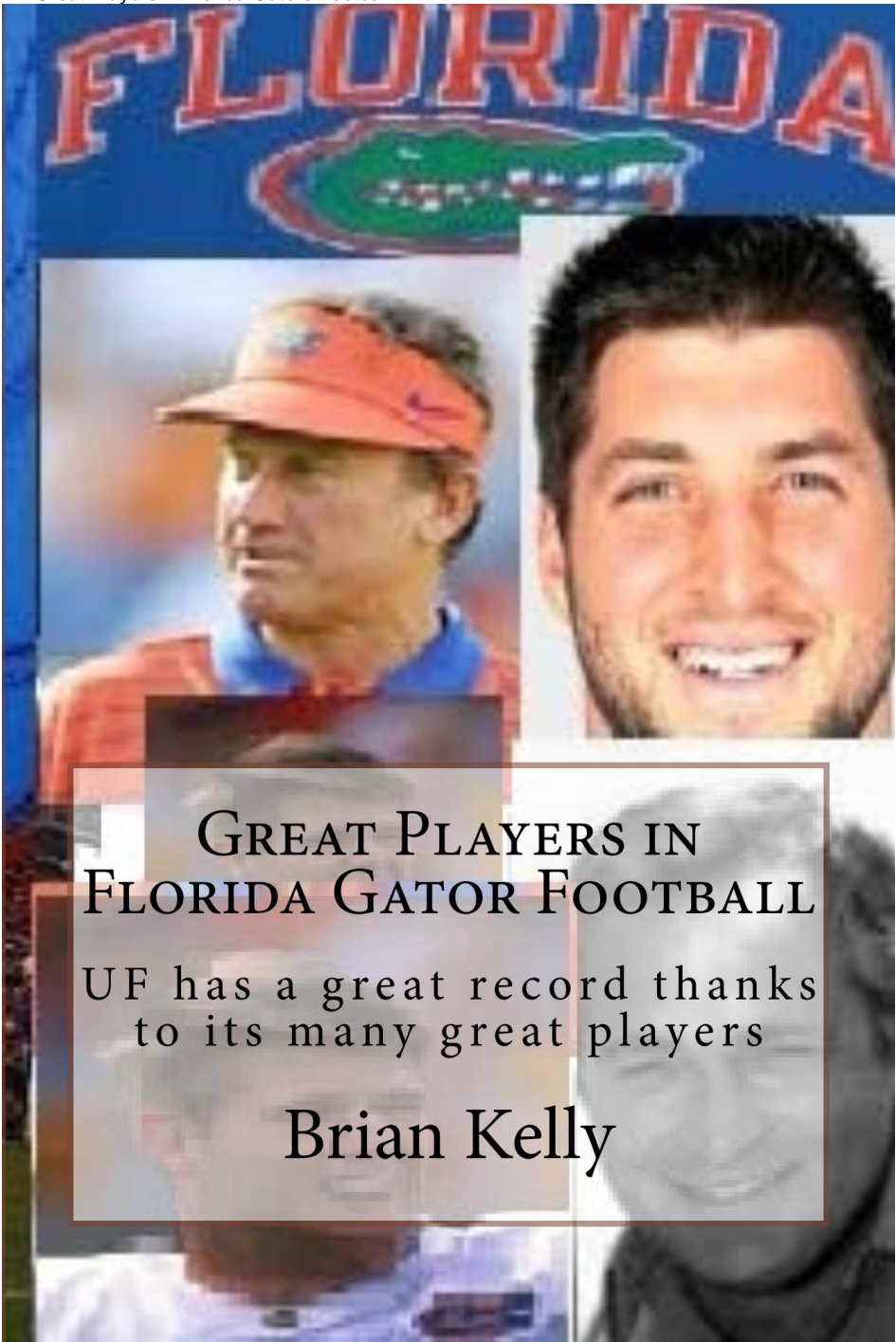


Dear Reader: Thank you for downloading this free book from Brian W. Kelly's finished book catalog. I finished the book titled **Great Players in Florida Gators Football** at <https://letsGOPublish.com/collegefootball/gatorsplayers.pdf> in August 2019. This is a college football classic book about the great players of the Florida Gators football team.

**Most of my books had previously been published on Amazon.**

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# Great Players

In

# Florida Gators Football

University of Florida has a great record thanks to its many great players

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 UF coaches and many great players over 110 years brought us all the victories and the excitement. We know how they did it—discipline, conditioning and an honor in winning. The Gators were never a *losing is OK* team. Look at the record. The Florida Gators from way back have a winning way. UF fans need this book on their bookshelves.

The book first tells the story about how the constituent schools before 1906 played intramural football until the University combined and created the Football program of today when Florida played its first official football game with a real coach who was paid by the college.

As we rapidly move through the football ages, we meet the great immortal University of Florida players by working through the seasons with their great coaches—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. We find another great coach at the end of the journey, not yet an immortal. Coach James McElwain 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 players 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 a nice story about a great player such as Neil Anderson, Jevon Kearse, Jason Odom, Steve Spurrier, Jack Youngblood, Emmitt Smith, Danny Wuerffel, Reidel Anthony, Tim Tebow, Percy Harvin, Louis Oliver, and many others. You will not be able to put this book down.

## Brian Kelly



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**Title: Great Players in Florida Gators Football**

Editor: Brian P. Kelly  
Author Brian W. Kelly

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# Acknowledgments:

I appreciate all the help that I received in putting this book together, along with the 115 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](http://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](http://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 115 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 players 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 players in the University of Florida Football Program.

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 players 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.

Then, I started doing other things with my writing such as creating derivative works from my original huge comprehensive works about ND, PSU, or UA. Now, I am looking to write again about a really exciting football program with a great team.

Since none of the three, ND, PSU, or UA, 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, 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 my next book, is that at more than a half a century older than ten years old and perhaps even more, 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 favorite ND book has been out almost a year, ND Sports information department recently informed me that they worked to get my book into the ND Bookstore. It was selling well, and now even better. PSU and UA have not chosen to do the same thing but those books also sell well.

At Gainesville in Ben Hill Griffin Stadium, maybe somebody could 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'd be signing and 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. 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 Football story 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.

This book walks you through the whole UF football journey stopping to look at the best players in Gators Football. There are many great players responsible for the great Florida records over the years. This period began in 1906. Think about the struggle of playing on a college football team when getting the right equipment was the biggest issue.

The book is structured in football seasons sequence and the stories about the greats are included within the seasons in which they played. I sure hope you enjoy this unique approach.

## **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 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.

You are going to love this book because it is the perfect read for anybody who loves the Gator Nation and wants to know more about the most revered athletes to have competed in one of the finest football programs of all time.

Few sports books are a must-read but Brian Kelly's Great Players 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 115<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.letsGOPublish.com). Quantities from 20 to 1000 are for sale at [www.bookhawkers.com](http://www.bookhawkers.com). You may see most of Brian's works by taking the following link [www.amazon.com/author/brianwkelly](http://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 116 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! Go Gators!



# Chapter 1 Introduction to University of Florida (UF) Football

## University of Florida's 110<sup>th</sup> Year in 2016!

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.



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.

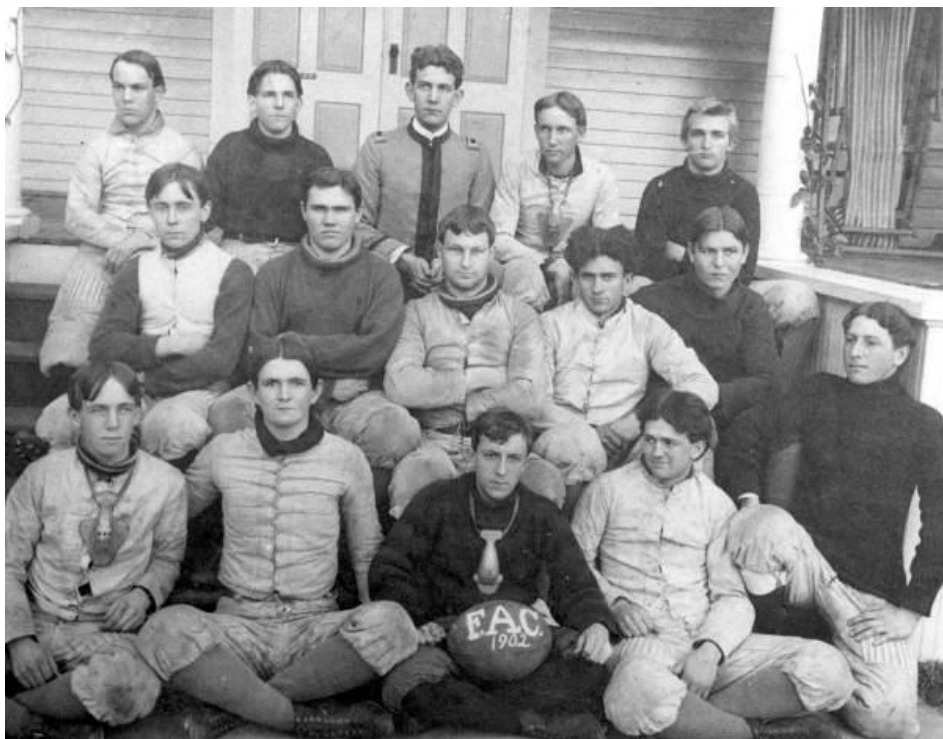
UF was a bit late getting into the game but then again, UF was not really UF until 1906 when it played its official first football game. By then, the four precursor teams had merged and the scenario for Florida was settled. By then, the Ivy League teams had been playing for about thirty years; Teams 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

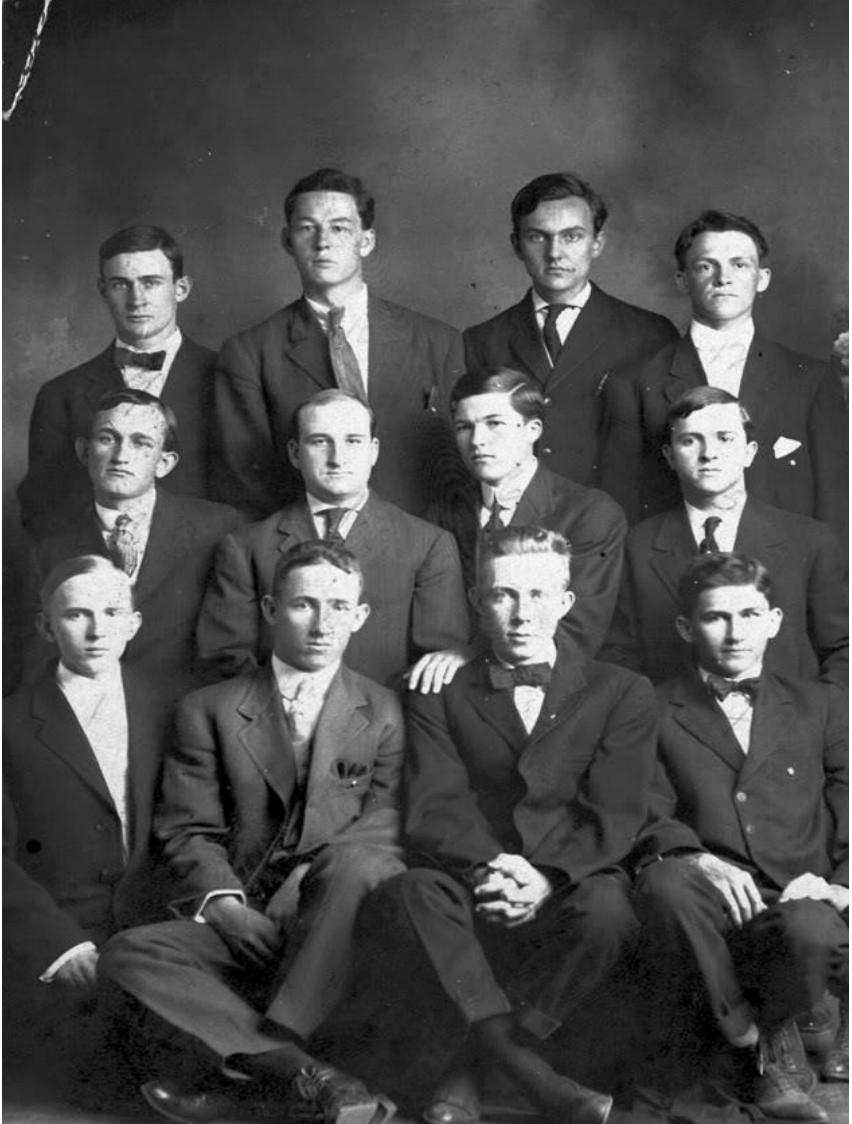
Now, let’s look at that first official season.



## 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:

**Great Players-- 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 Coaches Forsythe & Pyle 1907-1913

Forsythe      Coach #1  
Pyle            Coach #2

<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		
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

## Great Players-1907 UF Football Team Shown Below



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 the 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:

### Great Players celebrating Georgia Win



In addition to his coaching duties, Forsythe was also a great Gator Player. He was a fullback and was paid \$500 for coaching and another \$500 for playing. Today he would not be able to take the money. 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.

## **1907: Florida Gators Season 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: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **Great Gators Player: Earl "Dummy" Taylor**

During this season and others following, Earle "Dummy" Taylor (Left on next page) became the only UF player ever to earn five football letters.





He played five seasons as a halfback and drop-kicker, beginning with his freshman season in 1908. He was quite a player. He ran for touchdowns of 43, 75 and 60 yards in a 28-3 win over Rollins in 1909. His field-goal records for a game (three), season (eight in 1911) and career (16) stood until the mid-1970s.

## **How the Gators became the Gators?**

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.

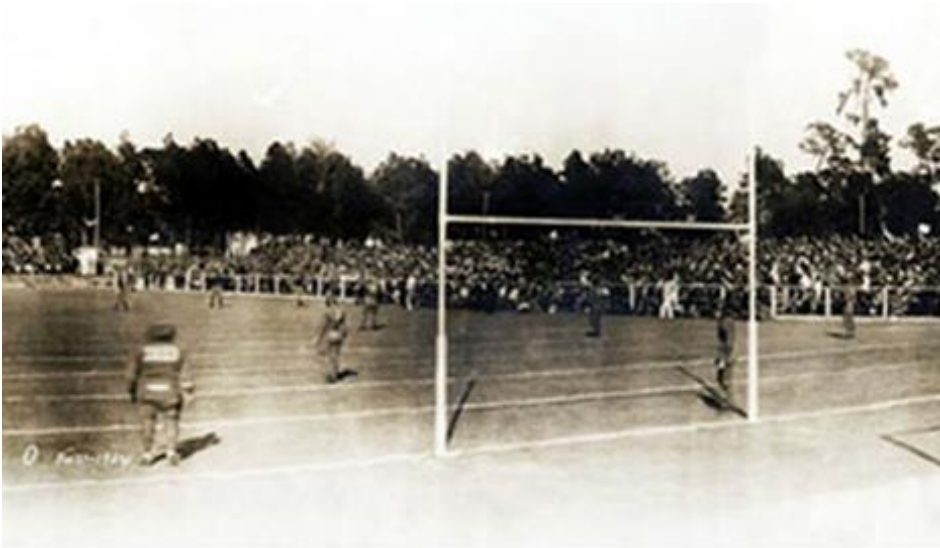
## **Other Great Gators Players in 1908**

The team captain, William Gibbs, came in as a veteran transfer. As noted, it was the first season for the talented Gainesville young man—Dummy Taylor. The backfield had some fine players including Charlie Bartleson, Jim Vidal, and the already mentioned William A. Shands, future state senator and namesake of Shands Hospital.

Working through the Gators starting lineup from left to right we find Malhorton at left end; Rader at left tackle, Van Fleet at (left guard, Parker at center), Videll at right guard), J. Taylor at right tackle, and Shands at right end). In the backfield, Thompson played QB, Bartleson played left half, E. Taylor played right halfback, and Gibbs was the starting fullback).

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, 1 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.

## 1909: Florida Gators Season 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, continuing to outplay

everybody on the field, was on the mark and he kicked three field goals, all that was needed to beat the Olympics 9-0.

## Great Players from 1909 Team



In this game, Moody was at left end); Wagner at left tackle, McMillian at left guard, Storter at center), Cox at right guard, Rader at right tackle), Johnston at right end and George Pile played quarterback. Shands was the left halfback; Taylor played right halfback, and Vidal (started at fullback). They all played well.

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: Florida Gators Season 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)

## Great Players from 1910 Team



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.

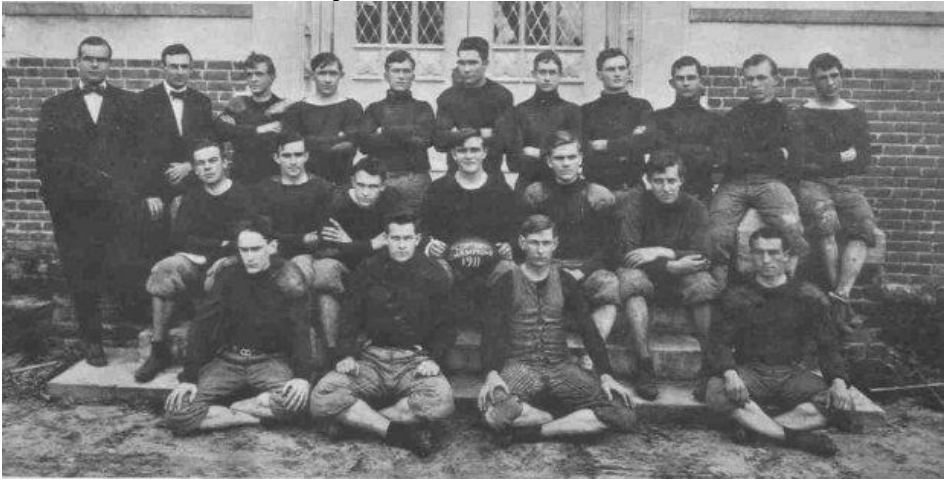
It was so tough to get a good game, that mostly anybody would play anybody and there was no NCAA back then to tell the colleges and university they could not do whatever they wanted. By scheduling

athletic clubs and high schools, the “lads” on the tea got a lot more game action than they would otherwise.

## 1911: Florida Gators Season 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.

### Great Players from the 1911 Team



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: Florida Gators Season 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.

### Great Players from 1912 Team



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 the teams over the years have been this 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 teams 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: Florida Gators Season 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.

### On the left Great Player

<<<< 1913 starting QB AW "Rammy" Ramsdell UF alumni raised money to award a scholarship for the talented Tampa athlete to attend UF. Ramsdell was the first scholarship athlete at UF.

## Picture Pre-World War I Gators Players Game Action





## Chapter 5 Coach C. J. McCoy 1914-1916

Coach # 3

<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

### Great Gators Players – A Whole Team from 1914



1914 Florida Gators Football Team

### 1914: Florida Gators Season 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: Florida Gators Season 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.

### Another Great Group of Gators Players 1915



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.

### Some noted great players on the 2015 team

The football team captain was tackle A. A. "Daddy" Lotspeich. At the guards were Ham Dowling, future Georgia Tech transfer, and Everett Yon, future Gator athletic director. Leading the backfield was

Rammy Ramsdell, "the Gators' first quarterback of note," and the first scholarship athlete at the University of Florida.

McCoy got an assistant for 2015--Z. J. Stanley. In 2014, he had been the coach of the Maryville Scots.

The season began on Oct 9, and 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)





Roy Van Camp 1915 Great Gators QB

## 1916: Florida Gators Season 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.

## Great Gator Players 1916 UF Football Team



If you are paying attention, you will notice that this is the same picture as in the 1915 photo. When the UF athletic department reads this book, and sends me the right picture, I promise that I will put it in even before a new version of the book.

### Great Players shifting to help the team

Most of the team apparently was the same anyway. The season began with Gators' starting quarterback, Rammy. The star 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, 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 6 Coaches Alfred Buser & William G Kline 1917 - 1922

Coach #4 Alfred E. Buser

Coach #5 William G. Kline

<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
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

### 1917: Florida Gators Season Coach Alfred 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. Gator Great Player, 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).

## Great Gators Playing South Carolina



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: Florida Gators Season Coach Alfred 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. Consequently, the 1918 Gators played just 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. They were pleased to even get a game.

## **1919: Florida Gators Season Coach Alfred 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. Even in tough times, the fans expected winning teams.

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 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.

Great Gator Player Jim Sparkman was the team captain this year. He had just returned from World War I service with the Rainbow Division after having played for Florida from 1914 to 1916. Another great, 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 were beaten by the Gators 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 again L (0-7)

At Tulane Stadium in New Orleans on Nov 8, the Gators lost 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).

## **1920: Florida Gators Season Coach William Kline**

**Great Players from 1920 Gators shown below**





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. The Florida administration was looking for winning teams and were bringing in coaches to help the teams win games



<< 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: Florida Gators Season Coach William 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.

## Great Players on the 1921 Florida Gators Team



1921 Florida Gators Football Team

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.

## Great Player Tootie Perry

"Captain Tootie Perry (Below) was the school's first ever All-Southern selection. **Carl "Tootie" Perry who played from 1919-1921** is shown at a robust 5' 10" and 235 pounds, guard-center Perry was twice an All-Southern selection



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 from 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. Perry is shown on the page above.

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: Florida Gators Season Coach William 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 Vanderbilt, Georgia Tech, and North Carolina.

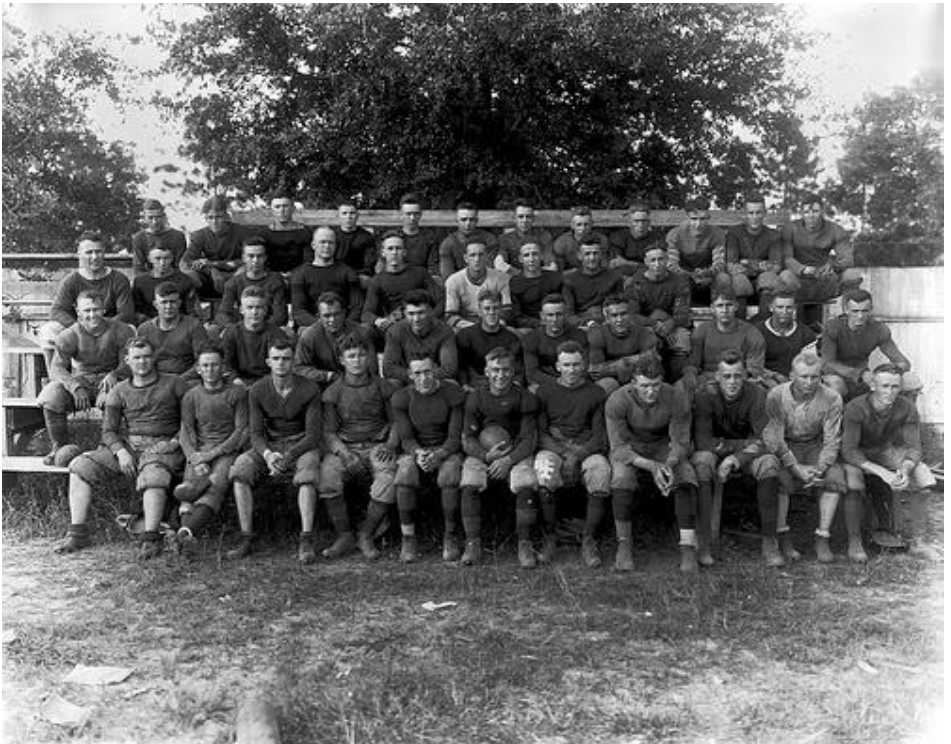


## Chapter 7 Coaches Van Fleet & Sebring 1923-1927

Coach #6 James Van Fleet

Coach #7 Harold L. Sebring

<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
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



1920's Great Gators Football Team Picture

## 1923: Florida Gators Season Coach 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!

## Great Players in 1923 Games

1923 was to be the first of two under Major James van Fleet who had served on Kline's staff and was a professor of military tactics at UF. Some early stars on Kline's and Van Fleet's teams were robust Center Carl "Tootie" Perry and Halfback Robert "Ark" Newton who made headlines with a 92-yard punt against Mississippi College in 1921 and a brilliant 95-yard interception return against Army in 1923.

Newton's powerful leg was also pivotal in the biggest upset victory in Gators' history to that time, a 16-6 win over Wallace Wade's Alabama team in driving rain and ankle deep mud in Birmingham in 1923. The Gators trailed 6-0 at intermission when Coach James Van Fleet had his troops strip off their waterlogged socks and return to the field at the last possible moment. Alabama, encumbered by its soggy



hosiery, could not keep up. "Coach Wade was so mad he never spoke to me again" Van Fleet said. "But, as I remember, he had his boys play bare-legged in the future in bad weather." UF celebrated its first homecoming that year with a 19-6 victory over Mercer and finished with a 6-1-2 record.

## Great Players Edgar Jones et al

The team included Cy Williams, Goldy Goldstein, Edgar Jones, and Bill Middlekauff.

Edgar Jones (below) played from 1923-1925 at Quarterback. He set the single season scoring record in 1925 that stood until Tommy Durrance broke the record in 1971 during an 11-game season. Jones scored all of Florida's points in their historic 1924 upset of Wade



Wallace's powerful Bama squad. Jones was named all Southern Conference.

There were a lot of preseason reports about what to expect in 1923. One preseason account reads: "Big Cy Williams, star Freshman tackle of the prior year and Varsity tackle of 1923, was the immediate cause of the tackling dummy's downfall for when he dove into the lifeless foe, it collapsed and Cy was deluged with sawdust. A new 'dummy' was brought out but it is predicted that it will not last long under the fierce tackling of the Gators gridders."

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. 24th 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: Florida Gators Season 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 their ties against the powerhouse Texas Longhorns and Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets. Led by star Tailback Robert "Ark" Newton, Van Fleet's 1924 Florida Gators finished 6-2-2 overall.



**Ark Newton**

Robert D “Ark” Newton played from 1922-1924 as halfback. He earned 14 varsity letters in Football, Track, Basketball and Baseball. Named all Southern Conference as a Halfback in 1922 and led UF to a 15-8-4 mark during his career. In Track he set a then NCAA record in the broad jump of 22 feet 6 inches. He was a tremendous athlete named by the Gainesville Sun as one of UF’s top 50 all-time he went on to play professional football.

The US Army transferred Van Fleet to the Panama Canal Zone after the 1924 season and

he was forced to give up his duties as Florida’s head football coach. Van Fleet compiled a 12-3-4 record (73.68% winning percentage) in his two seasons. Van Fleet was then succeeded by law student Harold “Tom” Sebring from 1925-1927.

## Ark Newton Victory Ride by students 1924 Game



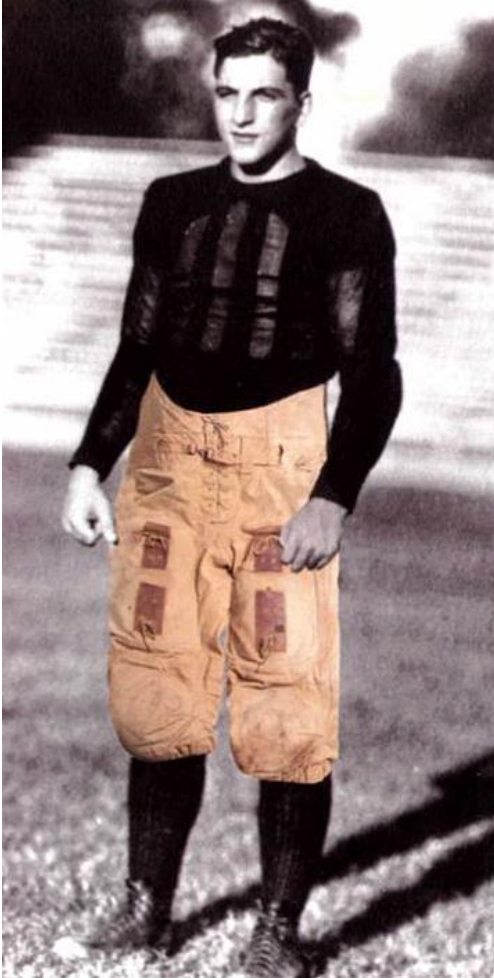
## 1925: Florida Gators Season Coach “Tom” Sebring



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 great Gators players Team finished 8–2, and 3-2 in the SoCon, and placed 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.



**Maxie Goldstein**

Jacksonville. Three times, he was named all Southern Conference, he was named as one of the top 100 all-time Gators by the Gainesville Sun. He went on to play several years of professional football before becoming a lawyer and settling in Miami.

## More Great Florida Players

Captain and halfback Edgar C. Jones set a Florida single-season scoring record of 108 points, which lasted until 1969.

Though he had graduated, Clyde Norton was deemed eligible to return to play another year. Despite losing eight players, prospects were still bright for the team. In 1925, southern teams made substantial use of the forward pass. As coach Sebring recalled, the UF 1924 QB Edgar C. Jones had "held back from calling plays for himself the year before. I told him not to hold back."

Max "Goldie" Goldstein played from 1923-1925. He was a burly Guard out of

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).

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: Florida Gators Season Coach “Tom” 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: Florida Gators Season Coach “Tom” 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.

## Sebring Out at Florida

Under Sebring, the Gators compiled their highest single season win total to date in 1925, losing only to Georgia Tech and Wallace Wade's undefeated Alabama squad both on the road. The highlights of the season included the conference victories over Wake Forest, Clemson and Mississippi State to finish 8-2 overall,

The 1926 season was Sebring's worst as the Gators finished 2-6-2 overall after losing several key players. Sebring recruited well and the Gators would bounce back strongly in 1927. After suffering an 0-12 upset loss at the hands of Davison, the Gators rallied to defeat Auburn for the first time as well as defeating Wallace Wade's Alabama squad yet again. Sebring's 1927 Florida Gators finished 7-3 overall. Sebring resigned after the 1927 season having compiled a 17-11-2 record (60.00% winning percentage) in 3 seasons.



## Chapter 8 Coach Charlie Bachman 1928-1932

Coach # 8 Charlie Bachman

Year	Coach	Record	Conference	Record
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

### Great Players on 1928 Gators Team



### 1928: Florida Gators Season 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 finished 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. Even before the great Steve Spurrier, the Gators had achieved greatness.

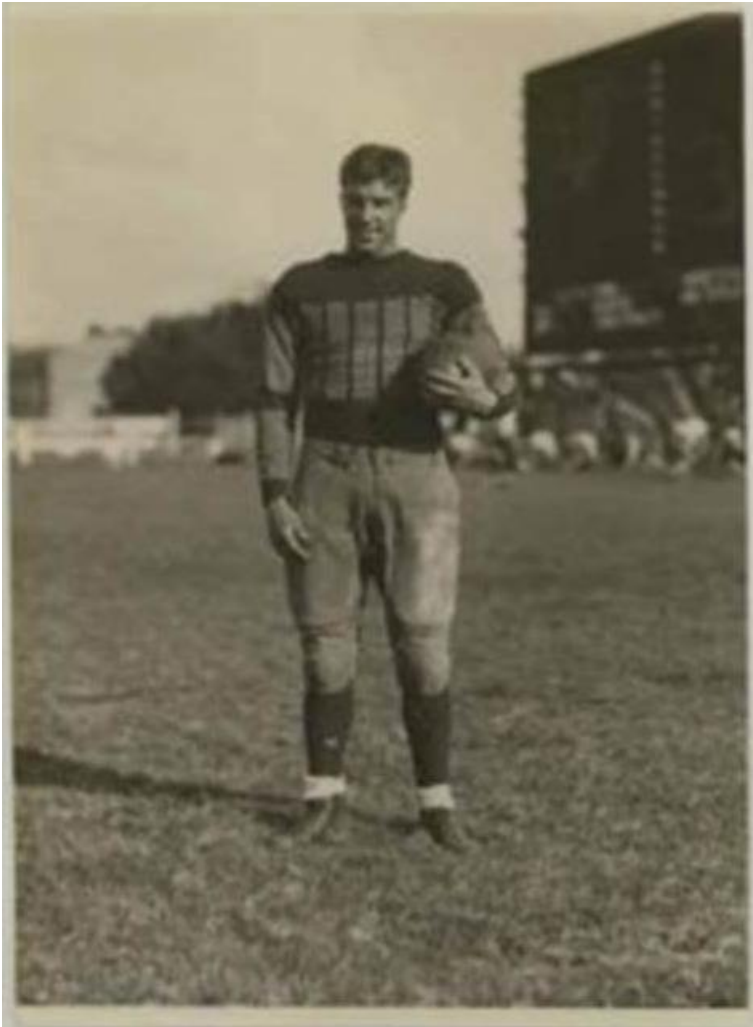
## **Florida Great Players Phantom Backfield**

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.

Clyde “Cannonball” Crabtree at 5’5’ 147 played from 1927-1929 as the QB in the Phantom Backfield. He was named all Southern Conference in 1929 despite his small size. He was noted to be a very elusive runner in addition to being fully ambidextrous.



Clyde Cannonball Crabtree



**Carl Brumbaugh**

Carl Brumbaugh was a Halfback from 1926-1928. At 5'10" 170, he led the Gators in scoring in 1928 and Florida led the nation in scoring that year. Brumbaugh. Played 10 years in the NFL as the first T formation quarterback in the league. He teamed with Bronco Nagurski and Red Grange to form a dynamite backfield for the Chicago Bears. One of the Phantom Backfield

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."

At ends were future coach Dutch Stanley, and Florida's first-ever, first-team All-American, Dale Van Sickel. Van Sickel and quarterback Crabtree, who was really ambidextrous and could throw passes with either hand, or punt with either foot, while on the run or stationary, were both unanimous All-Southern selections.

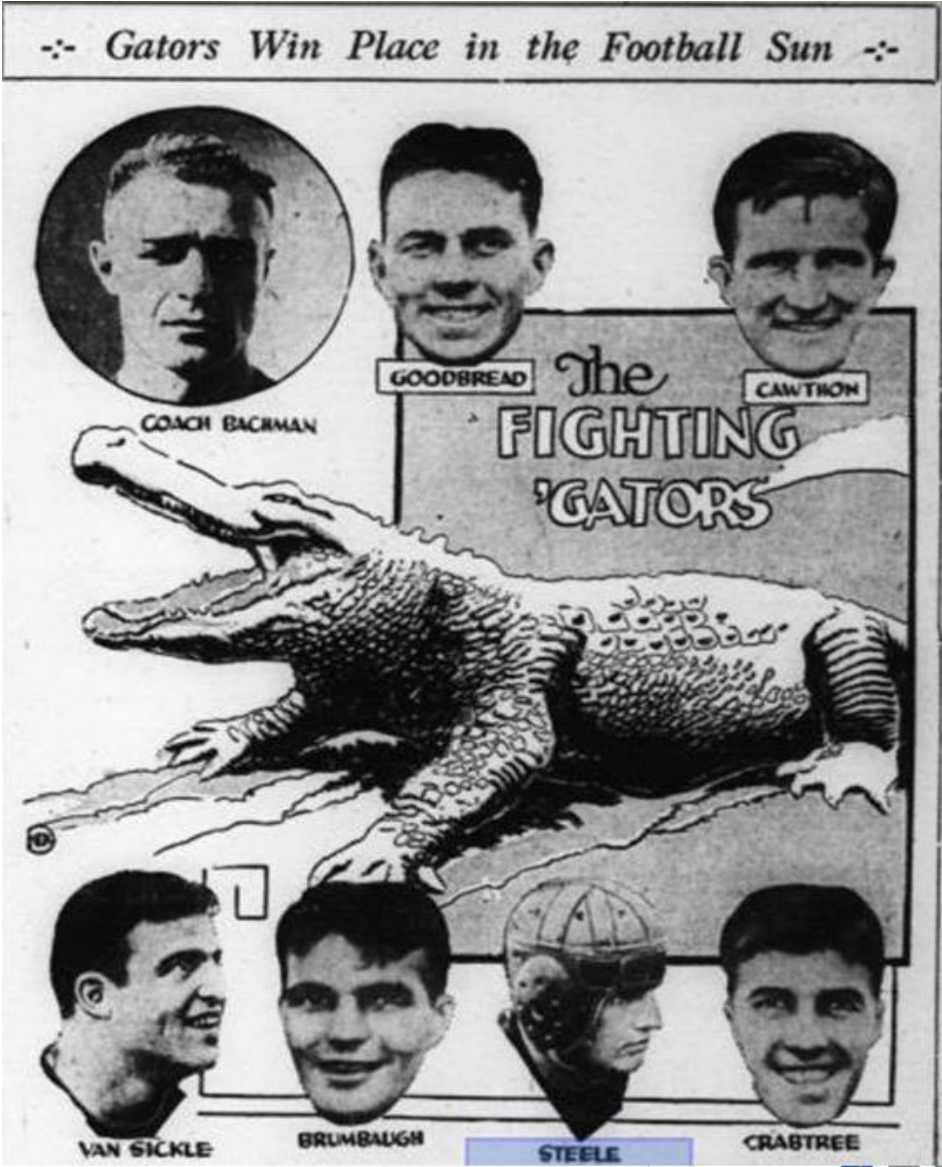
What a team! What great players!

There were tons of highlights for such a spectacular season. Among the many of 1928 were the Gators' 26–6 victory over the Georgia Bulldogs. This was not only a great victory but it ended a six-game losing streak against the Bulldogs. And, of course, there was the controversial loss to Tennessee that ended the Gators bid for an undefeated season and more than likely a Rose Bowl berth, the SoCon championship, and the National Championship.



**Great Player:** Royce Goodbread 5'11 207 is shown carrying the ball in some 1928 game action. He played Fullback from 1927-1929 and was unstoppable. He later played 3 years of professional football.

Let's talk about that special game for before we get into season games.



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.



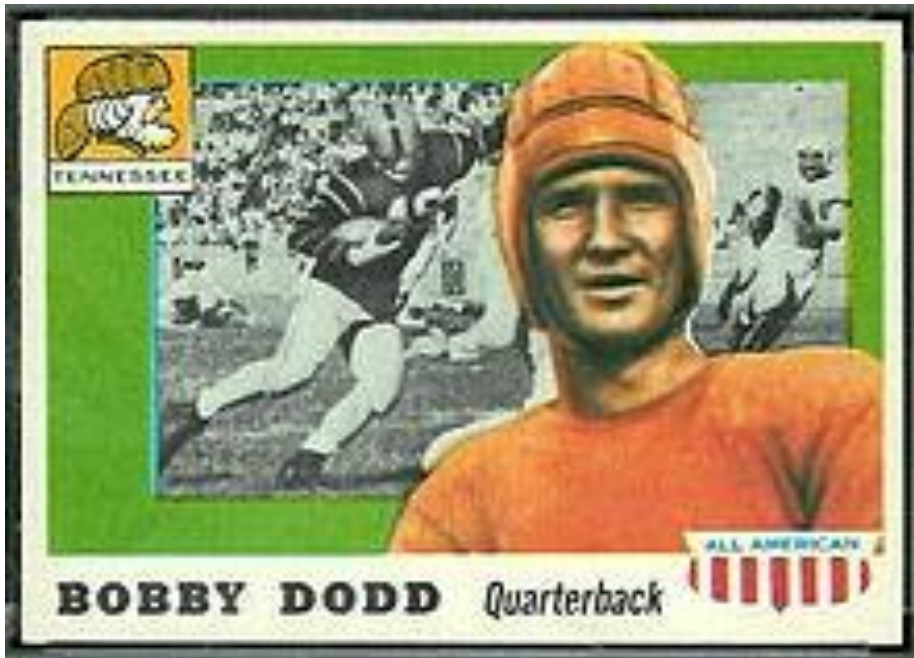
Coach Neyland was sick with the flu on the day of the game. The game was played on a soft, wet field, following a hard rain. Nothing unusual. Both teams were able to score two touchdowns on the muddy field. The Volunteers missed one of their two extra-point conversion attempts after touchdowns, but the Gators missed both conversion attempts and thus lost the game by a single point, 12–13.

In what would become a trend in the series, there was a controversy about the contest. By what today is said to be “by all accounts,” the playing surface had been a muddy mess. Some Gators claimed that it could not have gotten that bad by the amount of rain that had fallen. They were convinced that the home team had watered down the field in an effort to slow down the speedy Gator backs.

The Vols defended their field claiming that the sloppy conditions were simply the result of the heavy rain the night before the game. Who knows? One contemporary sportswriter called the game “the biggest upset of the year down South.” Tennessee’s usual quarterback, Roy Witt, was out with an injury, and was replaced by Bobby Dodd.

Prior to the contest, 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.

Tennessee got off to a fast start and led the scoring for most of the game; Florida only made the game close after two late rallies.

It was early in the second quarter that Tennessee made the half's lone score. It was set up by a "bullet-like" 25-yard pass from Dodd, who was running to avoid getting sacked. The pass went to Paul Hug, who was tackled at the 2-yard line. After Florida held for three downs, Gene McEver scored between the center's legs on fourth down. The ensuing extra point on a pass from Dodd to Herc Alley would decide the game. Dodd was on his way to a hero's game.

Down 7-0 at the half, the Gators got it going and scored two minutes into the third quarter. It was a play that was similar to Tennessee's score. Royce Goodbread completed a 16-yard pass to Dale Van Sickel, who was tackled at the 1-yard line. Goodbread ran over left tackle for the touchdown on the very next play. Dodd was doing it all that day. On defense, he then deflected Carl Brumbaugh's pass for the extra point attempt, denying the Gators the opportunity to tie the game.

When the fourth quarter got going, Florida had the ball inside its own 15-yard line after Tennessee had turned the ball over on downs. Clyde Crabtree ran instead of punting, and he was tackled just as he tried to execute a lateral to Goodbread near the 30-yard line. The lateral was intercepted by Tennessee's Buddy Hackman, who out-sprinted Brumbaugh to the goal. So, the Volunteers second TD was scored by its defense.

The Gators later drove to the 4-yard line and with all the mud, they just could not get the ball over the goal line and so they were held on downs. Tennessee could not move the ball and after Dodd's punt to midfield, the Gators' began their final scoring drive.

It began with a 27-yard pass from Brumbaugh to Van Sickel. The Gators soon were out of bounds at the 1-yard line. Crabtree ran it in for the touchdown. This time the Gators kicked the extra-point try but Brumbaugh's place kick for the extra point was both wide and short. There were sources on the field who claim the kick was blocked. The game ended as a heartbreaker for Florida Gators history. It was a game that could have and should have been won.

As a side note, Tennessee was having a banner year also. The Volunteers just the week before had their own heartache going into the Kentucky game at 8-0-0. The Vols had also beaten the big powerhouses in SoCon also and were surprised when they could not score against Kentucky, rendering the game as a scoreless tie. Kentucky had three losses going into the Tennessee game. The talents were pretty well matched against the Gators but the blemish on the Vols record going into the game would have given Florida the advantage in the standings – but for that one extra point.

### **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: Florida Gators Season 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.

## 'GATORS AND WEBFEET IN FINE FETTLE FOR FRAY

FULL OF FIGHT AND PEP, they're keen, both teams of late—Webfeet and Gator, Orange and Florida. They are now awaiting trip to the great nation that will clash in the intercollegiate game in Miami Saturday afternoon that holds the record for greatest sport of the continent.

**BOOTH OF TEAMS PLAN WORKOUT AT THE STADIUM**

Both the Gator and Webfeet teams will be seen in action at the stadium Saturday afternoon. The Gator team will be seen in action at the stadium Saturday afternoon. The Webfeet team will be seen in action at the stadium Saturday afternoon.

**Here's Introduction to Gator Team, First String and Subs**

Take a look into the eye of the market tomorrow is the Gator team. The Gator team will be seen in action at the stadium Saturday afternoon. The Webfeet team will be seen in action at the stadium Saturday afternoon.

**Brief Sketches of Grid Coaches With Alligators**

The Gator team will be seen in action at the stadium Saturday afternoon. The Webfeet team will be seen in action at the stadium Saturday afternoon.

**Captain McEwan, Head Coach of Webfeet, Has Noted Record**

McEwan has a record of 100 wins and 50 losses. He has coached the Webfeet team for many years. He is a very successful coach and has many players who have gone on to play professional football.

**POINCE DE LEON COUNT TO PLAY**

Poince de Leon is a very talented player and is expected to play a key role for the Webfeet team. He has a strong background in football and is a very hard worker.

**ERIC FORBATA**  
GATOR

**BEN CLAMPON**  
GATOR

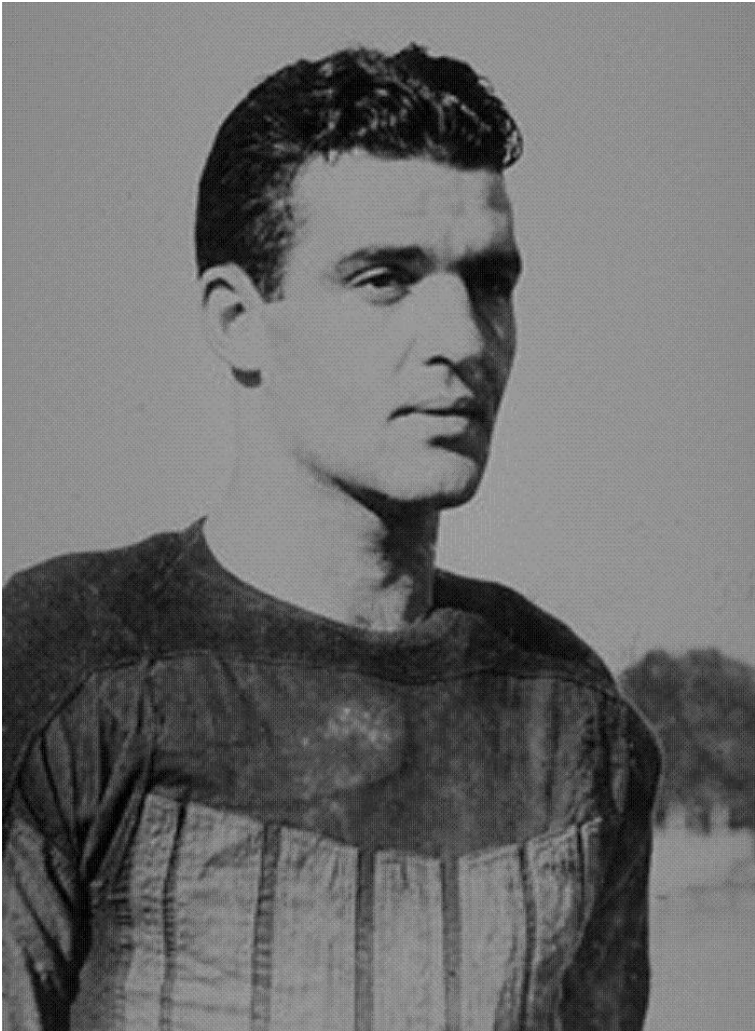
**DALE WATKINS**  
WEBFEET

**JERRY LITTLE**  
WEBFEET

## Great Player Dale Van Sickel

Dale Van Sickel is one of the greats for sure who played for the Gators from 1927 to 1929 during the Knute Rockne years at ND. Sickel did not have to leave Gainesville, where he attended high school to play for the Gators. He became a three-sport athlete in football, basketball and baseball at Florida. His great moment regarding his Gator career is that he was the first UF Gator to be inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1975.

Van Sickel played end for the Gators, and was selected as a first-team All-American in 1928, and a second-team All-American in 1929. Born in Georgia, he grew up in Gainesville, playing ball for the Hurricanes. Dale's older brother Talmadge had also been an all-state player for Gainesville High. In 2007, eighty-one years after he graduated from high school, the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) recognized Dale Van Sickel as one of the "100 Greatest Players of the First 100 Years" of Florida high school football. He is generally regarded as the best high school football player produced in the state of Florida before the 1930s. He was a welcome addition to the Gators.



Dale Van Sickel

Van Sickel attended the University of Florida in Gainesville. He played right end for the Florida Gators football team for three seasons from 1927 to 1929, on the opposite side of the line from left end Dutch Stanley. During his three years as a member of the Gators varsity, the team won twenty-three of twenty-nine games.



<<< Van Sickel in a three-point stance. Led by future Hall of Fame coach Charlie Bachman in 1928, Van Sickel and the Gators posted an 8–1 record during his junior season, outscoring their competition 366–44—the most points scored in the nation.

The Gators' sole 1928 loss was to Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee—by a single point, 12–13. The Associated Press, Newspaper Enterprise Association and Grantland Rice of Collier's Weekly

named Van Sickel to their respective 1928 first-team All-America squads, making him the first player from the University of Florida to be named a first-team All-American.

As was typical of the 1920s era, Van Sickel played both offense and defense; his College Hall of Fame biography describes him as "a swift and sure-handed receiver on offense and a gifted defensive player." Van Sickel was injured during his senior football season in 1929, and while he was productive, he was unable to post the same sort of numbers in 1929 that he did during his 1928 All-American season. He was also a first-team All-Southern selection in both 1928 and 1929.

Van Sickel was also the team captain and a varsity letterman for the Florida Gators basketball and Gators baseball teams. He was later inducted into the University of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame as a "Gator Great," and he was also the first Gator to be inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1975. The sportswriters of The



Gainesville Sun selected him as the No. 11 all-time Gator player among the top 100 from the first century of Florida football in 2006.

Van Sickle graduated from the University of Florida with a bachelor's degree in 1930, and he remained at the university to be an assistant coach for the Gators football and basketball teams during the 1930 and 1931 seasons. He also had a Hollywood career as a stuntman.

After his two-year coaching career, Van Sickle moved to Hollywood to begin a career as a movie stuntman, and had his first on-screen stunt role in the Marx Brothers' 1933 film *Duck Soup*. Over the next thirty-eight years, Van Sickle appeared as an extra and occasional leading man in over 280 films and television episodes, and performed on-screen stunts in another 140.

Van Sickle died in 1977 in Newport Beach, California as a result of injuries received while filming a car crash stunt in 1975; he was 69 years old. He was survived by his wife Iris and their daughter.

--End of player highlights --

### **1929 game: Florida 20, Oregon 6 as Ed Sauls scores on a 20-yard TD run in the 3rd quarter**



—ED SAULS

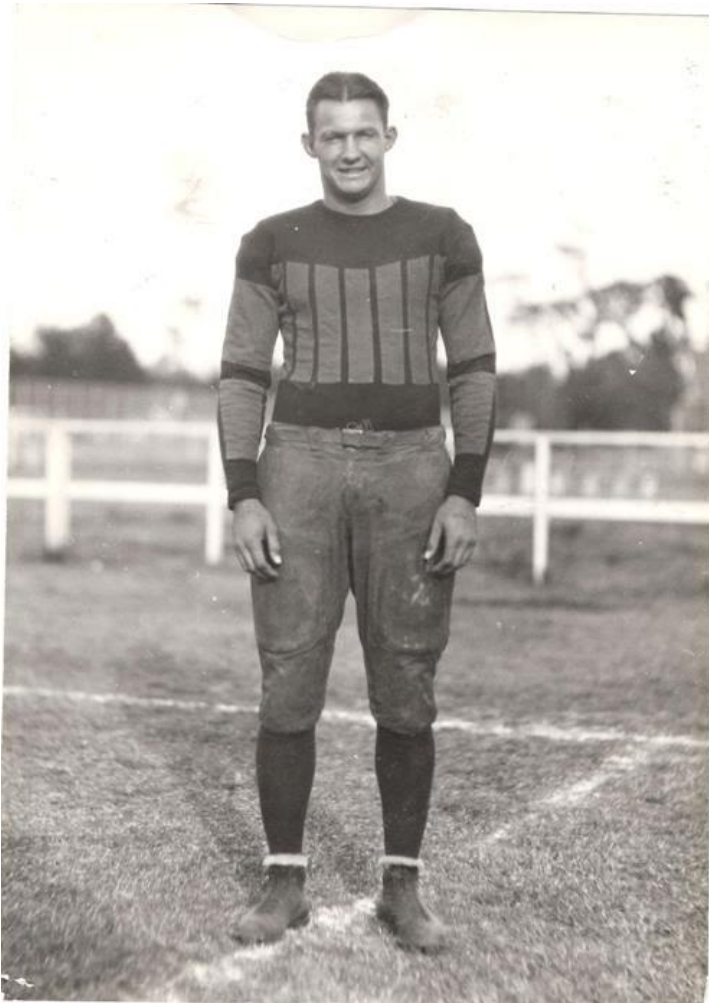
—Photo by

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 Sickle. 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: Florida Gators Season Coach Charlie Bachman

**Great Player Jimmy Steele** played Guard from 1929-1930. He was selected as an All-American by several organizations, in addition to being named all-Southern Conference. He also played several years in the NFL



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.

### **Great Players from 1930 Carlos Proctor, left & Red Bethea, right**



### **1931 Florida Gators Season 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

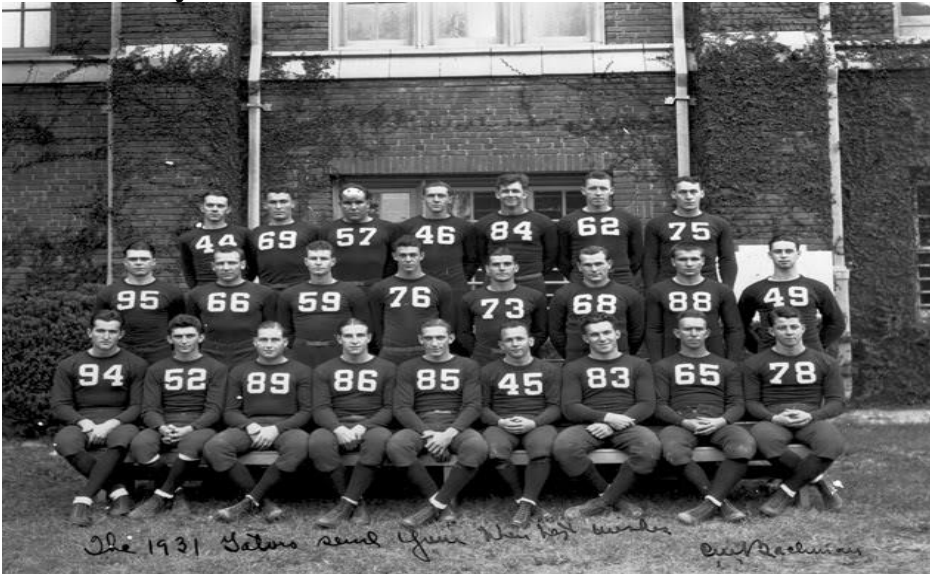
season with the Southern Conference SoCon, placing fifteenth of twenty-three teams in the conference standings.



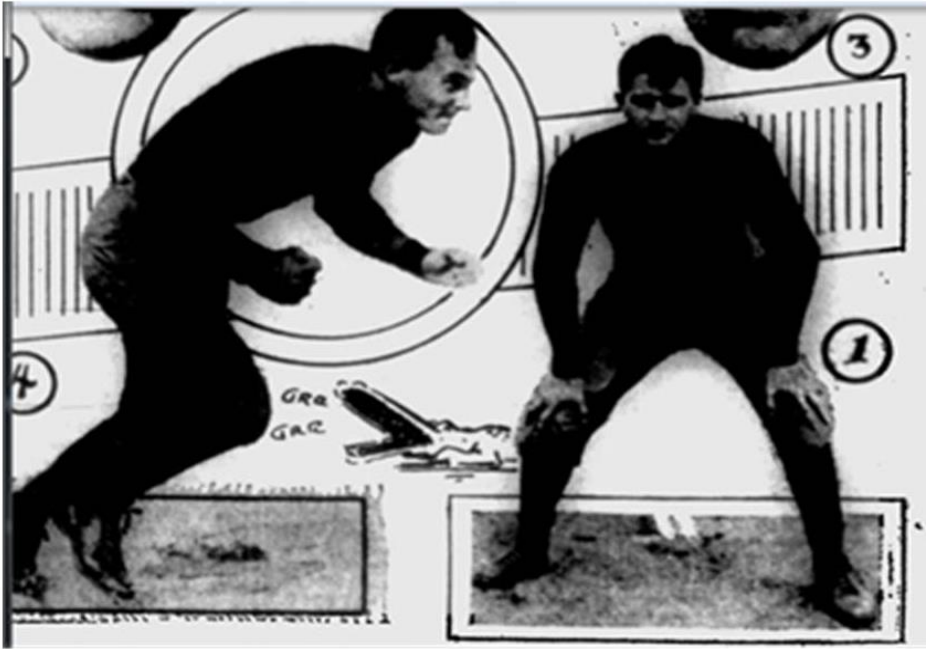
Gators v Syracuse 1931

Bachman's 1930 Florida Gators were 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.

### Great Players from the 1931 Gators Team



## Jimmy Nolan, End from the 1931 Gators



## 1932: Florida Gators Season 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. This was the Gators' final year as members of the Southern Conference.

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

### Gators v UCLA 1932



## Chapter 9 Coaches Dennis Stanley & Josh Cody 1933-1939

Coach # 9 Dennis K Stanley  
Coach # 10 Josh Cody

Year	Coach	Record	Conference	Record
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
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

### Great Gators: Coach Stanley's 1933 Gators

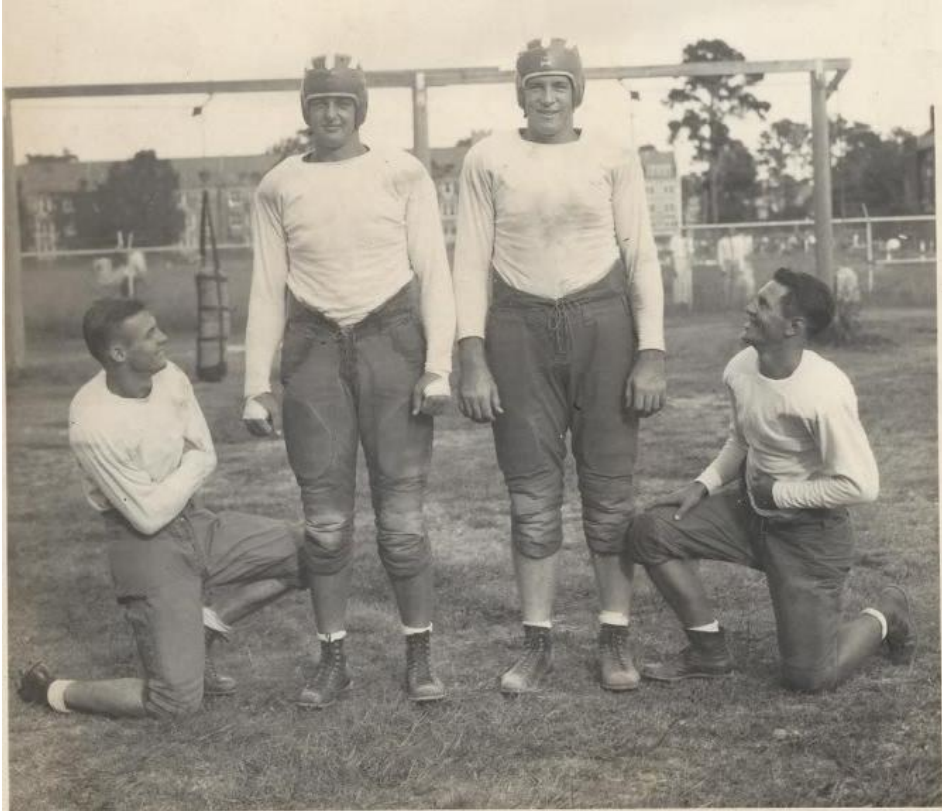


1933: Florida Gators Season Coach Dennis K. (Dutch" Stanley

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.

Unidentified Gators Linemen from the 1930's



## **1934: Florida Gators Season Coach Dennis 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.

## 1935: Florida Gators Season Coach Dennis 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.

### Mid 1930's Gators



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).

## **1936: Florida Gators Season 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.

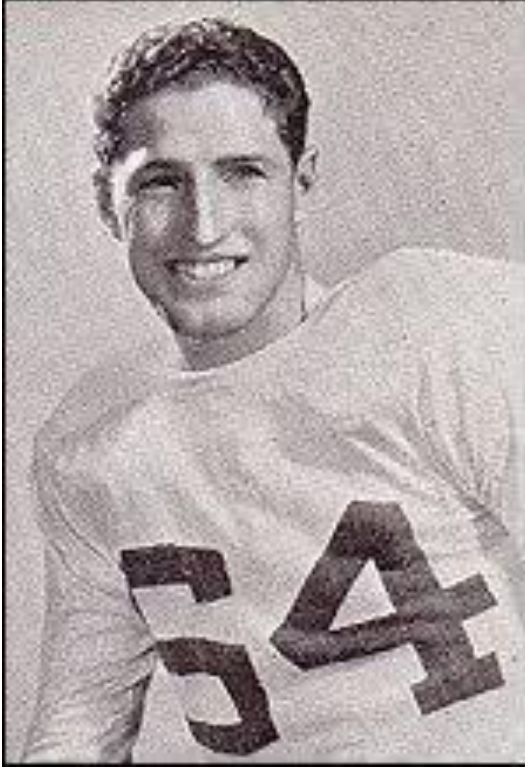
## **1937: Florida Gators Season Coach Josh Cody**

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.

The highlight of the season was the Gators' only 1930s win over the Georgia Bulldogs (6–0) in Jacksonville, Florida, but unfortunately history will remember this season more for its disappointments—three one-point losses to the Temple Owls (6–7), the Mississippi State Bulldogs (13–14) and the Clemson Tigers (9–10).

## Great Player Walter “Tiger” Mayberry played



Halfback/Quarterback from 1935-1937. He was named all-SEC in 1937, (the Gators' first). He was the 8th pick in the first round of the 1937 NFL draft. During World War II Mayberry became a Marine fighter pilot. His plane was shot down he was captured. Mayberry was murdered as a POW of the Japanese in 1943. He was one of seven former Gator football players who lost their lives in the war.

## 1938: Florida Gators Season 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.

## 1939: Florida Gators Season 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.



Gators vs Boston College 1939 Ralph Kelleman carries

# Chapter 10 Coaches Tom Lieb & Ray Wolf 1940-1949

Coach #11 Lieb

Coach #12 Wolf

Year	Coach	Record	Conference	Record
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
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

## Great Gators from 1940



### 1940: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **1941: Florida Gators Season 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!

## **Great Gator Players Highlights Forest Ferguson**

When the season was completed, some nice honors came to a fine Gator player—end Fergie Ferguson, who was named the Gators' second-ever first-team All-Southeastern Conference (SEC) selection and an honorable mention All-American by Grantland Rice in Collier's magazine. Ferguson led the team in both points scored (36) and minutes played (420).



Forest K. "Fergie" Ferguson, Jr. a Florida Stalwart at end

Forrest Ferguson was a wing right, Defensive End player in his day

His great years were between 938-41. With a nickname of "Fergie", Ferguson, coming out of Stuart High School, he started every game on both sides of the ball during his four years at Florida. He sees his great moment as winning the U.S. Army's Distinguished Service

Cross, the nation's second highest medal for gallantry in combat, for his service in Normandy on D-Day. What a man. What a patriot. What a Gator.

Forest King Ferguson, Jr. (June 21, 1919 – May 15, 1954), nicknamed Fergie Ferguson, was a great American college athlete who attended the University of Florida and was a member of the university's football, boxing, and track and field teams, and later served as a decorated officer in the U.S. Army. He is remembered as one of the most remarkable athletes that the University of Florida ever produced.

Ferguson was born in South Jacksonville, Florida, in 1919. His father, Forest K. Ferguson, Sr., was a Massachusetts native who was employed in 1920 as a boilermaker for a railroad company. His mother Frances Loretta (sometimes referred to as "Fannie") Ferguson was a New York native. Ferguson was the middle child, having an older sister, Aurora, and a younger brother, Wilbur.

By 1930 and continuing through at least 1935, the family lived at Jensen in Martin County, Florida, where Ferguson's father was employed as a fisherman. In 1937, the family moved to nearby Stuart, Florida, where Ferguson became a multi-sport star athlete for Martin County High School.

He was later remembered for leading Martin County's high school football team to its first-ever victory over nemesis Fort Pierce High School, a game in which he caught two passes for touchdowns and two more for extra points.

University of Florida

Ferguson entered the University of Florida as a freshman in the fall of 1938, and, after he became eligible as a sophomore, he quickly claimed his position as a three-year starter at end for coach Josh Cody and coach Tom Lieb's Florida Gators football teams from 1939 to 1941. Ferguson provided many of the highlights for the Gators during those years, "playing both ways," as was typical in the era of single platoon football.

As good or better on defense than he was on offense, his team records for career receptions (43) and career receiving yardage (668)



remained unbroken until the 1960s, when Gators quarterbacks Steve Spurrier and John Reaves were throwing passes to star receivers Charles Casey, Richard Trapp and Carlos Alvarez in pro passing schemes.

Fergie Ferguson had a dramatic impact on the Gators' prospects almost immediately as a sophomore starter in 1939, and he played a key role in the Gators' 7–0 upset of coach Frank Leahy's Boston College Eagles in Boston before the great coach found his life at Notre Dame. The Gators stopped the Eagles inside the Gators' 15-yard line five times, while Ferguson recorded six tackles for a loss, including a dramatic tackle of Eagles quarterback Charlie O'Rourke on a fourth-down play from the Gators' 4-yard line, dropping O'Rourke nine yards behind the line of scrimmage.

Ferguson was such an athlete that he competed in field events for the Florida track team.

Memorably, he scored both touchdowns on receptions for 45 and 74 yards in a 14–0 upset of the Miami Hurricanes in 1941, while totaling 123 yards; The Miami Herald reported the game score as "Forrest Ferguson 14; University of Miami 0." Less often remembered was the key role he played against Miami on defense: his tackles of Miami ball carriers behind the line of scrimmage totaled 62 yards of losses.

The 74-yard touchdown catch remained the longest reception in team history until 1954. Seven days later, he figured prominently in the Gators' 14–7 victory over the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets. First, he stripped the ball from a Yellow Jackets ball carrier on the Georgia Tech 28-yard line, and then two plays later, he caught a pass from Gators halfback Tommy Harrison, and when cornered by defenders he lateraled the ball to tackle Milton Hull for the touchdown. I bet Milton Hull's family has that ball on display to this day. Wow!

Fergie was snapped as a boxer in the 1941 Seminole yearbook. You can bet if I had a picture of that or could get one, it would be in this book.

During his 1941 senior season, Ferguson caught a total of 26 passes in 10 games. He also led the 1941 Florida football team with 36

points scored and 420 minutes played; the 1942 Seminole yearbook referred to him as a "defensive bulwark," "colorful," and "unpredictable." After the season, he received first-team All-Southeastern Conference (SEC) honors, and was an honorable mention All-American selection by Grantland Rice in Collier's magazine.

Following his final college football season, Ferguson became the State of Florida collegiate heavyweight boxing champion, and won the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) national championship in the javelin throw with a distance of 203 feet, 6 and 1/2 inches, in 1942. During the spring of 1942, he also played at first base for the Florida Gators football team. Ferguson graduated from the University of Florida with a bachelor's degree in education in 1942.

Military service.

Several months after the United States entered World War II, Ferguson joined the U.S. Army in 1942, and was commissioned as a second lieutenant after attending officers' candidate school. On June 6, 1944, he led a platoon in the anti-tank company, 116th Infantry Regiment of the 29th Infantry Division in the Allies' D-Day landings on Omaha Beach in Nazi-occupied Normandy, France.

After landing in the second wave of the amphibious assault, Ferguson and his platoon, as well as the survivors from the first wave, were pinned down on the beach by heavy rifle, machine gun and artillery fire from the German defenders, and their advance was blocked by extensive barbed wire and other enemy obstacles.

Ferguson rose under fire, cleared a passage through the enemy obstacles with a Bangalore torpedo, and was gravely wounded while leading his men in a direct frontal assault against the enemy. Ferguson was awarded the U.S. Army's Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest medal for gallantry, for "extraordinary heroism" in combat on June 6, 1944.

Ferguson never fully recovered from his head wound, and died from complications arising from his war-time injuries on May 15, 1954, at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Coral Gables, Florida; he was just 34 years old. What a legacy!/? What a Gator! What a man!

Following a community memorial service at the First Baptist Church in Stuart, he was buried with military honors in All Saints Cemetery in Jensen Beach, Florida.

After his death, several of his former Gators teammates established what is commonly known as the "Fergie Ferguson Award" in his memory; since 1955, it has been presented annually to the senior player for the Florida Gators football team "who displays outstanding leadership, character and courage." He was later inducted into the University of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame as a "Gator Great," and was unanimously elected to the Florida Sports Hall of Fame by the 65 participating Florida sportswriters in 1957.

--End of player highlights

## **1942: Florida Gators Season 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

## **1944: Florida Gators Season 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. 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. 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: Florida Gators Season 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 not 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.

## **Great Gators Players from the Freshman Class**

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.

To open the season, on Sept 22, the Gators beat Camp Blanding W (31-2). The next win came quickly the following week on Sept 29 as the Gators defeated Ole Miss in Jacksonville W (26-13). In New Orleans on Sept 19, the Gators tied Tulane T (6-6). On Oct 13, it was Vanderbilt at home in Florida Field L (0-7) followed by a loss on Oct 19 at Burdine Stadium in Miami, Florida against the Hurricanes L (6–7).

Next on Oct 27, the Gators beat Southwestern Louisiana at Florida Field W (45–0. On Nov 3. at Auburn, the Tigers beat the Gators L (0-19). Then in the annual Jacksonville game, Georgia again dominated the Gators L (0-34). On Nov 17, the Gators beat Presbyterian at Florida Field W (41-0). Then, in the season wrap-up game. The Gators lost to the US. Amphibious Unit at Norfolk, Virginia L (0-12)

After Lieb's coaching contract was not renewed, he became the track & field coach and an assistant football coach at the University of Alabama, where his old Notre Dame teammate Frank Thomas was the head coach of the Alabama Crimson Tide.

## **1946: Florida Gators Season 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 was not necessarily the best or the worst. It was the Gators fourteenth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). They placed twelve of twelve teams in the SEC conference standings. They won not 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, it was 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.

### **1947: Florida Gators Season 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.

### **1948: Florida Gators Season 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.

### **1949: Florida Gators Season 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. This year, the Gators beat Georgia, however, which was a big deal:



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."

## Great Gators Players – Chuck Hunsinger

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 the Ga Tech game debacle (L914043), the Gators played Georgia at Gator Bowl Stadium and finally beat the Bulldogs W (28-7). The Gators would lose out the rest of the season.



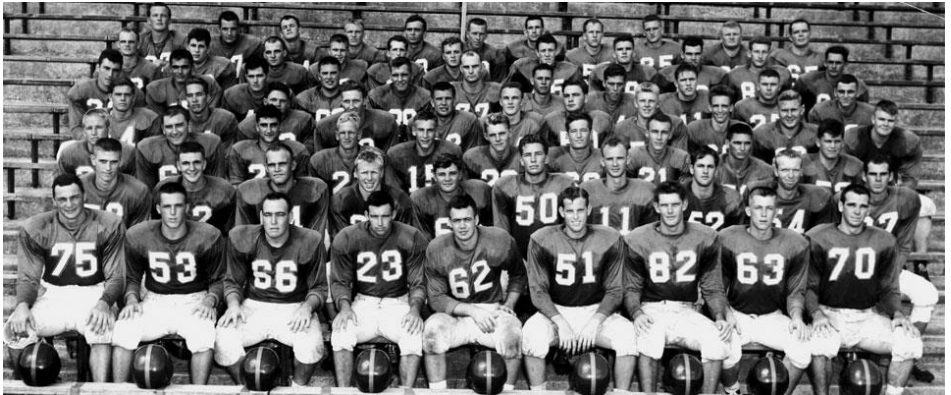
**<< Chuck Hunsinger  
Tailback 1946-1949** had a brilliant career at UF rushing for over 2,000 yards. He was the 3rd overall selection in the 1950 NFL draft. Vs Georgia in 1949 rushed for 174 yards on 18 carries and scored 3 TDs leading the Gators to victory.



# Chapter 11 Coach Bob Woodruff 1950-1959

## Coach # 13 George Robert Woodruff

Year	Coach	Record	Conference	Record
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 Coach Bob Woodruff

## 1950: Florida Gators Season 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.

Trained by the best – Coach Neyland, Bob 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.

## Haywood Sullivan Great Gator Player

A great Gators player, Haywood 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: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **1952: Florida Gators Season 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. After a 500 season, the 1951 Gators followed it up with another 500.

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 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

LaPradd. La Pradd was the Gators' lightest tackle and one of their two captains.

## Great Gator Player Charlie La Pradd

Charlie LaPradd, Tackle 1950-1952. A first team All-America at Tackle (back when players played two ways) after having been a US Army paratrooper prior to attending UF.



For the annual neutral game in Jacksonville on Oct 25, the Gators whooped Georgia W (33-0). The Gators actually dominated rival Georgia in Jacksonville, giving Gators' largest victory margin over the Bulldogs for almost forty years. Casares ran for 108 yards, kicked a field goal, and made all the extra points.

Then on Nov 1, Florida beat #17 ranked Auburn at home W (31-21). Florida was finally having a winning season. #18 Tennessee spoiled the good feelings on Nov 15, winning L (12-26) at Shields-Watkins Field in Knoxville, Tennessee. The Gators then beat Miami on Nov 22 W (43-6), followed by Kentucky W (27-0 and Tulsa W (14-13) on Jan 1, 1953 to finish the season on a high note. This game was the Gators' first appearance in a NCAA-sanctioned bowl game, a closely matched 14-13 Gator Bowl victory over the Tulsa Golden Hurricane on January 1, 1953. In the Tulsa game, star fullback Rick Casares kicked the winning extra points for the margin of victory. Gator star LaPradd was named All-American.

-- End of player highlights

## **1953: Florida Gators Season 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 Florida 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.

## **1954: Florida Gators Season 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 Florida 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.

## 1955: Florida Gators Season 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.

### Great Gator Player Don Chandler



<<< Don Chandler  
Kicker/Punter  
1954-1955.  
Transferred into UF  
from tiny Bacone  
College in  
Oklahoma. He  
played 12 years in  
the NFL including  
the first two  
overtime games (the  
1958 classic  
between the Colts  
and Giants being  
one of them) and  
was named to the  
NFL's all-decade  
team for the 60's.

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.

-- End of player highlights

## **1956: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **Great Gator Players Leading the Charge**

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.

## **1957: Florida Gators Season 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.



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: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **Problems & Success with Great Gator Players**

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



Gators 1958 Action

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: Florida Gators Season 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.

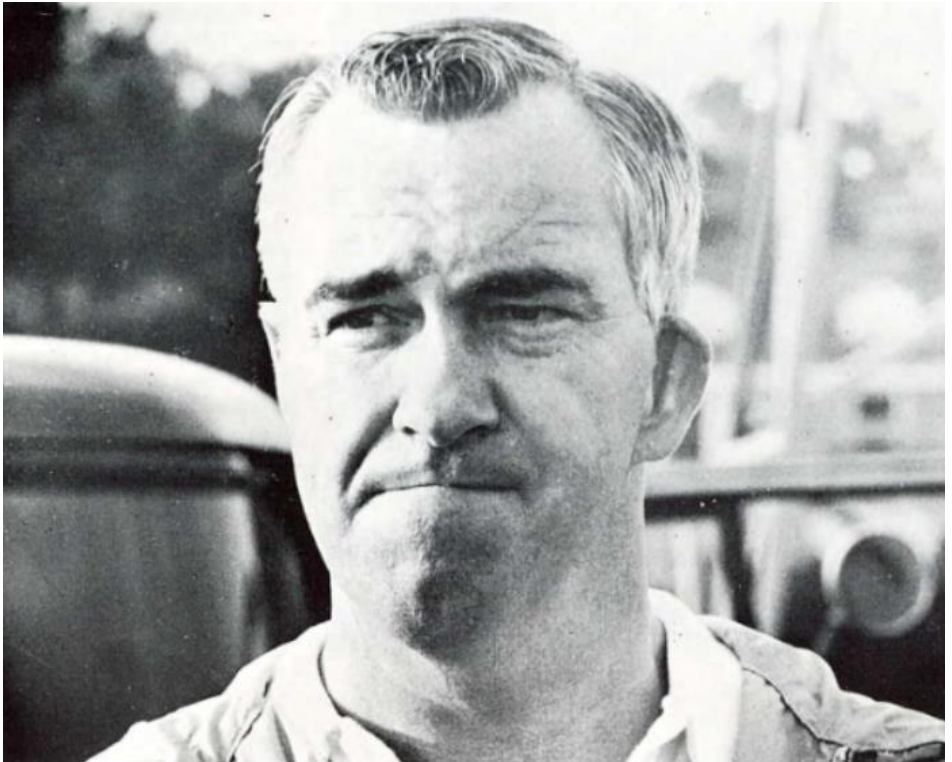
It was the Gators twenty-seventh season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was an OK showing and a poor showing in the SEC. The team record was 5-4-1, and 2-4-0 in the SEC. They were ninth in the SEC conference standings among the twelve SEC team after winning just 2 SEC games.



## Chapter 12 Coach Graves Era 1960-1969

Coach # 14 Ray Graves

Year	Coach	Record	Conference	Record
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: Florida Gators Season 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 wind 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.

## **1961: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **1962: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **1963: Florida Gators Season 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 team after winning 3 SEC games.

## **1964: Florida Gators Season 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 a fine 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.

## **Great Florida Player Steve Spurrier**

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.

Nothing worth having is easy but the Alabama game could have been the Gators'. Going in to their 1964 homecoming game against Florida, Alabama was ranked very high at #3 and Florida was doing well at #9 in the AP Poll. This was a back and forth game.

Against the Gators, as noted, Alabama grabbed a 17–14 victory. It did not look like it was theirs for the asking but then they scored ten unanswered points in the fourth quarter.

After a scoreless first quarter, Florida got a 7–0 second quarter lead when Steve Spurrier threw a nine-yard touchdown pass to Randy Jackson. Alabama tied it up when Steve Bowman got a one-yard touchdown run later in the quarter. It was 7–7 at halftime. Thee fans were on edge. Fingernails were found all over the stadium by the maintenance crew the next day.

In the third, the Gators got the lead back with a three-yard John Feiber touchdown run but then the Crimson Tide began its fourth quarter rally. It began with a 30-yard Bowman touchdown run, which tied the game, and it was a 21-yard David Ray field goal with just 3:06 left in the game that broke the backs of the Gators. Spurrier did his best by then leading the Gators on a drive that looked like it would reach pay dirt at the Tide's seven-yard line.

The Gators went for the tie and not the win and James Hall (surely, he does not want his name in this book) missed a field goal to tie the game and that single missed opportunity preserved the 17–14 Alabama win.

Putting their winning ways back in gear after the heartbreaking Alabama loss, the Gators beat Auburn on Oct 31 at Florida Field on the Gainesville Campus W (14–0). The Gators beat the favored Tigers by picking off four passes, returning one for an 84-yard touchdown, and by recovering three fumbles. QB Steve Spurrier ran in the final score from 5 yards out. For so many turnovers, the score was low.





Tommy Tolleson and David Ray rattle the Gator kicker to send a fourth down field goal wide at the end of the game and ensure Alabama's 17-14 victory

Vince Dooley, the infamous and great Georgia coach would permit no loss to any team without a big fight. He became the new head coach of the underdog 1964 Georgia Bulldogs. In a game where the Bulldogs' quarterback failed to complete a single pass and was intercepted twice, "Dooley's Dogs," somehow were able to rely on their running game, a staunch second-half defense, and a little bit of luck to beat Coach Graves' tenth-ranked Gators and Sophomore sensation Steve Spurrier.

With the game tied at 7-7 in the fourth quarter, Bulldogs placekicker Bob Etter lined up for a potential game-winning field goal. Instead, in a poorly executed broken play, the Bulldogs' center and placeholder mishandled the snap, but the kicker picked up the bobbled ball and ran it for a touchdown to win the game 14-7. The sound of a deflated Gator permeated the stadium.

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.

End-of-player highlights

## Great Florida Player Larry Dupree



Years: 1962-64. The Buzz: After nearly heading to Athens, Ga., to play for the Bulldogs, the MacClenny (pictured, far right) native decided to attend Florida at the last minute. Great moment: Set a school record for carries in a game (31 for 138 yards) and scored the game's only touchdown against Florida State in 1963 to keep the Gators undefeated (5-0-1) in the fresh rivalry.

Larry Dupree was a Florida Gator legend in the 1960s, the first in school history to make the All-SEC first team three times and the first running back to be a first-team All-American.

To family and lifelong friends in Baker County, he was simply one of them.

Dupree, who passed away at age 70 at Ed Fraser Memorial Hospital, never made a big deal about his place in Florida football history unless someone else brought it up.

Those who filled Guerry Funeral Home on East Macclenny Avenue to overflowing for the viewing on Wednesday, then returned on



He was always well-grounded in family structure and home and it says a lot to see the number of people who have come here to remember him.”

“Just an average country fellow,” said Terry Barber, one of Dupree’s cousins. “A good man. I knew that about him a long time before I found out what he had accomplished at Florida.”

“He was a true friend,” added E.L. Padgett, whose son played high school football with one of Dupree’s sons. “He stayed loyal to Baker County and stayed true to everyone in Baker County. They stayed true to him.”

Dupree gained 1,725 yards and scored 14 touchdowns in three years with the Gators. UF compiled a 20-10 record during that span, beat Georgia twice and topped Penn State 17-7 in the 1962 Gator Bowl.

Dupree’s teams were 3-1 in Jacksonville, the closest he would ever play to Macclenny after his career at Baker County High School.

Thursday for services at Glen Baptist Church, followed that cue, even though dozens honored his college career by wearing Gator blue and orange to both places.

They lauded him more as a good family man and a neighbor than what he did on the football fields of the SEC from 1962-1964.

“You’ve got to know where Macclenny is if you want to get there,” said former Gator teammate Larry Gagner at the viewing. “He put Macclenny on the map, and then he came back to live out his days with his family.

Dupree's sense of family was evident while he was still a player. He nearly missed the 1963 game against Georgia because his first wife Denise delivered their first child stillborn, a girl they named Lisa. He was so devastated that one of his teammates, Allen Trammell, told his position coach that he was going to miss curfew because he was not going to leave Dupree's side.

Trammell told the Gainesville Sun that Dupree "was devastated."

But Denise Dupree urged her husband on Saturday morning to go to Jacksonville for the game. Her father was a Florida Highway Patrol officer who arranged a police escort to get Dupree to the game on time.

Coach Ray Graves told his players before the game, "If you guys don't want to play today, you never will."

Dupree scored a touchdown, ran for 74 yards and caught a 34-yard pass as the Gators beat Georgia 21-14.

Teammates at both Baker County and Florida remembered Dupree as a rugged runner who bounced off tacklers, ran them over and dragged them with him to the end zone.

He was one of the unquestioned team leaders at both places but was understated. There were never inspirational halftime pep talks or pounding of lockers from Dupree, but his actions spoke with all the volume required.

"He was very humble, very likable but when he was around a bunch of guys, you knew he had leadership qualities," Gagner said. "He led by example. The young guys saw the effort he made in practice and the games and when you play with a guy you respect that much, you do your best to put in the effort he did."

Florida Heisman Trophy winner and all-time coaching victories leader Steve Spurrier was a sophomore quarterback when Dupree was a senior. He said Graves rotated running backs more that year, with Dupree's rushing yardage cut almost in half.

Spurrier said Dupree never complained and was all about winning during a 7-3 season.

“He was a quiet guy, a very good back and respected by everyone,” Spurrier told the Times-Union. “A good person and well-liked.”

Marcus Rhoden, who played for the Wildcats with Dupree and then against him when he went to Mississippi State, later worked with Dupree to start the first youth football program in Baker County.

“He was a great teammate but if you slacked off, he’d get on you,” Rhoden said. “He didn’t care about being captain. He didn’t need the title to be a leader.”

Dupree never made it to the NFL but became successful in business, managing Woolverton Oldsmobile in Jacksonville and Pineview Chevrolet in Macclenny. He also was involved in contracting.

Logan Dupree said his father never tried to steer him and his three brothers to football. They all played, but it was their decision.

“He told us to play football because we wanted to, not because he played,” Dupree said. “He told us if we wanted to play the piano, then play the piano, and he’d be in the front row. He didn’t like to talk about his career. He never told people when they met him that he was an All-American. We were talking about that the night before he passed. He said, ‘if you have to talk about it, you probably weren’t too damn good.’”

Padgett said Dupree’s name remains legendary in Baker County.

“People talk about how this kid or that kid might be the best player to ever come out of Baker County,” he said. “But unless you go off and become a three-time All-SEC and an All-American, unless you reach that kind of status, you’re not the best football player we ever had in Baker County.”

LARRY DUPREE (1944-2014)

High school: Played at Baker County, graduated in 1960.

**College:** Three time first-team All-SEC running back at the University of Florida. Led team in rushing all three years and was named All-American in 1964. Gained 1,725 yards and scored 14 touchdowns.

He was a member of the University of Florida Hall of Fame, the Florida Sports Hall of Fame and TaxSlayer Bowl Hall of Fame.

## 1965: Florida Gators Season 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 Sugar Bowl

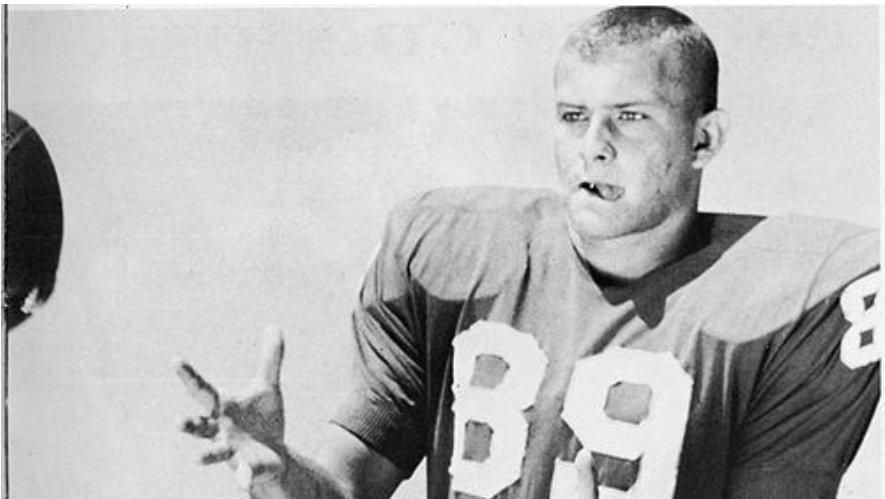
Finishing off the post season #6 Missouri, played the Gators at Tulane Stadium in New Orleans, LA in the (Sugar Bowl). The

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!

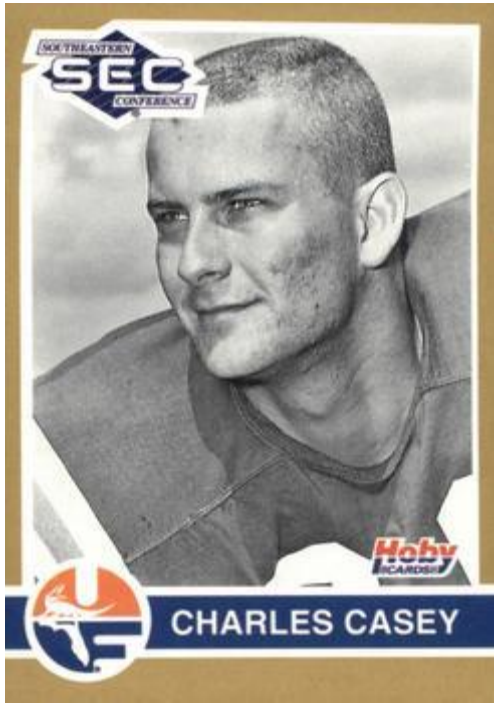
## Great Players Charlie Casey

Casey played from 1963-65. He was drafted in the sixth round by Atlanta, where he grew up, after helping revolutionize a downfield passing game with Steve Spurrier under center. A great Casey moment was when Charlie caught 10 passes in a 28-6 victory over North Carolina State in 1965, then a school record.



Born February 1, 1944, Casey is a former American football player. He played at the end position at the University of Florida. He was selected as a first-team All-American in 1965 and set Florida single-season records for receptions (58), receiving yards (809), and receiving touchdowns (8). At the end of his collegiate career, he was

the leading receiver in Southeastern Conference (SEC) history with career totals of 114 receptions and 1,612 receiving yards.



Casey grew up in Atlanta, Georgia. He attended Brown High School where he was a star athlete in baseball, basketball and football. He was offered a \$10,000 signing bonus to play baseball by the Milwaukee Braves and scholarships to play basketball by Navy, Louisville and other schools. Pepper Rodgers, who also attended Atlanta's Brown High, recruited Casey to play football at the University of Florida where Rodgers was an assistant coach.

At the University of Florida Casey enrolled and played at the end position for head coach Ray Graves' Florida Gators football teams from 1963 to 1965. After catching nine passes as a sophomore in 1963, Casey gained notice during a March 1964 scrimmage when he caught six passes. During the 1964 season, and despite being routinely double-teamed, Casey was the SEC's leading receiver, and he broke Florida's single-season records with 47 receptions and 673 receiving yards.

As a senior in 1965, Casey broke his own single-season receiving records. In his second season teaming up with Florida quarterback Steve Spurrier, Casey was again the leading receiver in the SEC with 58 receptions for 809 yards and eight touchdowns. He ended his college career as the leading receiver in SEC history. After the 1965 season, he was selected as a first-team All-American offensive end by the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) and the Associated Press (AP).

Casey was also selected to play in the Senior Bowl, and he received the Daytona Beach Quarterback Club's award as the outstanding



senior college football player in the State of Florida. He garnered 13 of 17 first-place votes for the award. The Gators coaching staff named him as the recipient of the team's Fergie Ferguson Award, as the "senior football player who displays outstanding leadership, character and courage."

Ready to be a pro, Charlie Casey was selected by the Atlanta Falcons in the sixth round (81st overall pick) of the 1966 NFL Draft. He signed a two-year contract for about \$125,000, but it was not too long afterwards that he was released by the Falcons in August 1966 without appearing in any regular season NFL games. What do they know?

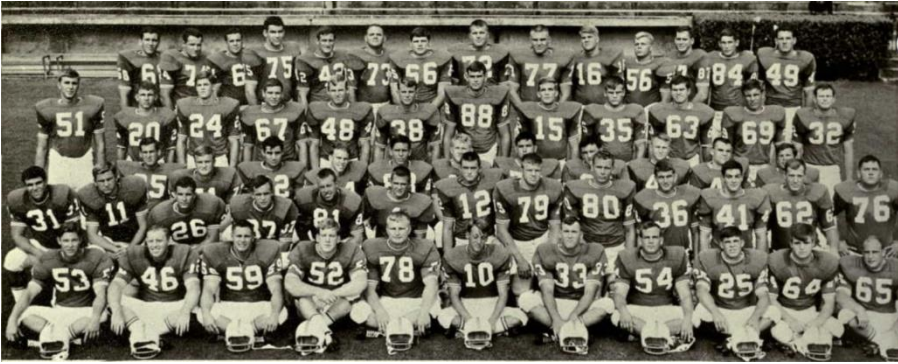
Casey was later inducted into the University of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame as a "Gator Great".

-- End of player highlights

## **1966: Florida Gators Season 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 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 big 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 prior were 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

Steve Spurrier, player and coach is one of a kind. 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 1964 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. He never accepted anything but a winning attitude until a game ended.

Steve Spurrier was born in Miami, Fla. He attended Science Hill High in Johnson City, Tenn., where he was a three-sport letterman starring in high school football, basketball and baseball. In three years as the starting pitcher for Science Hill, he never lost a game and led his team to two consecutive state baseball championships. He was an all-state selection in football, basketball and baseball, and a high school All-American quarterback in 1962. His accomplishments seem to never end.

Spurrier was recruited by several top college programs but he was not seriously recruited by Tennessee because the Volunteers ran a wing-T offense that featured a running quarterback while Spurrier was an

excellent passer. He ultimately chose to accept a scholarship offer from Florida in 1963 because of "the passing, the SEC, the weather, and coach Ray Graves."

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.

A head coach at the collegiate level since 1987, he was 20-13-1 at Duke and won the ACC Championship in 1989. While head coach at Florida, his team won the SEC Championship in 1990, '91, '93-'96, 2000 and the National Championship in 1996. He became the first Heisman winner to coach another Heisman winner when Florida quarterback Danny Wuerffel won the award in 1996. After Florida, he coached the Washington Redskins in the NFL before returning to coach South Carolina.

Spurrier is a member of the Orange Bowl Hall of Fame and the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame. He was elected to the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame in 1986.

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 a 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.

Teammate and tailback Larry Smith took pressure of Spurrier as a QB as he was the team's leading rusher with 742 yards and nine touchdowns on 162 carries. Smith got his own accolades. He was selected as the most valuable player in the 1967 Orange Bowl after setting two Orange Bowl records with 187 rushing yards and a 94-yard touchdown run.

Looking for other greats on the team, it is not difficult. Actually, QB Spurrier helped all players play better than they might have been inclined. For example, flanker Richard Trapp set a new team record with 63 catches during the 1966 season.

More than just Spurrier created the difference for this 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.

-- End of player highlights – Steve Spurrier --

The 1966 season began with everybody knowing that Quarterback Steve Spurrier was returning to the 1966 team. However, nothing comes in football without some butts. 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.

On Sept 17 in the season opener against a Big-10 Northwestern team, at Florida Field on the Gainesville Campus, the Gators won a nice game W 43–7. In this 1966 season and home opener over the Northwestern Wildcats at Florida Field, Quarterback Steve Spurrier passed for 219 yards and three touchdowns and he kicked two field goals in the game. Receiver Richard Trapp caught two touchdown passes (19 and 53 yards) and Elsdon caught another (10 yards). Back-up quarterback Harmon Wages also scored on a 25-yard run. Preston also scored on a 15-yard pass from Kay Stephenson. In all, Florida gained 506 yards of total offense, 206 rushing and 302 passing. Great start!

On Sept 24, Mississippi State played at Florida Stadium and succumbed to the Gators W (28-7). Florida became two and 0. It was a record home crowd of 49,333 at Florida Field. When the first half ended, the teams were knotted 7–7; but the Gators had not yet gone into high gear. UF scored three touchdowns in a seven-minute span in the third quarter.

Quarterback Steve Spurrier threw two TD passes, a 16-yard pass to Jack Coons and a 13-yard pass to end Paul Ewaldsen. Florida's other touchdowns came on runs by Larry Smith and Harmon Wages. Three of Florida's four touchdowns were set up by interceptions of passes thrown by Mississippi State quarterback Don Saget. Good "D!"

On Oct 1, the Florida Squad traveled to Dudley Field in Nashville, TN to beat Vanderbilt W (13-0). Then, on Oct 1, Florida State played extremely tough in their home game against their in-state rivals but lost nonetheless to the Gators W (22-19) in a definite nail biter. Both Florida touchdowns were the result of passes thrown by Steve Spurrier, a 22-yarder to Jack Coons in the second quarter and a five-yarder to Larry Smith in the third quarter.

In the fourth quarter, Spurrier took charge and threw a 41-yard touchdown pass to Larry Smith and then completed a pass to Richard Trapp for the two-point conversion. This gave the Gators a

three-point lead. Late in the game, a Florida State receiver was ruled out of bounds when he caught a pass in the end zone. The Seminoles kept battling but scored no more points. They missed a 48-yard field goal attempt as time expired. Senior QB Spurrier completed 16 of 24 passes for 219 yards and three touchdowns

On Oct 15, NC State took on a *riding high doing well* Florida team at Carter–Finley Stadium in Raleigh, NC, but lost to the Gators W (17-1). This was the Gators' fifth game and they were ranked #8 in the AP Poll. This victory marked the first time since 1928 that the Gators had won the first five games in any season.

It was a close game all the way. Early in the fourth quarter, North Carolina State kicked a field goal and grabbed the lead 10–3. The Gators then sustained a 74-yard drive and tied the game on a short touchdown run by Larry Smith. Shortly thereafter, linebacker Steve Heidt intercepted a pass on Florida's 23-yard line. Quarterback Steve Spurrier then led a 77-yard drive capped by a 31-yard touchdown pass to Richard Trapp.

Then, on Oct 22, an always tough LSU SEC team played the Gators at Tiger Stadium in Baton Rouge, LA but were defeated by the Gators W (28-7). Florida took a 21–0 lead at halftime on an eight-yard touchdown pass from Steve Spurrier to Larry Smith, a two-yard touchdown run by Smith, and a 13-yard touchdown pass from Spurrier to Richard Trapp. Fullback Graham McKeel also scored a touchdown on a short run in the third quarter. Louisiana State did not score until the fourth quarter. Steve Spurrier had another great game completing 17 of 25 passes for 208 yards and two touchdowns.

On Oct 29, Auburn played at Florida Field in a Gators Homecoming Game on the Gainesville Campus and were beaten by the Gators for a great HC celebration W (30–27).

This was the University of Florida's seventh straight winning game, defeating coach Shug Jordan's Auburn Tigers before a record homecoming crowd at Florida Field. In the game, the teams traded the lead back and forth all day.

When Auburn fumbled the opening kickoff, quarterback Steve Spurrier got right in gear and threw a touchdown pass to Richard

Trapp on the third play of the game. On the day, Spurrier completed 27 of 40 passes for 259 yards. Other touchdowns came on short runs from backs Graham McKeel and Larry Smith. Smith finished the day with 102 rushing yards on twenty-two carries, including a 53-yard run. It was a great overall effort.

In the fourth quarter, Spurrier did what was necessary and scored a touchdown on a quarterback sneak after a 71-yard drive. Now the game as tied at 27, and Spurrier had the daunting task of engineering another late drive for the win. But, Florida was stopped at Auburn's 39-yard-line following an intentional grounding penalty.

The distance was outside the usual range of the Gators regular placekicker Wayne "Shade tree" Barfield, but Spurrier had kicked 40-yard field goals in practice. Fans still remember Steve Spurrier waving off the kicker and booting the game-winning, 40-yard field goal. That is the very definition of a real not faux superstar. There was no fake news reporting on Steve Spurrier when he was just about twenty years old. He's been that good for that long.

This was super exceptional play for the Florida Field General. Most believe this play eventually was responsible for Spurrier winning the Heisman. "Steve Spurrier may own the patent for thrills in football after the 1966 season. Indeed, Spurrier proved he was every bit the calm, collected candidate for the Heisman Trophy." said Pat Parrish of the All Florida News. What a player! What a team!

On Nov 5, as usual Georgia traveled to the Gator Bowl Stadium in Jacksonville, FL and as always played the Gators. Florida lost this one L (10-27). It was the first loss of the 1966 season, falling to the rival Georgia Bulldogs. Florida had been ranked #7 in the AP Poll prior to the game. With the loss, the Gators, dropped out of the AP top 10 after the loss. Bulldogs running back Ron Jenkins led the attack for Georgia with 88 rushing yards and a touchdown on 20 carries.

Florida got off to a fine start in the game. On the squad's first possession, the Gators put forth an 86-yard scoring drive with fullback Graham McKeel going over for the touchdown. Thereafter, the Gators were limited to a field goal, as Georgia was successful in



repeatedly blitzing Florida quarterback Steve Spurrier, holding him to 16 of 29 passes for 133 yards.

Then, on Nov 12, Tulane played at Florida Field who lost to the Gators W (31-10). Florida rebounded with this fine victory over the Tulane Green Wave at Florida Field. Quarterback Steve Spurrier gained 282 yards of total offense in the game, breaking the SEC career total offense record.

At the end of the game, Spurrier had a three-year total of 5,082 yards, surpassing Zeke Bratkowski's prior record of 4,824 yards from 1951 to 1953. Spurrier also set a new Florida single-season record with his 15th touchdown pass of the season. The game included an 83-yard punt return in the fourth quarter by Florida's George Grandy. Running back Larry Smith rushed for 93 yards on 26 carries. Everybody plays well when Steve Spurrier is playing or coaching or rooting on their side.

As the season closed, it was Miami playing against # 9 Florida at home. Miami won the game in a squeaker, L (16-21) Florida had a great season. This regular season ending loss at Florida Field was played before 59,211. It stung for sure.

Miami had led 21-3 at one point in the third quarter. Quarterback Steve Spurrier, who was playing in his last home game, engineered and executed a "desperate surge" that brought the Gators to within five points. He completed ten straight passes in one stretch and threw a touchdown pass to end Paul Ewaldsen late in the third quarter. Spurrier led another long drive in the fourth quarter that was capped by a touchdown run by Larry Smith.

As time ran out, the Gators had advanced the ball to the Miami 30-yard line. In all, Spurrier completed 26 of 49 passes for 224 yards. Flanker Richard Trapp caught 11 passes and set a team record with 63 receptions during the 1966 season. After the game, coach Ray Graves announced that Spurrier's number 11 jersey would be permanently retired. Tough game! Great player; Great regular season. Great team!

The Gators accepted an invitation for January 2, 1967 to play the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets in the Orange Bowl. With Steve

Spurrier as a senior QB at the helm in his last college game as a player, the Gators prevailed and won the Bowl Game W (27-12). It was great!

This was the 33rd Orange Bowl game. Florida tailback Larry Smith carried the ball 23 times for 187 yards in the game for a super yeoman effort. His game included a 94-yard touchdown run in the third quarter while he had a personal issue. His pants kept falling causing him to take time from running to keep his pants up. No kidding! He set Orange Bowl records for the most rushing yards in a game and for the longest run from scrimmage, and he was selected as the game's most valuable player.

Fullback Graham McKeel also got two nice touchdowns, and the Florida defense intercepted four passes and recovered a fumble. It was a great all-over effort. Quarterback Steve Spurrier was Mr. Inspiration though he saw limited action due to a sore throwing arm. Even in pain, the great QB still completed 14 of 30 passes for 160 yards. Backup QB Harmon Wages was tickled to get some time and he did very well. He threw a touchdown pass to end Jack Coons. What a nice story and the best part is that it is true. Florida coach Ray Graves called the game "the sweetest victory of my coaching career." For readers of this book, it surely was a season long overdue.

There is so much good about Steve Spurrier that has occurred in one way or another while he was / is a Gator, he is not only respected but well loved by the Gator Nation as one of its best!

## **1966 Heisman Trophy winner Steve Spurrier.**

### **How about that for a great Gator Player**

There were a lot of post-season awards for this fine Florida team. Florida quarterback Steve Spurrier received many individual awards for his one-of-a-kind efforts, including the following:

On November 23, 1966, Spurrier was announced as the winner of the 1966 Heisman Trophy. The QB received 433 of 869 first place votes and 1,679 points, outpacing Purdue quarterback Bob Griese who garnered 184 first place votes and 816 points.

Spurrier was also recognized by the NCAA as the unanimous first-team quarterback on the 1966 All-America Team, having received first-team honors from the Associated Press (AP), United Press International (UPI), Newspaper Enterprise Association, Central Press Association, American Football Coaches Association, Football Writers Association of America, Time magazine, and The Sporting News.

On December 3, 1966, Spurrier was selected by UPI as for its "back of the year" award. Spurrier received 137 of 327 possible votes, outpacing Bob Griese who finished second with 48 votes. In any other year, Bob Griese an outstanding back, would have gotten the nod.

On December 4, 1966, Spurrier was named the Sporting News College Football Player of the Year based on the votes of professional football scouts.

Florida center Bill Carr was Florida's other first-team All-American. He received first-team honors from Time magazine and the Sporting News. The team honors were not finished yet.



Five Gators received first-team All-SEC honors from either the AP or UPI on the 1966 All-SEC football team. Spurrier, Carr, running back Larry Smith, and flanker Richard Trapp were consensus first-team picks by both the AP and UPI, while guard Jim Benson took first-team honors from UPI and second-team honors from the AP. The only thing anybody can do alone is fail, Steve Spurrier was not alone. The Florida Gators were not alone.

## **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: Florida Gators Season 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.

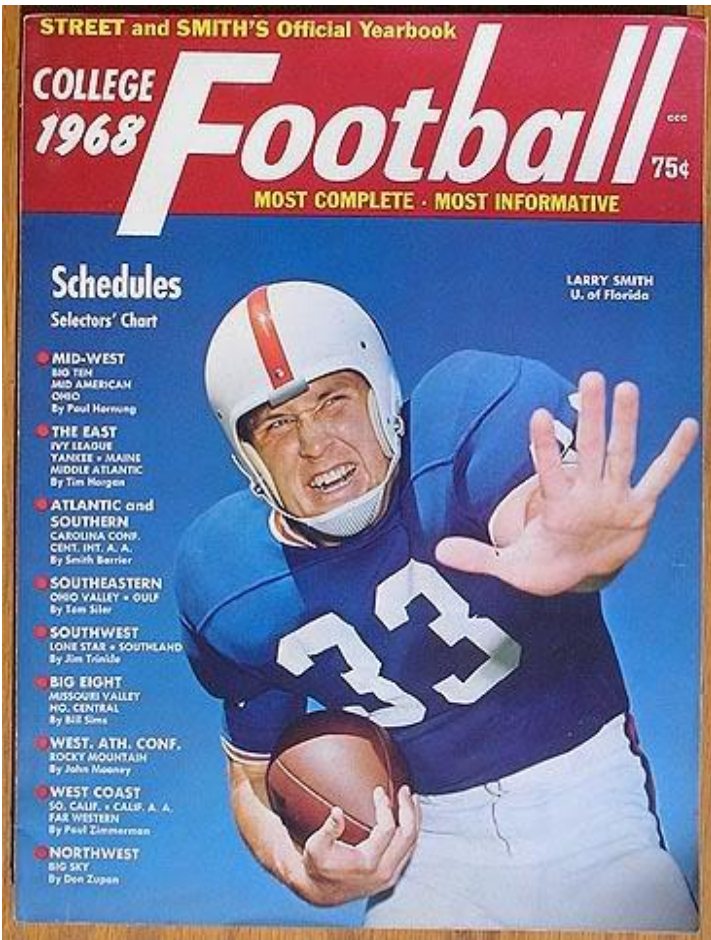
It was the Gators thirty-fifth season with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another reasonable showing. The team record was 6-4-0, and 4-2-0. They placed third in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams after winning 4 SEC games. Heisman winner QB Steve Spurrier was not available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

## **1968: Florida Gators Season 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 OK 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.

## Gator Great Players Larry Smith



Senior tailback Larry Smith led Florida's offense. He was a first-team All-American.

Among the season's highlights were the Gators' conference wins over the Mississippi State Bulldogs (31–14), Tulane Green Wave (24–7) and Kentucky Wildcats (16–14), and victories over

the in-state rival Florida State Seminoles (9–3) and Miami Hurricanes (14–10). The Gators did get a big blackmark this year as they suffered their worst loss since 1942—a 0–51 blowout by the Georgia Bulldogs.

## 1969: Florida Gators Season Coach Ray Graves

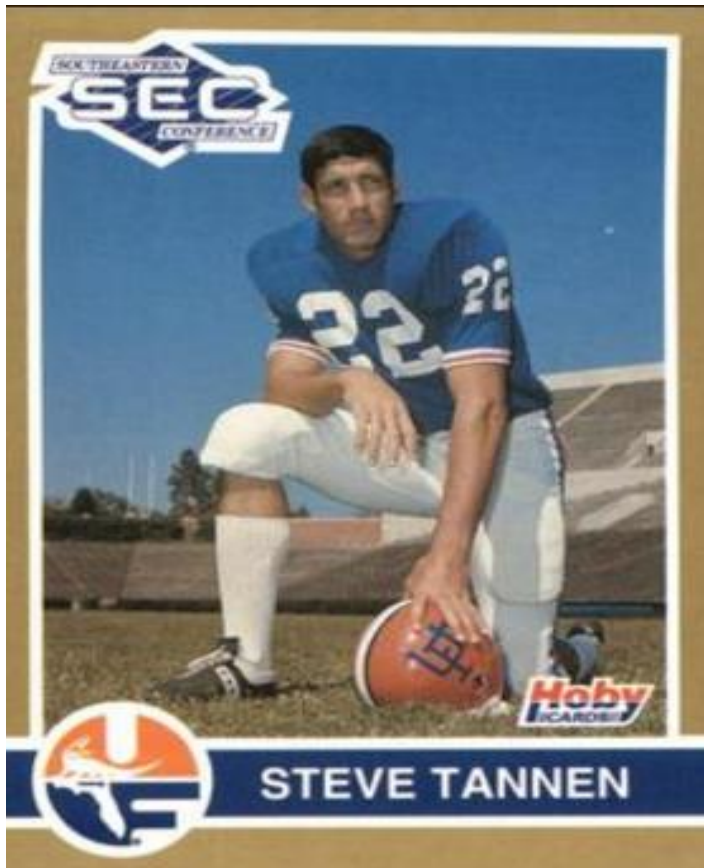
The 1969 Florida Gators football team was the sixty-third season for Florida. It was the tenth and last of ten seasons and the most successful for Ray Graves as the Football Gators head coach. The

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.

## Great Players DB Steve Tannen



Before his Gator playing years, 1967-69, the Miami native was a track and field standout in high school; but he chose to play football with the Gators. Post Gators, he played five seasons with the New York Jets after they selected him in the first round of the 1970 NFL draft. He had a great collegiate football moment when he blocked a punt that was returned for a touchdown in a 14-13 victory against Tennessee in the 1969 Gator Bowl. Nobody has ever forgotten that.

Steven Olson Tannen was born July 23, 1948) as an American football player in an already built football uniform. It could have been but the former college and professional football player actually first went through childhood. Then, he was a defensive back in the National Football League (NFL) for five seasons during the early 1970s. Tannen played college football for the University of Florida, and was recognized as an All-American. He was a first-round pick in the 1970 NFL Draft, and he played his entire professional career for the New York Jets of the NFL. Gator fans loved him.

Not that it matters but Tannen is Jewish, and was born in Miami, Florida in 1948, the same year as i. He attended Southwest Miami High School where he was an outstanding track and field athlete in the Florida Relays as a senior in high school, competing in the high hurdles, pole vault, high jump and the 440 relay, as well as starring in high school football for the Southwest Miami Eagles. In 2007, forty-one years after he graduated from high school, the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) recognized Tannen as one of the "100 Greatest Players of the First 100 Years" of Florida high school football. He was that good.

After HS, Tannen accepted an athletic scholarship to attend UF in Gainesville, Florida, where he played defensive back for coach Ray Graves' Florida Gators football team from 1967 to 1969. He had a well-deserved reputation for tough play and he was brash and cocky because he knew he was good and he knew his confidence would help his team.

Tannen was a first-team All-Southeastern Conference (SEC) selection in 1968, a first-team All-American in 1969, and the recipient of the Gators' Fergie Ferguson Award recognizing the



"senior football player who displays outstanding leadership, character and courage."

Memorably, Tannen blocked a punt in the 1969 Gator Bowl, which was returned for a touchdown and provided the Gators' margin of victory in their 14–13 upset win over the Tennessee Volunteers, and helped the Gators achieve their then best-ever record of 9–1–1. A highly versatile athlete, Tannen finished his three-season college career with eleven interceptions, and led the team in punt return yardage as a senior

He graduated from Florida with a bachelor's degree in business administration in 1972, and was later inducted into the University of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame as a "Gator Great." In 2006, the sportswriters of The Gainesville Sun chose him as No. 15 among the 100 greatest players from the first 100 years of Florida Gators football.

The New York Jets selected Tannen in the first round (twentieth pick overall) of the 1970 NFL Draft, and he played for the Jets for five seasons from 1970 to 1974. As a rookie, he blocked a punt, recovered the ball and scored against Buffalo in 1970.

A series of muscle pulls idled him in 1971. Shoulder injuries slowed him, but he managed to play in thirteen of the games and led the team in interceptions with seven during the 1972 season. In 1973, he managed to start three games at free safety and spent the bulk of the season as backup man at either safety or at cornerback since he had experience at all positions.

During his five-year NFL career, Tannen played in sixty-one games and had twelve interceptions with 204 return yards. He was also a standout special teamer, and blocked two field goals.

-- End of player highlights



# Chapter 13 Coach Doug Dickey 1970-1978

Coach # 15 Doug Dickey

Year	Coach	Record	Conference	Record
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: Florida Gators Season 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.

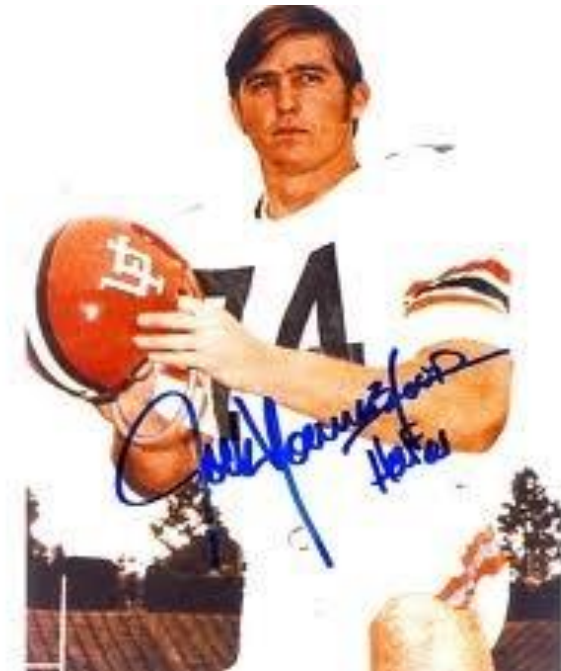


Doug Dickey has retired from college football where he was head coach for both the Florida Gators and the Tennessee Volunteers.

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.

## Great Players Jack Youngblood

Monticello Native Jack Youngblood played for Florida from 1968 to 1970. He entered college at UF, where he could not play as Freshman and he wanted to be stronger. So, he put on 10 pounds a year through weight-lifting, finishing around 245 pounds when he graduated. He went on to be NFL Defensive Player of the Year after his career as the most dangerous pass rusher in Gator history. He played 14 seasons with the Los Angeles Rams and was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2001. With Florida down seven, Youngblood is remembered for having stopped a Georgia running back on the 1-yard line, forced a fumble and recovered it to begin a come-from-behind 24-17 victory in 1970.



Jack Youngblood



Also known to his parents as Herbert Jackson Youngblood III, he was born January 26, 1950 in Jacksonville, Florida. He graduated from the University of Florida as an All-America selection and he is considered among the best players the school has ever produced, having been named to the Gator Football Ring of Honor and having been voted to the College Football Hall of Fame.

He had a great NFL career and then spent time in the front-office for the Rams and other teams until about 2002. He's been a busy guy who made overtures into broadcasting (both radio and television), acting, business, and he even penned an autobiography.

Youngblood was named to Florida's All-Time High school football team by Sports Illustrated in 1989. In November 2007, he was voted to the Florida High School Athletic Association's All-Century High School football team. Jack Youngblood was never an also-ran

At UF, Youngblood got his degree in finance, and was a three-year varsity letterman. His weightlifting prowess is legendary. While at UF, he enjoyed his share of free juices as his class were the Guinea Pigs for the testing of what became Gatorade, a beverage created by Doctors Robert Cade and Dana Shires, designed to help Gator athletes who had to practice and play in the Central Florida heat.

Youngblood offered these comments on this experience: "Dr. Cade began experimenting with Gatorade my freshman year. He tried to kill us all! That first stuff was lethal! It was thick, like syrup, and had an aftertaste. Then, it started to look like milk." Jack made it four years anyway.

As a freshman Youngblood played defensive end, wearing number 52, for the Gator Freshman Team. It was his first experience on the defensive line, after playing linebacker in High School. As a sophomore in 1968, Youngblood played defensive end and defensive tackle while also handling the kicking chores for the Gators, kicking a career-long 42-yard field goal to provide the three-point winning margin in his first collegiate game which was against Air Force.

In 1969 Youngblood was part of a 9-1-1 Gator team that upset the University of Tennessee Volunteers in the Gator Bowl in Ray Graves's final game as coach at Florida. Youngblood played a key role in the Gator Bowl recording nine tackles and forcing a fumble. He first grabbed the national spotlight after an October 4, 1969, 5-sack performance 21-6 win versus instate rival Florida State. He also set a school record for sacks (14) in 1969 and led the teams' defensive linemen with 66 tackles.

In 1970, Jack Youngblood was voted All-American, while leading the team with 10 sacks to finish his Gator career with 29 quarterback sacks. Additionally, he was a finalist for the Outland Trophy following the 1970 season and he was voted the 1970 SEC lineman of the year.

In 1970, Youngblood was also named to the SEC All-Conference team, which ended three winning seasons while at Florida. He was gained the 1970 Florida's Forrest K. (Fergie) Ferguson Award, which goes to the senior who displays outstanding leadership, character, and courage.

His overall performance in the Florida/University of Georgia rivalry earned him a spot in the Florida-Georgia Game Hall of Fame as well. In the 1970 edition of the game in Jacksonville, when Florida trailed Georgia by seven points and the Georgia offense had driven to Florida's 1-yard line, Youngblood stopped a Georgia running back

short of the goal line and forced him to fumble. He then recovered the loose ball. This began a rally that gained a come-from-behind 24-17 victory in what is known as "The World's Largest Outdoor Cocktail Party".

There are many who regard Jack Youngblood, as the best defensive lineman in Gators history as well as one of the top five players in the University of Florida's football program. When Time magazine chose him for their 1970 All-America Team, they wrote this about Youngblood: "Deceptively fast for his size, he reads screens and swing passes so adroitly that he intimidates quarterbacks by his mere presence."

His coach Doug Dickey told The Sporting News, "He is difficult to move when you run at him, has the speed and agility to pursue down the line of scrimmage, and the strength and quickness to rush the passer". One experienced Florida writer still agrees stating, "Youngblood has to be viewed as one of the top five Gators ever. A phenomenal pass rusher".

He became a great pro. Youngblood was drafted by the Los Angeles Rams in the first round of the 1971 NFL Draft. He was the 20th overall pick in that draft and signed a 3-year \$105,000 contract including a \$30,000 signing bonus. In his rookie season, he backed up Deacon Jones at left defensive end and started four games when Jones was sidelined with a severely sprained arch. He was named All-Rookie by Football Digest and after the season Jones was traded to the San Diego Chargers. In 1972, the left defensive end position was Youngblood's as he led the Rams defensive linemen in tackles with 70, and started 11 of the 14 games he played, recording six sacks.

In 1973 Youngblood was a Second-team All-pro selection and went to the first of his seven Pro Bowls and led the Rams with 16-1/2 sacks. Youngblood was honored as the NFC Defensive Player of the Year by United Press International in 1975 and Pro Football Weekly named Youngblood the NFL defensive lineman of the year.

He is well known for having played the entire 1979 playoffs, including Super Bowl XIV, with a fractured left fibula. He also played in the 1980 Pro Bowl with the injured leg, a week after the



Super Bowl. In the playoffs, Youngblood sacked Dallas Cowboys quarterback Roger Staubach near the sideline in the waning moments of the divisional playoff game versus the Cowboys. Playing with the fractured leg was noted by Sports Illustrated in their Top 10 list of athletes playing in pain. For that and other achievements Jack was dubbed the "John Wayne of football" by Jim Hanifan and echoed by Hall of Fame coach John Madden.

The NFL Network series NFL Top 10 selected Youngblood's performance in the 1979 playoffs as top on its list of the "Gutsiest Performances" of all-time.

Despite the broken leg and numerous other injuries, Youngblood played in 201 consecutive games, a Rams team record; and only missed 1 game in his 14-year NFL career.

When Youngblood retired on August 27, 1985, he asked his career to be remembered for "dignity, integrity, respect and pride."

As an actor, the great Defensive Lineman appeared in two television movies: C.A.T. Squad in 1986 and C.A.T. Squad: Python Wolf in 1988. For "Python Wolf" he was nominated for an Emmy for 'Best Supporting Actor'. What a Gator!

-- End of player highlights --

## **1971: Florida Gators Season Coach Doug Dickey**

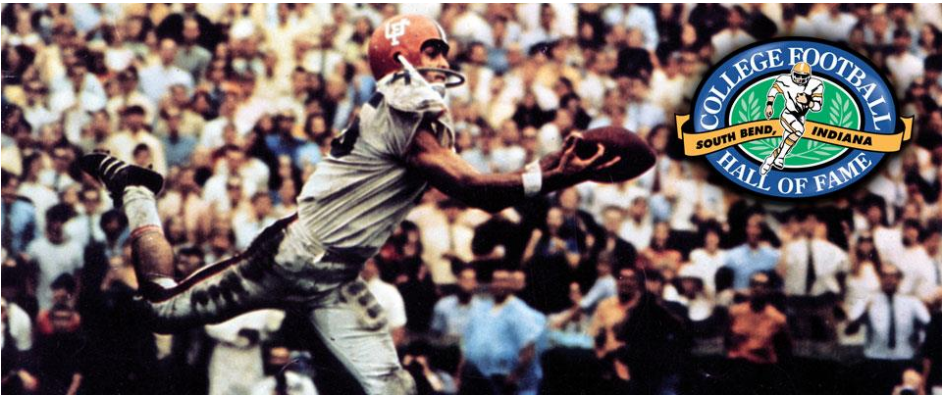
The 1971 Florida Gators football team was the sixty-fifth season for Florida. It was the second of nine seasons for Doug Dickey as the Football Gators head coach. The 1971 Gators had a miserable year in the overall season and they were terrible in the SEC.

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.

## Great Player Carlos Alvarez

Carlos Alvarez was a great receiver who played for UF from 1969-1971. Some of the Miami native's UF receiving records still stand more than 40 years later. Alvarez broke the Florida record by catching 15 passes for 238 yards against rival Miami in 1969.

Carlos Alvarez was not supposed to be a football player. He had played baseball and basketball in Cuba before his family fled Castro's regime in 1960. He had never heard of football, but his new American friends were playing it, so he decided to give it a go. As a natural thrower, they made him a QB for his Boys Club team in Miami. He hardly spoke any English. He didn't know the rules. He wasn't even sure what a touchdown was.



"On the first play from scrimmage I ran around the right end and ran for a touchdown," he recalled during an interview after the press conference prior to the dinner.

The only problem was that, straight out of the movie "Forrest Gump," he kept on running until about 20 yards past the goal line. When he came to a fence, Alvarez figured it was safe to stop. The next thing he knew, he was mobbed by his teammates.

And so, this was the beginning of a fine football career that reached its apex when the former wide receiver for the University of Florida, was honored at the National Football Foundation and College Football Hall of Fame's annual dinner at the Waldorf Astoria. He

and 15 other college football greats became the newest members of the Hall of Fame. What an honor

Alvarez was just 10 years old when his family left Cuba on a ferry for Key West.

"Castro had been in power for about a year and a half," recalled Alvarez. "My parents were not political, but they saw how Castro was tightening the belt and they were scared."

Alvarez's father gave up his law practice in Cuba and on the ferry told him and his two brothers: "I don't care if Castro falls. We're never going back. We're going to be Americans!"

Alvarez's mother had some experience as a seamstress, so his parents opened a small dress shop in a Miami mall.

"In 13 years, they took only one week's vacation," said Alvarez. Instead, they focused on getting enough money to provide for their sons, while stressing the importance of solid education and becoming Americanized.

Alvarez went on to become a star running back at North Miami High School.

"In my senior year, Vanderbilt offered me a four-year scholarship," he recalled. "I didn't even know you could get scholarships for playing football. I asked them, 'You mean I just have to play football?'"

More offers started pouring in.

"I wanted to be a wide receiver," he said. "I knew I could catch the ball. Florida promised me they would give me a try at wide receiver."

So, he became a Gator, where he made school history. Alvarez accepted an athletic scholarship to attend the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida, and played for coach Ray Graves and coach Doug Dickey's Florida Gators football teams from 1969 to 1971

During Coach Ray Graves' final season as Florida's head coach in 1969, Alvarez was one of several talented second-year Gators known as the "Super Sophs" who led the team to its then all-time best record of 9–1–1. At the close of his sophomore season, he was honored as a first-team All-Southeastern Conference (SEC) selection and a consensus first-team All-American, and he caught a nine-yard touchdown pass to provide the Gators' margin of victory in their 14–13 upset of the Tennessee Volunteers in the 1969 Gator Bowl.

Alvarez was known for his speed on the football field, and the media dubbed him the "Cuban Comet." He was also the Gators' leading receiver in 1970 and 1971, marking three straight seasons as the Gators' top offensive weapon. As a brain and an athlete, Alvarez was also a first-team Academic All-American in 1969 and a second-team Academic All-American in 1970 and 1971, and he was chosen for the Academic All-American Hall of Fame in 1991.

He set single season records for receptions (88), yards (1,329) and touchdown passes (12), and ranks second in school history with 172 career receptions and Florida's all-time mark with 2,563 receiving yards. He caught passes in 25 straight games.

Besides his All-America honors and numerous other awards for his gridiron exploits, he is very proud that he was also a three-time Academic All-America honoree.

After college, Alvarez was drafted by the Dallas Cowboys, even though they knew that he had knee problems that had started in his junior year, not from football, but from basketball.

"The Cowboys took a chance on me, but my knees never came back," he said.

In the meantime, however, Alvarez was attending law school at Duke University as he and his two brothers followed their father's footsteps in the legal profession.

A practicing attorney in Tallahassee, Fla., he is a recipient of the Jose Marti Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Cuban Community from the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. -- End of Player Highlights--

## 1972: Florida Gators Season 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: Florida Gators Season 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).

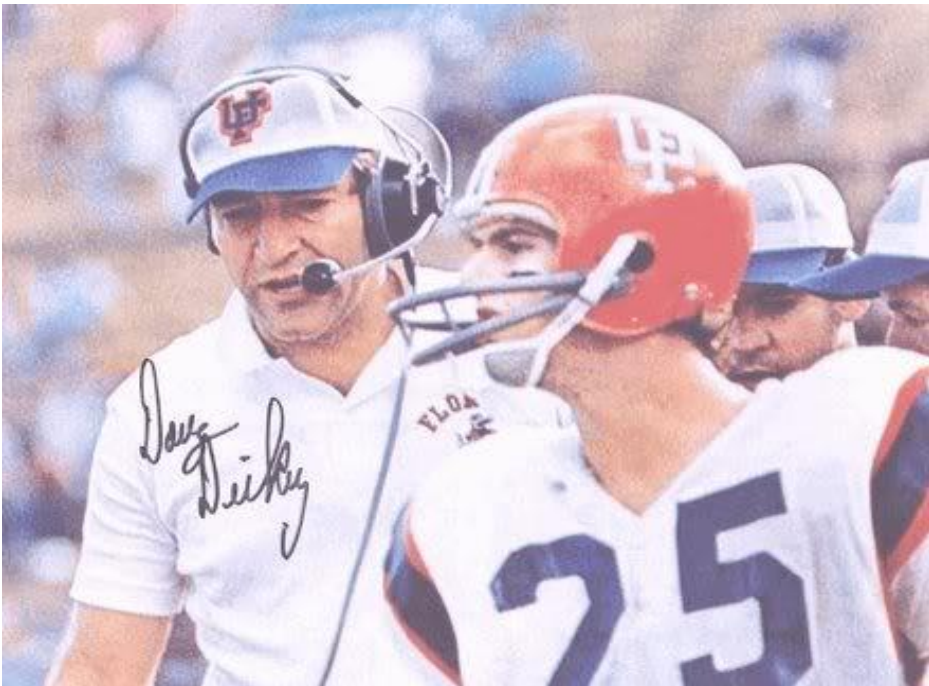
## 1974: Florida Gators Season Coach Doug Dickey

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: Florida Gators Season 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.

## 1976: Florida Gators Season 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.

At 8-4, Florida was invited to some bowls. They chose the Sun Bowl which was played in January of the following year. On January 2, 1977, the Gators squared off against #10 nationally ranked Texas A&M at Sun Bowl Stadium in El Paso, TX (Sun Bowl). As a consolation, it could have been worse. The offense was not clicking well but scored and the defense was not clicking but did not give up more than 50 points. This game was a loss L (14-37) for Florida. It

could have been better but it also could have been worse. I keep waiting as of 1976 for Florida to win the SEC Championship.

## **1977: Florida Gators Season 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.

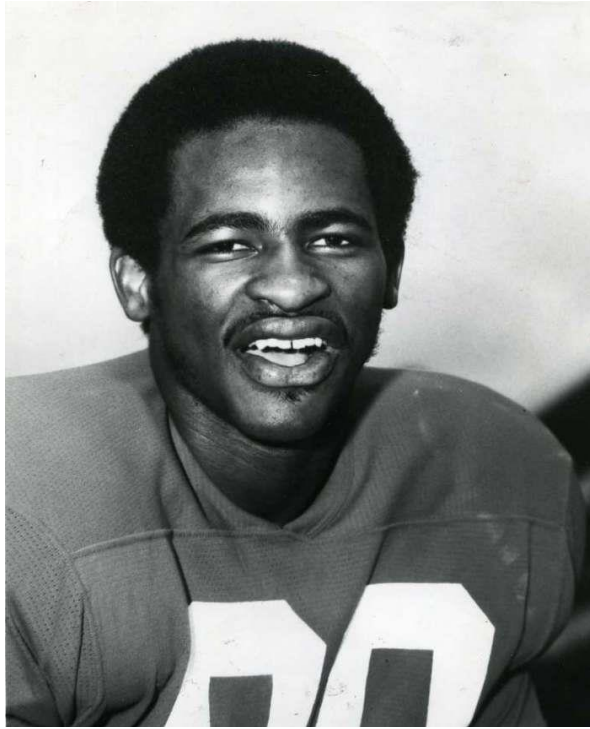
It was the Gators forty-fifth with the South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was another nice showing. The team record was getting positive at 6-4-1, and 3-3-0 in the SEC. They placed fifth in the SEC conference standings among the ten SEC teams. In forty-five seasons, the Gators had yet to win one SEC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

## **Great Players Wes Chandler**

Wes Chandler played for the Gators shortly after Steve Spurrier played – from 1974 1977. By this time, the Gators had learned how to win. Playing in a run-oriented wishbone offense did not hinder Chandler from posting record receiving numbers with the Gators. Chandler, from New Smyrna Beach, completed 11 seasons in the NFL, compiling 559 catches for 8,966 yards and 56 touchdowns for the New Orleans Saints and San Diego Chargers. In a great football moment. Chandler had 163 receiving yards and two touchdowns in a 24-19 victory against Auburn in 1976.

Whenever Gator fans discuss the most dynamic playmakers in school history, those who are 30-and-younger quickly mention the talented Percy Harvin, and deservedly so. But, there was a Percy Harvin well before Percy Harvin was born, and his name was Wes Chandler. If you ever saw Chandler play you know why.





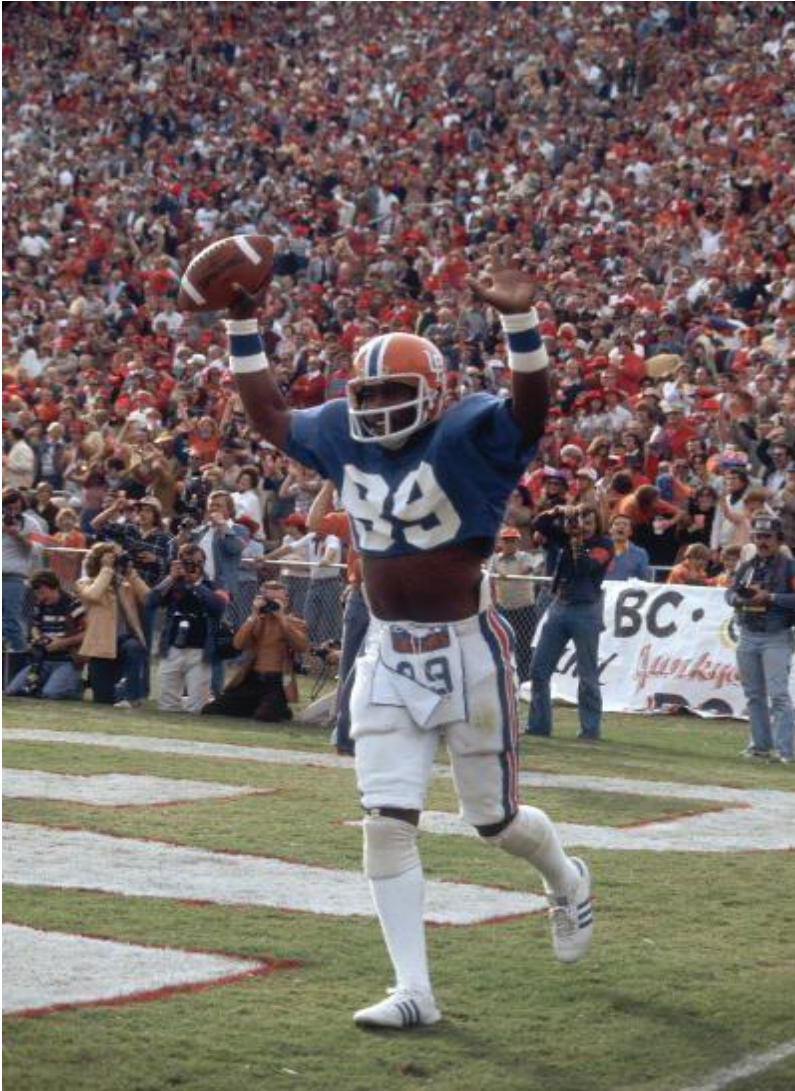
Chandler was well remembered by the National Football Foundation and they showed their long memory by inducting Chandler into the College Football Hall of Fame as a member of the 2015 class. He arrived at UF in 1974 from New Smyrna Beach (Fla.) High and over the next four seasons, despite playing receiver in a wishbone offense, was a two-time All-American. He finished at UF career with 92 catches for 1,963 yards and 22 touchdowns. He added 353 yards and six touchdowns rushing in his senior season. His 21.3-yard average per catch remains a school record nearly 40 years after he played his final game at UF.

"When you are growing up in high school, you wonder what it would be like to play with such great athletes and just being part of that," Chandler said after learning of his induction into the Hall of Fame. "For me, just to be able to get to Florida and participate with those individuals, individuals who had crates of talent, really helped me grow as a person and helped me grow as an athlete.

"I was just grateful to play there at Florida and with such great people and to be touched and coached by a lot of great people. I remember everyone that had an impact on my life."

Chandler was the third overall pick of the 1978 NFL Draft by the New Orleans Saints and played 11 seasons in the NFL with the Saints, Chargers and 49ers. He was selected for four Pro Bowls and led the NFL in receiving in 1982.

Wes Chandler



Chandler was well remembered by the National Football Foundation and they showed their long memory by inducting Chandler into the College Football Hall of Fame as a member of the 2015 class. He arrived at UF in 1974 from New Smyrna Beach (Fla.) High and over the next four seasons, despite playing receiver in a wishbone offense, was a two-time All-American. He finished at UF career with 92 catches for 1,963 yards and 22 touchdowns. He added 353 yards and six touchdowns rushing in his senior season. His 21.3-yard average per catch remains a school record nearly 40 years after he played his final game at UF.

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"I was just grateful to play there at Florida and with such great people and to be touched and coached by a lot of great people. I remember everyone that had an impact on my life." Chandler was the third overall pick of the 1978 NFL Draft by the New Orleans Saints and played 11 seasons in the NFL with the Saints, Chargers and 49ers. He was selected for four Pro Bowls and led the NFL in receiving in 1982.

But it was in college, wearing No. 89, where Chandler dazzled fans at Florida Field with an array of moves and athletic ability that provided head coach Doug Dickey a versatile weapon unlike perhaps any other Gator before him.

Chandler when inducted joined eight other former UF player to be inducted into the Hall of Fame—Dale van Sickel, Steve Spurrier, Jack Youngblood, Emmitt Smith, Wilber Marshall, Carlos Alvarez and Danny Wuerffel.

Chandler believes that his most noteworthy game at Florida is a victory over Georgia in 1977 at the old Gator Bowl in Jacksonville. The Bulldogs had won three in a row over the Gators, including a 41-27 win the previous season in which the Gators blew a big lead. In his final opportunity to get a win against Georgia, Chandler split time

at receiver and running back. Pundits over the years like to use this to describe the game results: The final score: Wes Chandler 18, Georgia 17.

For the record, the actual score was 22-17, but Chandler scored all three Florida touchdowns while catching three passes for 50 yards and rushing 15 times for 57 yards in an emotional win for the Gators. "Beating Georgia for the first time, I've got to say that was one of the most gratifying moments of my college career because it was the stigma," he said "We thought one year we were going to the Sugar Bowl and we lost. We had a commanding lead. The fact we had not beaten Georgia in my time there and to finally get over that hump was one of the major accomplishments."

"There are so many more memories, just playing with so many other guys who had great talent was a blessing in disguise for me. I still say that Georgia game was the impact moment in my career."

Watching that day at the Gator Bowl was Bud Asher, Chandler's high school coach and by then a scout for the Oakland Raiders. After Chandler was named the game's MVP, Asher told the Daytona Beach Morning Journal that Chandler was just getting started.

-- End of player highlights --

## **1978: Florida Gators Season 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 Florida 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 mediocre season. 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.

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.

Days after the season finale, the Florida administration announced that Clemson coach Charlie Pell had been hired to coach the Gators. Dickey was gone.



# Chapter 14 Coach Charley Pell 1979-1984

## Coach #16 Charley Pell

Year	Coach	Record	Conference	Record
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: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **1980: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **Great Gator: 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.

## **Great Gator Players Cris Collinsworth**

Collinsworth played from 1977-80. He switched from quarterback to wide receiver after his freshman year in Gainesville. The change paid off as Collinsworth became a three-time NFL Pro Bowl wide receiver with the Cincinnati Bengals. He later became a highly-regarded NFL broadcaster. One of his greatest sports moments was when he tied an NCAA record with a 99-yard touchdown pass against Rice in 1977.



Cris Collinsworth was born January 27, 1959. He is a color commentator, and a former Wide Receiver for the Cincinnati Bengals, where he played for his entire pro career. A former second round draft choice by the Bengals out of the University of Florida,

Cris currently broadcasts on NBC Sunday Night Football alongside veteran sports broadcaster Al Michaels.

Collinsworth was born in Dayton, Ohio but moved to Titusville, Florida with his family as a child. He attended Astronaut High School in Titusville, Florida. He was a star high school football player and was named All-American quarterback and additionally in a different sport, he was the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) Class 3A 100-yard-dash state champion for the Astronaut War Eagles in 1976.

Collinsworth's exceptional height at 6' 5", and his quickness attracted the attention of college football coaches throughout the South. Among other offers, he received an athletic scholarship to attend the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida, where he played for coach Doug Dickey and coach Charley Pell's Florida Gators teams from 1977 to 1980. Collinsworth was recruited as a quarterback by Doug Dickey's staff and in his first game as a Gator, Collinsworth threw a 99-yard touchdown pass to Derrick Gaffney against the Rice Owls, which is still tied for the longest touchdown pass in NCAA history. Nebraska tied it again in the 2014 Gator Bowl.

He later switched to wide receiver as the Gators transitioned from a run-oriented option offense to an offensive scheme that employed more passing. As a Gator wide receiver, he was a first-team All-Southeastern Conference (SEC) selection in 1978, 1979, and 1980, and a first-team All-American, a first-team Academic All-American, and a team captain in 1980. You can't be a dummy and be a sportscaster. During his career at Florida, he caught 120 passes for 1,977 yards and fourteen touchdowns, while also scoring two rushing touchdowns and one on a kickoff return.

As a senior in 1980, Collinsworth was a member of the Gators team that posted the biggest one-year turnaround in the history of NCAA Division I football—from 0–10–1 in 1979 to an 8–4 bowl team in 1980.

While he was an undergraduate, Collinsworth was also an active member of the Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity (Florida Alpha Omega Chapter), and was inducted into the University of Florida Hall of Fame. He graduated from Florida with a BA degree in accounting in

1981, and was inducted into the University of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame as a "Gator Great" in 1991.

NFL playing career Edit

After college, Collinsworth was drafted by the Cincinnati Bengals in the second round (thirty-seventh pick overall) of the 1981 NFL Draft, and spent his entire eight-year NFL career with the Bengals. He surpassed 1,000 yards receiving four times (in 1981, 1983, 1985, and 1986) and was named to the Pro Bowl in 1981, 1982 and 1983. At six feet, five inches in height, Collinsworth often created mismatches against much smaller cornerbacks. In addition to his height advantage, Collinsworth was a legitimate deep threat due to his speed.

It was announced on April 16, 2009 that Collinsworth would fill the role vacated by John Madden on NBC's Sunday Night Football.

His son, Austin Collinsworth, played football at the University of Notre Dame.

-- End of player highlights

## **1981: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **1982: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **1983: Florida Gators Season Coach Charley Pell**

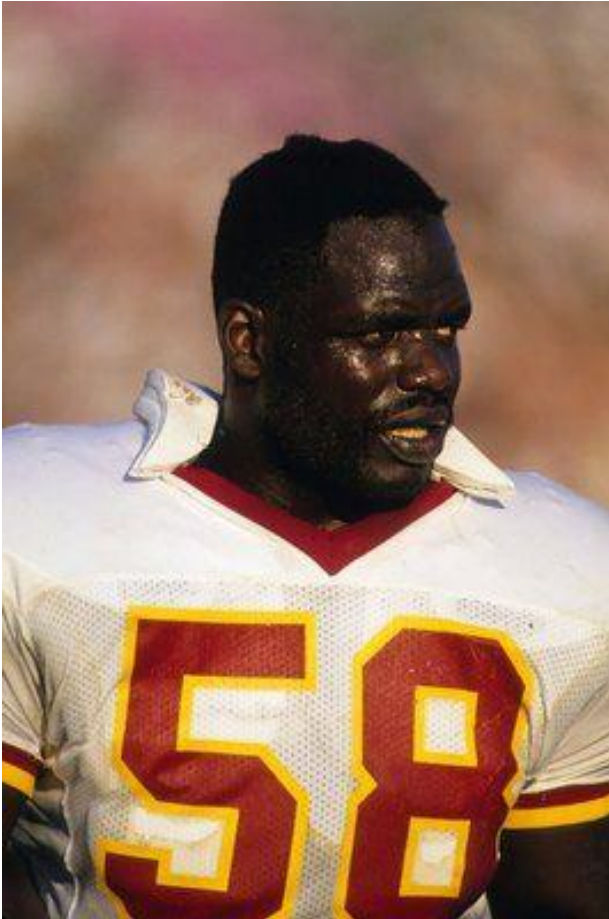
The 1983 Florida Gators football team was the seventy-seventh season for Florida. It was the fifth of six seasons for Charles B. “Charley” Pell as the Football Gators head coach. The 1983 Gators had their best season of the Charley Pell Era so far.

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).

## Great Players Wilbur Marshall

Wilbur Marshall, a native of Titusville played for UF from 1980 to 1983. He was a two-time, first-team All-Pro in the NFL and was part of the Chicago Bears' Super Bowl-winning team after the 1985 season. As a great Gator, he recorded 14 tackles and four sacks in a 17-9 victory against Southern Cal in 1982.



Wilbur Marshall was one heck of a football player. For example, on Sept 11, 1982, before a capacity crowd of 73,238 at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium, he put on one of the greatest defensive performances in the history of the Florida football program. It was against the highly-touted Southern Cal Trojans who came to Gainesville to be upset by the inspired hometown Gators, 17-9. This was a program-defining win. Just three years prior, in 1979, the same Gators had a record of 0-10-1 in Coach

Charley Pell's first season at the helm. Things had changed. Following this great upset win, with the help of Wilbur Marshall, the Gators compiled a 34-8-3 mark over the next four seasons. The star of the Southern Cal game was Linebacker Wilbur Marshall, who collected 14 tackles and sacked USC quarterback Sean Salisbury four times. He received national recognition as Defensive Player of the Week by both Sports Illustrated and the Associated Press.

Marshall had a great year and a great career and was named a consensus first-team All-American as a junior. As an encore in 1983, he repeated as a first-team All-American, was a finalist for the Lombardi Award and was named the National Defensive Player of the Year by ABC Television. He was also a member of the first Gator senior class to play in four bowl games and he was only the third player in school history to be named a three-time first-team All-SEC pick.



In May of 2008, Archie Manning, chairman of the National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame, announced that Marshall would have his name etched in college football history as a member of the College Football Hall of Fame Class of 2008.

Marshall, who played for the Gators from 1980-83, was one of 13 players and two coaches who were selected to the prestigious class. The group was honored at the NFF Awards Dinner then Marshall was formally inducted at the College Hall of Fame Enshrinement Festival, July 18-19, 2009, in South Bend, Ind.

He became just the fifth Florida player to be given this great honor. He is in good company with end Dale Van Sickle (1927-29), quarterback Steve Spurrier (1964-66), defensive end Jack Youngblood (1968-70), and running back Emmitt Smith (1987-89).

Three Florida head coaches are members of the Hall of Fame, including Charles Bachman (1928-32), Ray Graves (1960-69) and Doug Dickey (1970-78).

Wilbur Marshall finished his career at Florida as the record holder in four categories. Along with the two single-season records in 1981, his 23 career sacks and 58 career tackles for loss established new school standards. He has since been passed in career sacks (Alex Brown, 33 between 1998-01) and single-season sacks (Brown, 13 in 1999). In 1999, the Gainesville Sun named him the Defensive Player of the Century and prior to a recent Florida-Auburn game, he was the fifth person to be inducted into the prestigious Ring of Honor.

Following his collegiate career, Marshall took his hard-hitting play to the NFL. Selected in the first round (11th overall) of the 1984 NFL Draft by the Chicago Bears, Marshall played for five teams in 12 seasons on the professional level. He was named first-team All-Pro twice (1986, '92) and played in the Pro Bowl three times (1986, '87, '92).

During his dozen NFL seasons, Marshall recorded 45 sacks and intercepted 23 passes, which he returned for 304 yards and three touchdowns. He also recovered 16 fumbles, returning them for 70 yards and one touchdown. Marshall is among the few players who have recorded 20 sacks and 20 interceptions in their career.

-- End of player highlights --

## **1984: Florida Gators Season 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, despite 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!

## **Great Players T. Lomas Brown**

Lomas Brown played for the Gators from 1981-84. He came to Florida after playing high school football at Miami Springs High and



he enjoyed a remarkable 18-year NFL career. He earned seven All-Pro selections after being selected in the first round of the 1985 NFL draft by the Detroit Lions. Great moment: He became the first Florida player to win the Jacobs Blocking Trophy, given annually to the best blocker in the SEC.

Lomas Brown, Jr. (born March 30, 1963) played college and professional football as an offensive tackle in the National Football League (NFL) for eighteen seasons in the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s. He played college football for the University of Florida, where he received consensus All-American honors. He was a first-round pick in the 1985 NFL Draft. He played professionally for the Detroit Lions and four other NFL teams. At present, he is a sports broadcaster and analyst for ESPN and other TV and radio networks.



In high school in Miami, Brown was a stand-out offensive lineman for the Miami Springs Golden Hawks high school football team. In 2007, the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) recognized Brown as one of the thirty-three all-time greatest Florida high school football players of the last 100 years by naming him to its "All-Century Team."

Brown received an athletic scholarship to attend the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida, where he played for coach Charley Pell and coach Galen Hall's Florida Gators football teams from 1981 to 1984. He started thirty-four games in his college career at Florida, all at tackle. He was quite a Gator as a team captain, a first-team All-Southeastern Conference (SEC) selection and a consensus first-team All-American. As noted, he was also the winner of the Jacobs

Blocking Trophy recognizing the best blocker in the SEC during his senior year in 1984.

He anchored the Gators' outstanding offensive line, that was memorably dubbed "The Great Wall of Florida." Besides, Brown, the line included Phil Bromley, Billy Hinson, Crawford Ker and Jeff Zimmerman in 1984. Behind the blocking of Brown and his Great Wall teammates, the Gators' quarterback Kerwin Bell, fullback John L. Williams and halfback Neal Anderson led the Gators to a 9–1–1 overall win-loss record and won their first SEC championship with a conference record of 5–0–1.

Unfortunately, the title was later vacated because of NCAA rules violations committed by Charley Pell & Gators coaches 1979 & 1983.

Brown was inducted into the University of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame as a "Gator Great" in 1995. As part of its 2006 article series about the top 100 players of the first 100 years of Florida football, The Gainesville Sun recognized him as the No. 8 all-time Gator player. Eighteen NFL seasons is an amazing feat.

While Brown was a student at Florida, he was initiated as a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity (Zeta Kappa Chapter). He later returned to the university during the NFL off-season to complete his bachelor's degree in health and human performance in 1996.

Picked by the Detroit Lions in the first round (sixth pick overall) in the 1985 NFL Draft, Brown played for the Lions for eleven seasons (1985–1995). In his long professional career, he also played for the Arizona Cardinals (1996–1998), the Cleveland Browns (1999), the New York Giants (2000–2001), and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (2002), with whom he won a Super Bowl before retiring after eighteen seasons in the NFL. Brown was a remarkably consistent starter in his unusually long-lived career, playing in 263 games and starting 251 of them, and was named to the NFC Pro Bowl team seven straight seasons from 1990 to 1996.

After retiring from the NFL, he spent some time with the NFL Network and ESPNEWS as an analyst and also co-hosted a sports radio show for WXYT-FM in Detroit, Michigan. -- End of player highlights

## Chapter 15 Coach Galen Hall 1985-1989

Coach # 17 Galen Hall  
Coach # 18 Gary Darnell

Year	Coach	Record	Conference	Record
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: Florida Gators Season 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.

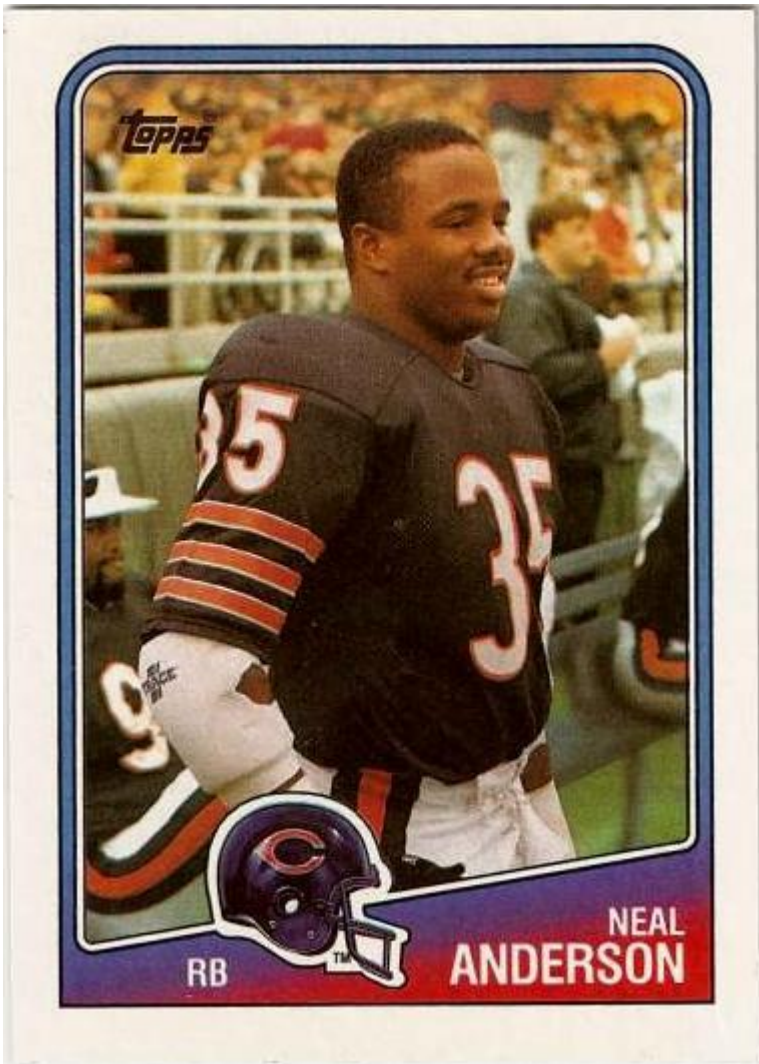
Hall had performed miracles in 1984 taking over for a 1-1-1 team. There were no more losses and no more ties once Hall took the reins in 1984. This 1985 year would be just as good but it had the same shaky start. So, the 1985 Gators tied their best season of the Charley Pell Era and their best season 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.

## **Great Player Neil Anderson**

Though his pic is a football card from his Bears days, Anderson played well for the Gators from 1982-85. From Graceville, Anderson proved his consistency over his four years at Florida before he became a first-round NFL draft pick and four-time Pro Bowler with the Chicago Bears. As a Gator, his great moment came when he rushed for 197 yards and three touchdowns in his first start against Kentucky. Wow!

Anderson accepted an athletic scholarship to attend the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida, where he played for Charley Pell and Galen Hall's Florida Gators football teams from 1982 to 1985, and shared the Gators' backfield with fullback John L. Williams for four years. Memorably, Anderson ran for a 197 yards versus the Kentucky Wildcats as a freshman in 1982, a seventy-six-yard touchdown against the LSU Tigers in 1983, and 178 yards and an eighty-yard touchdown against the Tennessee Volunteers in 1984.



He was a team captain in 1985, a first-team All- (SEC) selection in 1985, an Associated Press honorable mention All-American in 1984 and 1985, and the recipient of the Gators' Fergie Ferguson Award in 1985. In his four years as a Gator,

Anderson had fourteen games with 100 yards or more rushing, 639 carries for 3,234 yards rushing and thirty touchdowns, forty-nine receptions for 525 yards receiving and two touchdowns, and ninety-seven yards passing.

In terms of career rushing yardage, he remains the Gators' third all-time running back behind Errict Rhett and Emmitt Smith.

Behind the rushing of Anderson, the rushing and receiving of John L. Williams, the receiving of wide receiver Ricky Nattiel and the passing of quarterback Kerwin Bell, the Gators finished with identical best-in-the-SEC records of 9-1-1 in 1984 and 1985.

Anderson graduated from Florida with a bachelor's degree in public relations in 1986, and was later inducted into the University of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame as a "Gator Great" in 1995. The sportswriters of The Gainesville Sun selected him as No. 13 among the top 100 all-time greatest Gators from the first 100 years of Florida football in 2006.

End of player highlights

## **1986: Florida Gators Season 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 those 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: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **Great Player Emmitt Smith**

Everybody who loves football and has been alive and over the age of ten tears old any time from the late 1980's to the mid 2000's has heard of Emmitt Smith as a great gentleman and a great football player for the Gators and for the Dallas Cowboys. There is just one Emmitt Smith. He played for the Gators from 1987 to 1989, foregoing his senior year at Florida to enter the NFL draft.

A Pensacola native, when he moved on to the NFL he held 58 UF records. His best memory of a great moment occurred in the third game and his first start when he rushed for 224 yards and two touchdowns in a 23-14 upset victory at Alabama. As you can see when they retired his Jersey at his High School, Escambia in Pensacola, those he touches hold him in the highest regard.



Emmitt Smith left his mark on Escambia High School in Pensacola, Fla. He had his jersey retired, the weight room bears his name and the sign outside the school brags "Home of Emmitt Smith." ESPN RISE

The son of Mary J. Smith and Emmitt James Smith, Jr. he attended Escambia High School in Pensacola, where he played high school football and ran track for the Escambia Gators. During Smith's high school football career, Escambia won the state football championship, and Smith rushed for 106 touchdowns and 8,804 yards, which was the second most yardage in the history of American high school football at the time. Emmitt rushed for over 100 yards in 45 of the 49 games he started for Escambia (including the last 28 in a row) and finished with a 7.8 yards per carry average. Twice, he broke the 2,000-yard rushing mark in a season. In track & field, Smith competed as a sprinter and was a member of the 4x100m (42.16 s) relay squad.

For his efforts, Smith was named the USA Today and Parade magazine high school player of the year for 1986. In 2007, twenty years after Smith graduated from high school, the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) named Smith to its "All-Century Team," recognizing him as one of the thirty-three greatest Florida high school football players of the last 100 years. As part of its "100 Years of Florida High School Football" awards ceremony, FHSAA named Smith as its "Player of the Century."





Despite his high school records, #22 Smith was thought of as too small at 5'9" 216 pounds. Recruiting expert Max Emfinger made the dumbest comment when he said of Smith, "Emmitt Smith is a lugger, not a runner. He's not fast. He can't get around the corner. When he falls flat on his face, remember where you heard it first."

Nonetheless, he received an athletic scholarship to UF in Gainesville, where he played for coach Galen Hall's Florida Gators football team for three seasons from 1987 to 1989. He sat the first two games of his college career in the fall of 1987, but then let 'em have it in the third game. He even made the most of his opportunities in a second-week rout of Tulsa in which he gained 109 yards on just ten carries, including a 66-yard touchdown run. That performance earned him a spot in the starting lineup the following week in the Gators' SEC opener against Alabama at Legion Field.

In his first collegiate start, Smith promptly broke Florida's 57-year-old all-time single game rushing record, carrying 39 times for 224 yards and two touchdowns as the Gators upset the Crimson Tide. 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 finished the 1987 season with 1,341 yards and was named Southeastern Conference and National Freshman of the Year. He also finished ninth in that year's Heisman voting.

Smith and the Gators began the 1988 season strong as he averaged over 120 yards per game, leading his team to 5-0 start. During the sixth contest against Memphis State, he injured his knee and was forced out of action for several weeks. The Gators lost the game in which he was injured plus their next three games, and with starting quarterback Kyle Morris also injured, they were unable to muster a single touchdown over 14 quarters of play.

Once Smith returned to the lineup, they rebounded to finish the season 7-5, including a win in the 1988 All-American Bowl in which Emmitt Smith ran for a 55-yard touchdown on the first play from scrimmage and was named the game's MVP. Smith rushed for 988 yards on the year (not including the bowl game) at 110 yards per game, the lowest totals of his college career.

Smith stayed healthy throughout his junior season in 1989 and found success again. He finished the campaign with Florida records for rushing yards in a season (1,599), rushing yards in a single game (316 versus New Mexico in October 1989), longest rushing play (96 yards against Mississippi State in 1988), career rushing yards (3,928), career rushing yards per game (126.7) and career rushing touchdowns (36), among many others. In all, Smith owned 58 school records at Florida despite playing on Florida teams with virtually no passing game, which made him the focal point of opposing defenses.

At the conclusion of his junior season in 1989, Smith was named a first-team SEC selection for the third year and SEC Player of the Year, was a unanimous first-team All-American, and finished seventh in the Heisman Trophy balloting.

On January 1, 1990, Florida hired Steve Spurrier to coach the Gators. Smith, concerned about his potential role in Spurrier's reportedly pass-first offense, decided to forgo his senior year at Florida and he entered the NFL draft (Smith's school rushing record would be broken by Errict Rhett, Spurrier's first starting running back at Florida, albeit over four seasons instead of three and on 173 more

rushing attempts). Smith returned to the university during the NFL off-season and completed his bachelor's degree in 1996.

Emmitt Smith was subsequently inducted into the University of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame as a "Gator Great" in 1999, the Gator Football Ring of Honor and the College Football Hall of Fame in 2006. As part of a series of articles written for The Gainesville Sun in 2006, he was recognized as the No. 3 all-time player among the top 100 from the first 100 years of the Gators football program.

Drafted at 17th in the first round of the 1990 NFL Draft, the Cowboys never regretted that decision.

Smith was the first player in NFL history to rush for 1,400 rushing yards or more in five consecutive seasons. Smith, Jim Brown, and LaDainian Tomlinson are the only players with seven straight ten-touchdown seasons to start their careers. With 1,021 rushing yards in 2001, Smith became the first player in NFL history with 11 consecutive 1,000 yard seasons and the first to post eleven 1,000-yard rushing seasons in a career.

He is the NFL's all-time leader in rushing attempts with 4,409. Smith is the only player to post three seasons with nineteen or more touchdowns. He also holds the record for most games in a season with a touchdown and most games in a season with a rushing touchdown (15), set in 1995. And, somebody once said he would fall on his face. I remember that.

## **More on Great Gator: Emmitt Smith**

A unanimous first-team All-America selection in 1989, Emmitt Smith produced one of the most decorated careers in both Florida and NCAA history. Regarded by many as "too small" or "too slow," the Pensacola, Fla., native broke 58 school records en route to rushing for 3,928 yards and 36 touchdowns in only three seasons as a Gator.

Known as one of the best Gators ever is Emmitt Smith, is also the NFL's all-time leading rusher. In his first start at running back, Smith broke Florida's all-time single game rushing record, toting the pigskin

39 times for 224 yards and two touchdowns in an upset win over an always tough Alabama team.



He gained Southeastern Conference Freshman of the Year honors and he finished ninth in the Heisman Trophy balloting in 1987. As a junior in 1989, Smith tallied 1,599 rushing yards and 16 touchdowns. Those superior stats earned him the 1989 SEC Player of the Year award, as well as a seventh-place showing in the Heisman race. He was also a three-time All-SEC pick during his college

career.

The Dallas Cowboys selected Smith in the first round of the 1990 NFL Draft, and he went on to enjoy 15 stellar NFL seasons with the Cowboys and Arizona Cardinals. Along the way, the former Gator led the NFL in rushing four times (1991-93, 1995) and rushing touchdowns three times (1992, 1994, 1995) and was named to eight Pro Bowls. He also took home the NFL Rookie of the Year and Most Valuable Player hardware in 1990 and 1993, respectively.

Smith, however, seemed to save his best performances for the biggest stage in football. He earned three Super Bowl rings and was named the MVP of Super Bowl XXVIII during his tenure in Dallas. He rushed 71 times for 289 yards, caught 11 passes for 56 yards and scored a career Super Bowl record five touchdowns in those three contests.

Smith is the NFL's all-time leader in rushing yards, with 18,355, and rushing touchdowns, with 164, and his 175 total touchdowns rank him second to only Jerry Rice's 207 scores in the all-time annals. The sum of his rushing yards, receiving yards (3,224) and fumble return yards (-15) give him a total of 21,564 yards from the line of scrimmage, making Smith one of only four players in NFL history to eclipse the 21,000-combined yards' mark.

One of the all-time Gator greats, Smith was chosen for the Gainesville Sun's UF Team of the Century in 1999. He was officially enshrined into the College Football Hall of Fame in South Bend, Ind., during ceremonies in 2006.

--End of player highlights --

## **1988: Florida Gators Season 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.

## Players Highlights S Louis Oliver

Oliver was former walk-on from Belle Glade. He became a team captain at Florida before playing eight seasons in the NFL. He was a first-round pick by the Miami Dolphins in 1989. Great moment: Inducted into the University of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame in 2000.



Oliver is one of the all-time success stories in UF lore. He was a standout player at Belle Glade (Fla.) Glades Central High, yet his Division-I offers were few. Meanwhile, a couple of his teammates -- Ray McDonald and Rhondy Weston -- signed with the Gators. Oliver believed he was every bit the prospect those two were...along with everybody else on the Gators roster, actually.

True story. At a team orientation in 1984, each freshman was asked to stand, give his name and position, then say a little something about himself. When Oliver's turn came, he did not mince words.

*"I'm Louis Oliver, I'm a safety from Belle Glade, Florida, and most of you other safeties won't play as long as I'm here."*

Oliver was red-shirted that season, but the following spring he was running with the second-team defense. The way Oliver recalls it, he went to Coach Galen Hall and the defensive staff with an ultimatum.

“I told them to either put me on scholarship or I was transferring to Florida State,” Oliver said.

And?

“I had a scholarship about 15 minutes later.”

Oliver became the first Gators defensive back to be named first-team All-America twice, but along the way he only tasted victory in the Georgia series once. That was in 1986, when UF won 31-19. All but the last of Oliver's four seasons was spent on NCAA probation.

“We weren't eligible for championships and a couple of those years we couldn't be on TV, but we still had to play the games,” said Oliver, now 48, married with a young daughter, and making a living as a real estate investor in Sunrise, Fla. “We still had to play Miami and Auburn and LSU and Georgia and Florida State. Just the challenge of playing so many teams with so much talent, that's what I was after.”

He definitely made the best of it. The Miami Dolphins made Oliver the 25th pick in the first round in 1988. In 1992, he returned an interception 103 yards for a touchdown against the Cincinnati Bengals, still the third-longest runback in league history. Louis Oliver has always been a man on the move.

A standout at safety for the Dolphins for seven years (1989-93, 1995-96), Oliver hit the ground running after being drafted in the first round by Miami in 1989. He immediately earned a starting job in the Dolphins' defensive backfield and was a mainstay there for most of his career with the team.

Possessing both size and speed, Oliver started all but three games his first four years in Miami. His 24 interceptions ranks tied for sixth in Dolphins history and he led Miami in interceptions four straight seasons (1989-92). Just a few weeks ago Oliver was named to the Dolphins' 50th season all-time team.

Oliver's signature game came on Oct. 4, 1992 at Buffalo when he authored one of the greatest individual performances in team history. He had three interceptions, returning his final one 103 yards for a

touchdown, tying the record for the longest interception return in NFL history. Jim Kelly, who whiffed on a tackle on that return, probably still has nightmares of Oliver sprinting past him on the way to the end zone.



And now that he has retired, Oliver still hasn't slowed down, building a professional pedigree to match his football one.

"I've been in the real estate business since I retired," said Oliver. "I'm with the sports and entertainment division of Opulence International Realty. I sell a lot of real estate to athletes, entertainers, and celebrities.

"Hey, what are you going to get into that is going to sustain the type of lifestyle you're accustomed to? "There is only a finite amount of land on the planet. So that's why I got into selling real estate. It's a natural."

Working with celebrities certainly fits Oliver to a "T." Ever since he joined the Dolphins, he has been a visible and popular presence in the South Florida sports and entertainment world.



And being a part of that culture also has helped fuel his other passion.

“I put on a lot of entertainment and promotional events,” said Oliver. “I’ve been running my own entertainment, marketing, and promotional company, called Promo Services, for more than 20 years. I was doing that even when I was playing, and I’m still doing it now. I’m having a lot of fun.”

But Oliver doesn’t stop there. He enjoys his leisure time, and as befits a man in perpetual motion, one of his hobbies comes as no surprise.

“I’m still here, still in South Florida, happily living in Sunrise. I wouldn’t move from this place for anything in the world,” said Oliver. “My family is doing fantastic. We travel a lot, we relax and eat and laugh a lot. We really love to travel. That’s a big thing we do – going to various places and enjoying it all.”

He also manages to maintain his Dolphin ties with the team’s current and former players.

“I still follow the Dolphins – every day, every day,” said Oliver. “I’m around and I see the guys all the time. I love those guys and told them, ‘C’mon, let’s get this thing turned around. All of South Florida is rooting for you.’”

But even with all he has going on, Oliver makes it a priority to find the time to be an integral part of the Dolphins’ community relations program.

“I still do a lot of community things for the organization,” he said. “To give back is something I always felt was necessary and important. So many people go out and spend their hard-earned money to support us, so the least we can do when we have an opportunity is to give back in whatever way, shape, form or fashion that we can.”

--End of player highlights

## 1989: Florida Gators Season Coach G. Hall / G. 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.

### Interim Coach Gary Darnell



'I have accepted the resignation, effective today, of head football coach Galen Hall,' said UF Interim President Robert 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.'

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.



# Chapter 16 Coach Steve Spurrier 1990 to 2001

Coach # 19

Year	Coach	Record	Conference	Record
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

**What a record!!!**

## **1990: Florida Gators Season 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.

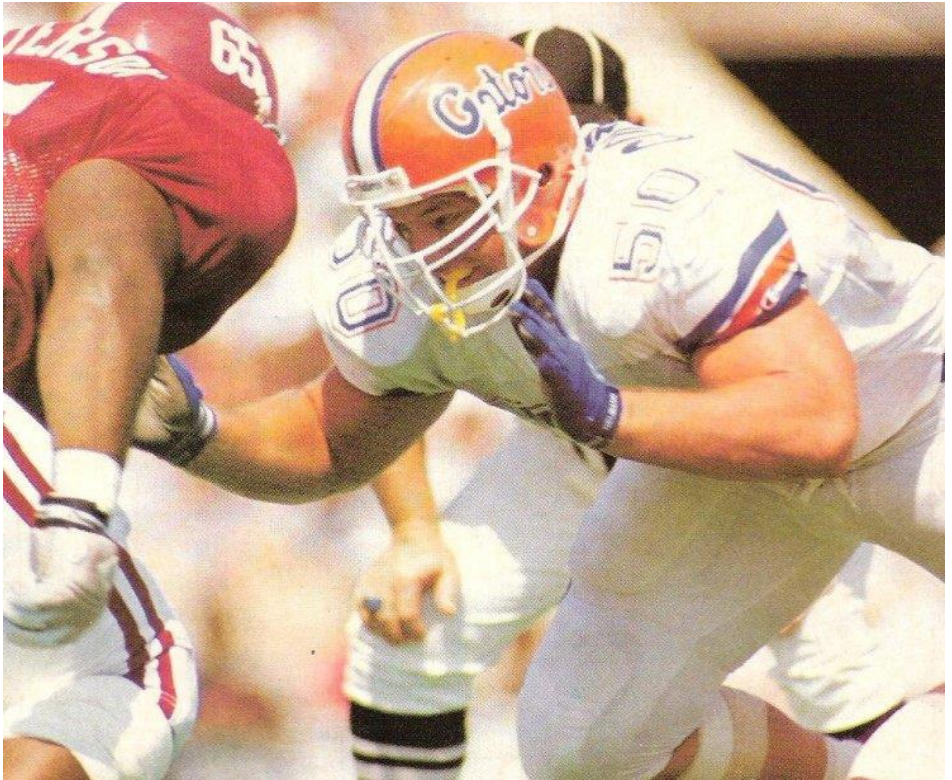
## **1991: Florida Gators Season Coach Steve Spurrier**

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

## **Great Gator Player Brad Culpepper**

Brad Culpepper played from 1988-1991. He was a defensive Tackle. Brad is both the son, grandson and nephew of former Gator players, he was named as a first team All-American in 1991, Culpepper set a school record for tackles for loss by an interior Defensive Lineman that year (21.5) and for his career (47.5). In this, his Senior season he was also elected as the student body vice president. He enjoyed a productive 9-year career in the NFL and is currently an attorney residing in Tampa.

See action picture on next page.



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.

## 1992: Florida Gators Season 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.

## Great Players QB Shane Matthews



During the years: 1989-92, this Mississippi native played 13 years as a backup in the NFL after completing what many consider to be the most illustrious career a Florida quarterback had ever seen.

Remember he is not the greatest but among greats like Spurrier, Wuerffel, and Tebow, he surely holds his own. His great moment according to him is when he led Florida to its first SEC Title in 1991.

Michael Shane Matthews (born June 1, 1970) is an American former college and professional football player who was a quarterback in the National Football League (NFL) for all or part of fourteen seasons during the 1990s and 2000s. He played college football for the University of Florida, and thereafter, he played professionally for the Chicago Bears, Washington Redskins, and four other NFL teams. Since retiring as a player, Matthews has lived near his college alma



mater in North Central Florida, where he has hosted a sports talk radio program and coached high school football.

### Early life

Matthews was born in Cleveland, Mississippi in 1970.

He attended Cleveland High School in Cleveland through his sophomore year, before transferring to Pascagoula High School in Pascagoula, Mississippi, where he played high school football for the Pascagoula Panthers. Matthews was a stand-out high school quarterback and was named the Mississippi Player of the Year as a senior.



Matthews accepted an athletic scholarship to attend the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida, and was the starting quarterback for the Florida Gators football team under coach Steve Spurrier from 1990 to 1992.

In Matthews' first season as a starter in 1990, the Gators finished 9–2 overall and a league best record of 6–1 in the Southeastern Conference (SEC); in his second season in 1991, the Gators finished 10–2 overall and 7–0 in the SEC, winning their first official SEC football championship.

Matthews set a new Gators team record for career passing yards (later surpassed), finished fifth in the 1991 Heisman Trophy voting as a junior, and was a first-team All-SEC selection in 1990, 1991 and 1992.

He finished his college career having completed 722 of 1,202 attempts for 9,287 yards and seventy-four touchdowns, and was a team captain and the Gators' most valuable player during his final

season. He led the SEC in passing for three consecutive years (1990–1992), and finished with a career efficiency rating of 137.6.

Matthews graduated from Florida with a bachelor's degree in business administration in 1997, and he was inducted into the University of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame as a "Gator Great" in 2002.

In a 2006 article series regarding the top 100 Florida Gators from the first 100 years of Florida football, The Gainesville Sun recognized him as the No. 9 all-time Gator player.

After finishing his college career, Matthews was signed by the Chicago Bears in 1993. In 1996, his daughter, Brooke was born in Jacksonville, Florida. He remained the Bears' back-up and third-string quarterback for four seasons. Matthews did not appear in a regular season game with the Bears until 1996.

Matthews spent the next two years with the Carolina Panthers, but remained a seldom-used back-up.  
1999–2002

The Bears brought Matthews back for the 1999 season and in his second stint with the team he played a much bigger role. Matthews had his best season in the NFL in 1999, starting seven games, throwing for 1,645 yards and ten touchdowns. Matthews played the next two seasons with the Bears, starting a total of eight games in that span. He also relieved starter Jim Miller in the 2002 (2001 NFL season) playoff game against the Philadelphia Eagles, after Miller separated his shoulder and could not continue.

In 2002, Matthews signed with the Washington Redskins, where he played for his former college coach Steve Spurrier. Matthews started seven games for the Redskins, throwing for 1,251 yards and eleven touchdowns while sharing time with fellow former Florida QB Danny Wuerffel. 2003–06

After 2002, Matthews returned to his back-up role with the Cincinnati Bengals in 2003 (no appearances) and the Buffalo Bills in 2004 and 2005 (three appearances, no starts). In 2005, he was on the roster of the Bills, but was the third-string quarterback behind J.P.

Losman and Kelly Holcomb. Matthews did not appear in a regular season game during the 2005 NFL season, and retired after the end of the 2005 season.

In December 2006, Matthews was signed as the third-string quarterback for the Dolphins after former starter Daunte Culpepper was placed on injured reserve with a knee injury. Matthews did get into a game with the Dolphins, and on March 2, 2007, he again retired from the NFL.

Over his fourteen NFL seasons, Matthews played in thirty-two regular season games, started twenty-two of them, and completed 492 of 839 passing attempts for 4,756 yards and thirty-one touchdowns.

After retiring from professional football, Matthews has hosted or co-hosted sports talk radio programs in Gainesville. In 2009, Matthews was chastised by then-Gator head coach Urban Meyer for criticizing his coaching decisions on the air.

Coaching

--End of player highlights

## **1993: Florida Gators Season 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.



On Oct. 2, #5 UF defeated Mississippi State at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium W (38–24). Wuerffel and Doering teamed up for three touchdown passes. Down 21–17, Jack Jackson had a 100-yard kickoff return to put the Gators up 24–21. It was a big play.

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.



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.

## **1995: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **Great Players T. Jason Odom**

Odom was a star player in 992-95. Playing as # 74, the Bartow native started during a run of three consecutive SEC Championships. He thinks his great moment was spending his senior season protecting the O'Brien National QB of the Year Award winner, Danny Wuerffel. I'll bet Wuerffel has repayed the compliment many times.

T. Jason Brian Odom was born on March 31, 1974, and from the cradle he became an American college and professional football player. He was an offensive tackle in the National Football League (NFL) for four seasons during the 1990s. Odom played college football for the University of Florida, and received unanimous All-

American honors. Thereafter, he played professionally for the NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Look at this handsome face. Who would he ever hurt? – other than a UF opposing player.





Odom was born in Winter Haven, Florida in 1974. He attended Bartow High School in Bartow, Florida, and played high school football for the Bartow Yellow Jackets. College career

Odom accepted an athletic scholarship to attend the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida, where he was an offensive lineman for coach Steve Spurrier's Florida Gators football team from 1992 to 1995. Odom was a four-year starter, a senior team captain in 1995, a first-

team All-Southeastern Conference (SEC) selection in 1994 and 1995, and a unanimous first-team All-American in 1995. In his four years as a Gator, the team won three consecutive SEC championships (1993, 1994, 1995), and played for a Bowl Alliance national championship in the 1996 Fiesta Bowl. He was also the recipient of the SEC's Jacobs Blocking Trophy, recognizing the best blocker in the SEC, in 1994 and 1995.

Odom graduated from Florida with a bachelor's degree in exercise and sports science in 1996. In one of a series of articles written for The Gainesville Sun in 2006, the newspaper's sports editors selected him as No. 28 of the top 100 Gators from the first 100 years of Florida football. He was inducted into the University of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame as a "Gator Great" in 2010. Professional career

Odom was chosen in the fourth round (ninety-sixth pick overall) of the 1996 NFL Draft by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, and played offensive tackle for the Buccaneers for four seasons from 1996 to 1999. He started forty-one of the forty-six Buccaneers games in which he played.



In his life after football, Mr. Odom served as a Hillsborough County Sheriff's Deputy in Tampa, Florida since 2008.

See also

## **1996: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **Great Players 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.

Wuerffel was born in Pensacola, Fla., the son of an Airforce Chaplain. He lived all over the US during his childhood. He also lived three years in Spain, before he attended Fort Walton Beach (Fla) High. Wuerffel had a brain to match his athletic prowess. He was his class valedictorian and led his HS football team to the state championship. He was widely considered the top player in the state of Florida as a 1991 senior. He was highly recruited.

The 6-1, 210-pound Wuerffel was average size for a great Quarterback in those days. Coach Spurrier is 6'2" and 204 pounds. He signed with Florida the following spring and, after redshirting his first season in Gainesville, made a big impact as a freshman in 1993. He played as part of a platoon with Terry Dean. Wuerffel threw for 2,230 yards and 22 touchdowns. In 1994, he started again in a platoon role but eventually took over the starting job, throwing for 1,754 yards and 18 scores.



Wuerffel in action

Wuerffel had a breakout All-American season in 1995, throwing for 3,266 yards and 35 touchdowns while leading Florida to the national championship game against Nebraska. For his efforts, Wuerffel finished a strong third in the Heisman vote behind Eddie George and Tommie Frazier.

Wuerffel bounced back in 1996 with another stellar season, throwing for 3,625 yards and 36 touchdowns as he guided the Gators to an 11-1 record and another shot at the national title. After winning the Heisman, he threw for 306 yards and three TDs to lead Florida to a 52-20 victory over rival Florida State as the Gators claimed their first national title.

He finished his Gator career by throwing for 10,875 yards and 114 touchdown passes, the best in SEC history and second-most in major college history (at the time). He graduated with a bachelor's degree in public relations.

Wuerffel was selected in the fourth round of the 1997 NFL draft (99th overall) by the New Orleans Saints. He spent six years in the NFL with the Saints, Packers, Bears and Redskins before retiring.

After football, Wuerffel began work at Desire Street Ministries, a non-profit, faith-based, organization focusing on spiritual and community development in areas of New Orleans.

-- End of player highlights --

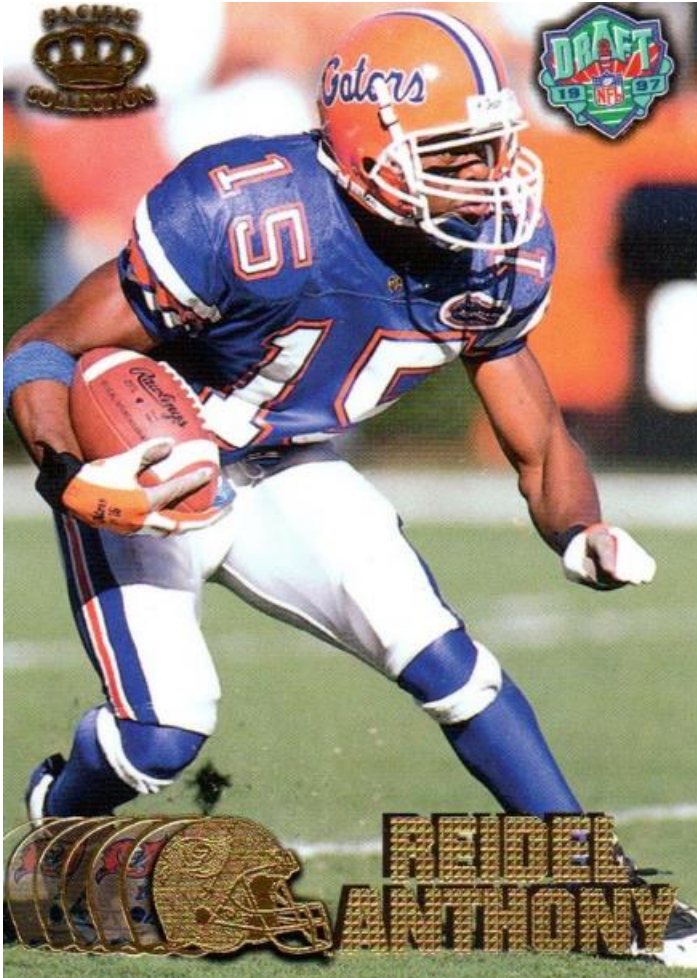
## **Great Players WR Reidel Anthony**

Between 1994-1996. Reidel Anthony, who hailed from Belle Glade, had arguably the best season a Gators receiver has ever had in one year -- 1996. Anthony went on to play five years for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers because he was simply a great player. In his great moment, he recalls catching 11 passes for 171 yards and three touchdowns in Florida's 45-30 victory over Alabama in the 1996 SEC Championship game. That is something.

Reidel Anthony won a national championship at Florida as a big-play wide receiver in Steve Spurrier's high-scoring offenses. He became a first-round NFL Draft pick in 1997 and had a 5-year career with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Now, in his new life, Anthony is trying to develop players seeking those same goals.

He trained fellow wide receivers including Sammy Watkins, Nelson Agholor, Allen Robinson, Bruce Ellington and Jamison Crowder in advance of the NFL Scouting Combine in recent years. Anthony also worked with high school players including current Gators running back commit Malik Davis.



Anthony and former Bucs teammates Booger McFarland and Yo Murphy came together about 6 years ago to open their expansive training complex in Tampa, called ASPI Powered by The Compound. Anthony coached at Valdosta State in Georgia for a couple years and later as a high school coach in Florida before realizing that wasn't

necessarily his calling.

“One thing about coaching I realized, and I’ve never been one to try show up to someone’s program and try to take over, but every coach always, you know, they’re going to feel threatened,” Anthony said. “I have my ideas on how things work, and they’re going to have their

ideas and I have to teach their way. But with me having my own facility and being able to teach what I want to teach I feel like I can give more that way.”

Anthony also gave plenty of his time this week to chat about Florida football, reflections from his career, his frustrations with his NFL experience, a Steve Spurrier story and more.

**Q:** What’s something that surprised you through your career that you wish someone had told you about or prepared you for?

**Anthony:** “The NFL is what it stands for — not for long and not much fun. It’s a business, and to go in there young and you’re used to hanging out with your friends, guys your age, now you go in the locker room with people that have families. They come there, they’ll be on the phone talking to their family, you try to find conversation with them. And when practice is over, they go home to their families, and if you’re a single guy, who do you go home to? And let’s keep it real, at that age none of them really can cook. So, eating out by yourself gets old.

“It’s a culture shock. I told a guy today that those guys that leave to go home to the family, they’re really not on your side because why would they give you their blue print to take food off of their table? I wouldn’t be all extra and nice when I know they brought this player in to take my spot and I’ve got three kids and a dog at home. So, you have to be prepared for a lot of adversity, and everybody who’s there for you ain’t really there for you.”

Reidel Anthony’s career stats at Florida

Year	Games	Receptions	Yards	Touchdowns
1994	12	30	615	5
1995	9	24	366	3
1996	12	72	1,293	18

**-- End of great player highlights**

## Great Players WR Ike Hilliard



Ike played from 1994-96. He was quite a Gator. Hilliard came from Patterson, La., and teamed with Reidel Anthony to form the best receiver duo in the country. The New York Giants took him in the first round of the 1997 NFL draft; he played eight seasons there. He finished his career with four seasons with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. His great Gator moment was in 1997 when he caught three touchdown passes in the Gators' 52-20 victory against Florida State in the 1997 Sugar Bowl, giving UF its first national title. Bravo Mr. Hilliard!

Isaac Jason Hilliard was born April 5, 1976), and a few days later became a former American football wide receiver in the National Football League (NFL). OK it took a few years but he worked every minute to get there. Hilliard played college football for the University of Florida, and earned All-American honors.

Mr. Ike was a first-round pick in the 1997 NFL Draft, and played professionally for the New York Giants and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers of the NFL. After his playing career, Hilliard became a

coach, and as recently reported, he is currently the wide receivers coach for the NFL's Washington Redskins.

Mr. Ike Hilliard was born in Patterson, Louisiana in 1976, and after skipping grade school, he attended Patterson High School, OK just kidding he did attend grade school or he could not have attended high school anywhere. In HS, he was a star high school football player for the Patterson Lumberjacks.

Hilliard graciously accepted an athletic scholarship to attend the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida, where he played wide receiver for coach Steve Spurrier's Florida Gators football team from 1994 to 1996. During his three seasons as a Gator, the team won three SEC Championships in 1994, 1995, and 1996. Ike was a difference maker.

As a junior in 1996, he was paired with fellow Gators receiver Reidel Anthony and both posted 1,000-yard seasons in which Hilliard and Anthony were recognized as first-team All-Southeastern Conference (SEC) selections and consensus first-team All-Americans. Not too shabby! The Gators won the Bowl Alliance national championship—their first-ever national football title. Bravo Ike!

The Gators finished the season with a record of 12–1 after a 52–20 victory over the top-ranked Florida State Seminoles in the 1997 Sugar Bowl. Memorably, Hilliard set three Sugar Bowl records against the Seminoles: he had 150 receiving yards, including an 82-yard touchdown catch, and scored a total of three touchdowns for eighteen points.

Ike declared himself eligible for the NFL Draft after his junior season, and finished his college career with 126 receptions for 2,214 yards and twenty-nine touchdowns.

In a 2006 series published by The Gainesville Sun, he was recognized as No. 14 among the 100 all-time greatest Gator players from the first century of Florida football. He was inducted into the University of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame as a "Gator Great" in 2009.



## **Pro Career with New York Giants**

The New York Giants chose Hilliard in the first round (seventh pick overall) of the 1997 NFL Draft, and he played his first eight seasons for the Giants from 1997 to 2004. He became a regular starter in 1998, helping the Giants reach Super Bowl XXXV following the 2000 regular season. He finished his career with the Giants with 368 receptions for 4,630 yards and twenty-seven touchdowns.

## **Pro Career Tampa Bay Buccaneers**

Hilliard signed with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers after the 2004 season. During his first two seasons with Tampa Bay, he was used mainly as a third or fourth receiver, but in 2007 he started ten games making sixty-two receptions for 722 yards. Hilliard was released by the Buccaneers on February 25, 2009. Hilliard finished his NFL career with 546 catches for 6,397 yards and thirty-five touchdowns.

In his twelve-season NFL career, Hilliard appeared in 161 regular season games, started 105 of them, and made 546 catches for 6,397 yards and thirty-five touchdowns. He also had 126 rushing yards on sixteen attempts.

-- End of player highlights

## **Great Players Jevon Kearse**

Kearse played in the 1996-98 seasons. He was well noticed. He was actually nicknamed "The Freak", because he dominated so decidedly at Florida before switching to defensive end and becoming a three-time Pro Bowler in the NFL. He would say that his great moment at Florida was when he was part of the Gators' 1996 national championship team. Who wouldn't?

Here on earth, undersized and injury-prone does not add up to a megamillion-dollar football contract. But Jevon Kearse's otherworldly attributes—explosive speed and quickness, turbo-charged power and an engine that the guys at NASA wish they could duplicate—make him well worth the risk. The Eagles certainly think

so. They gambled \$66 million that the “Freak” can bring a Super Bowl title to Philadelphia. Jevon is eager to prove them right. This is his story...



## GROWING UP

Jevon Kearse was born on September 23, 1976, in Fort Myers, Florida to Joseph and Lessie Mae Kearse. Joseph had the skills to become an athlete but not the opportunity, and circumstances eventually led him to a life of crime. He was so large and so intimidating that he often

robbed people without a weapon, and even the Ft. Myers police made a point of steering clear of him. Joseph was murdered shortly before Jevon was born.

Jevon’s family continued to be touched by tragedy. When he was a toddler, his grandfather was gunned down in front of his house. That same year, his cousin Danny was killed in self-defense when he assaulted someone. Another cousin, Marcell, died in prison after being sent up for attempted murder.

Growing up in the poverty-stricken Dunbar section of Ft. Myers during the height of the crack epidemic, Jevon learned how to spot trouble and steer clear of it. He also recognized that school might supply a way out. Jevon was an avid reader and, despite a stutter,

enjoyed the classroom environment. His home life, however, was not conducive to studying, so he looked for any reason to get out of the cramped apartment in the Sabal Arms projects. Jevon had an older brother, J.J., and a younger half-brother, Jermaine. All three were big, fast and rambunctious. They went fishing or crabbing, played basketball, wrestled, or played football.

When J.J. reached his teen years, he began hanging out with a rough crowd. Jevon, a much gentler soul, could not see himself following in his brother's footsteps. He devoted himself instead to football, becoming the star of the Lee Middle School team. Yet even in the heat of battle, he rarely tackled opponents as hard as he could.

As time passed, Jevon got increasingly serious about football. He was well over six feet tall, yet extremely quick and agile. He began taking weight-gaining supplements to add bulk to his body, but no matter how much muscle he packed on, he did not slow down. After he and Cisco transferred to Fort Myers High School in North Fort Myers in 1993, Jevon began attracting the attention of college recruiters as he refined his game under coach Wade Hummel. It was not unusual for a dozen scouts to attend his home games—along with 15,000 fans. He played strong safety and tight end, and was a terror on special teams. In his first season for the Red Knights, he returned four kicks for touchdowns.

In 1994, Jevon's senior season, he took his game to a new level, recording 96 solo tackles, intercepting six passes and blocking four punts. He also caught 24 passes. He was honored as a prep All-American by USA Today. The number that interested many colleges was his GPA, a solid 3.6. Jevon was also a member of the National Honors Society. He was a star athlete, a solid student and, despite a tragedy-plagued childhood, one of the nicest kids anyone had ever met.

He was viewed as an impact player by the recruiters, who projected him as either a defensive back or linebacker. His wingspan was almost seven feet from fingertip to fingertip, and as he was scary fast. Jevon considered dozens of scholarship offers, looking at a school's football program as well as the academic opportunities it offered. He

seriously thought about Notre Dame, but the thought of those frigid winters led him closer to home. He selected the University of Florida, where a familiar face—cousin Johnnie Church—was already on the team.

Jevon was red-shirted for the 1995 season, which gave him a chance to acclimate himself to college life. He experienced the Gators' run at the NCAA title that year from the sideline, as they made it to the national championship game against Nebraska before losing.

By 1996, Jevon had grown to 6-6 and weighed well over 200 pounds. Now considered a linebacker or defensive end, he made it clear in spring practice that he had the talent and desire to start the following fall. Though Jevon was still learning the defense, he was dominating his teammates in scrimmages regardless of where he played. Coach Steve Spurrier could hardly wait to spring the “Freak”—as he was now being called by his fellow Gators—on SEC opponents.

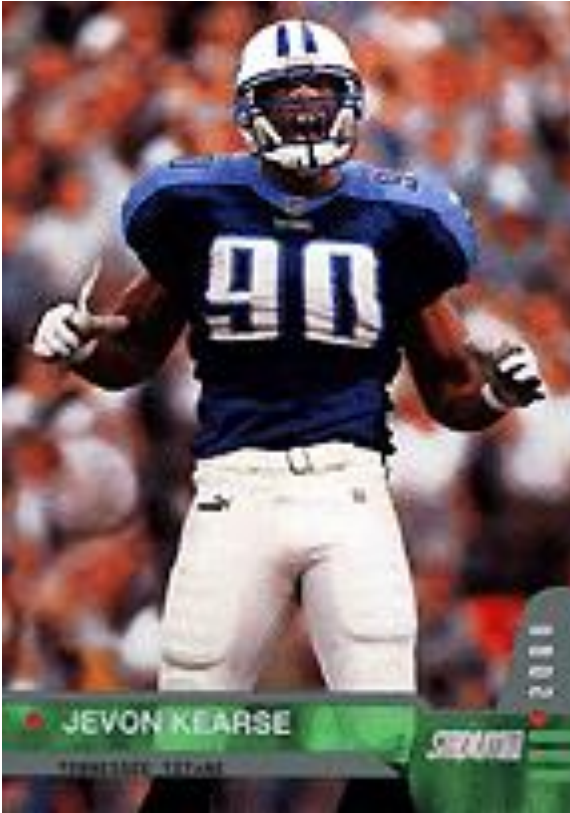
Jevon was a member of one of college football's greatest teams in 1996. Danny Wuerffel, who QB rating was the highest in NCAA history the previous year, was throwing to future NFL stars Ike Hilliard, Jacquez Green, and Reidel Anthony. Fred Taylor, who would gain 1,000 yards three times as a pro, was the Gators' featured back. Bob Stoops, a brilliant defensive coordinator, called the shots when Florida's opponent had the ball. Many of the team's starters had graduated or moved on to the pros, so it was up to Jevon and other young studs to hold the defense together.

Prior to the 1998 campaign, Jevon began receiving national attention in newspapers and magazines. The Sporting News called him the best linebacker in college ball. He was the heart of a defensive unit that steamrolled opponents all year. It included great players like Mike Peterson, Ed Chester, Reggie McGrew and Johnny Rutledge. The Gator offense was not nearly as good, however. Problems on this side of the ball hamstrung Florida in losses to Tennessee and Florida State, and in the Orange Bowl, against Syracuse.

Jevon had a terrific season, making All-SEC again and being named to several All-America teams. He was also a finalist for NCAA Defensive Player of the Year. That spring, he declared for the 1999 NFL Draft. In the combine at Indianapolis, he proved his

explosiveness by recording the second-fastest time ever in the 10-yard dash. (First on the list was Deion Sanders.)

Kearse mad a big difference at Tennessee as a pro and then as an Eagle, he was unstoppable. On the first day of the NFL's signing period, he inked an eight-year deal with the Eagles worth more than \$65 million. Philadelphia, desperate for big-play performers after three straight losses in the NFC title game, got the pass rusher they desperately needed. In return they made Jevon the highest-paid lineman in NFL history. It paid off for the Eagles.



Jevon's athleticism, tenacity and speed make him a brilliant pass rusher, capable of disrupting an offense for an entire game. And what he lacks in run-stopping ability, he often compensates for with his enormous wingspan and tackling ability.

Jevon's favorite technique off the ball is to pick a spot and simply decide he will beat his man there. Only if a blocker guesses correctly does he stand a chance of holding him back.

How do teams deal with Jevon? They beat the crap out of him. They try to hit him from two sides at once, using a tackle up front and a tight end from the side. Some teams have assigned a running back to chip him, too. Jevon

hates this tactic and can be unnerved for a time. But once that passes, he tends to take it out on the offending blocker.

Besides being one of the most focused and dedicated defensive linemen in football, Jevon also happens to be one of the league's genuinely nice guys. On the field, however, his sparkling personality doesn't always shine through. Jevon once admitted that when he has to dig down deep in a game, he pretends the man across from him on the line is the guy who killed his little brother.

End of great player highlights

## **1997: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **1998: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **1999: Florida Gators Season 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.

### **Highlighted Player Darrel Jackson**

Jackson was a highly-touted prospect who lived up to his press clippings. Jackson had a breakout year in his Junior season and entered the NFL draft after that year where he went on to have a productive 9-year career



**Darrel Jackson** 1997-1999 Wide Receiver

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.

## **2000: Florida Gators Season 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).

## **2001: Florida Gators Season Coach Steve Spurrier**

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's resignation**

In early January 2002, Steve Spurrier announced that he was resigning as Florida's head coach after 12 seasons.



## Chapter 17 Coach Ron Zook 2002 to 2004

Coach # 20 Ron Zook  
Coach # 21 Charlie Strong

Year	Coach	Record	Conference	Record
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 has the formidable task of replacing Steve Spurrier**

## **2002: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **Great Players Rex Grossman**

Rex, which means King in Latin, played King QB for the UF squad from 2000-02. The Buzz: Ironically, Florida fans felt snubbed when Grossman did not become the first sophomore to win the Heisman Trophy in 2001. Yet, one day soon, they would have their first sophomore Heisman in Tim Tebow. Grossman was taken in the first round of the 2003 NFL draft by the Chicago Bears and he also played for the Houston Texans and the Washington Redskins.

His great Gator moment was when he played in what became known as the “Slingin’ in the Rain” game against LSU, where he threw for 464 yards and five touchdowns in a 44-15 victory.

Grossman decided on Florida in 1999 so he could be coached by Steve Spurrier. His other choice was the University of Indiana—his father's and grandfather's Alma Mater. Grossman was redshirted in his freshman year and then he got the dubious role of third string QB on the Gators.



Grossman got to start his first game as a Florida Gator on October 7, 2000 against LSU. He had won the opportunity to start after completing 13 of 16 pass attempts for 232 yards and two touchdowns against Mississippi State the week before in the Gators' only SEC conference loss of the season.

Grossman solidified his position as Florida's starting quarterback during

the next two games by throwing for over 500 yards, eight touchdowns and no interceptions in lopsided wins over LSU and Auburn. He led the Gators to the SEC championship and was named Most Valuable Player of the SEC Championship Game. For the season, Grossman completed 61.8 percent of his passes for 1,866 yards, 21 touchdowns, and only seven interceptions. His passer efficiency rating of 161.8 was the third best in NCAA Division I football.

Grossman passed for over 300 yards in nine consecutive games during his sophomore season in 2001. He was great. He was Rex. He was the king QB for sure. He led the nation in passing efficiency, passing completion percentage and yards per attempt. Grossman was recognized as a consensus first-team All-American,

On October 6, 2001, Grossman passed for 464 yards and five touchdowns as No. 2 Florida defeated the No. 18 LSU Tigers 44-15. In a 2006 interview with the Chicago Tribune, Grossman cited the victory as his most memorable game as a Gator.

He had led the Gators to a 10-2 record in 2001 and he finished second in the Heisman voting by one of the closest margins in Heisman history (a mere 62 votes) to Eric Crouch. He would've beaten Tim Tebow to becoming the first sophomore to win the Heisman but it was not to be. The Gators went on to roll over Maryland in the Orange Bowl and Grossman won AP National Player.



As

A junior team captain in 2002, Grossman was as good as he could be while the team, no longer coached by Spurrier, finished 8-5; 6-2 in the SEC. He led the Gators in the famed "Slingin' in the Rain" game against the Tennessee Volunteers, in which he threw three touchdowns and 22 completions in 32 attempts en route to a 30-13 victory over the Vols. Grossman led the Gators to the 2003 Outback Bowl, where they lost to the Michigan Wolverines 38-30 despite his completing 21 of 41 passes for 323 yards and two touchdowns. After the season was over, Grossman decided to forgo his final year of college eligibility and declared for the NFL Draft.

In his three-season college career, Rex Grossman threw for 9,164 yards and seventy-seven touchdowns. Florida should have won a national championship for all the good play Grossman put out. He had a 146.77 passer rating, becoming the third most efficient passer in the Southeastern Conference's history.

He was twice chosen by his teammates as the Gators' most valuable player, in 2000 and 2001. In one of a series of articles about the top 100 Gators from the first century of Florida football, The Gainesville Sun recognized Grossman as the No. 10 all-time Gator in 2006. He was inducted into the University of Florida Athletic Hall of Fame as a "Gator Great" in 2013.

-- End of player highlights --

## **2003: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **2004: Florida Gators Season 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



# Chapter 18 Coach Urban Meyer 2005 - 2010

Coach # 22 Urban Meyer

Year	Coach	Record	Conference	Record
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 with Urban Meyer. Like him or not, Meyer is a great coach.

## **2005: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **2006: Florida Gators Season 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 exceeding the great records of the Spurrier years. This year it was more of good wins, great players and a great coaching that would help the Florida Gators become recognized again as the Nation's Football power. And, of course this year's 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 definitely a fine coach.

## **2007: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **Great Players Tim Tebow**

In terms of Florida Gator greats, most pundits rate Tim Tebow as the #1 Gator in the school’s 110 years of football. We make no attempt in this book to anoint a “greatest.” 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.

He is the youngest of five children. He hails from Makati City in the Philippines, making him one of three Heisman winners to be born outside of the U.S. (the other two are Robert Griffin III and Frank Sinkwich).

His family later settled in Jacksonville, Fla., where Tebow attended Trinity Christian Academy, playing tight end for the football team. He went to Nease High, where he earned national recognition as a dual-threat quarterback. During his senior season, he led Nease to the state title, earning himself All-State honors and he had the honor of

being named Florida's Mr. Football. A humble man, Tebow takes his honors and wears them well.

Tebow was highly recruited and he had lots of choices. He picked Florida in 2006. He spent that fall as a key true freshman backup to Chris Leak as the Gators won the national title. He had nice stats as a freshman totaling 13 touchdowns running and passing and was the team's second-leading rusher.



When Chris Leak graduated, Tebow took over the starting quarterback job in 2007 and proceeded to record one of the finest seasons in NCAA history. He threw for 3,132 yards and 29 touchdowns, with just six interceptions, and he rushed for 828 yards and 22 scores (the last figure an SEC record) as he won the Heisman solidly over Arkansas running back Darren McFadden. Along the way, Tim Tebow shattered a long-held Heisman streak that saw only juniors and seniors win the trophy.

Tebow's sophomore year was not the only year he was in contention for a Heisman. He flirted with history in his next two seasons, nearly

joining Archie Griffin as the only two-time Heisman winner. As a junior in 2008, he led the nation in passing efficiency and finished a close third in the Heisman race despite garnering the most first-place votes. He led the Gators to the National Championship title too. It was another great fine season in 2009 and he returned to New York on Heisman day for a fifth-place Heisman finish.

At the end of his college career, as previously noted Tebow held five NCAA, 14 SEC and 28 Florida statistical records. Among many mentions in the NCAA Division-I record book, Tebow is ranked second in career passing efficiency, third in career yards per attempt (9.33), eighth in career rushing touchdowns, and he also owns the record for most consecutive games in which he both threw at least one touchdown pass and scored at least one rushing touchdown (14).

Tebow was selected in the first round of the 2010 NFL draft, the 25th pick overall, by the Denver Broncos. He played sparingly as a rookie but led Denver to a playoff win over defending Super Bowl champs Pittsburgh in year two. He later had stints with the New York Jets, New England Patriots and Philadelphia Eagles. A gifted athlete, today he is playing professional baseball in the NY Mets organization.

I wrote another book about the Gators called Great Moments in Florida Gators Football. In that book, there are about 70 pages of facts and game summaries that correspond to the Tebow Days at Florida. Tim Tebow as noted is the # 1 player in the eyes of just about every Gator that you find. The pages from 2005 to 2008 in all football books are filled with Tim Tebow.

Though we do not pick the greatest of the Gators in this book, Tebow is as great as it gets as a Florida Gators player. He and Danny Wuerffel and Steve Spurrier are the Gators' three Heisman winners and that alone says something. Spurrier's years as coach may bring him in as the most loved of the Gators as he crosses generations.

Nonetheless, if we recount all the great plays in his Heisman season and two National Championships, there would be little room for the other great Gators players across the years. I could surely write a full book just on Tim Tebow. But, a visit to Amazon.com shows that

there are already six Tim Tebow books out there. He sure is quite a person and a phenomenal football and baseball player.

In summary, if it is possible to summarize, Tim Tebow had a storybook football career for the Florida Gators. He was all everything and led the team to two National Championships. He won both the Heisman Trophy and the BCS National Championship. He was a great player and he was drafted by the NFL's Denver Broncos in 2010 and joined the New York Jets in 2012. He now plays professional baseball for the Mets.

Despite leading the NFL's Denver Broncos to the playoffs in 2011, the popular quarterback was traded to the New York Jets after the season. Over his pro career, also was with the New England Patriots and the Philadelphia Eagles. He was a fan favorite wherever he went. He worked as a television analyst between NFL gigs.



Tebow, born August 14, 1987, grew up as the youngest of five children, in Makati City in the Philippines. His parents were American Baptist missionaries. Tim was homeschooled by his mother, who instilled in him the family's Christian beliefs. Those beliefs became a large part of Tebow's life and have often colored the media's coverage of him. Many of us have seen him pay tribute to the Lord in his football career.

As one would expect, he was a scholarship athlete at the University of Florida. he played all four years and his play mattered big-time to the Gators successful record. Despite his prospects to go early in the draft, his loyalty to the Gators caused him to decide to play his senior year.

He was about as good as it gets. As a freshman, he was a backup, but became a key contributor for a team that went on to win the BCS Championship. The following year he became the starting quarterback and won, among other honors, the Heisman Trophy (for outstanding all-around player) and the Davey O'Brien Award (for outstanding quarterback).

Playing for Coach Urban Meyer as QB, he ran the "wildcat offense," an unpredictable formation in which the quarterback can be an active rushing threat, Tebow set numerous records in the 2007 season, including the Gators' single-game QB rushing yards (166) and records for SEC season rushing touchdowns (20), career high single-game rushing touchdowns (5) and SEC season total touchdowns (passing and rushing; 55).

At the close of the 2008 season, his senior year, Tebow led his team to victory in the BCS National Championship game, and was named the winner of a slew of athletic awards. The list is never ending.

At 6'3" tall and weighing around 240 pounds, Tebow was referred to by one NFL coach as "the strongest human being that's ever played the position [of quarterback]. He was chosen by the Denver Broncos in the first round of the 2010 draft and signed a five-year contract to play second string behind Broncos QB Kyle Orton.

After a 1–4 start to the 2011 season, Tebow replaced Orton as the Broncos' starting quarterback. In his first start, he led the Broncos to a



come-from-behind 18–15 overtime victory against the Miami Dolphins, after being down 15–0 with less than three minutes left in the game. Tebow led the team to six wins in their next eight games and into the playoffs. The Broncos beat the Pittsburgh Steelers in the wild-card game of the playoffs before losing to the New England Patriots in the division championship game, ending Tebow’s first season as the Broncos starting quarterback.

After becoming a college football analyst for ESPN in late 2013, Tebow in September 2014 announced he was joining the Good Morning America team as a contributor to a new series called “Motivate Me Monday.” ABC said the series was set to highlight “individuals and their amazing stories of triumph.”

In the meantime, the former collegiate star trained with noted quarterbacks coach Tom House with the goal of returning to the NFL. He got his shot by agreeing to a one-year deal with the Philadelphia Eagles in April 2015, though it was unclear if he would get a serious chance to compete for a starting job. Since then, he switched to baseball with the Mets.



Apart from his skills on the field, Tebow is known for his devotion to his Christian beliefs and his charity work. The former is displayed often on the field with what has become known as “Tebowing”—dropping to one knee in prayer with his head resting on one hand.

The move has been both widely imitated by Tebow fans and widely mocked by others. Whatever the intent behind the fad, Tebowing became a cultural phenomenon in the 2011 football season. There's nothing wrong with giving God his due!

While active in charity work even in college, Tebow founded the Tim Tebow Foundation in January 2010. The faith-based outreach group works with children in need in both the United States and the Philippines, building facilities for sick children, granting wishes for children with life-threatening illnesses and building playrooms in hospitals and orphanages, among other far-reaching charitable works.

Tim Tebow: a great player and a great man.!

-- End of player highlights --

Of course, this year, 2007 the Gators had to replace Chris Leak at quarterback. Leak's replacement, sophomore Tim Tebow got a lot of playing time as a freshman.

## **2008: Florida Gators Season 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.

## Great Players 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.

Harvin is still revered as one of the most electrifying players of the BCS era. He is the best wide receiver, ever, from the University of Florida.

And for the doubters: whether you think Harvin is the Gators' best all-time receiver or not, there's no denying he was UF's most versatile and dynamic playmaker ever.



Before we break down Harvin's incredible numbers and overall game, let's take a trip down memory lane to briefly mention a few others high on the list. Carlos Alvarez, the 1969 All-American, and

Chris Doering, tied for the most touchdown receptions in SEC history, were big-time talents at the university, and of the two, Alvarez would likely be the most highly regarded in school history.

Ike Hilliard, Jabar Gaffney and Jack Jackson were receivers in the golden era of the Gators' passing attack in Steve Spurrier's Fun N' Gun. All five put up incredible numbers, and we haven't even mentioned Reidel Anthony or Wes Chandler yet. Hilliard and Anthony were the two key cogs that made Florida's 1996 receivers the best in SEC history.

Harvin is the best. He is highly regarded as one of the top high school athletes from the Virginia Beach area ever, joining Ronald Curry and Allen Iverson. Harvin's abilities were obvious, but he had a bad rap in the area. He was suspended twice in high school, once for making contact with an official and using inappropriate language and the other for unsportsmanlike conduct. He was eventually suspended from all high school sports by the VHSL, stemming from a basketball altercation.

Yet, the Gators' coach felt that he was good enough a player to take a chance on. Urban Meyer knew it. He scored 77 total touchdowns, and he scored more points than any player in South Hampton Roads history. He led his team to three consecutive state championship games.

But, the discipline questions lingered, but Meyer believed in Harvin, and ultimately, Harvin's recruitment came down to Florida, Southern Cal and FSU. Harvin's impact didn't take long in 2006. After he hauled in a 58-yard touchdown grab against UCF, Meyer and fans knew he would be something special. He caught 34 passes for 427 yards and two touchdowns, while adding 41 carries for 428 yards and three rushing touchdowns his freshman season.

Talk about balance. Some of his biggest and best plays came on the biggest stage, too. Harvin was named the SEC Championship Game MVP, and he was dynamic against Ohio State in the BCS Championship Game. He also won the SEC's Freshman of the Year award, despite having an injury-riddled season.

There was no sophomore slump for Harvin in 2007, either. He combined for 1,622 yards and 10 touchdowns. He led the team with 858 receiving yards and finished second in rushing behind Tim Tebow with 764 yards. He became the first receiver in Florida history to record 1,000 yards receiving and 1,000 yards rushing during his career, and he had another season to add to those numbers.

He was named the SEC's first-team All-Purpose player, while being named a second-team receiver in the same year. That year, Tim Tebow won the Heisman Trophy thanks a lot to Harvin's help running and catching the football.

Everybody expected even more from Harvin in 2008. He was even named a Preseason All-American and was featured among the biggest Heisman Trophy candidates in the country. He had a banner year with over 1,300 yards and 17 touchdowns even though he had missed two games due to injury, including the first game of the year against Hawaii and the SEC Championship Game.

Percy Harvin saved his best performance for last. He torched Oklahoma in the BCS National Championship Game while enduring on a high ankle sprain and a hairline fracture. He rushed for 122 yards on nine carries and one touchdown, while making five catches for 49 yards. He flipped field position in a hurry against OU, and other than the incredible defensive performance, Harvin was the biggest reason Florida won the game.

Percy Harvin finished his career with 1,929 receiving yards and 13 receiving touchdowns, while rushing for 1,852 yards and 19 touchdowns. He combined for 3,781 yards and 32 touchdowns during his three-year career.

During Harvin's stay at Florida, the Gators won two national championships and two SEC Championships.

Many define the wide receiver position differently, but Florida never had a player as diverse or electric as Percy Harvin. That's how it was. Harvin has a permanent place in Florida Gators history. The lore can never be a big as the reality.

-- End of player highlights --

## **2009: Florida Gators Season 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. Great players make a great team.

## **Great Players Brandon Spikes**

Brandon Spikes played for the Gators from 2006-09. The was from Shelby, N.C. Brandon made himself known with an immediate impact after arriving in Gainesville.

He was selected in the second round of the 2010 NFL draft by the New England Patriots. He was part of two national championship teams at UF. He might consider his greatest Gator moment as when he totaled six tackles in the 2009 BCS national championship game victory against Oklahoma in Miami. What a feat!



Brandon Spikes was born September 3, 1987, and after growing up became an American Football linebacker for the Buffalo Bills of the NFL. Before that he was drafted 62nd overall in the 2010 NFL Draft by the New England Patriots. He had played some great seasons for the Florida Gators from 2006-2009.

Born in Shelby, North Carolina, Brandon attended Crest High School in Shelby, where he was a standout football player for the Crest Chargers. When he was coming out of high school, Spikes was considered one of the best linebacker prospects in the nation, and he was rated the number one prospect in the state of North Carolina by Rivals.com. He had a grade of 33rd overall best player in the country according to Scout.com. He took his honors humbly as he was also selected to play in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl.

Spikes accepted an athletic scholarship to attend the University of Florida. He had many other offers such as Alabama, North Carolina State University and Virginia Tech. At Florida, he was pleased to be a four-year letterman. He played for one of the best coaches ever with Urban Meyer's Florida Gators football team from 2006 to 2009.

Spikes had great games in about 47 of the games he played for Florida with 39 starts at linebacker. He registered 307 tackles (178 solo) in his career, with 31.5 for loss, including 6.5 sacks. He forced two fumbles, recovered four fumbles and had six interceptions which he returned for 139 yards and four touchdowns, more than any other player in the nation and a Florida school record.

As a junior team captain in 2008, he made first-team All-SEC selection and was a unanimous first-team All-American. He was not just an ordinary player and thus was selected as a finalist for the Bronko Nagurski Trophy and a semifinalist for the Lombardi Award and Chuck Bednarik Award. He was a starter at middle linebacker and led the team with 93 tackles on the season, including 8.0 for a loss.

He returned two interceptions for a touchdown tying the school record. He made six tackles in the 2009 BCS National Championship Game win over Oklahoma and had seven tackles, two quarterback hurries and broke up one pass in the 2008 SEC Championship Game against the University of Alabama. After the season (his junior year) he decided to forgo entry into the 2009 NFL Draft and returned to Florida for another season.

Spikes was drafted by the New England Patriots in the second round (62nd overall) of the 2010 NFL Draft. He signed a four-year contract on July 26, 2010. Spikes quickly became a starter at inside linebacker in the Patriots 3–4 defense, alongside Jerod Mayo. Against Baltimore in Week 6 of his rookie season, Spikes recorded 16 tackles in an overtime Patriots win. Spikes recorded his first career interception in a Week 13 win over the New York Jets on Monday Night Football.

## **2010: Florida Gators Season 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,



# Chapter 19 Coach Will Muschamp 2011 to 2014

Coach # 23 William Larry Muschamp

Coach # 24 D J Durkin

Year	Coach	Record	Conference	Record
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

## **2011: Florida Gators Season 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 was a 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.

## **2012: Florida Gators Season 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.

## **2013: Florida Gators Season 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.

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-first with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). It was a dismal year overall and in the SEC with five losses.

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 honors for the Gators this year. They failed to become bowl eligible for the first time since 1990.

## **2014: Florida Gators Season 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 after this season for Coach Muschamp. 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 record 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.



DJ Durkin Interim Gators Head Coach

Coach 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 20 Coach Jim McElwain 2015-2017+

Coach # 25 Jim McElwain

Year	Coach	Record	Conference	Record
2015	Jim McElwain	10-4	SEC	7-1
2016	Jim McElwain	9-4	SEC	6-2
2017	Jim McElwain	To-be	SEC	To-be



Coach McElwain instructing the Gators

## 2015: Florida Gators Season Coach Jim McElwain

The 2015 Florida Gators football team was the One hundred-ninth season for Florida. It was the first season for 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. Future prospects 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 season with the powerful South-Eastern Conference (SEC). 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 great players and the fine coaching of this squad earned the team a berth in the 2015 SEC Championship Game. Unfortunately for the Gators, the team ended the season on the short end of the big games with an overall record of 10-4 after losing in the last regular season game to Florida State and both the SEC championship and the Citrus Bowl.

## **2016: Florida Gators Season 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.



## 2017: Florida Gators Season 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

## Player Highlights 2017 Recruiting Class

Since this book goes to print before the 2017 season, there are no great player highlights for this year. However, we can count on some great players coming out of this recruiting class. You bet!

Ironically in 2017, 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 in the nation 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. Here is a nice piece about that game from [alligatorarmy.com](http://alligatorarmy.com).

## Florida Gators spring game recap: Luke Del Rio leads Blue to 44-6 win over Orange

By Andy Hutchins Apr 8, 2016, 9:08pm EDT

<http://www.alligatorarmy.com/2016/4/8/11396056/florida-gators-spring-game-recap-stats-2016-luke-del-rio>

The primary takeaway from Florida's 2016 spring game on Friday night was as obvious as could be. With a thoroughly impressive performance, one of the best by a Gators' quarterback in a spring game, Luke Del Rio led his Blue team of first-teamers to an easy 44-6 victory — and stamped himself as Florida's obvious leading candidate to be its starter for the fall.

Florida's quarterback of the now could scarcely have had a better night. Del Rio led four touchdown drives and threw for two touchdown passes, completing 10 of 11 passes for 176 yards against a second-team defense that couldn't pressure him consistently. He looked sharp, composed, and decisive, though, with his only incompleting coming on a savvy throwaway, and made throws over the middle and to the corner that would likely have been completions against even the Gators' best defenders.



Picture by Logan Bowles-USA TODAY Sports

Of course, "likely" is not "assuredly," and given how that defense ruined the Florida debut of Feleipe Franks, it's hard to jump from one to the other. Franks threw three interceptions to Blue defenders — two to Duke Dawson, the latter of the duo returned for a touchdown — and generally seemed every bit a freshman, and not at all a highly-touted recruit, until the Gators' final drive. Finally playing with the Blue team on that drive helped Franks: His finest moment came on a deep throw to C'yontai Lewis that was dropped late in the fourth quarter, and he hooked up with Lewis while on the run for a touchdown pass.

Redshirt senior Austin Appleby and true freshman Kyle Trask each looked significantly more composed than Franks with the Orange

team, both doing so almost exclusively while under duress and behind a leaky line. Trask connected with Alvin Bailey over the middle on a throw better than any by a QB not named Del Rio on the night.

Apart from Del Rio's excellence and the Blue team's dominance, though, the most welcome sight of the night was the performance of redshirt sophomore kicker Eddy Pineiro. Florida's ballyhooed kicker recruit did not disappoint in his first game in Tim Tebow's old No. 15 jersey, cranking kicks of 56, 52, and 46 yards through the uprights and missing 54- and 52-yarders wide right.

Of the three makes, only the longest kick seemed to lack the leg to be good from 60 yards out — and while three made field goals in a spring game may not seem like much, Florida didn't have three three-pointers in any game in 2015. Pineiro is expected to be a major upgrade on the kicker-by-committee approach that was headlined by Austin Hardin's inconsistency, and showed positive signs of living up to his hype.

Redshirt junior Mark Thompson led all running backs with 46 yards and a touchdown run, but also coughed up a fumble near the goal line that C.J. Worton fortuitously grabbed and turned into six points. Worton also had the night's longest completion, a 46-yard catch-and-run from Del Rio on the opening drive; tight end C'yontai Lewis had five catches and 79 receiving yards to lead all players, with Franks feeding him late.

Redshirt junior Drew Massey caught Del Rio's other TD pass.

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!**

**We hope to bring out another version of the great players' edition in about ten years. It will focus on Gator football and offer a commentary on what's new. Thank you for choosing this book among the many that are in your options list. I sincerely appreciate it! We plan to offer another UF title over the next six months highlighting great coaches of the Gators over the years.**

**The best to you all – a great Gator Nation!**



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