

THE ATHENS DAWG REPORT PRESENTS

GEORGIA FOOTBALL A TO Z

The complete 2026 season guide. Every projected starter, the schedule with stakes attached, what changed this offseason, and the names that will matter in November.

2026 SEASON · VERIFIED AUGUST 29, 2026 · KIRBY SMART, YEAR 11

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The sixty-second version

If you read nothing else in this guide, read this page. It is enough to hold a conversation with anybody.

Who they are

Georgia is the most consistently good program in college football over the last decade and has not lost a regular-season game to anyone outside the SEC's top tier in years. Two national titles, after the 2021 and 2022 seasons. Head coach Kirby Smart is in his 11th year.

Where they left off

12-2 in 2025. They beat Alabama 28-7 for the SEC championship, got the No. 3 seed and a first-round playoff bye, then lost 39-34 to Ole Miss in the Sugar Bowl quarterfinal. It was the second year running that ended exactly that way.

The one stat that explains the frustration

Georgia had won 75 consecutive games when leading at the start of the fourth quarter. Ole Miss scored 20 points in the fourth quarter and ended the streak in the game that mattered most.

Who to watch

Quarterback Gunner Stockton, who finished seventh in the Heisman voting. Cornerback Ellis Robinson IV, who won national freshman defensive player of the year. Safety KJ Bolden. Running back Nate Frazier.

The two worries

Pass rush — Georgia managed only 20 sacks all of last season, and the transfer brought in to fix it tore an ACL in the spring. And receiver, where six of the top seven pass catchers are gone.

The expectation

No. 3 in both preseason polls. Anything short of the playoff is a disappointment, and at this point anything short of a January win is going to feel like one too.

What changed this offseason

Six things. If you knew this program a year ago, these are the updates that matter.

Nine SEC games, not eight

The conference expanded its league schedule this season. Georgia now plays only three non-conference opponents a year, one of which is permanently Georgia Tech. Practically, it means one fewer tune-up and one more chance to lose.

The receiver room was rebuilt from scratch

Georgia lost six of its top seven pass catchers, including Zachariah Branch, who led the SEC with 81 catches, and tight end Oscar Delp. London Humphreys is the only returning receiver with real production. Georgia added exactly one receiver from the portal. That is a deliberate bet on young players.

Florida moves to Atlanta

For the first time since 1995 the Georgia-Florida game leaves Jacksonville, because EverBank Stadium is being renovated. Mercedes-Benz Stadium this year; Tampa in 2027.

A new offensive line coach

Stacy Searels, a 30-plus-year offensive line coach, moved into an analyst role in January. Analyst Phil Rauscher was promoted to replace him. Rauscher's background is mostly NFL, and he is coaching a line with two first-team All-SEC picks and thin depth behind them.

The pass rush plan fell apart in April

Auburn transfer Amaris Williams was the marquee defensive addition and is expected to miss the season with a torn ACL. Georgia already needed more from this group; now it needs it from second-year players like Isaiah Gibson, Chase Linton and Darren Ikinagbon.

Two award-winning specialists to replace

Punter Brett Thorson won the Ray Guy Award and long snapper Beau Gardner was also a national award winner. Both are out of eligibility. Kicker Peyton Woodring returning for a senior year is the one thing on special teams nobody has to think about.

The 2026 schedule

Seven home games between the hedges, four true road games, and Florida in Atlanta. Rankings shown are the AP preseason poll.

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE	TIME
Sep 5	Tennessee State	Home Sanford Stadium	3:00 ET
Sep 12	Western Kentucky	Home Sanford Stadium	12:45 ET
Sep 19	at Arkansas	Away Fayetteville	12:00 ET
Sep 26	Oklahoma (10)	Home Sanford Stadium	TBA
Oct 3	Vanderbilt	Home Sanford Stadium	TBA
Oct 10	at Alabama (13)	Away Tuscaloosa	TBA
Oct 17	Auburn	Home Sanford Stadium	TBA
Oct 24	<i>Open date</i>	—	—
Oct 31	Florida	Neutral Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Atlanta	3:30 ET
Nov 7	at Ole Miss (9)	Away Oxford	TBA
Nov 14	Missouri (25)	Home Sanford Stadium	TBA
Nov 21	at South Carolina	Away Columbia	TBA
Nov 28	Georgia Tech	Home Sanford Stadium	TBA

The three games that decide the season

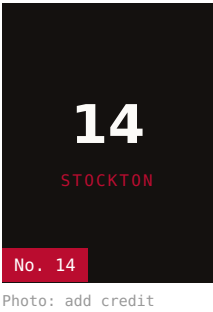
At Alabama on October 10, Florida in Atlanta on October 31, and at Ole Miss on November 7. Georgia lost to Alabama in the regular season last year and then beat them for the SEC title; Ole Miss ended the season in the Sugar Bowl. The bye week falls before Florida, which is exactly where a coach would put it.

One structural note

The SEC moved to nine conference games this season. Georgia now plays only three non-conference opponents a year, and one of them is permanently Georgia Tech. The SEC Championship Game is December 5 in Atlanta; Georgia plays in it only by finishing in the league's top two.

Meet the offense

The projected starters, plus the second running back — Georgia’s backfield is a rotation, not a depth chart.



Gunner Stockton

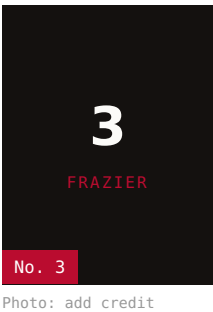
Quarterback | Senior • 6-1, 215 • Tiger, Georgia

The single most important player on the team and one of the more argued-about quarterbacks in the sport. Stockton was a record-setting Georgia high school player at Rabun County who committed to South Carolina, flipped to Georgia, then waited three years behind Carson Beck and Brock Vandagriff. In his first full season as a starter he led the SEC's champions, was the SEC Championship Game MVP against Alabama, and finished seventh in the Heisman voting.

What he does well is not glamorous and is extremely valuable: he protects the football and he does not shrink. He threw five interceptions in 386 attempts and is on pace for the lowest career interception rate in program history. In the fourth quarter last season he completed 83.6 percent of his passes with seven touchdowns and zero interceptions. He also ran for ten touchdowns, the most of any SEC quarterback and the most by a Georgia quarterback since Frank Sinkwich in 1942.

The criticism is about arm distance, not toughness. His average depth of target was 7.3 yards, the lowest of any quarterback in last season's playoff field, and the offense leaned hard on screens. Whether that was Stockton or the play-calling is the argument that will define his senior year.

269-386, 2,894 yds, 24 TD, 5 INT • 462 rush yds, 10 rush TD (2025)



Nate Frazier

Running back | Junior • second-team preseason All-SEC

Fumbles cost him carries early last season and he answered by closing strong, finishing 53 yards short of 1,000 in a rotation. He is the lead back in what may be the deepest backfield in the conference. ESPN analysts already have him in the top five of the 2027 draft class at his position.

Georgia's ground game jumped from 124.4 yards a game in 2024 — next to last in the SEC — to 182.1 last year, which was fourth. That turnaround is the foundation of the whole offense, and Frazier is the biggest reason for it. The thing to watch is third down: Georgia lost Cash Jones, its third-down back, and if Frazier improves as a pass protector he never has to leave the field.

173 car, 947 yds, 6 TD • 16 rec, 116 yds, 1 TD (2025)

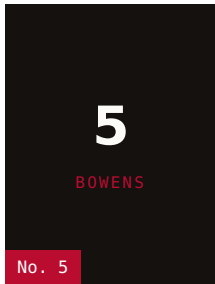


Photo: add credit

Chauncey Bowens

Running back | Breakout of 2025 · now wearing No. 5

The 1B to Frazier's 1A, and the reason Georgia can play a physical fourth quarter. He broke through last season and took over the No. 5 jersey, which at Georgia is not nothing. Behind the two of them, speedster Dwight Phillips Jr. is the change-of-pace and Bo Walker — who had a three-touchdown game as a freshman — is the fourth man in a room most teams would be happy to start.

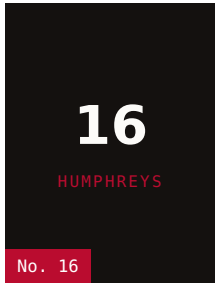


Photo: add credit

London Humphreys

Wide receiver | Senior · the only returning producer at the position

Everything about Georgia's receiver room starts with the fact that Humphreys is the last man standing. He came to Athens from Vanderbilt, has been in the system, knows the answers, and for that reason projects as the No. 1 whether or not he is the most talented player in the group. He is a big-play receiver by profile — his career yards-per-catch numbers are strong even on limited volume.

His real job in 2026 may be as much about the huddle as the route tree. Georgia is starting over at the position and needs somebody who already knows how Bobo's offense wants things run.

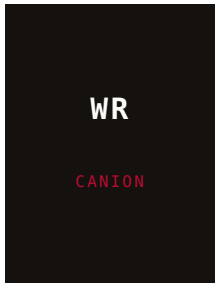


Photo: add credit

Isiah Canion

Wide receiver | Transfer from Georgia Tech · the only receiver Georgia added from the portal

Georgia went into the portal for exactly one wideout, which the staff meant as a statement of confidence in the young players already on campus. Canion arrives with production against power-conference defenses and immediately projects into the two-deep. Coming from Tech to Georgia gives him a story that Athens will enjoy every November.



Photo: add credit

Sacovie White-Helton

Wide receiver · slot | Sophomore · the Branch replacement

The most schematically important of the young receivers. Zachariah Branch caught 81 passes last year, a huge share of them on screens and manufactured touches, and White-Helton has the closest skill set to that on the roster. If Georgia's short passing game looks the same as last year, it will be because this worked.

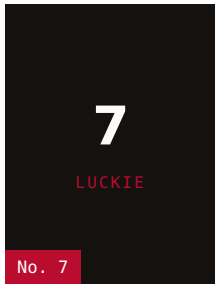


Photo: add credit

Lawson Luckie

Tight end | Junior • second-team preseason All-SEC

The starter in the best tight end room in college football, and a player whose raw numbers badly understate his role — he was the No. 2 behind Oscar Delp last season and still found the end zone four times. With the receivers rebuilt, Georgia is expected to lean on tight ends more than usual this fall, which makes Luckie one of the likeliest players on the roster to double his production.

Behind him: Elyiss Williams, who has the most receiving upside of anyone in the room; Jaden Reddell; and Ethan Barbour, who started Week 1 last season before a serious leg injury. Add freshman Kaiden Prothro and Georgia can put three tight ends on the field and still be the faster team.

15 rec, 158 yds, 4 TD (2025)

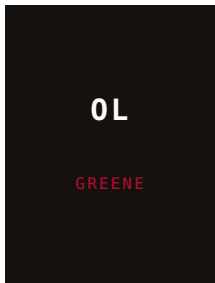


Photo: add credit

Earnest Greene III

Left tackle | Senior • first-team preseason All-SEC

The anchor, when healthy — which is the caveat that follows him. A back injury limited him to nine starts last season and Georgia's offense visibly changed without him. He is a first-team All-SEC left tackle protecting a quarterback who is not tall enough to see over traffic, so the connection between Greene's availability and Stockton's numbers is direct.



Photo: add credit

Dontrell Glover

Left guard | Sophomore • second-team preseason All-SEC

Started 12 games as a true freshman, which almost never happens on a Kirby Smart offensive line, and made second-team preseason All-SEC in year two. Smart cites him by name when he argues that Georgia's freshmen have to be ready to play immediately.



Photo: add credit

Drew Bobo

Center | Senior • first-team preseason All-SEC

The line's brain and its other first-team All-SEC pick. Like Greene he comes with recent injury history, and like Greene his availability is one of the two or three things most likely to decide how good this offense is. A center who makes the right protection calls is worth more to Stockton than another receiver.

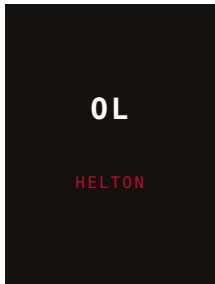


Photo: add credit

Zykie Helton

Right guard | True freshman · the best story in camp

A three-star recruit ranked outside the national top 450 and only 46th in his own state, Helton has taken first-team reps at right guard through fall camp and is projected to start over veteran Daniel Calhoun. If you want one example of why Georgia fans do not take recruiting rankings literally, this is it. It is also the most likely position on the offense to change hands during the season.



Photo: add credit

Juan Gaston

Right tackle | Sophomore · started as a true freshman

The other freshman who won a job last year out of necessity when injuries and draft departures hit the line. He can slide inside if Georgia needs him to, which matters because the depth behind the front five is good rather than elite. Watch true freshman Ekene Ogboko, a top-40 national signee, push here as the season goes on.

Meet the defense

A 3-4 base that lives in nickel: three linemen, an edge, two inside backers and five defensive backs. The slot defender, listed as STAR, is effectively a starter.

44

HALL

No. 44

Photo: add credit

Jordan Hall

Nose tackle | Senior • former five-star

A five-star recruit whose career has been interrupted repeatedly by injury. His snaps will likely be managed. When he is on the field he is the reason Georgia's run defense returned to a top-five unit last season; behind him Xzavier McLeod has improved in each of his two years and will play plenty.

90

GRIFFIN

No. 90

Photo: add credit

Elijah Griffin

Defensive tackle | Sophomore • second-team preseason All-SEC

The player Georgia most needs to become a star. Griffin was the No. 3 overall prospect in the 2025 class, earned Freshman All-America honors immediately, and is now expected to anchor the interior in year two. He collapses the pocket from the inside, which is the cheapest way to fix a pass rush that only produced 20 sacks.

If Griffin takes the leap, a lot of Georgia's problems on this side of the ball solve themselves. Freshman five-star Valdin Sone is the name behind him.

Freshman All-America (2025)

0

HARRIS

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Photo: add credit

Gabe Harris Jr.

Defensive end | Junior • third-team preseason All-SEC

Big enough to play defensive end and athletic enough to stand up as an outside linebacker, which is exactly what Georgia's front asks for. He missed the Sugar Bowl and all of spring practice with turf toe. Georgia needs him healthy and getting home. Joseph Jonah-Ajonye, a former elite recruit, rotates behind him.

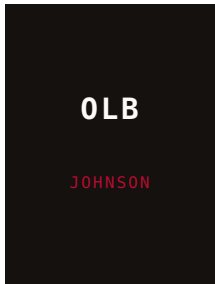


Photo: add credit

Quintavious Johnson

Outside linebacker | Starter after a promising 2025

Expected to start on the edge after flashing last season. The bigger story is behind him: with Amaris Williams out for the year, one of Isaiah Gibson, Chase Linton or Darren Ikinnagbon — all talented second-year players — has to become a real pass rusher. Freshmen Khamari Brooks and PJ Dean were both four-star signees and will get looks.



Photo: add credit

Raylen Wilson

Inside linebacker | Senior • second-team preseason All-SEC

Third on the team in tackles in his first year as a starter, and now the veteran of the position group after CJ Allen left for the draft. He missed spring practice with a knee issue and was full-go in fall camp.

Georgia's inside linebacker room is the deepest position on the roster and probably in the country. Wilson, Chris Cole, Justin Williams and Zayden Walker would all start at most programs. That all four chose to stay is the quiet win of Georgia's offseason.

74 tackles, 6.5 TFL, 2.5 sacks (2025)

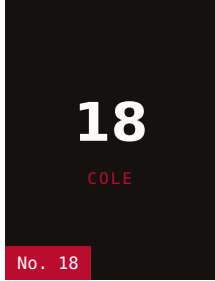


Photo: add credit

Chris Cole

Inside linebacker | Georgia's leading pass rusher in 2025

Led the team in sacks from an off-ball position, which tells you both how good he is at timing a blitz and how little the edge rushers produced. Cole and Zayden Walker are the two pieces Glenn Schumann uses to manufacture pressure when the front four cannot get there on its own.

59 tackles, 4.5 sacks, 7 TFL (2025)

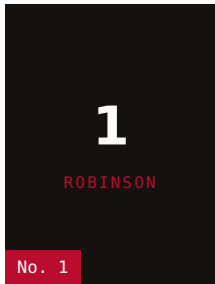


Photo: add credit

Ellis Robinson IV

Cornerback | Sophomore • first-team preseason All-SEC

Possibly the best cornerback in college football. He was the No. 3 overall prospect in the 2024 class out of IMG Academy, barely played as a true freshman, then started 12 games last season and won FWAA Freshman Defensive Player of the Year — the first Georgia player ever to take that award. His four interceptions tied for the SEC lead.

Quarterbacks stopped throwing at him by midseason, which is the highest compliment available. The concern is not Robinson; it is that Georgia's depth at outside corner is thin enough that an injury to him would be a genuine crisis.

20 tackles, 7 PBU, 4 INT (2025)

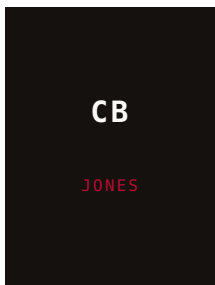


Photo: add credit

Demello Jones

Cornerback | Projected to start opposite Robinson

The job opposite Robinson is his to hold, with experienced transfers Braylon Conley (USC) and Gentry Williams (Oklahoma) pushing. Whoever wins it will see a lot of targets, because nobody is going to keep throwing at the other guy.

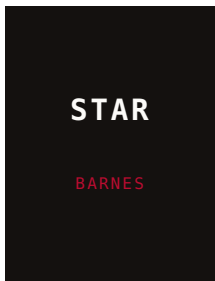


Photo: add credit

Khalil Barnes

Slot defender (STAR) | Senior • Clemson transfer • third-team preseason All-SEC

A North Oconee product who came home. He was a freshman All-American at Clemson in 2023 and made 30 starts over three seasons there. Georgia's STAR is functionally a starter — the Bulldogs live in nickel — and Barnes brings the kind of experience the position needs against SEC passing games.



Photo: add credit

KJ Bolden

Free safety | Junior • first-team preseason All-SEC

Georgia flipped him from Florida State at the last minute in the 2024 cycle and he has been a starter almost since he arrived. He is the communicator in the back end and the player who cleans up when something breaks in front of him. First-team All-SEC in the preseason and a likely All-American candidate.

76 tackles, 5 PBU, 2.5 TFL, 2 INT (2025)



Photo: add credit

Rasean Dinkins

Strong safety | Started down the stretch in 2025

Played well in the SEC Championship Game against Alabama and less well in the Sugar Bowl, which is roughly the story of Georgia's pass defense as a whole. Zion Branch, ECU transfer Ja'Marley Riddle and Kyron Jones will all take snaps. Freshman Tyriq Green, a state champion at Buford, has generated more camp buzz than any defensive back in the class.

Special teams

One certainty and two jobs that turned over in the same offseason.



Photo: add credit

Peyton Woodring

Kicker | Senior · Lou Groza Award watch list

One of the best kickers in the country and the least stressful thing about Georgia football. Both of his misses last year came from 40 yards or beyond, and he went 8-for-10 from 40-plus. He has made all 173 extra points of his career, second in program history behind Rodrigo Blankenship. Gunner Stockton holds for him.

17-19 FG (89%), long 53, perfect on PATs (2025)

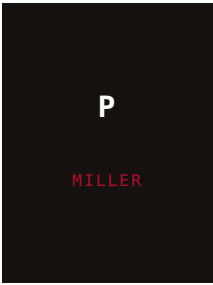


Photo: add credit

Drew Miller

Punter | Junior · replacing a Ray Guy Award winner

Has appeared in two career games and now has to replace Brett Thorson, the best punter in the country last season. His one real audition — six punts for a 48.0-yard average against Marshall in 2025 — went well. If he struggles, true freshman Wade Register, the top-rated punter in his class, is waiting.



Photo: add credit

Snellings

Long snapper | Replacing an award-winning snapper

The most anonymous job on the roster and the one where anonymity is the entire goal. Beau Gardner was a national award winner; if you never hear Snellings's name this season, he did it right.

Meet the coaches

Two experienced coordinators under real pressure to finish a season, a first-year offensive line coach, and a head coach in year eleven.

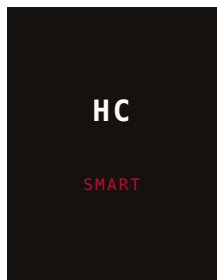


Photo: add credit

Kirby Smart

Head coach | 11th season · 2021 and 2022 national champion

Played safety at Georgia, then spent nine years on Nick Saban's staff at Alabama, most of it running the defense. He came home in 2016 and has since built the most consistently good program in the sport. Back-to-back national titles after the 2021 and 2022 seasons — the first repeat since Alabama in 2011 and 2012.

His identity has never wavered: run the football, stop the run, and build through high school recruiting rather than renting players from the portal. "You've got to be a high school development program or you've got to be a portal team," he said this winter. "We lean towards the high school development."

The question in year 11 is not September. Georgia has won the SEC two years running and lost its first playoff game both times. Smart's own framing after the Sugar Bowl was about toughness: "A word we talk about a lot around here is grit. We've got to find out what kind of grit we got."

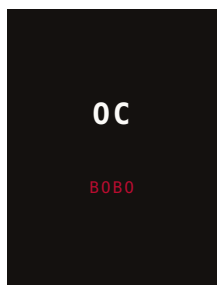


Photo: add credit

Mike Bobo

Offensive coordinator / quarterbacks | 4th consecutive year as OC · roughly 20th season on a Georgia staff

A former Georgia quarterback whose association with the program spans decades across two stints. He was promoted when Todd Monken left for the NFL and has held the job since.

The 2025 offense averaged 32.1 points a game and finished fourth in the SEC in rushing at 182.1 yards a game — a jump of nearly 58 yards a game over the year before, which was the single biggest reason Georgia won the league. He was a Broyles Award finalist for the second time in three years.

The criticism that follows him is the passing game. Gunner Stockton's average depth of target was 7.3 yards, lowest of any quarterback in last season's playoff field, and the offense leaned hard on screens. With the receiver room rebuilt, whether that was scheme or personnel gets answered this fall.

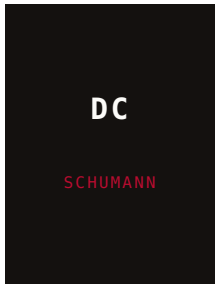


Photo: add credit

Glenn Schumann

Defensive coordinator / inside linebackers | 8th season · perennial head-coaching candidate

One of the most sought-after assistants in college football and a name that comes up every hiring cycle. His run defense returned to a top-five national unit in 2025 and his inside linebacker room is arguably the best in the country.

Two things sit on his desk. The pass rush produced only 20 sacks, and his answer has been to manufacture pressure with off-ball linebackers — Chris Cole led the team in sacks from an inside position, which is both a credit to the scheme and a symptom. And the pass defense gave up too many explosive plays, particularly against Ole Miss and Tennessee.

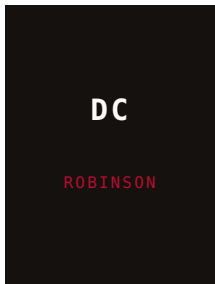


Photo: add credit

Travaris Robinson

Co-defensive coordinator / defensive backs | 3rd season

Works the secondary alongside Donte Williams and has helped turn a very young defensive backfield into the strength of the team. KJ Bolden and Ellis Robinson IV are both first-team preseason All-SEC under his watch, and neither is a senior.

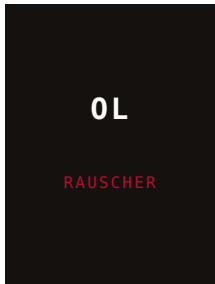


Photo: add credit

Phil Rauscher

Offensive line | 1st season in the role · promoted from analyst in January

The notable staff change of the offseason. Stacy Searels, a 30-plus-year offensive line coach with most of that time in the SEC, moved into an analyst role in January and Rauscher was promoted to replace him. Smart's statement cited work ethic, technical expertise and the ability to connect with players.

Two things make this worth watching. Rauscher's background is mostly NFL — his most recent college stop before becoming a Georgia analyst was more than a decade ago — which raises fair questions about what he brings on the recruiting trail. And he inherits a line with two first-team preseason All-SEC picks, both of whom have injury history, and depth behind them that is good rather than elite.

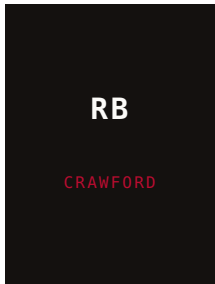


Photo: add credit

Josh Crawford

Running backs | Oversaw a 58-yard-per-game jump in the ground game

His first year was rough and his second was a genuine turnaround: Georgia went from 124.4 rushing yards a game in 2024, next to last in the SEC, to 182.1 in 2025, which was fourth. He now has the deepest backfield in the conference and the job of replacing Cash Jones on third down.

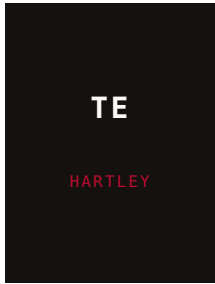


Photo: add credit

Todd Hartley

Tight ends | Runs the best tight end room in college football

Lawson Luckie, Elyiss Williams, Jaden Reddell and Ethan Barbour, plus freshmen Kaiden Prothro, Lincoln Keyes and Brayden Fogle. He landed the top tight end recruit in the 2026 class and has already secured a five-star for 2027 in Jaxon Dollar.

With the receivers rebuilt, his group is expected to absorb more of the passing game than usual — which makes him one of the most important assistants on the staff this season.

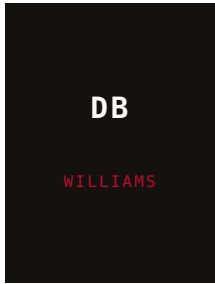


Photo: add credit

Donte Williams

Defensive backs / recruiting | Arrived before the 2024 season with an elite recruiting reputation

Hired for the trail and has backed it up on the field. The 2026 class included four-star defensive backs Caden Harris, Justice Fitzpatrick, Jordan Smith and Zech Fort, and Georgia went into the portal for four more defensive backs on top of that. The secondary is the most heavily recruited room on the roster.

Georgia had more staff churn than usual below the coordinator level this offseason. Outside linebackers coach Chidera Uzo-Diribe departed, former Georgia player Maurice Smith joined the defensive staff, and the wide receivers role shifted as part of the same reshuffle. Both coordinators are on the same salary this season, which is unusual and tells you how Smart values the two jobs.

The rest of the two-deep

Everyone else who will play. Georgia rotates heavily and now carries 105 scholarship players, so most of these names appear at some point.

Offense

Ryan Puglisi QB, r-So.

The backup. A former four-star with 27 career pass attempts and one touchdown. If Stockton misses time, the season turns on him.

Ryan Montgomery QB, r-Fr.

Third string. Was not healthy last offseason, so this is effectively his first full year of development.

Hezekiah Millender QB, Fr.

Flashed in the spring. Georgia has better quarterback depth than it did a year ago.

Bryson Beaver QB, Fr.

Enrolled at Oregon, so he counts as a transfer, but functions as a 2026 signee.

Bo Walker RB, So.

Had a three-touchdown game as a freshman. Fourth in a backfield most teams would start him in.

Jae Lamar RB, Fr.

Four-star freshman in a crowded room.

Dante Dowdell RB, Sr.

Kentucky transfer, 15 touchdowns across his last two seasons. Suffered serious injuries in a July ATV accident; status uncertain.

CJ Wiley WR

A big-bodied target expected to see action from the opener. Very little separates him from the receivers listed ahead of him.

Landon Roldan WR

One of the young receivers Georgia is betting on instead of going back to the portal.

Thomas Blackshear WR

In the mix in a room where the rotation is genuinely open.

Tyler Williams WR, r-Fr.

Another name in the receiver rotation.

Jeremy Bell WR, r-So.

Expect opportunities against the non-conference schedule.

Jaden Reddell TE

Third in a four-deep tight end room that Georgia will use as a personnel weapon.

Ethan Barbour TE

Started Week 1 last season before a significant leg injury ended it.

Colton Heinrich TE

The blocking specialist in the group.

Lincoln Keyes TE, Fr.

Four-star freshman with too much competition in front of him to expect early snaps.

Brayden Fogle TE, Fr.

Same story — talented, buried.

Jahzare Jackson OT

The first man off the bench at tackle.

Daniel Calhoun OG

The veteran Zykie Helton beat out in camp. One bad week and this flips back.

Michael Uini OG

Interior depth.

Malachi Toliver C/OG

The backup center, which on a line with Drew Bobo's injury history is not a trivial job.

Cortez Smith OT

Tackle depth.

Defense

Xzavier McLeod NT

Has improved in each of his two seasons and is a top rotation piece with Jordan Hall's snaps managed.

Nnamdi Ogboko NT

Another big body inside.

Nasir Johnson DL

Interior depth across nose and tackle.

Josh Horton DT

Plenty of experience; Georgia would like more production from it.

London Seymour DL

In the interior rotation.

Joseph Jonah-Ajonye DE

A former elite recruit rotating behind Gabe Harris.

JJ Hanne DE

Depth on the edge.

Justin Greene DE

Depth on the edge.

Chase Linton OLB, So.

One of the second-year edge players who has to step up with Amaris Williams out.

Darren Ikinagbon OLB, So.

Same group, same assignment.

Khamari Brooks OLB, Fr.

Four-star signee getting a longer look than expected.

PJ Dean EDGE, Fr.

Four-star signee, same reason.

Zayden Walker ILB

Missed spring with a shoulder issue. A key piece of the blitz package alongside Chris Cole.

Nick Abrams II ILB, Fr.

A lot of talent, buried on the deepest depth chart on the team.

Terrell Foster ILB

Reliable veteran depth.

AJ Kruah ILB, r-Fr.

Developmental.

Braylon Conley CB

USC transfer brought in for experience behind Ellis Robinson.

Gentry Williams CB

Oklahoma transfer, same role. Both could push Demello Jones for the second corner spot.

Caden Harris CB, Fr.

Top-100 signee out of Tennessee.

Jontae Gilbert CB

In a thin outside corner room, he matters more than a fourth corner usually would.

Justice Fitzpatrick CB, Fr.

Top-100 signee rehabbing a December ACL tear, reportedly ahead of schedule.

Rasean Dinkins STAR/S

Listed as a starter at strong safety and also the second option at STAR.

Zech Fort STAR, Fr.

Four-star signee at the slot position.

Zion Branch S

Second-year man in the system expected to take real snaps.

Ja'Marley Riddle S

East Carolina transfer, most likely to help at safety.

Kyron Jones S

Missed much of the second half of last season; health is the question.

Jaylan Morgan S

Safety depth.

Jordan Smith S, Fr.

Top-100 signee out of Warner Robins.

Todd Robinson S

Depth.

Blake Stewart S, Fr.

Signed on signing day itself.

Special teams

Harran Zureikat K, Fr.

The consensus No. 1 kicker in his recruiting class, out of Pittsburgh. Has hit 61-yarders in practice. Waiting behind Peyton Woodring.

Wade Register P, Fr.

The No. 1 punter in his class. If Drew Miller struggles early, Register is the answer.

Names you will hear in October and November

These are not the starters. They are the players most likely to matter once the season gets serious — the ones who make you look prescient for mentioning them in September.

Talyn Taylor · WR, sophomore

The name to know. A five-star signee in 2025 — only the second five-star receiver Georgia has signed under Kirby Smart, after George Pickens — whose freshman year was wrecked by a broken collarbone and a costly drop against Alabama. He finished with two catches. ESPN's Mark Schlabach named him a national breakout candidate on the strength of camp reports and elite speed. With the receiver room cleared out, the opportunity is enormous.

Kaiden Prothro · TE, true freshman

Six-foot-six, a top-40 national recruit, and already catching passes in camp. Georgia is listing him among the receivers as well as the tight ends, which tells you they intend to move him around and create mismatches. Won a state title at Bowdon as a senior.

Elyiss Williams · TE, sophomore

Made several big plays down the stretch last season. With Oscar Delp gone, the snaps are there. Of everyone in Georgia's tight end room he has the most upside as a pure receiver.

Isaiah Gibson · EDGE, sophomore

A top-10 national recruit in the 2025 class who committed to USC and came home. With Amaris Williams out for the season, Georgia needs him now rather than later.

Tyriq Green · S, true freshman

The defensive back everyone in Athens keeps mentioning. Led Buford to a state championship and has generated persistent talk about being Georgia's next big-time safety.

Craig Dandridge · WR, true freshman

A top-100 signee out of Alpharetta who has been making plays since he arrived. In a receiver room this open, a freshman getting mentioned in August usually means October snaps.

Justin Williams · ILB, junior

A former five-star who now steps into the void CJ Allen left. The staff talks about his leadership as much as his play, and Georgia's linebacker rotation will give him real snaps regardless of who is technically listed first.

Ekene Ogboko · OT, true freshman

A top-40 national signee at a position where Georgia's depth is thinner than it looks. If either tackle misses time, he is the next man.

Valdin Sone · DL, true freshman

Five-star interior lineman. Georgia rotates its defensive line heavily, so he will play, and the interior is where this defense most needs disruption.

Dwight Phillips Jr. · RB, junior

The speed back. In a season where Georgia is short on proven explosive receivers, a running back who can turn a crease into 60 yards has real value.

The program, in seven paragraphs

Enough history to understand why people react the way they do.

The short version

Georgia has been playing football since 1892 and has won three consensus national championships: 1980, 2021 and 2022. The 2021 and 2022 titles were back-to-back, the first repeat by any program since Alabama in 2011 and 2012. Home games have been played at Sanford Stadium since 1929, and from that first season through 2017 Georgia was 346-106-9 between the hedges.

Wally Butts • 1939-1960

Gave Georgia the silver britches and coached the 1942 team that produced Frank Sinkwich, the program's first Heisman Trophy winner. The uniform Georgia wears today is essentially his design.

Vince Dooley • 1964-1988

The defining figure. Twenty-five seasons, six SEC titles and the 1980 national championship, then athletic director for another two decades. The playing surface at Sanford Stadium is named Dooley Field.

Erk Russell • defensive coordinator, 1964-1980

Dooley's defensive coordinator and the most beloved assistant in program history. He named the 1975 defense the Junkyard Dawgs — undersized, overachieving, relentless — and the phrase still describes any Georgia defense that plays angry. He famously headbutted his own helmeted players while wearing no helmet himself.

Herschel Walker • 1980-1982

Arguably the greatest player in college football history. He won the national championship as a true freshman in 1980 and the Heisman Trophy in 1982. No Georgia player has won the Heisman since. When people in Athens say a player is good, the unspoken comparison is always to Herschel, and it is always unfair.

Kirby Smart • 2016-present

Titles after the 2021 and 2022 seasons, and since then two more SEC championships with two straight playoff quarterfinal exits. The program has appeared in five College Football Playoffs. The current frustration is not a decline — it is the gap between being reliably great and winning the last game.

What Georgia is, stylistically

A pro spread on offense and a 3-4 base defense that lives in nickel. In plain terms: run the football, play five defensive backs, tackle well, and make the other team earn every yard. Georgia has rarely been the flashiest team on the field and has almost always been the most physically prepared one.

How 2025 actually went

The season that explains the mood going into this one.

The record

12-2 overall, 7-1 in the SEC. Final ranking: No. 6 in the AP poll for the second consecutive season.

The opening stretch

Wins over Marshall and Austin Peay, then the first SEC test on the road at Tennessee. Georgia won it in overtime after Stockton converted a fourth-and-6 and then completed the game-tying two-point conversion to force the extra period. He threw for a then-career-high 304 yards and was named SEC Offensive Player of the Week.

The loss

Alabama came to Athens and won 24-21 — Georgia's first home loss since 2019. Talyn Taylor's drop in that game became one of the season's lingering images.

The response

A 35-14 win over Kentucky, then a road win at Auburn.

The best game they played

Ole Miss came to Sanford Stadium in October and Georgia scored on its first eight drives — the first team to do that against an AP top-10 opponent since 2016. Stockton finished with 289 passing yards, 59 rushing and five total touchdowns, completing 84 percent of his throws.

The finish

Georgia closed the regular season by beating Georgia Tech 16-9 at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, then returned to the same building a week later and beat Alabama 28-7 for the SEC championship. Stockton was named the game's MVP.

The ending

As the No. 3 seed with a first-round bye, Georgia met Ole Miss in the Sugar Bowl quarterfinal. The Bulldogs led 21-12 at halftime on two Stockton rushing touchdowns and a Daylen Everette fumble return. Ole Miss scored 20 points in the fourth quarter and won 39-34. Georgia had won 75 consecutive games when leading entering the fourth quarter. A botched fourth-and-2 snap at Georgia's own 33 — the offense had come on to draw an offsides and the ball was snapped anyway — turned into a sack and a turnover on downs. Smart took the blame: "That's on us as coaches."

Georgia football, A to Z

Twenty-six entries. Names, places, phrases and one number.

A **Athens**

The town. Sixty-five miles east of Atlanta, home to the University of Georgia, one of the great American music scenes, and roughly 93,000 people on a fall Saturday who did not come for the music.

B **Bobo, Mike**

The offensive coordinator. A former Georgia quarterback in roughly his 20th season on a Georgia staff. Beloved and second-guessed in equal measure, often in the same drive.

C **Clean, Old-Fashioned Hate**

The Georgia Tech rivalry, played since 1893. Two schools 70 miles apart in different conferences. The name is not marketing; it is accurate.

D **Dawg Walk**

The pregame procession of players through a corridor of fans into Sanford Stadium, with the Redcoat Band playing. Free to attend and the best thing on the schedule before kickoff.

E **Erk Russell**

The defensive coordinator from 1964 to 1980 who named the Junkyard Dawgs, headbutted his own players in helmets while wearing none, and is one of the most beloved figures in program history.

F **Frazier, Nate**

The lead running back. Nine hundred and forty-seven yards last season in a committee.

G **Glory, Glory**

The fight song, set to the tune of the Battle Hymn of the Republic and associated with Georgia since the late 1800s. You will hear it a great many times.

H **Hedges, the**

English privet planted around the field in 1929 because roses would not survive the climate. The origin of 'between the hedges' and the most famous landscaping in American sport.

I **IMG Academy**

The Florida prep powerhouse where Ellis Robinson IV played. Shorthand in recruiting conversation for national-level high school talent.

J **Junkyard Dawgs**

What Erk Russell called his undersized, overachieving 1975 defense. Still what fans call a Georgia defense that plays angry.

- K Kirby**
Smart, Kirby. Head coach since 2016. Played safety at Georgia, coached under Nick Saban at Alabama, won national championships after the 2021 and 2022 seasons. Nobody in Athens uses his last name.
- L Luckie, Lawson**
The starting tight end, in a room deep enough that it functions as Georgia's third receiver corps.
- M Mercedes-Benz Stadium**
Atlanta. Site of the SEC Championship Game, and this year of Georgia-Florida while Jacksonville renovates.
- N Nine**
The number of conference games the SEC now plays, up from eight. It is the biggest structural change to the sport's schedule in years.
- O Ole Miss**
The team that ended Georgia's 2025 season 39-34 in the Sugar Bowl. Georgia plays at Oxford on November 7. Circle it.
- P Pass rush**
Georgia's defining problem. Twenty sacks in 2025, and the transfer signed to fix it is out for the year.
- Q Quarterfinal**
The round of the College Football Playoff where each of the last two Georgia seasons has ended. The word carries weight in Athens that it does not carry anywhere else.
- R Robinson IV, Ellis**
The cornerback. National freshman defensive player of the year. Four interceptions, tied for the SEC lead, as a first-year starter.
- S Sanford Stadium**
Opened 1929 in a natural ravine on North Campus. Capacity 93,033. The playing surface is named Dooley Field, for Vince Dooley.
- T Tiger, Georgia**
Population under 400, in the mountains of Rabun County, and the hometown of the starting quarterback. It comes up more than you would expect.
- U Uga**
The live mascot — the eleventh in an unbroken line of solid-white English bulldogs raised by the Seiler family of Savannah since 1956. The current one is named Boom. He has an air-conditioned doghouse.
- V Vince Dooley**
Head coach 1964-1988, athletic director after that, and the man who won Georgia's 1980 national championship with Herschel Walker. The field is named for him.

W **Woodring, Peyton**

The kicker. Seventeen of nineteen last year. Has never missed an extra point in his career.

X **X-and-O identity**

Georgia runs a pro spread on offense and a 3-4 base on defense that lives in nickel. Translated: run the football, play five defensive backs, and make you earn every yard.

Y **Yale**

Georgia's opponent in the first game at Sanford Stadium on October 12, 1929 — a 15-0 Georgia win. Yale donated half its share of the gate to help pay off the stadium.

Z **Zone coverage**

What Georgia plays more of than its reputation suggests. The 2025 pass defense gave up too many explosive plays, and tightening that is the coordinator's assignment this fall.

Ten things to say to sound like you have been watching all along

Each of these is true, specific and defensible. That is the whole trick — one accurate observation beats five vague ones.

01

"The ceiling is the pass rush." Twenty sacks is the number. Everything else about this defense is fine.

02

"They have to find out who catches the ball." Six of the top seven pass catchers are gone. This is the honest question about the season.

03

"Stockton doesn't lose you games." Five interceptions in 386 attempts. Say this and then wait to see whether the person you're talking to thinks that's a compliment.

04

"The linebacker room is the best in the country." Wilson, Cole, Williams, Walker — four starters, all of whom stayed.

05

"Watch the right guard." A three-star true freshman named Zykie Helton beat out a veteran in camp. It's the most interesting job on the roster.

06

"Bobo's average depth of target was 7.3." The lowest of any playoff quarterback last year. This is the whole argument about the offense in one number.

07

"They're a high school development program, not a portal team." Kirby Smart said it himself. Roughly 30 signees, nine transfers.

08

"Their problem isn't November." Two straight SEC titles. Two straight quarterfinal exits.

09

"Ole Miss in Oxford is the game." November 7. Everyone in Athens knows what happened in New Orleans.

10

"Robinson might be the best corner in football." Nobody will argue very hard with you.

A word on everything above

Georgia does not publish a conventional depth chart, so every lineup in this guide is a projection assembled from public beat reporting through fall camp, current as of August 29, 2026. Statistics are from the 2025 season. Recruiting rankings differ between services, which is why a player described as a five-star by one outlet may be a high four-star at another; where they disagree, this guide says so. Injuries, position battles and rankings will all move once games start. Check georgiadogs.com for official information.