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^By RICK WARNER=

^AP Football Writer=

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. (AP) _ ``It's hard to be humble when you're from Bama'' used to be one of the most popular bumper stickers on campus.

Not anymore.

When you're team is 0-2 and in the midst of its longest losing streak in 34 years, it's downright easy to be humble _ even at a school with one of the proudest pasts in college football.

``Nobody around here is happy, and that includes me,'' first-year Alabama coach Gene Stallings says. ``Alabama fans expect winning streaks, not losing streaks.''

Stallings has already lost as many games as his predecessor, Bill Curry, did all last season _ and Curry took so much heat that he left for Kentucky. He's also lost two of his best players, running back Siran Stacy and receiver Craig Sanderson, with season-ending knee injuries.

Fans are frustrated, players are pressing and some are even worried that Alabama, which has lost four straight dating back to last season, might be headed toward its worst record since the pre-Bear Bryant era.

``We've been pretty easy on them so far,'' says Larry Shoultz, sports editor of the Crimson White, Alabama's student newspaper. ``But if they don't win pretty soon, we're going to have to pull out the knife.''

Just how far has the Tide ebbed? Well, consider these two broadcasting notes: An Atlanta radio station that carries their games is reportedly thinking about dropping them, and CBS has demoted Saturday's Alabama-Georgia telecast to backup status behind BYU-San Diego State.

This is not the kind of treatment they've come to expect at a school that has won five national championships, played in more bowls than anyone else and produced players such as Lee Roy Jordan, Bart Starr, Joe Namath, Ken Stabler, Cornelius Bennett and Keith McCants.

``It's awfully hard to satisfy Alabama fans,'' says Stabler, now an NFL commentator and Mobile businessman. ``They got so used to winning under Coach Bryant that they expect to do it all the time.''

Bryant's legacy is both a blessing and curse for Stallings. Like Ray Perkins and Curry, the first two coaches to follow the Bear, Stallings must deal with constant comparisons to the man who transformed Alabama football from a sport to a religion.

But because Stallings was one of Bear's boys _ he played for him at Texas A&M and coached under him at Alabama _ he started with a broader base of support than Curry, who was resented partly because he came from hated Georgia Tech.

``I think they'll be more patient with Stallings,'' says student Chris Johnson, a sophomore from Huntsville. ``If Bill Curry had lost his first two games, they would have run him out of town.''

After a homecoming loss to Mississippi in 1988, a disgruntled fan threw a brick through Curry's office window. Nothing like that has happened to Stallings, although he has been roasted this week on the radio talk shows.

``It's pretty scary,'' says Paul Finebaum, a Birmingham sports columnist who hosts a nightly call-in program. ``A guy phoned me the other night and said, 'I want Stallings out.' I said, 'But he's only lost two games.' And he said, 'It's not those two I'm worried about, it's the other 45 that bother me.'''

The caller was referring to Stallings' less-than-sterling 27-45-1 record at Texas A&M from 1965-71. He also had a losing record in his other stint as head coach, 23-34-1 with the St. Louis-Phoenix Cardinals from 1986-89.

But the losses on Stallings' mind right now are 27-24 to Southern Mississippi and 17-13 to Florida. They were especially galling to Alabama's football savvy fans because of the way the Tide lost.

Alabama gained twice as many yards as Southern Miss, but lost because of turnovers, penalties and a disorganized defense that wasted three timeouts while trying to get the right number of men on the field. Last week, Florida blocked a punt in the fourth quarter and recovered it for the winning touchdown.

``We're playing well enough to win, but we're making critical mistakes,'' center Roger Shultz says. ``We're winning all the stats except the big one - the final score.''

All-SEC quarterback Gary Hollingsworth, who has already thrown six interceptions, thinks the Tide can turn if the team cuts down on its mistakes.

"If we were being physically dominated," he says, "that would be one thing. But we aren't. We're giving the games away."

Still, it will be difficult to overcome the loss of Sanderson and Stacy, who rushed for 1,079 yards last season and led the SEC with 18 touchdowns. The Tide doesn't have much depth after a series of poor recruiting years by Curry.

"I'm doing everything I can to make us a better team, but it may take some time," says Stallings, sitting beneath a portrait of Bryant in a spacious office that overlooks the Tide's practice fields.

"I think our fans understand that. We both want the same thing — a winning football team."

Some wins are more important than others in Tide territory. No matter what Stallings does, he'll be considered a failure if he doesn't beat arch-rival Auburn. Curry won 72 percent of his games at Alabama, but was blasted for going 0-3 against the Tigers.

"If Stallings goes 1-10, it's OK as long as the victory is over Auburn," Shoultz says.

Before that season-ending game in Birmingham, Alabama must play Georgia, Tennessee, Penn State and LSU. Doomsday scenario: a 4-7 record, worst since the Tide went 2-7-1 in 1957, the year before Bryant arrived.

A plaque on Stallings' wall reads: "Never confuse activity with accomplishments ... Results are what count" Alabama fans wholeheartedly agree.

"The only acceptable record here is 12-0, and that's the way it ought to be," says linebacker Keith Neighbors, whose father, brother and uncle all played for the Tide. "That's why I came here — to win a national championship. Nothing else is good enough."

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