

## **The Storybook Ending**

The 2019 college football season is officially upon us and the new trend for quarterbacks who do not win the starting job is to pack up and leave. There are thousands of players in the transfer portal each year and that trend continues to grow.

Justin Fields, Tate Martell, and Kelly Bryant are big time quarterbacks who did not buy into the team when they found out they did not earn the job and packed their things. They wanted nothing to do with their programs that promised them they would excel and make it to the next level.

One quarterback who stood out from the rest was Jalen Hurts from the University of Alabama. In 2018, Hurts lost the starting position to Tua Tagovailoa after being benched in the second half of the National Championship when playing Georgia. Tagovailoa ended up leading the Crimson Tide to their 17<sup>th</sup> National Championship.

Heading into the 2019 season for the Tide, there were many questions about who was going to start at the quarterback position. When the offense hit the field for their game against Louisville, it was the sophomore Tagovailoa who was running out with the first team. Although a lot of players would have packed it up and shut the season down, Hurts was not going to go out in such a fashion for the Tide.

As a starter for Alabama, Hurts had a record of 26-2. There was no doubt that Hurts was good enough to play at any other university and would be a star on any other team. Jalen supported Tua and the Tide the whole season and was not leaving his teammates behind even though he was not playing.

Tua Tagovailoa had a breakout year as the starter for Alabama and was the runner up for the Heisman trophy behind Kyler Murray. Alabama was rolling heading into the SEC Championship where they would face Georgia in Atlanta. Alabama was 12-0 going into this matchup while Georgia was 11-1 and the winner of this game would be in the College Football Playoffs.

There was a lot at stake when the two teams took the field and the Bulldogs were ready to play. Heading into halftime, Georgia was leading Alabama 21-14 and the world was shocked. Tagovailoa was banged up heading into the game with a knee injury and really struggled against the Bulldogs for the whole first half. It was clear Alabama needed a change when the Bulldogs scored on their first possession of the second half leading 28-14.

Tagovailoa was not playing one hundred percent and was finally subbed out in the fourth quarter of the SEC Championship just before throwing his last touchdown to bring Alabama back within seven. It was now Jalen Hurts time to show people he was still the real deal.

A year ago, Jalen was being replaced by Tua in the National Championship and now Jalen had his shot to lead the comeback of a century with one quarter left. Jalen delivered and

finished with a touchdown pass and the game winning score when he ran the ball 15-yards with one minute left on the clock.

Alabama went on to the College Football Playoffs and beat Oklahoma in the first round with Tua back in the starting position. Clemson and Alabama played for the National Championship for the third time in four years. It was the Clemson Tigers that was victorious and won its' third National Championship.

Without Hurts commitment to stay ready, Alabama would not have been in the Championship. He stayed loyal to the Tide the whole year after being benched. After the year, Hurts entered the transfer portal as an Alabama legend that will be beloved by all Bama fans because of his commitment to the team.

Jalen Hurts is now the starting quarterback at the University of Oklahoma and is set to play his first game Sunday, September 1<sup>st</sup> when the Sooners take the field against the Houston Cougars in Norman. Many experts have picked the Sooners to make the CFP and face the Crimson Tide in the semi-final. Undoubtably, it will be an incredible journey for Hurts in his last year to make it to the top.