

to Etienne on a beautiful shovel toss -- and showed off his NFL-ready arm with a number of throws against the middle of the Crimson Tide defense. # Alabama managed just 16 points, making this the largest halftime deficit for the Tide under Saban. # " We're not doing a very good job of getting off the field on third down on defense, " Saban said on ESPN. " Defensively, we're going to have to play a lot better. " # Before Monday, the Tide's previous mark for points allowed in the first half came in the 2014 Sugar Bowl, when Oklahoma scored 31 points and led by two touchdowns in an eventual 45-31 win. # On college football's biggest stage, in a rivalry rematch against a program angling for the Tide's crown as the dominant figure in the sport, it's fair to say the following: Alabama's defense just put together the worst first half of the Saban era, particularly given the stakes at play. # The pressure is now shared between the Alabama offense and its defense. Offensively, Alabama has been able to find explosive plays but has been stymied by uncharacteristic errors, notably in Tua Tagovailoa's two interceptions. The first was returned for a touchdown for the game's opening score. # But the Tide knew coming into Monday night that the offense would need to maintain its run as the one of the nation's most productive on a per-play basis. Now, however, the Tide enter the locker room needing to focus on how to fix a defense that has flopped against Clemson's balanced scheme.