

WEEK THIRTEEN
WESTERN CAROLINA at ALABAMA

Jones, No. 5 Alabama rout Western Carolina, 66-3

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. -- Tua Tagovailoa watched from a cart as his Alabama teammates treated him to a dominant performance against a badly outclassed opponent.

Mac Jones passed for 275 yards and three touchdowns in little more than a half and No. 5 Alabama began life without Tagovailoa with a 66-3 romp Saturday over Western Carolina of the Football Championship Subdivision.

With Tagovailoa watching much of the game from behind the bench, the Crimson Tide (10-1) put on a one-sided show against the Catamounts (3-9). The star quarterback, who had hip surgery on Monday, was cheered as he was driven toward the sideline before the game. He didn't have to give much of a pep talk.

"Just his presence," Tide wide receiver Jaylen Waddle said. "Just knowing what he meant to the team. That was enough. He didn't have to say much."

Alabama is fifth in the College Football Playoff rankings and hoping to somehow make the field despite failing to win the SEC West -- and losing its biggest star.

But this one was about taking care of business after an emotional week, not impressing the selection committee.

"It's not easy to overcome something like that, losing a great leader," said Jones, who completed 10 of 12 passes in his second career start. "But I think we're built for that. We train every day for the whole year mentally and physically. It's really mental toughness and learning how to rebound and respond to adversity."

Alabama forced five turnovers, including Xavier McKinney's 81-yard interception return for a touchdown, and got big plays from Jones and wide receivers DeVonta Smith and Jaylen Waddle.

Jones only threw one pass after halftime. Smith had four catches for 94 yards and two touchdowns, including a 57-yarder when he juke a defender before sprinting to the end zone. Waddle produced 101 yards and took a screen 54 yards for a touchdown, then returned a punt 49 yards to near the goal line on his next touch.

"I thought he threw the ball well and he was accurate on the deep ball," Alabama coach Nick Saban said of Jones. "I know he missed one, but we just want to keep building on his confidence and our confidence in him that he's going to go out there and do his job well."

THE TAKEAWAY

Western Carolina fell to 0-57 against FBS teams. The Catamounts came up empty after making it into Tide territory on each of their first four drives, including three turnovers.

"We had five turnovers on the day, and you can't do that against anybody, but especially the University of Alabama," Catamounts coach Mark Speir said. "I wish them the best of luck in their quest for the playoffs."

Alabama did what it was supposed to and showed no signs of an emotional hangover after Tagovailoa's injury. The defense had some shaky moments but was missing several players nursing injuries, including linemen Raekwon Davis and D.J. Dale. Najee Harris ran for a touchdown and caught a scoring pass.

TAULIA'S TURN

Tagovailoa's absence gave his younger brother, Taulia, a chance for his most extended action. The freshman came into the game with 12:12 left in the third quarter and threw a 15-yard touchdown pass to Smith on his first attempt. He completed 2 of 3 passes for 35 yards. Alabama scrapped plans to redshirt the four-star recruit, who already had played in four games. Fellow freshman quarterback Paul Tyson, great-grandson of coaching icon Bear Bryant, saw his first action.

CARE TO DANCE?

When Saban recruited safety Jared Mayden, he took part in a dancing contest. Mayden's mother, Katrina Salles, reminded him of that during the pre-game ceremony honoring the seniors on the field.

"She reminded me of that today and actually said, 'Do you want to dance?' I said, 'Not today,'" said Saban, laughing.

PICKS IN PAIRS

McKinney ended Western Carolina's first two drives with interceptions, including the pick-six, after coming in with just one. Mayden got his third and fourth interceptions.

| Final | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | T |
|-------|----|----|----|---|----|
| WCU | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| ALA | 17 | 21 | 21 | 7 | 66 |

Scoring Summary -----

| | WCU | ALA |
|--|-----|-----|
| FIRST QUARTER | | |
| ALA FG 11:44 Joseph Bulovas 29 Yd Field Goal | 0 | 3 |
| 8 plays, 46 yards, 3:16 | | |
| ALA TD 9:00 DeVonta Smith 57 Yd pass from Mac Jones (Joseph Bulovas Kick) | 0 | 10 |
| 3 plays, 79 yards, 0:40 | | |
| ALA TD 5:33 Xavier McKinney 81 Yd Interception Return (Joseph Bulovas Kick) | 0 | 17 |
| 6 plays, 43 yards, 3:27 | | |
| SECOND QUARTER | | |
| ALA TD 11:29 Brian Robinson Jr. 5 Yd Run (Joseph Bulovas Kick) | 0 | 24 |
| 6 plays, 63 yards, 1:44 | | |
| ALA TD 7:36 Najee Harris 12 Yd pass from Mac Jones (Joseph Bulovas Kick) | 0 | 31 |
| 4 plays, 65 yards, 1:40 | | |
| ALA TD 4:08 Jaylen Waddle 54 Yd pass from Mac Jones (Joseph Bulovas Kick) | 0 | 38 |
| 1 play, 54 yards, 0:10 | | |
| THIRD QUARTER | | |
| ALA TD 13:41 Najee Harris 3 Yd Run (Joseph Bulovas Kick) | 0 | 45 |
| 3 plays, 27 yards, 1:11 | | |
| ALA TD 10:32 DeVonta Smith 15 Yd pass from Taulia Tagovailoa (Joseph Bulovas Kick) | 0 | 52 |
| 4 plays, 32 yards, 1:40 | | |
| ALA TD 6:02 Keilan Robinson 46 Yd Run (Joseph Bulovas Kick) | 0 | 59 |
| 5 plays, 73 yards, 2:10 | | |
| FOURTH QUARTER | | |
| WCU FG 14:56 Julian Pletz 38 Yd Field Goal | 3 | 59 |
| 10 plays, 54 yards, 6:06 | | |
| ALA TD 8:13 Jerome Ford 6 Yd Run (Joseph Bulovas Kick) | 3 | 66 |
| 10 plays, 63 yards, 6:43 | | |

| Team Stats | WCU | ALA |
|------------------------|-------|-------|
| First Downs | 10 | 23 |
| Passes for First | 6 | 10 |
| Rushes for First | 3 | 12 |
| Penalties for First | 1 | 1 |
| Third Down Efficiency | 2-12 | 5-8 |
| Fourth Down Efficiency | 0-1 | 1-1 |
| Total Yards | 179 | 541 |
| Total Plays | 53 | 57 |
| Avg Gain Per Play | 3.4 | 9.5 |
| Net Yards Rushing | 67 | 231 |
| Rushes | 34 | 42 |
| Yards Per Rush | 2.0 | 5.5 |
| Net Yards Passing | 112 | 310 |
| Comp-Att | 10-19 | 12-15 |
| Yards Per Pass | 5.9 | 20.7 |
| Times Sacked | 4 | 0 |
| Yds Lost To Sacks | -25 | 0 |
| Interceptions | 4 | 0 |
| Punts | 6 | 1 |
| Punt Average | 35.7 | 33.0 |
| Penalties | 3 | 4 |
| Penalty Yards | 36 | 45 |
| Fumbles | 1 | 1 |
| Fumbles Lost | 1 | 1 |
| Time of Poss | 32:09 | 27:51 |

Individual Stats

| RUSHING | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------|-----|------|------|------|-----|-------|
| | Rush | Yds | Avg | TD | LONG | | |
| WESTERN CAROLINA | | | | | | | |
| Donnavan Spencer | 15 | 39 | 2.6 | 0 | 10 | | |
| Tyrie Adams | 11 | 28 | 2.5 | 0 | 20 | | |
| Connell Young | 6 | 8 | 1.3 | 0 | 7 | | |
| Team | 1 | -1 | -1.0 | 0 | 0 | | |
| Will Jones | 1 | -7 | -7.0 | 0 | 0 | | |
| ALABAMA | | | | | | | |
| Keilan Robinson | 8 | 92 | 11.5 | 1 | 46 | | |
| Najee Harris | 14 | 66 | 4.7 | 1 | 22 | | |
| Jerome Ford | 5 | 24 | 4.8 | 1 | 8 | | |
| Chadarius Townsend | 6 | 24 | 4.0 | 0 | 9 | | |
| De'Marquise Lockridge | 2 | 12 | 6.0 | 0 | 8 | | |
| Brian Robinson Jr. | 4 | 11 | 2.8 | 1 | 5 | | |
| Mac Jones | 1 | 4 | 4.0 | 0 | 4 | | |
| Team | 2 | -2 | -1.0 | 0 | 0 | | |
| PASSING | | | | | | | |
| | Comp | Att | Yds | Y/A | TD | Int | QBRat |
| WESTERN CAROLINA | | | | | | | |
| Tyrie Adams | 10 | 19 | 112 | 5.9 | 0 | 4 | -- |
| ALABAMA | | | | | | | |
| Mac Jones | 10 | 12 | 275 | 22.9 | 3 | 0 | 99.5 |
| Taulia Tagovailoa | 2 | 3 | 35 | 11.7 | 1 | 0 | 99.9 |
| RECEIVING | | | | | | | |
| | Rec | Yds | Avg | TD | LONG | | |
| WESTERN CAROLINA | | | | | | | |
| Owen Cosenke | 4 | 46 | 11.5 | 0 | 17 | | |
| Clayton Bardall | 1 | 28 | 28.0 | 0 | 28 | | |
| Connell Young | 2 | 20 | 10.0 | 0 | 10 | | |
| Jaylin Young | 1 | 11 | 11.0 | 0 | 11 | | |
| Daquan Patten | 1 | 7 | 7.0 | 0 | 7 | | |
| Tyrie Adams | 1 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0 | | |
| ALABAMA | | | | | | | |
| Jaylen Waddle | 3 | 101 | 33.7 | 1 | 54 | | |
| DeVonta Smith | 4 | 94 | 23.5 | 2 | 57 | | |
| Jerry Jeudy | 2 | 66 | 33.0 | 0 | 44 | | |
| Tyrell Shavers | 1 | 20 | 20.0 | 0 | 20 | | |
| John Metchie | 1 | 17 | 17.0 | 0 | 17 | | |
| Najee Harris | 1 | 12 | 12.0 | 1 | 12 | | |