



# THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

ATHLETICS COMMUNICATIONS

ALABAMA CRIMSON TIDE VS. MISSISSIPPI STATE BULLDOGS  
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2012 • BRYANT-DENNY STADIUM

## • MISSISSIPPI STATE POSTGAME NOTES

### TEAM NOTES

- The Bulldogs' 7-1 start is the best start through eight games for MSU since 1999 (8-0).
- Mississippi State's nine-game winning streak came to an end. The streak was the third-longest winning streak nationally and in school history.
- Mississippi State's 17 passing touchdowns this season are tied for third most in a single season in school history.
- The Bulldogs have scored 264 points through the first eight games, the highest point total through the first eight games of a season since 2000 (278).
- MSU's defense held Alabama running back Eddie Lacy to his lowest career yards-per-carry average (2.6, minimum five carries), as well as his career low for rushing yards as a starter (26).
- State had its most passing yards against Alabama since passing for 262 yards in 2000.
- Head Coach Dan Mullen has yet to be shutout in 46 games as MSU head coach, the third-longest stretch without being shutout in school history (90 from 1978 to 1986; 76 from 1990-1997; 45 from 1997-2001).
- State's 16-play, 97-yard drive in the third quarter was its longest drive of the season.
- Thanks to the MSU defense, Alabama went three-and-out on three-straight possessions for the first time since Jan. 7, 2010 against Texas in the 2010 BCS Title Game.
- After registering 42 penalty yards combined in its last three games, MSU tallied 51 penalty yards in the first half alone Saturday night.
- The crowd of 101,821 tied for the second-largest crowd ever to watch a Mississippi State football game.

### PLAYER NOTES

- Senior linebacker Cameron Lawrence finished the night with 10 tackles, 2.0 tackles for loss and a sack. In his last two games overall, Lawrence has 16 tackles, 4.5 tackles for loss, two sacks, a forced fumble and a fumble recovery. In his last two games against the Crimson Tide, the senior has totaled 22 tackles, 2.5 tackles for loss, a sack and an interception.
- Senior wide receiver Chad Bumphis passed Robert Isaac (2,933) for 10th all-time in school history in career all-purpose yards (2,938).
- Junior quarterback Tyler Russell passed Chris Irel (3,297) for eighth all-time in school history in career passing yards (3,411).
- Redshirt freshman Robert Johnson caught a career-high four catches, including a touchdown catch for the second-straight game.
- Redshirt freshman Dak Prescott has accounted for a touchdown in three-straight games, finishing 4-for-6 for 40 yards and a touchdown pass.
- Senior wide receiver Chris Smith tallied three catches for a season-high 73 yards, becoming the first MSU player with three or more catches in six-straight games since Chad Bumphis did it in seven-consecutive games from Nov. 21, 2009 to Oct. 9, 2010.
- Redshirt freshman linebacker Benardrick McKinney tallied his first career sack in the second quarter for -13 yards.
- Senior defensive tackle Dewayne Cherrington notched his first tackle for loss of the season.
- Midseason All-American left guard Gabe Jackson has started all 34 games of his career, marking the longest streak on the team.



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### Head Coach Dan Mullen

#### Opening statement:

“Obviously, we are very disappointed, that all falls on me as the head coach to make sure we had our guys ready and we were in positions to make plays tonight but we didn’t do that. A lot of plays were there that could be made on the field and we didn’t make them.

“We give Alabama a lot of credit. They made a lot of big plays during the course of the game. You know from the result; you watch the team and well coached. They all played very hard. It’s amazing how the ball bounces to the guys who play hard. So, you know, it’s the reason they’re the number one team in the country. I think our team has done a great job so far this year with handling the adversity of success.

“Now we’re going to see how we handle the adversity of failure this week, and that’s a good challenge you know, a great challenge. It’s going to be a great challenge for me and our staff and the leadership of our team to come back. You know, there is a lot of football left to be played this season. It’s far from over for us. This season is far from over for anybody in the SEC West at this point. We have a really big home game next week; we’re going to have to bounce back.

“I think our fans did an unbelievable job and I think all of the support our fans have given us, how much they bought in, how much they believe in this program, it really shows, and I thank them for all of their support. You know what we need our biggest fan output of the season and our best home field advantage that we’ve had so far this year, next week.”

#### On the team’s effort:

“I think our guys played hard all four quarters. I think they still, you know, we still have a lot of young guys that are still learning and I think our guys came in. I think our guys are disappointed, you know, they came in and expected to win the game. And probably nobody else out there thought we would expect us to win. And I love our fans and how they believed in us. We didn’t just believe, I think our guys expected us to win. So I think they’re very disappointed. They’re going to have to see how they respond from this.”

#### On the impact of turnovers and special teams:

“Turnover ratio. The little things. All of the little things. And little things to me, you know, come down to attention to detail and complete focus. We talked about it. To win these games, you have to have complete focus and execute for 60 minutes. We obviously didn’t do that and we made some critical mistakes. I think the first half we converted two third downs and then had them called back for penalties. Then we turned the ball over a couple of times. That’s going to allow us good field position and the momentum we need throughout the course of the game. All of the little things you need to do, we didn’t do. We had two red zone possessions, threw an interception on the second one, I think it was 24 to nothing at the time. If we scored in the red zone, it would have been 24 to 14 at that point. We were in a very different deal. We didn’t score touchdowns in the red zone. All of the little things you have to do in great games, give them credit for, we didn’t do them tonight.”

### Johntan Banks, Cornerback

#### On the 21-0 deficit:

“They [Alabama] came out ready. They were prepared for us. Whatever we did on defense, they had an answer for. I tip my hat to those guys, they came out, they played hard, and they did what they needed to do to get the job done.”

#### On what went wrong on the 57-yard touchdown:

“Just busted coverage. That’s it.”

### Cameron Lawrence, Linebacker

#### On if he saw this result coming tonight:

“It wasn’t something we expected. We came into this game expecting to get a win. Props to Alabama, they’re the number one team in the country for a reason. I felt we played one of our worst games, and Alabama just executed.”

#### On being down 21-0 early on:

“It was definitely hard. It was frustrating for us, and we’ve never had somebody come out and do that to us. We did get our groove back there in the 2nd up through the 4th quarter. We had a couple three and outs, and kind of held pretty good, but just silly mistakes and we couldn’t get any momentum really after that. They kept rising and kept executing and doing what they did.”



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### GENERAL NOTES

**ALABAMA UNDER SABAN IN OCTOBER:** Alabama has been very successful in the second month of the season under head coach Nick Saban. Now in his sixth season at Alabama, the Crimson Tide sports an 18-1 record (20-1 including two vacated victories in 2007) in October. In 21 games over that span, the Crimson Tide has outscored its opponents 654-261.

**TIDE 57-3 UNDER SABAN WHEN LEADING AT THE HALF:** Alabama defeated Mississippi State on Saturday after taking a 24-0 lead into halftime. With the victory, the Crimson Tide is 57-3 when leading at halftime under head coach Nick Saban.

**30-POINT STREAK:** Alabama recorded its eighth straight game with 30 or more points which is the longest streak to start a season in school history. Prior to this season, Alabama had started three seasons with five games in a row (1920, 1979 & 2009) of scoring 30 or more points.

### OFFENSIVE NOTES

**McCARRON PASSES WITHOUT AN INTERCEPTION:** AJ McCarron continues to build his school record of passes without an interception. After passing Brodie Croyle's record of 190, McCarron enters the second half of tonight's game with an active streak of 258 passing attempts without an interception.

**McCARRON MOVING UP ON CAREER TD PASSES LIST:** With two touchdown passes thus far tonight, AJ McCarron has 37 career touchdown passes. That total ranks 4th in Alabama history behind John Parker Wilson (47 - 2005-08), Brodie Croyle (41 - 2002-05) and Greg McElroy (39 - 2007-10).

**McCARRON ON SINGLE-SEASON TD PASSES LIST:** McCarron's 18 touchdown passes this season ranks tied for second on the Alabama single-season passing touchdowns list with John Parker Wilson, who also threw for 18 touchdowns in 2007. Greg McElroy holds the single-season passing touchdowns mark with 20, set in 2010.

**FIRST HALF SCORING:** Alabama has helped its own cause over the last few seasons by not trailing while entering the locker room at the half. The Tide has either held a lead or been tied entering the intermission in 28 straight games. Over that span UA has outscored the opposition, 564-114 in the first half. The last time the Tide trailed at the half was at South Carolina on October 9, 2010, an eventual 35-21 loss.

**20 OR MORE IN THE FIRST HALF:** With 24 points in the opening half tonight against Mississippi State, Alabama has scored 20 or more points in every first half this season.

**FIRST QUARTER POINTS:** With T.J. Yeldon's 11-yard run to start the scoring and a 57-yard pass by AJ McCarron to Kenny Bell in the first quarter, Alabama has scored in every first quarter this season, outscoring its opponents 104-3 in the opening quarter this season.

**SCORING STREAK CONTINUES:** With T.J. Yeldon's 11-yard touchdown run in the first quarter, Alabama raised its current total of consecutive games in which it scored to 150 – the longest streak in program history.

**RUSHING TO SUCCESS:** Alabama rushed for 179 on Saturday against Mississippi State. Alabama is 45-0 since the start of the 2008 season when the Tide rushes for at least 150 yards.

**RUSHING TRENDS VS. MSU:** Since the arrival of Alabama head coach Nick Saban in 2007, the Crimson Tide has had a decided advantage rushing the football against Mississippi State. Alabama has gained more yards on the ground in each of those six meetings, rushing for 1,180 yards while the Bulldogs have gained 472 yards. The Crimson Tide averages 196.7 rushing yards per game against MSU since 2007. Conversely, Mississippi State is gaining an average of 78.7 yards per game on the ground against UA.

### DEFENSIVE NOTES

**YARDS HARD TO COME BY:** The Alabama defense held Mississippi State to 256 total yards on Saturday night. Dating back to the 2011 Capital One Bowl against Michigan State, a span of 22 games, the Alabama defense has allowed just one



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opposing team to reach 300 total yards (Georgia Southern, 341). Teams have been held under 200 total yards 12 times, and less than 100 total yards twice. Rushing against the Tide has been even more difficult over that span as teams have been held to under 100 yards 18 times, under 50 yards 10 times and in negative yardage twice.

**10 POINTS OR LESS:** Alabama's defense held Mississippi State to seven points on Saturday night. Since Nick Saban took over as head coach, the Crimson Tide has held opponents to 10 points or less 38 times since the start of the 2007 season.

**HOLDING OPPONENTS UNDER 300:** Alabama held Mississippi State to 256 total yards on Saturday night. In head coach Nick Saban's 75-game tenure at Alabama, the Crimson Tide has limited opponents to less than 300 yards of total offense 50 times, or 66.7 percent of the time.

**TURNOVERS=POINTS:** Twice against Mississippi State Alabama scored touchdowns on offense immediately after the defense forced a turnover. This season, Alabama has forced 23 turnovers and converted them into 17 touchdowns and two field goals for a total of 125 points.

**LESTER GETS 13TH CAREER INTERCEPTION:** Alabama senior safety Robert Lester picked off his 13th career pass which ranks eighth in Alabama history. The Mississippi State game marked the second consecutive game in which Lester intercepted a pass.

**MULTIPLE INTERCEPTIONS:** Alabama has tallied 14 interceptions on the season and has picked off at least one pass in seven of the eight games in 2012. The Tide has picked off two or more passes in five of the eight games, including three in a row.



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### Head Coach Nick Saban

#### Opening Statement:

“We certainly had a lot of respect for Mississippi State. You don’t get to be 7-0 by accident. We thought they were a really good team and that they would come and play a really good game. I thought it was important for us to get off to a fast start in this game. You are preparing yourself to fight a 15-round fight, knowing that you are going to have to take the fight to them in the early rounds. You can’t necessarily win the fight in the first round, but you can certainly lose it. I think we had the right mental energy and the right physical energy to play in the game. I was really proud of the way our guys competed and played in the game. It was a tough physical game. Our goal was to play sound football for 60 minutes. Everybody knows what the formula for that is for them, and the recipe that is for us. Everybody has to understand their role and go out there and do it. I know everybody is probably going to say, ‘Well you got upset with the backup players.’ I got upset with the backup players because they are better than that. They can play better than that. They need to play with poise and confidence when they go in the game and compete just like everybody else competes. That’s being able to execute and do your job. It’s not about shutting anybody out. It’s not about any of that. It’s about them playing their best football. We are trying to get our players to play their best that they can play in every regard. We need to keep improving as a team.

“I think at this point in the season it’s kind of like the playoffs in a way. You’ve got a tough game the next week. You’ve got a good opponent the next week. You’ve got somebody in your division that’s a really good team. We are going to have to continue to improve and learn from our experiences today in terms of the good things that we did and also correct some of the things we didn’t do very well. Every game has a history, a life of its own. It’s up to us to try and do the best we can to put our players in the best possible position to be successful.

“I though AJ (McCarron) played really well in the game. He’s got a back contusion. That’s what he’s got. It’s in his back. It’s from when he got sacked. He bruised his back. He’s fine. He could have gone back in the game. He could have played in the game. He should be fine for next week’s game. Amari Cooper twisted his ankle early in the game and came back and played

on it. He will be fine. I don’t think we have any other injuries to report.

“I thought turnovers would be important in this game. I think it was very important that we didn’t turn the ball over in the game and that we were plus three in turnovers. I think it made a huge difference in the game.”

#### On the play of the defensive line in this evening’s game:

“I thought it was good – they kind of kept us off-balance a little bit. I think they have a good offensive team. We probably didn’t play as good of pass defense as I would have liked, but I thought the front did a pretty good job. They hurt us a couple of times on some 10-yard-runs – on a counter play where we could have closed a little better and fit the run a little bit better. I was really pleased with the way they played. I think we affected the quarterback a little bit, but we didn’t get a lot of sacks. I think we did affect them some. I thought we made some coverage errors out there where they had guys open and I think we are going to need to play better than that down the road.”

#### On the momentum off of the blocked field goal:

“I think there were two really critical plays in the game. They drove the ball right down the field on us, and we get a blocked field goal early in the game which is a big play. I also think when they drove the ball 90-some yards on us and we got an interception – both those things were huge. The blocked field goal early in the game was certainly a boost for us. I think the first drive that we had offensively was a big momentum boost for us.”

#### On when quarterback Blake Sims enters the game and his level of knowledge of the offense:

“Blake has improved a lot since we have put him in the role of being back-up quarterback – he really shares time with Phillip [Ely]. There are certain things that he does, there are a lot more things that he can do and he’s capable of doing, it’s just that when we’re in those situations of the game, we are really trying to take the air out of the ball and it’s really four minute offense and he does a good job executing that. The fact that he is a runner, gives them something else to defend. He has made good progress and he continues to learn more about the offense and play with confidence. He is very athletic, so it gives us a little different pitch for the defense, when he is in the game. We have



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all the confidence in the world in utilizing him and using his abilities in some way.”

On the progress this year’s defense has made since the Michigan game:

“I have been pleased with the way our guys have played. I thought our guys could have executed a little bit better a couple of times tonight. Really for all of the young players we have, if you would have told me that we would be in the position statistically and scoring defense-wise that we are in right now I would have said ‘probably no way’. These guys have really set out with an attitude that they want to prove something and we have had some guys that have really stepped up as play-makers. C.J. Mosley has been a play-maker for us all year long; Dee Milliner has played really, really well. The front guys have played well. We have had some guys that have been great role-players around them, so I have been really pleased with the progress they have made. I think continued improvement is really going to be important for us down the road.”

### **Robert Lester, Defensive Back**

On the defense’s play tonight:

“I think we did an excellent job of coming in and executing the game plan, playing assignment football. Everybody did their job, and near the end of the game it was the only touchdown we gave up, so I think the defense came out and played excellent tonight.”

On the interception in the end zone:

“It was all a part of me doing my job. I dropped off in zone and was able to read the quarterback and make a great play on the ball.”

### **C.J. Mosley, Linebacker**

On the defense’s play tonight:

“We were just all about communication. Even though we played at home we have to make sure that we do the things we did to affect their offense, and that’s what we did.”

On going forward to a big game next week:

“We don’t even have to talk about it. You already know what is set for next week’s game, based off last year and based off the national championship. We just have to treat every game like it’s another game. We just got to be ready for what they bring.”

### **Michael Williams, Tight End**

On the touchdown and the overall performance of the offense:

“It was all part of the game plan. We saw different things and we saw holes through where the tight end could get open and just on that particular play, I had one on one with the cornerback, he widened out, and it opened up space for me.”

On the quick start by the offense:

“Any offense wants to start off fast; that’s the main thing about coming out of the game: starting fast and finishing strong. We struggled a little in the middle, but we still finished the game strong. Like I said, we did what we wanted and we started fast.”