

ALABAMA CRIMSON TIDE



RB TJ Yeldon

POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2014

QUARTERBACKS - Only 3 QB's have ever started a gm in the Saban era: John Parker Wilson, Greg McElroy and AJ McCarron. McCarron was the only Saban recruit (inherited first 2). In '11 Saban did not announce the st'r prior to the year and soph McCarron and rFr Phillip Sims split snaps in the opener. Saban awarded the job to McCarron who threw for 2,634 (67%, 16-5) and became the first underclassman to guide his team to a BCS Nat'l Title. In '12 Phillip Sims transferred and McCarron improved to 2,933 (67%, 30-3, #1 FBS pass eff) while Blake Sims (PS#40) played in 10 (5-10-77, 187 rush). McCarron had 291 passes w/o an int (2nd longest SEC hist). LY McCarron was in a walking boot prior to the opener (10-23-110), but had a career-gm vs A&M (334, 4 td). He set the Bama record for comp % (93.75) vs Georgia St (Ken Stabler 84.2% '66) and threw for 3,063 (67.3%, 28-7, #2 Heisman). He passed Jay Barker (35-2-1 '91-'94) for all-time wins in Bama history (36-4). Sims was the only other QB to see action (8 gm, 167, 62.1%, 2-0, 61 rush). TY McCarron departs (#5DC CIN, Maxwell winner) while Sims will battle numerous QB's (see below) as well as Alec Morris (6'3" 230 So, PS#72). No true frosh QB has ever taken a snap in the Saban era. With the loss of their career passing leader, they are much less exp'd but do add in Florida St transfer Jacob Coker (PS#38) who battled Jameis Winston until mid-August (he enrolls this summer).

RUNNING BACKS - Bama keeps churning out NFL caliber RB's as each of the last 3 have been drafted in the top 2 rounds. In '12 they lost Trent Richardson (#1DC), but Eddie Lacy and TJ Yeldon became the first ever duo of RB's to each top 1,000 here. Yeldon's 111 yds vs Mich were the most by a Tide frosh in his debut (1108, 6.3). Kenyan Drake (PS#31) had 281 (6.7) as a true. LY Lacy departed (#2DC), but they added in PS#1 Derrick Henry. Yeldon led again with 1,235 (6.0, 14 td) and notably had 100+ in the biggest gms: 149 A&M, 121 Miss, 133 LSU, 141 Aub. Drake was #2 w/694 (7.5, 8 td) and had B2B 100 yd gms vs UK and Ark while Henry added 382 (10.9) after gaining 100 (12.5) in the bowl. Altee Tenpenny (PS#8, 82) added depth. TY the only loss is Dee Hart (78, 3.5) and they add in rFr Tyren Jones (5'9" 212, PS#10). With an inexp'd QB they should get even more action and are as deep and talented as any RB corps in the country.

RECEIVERS - In '12 Bama lost its top 4 rec's. True frosh Amari Cooper (PS#33) led with 1,000 (16.9) breaking the td rec record with 11 (Al Lary, 10 in '50). Kevin Norwood was #2 (461, 15.9) while soph Christian Jones added 368 (13.6). LY

they ret'd their top 4 and added in 5 VHT frosh (PS#1, #3, #9). They figured to have their best and deepest unit in yrs, but were hampered by inj's particularly to Cooper. Cooper only had 100 yds in the 1st 5 (missed 1, toe) but still led w/736 (16.4) incl 178 (29.7) vs Aub (longest play sch hist 99 yd, Chris Anderson, 96 yd rush in '91). In the bowl Cooper and PS#17 DeAndrew White (534, 16.7) became the first duo here w/100+ yds rec s/'05. Norwood was #2 w/568 (14.9) while Jones slipped to 349 (9.7) and PS#1 TE OJ Howard was #5 w/269 (19.2). Not in the PSL are TE's Malcolm Faciane (6'5" 265 Jr, PS#16) and Kurt Freitag (6'4" 255 So, PS#52). TY they lose Norwood (8 st, #4DC SEA), Kenny Bell (4 st, 167, 11.9) and TE Harrison Jones (1 rec). This is one of the better rec units in the country but no longer have McCarron under center.

OFFENSIVE LINE - The Tide has actually improved their ypc rush for 7 straight yrs (3.5 '06 to 5.8 '13). In '12 I called the Tide the best OL in the country and they lived up to that billing dominating Georgia & ND at the end of the yr. That '12 group had 95 car sts but LY the losses were similar to '09 as they lost a 1st Tm AA C (#4DC), a 1st Tm AA LG (#1DC) and a 2nd Tm AA RT (#1DC) losing a comb 126 car sts. They dropped to 39 car sts. This is one of those times where numbers lie and I have to go with the eye test. LY's OL was not as dominant as that '12 front. However, they did have a better ypc and allowed less sks (17). TY they lose 1st Tm AA LT Cyrus Kouandjio (2Y st'r, #2DC BUF), 2nd Tm SEC RG Anthony Steen (3Y st'r), Kellen Williams (1 st) and C Chad Lindsay (4 st). This unit loses less than it did LY (37 car sts ret) but can they actually make it an 8th straight year of improved ypc?

DEFENSIVE LINE - In '11, vs FBS teams, Alabama allowed 53 ypg rush (1.8l). In '12 they had to replace a 2nd Tm SEC NT (#5DC) and his bkp. They all'd just 76 ypg (2.4) with 35 sks (DL had just 13). LY they had to replace 2 st'rs (#5DC) and 2 bkps (#5DC). Bama slipped to 106 ypg (3.3) with just 22 sks. TY they lose 2 st'rs again in DE Jeffery Pagan (PS#5, 34 tk, 3.5 tfl, #6DC HOU) and 3rd Tm SEC DE Ed Stinson (5# tk/r, 1.5 sk, #5DC ARZ). True frosh A'Shawn Robinson was described as a 30 year old man at 6'4" 320 (#7 tk/r, 5.5 sk). After 2 straight years of not even placing a DL on my 1st or 2nd Tm SEC, that will change this year and they add in PS#14 & #22 JC's.

LINEBACKERS - The Tide had inexp'd LB units in '08, '09 and '10. In '11 they finally had an exp'd group and that unit spearheaded what was by far the best D in the country (7.1 ppg vs FBS). In '12 they had to replace their #1 tk/r (#1DC), #3 tk/r (#2DC) and 2 bkps (8 st, 46 tk). They did return their #4 and #7 tk/r's and still only all'd 10.9 ppg. 1st Tm AA CJ Mosley (PS#15) was named TM MVP (1# tk/r, 107). Tre DePriest (PS#7) was a distant #2 w/59 tkls while Adrian Hubbard (PS#29) was #7 (41 tk). LY they only had to replace Nico Johnson (5 st, #4DC). Butkus winner Mosley was also a finalist for the Nagurski, Bednarik and Lombardi Awards. He was the #1 tk/r by far again (108, 9 tfl). This year they do return their #3 tk/r in DePriest and PS#16 and PS#4 Jrs (comb 33 tk) as well as PS#2 Reuben Foster (12 tk). They lose Mosley (#1DC BAL), Hubbard (#9 tk/r, 13 st, 3 sk, 2.5 tfl) and Tana Patrick (12 tk). LY they had arguably the best LB corps in the country and TY's won't be far off that pace.

DEFENSIVE BACKS - In Saban's first season Bama only finished #40 in my PDR. He spends a lot of time coaching DB's and is normally harder on the secondary than any other unit. They improved to #17, #2 and #3 despite some good sized graduation losses. In '11 I called it the best secondary in the country and they finished #1 with their 4.3 ypa all'd being the lowest in NCAA history. In '12 they were #5. LY they had to replace a 1st Tm AA CB (#1DC), a 2nd Tm SEC S and SS

Vinnie Sunseri was OFY after 7 sts. It was not your typical Bama unit as they finished "just" #27 (55.5%, 13-11). TY they lose 1st Tm AA FS Ha Ha Clinton-Dix (10 st, #4 tk/r, 2 int, #1DC GB), Sunseri (20 tk, 2 int, #5DC NO), CB Deion Belue (11 st, 20 tk, 1 int) & CB John Fulton (2 st, 19 tk). Soph Cyrus Jones (PS#8) st'd 5 of the last 6 and soph Landon Collins (PS#1) st'd the last 9. 2013 was an atypical performance and despite the losses they will be back near the top.

SPECIAL TEAMS - In '12 the Tide was #22 in my ST rankings. Tide had to replace their K LY but added in PS#1 LS Cole Mazza & PS#4 K Adam Griffith. Cade Foster was 12-17 (L53) while Griffith was 1-3 on fg's. They, however, will be most remembered for the 4th FG att vs Aub (kick six). Christian Jones became the 1st FBS ply'r s/'06 to have a KR and a PR td in the same gm (vs VT). He avg'd a superb 28.7 (#8) on KR and 14.0 (#15) on PR. Four-yr st'g P Cody Mandell increased his avg (47.1) and net (42.4) each yr which helped the Tide finish #5. TY Foster and Mandell depart and I look for a return to their usual #20-40 finish.

COACHES - Nick Saban came up just short of a 3rd straight Nat'l Championship which would've been his 5th overall (1 at LSU). He has secured his place among the greatest college football coaches of all-time. The embattled ex-USC/Tenn/Raiders HC Lane Kiffin becomes the 3rd OC in 4Y, a position he last held in '05-'06 (USC). Kirby Smart was promoted to DC in '08 and his units have finished in the FBS Top 5 in both total and scoring defense each of the L5Y. Overall, the Tide have 4 former FBS HC's.

ALSO ON ROSTER:					
TE	Michael Nysewander	6'1" 238 Sr	TE	Truett Harris	6'3" 210 Jr
TE	Corey McCarron	6'2" 245 Jr	TE	David D'Amico	6'0" 213 So
TE	Kieran Williams	6'4" 243 rFr	OL	Paul Waldrop	6'4" 285 Jr
TE	Isaac Leon	6'6" 215 So	DL	Bernel Jones	6'3" 253 Sr
			DL	Stephen Hodge	6'1" 257 Jr
			DL	Jake Long	5'10" 229 So
			DB	Daniel Geddes	5'6" 170 Sr
			DB	Zach Houston	6'1" 192 Jr
			DB	Nate Staskielunas	6'3" 206 So

PHIL'S FORECAST

Alabama has won 3 National Titles in the last 5 years. The only 2 years they did not win the title in that span, ironically, were the only 2 years they entered the season #1 in the AP Poll which were '10 (10-3) and '13 (11-2). They won Nat'l Titles with preseason rankings of #5, #2 and #2. In '09 they upset #1 Florida in the SEC Title game and went on to beat Texas to win their first Nat'l Title under Saban. They were the preseason consensus #1, but my magazine was the only one that did not place them in the Nat'l Title game in '10 and Bama fans let me know about it during the offseason. The Tide actually was just 9-3 before blowing out Mich St 49-7 in the Capital One Bowl to finish #10. In '11 Bama was #2 AP but they were my pick to win the National Title as I thought their D would be dominant. Vs FBS foes they all'd just 171 ypg incl 53 ypg rush and 7.1 ppg. Despite losing a home game to LSU in OT (9-6) they got revenge in the Nat'l Title Game, 21-0. In '12 the Tide lost another reg ssn game, this time vs A&M which was the week after their momentous win over LSU on the road. They rebounded to win their 3rd Nat'l Title in 4Y. LY they were the pressn #1 and ranked #1 in every week of the reg ssn. They won 10 of their F/11 gms all by 13 pts or more with the exception being the 49-42 shootout win over A&M in gm 2. In the Iron Bowl they had 4 fg att's vs Auburn and passed up on another. Those 4 fg's resulted in zero pts for Bama and 6 pts for Auburn on the famous ret'd on the last play which put Aub in the SEC Title game. Bama lost to OU in the bowl and fell to #7. TY they lose QB McCarron but have the best RB corps in the country and their 12 ret st'rs is on par with each of the L2Y. While they draw Fla out of the East, they avoid both SC & UGA. They also get a revenge game vs Auburn at home but do have to travel to Baton Rouge on Nov 8. The good news for Tide fans - they won't be ranked #1 in the Preseason poll! This is a legitimate Nat'l Title contender and remember 3 of the last 4 Nat'l Champs had a 1st yr starter at QB.

OFFENSE	JERSEY # IN CRIMSON	2014 PROJECTED STARTING LINEUP	JERSEY # IN CRIMSON	DEFENSE		
QB NA Jake Coker Jr.	6-5 230	PS#38. 11 gm, 295 (51%, 1-1) 2Y at Fla St. 6 Blake Sims (6'0" 208 Sr) PS#40. 24 gm, 617 tk yd 3Y. 18 Cooper Bateman (6'3" 215 rFr) PS#8. 15 Parker McLeod (6'3" 200 rFr) PS#68.	6-4 315	PS#22JC. IFS. 93 Jonathan Allen (6'3" 270 So) PS#9. 13 gm, 16 tk, 3 tfl true.		
RB 4 TJ YELDON JR.	6-2 221	PS#5. 14 gm, 1108 (6.3), Frosh AA true. 11 st, 1235 (6.0), 1st Tm SEC LG 17 Derrick Henry (6'3" 241 So) PS#1. 12 gm, 382 (10.9) true. 17 Kenyan Drake (6'1" 202 Jr) PS#31. 1 st, 975 (7.3) 2Y.	6-4 308	1 st, 27 tk 2Y. 12 st, 24 tk LY. 54 Dalvin Tomlinson (6'2" 299 So) PS#14.		
WR 2 DeANDREW WHITE SR.	6-0 190	PS#17. 7 st, 256 (11.6) 2Y 6 st, 534 (16.7) LY. 8 Robert Foster (6'3" 190 rFr) PS#3. Derek Kief (PS#36. 82 Ty Reed (6'1" 193 Sr) 1 gm LY. RB 28 Altee Tenpenny (6'0" 218 So) PS#8. 13 gm true.	6-4 320	PS#7. 2 st, 13 gm, 38 tk, 8 tfl, 1st Tm All-SEC Fr Tm true. 57 DJ Pettway (6'3" 265 Jr) PS#14JC. 13 gm, 8 tk rFr. JC LY. IFS. 52 Dee Linder (6'3" 295 So) PS#8. 2 tk true. 94 Dakota Ball (6'2" 280 So) PS#66.		
WR 22 Christian Jones Sr.	5-11 187	PS#51. 4 tk LY. 28 Altee Tenpenny (6'0" 218 So) PS#8. 13 gm true.	6-2 254	PS#18. 14 gm, 18 tk, 3 tfl true. 3 st, 30 tk, 3 sk, 2 tfl LY. 47 Xzavier		
5 Chris Black (5'11" 185 So) PS#13. 8 gm, 79 (9.9) rFr. 80 Raheem Falkins (6'4" 210 So) PS#35. Kyle Kazakevicius (6'0" 184 Sr).	6-1 204	PS#33. 9 st, 1000 (16.9), Frosh AA true. 8 st, 736 (16.4) LY. 7 Cam Sims PS#20. IFS. 13 ArDarius Stewart (6'0" 193 rFr) PS#9. 87 Parker Barrineau (6'0" 184 Jr) 7 gm, 2 rec LY.	3 tk true. 7 st, 33 tk, 5 tfl 12. 12 gm, 13 tk, 2 tfl LY. Rashawn Evans PS#2.	6-2 250	PS#7. 13 gm, 25 tk true. 13 st, 59 tk, 4 tfl 12. 13 st, 65 tk, 7.5 tfl, 3rd	
WR 9 AMARI COOPER JR.	6-6 240	PS#1. 5 st, 269 (19.2) true. 84 Brian Vogler (6'7" 265 Sr) PS#9. 3 st, 3 rec 2Y. 12 st (inj), 8 rec (8.9) LY. 45 Jalston Fowler (6'1" 248 Sr) PS#39RB. 1 st RB, 39 gm, 669 (6.6) 4Y.	6-2 257	PS#4. 11 gm, 8 tk true. 13 gm, 17 tk LY. 10 Reuben Foster (6'1" 236 So) PS#13. IFS. 35 Walker Jones (6'2" 238 rFr) PS#98. Keith Holcombe (PS#46.		
C 70 RYAN KELLY JR.	6-5 296	PS#44. 9 gm rFr. 9 st (inj) LY. JC Hassenaauer (6'3" 290 Fr) PS#11.	6-4 243	PS#16. 8 gm, 1 tk true. 13 gm, 16 tk LY. 56 Tim Williams (6'3" 242 So) PS#7. 7 gm, 3 tk true. Christian Miller PS#3. 34 Tyler Owens (6'0" 225 Sr) 1 gm LY. Paden Crowder (6'4" 235 Jr).		
Josh Casher PS#35. LS 55 Cole Mazza (6'1" 251 So) 13 gm true. 59 MK Taylor (5'10" 230 Sr) 2 gm LY.	6-6 320	PS#15JC. 1 st RG, 9 gm here LY. 50 Alphonse Taylor (6'5" 328 So) PS#70. 8 gm bkp OG rFr. 68 Isaac Luatua (6'2" 315 Jr) PS#62. 8 gm bkp OG LY. LS 58 Alex Harrelson (6'0" 226 Jr).	5-11 180	PS#19. 3 st, 16 tk 2Y. 54 Eddie Jackson (6'0" 188 So) PS#124. 4 st, 19 tk, 3 pd true. 21 Maurice Smith (6'0" 195 So) PS#24. 1 st, 13 tk true. 28 Anthony Averett (6'0" 180 rFr) PS#36.		
RG 72 Leon Brown Sr.	6-5 315	PS#20. 2 gm (inj) rFr. 10 gm 12. 13 st LG LY. Dominick Jackson (6'7" 310 Jr) PS#3JC. 75 Bradley Bozeman (6'5" 325 rFr) PS#9. 87 Parker Barrineau (6'0" 184 Jr) 7 gm, 2 rec LY.	6-0 190	PS#5. IFS. 5 Cyrus Jones (5'10" 194 Jr) PS#8. 11 gm WR true. 5 st CB. 25 Smith (6'0" 197 Jr) PS#6. 2 st, 9 tk true. 12 gm, 10 tk LY. 6 Laurence "Hootie" Jones PS#9. IFS. 60 Grant Hill (6'6" 308 So) PS#5. 5 gm as a true. 73 Brandon Hill (6'6" 370 Fr) PS#145. Hargrave. 60 Austin Peavler (6'3" 317 So).	6-1 215	PS#15. 11 gm, 6 tk 2Y. ACL. 12. 10 st, 40 tk LY. 27 Nick Perry (6'1" 211 Sr) PS#39. 3 tk 2Y. 4 st, 38 tk 12. 2 gm, OFY LY. Jonathan Cook (6'0" 190 Fr) PS#108. Jerrod Bierbauer (6'1" 198 Sr).
LG 77 ARIE KOUANDJIO JR.	6-5 315	PS#20. 2 gm (inj) rFr. 10 gm 12. 13 st LG LY. Dominick Jackson (6'7" 310 Jr) PS#3JC. 75 Bradley Bozeman (6'5" 325 rFr) PS#9. 87 Parker Barrineau (6'0" 184 Jr) 7 gm, 2 rec LY.	6-0 215	PS#1. 14 gm, 17 tk true. 9 st, 13 gm, 70 tk, 8 pd, 2nd Tm SEC LY. 24 Geno Smith (6'0" 197 Jr) PS#6. 2 st, 9 tk true. 12 gm, 10 tk LY. 6 Laurence "Hootie" Jones PS#9. IFS. 60 Grant Hill (6'6" 308 So).		
RT 79 AUSTIN SHEPHERD SR.	6-5 320	PS#71. 7 gm as a rFr. 9 gm 12. 13 st at RT LY. 64 Grant Hill (6'6" 308 So) PS#5. 5 gm as a true. 73 Brandon Hill (6'6" 370 Fr) PS#145. Hargrave. 60 Austin Peavler (6'3" 317 So).	6-4 185	PS#4. All-CO w/43.8 avg on punts HS Sr. Adam Griffith (PS#4. 11 Alec Morris (6'3" 280 So). 98 Adrian Lamothe (5'9" 190 So) WO. John Pizzitola (5'11" 175 So). Tuck Borie (5'10" 180 Fr) WO.		
LT 74 Cam Robinson Fr.	6-6 325	PS#1. In for spring. 58 Brandon Greene (6'5" 304 So) PS#39. 1 st TE, 13 gm rFr. OL spg. Ross Pierschbacher PS#10. 62 Will Davis (6'5" 316 So). 68 Chris Posa (6'3" 269 So).				
K 99 Adam Griffith So.	5-10 188	PS#4. Hit 52 yd fg as HS Sr. 1-3 fg, L20, 5-5 PAT, 14 KO, 4 TB, 8 gm rFr. JK Scott (6'4" 185 Fr) PS#4. All-CO P as HS Sr. 97 John Pizzitola (5'11" 175 So) WO. Gunnar Raborn (5'10" 180 Fr) pref WO.				

