

ROLL TEARS ROLL

Aggies defeat No. 1 Crimson Tide 41-38 in instant classic



Robert O'Brien — THE BATTALION

Senior defensive back **Leon O'Neal Jr.** recovered the ball fumbled by Alabama at the end of the first quarter. O'Neal returned the ball to Alabama's 41-yard line allowing A&M to score a touchdown in the following drive.

By **Jennifer Streeter**
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Saturday was an upset nobody expected.

Texas A&M football defeated then-No. 1 University of Alabama in front of a sold-out Kyle Field on Saturday, Oct. 9 with 106,815 fans in attendance. The last time A&M defeated the Crimson Tide was in the 2012 upset in Bryant-Denny Stadium. Alabama head coach Nick Saban's previous record against his former assistant coaches was 24-0, with Texas A&M head coach Jimbo

Fisher recording the first-ever victory over his former boss.

While the win is great, Fisher said he will not be fully satisfied until he sees how his team performs throughout the rest of the season.

"We can be special. Our football team is learning to play against other great football teams and have success. That's what matters to me," Fisher said. "It shows a lot of character, and it shows a lot of belief in themselves. It shows a lot of belief in their teammates."

At halftime, Alabama went into the locker room trailing on the scoreboard for the first time since Oct. 17, 2020, when the Tide took

on Georgia in an eventual 41-24 victory over the Bulldogs. For the Aggies, it all came down to the fourth quarter, with A&M only leading by one touchdown, 31-24.

Redshirt sophomore quarterback Zach Calzada found his groove. With the 12th Man behind him, the signal caller led the Aggies to score in all three possessions during the first quarter. Additionally, Calzada was 10 for 10 before throwing an interception in the middle of the second quarter.

"There is not a harder position in sports to play than quarterback," Fisher said. "[I'm] very proud of Zach. He's a high-character

young man. He cares, and it matters to him."

For the ground game, junior running back Isaiah Spiller and sophomore running back Devon Achane stole the show. Spiller ran for 46 yards and one touchdown. One highlight of the night for the maroon and white was Achane's 96-yard kickoff return for a touchdown in the third quarter.

Achane said he was in disbelief with the amount of open green available to him.

"I couldn't believe it because the hole was so big," Achane said. "After scoring that, the feeling was just amazing. It gave us a lot of momentum. It was a big opportunity for us."

GAME RECAP ON PG. 3



Robert O'Brien — THE BATTALION

The Aggies' 41-38 victory over the Crimson Tide was the result of months of hard work put forth by the A&M football team.

From Jimbo, with love

Jimbo Fisher celebrates 56th birthday with win over former boss Nick Saban

By **Ryan Faulkner**
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Over five months ago, Texas A&M head coach Jimbo Fisher made a bold promise:

"We're going to beat his ass."

On the surface, this claim lacked substance, with many left wondering why Fisher would single out one specific coach — Alabama's Nick Saban. After all, Fisher had already accomplished almost everything there is to do in college football — two national championships, three conference titles, nine bowl wins and a College Coach of the Year award.

But beating Saban, his former boss, in head-to-head competition had significance of its own.

"I have the utmost respect for Nick Saban. I always have, I always will and I consider us friends," Fisher said. "But we're competitors. That's ball, and I respect him for that."

Starting in 2000, Fisher worked under Saban as the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach for Louisiana State University. The two won a national championship together with LSU in 2003, but after Saban left for the Miami Dolphins, the duo's path split. Even apart, the two men's coaching styles remained similar, something Fisher attributes to the pair's similar upbringing from the "same neck of the woods" in West Virginia.

Nearly a decade later, Saban went on yet another streak of success as a college football

coach. Starting in 2010, Saban began terrorizing his former assistants who had since taken over their own programs as head coaches.

With 24 straight wins and an undefeated record against his earlier protégés, including four wins over Fisher, Saban's dominance threatened to continue with no end in sight; beating the seven-time national champion seemed to be a feat unconquerable to those who, at one point, worked under the man.

Even so, in Fisher's words, Saban's downfall "was inevitable" because "someone was going to do it, in time."

And though he didn't necessarily expect it, Fisher himself became the grand champion whose arrival was foretold in his own prophecy.

On Saturday, Oct. 9, the unranked Aggies upset the undefeated No. 1 Crimson Tide in front of 106,815 fans at Kyle Field. Not only did the win put A&M back on track after two consecutive losses to open its SEC campaign, but it also gave Fisher another win of his own — proof he could do what was thought to be impossible and take down his former boss, mentor and colleague.

Saban said he had no choice but to praise his former assistant, impressed with A&M's ability to snap Alabama's 19-game winning streak.

"I have great respect for [Fisher]. I always say that. He is one of the best who ever did it," Saban said on the postgame CBS broadcast. "I learned a lot when I coached with him, and we had a lot of good times."

By finally defeating Saban, Fisher

FISHER ON PG. 3