

# Damien Harris, No. 1 Alabama beat Arkansas 41-9

Tuscaloosa, Alabama - Damien Harris and Alabama delivered a message on the first offensive play: They had no intention of becoming the weekend's latest upset victim.

Harris opened with a 75-yard touchdown run and the top-ranked Crimson Tide rode a fast start to a 41-9 victory over Arkansas on Saturday night.

The Crimson Tide (7-0, 4-0 Southeastern Conference) had raced to a 17-0 lead by midway through the first quarter. Playing without injured quarterback Austin Allen, the Razorbacks (2-4, 0-3) managed to slow down the onslaught for a while.

Harris ran for 125 yards and two touchdowns on just nine carries. His opening run matched his career long set last week at Texas A&M, putting the Tide in front just 15 seconds into the game.

"I think it just kind of sets the tempo of the game and shows our opponent that we're coming at you," Harris said.

Three top 10 teams - No. 2 Clemson, No. 8 Washington State and No. 10 Auburn - had already fallen before Alabama took the field.

There wasn't much drama in this one.

"We know what's going on," quarterback Jalen Hurts said. "We see it, and at the end of the day we don't want it to be us."

That game with the Aggies was Alabama's closest of the season, prompting coach Nick Saban to challenge his team to listen to him instead of the "rat poison" of media hype. The message seemed to be received.

"I think we learned a lot of lessons in the Texas A&M game," Saban said. "I didn't know how the team would play (Saturday), to be honest with you. I think we had a little better week of practice."

The result was a second straight lopsided SEC loss for Arkansas and embattled coach Bret Bielema.

Playing without Allen because of a right shoulder injury, Arkansas couldn't muster much sustained offense. The Tide outrushed Arkansas 308-27, including five sacks of redshirt freshman Cole Kelley.

Kelley made his first start and spent much of the night under heavy pressure. He completed 23 of 42 passes for 200 yards with a touchdown and an interception.

The 6-foot-7, 268-pounder led the Razorbacks down the field at the end of the first half, but it ended with an incompleteness from the 3.

"Cole did some things that were very, very positive," Bielema said. "He's a fighter and, obviously, a competitor. I just asked our guys to keep swinging, swing for swing, fight for fight."

"The way that we started defensively was very disheartening, just a routine stretch play to our left, and we had some people just get caught up in the moment, get a little overzealous in their pursuit. They cut it back, and it goes for a score."

Alabama: The offense sputtered at times after the fast start but produced points in bursts. The Tide committed two turnovers after losing just one in the first six games and muffed three punt returns. Hurts' third-quarter interception ended a streak of 206 consecutive passes without one, Alabama's second-longest.

## DABO VISITS

Clemson coach Dabo Swinney was on hand with other members of Alabama's 1992 national championship team, which was honored before the game. His coach, Gene Stallings, was also there. Alabama and Clemson have split the past two national title games. The second-ranked Tigers lost to Syracuse on Friday night.

Saban improved to 100-24 in regular-season SEC games. He joins Bear Bryant, Steve Spurrier, Johnny Vaught and Vince Dooley as the only coaches to reach that milestone.

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>Arkansas</b>	0	0	3	6	<b>9</b>
<b>Alabama</b>	17	7	7	10	<b>41</b>

	<b>Arkansas</b>	<b>Alabama</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Downs</b>	15	23
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> down efficiency</b>	5 - 18	5 - 11
<b>4<sup>th</sup> down efficiency</b>	2 - 3	0 - 0
<b>Total Yards</b>	227	496
<b>Passing</b>	200	188
<b>Comp-Att</b>	23 - 43	13 - 21
<b>Yards per pass</b>	4.7	9
<b>Interceptions thrown</b>	1	1
<b>Rushing</b>	27	308
<b>Rushing Attempts</b>	29	43
<b>Yards per rush</b>	0.9	7.2
<b>Penalties</b>	5 - 25	6 - 66
<b>Turnovers</b>	1	2
<b>Fumbles lost</b>	0	1
<b>Interceptions thrown</b>	1	1
<b>Possession</b>	29:33:00	30:27:00