

Popular Football Mascot Dies Unexpectedly

University of Georgia's Bulldog mascot succumbs to heart disease at age 4.

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Uga VII, the 4-year-old English Bulldog who serves as the University of Georgia's football mascot, died Thursday, Nov. 12, 2009, of heart disease at his home in Savannah, the dog's owner said.

"We are all in a state of shock," owner Sonny Seiler said in a news release issued by the university. "We had no warning whatsoever."

The laid-back 56-pound dog made his sideline debut in 2008 after his father, Uga VI, Georgia's winningest mascot, died of congestive heart failure.

Officials placed a wreath on Uga VII's doghouse on the sidelines at Georgia's Saturday game versus Southeastern Conference rival Kentucky.

"He was 10-3 last year, which is not bad for a 'freshman,'" Seiler said. "Uga VII was not as active or mischievous as his father but more distinguished. He realized his role when he put his shirt on. He was well-behaved and always appreciated the significance of his role."

Seiler said he'll name a replacement sometime next year.

"This is a very sad day for the Seiler family but also for all Georgia people," added Damon Evans, the school's athletic director. "Just as his ancestors, he had captured the hearts of college football fans everywhere as the country's No. 1 mascot. He had been truly embraced by all those who follow the Georgia Bulldogs across the country. We will miss him dearly."