

No. 1 Tide prove dominance passing toughest test yet to win SEC West

Baton Rouge, Louisiana - No. 1 Alabama dominated No. 3 LSU on Saturday night in Death Valley, winning a 29-0 shutout to secure the SEC West crown and proving to the world that it is the unquestioned king of college football. Sophomore quarterback Tua Tagovailoa went 25-of-42 passing for 295 yards, two touchdowns and one interception -- his first of the season. The Crimson Tide defense held the Tigers to just 196 total yards and 3.3 yards per play.

LSU quarterback Joe Burrow was 18-of-35 passing for 184 yards with a in a losing effort. He got no help from his rushing attack, which gained just 12 yards on 25 attempts against the stout Tide front seven. The loss for LSU was its eighth straight to Alabama dating back to the 2012 BCS Championship Game. The Tide have shut out the Tigers three times in that span with all three coming in Louisiana, two in Death Valley.

The win sets up the SEC Championship Game between SEC West champion Alabama and SEC East champion Georgia -- a rematch of last season's College Football Playoff National Championship. The Tide and SEC title-defending Dawgs will square off on December 1 at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta.

Coming into this game, the only knock against Alabama was its schedule -- and that gripe seemed like quite a reach for people who just want to find something to complain about. That gripe can't be used anymore because Saturday's beatdown on the Bayou removed all doubt about Alabama's talent, depth and ability to dominate the best of the best in college football. Sure, you can knock LSU's offense and claim that its lack of explosiveness made the Tigers a ... "paper Tiger." But let's be real about what happened Saturday night in Death Valley, which is the fact that the Tagovailoa show lit up a stout LSU defense like Clark Griswold's house in "Christmas Vacation".

That's the primary takeaway -- that this is the best Alabama offense of all time, and it's not even close. Tagovailoa has thrown two touchdowns in the first half of every game this season, routinely found wide receivers in the face of immense pressure and sliced apart a Tiger secondary that boasts -- and earned -- the moniker "DBU".

It isn't just Tagovailoa, though. It's Jerry Jeudy, Henry Ruggs III, Irv Smith and Jaylen Waddle getting open for him. It's Jonah Williams and Ross Pierschbacher up front doing the dirty work. It's Damien Harris, Josh Jacobs, and Najee Harris not only pounding the rock, but wearing down one of the deepest and most physical defensive fronts in college football. Tagovailoa is a video game cheat code, and we've known that since he won the national title game last year. But he's only one piece of an offensive equation unlike any that we've ever seen.

Les Miles got fired at LSU for having a stagnant offense that is not only based on winning the battle in the trenches and wearing down opponents, but is only capable of winning the battle in the trenches and wearing down opponents. When somebody does it better, LSU has no chance. It isn't equipped to win games outside of its comfort zone. Alabama's ability to consistently one-up LSU in the trenches is why the Tigers have dropped eight straight to the Crimson Tide, and the Crimson Tide's offensive prowess this season is why Ed Orgeron's crew had no chance the moment they walked out of the tunnel. This is not what modern college football is, and LSU still hasn't realized it. You can't build a team to play the way it wants to play and not have the ability to adjust. These stats illustrate it better than anything else can.

- Alabama has shut LSU out six times since 1996
- Alabama has outscored LSU 39-0 in the last two games in Baton Rouge
- LSU hasn't scored against Alabama in Baton Rouge over the last 11 quarters; 167:07 of total game time

Miles did it in Baton Rouge and got fired. Orgeron is nowhere close to even being on a warm seat right now, but he has to realize that a change in offensive philosophy from the top down is needed in order

for the Tigers to be a legitimate national title threat. If that's with this staff, fine. If it's with another scheme, so be it. But it can't be like this, not with the talent on LSU's roster and talent in the state of Louisiana.

We all knew the knock on Alabama's defense heading into the LSU game, and the 196 total yards it allowed to LSU won't change it. This isn't like other Alabama defenses in terms of depth, but that standard is much different than it is at other schools. Choosing the best and worst Alabama defense is like choosing between \$50 steaks; you're not going to be wrong no matter what you choose. There is nothing wrong with this defense. The Crimson Tide racked up five sacks against the Tigers, 10 tackles for loss and not only paid rent in their backfield, but paid off the entire mortgage.

Leading the way for the Tide was defensive lineman Quinnen Williams, who had 10 tackles 3.5 for loss and 2.5 sacks, all of that while being double-teamed on multiple occasions by an LSU offensive line that was simply overmatched. His performance Saturday solidified him as one of the best players in the country regardless of position. Even when he wasn't the one making the plays, the attention Williams received freed up the rest of his teammates to expose one-on-one matchups and hold LSU in check.

It's time to stop comparing Alabama's defense to other Alabama defenses. That name alone should be enough of a description to explain exactly what it is: terrifying.

Tagovailoa hit DeVonta Smith in overtime last January to lead Alabama to a win over Georgia in the national title game, and the rematch is now set. Georgia topped Kentucky Saturday afternoon to lock up the SEC East and set the stage for a battle between two SEC powers on December 1 with the SEC title on the line.

One thing is certain: Georgia won't be intimidated.

Most teams walk out of the locker room, see the crimson and white uniforms of the Crimson Tide and lose before the coin flip. Georgia won't. The Bulldogs didn't back down when the game's ultimate prize was on the line, and there's nothing to suggest that will change this time around. We'll get mentor vs. pupil again when Alabama coach Nick Saban takes on Georgia's Kirby Smart. Hopefully, for college football's sake, this one will be as much of a classic as the last one.

	1	2	3	4	Total
Alabama (9 - 0)	6	10	6	7	29
LSU (7 - 2)	0	0	0	0	0

	Alabama	LSU
1 st Downs	29	13
3 rd down efficiency	8 - 14	5 - 16
4 th down efficiency	43101	0-0
Total Yards	576	196
Passing	295	184
Comp-Att	25 - 42	18 - 35
Yards per pass	7.0	5.3
Interceptions thrown	1	1
Rushing	281	12
Rushing Attempts	37	25
Yards per rush	7.6	0.5
Penalties	6 - 60	3 - 15
Turnovers	1	1
Fumbles lost	0	0
Interceptions thrown	1	1
Possession	35:18	24:42