

SEC West Division #1

ALABAMA

(11-2-0) LETTERMEN Lost 21
COACH: Nick Saban Returning 49
STARTERS RETURNING Offense 7
Defense 5

GamePlan 2014 National Ranking: #2

For most of the 2013 campaign, it certainly looked like Alabama was headed for its fourth National Championship in the past five seasons, but the Crimson Tide closed out the year with rare back-to-back losses. The key moment came in the Iron Bowl when arch rival Auburn pulled off the most unlikely victory when on the last play of the game, the Tigers returned a missed 'Bama field goal 109 yards for the winning touchdown. Still hungover from that stunning defeat, the Crimson Tide were then lit up by Oklahoma in the Sugar Bowl in what may have been the worst defensive effort of the Nick Saban Era. And if Alabama wants to contend for the national title again, they will need to solve a major issue at quarterback.

Long-time starter A.J. McCarron has finally graduated and projected replacement Blake Sims has looked AWFUL in limited action, then turned in a weak performance in spring drills as the new #1 guy. But riding into the rescue is Florida State transfer Jacob Coker, a talented player who was stuck behind Heisman Trophy winner Jameis Winston with the Seminoles. Coker is a dual threat option who can pass and run with equal skill and he should prove to be a major upgrade over the shaky Sims, who will now battle for the #2 job with redshirt frosh Cooper Bateman.

There are no superstars at wide receiver, but the Tide have three proven performers who were key contributors on National Championship squads in Amari Cooper, Christian Jones and DeAndrew White. Cooper saw his numbers drop a bit last year due to injury, but still managed a team-high 45 grabs for 736 yards and four TDs, while Jones and White shared one starting role and combined for another 68 receptions and six scores. Soph Chris Black and redshirt freshman

Robert Foster looked strong in spring drills. At tight end, vet Brian Vogler is a strong blocker and talented soph O.J. Howard a dangerous pass receiver off the bench who averaged 19 yards per catch as a 2013 true freshman.

The talent level at running back is simply amazing as All-American candidate T.J. Yeldon leads the way and he may not even be the most talented player at this position! Yeldon ran for 1,235 yards and 14 TDs as a true soph last year and top backup Kenyan Drake ripped off another 694 yards and eight more scores. But the best of this bunch may prove to be soph Derrick Henry, a truly unique blend of size and speed who ran for 382 yards as a true frosh averaging a ludicrous 10.9 yards per carry!!

The offensive line was a notch below its usual level of brilliance last season, especially when it came to pass protection. But that problem may be solved by the addition of heralded true frosh blue chipper Cameron Robinson who is expected to step in and start at the all-important left tackle slot from day one this fall. Incumbent starters Arie Kouandjio and Ryan Kelly are strong run blockers, while right tackle Austin Shepherd needs to work on his pass blocking. The rest of this unit is deep and reasonably talented, but the key guy will of course be true freshman Robinson.

Early NFL exits hurt the defense a bit, but we feel the talent level here is actually better as Coach Saban will turn loose a talented bunch of freshmen and sophomores. Up front, the D-line will also be bolstered by the addition of JUCO transfers Jarran Reed and D.J. Pettway, the latter of whom returns to Alabama after being cleared of criminal charges that forced him to leave a few years back. Senior nose man Brandon Ivory is the anchor up front, but the real talent here comes from athletic sophs Jonathan Allen and A'Shawn Robinson, the latter of whom may go from a backup to an All-American this season!

Alabama loses two terrific linebackers in C.J. Mosley and Adrian Hubbard, but they still possess a host of talented veterans here in the quintet of Trey DePriest, Reggie Ragland, Denzel Devall, Dillon Lee and Xzavier Dickson, all of whom have started at times over the last two seasons.

DePriest is a tough run stopper inside, while Devall probably has the most pass rushing skills of the outside guys. Soph Reuben Foster looks like a future star as well, plus 'Bama also added brilliant true frosh recruits like Rashaan Evans, Shaun Dion Hamilton and Christian Miller.

Other than big-play safety Landon Collins there are a host of question marks in the secondary, but this suspect unit will receive a huge shot in the arm this fall as Coach Saban has added a number of brilliant true frosh DBs led by the amazing one-two punch of Tony Brown and Marlon Humphrey who were the #1 and #2 ranked cornerbacks to come out of the high school ranks last year! The key vets who will need to improve this season are CBs Cyrus Jones and Bradley Sylve, as well as safeties Geno Smith and Jarrick Williams.

GAMEPLAN CONCLUSION: This team is always in the national title chase and the 2014 season will certainly be no exception. The talent level on both sides of the football is superb as usual and the only thing that might hold back the Crimson Tide this year is either a leaky secondary or a weaker than expected showing from QB transfer Coker. Alabama gets most of its tough games at home so the only major challenges look to be LSU on the road and Auburn in the Iron Bowl rematch!

2014 Alabama Schedule

8/30	West Virginia
9/6	FLORIDA ATLANTIC
9/13	SOUTHERN MISS
9/20	FLORIDA
10/4	at Mississippi
10/11	at Arkansas
10/18	TEXAS A&M
10/25	at Tennessee
11/8	at LSU
11/15	MISSISSIPPI STATE
11/22	WESTERN CAROLINA
11/29	AUBURN

2013 ALABAMA RESULTS

(SUR: 11-2 PSR: 7-6 O-U: 6-6-1)

A.31	Va. Tech	W	-20'	35-10	u45'
S.14	Texas A&M	L	-8	49-42	o61
S.21	COLO. ST.	L	-39'	31-6	u53
S.28	MISSISSIPPI	W	-14	25-0	u55
O.05	GEORGIA ST.	L	-55	45-3	u59
O.12	Kentucky	W	-26'	48-7	o51'
O.19	ARKANSAS	W	-29	52-0	o49
O.26	TENNESSEE	W	-28	45-10	o51
N.09	LSU	W	-12'	38-17	p55
N.16	Mississippi St.	L	-24	20-7	u52'
N.23	CHATT.	W	-48'	49-0	u52
N.30	Auburn	L	-10'	28-34	o54
J.02	Oklahoma	L	-16	31-45	o51'

2013 Alabama Final Stats

	Alabama	Opp
Points per game	38	14
1st Downs	302	194
Rush Att	461	416
Rush Yards	2673	1381
Avg Rush	5.8	3.3
Pass Comp	244	197
Pass Att	365	355
Pass Yds	3230	2344
Had Int	7	11
Off Yds per game	454	287

2014 ALABAMA DEPTH CHART

Offense

QB Jacob Coker (6-5, 230, Jr.)	Blake Sims (6-0, 210, Sr.)
RB T.J. Yeldon (6-2, 225, Jr.)	Derrick Henry (6-3, 245, So.)
WR Amari Cooper (6-1, 205, Jr.)	Robert Foster (6-3, 190, Fr.)
WR Christian Jones (5-11, 190, Sr.)	Raheem Falkins (6-4, 210, So.)
WR DeAndrew White (6-0, 190, Sr.)	Ty Reed (6-1, 195, Sr.)
WR Chris Black (5-11, 185, So.)	Cam Sims (6-4, 210, Fr.)
TE Brian Vogler (6-7, 265, Sr.)	O.J. Howard (6-6, 245, So.)
C Ryan Kelly (6-5, 300, Jr.)	J.C. Hassenauer (6-3, 300, Fr.)
LG Arie Kouandjio (6-5, 320, Sr.)	Alphonse Taylor (6-5, 330, So.)
RG Leon Brown (6-6, 320, Sr.)	Bradley Bozeman (6-5, 325, Fr.)
LT Cameron Robinson (6-6, 325, Fr.)	Brandon Greene (6-5, 305, So.)
RT Austin Shepherd (6-5, 320, Sr.)	Grant Hill (6-6, 310, So.)
PK Adam Griffith (5-10, 190, So.)	J.K. Scott (6-5, 185, Fr.)

Defense

DE A'Shawn Robinson (6-4, 320, So.)	Jarran Reed (6-4, 315, Jr.)
DE Jonathan Allen (6-3, 275, So.)	D.J. Pettway (6-3, 270, Jr.)
NG Brandon Ivory (6-4, 310, Sr.)	Darren Lake (6-3, 325, Jr.)
LB Denzel Devall (6-2, 255, Jr.)	Xzavier Dickson (6-3, 265, Sr.)
LB Trey DePriest (6-2, 250, Sr.)	Shaun Dion Hamilton (6-0, 245, Fr.)
LB Reggie Ragland (6-2, 260, Jr.)	Reuben Foster (6-1, 240, So.)
LB Dillon Lee (6-4, 245, Jr.)	Rashaan Evans (6-3, 225, Fr.)
SS Landon Collins (6-0, 215, Jr.)	Laurence Jones (6-2, 210, Fr.)
FS Geno Smith (6-0, 200, Jr.)	Jarrick Williams (6-1, 215, Sr.)
CB Cyrus Jones (5-10, 195, Jr.)	Maurice Smith (6-0, 195, So.)
CB Bradley Sylve (5-11, 180, Jr.)	Marlon Humphrey (6-0, 175, Fr.)
NB Tony Brown (6-0, 190, Fr.)	Jabriel Washington (5-11, 185, Jr.)
P Alec Morris (6-3, 230, So.)	J.K. Scott (6-5, 185, Fr.)

Returning Starters are Listed in Bold Type