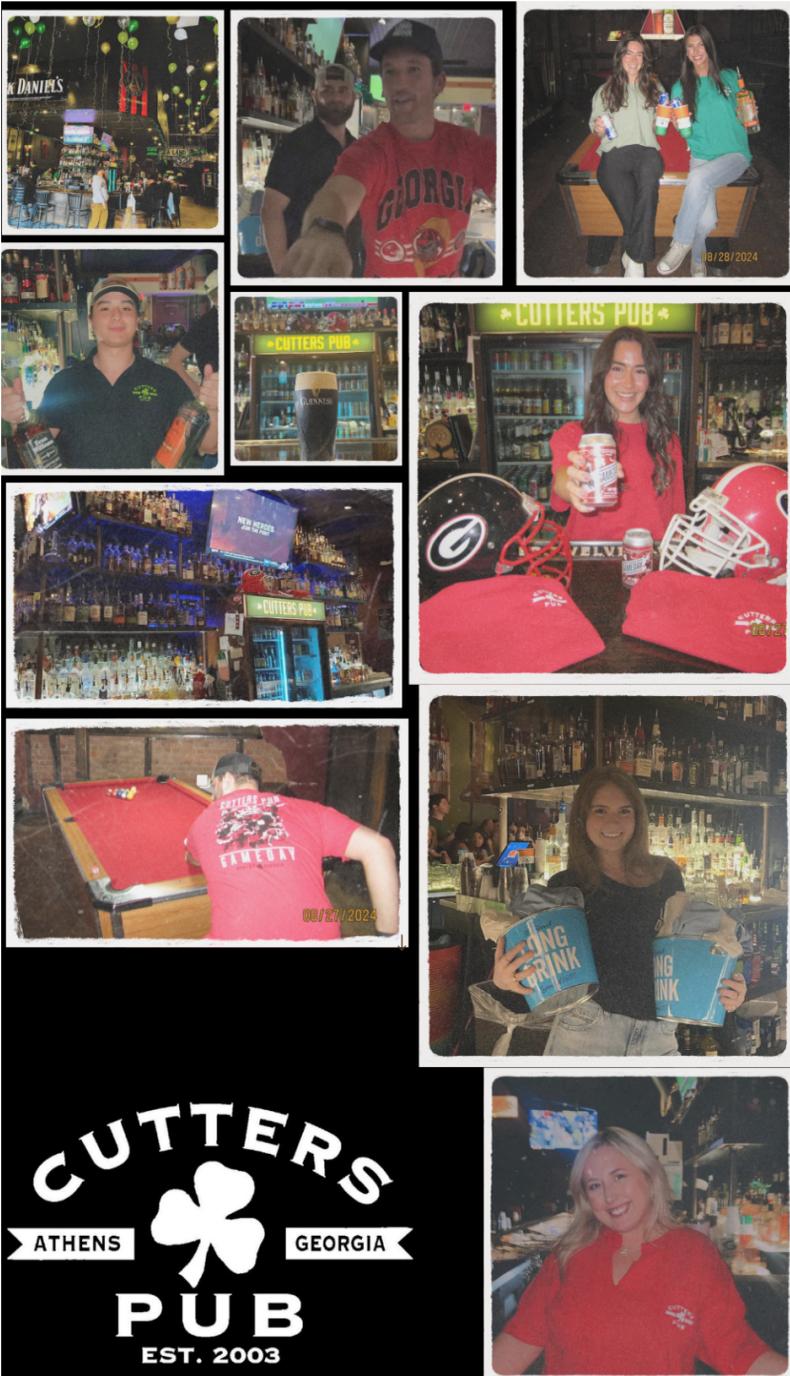
Thomas, a 6-foot-5 senior transfer from Texas A&M, fits the prototype of an elite SEC receiver. Last season, he recorded 39 receptions for 574 yards and eight touchdowns, demonstrating his ability to make contested catches and finish in the red zone. Georgia enters the 2025 season with one of its deepest and most skilled receiver groups in recent memory, and Thomas is poised to establish himself as the alpha, both for the Bulldogs and across the SEC.

Christen Miller, DT

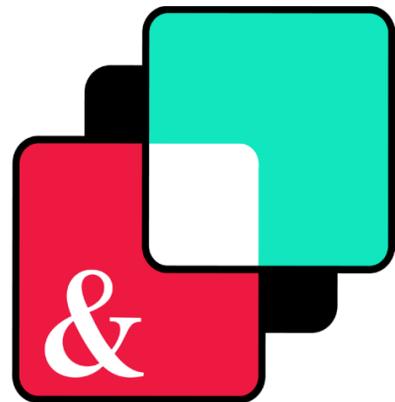
Miller, a junior defensive tackle, returns as the anchor of Georgia's defensive line, a group that has been essential to the national championship pedigree the Bulldogs have displayed in years prior. In 2024, he recorded 27 tackles and 1.5 sacks, nearly doubling his numbers from the previous season and establishing himself as one of the most disruptive defensive linemen in the country. His combination of strength, size, speed and technique has made him a known force for opposing offensive linemen and quarterbacks. Though he is currently recovering from a labrum injury suffered late last season, Miller is expected to be fully healthy by the fall. With a wave of young recruits from recent cycles filling up the defensive line room, Miller's experience and leadership will be crucial to maintaining Georgia's defensive identity.

#52

— Riley Baugh



Storyboards



Play today on redandblack.com

The Red & Black

DOWNTOWN ATHENS' FAVORITE PUB
120 E. Clayton Street | cutterspub.com

POOL TABLES • SKEE BALL • DARTS • PHOTO BOOTH • GOLDEN TEE

Highlights from the 2024-25 Georgia football season



The Georgia football team celebrates as confetti rains down after the 2024 SEC Championship game between Georgia and Texas at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta, Georgia, on Saturday, Dec. 7, 2024. Georgia won 22-19. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN



Georgia head coach Kirby Smart celebrates after the Aflac Kickoff Game between No. 1 Georgia and No. 14 Clemson at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta, Georgia, on Saturday, Aug. 31, 2024. Georgia defeated Clemson 34-3. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN



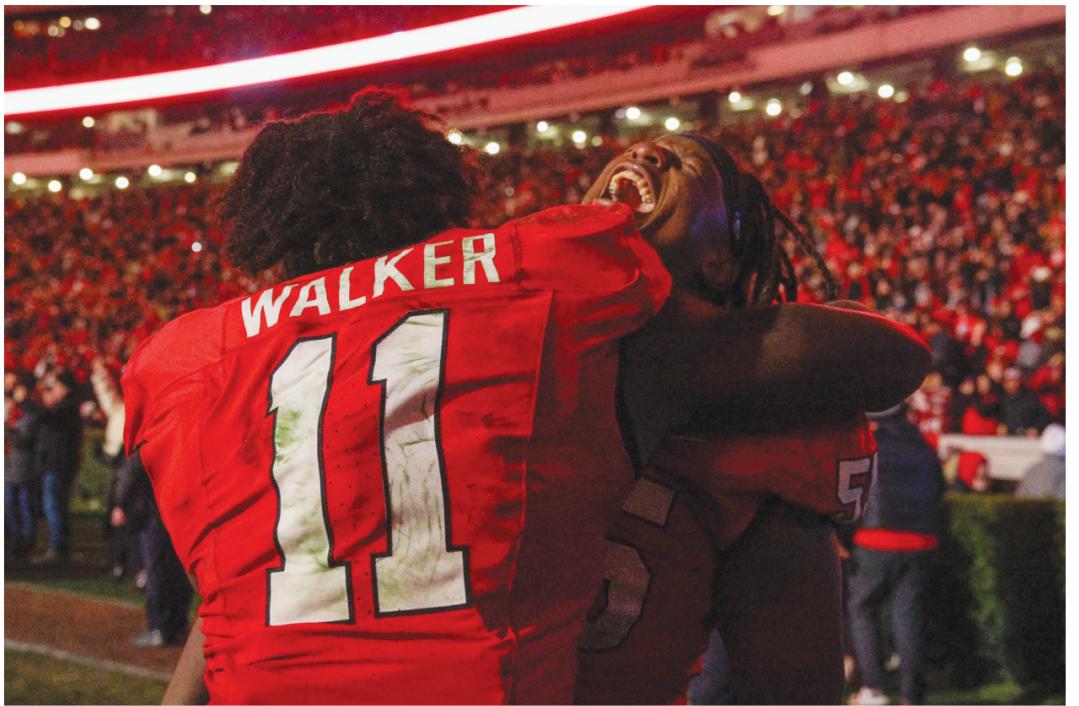
Hairy Dawg points during the first half of the University of Georgia vs. University of Massachusetts football game at Sanford Stadium on Saturday, Nov. 23, 2024, in Athens, Georgia. Georgia won 59-21. PHOTO/SAMANTHA HURLEY



Georgia wide receiver Arian Smith (11) runs with the ball during the NCAA college football game between Georgia and Georgia Tech at Sanford Stadium in Athens, Georgia, on Friday, Nov. 29, 2024. Following a historic eight overtimes, Georgia beat Georgia Tech 44-42. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN



Arian Smith (11) runs during the game between Georgia and Florida at EverBank Stadium in Jacksonville, Florida, on Saturday, Nov. 2, 2024. Georgia won 34-20. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN



Georgia linebacker Jalen Walker (11) celebrates after the NCAA college football game between Georgia and Georgia Tech at Sanford Stadium in Athens, Georgia, on Friday, Nov. 29, 2024. Following a historic eight overtimes, Georgia beat Georgia Tech 44-42. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN



Members of the UGA Spike Squad cheer during the NCAA college football game between Georgia and Tennessee at Sanford Stadium in Athens, Georgia, on Saturday, Nov. 16, 2024. Georgia won 31-17. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN



Scenes during the Georgia vs. Tennessee Tech game at Sanford Stadium in Athens, Georgia, on Saturday, Sept. 7, 2024. Georgia won 48-3. PHOTO/LANEY MARTIN

Gameday flavors

Exploring tailgating food traditions

Eva Saraf

As gameday approaches, fans prepare for the immersive atmosphere that is Georgia football. Whether you're watching from the comfort of your own home or tailgating with friends on campus, here are some Southern drinks and snacks that are perfect for your SEC gameday.

Drinks

Sweet iced tea:

Sweet tea is a southern staple and has been for years. Having it at gameday social events is a must. This drink is made easily with water, tea bags and sugar and is enjoyed by many.

The classic mimosa:

This orangey, citrus drink is a gameday staple and is versatile, because it can be made alcoholic and nonalcoholic. For an alcoholic version, you can use champagne with the orange juice, and for a virgin mocktail, use ginger ale instead.

Hot cocoa with peppermint whipped cream:

With the season usually spanning the fall months up into January, it is good to be prepared with some warmer beverages to enjoy the game with. A mug of hot cocoa is a need in the cold. When topped with peppermint-flavored whipped cream, this is a sweet treat everyone will love.

Snacks

Pepperoni rolls:

These soft, doughy rolls are perfect for watching a game. The traditional roll is slightly sweet, soft dough stuffed with a few pepperoni slices and then baked. It's also fun to dip them in a marinara or cheese sauce. These can also be pre-



A football fan grills at a tailgate on the University of Georgia campus before the South Carolina game on September 16, 2023, in Athens, Georgia. FILE/STAFF



A family plays football on the University of Georgia's campus before the annual G-Day spring football game in Athens, Georgia, on Saturday, April 13, 2024. PHOTO/SAMANTHA HURLEY

pared the night before which makes them easy to serve on gameday.

Onion rings:

This popular side dish, known for its crispy texture and sweet-savory flavor, is good on its own and ideal for snacking. These can also be dipped in marinara sauce and served on a platter for people to enjoy.

Sheet pan nachos:

Everyone loves nachos, and these are the best kind to make, because the dish only requires one tray that you can line with foil to make cleaning up easy. Just bake some tortilla chips with beans, cheese and whatever toppings you and your watchparty would like.

The perfect gameday charcuterie board:

Charcuterie boards have been on the trend due to their visual appeal and adaptability. Grab your favorite board, add your favorite cheeses, sliced meats, crackers and spreads. Some cheeses to consider are smoked gouda or pepper jack, and some common meats include salami and prosciutto.

Jalapeño hummus:

This spicy hummus is the perfect dip to pair with some crackers or pita chips, and is easy to make at home. You can even add it to the charcuterie board. You can add lemon or lime to the dip for some extra flavor and adjust the spice level by adding more or less jalapeños.

Barbecue chicken sliders:

This can be a fun gameday appetizer and is simple to make. You can grab your favorite sweet rolls, like Hawai-

ian rolls, add in the shredded barbeque chicken, and top it with garnishes of your choice, or just leave it as it is. Some common garnishes include mozzarella, gouda, red onion and cilantro.

Buffalo, barbecue and lemon pepper wings trio:

Wings are a gameday essential and a popular, relatively easy to prepare, snack that is perfect for sharing. It is also easy to prepare the wings by drying and seasoning them in advance and making the sauces ahead of time. Two common dips to serve with are blue cheese and ranch.

Pasta salad:

Tailgates definitely tend to be meat centered with few options for vegetarians; pasta salad is a dish loved by vegetarians and meat enjoyers alike. Some common dressings are vinaigrette or mayonnaise, and you can add whatever pasta and toppings you like.

Desserts

Mini funnel cakes:

Funnel cakes are often associated with fairs and amusement parks, but they can also be the perfect way to sweeten up your gameday. All you need is a squeeze bottle with the mixture, frying oil and pastry rings to create your own funnel cakes. A nice garnish is powdered sugar.

Donut holes:

Donut holes are a fun and delicious treat that can easily be made at home for gameday snacking. You can top these donut holes off with cinnamon sugar, powdered sugar, vanilla glaze or dippings like caramel sauce.

The Red & Black HOUSING FAIR

OCTOBER 9 • TATE GRAND HALL • 10 AM-2 PM

KICK OFF YOUR HOUSING SEARCH

2025



HOME FIELD ADVANTAGE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Apartments
for ATHENS.com

