

JAN. 1, 2020 ♦ THE CITRUS BOWL

Game Info

Site: at Camping World Stadium (65,000)

Kickoff: 1:00 p.m.

Television: ABC

Radio: Michigan/IMG Radio Network (950 AM in the Detroit Area; SiriusXM channel 82) with Dan Dierdorf, Jim Brandstatter and sideline reporter Doug Karsch, a regular contributor to TheWolverine.com.

Series Facts: Michigan and Alabama have met four previous times, with each team winning twice and three of the showdowns coming in bowl games ... The lone regular-season meeting was the most recent, a 40-14 Alabama win to kick off the 2012 campaign ... The three bowls were each decided by four points or less ... Both programs rank in college football's all-time top 10 for wins (Michigan first, 962; Alabama third, 915), win percentage (Michigan second, .730; Alabama fifth, .727), national championships (Michigan second, 11; Alabama first, 17), consensus All-Americans (Michigan third, 83; Alabama sixth, 74), NFL Draft picks (Michigan fifth, 369; Alabama sixth, 365), first-round selections (Michigan eighth, 46; Alabama fifth, 64); and weeks ranked in the AP Poll (Michigan second, 865; Alabama fifth, 807).

Previewing Alabama With A Crimson Tide Insider

Austin Fox • TheWolverine

Clint Lamb of RollTideWire.USAToday.com was kind enough to swing by this week and break down the Alabama Crimson Tide squad prior to its Jan. 1 Citrus Bowl showdown with the Michigan Wolverines' football team.

Lamb analyzed the Crimson Tide's strengths and weaknesses on both sides of the ball, before revealing how he sees Wednesday's game shaking out.

PROJECTED STARTERS ON OFFENSE

• **Redshirt sophomore QB Mac Jones** — He started the final two games of the year against Western Carolina and Auburn following junior Tua Tagovailoa's injury, and posted a regular-season stat line of 1,176 passing yards, 11 touchdowns, three picks and a 69.8 completion percentage. Two of his three interceptions, however, were pick-sixes that contributed to the 48-45 loss at Auburn on Nov. 30.

• **Junior RB Najee Harris** — His 1,088 rushing yards were the sixth most in the

SEC, and were 663 more than anyone else on Alabama's roster. Harris' 11 rushing scores were also tied for the third most in the conference, and he compiled five different 100-yard outings this season.

• **Junior WR Henry Ruggs** — His 719 yards were the third most for the Crimson Tide, while his 18.9 yards per catch led the team (among players who had at least two grabs) and were the third-highest clip in the SEC. Ruggs also reeled in seven scoring receptions and enjoyed three different outings where he accumulated at least 99 yards through the air.

• **Junior WR DeVonta Smith** — He is the statistical leader of Alabama's receiving unit, leading the squad in receiving yards (1,200) and touchdown grabs (13), while checking in second in receptions (65). Smith's 1,200 yards were the 11th most in college football in 2019, while his 13 scoring grabs were tied for sixth.

• **Junior WR Jerry Jeudy** — His 71 catches led the Crimson Tide, but his 959 yards and nine TD grabs were both second to Smith. The 6-1, 192-pounder racked up 68 grabs for 1,315 yards and 14 scores last year en route to the Biletnikoff Award as the nation's best wideout last year, but has obviously seen more defensive attention this fall.

• **Redshirt junior TE Miller Forristall** — His campaign was interrupted by injuries, and he only reeled in 12 catches for 131 yards and three scores as a result. "Miller Forristall's status for the game is not certain," Lamb revealed. "He has returned to practice after suffering an injury to his voice box earlier this season."

• **Junior LT Alex Leatherwood** — Pro Football Focus (PFF) has awarded him with a 73.9 overall grade (64 is considered average) on the year, which is the second lowest among Alabama's five projected starting offensive linemen. His 691 snaps are the second most of any of the Crimson Tide's offensive players, behind only junior right tackle Jedrick Wills' 713.

• **Freshman LG Evan Neal** — He was rated as the No. 1 offensive tackle in the nation out of high school, and started all 12 games this year at left guard as a freshman. The 71.8 overall grade PFF tagged him with, however, is the lowest of Alabama's five projected starting offensive linemen.

• **Redshirt junior C Landon Dickerson** — This past year was his first at Alabama after spending the first three seasons of his collegiate career at Florida State. PFF has labeled Dickerson as the Crimson Tide's best pass blocker, with an 84.8 mark in that department.

• **Redshirt junior RG Deonte Brown** — PFF has declared him as the club's second-best run blocker among its offensive linemen, giving him an 83.8 grade in that area. Brown only played in eight games this year, after being suspended for the first four due to a violation of team rules.

• **Junior RT Jedrick Wills** — His 90.2 tally from PFF is tied with Tagovailoa as the highest of any Alabama offensive player. The outlet also awarded Wills with a 91.6 mark as a run blocker and a 81.8 grade as a pass blocker, both excellent marks.

PROJECTED STARTERS ON DEFENSE

- **Redshirt freshman DL Christian Barmore** — PFF has tagged him as the best defensive player on Alabama's entire roster, pegging him with a 91.8 overall grade. Barmore has racked up 24 tackles this season, six stops behind the line of scrimmage and two sacks.
- **Redshirt sophomore DL Phidarian Mathis** — He has only compiled 23 tackles and half of a tackle for loss, and is still in search of his first sack. However, PFF has awarded him with lofty grades as both a run defender (79.4) and as a tackler (81.5).
- **Senior DL Raekwon Davis** — He was named a second-team All-American in December by the American Football Coaches Association, after racking up 45 tackles, three tackles for loss and four quarterback hurries. PFF also had high praise for the senior, honoring him with an 83.5 overall grade and a 90.5 mark as a run defender.
- **Redshirt sophomore LB Christopher Allen** — Nearly half of his tackles have come behind the line of scrimmage this season, with 3.5 of his eight stops occurring in the opponent's backfield. Allen has only been used sparingly throughout the year, playing 15 or fewer snaps in all but three of Alabama's games.
- **Freshman LB Shane Lee** — He has struggled mightily in his first collegiate season according to PFF, with the publication giving him a 54.3 tally on the year. Lee is Alabama's second-leading tackler, however, with 77 stops.
- **Freshman LB Christian Harris** — He is the Crimson Tide's fourth-leading tackler, with 54 stops and 5.5 TFLs on the season. PFF has declared him a slightly above average defender with a 66 overall grade, though his 82.6 mark as a run defender is fourth best on the Crimson Tide's defense.
- **Fifth-year senior LB Anfernee Jennings** — He has the best stats of any Alabama defensive player, leading the team in tackles for loss (12), sacks (7.5) and checking in third in stops (73). Jennings' 85.6 overall mark from PFF is the fourth best on the Crimson Tide defense.
- **Sophomore CB Josh Jobe** — He is expected to start in place of senior Trevon Diggs, who has chosen not to compete in the Citrus Bowl. Jobe has appeared in eight games this year but has performed below average according to PFF, with the outlet handing him a 61.9 mark.
- **Sophomore CB Patrick Surtain** — The 759 snaps he has seen in 2019 are more than any other Alabama defensive player, while his 84.5 overall tally is the fifth best on the Crimson Tide defense. Surtain's seven pass breakups are tied for the second most on the team, while his three forced fumbles also check in second.
- **Junior S Xavier McKinney** — His 88.3 grade from PFF makes him the third-best Alabama defensive player, with the outlet also tabbing him as the club's best pass rusher (90.9) and second-best coverage man (88.3). McKinney's 85 tackles and four forced fumbles lead the squad.

• **Senior S Jared Maiden** — His four picks pace the roster and are tied for the 17th most in all of college football. PFF has awarded Maiden with an 80.7 grade, including an 81.3 tally in coverage.

PROJECTED STARTERS ON SPECIAL TEAMS

- **Redshirt sophomore K Joseph Bulovas** — He has connected on eight of his 11 attempts this season, but has only made one kick beyond 40 yards (a 43-yarder). Freshman Will Reichard has been the primary kicker used on longer attempts, going 2 of 4 from beyond 40 yards this year.
- **Freshman P Ty Perine** — He has averaged 44.6 yards on his 13 punts this season, with three of those kicks traveling at least 50 yards. In his limited work, Perine has only dropped two punts inside the opposing 20-yard line.

ALABAMA'S BIGGEST STRENGTH ON OFFENSE

“The collection of wide receivers at any Alabama quarterback's disposal is widely considered the biggest strength on the offensive side of the football,” Lamb explained. “All of the top four players on the depth chart — Jerry Jeudy, Henry Ruggs III, DeVonta Smith and [sophomore] Jaylen Waddle — should eventually be Day 1 or 2 NFL Draft picks.”

The statistics the quartet have posted this season are nothing short of amazing, with all four wideouts having compiled at least 553 yards and six touchdowns.

Alabama has thrown for at least 280 yards in 11 of its 12 games, with the 233 it accumulated against Tennessee on Oct. 19 standing as its season low.

The Crimson Tide has eclipsed 335 passing yards seven different times this year, and surpassed 417 yards through the air on three separate occasions (highlighted by a 495-yard showing against South Carolina).

Alabama's elite passing attack has also thrown at least four touchdown passes in nine of its 12 contests, and has gone for five or more three times.

ALABAMA'S BIGGEST WEAKNESS ON OFFENSE

“The biggest weakness on offense continues to be tight end,” the expert noted. “Alabama was forced to replace Irv Smith Jr. and Hale Hentges, both currently on NFL rosters, from last season.”

“After losing Kedrick James to transfer, the position has remained thin in 2019. Miller Forristall's return from a voice box injury would help against Michigan, but it's still considered a major weakness.”

Outside of Forristall, Alabama's tight ends have basically been nonexistent this season.

Redshirt sophomore Major Tension is the next leading receiver at the position, with just three receptions for 21 yards. Freshman Jahleel Billingsley and senior Giles Amos are the only other two tight ends on the roster who have even caught passes in 2019, with the duo having posted a combined two receptions for 24 yards.

ALABAMA'S BIGGEST STRENGTH ON DEFENSE

“The defensive side of the football is a touchy topic for Alabama fans,” Lamb said. “The strength has continued to be the secondary, but it will be interesting to see how sophomore Josh Jobe does replacing Trevon Diggs, who is sitting out, at the corner-back spot opposite Patrick Surtain II.”

The overall numbers Alabama’s defense has posted this year are still very impressive, though, with the unit ranking 16th nationally in yards allowed per game (318.5).

The run defense hasn’t lived up to its usual Crimson Tide standards (ranks 35th in the country, yielding 135 yards per game), but the secondary has once again been elite (ninth in the FBS, allowing 183.4 yards per contest).

Alabama has held five different opponents to 233 yards or fewer in 2019, and six foes to 10 points or less.

ALABAMA'S BIGGEST WEAKNESS ON DEFENSE

“There are also a lot of weaknesses on the Crimson Tide’s defense,” the insider explained. “For most of the season, it’s been the inside linebackers. The struggle to replace expected top-10 pick Dylan Moses [who tore his ACL in the preseason] has been real, and the ‘trial by fire’ approach for the two freshmen – Shane Lee and Christian Harris – has yielded up-and-down results.

“The depth at edge rusher also took a major hit with Terrell Lewis choosing to sit out. But his expected replacement in the starting lineup, [linebacker] Christopher Allen, seems ready to make a sizable leap in production.

“Also look out for more snaps for former five-star [and redshirt junior linebacker] Ben Davis, as well as two freshmen four-star guys, King Mwikuta and Kevin Harris II.”

Alabama’s defense has been gashed in a big way several times this year, allowing at least 459 yards three different times. LSU piled up 46 points and 559 yards on them, while Ole Miss even racked up 31 points and 477 yards on Sept. 28.

Allowing chunk plays on the ground has also been a problem for the Crimson Tide, with their 17 runs allowed of at least 20 yards ranking 67th in the country.

FINAL SCORE PREDICTION

“Alabama is currently a 7-point favorite heading into this game, and I believe a lot of the final outcome will come down to motivation factors,” Lamb opined. “If this is truly a team trying to prove itself on a national stage, a showdown with Michigan is the perfect opportunity.

“The Wolverines’ offense, like most others, should have a lot of success against the Tide’s defense. But a Mac Jones-led Alabama offense with the weapons he’ll have available – and one of the most talented, improved offensive lines protecting him – is capable of outscoring opponents.

“I believe **Alabama wins 37-27** in what should be a fun game to watch.”

Keys To The Game: Michigan Wolverines Football vs. Alabama

Chris Balas • TheWolverine

ORLANDO, Fla. — Michigan’s first trip to the Citrus Bowl under Jim Harbaugh was tabbed a business trip, a chance to get the new era off to a great start with a 10-win season. On the flip side, the talk was that Florida would rather have been anywhere else ... and they played like it.

Michigan won that game, 41-7, and ended the season on a high note. That was the last time, however, the Wolverines have concluded with a positive, having lost the last three bowl games. Two of them came at the hands of SEC teams — South Carolina in the Outback Bowl that concluded the 2017 campaign and Florida in last year’s Peach Bowl. The tables were turned from 2016 and the Gators, under first-year head coach Dan Mullen, came in motivated while two of U-M’s captains and a few others sat out in a blowout loss.

Michigan has had its share of fun in Orlando this year, including a trip to the amusement park Monday with underprivileged children from the area, but it’s Alabama everyone’s wondering about ... specifically, how badly could they really want to be here given it’s usually College Football Playoff or bust for this program?

Motivation aside, the Crimson Tide has a significant talent advantage and are better at most positions. The Wolverines will likely have to score a lot of points to stay close in this one, and while the ‘Bama defense is leaky, there are plenty of athletes on that side of the ball.

Here are keys to a Michigan win in Wednesday’s Citrus Bowl:

Limit explosive plays on offense and make Alabama kick some field goals: This was the first key to beating Ohio State Nov. 30 as well ... that one didn’t work so well. OSU’s wide receivers and running back J.K. Dobbins shredded the Wolverines with big plays both on the ground and through the air, and U-M couldn’t get off the field on the rare third-and-long play. The Buckeyes even converted a second-and-17 when U-M mis-played a man defense.

Alabama’s trio of wide receivers is every bit as talented as OSU’s, if not more so. Jerry Jeudy, Devonta Smith and Henry Ruggs III — all regarded by ESPN’s Todd McShay as top-30 prospects for the upcoming NFL Draft — will provide a huge test for the Michigan defensive backs. U-M’s secondary doesn’t seem to have the bodies to match up ... this could be a game in which defensive coordinator Don Brown mixes up the coverages even more than usual, especially given the difficulty Michigan’s safeties have had this year covering talented receivers.

Slow the Alabama running game: The Wolverines aren’t going to stop running back Najee Harris and the Alabama running game altogether. The line boasts several future NFL players, including a pair of future early round draft picks in Jedrick Wills and Alex Leatherwood. On the other side, U-M will be playing without redshirt junior defensive

tackle Michael Dwumfour, back home after undergoing a medical procedure, and senior tackle Carlo Kemp is less than 100 percent.

This group struggled mightily against lines like Wisconsin's and Ohio State's when fully healthy — it's a lot to ask guys like backups Jess Speight and Donovan Jeter to hold up against one of the nation's top groups.

U-M might need to gamble with some run blitzes, etc., and hope that the ends can generate some pressure if Tide quarterback Mac Jones is forced into passing situations.

Work the intermediate game on offense: Alabama backup corner Josh Jobe will be thrust into action with starter Trevon Diggs opting to sit out the game, and he's suspect. Michigan's receivers will have an opportunity there, but the Crimson Tide's safeties are very good. 'Bama is among the nation's best in big plays, having allowed only two over 40 yards and none over 50. That's tops in the country.

This group is pedestrian, however, when it comes to plays of 10-plus yards. They're 31st nationally in plays of 10-plus yards allowed, and teams have been able to sustain drives against them. The Tide defense is 30th in third-down defense (34.7 percent conversion rate allowed) and 35th in rush defense (135.2 yards allowed per game). U-M needs to keep the chains moving and avoid turnovers ... it should be possible, though 'Bama is among the nation's best in forcing turnover (tied for seventh with 26).

The Breakdown: Michigan Wolverines Football vs. Alabama

The spread opened with Alabama as a seven-point favorite, and it actually dropped to 6.5 before settling at seven again ... and it's hard to fathom why. The Wolverines are going to need to play their A+ game to compete in this one on both sides of the ball and probably need a few breaks, as well, to keep it competitive.

U-M's best bet is a shootout. On a positive note, Alabama's defense isn't the nation's stingiest (as it's been in the past), and senior quarterback Shea Patterson is playing the best football of his career. Michigan moved the ball well on Ohio State before self-destructing at times. The Wolverines will need to do that again, but this time finish drives with touchdowns to have a shot to win on New Year's Day.

Wolverine Watch: Rogues Gallery Remains Daunting

John Borton • TheWolverine

Non-playoff bowl games have become the green garnish on college football's postseason plate. Fans grab them, maybe take a quick peek and cast them aside for meatier fare.

That would have been the case for the Michigan Wolverines, had it drawn, say, Wake Forest or Memphis for a bowl game. Such wasn't as true when Alabama's Crimson Tide came rolling in. Everybody noticed — but such a development ushers in its own set of problems.

Michigan fan reaction to facing Alabama in the Citrus Bowl Jan. 1 in Orlando? Those adorned in maize and blue reacted one of two ways:

Hide Your Eyes — This one comes from the segment of Wolverine watchers still shell-shocked by Ohio State running roughshod over Michigan for the second straight year. Add in the fact that Alabama would be battling for yet another national championship had quarterback Tua Tagovailoa not exited via injury late in the season, and it's more daunting.

Bama can still hammer, overrun with more NFL prospects than the bottom 10 teams of the Big Ten combined. For these folks, a second straight season of double blowouts to conclude a campaign looms.

What An Opportunity — This crew figures, what better way for the 9-3 Wolverines to spit out the nasty taste of Buckeye dust and enter the offseason on a marvelous upswing than to take down the Crimson Tide? Michigan coaches and players have taken that route, the only reasonable one available.

The problem involves getting it done. There's a handful of elite rogues in college football these days. Alabama definitely qualifies. Michigan's still trying to get there with major taint, Jim Harbaugh facing a John Beilein-esque climb up a mountain bearing signs that caution: Only Payoffs Earn Playoffs.

Michigan fans in general aren't sure what to feel at this time of year anymore. Manageable opponent for a bowl win and a 10th victory for the fourth time in five years under Harbaugh? Go for the gusto against Bama and hope the Tide doesn't take a tsunami's toll?

U-M fans in many cases have been reduced to taking pleasure in somebody, anybody, beating Ohio State. There arose an audible sigh of relief from Maine to Hawai'i and beyond when Clemson bounced back to end the Buckeyes' hopes in a College Football Playoff semifinal.

Never mind that it took an injury to the best player on the field (OSU's JK Dobbins), a Clemson rally from a 16-0 deficit and the Buckeyes being forcibly removed from Big Ten officiating to get that done.

Never mind that Michigan rooting for Clemson over Ohio State is akin to getting your legitimate business burned down by the Gambinos, then silently fist pumping when the Luccheses overcome them.

But it's what's left right now. That and exercising a short memory infused with long-range hope.

"We've moved on from that," Michigan defensive coordinator Don Brown said, regarding the loss to OSU. "Obviously, you can't let a significant loss like that linger. If you let it linger, one loss leads to two losses. Our guys have done a good job of just putting that behind us and focusing on what's in front of us.

"We've got a great challenge coming up here next Wednesday. That's our 100-percent focus."

It needs to be. That said, facing the nation's No. 2 offense (48.3 points per game) and third-best team in turnover margin (plus-1.33 per game) isn't any bargain, regardless of mindset.

Still, Michigan's making a climb, according to offensive coordinator Josh Gattis. He points to the fact that the Wolverines turned the football over 13 times in their first six games, three in the final half-dozen.

That opened the door for an offense many expected sooner, but fans still welcomed late. U-M burst through the opening with routs over rivals Notre Dame and Michigan State — a fact too easily forgotten in the regular-season wrap-up misery.

"There was a point in the year when a lot of people were saying, 'Hey, give up. Quit. This isn't working.' But none of our kids believed that," Gattis said. "Our first play of the season was a fumble. When your first play call, the first thing that happens [is that], and the next thing you know the ball's on the ground, you've got to learn to deal with adversity.

"They never lost faith. They never lost confidence. When your players play for you and they play for each other, good things are ultimately going to end up happening."

Good things did happen. Great things ... well, that's another story. The Wolverines had a chance against Rogue One. Rogue Two coming up, with greatness remaining a distant hope.

By The Numbers: U-M Owns An All-Time Mark Of 8-7 Vs. The SEC In Bowl Games

Austin Fox • TheWolverine

The "speed of the SEC" against the "power and strength of the Big Ten" is a narrative that has frequently been used over the last decade or so any time the two conferences square off with one another in the postseason, with the sentiment undoubtedly sure to pop up once again when Michigan Wolverines' football team goes head-to-head with Alabama in the Jan. 1 Citrus Bowl.

The SEC has oftentimes been viewed as the beneficiary of the aforementioned matchup, despite the fact that U-M has posted a winning record against the Southeastern Conference in bowl games throughout its history.

The Maize and Blue have compiled an all-time mark of 8-7 against the SEC in postseason play, a series that dates back to Jan. 2, 1984, when the Wolverines fell to Auburn in the Sugar Bowl in their first bowl meeting with a Southeastern Conference opponent.

Though Michigan has squared off with the Pac-12 in bowl games more than any other conference (20 times), the SEC has been U-M's primary postseason opponent as of late.

Including this year's showdown with Alabama, 12 of Michigan's last 19 bowl contests have been played against SEC programs, dating back to the Jan. 1, 1999, Citrus Bowl triumph over Arkansas.

The Pac-12, meanwhile, was the primary foe for U-M in its early bowl years, with the Maize and Blue squaring off with the league in their first six postseason appearances and 12 of their first 14.

Reverting to a heavy dose of SEC competition paid dividends for Michigan in the late 1980s and into the early 2000s, primarily under the leadership of head coach Lloyd Carr (1995-07).

Carr posted an impressive 5-2 mark in postseason affairs against the Southeastern Conference, with perhaps his most memorable victory occurring in his final game as the head man at Michigan when his 2007 Wolverines took down a heavily favored Florida squad in the Capital One Bowl, 41-35.

Michigan's 15 Previous Bowl Matchups With SEC Schools			
Date	Opponent	Bowl	Result
Jan. 2, 1984	Auburn	Sugar Bowl	L, 9-7
Jan. 2, 1988	Alabama	Hall of Fame Bowl	W, 28-24
Jan. 1, 1991	Ole Miss	Gator Bowl	W, 35-3
Jan. 1, 1997	Alabama	Outback Bowl	L, 17-14
Jan. 1, 1999	Arkansas	Citrus Bowl	W, 45-31
Jan. 1, 2000	Alabama	Orange Bowl	W, 35-34
Jan. 1, 2001	Auburn	Citrus Bowl	W, 31-28
Jan. 1, 2002	Tennessee	Citrus Bowl	L, 45-17
Jan. 1, 2003	Florida	Outback Bowl	W, 38-30
Jan. 1, 2008	Florida	Capital one Bowl	W, 41-35
Jan. 1, 2011	Mississippi State	Gator Bowl	L, 52-14
Jan. 1, 2013	South Carolina	Outback Bowl	L, 33-28
Jan. 1, 2016	Florida	Citrus Bowl	W, 41-7
Jan. 1, 2018	South Carolina	Outback Bowl	L, 26-19
Dec. 29, 2018	Florida	Peach Bowl	L, 41-15

Following Carr's retirement after the victory over the Gators, U-M's program held an all-time mark of 7-3 against the SEC in bowl games.

Carr's successors (Rich Rodriguez, Brady Hoke and Jim Harbaugh) have seen that mark dip in recent years, going a combined 1-4 against the league in postseason action since the 2010 season.

Most expect U-M's record to drop to 8-8 following this year's meeting with Alabama, with the Crimson Tide standing as a seven-point favorite according to Vegas' Westgate Superbook (as of Dec. 30).

TheWolverine.com

Your No. 1 Resource

for extensive Michigan Football coverage



*Use Promo Code **BLUE60**





RECRUITING SCOOP
Breaking news, team and individual rankings, features on every commitment, over 10 years of archived recruiting information.

DAILY TEAM COVERAGE
Go behind the scenes with exclusive coverage on the Wolverines throughout the season.

EXPERT ANALYSIS
In-depth analysis by our seasoned experts in the field.

PROSPECT VIDEOS
See all of tomorrow's top Michigan prospects in action on our top-quality prospect videos.

LIVELY MESSAGE BOARDS
Interact with other Michigan fans across the country and discuss the state of the Wolverines.



Rivals.com Mobile
Providing you the best coverage of Michigan football, basketball and recruiting – on the go!




The New Year's Day meeting will be the fourth postseason matchup between the two traditional powerhouses, with the Wolverines holding a 2-1 record in the previous three.

The two programs played an instant classic the last time they squared off in the 2000 Orange Bowl, when U-M pulled out a 35-34 overtime victory following a missed extra point by the Crimson Tide.

Tom Brady's 369 passing yards that night were the second most in a bowl game in Michigan history, trailing only the 373 Chad Henne compiled in the aforementioned 2008 Capital One Bowl victory over Florida.

BY THE NUMBERS: MICHIGAN VS. ALABAMA

2 Different Alabama receivers posted at least 959 receiving yards this season, in juniors DeVonta Smith (1,200) and Jerry Jeudy (959). Hawaii, LSU and Minnesota are the only other three teams in the nation to possess at least two wideouts who have racked up such lofty statistics.

3 Straight bowl games Michigan has lost, and 10 of its last 14, dating back to the Jan. 1, 2004, Rose Bowl setback to USC. Harbaugh won his debut bowl at U-M when his club destroyed Florida, 41-7, on Jan. 1, 2016, but has proceeded to lose the next three to Florida State on Dec. 30, 2016, South Carolina on Jan. 1, 2018 and Florida on Dec. 29, 2018.

7 Alabama players ESPN analyst Todd McShay included among his top 32 prospects for the 2020 NFL draft: Jeudy (No. 3), junior quarterback Tua Tagovailoa (No. 12), junior receiver Henry Ruggs (No. 14), senior defensive tackle Raekwon Davis (No. 20), junior safety Xavier McKinney (No. 22), Smith (No. 30) and junior left tackle Alex Leatherwood (No. 32).

33 Touchdown passes for Tagovailoa this season, despite the fact that he was injured on Nov. 16 and missed the final two games of the year. His 33 scoring tosses are tied for the seventh most in college football, while his 71.4 completion percentage ranks sixth and his 315.6 passing yards per game checks in fourth. Redshirt sophomore Mac Jones will start in his place, and he has tallied 1,176 yards, 11 touchdowns, three picks and a 69.8 completion percentage this season.

351.6 Passing yards per game for U-M senior quarterback Shea Patterson over his last three outings, after racking up 384 yards through the air against Michigan State on Nov. 16, 366 at Indiana on Nov. 23 and 305 against Ohio State on Nov. 30. His three consecutive 300-yard outings are already a school record, so potentially doing so for a fourth straight time would only add to that mark.

1,386 Combined receiving yards for sophomore wideout Ronnie Bell (705) and junior receiver Nico Collins (681) this season. The duo only needs to compile a combined 105 yards in the bowl game to become the top statistical receiving tandem Harbaugh has had at Michigan, surpassing the 1,491 that Jehu Chesson (764) and Amara Darboh (727) racked up in 2015.

1902 Was Michigan's first-ever bowl game, with the Maize and Blue taking down Stanford, 49-0, on Jan. 1 in the inaugural Rose Bowl. The Wolverines would not play in

another bowl until Jan. 1, 1948, when they defeated USC, 49-0. Nine of Michigan's first 10 postseason appearances occurred in the Rose Bowl.

1976-80 Is the last time U-M won at least 10 games four times in a five-year span, going 10-2 in 1976, 1977, 1978 and 1980, and 8-4 in 1979. A victory over Alabama on Jan. 1 would mark Michigan's fourth 10-win season in Harbaugh's five years on the job.

Final 2019 Statistics For Every Former Michigan Wolverine In The NFL

Austin Fox • TheWolverine

The 2019 NFL regular season has come to a close, and plenty of former Michigan Wolverines' football players will now be advancing to the playoffs.

Several also made a bang on the campaign's final weekend, including Kansas City Chiefs defensive end Frank Clark and Philadelphia Eagles defensive end Brandon Graham, who each recorded sacks for their clubs.

OG Ben Braden, New York Jets

Saw action in the 7-9 Jets' 13-6 win at Buffalo, marking his first appearance of the 2019 season ... Braden was released by the Green Bay Packers on Nov. 7 and was signed by New York on Nov. 13.

QB Tom Brady, New England Patriots

Completed 16 of his 29 passes for 221 yards with two touchdowns and a pick in Sunday's 27-24 loss to Miami ... Brady connected on 60.8 percent of his passes this season for 4,057 yards, 24 scores and eight interceptions, and also ran for three TDs ... His 4,057 yards are the seventh most in the NFL and his 24 touchdowns are tied for 13th.

"If you ever find yourself in a game with friends where you're trying to stump one another with sports trivia, file this one away: Tom Brady's 540th touchdown pass, the one that moved him past former all-time record holder Peyton Manning but into second place behind Drew Brees, went to a linebacker named Elandon Roberts," Shalise Manza Young of Yahoo Sports wrote on Sunday. "That's a true statement.

"Late in the third quarter of Sunday's regular-season finale against the Miami Dolphins, Roberts was lined up at fullback on first down from the Miami 38. He ran a wheel

route and was completely ignored by the Dolphins' defense as he ran, catching the pass from Brady and scoring the 38-yard touchdown.

"He's the 77th player to catch a touchdown from Brady, extending his NFL record, but only the second who was a defensive player: [former linebacker and current Titans head coach] Mike Vrabel had 10 touchdown catches from Brady in his career."

TE Ian Bunting, Indianapolis Colts

After being released by the 7-9 Jets on Sept. 25, he was signed to the Colts' practice squad on Oct. 8, but did not appear in an affair with either team this year.

LB Devin Bush Jr., Pittsburgh Steelers

Started Pittsburgh's 28-10 loss to 14-2 Baltimore, and accumulated a season-high 12 tackles ... Bush played in all 16 clashes this year and started 15 of them, compiling 109 tackles, one sack, four passes defended, two picks for a combined six yards, one forced fumble and a fumble recovery he ran back nine yards for a touchdown.

"The Pittsburgh Steelers have had seasons where there was no clear-cut answer for who would be their rookie of the year," Jeff Hartman of Behind the Steel Curtain wrote on Friday. "At times it was simply by default, especially if the team was a veteran-laden team. 2019 was not the case with several players being considered as worthy candidates for the Joe Greene Award. Ultimately, the Pittsburgh Chapter of Pro Football Writers of America selected Devin Bush as the 2019 Joe Greene Award winner, for the team's top rookie of the season."

TE Jake Butt, Denver Broncos

Resides on the 7-9 Broncos' injured reserve list after suffering a torn ACL on Aug. 28.

DE Taco Charlton, Miami Dolphins

Did not see time in the Dolphins' 27-24 win over New England, marking the second straight week he didn't play and the third time in four contests ... Charlton started five of the 10 games he appeared in for his team this season, and logged 21 tackles, five sacks and two forced fumbles.

"Defensive end Taco Charlton said Monday that he doesn't know what to think about the Dolphins making him inactive for three of the final four games this season, or what it might mean for his future with the team," Steve Gorten of The Palm Beach Post explained on Monday.

"I don't know if I'm in their plans," he told the Post as players cleaned out their lockers at the team's Nova Southeastern University practice facility the morning after a season-ending victory at New England. "I don't know anything. I just show up every day, work hard, and see where the pieces may fall. I love these guys in the locker room, so I try to give everything I can to perform and show them what I can do."

"Hopefully, I was able to make a good impression. At this point, it's a business at the

end of the day. I know that. I've seen that firsthand that it's a business, so I'll prepare myself for what happens next."

WR Jehu Chesson, Washington Redskins

Is on the 3-13 Redskins' injured reserve and did not appear in an outing this year.

DE Frank Clark, Kansas City Chiefs

Notched two tackles, one sack and a pass defended in the Chiefs' 31-21 triumph over the 5-11 Chargers ... Clark started 11 of the 14 showdowns he took part in, and posted 37 tackles, eight sacks, four passes defended, one pick for five yards and three forced fumbles ... Tied for 33rd in the league in regular-season sacks.

OL Mason Cole, Arizona Cardinals

Saw time off the bench in Arizona's 31-24 setback to the 9-7 Rams ... Cole received playing time in all 16 of the Cardinals' tilts, but only started two of them.

CB Blake Countess, New York Jets

Did not see the field for a third straight week in New York's 13-6 win at Buffalo ... Countess took part in six affairs in 2019, but did not rack up any stats.

WR Amara Darboh, Pittsburgh Steelers

Did not receive playing time in 2019 (including Sunday's 28-10 loss to the Ravens), despite being promoted from the practice squad to the 8-8 Steelers' 53-man roster on Dec. 16.

WR Devin Funchess, Indianapolis Colts

Missed the final 15 clashes of the year with a broken collarbone, after only appearing in the season-opening loss to the Chargers ... Funchess hauled in three catches for 32 yards that day before suffering the injury.

LB Rashaan Gary, Green Bay Packers

Came off the bench in Sunday's 23-20 thrilling victory at Detroit, but did not record any statistics ... Gary played in all 16 clashes for 13-3 Green Bay (no starts), and registered 21 stops with two sacks.

LB Ben Gedeon, Minnesota Vikings

Suffered his second concussion of the year on Nov. 17, and spent the rest of the campaign on the injured reserve ... Gedeon started five of the eight contests he took part in this season, and tallied 13 tackles.

TE Zach Gentry, Pittsburgh Steelers

Did not play in his club's 28-10 loss to Baltimore ... Gentry only received playing

time in four games, and totaled one reception for four yards.

OL Graham Glasgow, Detroit Lions

Started Detroit's 23-20 loss to 13-3 Green Bay, marking his 15th start in 15 outings this season (missed the Nov. 3 loss at Oakland with a back injury).

"At this point, Glasgow seems headed for free agency," Kyle Meinke of MLive reported on Dec. 29. "He said this week it would be 'almost dumb' not to test the waters, and he's right. He already took on the risk of playing through a contract season, so he might as well reap the potential benefits of a bidding war too. And with the way interior offensive linemen have gotten paid in recent years, he figures to be headed for a major pay bump.

"He made \$2.03 million this year. There are 17 guards who average at least quadruple that, including Warford, and Glasgow could be looking at a similar type of contract."

DT Ryan Glasgow, Cincinnati Bengals

Started two of the five showdowns he participated in and accumulated seven tackles for the 2-14 Bengals, but suffered a knee injury on Oct. 27 and missed the rest of the year.

DE Brandon Graham, Philadelphia Eagles

Compiled three tackles and one sack in Philadelphia's 34-17 triumph over the Giants ... Graham started all 16 tilts and logged 50 tackles, 8.5 sacks and one forced fumble ... He finished the regular season tied for 27th in the league in sacks.

"Brandon Graham wanted a T-shirt," Zach Berman of The Athletic wrote after the Eagles clinched the NFC East. "He expressed it earlier in the week when thinking about Sunday's win-and-in Week 17 game against the Giants. An Eagles victory would clinch the NFC East, and the NFL rewards division champions with commemorative gear.

"Graham sat by his locker after the Eagles' 34-17 win over the Giants set up next Sunday's opening-round playoff game against Seattle and glanced at the new shirt hanging above him. He was waiting to shower and add it to his ensemble.

"The midnight green shirt reads 'THE EAST IS NOT ENOUGH' wrapped around an Eagles logo. Some players wore it during the locker room celebration and posed with it in pictures, while dancing to 'The Box' by Roddy Ricch and 'Dreams and Nightmares' by Meek Mill. Others wore it onto the bus back to Philadelphia, even accessorizing it under their suits."

QB Chad Henne, Kansas City Chiefs

Did not see any action for 12-4 Kansas City in 2019, serving as the club's third-string quarterback behind Patrick Mahomes and Matt Moore.

RB Karan Higdon, Houston Texans

Spent the entire 2019 campaign on the 10-6 Texans' practice squad, and did not participate in an affair this year.

S Lano Hill, Seattle Seahawks

Earned the starting nod for the second straight week in Seattle's 26-21 loss to 13-3 San Francisco, and tied his season high with six tackles ... Hill started four of the 12 clashes he played in this year, and notched 25 stops.

"I don't have a good opinion of it," head coach Pete Carroll said after the club's loss, addressing Hill's play. "I have to see the film. I don't know. There were a couple plays that I wish he would have made on some crossing stuff that got out, like the last time we played them. And, unfortunately, it happened again. But, all in all, he did a nice job."

DT Maurice Hurst, Oakland Raiders

Started Oakland's 16-15 loss to Denver and posted two tackles ... Hurst played in all 16 contests in 2019 (four starts), and racked up 18 stops, 3.5 sacks, three passes defended and one interception he returned 55 yards.

OL Kyle Kalis, Oakland Raiders

Was signed to the 7-9 Raiders' practice squad on Oct. 23, but was then released on Dec. 4 after not having appeared in a game with them. The club signed him yet again on Dec. 11, but Kalis never played in an outing this season.

OT Taylor Lewan, Tennessee Titans

Started at left tackle in Tennessee's 35-14 win over Houston ... Lewan received the starting nod in all 12 showdowns he competed in this season, after returning Oct. 6 from his four-tilt suspension to begin the year.

CB Jourdan Lewis, Dallas Cowboys

Started for the fourth time in six weeks in Dallas' 47-16 destruction of Washington, recording five tackles ... Lewis saw playing time in all 16 affairs (five starts), and registered 51 stops, four sacks, six passes defended and two picks for a combined 20 yards.

CB David Long, Los Angeles Rams

Tallied a career-best three tackles and a pass defended in his club's 31-24 victory over Arizona ... Long took part in eight clashes this season (no starts), and totaled 10 tackles and two passes defended.

OL Erik Magnuson, Oakland Raiders

Spent most of the season on the 7-9 Raiders' practice squad, with his lone appearance of 2019 coming in the Nov. 3 win over Detroit ... Magnuson was signed by Oakland off the Bills' practice squad on Oct. 30.

DT Bryan Mone, Seattle Seahawks

Did not see the field in Seattle's 26-21 loss to the 49ers ... Mone received playing time in just four contests in 2019, and accumulated four stops.

OL Patrick Omameh, New Orleans Saints

Saw playing time in a backup role in New Orleans' 42-10 destruction of 5-11 Carolina ... Omameh played in 14 games this season, but only earned the starting nod in one (a 26-18 win at Atlanta on Nov. 28).

S Jabrill Peppers, New York Giants

Was placed on the club's injured reserve list with a back ailment on Dec. 7 ... Peppers began all 11 outings for New York prior to the injury, and compiled 76 tackles, five passes defended, one interception he returned 32 yards for a score and three forced fumbles ... He also averaged 12.3 yards on four punt returns and 23 yards on one kick return.

QB Jake Rudock, Miami Dolphins

Spent the entire season on the 5-11 Dolphins' practice squad.

LB Jake Ryan, Jacksonville Jaguars

Was put on 6-10 Jacksonville's injured reserve list on Dec. 10 with a hamstring ailment ... Ryan took part in just two showdowns this season after missing the first 11 while recovering from an offseason ACL injury, but never logged any statistics.

OL Michael Schofield, Los Angeles Chargers

Started the 5-11 Chargers' 31-21 loss to the Chiefs, marking the 16th consecutive start he made this season.

CB Brandon Watson, Jacksonville Jaguars

Notched a season-best two tackles off the bench in the Jaguars' 38-20 triumph over Indianapolis ... Watson competed in eight tilts (no starts) and posted five stops in 2019.

P Matt Wile, Free Agent

Was released by the Lions on Dec. 5 and has been a free agent ever since ... Wile had been on Detroit's practice squad after the team signed him on Nov. 16 following his waiving by the Falcons ... He appeared in two affairs with Atlanta, and averaged 48.3 yards on six punts, while dropping three of the six inside the opposing 20-yard line.

S Jarrod Wilson, Jacksonville Jaguars

Racked up six tackles in Jacksonville's 38-20 win over the 7-9 Colts ... Wilson earned the starting nod in all 16 clashes this season and recorded 79 tackles, four passes defended, two picks for a combined four yards and one forced fumble.

Subscribe to *The Wolverine!*



The Wolverine covers all sports at U-M with an emphasis on football, basketball and recruiting.

Subscriptions start at \$39.99
Makes a terrific gift for your Michigan Fan!

A one-year subscription includes:

- 11 monthly full-color, information-packed issues (double issue in June/July).
- *The Wolverine Football Preview*, 160 full-color, action-packed pages filled with great information about the upcoming season. (Mailed in July.)
- 26 issues of *The Wolverine Now*, our digital newsletter, published every pre-game Thursday and post-game Sunday during football season.
- Digital access to current and archived editions of *The Wolverine* through the FREE apps as well as at www.TheWolverineOnDemand.com.

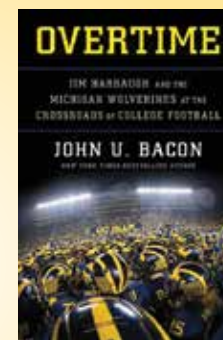
SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

Overtime

Get this new book for only \$19.95
with FREE shipping*

when you subscribe, renew or give a gift subscription

With unprecedented access to Jim Harbaugh's U-M football team, *Overtime* is a riveting insider's chronicle of Michigan's Jim Harbaugh era, and a deeply reported human portrait of a big-time college football program at the crossroads.



(432 pages, Hardback) Regularly \$28.99 plus shipping.

*FREE Economy Shipping (Allow up to 3 weeks for delivery)
Offer only available in U.S. Limit one book per subscription
Please call 800-421-7751 for faster shipping options.

SAVE
OVER \$10!
ONLY \$19.95
WITH SUB ORDER

Book Offer Expires Dec. 31, 2019. Order yours today!

1-800-421-7751 • www.TheWolverineOnDemand.com

DE Chase Winovich, New England Patriots

Registered one tackle off the bench in the Patriots' 27-24 loss to Miami ... Winovich competed in all 16 contests (no starts) and tallied 26 tackles, 5.5 sacks and a touchdown he scored after taking a blocked punt to the house.

According to Bernd Buchmasser of Pats Pulpit, Winovich played 20 of the team's 68 snaps (29 percent) on Sunday against the Dolphins, and 18 of the club's 29 special teams snaps (62 percent).

DE Chris Wormley, Baltimore Ravens

Started and totaled four tackles in the Ravens' 28-10 triumph over the 8-8 Steelers ... Wormley played in all 16 games this year (seven starts) and accumulated 33 stops, 1.5 sacks and two passes defended.

Offensive Coordinator Josh Gattis Prepared For Battle With 'Sugar Shea'

Chris Balas • TheWolverine

ORLANDO, Fla. — Michigan Wolverines football offensive coordinator Josh Gattis was in Alabama at this time last year, a co-offensive coordinator for Nick Saban and the Alabama Crimson Tide. A year later he's preparing to face his former team in the Citrus Bowl as U-M's man in charge of the offense.

The Wolverines' defensive players have been asked extensively this week if Gattis has been preparing them for what they might expect in Wednesday's showdown. The first-year U-M assistant got the same question Sunday during his Citrus Bowl meeting with the media.

"They're different. We're different," he said. "Obviously, there are little similarities in what we do offensively. I think they've done a really good job adapting and adjusting the offense from previously being there, and they've got good players. They've got good coaches."

Saban brought in former Washington head coach Steve Sarkisian, and the 'Bama offense continued to roll. Losing starting quarterback Tua Tagovailoa proved to be too much to overcome in a loss to Auburn ... with him, the Crimson Tide would likely be in a New Year's Six Bowl, possibly even the College Football Playoff.

The Wolverines, meanwhile, fell short of their championship goals again, ending the

regular season with another loss to Ohio State. They have a chance to change the narrative with a win over the Tide, and Gattis said he wouldn't trade his quarterback for anybody.

Senior Shea Patterson threw for 300-plus yards in each of his last three games and earned U-M's MVP honor.

"I'll go to battle with this guy any day of the week. This is 'Sugar' Shea Patterson right here," Gattis said. "Just to see his confidence throughout the year continue to rise each and every week, his preparation, his performance. Statistically he did some pretty amazing things throughout the year as far as a number of 300-yard passing games. ...

"There was some adversity that we faced offensively, and I think Shea is one of the leaders and [senior guard] Ben [Bredeson] is one of the leaders that really took ownership of it, and no one put their head down. They continued to fight and continued to push through, and that's a testament to their character."

They could have quit after a tough loss at Penn State that essentially knocked them from the Big Ten race. Instead, they rebounded with a huge win over Notre Dame, a 45-14 blowout.

"There was a point in the year when a lot of people were saying, 'Give up and quit. Hey, this isn't working. This isn't this.' But none of our kids believed that because they truly knew who we were in practice, who we were in games," Gattis said. "And it was a testament to their character, to fight through everything."

"I couldn't be more proud of Shea and Ben, both of these guys. But specifically, when you see Shea ... this guy's a player, man. He's been playing at an extreme high level for us, and he's been the leader of our offense, leader of our team. And, like I said, I'll go to battle with him any day out of the week versus any team in the country."

The same could be said of the rest of the offense, he added. What was once a turn-over-prone mess became a very effective group by the end of the year.

They have one more game to add to what's been an impressive late-season surge.

"We've got a great culture within our team, within our offense, and we're really proud of everything that we've accomplished," Gattis said. "We're proud of each other but we're not done. We've got a great opportunity ahead of us to really end the season the way we want to."

Michigan Wolverines Football Early Enrollees Impressing Early

Class of 2020 running back Blake Corum and offensive tackle Zak Zinter have joined the team as early enrollees and did some drills with the team in bowl practices last week, albeit in a very limited capacity.

"I think it was very beneficial from a team chemistry standpoint, just mixing those guys in, kind of getting them around some of their teammates, and really kind of showing those guys how we practice and the culture that we have in practice," Gattis said. "There wasn't a ton of work that they could do, obviously. We were focused on our opponent coming up

and moving along in our game preparations. But ... very, very pleased with both of those young men and what they displayed.

“Blake’s got a unique ability to be explosive with the ball in his hands and we’re excited about him. But we’re going to welcome those guys back in January and they’re going to have to really get back to work. It’s going to be a different set and it’s going to be a different team. It’s going to be new opportunities and new challenges, and so we look forward to welcoming those guys on campus.”

Michigan Wolverines Football: Dwumfour Has Procedure, Will Miss Citrus Bowl

Chris Balas • TheWolverine

ORLANDO, Fla. — Michigan redshirt junior defensive tackle Michael Dwumfour has not made the trip to Orlando and will miss the Citrus Bowl.

Dwumfour was not spotted at practice the last two days. Today, he appeared to post a video from the Detroit Lions versus Green Bay Packers game on his Instagram account.

“Michael has a medical procedure that prevented him from traveling and playing in the bowl game,” U-M spokesman Dave Ablauf responded when asked for comment.

Dwumfour later posted on Dec. 29 to his Twitter account: “I have been playing through injury for a good portion of the season and decided to have surgery that would keep me from playing or traveling with my teammates to the Citrus Bowl. I will miss suiting up with my teammates but I will be cheering them on New Year’s Day.”

The 6-2, 285-pounder struggled with a foot injury and played through it last year, and played through another injury this season to appear in 10 games after leaving the opener with Middle Tennessee State with an upper-body injury. He returned against Rutgers Sept. 28 and started the last two games of the season against Indiana and Ohio State.

Dwumfour finished the season with nine tackles, 1.5 tackles for loss, 0.5 sacks and two passes broken up.

Senior and fellow tackle Carlo Kemp, meanwhile, has been working through something, head coach Jim Harbaugh announced at the Schemmy Awards in mid-December. Kemp, however, has been practicing with the team, after totaling 40 tackles, 4.5 tackles for loss and two sacks with a fumble recovery in the regular season.

Freshman Chris Hinton is a candidate to see more time, having earned more playing time late in the season. He saw action in 11 contests this fall and totaled nine stops with 0.5 tackles for loss.

GET YOUR GEAR!
CLICK TO FIND OUT HOW!

NEW ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS
GET 25% OFF
YOUR FIRST YEAR AT
THEWOLVERINE.COM
PLUS A
\$75.00
DIGITAL GIFT CODE
GOOD FOR NIKE GEAR!

USE PROMO CODE
NIKE

OFFER EXPIRES
DECEMBER 31, 2019!