**The Devil Went Down to Tennessee and Now Auburn**

**by RG** (Dec. 13, 2020)

Not to correct the exceptional song writing abilities of one of the country’s greatest song writers and performers, who happens to be from the South, but the late, great Charlie Daniels had the Devil’s destination all wrong. It wasn’t Georgia, it has been Tennessee and he has taken up residence at least for the time being with a little side road trip to Auburn, Alabama.

The Devil can play a mean violin but this eloquent string instrument in this instance is not the focus. Rather, it is college football head coaching ability and what is utterly amazing is the Devil has not only found willing participants in the Volunteer faithful, but the true subject of his desires is Phillip Fulmer, former head coach but now Vice Chancellor and Athletic Director at the University of Tennessee, who apparently has not been deterring the Devil’s advances but has been releasing his pheromones to such a high intensity that the Devil has no choice but to respond and stay.

With the recent 42-17 victory over their interstate rival, the Vanderbilt Commodores, it is not certain if that will be enough to save his current 3-6 record breaking season. This when added to his overwhelming, under producing 3-year record of 15 wins and 18 losses with a 1-0 bowl record, a 23-22 victory over the Indiana Hoosiers at the 2020 Taxslayer Gator Bowl, appears that this Vanderbilt victory may not be his saving grace. Besides, Vanderbilt has the history making kicker Sarah Fuller capturing everyone’s attention at least briefly for now on their side.

Just ask Gus Malzahn, his recent 24-10 victory over the lack luster Mississippi State Bulldogs seemingly was not enough to secure his future at Auburn and receiving the proverbial kick in the ass-can. He finished his regular season with a 6-4 record which with his overall eight season record of 68-35, a BCS National Championship appearance his first year, six consecutive bowl appearances and 2 SEC West Division titles, he still will be looking for a job at the start of the new year of 2021.

All of which is to say, there are no guarantees in life especially when it comes to SEC football. Victories do not provide the assurances of keeping a head coaching position, even though Pruitt still remains. Buyouts also come into play but Malzahn has a buyout of $21.7 million and Pruitt has a $12.8 million buyout. One is gone and the other still remains. However, if Auburn can release Malzahn who has a more convincing record (yes longer time of being a head coach but his record at Auburn for his first 3 years is 27-13 compared to a 15-18 record), what is Tennessee’s problem? Not that I am a Tennessee or an Auburn fan or wanting anyone to lose their job especially during these crazy COVID-19 root of all what is currently wrong in America, it does not make any sense. Only time will tell and besides, 2020 is not over yet.