

12TH MAN

A VOLUNTEER'S GUIDE TO THE UNFORGETTABLE SATURDAY NIGHT



History made

Tennessee wins shootout against Alabama on last-second field goal

ANDREW PETERS
Sports Editor

Tennessee can light cigars for the first time since 2006.

The No. 6 Vols defeated No. 3 Alabama 52-49 on a last second field goal, snapping a 15-year losing streak and moving Tennessee to 6-0.

“Tonight was for our players, for our former players, for our donors,” head coach Josh Heupel said. “It is for our fans. I know how much this has meant to the people of Tennessee and Vol Nation, and I’m so excited that we came out with the win, for everybody involved.”

The Vols and the Crimson Tide traded touchdowns in the first quarter, with Tennessee scoring on its first drive of the game on a Jabari Small run.

Tennessee created some separation in the first half, taking advantage of Alabama’s many mistakes. Alabama had nine penalties for 71 yards in the first half alone.

Alabama also had a crucial mistake, muffing Tennessee’s punt after some confusion about who touched the ball. The muffed punt set up a Tennessee touchdown a few plays later.

Jaylin Hyatt – who has been Hendon Hooker’s favorite target with Cedric Tillman out – had a huge first half for the Vols. He picked up two touchdowns on back-to-back drives to give Tennessee a 21-7 lead in the first quarter.

Tennessee led by 18 at one point in the first half, but Alabama managed to crawl back and make it a 28-20 game at the half.

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Head Coach Josh Heupel

Alabama came out of halftime looking more like itself, and punched Tennessee in the mouth on its first drive of the half, scoring and convert-

ing for two to tie it up.

Tennessee had an answer, and scored on a 60-yard pass to nobody other than Hyatt. The Vols missed the extra point, opening the window for Alabama to take the lead on the next drive.

The Tide jumped on the opportunity, and took a 35-34 lead on a Jahmyr Gibbs rushing touchdown.

Hooker threw a rare interception in the third quarter, but Alabama didn’t make Tennessee pay for the turnover, punting the next drive.

Besides Hooker’s interception, the veteran quarterback was near perfect. He threw for 385 yards and five touchdowns on 21-30 passing.

“He controlled the game for us,” Heupel said.

Hooker made sure his interception wouldn’t define his game, and on the next drive he hit Hyatt again on a 78-yard touchdown pass. Hyatt’s four receiving touchdowns is a Tennessee record.

Hyatt finished the game with 207 yards and five touchdowns.

“The looks they were giving us—me and (Hendon)—were on the right page as far as what we were looking at, and him trusting in me.” Hyatt said. “This is what we needed.”

Alabama was right back in it a few drives later, marching down the field and scoring on a short pass from Bryce Young to Cameron Latu to make it 42-22.

Tennessee shot itself in the foot halfway through the fourth quarter as Hooker dropped the ball on a handoff to Small, and Alabama recovered and took it into the endzone to make it 49-22.

In the redzone on fourth down, Hooker threw another interception, but the Vols were bailed out by a pass interference call and scored the next play to tie it up.

Alabama missed a 50-yard field goal with 15 seconds left, giving Tennessee one last chance to win it in regulation.

Hooker made an 18-yard pass to Ramel Keyton and a 27-yard pass to Bru McCoy to get the Vols to the 15-yard line with two seconds remaining.

Chase McGrath’s field goal was short, but good, and fans spilled onto the field, cigars in hand.

Heupel has been at Tennessee for less than two seasons, but he is well on his way to flipping the script on the Tennessee football program. The win puts Tennessee in the College Football Playoff conversation, but for now, Heupel is enjoying the win.

“I smoked it slow,” Heupel said of his post-game cigar. “But it was dang good.”



Top: Smokey and Davy Crockett get a roaring cheer from the packed crowd at Neyland. Middle: Fans participated in an “orange out” at the game against Alabama on Oct. 15, 2022. Bottom: No. 40 Chase McGrath makes the game-winning field goal against Alabama on Oct. 15, 2022 in Neyland Stadium. Nolan Keesee / Contributor

Pandemonium reigned again as fans celebrated Alabama victory

EMMA COFFEY AND AUTUMN HALL
Arts and Culture Editor and News Editor

Following Tennessee's 52-49 win against Alabama, students and fans celebrated both on and off the field. From storming the field to burning couches and breaking TVs, the UT fanbase was more than ecstatic about the win over Alabama.

Although the celebration of the historic victory was well-deserved, some fans took their excitement to a destructive – and expensive – level. As Vol Network legend John Ward once said, “pandemonium reigns!”

After the last-second field goal by Chase McGrath, fans rushed the field for the first time since the 1998 Victory against Florida.

The entire field was covered by a sea of orange within minutes after the win. Thousands of people brought their victory cigars and lit them for the first time since 2006.

Senior Anna Cykoski described her emotions as she rushed the field with thousands of students.

“Neyland was electric. Tears streamed down my face as ‘Dixieland Delight’ blasted through the speakers and we jumped onto the field. The crowd roared as the goal posts were torn down, hands stretching out to touch them on their journey to the river,” Cykoski said. “My hands were shaking as I lit my cigar to celebrate, joining thousands of others in this special tradition.”

Cykoski said that as a lifelong Tennessee fan, this was a moment she will share with her future children and grandchildren.

Students were in disbelief that they were a part of this historic moment. Those who grew up as Vols fans had heard about the football traditions, but did not expect to ever be a part of them.

“We were in the Fort and there were burning couches in the middle of the streets ... The glow of the fires lit up everyone’s orange jerseys and orange dresses. It was a surreal experience.”

Junior Chris Meyers

Junior Miles Bonn explained how valuable the moment was to him as a student.

“I will forever remember that Saturday night when we made that field goal. It felt like everything went numb and was moving in



A sea of UT fans flooded Shields-Watkins Field and tore down both goalposts in triumph after the Tennessee Volunteers defeated the Alabama Crimson Tide in Neyland Stadium on Oct. 15, 2022. Nolan Keesee / Contributor

slow motion. The Vols are a different breed and there’s no stopping us now,” Bonn said.

Other students were happy to finally have something to celebrate. Garrett Russell, a junior and Knoxville native, explained how the victory redefined the experience of being a UT fan.

“Rushing the field was a dream come true. All the pain that has come with being a Vol fan the past 20 years was worth it. The goal posts are ours and the Vols are back,” Russell said.

UT alumni have also been waiting a long time for a win like this. Ally Willoughby (‘22) and her friends chose this game as their reunion weekend and they were not prepared for the experience that they got. She said that she was overwhelmed with emotions being back in a place that feels like home and celebrating with 100,000 fans – it felt even more special for her as an alumni.

While many people rushed the field without facing injury, some did not. Immediately after the winning kick, people in the student section were forcibly pushed down the stands to run onto the field. Junior Abby Brewer returned home with a bruise the size of a softball, but she said that she would do it again in a heartbeat to experience the joy of beating Alabama.

“When I was jumping the wall the crowd pushed into me causing me to slip slightly before jumping down onto the field. I wasn’t able to jump far enough from the wall so the side of my upper thigh smacked the wall. While it did hurt immensely when it happened, I didn’t have time to care about it. I ran onto the field and cheered with everyone else,” Brewer said.

Fans were quick to tear down the goalposts on both the north and south sides of the field.

A piece of the upright was then taken out of the stadium and transported along Cumberland Avenue and thrown into the Tennessee River. This tradition first began when UT beat Alabama in 1982 and fans tore the goal posts down.

Senior Interfraternity Council President Michael Rodriguez is one of the many fans who carried a goal post out of Neyland and to the Tennessee River.

“The emotions I experienced that night are unlike any other during my time at UT. It felt as if the last four years of struggles finally just shed right off. Hearing alumni always talk about the Golden Ages of Tennessee football in the ‘90s made me envious that I’d never experience something of that nature,” Rodriguez said.

“But there I was, carrying the goalpost down Cumberland with hundreds of my fellow peers, taking a dip into the river and carrying it right back out – it just felt right.”

Only a few hours after the game, madness and chaos ensued on the Strip. According to Knoxville Police Department, around 11 p.m. following the game, gunshots were fired on Cumberland Avenue, where many fans were still out celebrating.

A man was shot in his hands and was transported to UT Medical Center with non-life threatening injuries. The police do not believe there was any connection between the victim and the multiple shooters, but the investigation into the shooting is still ongoing.

UT junior Ashley Sanderson works at University Liquors on the Strip and witnessed the shooting while she was standing behind the counter. Sanderson said she heard around

seven gunshots and had to hide in the store’s cooler room.

“I just witnessed mad chaos, everyone was running ... there was a mass of people standing on the other side of the tape watching everything happen,” Sanderson said.

“I was so excited to be celebrating beating Alabama, I never thought anything like that would happen ... but I felt so unsafe on the Strip because I didn’t know if someone else would pull out their gun and start shooting at people ... I’m glad that no one died.”

Later in the night, fans in Fort Sanders took to burning and setting fire to things and smashing glass as a form of celebrating the Vols’ victory.

Senior Mary Demere lives on Clinch Avenue and saw people burning furniture after returning home from the game. Demere’s neighbors set an old cabinet on fire and were standing around it playing “Rocky Top.” She said that there was a large cloud of black smoke and then firemen arrived.

Junior Chris Meyers was also in Fort Sanders with his friends and witnessed multiple fires.

“It was wild. We were in the Fort and there were burning couches in the middle of the streets, people crowded on roofs. The glow of the fires lit up everyone’s orange jerseys and orange dresses. It was a surreal experience,” Meyers said.

Some of the parties that occurred near Clinch Avenue were so large that people were blocking the entire street. There were fireworks going off, people burning doors and couches lying in the middle of the road.

With a chaotic but eventful night, Vols fans are going to remember this one for a long time.

Notebook: Vols' win over Alabama makes them contenders

ERIC WOODS

Assistant Sports Editor

Tennessee entered the Alabama game with so many questions. Is the hype real? How will the Vols do against a "real" team? Can the defense create key stops?

Even if all of those questions were answered, one assumption loomed. Tennessee surely won't beat Alabama, right?

Well, it happened. For the first time since 2006, the Vols lit their cigars after beating the Crimson Tide, and Josh Heupel became the first Tennessee head coach to beat Alabama since Phillip Fulmer.

The Vols are legitimate contenders

Tennessee entered Saturday night as outsiders looking in when it came to the SEC East discussion. Now, the college football world is officially on notice, even the doubters, that this team is for real, not just in the East.

Now the defense obviously was not pretty, but the group came up with a big stop that led to McGrath's game-winning field goal.

Tennessee's offense is unstoppable, plain and simple. If the defense can continue to come up with stops in crucial moments, then the sky's the limit for this team.

"Good teams get better throughout the course of the season," Heupel said. "We are



Jalin Hyatt (11) and Jerome Carvin (75) pump up the crowd at the Alabama game on Oct. 15, 2022 in Neyland Stadium. **Nolan Keesee / Contributor**

halfway finished with the regular season. We are just beginning."

Jalin Hyatt was terrific

Terrific is an understatement. Hyatt had the game of his life, the game of any Tennessee wide receiver's life at that. On six receptions, he shattered a Vol record with five touchdowns, and 200 yards. Hyatt was simply unstoppable. His ability to create separation on routes was second to none.

Hyatt played the biggest role in the biggest game of the year for the Vols.

He had a pair of scores in the first quarter, and he was on watch to break the record. He then burned Demarcco Hellams for a 60-yard touchdown five minutes into the third.

The record-breaker came when Hyatt once again got separation at the beginning of the third quarter at the beginning of the fourth

quarter to give Vols the lead.

Hyatt's most important, however, was his fifth. He took a slant off a Hendon Hooker pass for 13 yards to the house.

"To be honest, I didn't know I was going to have five touchdowns," Hyatt said. "That's a lot. It was the looks, what they were showing us ... We knew we could execute on big plays, knew that coming into the game and knew we had to in order to win this game. I'm proud of everyone in this locker room, and we're onto the next."

Game of the year

This was without a doubt the game of the year so far. Besides, who doesn't love a shoot-out? Tennessee led 28-10 at one point. After the Crimson Tide stormed back and tied it at the beginning of the second half, it looked like

Tennessee's time was running out.

But Tennessee kept responding, even after Alabama took a 49-42 lead halfway through the fourth quarter following a fumble returned for a touchdown. Tennessee kept coming back out and not backing down.

Hendon Hooker connected with Hyatt and the game was tied, but Bama had the ball with a little over three minutes, and it once again looked like the Vols' time was running out.

Tennessee then responded in a different way: on the defensive side.

The Crimson Tide was milking out the clock, but the Vol defense caused the drive to end shortly and force a long field goal with some time left on the clock. Alabama missed it and the rest is history.

After 15 years, the Vols finally beat the Crimson Tide.

Other notes

Hendon Hooker cementing himself in the Heisman candidacy was somehow not the biggest story of the game, but he had 385 yards and five touchdowns. The offensive line had a huge game, allowing zero sacks and neutralizing one of college football's best players.

"The big picture of this means we are the best team on the field this game and that is our goal every single week," Heupel said. "There are so many uncontrollables. Control what we can control."

How Jalin Hyatt became Tennessee's most lethal weapon

ANDREW PETERS

Sports Editor

Jalin Hyatt watched a year ago as Alabama fans lit their cigars in Bryant-Denny Stadium in the final minutes of the Crimson Tide's 52-24 routing of the Vols.

Hyatt was a nonfactor in the game, picking up just 14 yards on three receptions. It was a tough game in what had been a tough season for the sophomore receiver. He was coming off a great start in his freshman year, but hadn't improved the way he and many others expected he would.

That night stuck with him. Watching the opposing fans celebrate Alabama's 15th straight win was something he didn't want to feel again.

Hyatt grew up just minutes from South Carolina's campus, but he brought his talents to the Jeremy Pruitt-coached team in 2020. His freshman year he recorded 276 yards and a pair of touchdowns, showing some flashes of greatness coming off the bench for Tennessee.

His college career was shaken up at the end of Tennessee's historically bad 2020 season as Pruitt was fired amidst a recruiting scandal, but Hyatt stuck around as Josh Heupel took over.

Hyatt didn't see much improvement his sophomore year, recording 226 yards and two touchdowns on 21 receptions.

Heading into the 2022 season, Hyatt knew he had some changes to make.

"Even in the middle part of last year, his focus and attention to detail, he understood that it needed to change," Heupel said after one of Tennessee's first fall practices. "He started making those changes."

In Tennessee's dominant win over Akron, Hendon Hooker's main target, Cedric Tillman, went down with a high-ankle sprain. Hyatt had his chance to be the No. 1 target, and he took it, picking up 166 yards and a pair of touchdowns in the 63-6 win.

A few games later, Hyatt continued to show improvement as he picked up two touchdowns in the Vols' 40-13 win over LSU on the road.

Then, Hyatt had the game of his career.

The Vols entered the Alabama game with their best chance to win in over a decade. Their offense was rolling, their defense was showing improvement and they had already put together a handful of impressive wins.

Hyatt scored his first touchdown of the game in the first quarter. He burned past his defender and Hooker hit him on a perfect 36-yard pass to put the Vols up 14-7. His second touchdown came less than three minutes later and put Tennessee up by two touchdowns.

Alabama evened things up at 28 in the third quarter, but Hyatt quickly got the touchdown back. Hyatt once again left his defender in the dust, and Hooker found him on a 60-yard pass

to score.

The 60-yard touchdown catch was the longest of his career – but it didn't last long. In the fourth quarter, Hooker found Hyatt on a quick pass, and Hyatt took it to score – a 78-yard touchdown pass. The touchdown was his fourth of the game, a Tennessee program record.

"The looks they were giving us—me and (Hendon)—were on the right page as far as what we were looking at, and him trusting in me," Hyatt said.

Hyatt's big night wasn't over yet.

After a scoop-and-score gave Alabama the lead, Tennessee's offense marched down the field and capped off the drive with an 11-yard touchdown pass to nobody other than Hyatt. He finished the game with 207 yards and five touchdowns on just six receptions.

"Preparation meets opportunity and you have to be ready to smash it," Heupel said. "Tonight, he had opportunities and played really good football. It's really special what he did tonight."

Hyatt's game was unbelievable – but it wasn't a fluke. He put in the work and the hours in the offseason and was rewarded with a victory cigar on Saturday.

"I think that is one of the great stories," Heupel said. "Everyone knew he wanted to be a great player. You've heard me say it. He has worked to become a great player this year."



Jalin Hyatt celebrates one of his five touchdowns in Tennessee's win over Alabama on Oct. 16, 2022. **Nolan Keesee / The Daily Beacon**