**Alabama vs. Auburn: The Iron Bowl**

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Ohio State-Michigan may have the hype. Army-Navy may have the pageantry.

But when it comes to good old-fashioned football hatred, there may be no rivalry in college football that can match Alabama-Auburn.

It is called the Iron Bowl, and for more than a century, it has been tearing the state of Alabama in two. These two teams hate each other. The fans hate each other. And probably more than any other rivalry in college football, Alabama-Auburn is truly a 365-day-a-year obsession.

Alabama currently leads the series with a record of 38-33-1. Though Auburn fans might tell you that's partially because the Crimson Tide enjoyed home-field advantage for four decades.

**Nasty From the Start**

Auburn and Alabama first met on Feb. 22, 1893, in Birmingham, Alabama.

Auburn won 32-22. That much could be agreed upon. But the schools ended up getting into a spat—the first of many to come—over whether the game should be counted toward the 1892 season or the 1893 season. The nastiness continued from there, eventually leading to the temporary suspension in the series after the schools’ 1907 meeting, which ended in a 6-6 tie.

Auburn and Alabama didn’t meet again until 1948. And it literally took an act of the state government to make that happen.

**Reborn in Birmingham**

In December of 1947, the Alabama House of Representatives passed a resolution encouraging the schools to get over their differences and once again meet on the gridiron.

Auburn president Dr. Ralph B. Draughon and Alabama president Dr. John Gallalee came to an agreement to allow the series to resume the next year. They also made a decision that would shape the dynamics of the rivalry for years to come: Because Birmingham’s Legion Field was the largest stadium in the state, they decided the game would be played there, with tickets split in half between the two schools.

Though Alabama’s campus is located in Tuscaloosa, and not Birmingham, the Auburn-Alabama game at Legion Field took on the feel of an Alabama home game.

The decision to move the game to Birmingham (more on that in just a bit) also gave the series its name. It was tabbed “The Iron Bowl” because of the city’s location near iron deposits.

**Greatest Moment**

For decades, Alabama football enjoyed a higher profile than their cross-state rival, both in Alabama and across the nation. Auburn always had their share of success, but the perception was that the Tigers were the No. 2 team in their own state. Legendary 'Bama coach Bear Bryant even referred to Auburn as "that cow college on the other side of the state."

But by the 1980s, an ascendant Auburn program was making waves, and as the program’s stature grew, the Tigers’ home field, Jordan-Hare Stadium, grew along with it. Eventually the stadium had outgrown even Legion Field, and in 1987—after an increasing sense of injustice among the Auburn faithful that the Iron Bowl had never been played on *their* turf—Auburn officially requested that the game be played at Jordan-Hare every other year.

As longtime Auburn athletic director recently told the Auburn fan site AuburnUndercover.com: “Truth, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. For whatever reason, right or wrong, Auburn people always thought Alabama had a home-field advantage. Most Auburn people thought Legion Field was as neutral as the beaches of Normandy on D-Day.”

That long-time wish among Auburn fans—to get Alabama at home—was eventually granted and, on Dec. 2 1989, the Alabama Crimson Tide took the field on the campus of Auburn University for the first time. It has been called the greatest day in the history of Auburn football.

It didn’t hurt, of course, that the underdog Tigers knocked off big-brother Alabama that day, 30-20. The Tide had been ranked No. 2 in the nation.

Just how important was that day for Auburn fans?

Well, this might be some indication. Asked to describe what it was like to lead his team on to the field that day, then-Auburn coach Pat Dye said: "I'm sure that [the scene] must have resembled what went on the night the wall came down in Berlin. I mean, it was like [Auburn fans] had been freed, and let out of bondage, just having this game at Auburn."

Now *that's* a rivalry.