

WEEK NINE
ARKANSAS at ALABAMA

Mac Jones, No. 1 Alabama dominate Arkansas 48-7 minus Tua TUS-CALOOSA, Ala. -- Alabama didn't get caught looking ahead to the massive next game or slow down much even with Tua Tagovailoa stuck watching from the sidelines.

Mac Jones passed for 235 yards and three touchdowns filling in for an injured Tagovailoa and the top-ranked Crimson Tide coasted to a 48-7 victory over Arkansas on Saturday night.

Even without the Heisman Trophy candidate Tagovailoa, the Tide (8-0, 5-0 Southeastern Conference) raced to a 41-0 halftime lead and Jones only played one drive into the second half. The Razorbacks (2-6, 0-5) couldn't muster much challenge on either side of the ball in what turned into a drama-free tuneup for Alabama's game in two weeks against No. 2 LSU.

Tide coach Nick Saban didn't have to gripe about players swallowing the "rat poison" of media and fan hype about the next game.

"This was a game that if we'd taken any rat poison, we wouldn't have been focused on this game at all, based on everybody else," Saban said. "The community, the media, the fans and the questions I get asked on the radio show.

"I get asked about the next game and we had this game. I was really pleased with the way they stayed focused on what they had to do in this game."

Jones completed 18 of 22 passes and finished up with a 40-yarder in the end zone for his second touchdown throw to Jerry Jeudy. Jeudy caught seven passes for 103 yards with Jones & Co. proving they can still deliver some big plays even without Tagovailoa.

"I felt really prepared and we were prepared," Jones said. "It's football and I've been playing since I was 5 and everybody around me has been playing since they were 5. So no big deal."

Najee Harris rushed for 86 yards and a pair of 1-yard touchdowns. Cornerback Trevon Diggs scored on an 84-yard interception return in the final seconds before the half, a week after returning a fumble 100 yards for a score against Tennessee.

Nick Starkel returned to the starting role at quarterback for Arkansas after Ben Hicks suffered a left shoulder injury against Auburn. Starkel completed just 5 of 19 passes for 58 yards and was intercepted three times.

"You can't spot the No. 1 team in the country 24 points (off turnovers) in the first half and expect to come out of that," Razorbacks coach Chad Morris said.

Redshirt freshman John Stephen Jones got the Razorbacks on the board with a touchdown pass to start the fourth quarter.

Alabama's win set the stage for a two-week buildup to the latest Game of the Century. LSU did its part by beating No. 9 Auburn 23-20. The big question will be if Tagovailoa can recover in time from a right ankle injury.

In the meantime, he watched from the sideline as his little brother got some playing time. Freshman Taulia Tagovailoa played much of the second half and showed his own scrambling ability.

THE TAKEAWAY

Arkansas: Has lost 13 straight to Alabama and is 0-13 in SEC games under coach Chad Morris. Jones, grandson of Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones, was 6 of 7 for 49 yards and a touchdown. Jerry Jones attended the game.

"I thought he gave us a spark and allowed us to get in some of our zone read game and do some really good things," Morris said of the young QB. "The moment was not too big for him."

Alabama: Didn't miss a beat without Tua Tagovailoa, but started out conservatively on offense. The Tide converted four turnovers into 24 points. Taulia was 6 of 8 for 45 yards. Saban expects Tua to return to practice in some capacity by mid-week.

QB CHASER

Alabama linebacker Terrell Lewis was credited with six quarterback hurries, helping harass Starkel into mistakes. "I told the DBs they owe me a thank you note," he joked.

SMITH'S SHOULDER

Alabama wide receiver DeVonta Smith was on the sidelines with a sling on his left shoulder in the second half, which Saban said was just a bruise. He had four catches for 67 yards and Saban.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
ARK	0	0	0	7	7
ALA	17	24	7	0	48

Scoring Summary -----

	ARK	ALA
FIRST QUARTER		
ALA FG 5:53 Joseph Bulovas 31 Yd Field Goal	0	3
14 plays, 69 yards, 6:27		
ALA TD 4:03 Henry Ruggs III 14 Yd pass from Mac Jones (Joseph Bulovas Kick)	0	10
1 play, 14 yards, 0:07		
ALA TD 0:34 Jerry Jeudy 14 Yd pass from Mac Jones (Joseph Bulovas Kick)	0	17
5 plays, 48 yards, 1:42		
SECOND QUARTER		
ALA TD 12:25 Najee Harris 1 Yd Run (Joseph Bulovas Kick)	0	24
6 plays, 70 yards, 2:16		
ALA TD 9:57 Najee Harris 1 Yd Run (Joseph Bulovas Kick)	0	31
4 plays, 48 yards, 1:30		
ALA FG 2:36 Joseph Bulovas 30 Yd Field Goal	0	34
5 plays, 13 yards, 1:48		
ALA TD 0:07 Trevon Diggs 84 Yd Interception Return (Joseph Bulovas Kick)	0	41
7 plays, 51 yards, 2:29		
THIRD QUARTER		
ALA TD 12:38 Jerry Jeudy 40 Yd pass from Mac Jones (Joseph Bulovas Kick)	0	48
5 plays, 64 yards, 2:22		
FOURTH QUARTER		
ARK TD 14:52 Cheyenne O'Grady 8 Yd pass from John Stephen Jones (Connor Limpert Kick)	7	48
13 plays, 85 yards, 7:34		

Team Stats	ARK	ALA
First Downs	13	23
Passes for First	5	14
Rushes for First	5	9
Penalties for First	3	0
Third Down Efficiency	3-12	8-13
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	0-1
Total Yards	213	459
Total Plays	56	68
Avg Gain Per Play	3.8	6.8
Net Yards Rushing	106	179
Rushes	30	38
Yards Per Rush	3.5	4.7
Net Yards Passing	107	280
Comp-Att	11-26	24-30
Yards Per Pass	4.1	9.3
Times Sacked	1	0
Yds Lost To Sacks	-7	0
Interceptions	3	0
Punts	6	2
Punt Average	39.0	47.5
Penalties	0	6
Penalty Yards	0	60
Fumbles	1	1
Fumbles Lost	1	0
Time of Poss	25:26	34:34

Individual Stats

RUSHING							
ARKANSAS	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Rakeem Boyd	12	50	4.2	0	12		
Devwah Whaley	9	40	4.4	0	10		
John Stephen Jones	6	14	2.3	0	12		
T.J. Hammonds	1	7	7.0	0	7		
Treylon Burks	1	3	3.0	0	3		
Team	1	-8	-8.0	0	0		
ALABAMA	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Najee Harris	13	86	6.6	2	20		
Brian Robinson Jr.	13	67	5.2	0	37		
Keilan Robinson	9	29	3.2	0	5		
Mac Jones	1	1	1.0	0	1		
Team	1	-2	-2.0	0	0		
Taulia Tagovailoa	1	-2	-2.0	0	0		
PASSING							
ARKANSAS	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Nick Starkel	5	19	58	3.1	0	3	3.8
John Stephen Jones	6	7	49	7.0	1	0	87.0
ALABAMA	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Mac Jones	18	22	235	10.7	3	0	94.4
Taulia Tagovailoa	6	8	45	5.6	0	0	48.0
RECEIVING							
ARKANSAS	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Rakeem Boyd	4	55	13.8	0	22		
Devwah Whaley	2	24	12.0	0	15		
Treylon Burks	1	15	15.0	0	15		
Cheyenne O'Grady	4	13	3.3	1	8		
ALABAMA	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Jerry Jeudy	7	103	14.7	2	40		
DeVonta Smith	4	67	16.8	0	47		
Henry Ruggs III	4	47	11.8	1	18		
Jaylen Waddle	5	39	7.8	0	15		
Miller Forristall	2	11	5.5	0	11		
Brian Robinson Jr.	1	8	8.0	0	8		
John Metchie	1	5	5.0	0	5		