



# POSTGAME NOTES

GAME 10 • #16 MISSISSIPPI STATE (7-3, 3-3 SEC) VS. #2 ALABAMA (10-0, 7-0) • NOV. 11, 2017 • DAVIS WADE STADIUM

## TEAM NOTABLES

- Alabama won the toss and elected to defer until the second half. It is just the fourth time that MSU started a game on offense this season.
- Sophomore Jamal Couch earned the first start of his career at wide receiver. He is the 11th first-time starter this season for the Bulldogs. MSU has had five first-time starters on offense and six on defense.
- Aeris Williams scored on an 11-yard rush on MSU's second drive of the game to give State a 7-0 lead with 3:37 in the first quarter. It was MSU's first lead over Alabama since holding a 7-5 second-quarter advantage over the Tide on Nov. 15, 2008.
- MSU closed the first quarter with a 7-7 tie over Alabama. It is the first time this season and the first time since Dec. 31, 2016 against Washington that Alabama has not led after the first quarter.
- At the half, MSU took a 14-14 tie into the locker room to mark the first time since Nov. 5, 2016 against LSU that Alabama did not lead at the half. MSU's 21-17 lead after three quarters was also the first time Alabama has not led heading into the fourth quarter since the 2016 contest against LSU.
- MSU scored three rushing touchdowns against the Tide. It is the first time a team has scored three rushing touchdowns against Alabama during the Nick Saban era and the first time Alabama has allowed three rushing scores since Dec. 28, 2006 against Oklahoma State.
- MSU tallied 172 rushing yards, the most given up by Alabama this season and the most allowed by the Tide since Georgia rushed for 193 yards on Oct. 3, 2015.
- State's defense recorded five sacks against Alabama. It is the first time that Mississippi State has recorded five sacks in a game since Dec. 30, 2015 against North Carolina State in the Belk Bowl.
- MSU's 24 points were the most it has scored against Alabama since State's 24-16 win at Tuscaloosa on Nov. 4, 2006.
- Tonight's attendance was 61,344, which was the 10th-largest crowd in Davis Wade Stadium history.

## PLAYER NOTABLES

- Aeris Williams racked up 97 yards rushing on 22 carries to average 4.4 yards per touch. Williams added two rushing touchdowns. It was Williams second multi-touchdown game and his first since Nov. 16, 2016 at Ole Miss. Williams is the first running back to score two rushing touchdowns against Alabama since Ohio State's Ezekiel Elliott on Jan. 1, 2015.
- Nick Fitzgerald added 66 yards on 21 carries with one touchdown. He brings his season total to 13 rushing touchdowns to rank tied for seventh with Dak Prescott (2013), Keffer McGee (1995) and John Bond (1983) in MSU single-season history. Fitzgerald has now accounted for 6,644 yards of total offense to pass Wayne Madkin (1998-01) for fourth in MSU career history.
- Mark McLaurin led the team and tied his career high with 11 tackles. He also set a career high with 1.5 sacks.
- Braxton Hoyett matched his season high with three tackles.
- J.T Gray tallied his first sack of the season on Alabama's first offensive drive, while both Fletcher Adams (0.5) and Erroll Thompson (1.0) recorded the first sacks of their careers.
- Jace Christmann connected on a 25-yard field goal with 14:13 remaining in the game to improve to 9-for-9 on the season.
- Reggie Todd reeled in two passes for a career-high 25 yards.

**POSTGAME NOTES – 2/1/1 ALABAMA VS. 16/18/18 MISSISSIPPI STATE**  
**SATURDAY, NOV. 11, 2017 • DAVIS WADE STADIUM • STARKVILLE, MISS.**

### NOTES

**GAME CAPTAINS:** Alabama's captains for tonight's game at Mississippi State were center Bradley Bozeman, defensive back Hootie Jones and defensive lineman Da'Ron Payne.

**SEC STREAK:** With tonight's 31-24 win at Mississippi State, Alabama has now won 22 consecutive SEC regular season contests (not including SEC Championship Games) dating back to a 38-10 win at Georgia on Oct. 3, 2015, the second-longest streak in school history. Alabama's last loss was a 43-37 defeat by Ole Miss on Sept. 19, 2015. Alabama won a school record 27 consecutive SEC games from 1976-80.

**SABAN'S 60th GAME AS AP NO. 1:** The matchup with Mississippi State was Nick Saban's 60th career game coaching Alabama as the Associated Press No. 1 team, the most games coached as No. 1 at one school. At 54-6 (.900), Saban has won more games coaching as the No. 1 team at one school than any other coach in college football history. Woody Hayes (Ohio State) and Bobby Bowden (Florida State) are tied for second with 40 wins apiece. Bowden was 40-5 at Florida State as No. 1 and Hayes went 40-6 with Ohio State.

**ALABAMA AS THE NATION'S NO. 1:** Alabama has played 84 games as the nation's top-ranked team since the inception of the Associated Press Poll in 1936. In those games, the Crimson Tide boasts a 73-11 (.869) record. Those numbers are even more impressive when you look at the 11 seasons under the direction of head coach Nick Saban (2007-present). Since the ninth game of the 2008 season (126 games), Alabama has played 60 games while being ranked No. 1, posting a 54-6 (.900) record during that span.

### DEFENSIVE NOTES

**JONES SETS CAREER HIGHS IN TACKLES:** Alabama senior defensive back Hootie Jones finished with a career-high 10 tackles against Mississippi State tonight. Jones' previous career best was six stops, which he had posted twice, most recently against Tennessee on Oct. 21.

### OFFENSIVE NOTES

**FOURTH DOWN EXECUTION:** Alabama is a perfect 12-for-12 on fourth down attempts this season after a 13-yard rush from quarterback Jalen Hurts extended the Tide's first drive in the fourth quarter. Alabama was 2-for-2 against Florida State, 1-for-1 against Fresno State, 2-for-2 at Vanderbilt, 3-for-3 against Ole Miss, 1-for-1 at Texas A&M and 2-for-2 versus Tennessee.

**SCORING STREAK CONTINUES:** Alabama's school record consecutive games scoring streak was extended to 223 games against Mississippi State tonight with Jalen Hurts' one-yard touchdown run on Alabama's second possession. The Crimson Tide was last held off the scoreboard in a 9-0 loss to Auburn on Nov. 18, 2000.

**RIDLEY'S SEVENTH CAREER 100-YARD RECEIVING GAME:** Calvin Ridley's five catches for 171 yards marked the seventh time in his career the junior has topped 100 yards receiving, which ranks No. 4 all-time at Alabama. Julio Jones (2008-10) is third on the UA career list with eight 100-yard games.

**RIDLEY THIRD ON NCAA ACTIVE GAMES WITH A RECEPTION LIST:** With his 63-yard reception on Alabama's second possession tonight, junior Calvin Ridley now has at least one reception in all 40 games of his Alabama

career and ranks No. 3 in consecutive games with a reception among active players in the Football Bowl Subdivision.

**HURTS' CAREER TOUCHDOWN RESPONSIBILITY:** Jalen Hurts' one-yard touchdown run in the first quarter and his 26-yard touchdown pass to freshman DeVonta Smith moved his career touchdown responsibility total to 55. The sophomore remains in third place on the UA career list behind second-place John Parker Wilson (2005-08) who had 58 scores. Hurts has thrown 34 career touchdown passes and rushed for 21 career scores in 25 games.

**HURTS NOW NINTH ON UA CAREER PASSING YARDS LIST:** With 242 passing yards in tonight's game, sophomore Jalen Hurts moved into ninth place on the Alabama career passing yards list with 4,428 yards in 25 career games. Freddie Kitchens (1993-97) is eighth with 4,668 yards.

#### **SPECIAL TEAMS NOTES**

**SCOTT CLIMBING TIDE CAREER PUNTING LIST:** Punter JK Scott's 174 punting yards against the Bulldogs gives him 10,287 yards for his career to extend his UA career record. He is the first punter in UA history to surpass the 10,000 yard mark. Scott's four punting attempts against Mississippi State gave the senior 225 for his career, the second-most in Tide history behind P.J. Fitzgerald (2006-09), who punted 238 times in his career.

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## HEAD COACH DAN MULLEN QUOTES

November 11, 2017

Alabama vs. Mississippi State

### ***Opening statement...***

"I give them a lot of credit. They are an excellent football team. They had a lot of players come up and make some big plays in key moments of the game. They found a way to win there at the end with their players making plays."

### ***On controlling the tempo of possession...***

"We wanted to control the tempo of the game. I thought we were able to do that most of the night. We gave up too many explosive plays on the defensive side of the ball. I mean they have some great players. Some of their great players made some of those plays happen. Coming in to it, I wanted to control the tempo and play at our tempo. I thought we ran the ball okay most of the night offensively. We did control the tempo of the game. We just didn't get enough points at the end of the game."

### ***On coming so close to beating Alabama...***

"Frustrating. Our guys played their tails off. They played hard for 60 minutes. That is the No. 1 team in the country, and they are the No. 1 team in the country for a reason. It isn't easy to beat the No. 1 team in the country. I guess we get opportunities every year, so we will get another shot next year."

### ***On feeling like he did everything to win this game...***

"No. If we did we would have won. As coaches we have to make sure we are putting our guys in the best position. A couple times we didn't do that today. That was probably the difference in the game right there. If we did everything we could have done, we would have won the game."

### ***On being able to run the ball...***

"That was kind of the plan going in to it. They don't give up a lot of explosive plays. They have great athletes. When you get to the second level they normally have some really good guys there. The explosives are the difference in the game. We had some opportunities. They hit all of the explosives, and we missed them. That was probably the difference when it comes down to it at the very end."

### ***On blitzing on 3rd & 15 late in the 4th quarter...***

"Well we are an aggressive defense. We came after them. That is our style. We are not going to change our style or get conservative. We will be an attacking style defense. That is what we are. That is who we are. That is how we have had success. If you look at what he did for them, No. 3 (Calvin Ridley) was easily the best player on the field tonight. With the game on the line he made every play. No question, he is the guy."



## HEAD COACH NICK SABAN QUOTES

November 11, 2017

Alabama vs. Mississippi State

### *Opening Statement*

“That was a great win for our team. I think it was a great example of overcoming a lot of adversity. We knew this game would be hard. We talked about trying to thrive in hard situations and we certainly had the opportunity to do that. At the end of the game we made a couple of great drives on offense especially the last drive. We got a couple of critical stops on defense when we needed to. I can’t be more proud of the players for the way they competed during the game. This is a great team win for us. I can’t tell you how happy and excited I am for the players. They are very excited and happy. Sometimes if you win a game like this, it does a lot for everybody coming together. We certainly had to do a lot of that overcoming adversity especially in the second half in the fourth quarter. On defense, they had a really good plan. They played slow. They are usually a no huddle team. They tried to shrink the game, make it a close game and have great time and possession which they had, but we made a lot of plays on offense. A lot of explosive plays and big plays and scored. We did what we had to do to score points. Defensively, we did not do a great job at stopping the run, but you have to give Mississippi State a lot of credit. They had a great plan and a good running game. The quarterback is really a handful to go with the running game. Our players hung in there and did a really good job at competing. There is no doubt that a lot of guys that have not played a lot of football to this point probably learned a lot tonight and will have a chance to get better. We will work with them to do that. Ross Pierschbacher has a high ankle sprain. We will do an MRI on him in the morning and learn how long he will be out. We have a couple of other guys that are kind of banged up that Doc will evaluate in the morning and we will go from there.”

### *On what he said to Jalen Hurts during the last drive of the game...*

“We practiced that. We usually practice for one minute and 20 seconds, but we were 11 seconds off when we got the ball back, so we only had one minute nine, but I think the execution and the ability to make plays when we needed them to, both Calvin Ridley and Jalen. They were blitzing and did a really good job of handling the blitz from an offensive point at the end. We didn’t do it earlier in the game and we got sacked a few times, but Jalen did a good job of handling it at the end.”

### *On the running game in the second half...*

“We talked about, at halftime, getting back to running some catch sweeps and when we weren’t running them to use them as eye candy for the defense. We wanted to try to run the ball in the perimeter a little bit more. I think the players did a really good job of that. We moved the ball very effectively in the second half.”

### *On the spark Josh Jacobs gave in the second half...*

“Josh was a different cap for us being a quick, explosive and fast guy. He hasn’t been healthy all the time, but I think he was a change of pace guy that could go in there and do what he did

tonight. That was the spark for the whole team. Just his competitive disposition about how he ran the ball and his second effort I think affected everyone out there. He was very productive and effective for us.”



## MISSISSIPPI STATE PLAYER QUOTES

November 11, 2017

Alabama vs. Mississippi State

**QB – Nick Fitzgerald – Jr.**

*On how to bounce back from tonight's loss...*

“Wake up tomorrow and then move on. We have two more games left in the regular season, must wins, and we have a bowl game so we have to keep moving forward. We can't lean on this one.”

*On his emotions following the game...*

“We lost. That's the reality of it. It doesn't matter who you lost to, it doesn't matter how much you lose by or anything like that, you lost a football game we feel like we should have won. I feel like we could have won, so I'm disappointed, sad, but can't lean on it too much, keep moving forward.”

**DL – Jeffery Simmons– So.**

*On the physicality of the game...*

“Other than Georgia, they were pretty physical. We knew it was going to be a front-tempo game, and we played our heart out, both offensive and defensive line.”

*On handling their attack tempo...*

“We knew they were going to come in hard. They did this last year, so we knew they were going to come and try to do that again. We are in shape for it and it is kind of how we are built and it made it harder on their offense.”

**DB – Mark McLaurin – Jr.**

*On emotions after the game...*

“It is very disappointing. We came out here and played very hard. It just came a little short. We fought so hard and we just lost all the big plays. I just want to say thank you to the coaches, players and everybody that participated in the game. We fought so hard; it was just a game of inches.”

*On if the game will stick with him...*

“It really does because we work so hard during the week. We came out and played the way we did tonight, and we just played lights out. With the big plays and with the end results it just wasn't what we were expecting.”



## ALABAMA PLAYER QUOTES

November 11, 2017

Alabama vs. Mississippi State

**WR – Calvin Ridley – Jr.**

*On quarterback Jalen Hurts' poise in tough situations...*

"We've been in situations like this. He definitely was very poised. We've been in situations like this, like last year versus Clemson and other games. We practice against that type of stuff. We just made some great plays right then."

*On what the win means, given the adversity faced in the game...*

"That team played their butt off tonight. They gave it all they had. I feel like it was on us, and we made some good plays at the end."

**DB – Anthony Averett – R-Sr.**

*On his muscle cramps in the second half...*

"We got down at first, but we just kept talking – especially our leaders, our senior leaders. Everybody was like, 'Keep your head up; it's a long game.' It kind of felt like Clemson."

*On how the team came together on the field tonight...*

"[Coach Saban] wants us to kill everybody, but unfortunately this is the SEC. Mississippi State is a good team. It was hard. The atmosphere was crazy. The cowbells were loud. It was a good game."

*On forcing Mississippi State's three-and-out in the final minutes of the game...*

"It was crucial. We're all about finishing this year. This game was just like last year, what happened with Clemson. This game kind of took a lot, but we have to finish. We finished today."

**OL – Jonah Williams– So.**

*On his first career game...*

"My heartbeat is still at about 120, so I'm coming down. That's the type of thing – you're not always going to blow people out, especially playing good, quality teams like that. Just to come out with a win is really big."

*On the importance of creating big plays late in the game...*

"It's huge. That's one of the things I think makes a good team, when we have adversity. We've had adversity throughout the season, but this was obviously one of our most adverse games. I think being able to respond to that is a big part of the character we have here as an offense."