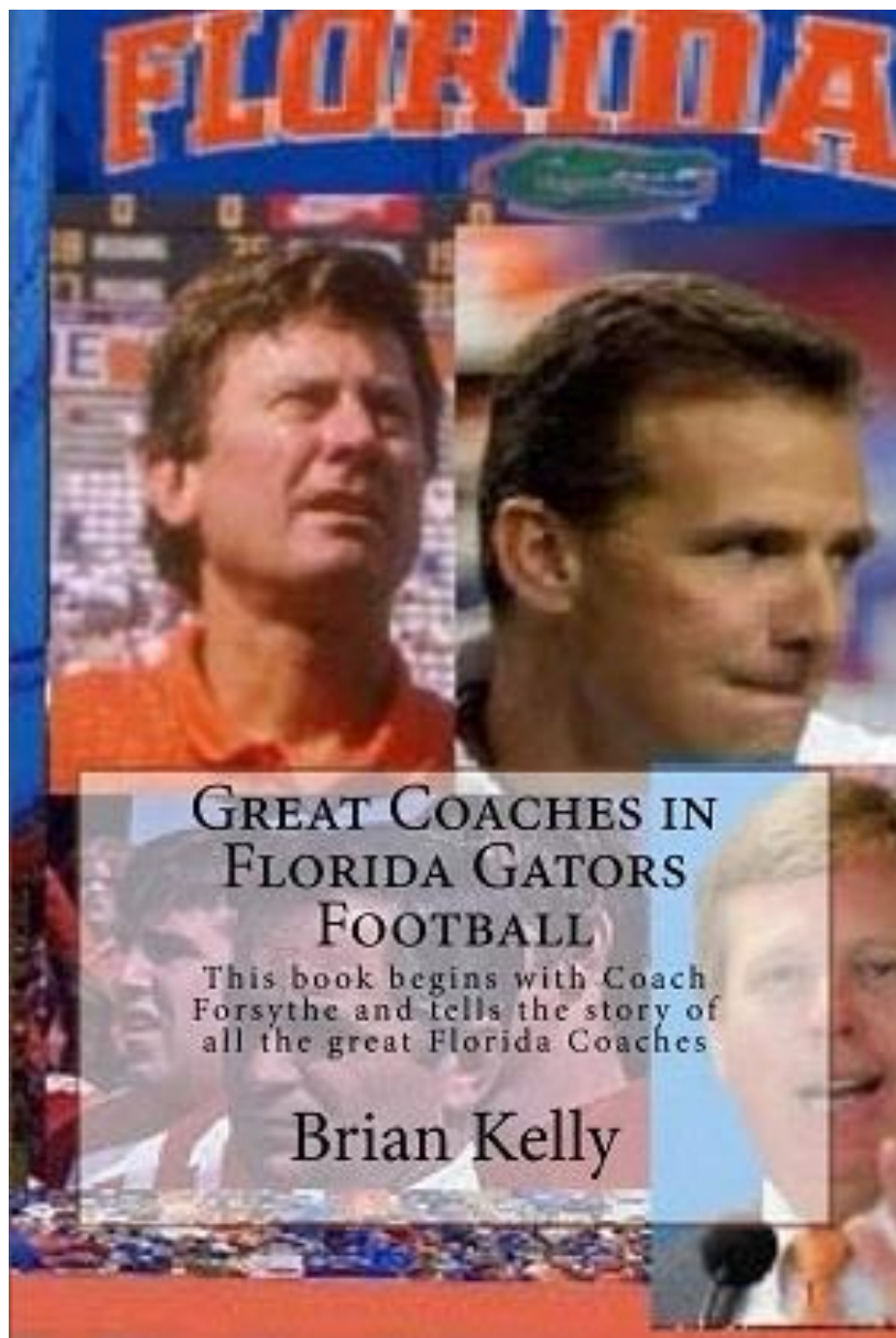


Dear Reader: Thank you for downloading this free book from Brian W. Kelly's finished book catalog. I finished the book titled **Great Coaches in Florida Gators Football** at <https://letsgopublish.com/collegefootball/gatorscoaches.pdf> in June 2017. This is a college football classic book about the great Coaches over the years of the Florida Gators football team.

Most of my books had previously been published on Amazon.

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GREAT COACHES IN FLORIDA GATORS FOOTBALL

This book begins with Coach Forsythe and tells the story of all the great Florida Coaches

Brian Kelly

Great Coaches

In

Florida Gators Football

This book begins with Coach Forsythe and tells the story of all the great Florida Coaches

This book is written for those of us who love Florida Gators Football. Those of us who enjoy the teams coming out every week in the fall know that it was because twenty-five great UF coaches worked with hundreds of great players over 110 years. These coaches masterminded the all the victories while the UF players provided the excitement. We know how the coaches did it. It was through hard work--discipline, conditioning and a commitment to the honor of winning. From day one, The Gators have been a winning team. Look at the record. The Florida Gators from way back learned to win. UF fans need this book on their bookshelves to get the story from a coach's perspective on how they pulled it off.

As we rapidly move through the UF football ages, we meet the great immortal University of Florida coaches from the first, "Pee Wee" Forsythe to the current coach, James McElwain. You've heard of them all over the years -- George E. Pyle, Bob Woodruff, Ray Graves, Doug Dickey, Charley Pell, Galen Hall, Gary Darnell, Steve Spurrier, Ron Zook, Charlie Strong, Urban Meyer, and Will Muschamp. Florida continues its journey of excellence each year with another great coach, not yet an immortal. Coach James McElwain. This fine coach seems to be on the right path for the future.

In this book, I tell lots of great stories about lots of great teams and great Saturdays and special days in Florida Football. It takes the reader through stories about the Gators teams through the 25 coaches over the years. There are 110 seasons worth of great games (1169 games) played by the best football players in the nation for the University of Florida. The book stops frequently in time and tells great stories about a special coach and/or a special player to pique your interest.

Gators fans will not be able to put this book down.

Brian Kelly



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Title: Great Coaches in Florida Gators Football

Editor: Brian P. Kelly
Author Brian W. Kelly

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UF Seasons by Year/Coach 1906 - 2017

Year	Coach	Overall	Conference	Bowl/playoffs	Coaches# Rank	AP° Rank
1906	Forsythe	5-3				
1907	Forsythe	4-1-1				
1908	Forsythe	5-2-1				
1909	Pyle	6-1-1				
1910	Pyle	6-1				
1911	Pyle	5-0-1				
1912	Pyle	5-2-1				
1913	Pyle	4-3				
1914	McCoy	5-2				
1915	McCoy	4-3				
1916	McCoy	0-5				
1917	Buser	2-4				
1918	Buser	0-1				
1919	Buser	5-3				
1920	Kline	6-3	Southern (S)			
1921	Kline	6-3-2				
1922	Kline	7-2	S 2-0			
1923	Van Fleet	6-1-2	S 1-0-2			
1924	Van Fleet	6-2-2	S 2-0-1			
1925	Sebring	8-2	S 3-2			
1926	Sebring	2-6-2	1-4-1			
1927	Sebring	7-3	5-2			
1928	Bachman	8-1	S 6-1			
1929	Bachman	8-2	6-1			
1930	Bachman	6-3-1	4-2-1			
1931	Bachman	2-6-2	2-4-2			
1932	Bachman	3-6	1-6			
1933	Stanley	5-3-1	SEC 2-3			
1934	Stanley	6-3-1	2-2-1			
1935	Stanley	3-7	1-6			
1936	Cody	4-6	SEC 1-5			
1937	Cody	4-7	3-4			
1938	Cody	4-6-1	2-2-1			
1939	Cody	5-5-1	0-3-1			
1940	Lieb	5-5	SEC 2-3			
1941	Lieb	4-6	1-3			
1942	Lieb	3-7	1-3			
1944	Lieb	4-3	0-3			

vi Great Coaches in Florida Gators Football

1945	Lieb	4-5-1	1-3-1	
1946	Wolf	0-9	SEC 0-5	
1947	Wolf	4-5-1	0-3-1	
1948	Wolf	5-5	1-5	
1949	Wolf	4-5-1	1-4-1	
1950	Woodruff	5-5	SEC 2-4	
1951	Woodruff	5-5	2-4	
1952	Woodruff	8-3	3-3	W Gator
1953	Woodruff	3-5-2	1-3-2	
1954	Woodruff	5-5	5-2	
1955	Woodruff	4-6	3-5	
1956	Woodruff	6-3-1	5-2	
1957	Woodruff	6-2-1	4-2-1	
1958	Woodruff	6-4-1	2-3-1	L Gator
1959	Woodruff	5-4-1	2-4	
1960	Graves	9-2	SEC 5-1	W Gator
1961	Graves	4-5-1	3-3	
1962	Graves	7-4	4-2	W Gator
1963	Graves	6-3-1	3-3-1	
1964	Graves	7-3	4-2	
1965	Graves	7-4	4-2	L Sugar
1966	Graves	9-2	5-1	W Orange
1967	Graves	6-4	4-2	
1968	Graves	6-3-1	3-2-1	
1969	Graves	9-1-1	3-1-1	W Gator
1970	Dickey	7-4	SEC 3-3	
1971	Dickey	4-7	1-6	
1972	Dickey	5-5-1	3-3-1	
1973	Dickey	7-5	3-4	L Tangerine
1974	Dickey	8-4	3-3	L Sugar
1975	Dickey	9-3	5-1	L Gator
1976	Dickey	8-4	4-2	L Sun
1977	Dickey	6-4-1	3-3	
1978	Dickey	4-7	3-3	
1979	Pell	0,10,1	SEC 0-6	
1980	Pell	8-4	4-2	W Tangerine
1981	Pell	7-5	3-3	L Peach
1982	Pell	8-4	3-3	L Bluebonnet
1983	Pell	9-2-1	4-2	W Gator
1984	Pell/Hall	9-1-1	5-0-1	Ineligible

1985	Hall	9-1-1	SEC 5-1	Ineligible		
1986	Hall	6-5	2-4			
1987	Hall	6-6	3-3	L Aloha		
1988	Hall	7-5	4-3	W All-American		
1989	Hall +	7-5	4-3	L Freedom		
1990	Spurrier	9-2	SEC 6-1	Ineligible	I	13
1991	Spurrier	10-2	7-0	L Sugar	7	7
1992	Spurrier	9-4	6-2	W Gator	11	10
1993	Spurrier	11-2	7-1	W Sugar	4	5
1994	Spurrier	10,2,1	7-1	L Sugar	7	7
1995	Spurrier	12-1	8-0	L Fiesta	3	2
1996	Spurrier	12-1	8-0	W Sugar	1	1
1997	Spurrier	10-2	6-2	W Citrus	6	4
1998	Spurrier	10-2	7-1	W Oranget†	6	5
1999	Spurrier	9-4	7-1	L Citrus	14	12
2000	Spurrier	10-3	7-1	L Sugar†	11	10
2001	Spurrier	10-2	6-2	W Oranget†	3	3
2002	Zook	8-5	SEC 6-2	L Outback	24	
2003	Zook	8-5	6-2	L Outback	25	24
2004	Zook+	7-5	4-4	L Peach	25	
2005	Meyer	9-3	SEC 5-3	W Outback	16	12
2006	Meyer	13-1	7-1	W BCS Champs	1	1
2007	Meyer	9-4	5-3	L Capital One	16	13
2008	Meyer	13-1	7-1	W BCS Champs	1	1
2009	Meyer	13-1	8-0	W Sugar†	3	3
2010	Meyer	8-5	4-4	W Outback		
2011	Muschamp	7-6	SEC 3-5	W Gator		
2012	Muschamp	11-2	7-1	L Sugar†	10	9
2013	Muschamp	4-8	3-5			
2014	Muschamp	7-5	4-4	W Birmingham		
2015	McElwain	10-4	SEC 7-1	L Citrus	25	25
2016	McElwain	9-4	6-2	W Outback	13	14

Total Games 1,169

Seasons 110

Total Wins 719

Total Losses 410

Total Ties 40 * Prior to Overtime Rules

Stats from 1906 * Through August 2017



Acknowledgments:

I appreciate all the help that I received in putting this book together, along with the 116 other books from the past.

My printed acknowledgments were once so large that book readers needed to navigate too many pages to get to page one of the text. To permit me more flexibility, I put my acknowledgment list online at www.letsqopublish.com. The list of acknowledgments continues to grow. Believe it or not, it once cost about a dollar more to print each book.

Thank you all on the big list in the sky and God bless you all for your help.

Please check out www.letsqopublish.com to read the latest version of my heartfelt acknowledgments updated for this book. Thank you all!

In this book, I received some extra special help from many avid football friends including Dennis Grimes, Gerry Rodski, Wily Ky Eyely, Angel Irene McKeown Kelly, Angel Edward Joseph Kelly Sr., Angel Edward Joseph Kelly Jr., Ann Flannery, Angel James Flannery Sr., Mary Daniels, Bill Daniels, Robert Garry Daniels, Angel Sarah Janice Daniels, Angel Punkie Daniels, Joe Kelly and Diane Kelly.

References

I learned how to write creatively in Grade School at St. Boniface. I even enjoyed reading some of my own stuff as a toddler.

At Meyers High School and King's College and Wilkes-University, I learned how to research, write bibliographies and footnote every non-original thought I might have had. I learned to hate *ibid*, and *op. cit.*, and I hated assuring that I had all citations written down in the proper sequence. Having to pay attention to details took my desire to write creatively and diminished it with busy work.

I know it is necessary for the world to stop plagiarism so authors and publishers can get paid properly, but for an honest writer, it sure is annoying. I wrote many proposals while with IBM and whenever I needed to cite something, I cited it in place, because my readers, IT Managers, could care less about tracing the vagaries of citations and their varied formats.

I always hated to use stilted footnotes, or produce a lengthy, perfectly formatted bibliography. I bet most bibliographies are flawed because even the experts on such drivel do not like the tedium.

I wrote 116 books before this book and several hundred articles published by many magazines and newspapers and I only cite when an idea is not mine or when I am quoting, and again, I choose to cite in place, and the reader does not have to trace strange numbers through strange footnotes and back to bibliography elements that may not be readily accessible or available. Academicians knowing all the rules of citation are not my audience. In this book, if you are a lover of Gator football, you are my intended group of readers

Yet, I would be kidding you, if in a book about the great moments in University of Florida Gators Football, I tried to bluff my way into trying to make you think that I knew everything before I began to write anything in this book. I spent as much time researching as writing. I might even call myself an expert of sorts now about the Gators, a team that I have always loved to watch, especially when the visor guy, Steve Spurrier had command of the sidelines for so many wonderful UF football years.

Without any pain on your part you can read this book from cover to cover to enjoy the stories about the many great coaches in the University of Florida Football Program.

It took me about two months to write this book. If I were to have made sure that a thought of mine was not a thought somebody else ever had, this book never would have been completed or the citations pages would more than likely exceed the prose. Everybody takes credit for everything in sports writing—at least that's what I have found.

I used UF Season summaries and recaps from whatever source I could to get the scores of all the games. I verified facts when possible. There are many web sites that have great information and facts. Ironically most internet stories are the same exact stories. Who's got the original? While I was writing the book, I wrote down a bunch of Internet references and at one time, I listed them here in this article. They were the least read pages. No more. Unless I am citing a reference in a section of the book, you will not see the book reference or a URL.

Since I am not a Floridian but I want to become one soon as winters in PA are very harsh and grey, I have no favorite source but I continually look for articles written by students to amplify the text I present.

While I was writing this book, because I was not sure that my citations within the text would be enough, and I was not producing a bibliography, I copied URLs into some of the book text of areas from the Internet in those cases in which I had read articles or had downloaded material and had brought articles or pieces of articles into this book. Hopefully, this will satisfy any request for additional information. If there is anything which needs a specific citation, I would be pleased to change the text. Just contact me. Your stuff is your stuff.

Most of the facts in this book are also put forth in the UF Media Guide. Our thanks for the use of this material for the accurate production of this book.

Preface:

This book is all about the great coaches in Florida Gators football. Along the way to today, we study the founding of the University of Florida, the preliminaries before UF football and then we delve right into the storied University of Florida Football Program--its struggles; its greatness; and its long-lasting impact on American life.

As a Pennsylvanian, I admit I wrote about Penn State Football but only after I had fulfilled the family Irish wish and had written about Notre Dame Football. Then, before Clemson whooped Alabama in the beginning of this year, I had figured Nick Saban could not be beat and so I picked Alabama as the third football team about which I would write about substantially. You've got to admit, they are a fine team. I think we'll be moving on to Clemson after this book...and then Army.

This year, I began to write derivative works from my original huge comprehensive works about ND, PSU, UA, and now UF.

Since none of the three, ND, PSU, or UA, prior to UF, invited me on campus to sign books, and none of them have really appealing locations anyway, especially those in the North, I figured why not pick a location that is so nice that I can just go there on vacation. And, so among other reasons, I decided to write about Florida State, where my great buddy George Mohanco's daughter went to college. That was my plan until...

I remembered that though I respected Bobby Bowden, I did not really like him the way I admired Steve Spurrier, who always seemed like a renegade to me. The more I looked at the Gators, the more smiles I can recall from days' past, especially when Steve Spurrier ran the show. I loved watching him on the sidelines even when Florida was beating Notre Dame or Penn State, my two favorite teams as a kid and if you'll pardon me, on into my sixties.

But, sincerely, I like the Gators and have always liked the Gators and I never liked the humming of the Tomahawk chant when my team, no matter who it was, was losing. I'll bet you I was mostly if not forever hoping for Steve Spurrier and follow-ons to whoop Bobby

Bowden and follow-ons on the gridiron even when my teams were not playing.

Another reason why I picked Florida as my state for this latest three book series, is that I would love for some book shop in Florida to have a book-signing for me. I would come because I love Florida. After a national favorite ND book has been out almost a year, the ND Sports Information Department recently informed me that they worked to get my book into the ND Bookstore. It is selling well, and now even better. PSU and UA have not chosen to do the same thing yet, but those books also sell well. I expect the three-book series about the University of Florida Gators to be the best selling. After all, the people live and work in Florida.

At Gainesville in Ben Hill Griffin Stadium, maybe somebody will step up and get me fifty-yard line seats in a game in which UF is playing against one of my old-time favorites ND or PS, or quite frankly, any team. I'd be there with bells on and I'll be signing books and then after the game, after a few whistle wetters, I would be happy to sign again.

I like UF a lot but you gotta admit that it was easy for me to be a Penn State Fan all of my life and ND has always been as close as a family religion. Nobody in America can help noticing Alabama.

I began to pay attention to the Gators watching the great Steve Spurrier as a coach. I had no idea he was such a great football player also, before researching this book. I promise that I will know a lot more as I tell his story and the UF Coach's stories in this book.

Supporters who love the University of Florida will read the book and get an immediate burst of emotions such as warmth and love for their favorite team. You will love this book because it actually has it all – every great season and every great coach and every great game. Go Gator Nation!

This book walks you through the whole UF football journey through the vantage of the great coaches in Gator History. These great UF coaches are listed within the football seasons in which they coached--from season 1 in 1906 to season 111 in 2017. In other words, the seasons are examined chronologically and the coaches and certain

games are highlighted within the seasons in which they were played. I sure hope you enjoy this unique approach.

Few of the UF twenty-five coaches took the team for more than five years early-on but they still produced powerful teams with powerful players. It was not until the 1930's and 1940's when UF joined the SEC that the losses began to be seen more often than the wins. By the 1950's the coaches began to put in longer tenures and the wins began to increase. When Steve Spurrier became the coach, thanks to the efforts of coaches such as Charley Pell, winning had become commonplace and he kept it going. Some think Spurrier put the football program on the map. In many ways, he sure did.

Florida Gators are a long-time football power

One hundred eleven years is a long time to be playing football. The University of Florida Gators are recognized today as one of the finest teams in the nation, ready to win a national championship at the drop of the next hat.

In 1933 the University of Florida joined the SEC and have been playing the best football teams in the nation ever since by competing in the NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision.

Your author would like you to know that when football season closes in the second week of January each year, there is now a great football item—this book—that is available all 52 weeks of the year and in fact all 365 days each year. It does not rely on the stadium gates being open for you to get a great dose of Gator Football. Just begin reading about great Gators coaches right here.

It is now available for you to add to your Gator Nation experience and your book collection. Once you get this book, it is yours forever unless, of course you give it away to one of the many who will be in awe, and who will accept it gladly.

The book opens with some introductory information about the first unofficial games played by Florida. These games were not coached by the greats. It then moves on to the first official game with the first official coach and moves all the way to Coach McElwain's last game. Before you know it, you will be rereading the book. It tells a story

about the football seasons and the great coach of that season from “Pee Wee” Forsythe’s first officially coached game in 1906 to today.

You are going to love this book because it is the perfect read for anybody who loves the Florida Gators and wants to know more about the most revered coaches who have led the many great teams who have competed in one of the finest football programs of all time.

Few sports books are a must-read but Brian Kelly's Great Coaches in Florida Gators Football will quickly appear at the top of Americas most enjoyable must-read books about sports. Enjoy!

Who is Brian W. Kelly?

Brian W. Kelly is one of the leading authors in America with this, his 117th published book. Brian is an outspoken and eloquent expert on a variety of topics and he has also written several hundred articles on topics of interest to Americans.

Most of his early works involved high technology. Later, Brian wrote a number of patriotic books and most recently he has been writing human interest books such as The Wine Diet and Thank you, IBM. His books are always well received.

Brian's books are highlighted at www.letsGOPublish.com. Quantities from 20 to 1000 are for sale at www.bookhawkers.com. You may see most of Brian’s works by taking the following link www.amazon.com/author/brianwkelly.

The Best!

Sincerely,

Brian P. Kelly, Editor in Chief
I am Brian Kelly's eldest son.

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About the Author



Brian Kelly retired as an Assistant Professor in the Business Information Technology (BIT) Program at Marywood University, where he also served as the IBM i and Midrange Systems Technical Advisor to the IT Faculty. Kelly designed, developed, and taught many college and professional courses. He continues as a contributing technical editor to a number of technical industry magazines, including "The Four Hundred" and "Four Hundred Guru," published by IT Jungle.

Kelly is a former IBM Senior Systems Engineer. His specialty was problem solving for customers as well as implementing advanced operating systems and software on his client's machines. Brian is the author of 117 books and hundreds of magazine articles. He has been a frequent speaker at technical conferences throughout the United States.

Brian was a candidate for the US Congress from Pennsylvania in 2010 and he ran for Mayor in his home town in 2015. He loves Florida Gators Football and can't wait to get back down to Florida again in the fall. When he comes he'll be glad to sign your books. God bless the Gators!

Chapter 1 Introduction to University of Florida (UF) Football

University of Florida's 111th Year in 2017!

The Gator Nation celebrated 100 years of Florida football in 2006. Football was played beginning in 1906 and the 100th season was completed in 2006. The team played every year but 1943 in the heat of World War II and the 1918 team played just one game during World War I. One game in one year doth make a season.



Coach McElwain leading the Gators onto the field

During the 1918 season, the Gators' team ranks were depleted by both the Spanish Flu and the loss of the many World War I volunteers and draftees. Therefore, the 1918 team played just that one game. One can fathom that the Army training camps had the best players in the nation at the time. The Gators lost L (2–14) to a football team from Camp Johnston, a U.S. Army training installation in nearby Jacksonville, Florida.

Coach Alfred L. Buser's Gators had a tough time finding a college game in 1918 and were unable to play any Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA) teams in 1918. In 1943, the Gators skipped the season because with the war demands, there simply were not enough players to put a team on the field.

The Gators therefore have fielded a team every season since the inaugural 1906 season, with the exception of 1943. Florida has played 1,169 games in its 109 seasons, and the Gators have a fine all-time record of 701 wins, 404 losses, and 40 ties. That's a lot of football folks.

We begin the rest of the Florida Gators football story in Chapter 2 with the founding of the Football program in 1906.

In defining the format of the book, we chose to use a timetable that is based on a historical chronology. Within this framework, we discuss the great moments in University of Florida football history, and there are many great moments. No book can claim to be able to capture them all, as it would be a never-ending story, but we sure do try.

Three Heismans for Florida



For three larger than life Florida Alligators--one time great football players, three larger-than-life statues of these UF Heisman Trophy winners will surely do. What a great tribute to such great legendary players. They are now all fully installed outside Ben Hill Griffin Stadium. Nobody in Florida or elsewhere in the country is complaining. It had to be a hefty task getting them in place as the

statues commemorating those whose images they hold range in weight from 1,700 to 2,000 pounds. Try to guess whose statue is the heaviest!

Florida loves its greats and always reveres them. These three Florida Gator Greats in bronze form were installed in April 2011 outside the Ben Hill Griffin Stadium. The University Athletic Association board had previously, quite unanimously, approved the project. Everybody from the University of Florida Gator Nation loves the three who are still alive -- very much alive, while their images are living outside the stadium all covered in a beautiful bronze.

So, who might these bronzed, frozen in time, once great actors on the Gators football field be? You probably already know because I showed you their pictures on the prior page. It's The bronze statues of Steve Spurrier, Danny Wuerffel, and Tim Tebow. Florida's three Heisman Winners were placed on the west side of the stadium in full regalia. The statues cost about \$550,000, which was funded by private donations. Lots of people like all three of these Gator Nation immortals.

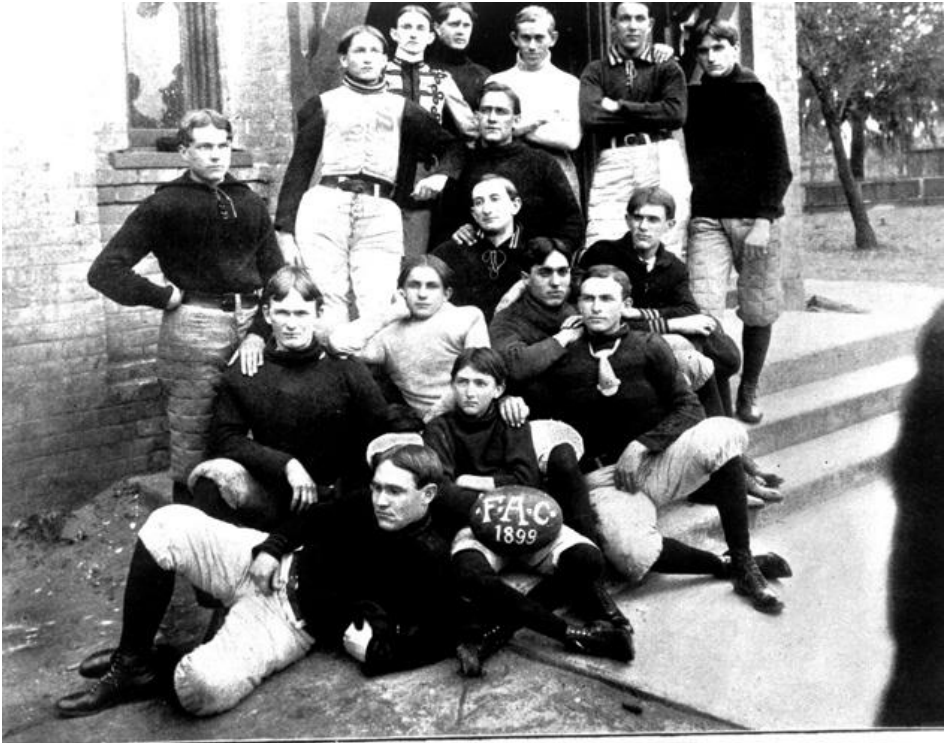


The university of Florida is a long-time football power

Bordering on 111 years is a long time to be playing football. The Florida Gators football team was established in 1906. This great and storied football powerhouse represents the University of Florida in college football. The moniker *Gators* comes from the notion of the Alligator so prevalently popping up in the Everglades and all through Florida. Florida University has become a Gator Nation because it has decided that it is Gator tough. Even Gator-Ade came to US to get its branding right.

For many years, the University of Florida football team competed in the SEC Conference, in the NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision. Years and year ago when there was no SEC, right after it was formed, Florida joined in and has become a powerhouse as a member of the SEC. through the current 2017 season. All SEC teams say that the SEC is the toughest conference in which to compete in the United States of America. I think they are right!

Chapter 2 UF Launches First “Un-Official” Football Team



The 1899 Florida Agricultural College (FAC) Football Players

1899: Nearly 50 years from the founding

Though the school was not called the University of Florida in 1899, the first reported football play by any of the predecessor schools that ultimately became UF was in 1899. One of four University of Florida precursor schools—known then as the Florida Agricultural School—was playing unofficial football games at an intramural level in 1899. They would have loved to find another school willing to give them a game.

Football was really catching on as an American sport by 1899 and it was a tough chore for college administrators across the country to limit its play on American campuses. You will learn in Chapter 6 that the 1899 “UF” intramural season came thirty years after what

many regard as the very first football game ever played at the intercollegiate level. This of course was a contest held between teams from Rutgers College (now Rutgers University) and the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University). This 1869 game between Rutgers and Princeton is important in College Football History in that it is the first documented "football" game between two American colleges. For folks who like to know the results of the game—Rutgers won the game by a score of 6–4. Yes, the scoring was different in the early days

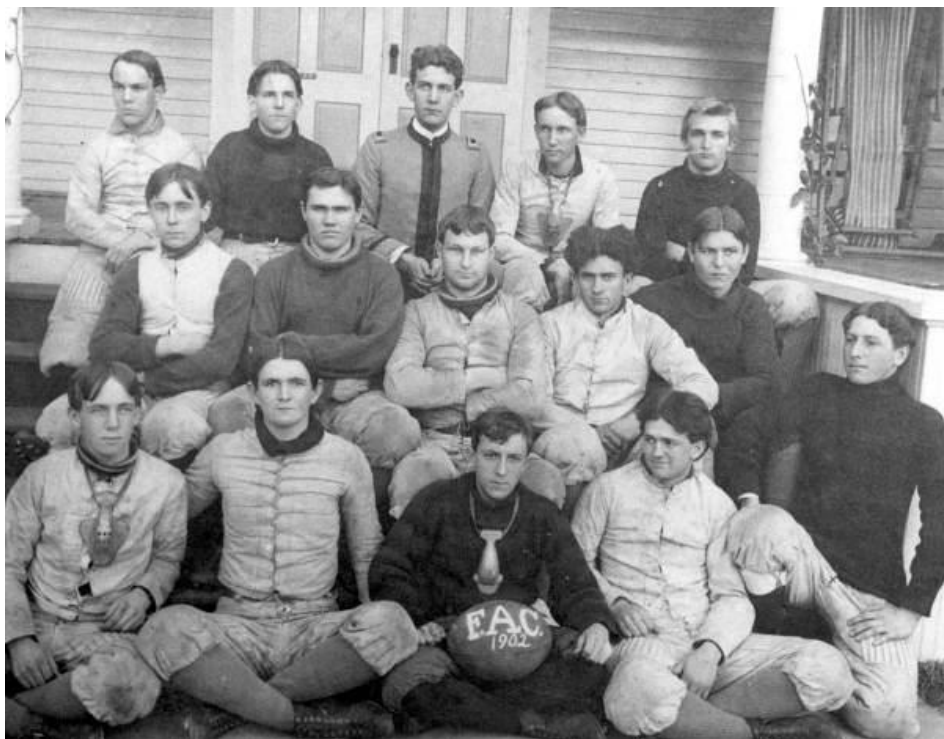
The early football games from the first were a combination of American football (like soccer) and rugby. From 1876, Yale's Walter Camp helped form the rules of the game with innovations such as the scrimmage line. Those interested in how American football came to be, might be interested in my 2017 book titled *American College Football: The Beginning*, available on Amazon and Kindle.

UF was a bit late getting into the game but then again, UF was not really UF until 1906 when it played its official first football game. By then, the four precursor teams had merged and the scenario for Florida was settled. By then, the Ivy League teams had been playing for about thirty years; Teams like Notre Dame, Alabama, and Penn State had been at it for about twenty years. So, it is no wonder that it took a bit of time for UF to catch up.

The 1901 Florida Agricultural College (FAC) football team actually found some games with an opponent willing to play. At the time, FAC was the representative team in the sport of American football. As you know, this team was not the modern era Florida Gators of the University of Florida in Gainesville, which began its program 1906, but it was one of its four forming institutions.

The FAC played its first intercollegiate football game in the state of Florida against the Stetson Hatters in Jacksonville as part of the 1901 State Fair. It was great to get a game. Stetson won 6–0, after a sure FAC score was obstructed by a tree stump. Getting a field of suitable quality on which to play was an issue for a few more years. As previously noted, the school's first team was organized in 1899, but it played intramural as there was no other school found to play.

The FAC competed again in the 1902 college football season and found four games. They had a 1-2-1 record having played Stetson twice early in the fall. The first outing was a T (0-0) tie and the second was a big loss L (5-22). Then, in December, they played Florida State at Tallahassee on the 8th and lost L (0-6). They followed this up on December 20 and won W (6-0) at Florida State, Lake City



1902 Florida Agricultural College (FAC) Team

In 1903, the Florida Legislature changed the name of Florida Agricultural College to the "University of Florida", in recognition of the legislature's desire to expand the curriculum beyond the college's original agricultural and engineering educational missions.

Ready to roll again in 1903, the University of Florida, known as the Blue and White football team (not the FAC) represented the University of Florida at Lake City in American football. Again, this was not the modern Florida Gators of the University of Florida in Gainesville but they were one of the four predecessors.

The Blue and White played three games this year. They lost to East Florida Seminary (another of the predecessors but at the time independent) early in the Fall, and then in a rematch, they won. No score was recorded in either game. They followed this up with a game against Florida State in Tallahassee on November 13, and lost the match L (0-12)

By 1904, even more teams were ready to engage. This time again, The 1904 University of Florida White and Blue football team was not the modern Florida Gators of the University of Florida in Gainesville, but were now operating with a name change. The team played several major colleges, including Mike Donahue's Auburn in his first year coaching the team John Heisman's Georgia Tech in his first coaching year at Georgia Tech. The team, a bit outclassed by the new competition failed to post a win.

Every team leaves its comfort zone to move on to excellence. There was little excellence in this year but the “to-be” Gators team had surely moved out of their comfort zone. This was the results of moving from comfort to tough football:

October 1	at Alabama	The Quad • Tuscaloosa,	L 0–29
October 4	at Auburn	Auburn, AL	L 0–44
October 15	at Georgia	Macon, GA	L 0–52
October 17	at Georgia T	Atlanta, GA	L 0–77
October 21	at Florida State College,	Lake City, FL	L 0–23

In 1905, the precursor institutions were all in flux getting ready to join the big mothership that would be known forever more as The University of Florida at Gainesville. When it got itself together in 1906, the football team that it fielded took on the name of the mother university, the University of Florida or UF.

The days of unofficial UF football were over. The Gators were about to appear but the name would wait a few more years.

And, so as we now refer to it compared to the four formative schools, the modern University of Florida (UF) was created in 1905 when the Florida Legislature enacted the Buckman Act. This was the end of the four separate schools. The Act abolished all of the state's publicly-

supported institutions of higher learning and consolidated the academic programs of the four precursor schools into the new University of the State of Florida (a land-grant university for white men). “White men” was in the original wording. It was common at that time in US history. Descending from a major agricultural school, this clearly excluded women, and as it appears, those of other races than Caucasian. The US was growing in understanding at the time but had not yet reached where it needed to go.

The private Stetson College, which is now known as Stetson University in DeLand was the first college to field a football team in the state of Florida. They played intramural games as early as 1894, and were one of the first team that the FAC played. Stetson, West Florida Seminary (later Florida State College, now Florida State University), and Florida Agricultural College (renamed the University of Florida at Lake City in 1903) had intramural football teams by the late 1890s or early 1900s.

Now, let’s look at that first official season.

Chapter 3 UF Launches First “Official” Football Team

Finally, after the four-school consolidation had taken place in 1905. UF football, featuring the team that would grow into being the Florida Gators was permitted to begin playing football officially for the University of Florida. 1906 Team Picture below:

1906 Football Team shown below



And, so the 1906 Florida football team was the first official varsity team fielded by the new University of the State of Florida (now known simply as the University of Florida); during the 1906 college football season. The team finished its inaugural season with a winning record of 5–3. In recent years, this record has been contested. In our second edition, depending on what we learn to be the truth, we may go through the recommended corrections after they undergo more scrutiny, and we will correct or affirm the next time we print a new edition of this book.

Nobody denies that the 1906 Florida gridgers were known as "Pee Wee's Boys." This was in honor of their coach, Jack "Pee Wee" Forsythe, who was a former Clemson Tigers lineman who played for coach John Heisman from 1901 to 1903.



<< Coach

Forsythe was a real coach but he also played on the team as an end, just like Knute Rockne was an end. Forsythe used a technique known as the Minnesota shift to get the advantage over opponents. Since 1906, Florida has had a football season every year until 1943 when the war demands were such that even if a university could field a team, they would have a tough time finding another team to play.

Florida quickly joined the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS), but remained independent of an athletic conference. Though we think that the term Gators has always been the moniker of Florida, the university did not adopt the great nickname-- "Florida Gators" for all of its sports teams until 1911. Early Florida football teams were known simply as "Florida" or the "Orange and Blue." Orange and Blue still are the identifiable marks of the team when on the field.

The Florida football teams played their home games in a variety of locations, including the university's Gainesville, Florida campus.

Buckman Act Changed Life for UF Big Time

After the Buckman Act in 1905, the modern University of Florida (still in Lake City) metamorphosed into today's Gators—well almost. The university hired coach C. A. Holton and was ready to play its first season in 1905. The 1905 Season is virtually non-existent from the records as, even with a coach, the team played just half a game against the Julia Landon Institute of Jacksonville. I will look for more on the topic of roughness in football next time out but the fact is that across the country both girls and boys were being killed on the gridiron because the game had gotten so rough.

The 1905 non-season was thus described by Tom McEwen as "lame duck, confusing, and troubled." Players were banned by Andrew Sledd from playing as they were behind in their studies. The captain of the 1905 team was William M. Rowlett. Of all the players from the earlier predecessor teams of the Florida Gators, only tackle William Gibbs of the 1905 Lake City team is known to have played for the new university's team in Gainesville in the fall of 1906. Most big changes eventually turn out well but the road to wellness often leaves many old traditions behind.

Why are University of Florida's Team Colors Orange & Blue?

Surely, one day somebody will come up with a better story but here is the truth. This is one of those explanations that could be true, but nobody is 100% sure one way or the other. One day maybe

everybody will go back to saying, “We don’t know!” In the book of colors of course, blue and orange stand for “We don’t know.” You’ll find that explanation as good as the apparent truth. Since it is very much like “we don’t know.” Blue and orange it became, nonetheless.

In 1910, the Buckman Act, which we have already discussed, consolidated many of the state universities in Florida, including University of Florida at Lake City and East Florida Seminary. The big rumor on the team colors comes about from UFLC’s (blue) and EFS’s (orange and black). They say the colors were appropriated and mixed with the Gators mascot to create the modern Florida Gators look. Of course, nobody yet knows who “they” are.

Rule changes

At the end of 1905, there had been so little hype and so little real football action that UF had not taken a side on the looming national football controversy over “unnecessary roughness” in the game. Football was on the verge of being abolished at the US level due to all of the reoccurring violence during games. The rules made it easy for people to be hurt but Walter Camp was working on that along with Knute Rockne, President Roosevelt, and others.

Football was a sport that unfortunately had degenerated into clever but dangerous tactics such as: the flying wedge, punching, kicking, piling-on, and elbows to the face. Almost any violent behavior was allowed. Like the Roman Coliseum, all that mattered to the fans was that the other team did not win. Fatalities and injuries mounted during the nation’s 1905 football season.

As a result, the 1906 season was played under a new set of rules. Walter Camp gets credit for many. The rules governing intercollegiate football were changed to promote a more open and less dangerous style of play.

An intercollegiate conference, which would become the forerunner of the NCAA, approved radical changes including the legalization of the forward pass, allowing the punting team to recover an on-side kick as a live ball, abolishing the dangerous flying wedge, creating a

neutral zone between offense and defense, and doubling the first-down distance to 10 yards, to be gained in three downs.

The 1906 rules were the first installment and installments of rules to help the game and to make the game safer are continually made at the college and professional level even today.

As noted previously, and I promise to straighten it out for this book in a future edition, the accepted UF win-loss record over the years of the early games has been contested and so in Edition 2 of this book, we hope to straighten it out. Still, even in 1906, sometimes new collegiate level teams could not find other colleges to play them. So, they played whomever they could.

The 1906 Games

On Oct 13, UF played the Gainesville Athletic Club at the Baseball Park (Swamp) in Gainesville, Florida and Florida got the win, W (16-6). Then, on Oct 20 at Mercer in Central City Park. Macon, Georgia, UF could not find the magic and lost L (0-12).

On Oct 26 v Rollins at the Baseball Park in Gainesville, Florida, UF prevailed W (6-0) with 150 fans watching every play. On Nov 2, v the Riverside Athletic Club at the Baseball Park in Gainesville, Florida, UF again triumphed W (19-0), UF was feeling pretty good when they had to travel on Nov 4 to the Savannah Athletic Club in Georgia but they fell to the Club Team L (2-27).

On Nov 11 at Rollins in Winter Park, Florida it was a loss L (0-5). The next week Nov 18, at the Athens Athletic Club in Athens, Georgia, UF was victorious W 10-0. The next venture of the 1906 UF football squad was Nov 30, at the Riverside Athletic Club in Jacksonville, Florida. UF collected a big win W (39-0).

Florida Fields

Though UF has thousands of acres, the acreage was not well developed for sports in the early years. Both football and baseball games as well as track meets were held at University Athletic Field. This was a grassy playing surface flanked by low bleacher. It was

located on West University Avenue just north of the present stadium site. Permanent bleachers were installed in 1911, and the facility was given a real name, Fleming Field in honor of former Florida governor Francis P. Fleming. Somehow politicians get their names on a lot of things.



Football game at Fleming Field, 1924. Note Thomas Hall, background right.

From 1911 to 1930, Florida's football squads posted a 49–7–1 record at Fleming Field. This is a pre-Spurrier football record and it is not too shabby at all. Because the facility had a very limited capacity of just about 5,000 and the relative inaccessibility of Gainesville to the rest of the world in the early 20th century, many home games against top opponents were rescheduled to be played at larger venues in larger cities such as Jacksonville or Tampa. There were even other games that were played in St. Petersburg and Miami and Orlando. In 1930, about 25 years after football had begun for real at UF, things on the field were about to change for the good.

Ben Hill Griffin Stadium at Florida Field

It is an easy conclusion to deduce that The Ben Hill Griffin, Jr. Stadium at Florida Field was named after Ben Hill Griffin, Jr.



< Ben Hill Griffin, Jr.

Mr., Griffin came to the University of Florida in 1930 to study economics, agriculture and marketing. He was an eager learner and a programatist, who wished to put his newly acquired knowledge to work. Three years after arriving, he departed in 1933 without his degree. That same year, Ben Hill Griffin, Jr. received a 10-acre citrus grove as a wedding present from

his father and that was his beginning of his odyssey to become a giant in the citrus, packaging and cattle industries. There was nothing Ben could not do when he put his mind to it.

Chapter 4 First Coach Jack "Pee Wee" Forsythe 1906-1908

Jack Forsythe Coach #1

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Record</u>
1906	Jack "Pee Wee" Forsythe	5-3-1		
1907	Jack "Pee Wee" Forsythe	4-1-1		
1908	Jack "Pee Wee" Forsythe	5-2-1		



1907 UF Football Team Coach Pee Wee Forsythe

Look above the picture and you can see that each year the Florida football team was above 500 with some fine years in the mix. It was not until the 1930's that losing seasons began. So, as you can see, long before Steve Spurrier brought the Gators their winning ways, it was a natural for the early teams to win and win and win.

With the creation of the University of Florida via the Buckman act and the establishment of the campus in Gainesville, the university fielded its first football team in 1906 led by former Clemson star Jack

“Pee Wee” Forsythe. Forsythe coached for three seasons compiling a 14-6-2 record with a 0.682 winning percentage. Here is another photo of the team celebrating a victory over Savannah:



In addition to his coaching duties, Forsythe also played on the team as a fullback and was paid \$500 for coaching and another \$500 for playing. In their first game, the University of Florida football team defeated Gainesville Athletic Club 6-0 on Oct. 5, 1906 in front of a “crowd” of 150 people (the university had 100 students enrolled at the time).

The game was played on a fenced in field in Porter's community center in Gainesville so the university could charge admission. The profit from the game was \$5.20. The team finished the 1906 season with a 5-3 record.

Read more: <http://gatarnation.proboards.com/thread/8909/florida-gators-1906-1919#ixzz4dJJdXQg6>

1907 Coach Jack Forsythe

The UF official football program began in 1906. In 1907, the Florida football team posted a 4–1–1 record, due in large part to the play of star Tailback and Quarterback Willie Shands from Gainesville, who later was elected as a state senator and helped found the UF medical school Shands Hospital in 1953.

Only four men from the 1906 team returned. Captain Roy Corbett was also the athletics editor of the Florida Pennant.

The 1907 Florida football team was coached by Jack Forsythe in its 2nd season and his second season as head coach of the UF Football team.

The Orange and Blue lost on Oct 12 to the Mercer Bears for the second season in a row in Macon GA L (0-6); beat the Columbia Agricultural College W (6-0 on Oct 26 in Savannah; beat a tough Rollins College Tars W (9-4) on Nov 9 in the Baseball Park on the Gainesville, Florida campus;



The Gators beat the Riverside Athletic Club Nov 28 (picture above) at the Baseball Park W (17-0); and tied the Tars T (0-0) on their home field in Winter Park, Florida. As noted, Coach Forsythe's 1907 Florida football team posted an overall record of 4–1–1 in their second varsity season.

1908 Coach Jack Forsythe

The 1907 Florida football team was coached by Jack Forsythe in its 3rd season and Forsythe's third season and last as head coach of the UF Football team. Forsythe's 1908 Florida football team posted a record of 5–2–1 in their third varsity season. The fine 1908 team (5-1-1) had a lot to do with the play of Willie Shands.

There are always stories in football that are often passed by word of mouth. One such story talks of the University of Florida becoming the "Florida Gators" and suggests it originated in 1908. There was a Gainesville shop owner who ordered orange and blue pennants with a gator emblem from the Michie Company, drawing inspiration from the University of Virginia, and the notion of being the "Gators" came naturally.

On Oct 10, The Florida football team opened the season with a loss to the Mercer Baptists at Macon, GA for the third consecutive

season. L (0-24). The Mercer team must have been good eaters as they outweighed Florida by twenty pounds.

In the games at Riverside, Florida beat the Riverside Athletic Club of Jacksonville twice. The first win on Oct 10 at the Baseball Park was 4-0. Former Gator Roy Corbett coached and played right halfback for Riverside. In the second game, later in the season, the Gators thumped the AC 37-0.



Early game at the Swamp (to be Fleming Field)

On Oct 21, Florida then beat the Gainesville Athletic Club W 37-5 and then Columbia College on Oct 24, W (6-0) at Lake City, FL. Then Rollins got the best of the Gators L (0-5) at Winter Park, FL. The tough state champion Rollins Tars beat the Gators in a close match. The game breaker was Rollins' Harman breaking away for a 30-yard touchdown in the second half.

In the next game on Nov. 7, Florida played the Stetson College Hatters for the first time, beating them in a close game 6-5 on the Orange and Blue's home field (Baseball Field) in Gainesville. A great kick by Dummy Taylor's for the extra point decided the win over Stetson, after a Charlie Bartleson touchdown run.

Then, on Nov. 2, 1911 came the second win over Riverside W (37-0.) played at the Baseball Park.

On Nov. 26, Florida finished the season with a rematch that ended in a tie (0-0) against Stetson at the Hatters' home field in DeLand, Florida.

Chapter 5 Coach George E. Pyle Era 1909-1913

George E. Pyle, Coach #2

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conf</u>	<u>Record</u>
1909	George Pyle	6-1-1		
1910	George Pyle	6-1-0		
1911	George Pyle	5-0-1		
1912	George Pyle	5-2-1	SIAA	0-2-1
1913	George Pyle	4-3-0	SIAA	2-2-0

1909 Coach George Pyle

In its fourth season, the 1909 University of Florida football team was coached by George Pyle in his first season as head coach of the Gators. This year, 1908 the University of the State of Florida officially shortened its name to the University of Florida Pyle's 1909 Florida football team finished its fourth varsity football season with a nicely played 6-1-1 set of games.



Coach George Pyle 1909-1913

On October 8, the Gators opened the season with a nice in W (5–0) of the Gainesville Athletic Club. In the next game on Oct 23 v Olympics in Jacksonville, FL, UF prevailed W (9-0). This was the second week of play, Dummy Taylor was on the mark and he kicked three field goals, all that was needed to beat the Olympics 9–0.

On Oct 30, Florida defeated the Rollins College Tars for the first of two times. The second was at the end of the season. In this first game in Gainesville, Florida beat Rollins 14–0 in a contest described as "fast and furious". Taylor hit McCormick on a 20-yard pass, and scored every point.

On Nov. 6, UF was beaten by Stetson in DeLand FL L (0-26). On Nov. 24, UF played Stetson again but could not get much scoring done again. This time the D held and the Gators tied Stetson T (5-5) against this tougher than nails team. UF lost L (26-0). This was the second game of another two-for against the Stetson College Hatters. It was twice in the same season for the second year in a row. The first loss was at the Hatters' home field in DeLand, Florida. The tie was at home. 1909 was the last season in which Stetson claimed a state championship

In their second game with Rollins on Nov 15 in Orlando, Florida beat Rollins W (28–3). Florida fumbled the kickoff and Rollins made a field goal. Taylor ran 45 and 75 yards for touchdowns in the first half. In the second half, Taylor had another 60-yard run. Edgerton had a 30-yard run and McCormick had one of 80 yards. Game was called on darkness.

On Nov. 20, in the second game of another two-for, at the Baseball Park, the Gators beat Olympics W (11-0). On Nov 28, the Tallahassee Athletic Club came to the Baseball Park in Gainesville and were whooped 24-0.

1910 Coach George Pyle

In its fifth season, the 1910 University of Florida football team was coached by George Pyle in his second season as head coach of the Gators. This year the Gators were undefeated on their home field,

with an overall record of 6–1 and a Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA) record of 1–1.

The season began on Oct 8 with a nice win W (23-0) vs. the Gainesville Guards at the Baseball Park. On Oct 15, UF traveled to Jacksonville to play Georgia A & M and had a great day defeating them W (52-0). Always having a tough time with Mercer, the Gators had not figured out the magic yet of beating the Baptists. In a game played at Central City Park in Macon Georgia on Oct 22, UF lost again to Mercer L (0-13).

On Nov 5, UF traveled to Jacksonville and beat the Citadel W (6-2). Then, on Nov 12 the Gators took on a once-tough Rollins team at Winter Park and beat them big time, W (38-0). On Nov. 19, Charleston played at the Baseball Park in Gainesville and were soundly beaten by the Florida W 34–0. In a season finale, UF traveled to Lake City and played the Columbia Athletic Club and won a nice match W (33-0)

A point of confusion for readers of the results of early football games is typically the fact that it is not all colleges and universities who line up as opponents. Florida began its formal program in 1906 and so, in 1910, it had been playing collegiate v Intramural football for just five years. Thus, those scheduling games had a tough time finding teams willing to play—especially if your team was really good.

Therefore, there are many schools who at this time would not only play athletic clubs who would be made up of former players who had graduated or those who never went to college and some who were still in high school. In fact, many schools across the country played High School Teams who were brave enough to face them.

It was so tough to get a good game, that mostly anybody would play anybody and there was no NCAA back then to tell the colleges and university they could not do whatever they wanted. By scheduling athletic clubs and high schools, the “lads” on the tea got a lot more game action than they would otherwise.

1911 Coach George Pyle

In its sixth season, the 1911 University of Florida football team was coached by George Pyle in his third season as head coach of the Gators. This year the Gators were undefeated on their home field, with an overall record of 6–1 and a Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA) record of 1–1.

This year, there were no high schools nor athletic clubs on Florida's football schedule but there were also just six games. The season began on Oct 7 against the Citadel in the Baseball Field. Florida won W (15-3). Taking the bus to South Carolina's Davis Field, in Columbia, the Gators on Oct 21 played South Carolina to a tie T (6-6).

Moving down what was a tough schedule, on Oct 25, UF took on Clemson at Bowman Field in Calhoun SC and literally squeaked out a victory W (6-5). Back Home at the Baseball Field, UF beat Columbia College on Nov 4 W (9-0).

Then, UF took the bus to DeLand Florida and played Stetson, and made the trip worthwhile with a nice win W (27-0). In its sixth and last game of the season, Florida was on the road again at Jacksonville to play Charleston. The Gators got their fifth win of the season against no losses and one tie. George Pyle knew how to coach.

1912 Coach George Pyle

The 1912 Florida Gators football team, the seventh season for Florida, was the fourth for George Pyle as the Gators football team's head coach. Pyle's 1912 Florida Gators finished their seventh varsity football season with an SIAA conference record of 1–2 and an overall winning record of 5–2–1. Not too shabby for a still neophyte program.

The 1912 season was marked by several exciting first-time events for the Florida Gators. Though in this book, we called them the Gators out of the chute, this was the first full season that the Florida football team would compete as the "Florida Gators"; the first games that they played against two future rivals, the Auburn Tigers and Georgia

Tech Yellow Jackets (both games were losses); their first-ever victory over the South Carolina Gamecocks; their first season played in the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA); and the first time they ever participated in a post-season bowl game. Florida also claimed the state championship by beating in-state rival Stetson for the third consecutive year.



1912 Gators practicing on UF Campus

Now, can any of you folks top that for a productive year of any program, institution, or business? Congratulations Gators! You make us all proud and we've been that way for over 100 years.

To bring us all up-to-date, before the season had even begun, Florida joined the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association. It had been playing games against teams from the conference for a few years before. The SIAA, when Florida joined was a large confederation of southern athletic programs that was the precursor to several other regional conferences, including the Southeastern Conference. This raised the profile of the young UF program, perhaps immeasurably at the time.

We all know in this chapter that 1912 was only the seventh academic year for the modern University of Florida. It allowed more contests against older football programs in the south and elsewhere. In some

ways, Florida, was experiencing a baptism of fire as it faced many teams that had been playing even tougher team than the Gators. As Florida sportswriter and UF alumnus Tom McEwen wrote, "it was in 1912 when the Gators really ventured out into big-time football."

Florida played two more games this year than the last. Both were against Athletic clubs which we explained helped to keep the adrenalin flowing with a real game against unknown opponents who really wanted to beat you. The price a new team in a new conference paid in those days to be part of better football all-around was that they played less home games.

On Oct 12, UF played Auburn at Drake Field in Auburn, Alabama. The Gators performed well but lost L (27-13). On Oct 19, at home in the Baseball Field, which was renamed University Field, Florida beat South Carolina W (10-6).

Skipping a week, on October 26, UF played Georgia Tech in Jacksonville, Florida and the Gators looked good while losing L (6-14). On Nov 4, Charleston marched into University Field to take on the gators but they had a real tough time this day in Gainesville, Florida and were beaten soundly by the Gators W 78-0.

On Nov 15. Stetson, a team that was always ready to play came to University Field and were beaten soundly by UF W (23-7). On Nov 28, a tough Mercer team came with its winning bags ready to take away a triumph. When Mercer left, nothing was in the bag but a sweet grandmother's kiss for the tie game T (0-0) that they played against the Gators.

The season was not over as southern teams can play a lot longer than northern teams. On Dec. 20 at the Tampa Athletic Club, UF prevailed decidedly W 44-0. Then, on Christmas Day, December 25 at the Vedado Athletic Club in Almendares Park • Havana, Cuba, UF won the Bacardi Bowl W 28-0. Good things were beginning to happen.

1913 Coach George Pyle

The 1913 Florida Gators football team, the eighth season for Florida, was the fifth and final year for George Pyle as the Gators football team's head coach. Pyle had one a great job as coach and had ushered UF into the big-time. Pyle's 1913 Florida Gators finished their eighth varsity football season with an SIAA conference record of 2–2 and an overall winning record of 4-3 Not too shabby for an off-year in what would be called still neophyte program.

The 1913 Florida Gators football team represented the University of Florida during the 1913 Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association football season. The season was George Pyle's fifth and last as the head coach of the Florida Gators football team. Pyle's 1913 Florida Gators completed their eighth varsity football season with an overall record of 4–3 and their fourth year in the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA) with a conference record of 2–2. The 144–0 defeat of Florida Southern is the largest in school history

To begin the season, the UF played a team that should not have been on the field. It was like there was no D and UF could do as it pleased. There had not been enough time from the beginning of football for any tea to really know that scoring over 75 points might be frowned upon.

Nonetheless, on Oct 6. The Gators had to be all charged up to play a team that wanted to beat them as much as they wanted to beat the other team. Florida Southern marched proudly into “The Baseball Field” and expected to make a game out of it. Perhaps because of the tough competition UF had faced that never gave an inch. The Gators felt it was OK to not move an inch and they defeated Florida Southern by a frightful score of 144 to nothing. I bet after the game, they wished they could have taken a bunch of touchdowns away. We all learn by our mistakes.

Auburn, a really tough team for a long time on Oct 11 let UF have it the following week as they pounded the Gators 55-0. This score did not seem big because of the prior week’s major blowout.

On Oct 18, Maryville came to Gainesville and knew there would be no mercy. Compared to Florida Southern, they did fine at W (39-0). UF was getting tough for sure and it showed it the following week Oct 25 at Georgia Tech in Jacksonville with a squeaker win W (13-3).

On Nov 8, South Carolina did not let UF score a point but go just 13 themselves L (0-13). The Citadel, like UF had been upgrading its program and they called the Gators to task on the field but lost nonetheless W (18-13).

0s
On Nov 27, at home, UF was happy to beat a typically tough Mercer team W (24-0) to close out the season.

Chapter 6 Coach C. J. McCoy Era 1914-1916

Coach # 3 C.J. McCoy

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>
1914	C. J. McCoy	5-2-0
1915	C. J. McCoy	4-3-0
1916	C. J. McCoy	0-5-0



1914 Florida Gators Football Team

1914 Coach C.J. McCoy

The 1914 Florida Gators football team, the ninth season for Florida, was the first of three years coaching for C. J. McCoy as the Football Gators head coach. All new coaches are suspect, especially after succeeding a fine coach such as George Pyle.

As noted previously, Pyle had done a great job as coach and had moved UF football into the big-leagues. That made it hard for C. J. McCoy to take over and be immediately successful. Yet, his 1914

Florida Gators finished their ninth varsity football season with an SIAA conference record of 3–2 and an overall winning record of 5-2 Not too shabby for an off-year in what would be called a still-neophyte program.

McCoy's 1914 Florida Gators completed their ninth varsity football season on a four-game winning streak, with an overall record of 5–2 and an SIAA conference record of 3–2.



<<<C. J. McCoy
The season began against a tough Auburn team on Oct 10 in Jacksonville L (0-20). On Oct 17, it was back home against King's College W (36-0) Sewanee was a really tough team and they beat Florida on Oct 24 L (0-26). Southern Florida was next on the schedule in a game played at Tampa W (59-0).

Wofford visited the Gators home campus on Nov 7 and were beaten up by Florida W (66-0). On Nov 14, the Gators traveled to the Citadel and played tough enough to win a close W (7-0) at Charles Park Stadium

in Charleston South Carolina. Mercer was next on November 26 for the season Finale at Mercer W (14-0)

1915 Coach C.J. McCoy

The 1915 Florida Gators football team, the tenth season for Florida, was the second of three years coaching for C. J. McCoy as the Football Gators head coach. This was not as productive a year for Coach McCoy. They finished with an overall record of 4–3 and in their sixth year in the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA), they came in with a conference record of 3–3.



1915 Gators team photo Coach Charlie McCoy on right

In 1914, we know that first-year head coach Charles J. McCoy had released a Florida team that performed in the top half of the SIAA. In 1915, McCoy also assumed the role as the school's first basketball coach.

McCoy got an assistant for 1915--Z. J. Stanley. In 1914, he had been the coach of the Maryville Scots.

The season began on Oct 9, again the first opponent was Auburn. The game was played at Drake Field in Alabama. Auburn won the game again L (0-7). On Oct 16, the Gators played Sewanee at Barrs Field in Jacksonville and lost by the same score L (0-7). Florida

Southern was an easier match but each time they get just a little tougher. On Oct 20, the Gators won W (45-0). The Gators played Georgia next on Nov 6. Georgia dominated the game L (0-37).

On Nov 13, The Citadel came to Gainesville for a Gator home game won by Florida W (6-0). On Nov 18 in another home game, the Gators defeated Tulane W (14-7). The Gators finished their 1915 season against Mercer at Macon Georgia W (34-7)

1916 Coach C.J. McCoy

Having coached for two years and believing he finally had the makings of a great Gators squad, Coach McCoy looked out and booked the most ambitious and difficult Gators football schedule to date. There were no breather teams. The best laid plans of mice and men often go astray. This was the case as the coach's plans were thwarted by a series of injuries and academic ineligibility problems. He was lucky to field a team.

It began with Gators' starting quarterback, Rammy Ramsdell. The QB broke his leg playing baseball against Auburn Tigers. The team then saw experienced guard Ham Dowling transferring schools, and tackle Everett Yon was called by the National Guard to defend the Mexican border.

Due to a shortage of men players (WWI), captain Rex Farrior, previously a center, moved to fullback. Mercer had scheduled a game with Florida, but several Mercer linemen were behind in their studies, and so the game that might have given Florida a win was cancelled.

The 1916 Florida Gators football team, the eleventh season for Florida, was the third (last) of three years coaching for C. J. McCoy as the Football Gators head coach. This was a terrible year for the Gators and Coach McCoy. The team had been depleted of first-string football talent and it also lacked depth, McCoy's 1916 Florida Gators ended their season disastrously with an overall record of 0–5 and a Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA) conference record of 0–4.

On Oct 14, UF lost to Georgia at Sanford Field in Athens, Georgia L (0-21). On Oct Alabama came to Gainesville and beat the Gators L (0-16). On Oct 28, the Gators lost to Tennessee at Plant Field in Tampa L (0-24).

It got no better on Nov 11 in Jacksonville against Auburn L (0-20). The 1916 season's pain ended after the last game on Nov 18 at Indiana's Jordan Field in Bloomington Indiana L (3-14). Finally, the Gators at least scored a few points. This game was played before an attendance of 5000.

Chapter 7 Coach Alfred Buser Era 1917 - 1919

Coach #4 Alfred E. Buser

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1917	Alfred E. Buser	2-4-0	SIAA	0-4-0
1918	Alfred E. Buser	0-1-0	SIAA	none
1919	Alfred E. Buser	5-3-0	SIAA	2-2-0

1917 Coach Alfred E. Buser

The 1917 Florida Gators football team, the twelfth season for Florida, was the first of three years coaching for Alfred E. Buser as the Football Gators head coach.



Buser in 1911 as Wisconsin team captain

This was another bad year but not as bad as 1916. Buser's 1917 Florida Gators ended their season with an overall record of 2-4 and a Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA) conference record of 0-4.

Coach Buser was a great football player who was declared an All-American lineman for the Wisconsin Badgers in 1911. Buser promised to bring a Midwestern power football style of play to revive the Gators after the winless 1916 season. Captain "Rowdy Bill" Wilkinson was the team's only returning letterman for 1917.

On Oct. 13 UF played South Carolina at home and won its first game in two years W (21-13). On Oct 20, the Gators were home against Tulane and lost at University Field big-time L (0-52).



South Carolina Game 1917 Signed Picture

The Gators then squeaked a win from typically pushover Florida Southern on Oct 27 W (19-7).

On Nov 3, the Gators traveled to Drake Field in Auburn, Alabama and were defeated by the Tigers in a blowout L (0-68). The Gators played Clemson in Jacksonville on Nov 17 and lost in another blowout L (7-55). Kentucky made a miserable season even more

miserable on Nov 29 when they soundly beat the Gators at Stoll Field in Lexington, KY L (0-52)

1918 Coach Alfred E. Buser

The 1918 Florida Gators football team was the thirteenth season for Florida. It was year 2 of three years coaching for Alfred E. Buser as the Football Gators head coach.

The Gators' ranks were depleted by both the Spanish flu and the loss of World War I military volunteers and draftees, and the 1918 Gators played only one game—a loss L (2-14) to a football team from Camp Johnston, a U.S. Army training installation in nearby Jacksonville, Florida. Buser's Gators did not play a Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA) conference schedule in 1918.

1919 Coach Alfred E. Buser

The 1919 Florida Gators football team was the fourteenth season for Florida. It was year 3 and the last of three years coaching for Alfred E. Buser as the Football Gators head coach. Finally, Buser brought home a winner but he did not win games he should have and it got to be too much for Florida fans.

In fact, Florida students, fans and alumni had had enough of losing. They had learned to suffer through football losses to major Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA) opponents such as the Georgia Bulldogs and the Tulane Green Wave, but the 0–7 loss to the Florida Southern in 1919 was viewed by many as an unacceptable failure. Nevertheless, as noted, Buser's 1919 Florida Gators completed their football season with an improved overall record of 5–3 and an SIAA conference record of 2–2. Florida Southern had surely stepped up its game.

Jim Sparkman was the team captain this year. He had just returned from World War I service with the Rainbow Division after having playing for Florida from 1914 to 1916. Rondo Hatton was a substitute quarterback on the team.

On Oct 4, Georgia A&M played the Gators at the Baseball Field in Gainesville and lost W (33-2) before 1200 attendees. On Oct 18 on Fleming Field, the Gators beat Mercer W (48-0). On Oct 25 at Plant Field in Tampa FL, the Gators lost to Georgia L (0-16). The following week on Nov 1 at Florida Southern in St. Petersburg, FL the Gators lost L (0-7)

At Tulane Stadium in New Orleans on Nov 8, the Gators lost to Tulane L (2-14). Back at home on Fleming Field the next week on Nov 15, the Gators beat Stetson W (64-0). Then the Gators went on the road to Columbia South Carolina and prevailed W (13-0). Closing out the season at Home (Fleming Field), On Nov 27, the Gators beat Oglethorpe W (14-7).

Chapter 8 Coach William G Kline Era 1920-1922

Coach #5 William G. Kline

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1920	William G. Kline	6-3-0	SIAA	1-3-0
1921	William G. Kline	6-3-2	SIAA	4-1-2
1922	William G. Kline	7-2-0	SoCon	2-0-0

1920 Coach William G. Kline

The 1920 Florida Gators football team was the fifteenth season for Florida. It was year 1 for new coach, law professor William G. Kline as the Football Gators head coach. Coach Kline, a law professor, was a former halfback for the Illinois Fighting Illini, and he previously had coached the Nebraska Cornhuskers.



<< Kline's 1920 Florida Gators compiled a marginally better 6-3 overall record than the 1919 Gators, but their 1-3 conference record against Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA) competition was poor.

The Gators improved their series records against traditional in-state opponents like the Florida Southern Moccasins and the Stetson Hatters, they also suffered a shutout defeat by the Tulane Green Wave and lost their

fourth consecutive game to the Georgia Bulldogs. In a season looking for big changes, they did not come.

On Oct 9, to begin the season, the Gators beat Newberry at Fleming Field W (21-0). Then, on Oct 16, in a return to showing its mettle, the gators beat Florida Southern W (13-0) after the heartbreaking first loss in Buser's final year of coaching. On Oct 23, UF forfeited a game from Rollins W (1-0). Then, on Oct 30, Florida traveled to Valdosta Georgia to take on Mercer and they triumphed W (30-0).

On Nov. 11, the Gators played the first of two games this season against Stetson W (26-0). Two days later, on Nov 13, the Gators were walloped At Georgia L (0-56). The second Stetson game was played at home (Fleming Field) and the Gators chalked up another win W (21-0) Oglethorpe got its act together at Memorial Stadium in Columbus GA on Nov 25 and soundly beat the Gators L (0-21)

1921 Coach William G. Kline

The 1921 Florida Gators football team was the sixteenth season for Florida. It was year 2 for coach & law professor William G. Kline as the Football Gators head coach. It was its 9th and final season for UF as a member of the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA).

The Gators played their home games at the former Baseball Field, which was renamed as Fleming Field in Gainesville, Florida. They finished the season with a record of 6 wins, 3 losses, and 2 ties (6–3–2 overall, 4–1–2 in the SIAA), finishing 6th in conference play.

The Gators improved their record against major collegiate competition with a notable win against the Alabama Crimson Tide (9–2) in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Florida's two losses against the Tennessee Volunteers (0–9) and the North Carolina Tar Heels (10–14) were both competitive and close.

The prowess of the Gators football team was noticed by other coaches. Coach Herman Stegeman of Georgia wrote in Spalding's Football Guide "Florida, for the first time, had a strong team. Aided by Dixon, the South's best punter, they combined a kicking game and a well-diversified offense to good advantage." Captain Tootie Perry was the school's first ever All-Southern selection.



1921 Florida Gators Football Team

Before the season began James Van Fleet, a professor of military science joined Kline's coaching staff. In the era of Knute Rockne and Hugo Bezdek bringing in championships and undefeated seasons. The entire Florida staff faced heavy pressure from the alumni for putting together a winning football team.

To this end, and so "five players were brought the University of Oklahoma and the western states" such as Ferdinand H. Duncan and Ark Newton. Newton allegedly first attended a practice only to watch, but the captain Tootie Perry was so impressed when he saw him that he offered Newton a uniform and coaxed him onto the field. Newton's punts sailed over the head of the return men, and brought the attention of all the Gator coaches. Football was now a national big time sport at the college level.

This unusually long season began on Oct 1 at Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia with a close win W (6-0) before 4,500 fans. UF then played Rollins on Oct 8 in Orlando Florida W (33-0). Next was Carlstrom Field at home L (0-19). Carlstrom Field is a former military airfield. It is located 6.4 miles from Arcadia, Florida. The airfield was one of thirty-two Air Service training camps established in 1917 after the United States entry into World War I. The servicemen there had just finished with the war and those staying on

were tough somewhat older men, often with substantial football experience.

On Oct 15 Mercer came to Fleming Field and were beaten by the Gators W (7–0). On Oct 22, the Gators traveled to play Tennessee at Shields-Watkins Field in Knoxville and were narrowly beaten L (0-9). On Oct 29 at Howard in Montgomery, Alabama the Gators triumphed W 34–0. Then, the following Saturday, it was a short ride to Plant Field in Tampa to play South Carolina in a Home Game tie T (7-7).

On Nov 12 at Alabama's Denny Field in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, the Gators showed some muscle as it beat a respected Crimson Tide team W (9–2) before 5,000 fans. On Nov 18 UF tied Mississippi College at home in Fleming Field T (7-7). Then, on Nov 26 Oglethorpe came to Fleming Field to get licked by the Gators W (21-3). In the last game of the season on Dec 3 North Carolina barely outplayed the Gators and came home with a win L (14-10) before an attendance of 7500.

1922 William G. Kline

The 1922 Florida Gators football team was the seventeenth season for Florida. It was year 3 and the final year for coach & law professor William G. Kline as the Football Gators head coach. It was the Gators first season with the new Southern Conference SoCon, placing fifth of twenty-one teams in the conference standings.

Kline's 1922 Florida Gators finished 7–2 overall, and 2–0 in their first year as members of the new Southern Conference.

Despite having an undefeated conference record, the team played only two conference opponents (Tulane and Clemson) and so it did not get the benefit of being co-champion along with with Vanderbilt, Georgia Tech, and North Carolina.

Even before Steve Spurrier, Florida, like Notre Dame and other great teams of the day had taken to the passing game in a big way. The 1922 Spalding's Football Guide ranked Florida as the best forward passing team in the country.

The team expected to do well and did but there was an unexpected loss early in the season to Furman in a close match. Otherwise the season was very interesting for the players as they got to visit Washington D. C. and the White House when traveling North for the first time to face the Harvard Crimson, and the upset of Tulane.

In the first season of the new Southern Conference (SoCon), freshmen were barred from play. 1921 had been the best year in Florida football history. Florida had two of the South's best punters in running backs Ark Newton and Ray Dickson.

The 1922 season began on Oct. 7 with a loss to Furman at Fleming Field in Gainesville, Florida L (6-7). The following week, the Gators made the short trek to Orlando to beat Rollins W (19-0). This was followed by a short trip to Tampa to play an American Legion Team. The Gators won W (14-0). The following Saturday, Florida handily defeated Howard at home W (57-0).

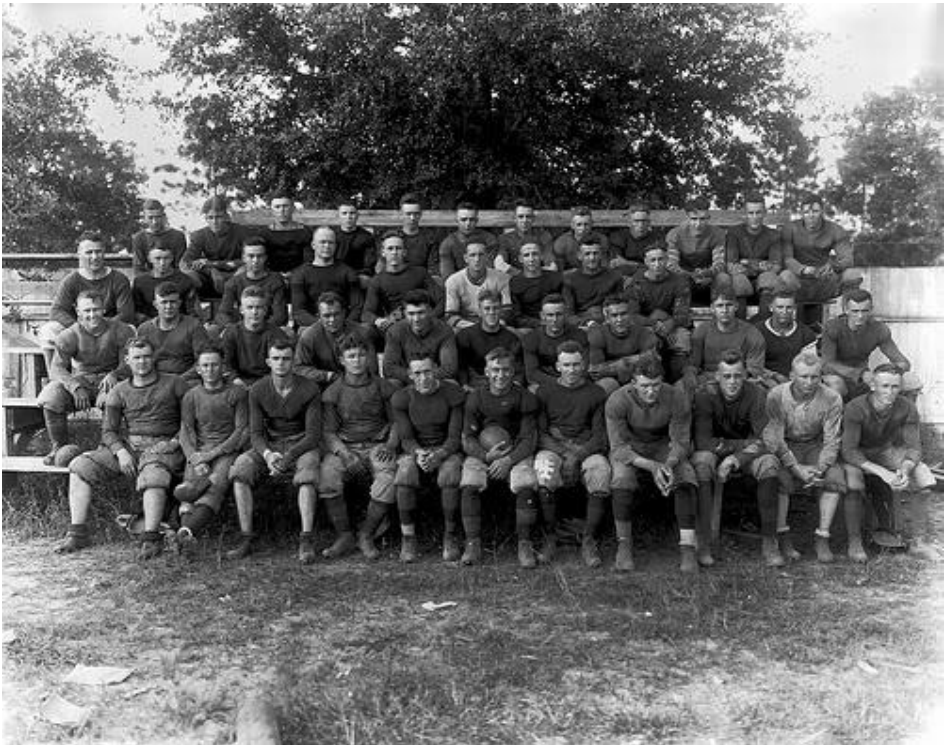
Without a lot of time in between games, the Gators had to get to Harvard for the following game and of course they had to see the White House on a stop at the Nation's Capital. They had to be tuckered out. By the time the game started on Saturday Nov 4, the gators could not score a point and were defeated by Harvard at Harvard Stadium in Allston Mass. (0-24). There were 30,000 in attendance to watch the game. The Gators were not accustomed to so many eyeballs on a game.

On Nov 11, UF was back from its trip to the North and they had enough zip to wallop Mississippi College at Plant Field in Tampa, Fl. W (58-0) before 4,000 in attendance. On Nov. 18, the Gators traveled to Tulane Stadium and beat the Green Waves W (27-6). Then it was another road game as the Gators beat Oglethorpe on Nov 18 in Ponce de Leon Park, Atlanta GA, W (12-0). In the final game of the year, Florida beat Clemson at Barrs Field in Jacksonville W (47-12)

Chapter 9 Coach James Van Fleet Era 1923-1924

Coach #6 James Van Fleet

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1923	James Van Fleet	6-1-2	SoCon	1-0-2
1924	James Van Fleet	6-2-2	SoCon	2-0-1



1920's Gators Football Team Picture

1923 James Van Fleet

The 1923 Florida Gators football team was the eighteenth season for Florida. It was year one of two for the new coach Major James Van Fleet as the Football Gators head coach. It was the Gators second season with the new Southern Conference SoCon, placing fifth of twenty-one teams in the conference standings.

Van Fleet was a serving officer in the U.S. Army and a professor of military tactics in the university's Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program, and had been a standout fullback on the undefeated West Point Cadets team of 1914. Van Fleet's 1923 Florida Gators finished 6–1–2 overall, and 1–0–2 in the Southern Conference, placing third of twenty-one teams in the conference standings.

This was the first year that Florida alumni and students celebrated a Homecoming. It was a wonderful 19–7 victory over the Mercer Baptists. The Gators tied the defending SoCon champion Georgia Tech Golden Tornado this year. The highlight of the entire 1923 season was a 16–6 upset of legendary coach Wallace Wade's previously undefeated Alabama Crimson Tide on a muddy, rain-soaked field in Birmingham, Alabama in the final game of the year. Go Gators!

For whatever reason, the Junior and Senior Classes did not play much of a role in the 1923 season. It was built from sophomores. Freshmen were playing their own games at the time and the 1922 Florida freshmen had won the southern crown for freshmen squads so this set of sophomores, though without varsity game experience were expected to lead the Gators to a fine season.

On Oct 6, the Gators played Army, a perennial great team, for the first time. It was a baptism of fire but the gators held on but lost the game L (0-20). The game was played after the long trek up North to The Plain in West Point, New York. On Oct 13, still on the road, the Gators were tied by Georgia Tech at Grant Field in Atlanta, Georgia T (7–7) before a crowd of 12,000. On Oct 19, in the home opener, the Gators beat Rollins W (28-0). On Oct 27, the Gators played Wake Forest for the very first time. The game was at Plant Field in Tampa. The Gators won W (16–7).

On Nov 3, at home, UF defeated Mercer W (19-7). In another home game on Nov 10, Florida beat Stetson W (27-0). On November 17, it seemed like the Gators team had gotten its moxie back against Florida Southern as they delivered a walloping W (53-0) against the Mocs in Lakeland Florida.

On Nov. 24 the Gators played Mississippi A&M to a tie at Barrs Field in Jacksonville, Florida T (13–13). Florida ended its 1923 season with a W (16-6) win at Alabama in a game played at Rickwood Field in Birmingham, Alabama before an attendance of 10,000.

1924 Coach James Van Fleet

The 1924 Florida Gators football team was the nineteenth season for Florida. It was year two and the last of two for coach Major James Van Fleet as the Football Gators head coach. It was the Gators third season with the new Southern Conference SoCon, placing second of twenty-two teams in the conference standings.

Van Fleet's 1924 Florida Gators finished 6–2–2 overall, and 2–0–1 in the Southern Conference, and as noted, placing second of twenty-two teams in the conference standings.

The Gators traveled further during the 1924 season than any other college football team in the country, and received national recognition for a controversial tie with the Texas Longhorns and a very close loss to a nationally ranked Army team. The season also produced a tie with a southern power, who had often prevailed against the Gators—Georgia Tech.



General Van Fleet Gators Coach

Coach Van Fleet's assignment was changed from Florida to the Panama Canal Zone before the season opened. However, out of respect for the team, he coached on an unpaid basis during four months of leave.

In the trivia category but also the fun to know category, more than 100 players took part in a game between the varsity and freshmen.

Also, a 4-month old Florida black bear captured by a freshman, wandered onto the field on October 1. An unidentified fan placed a Gator banner on its back, and it never caused much trouble but offered some nice photographs for the fans.

The season began on my anniversary date, October 4. If my wife reads this, please know dear that I love you very much even though neither of us were alive in 1924. But, our parents were.

Starting it off big, on Oct 4, the Gators showed perhaps a little more muscle than needed as UF wamped Rollins at Fleming Field W (77-0). On Oct 11, the tough Georgia Tech Yellowjackets invited the Gators for some fun at Grant Field in Atlanta, Georgia, but since nobody likes a tie (T (7-7) maybe the outcome was not as fun or exciting as the game.



Wake Forest came in to Plant Field in Tampa, Florida on Oct 18, and the Gators won W (34-0). Florida played a tough Texas team on Oct 25 at Clark Field in Austin, Texas and tied the Longhorns T 7-7. On Nov 1, Florida Southern played a better game than 1923 as the Gators prevailed W (27-0). On Nov 8 at Army's Michie Stadium at West Point, New York, the Gators put on a great show but lost in the end L (14-7). To understand the significance of this close score

for the Gators v Army, it helps to know that five Army players were recognized on the 1924 College Football All-America Team.

On Nov 14 at Mercer in Macon, Georgia, the Gators could not score and went down L (0-10). The Gators rebounded on Nov 22 vs. Mississippi A&M in the Cramton Bowl located in Montgomery, Alabama W (27-0).

Getting close to the end of the season, The Gators beat Drake in a close match at home W (10-0). On December 6, because UF did not really have a reasonable capacity stadium as it often had done, it scheduled its game v Washington & Lee for Barrs Field in Jacksonville, Florida. The Gators won this game W (16-6).

Knowing the notion of the home field advantage, the Gator coaches and the Florida Administration were probably beginning to think about how propitious it would be for the Gators to have a nice sized stadium so traveling for popular games was not required and so that the home team could play in a home field.

This dream was about five-years from fruition

Chapter 10 Harold L. Sebring Era 1925-1927

Coach #7 Harold L. Sebring

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1925	Harold L. Sebring	8-2-0	SoCon	3-2-0
1926	Harold L. Sebring	2-6-2	SoCon	1-4-1
1927	Harold L. Sebring	7-3-0	SoCon	5-2-0

1925 Harold L. Sebring

The 1925 Florida Gators football team was the twentieth season for Florida. It was year one of three for new coach Harold L. “Tom” Sebring as the Football Gators head coach. It was the Gators fourth season with the Southern Conference SoCon, placing second of twenty-two teams in the conference standings.

Sebring’s 1925 Florida Gators finished 8-2, and 3-2 in the Southern Conference, and placing eighth of twenty-two teams in the conference standings.

The Gators compiled their best win-loss record to date, losing only to the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets 7-23 in Atlanta, Georgia and legendary coach Wallace Wade's undefeated Alabama Crimson Tide 0-34 in Montgomery, Alabama. The highlights of the season included conference victories over the Wake Forest Demon Deacons, Clemson Tigers, Mississippi A&M Aggies and Washington & Lee Generals.

It is a long time from season end to season begin. Practice began on September 14 with new head coach Tom Sebring, along with A. C. Tipton, Everett Yon, and Herbert Bunker. They were in charge of the first workout.

The season began on Oct 3 with Mercer at home W (24-0). Toughening up again, on Oct 10, Florida Southern gave the Gators a

tussle but lost in a close game W (9-0). Right after the Florida Southern Game, Hampden Sidney lost to the Gators at home W (22-6). Then, one of the Big guns from the conference, Georgia Tech beat the Gators at Grant Field in Atlanta, GA. L (7-23).



<<< Coach Sebring. On Oct 24, Wake Forest was back at Fleming Field and were beaten by Florida W (24-3). Some of the Florida opponents were off and on and others had just lost their ability to keep up with teams that were getting the players. Rollins, always tough in the early years were beaten bad by the Gators in Fleming Field W (61-0). Clemson, which has a storied football program and they are the current national champions were beaten by the Gators on Nov 7 at Riggs Field,

Clemson, SC W (42-0).

Moving on to the never a pushover-category, the Gators bit the dust in a game on Nov 14 at the Cramton Bowl, one of many venues in which Alabama plays. This stadium is located in Montgomery, not Tuscaloosa, where the campus lies. Alabama won (L 34-0). On Nov 21, Mississippi A&M played the Gators tough at Plant Field in Tampa, Florida W (12-0) before a crowd of 20,000.

On Nov 26, in the season ending game, the Gators beat Washington & Lee at Barrs Field in Jacksonville, Florida W 17-14 in front of 15,000 fans.

1926 Coach Harold L. Sebring

The 1926 Florida Gators football team was the twenty-first season for Florida. It was year two of three for new coach Harold L. "Tom"

Sebring as the Football Gators head coach. It was his least successful so don't be looking for a lot of W's in the game results. It was the Gators sixth season with the Southern Conference SoCon, placing nineteenth of twenty-two teams in the conference standings.

Sebring's 1926 Florida Gators finished 2-6-2 overall, and 1-4-1 in the Southern Conference, and placing nineteenth of twenty-two teams in the conference standings.

There are always great highlights even in the most dismal of seasons. In 1926. The highlights of the season were the Gators' two home field victories over the Florida Southern Moccasins W 16-0) and the Clemson Tigers W (33-0). Unfortunately, these were interspersed among four close losses to the Chicago Maroons (6-12), the Ole Miss Rebels (7-12), the Mercer Bears (3-7) and the Kentucky Wildcats (13-18), crushing defeats by the Georgia Bulldogs (9-32) and coach Wallace Wade's undefeated Alabama Crimson Tide (0-49), and two low-scoring ties with the Hampden-Sydney Tigers (0-0) and the Washington & Lee Generals.

1927 Coach Harold L. Sebring

The 1927 Florida Gators football team was the twenty-second season for Florida. It was year three (last) of three for coach Harold L. "Tom" Sebring as the Football Gators head coach. It was not so bad. his least successful so don't be looking for a lot of W's in the game results. It was the Gators seventh season with the Southern Conference SoCon, placing sixth of twenty-two teams in the conference standings.

Sebring's 1927 Florida Gators finished 7-3 overall, and 5-2 in the Southern Conference, and placing sixth of twenty-two teams in the conference standings.



1927 Florida Gators Football Player George Rich

After a Sept 24 W (26-7) over Florida Southern) the Gators suffered a 0–12 upset loss at the hands of the Davidson College Wildcats on Oct 1. From there, they picked themselves up and the Gators rallied to defeat the Auburn Tigers W (33–6) on Oct 8—defeating the Tigers for the first time and ending a six-game losing streak, and then the Gators upset coach Wallace Wade's Alabama Crimson Tide's Invincibles on Nov 12 W (13–6). Along the way, the Gators beat Kentucky W (27-6) on Oct 15

Florida Gators finished 7–3 overall, and 5–2 in the Southern Conference, placing sixth of twenty-two teams in the conference standings.

Nobody likes to whine about a loss but the loss to Davidson featured captain Frank Oosterhoudt, who was later declared ineligible, and replaced at captain by Bill Middlekauff. With Middlekauff at captain, the Gators suffered just two further losses: to conference co-champions NC State on Oct 23, L (6-13) ; and on Nov 6, to Georgia's "Dream and Wonder team" L (0-28) . NC State was led by Hall of Famer and Gainesville native Jack McDowall.

UF also beat Mercer W (32-6) on Oct 30, Washington & Lee on Nov 24, W (20-7), and Maryland W (7-6 on December 3.

Chapter 11 Charlie Bachman Era 1928-1932

Coach # 8 Charlie Bachman

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1928	Charlie Bachman	8-1	SoCon	6-1
1929	Charlie Bachman	8-2	SoCon	6-1
1930	Charlie Bachman	6-3-1	SoCon	4-2-1
1931	Charlie Bachman	2-6-2	SoCon	2-4-2
1932	Charlie Bachman	3-6	SoCon	1-6

1928 Coach Charlie Bachman

The 1928 Florida Gators football team was the twenty-third season for Florida. It was the first year of five for new coach Charlie Bachman as the Football Gators head coach. He had a great year in 1928. It was the Gators eighth season with the Southern Conference SoCon, placing third of twenty-two teams in the conference standings.



Coach Charlie Bachman

Bachman's 1928 Florida Gators were outstanding, finishing 8-1 overall, and 6-1 in the Southern Conference, and placing third of twenty-two teams in the conference standings behind the national champion Georgia Tech Golden Tornado (7-0 SoCon), and the Tennessee Volunteers (6-0-1 SoCon).

The Gators were as good as they had ever been and better. Florida led the entire nation in scoring with 336 points, and they were remembered by many sports commentators as the best Florida football team until at least the 1960s.

The secret was the "Phantom Four Backfield" The large scores were mostly attributed to the great play of the named backfield. due to its "Phantom Four" backfield which included: quarterback Clyde Crabtree, halfbacks Carl Brumbaugh and Royce Goodbread, and fullback Rainey Cawthon.

This was a great name and was surely reminiscent of the Four Horsemen of Notre Dame. You may recall this group of stalwarts were put together just a few years before the Phantom Four. Coach Knute Rockne devised the lineup in 1922 during their sophomore season. During the three-year tenure of the Four Horsemen, Notre Dame lost only two games; one each in 1922 and 1923, both to Nebraska in Lincoln before packed houses. In 1924, ND got the National Championship with no defeats.

The Gators were just one win away from what could have been their first National Championship. It was a great season for Florida. Other backs contributing to the fine year were captain "Goof" Bowyer, sophomore halfback Lee Roy "Red" Bethea, alternate-captain and halfback Tommy Owens, and fullback Ed Sauls. Lots of stories were told about the prowess of the backfield. One story goes like this:

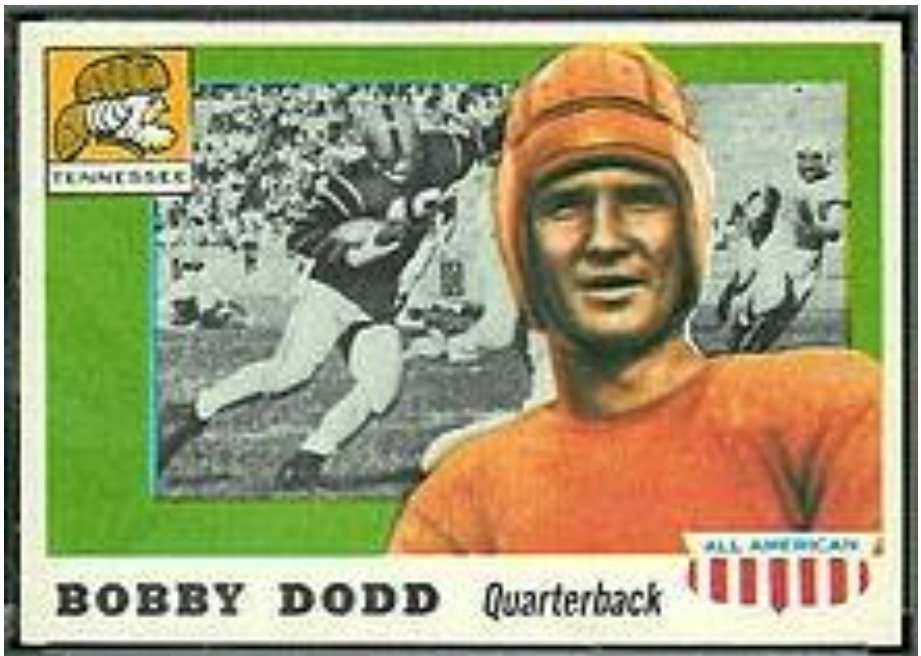
"There were twelve backs on the squad. Six of them can do the hundred in 10.1 seconds. Eight of them are fine punters and ten of them are great passers. And all of them are good receivers."

The 1928 Gators were 8-0-0, after having executed a tough schedule, playing six Southern Conference powerhouse teams. They then played their final game of the season against coach Robert

Neyland's Tennessee Volunteers. It was played on the Vols' home field in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Prior to the big Tennessee Volunteers game, coach Bachman used a motivational trick learned from Knute Rockne and waved a telegram in front of his players, telling them a win over Tennessee meant an invitation to the Rose Bowl, the only postseason bowl in those days, even though conference champion Georgia Tech was already invited.

The loss eliminated Florida's hopes of its first conference title, and fans and players have long since mourned this missed opportunity chance to play and win a Rose Bowl. Coach Bachman later added: "We would have beaten California in the Rose Bowl. Worse than Tech did on a dry field."



Tennessee quarterback Bobby Dodd, who came from no place to star in the game is depicted on the above football card from the 1950s.

Games of the 1928 Season

New Head coach Charlie Bachman replaced Tom Sebring, who was his former player at Kansas State. Bachman had attended Notre Dame and he knew how to use Knute Rockne's system. When

Sebring graduated from the University of Florida's College of Law, he moved on.

Bachman did not have a lot of time but It was enough for him to know what he had. Practice was opened on September 3. He was the beneficiary of a wealth of talented players from Florida high schools, He knew what he had after just two weeks. Bachman declared his backfield material as the finest ever. The days of playing in the old Baseball Field were coming to an end but not just yet.

John J. Tigert became UF president in 1928. Tigert liked the idea of more fans watching more football. He worked to gain a consensus to construct a new and larger stadium upon his arrival.

The season began with three home games in a row. On Oct. 6, the Gators beat Florida Southern W (26-0). On Oct 13, one week later, UF beat Auburn W (27-0). The following week on Oct 20, Mercer went down big W (73-0). With some bleachers in place, over 8,000 saw the Mercer game.

On Oct 27, the Gators narrowly beat North Carolina State at Fairfield Stadium in Jacksonville, Florida W (14-7) before 13,000. On Nov. 3, The Gators hammered Sewanee at Fairfield Stadium W (71-6). The Gators then traveled to Georgia and beat the Bulldogs at Municipal Stadium in Savannah, W (26-6) before 16,000. Clemson came to Fairfield Stadium on Nov 17 and were beaten by the Gators W 27-6 before 15,000. UF was using Jacksonville a lot more as the demand to see Gators football was increasing.

On November 29, Washington & Lee came to Fairfield Stadium and were walloped W (60-6). The Gators were ready for Tennessee. They traveled to Shields-Watkins Field • Knoxville, Tennessee on December 8, and in a muddy contest that was a nail biter, the Gators came up short L (13-12). Overall the season was great but with just two more points, and perhaps just one more, the Gators would have had a few championships.

1929 Coach Charlie Bachman

The 1929 Florida Gators football team was the twenty-fourth season for Florida. It was the second year of five for coach Charlie Bachman as the Football Gators head coach. He had another fine year in 1929. It was the Gators ninth season with the Southern Conference SoCon, placing fourth of twenty-two teams in the conference standings.

Bachman's 1929 Florida Gators were outstanding, finishing finished 8-1 overall, and 6-1 in the Southern Conference, and placing fourth in the conference standings.

There were many highlights this year. Let's look at them all as we cover the whole season. First of all, there were the Southern Conference victories over the Virginia Military Institute Keydets on Oct 5 W (18-7), Auburn Tigers on Oct 11 (19-0), Georgia Bulldogs on Oct 26 W (18-6), Clemson Tigers on Nov 16 W (13-7) South Carolina Gamecocks on Nov 23, W (20-7), Washington & Lee Generals on Nov 28 W (25-7), and a W (20-6) intersectional upset on over coach John McEwan's Oregon Webfoots on Dec 7 in a neutral site game played at the old Madison Square Garden stadium in Miami, Florida.

Besides these fine wins, on Sept 28, at home, Florida beat Florida Southern W (54-0).

Two well played games marred the Gators results this year as UF lost at Harvard Stadium in Allston Mass on Nov 2 to the Crimson L (14-0) and before that on Oct 19, the Georgia Tech Yellowjackets won at Grant Field in Atlanta Georgia.

Before the season even began, things were happening for the Gators. First of all, there was a big change in Florida Athletics. Former player Edgar Jones became athletic director and Joe Bedenk left. James Van Fleet returned to help assist Bachman.

Coach Bachman began the season's intensive practices on the beach at Anastasia Island, some ten miles from Saint Augustine. There was a fierce battle amongst the eleven running backs featured to get the starting positions. Another good backfield was expected.

Bachman later said the 1929 team "was as good as the 1928 team and would have been better had we not lost Carl Brumbaugh from the year before. He was our passer, and he was our thinker. He could get the ball to Van Sickel. In those days, the halfbacks passed more than the quarterback. And boy did we pass. In the flats a lot, like they do now."

This is the last team that would have the old baseball field as its home field. Soon in 1930, the new Florida Stadium would begin construction with a style that could be expanded as needed. Florida Stadium would be a place to behold

1930 Coach Charlie Bachman

The 1930 Florida Gators football team was the twenty-fifth season for Florida. It was the third year of five for coach Charlie Bachman as the Football Gators head coach. Things did not go quite as well this year as they had in 1928 and 1929. It was the Gators tenth season with the Southern Conference SoCon, placing fourth of twenty-two teams in the conference standings.

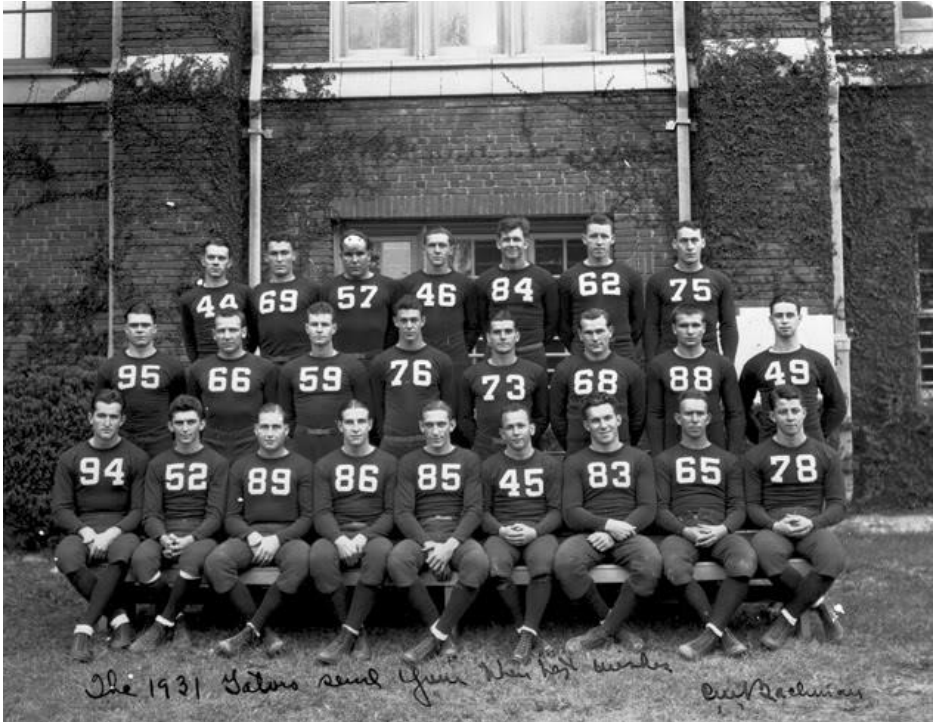
Bachman's 1930 Florida Gators were not too bad and not too good. They were short of outstanding for sure. They finished 6-3-1 overall, and 4-2-1 in the Southern Conference, and placing seventh in the conference standings. After a great start in 1928, Bachman's teams had taken a downward trajectory.

The construction for the new stadium commenced on April 16, and the Gators played there just one game in 1930. The Jacksonville venue was still kept alive for playing certain games.

1931 Coach Charlie Bachman

The 1931 Florida Gators football team was the twenty-sixth season for Florida. It was the fourth of five for coach Charlie Bachman as the Football Gators head coach. Things did not go well at all this year as they had the first three years. It was the Gators eleventh season with the Southern Conference SoCon, placing fifteenth of twenty-three teams in the conference standings.

Bachman's 1930 Florida Gators were bad and not very good this season. They finished 2-6-2 overall, and 2-4-2 in the Southern Conference, and placing fifteenth of twenty-three in the conference standings. After a great start in 1928, Bachman's teams had taken a downward trajectory and had reached the bottom in 1931.



1931 Florida Gators

There were few season highlights but we must count the Gators' only victories over the North Carolina State (31-0) in Raleigh, North Carolina and the Auburn Tigers (13-12) in Jacksonville, Florida, both of which were fellow Southern Conference members.



Gators 1931 Game Action

1932 Coach Charlie Bachman

The 1932 Florida Gators football team was the twenty-seventh season for Florida. It was the fifth of five for coach Charlie Bachman as the Football Gators head coach. Things were just a skosh better this year than the last year's miserable season. It was the Gators twelfth season with the Southern Conference SoCon, placing twentieth of twenty-three teams in the conference standings.

Bachman's 1932 Florida Gators were not quite as bad as the 1932 version. But, they were not good either. The Gators finished 3-6 overall, and 1-6 in the Southern Conference, and placed twentieth of twenty-three in the conference standings. After a great start in 1928, Bachman's teams had taken a downward trajectory and had reached the bottom on 1931. This was the Gators' final year as members of the Southern Conference.

Coach Bachman with a team loaded with sophomores again, had predicted that the Gators would win half of their games.

Tough season for sure!

Chapter 12 Coach Dennis Stanley Era 1933-1935

Coach # 9 Dennis K Stanley

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1933	Dennis K. Stanley	5-3-1	SEC	2-3-0
1934	Dennis K. Stanley	6-3-1	SEC	2-2-1
1935	Dennis K. Stanley	3-7-0	SEC	1-6-0

Coach Stanley's 1935 Gators are shown below:



1933 Coach Dennis K. (Dutch" Stanley

The 1933 Florida Gators football team was the twenty-eighth season for Florida. It was the first of three seasons for Florida Alumnus Dennis K. (Dutch) Stanley as the Football Gators head coach. Things were a lot better this year with the new coach as the record was again above 500.

It was the Gators first season with the South-Eastern Conference. The overall record was 5-3-1 and the SEC record was 2-3-0. They tied for ninth of thirteen teams in the conference standings.



<<< Dennis K. Stanley had been a standout end on the great 1928 Gators team. To make it work for Florida, he assembled an all-Florida-alumni coaching staff and led the Gators to a 5-3-1 revival following two consecutive losing seasons in 1931 and 1932.

On Sept 30, in an early season start, the Gators beat Stetson at their new Florida Field W (28-0). A week later Sewanee played at Jacksonville and the Gators beat them W (31-0). With a

2-0 start, on Oct 14, North Carolina State played the Gators at Raleigh NC to a scoreless tie T (0-0). Then, on Oct 21, North Carolina came in and were beaten by UF at home W (9-0)

For years the Gators had been having trouble with Tennessee and this year was no different. On Oct 28, the Vols beat the Gators at Shields-Watkins Field in Knoxville, Tennessee L (6-13). On Nov 4, Georgia then beat the Gators in Jacksonville L (0-14). Florida traveled to Grant Field in Atlanta, Georgia on Nov 11 and lost L (7-19).

The Gators ended the year positively against two strong teams. On Nov 18, at home, they beat Auburn W (14-7) and on Dec 2, they beat Maryland in a home game played at Plant Field in Tampa W (19-0).

1934 Coach Dennis K. (Dutch” Stanley

The 1934 Florida Gators football team was the twenty-ninth season for Florida. It was the second of three seasons for Florida Alumnus Dennis K. (Dutch) Stanley as the Football Gators head coach. Things were a little better this year with the new coach as the team recorded one more win than in 1933. This would be Dutch’s best year.

It was the Gators second season with the South-Eastern Conference. The overall record was 6-3-1 and the SEC record was 2-2-1. They placed seventh of thirteen teams in the SEC conference standings.

On Sept 29 in the season opener, the Gators beat Rollins in Jacksonville W 13-2. This win was followed by another win on Oct 6 against VPI at Miles Stadium in Blacksburg, Virginia W (20-13). Three was not the charm on Oct 13 at home v Tulane L (12-28). On Oct 20, the Gators came back to beat NC State in Tampa W (14-0).

On Oct 27, the Gators traveled to Maryland at Byrd Stadium in College Park, Maryland and lost to the Terrapins L (0-21). On Nov 3, at the annual Jacksonville game, Georgia beat the Gators L (0-14). Then, on Nov 10 at home in Florida Field, Mississippi tied the Gators T (13-13). On Nov 17, the Auburn site was the Cramton Bowl, and the Gators beat the Tigers W (14-7).

In a nail biter against Georgia Tech on Nov 24, UF pulled the game out and won W (13-12). The next week in the season finale v Stetson at home, the Gators won again W (14-0)

There is bad news on the horizon for Florida fans and it is coming quickly It seemed for a number of years the team had been hot and cold. When it got hot, sometimes it was sizzling hot. They were great years. But no period of success was long-lasting.

Few coaches lasted for more than three years while Florida was looking for a consistent coach, who could bring consistency and lasting success to the program. Some coaches lasted just two years. Some seemed to be doing OK in their first two years and then blew up in year three.

The prognosis for the future for a while at least in Gator History is bad news for those of us that love reading about the Florida Gators winning lots of games. There is a winning season drought about in Chapter 1 is about to begin. It is not as bad, however, as some fans think they remember about the program – that Florida did not start winning until Steve Spurrier began to play for the Gators.

This drought won't be that long. It will be long, however. Brace yourself. After 1934, the Gators would not win six or more games again in a single season until the 1952 season.

1935 Coach Dennis K. (Dutch” Stanley

The 1935 Florida Gators football team was the thirtieth season for Florida. It was the last of three seasons for Florida Alumnus Dennis K. (Dutch) Stanley as the Football Gators head coach. Things got really bad and the losses started to roll in at a clip better than the wins from the prior two years. This would-be Dutch's worst year. He was gone the next year and his epitaph was not long.

It was the Gators third season with the South-Eastern Conference. The overall record was 3-7 and the best I can say about the SEC record is that at least there was one win 1-6. They placed twelfth of thirteen teams in the SEC conference standings. Coach Stanley's 1935 Gators are shown in the picture below

The highlights of the season included the Gators' victories over the Sewanee Tigers (20–0) and the South Carolina Gamecocks (22–0).

The season opener was at home on Florida Field on Sept 28. UF defeated Stetson W (34-0). The Florida squad then traveled to New Orleans and were beaten by Tulane L (7-19). On Oct 19 at Mississippi's Hemingway Stadium in Oxford, Mississippi the Gators met misfortune again L (6–27). With no recovery in sight, Maryland came to Florida to play the Gators and won L (6-20). The rest of the season was miserable.

Coach Stanley submitted his resignation at the end of the season in the face of understandable alumni discontent, but, in an unusual

move, because he was a Gator, he remained a member of the coaching staff when the new head coach, Josh Cody, took over in 1936. Stanley, who was also an education professor, later became the first dean of the university's new College of Health and Human Performance in 1946.

Before we continue with coach Cody, let's look at some possibilities for the poor records. Though some of it could be coaching, if you look at the non-Gator records of the coaches, they were in most cases top caliber. Most of the ingredients for success were there. The President was supportive and did what many would never consider. He dipped into his own pocket and along with some other friends of the Gators, he loaned money for the construction of the new stadium.

So, what was the problem? Well, one of the ingredients could have been the alumni and fan expectations on the coaches. Clearly there was a lot of dissatisfaction even when the winning percentage was in the 60% range v the 45% range. There was little forgiveness. There was no consistency with coaches leaving every two or three years. And so, players had to think twice about coming. Another fact is that the Depression dried up a lot of alumni contributions and no athletic scholarships were available at all until after World War II. Scholarships are often the major factor.

Additionally, from 1939 on, there was World War II. Which gobbled up a lot of great football players wanting to serve their country. Many of these young men would have been Gator football heroes. One person came up with the idea that night games would help but the record did not change much after lights were installed.

There is one thing that nobody else has suggested that could have been a factor. What do you think? Even after Florida got its own stadium with a 22,000 capacity as a starter, they played games throughout the state. This may have helped bring students to UF but not when the team was losing many of its games.

The Gators team itself could not wake up in the morning and know where their games would be held. They were on buses to Jacksonville, Orlando, Tampa, and even Miami to play home games when they had their own field. There are probably lots of reasons.

Talent is typically the biggest reason but all reasons noted except the temperature seem to be very valid. The Gators could have done much better if a few of the knobs to success were turned properly. It's worth a thought as you go through the next eighteen seasons with me.

Chapter 13 Coach Josh Cody Era 1936-1939

Coach # 10 Josh Cody

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1936	Josh Cody	4-6	SEC	1-5-0
1937	Josh Cody	4-7-0	SEC	3-4-0
1938	Josh Cody	4-6-1	SEC	2-2-1
1939	Josh Cody	5-5-1	SEC	0-3-1

1936 Coach Josh Cody

The 1936 Florida Gators football team was the thirty-first season for Florida. It was the first of four seasons for Josh Cody as the Football Gators head coach. With the coaching change came no better results.

It was the Gators fourth season with the South-Eastern Conference. The overall record was 4-6 and the best things I can say about the SEC record again is that at least there was one win and one less loss. 1-5. The Gators have yet to be in last place in any conference. They placed tenth of thirteen teams in the SEC conference standings.

The positive highlights of the season included a 32-0 shutout of the Stetson College Hatters, a Homecoming game win over the Maryland Terrapins (7-6), and the Gators' only conference victory over the Sewanee Tigers (18-7). However, this season will go down in history for the Gators' three disappointing 0-7 shutout losses to the South Carolina Gamecocks, Kentucky Wildcats and the Mississippi State Bulldogs. The good news for readers is that this season is Cody's worst SEC finish in four seasons as the Gators football coach.



<<< Josh Cody. On Oct 3, Florida beat the Citadel W (20-14). On Oct 10, at South Carolina, the Gamecocks shut out the Gators (0-7). On Oct 17, Florida beat Stetson W (32-0), and on Oct 24 at Kentucky, it was another L (0-7). After Kentucky. The Gators picked themselves up and played a tough game to win against the Maryland Terrapins.

They then fell to Georgia on Nov 7 at Jacksonville L (8-26). On Nov 14, they beat Sewanee, an SEC member W (18-7). Then, on Nov 21, at Georgia Tech, they lost big to the Yellow Jackets L (14-38). On Nov 28, they lost to Auburn at the Crampton Bowl

L (0-13). Their next L (0-7) loss was on Dec 5 against Mississippi State at home.

1937 Coach Josh Cody

The 1937 Florida Gators football team was the thirty-second season for Florida. It was the second of four seasons for Josh Cody as the Football Gators head coach. The overall record was worse but instead of one win in the conference, Cody's team brought in three.

It was the Gators fifth season with the South-Eastern Conference. The overall record was 4-7 and the 3-4 in the SEC. They placed eighth of thirteen teams in the SEC conference standings.

1938 Coach Josh Cody

The 1938 Florida Gators football team was the thirty-third season for Florida. It was the third of four seasons for Josh Cody as the Football Gators head coach. Not much changed in the win-loss column.

It was the Gators sixth season with the South-Eastern Conference. The overall record was 4-6-1 and the 4-2-1 in the SEC. They placed seventh of thirteen teams in the SEC conference standings. This was Cody's best finish in the SEC, where the tough football is played.

The bright spots in this otherwise poor season included a 21-7 Homecoming win over the Maryland Terrapins and a hard-fought 9-7 conference victory over the Auburn Tigers in Jacksonville, Florida.

After playing football in Florida for thirty-two years prior to this season. The Florida Gators finally got to meet their future in-state rival Miami Hurricanes on the gridiron. They lost 7-19 at home. On the negative unexpected side, the Gators also suffered a 14-16 upset loss to the Stetson Hatters in Gainesville. The season ended with a 20-12 loss to Temple. It was the legendary Pop Warner's last victory.

1939 Coach Josh Cody

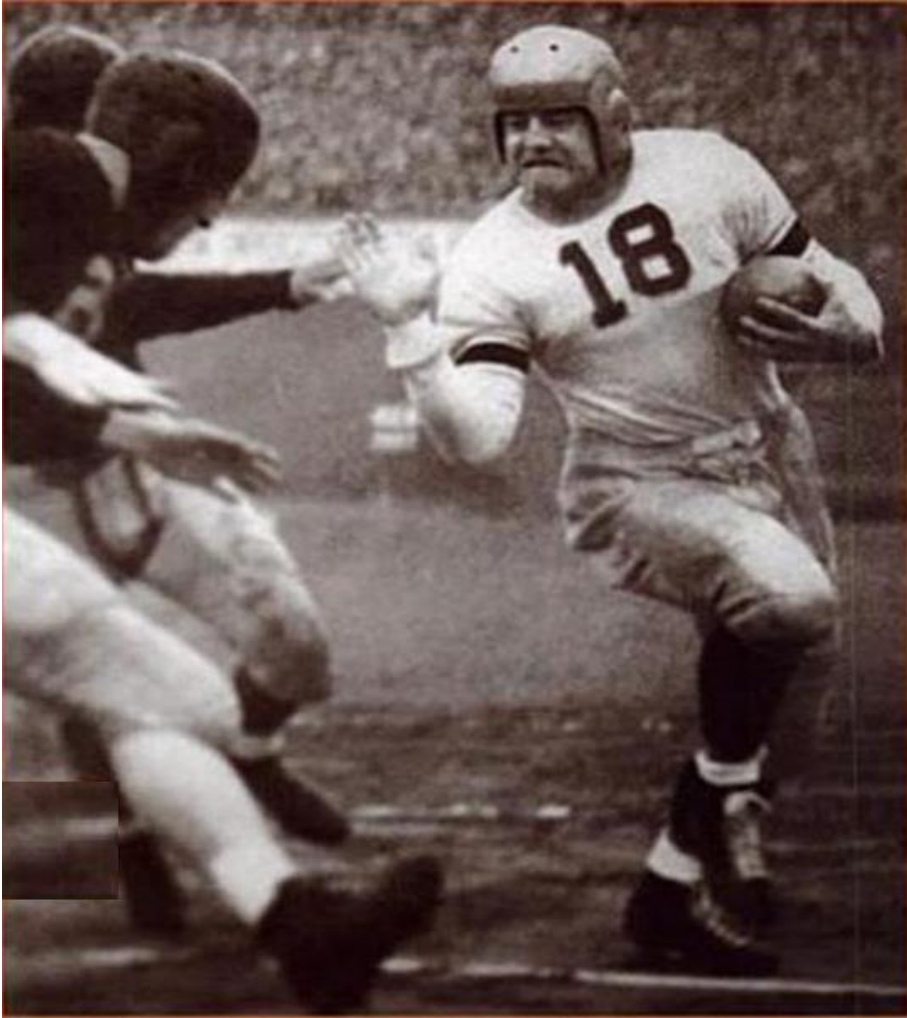
The 1939 Florida Gators football team was the thirty-fourth season for Florida. It was the last of four seasons for Josh Cody as the Football Gators head coach. This year Cody won five games for the first time and the team was not below 500.

It was the Gators seventh season with the South-Eastern Conference. The overall record was 5-5-1 and the 0-3-1 in the SEC. They placed twelfth of thirteen teams in the SEC conference standings. They won no games v SEC teams This is Cody's best finish overall but his worst record in the SEC, where the tough football is played.

On Oct 12, 1939, a new gun invited the Gators to their town known for a game played at the legendary Fenway Park in Boston, Massachusetts. The Gators rose to the challenge and defeated BC W (7-0).

Josh Cody was not a bad coach but with four years of live coaching as his proving ground, more than likely because of bad talent and bad circumstances, he had a bad record. After leaving Florida, in the early days lots of coaches were successful. Josh Cody was one of them... but not in football.

Cody would later become the long-time head coach of the Temple Owls men's basketball team and he was a notable Temple University athletic director. Florida was going through tough times in the 1930's as the US was getting over a depression and preparing for a World War. Cody was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame as a player in 1970. Somebody saw his efforts as very positive for the Florida program. Even the greatest pundits cannot tell any of us why this was happening to our Gators.



Gators vs Boston College 1939 Ralph Kelleman carries

Chapter 14 Coach Thomas Lieb Era 1940-1949

Coach #11 Thomas Lieb

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1940	Thomas Lieb	5-5-0	SEC	2-3-0
1941	Thomas Lieb	4-6-0	SEC	1-3-0
1942	Thomas Lieb	3-7-0	SEC	1-3-0
1943	Thomas Lieb	WWII		
1944	Thomas Lieb	4-3-0	SEC	0-3-0
1945	Thomas Lieb	4-5-1	SEC	1-3-1



1940 Coach Thomas Lieb

The 1940 Florida Gators football team was the thirty-fifth season for Florida. It was the first of six seasons for Thomas J. “Tom” Lieb as the Football Gators head coach. This year Lieb won five games and kept his team above 500 overall. Despite great credentials coming in, this would be his best record.

It was the Gators eighth season with the South-Eastern Conference. The overall record was 5-5-1 and the 0-3-1 in the SEC. They placed eighth of thirteen teams in the SEC conference standings. They won two games v SEC teams This is Lieb’s best finish overall and best finish in the SEC, where the tough football is played.



<<< Thomas Lieb, like most Gator coaches had a great pedigree. I keep thinking about how well Knute Rockne would have done at Notre Dame without talent. Who knows the problems of 1940, yet somebody was on the other side of the line beating the Gators and they had figured something out.

I am still not apt to blame coaching. Lieb was the former coach of the Loyola Lions, where he had done well and he had previously served as Knute Rockne's primary assistant and on-the-field

replacement while Rockne was in the hospital during most of the Notre Dame Fighting Irish's 1930 national championship season. He obviously knew how to take players and help make them champions. But?

I have heard few good definitive explanations of the black cloud over the Gators. If there were such a cloud, why did their opponents not feel the same pain? Interesting question but I have no answer...yet. How about you?

The highlights of the Gators' 1940 season included victories over the Maryland Terrapins (19-0), the Georgia Bulldogs (18-13), the Miami Hurricanes (46-6) and the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets (16-7). For those thinking that the Gators were not doing well, how about the coach of the 1940 Miami Hurricanes. What does Miami have to say?

As noted, Coach Lieb's 1940 Florida Gators finished with a 5-5 overall record and a 2-3 record in the Southeastern Conference

(SEC), placing eighth among thirteen SEC teams. Was that the best he could get? Who knows?

For those scoring at home. It will be about thirteen more years before we see consistent wins from the Gators.

1941 Coach Thomas Lieb

The 1941 Florida Gators football team was the thirty-sixth season for Florida. It was the second of six seasons for Thomas J. “Tom” Lieb as the Football Gators head coach. This year Lieb fell behind the 500 mark and in his six years, he never found it again. He won four games but just one game in the SEC. So far, the Gators have never been at the bottom of the SEC, though they have been close.

It was the Gators ninth season with the South-Eastern Conference. The overall record was 4-6-0, and 1-3-0 in the SEC. They placed tenth of thirteen teams in the SEC conference standings. They won just two games v SEC teams This is Lieb’s best finish overall as a coach at UF and his best finish in the SEC, where the tough football is played.

The highlights of the season included a 14–0 road win over the Miami Hurricanes in Miami, and a hard-fought 14–7 Homecoming victory the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets. Go Gators!

1942 Coach Thomas Lieb

The 1942 Florida Gators football team was the thirty-seventh season for Florida. It was the third of six seasons for Thomas J. “Tom” Lieb as the Football Gators head coach. This year Lieb won three games but just one game in the SEC.

It was the Gators tenth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). The overall record was 3-7-0, and 1-3-0 in the SEC. They placed ninth of twelve teams in the SEC conference standings. They won just one game v SEC teams, where the tough football is played.

By the autumn of 1942, World War II had begun to affect many college football programs. Florida lost several players and most of its

coaching staff to the war effort before the season, the team lost several more players during the season, leading to diminishing success as the schedule progressed. For example, the Gators began the season 3-1 but lost their final six contests

1943 Coach Thomas Lieb

In 1943, for the first and only autumn since the modern University of Florida opened its Gainesville campus in 1906, the university did not field an official varsity football team because most able-bodied men of college age were serving in the U.S. armed forces during World War II. Florida was one of seven Southeastern Conference schools that did not field a squad during the 1943 season. Because Coach Lieb was not fired, we count this as the fourth of six seasons for Thomas J. “Tom” Lieb as the Football Gators head coach, though no football games were played.

1944 Coach Thomas Lieb

If anybody today called Mr. Lieb or his successor, Mr. Wolf in to check out the scenario as it looked in the 1940’s, neither would have applied for the UF coaching job. Something was wrong at UF that the best of the best coaches hired judiciously by the administration could not repair. We have discussed this already. More than likely, it was money and scholarships. You cannot get blood from a stone. The war seemed to impact the less endowed schools the most.

The 1944 Florida Gators football team was the thirty-eighth season for Florida. It was the fifth of six seasons for Thomas J. “Tom” Lieb as the Football Gators head coach. This year Lieb won four games but not one game in the SEC.

It was the Gators twelfth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). The overall record was 4-3-0, and 0-3-0 in the SEC. They placed tenth of twelve teams in the SEC conference standings. They won no games v SEC teams, where the tough football is played.

Though the team had not gotten its moxie back, there were some positive highlights this season. They included the Gators' 13–6 Homecoming victory over the Maryland Terrapins and their 13–0 shutout of the in-state rival Miami Hurricanes on the Hurricanes' home field. The Gators also scored solid victories over teams from two U.S. Naval Air Stations in nearby Jacksonville.

1945 Coach Thomas Lieb

The 1945 Florida Gators football team was the thirty-ninth season for Florida. It was the last of six seasons for Thomas J. “Tom” Lieb as the Football Gators head coach. This year Lieb won four games but just one game in the SEC.

It was the Gators thirteenth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). The overall record was 4-5-1, and 1-3-1 in the SEC. They placed ninth of twelve teams in the SEC conference standings. They won one game v SEC teams, where the tough football is played.

The 1945 backfield was made up entirely of freshmen.

Among the season's highlights was the Gators' 26–13 neutral site victory over the Ole Miss Rebels played in Jacksonville. The Gators also split a pair of games against teams from two U.S. military training bases.

Chapter 15 Coach Ray Wolf Era 1946-1949

Coach #12 Raymond Wolf

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1946	Raymond "Bear" Wolf	0-9-0	SEC	0-5-0
1947	Raymond "Bear" Wolf	4-5-0	SEC	0-3-1
1948	Raymond "Bear" Wolf	5-5-0	SEC	1-5-0
1949	Raymond "Bear" Wolf	4-5-1	SEC	1-4-1 1946

1946 Coach Raymond "Bear" Wolf

The 1946 Florida Gators football team was the fortieth season for Florida. It was the first of four seasons for Raymond "Bear" Wolf as the Football Gators head coach. This year Wolf was winless 0-9-0, and 0-5-0



<<< "Bear" Wolf. It was the Gators fourteenth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). They placed twelve of twelve teams in the SEC conference standings. They did not win even one game v SEC teams, where the tough football is played. This was the first time ever that a Gators team was last in any conference.

Bear Wolf's first Gators team was formed mostly of college freshmen and World War II newly returned veterans who had not played football in several years. Yet, nobody expected a winless 0-9 season. It was the worst win-loss record in the history of Gators football to date.

Despite never making it into the win column, the 1946 Gators had a great passing attack. In fact, hard as it is to believe they passed so well, they were seventh best in the nation. End Broughton Williams led the nation in receiving. Harold Griffin was best in the nation in punt return average.

This team was right in the middle of a school record 13-game losing streak. The losses stretched from the last game of the 1945 campaign until the fourth contest of 1947. There are no Gators fan smiles about things like that.

The most positive spin on the losing record is that the players who lived through it, who in some ways were part of the happening, labeled the period the "Golden Era." The "Golden Era Gang" made the most of it by holding reunions and raising scholarship funds. They helped facilities improvements at UF for many subsequent years.

Some of the players were well known. They included future Florida attorney general James W. Kynes and College Football Hall of Fame coach Marcelino Huerta.

1947 Coach Raymond “Bear” Wolf

The 1947 Florida Gators football team was the forty-first season for Florida. It was the second of four seasons for Raymond “Bear” Wolf as the Football Gators head coach. This year Wolf finally began to win some games, but not right away.

It was the Gators fifteenth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). The overall record was 4-5-1, and 0-3-1 in the SEC. They placed twelve of twelve teams in the SEC conference standings. For the second year in a row, the Gators were last in the conference. They won no games v SEC teams, where the tough football is played.

The Gators broke a record they would rather not own. It is a thirteen-game post-war losing streak, dating back to the 1945 and 1946 seasons, when they upset the eighteenth-ranked North Carolina State

Wolfpack 7–6 on the Wolfpack's home field in Raleigh, North Carolina, they had broken the streak.

Some positive highlights of the season include the Gators beating their in-state rival Miami Hurricanes in Miami, Florida. Additionally, Florida ended the season with a 25–7 inter-sectional victory against the Kansas State Wildcats.

1948 Coach Raymond “Bear” Wolf

The 1948 Florida Gators football team was the forty-second season for Florida. It was the third of four seasons for Raymond “Bear” Wolf as the Football Gators head coach. This year Wolf’s record finally broke even.

It was the Gators sixteenth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). The overall record was 5-5-0, and 1-5-0 in the SEC. The Gators were still having trouble winning games against the tough members of the SEC. They placed tenth of twelve teams in the SEC conference standings. They won just one game in the SEC, where the tough football is played.

There were not many highlights this year but of note is the Gators' 16–9 win against the Auburn Tigers and their 27–13 Homecoming victory over the Miami Hurricanes.

There is no question that the Gators had seen better years. The fans and alumni had a history of demanding coaching replacements when the team did not perform to expectations. This was another of those times. After the 1948 season, several members of the Florida Board of Control and a number of Florida alumni were looking to have Coach Wolf step down. However, they got resistance from students who were attending football player-led student rallies in his support. The scuttlebutt ended with the administration extending Wolf's contract through the next year.

1949 Coach Raymond “Bear” Wolf

The 1949 Florida Gators football team was the forty-third season for Florida. It was the fourth and last of four seasons for Raymond

“Bear” Wolf as the Football Gators head coach. After a 500 season in the prior year, this year the Gators lost ground again.

It was the Gators seventeenth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). The overall record was 4-5-1, and 1-4-1 in the SEC. The Gators were still having trouble winning games against the tough members of the SEC. They placed tenth of twelve teams in the SEC conference standings. They won just one game in the SEC, where the tough football is played. In the Bear’s four years, the most SEC wins in a season was one. For Gator fans, this would not stand. After this year, though things did not immediately improve, this ended the Gators' ironically-named "Golden Era."

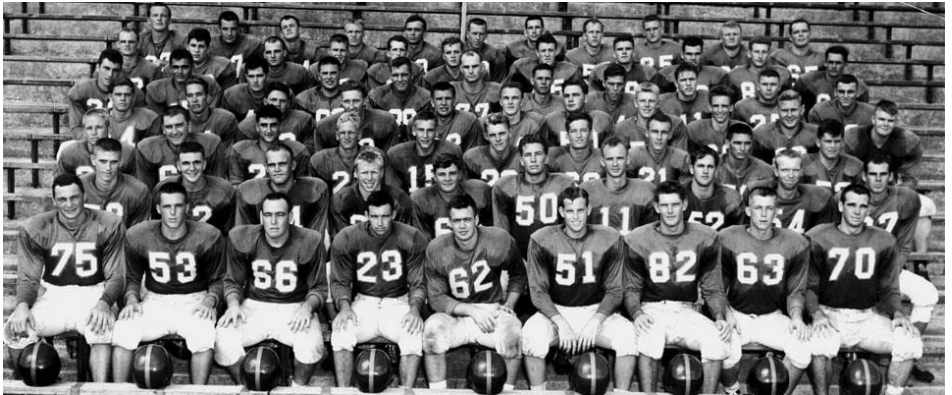
The game highlight of the 1949 season was the Gators' 28–7 upset of the Georgia Bulldogs. This game was led by halfback Chuck Hunsinger, who rushed for 171 yards and three touchdowns, and team captain Jimmy Kynes, who was the defensive star and played every minute of the sixty-minute game. The Gators enjoyed the win which was the first over the Bulldogs since 1940.

After Bear Wolf left Gainesville, he returned to his alma mater, Texas Christian University, where he became a long-time administrator. As a former professor at several colleges myself, I am sure the Bear felt like he was still part of a tradition when he went to work every day on the TCU campus.

Chapter 16 Coach Bob Woodruff Era 1950-1959

Coach # 13 George Robert Woodruff

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1950	Bob Woodruff	5-5-0	SEC	2-4-0
1951	Bob Woodruff	5-5-0	SEC	2-4-0
1952	Bob Woodruff	8-3-0	SEC	3-3-0
1953	Bob Woodruff	3-5-2	SEC	1-3-2
1954	Bob Woodruff	5-5-0	SEC	5-2-0
1955	Bob Woodruff	4-6	SEC	3-5-0
1956	Bob Woodruff	6-3-1	SEC	5-2-0
1957	Bob Woodruff	6-2-1	SEC	4-2-1
1958	Bob Woodruff	6-4-1	SEC	2-3-1
1959	Bob Woodruff	5-4-1	SEC	2-4-0



1953 Florida Gators Team -- Coach Bob Woodruff

1950 Coach Bob Woodruff

The 1950 Florida Gators football team was the forty-fourth season for Florida. It was the first of ten seasons for Bob Woodruff as the Football Gators head coach. After a lackluster 1949 season, the Gators showed signs of life with a 500 season.

It was the Gators eighteenth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). The overall record was 5-5-0, and 2-4-0 in the SEC. The Gators were still having trouble winning games against the tough members of the SEC. Even with one more win they still placed

tenth of twelve teams in the SEC conference standings. They won just two games in the SEC, but this was twice as many as all seasons from 1941 to 1949.



<<< Bob Woodruff was a former college football player and he was an assistant coach for Robert Neyland's Tennessee Volunteers. Neyland had made his name as an up-and-coming young head coach when he led the Baylor Bears for three seasons in the late 1940s.

Trained by Neyland, Woodruff emphasized stout defense, the kicking game and a ball control offense. Perhaps ironically, in Woodruff's first season of

1950 the Gators offense, led by quarterback Haywood Sullivan and offensive coordinator Frank Broyles, posted record numbers. Sullivan was the first sophomore in SEC history to throw for more than 1,000 yards in a season. He set nine school records.

There were some additional nice highlights this season including two Southeastern Conference (SEC) victories over the Auburn Tigers (27–7) and over the thirteenth-ranked Vanderbilt Commodores (31–27)—the first season since 1940 in which the Gators won two or more SEC games. The Gators' were on a roll for a while this season. Their twentieth ranking after the Vanderbilt game was their first-ever appearance in the top twenty of the weekly Associated Press Poll.

It is noteworthy to mention that lights were installed at Florida Field during the summer of 1950.

The home opener on Sept 23 was played under the lights—a W (7-3) win against Citadel. On Sept 30, the Gators beat Duquesne W (27-

14). At Georgia on Oct 7, Georgia tech beat Florida L 13-16). On Oct 14 at home, Florida beat Auburn W (27-7).



Gators v Auburn

The Auburn game was followed on Oct 21 with another win against Vanderbilt in Dudley Field in Nashville W (31-27).

On Oct 28, UF beat Furman W (19-7) Then, at Kentucky, the Gators lost big L (6-40). Georgia beat the Gators on Nov 11 in Jacksonville L (0-6) and on Nov 18, in a close match Miami beat Florida at Florida Field. L (14-20). The final game of the season was against Alabama, a perennial SEC powerhouse. The game was played in the Gator Bowl in Jacksonville. Alabama dominated the game L (13-41)

1951 Coach Bob Woodruff

The 1951 Florida Gators football team was the forty-fifth season for Florida. It was the second of ten seasons for Bob Woodruff as the Football Gators head coach. After a 500 season, the 1951 Gators followed it up with another 500.

It was the Gators nineteenth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). Just like the prior year, the overall record was 5-5-0, and 2-4-0 in the SEC. The Gators were still having trouble winning games against the tough members of the SEC. With the same record as last year, they placed ninth of twelve teams in the SEC conference standings. They won just two games in the SEC, but this was twice as many as each season from 1941 to 1949.

There was some good stuff in the air but excellence was going slowly. The highlights of the season included two intersectional victories over the Wyoming Cowboys (13–0) and the Loyola Lions (40–7), and two Southeastern Conference (SEC) victories over the Vanderbilt Commodores (33–13) during Florida's Homecoming and the Alabama Crimson Tide (30–21) in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

1952 Coach Bob Woodruff

The 1952 Florida Gators football team was the forty-sixth season for Florida. It was the third of ten seasons for Bob Woodruff as the Football Gators head coach.

It was the Gators twentieth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was a big year—Woodruff's best overall record. The team record was 8-3-0, and 3-3-0- in the SEC. The Gators were solving their problem of winning games against the tough members of the SEC.

They placed sixth of twelve teams in the SEC conference standings. They won three games in the SEC. This mark had been achieved last in 1937 with Josh Cody's team.

One of the setbacks of the season was that QB Haywood Sullivan's departed early for the Boston Red Sox. He left the Gators without a starting quarterback. Doug Dickey then moved from seventh on the Gators' depth chart to starter. The Gators offense was led by fullback Rick Casares, halfback J. "Pappa" Hall, halfback Buford Long, alternating quarterbacks Doug Dickey and Fred Robinson, and lineman Charlie La Pradd. La Pradd was the Gators' lightest tackle and one of their two captains.

1953 Coach Bob Woodruff

The 1953 Florida Gators football team was the forty-seventh season for Florida. It was the fourth of ten seasons for Bob Woodruff as the Football Gators head coach. After a great season, the 1953 Gators were well below 500.

It was the Gators twenty-first season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was a poor showing — Woodruff's worst overall record and just his first of two losing seasons. The team record was 3-5-2, and 1-3-2 in the SEC. The Gators were slipping back from having improved in tough SEC games. The 1953 season was in fact a year of rebuilding and backsliding after the graduation of All-American Charlie LaPradd and the loss of fullback Rick Casares to the U.S. Army.

They placed ninth of twelve teams in the SEC conference standings. They won just one game in the SEC.

The highlight of the season was the Gators' second consecutive victory over the Georgia Bulldogs, but the Gators began a pattern of agonizingly close losses to the Rice Owls (16–20), Auburn Tigers (7–16), Tennessee Volunteers (7–9) and Miami Hurricanes (10–14), as well as two ties with the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets (0–0) and LSU Tigers (21–21).

1954 Coach Bob Woodruff

The 1954 Florida Gators football team was the forty-eighth season for Florida. It was the fifth of ten seasons for Bob Woodruff as the Football Gators head coach. The 1954 Gators brought in their third 5-5 season out of five.

It was the Gators twenty-second season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was a so-so showing but a powerful showing in the SEC. The team record was 5-5-0, and 5-2-0 in the SEC. Best showing ever in the SEC. They had really improved in the tough

SEC games. The 1954 season was another rebuilding year and it looked like it was working.

They placed third (tie for third) of twelve teams in the SEC conference standings. They won just one game in the SEC.

The 1954 Florida Gators football team represented the University of Florida during the 1954 college football season. The season was the fifth for Bob Woodruff as the Florida Gators football team's head coach.

The Gators' had a number of great players included running back Mal Hammack. The season showed mixed results for the Gators. It was the best-ever Southeastern Conference (SEC) win-loss record, balanced by five overall losses.

Season highlights included the five SEC wins over the fifth-ranked Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets (13–12), Auburn Tigers (19–13), Kentucky Wildcats (21–7), Mississippi State Bulldogs (7–0) and Tennessee Volunteers (14–0). The SEC showing was so good nobody was crying for a coaching replacement.

1955 Coach Bob Woodruff

The 1955 Florida Gators football team was the forty-ninth season for Florida. It was the sixth of ten seasons for Bob Woodruff as the Football Gators head coach. 1955 was another losing season for the Gators – the second and last losing season for coach Bob Woodruff.

It was the Gators twenty-third with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was a medsa meds showing but a powerful showing in the SEC. The team record was 4-6-0, and 3-5-0 in the SEC. They placed tenth of twelve teams in the SEC conference standings. They had won just three games in the SEC.

The Gators played their only eight-game Southeastern Conference schedule before the 1990s, and it was the most difficult of the 1950s. Despite the poor record, there were some standout Gator players including offensive and defensive tackle John Barrow, halfback and

punter Don Chandler, two-way halfback Jackie Simpson and defensive back John Symank.

The season highlights included three conference victories over the Mississippi State Bulldogs (20–14), LSU Tigers (18–14) and Georgia Bulldogs (19–13). The Gators closed out the season with a nail biting 6–7 road loss to the Miami Hurricanes at Miami.

1956 Coach Bob Woodruff

The 1956 Florida Gators football team was the fiftieth season for Florida. It was the seventh of ten seasons for Bob Woodruff as the Football Gators head coach. The 1956 Gators climbed back over 500 and kept a winning percentage for the duration of Woodruff's tenure as head coach. However, the team achieved no more than 6 wins per season during this period.

It was the Gators twenty-fourth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was a very nice showing and an excellent showing in the SEC. The team record was 6-3-1, and 5-2-0 in the SEC. They placed third in the SEC conference standings after winning 5 SEC games.

This Gators team was led by All-American tackle John Barrow, quarterback Jimmy Dunn, two-way halfbacks Joe Brodsky, Bernie Parrish, Jim Rountree and Jackie Simpson, and defensive back John Symank.

The season highlights included SEC road wins over the Mississippi State Bulldogs (26–0) in Starkville, Mississippi, the Vanderbilt Commodores 21–7 in Nashville, Tennessee, and the LSU Tigers 21–6 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, a shutout Homecoming victory over the Auburn Tigers (20–0), and a second consecutive win over the Georgia Bulldogs (28–0). Woodruff's 1956 Florida Gators started a promising 6–1–1, but lost their final two games to finish 6–3–1.

1957 Coach Bob Woodruff

The 1957 Florida Gators football team was the fifty-first season for Florida. It was the eighth of ten seasons for Bob Woodruff as the Football Gators head coach. The 1957 Gators were again over 500 for the year.

It was the Gators twenty-fifth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was a fine showing and a nice showing in the SEC. The team record was 6-2-1, and 4-2-1 in the SEC. They tied for third place in the SEC conference standings among the twelve SEC team after winning 4 SEC games.

This would be the last time the Gators would play only nine games in a season. Ten games had been scheduled, but in an unusual move, the season opener against the UCLA Bruins was canceled when most of the Gators team members were suffering from a serious bout of influenza. During the season, the Gators were led by quarterback Jimmy Dunn, and two-way halfbacks Bernie Parrish and Jim Rountree.

On Oct 26, at home, the Gators beat #10 LSU in a nice game W (22-14). The squad enjoyed upsetting Billy Cannon and his 10th-ranked LSU Tigers.



Gators v LSU 1957

At the end of the season, the Gators had finished in the top twenty of the final AP Poll for only the second time in their history.

1958 Coach Bob Woodruff

The 1958 Florida Gators football team was the fifty-second season for Florida. It was the ninth of ten seasons for Bob Woodruff as the Football Gators head coach. The 1958 Gators were again over 500 for the year.

It was the Gators twenty-sixth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was a fine showing and a nice showing in the SEC. The team record was 6-4-1, and 2-3-1 in the SEC. They were eight in the SEC conference standings among the twelve SEC team after winning just 2 SEC games.

Before the season began, there was bad news for Florida on the UF campus when it was learned that their star two-way halfback Bernie Parrish decided to call it quits at UF to play baseball with the Cincinnati Reds. The Gators were then led by quarterback Jimmy

Dunn, defensive back, Don Fleming, halfback and punter Bobby Joe Green and All-American tackle Vel Heckman.



Jimmy Dunn Florida QB

Jimmy Dunn, above was a Florida QB from 1956-1958 Despite the protests by FSU that Dunn had committed to them, he signed with the Gators and although a pint-sized 5'10' 147 pounds, Dunn was nonetheless an effective runner due to his excellent quickness

On December 27, playing in the 1958 Gator Bowl, eleventh ranked Ole Miss beat the Gators in a defensive struggle at Gator Bowl Stadium in Jacksonville L (3-7).



1958 Gator Bowl v Ole Miss

1959 Coach Bob Woodruff

The 1959 Florida Gators football team was the fifty-third season for Florida. It was the tenth and last of ten seasons for Bob Woodruff as the Football Gators head coach. The 1959 Gators were once again over 500 for the year.

It was the Gators twenty-seventh season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was an OK showing and a poor showing in the SEC. The team record was 5-4-1, and 2-4-0 in the SEC. They were ninth in the SEC conference standings among the twelve SEC team after winning just 2 SEC games.

The Gators did not have many conference wins so getting one was a cause for celebration. Florida celebrated a blowout conference shutout over Tulane W (30-0) and a close conference win over the Mississippi State Bulldogs (14-13), and then suffered close conference defeats to the Vanderbilt Commodores (6-13), the top-ranked LSU Tigers (0-9) and the eighth-ranked Auburn Tigers (0-6).

Woodruff finished his ten-year tenure on a high note, with the Gators' victories over Florida rivals Florida State Seminoles (18-8) and the twelfth-ranked Miami Hurricanes (23-14).

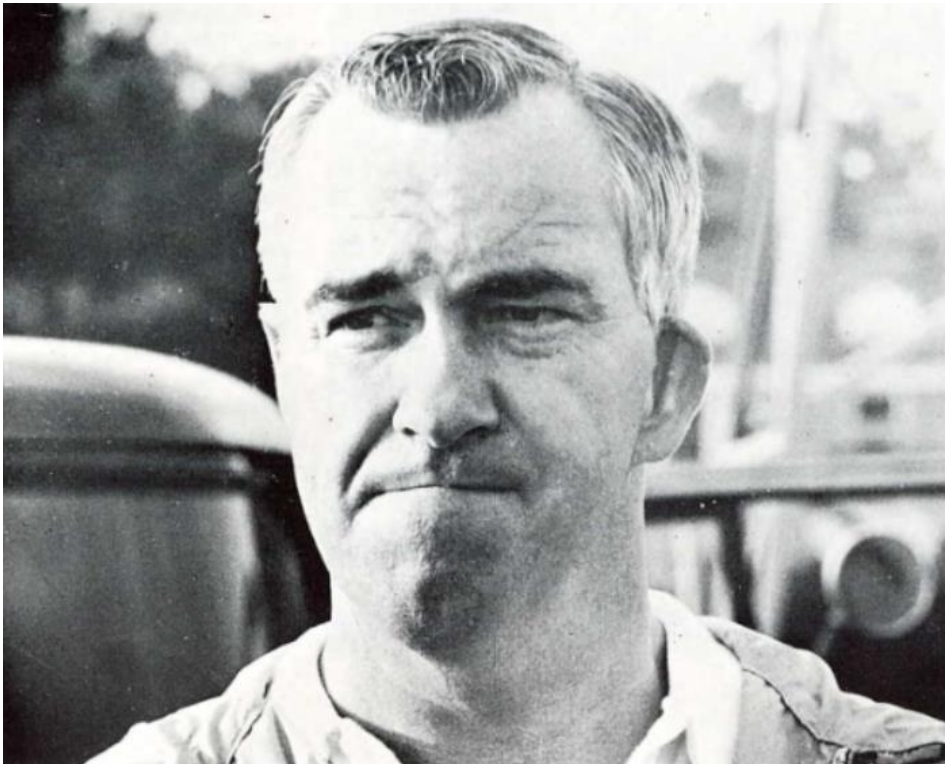
Wrap-Up on Coach Woodruff

The Woodruff years were not bad comparatively. He brought a level of competitive respectability to Florida within the Southeastern Conference (SEC) in his ten seasons as the Gators' coach and athletic director. It was not enough to prompt University of Florida president J. Wayne Reitz to renew Woodruff's contract in 1959 after two previous contract extensions. Woodruff landed on his feet as he returned to the University of Tennessee, his alma mater, in 1963. He became athletic director of the Tennessee Volunteers sports program for the long-haul. During the 1950s, the Gators compiled an overall record of 53–42–6 (.555) during his tenure.

Chapter 17 Coach Ray Graves Era 1960-1969

Coach # 14 Ray Graves

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1960	Ray Graves	9-2-0	SEC	5-1-0
1961	Ray Graves	4-5-1	SEC	3-3-0
1962	Ray Graves	7-4-0	SEC	4-2-0
1963	Ray Graves	6-3-1	SEC	3-3-1
1964	Ray Graves	7-3-0	SEC	4-2-0
1965	Ray Graves	7-4-0	SEC	4-2-0
1966	Ray Graves	9-2-0	SEC	5-1-0
1967	Ray Graves	6-4-0	SEC	4-2-0
1968	Ray Graves	6-3-1	SEC	3-2-1
1969	Ray Graves	9-1-1	SEC	3-1-1



Ray Graves 1960 – 1969 Florida Gators Coach

1960 Coach Ray Graves

The 1960 Florida Gators football team was the fifty-fourth season for Florida. It was the first of ten seasons for Ray Graves as the Football Gators head coach. The 1960 Gators had a great year – well over 500 for the year. It was Graves' first of three very successful seasons in his ten years.

It was the Gators twenty-eighth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was a very good showing and a very good showing in the SEC. The team record was 9-2-0, and 5-1-0 in the SEC. The Gators days of sucking win were behind them. They were second in the SEC conference standings among the twelve SEC team after winning 5 SEC games. This was the Gators best season yet in the SEC.

Before the season, of course coach Woodruff had not received a contract renewal. Somehow, they found Graves who was a great coach and who made the program much better than it had ever been.

Graves was a former Tennessee Volunteers lineman and assistant coach under the legendary coach Robert Neyland. He then became a long-time Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets defensive assistant for coach Bobby Dodd. When Graves' came to Gainesville, it was a big change in the Gators' football outlook. No longer would the Gators espouse Bob Woodruff's conservative, ball control, "go for the tie" philosophy. Graves was interested in winning games even if there was some risk.

On Sept 17, the Gators began this new season with its new coach with a nice win over George Washington at Florida Field W (30-7). Florida State was getting tougher every year since they'd been added to the schedule and this year, it was a close call but on Sept 24, the Gators beat the 'Noles by a Field Goal W (3-0). Georgia Tech played Florida at Florida Field on Oct 1 and the Gators picked up a hard fought one W (18-17 showing the desire of the new coach to win and not to tie. Rice was next on Oct 8 at Orange Bowl Stadium in Miami Fl. The Gators let this one get away L (0-10). At home again on Oct 15, the Gators beat Vanderbilt W (12-0).

Florida traveled to Louisiana State on Oct 22 to beat the Tigers at Tiger Stadium in Baton Rouge, LA W (13–10) Auburn came to Florida on Oct 29 and beat the Gators in a tight match L (7-10) Georgia was next on Nov 5 again at Jacksonville for a Gator win W (22-14) The Gators beat Tulane the next week at home W 921-6) with two games left having a good year so far, the Gators beat Miami at Miami W 918-0) They followed this nice win up with another against Baylor in a nail biter at the Jacksonville Venue W (13-12)

This was the Florida Gators first-ever nine-win season when they got this hard-fought 13–12 victory over the twelfth-ranked Baylor Bears in the Gator Bowl on New Year's Eve 1960. In the Gator Bowl, the Gators defense halted a 75-yard drive by Baylor on the half-yard line in the first quarter, then set the stage for two second quarter touchdowns. Baylor dropped a pass for the two-point conversion and the win, and quarterback Libertore was voted game MVP. Great year for the Gators.

1961 Coach Ray Graves

The 1961 Florida Gators football team was the fifty-fifth season for Florida. It was the second of ten seasons for Ray Graves as the Football Gators head coach. The 1961 Gators had a rebuilding year below 500 for the first time in about five years. It was Graves' worst season as Gators coach.

It was the Gators twenty-ninth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was a poor showing but not as bad in the SEC. The team record was 4-5-1, and 3-3-0 in the SEC. They were sixth in the SEC conference standings among the twelve SEC team after winning 3 SEC games.

Before beginning the season, Coach Graves toyed with the idea of using LSU coach Paul Dietzel's three-platoon system.

1962 Coach Ray Graves

The 1962 Florida Gators football team was the fifty-sixth season for Florida. It was the third of ten seasons for Ray Graves as the Football

Gators head coach. The 1962 Gators had a nice year well above 500 for the season and they had a better than usual year in the SEC.

It was the Gators thirtieth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was a reasonable showing. The team record was 7-4-0, and 4-2-0 in the SEC. They were fifth in the SEC conference standings among the twelve SEC team after winning 4 SEC games.

The Gators won the Gator Bowl again in 1962, upsetting ninth-ranked Penn State. They wore the Confederate Battle Flag on the side of their helmets to pump up the southern team facing a favored northern school.

On Sept 22, Florida began its season away at Mississippi State in Veterans Memorial Stadium in Jackson, MS, and won the match W 19-9. On Sept 29, at Florida Field, the Gators were beaten by Georgia Tech L (0-17). Duke played the Gators in Jacksonville on Oct 6, and beat the Gators L (21-28). On Oct 13, the Gators beat Texas A & M at Florida Field in a drubbing W (42-6). In an almost duplicate game the following week Vanderbilt bit the dust W (42-7).

#6 LSU beat the Gators on Oct 27 in Tiger Stadium Baton Rouge, LA L (0-23). The Gators clipped the #10 Auburn Tigers on Nov 3 at Florida Field W (22-3). The next week at Jacksonville on Nov 10, Florida beat the Georgia Bulldogs W (23-15). Next on the schedule were the two Florida nemeses, First, on Nov 17, the Gators beat Florida State W (20-7) at home and then at the Orange Bowl Stadium in Miami, the Hurricanes got the best of the Gators L (15-17)

In the Gator Bowl Game on the day before New Year's Eve, The Gators beat #9 ranked Penn State W (17-7).

1963 Coach Ray Graves

The 1963 Florida Gators football team was the fifty-seventh season for Florida. It was the fourth of ten seasons for Ray Graves as the Football Gators head coach. The 1963 Gators had a nice year well above below 500 for the season and they had an OK year in the SEC.

It was the Gators thirty-first season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another reasonable showing. The team record was 6-3-1, and 3-2-1 in the SEC. They were seventh in the SEC conference standings among the twelve SEC teams after winning 3 SEC games.

After their third game, the Gators were 1–1–1, having squeezed out their single win over the Richmond Spiders (35–28). Graves' 1963 Florida Gators won their last three games over the Georgia Bulldogs (21–14), Miami Hurricanes (27–21) and Florida State Seminoles (7–0), giving them a nice edge going into 1964.

1964 Coach Ray Graves

The 1964 Florida Gators football team was the fifty-eighth season for Florida. It was the fifth of ten seasons for Ray Graves as the Football Gators head coach. The 1964 Gators had a nice year well above below 500 for the season and they had an OK year in the SEC.

It was the Gators thirty-second season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another reasonable showing. The team record was 7-3-0, and 4-2-0. They tied for second in the SEC conference standings among the eleven SEC teams after winning 4 SEC games.

This was the first season with sophomore Steve Spurrier in his first season as QB. Freshman were not yet eligible to play varsity football. In fact, it was not until 1972 -- the first in which freshmen were eligible to play varsity football in the University Division. Spurrier was an instant standout. Graves style did not get in the way of Stever Spurrier's greatness.

Though it was not a championship season, there were lots of nice wins and a nice season for the Gators. Nobody was complaining about the team or the coach. Hopefully, those days were behind the Gators and the future was looking bright.

1965 Coach Ray Graves

The 1965 Florida Gators football team was the fifty-ninth season for Florida. It was the sixth of ten seasons for Ray Graves as the Football Gators head coach. The 1965 Gators had a nice year—well above 500 for the season and they had another fine year against the tougher SEC teams.

It was the Gators thirty-third season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another reasonable showing. The team record was 7-4-0, and 4-2-0. They placed third in the SEC conference standings among the eleven SEC teams after winning 4 SEC games. Heisman winner Steve Spurrier was a junior this year and the team looked very good. Nothing in life, however, comes easy.



Coach Ray Graves

The undisputed highlights of the season include an intersectional road victory over the Northwestern Wildcats of the Big Ten Conference, plus a few Southeastern Conference (SEC) wins over some fine tough teams such as Louisiana State (14–7), Ole Miss Rebels (17–0), Georgia Bulldogs (14–10) and Tulane Green Wave (51–13), and of course a sound thumping of the in-state rival Florida State Seminoles (30–17).

The Gators showed their prowess as their losses were nothing to feel bad about as they lost close matches against the Mississippi State Bulldogs (13–18) and the Miami Hurricanes (13–16).

The Sugar Bowl

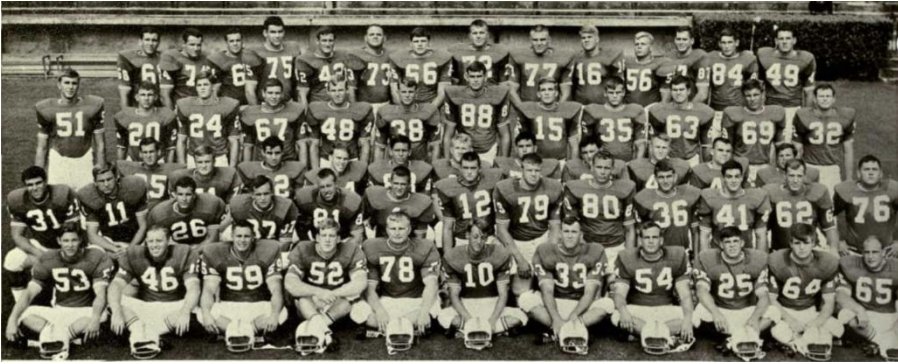
Finishing off the post season #6 Missouri, played the Gators at Tulane Stadium in New Orleans, LA in the (Sugar Bowl). The Gators almost won L (18–20) but got no cigars to pass-out to admiring fans.

Yes, this occurred at the end of the season, the Gators played the Missouri Tigers in the Gators' first-ever major bowl game, the Sugar Bowl, on January 1, 1966. Despite a three-touchdown second-half effort from the Gators, they lost to the Tigers 18–20 after they failed to score on three consecutive two-point conversion attempts after each of their touchdowns. Following the game, Gators quarterback Steve Spurrier, a name most Gators recognize, was recognized as the game's Most Valuable Player—the only MVP selected from the losing team in the history of the Sugar Bowl. Spurrier is quite a guy!

1966 Coach Ray Graves

The 1966 Florida Gators football team was the sixtieth season for Florida. It was the seventh of ten seasons for Ray Graves as the Football Gators head coach. The 1965 Gators had a nice year—well above 500 for the season and they had another fine year against the tougher SEC teams.

It was the Gators thirty-fourth-ninth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another reasonable showing. The team record was 9-2-0, and 5-1-0. They placed third in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams after winning 5 SEC games. Heisman winner Steve Spurrier was a senior this year and the team looked very good. Spurrier made a bid difference in his three years. But, nothing in life, even if SS is on your team comes easy.



1966 Florida Gators Team Picture

This team and the team for the last two seasons before had been led by quarterback Steve Spurrier. The Spurrier Gators outscored their opponents by a combined total of 265 to 147 and concluded their 1966 season with a 27-to-12 victory over the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets in the 1967 Orange Bowl. The Gators were not a favorite of the AP, but nonetheless, they were ranked # 11 final UPI Coaches Poll. The Gators-- Steve Spurrier and Ray Graves had a great year.

Player Highlight Steve Spurrier

You can literally write forever about Steve Spurrier, the multi-talented and extremely successful Heisman Trophy Winner and great college football coach. Spurrier played from 1944 to 1966 when Freshman were not permitted on the active varsity teams. The most noteworthy achievements for this Tennessee native as a player was that he helped revolutionize the Florida Gators offense by breaking every school and SEC passing record while in Gainesville. Though he had many great moments, pundits have credited his breaking of six Sugar Bowl records during an attempted comeback against Missouri in 1966 as his crown jewel. Spurrier led Florida to three fourth-quarter touchdowns to nearly overcome a 20-0 deficit.



Spurrier receives the coveted Heisman Trophy for his 1966 season

Spurrier established himself as one of the best passers in SEC history on his way to winning Florida's first Heisman Trophy in 1966.

The 6-2, 203-pound, Spurrier became the Gators' starting quarterback in 1964 and he had a solid debut season by throwing for 943 yards and six touchdowns while leading Florida to a 7-3 record. As a 1965 junior, he passed for 1,893 yards and 14 touchdowns as the Gators went 7-4. Spurrier finished ninth in that year's Heisman vote.

His senior year was a special one. Spurrier threw for 2,012 yards and 16 touchdowns as Florida finished the regular season with an 8-2 record and a No. 11 ranking in the polls. Spurrier closed out his three-year, thirty-one-game college career with 4,848 passing yards and 37 touchdowns, breaking numerous school and conference records. In addition to winning the Heisman Trophy and the Walter Camp Award as a senior, he was also a unanimous All-American.

Spurrier was the third overall pick in the 1967 draft by the San Francisco 49ers, where he played for nine years, spelling John Brodie as quarterback in 1972 and leading the '49ers to a third-consecutive NFC West Title.

Steve Spurrier was so noticeable that he won the 1966 Heisman Trophy and he was the unanimous first-team quarterback on the 1966 All-America Team. That is quite a bit of plaudits for a guy from a team that the AP did not even see as competitive.

Spurrier completed every pass he threw. Well, not exactly! He was so accurate; however, he actually did complete 179 of 291 passes for 2,012 yards and 16 touchdowns with just eight interceptions.

More than just Spurrier created the difference for this Coach Graves team. In addition to the QB, center Bill Carr was the team's only other first-team All-American, receiving first-team honors from Time magazine and The Sporting News. Five Gators received first-team honors from either the Associated Press (AP) or United Press International (UPI) on the 1966 All-SEC football team.

Carr, Smith, Spurrier and Trapp were consensus first-team picks by both the AP and UPI, while guard Jim Benson took first-team honors from the UPI and second-team honors from the AP. The Gators of 1966, but for their overall record were one of a kind in football that year.

The season began with everybody knowing that Quarterback Steve Spurrier was returning to the 1966 team. However, nothing comes in football without some buts. But, Spurrier's two leading receivers, Charles Casey (58 catches in 1965) and Barry Brown (33 catches in 1965), had graduated and other receivers needed to be discovered.

This predicament was not lost on Coach Graves who is quoted: "This team has to be a question mark. I don't know what type of football team we have." Yet, Coach Graves was pleased to have the talent, including QB Spurrier that he had. He used the players to extract a toll from every opponent the Gators faced. Bravo to the 1966 team.



The NFL Draft Favored the Gators

The 1966 Florida Team provided ten players to the NFL. These players were either drafted to play or actually played in the National Football League (NFL). Four players were drafted into the league in the subsequent 1967 NFL Draft. They are: Steve Spurrier - selected by the San Francisco 49ers with third overall pick, played for the 49ers (1967–1975) and Tampa Bay Buccaneers (1976).

Bill Carr - selected by the New Orleans Saints with the 106th pick in the 1967 NFL Draft, signed with the Saints but did not make regular season roster after completing military service; Jim Benson - selected by the New Orleans Saints with the 264th pick in the 1967 NFL Draft, but did not appear in an NFL game; Kay Stephenson - undrafted in 1967, played for the San Diego Chargers (1967) and Buffalo Bills (1968).

The challenges of American football make it the most exciting sport in the world. The folks at home and those on the college game sidelines seem to like college football the best because there is no

guarantee of million-dollar lives. Yet, when some of our college favorites make it to the pros, we love it and we root for them almost for eternity. My case in point of course among others is the master, Steve Spurrier.

1967 Coach Ray Graves

The 1967 Florida Gators football team was the sixty-first season for Florida. It was the eighth of ten seasons for Ray Graves as the Football Gators head coach. The 1967 Gators had a nice year—well above 500 for the season and they had another fine year against the tougher SEC teams.

It was the Gators thirty-fifth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another reasonable showing. The team record was 6-4-0, and 4-2-0. They placed third in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams after winning 4 SEC games. Heisman winner QB Steve Spurrier was not available this year and it made a difference for sure.

1968 Coach Ray Graves

The 1968 Florida Gators football team was the sixty-second season for Florida. It was the ninth of ten seasons for Ray Graves as the Football Gators head coach. The 1968 Gators had a nice year—well above 500 for the season and they had another fine year against the tougher SEC teams.

It was the Gators thirty-sixth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another reasonable showing. The team record was quite respectable at 6-3-1, and 3-2-0 in the SEC. They tied for sixth in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams after winning 3 SEC games.

1969 Coach Ray Graves

The 1969 Florida Gators football team was the sixty-third season for Florida. It was the tenth and last of ten seasons and the most

successful for Ray Graves as the Football Gators head coach. The 1969 Gators had a very nice year—almost undefeated. They had a great year against the tougher SEC teams.

It was the Gators thirty-seventh season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another reasonable showing. The team record was quite respectable at 9-1-1, and 3-1-1 in the SEC. They placed fourth in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams after winning 3 SEC games.

Graves' final Gators squad was an outstanding team, led by a surprising group of second-year offensive players known as the "Super Sophs." The group included quarterback John Reaves, wide receiver Carlos Alvarez and tailback Tommy Durrance.

Florida accepted a Gator Bowl Game bid in Gator Bowl Stadium on Dec 27 at Jacksonville. The Gators won the game against Tennessee in a nail biter W (14-13).

A Southeastern Conference (SEC) loss to the Auburn Tigers and a tie with the rival Georgia Bulldogs cost the Gators a share of their elusive first SEC football championship.

In what some consider a strange twist, the Gators were invited to play coach Doug Dickey's SEC champion Tennessee Volunteers in the December 1969 Gator Bowl. The Florida defense dominated the game. With linebacker Mike Kelley (the game's MVP), defensive back Steve Tannen and defensive end Jack Youngblood, the Gators upset the Volunteers 14-13 to cap their 9-1-1 season.

This was the Gators' best ever single-season record to that time. After the Gator Bowl, Ray Graves was ready to go and he resigned as the head coach of the Gators football team. He chose to continue as the athletic director of the Florida Gators sports program until 1979.

Graves was the best overall coach to date at Florida. During the 1960s, Graves compiled an overall record of 70-31-4 (.686) during the decade, making him the winningest coach in the history of the Gators football program to that time.

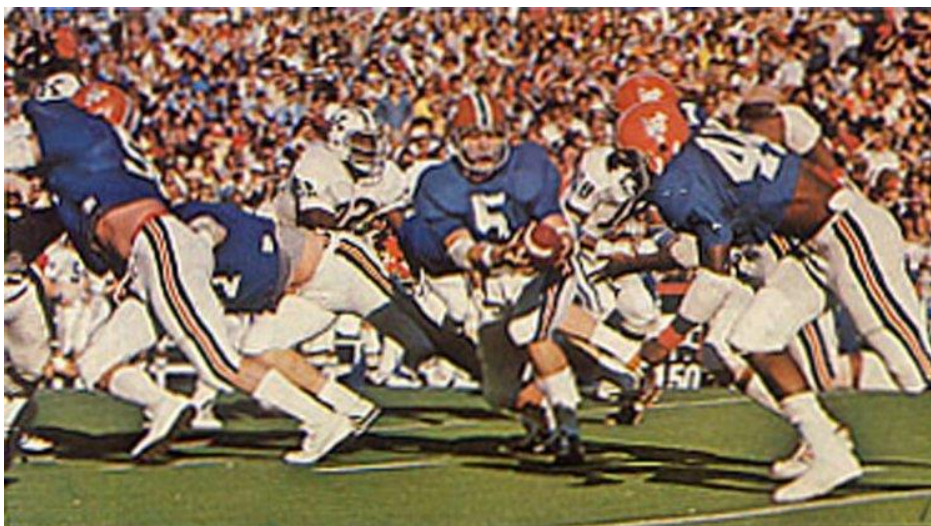
Chapter 18 Coach Doug Dickey Era 1970-1978

Coach # 15 Doug Dickey

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1970	Doug Dickey	7-4-0	SEC	3-3-0
1971	Doug Dickey	4-7-0	SEC	1-6-0
1972	Doug Dickey	5-5-1	SEC	3-3-1
1973	Doug Dickey	7-5-0	SEC	3-4-0
1974	Doug Dickey	8-4-0	SEC	3-3-0
1975	Doug Dickey	9-3-0	SEC	5-1-0
1976	Doug Dickey	8-4-0	SEC	4-2-0
1977	Doug Dickey	6-4-1	SEC	3-3-0
1978	Doug Dickey	4-7-0	SEC	3-3-0

Doug Dickey spent 15 seasons as the head coach at Tennessee and Florida, winning two SEC titles and playing in nine bowl games during that time. He was later inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame.

1970 Coach Doug Dickey



The 1970 Florida Gators football team was the sixty-fourth season for Florida. It was the first of nine seasons for Doug Dickey as the

Football Gators head coach. The 1970 Gators had a nice year in the overall season and they were so-so in the SEC.

It was the Gators thirty-eighth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another reasonable showing. The team record was respectable at 7-4-0, and 3-3-0 in the SEC. They placed fourth in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams after winning 3 SEC games.



Doug Dickey has retired from college football where he was head coach for both the Florida Gators and the Tennessee Volunteers.

Dickey had been the starting quarterback for the Gators under coach Bob Woodruff in 1952 and 1953, and had previously served as the head coach of the Tennessee Volunteers before returning to his alma mater in 1970.

1971 Coach Doug Dickey

The 1971 Florida Gators football team was the sixty-fifth season for Florida. It was the second of nine seasons for Doug Dickey as the Football Gators head coach. The 1971 Gators had a miserable year in the overall season and they were terrible in the SEC.

It was the Gators thirty-ninth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another reasonable showing. The team record was respectable at 4-7-0, and 1-6-0 in the SEC. They placed fourth in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC tied for eighth after winning just one SEC game. This was one of those rebuilding years for the Gators. They would be coming back but not like in the Graves years.

The disappointing 1971 season ended on a controversial note. With the Gators leading the Miami Hurricanes 45-8 late in the fourth quarter of the last game of the season, senior quarterback John Reaves was just 14 yards short of the NCAA career record for passing yardage, but Miami had the ball and seemed destined to run out the clock.

At the urging of Florida defensive captain Harvin Clark, Dickey agreed to permit the Gators defense to allow the Hurricanes to score, thus returning the ball to the Gators offense and giving Reaves a chance to break the record. Dubbed the "Florida Flop" or "Gator Flop," the move worked.

When Miami snapped the ball from the Florida 8-year line, the Gators instantly flopped to the turf, allowing Miami quarterback John Hornibrook to walk uncontested into the end zone. Florida's offense got one more possession, and Reeves promptly broke the record with a pass to favorite target Carlos Alvarez. After the game, many Gator players celebrated by jumping into the pool at the Orange Bowl's east end zone used by the Miami Dolphins' live mascot, Flipper.

Miami coach Fran Curci was so angered by the turn of events that he refused to shake Dickey's hand. In a post-game interview, he called the actions "bush league" and declared that "what Doug Dickey did shows absolutely no class."

1972 Coach Doug Dickey

The 1972 Florida Gators football team was the sixty-sixth season for Florida. It was the second of nine seasons for Doug Dickey as the Football Gators head coach. The 1972 Gators had a 500 year in the overall season and they had a similar year in the SEC.

It was the Gators fortieth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another reasonable showing. The team record was respectable at 5-5-1, and 3-3-1 in the SEC. They tied for eighth after winning just one SEC game. This was one of those rebuilding years for the Gators. They would be coming back but not like in the Graves years.

1973 Coach Doug Dickey

The 1973 Florida Gators football team was the sixty-seventh season for Florida. It was the fourth of nine seasons for Doug Dickey as the Football Gators head coach. The 1973 Gators had a fine record—the best for a Doug Dickey team. This was better than a 500-percentage year in the overall season and not quite as good in the SEC.

It was the Gators forty-first season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another reasonable showing. The team record was getting positive at 7-5-0, and 3-4-0 in the SEC. They placed fifth in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams.

The Gators were invited to the Tangerine Bowl for the Dec 22 game against the Miami Redskins (now RedHawks) of Ohio. The Tangerine Bowl was temporarily moved from Orlando to Gainesville as the completion of the Citrus Bowl expansion was delayed. The fans were greeted by a record cold snap, with game time temperatures at 25 degrees Fahrenheit (minus-4 degrees Celsius); the

cold weather benefited the visiting Miami Redskins from Ohio, who won the game in the cold L (16-7).

1974 Coach Doug Dickey

The 1974 Florida Gators football team was the sixty-eighth season for Florida. It was the fifth of nine seasons for Doug Dickey as the Football Gators head coach. The 1974 Gators had a better than 500 year in the overall season and not quite as good in the SEC.

It was the Gators forty-second with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another reasonable showing. The team record was getting positive at 8-4-0, and 3-3-0 in the SEC. They placed fourth in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams.

The 1974 Gators were powered by a strong backfield that included Tony Green and Jimmy DuBose, Dickey employed the wishbone offense for the first season in the Gators' history.

The Florida football season was so productive this year that #18 ranked UF was invited to play #8 Nebraska in the Sugar Bowl played at Tulane Stadium in New Orleans, LA. The Gators lost to the Cornhuskers by a field goal in a tough played match. L (10-13)



1975 Coach Doug Dickey

The 1975 Florida Gators football team was the sixty-ninth season for Florida. It was the sixth of nine seasons for Doug Dickey as the Football Gators head coach. The 1975 Gators had a great record; Dickey's best, and one of the best records for Florida ever in the SEC.

It was the Gators forty-third with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another nice showing. The team record was getting positive at 9-3-0, and 5-1-0 in the SEC. They tied for second in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams. In Forty-Three seasons, the Gators had yet to win an SEC Championship. That day will come while you are reading this book.

The 1975 team featured consensus All-American linebacker Sammy Green. Sammy sure helped build this fine record.

The Gators played in the Gator Bowl at the Gator Bowl on Dec 29 against #17 Maryland but could not keep up with the Terrapins and wound up losing the encounter L (0-13).

1976 Coach Doug Dickey

The 1976 Florida Gators football team was the seventieth season for Florida. It was the seventh of nine seasons for Doug Dickey as the Football Gators head coach. The 1976 Gators had a nice record, one of Dickey's best, and a nice record for Florida in the SEC.

It was the Gators forty-fourth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another nice showing. The team record was getting positive at 8-4-0, and 4-2-0 in the SEC. They tied for fourth in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams. In forty-four seasons, the Gators had yet to win an SEC Championship. That day will come while you are reading this book. But, it would not be during Dickey's tenure.

1977 Coach Doug Dickey

The 1977 Florida Gators football team was the seventy-first season for Florida. It was the eighth of nine seasons for Doug Dickey as the Football Gators head coach. The 1977 Gators were the first of two Dickey slides down (not up) the ladder of success. Things would not get better until the coach was changed in a few years. The SEC record was even but not good.

It was the Gators forty-fifth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another nice showing. The team record was getting positive at 6-4-1, and 3-3-0 in the SEC. They placed fifth in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams. In forty-five seasons, the Gators had yet to win one SEC Championship.

With a four-year cycle, Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors, every four years coming and going, colleges must refresh their lineups or be condemned to forever to losing football games. This year, 1977, Florida had several quarterback candidates with Terry LeCount finally designated to be the starter.

1978 Coach Doug Dickey

The 1978 Florida Gators football team was the seventy-second season for Florida. It was the ninth and last of nine seasons for Doug Dickey as the Football Gators head coach. The 1978 Gators were a big slide from past Gator seasons. Dickey had climbed down to the bottom of Gator football success after almost being right at the top. Things would not get better until the coach was changed in 1979, the following year. The SEC record was even but still not good.

It was the Gators forty-sixth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another meddled meddled showing. The team record was no longer positive at 4-7-0. 3-3-0 in the SEC was not so bad. They tied for fourth in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams. In forty-six seasons, the Gators had yet to win one SEC Championship.

After a disappointing though respectable 1977 season, Dickey had been under pressure to shake up his coaching staff, and he decided to abandon the run-oriented wishbone offense his teams had used for several seasons in favor of a more pro-style system. Former Florida quarterback Steve Spurrier, 1966 Heisman winner from Florida, who had lived in Gainesville since wrapping up his NFL career in 1976, came in to run the offense in his first coaching job. This was the beginning of something good. Spurrier had never met a challenge he would not face with all his might.

Players are the most important thing in building a great football team. It has been said that without the proper talent to execute any coach's demands, there might as well be no demands. Consequently, even though there were better signals being called from the top, the Florida 1978 scoring output was almost identical to 1977's output - about 22 points per game. Granted the wins and losses were way off but the scoring was similar.

Florida struggled with consistency, never winning consecutive games, losing to traditional rivals Georgia and Florida State, and suffering their first losing season since 1971. Days before the final game. The fan base and the alums had expected a lot more, and

Dickey one way or another had promised more. But, after the 1978 season, it was clear he did not know how to keep his promise.

Coach Dickey (along with Coach Spurrier and the rest of the coaching staff) were told by University of Florida president Robert Q. Marston that they would be let go after the season. It had been miserable for Florida supporters, watching the ups and downs and the lack of anything consistent. Days after the season finale, the Florida administration announced that Clemson coach Charlie Pell had been hired to coach the Gators. Dickey was gone.

Coach Dickey Epitaph

There were many worse coaches at Florida before Doug Dickey, and as a young coach, Dickey showed some signs of being a fine coach but in the end, it did not happen. After leaving Florida, Dickey went into private business for several years before becoming the athletic director of the University of Tennessee's Volunteers sports program in 1985. He was a football pioneer for sure when all the moves had yet to be invented. Doug Dickey was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame as a coach in 2003. After a dozen years spent as an offensive assistant and head coach in college football and the USFL, Steve Spurrier would return to Florida again to become Florida's head coach in 1990. In 1978, as an assistant, Coach Spurrier was thrown out, shall we say, with the baby's bath water. Too bad!

Chapter 19 Coach Charley Pell Era 1979-1984

Coach #16 Charley Pell

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1979	Charley Pell	0-10-1	SEC	0-6-0
1980	Charley Pell	8-4-0	SEC	4-2-0
1981	Charley Pell	7-5-0	SEC	3-3-0
1982	Charley Pell	8-4-0	SEC	3-3-0
1983	Charley Pell	9-2-1	SEC	4-2-0
1984	Pell/Hall	9-1-1	SEC	5-0-1



Charlie Pell, A Formative Gator Coach

1979 Coach Charley Pell

The 1979 Florida Gators football team was the seventy-third season for Florida. It was the first of six seasons for Charley Pell as the Football Gators head coach. The 1979 Gators were an abomination with no wins at all. Pell would do a lot better but his inaugural

season cast a doubt on Florida's future and made the folks wish Doug Dickey were back. But, Pell got his chance in 1980. No wins is no wins even in the SEC.

It was the Gators forty-seventh with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another terrible showing. The team record was so bad, with a lone tie as the high point that nothing was positive 0-10-1 and 0-6-0 in the SEC. They were dead last in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams. In forty-seven seasons, the Gators had yet to win one SEC Championship. During the Pell Years, I regret to say this dream would still not come true.

Pell arrived in Gainesville full of hope with a new plan for building the Gators football program—new offensive and defensive schemes, new assistant coaches, a new attitude and new boosters fund-raising model to support the program and improve the stadium and training facilities. Pell's plan would produce many on-the-field victories over the next five years. However, as you read in the intro his first campaign as the Gators coach produced the most losses in any single season in Gators football history, ending with a winless 0-10-1 overall record and a 0-6 record in the Southeastern Conference.

In addition to having to learn a new scheme, the team was plagued by injuries. And, so the UF squad placed dead last among ten SEC teams. It was so bad Florida Fans had that bad taste all season long and nobody was sure it would ever go away.

The best news I can give you is that this was the last time until 2013—over thirty years later, that Florida fielded a team with a losing record.

Perhaps the Charley Pell led 1979 Florida team had too many starting quarterbacks: Tim Groves, Tyrone Young, Johnell Brown and Larry Ochab. John Brantley also played at quarterback, though he did not start. Ironically, Brantley was supposed to be the starting quarterback, but he was injured in the preseason. So many quarterbacks and yet no winning games. Nobody can predict injuries. Players are needed to field a poor team or a good team or a great team. The rest of the Pell years are good. Thank God.

On Sept 15, the season began abruptly with the first of ten losses against no wins. L (10-14) This was one of the good games as the differential was just four points. Houston defeated the Gators at Jeppesen Stadium in Houston, Texas. In the only highlight shown on the highlight reels describing the 1979 season. You would find Georgia Tech on Sept 22 at Florida Field on the UF campus at Gainesville, Florida, battling the Gators to a tie T (7-7).

It's not that teams were blowing the Gators away, but no matter how much wind they could produce it was enough to claim a victory over the beleaguered Gators. On Sept 29, Mississippi State added to the pain at Veterans Memorial Stadium in Jackson, Mississippi L (10-24). Then #17 Louisiana State got its licks at Tiger Stadium in Baton Rouge, Louisiana L (3-20). Never missing an opportunity to crush a hapless opponent, Bear Bryant's # 2 Alabama squad decided not to take the night off and they pounded the Gators the whole game L (0-40).

On Oct 27, Tulsa came in figuring it would be a tough game if the normal Gators were on the field. They beat the team on the field L (10-20) at Florida Field, the on-campus home field on the Gainesville campus in Florida. Homecoming that year was not as cheerful.

On Nov 3, #20 Auburn played its typically tough game against a UF team that fought back hard. Auburn won L (13-19) at Jordan-Hare Stadium in Auburn, Alabama. Georgia was no exception to the bloodbath this season as they beat the Gators in Jacksonville L (10-33).

Kentucky kept the punishment coming on Nov 17 and they whooped Florida L (3-31) at the Florida home field. Rival Florida State would have probably liked to inflict more pain on its cross-state rivals but they settled for a regular score-type win against the Gators on Nov 23, L (16-27). Finishing it up in grand fashion Miami beat the Gators in Orange Bowl Stadium on Dec 1, in Miami, Florida L (24-30).

This season if played over and over and over again would have been different some way and somehow. All the things that could go wrong, went wrong. Charley Pell was about to prove he was a fine coach and his system and the team of assistants he brought actually could get the job done.

The following year, in 1980, if the Florida Gators won one game it would have been a 100% improvement if that is mathematically correct. But, they both won and lost more. They made a remarkable turnaround. They won the first three games of that season before a loss to Louisiana State crushed the Florida team's hopes of being undefeated.

Nonetheless after a prior zero-win season, ending the regular season with 7 wins and 4 losses, and pounding Maryland in the Tangerine bowl brought the overall record to 8-4. At the time, this Florida season was an NCAA record turnaround, and this was the first team to make a bowl game after being winless the previous season. And, Steve Spurrier had not yet arrived for his great coaching stint. Go Gators!

1980 Coach Charley Pell

The 1980 Florida Gators football team was the seventy-fourth season for Florida. It was the second of six seasons for Charles B. "Charley" Pell as the Football Gators head coach. The 1980 Gators were the comeback kids of the SEC. Pell did lots better than his zippo inaugural season which cast a doubt on Florida's future. After 1980 was in the record books, nobody was wishing for Doug Dickey to make a comeback. Pell got his big chance this year in 1980 and I am pleased to say, he just about hit the ball out of the park.

It was the Gators forty-eighth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another fine showing. The team record was a zillion time better than the prior year, and it was simply good, period. The record was 8-4-0 with a 4-2-0 record in the SEC. The Gators finished tied for fourth in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams. In forty-eight, the Gators had yet to win one SEC Championship. During the Pell Years, it seemed like this might change.

Nineteen Eighty marked a remarkable one-year turnaround for the Gators from their 0-10-1 record in 1979. The winless 1979 season caused many in the support base of Florida to lose heart but as they looked at how hard the team was playing against tough teams. There

was a lot of forgiveness. Recognizing he injuries and the changes to the game and the talent pool, this year was the make-up year and Gators fans were tickled pink.

Yes, 1979 had been the worst season in Gators history, and yes it was Charley Pell's first campaign as the new head coach of the Gators. But all was not copacetic with the Gators' previous head coach, Doug Dickey, who had been fired in the aftermath of a poor 4–7 season in 1978.

Pell's 1980 Florida Gators were not looking back, instead they posted an 8–4 overall record and a Southeastern Conference (SEC) record of 4–2, tying for fourth place in the ten-team SEC. The Gators added honors to their season with a 35–20 bowl victory over the Maryland Terrapins in the Tangerine Bowl. This marked the first time in the history of major college football that a winless team received a bowl bid the following season. The Florida Gator fan and alum machine were elated as any team that had come do far in such a short time would be. “Cautious Optimism” were the call-words for the future of football at Florida.

Linebacker David Little set the career record for tackles by a Gator in 1980 and he was a consensus All-American. Receiver Cris Collinsworth, now a sports broadcaster, was first-team All-American. This season featured the famous "Run Lindsay Run" in the close loss to national champion Georgia. Overall, Florida had a lot of reasons to be proud of 1980.

1981 Coach Charley Pell

The 1981 Florida Gators football team was the seventy-fifth season for Florida. It was the third of six seasons for Charles B. “Charley” Pell as the Football Gators head coach. The 1981 Gators were the comeback kids of the SEC. Pell had another respectable plus 500 season. A

It was the Gators forty-ninth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another respectable showing. The record was 7-5-0 with a 3-3-0 record in the SEC. The Gators finished tied for fourth in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams. In forty-

nine year, the Gators had yet to win one SEC Championship. During the Pell Years, it did seem like this might change.

With an earlier start than normal, to begin the season, on Sept 5, Florida lost to Miami at Orange Bowl Stadium in Miami, FL L (20–21) before 73,817. On Sept 12, Florida came back and beat Furman at Florida Field on the Gainesville Campus W (35-7) before 54,439. On Sept 19, the Gators beat Georgia Tech at home W (27-6). Then, on Sept 26, the UF squad traveled to Veterans Memorial Stadium in Jackson, MS and lost to Mississippi State L (7–28). On Oct 3, at Tiger Stadium, the Gators beat LSU W (24-10).

With a 7-4 record, the Gators were invited to play West Virginia on New Year's Eve, 1981 at Fulton County Stadium in Atlanta, GA. The Hokies won the match L (6–26).

1982 Coach Charley Pell

The 1982 Florida Gators football team was the seventy-sixth season for Florida. It was the fourth of six seasons for Charles B. “Charley” Pell as the Football Gators head coach. The 1982 Gators performed better than the prior year. Pell had another respectable plus 500 season.

It was the Gators fiftieth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another fine showing. The team record was very positive 8-4-0 with a 3-3-0 record in the SEC. The Gators finished tied for sixth place in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams. In fifty years of play, the Gators had yet to win one SEC Championship. During the Pell Years, it seemed like this might change.

For their 8-3 performance, UF was invited for the Astro-Bluebonnet Bowl on New Year's Eve, 1982 against Arkansas in the Astrodome in Houston. Arkansas had just a little more than the Gators in this encounter and they prevailed L (24-28).

1983 Coach Charley Pell

The 1983 Florida Gators football team was the seventy-seventh season for Florida. It was the fifth of six seasons for Charles B. “Charley” Pell as the Football Gators head coach. The 1983 Gators had their best season of the Charley Pell Era so far.

It was the Gators fifty-first with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was a terrific showing. The team record was very positive 9-2-1 with a 4-2-0 record in the SEC. The Gators finished third in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams. In fifty-one years of play, the Gators still had yet to win one SEC Championship. During the Pell Years, including this year, it seemed like this might change soon.

The Pell Gators loved to run the ball and they were darned good at it. Behind a stout defense and a rushing attack led by future pros Neal Anderson, John L. Williams, and Lorenzo Hampton, Pell’s 1983 Gators were the first squad in program history to be ranked among the top ten teams in the final Associated Press poll. It was a banner year for the Gators. It was also the second time that the Gators were ranked in every weekly AP Poll throughout the season, (1975 was the first).

Not known for winning bowl games; but having been invited and having played in its share of post season games, Florida chose not to pay heed to its past bowl game results and came out blazing against Iowa at Gator Bowl Stadium in Jacksonville in the Gator Bowl. The Gators won the game by consistent hard playing and relentless pursuit W (14-6) Go Gators!

1984 Coach Charley Pell

The 1984 Florida Gators football team was the seventy-eighth season for Florida. It was the sixth and last six season for Charles B. “Charley” Pell as the Football Gators head coach. After preparing the team for the season, Charley Pell was fired after the third game of the season due to numerous NCAA violations reputedly committed by him and his staff over the previous few years. Consequently,

though not on the field during the remainder of the season, Pell shared honors with Coach Hall who took over the season for Pell after game three.

New offensive coordinator Galen Hall served as “interim coach,” not co-coach for the remainder of the season. The 1984 Gators had their best season of the Charley Pell Era, period. Just one loss. Galen Hall was a fine coach and he brought in the crops that Pell had planted.

It was the Gators fifty-second with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was a phenomenal showing, often good enough to win a national championship. The team record was very positive at 9-1-1 with a 5-0-1 record in the SEC. The Gators finished first in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams. In fifty-two years of play, this was the Gators first team to win an SEC Championship on the merits of the on-field play. This was a big deal. During the Pell Years, it seemed like this might change soon so it would be a more regular occurrence. In 1984, the Gators won, regardless of the NCAA.

Another look at the season would show that after the Gators began the season as a 1-1-1 team under Pell. You’d have to be there to feel the anguish during the season. I bet Steve Spurrier has an opinion but we’ll spare him.

Coach Galen Hall's version of the 1984 Florida Gators posted a 9-1-1 overall record and a Southeastern Conference (SEC) record of 5-0-1 (8-0-0 and 4-0-0, respectively, under Hall), finishing first among ten SEC teams. The Florida Gators were initially and formally recognized as the SEC champions.

The Gators had such a great year that they finished third in the Associated Press National Poll and seventh in the Coaches Poll, and they were so good that they were also named national champions by twenty-two publications including The New York Times and The Sporting News. I have been writing about the Gators at this point in this book for seventy-eight seasons. Enough bad stuff had happened naturally in the course of all those seasons that man-made manufactured crap was not necessary for a team that had finally made it. Find another team to pick on!

What a shame that the big power brokers in college football conspired to take this great honor from the Florida Gators.

No Bowl game was offered.

Somehow, the smoke filled closed rooms had something more in store for the Florida Gators than just telling the team to go get 'em. On May 30, 1985, the presidents of the ten SEC-member universities voted 6–4 to vacate the Gators' 1984 SEC title, the only title ever won by Florida and they declared that the team would be ineligible for the SEC championship during the upcoming 1985 and 1986 seasons because of the rule violations committed under Pell.

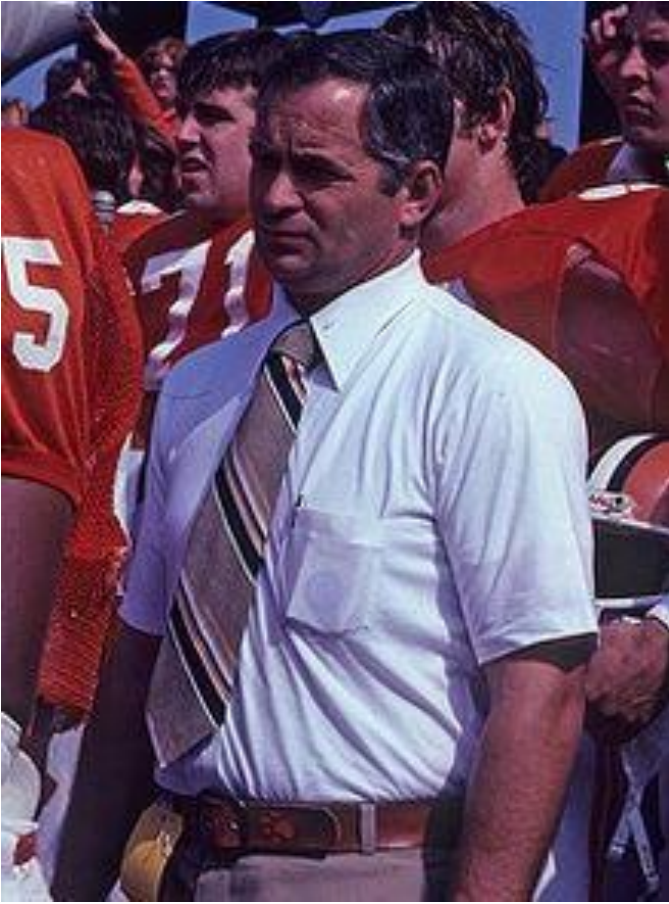
The retroactive vacating of the 1984 championship, six months after the 1984 football season ended, drew an angry response from University of Florida president Marshall Criser, as well as Gators coaches, players and fans due to the retroactive nature of the decision and its perceived unfairness.

What men on the field win by their football prowess should not be taken away by desk jockeys in protective garb ever. Sometimes fair does not win out! What a shame for fairness in sports.

Some say Charley Pell was responsible but many others say his trust in mankind was his downfall.

What did Charley Pell really do that was so bad?

Let's take a closer look at Charley Pell, the coach who first put Florida on the map. I think you will be impressed. This article about Charley, was written in 2014 after his way-too-soon death.



Charley Pell, the great coach who is credited with bringing the University of Florida to football prominence in the 1980's but, who was fired amid highly publicized violations of N.C.A.A. rules, died in Southside, Ala on May 29, 2001. He was just 60.

He had been suffering from lung cancer.

Pell was a disciplinarian

who drove himself, his assistants and his players. Jeff Bostic, who played for him at Clemson before a long professional career, said: "I'm convinced he was the most organized, philosophical, psychological coach I've ever met. He was a master organizer."

<http://www.gatorcountry.com/florida-gators-football/legacy-charley-pell/>

THE LEGACY OF CHARLEY PELL

Written by FRANZ BEARD, MAY 12, 2014,

Original article also contains 10 COMMENTS

Charley Pell was angry. It took every ounce of strength, both physical and emotional, to hold back what he was really thinking

that December Saturday afternoon in 1980 when he marched into the Florida State dressing room at Doak Campbell Stadium, congratulated Bobby Bowden and the Seminoles for a game well played and a 17-13 victory well earned. It was the march back to the Florida dressing room that the seething emotions began to spill over.

He was barely in the Florida locker room when he told the Gators, still quiet and still smarting from a game in which they had snatched defeat from the jaws of victory, “Gentlemen, I just did the most unpleasant thing I’ve ever done in my life. I just congratulated Coach Bowden for beating us. I want you to know that as long as I’m the head football coach at the University of Florida, that opportunity will never present itself again.”

Bob Hewko remembers that like it was yesterday. Injured in the game, Hewko sat in that tiny, cramped, visitor’s locker room with his teammates waiting for what seemed an eternity for Pell to arrive and when he did, there was a look on his face that he and every other Gator knew all too well and understood.

Hewko braced himself.

“What he said wasn’t anything like we were expecting,” Hewko said on the phone from Las Vegas where he was mixing some business with pleasure. “He was mad. He was really mad and we probably deserved to get chewed out because that’s a game we knew we should have won, but if you understand one thing about Coach Pell, he used moments like this. He was a master at turning the worst thing into something good and when he told us we weren’t going to lose to them again as long as he was the coach, it was totally believable. It was like, okay, there is never even a shot that we’re going to lose to them again ... ever.

“Coach Pell always said that his goal was to win the state of Florida. He said once you win the state of Florida, you’re in position to win the national championship but that’s where it all starts.”

For the most part, that’s held true throughout the years. There was that year in 1983 when the Gators beat both FSU and

Miami. The Gators were the state champs, but the Hurricanes won the national championship by beating previously unbeaten Nebraska in the Orange Bowl, the first time a team from the state of Florida had ever won the national title. In the 30 years since that first national championship by a Florida team, Miami has won four more national championships and both Florida and FSU have won three each. With the exception of Miami in 1989 (0-1 against FSU, didn't play Florida) and Florida in 1996 (1-1 against FSU, didn't play Miami) it took a perfect intra-state record to win it all.

Charley Pell became Florida's head coach in 1979. He replaced Douglas Adair Dickey, who had the Gators on the verge of greatness midway through the decade of the 1970s, but the Gators couldn't get over the Georgia hump. Dickey's "Fourth and Dumb" gamble against Georgia in 1976 not only cost the Gators the SEC title but it was the beginning of the end of his Florida coaching career. For the next two years, the losses mounted on the field amid rumors that the Gators were torn down the middle along racial lines and that there were serious drug and discipline problems and facilities were disastrous.

Dickey was dismissed after losing to Florida State and Miami in the final two games of a 1978 season that saw the Gators go 4-7. The hot names to replace Dickey were Fred Akers (Texas), Lou Holtz (Arkansas) and Ron Meyer (SMU) but while all the attention focused in on those three, at a clandestine meeting in a secluded office at the Eastern Airlines baggage claim at the Greenville-Spartanburg airport, Clemson's Charley Pell was interviewed by UF president Robert Marston and prominent booster Warren Cason.

They were so impressed they offered Pell the job. Marston and Cason might have been impressed, but not Charley Pell's wife.

"Here Charley Pell comes home to my brand-new house that I've been in for one month and haven't even unpacked all my clothes – I'm still having to go to boxes in the garage to find certain things I need to wear – and he asks me, 'What do you think about us going to Florida' and I told him it's a great place for a vacation," Ward Pell remembers. "I loved Clemson. I loved

my house. We had it going there. We were winning big. We had facilities. The people were just fantastic. And I had my new house that Charley had been promising me for forever.

“He had that look on his face and I said you can’t be serious. He was.”

Ward spent the night feeling so numb that she thought her entire world had been shot up with Novocain. First thing the next morning, Pell’s right hand man, Dwight “Hoss” Adams, showed up at the house. Charley asked him the same question he had asked Ward.

“Hoss looks at Charley and says, ‘Well, Charley, we made chicken salad from chicken s^%! before and we can do it again’ and when he said that I took one look at my beautiful new house and said my good-byes,” Ward recalled. “They (Marson and Cason) called us at the house, Charley took the job at Florida and 45 minutes later we sold my house just like that.”

Ward Pell had no idea what they were getting into and to this day she’s not sure that Charley Pell would have taken the Florida job if he had a clue about the state of not only football but the entire athletic program.

Calling the 1979 Florida program a disaster would be insulting to every athletic program in the 35 years since that has fallen on hard times. It was indeed a sad state of affairs and left unattended or placed in the wrong hands, the shiny, well-run machine that is Florida athletics today – the one that churns out SEC and national championships on a yearly basis – wouldn’t exist.

This was a job for someone with a vision who could see beyond all the problems.

“He could look at how things were and see through the problems to envision how things could be ... let me correct that: the way things ought to be,” Ward said.

Charley Pell split the problems in half. The run-down football stadium, wreck of an athletic dorm, inadequate training table and lack of a weight room fitting for an SEC football program fell under the physical improvements category.

“When I got to Florida (1977), our weight room had one universal machine and one squat machine,” recalls Dock Luckie, one of the strongest players in Florida football history. “Coach Jack Hall took one look at me one day and said ‘You don’t have to lift anymore. Let the weak guys lift while you go and study so you can make good grades.’ I’m serious.”

The racial, drug and discipline problems along with a roster that lacked the kind of players you had to have to compete with the likes of Alabama fell under personnel.

Physical improvements required money and the entire Florida athletic program was skating on very thin financial ice. The only way the improvements would be made were if Pell raised the money himself. So, he went around the state speaking to whoever would listen, inspiring the Gator Nation to catch his vision for the future.

“He got everybody so fired up that when he asked them for their money, people were whipping out their checkbooks and giving what they could,” Ward said. “We took big checks, little checks ... even IOUs. We did seven meetings a week, sometimes more.”

More than 300 speeches later, the after effects of that tour linger on for Ward. She ate so much barbeque that it was another seven or eight years before she could put a forkful in her mouth again.

She can stomach barbeque now, but it goes down with a measure of reluctance.

“You go places and there’s a meeting and what’s the best thing to serve to a massive number of people? Barbeque,” Ward says. “If I’m at a big meeting and that’s what we’re eating, I’ll eat some but it’s not something I’ll go out of my way to order if I’m out at a restaurant.”

There was a method to Charley Pell's madness. The Gator Nation awoke behind this pied piper who could sell brine at the Dead Sea and the money began pouring in, stabilizing the finances of the Florida athletic department but giving Pell the resources he needed to turn the Florida program into one that could compete with anyone.

Florida Field was expanded to 72,000 with the south end zone addition. Yon Hall was transformed from its state of disrepair which included urinals that had fallen off the wall to dirty, stinky carpet filled with holes into a neat, clean athletic dorm that, at the time, was one of the nicer ones in the SEC. The training table became one of the best in the country. The worst weight room in the SEC became one of the best in the nation thanks to a sizeable donation from Dave Thomas, the chairman of the board of Wendy's.

"Phil Dunn, who owned all the Gainesville Wendy's, arranged for us to meet Dave Thomas," Ward said. "We went down to Fort Lauderdale and stayed with Dave and his wife Lorraine and they gave us the money for the weight room."

It wasn't just about football, either. While Charley Pell understood that football pays the freight for the entire athletic program, a school as big and as diverse as the University of Florida needed a strong athletic department top to bottom.

"Charley saw the big picture," Ward said. "He knew that all these other sports – basketball, baseball, track, golf, swimming, you name it – are important to the entire university. Now, Charley was football first, don't get me wrong, but he knew that these other sports keep the Florida name out there all year round, even when it's not football season. Recruits pay attention to things like that."

Personnel problems were filed under two categories: discipline and recruiting.

There was a deep racial divide on the team and a thriving drug and gun culture that Pell knew he had to bust up if he was to turn

the program around. To solve that problem, Pell came up with a rather ingenious idea.

“He came home, goes to bed early and tells me ‘Wake me up at 1 o’clock” and I’m thinking 1 p.m., you’re always up before dawn and you never sleep that late,” Ward said. “Then I realized one in the morning and I asked what’s up and he told me he couldn’t tell me right then but he would tell me when he got back home.”

At 2 a.m., all the athletes in Yon Hall were roused out of bed and marched out to Florida Field while police, drug enforcement agents and agents of the ATF brought in drug and gun-sniffing dogs to search high and low for illegal substances and weapons.

When the search concluded, 26 Gators had their scholarships rescinded effective at the end of the semester.

A believer that team discipline starts with little things such as showing up on time, Pell kept a drawer full of watches. Show up late for a scheduled meeting and he’d reach into that drawer, throw a watch at the offending player and tell him don’t be late again.

“We lived on Charley Pell time,” Patrick Miller recalls. Miller, one of the great special teams’ performers in Florida football history also played linebacker well enough to get drafted by the San Diego Chargers. “Right after I got to Florida, Coach Pell wanted to meet with me. I showed up at the time he said and he told me I was late. He threw me a watch. The watch was set 10 minutes early – Charley Pell time. I still keep my watch set on Charley Pell time.”

The impact of the discipline and the fundraising was felt on the recruiting trail. By 1983, the Florida roster was loaded with 27 future pros: Wilber Marshall, Lomas Brown, John L Williams, Neal Anderson, Lorenzo Hampton, Ricky Nattiel, Alonzo Johnson, Tim Newton, Tony Lilly, Alonzo Mitz, Ray Criswell, Crawford Ker, Dwayne Dixon, Jeff Zimmerman, Frankie Neal, Ray McDonald, Billy Hinson, Bob Hewko, Mark Korff, Patrick Miller, John Hunt, Ricky Easmon, Gary Rolle, Randy Clark, Leon Pennington, Scott Trimble, and Vito McKeever.

Florida was dominating the state for recruits. There were rumors, hints and allegations that Florida wasn't playing by the rules but then again nobody else was in the SEC, the Southwest Conference, the Big Eight or even the ACC. In the 1980s, Auburn and Georgia went on probation twice while LSU, Tennessee, Ole Miss and Missouri (Big Eight at the time) also were hit with major violations. Miami went on probation in 1981 and FSU got hit in 1984. If Florida was breaking the rules, it wasn't like the Gators were the only ones.

Fingers were pointed at Pell, who played college football for Bear Bryant, but Dwight Adams, who coached Florida's special teams, says Pell wasn't to blame for the bulk of violations uncovered by the NCAA enforcement staff. Adams says there were two coaches on the Florida staff who ran amok with the rules.

"Charley Pell made one mistake and I'm not second guessing him but I told him you're putting your trust in two people that's going to be a problem," Adams said in a recent telephone interview. "I called their names and said these guys are trouble and they'll get you in trouble. Boy he got irritated because he trusted these guys. He shouldn't have."

Three games into the 1984 season, Pell was fired after the NCAA found Florida in violation of 107 rules. To avoid the possibility of the NCAA issuing the death penalty, Florida fired Pell three games into the season. At that time, the Gators were 1-1-1. They went 8-0 the rest of the way with Galen Hall as the head coach and redshirt freshman walk-on Kerwin Bell playing quarterback. The Gators won the SEC championship on the field and were awarded the New York Times national championship trophy, but NCAA probation kept Florida from a bowl game. In January, the SEC ruled to strip Florida of the championship it earned on the field.

For all the troubles, Adams once again insists that Pell was not fully responsible for what went wrong.

“Charley fell on the sword for everybody,” Adams said. “It happened on his watch and he wasn’t going to blame anybody else, but believe me, most of what happened was because Charley trusted people he shouldn’t have and they did the stuff that got us in trouble.”

Charley Pell never coached again after he was fired at Florida but he never stopped changing lives although he had to come to grips with a few things of his own. A longtime sufferer of chronic depression, Pell botched a suicide attempt in 1994, saved only by longtime friend, Florida Highway Patrol Trooper Malcolm Jowers. That proved to be a turning point in Charley Pell’s life. Given a second chance, Charley conquered his own demons and made it his mission until lung cancer took him in May of 2001, to help others who struggled with chronic depression and mental illness in the state of Alabama. His work lives on today in various state and privately funded programs to help those who suffer from those debilitating conditions.

Some thirty years after his departure from the University of Florida, the Pell legacy not only lives on but thrives. While uninformed Gator fans associate Charley Pell with a bad NCAA probation, those who admire the facilities and championships won in the last thirty years understand that little, if any of this, would have been possible without the foundation laid from 1979-84.

“Look at what we have at the University of Florida now,” says Dock Luckie. “That started with Coach Pell. Before Coach Pell the Gator Nation wasn’t united. Coach Pell brought everybody together and the boosters like Mr. Ben Hill Griffin got organized and started giving the money. I hate thinking about where we would be if it wasn’t for Coach Pell.”

Like other players, when Luckie fell a couple of credits short of earning his Florida degree, it was Charley Pell who found a way to keep him in school until he was able to take and pass the necessary classes. Pell was obsessive in his desire that every one of his players graduated from the University of Florida.

A lieutenant on the University of Florida police force, Luckie says Pell's sometimes gruff demeanor overshadowed a big, soft heart.

“He'd yell at you and get on you at practice or in games, but you always knew he wanted what was best for you,” Luckie said. “He wanted his boys to get their degree so they could get past whatever their circumstances in life and have success. We all owe a lot to him.”

Luckie will get no argument from Bob Hewko.

“I'm proud that I'm a Gator and I'm proud that I played for Charley Pell,” Hewko said. “His impact on my life can't be measured and you can't measure the impact he had on the entire athletic department. We owe him a debt of gratitude because the championships, the great teams, the facilities – all that's because of Coach Pell. Could it have been done without him? Maybe, but unlikely.”

During their days at the University of Florida, Ward Pell was known as “The First Lady of Florida Football.” She retains icon status among former players like Wilber Marshall, who still call her “Mom,” and longtime Florida boosters, who were there at the beginning when the rallying cry for Gators was “Wait 'til next year!”

The Gators don't have to wait until next year anymore and that has everything to do with a booster organization that ensures the athletic department has the funds it needs to do things in a first-class manner.

So, just how did a former lineman for Bear Bryant from the little town of Albertville, Alabama impact so many lives and begin the transformation of the University of Florida athletic department into the powerhouse that it is now?

Ward Pell knows Charley's secret.

“Charley could make you feel like you were the most important person in the world,” Ward says. “When he talked to you, he

was talking to YOU and he was listening to YOU. He didn't talk down to anybody and there was no BS. If he cared about you, he cared about you and he meant it and let you know it in the way he treated you. You find out a lot about people in watching how they talk to others and how they listen. Charley empowered people and they would do anything he asked them to do." about t

--- End of Frank Beard Article

Post Script on Charley Pell

This is my fourth "Great Moments" book. My first was about Notre Dame. When I write a book such as this, I get the opportunity to study a football program from beginning to the current moment in time. It is a very enjoyable experience. I don't particularly like writing about the game highlights as they are exhaustive and exhausting but I would not put my name to a book that simply showed box scores without some commentary.

Each school so far that I have studied has a prime mover before the prime mover. At Florida, Steve Spurrier, whose coaching period is coming up soon in this book has been the prime mover with all the credit at Florida. Spurrier deserves the accolades. At Notre Dame, it was Knute Rockne. But, before these legends, there were not so well-known legends who greased the skids for their success. For Florida, it was Charley Pell. What a well-written piece by Frank Beard to get one's heart moving towards a truth that otherwise would not be known. Thank you Frank

At Notre Dame, the Charley Pell Character was played by Coach Jesse Claire Harper. Harper coached ND when QB Gus Dorais and End Knute Rockne became All-Americans. His five-year record was 34-5-1 To show the unsung similarities between Harper and Pell, let me quote from a great article about Harper:
<http://www.und.com/sports/m-footbl/spec-rel/082913aad.htm>.

"There are six former Notre Dame head coaches in the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame. Five of them are immortalized with sculptures just outside Notre Dame Stadium. Harper is the lone omission. It somewhat defines how he was the man behind the

scenes who went relatively unnoticed despite serving the school so well as a coach, administrator, businessman, educator and an example to emulate.”

Frank Beard did his best in 2014 to bring Charley Pell to everybody’s attention. Both Pell and Harper have great legacies. Both could use just a little more attention from their respective universities. Though I must admit, neither would ever think they deserved extra attention nor would they consider asking for it. But, guys like me and Frank Beard and the great Gator Nation surely can.

Chapter 18 Coach Galen Hall Era 1985-1989

Coach # 17 Galen Hall
Coach # 18 Gary Darnell

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1985	Galen Hall	9-1-1	SEC	5-1
1986	Galen Hall	6-5	SEC	2-4
1987	Galen Hall	6-6	SEC	3-3
1988	Galen Hall	7-5	SEC	4-3
1989	Galen Hall	7-5	SEC	4-3
1989	Gary Darnell			



Galen Hall with the Gators

1985 Coach Galen Hall

The 1985 Florida Gators football team was the seventy-ninth season for Florida. It was the first official year for Galen Hall as the Football

Gators head coach. Former Offensive Coordinator and 1984 “interim coach” had been coaching the Gators for a number of years.

Hall had performed miracles in 1984 taking over for a 1-1-1 team. There were no more losses and no more ties once Hall took the reins in 1984. This 1985 year would be just as good but it had the same shaky start. So, the 1985 Gators tied their best season of the Charley Pell Era and their best season of the Galen Hall era. Galen Hall was a fine coach and he brought in every crop that Charley Pell had planted, including the perennials.

It was the Gators fifty-third with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another phenomenal showing, almost good enough to win a national championship. The Galen Hall team record was very positive 9-1-1 with a 5-1-0 record in the SEC. The Gators finished tied for first for their second conference topping performance among ten SEC teams. In fifty-three years of play, this was just the second team to win enough games to win the SEC Championship. This was a big deal. During the Pell Years, the team inched up at the championship and finally snagged it in 1984.

With a similar record to 1984, the Gators came in tied for first and they would not see another Championship in the SEC until Steve Spurrier came in as head coach in 1990 when Galen Hall was replaced. Spurrier wasted no time to grab the SEC in his first year as head coach.

Unfortunate, because the SEC wanted to punish Galen Hall’s team for Charley Pell’s issue, this fine coach’s 1985 Florida Gators were ineligible to win the Southeastern Conference (SEC) title, receive a bowl bid, or appear on live television.

After the season, the Eck Rating System, an NCAA recognized selector created by Steve Eck, named Florida as the 1985 national champions, though Florida does not claim the title. Florida finished with a 9–1–1 overall record and an SEC record of 5–1, tying for first place in the ten-team SEC.

1986 Coach Galen Hall

The 1986 Florida Gators football team was the eightieth season for Florida. It was the second year for Galen Hall as the full-year Football Gators head coach. Hall had performed miracles in 1984 taking over for a 1-1-1 team. The 1986 year would be a rebuilding year after Charley Pell's recruits made 1985 such a success.

It was the Gators fifty-fourth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was so-so showing, just better than 500. Galen Hall's record was 6-5-0 and 2-4-0 in the SEC. Hall was not getting the talent that Charley Pell had brought to the Gators. Florida finished tied for seventh in the SEC Conference among ten SEC teams. In fifty-four years of play, the 1984 and 1985 years were #1 years for the Gators but both championships were taken away after the seasons due to violations and sanctions.

Of course, Gator fans know we got the wins

Point of note: This was the last year that Florida lost to the Kentucky Wildcats, as of 2016---the longest annual win streak of any team over another in NCAA history and the longest such streak in Southeastern Conference history.

1987 Coach Galen Hall

The 1987 Florida Gators football team was the eighty-first season for Florida. It was the third official year for Galen Hall of five as the Football Gators head coach. Galen Hall was not as successful at recruiting as Charley Pell and could not rebuild the team to the strength of Pell's squads. This year was Hall's worst effort with a flat 500 season.

It was the Gators fifty-fifth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was mediocre showing at 500. Galen Hall's record was 6-6-0 and 3-3-0 in the SEC. Florida finished sixth in the SEC Conference among ten SEC teams.

The season was the debut of freshman running back Emmitt Smith. Few football fans have not heard of the great Emmett Smith when he played pro for Dallas. Smith went on to break the 1,000-yard barrier in the seventh game of his freshman season, the fastest any running back had ever broken that barrier to begin his college career. He was named SEC and national freshman of the year.

The Gators were invited to play Honolulu in the Aloha Bowl in Hawaii on Dec 25 and were beaten L (16-20) before a sparse crowd of 24,939.

1988 Coach Galen Hall

The 1988 Florida Gators football team was the eighty-second season for Florida. It was the fourth official year for Galen Hall of five seasons as the Football Gators head coach. The team record showed one more win than in 1987 but the program was not yet back on track.

It was the Gators fifty-sixth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was a respectable showing just above 500 but not the type of season to which Florida had become accustomed. Galen Hall's record was 7-5-0 and 4-3-0 in the SEC. Florida finished tied for fourth in the SEC Conference among ten SEC teams.

The Gators started the 1988 season as if they were invincible with five wins in a row. They were ranked as high as No. 14 during this period. Then, some bad things happened. It may have just one bad but devastating twist of fate. In an October game against the Memphis State Tigers, their #1 star running back Emmitt Smith injured his knee and could not play for a month. Florida lost the Memphis State contest and the next three while Smith was recuperating. They had developed a dependency on the great back.

It was so bad on the offensive side of the ball that the Gator offense was unable to score a single touchdown while Smith was sidelined. Under coordinator Lynn Amadee the offense struggled the whole season long. For example, with Gator quarterbacks combined to throw just three touchdowns but they gave up 17 interceptions.

Where is Grantland Rice when you need him? One leading Florida sports columnist was prompted to dub the offense the "Amadeeville Horror" after the Amityville Horror which was current at the time. There is always some good news among the bad. For example, Defensive tackle Trace Armstrong was All-SEC in 1988, setting a new school, single-season record for tackles for a loss with nineteen, including seven sacks. In both 1987 and 1988, walk-on safety Louis Oliver made the All-American team.

The Gators got their last win of the season in the All-American Bowl, on December 29 at Legion Field against Illinois at Legion Field in Birmingham, AL. It was an unremarkable year.

1989 Coach Galen Hall / Coach Gary Darnell

The 1989 Florida Gators football team was the eighty-third season for Florida. It was the fifth official year for Galen Hall of five /six seasons as the Football Gators head coach. It was Hall's last year and it would end abruptly. Galen Hall was replaced as the Gators head coach after five games by his defensive coordinator, Gary Darnell. The team record was the same as in 1988 but the program had not come back in the last four years of Galen Hall.

It was the Gators fifty-seventh with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a respectable showing just above 500 but not the type of season to which Florida fans and alums had become accustomed. Galen Hall and Gary Darnell's combined record was 7-5-0 and 4-3-0 in the SEC. Florida again finished tied for fourth in the SEC Conference among ten SEC teams.

Galen Hall had come in to finish Charley Pell's 1984 season after three games and was replaced after the fifth game of this season. Overall, we can say that Hall coached for five seasons plus two games. Gary Darnell would not be retained in 1990. Instead Steve Spurrier took the helm.

Galen Hall Epilogue

As you can see by reviewing the game results, Galen Hall had the Gators moving well during the 1989 season. With the team record at 4-1, It looked like another Charley Pell-like year was on the way. Then, the boom fell on Galen Hall.

It seemed like all coaches of the day were shaving corners and doing their best to get the best recruits and some practices. Charley Pell knew that but was mostly above it but he had a few assistants who stretched the rules.

Hall therefore inherited a probation-wracked program when he replaced Pell in 1984. He was pressured to resign himself Sunday, less than 24 hours after a dramatic 16-13 victory at Louisiana State that brought the Gators record to 4-1. It was clearly not a strategy to remove Hall as he was replaced on an interim basis by second-year defensive coordinator Gary Darnell. Why? It seems an NCAA probe revealed new violations.

Hall had taken the team through eight victories (8-0) after replacing Pell in 1984 and he finished with a quite respectable 39-17-1 mark in regular-season play. The Gators lost the 1987 Aloha Bowl to UCLA and beat Illinois in last year's All-American Bowl.

Right as Hall took over, the Florida football program was nailed with a two-year probation in 1984 after having been found guilty of numerous NCAA violations. Hall chose not to be present when the university president Dr. Robert Bryan announced the resignation. Here are Bryan's comments:



<<< Gary Darnell 'I have accepted the resignation, effective today, of head football coach Galen Hall,' said Bryan. 'The detailed reasons for this resignation are set forth in his letter to me. In short, Coach Hall has conceded to me his personal involvement in 1987 in helping to solve the problems of a player, the details of which assistance are outlined in

his letter; and the personal payment of unauthorized salary supplements to assistant coaches from 1986-89. All of these actions are in direct violation of NCAA rules; they were also clearly in breach of the responsibilities imposed upon him by his contract with the university.

'This resignation results from an investigation jointly conducted by the NCAA and the university which began a number of months ago. Our cooperation with the NCAA made sending a preliminary notice of inquiry unnecessary. That investigation continues. It involves both the football program and the basketball program. My mandate is that it be both searching and fearless, and that as it proceeds, verified violations will be brought to my attention for immediate action.'

In his letter of resignation, Hall outlined the reasons for his departure. Hall received a vote of confidence from the university last fall amid rumors of his imminent firing. Gator boosters have been vocal in their displeasure with Florida's play in recent years, but this year's team has won four straight after opening with a home loss to Mississippi.

'Dear Dr. Bryan, recently special council for the university together with investigative representatives of the NCAA discussed with me and my council various allegations relating to my actions as head coach,' said the university president, reading from Hall's letter. 'I

acknowledge that I made the payments to both of the assistant coaches in question and further concede that the \$4,000 payment was made in currency. Although these payments were entirely derived from my own funds, I acknowledge that I failed to report these matters to the athletic director or to secure his approval as required by my employment agreement and in apparent violation of NCAA rules.'

Darnell, 40, was head coach at Tennessee Tech from 1983-85 before serving as inside linebacker coach and defensive coordinator at Wake Forest. He joined the Gators in 1988 and directed a defensive unit that ranked third nationally. This year's Gator defense was rated No. 1 in the nation entering the LSU game.

'Mr. Arnsbarger, our athletic director, has recommended the appointment of our defensive coordinator, Gary Darnell, as interim head coach and I have approved that appointment,' said Bryan. 'Earlier this evening, I spoke with our football team and with Coach Darnell. They have my full support and respect. This is an especially difficult time for them, and they deserve the support of all of us.'

The team was clearly upset and finished with just three more wins and four losses. Personally, I am not a fan of the NCAA though something like the NCAA is needed, in my research I have found the NCAA to be quite arbitrary and even capricious.

The NCAA has a huge financial war chest and would be difficult to displace but many who see the chicaners' behavior think it is time for the NCAA to go away and stay away. There is plenty to read on the Internet and elsewhere about various respected sources calling for the NCAA to melt away or be swept off the deck.

This snippet from dealcotimes.com shows some of the sentiment that is out there.

'The NCAA needs to go the way of typewriters, the Edsel and black-and-white TV. Its time has passed. Collegiate sports can no longer be run with an iron fist - especially an incompetent one - or with the quaint notion that Quinnipiac women's basketball can operate under the same rules as Alabama football.

‘The NCAA accelerated its path toward irrelevance years ago, when Emmett’s predecessors, Cedric Dempsey and Myles Brand, ceded control of football to conference commissioners - wanting no blame for the cartel that was the Bowl Championship Series when it was created 15 years ago. That abdication of ownership is a major reason why conference realignment has been allowed to burn out of control like a wildfire...’

Chapter 19 Coach Steve Spurrier Era 1990 to 2001

Coach # 19

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
1990	Steve Spurrier	9–2–0	SEC	6–1–0
1991	Steve Spurrier	10–2–0	SEC	7–0–0
1992	Steve Spurrier	9–4–0	SEC	6–2–0
1993	Steve Spurrier	11–2–0	SEC	7–1–0
1994	Steve Spurrier	10-2-1	SEC	7–1–0
1995	Steve Spurrier	12–1–0	SEC	8–0–0
1996	Steve Spurrier	12–1–0	SEC	8–0–0
1997	Steve Spurrier	10–2–0	SEC	6–2–0
1998	Steve Spurrier	10–2–0	SEC	7–1–0
1999	Steve Spurrier	9–4–0	SEC	7–1–0
2000	Steve Spurrier	10–3–0	SEC	7–1–0
2001	Steve Spurrier	10–2–0	SEC	6–2–0



Steve Spurrier, Leading the Gators

1990 Coach Steve Spurrier

The 1990 Florida Gators football team was the eighty-fourth season for Florida. It was the first year for Steve Spurrier, Gator's Heisman

Trophy-winning quarterback to return to his alma mater of twelve seasons as the new Football Gators head coach. The team record was the best since Galen Hall's first official year as coach.

It was the Gators fifty-eighth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a fine showing with just two losses. It was just the kind of season for which Florida fans and alums were hoping. Spurrier had a fine record of 9-2-0 and 6-1-0 in the SEC. Florida again finished first in the SEC Conference among ten SEC teams. But, unfortunately, the great win did not count.

From Galen Hall's supposedly major infractions, Spurrier's 1990 Florida Gators, were ineligible to win the SEC title or receive a bowl bid because of lingering NCAA probation. Nonetheless, as noted above, the Spurrier-led Gators posted a best-in-the-SEC record of 6-1 to accompany a stellar 9-2 overall record. This season laid the foundation for the Gators' run of six SEC championships and a national title during the next decade. Florida finished thirteenth in the season's final AP Poll.

Even as Spurrier's new "fun 'n' gun" offensive scheme that was led by quarterback Shane Matthews, wide receiver Ernie Mills and tight end Kirk Kirkpatrick was breaking team scoring and yardage records, defensive coordinator Jim Bates was busy coaching one of the best defensive squads in team history. Among the great defenders were two first-team All-Americans, defensive end Huey Richardson and safety Will White.

Games of the Season

One of the things you will notice as you look at the season's games is that even in Spurrier's first years, there were few close games because the offense almost always scored a ton of points. So, it was in the Season home opener on Sept 8 as the Gators smothered Oklahoma State at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium on the campus at Gainesville, Florida W (50-7).

This first Gator squad of the master coach was 5-0 and ranked No. 9 coming into the game with Johnny Majors' 3-0-2 and #5 Vols. This

was the first time in their series history that both rivals were ranked in the AP top-10 when they faced off.

The 1990 game began as a defensive struggle, with UT holding a slim 7–3 lead at the half. However, the Vols' Dale Carter returned the second half kickoff 91 yards for a touchdown, igniting the home crowd at Neyland Stadium.

On their ensuing possession, the Gators fumbled for what would be the first of six UF turnovers in the second half. The opportunistic Vols took full advantage, turning Spurrier's homecoming (and, coincidentally, UT's homecoming game) into a dominating 45–3 rout, the largest margin of victory for either team in the series.



Shane Matthews ready throwt

Shane Matthews finished the season with 2,952 passing yards and twenty-three touchdowns—then the most passing yards in Gators history. He was SEC Player of the Year.

Before Coach Spurrier returned to Gainesville, the Gators had never won an officially sanctioned Southeastern Conference (SEC) or national football championship (Florida's first SEC championship was in 1984, but was retroactively vacated by the SEC for infractions incurred by former head coach Charley Pell). Before Spurrier resigned to seek a coaching position in the National Football League in January 2002, the Gators would win six official SEC titles, play for

two national championships, and win one in 1996. What a difference a great coach makes.

1991 Coach Steve Spurrier

The 1991 Florida Gators football team was the eighty-fifth season for Florida.

It was the second year for Steve Spurrier of twelve seasons as the Football Gators head coach. The team record was better than 1990, the first time the Gators had achieved a ten-game win-season.

It was the Gators fifty-ninth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a fine showing with just two losses. It was a better season than the last and just the kind of season for which Florida fans and alums were hoping. Spurrier had a fine record of 10-2-0 and 7-0-0 in the SEC. Florida again finished first in the SEC Conference among ten SEC teams. This time it counted.

The Gators were led by quarterback Shane Matthews and first-team All-American defensive tackle Brad Culpepper. Spurrier's 1991 Florida Gators compiled the first-ever ten-win season in program history, and a perfect SEC record of 7-0. There was reason on campus to celebrate.

#3 ranked Florida was invited to the Sugar Bowl to play #18 Notre Dame at the Superdome in New Orleans, Louisiana. Notre Dame got the best of the Gators L (28-39). This was the Gators first New Year's Day bowl appearance since 1974. The defeat by Notre Dame brought the team in at a rank of seventh in the final Associated Press Poll. Florida won the team's first official SEC championship, 59 seasons after joining the conference as a charter member.

Quarterback Shane Matthews repeated as SEC Player of the Year in 1991.

1992 Coach Steve Spurrier

The 1992 Florida Gators football team was the eighty-sixth season for Florida. It was the third year for Steve Spurrier of twelve seasons

as the Football Gators head coach. The team record was very good but not as good as 1991.

It was the Gators sixtieth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a fine showing with just four losses in a thirteen-game season. Spurrier led the Gators to another fine record of 11-2-0 and 6-2-0 in the SEC. Florida again finished first in the SEC Conference Eastern Division among six division teams.

This season, the wins were harder to come by as the star-studded senior classes from 1990 and 1991 had graduated. Nonetheless, the Gators racked up six tough Southeastern Conference (SEC) wins over the Kentucky Wildcats (35–19) Sept 9 at home, LSU Tigers (28–21) Oct 10 at home, Auburn Tigers (24–9) Oct 17 at home, seventh-ranked Georgia Bulldogs (26–24) Oct 31 @ Jacksonville, South Carolina Gamecocks (14–9) Nov 14 at home, and Vanderbilt Commodores (41–21) Nov 21 @ Vanderbilt. They also suffered two crushing SEC losses to the fourteenth-ranked Tennessee Volunteers (14–31) in Knoxville, Tennessee on Sept 19, and to the twenty-fourth-ranked Mississippi State Bulldogs (6–30) on Oct 1-- a Thursday night in Starkville, Mississippi.

As noted previously, Spurrier's 1992 Florida Gators posted a 9–4 overall record, concluding their season with a victory over the twelfth-ranked North Carolina State Wolfpack (27–10) in the Gator Bowl, and ranking tenth in the final AP Poll.

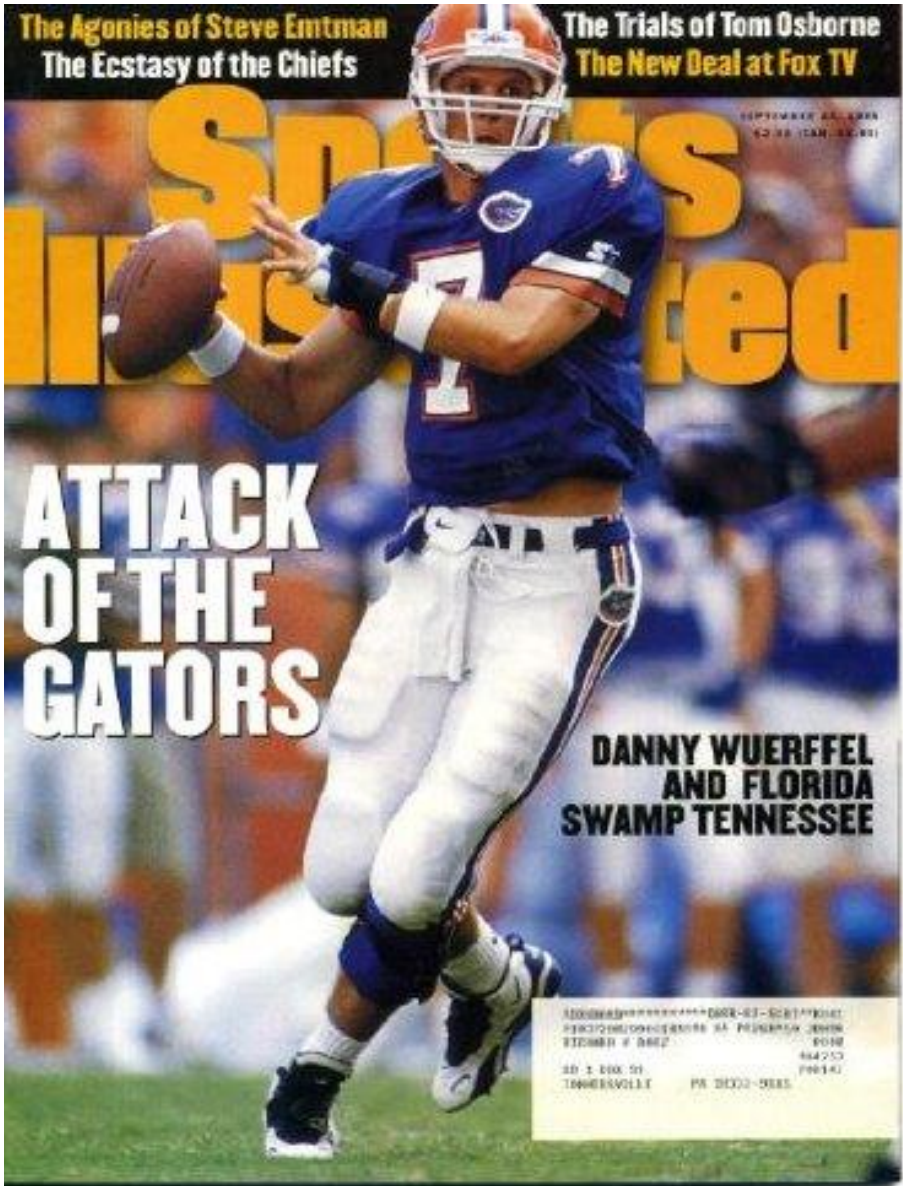
1993 Coach Steve Spurrier

The 1993 Florida Gators football team was the eighty-seventh season for Florida. It was the fourth year for Steve Spurrier of twelve seasons as the Football Gators head coach. The team record was very good. It was the first season with 11 wins, counting the bowl win.

It was the Gators sixty-first with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a fine showing with just four losses in a thirteen-game season. Spurrier led the Gators to another fine regular season record of 11-2-0 and 7-1-0 in the SEC. Florida again finished first in the SEC Conference Eastern Division among six division teams.

The Gators continued to use coach Spurrier's pass-heavy "fun 'n gun" offense. The 1993 Gators fell short of their hopes for a national championship. The Gators legacy is one of continual improvement. This season, for example, marked the first time that they were ranked in the top ten of the Associated Press Poll during every week of the season, and they were ranked fifth in the final AP Poll, following their 41–7 Sugar Bowl victory over the West Virginia Mountaineers.

Before the season even began, instead of being speculative as in years past, the players' and fans and alumni had their preseason expectations for the Gators' fourth season under Spurrier set at very high. Some commentators began to speak openly about the possibility of the Gators making a run for the national title. It was a nice time to be a Florida fan.



Florida won the Eastern SEC Championship and played Alabama for the total SEC prize. The game was played at Legion Field on December 4. #17 Alabama played hard but not good enough. The Gators again won the SEC Championship by beating Alabama W (28-13).

The Gators had finished the regular season with a conference record of 7–1, and they held first place among the six teams of the SEC Eastern Division. This had earned them an automatic berth in the second SEC Championship Game in Birmingham, Alabama.

The Gators were paired against the Alabama Crimson Tide in the championship game, which was seen as a rematch of the 1992 SEC Championship Game. The Gators defeated the Crimson Tide 28–13, winning their first SEC Championship Game and their second SEC football championship in three seasons. It was celebration time in Gainesville.

Florida made it to another January 1, 1994 Bowl Game. The Sugar Bowl was played at the Superdome in New Orleans. Florida's very worthy opponent was #3 ranked West Virginia. The Gators won the game handily by a score of W (41-7).

Yes, with a crowd of 75,437, the Gators handed it to the third-ranked West Virginia Mountaineers 41–7 in the Sugar Bowl, thereby finishing fifth in the AP Poll. The Gators were hot. After a quick touchdown from Jake Kelchner to Jay Kearney to put West Virginia up 7–0 early, the Gators came right back and answered with a touchdown by Errict Rhett to tie the score at 7.

The fans expected the half would end that way, but just before halftime, Gator defensive back Lawrence Wright picked off an errant pass from West Virginia QB Darren Studstill right on the midfield logo. He first made his way to his right side, but when he ran out of blocking help just inside the WVU 40, he turned around and backtracked, circling back to the 45 before finding some running room, and he sprinted into the end zone from there to cap a 51-yard interception return touchdown.

That put Florida up 14–7, and it simply seemed to crush the Mountaineers' competitive spirit, as Florida's defense proceeded to force a quick three and out. This short amount of free time gave Terry Dean time to connect with Jack Jackson for a 39-yard touchdown to make it 21–7 at halftime. The game was over but for the motions after that.

From there, the Gators cruised in the second half. Errict Rhett ran in two more touchdowns and Judd Davis added two insurance field goals in the fourth quarter to make the final score a convincing 41–7.

Steve Spurrier's 1993 team set a then-record for wins in a season. Halfback Errict Rhett, offensive tackle Reggie Green, and defensive tackle William Gaines made first-team All-SEC. Placekicker Judd Davis won the Lou Groza Award. Florida was more than back. They were inching up to lead the whole pack.

1994 Coach Steve Spurrier

The 1994 Florida Gators football team was the eighty-eighth season for Florida. It was the fifth year for Steve Spurrier of twelve great seasons as the Football Gators head coach. The team record was again very good. It was almost as good as the 1993 season but for a tie.

It was the Gators sixty-second with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a fine showing with just two losses and a tie in a thirteen-game season. Spurrier led the Gators to another fine regular season record of 10-2-1 and 8-1-0 in the SEC. Florida again finished first in the SEC Conference Eastern Division among six division teams and the Gators won the SEC Championship game.

On New Year's Day, Florida was getting accustomed to playing football. After the twenty-eight-day layover from the SEC Championship game. Florida was not as crisp as Florida State and the Gators could not hold on, losing to Bobby Bowden's Seminoles L (17-23). Florida in-state losses stung Steve Spurrier more than any others.

1995 Coach Steve Spurrier

The 1995 Florida Gators football team was the eighty-ninth season for Florida. It was the sixth year for Steve Spurrier of twelve great seasons as the Football Gators head coach. The team record was the best ever with twelve wins. It was one of the most successful years in

school history. the Gators finished the regular season unbeaten and untied for the first time. Even the 1911 team went 5–0–1.

It was the Gators sixty-third with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a fine showing with just one loss in a thirteen-game season. Spurrier led the Gators to another fine regular season record of 12-1-0 and 8-0-0 in the SEC. Florida again finished first in the SEC Conference Eastern Division among six division teams and the Gators again won the SEC Championship game.

The Gators used coach Spurrier's pass-heavy "fun 'n gun" offense". Led by Heisman Trophy finalist quarterback Danny Wuerffel, the offense set many school and conference offensive records, including passing touchdowns, passing yards per game, total yards per game, and points per game, among others.

After finishing the regular season 12–0 (8–0 in the SEC), Florida defeated the Arkansas Razorbacks 34–3 in the 1995 SEC Championship Game.

As the No. 2 ranked team, the Gators were invited to play in the 1996 Fiesta Bowl, which was the Bowl Alliance national championship game. In Tempe, Florida lost 24–62 to the No. 1 ranked Nebraska Cornhuskers but remained No. 2 in the final AP poll. So, Spurrier's squad got to the National Championship game but lost—this time!

1996 Coach Steve Spurrier

The 1996 Florida Gators football team was the ninetieth season for Florida. It was the seventh year for Steve Spurrier of twelve great seasons as the Football Gators head coach. The team record was tied for the best ever with twelve wins. It was the most successful years in school history. the Gators finished the year as National Champions.

It was the Gators sixty-fourth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a great showing with just one loss in a thirteen-game season. Spurrier led the Gators to another fine regular season record of 12-1-0 and 8-0-0 in the SEC. Florida finished first in the

SEC Conference Eastern Division among six division teams for the fifth consecutive season. Additionally, the Gators again won the SEC Championship game for the fourth straight year. Of course, we must reiterate that this great team was designated consensus National Champions. Bravo Florida!

This was the first national championship for Florida in team history. It came from a 52–20 Sugar Bowl rout of their in-state rivals, the Florida State Seminoles.

All season long, the Gators used coach Spurrier's pass-heavy "fun 'n gun" offense". Quarterback Danny Wuerffel won the Heisman Trophy. Wuerffel as well as his wide receivers Ike Hilliard and Reidel Anthony were consensus All-Americans. It was a very good year for the Florida team, Florida fans, Florida alums, and of course their great coach Steve Spurrier.

Player Highlights Danny Wuerffel

Danny Wuerffel is a Fort Walton Beach native. He played football for the Florida Gators from 1993 to 1996 for Coach Steve Spurrier, another Heisman winner. Wuerffel rewrote the Florida passing record book while leading the Gators to their first national championship in 1996. His great moment some say was when he threw for 306 yards and three touchdowns in the Gators' 52-20 victory over Florida State in the 1997 Sugar Bowl, which led to Florida's first national title.



Danny Wuerffel became the second player from the University of Florida to win the Heisman, joining his coach, Steve Spurrier. It marked the first time that a Heisman winner came from a school coached by another former Heisman winner.

Other Honors to the Gators in 1996

The National Championship is simply a big deal. However, along with a national title, quarterback Danny Wuerffel was presented with the coveted Heisman Trophy, annually awarded to college football's top player. Wuerffel was the 1966 winner. He had a phenomenal year and was also awarded the Maxwell Award, Walter Camp Award, Davey O'Brien Award, Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award, as well as the Draddy Trophy, National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame Scholar, and College Football Association Scholar-Athlete Team. You can bet Danny Wuerffel got a lot of other honors. As a humble man, he probably would not tell you about them.

Lawrence Wright won the Jim Thorpe Award, and was on the College Football Association Scholar-Athlete Team. Jeff Mitchell was an Outland Trophy semi-finalist. It was a great Florida year. There is more. Danny Wuerffel, Ike Hilliard, and Reidel Anthony all

were consensus All-Americans. It was a big year for the Pros, Ike Hilliard was selected 7th overall by the New York Giants, and Reidel Anthony was selected 16th by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. What a great Florida year for everybody!

1997 Coach Steve Spurrier

The 1997 Florida Gators football team was the ninety-first season for Florida. It was the eighth year for Steve Spurrier of twelve great seasons as the Football Gators head coach. The team record was super but not championship quality but again, Florida was living close to the top of the SEC.

It was the Gators sixty-fifth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a great showing with just two losses in a twelve-game season. Spurrier led the Gators to another fine regular season record of 10-2-0 and 6-2-0 in the SEC. Florida finished tying for second place among the six SEC Eastern Division teams. After a national championship season, often there is rebuilding. Nonetheless, the Gators had a great double-digit winning year.

#6 ranked Florida agreed to play #11 ranked Penn State in the Citrus Bowl on New Years' Day 1-1-1998 in Orlando, Florida. The Gators could beat everybody and they had no problem with a tough Penn State team, winning W (21-6).

1998 Coach Steve Spurrier

The 1998 Florida Gators football team was the ninety-second season for Florida. It was the ninth year for Steve Spurrier of twelve great seasons as the Football Gators head coach. The team record was super but not championship quality but again, Florida was living close to the top of the SEC.

It was the Gators sixty-sixth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a great showing with just two losses in a twelve-game season. Coach Spurrier led the Gators to another fine regular season record of 10-2-0 and 7-1-0 in the SEC. Florida finished second

among the six SEC Eastern Division teams. The Gators had another great double-digit winning year.

In the Spurrier years, no season was complete until the Florida State game which this year came on Nov 21 at Doak Campbell Stadium in Tallahassee, Florida, and the Seminoles whipped up enough chutzpah to beat Florida L 12–23 before 81,614 State of Florida fans.

On the day after New Year's, 1999, #7 Florida got itself into a great Bowl game against #18 Syracuse. It was the Orange Bowl played at Orange Bowl Stadium in Miami. The Spurrier team played tricky and tough enough to defeat Syracuse W 31–10.

1999 Coach Steve Spurrier

The 1999 Florida Gators football team was the ninety-third season for Florida. It was the tenth year for Coach Steve Spurrier of twelve great seasons as the Football Gators head coach. The team record was super but not national championship quality. Again, Florida was living close to the top of the SEC, but not this year.

It was the Gators sixty-seventh with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a great showing with just two losses in a twelve-game regular season. Coach Spurrier led the Gators to another fine total season record of 9-4-0 and 7-1-0 in the SEC. Florida finished first among the six SEC Eastern Division teams. The Gators had another great almost double-digit winning year.

After a two-year hiatus, Florida was again in the SEC Championship Game, but the team did not bring home another SEC Championship trophy. After losing the SEC Championship Game 34–7 to the Alabama Crimson Tide, the Gators ended their season with a last-second 37–34 loss to the Michigan State Spartans in the Citrus Bowl. Sometimes football brings some disappointments. However, the Spurrier legacy was intact as an OK showing by a Spurrier-led team was substantially better than what Gator fans had presented to them for the many years before there was a Steve Spurrier. Thank you, Coach!

Nonetheless, it was a tough end of season for the Gators as they lost their third in a row on New Year's Day 2000, in a Citrus Bowl match with Michigan State in Orlando Fl. The game ended with Michigan State kicking a last-minute field goal. L (34-37)

2000 Coach Steve Spurrier

The 2000 Florida Gators football team was the ninety-fourth season for Florida. It was the eleventh year for Coach Steve Spurrier of twelve great seasons as the Football Gators head coach. The team record was very good and improved from 1999, but not quite national championship quality. Again, Florida was living so close to the top of the SEC, that this year, they claimed another title.

It was the Gators sixty-eighth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a great showing with just two losses in a twelve-game season. Coach Spurrier led the Gators to another fine regular season record of 10-3-0 and 7-1-0 in the SEC. Florida finished first among the six SEC Eastern Division teams. The Gators had another great double-digit winning year.

As noted, they were coached by Steve Spurrier, who led the Gators to their sixth SEC championship, a Sugar Bowl berth, and an overall win-loss record of 10–3 (.769).

On Nov 18, in the last regular game of the season, #4 Florida played #3 Florida State and the Gators were beaten handily L (7-30). In the SEC Championship game against Auburn on Dec 2, the Gators came back and wrapped up their sixth Conference win in the Coach Spurrier era at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta W (28-6).

There is a thing about losing to Florida teams and the Gators had already lost to Florida State on Nov 18. Nonetheless the Spurrier-led Gators, then ranked at #7 agreed to meet the #2 ranked team in the country, the Butch Davis coached Miami Hurricanes on January 2, in the Sugar Bowl at the Superdome in New Orleans, Louisiana. The last thing the Gators wanted or needed was a loss to in-state rival Miami but they got one nonetheless L (20-37).

2001 Coach Steve Spurrier

When I first began writing chapter summaries back when I had researched the 1906 season and all the way to 1990 when Steve Spurrier took over the reins of UF, I was anticipating writing about the Spurrier years. I knew they were very successful and it is a lot more fun writing about successful seasons than struggling seasons.

There were a lot of high points before reaching the Spurrier era and I relished them but there was little consistency in winning. Florida is a much different team now than in the pre-Spurrier times but right now, as I begin the last year of Coach Spurrier's magical period with the Gators, I miss him already. For me, it's like he is leaving again. I know we will get by. But, just like the Bryant's, the Rockne's, the Paterno's, the Osborne's, the Shembeckler's, the Leahy's great seasons with their teams, I know something will be missing. But, we'll get by. Go Gators!

The 2001 Florida Gators football team was the ninety-fifth season for Florida. It was the twelfth and last year for Coach Steve Spurrier of twelve great seasons as the Football Gators head coach. The team record was very good again and improved from 2000 with one less loss, but not quite national championship quality. Again, Florida was living close to the top of the SEC. But, not this year.

It was the Gators sixty-ninth with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a great showing with just two losses in a twelve-game season. Coach Spurrier led the Gators to another fine total season record of 10-2 and 6-2 in the SEC. Florida finished second among the six SEC Eastern Division teams. The Gators had another great double-digit winning year.

Steve Spurrier led the Gators to a 56–23 Orange Bowl victory over the Maryland Terrapins in his final game before moving on to the NFL. Sophomore quarterback really came through this year, throwing for more than 4,000 yards. As a sophomore, Rex Grossman was the Heisman Trophy runner-up. Grossman, wide receiver Jabar Gaffney and defensive end Alex Brown were consensus All-Americans. Brown's 33 sacks are still a school record for a career.

In one of the few times in school history, going into the season, the Gators were ranked preseason No. 1.

In the season finale at home, on Dec 1, The Gators lost a cliff-hanger to the Tennessee Volunteers L (32-34). As the season progressed, this postponed game with Tennessee took on more significance each week. Each squad had suffered only one close loss and Florida entered the contest with Tennessee ranked No. 6 and Florida ranked No. 2. The winner was to represent the SEC East and face LSU in the SEC Championship.

Additionally, with a win in that game, the Gators or Vols were likely to receive an invitation to the Rose Bowl to face the undefeated Miami Hurricanes with a national title on the line. The stakes were high. Despite the teams' identical records and much to the chagrin of the Vols, the Gators were 17-and-a-half point favorites at kickoff. It did not work out that way.

The Volunteers went on to dash the Gators' national title hopes with a nail-biter 34–32 upset, ending a 30-year winless drought against Florida at the Swamp. The star of the game was Volunteer running back Travis Stephens, who rushed for 226 yards and two touchdowns on 19 carries to lead the Vols' attack. Without their star running back, Graham, Florida managed only 36 total yards on the ground. Gator quarterback Rex Grossman threw 51 times for 362 yards and two touchdowns, but his pass on a potentially game-tying two-point conversion attempt with just over a minute left in the 4th quarter fell incomplete. Close but not in the win column

#5 Florida was invited to the Orange Bowl Game at Pro Player Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida to play the Maryland Terrapins. In Steve Spurrier's last game coached for the Gators, the team gave him a sweet victory, rising to the occasion to score 56 points to 23 for the opposition in a great win W (56-23)

Grossman was the Heisman Trophy runner-up to Nebraska QB Eric Crouch, in one of the trophy's closest ballots. Many feel that with his stats and great season, Grossman should have won. Both Crouch and Grossman made AP All-American.

Steve Spurrier's resignation

In early January 2002, Steve Spurrier announced that he was resigning as Florida's head coach after 12 seasons. He was the best, Florida coach & player without a doubt.

Please read this piece from lubbockonline written when Steve Spurrier announced his resignation over fifteen years ago:
http://lubbockonline.com/stories/010502/col_0105020022.shtml#.WPeF4dLyvmY

Spurrier quits as UF coach 12 years 'long enough' for Florida coach

Published: Saturday, January 05, 2002

Morris News Service

GAINESVILLE -- University of Florida football coach Steve Spurrier, who built the school into a national power and became one of the most successful coaches in Southeastern Conference history, resigned Friday after 12 seasons to pursue an NFL coaching position. The most likely candidate to replace Spurrier is Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops, according to several sources.

Spurrier's resignation early Friday morning came as a shock to players, coaches, athletic officials, and his closest friends. Only Norm Carlson, UF's assistant athletic director for communications and a close friend since Spurrier arrived in Gainesville as a player in 1964, knew of Spurrier's decision before Friday.

Spurrier told Carlson on Thursday night while the two were at their condos in Crescent Beach.

"I thought he was joking at first," Carlson said.

So did UF Athletics Director Jeremy Foley, who found out he needed a new coach when Spurrier phoned him with his resignation about 9:15 a.m.

"At one point when he was talking to me, he asked me if I was still there," Foley said. "I really thought he was kidding. I think he told Norm [Thursday] evening and I think Norm had the exact same reaction. He [Spurrier] made an indication not to try and talk him out of it."

Spurrier did not attend Friday's news conference -- he was still in Crescent Beach -- but he did release a 10-paragraph statement through the university's sports information department, and he has scheduled a 4:30 p.m. news conference for Monday.

"I'm announcing my retirement today, Jan. 4, 2002, as head football coach at the University of Florida," the statement began. "I simply believe that 12 years as head coach at a major university in the SEC is long enough."

The statement went on to read: "I'm not burned out, stressed out or mentally fatigued from coaching. I just feel my career as a college head coach after 15 years is complete, and if the opportunity and challenge of coaching a NFL team happens it is something I would like to pursue."

Spurrier did not inform his assistant coaches and players of his decision. In fact, wide receiver Jabar Gaffney found out only when a reporter telephoned him. "Oh, man," Gaffney said when told Spurrier had resigned. "He didn't give us any indications he was leaving or [the Orange Bowl] was his last game at all."

Carlson denied Spurrier has already made arrangements with an NFL team, saying he thinks Spurrier will sit back and wait before pursuing any openings. There currently are two NFL teams without head coaches: Minnesota, which fired Dennis Green yesterday, and San Diego, which recently fired Mike Riley. Of the two, San Diego would seem to be the better fit considering Spurrier's disdain for cold weather. There also are rumors surrounding Tampa Bay and the Jaguars, including one that has Tampa's Tony Dungy taking the Minnesota job and Spurrier joining the Bucs as coach and minority owner.

Foley said he would not comment on possible successors for Spurrier, but he has long had a mental list of possible replacements, including Stoops, who guided the Sooners to the national championship last season, was UF's defensive coordinator from 1996-98. Denver Broncos head coach Mike Shanahan, who was an assistant on former Florida coach Charley Pell's staff from 1980-83, and Washington's Rick Neuheisel, a close friend of Spurrier's, also are on the list.

Other possible candidates could be New Orleans defensive coordinator Ron Zook, UF's defensive coordinator from 1991-95 under Spurrier, and Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti, who guided the Ducks to an 11-1 record and No. 2 national ranking behind Miami this season.

Foley said Spurrier is not vulnerable to financial repercussions for leaving four years before his contract ends. Spurrier, the country's highest-paid college football coach at \$2.1 million per season, has a clause in his contract that allows him to leave without repercussions from Dec. 1 to Jan. 2 every season, and Foley said the two extra days would not cause any problems.

Outside linebackers and special teams coach Jim Collins, the Gators' recruiting coordinator, has canceled his trip to next week's coaches' convention in San Antonio, Texas, and will remain in Gainesville and work with the other assistant coaches to run the program until a new coach is named.

UF has received six verbal commitments, including Fletcher running back Ciattrick Fason and First Coast wide receiver Kenneth Tookes. All but one of the commitments -- Statesboro running back Jimtavis Walker -- said Friday they still plan to attend UF. Walker is wavering. It will be at least a week until coaches can contact Walker to assuage his concerns, though, because it is currently a dead period in recruiting and coaches cannot have contact with recruits until Friday.

Spurrier won the 1966 Heisman Trophy as a quarterback at Florida, and had a 10-year NFL career with San Francisco and Tampa Bay. He began his head coaching career with the Tampa Bay Bandits (1983-85) before spending three seasons at Duke (1987-89), where he

guided the Blue Devils to an Atlantic Coast Conference championship in 1989.

He returned to his alma mater in 1990, and that's where his reputation as an offensive genius really flourished. He used a wide-open attack to turn around a moribund program that had finished first in the SEC standings just twice in 56 years and had not won more than nine games in its 83-year history.

Since he arrived, the Gators have won six SEC titles (Spurrier claims the 1990 title as well, even though the Gators were not official champs because of NCAA probation) and the 1996 national title. The Gators have ranked in the top 10 in the final Associated Press poll 10 times, have played in eight major bowl games, and have been ranked No. 1 for 29 weeks. He is the only major college coach to win as many as 120 games in his first 12 years at the school (122-26-1), and he's the only coach in SEC history to win at least 10 games for six consecutive seasons (1993-98).

Spurrier's offense changed the way football was played, not only in the SEC, but around the country. His pass-oriented offense forced defensive coordinators to employ, five, six, or even seven defensive backs, but even then, they couldn't catch up. The Gators totaled 500 yards of offense 51 times and averaged more than 500 yards over the course of the 1995, 1996 and 2001 seasons. Gators quarterbacks have thrown for 400 yards 23 times and have thrown for 300 yards 91 times. They also have averaged more than 315 yards per game during his tenure.

Because the program was so starved for success, and because of his bold and brash nature, Gators fans adored him. But his cocky attitude and sometimes biting comments -- he dubbed FSU "Free Shoes University" following the 1993 Foot Locker store scandal -- drew the ire of opposing fans, who derisively called him Steve Superior and ranted about his huge ego.

Spurrier almost left UF in 1995, when Tampa Bay officials nearly convinced him to leave. But after several days of intense debate, Spurrier decided to remain at UF. Foley believed then that Spurrier would never coach anywhere else.

"I thought he'd be here forever," Foley said. "I knew he enjoyed the college game. His whole life he's been wrapped up in college athletics. He's a Heisman Trophy winner. He's coached a Heisman Trophy winner. He's in the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame. He took Duke to an ACC championship.

"I just honestly thought that as long as he coaches, he'd coach at this level and he'd coach here."

Chapter 20 Coach Ron Zook Era 2002 to 2004

Coach # 20 Ron Zook
Coach # 21 Charlie Strong

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
2002	Ron Zook	8-5	SEC	6-2
2003	Ron Zook	8-5	SEC	6-2
2004	Ron Zook	7-5	SEC	4-4
2004	Charlie Strong (interim)			



New Florida head football coach Ron Zook had the formidable task of replacing Steve Spurrier

August 22, 2002 | By Andrew Bagnato, Tribune college football reporter.

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — It's 6 a.m., and 29 Florida freshmen are stretching to the accompaniment of crickets.

An air horn punctures the steamy predawn air. Decked out in blue jerseys and orange helmets, the freshmen break into groups by position. A raspy voice rises from midfield.

"Let's go, running backs, let's go!" coach Ron Zook hollers.

It's 6:07 a.m. on the first allowable practice day. Daylight is an hour away. The first game is 24 days away. And many of these kids won't see action this year, if ever.

That doesn't matter to Zook. On the first official day of his first season as the Florida Gators' coach, he's making every minute count.

"Sleep's overrated," Zook says as he strides off the field about 7:30 a.m., his neck slick with sweat. "We have a lot of work to do." The new face of Florida football is an alarm clock.

Gone are the days when former coach Steve Spurrier would arrive from the golf course, arranging the team's practice schedule as he removed his spikes. The new boss at this Sunshine State football factory could not be more different from the old one.

Spurrier, a son of the South, is a smooth sip of bourbon. After a big victory over Tennessee or Florida State he would remove his visor, cast his eyes to the heavens and exclaim, "God smiled on the Gators today!"

Zook is a double shot of espresso, with two lumps of sugar.

"He's very energetic," freshman quarterback Gavin Dickey said. "He gets you riled up and makes you want to play for him."

Gators fans were riled up when athletic director Jeremy Foley named Zook to succeed Spurrier shortly after Spurrier left for the Washington Redskins last January.



<<< Ron Zook. Fans pined for Denver Broncos coach Mike Shanahan or Oklahoma Sooners coach Bob Stoops, both of whom were on Foley's wish list. Many fretted over handing the program to a 26-year assistant coach who most recently had served as the New Orleans Saints' defensive coordinator. They noted Spurrier had demoted Zook from defensive coordinator to special-teams' coordinator in 1993. And rival coaches warned potential recruits that Zook had

no track record as a head coach.

"I heard that and I said, 'What about Miami?'" Zook said. "They just won the national championship with a first-year head coach [Larry Coker]."

Indeed, several powerhouses have reaped huge rewards after hiring rookie head coaches. Think about Nebraska, which handed the reins to untested assistant coach Tom Osborne, or Penn State, which gave a Nittany Lions assistant named Joe Paterno his first head-coaching job. Stoops' Sooners finished atop the polls in his second year as a head coach.

"Obviously, in none of those situations were they replacing Steve Spurrier," Foley said: "When it's all said and done, it's going to come down to recruiting and coaching."

"I think Ron's the perfect guy to replace Steve because he's so unlike Steve, and I don't mean that in a negative way. He's not trying to be Steve. He's trying to be himself. If there's only one guy who can win here, and that's Steve Spurrier, then we need to shut the doors down.

"The goal is to get better, not to maintain. That may sound sacrilegious."

The contrasts between Spurrier and Zook are striking. Spurrier won the Heisman Trophy as a quarterback here in 1966. Zook was a walk-on defensive back at Miami of Ohio, where he lived in the same dorm as future Northwestern coach Randy Walker.

Spurrier endured recruiting. Zook enjoys it. Spurrier never paid a moment's notice to his defense. Zook has never called an offensive play.

"Coach Zook hates the comparisons," star quarterback Rex Grossman said. "They're completely different."

Raised in football-crazed Loudonville, Ohio, and educated at Miami University, the cradle of college football coaches, the 48-year-old Zook has spent his entire life preparing for this opportunity. No wonder he's in a hurry.

In 13 frenzied days last spring, Zook visited 71 Florida high schools and addressed 12 Gators booster clubs. Zook spent so much time on the road last spring he claimed not to know the address of his new home in Gainesville, even after wife Denise and daughters Jacquelyn and Casey had taken up residence there.

"I don't even know where the light switches are," Zook said.

Over breakfast one recent morning, Zook perhaps unwittingly gave an indication of his priorities.

"I wasn't going to eat, but that's OK," Zook said as he dug into a plate of scrambled eggs and grits.

"Can you imagine how much you could get done if you didn't have to eat or sleep?"

Zook's zeal appeals to the Gators legions. But it will take more than 20-hour workdays to step out of Spurrier's shadow.

"All of that's fine and good," Foley said. "But what matters is wins." Spurrier produced them by the barrel.

2002 Coach Ron Zook

The 2002 Florida Gators football team was the ninety-sixth season for Florida. It was the first year for Coach Ron Zook of three seasons as the Football Gators head coach. The team record was respectable but it was the worst since Galen Hall in 1989. Steve Spurrier had no seasons in which he won less than nine games. Ron Zook, may have been a good coach but he was not a Steve Spurrier.

It was the Gators seventieth with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a great showing with just two losses in a twelve-game season. Coach Zook led the Gators to an OK season record of 8-5 and 6-2 in the SEC Eastern Division. Florida finished second among the six SEC Eastern Division teams.

This was a season with five losses and a lot of games were close that in the past twelve years had big margins. This may have been a rebuilding year but a lot of Spurrier Talent was on the field and the team simply did not fire on all cylinders as it had in years past. The fan base was disappointed but the coach was going to stay as one year was not really a test of capability and quite frankly, an 8-5 record with six wins in the SEC would have been perfectly acceptable by most college football programs and even at Florida in years prior to 1990.

The scent of change was already in the air.

It is almost impossible to replace a legend. Replacing a legend with a coach with no head coaching experience is a recipe for disaster as Notre Dame and other Division I teams learned the hard way. “The Swamp. Only Gators get out alive.”

During his time at Florida, Steve Spurrier turned Ben Hill Griffin Stadium into a death trap for the Gators’ opponents. Spurrier only lost five games at home during his entire tenure as head coach of the University of Florida, making “the Swamp” one of college football’s most formidable stadiums.

However, Ron Zook managed to diminish the vision of “the Swamp” as a treacherous place to play. Zook lost an unbelievable five games at home and failed to defeat a ranked opponent at Florida Field during his three years at Florida.

Though we can be nice to coaches if we choose, football is about winning and coaches get paid big bucks to accomplish one simple goal-winning. When Bob Davie took over for Lou Holtz at Notre Dame, Ara Parseghian offered some advice that applied equally to Ron Zook in 2002. In 1997 When Davie replaced Lou Holtz as Irish coach in 1997, Parseghian’s advice was simple: "There are a lot of things to worry about," Parseghian told Davie, "but worry about one thing, and that's winning."

2003 Coach Ron Zook

The 2003 Florida Gators football team was the ninety-seventh season for Florida. It was the second year for Coach Ron Zook of three seasons as the Football Gators head coach. The team record was respectable; the same as the prior year.

It was the Gators seventy-first with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a great SEC showing with just two SEC losses. Coach Zook led the Gators to an OK season record of 8-5 and 6-2 in the SEC Eastern Division. Florida finished tied for first among the six SEC Eastern Division teams. Consensus All-American

Keiwan Ratliff set the school single-season interception mark in 2003 with 9.

On Nov 15, in a two-point match, #15 Florida beat unranked South Carolina W (24-22) at Williams-Brice Stadium in Columbia, South Carolina. Struggling for the last few years v Florida State, this year was no different as the Seminoles beat the Gators L (34-38) at home before 90,407.

On January 1, 2004, #13 Iowa engaged against #17 Florida in the Outback Bowl at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Florida and beat the Gators L (17-37). There was a negative pall cast on the Gators post-Spurrier.

2004 Coach Ron Zook

The 2004 Florida Gators football team was the ninety-eighth season for Florida. It was the third and last year for Coach Ron Zook of three seasons as the Football Gators head coach. The team record was unacceptable for a post-Spurrier Gators team.

It was the Gators seventy-second with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a great SEC showing with just two SEC losses. Coach Zook led the Gators to an OK regular season record of 7-4 and 4-4 in the SEC Eastern Division. Florida finished tied for third among the six SEC Eastern Division teams. Florida picked up another loss in the peach Bowl

For the fifth time in school history, Florida played five of its first six games at home. Four of the last five games were on the road. Florida's record for the two prior seasons under Zook on the road in conference play was an SEC league best 7-1. Eight starters returned and true sophomore Chris Leak would start the first game of the season at QB for the first time.

The Gators opened the season on Sept 11 with a nice win against Eastern Michigan from the Mid-American Conference at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium on the University Campus in Gainesville, Florida W (49-10). The attendance was 90,009. On Sept 18, the #11 ranked Gators lost to # 13 Tennessee at Neyland Stadium in Knoxville,

Tennessee L (28–30) before a whopping crowd of 109,061. On Sept 25, the Gators defeated Kentucky at home W (20-3). On Oct 2, Florida beat Arkansas W (45-30) at home. More losses than wins was the recipe for the rest of the season.

With a 7-4 record, the Gators were invited to the Peach Bowl at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta GA to play in-state rival #14 ranked Miami. The Hurricanes beat the Gators L (10-27). Charley Strong was hired as defensive coordinator for the Florida Gators before the 2003 season. Florida head coach Ron Zook was fired midway through the Gators' 2004 season, but continued to coach until the bowl game; Strong served as interim coach of the Gators for one game, the December 2004 Peach Bowl. Florida lost the game, 27–10, to Miami.

Chapter 21 Coach Urban Meyer Era 2005-2010

Coach # 22 Urban Meyer

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
2005	Urban Meyer	9–3	SEC	5–3
2006	Urban Meyer	13–1	SEC	7–1
2007	Urban Meyer	9–4	SEC	5–3
2008	Urban Meyer	13–1	SEC	7–1
2009	Urban Meyer	13–1	SEC	8–0
2010	Urban Meyer	8–5	SEC	4–4



Coach Meyer leading the Gators onto field for the game

Urban Meyer was a known entity

When Florida, a very successful football program sought a head coach after taking a chance for three years with a fine coach with no head coach experience, it had no choice but to pick a great one. They did so with the Master, Urban Meyer. Like him or not, Meyer is a great coach.

From Floridagators.com

URBAN MEYER NAMED FLORIDA'S HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

Saturday, December 4, 2004

Urban Meyer, a two-time National Coach of the Year and one of the nation's top young coaching talents, has been named the 22nd head football coach at the University of Florida, Gator Athletics Director Jeremy Foley announced today.



Meyer, 40, possesses 19 years of college coaching experience, including four as a head coach. Meyer turned around the football program at Bowling Green State University in 2001-02 and engineered a reversal of fortune at the University of Utah in 2003-04. Meyer, who sports a 10-1 record against Bowl Championship Series teams as a head coach, guided the Utes to a perfect 11-0 campaign this season and an expected berth in the

BCS. He has an overall mark of 38-8 (.826) and is 24-6 (.800) in conference play as head coach.

"Urban Meyer represents the qualities that we were looking for in our head coach," Foley said. "He is an innovator of the game with proven success as a head coach. He has shown the ability to attract

recruits and is a tremendous teacher. Urban's accomplishments speak for themselves. He is a man of high values and principles and we welcome him and his family to the University of Florida family."

"I am certainly excited about the opportunity to be the head coach at the University of Florida," said Meyer. "There were a lot of factors that went into this decision that our entire family had to consider. The opportunity to compete at the highest level at one of the nation's most-respected academic institutions is something that was attractive for us. The passion of Gator fans is legendary in collegiate athletics and I am eager to be a part of that environment.

"The quality of recruits within the state of Florida and the Southeast Region offers a tremendous recruiting base for us," Meyer continued.

"The support from the University's administration is evident in their commitment to my family and I am looking forward to leading the Gator football program."

"Urban Meyer is an outstanding coach with a strong record, great leadership skills and a very promising future," said UF President J. Bernard Machen. "I am very happy to welcome him along with Shelley and the Meyer family to UF and Gainesville."

Meyer recently earned the Mountain West Conference Coach of the Year award for the second straight time as the Utes begin to reap the benefits of an unbeaten regular season. On Friday, he was announced as The Home Depot 2004 Coach of the Year. In addition, Meyer is a semifinalist for both the Maxwell Club's George Munger College Coach of the Year and the Bobby Dodd Coach of the Year awards. Utah finished as the outright 2004 MWC champion to become the only back-to-back outright winners in the league's history.

Under his direction, the Utes are averaging 46.3 points per game – almost four points a game better than the school record of 42.5 ppg set back in 1930. Utah currently leads the MWC in 11 categories, including scoring offense, total offense (502.7), pass efficiency offense (171.6), pass efficiency defense (108.1), turnover margin (1.45) and third-down conversions (50.3).

The Utes were the MWC runner-up in rushing offense (244.9), passing defense (198.9), scoring defense (20.6), total defense (350.3), punt returns (10.9) and sacks against (18). Utah is ranked in the top 10 nationally in seven different categories.

Utah is riding a 15-game winning streak, the third-longest in the nation behind Boise State (22) and Southern California (20). The Utes did not trail at halftime of any 2004 game and their closest margin of victory was 14, a 49-35 win over Air Force on Sept. 25.

Meyer was named the 2003 National Coach of the Year by The Sporting News after leading the Utes to a 10-2 record, their first outright conference championship since 1957, a bowl victory and a final national ranking of No. 21. He became the first coach from the MWC and just the second coach from a non-BCS program to receive the coveted TSN award. Meyer was also voted the MWC Coach of the Year, becoming Utah's first conference coach of the year selection since 1978. He became the only coach in Utah's 111-year football history to win a conference title in his first year.

Ironically, Utah's 2003 wins came against one of the tougher schedules in school history. Two were against Pac-10 foes Oregon and California, and the Ducks were ranked No. 19 when Utah scored a 17-13 upset. The Utes also knocked off perennial league powers Colorado State, Air Force and Brigham Young. It was the first Ute sweep of that trio in 10 years and the first-ever road sweep against them. Meyer's Utes capped the season with a 17-0 victory over Conference USA champion Southern Mississippi at the AXA Liberty Bowl.

In 2003, Utah won five more games than the previous year, when it was 5-6, and matched BCS national champion LSU as the fifth-most improved team in the nation. Meyer's explosive spread offense and one of the nation's best defenses brought Utah local and national attention.

The 2003 Utes shattered their previous home attendance record by averaging 41,478 fans. The largest crowd ever to attend a Utah athletic event (46,768) and a national ESPN television audience watched the Utes beat California, 31-24, in Rice-Eccles Stadium.

Known as a defensive power, Utah's reputation on that side of the ball held true while the offense simply took off using Meyer's system. Utah shut out its last two opponents, Brigham Young and Southern Mississippi, and finished #19 in the nation in scoring defense (19.1 points per game).

On the other side of the line, Utah went from last in scoring offense in 2002 to third in the league by averaging 28.7 points per game in '03. A similar improvement (seventh to fourth) was made in total offense. Red zone scoring, a Meyer point of emphasis, rose 11 percentage points (68%-79%), with 61% of those scores coming on touchdowns (versus 49% in 2002).

Utah's special teams, under Meyer's direct supervision, also improved dramatically from past years. The Utes led the nation in kick return average (28.2 yards per return) and ranked second in the league in kickoff coverage (16.4 yards per opponent return).

Meyer began his head coaching career at Bowling Green in 2001, where he engineered the top turnaround in NCAA Division I-A football, showing a six-win improvement from the previous season. The Falcons rebounded from a 2-9 record to post their first winning season since 1994 with an 8-3 finish. For his efforts, he was named the 2001 Mid-American Conference Coach of the Year.

A year later, he guided BGSU to a 9-3 record and its highest national ranking in school history (No. 16 ESPN/USA Today and #20 Associated Press). Bowling Green spent five weeks in the national polls and finished third in the nation in scoring offense, averaging 40.8 points per game.

The Falcons, who became the highest scoring team in MAC history, also finished ninth in the nation in total offense (448.9 ypg) and 11th in rushing offense (219.1 ypg) in 2002. They were the only team in the nation to average at least 215 yards rushing and 215 yards passing per game. BGSU also led the nation in red zone production, scoring on 61-of-63 trips (.968) inside the 20-yard line, including 52 touchdowns.

Urban Meyer's teams fared well defensively, too. In 2001, BGSU ranked first in the MAC in scoring defense (19.5 ppg), rushing

defense (86.3 ypg) and total defense (319.5 ypg). Bowling Green led the MAC in turnover margin both years under Meyer.

Meyer's 17-6 record at Bowling Green included a 5-0 mark against BCS teams and two wins over ranked opponents. After his first of two wins over Missouri, Meyer was named ESPN.com National Coach of the Week in 2001.

Meyer apprenticed at Ohio State (1986-87), Illinois State (1988-89), Colorado State (1990-95) and Notre Dame (1996-2000) before getting the head job at Bowling Green. The Ashtabula, Ohio, native learned the coaching trade from the likes of Sonny Lubick, Lou Holtz, Earle Bruce and Bob Davie.

The 2000 season saw Notre Dame use a number of different receivers who helped three different Irish quarterbacks make big plays all year. Receivers Joey Getherall, David Givens, Javin Hunter and Jay Johnson helped ND rank 17th nationally in passing efficiency, as eight different receivers caught touchdown passes.

The 1999 season saw Meyer's receiving corps break the Irish single-season record for pass receptions with 192 and total receiving yards with 2,858. During 1998, Meyer coached split end Malcolm Johnson, who ended his career with 110 receptions, the seventh-most in school history.

In 1997, Meyer coached Johnson and fellow receiver Bobby Brown as they became the first Irish pair of players to record 40 or more receptions individually in a season as Brown had 45 receptions and Johnson had 42. In addition, the Notre Dame receivers helped set a then single-season school record with 190 receptions.

He coached a youthful Irish receiving corps in 1996 and helped integrate those players with veteran quarterback Ron Powlus to contribute to a Notre Dame offense that produced the third-highest figures for total offense and scoring in Irish history.

Prior to going to Notre Dame, Meyer had served as wide receiver coach for six years at Colorado State. He helped the Rams to the 1994 Western Athletic Conference title and to Holiday Bowl appearances following both the 1994 (10-2) and 1995 seasons (8-4).

In 1992, he coached wide receiver Greg Primus, an All-WAC pick who finished as Colorado State's all-time leading receiver and ended up with 192 career catches for 3,200 yards (then 10th on the NCAA's all-time yardage list). He also helped the Rams to the Freedom Bowl title following the 1990 season.

Meyer spent the previous two seasons at Illinois State, coaching quarterbacks and receivers in 1989 and outside linebackers in 1988.

He worked as receivers' coach at Ohio State in 1987 and helped the Buckeyes to a Cotton Bowl win following the 1986 campaign, when he coached tight ends.

A 13th-round pick in the Major-League Baseball Amateur Draft in 1982, an athletically talented Urban Meyer played two years in the Atlanta Braves' organization. He played as a defensive back at the University of Cincinnati before earning his degree in psychology in 1986. He went on to earn a master's degree in sports administration from Ohio State in 1988.

Urban Meyer was a great choice for Florida. I can't wait to get out from the Zook years into something that even if today were July 1, 2005, I know it would be a positive tour of duty for Coach Meyer.

2005 Coach Urban Meyer

The 2005 Florida Gators football team was the ninety-ninth season for Florida. It was the first year for Coach Urban Meyer of six great seasons as the Football Gators head coach. The team record immediately began to match the records of the Spurrier years.

Good wins, great players and a great coach were back on the agenda for the Florida Gators. Nobody worked harder than Urban Meyer. We'll give Meyer and Spurrier a tie in the work ethic category. Florida could not have made a better choice for head coach other than convincing the legendary Steve Spurrier to come back home. But, that did not happen.

It was the Gators seventy-third with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a great SEC showing with just three

SEC losses. Coach Meyer led the Gators to a Spurrier-quality regular season record of 9-3 and 5-3 in the SEC Eastern Division. Florida finished tied for second among the six SEC Eastern Division teams and Meyer brought Florida an Outback Bowl berth.

Before the season began there was a lot of good feelings because the fan base was not happy from day of the administration's decision to hire the prior head coach. The Urban Meyer arrival was well broadcast and those who rooted strongly for Florida were quite pleased.

And, so, the 2005 season would open with high expectations of new head coach Urban Meyer. Fourteen starters, seven from offense and seven from defense, would return for the 2005 season. The Gators would open the season in Gainesville against Wyoming from the Mountain West Conference. This year would also be the first-time former Gator coach Steve Spurrier would coach against his alma mater. The Florida fans will always admire coach Spurrier.

Coach Urban Meyer takes things seriously. He was not going to permit an instate rivalry to dominate a Florida team while he was coach. So, on Nov 26 when #23 Florida State decided to wipe out Florida at home, Meyer had other ideas. His Gators beat the Seminoles but good W (34-7) before 90,669.

On January 2-2006, after being invited to play in the Outback Bowl, Meyer's #16 Florida did not shirk its winning duty v # 25 Iowa at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Florida as the UF Squad prevailed W (31-24).

2006 Coach Urban Meyer

The 2006 Florida Gators football team was the One hundredth season for Florida. It was the second for Coach Urban Meyer of six great seasons as the Football Gators head coach. The team record immediately improved from the prior year and was on its way to matching and/or exceeding the great records of the Spurrier years.

This year it was more of good wins, great players and great coaching that would help the Florida Gators become recognized again as the

Nation's Football power. And, of course this 2006 National Championship cemented that notion.

It was the Gators seventy-third with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a great SEC showing with just one SEC loss. Coach Meyer led the Gators to a Spurrier-quality regular season record of 13-1 and 7-1 in the SEC Eastern Division. Florida finished first among the six SEC Eastern Division teams and won the SEC Championship and the National Championship.

Yes, this season was just the second for head coach Urban Meyer. Yet, he took the Gators that had floundered for three years, and he coached the team to an SEC Championship, a BCS National Championship, and an overall win-loss record of 13-1 (.929). Urban Meyer is a fine coach.

Florida had a lot more to overcome than just a second-year coach. Coach Meyer's Gators overcame the toughest schedule in the nation by opponent winning percentage and still they pushed forward to become national champions.

The Gators won their seventh SEC title or ninth as Spurrier counts, by defeating the Arkansas Razorbacks 38-28 in the SEC Championship Game on December 2, 2006.

They then defeated the Ohio State Buckeyes, a team which Urban Meyer now coaches, 41-14 in the BCS National Championship Game on January 8, 2007. This began the SEC's streak of seven consecutive national championships. It is not good to fool with the toughness of the Southeastern Conference.

During the 2006 season, the Florida Gators also celebrated two milestones in their history. It was the tenth anniversary of their first national football championship in 1996, brought forth by Coach Spurrier and a fantastic team. and 100 years of Florida football dating to their first season in 1906. What an accomplishment! What a program!

In addition, thought this is a football book, the fact is that the men's basketball team won both the 2006 and 2007 NCAA men's basketball national championships, and so, the University of Florida became

the first Division I school to ever win the football and men's basketball titles during the same year. How about that?

Coincidentally, the Gators, who beat Ohio State for the Football Championship, again faced and defeated Ohio State in the 2007 NCAA Basketball Tournament. This marked the first time in college sports history that identical matchups and results have occurred in both football and basketball championships. I would like my voice to be heard in praising both the Gators and the Buckeyes. That is incredible.

Pundits were high on Urban Meyer as a coach because he had produced before and it was expected that he would produce again. That is what great coaches do. Before the season if you choose to check, the polls in 2006 had Florida listed as one of the top 10 teams entering the season. The Gators had their best pre-season ranking from College Football News, which listed them at No. 2, behind only defending champion Texas. Nothing is certain in any sport but hard work always gives the team deploying such a strategy the edge.

Urban Meyer is a good man. He has another life than football thank God. He and the Gators celebrated 100 years of Florida football in the 2006 season.

Most of the starters had returned from his 2005 team that had gone 9–3. They were bolstered by a top-rated recruiting class from the previous February. The Florida schedule included a four-game stretch against teams likely to be in the top-15 teams, starting with Alabama on September 30. Nothing in life worth having, comes easy.

Ten-Year National Championship Anniversary

In this book, we reported the 1996 national championship, as Florida's first and the legendary Steve Spurrier's first. Over times such events have great anniversaries. The Gators celebrated the ten-year anniversary of winning their 1996 national championship in football during the opening game against Southern Miss.

Among the attendees was Steve Spurrier, a Florida legend on multiple fronts.

Spurrier had coached the team to its only championship ever, in that particular season. Having respect for an institution that respects him greatly, Mr. Spurrier took time off from his coaching duties at the University of South Carolina to pay a tribute to his former Gators team.

Many people had speculated that because of Spurrier's hiring as the South Carolina Gamecocks coach, he would be booed, but instead he received a very loud ovation during the ceremony. Steve Spurrier was, is, and seemingly always will be an adored legendary figure for the University of Florida.

It may not appear so special but in 2006, the Gators also celebrated 100 years since the start of its football program in 1906. You and I have weathered the good and the bad as we traversed 100 years of game highlights, great wins, and great positioning for a great football future. Bravo Gators! Go Gators!

2006 SEC Championship Game

On Dec 2, # 8 Arkansas was beaten by # 4 Florida in the Georgia Dome in Atlanta for the SEC Championship W (38–28). The fourth ranked Gators took on the eighth ranked Arkansas Razorbacks in the 2006 SEC Championship Game. Both teams were ready to leave behind their respective SEC Championship droughts. Florida had not won the title since 2000, and the Razorbacks lost in their previous two title game appearances.

The Gators were favored by three points. Before the game really started, both teams traded three and outs. Then, like a time bomb. Florida exploded in the second quarter. Up 3–0, Chris Leak was called for a rare quarterback draw which he converted by fighting into the end zone. This gave the Gators a 10–0 lead. On the next Florida drive, Leak found game MVP Percy Harvin on a perfectly thrown 37-yard touchdown pass. However, the Razorbacks came back with a single touchdown of their own. QB Casey Dick, who had been struggled in the recent Razorback games threw a perfect pass to

Marcus Monk who caught the pass for a 47-yard touchdown. The Gators led 17–7 as the whistle blew for the half.

At half time, the Florida team and fans learned that the third ranked USC Trojans lost in a shocking upset to rival UCLA. With this turn of events, Florida had a great shot at overtaking #2 Michigan to play in the BCS National Championship Game. They therefore needed this win and a strong showing.

But Arkansas came out all fired up and firing on target in the second half. Using the unusual "Wildcat Formation", All American tailback Darren McFadden threw a quick two-yard touchdown to fellow tailback Felix Jones. On the next offensive series, Gators quarterback Chris Leak was intercepted on an attempted shovel pass which was returned by Antwain Robinson for a touchdown, giving the Razorbacks a remarkable 21–17 lead. Florida regained the ball, but was stuffed by the Arkansas defense.

Coach Urban Meyer decided he had to do something to break the inertia of the Razorbacks. He ran a fake punt on his own 15-yard line, which proved to be a good call, as receiver Jemalle Cornelius scampered for a 16-yard gain. Even with this swing of momentum, the Gators were still keep moving and opted to punt from midfield.

The momentum then changed yet again, this time in Florida's favor. Punt returner Reggie Fish muffed the punt after trying to field it over his shoulder; the ball was recovered in the end zone by freshman Wondy Pierre-Louis, giving the Gators a 24–21 lead. It could not have been written out any better. The Gators took the three-point lead into the fourth quarter knowing with a win, they would have made their case to play in the BCS.

They got the job done. In the fourth quarter, Percy Harvin scored on a 67-yard run and Chris Hetland got the kick making the score 31 to 21. Then Arkansas' Felix Jones snagged a 29-yard pass from Cedric Washington for a score with the Gators still in the lead. With Jeremy Davis' kick the score was 31-28. With 9:04 left in the game, Tim Tebow came into the game. Tebow appeared to be running yet again, but pitched the ball to wide receiver Andre Caldwell who threw the ball five yards to Tate Casey. Chris Hetland made the kick giving Florida the game W (38-28).



2006 BCS Championship Game—A Great Game

The year was so great that the #2 Gators were invited to play on January 8, 2007 v #1 Ohio State at U. of Phoenix Stadium • Glendale, Arizona (BCS Championship). The Gators had their way W (41–14) before a nice crowd of 74,628.

It sounds so good, let me say it again: The Florida Gators ended this phenomenal season with a stunning 41–14 upset of the number one ranked Ohio State Buckeyes, giving them the school's second national championship in ten years. The national championship win also gives the University of Florida the distinction of being the only school to ever hold both the men's basketball national championship and football championship simultaneously.

2007 Coach Urban Meyer

The 2007 Florida Gators football team was the One hundred-first season for Florida. It was the third for Coach Urban Meyer of six great seasons as the Football Gators head coach. This was literally a rebuilding year from 2006's National Championship Team but still nine wins is not too shabby.

It was the Gators seventy-fifth with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a great SEC showing with just three SEC losses. Coach Meyer led the Gators to a Capital One Bowl berth and a regular season record of 9-4 and 5-3 in the SEC Eastern Division. Florida finished third among the six SEC Eastern Division teams. The team's quarterback was Tim Tebow, the first sophomore ever to win the Heisman Trophy.

Player Highlights Tim Tebow, Sophomore

In terms of Florida Gator greats, most pundits rate Tim Tebow as the #1 Gator in the school's 110 years of football. A Jacksonville native, Tebow owns five NCAA, 14 SEC and 28 Florida records. His greatest accomplishment in college according to many is that he led the Gators to two touchdowns in the final 10 minutes to beat No. 1 Alabama in the 2008 SEC Championship Game. They say it was better than as a sophomore he won the Heisman Trophy in 2007, becoming the first sophomore to ever win the award.



When Tebow gained the Heisman in 2007, he joined Steve Spurrier ('1996) and Danny Wuerffel ('96) as other Gator Heisman winners.

He was known as a tough, physical player, who happened to be a great QB and a great runner. He rushed and passed for 51 touchdowns during the 2007 regular season, becoming the first of the great 'spread' quarterbacks to win the Heisman.

Of course, this year, the Gators had to replace Chris Leak at quarterback. Leak's replacement, sophomore Tim Tebow got a lot of playing time as a freshman.

UF was invited to the Citrus Bowl to play Michigan in the Capital One Bowl on January 1 and the Gators lost a close game to the Wolverines L (35-41). This was only the second meeting between the two storied programs with the first having taken place a short five seasons ago in the Outback Bowl. Lloyd Carr coached his Wolverines for the final time with the announcement of his retirement shortly after his final regular season game against rival Ohio State.

Urban Meyer and the Gators were looking to carry their momentum from the second half of the season with Heisman-winning sophomore Tim Tebow into the bowl game. The Gators lost the game 41–35 as Michigan barraged the Gator defense for over 500 yards of offense. Chad Henne finished his career at the University of Michigan with a victory in a bowl game, the first in five seasons, and finished with a career high in passing yards. The newly named Michigan head coach, Rich Rodriguez, could be seen during the game along the Michigan sidelines.

2008 Coach Urban Meyer

The 2008 Florida Gators football team was the One hundred-second season for Florida. It was the fourth for Coach Urban Meyer of six great seasons as the Football Gators head coach. This was another great year for the Gators with just one loss.

It was the Gators seventy-sixth with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again a great SEC showing with just one SEC loss. Coach Meyer led the Gators to a Bowl berth and a regular season record of 13-1 and 7-1 in the SEC Eastern Division. Florida finished first among the six SEC Eastern Division teams and won the SEC Conference Championship and the BCS Championship finishing #1 in the AP and Coach's poll. The team's quarterback was Heisman winner Tim Tebow, playing in his Junior year.

Before the season, coach Urban Meyer suffered the loss of assistant coaches for the first time in his tenure. Co-recruiting coordinator and safeties coach Doc Holliday left to become an assistant at his alma mater, West Virginia, running backs coach Stan Drayton took the same job with the Tennessee Volunteers, and co-defensive coordinator and defensive line coach Greg Mattison joined the new coaching staff of the Baltimore Ravens. Offensive coordinator Dan Mullen left to become the head coach of the Mississippi State Bulldogs at the end of the 2008 season.

Player Highlights Percy Harvin

Percy Harvin played football for the Gators under coach Urban Meyer from 2006-08. Harvin, from Virginia, was the top high school prospect in America in 2006 and he soon became the most dangerous weapon on the Gators' roster by his sophomore season. Some say his greatest moment as when he rushed nine times for 122 yards and caught five passes for 49 yards in Florida's victory over Oklahoma in the team's 2009 BCS National Championship game.

The season started with a visit from Hawaii to Ben Hill Griffin Stadium on the University campus in Gainesville. The preseason ranked #5 Gators defeated the Rainbow Warriors W (56-10) before a crowd of 90,575.



Brandon Spikes and Ryan Stamper stop Graig Cooper from getting 1st down during 3Q

Beating Miami is really a big deal for Florida

On Sept 6, Florida beat cross-state rival Miami at home W (26-3). It was sweet. This was the first match between the two rivals since the 2004 Peach Bowl where the Gators lost to Miami 27-10. This game was also the first regular season meeting between the two teams since 2003 where the then #18 Gators nearly upset the #3 Miami Hurricanes at the Orange Bowl. The last time the Gators defeated the Hurricanes was in 1985 where the Gators defeated Miami in Miami with a score of 35-23.

Ole Miss Defeats the Gators

What could have been a big season-changer came as a determined but unranked Ole Miss defeated #4 UF on Sept 27 at home in a one-point battle L (30–31). From this point on, Florida won every game they played for the rest of the year including the championships and the bowl game.

In the Ole Miss Game, it was back and forth as the score would indicate. This is the first time the Gators had played the Rebels at home since their loss in 2003 against the Eli Manning-led Rebels squad. Entering this game, Urban Meyer was 21-1 at home in Gainesville and Houston Nutt was 0-3 against the Gators. Ole Miss's starting quarterback Jevan Snead, a transfer from the University of Texas, had committed to play for the Gators prior to the 2006 season before de-committing.

With the game was at 17-17 at the 10:30 mark in the third quarter. Florida's next two possessions on offense were negative 3 and the other was for just 19 yards. The Gators punted both times. After having regaining possession with 4:34 left in the third, Jevan Snead and Ole Miss put together a 3:42 drive that went 72 yards down the field resulting in a rushing touchdown by RB Dexter McCluster. This brought Ole Miss's lead back up to 7—same as it was early in the 1st quarter.

After a 25-yard kickoff return by Brandon James, Florida put together a 49-yard drive ending with touchdown from a Tim Tebow rush, tying the game at 24 apiece. Florida's defense could not stop

Ole Miss. The Rebels scored again on an 86-yard touchdown reception by Shay Hodge, thereby taking a 31-24 lead with only 5:26 left to play.

Would Florida come back again? Starting on their own 32, a full 68 yards away from the end zone, the Gators scored a touchdown in less than 2 minutes. Percy Harvin took the honors running in from 15 yards for the score. The Gators only needed the extra point to tie the game. Ole Miss was ready and Kentrell Lockett blocked the attempt.



Tim Tebow gets stopped by the Ole Miss defense on fourth down and one in 2008

Florida regained possession with 2:05 left in the game and were able to get to the Ole Miss 32-yard line. On 4th and 1 with 41 seconds left in the game, Tim Tebow rushed the ball but was stopped by an alert Rebels defense--short of the first down marker. Ole Miss got the ball back and ran the clock out upsetting the higher ranked Gators at home.

The stats suggest that Ole Miss should not have won this game, yet, they did and nobody whined about it. The Gators would end the game with more yards, 443 to 325, as well as with more first downs, 24 to 10. The Gators, however, had three turnovers, which was uncharacteristic given that they had zero in the first three games of

the season. Ole Miss only had just one turnover in the game as well as double the number of penalties (10 to 5).

After the game, an emotional Florida quarterback Tim Tebow addressed the media on the loss to Ole Miss:

“I'm sorry. I'm extremely sorry. We were hoping for an undefeated season. That was my goal, something Florida's never done here. But I promise you one thing: a lot of good will come out of this. You have never seen any player in the entire country play as hard as I will play the rest of this season and you'll never see someone push the rest of the team as hard as I will push everybody the rest of this season, and you'll never see a team play harder than we will the rest of this season. God Bless.”

— Tim Tebow,

SEC Championship Game

Florida played #1 Alabama on Dec 6 for the SEC Championship and won W (31-20). It was fortuitous as it gave the Gators a head to head win v #1 Alabama for the national rankings and with both teams having just one loss—well, you know!

The Florida Gators came back to the Georgia Dome after two years from when they last won the Championship in 2006 to play against #1 Alabama for the SEC title. This was the Gators' second visit to the SEC Championship Game since the 2006 game where they faced the SEC West champion Arkansas. The 2007 season SEC East representative in the title game was the Tennessee Volunteers. Alabama returned to the SEC Championship Game after a nine-year appearance drought.



In the 1999 SEC Championship Game, the Crimson Tide defeated the Gators with a score of 34 to 7. Florida's last win over the Tide in the title game occurred in the 1996 SEC Championship Game where the Gators would end up playing Florida State in the Sugar Bowl and Steve Spurrier's team would go on to win a first national championship for the Gators.

This game was Florida's ninth appearance in the game and they had a great record of 6-2 before kickoff. Alabama was 2-3 entering the game with their two wins over the Florida Gators in 1992—the first year of the championship game—and 1999.

When it was over, it was the Gators' seventh victory in the SEC championship game and Urban Meyer's second SEC title since becoming the head coach of the team in 2005. The teams clearly played great. But, Meyer must be acknowledged as a great coach who led these great athletes to victory.

This was the Florida Gator's eighth officially recognized SEC title with the first occurring in 1991 before the formation of the Championship Game. With the win over #1 Alabama, the Gators

were selected to play in the BCS National Championship Game, where they would face destiny against the tough Oklahoma Sooners.



Gator celebration after the BCS win

Bob Stoops and the Sooners extended their BCS bowl losing streak to five games and have lost two national championships at Dolphin Stadium after winning his only championship in the same stadium in 2001.

Urban Meyer's BCS bowl record extended to 3-0 with the first won as head coach of the Utah Utes. He has a bowl game record at Florida of 3-1 with his only bowl loss coming in the previous season. This was the Gators' 3rd national championship in school history and their second in the last three seasons.

2009 Coach Urban Meyer

The 2009 Florida Gators football team was the One hundred-third season for Florida. It was the fifth for Coach Urban Meyer of six great seasons as the Football Gators head coach. This was another respectable year for the Gators with just one loss.

The Gators competed in the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Eastern Division of the Southeastern Conference (SEC). It was the Gators seventy-seventh with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC).

It was again a great SEC showing with no SEC losses. Coach Meyer led the Gators to a Bowl berth and a regular season record of 13-1 and 8-0 in the SEC Eastern Division. Florida finished first among the six SEC Eastern Division teams and lost the SEC Conference Championship and played in the BCS Championship finishing #3 in the AP and #3 in the Coach's poll. The team's quarterback was Heisman winner Tim Tebow, playing in his Senior year.

With senior quarterback Tim Tebow and eleven defensive starters returning, the Gators had hoped to repeat as back-to-back national champions following their BCS National Championship at the end of the 2008 season. They finished with an undefeated 12-0 regular season, their first since 1995, but the Gators' 32-13 loss to the Alabama Crimson Tide in the SEC Championship Game derailed their national title hopes, and forced them to settle for a berth in the Sugar Bowl. At the conclusion of the 2009 season, the Gators were ranked No. 3 in both major polls.

On December 26, 2009, Gators athletic director Jeremy Foley announced that Urban Meyer would step down as the team's head coach for health and family reasons. The following day, Meyer stated that he would instead take an indefinite leave of absence, allowing him to resume his position as the head coach. Meyer returned to coach the Gators in spring practice in March 2010.

On January 11, 2009 during the national championship celebration at the University of Florida, quarterback Tim Tebow announced his intention to return for his senior season. This was followed on January 15 by linebacker Brandon Spikes who announced his intention to return as well. With Spikes' return, the entire two-deep of the Gators defense was set to return for the 2009 season. One major loss was All-America wide receiver Percy Harvin, who opted to leave the University of Florida to enter the 2009 NFL Draft.

The Gators also lost offensive coordinator and quarterback coach Dan Mullen, who became the head coach at Mississippi State following Sylvester Croom's resignation. Former offensive line coach Steve Addazio was named as Mullen's replacement, with Scot Loeffler hired to take on the role of quarterback coach.

Florida was voted #1 in both the preseason USA Today Coaches' Poll and the AP Poll. The Gators received the highest ever percentage of preseason #1 votes in the history of the AP Poll, which began in 1950.

Florida emerged after its last regular season game as undefeated for the entire regular season 12-0. What a great year. At 8-0, Florida had won the Eastern SEC. Now, it was time for the big SEC Championship game. Alabama was the foe. They had dominated the Western Division and were also undefeated going into the championship game. So, on Dec5, at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, the two teams faced off. Only one would be SEC Champion; then move on to play for the National Championship.

On a day in December, #2 Alabama was the better team though playing #1 ranked Florida. Alabama got off to a great start and kept it up until they had beaten the Florida Gators by the score of L (13-32) before a nice crowd of 75,514. Alabama was crowned SEC Champions. Florida's only recourse was to look for tomorrow.

This defeat kept the Gators from the BCS Championship game but they did play in the January 1 Sugar Bowl against #4 Cincinnati, coached by Brian Kelly, who had just committed to replace Charley Weis at Notre Dame. The Gators were ranked #5. The game was played in the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans, LA. The Gators had no problem with the Bearcats. W (51-24) before 65,207 fans.

2010 Coach Urban Meyer

The 2010 Florida Gators football team was the One hundred-fourth season for Florida. It was the sixth and last for Coach Urban Meyer of six great seasons as the Football Gators head coach. This was another respectable year for the Gators, even with five losses.

The Gators competed in the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Eastern Division of the Southeastern Conference (SEC).

It was the Gators seventy-eighth with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was again an OK SEC showing with four SEC losses. Coach Meyer led the Gators to a Bowl berth and a regular season record of 8-5 and 4-4 in the SEC Eastern Division. Florida finished third among the six SEC Eastern Division teams. Coach Meyer ended his coaching career by leading the Gators to a 37–24 Outback Bowl victory over coach Joe Paterno's Penn State Nittany Lions,

As the season unwinded, on November 13, Steve Spurrier's well-coached Gamecocks gained a victory over the Gators at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium L (14-36).



A non-SEC school, Appalachian State was then pounded by the Gators at home on Nov 20 W (48–10). Florida State was next. The Seminoles could smell blood as the Gators were not having their finest year and they out played the Gators on Nov 27 at Doak

Campbell Stadium in Tallahassee, FL L (L 7–31). So, went the season.

On January 1, somehow Florida, now an institution with a top name in football with a 7-5 record got to play in a major bowl – the Outback Bowl. At Raymond James Stadium. The Gators beat Joe Paterno's Penn State Nittany Lions that day W 37–24 before a crowd of 60,574 and a national TV audience. The Gators finished 8-5.

Urban Meyer, Florida Coach-- made an impact.

When Urban Meyer thought about leaving before this year began, he actually gave his notice but then took it back. He loves being a football coach but his style of coaching demands that he gives it his all. Like a maple tree whose sap can only produce so much syrup in a year, Meyer was tapped out. He needed to address his health and he did.

And, so in a combination of not being able to work as hard and not having his great 2009 team to drive the program, thus needing a rebuilding year like many programs, the Gators win # slipped lower than nine for the first time in his years with the Gators. Yet, it was still positive and quite respectable. Meyer needed real time off, however, to get his life and his future coaching act together and he could not do that with a university, any university pinning their next season on his ability to bring it all in.

I love using the words of others to describe what I feel. Here is a great article from ESPN.com that nets out the Urban Meyer departure from Florida. We all knew we would miss him as Urban Meyer's come along as infrequently as Steve Spurrier's do.

Urban Meyer stepping down at Florida

Dec 9, 2010

ESPN.com news services

GAINESVILLE, Fla. -- With his wife and two of his three children sitting a few feet away, Urban Meyer didn't have to look very far to

be reminded why he's leaving one of the premier jobs in college football.

It's all about family.

Meyer resigned from Florida on Wednesday, stepping down for the second time in less than a year. His first attempt, which lasted just a day, was for health reasons. This time it's to be a better husband and father.

"At the end of the day, I'm very convinced that you're going to be judged on how you are as a husband and as a father and not on how many bowl games we won," Meyer said at a campus news conference.



"I've not seen my two girls play high school sports. They're both very talented Division I-A volleyball players, so I missed those four years. I missed two already with one away at college. I can't get that time back," he said.

Meyer will coach his last game for Florida in the Jan. 1 Outback Bowl against Penn State in Tampa.

The 46-year-old coach led the Gators to two national titles but briefly resigned last December, citing health concerns. He had been hospitalized with chest pains after the Gators lost to Alabama in last season's Southeastern Conference championship game.

"Last year was a knee-jerk reaction," Meyer said. "This year was just completely different."

Meyer called Florida athletic director Jeremy Foley on Saturday to tell him he was contemplating retirement. They met Tuesday to finalize his intentions.

Meyer signed a six-year, \$24 million extension in 2009, meaning he's walking away from about \$20 million in guaranteed salary. But Foley did agree to pay Meyer a \$1 million retention bonus the coach would have received had he been employed on Jan. 31, 2011.

This time, Foley doesn't anticipate another change of heart.

"He's worked his tail off," Foley said. "You think of what he's rebuilt. He built one at Bowling Green, he built one at Utah, he built one here. It's not just sacrifices here the last six years. That's 10 years of their lives, not to mention what he did before that as an assistant coach. It's his time to step back and spend time with his family. You're not getting it back. I admire him for that."

Foley said the coaching search will begin immediately and he hopes to have a new coach before Christmas. Although Foley declined to offer names, Utah's Kyle Whittingham, Mississippi State's Dan Mullen and Arkansas' Bobby Petrino are likely on the list.

Meyer said he planned to be involved in the search, which could make Whittingham and Mullen front-runners. Whittingham was Meyer's defensive coordinator in Utah, and Mullen served as the offensive coordinator at Florida. Petrino was Foley's second choice behind Meyer in 2004.

"I don't see why it should take that long," Foley said, adding that he has not contacted anyone.

Meyer's announcement caught players, fans and the rest of college football by surprise.

He called assistant coaches, many of whom were on the road recruiting, earlier this week to relay the news. Quarterbacks coach Scot Loeffler told the AP he was "stunned" and that no one saw this coming.

"We'll be fine," said Loeffler, adding that Meyer was planning to meet with his staff Wednesday night. "It happens in this profession. We're just happy for him. He's doing it the right way."

Fellow coaches were quick to praise his efforts at Florida.

"The world of college football will miss Urban," said former USC coach Pete Carroll, who left his job for the NFL's Seattle Seahawks.

"He did a great job coaching at Florida. He had major personal issues and health issues a year ago, and I'm sure that he did everything he could to fight it off. Now he's making decisions that are probably exactly what he needs to be doing."

Added former Florida coach and current South Carolina coach Steve Spurrier: "I believe he will coach again someday, but if he doesn't, he will go down as one of the best coaches in college football history."

Meyer left open the possibility of returning to the sideline but said it was not going to happen in the "immediacy."

He plans to catch his daughters' volleyball matches -- his oldest is a sophomore at Georgia Tech and the other will attend Florida Gulf Coast next fall -- and catch more of his son's athletic events.

"There's not a perfect time; however, this is probably about as good a time you can have," Meyer said.

Former Florida quarterback Tim Tebow applauded Meyer's decision.

"I respect that Coach Meyer had the courage to make the decision that was right for himself and his family," the Denver Broncos quarterback said in a statement. He will be blessed and better off for

it. I am truly glad that he's happy and no matter what, we both will be Gators for the rest of our lives."

The decision to walk away was even tougher because of Florida's struggles this season. The Gators were near the bottom of the SEC in every offensive category; got blown out in games against Alabama, South Carolina and Florida State; and finished 7-5.

It was the most losses in Meyer's 10-year coaching career.

"I just think Florida deserves the best, and I'm not sure we gave them my best this year," he said.

Meyer was hired away from Utah by Florida after he led the Utes to an undefeated season. In his second season in Gainesville, he led the Gators to a national championship. Two seasons later he won another, the third time overall the school topped the final AP Top 25.

A bid for another national championship fell short in 2009, and the day after Christmas, Meyer surprisingly announced that he was giving up the job. Less than 24 hours later, he changed his mind and decided to instead take a leave of absence.

Meyer had to scale it back in January -- he didn't go on the road recruiting -- but still worked steadily through national signing day. He returned for spring practice in March but managed to take significant time off before and after.

But this season he had to replace Tebow, several other stars who moved on to the NFL and four assistant coaches, and the Gators struggled mightily.

Florida lost five regular-season games for the first time since 1988. The season ended with an embarrassing 31-7 defeat to Florida State, Meyer's first loss to the rival Seminoles.

After that game, Meyer vowed to fix the Gators' problems.

Now, he'll help find the person to do it.

"It has to be fixed," he said. "It's broke a little bit right now. But the way you fix it is hard work. When I say broke it's broke because of a

constant attrition of coaches who, God bless them, have gone on to be great head coaches. ... You lose five juniors to the NFL draft and you have a little bit of a void in there right now. But it's Florida. We'll be back strong, stronger than ever."

Information from The Associated Press was used in this ESPN report.

Chapter 22 Coach Will Muschamp Era 2011 to 2014

Coach # 23 William Larry Muschamp

Coach # 24 D J Durkin

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
2011	Will Muschamp	7–6	SEC	3–5
2012	Will Muschamp	11–2	SEC	7–1
2013	Will Muschamp	4–8	SEC	3–5
2014	Will Muschamp	7–5	SEC	4–4
2014	D J Durkin, Interim			



Will Muschamp Getting Ready to lead the Gators onto the field

My objective in finding leading and closing articles for modern Florida coaches, is to provide insights for why a selection is made, and then we ask whether it was either good or bad.

Excerpts from A Man and His Plan: Will Muschamp's Rise to Become a Head Coach Included a Personal Road Map to Guide Way

By Scott Carter

Posted: Wednesday, August 3, 2011

<http://floridagators.com/news/2011/8/3/21078.aspx?print=true>

GAINESVILLE, Fla. – The competitor we've seen in those highlights on the sideline was born in all those backyard battles with his older brothers, Mike and Pat.

...

On his 39th birthday a year ago, Muschamp envisioned a much different future as coach-in-waiting at Texas under Mack Brown. And then Urban Meyer resigned after the season. And then Jeremy Foley called. And then he told Brown about an offer to take over the Gators and how it all seemed to fit perfectly into his plan.

The next thing Muschamp knew he was standing in front of a packed room at the Swamp in December as Florida's new head coach. The plan was always to take over a high-profile program like the Gators someday.

...

When Muschamp talks about how he got here, he starts by going back to those sweaty battles with Mike and Pat. It didn't matter what sport they were playing; the Muschamp boys went at each other hard.

Will was the youngest and always out to prove himself. They played football in the fall, basketball in the winter and early spring, and baseball in the spring and summer.

...

Muschamp's interest in coaching grew into a real career option during his college career at Georgia. A walk-on safety, Muschamp's tenacity and team-first attitude earned the respect of Bulldogs Coach Ray Goff and his assistants.

Muschamp eventually earned a scholarship and often spent extra time watching film and learning all he could about the game, knowing that his future in the game was most likely on the sideline and not on the field.

"I wasn't good enough to play after college, and then you get in that crossroads, 'Well, what am I going to do with the rest of my life?' " Muschamp said. "I was always close to my coaches at Georgia. I was always very appreciative of the extra input they gave me about coaching."

...

Muschamp got his first break when he took a job as a graduate defensive assistant at Auburn under Terry Bowden. That's where he first met Fisher and Florida State offensive line coach Rick Trickett, future colleagues at LSU under Saban who later recommended Muschamp to for a job opening.

"It really soothed that yearning for competition, building a common purpose and being a part of something special," Muschamp said. "I'm very team-oriented. I love the team concept and football in my opinion is the ultimate team sport."

...

The story of how Muschamp and Saban first met has been well-documented. LSU was in Atlanta preparing to face Georgia Tech in the 2000 Peach Bowl.

Muschamp, shortly after his first season at Valdosta State, was in Atlanta visiting in-laws and called up Fisher to see if he could stop by the Georgia Dome and watch LSU practice.

So, on Christmas Day, Muschamp dropped by and was introduced by Fisher to Saban.

"I can remember plain as day," Fisher told the Birmingham News in 2010 prior to Saban's Alabama team defeating Muschamp's Longhorns in the BCS title game. "Nick pulled me aside and said, 'Who's that?' I said, 'Coach, he went to Georgia. Don't worry. He ain't gonna tell Georgia Tech anything.' "

A month later, LSU linebackers coach Sal Sunseri left for a job at Michigan State. Fisher urged Saban to consider Muschamp for the opening.

The big break Muschamp needed had arrived. It came via a phone call from Fisher.

"Would you be interested in coming to LSU?" Fisher asked.

"Of course," Muschamp replied.

"Well, we've recommended you for the job here coaching linebackers," Fisher told him.

Much like the way he landed at Florida, the wheels started spinning fast.

"Within that night, I talked to Nick and the next morning I was on a plane to Baton Rouge and was offered the linebackers job that night," Muschamp said. "In less than a 24-hour period my career certainly took a huge swing in a positive way."

Working for Saban is when Muschamp began to formalize his plan to eventually take over his own program. Saban was the perfect teacher at the perfect time.

"I learned total program management. He always talked to the staff about career advancement – be careful what you ask for, take the

right job, be patient, it's a marathon not a race. All of those things really resonate with me today," Muschamp said. "I've had some head coaching opportunities, some that I didn't even pursue and some I had point-blank offered and turned down until the Florida job."

Muschamp's career has been stuck on fast-forward since he joined LSU. After a season coaching linebackers, Muschamp took over as defensive coordinator from 2002-04. When Saban left for the NFL, Muschamp served as Miami's assistant head coach for defense in

..

As he searched for a replacement for Meyer, [Florida AD] Foley also had a plan, one that included someone with a stellar reputation and familiarity with the SEC. Muschamp fit like a glove, and after a face-to-face meeting, Foley was sure he had found his man.

Meanwhile, Florida was a perfect fit for the vision that Muschamp had of his first job as a head coach.

He wanted a recruiting base that included a talent pool within a three- to five-hour radius from campus with which you could win the SEC. Check. He wanted great support of the football program from the administration, starting at the top with the school president. Check. He wanted resources and facilities in place to attract the kind of recruits you can win a national title with. Check.

The deal was done as soon as Foley offered the job in Muschamp's mind – and that's not even factoring into the equation his roots in Gainesville. The Muschamp family lived here for 10 years when Will was growing up.

Muschamp's hiring drew the attention of his SEC colleagues, including Saban and Dooley.

"Will is one of my favorites," Saban recently told reporters. "He's got great principles and values personally and philosophically as a football coach."

"I had mixed feelings," Tennessee coach Dooley said at SEC Football Media Days. "I was proud of him. He deserved it. He's

earned it. But I'd rather him been at Texas because he's a friend of mine. I mean, that's just how it is. He's going to do a great job, there's no doubt in my mind.

“But we got to play each other every year and that's a big game for both programs.”

Muschamp's reputation as a stickler for details followed him to Florida.

In his first staff meeting once his new coaching staff was complete, Muschamp handed out notebooks with the plan for his first 100 days as head coach. He has since devised a plan with George Wynn, his former Georgia teammate and Assistant Athletics Director of Football Operations for the Gators, which is mapped out all the way through next summer.

As he turns 40, Muschamp's master plan adds another milestone a month from today when he leads the Gators onto the field against Florida Atlantic on Sept. 3 – his first game as a head coach.

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End of article excerpts.

2011 Coach Will Muschamp

The 2011 Florida Gators football team was the One hundred-fifth season for Florida. It was the first year for Coach Will Muschamp of four seasons as the Football Gators head coach. This record was just under OK year for the Gators, with six losses.

The Gators competed in the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Eastern Division of the Southeastern Conference (SEC).

It was the Gators seventy-ninth with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). They played their home games at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium on the university's Gainesville, Florida campus. It was a less than OK SEC showing with five SEC losses.

Coach Muschamp led the Gators to a Bowl berth and a regular season record of 7-6 and 3-5 in the SEC Eastern Division. Florida finished in third place among the six SEC Eastern Division teams.

This was the first six loss season since Galen Hall in 1987 went 6-6.

On January 2, 2012 v Ohio State at EverBank Field in Jacksonville, Florida picked itself up by the bootstraps and decided to win and played to win the Gator Bowl W 24-17 before 61,312.

2012 Coach Will Muschamp

The 2012 Florida Gators football team was the One hundred-sixth season for Florida. It was the second year for Coach Will Muschamp of four seasons as the Football Gators head coach. This two-loss year was great under anybody's standards and it was the best of Will Muschamp's four years at Florida. The team came alive.

The Gators competed in the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Eastern Division of the Southeastern Conference (SEC). It was the Gators eightieth with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). They played their home games at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium on the university's Gainesville, Florida campus.

It was a great year overall and in the SEC with just one-loss. Unfortunately, the loss came against Georgia and prevented the team from winning first place among the six SEC Eastern Division teams. Georgia came in #1.

Overall, Florida finished the season with 11-2, 7-1 SEC, sharing SEC Eastern Division title with Georgia. But, in head to head, Georgia had won and thus, they played for the SEC Championship. The team was invited to the 2013 Sugar Bowl, where they lost to the Louisville Cardinals, 33-23.

With an 11-1 record, Florida had its pick of Bowls and chose the Sugar Bowl at the Superdome in New Orleans, LA. Their opponent

was #21 ranked Louisville. The Gators were flat and lost the game L (23-33) before 54, 178 fans.

The following Sugar Bowl Game Recap is from <https://www.allstatesugarbowl.org/site559.php>

79th Annual Allstate Sugar Bowl ~ January 2, 2013

#21 Louisville 33 (Final: 11-2, #13)

#3 Florida 23 (Final: 11-2, #9)

It was no fluke. This Sugar Bowl belonged to Louisville from start to finish. Terrell Floyd's 38-yard interception return on the game's first play set the tone; and the Gators never fully recovered.



"I cannot tell a lie," Floyd said of his snare of a deflected ball. "I was just in the right place at the right time."

How Louisville and Florida Met in the 2013 Allstate Sugar Bowl

It was 14-0 after Louisville's first offensive possession, when star quarterback Teddy Bridgewater, who

constantly bought time with nimble foot work throughout the night, and completed 10 of his first 11 passes, drove his team 83 yards to the Florida 1, where Jeremy Wright scored on the ground. From then on, the Gators could get no closer than the 10-point margin in which the 79th Sugar Bowl ended.

The Cardinals soared to a 24-10 halftime lead, and so flummoxed were the Gators that they started the second half with an on-sides kick - unsuccessful, and made worse with two personal fouls on

Florida. Bridgewater connected with Damon Copeland in the end zone and Louisville had a 30-10 lead 12 seconds into the second half.



Florida would miss a pair of field goals, making its task harder, but after John Wallace kicked a 30-yard field goal for the Cardinals in the fourth quarter, Gator speedster Andre Debose returned the kickoff 100 yards to keep Florida within range of a football miracle.

With time starting to run out, Florida quarterback Jeff Driskel - recruited over Bridgewater two years before - guided his team 97 yards. With 2:13 remaining Driskel hit Kent Taylor with a two-yard touchdown pass.

The Gators had scored 13 fourth-quarter points and now had an outside chance to make up a 10-point deficit and stave off an embarrassing defeat.

Improbably, they would need a two-point conversion at this point, then a successful on-sides kick, another touchdown and another two-point conversion to send the game into overtime - and avoid the stigma of becoming the biggest favorite ever to lose, not only in the

Sugar but in any of the major postseason pairings in the 15-year BCS era.

Driskel took the snap and rolled out to look for another open receiver. But defensive back Marcus Smith shot in untouched and sacked Driskel - effectively ending the game, securing the 22rd-ranked Cardinals' greatest victory and dooming No. 3 Florida to a humiliating setback.

"That was our statement!" screamed Smith immediately afterward.

In the end, Louisville outhit, outsmarted, and out-executed its more heralded opponents for the entire night. After the 24-10 halftime lead, the Cardinals never allowed the Gators to muster one of their patented second-half surges.

The discombobulated Gators turned the ball over three times, and committed nine penalties for 98 yards, including one on their bench for unsportsmanlike conduct.

On this night, Bridgewater thoroughly outplayed the quarterback the Gators signed instead of him (Driskel was 16-of-29 for 179 yards with a pair of costly interceptions). Bridgewater was 20-of-32 for 206 yards and two touchdowns.

"He was the best player on the field," Strong said simply.

"I don't even feel like I'm here right now, " Cardinals senior center Mario Benavideo said with confetti raining down from the Superdome ceiling. "It's so unreal. . . . 90 percent of the people thought we didn't belong. My mom and dad were in the 10 percent."

Louisville cornerback Andrew Johnson, who had one of two interceptions of Driskel, exalted, "Winning this game is making history."

The game opened with a memorable coin toss as Florida was represented by the NFL's all-time leading rusher, Emmitt Smith, and 1997 Heisman Trophy winner Danny Wuerffel, while Louisville was represented by former football great Tom Jackson, as well as the man

known as "The Greatest of All-Time," Louisville native Muhammad Ali.



Recap by Sugar Bowl historian Marty Mulé, an award-winning sportswriter who covered college football and the Sugar Bowl for the New Orleans Times-Picayune for 33 years.

2013 Coach Will Muschamp

The 2013 Florida Gators football team was the One hundred-seventh season for Florida. It was the third year for Coach Will Muschamp of four seasons as the Football Gators head coach. This eight-loss losing season was the worst record for the Gators since Charley Pell's first year when he went 0-10-1.

This was the worst season of Will Muschamp's four years at Florida. The clock was ticking for Will Muschamp after this season for sure. Many were surprised that he got another season.

Overall, Florida finished the season with 4-8, 3-5 SEC, in fifth place in the six-team SEC Eastern Division. There were no post-season

laurels for the Gators this year. They failed to become bowl eligible for the first time since 1990.

Nobody expected such a season from the Gators in 2013 or ever again. They had great success with the same coach in 2012, and so they were ranked No. 10 in both major polls coming into the 2013 season. They opened looking like a great team with a 24–6 home win over Toledo, then fell in a very close match 21–16 to in-state rival Miami in a game in which the Gators gained almost twice as many yards as the Hurricanes but committed 5 turnovers, including a crucial late interception in the red zone. OK, those things happen.

The season slide began after It looked full of promise. With UF, ranked #17 early on lost its next seven games beginning on Oct 12 at #10 LSU L 6-17); Oct 19, #14 at Missouri L (17-36; Nov 2, in Jacksonville, Georgia, L (20-23); Nov 9 Homecoming Vanderbilt L (17-34); Nov 11, at South Carolina, L 14-19; Nov 23, Georgia Southern, L20-26); Florida State, L (7-37). It was a long year.

2014 Coach Will Muschamp

The 2014 Florida Gators football team was the One hundred-eighth season for Florida. It was the fourth and last year for Coach Will Muschamp of four seasons as the Football Gators head coach. This year was much improved from the 2013 eight-loss season but it was still one of the worst in over twenty years with 5 losses.

The clock ran out of time after this season for Coach Muschamp after this season. He had bad breaks for sure in 2013, but he did not seem to have a Plan B.

The Gators competed in the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Eastern Division of the Southeastern Conference (SEC). It was the Gators eighty-second with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). They played their home games at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium on the university's Gainesville, Florida campus. It was a respectable year overall but the SEC was not so good with four losses.

Overall, Florida finished the season with 7-5, 4-4 SEC, in third place in the six-team SEC Eastern Division. There were no post-season honors for the Gators this year. They failed to become bowl eligible for the first time since 1990.

This season's hopes came to an end on November 16, following an overtime loss at home against South Carolina. The OT loss to Coach Steve Spurrier's Gamecocks eliminated the Gators from the SEC East race. At this point, there were lots of rumors and multiple reports surfaced that Muschamp would not be the head coach in 2015.

He was permitted to coach the final two games of regular season play and the Gators did become bowl eligible after a win over Eastern Kentucky. The regular season ended with a loss to Florida State. Gators hate losing to Florida State. The Gators would go on to win the Birmingham Bowl against East Carolina and finish the season 7-5. After four seasons, Muschamp compiled a 28-21 overall winning record and a 17-15 SEC record

The 2013 season had lots of flaws. One of them was low point production from the offense. So, for the second year in a row, head coach Will Muschamp replaced the OC & the offensive line coach. He released offensive coordinator Brent Pease and offensive line coach Tim Davis. Muschamp replaced Pease with Kurt Roper, who led the Duke Blue Devils to their 1st 10-win season, the ACC title game, and the Chick-fil-A Bowl in 2013. Muschamp also replaced Davis with Mike Summers, and hired Coleman Hutzler as the new special team's coach. Muschamp was running out of time and he knew it. This season would do nothing to help preserve his position with the University.



DJ Durkin Interim Gators Head Coach

As noted, Will Muschamp was fired Nov. 16, 2014, and after he coached the final two games of the regular season, he left the program. That left D J Durkin, Muschamp's defensive coordinator and in his fifth year as a Gators assistant, to take over as interim coach for the team's bowl game.

The Gators were invited to play East Carolina in the Birmingham Bowl on January 3 at legendary Legion Field in Birmingham Alabama. The Gators triumphed in a close game W (28-20). Durkin ran the team through their drills for about a month that culminated in a 28-20 win over East Carolina in the Birmingham Bowl on Jan. 3.

Chapter 23 Coach Jim McElwain Era 2015-2017+

Coach # 25 Jim McElwain

<u>Year</u>	<u>Coach</u>	<u>Record</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Record</u>
2015	Jim McElwain	10-4	SEC	7-1
2016	Jim McElwain	9-4	SEC	6-2
2017	Jim McElwain			



Coach McElwain instructing the Gators

Florida hires Colorado State's Jim McElwain as Gators new coach

Can Jim McElwain turn around the Florida program?

By THAYER EVANS, Sports Illustrated

Tuesday December 2nd, 2014

Colorado State coach Jim McElwain has agreed to become the new head coach at Florida, the school announced on Thursday. The news was first reported by ESPN's Chris Low and confirmed by SI.com. McElwain called a team meeting with his Colorado State players.

McElwain, 52, had a 22-16 record in three seasons with the Rams and is well versed in the SEC. He served as the offensive coordinator at Alabama from 2008 to '11, a period during which the Crimson Tide won two national titles.

McElwain is a respected recruiter in the state of Florida, where he signed future first-round NFL draft pick Ha Ha Clinton-Dix in his final season with the Tide and also recruited former Alabama star quarterback AJ McCarron. He will need to hit the recruiting trail immediately in an attempt to salvage a 2015 class that is ranked last in the SEC, according to Rivals.com.

McElwain is the second consecutive Nick Saban disciple hired by the Gators. He replaces Will Muschamp, who was fired just over two weeks ago following a disappointing 28-21 record in four seasons, including a 6-5 mark this fall.

A Montana native, McElwain has a season of NFL coaching experience as the Oakland Raiders quarterbacks coach in 2006. He played quarterback at Washington from 1980-'83, and got his coaching start there as an assistant in '84.

He was also an assistant at Montana State, Louisville, Michigan State and Fresno State. McElwain had signed a five-year contract with Colorado State in August that paid him \$1.5 million annually and included a \$7.5 million buyout. His total compensation package at Florida will average \$3.5 million annually over six years, per the school's official release.

"The University of Florida Athletic Association and Colorado State have agreed to a payment of \$3 million over six years," the release reads. "Florida and Colorado State will also play a game in Gainesville between 2017-20 with a \$2 million guarantee. Coach McElwain has agreed to a \$2 million payment over time to Colorado State."

So far so good!

2015 Coach Jim McElwain

The 2015 Florida Gators football team was the One hundred-ninth season for Florida. It was the first season Coach Jim McElwain, the current Football Gators head coach. This year was much improved from the 2014 five-loss season by his predecessor. Double digit season wins may be back in style. Things look good for the team and the new coach.

The Gators competed in the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Eastern Division of the Southeastern Conference (SEC). It was the Gators eighty-third with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). They played their home games at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium on the university's Gainesville, Florida campus. It was a great year overall. Florida finished the season with a 10-4 record; 7-1 SEC, in first place in the six-team SEC Eastern Division.

The Gators finish in the SEC was surprising at 7–1. The squad earned the team a berth in the 2015 SEC Championship Game, but ended the season on the short end of the big games with an overall record of 10–4 after losing both the SEC championship and the Citrus Bowl.

Before the season began—in fact back on November 16, 2014 with two regular season games remaining, Florida announced that head coach Will Muschamp would be replaced after the 2014 football season. When the time came to leave, Defensive coordinator D. J. Durkin served as interim head coach for the post-season. Between the regular season and the bowl game, the school selected Colorado State head coach and former Alabama offensive coordinator Jim McElwain to become the head coach for the 2015 season.

As we go through the season results, you will see that the 2015 schedule consisted of 7 home games, 4 away games and 1 neutral game in the regular season. The Gators hosted SEC foes Ole Miss, Tennessee, and Vanderbilt, and traveled to Kentucky, LSU, Missouri, and South Carolina. Florida had its their 93rd meeting with Georgia in their annual neutral site rivalry game in Jacksonville,

Florida. This season was first since the 2008 national championship season in which Ole Miss returned to Ben Hill Griffin Stadium.

2015 Season Summary

It is always tough changing coaches for any team. For the coach, it is always better if the old coach was not making effective use of the talent, rather than having to replace a Knute Rockne or a Steve Spurrier of an Urban Meyer. So, McElwain had an edge in that his mark to overcome was not 13-1 but 7-5.

He had the benefit of the doubt since everybody knew the program was undergoing a major leadership change. Jim McElwain's new team was largely thought of as undergoing a rebuilding process. However, once the season began it was like Spurrier or Meyer was back. the team skipped to a 6-0 start to the season, including an upset win versus then-no. 3 Ole Miss 38-10.

The game at Missouri would end up being the last game of 2015 for Will Grier, who was suspended the following week for taking a banned substance. Treon Harris was called to lead the offense for the rest of the season. With Harris as quarterback, the Gators won four out of their next five games, including 27-3 over rival Georgia and losing only to Western Division rival LSU 28-35. With a 9-7 win against Vanderbilt, the Gators captured their first SEC Eastern Division championship since 2012, and earned a berth in the SEC Championship Game for the first time since 2009.

Florida's reenergized offense began to struggle toward the end of the season, as did the special teams. The Gators would need overtime to defeat Florida Atlantic, who finished 3-9 on the season. The Gators lost their final three games against rival Florida State, Alabama in the SEC Championship Game, and Michigan in the Citrus Bowl respectively, ending a Camelot season with a 10-4 record.

Florida's turnaround season earned McElwain the 2015 SEC Coach of the Year award. McElwain was also in contention for the 2015 AFCA Coach of the Year award by virtue of winning the regional AFCA award. In 2016, McElwain's job was to do it all again or do it better. He almost did

2016 Coach Jim McElwain

The 2016 Florida Gators football team was the One hundred-tenth season for Florida. It was the second season for Coach Jim McElwain as the current Football Gators head coach. This year, the team had one less win in the regular season and one more loss in the SEC.

The Gators competed in the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Eastern Division of the Southeastern Conference (SEC). It was the Gators eighty-fourth with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). They played their home games at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium on the university's Gainesville, Florida campus.

It was a great year overall. Florida finished the season with a 9-4 record; 6-2, in first place in the seven team SEC Eastern Division. Alabama, who lost the Championship game to Clemson in the playoffs, really put a whooping on Florida in the SEC Championship game (16-54). In post-season, the Gators then won the Outback bowl against Iowa.

#20 Florida got to play #21 Iowa in the Outback Bowl on January 2, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. in Raymond James Stadium, Tampa, FL. The Gators dominated the game and won W (30-3). It sure is nice to win anytime but at the end of the season in the last game until the 2017 season gets underway, it makes it even sweeter.

And, so, Florida ended its 2016 season on a winning note. The Gators pulled away quickly from Iowa in the second half for a nice 30-3 victory in the Outback Bowl. With this win, Florida ends with a nice record (9-4) does not have to endure a season ending three-game losing streak for the second straight year

It was a tight game for the majority of the first half, but Mark Thompson broke free on a screen pass for an 85-yard TD late in the second quarter. The scoring play gave the Gators momentum

heading into the locker room. They never lost it and carried it through to the end of the game.

With defensive coordinator Geoff Collins gone, and the Gators dealing with so many injuries on defense, there was concern about how they would do against the Hawkeyes. Nonetheless, UF dominated on both sides of the ball, allowing the fewest points in a bowl game in school history. I

Interim D coordinator Randy Shannon did a fine job with the play calling and made a strong case for the full-time position. On January 6, he was named to the position by Coach McElwain. A pair of true freshman, defensive back Chauncey Gardner and linebacker Vosean Joseph, starred for the Gators. Joseph made several impressive stops and Gardner had two interceptions, including a pick-6.

Florida's offense looked good in the game and had a productive performance despite two early interceptions of QB Austin Appleby. He settled down later and threw for 222 yards and a pair of touchdowns. The question now is what does UF do from here on at QB. They have options. Former starter Luke Del Rio returns as well as true freshmen Feleipe Franks and Kyle Trask, both of whom redshirted this year. When the Gators get really solid QB play, they will have the ability to be a really good football team. It was inconsistency at this key position which held the team back in 2016,

Unlike the prior McElwain season, Florida chose not to be spectators in this year's bowl game and got a much-needed program win. This team does have a lot of question marks for 2017 on both offense and defense, but at the end of the season, this group of Gators could go into the offseason with the wind behind them. That helps in recruiting as well.

2017 Coach Jim McElwain

The 2017 Florida Gators football team will be the One hundred-eleventh for Florida. It will be the third season for Coach Jim McElwain as the current Football Gators head coach. This year, the team's schedule is set and the Gators are ready to go.



The Gators compete in the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Eastern Division of the Southeastern Conference (SEC). It will be the Gators eighty-fifth with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). They play their home games at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium on the university's Gainesville, Florida campus. The pundits are looking for a great season as are Gator fans and alums.

The Gators' 2017 schedule consists of 7 home games, 3 away games, and 2 neutral site games in the regular season. The Gators will host SEC opponents Tennessee, Vanderbilt, LSU, and Texas A&M. They will travel to Kentucky, Missouri, and South Carolina. They will face Georgia at a neutral site.

Florida's non-conference schedule consists of three home games: Northern Colorado, UAB, and rivals Florida State. They will face Michigan at a neutral site in the Advocare Classic.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Opponent</u>	<u>Site</u>
September 2	Michigan*	AT&T Stadium, TX •
September 9	Northern Colorado	Home
September 16	Tennessee	Home

September 23	Kentucky	Commonwealth KY•
September 30	Vanderbilt	Home
October 7	LSU	Home
October 14	Texas A&M	Home
October 28	Georgia	EverBank in Jacksonville
November 4	Missouri	Faurot Fld, Columbia,MO
November 11	South Carolina	Wms-Brice Stadium SC
November 18	UAB*	Home FL
November 25	Florida State*	Home

2017 Recruiting Class

Until the final day, the coaching staff accomplishments of recruiting the best class for the Gators was not looking so good. Just a week before the signing deadline, the Gators' 2017 class had fallen to #31 and that is not good.

Coach Jim McElwain and his staff began the week needing a strong finish and the good news is they delivered. They landed defensive lineman Elijah Conliffe right before the deadline and defensive tackle Tadarrell Slaton, cornerback Christopher Henderson, defensive back Brian Edwards and receiver James Robinson the following day. All are four-star recruits and helped boost UF's recruiting class # to a healthy # 10. The Gators still could have used one or two elite, five-star talents, but they did not come nor did the pundits' doomsday scenarios for McElwain's third class.

Robinson's last-second commitment was the big boost the Gators needed to slip into the top 10. UF seemingly at one point had eliminated Robinson from consideration due to his Jan. 29 citation for marijuana possession. Instead, Robinson now is the Gators' highest-ranked recruit on offense. At 6-foot-4, 205 pounds, Robinson is a mismatch. Despite missing two games in 2015, he finished with 46 catches for 865 yards and eight scores.

Alex Leatherwood likely was Alabama-bound all along, but the Pensacola native and top-rated offensive tackle is the kind of in-state talent the Gators need to land. He got away. The list of players from Florida that got away also includes Jacksonville cornerback Shaun Wade (Ohio State) and Pompano Beach receiver Jerry Jeudy (Alabama) - five-star, Sunshine State talents UF could use.

Recruiting summation quote from the Coach: “I'm not ready to anoint any of these guys as sure-fire, first-round draft picks in three years, but I will say this: Our track record of developing players is pretty good. We got some pretty good guys, and I'm excited about them.”— UF coach Jim McElwain

An indicator of the team's toughness is always the annual Blue and Orange game. As a recap, Luke Del Rio led the Blue to 44-6 win over Orange. Don't forget that name in 2017

When the Orange team and the blue team wear their orange and blue Jerseys in the fall, I think we are going to have one heck of an enjoyable and productive season.

Best wishes to Coach McElwain and the 2017 Gators

That's All Folks!

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