

## **VOLS FALL TO NO. 1 ALABAMA, 45-10**

Written by Betsy Devine

Saturday, 26 October 2013 21:21

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A week after knocking off No. 11 South Carolina, the Vols lost to the top team in the land, No. 1 Alabama, 45-10, before 101,821 at Bryant-Denny Stadium.

"We probably played our worst half of football that we have played all year," Tennessee head coach Butch Jones said of the 35-0 hole Tennessee fell into. "Some of it was due to the quality of our opponent. Some of it was self-inflicted wounds. We talked about having to start fast. We gave up a long kickoff return, then they scored. Third down we fell over and gave up a big play. Everything had a snowball effect.

"The next step in the evolution of our football program and football team is to learn how to win on the road. When you play on the road, you are responsible for creating your own momentum and opportunities. Obviously, we did not do that in any way, shape or form in the first half. That is very disappointing."

Alabama's T.J. Yeldon ran for three touchdowns and 72 yards. Quarterback A.J. McCarron threw for 275 yards on 19-of-27 passing with two scoring tosses. Kevin Norwood hauled in six catches for 112 yards and a touchdown.

Vols' quarterback Justin Worley started, but was banged up and played the first half only, finishing with 120 yards. Freshman Joshua Dobbs made his college debut and led the Vols to their first scoring drive of the day, early in the third quarter.

Tennessee made sure it wouldn't be shutout for the 238th consecutive game as Michael Palardy kicked a 37-yard field goal with 12:53 left in the third quarter. That ended a run of 104 consecutive points by Alabama dating back to the Kentucky game on Oct. 12.

Dobbs then led the Vols to the first touchdown against Alabama at home in 2013. Early in the fourth quarter, Dobbs engineered a 9-play, 55-yard drive that culminated with a 3-yard touchdown run by Rajion Neal (13 carries for 70 yards). The score, which was originally ruled down outside the end zone, was corrected by video review for Neal's ninth TD of the season and the first allowed by Alabama at Bryant-Denny Stadium this season.

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Dobbs, who became the 15th true freshman to play for the Vols in 2013, finished the day with 75 yards on 5-of-12 passing. Fellow freshman Marquez North topped the Tennessee receiving chart with 87 yards on four catches.

"In the second half," said Jones, "I thought our players showed grit and fight, but we just didn't play winning football in all areas. We had dropped passes. We lost leverage in a football place. Lost leverage can be caused by playing a good defense. In a lot ways, we would lose leverage on football plays and they would lead to big football plays."

Tennessee and Alabama, played to a 10-10 score in the second half.

The Crimson Tide continued its first-half dominance, outscoring the Vols 35-0 in the first 30 minutes. Dating to its second game vs. Texas A&M, Alabama has scored 179 consecutive first-half points, over a span of more than 200 minutes.

Alabama came right of the gates, scoring just 1:28 into the game as Amari Cooper scored on a 54-yard swing pass from McCarron. That came three plays after a 49-yard kickoff return by Christian Jones to open the game.

The Tide took a 14-0 lead on a Yeldon 1-yard burst up the middle with 8:44 left in the first quarter. The lead expanded to 21-0 on a 22-yard pass from McCarron to Kevin Norwood with 28 seconds left in the first half. That drive consumed 12 plays and 5:34.

Yeldon added his second 1-yard TD run for a 28-0 lead for Alabama with 7:18 left in the first half.

Alabama appeared to be taking a 35-0 lead when Kenyan Drake fumbled going in for a score and Cameron Sutton recovered the ball for the Vols at their own 2-yard line. It was the first turnover by Alabama in three weeks.

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With Tennessee driving late in the first half -- looking to end the Crimson Tide's first-half dominance, Worley was intercepted by Landon Collins, who returned the pick 89 yards for a 35-0 lead with a dozen seconds left in the first half.

The Vols had three of the longest plays on offense against Alabama, all season. In the first half, Worley connected with Cody Blanc on a 43-yard bomb and a 38-yard strike to North. Early in the second quarter, Rajion Neal ripped off a 43-yard rush. Only Texas A&M's 95-yard pass from Johnny Manziel to Mike Evans on Sept. 14 and Trey Edmunds' 77-yard rush for Virginia Tech on Aug. 31 were longer.

It was the Vols' seventh consecutive loss to Alabama dating to a 2006 UT victory, 16-13, in Knoxville.

The Vols continue their two-game road swing at No. 5/7 and undefeated Missouri next Saturday, Nov. 2. The game will kickoff at 7 p.m. on ESPN or at 6 p.m., on ESPN2. The time and television will be announced as soon as it is available. Tennessee returns home for 2013 Homecoming on Nov. 9 as No. 11/17 Auburn comes to Neyland Stadium.