



# POSTGAME NOTES

GAME 10 • MISSISSIPPI STATE (4-6, 2-4 SEC) AT #1/1/1 ALABAMA (10-0, 7-0 SEC) • NOV. 12, 2016 • BRYANT DENNY STADIUM

## TEAM NOTABLES

- Today's game was Dan Mullen's 100th as head coach of the Bulldogs, joining Nick Saban as the only current coaches in the SEC to reach the century mark. Dan Mullen and Jackie Sherrill are the only coaches in MSU history to reach this milestone.
- This was the 101st meeting between Mississippi State and Alabama, with the Crimson Tide now leading the overall series 80-18-3. Alabama holds a nine-game winning streak against the Bulldogs.
- With Fred Ross's fourth receiving record, the Bulldogs have now broken 107 individual and career statistical records in the Dan Mullen era.
- Today's attendance was 101,821

## PLAYER NOTABLES

- Fred Ross became MSU's all-time leader in receiving yards with 23 today, giving him a total of 2275 to move past the record set by Chad Bumphis in 2012 (2270). The senior wide receiver has now shattered four MSU wide-receiving records in as many weeks (Catches, 181; Consecutive games with a catch, 32; 100-yard receiving games, 9)
- Ross continues to add on to his MSU record of consecutive games with a reception, now standing at 32-straight.
- Jamoral Graham grabbed the second interception of his career and returned it 46 yards late in the first quarter. For his career, he is averaging 42 yards per interception return.
- Westin Graves 47-yard field goal in the third quarter was the second longest of his career.
- Jamal Peters forced the first fumble of his career in the third quarter, jarring the ball loose from Jalen Hurts on fourth down. It was recovered by Mark McLaurin, his first since having a scoop-n-score in the fourth quarter against Kentucky on October 22.
- Nick Fitzgerald has now had 33 rushes go for 10 yards or longer. Entering the game that was good for sixth nationally and first among all SEC players at any position.
- Aeris Williams' 56 rushing yards today are the most by a Bulldog against the Crimson Tide since Dak Prescott had 82 on the ground in 2014 and the most by a Bulldog tailback since Vick Ballard's 80 in 2010.
- DeAndre Ward's 1.5 tackles for loss sets a new career-high for the former walk-on.

## **ALABAMA ATHLETICS COMMUNICATIONS**

**Saturday, November 12, 2016**

### **FOOTBALL**

#### **Alabama Football vs. Mississippi State – Postgame Quotes**

##### **Alabama Head Coach Nick Saban**

###### **Opening statement:**

“I was really pleased with the way we got started today. I know it’s been a long time since we scored a touchdown in the first quarter after the LSU game. I was worried about a little relief syndrome after that game last week, but I was really pleased with the way our players came out and started fast. Even though we didn’t finish the first drive, we moved the ball effectively and really did a good job.

“Jalen (Hurts) had a really good day today. It’s one of the things that we’ve been wanting to do in trying to develop some confidence in the passing game, and obviously, he was able to do that very well today. We got the ball to some of our playmakers down the field, and they had the opportunity to make big plays. ArDarius (Stewart) had a big day today, and also O.J. Howard, so that was really a positive for us. Jalen (Hurts) also having 100 yards rushing is something that’s never been done here before with 300 yards passing and 100 yards rushing. That’s something that we can be proud of.

“I was really pleased with the way our defense handled Mississippi State’s offensive attack, especially their quarterback (Nick Fitzgerald), who is such a good runner on the quarterback run plays. I know they nicked and dinged us a little bit. There were some third downs that we would’ve like to get off the field, which extended drives for them. When you’re playing against these fastball teams, that’s certainly what you don’t want to do.

“I think it was a team effort today. The offense controlled the tempo of the game, and the defense was able to get stops when they needed to. There was a couple bad field position situations early in the game with a turnover and a kickoff return that the defense went out on and got a stop, which was a real key to the game. I was just really proud of the way our guys competed in the game today and played in the game today. We sort of told them that there are 10 units here. Whether it’s O Line, D Line, linebackers, secondary or coaches, all those units need to work together, and that would make us strong. A lot of the leadership on the team really stepped up this week and knew that we would be a little bit vulnerable. I was glad that the guys all responded and did well. It’s a good win for us.

“We’re going to take an extra day off this week and not practice on Monday and try to get some guys healed up. Bo Scarbrough will be okay very shortly. We would have been pushing the envelope a little bit today to put him back out there. We did not want to play him today unless we absolutely had to, and we never needed to do that. From an injury standpoint, I know we had a couple guys come out of the game, but I don’t think we had anything serious to really report on.”

###### **On the status of Lester Cotton:**

“I think I said the other day that we’re trying some people at that position, and Lester [Cotton] missed some reps because of his concussion a few weeks ago. He was in a black shirt all this week, and we knew that he could play in this game but he didn’t take as many reps in practice, so we said we’re going to take a look at some of those other guys that can play that position right now. He was cleared to play in the game, and he did play some in the game. We’ve been wanting to try [Korren Kirven] in there all year just to see how he would do, and it will be interesting to see how those guys did at right guard.”

###### **On who he would give the game ball to:**

“I’m not big on doing that kind of stuff. We did give Eddie [Jackson] the game ball last week after the LSU game. The players wanted to do that, and I wanted to do it. He went on the trip with us because the team means a lot to him, and we miss him a lot. I guess if you went on statistics you would have to say the quarterback did a really good job today, but I think he would be the first guy to tell you that the other 10 guys that he plays with did a really good job too. We talk about standard, we talk about team, we talk about togetherness, and we talk about everyone doing their job. We’re not big on singling out people when I feel that there were a lot of people that did a really good job today.”

**#10 Reuben Foster, LB**

**On being ready from the start:**

“We prepared right. The team loved the team, and the opponent was great too. We try to limit our mistakes and play hard. We try to please our coach.”

**On the big plays made during the game:**

“Once one person makes a play, we feed off of it. All of us do. When one person does great, we all want to be great. Like Coach Saban and Coach Pruitt beat into our head. Control your box. Dominate your box. Control the player in front of you, and you’ll be successful.”

**#71 Ross Pierschbacher, OL**

**On the offense, and the big win:**

“We came out, executed, and everyone did their job. The coaches really challenged us this week to execute, and I think we did just that.”

**On the quick start:**

“We wanted to come out and play fast, just really prove ourselves. After last week, I felt that we had a lot of stuff to clean up, and I think we came out and did a good job.”

## **Mississippi State Head Coach Dan Mullen**

### **Opening Statement:**

“Alabama obviously has a great football team. As I said, they have great players from top to bottom. Their guys that aren’t even on the field, can’t get on the field, they’ll probably start for most teams in the country. We knew that coming in, knew we had to play a great game. Just way too many mistakes early on for us, whether it’s missed tackles, poor fits defensively, not setting an edge on the perimeter. You know, within a game plan you’ve got to try to stay balanced and take shots down the field. I think too many dropped passes with some shots down field. We had some opportunities to hit some and win some shots down field and missed those early in the game. But give them credit. They’re an excellent football team, and, you know, there’s a reason they’re No. 1 in the country. They play like it. We’ve just got to move on and get ready for Arkansas.”

### **On what you tell a young team about this type of game:**

“We are going to move on and go on to Arkansas at this point. There are things I told them to just be critical and to go watch themselves and evaluate some things on the film. They will see some opportunities that were missed for us in the game. They have to just realize you’ve got to have the confidence to make those plays, especially when you’re playing a great team. You are capable of executing at a very high level.”

### **On Alabama’s defense:**

“We had five dropped passes in the first half. That’s not good when you’re playing a great defense. It’s not good when you’re playing a bad defense, but when you’re playing a great defense you cannot do those things.”

### **On quarterback Nick Fitzgerald getting hit so much and coming back after this game:**

“We know they are a great team, so we knew that. He made some great throws during the course of the game and I think he will grow as a leader. He was put in some tough situations, made some great throws but missed a couple of throws, too. I think he will learn from this moving forward.”

## **#39 Richie Brown, LB**

### **On defending a quarterback like Jalen Hurts:**

“He is a fast guy and a great decision maker. He knows when to tuck it and run and he made some good plays today.”

### **On emotions after this game:**

“It’s tough, but we are kind of forced to put it behind us and keep moving forward because we have two games that we have to play our best football. So we need to put it behind us and learn from our mistakes.”

## **#6 Donald Gray, WR**

### **On pass defense:**

“I have to give credit where credit is due. Their DBs are pretty fast and have great closing speed. We got beat. The best man wins and they obviously won.”

### **On motivation from this game for final two games to get to postseason:**

“It helps a lot. It gives us something to play towards. We get a second chance next week to get better. We have to grind and do what we have to do to get another ball game.”

