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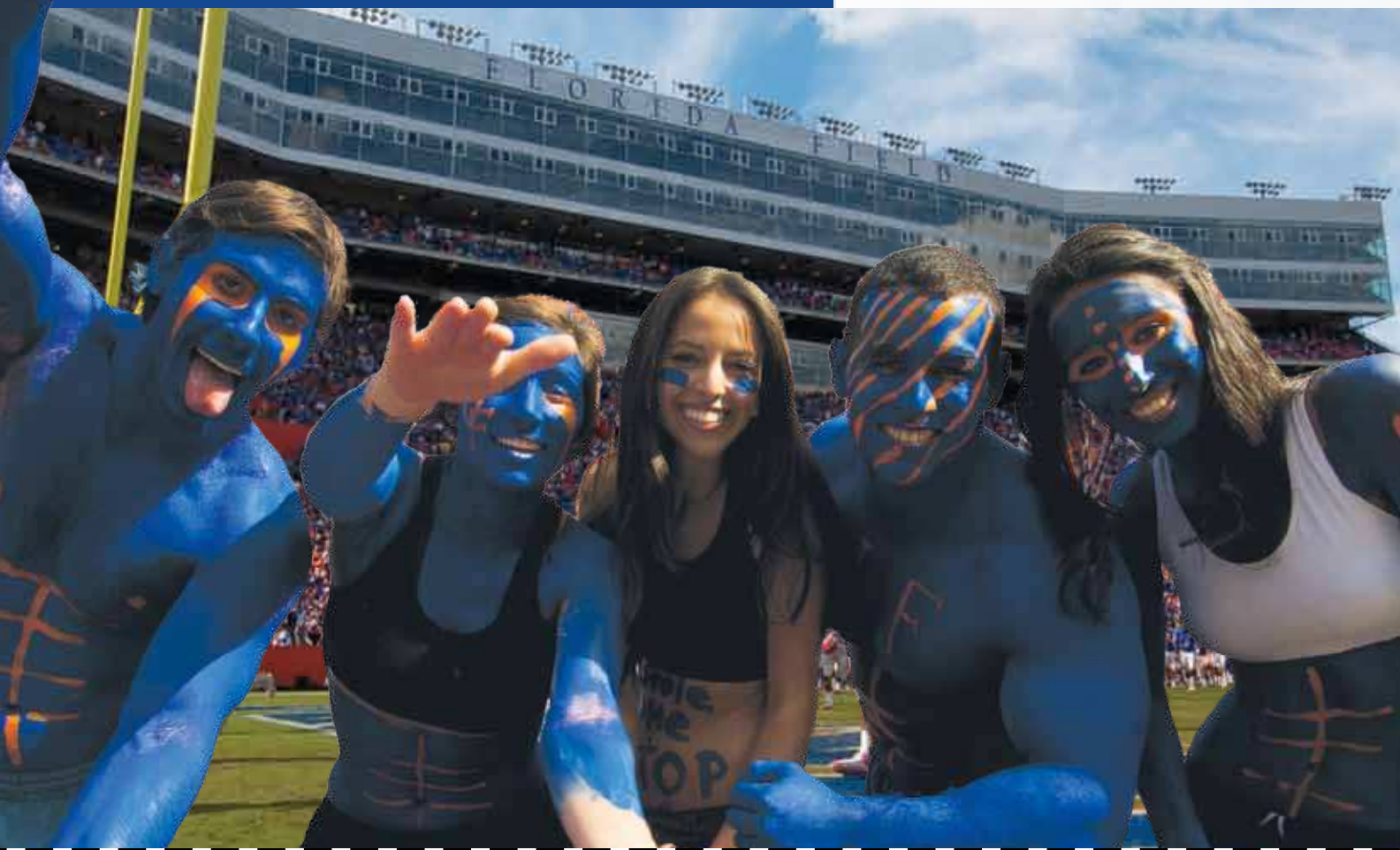
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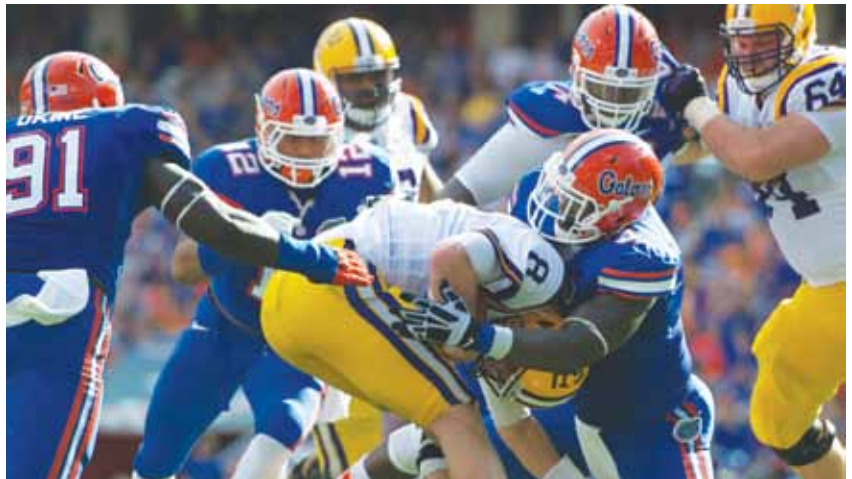
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## HOLD THAT TIGER

Damien Jacobs sacks LSU quarterback Zach Mettenberger as the Florida defense completely throttled the Tigers' offense.



## ON THE COVER

In a throwback to some of the great days of the recent past, The Swamp was alive as Florida handled LSU in a dramatic victory that catapulted The Gators up in the national rankings. Here the defense reacts on the sidelines to a video review that confirmed a UF fumble recovery.

COVER PHOTO BY STEVE JOHNSON

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## NEXT ISSUE

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## THE EXPRESS

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**S**omewhere up above, Charley Pell must have been smiling. Florida's football coach from three decades ago, a Bear Bryant disciple, would have loved what took place on a steamy October afternoon in The Swamp. It was old-fashioned, old-style, old-school SEC football and produced a result that never gets old – a grinding 14-6 Florida win over an LSU team that came into the contest ranked No. 4 in the nation, the defending SEC champs who sauntered into Gainesville with an 18-game regular-season winning streak. Even current head coach Will Muschamp gave a nod to history.

"That was typical 1980 SEC football right there today," Muschamp said. "It was a physical, physical match. Both lines of scrimmage are going to put pressure on the quarterback. That's the difference playing in this league and these other leagues you watch on TV. I know you like watching all these points being scored – the quarterback won't make it through the season in our league. Proud of our players, a resilient effort and how we won the game in the second half is what I'm most proud of."

It was a game that was going to be used as a measuring stick to gauge Florida's progress in Year Two under Muschamp, and morphed into a day where Florida beat LSU at its own game, simply lining up and pounding away, gaining the advantage on both sides of the line of scrimmage. The numbers won't totally reflect the domination – after all, Florida only gained 237 yards – but the Gators claimed this victory up front, where LSU was regarded as superior.

Incredibly, Florida ran the ball 34 times for 160 yards in the second half, continually chipping away at the LSU defense. There were no big plays – Florida's longest gain of the day was 17 yards – but it

# A BLAST FROM THE PAST

was a repeated series of body blows that eventually knocked the vaunted LSU defense to its knees. A time of possession machine (the Gators entered the game second in the nation in that category), they hogged the ball for more than 20 minutes (20:15) in the second half and wound up with the ball for a whopping 37:24.

"He (Muschamp) was actually talking like this was a heavyweight bout, a boxing match this whole week," center Jon Harrison said. "We just kept that in our mind all week – we were going to be the first to swing and we were going to be the last to swing at the end of the game. We just took that mentality in and it helped us succeed.

"We want our team to be known as a running team and we're going to run no matter what defensive scheme you throw at us to stop the run – whatever it is, we're going to run the ball regardless."

The beneficiary of the offensive line's might was senior tailback Mike Gillislee, who picked up 146 tough yards on a career-high 34 carries, ripping off a pair of 12-yard touchdown runs in the second half to complete the rally from a 6-0 half-time deficit.

"It was very evident out there on the football field that we have a strong, physical football team that had good endurance against an outstanding, athletic bunch, especially on the defensive

side of the ball," Muschamp said. "We felt the running game was there, we just needed to be a little more patient and (offensive coordinator) Brent (Pease) was outstanding. He called an outstanding game and put us in situations to be successful. Mike Gillislee ran hard and that's a talented bunch he ran against, a very good front seven."

The Gators were so determined to pound the football at LSU that they utilized an unbalanced line a number of times, even employing a seven-offensive lineman look with freshman tackle D.J. Humphries and redshirt sophomore guard Ian Silberman, along with tight end Clay Burton and fullback Hunter Joyer in the ultimate jumbo package. Both of Gillislee's touchdown runs came courtesy of terrific blocking from an unbalanced line set.

"The more the merrier at the O-Line position," Harrison said with a smile. "We had seven on a couple. Just keep hitting the defense in the mouth and keep gaining yards on the field."

Added James Wilson, who sheepishly admitted he needed to work on his fumble recovery skills ("that was embarrassing," he said), "We could put 11 out there – let's do it. It's awesome. Coach Pease with all his packages, he's a mastermind. We just try and be bullies up front."

It would have been hard to digest six weeks earlier that we would be writing

about a Florida offensive line that wound up manhandling LSU up front down the stretch. It wasn't that long ago – OK last season – where Florida's offensive line was being derided as one of the weakest in recent memory. Muschamp was calling out the offensive line in particular when he labeled the team "soft" last January – no word is as damaging to an offensive lineman.

"At the end of the bowl game last year he called us all soft and we took that to heart, focused on that the whole offseason and just want to be able to finish," Wilson said. "That's what we've been able to prove. No one likes to be called soft. You don't get to Florida if you're soft. We had a standard we had to pick up and get back to where Florida was supposed to be. There was a toughness that built in this offseason."

New strength and conditioning coach Jeff Dillman has been lauded from both Muschamp and the players as being the guiding force toward instilling the new style of Florida football, the Muschamp brand if you will. And keep in mind, this was an LSU outfit that had not allowed a point all season in the third quarter (48-0 in the first five games) and had outscored folks 97-20 in the second half, but got whipped 14-0 in the final 30 minutes on Saturday.

"I'm not going to talk trash about their defensive line, they have some great athletes, but we just had it in our head that we're not leaving here without the win," Harrison said. "They might have under-estimated us a little bit and we used that to our advantage and come out swinging."

"Offensive line is a selfless position, all work and no credit but when the play calls kept coming in and it was run after run after run, we just got it in our minds we're going to run this ball. That's our game plan and we succeeded."

Certainly Florida had equal success on the other side of the ball as well, completely throttling an LSU attack that picked up just one first down rushing (Florida had 16) and only 42 yards on the ground. But more than anything, this signature victory belonged to the offensive line, a maligned group that stood tall against what many considered to be the top defensive line in the nation.

"(Winning the line of scrimmage) is huge against a quality, quality football team," Muschamp said. "It adds more confidence to what you're doing, adds more belief to our system."

Now comes the time that makes coaches fret, handling the expectations and distractions that accompany moving into the Top 5 nationally. More showdowns await, including consecutive huge SEC East matchups with South Carolina in The Swamp and Georgia in Jacksonville, but with these players not too far removed from a desultory 7-6 season, it's hard to fathom they'd fall prey to puffed-up potential.

"This is one win, doesn't count for one-and-a-half, doesn't count for two," Muschamp said. "We will enjoy this tonight and get back tomorrow. We need to improve. We need to understand that as you continue to climb the mountain, it gets a little more dangerous."

"We've taken some steps, we've improved, I'm not going to doubt that but there are so many more things to accomplish as we move forward in the season. When you continue to climb the mountain, the steps get a bit more treacherous and we've got to understand that. I'm not trying to take anything away from the win, it was a great win, but it counts as one and we've got a long season ahead of us."

A season with that now sports the prospect of a dreamy future thanks to a throwback to the past.



**#23 MIKE GILLISLEE**  
PHOTO BY STEVE JOHNSON

# HOOPS TEAM STARTS PRACTICE

GATOR BAIT STAFF REPORT

Even though we've only reached the midway point of the college football season it's time for action on the hardwood to begin heating up as well. Practice has begun for teams around the country as Florida tips off its 17th season under head coach Billy Donovan.

Barely two weeks after practice begins, the Gators will host their lone exhibition game on Nov. 1 against Nebraska-Kearney (a Division II school that calls itself the Lopers, for Antelopes). Florida will then open its regular season in a historic contest with Georgetown on Nov. 9 in Jacksonville aboard the Naval Carrier the U.S.S Bataan.

The Gators will continue their tough non-conference schedule following the Nov. 11 home opener by hosting perennial Big 10 power Wisconsin on Nov. 14. Florida will also face UCF (home on Nov. 23), familiar foe Marquette – who they beat in the Sweet 16 last March – (home on Nov. 29), will take to the road to face Florida State (Dec. 5), Arizona (Dec. 15) and Kansas State (in Kansas City on Dec. 22).

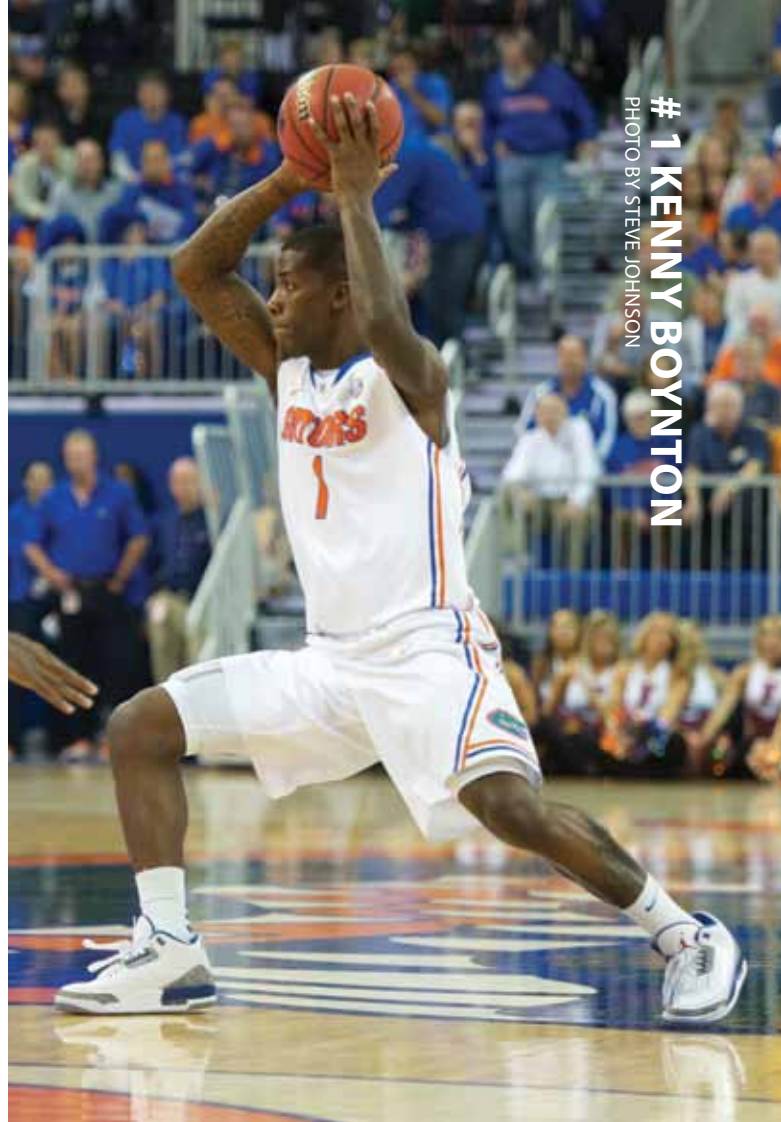
The expanded 18-game SEC schedule begins with a home meeting with Georgia on Jan. 9. The Gators play four of their first six league games at home before coming home for four of the next five, culminating in the Feb. 12 showdown with Kentucky on ESPN. The Gators' home finale will be against Vanderbilt on March 6 and they will end the regular season at Kentucky on March 9 on CBS. In all, 16 games will be televised by one of ESPN's station in addition to the Kentucky game on CBS. The opener with Georgetown will be broadcast on the NBC Sports Network.

The Gators return a deep team that advanced to the Elite Eight the past two seasons. Three seniors return including guard Kenny Boynton, who is on pace to become the school's alltime leading scorer, forward Erik Murphy and guard Mike Rosario.

Center Patric Young heads up the four-man junior glass, along with fellow forward Will Yeguete, swingman Casey Prather and point guard Scottie Wilbekin. Forward Cody Larson and walk on guard Jacob Kurtz return as sophomores while the Gators will welcome in a four-man freshman group featuring guards Braxton Ogbueze, Michael Frazier II and Dillon Graham along with swingman DeVon Walker.

In addition, Florida will have a pair of touted transfers on the roster who will have to sit out this season before becoming eligible in 2013-14 – forwards Damontre Harris from South Carolina and Dorian Finney-Smith from Virginia Tech.

We will have an in-depth preview of the 2012-13 Florida basketball team in the next issue of Gator Bait Magazine.



#1 KENNY BOYNTON  
PHOTO BY STEVE JOHNSON

## MEN'S BASKETBALL ROSTER

1	Kenny Boynton	G	6-2	190	SR
10	Dorian Finney-Smith	F	6-8	205	SO
20	Michael Frazier II	G	6-4	200	FR
12	Dillon Graham	G	6-4	179	FR
2	Damontre Harris	F	6-10	228	JR
0	Jacob Kurtz	G	6-5	208	SO
34	Cody Larson	F/C	6-9	239	RSO
33	Erik Murphy	F/C	6-10	238	SR
11	Braxton Ogbueze	G	6-0	182	FR
24	Casey Prather	G/F	6-6	208	JR
3	Mike Rosario	G	6-3	183	RSR
25	DeVon Walker	G/F	6-6	191	FR
5	Scottie Wilbekin	G	6-2	176	JR
15	Will Yeguete	F	6-7	240	JR
4	Patric Young	C	6-9	249	JR

# NO. 18 SOCCER TEAM SCORES UPSET

GATOR BAIT STAFF REPORT

Following in the footsteps of their football counterparts, Florida's other "football" team, Becky Burleigh's soccer club, claimed a big upset on Oct. 7. The No. 18 Gator soccer team (10-3-1, 7-1 SEC) took a 2-1 win at No. 5 Texas A&M (12-2-1, 6-1-1 SEC) in front of a chilly Aggie Soccer Stadium crowd of 2,096. Florida ended the Aggies' 12-match unbeaten streak and its 18-match home unbeaten streak.

Play by the Gators was a bit frenetic in the opening minutes, evidenced by A&M being awarded three corner kicks in the first 12 minutes. Once the Gators found their rhythm, they started to put pressure on the Aggies goal.

"I thought we were a little rattled at the beginning of the game. Our composure wasn't where we wanted it to be," UF coach Becky Burleigh said. "It didn't help that A&M had several corners in a row – that's a strength of A&M. I think

that was in part what rattled us. But once we got a hold of the ball a little bit and kept our possession going that gave us some confidence to keep it going."

But it was the Aggies who scored first off a set piece in the 22nd minute. Sophomore Shea Groom headed in a corner kick at the post off the assist from Beth West.

The Gators began to mount their fourth come-from-behind victory of the season with a goal off a set piece of their own seven minutes later.

Senior All-American Erika Tymrak was fouled just outside the right side of the Aggies box. The free kick taken by Jo Dragotta scored at the far post in the 29th minute, aided by fellow senior McKenzie Barney's distractive run in the box causing confusion right above the goal.

"The credit completely goes to McKenzie Barney. It wouldn't have gone in if she didn't do that tricky play and let it go

between her legs," Dragotta said. "They weren't expecting that and that allowed the ball to score. The credit goes to her for sure."

It was Dragotta's second goal of the season and of her career. Placing the ball in a key zone led to the goal, Burleigh said.

"What we are trying to do is play that ball in what we call the 'corridor of indecision,'" she said. "It is a tough ball for a keeper because it is a ball where she has to decide to come out or not. When you put the ball there, good things usually happen whether we get on the end of it or not. So that was one of those balls."

The go-ahead goal started again off a set piece. Tymrak tapped a pass off the free kick to Havana Solaun located at left side of box. Solaun returned the pass to Tymrak, who dribbled to eight yards and sent a centering pass to junior Adriana Leon located in the box. Leon pounded the ball into the roof of the net from 10 yards in the 39th minute.

"I don't remember too much about the play," Leon said. "I do remember Erika passing the ball to inside the box. I just ran onto it and kicked it as hard as I could into the net."

It was Leon's third goal of the season with all coming in the last six matches.

A strong team defensive effort helped the Gators limit the Aggies to a single goal for the third time this season.

"I think there were ups and downs in the game. There were a few times we lost our focus, but overall, I think we did a great job of keeping our focus and keeping our composure," junior outside back Taylor Travis said. "The coaches talked to us about different changes, movements and tactics at halftime and we adjusted to that so we had an even stronger second half defensively."

SEC co-leader Missouri is next for the Gators, who have just five regular-season matches remaining. Both teams stand atop the league standings with 21 points, while Texas A&M drops to third at 19 points. After the home match with Missouri, UF plays its final home game of the season against Mississippi State before ending with three road matches against Alabama, Vanderbilt and South Carolina. The SEC Tournament is scheduled for Oct. 31-Nov. 4.



#4 MCKENZIE BARNEY  
PHOTO BY STEVE JOHNSON

# NO. 11 VOLLEYBALL TEAM STAYS HOT

GATOR BAIT STAFF REPORT

**T**he early-season winning ways continued for the No. 11 Florida volleyball team (13-2, 7-0 SEC) in dramatic fashion, as the Gators completed an epic comeback, rallying from two sets down to defeat SEC East rival Kentucky, 3-2 (22-25, 20-25, 25-22, 25-22, 15-8), on Oct. 7. The Gators continued their undefeated streak in SEC action (7-0) as part of a 10-match winning streak.

“I think the tale of the match was that Kentucky played so well especially early on and we were just having a hard time getting in sync offensively,” Florida head coach Mary Wise said. “It took us a while but once we started passing the ball and allowed Taylor Brauneis to get a (quality) ball, then we could start distributing. You have to give Kentucky so much credit. Today, we saw how lethal they can be, especially with their ability to get kills from so many different positions.”

“In a night in which we didn’t have our best stuff and the opponent was playing so well, we stayed the course. What most pleases me is that you never saw the look of giving up or defeat on the team. They’re grinders and that’s who we are.”

The comeback marked the third time in four years that Florida rallied from an 0-2 hole to beat an opponent and the second time in program history the Gators have come back from an 0-2 deficit to defeat Kentucky (10/22/86 in Lexing-

ton). UF has come back from an 0-2 deficit 16 times in program history, seven of those at home, as a crowd of 3,008 witnessed the latest rally.

“It was awesome,” Florida junior setter Taylor Brauneis said. “We come in (to the press conference) and we’re smiling because the fans were in it and we were in it. It was a total team effort and it just feels amazing.”

Florida was led by the hard-hitting duo of junior middle blocker Chloe Mann and freshman outside hitter Živa Recek. Mann hit .409 against the ‘Cats, registering 11 kills and six blocks, while Recek notched a match-high 19 kills to go along with eight digs. Recek’s kill total marks the 10th time this season she has led Florida in kills and is the highest kill output in a five-set match since Mann and Florida All-American Kristy Jaeckel recorded 19 each on the road in the Gators’ 3-2 comeback win over Arkansas.

Freshman Gabby Mallette stuffed six blocks, finishing up a stellar defensive weekend at the net for the Gators, who tallied 28 blocks on the weekend (including a 3-0 home sweep of Arkansas two days earlier). Senior Tangerine Wiggs had her 10th match of the season hitting above .300 (min. 5 kills), smashing nine kills on .348 hitting.

“I think you could see it in the numbers, there was an inspired group on the bench,” Wise said. “Our seniors, Betsy and Tange, as well as Chloe were terrific and they just had that look about them that they weren’t going to go down without a fight.”

Brauneis dished out 47 assists against UK, narrowly missing a double-double with nine digs. Sophomore libero Taylor Unroe scooped 16 digs and fellow sophomores Madison Monserez and Holly Pole combined for 11 digs on the afternoon.

The 20-match SEC grind continues for Florida, which has 13 league encounters left and one matchup with state rival Florida State in Tallahassee.



**#4 TANGERINE WIGGS**

**#10 CHLOE MANN**

PHOTO BY STEVE JOHNSON



# NINE NAMED TO HALL OF FAME

GATOR BAIT STAFF REPORT

The University of Florida F Club and Gator Boosters, Inc., have announced nine Gators as 2013 UF Athletic Hall of Fame inductees. The 2013 Hall of Fame class will feature seven Gator Greats, one Distinguished Letterwinner and one Honorary Letterwinner that will join the 375 existing UF Hall of Famers next spring. The 2013 UF Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Banquet will be held on Friday, April 5, 2013, in the Holloway Touchdown Terrace at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium.

This year's induction class includes Gator Greats **Jeff Davis** (Wrestling), **Josh Fogg** (Baseball), **Rex Grossman** (Football), **Riko Higashio** (Women's Golf), **Heather Mitts** (Soccer), **Mike Pearson** (Football) and **Chrissy Van Fleet** (Gymnastics). Former UF football player and assistant coach **Larry Morris** will be inducted into the UF Athletic Hall of Fame as a Distinguished Letterwinner and **Ernestine Russell Weaver**, longtime Gator gymnastics coach, will be UF's first Honorary Letterwinner since 2011.

Each year, the F Club Committee selects members to the Hall of Fame, divided into three different categories: Gator Greats, Distinguished Letterwinners and Honorary Letterwinners.

Gator Greats are letterwinners who have brought recognition and prominence to the University and themselves by athletic accomplishments as a student-athlete. Distinguished Letterwinners are former student-athletes who have made major contributions to the University's athletic program through personal time, effort, interest and many years of continued service. They also have distinguished themselves as exceptional in their chosen field of endeavor.

Honorary Letterwinners are coaches and athletic officials – after retirement – who were not letterwinners/athletes at the University of Florida, yet have rendered outstanding service to the intercollegiate athletic program through personal time, effort, interest and through many years of continued service.

## 2013 GATOR GREATS

### JEFF DAVIS (WRESTLING, 1972-75)

Captain of the 1975 SEC Championship Team . . . A four-time All-SEC selection . . . Inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2004.

### JOSH FOGG (BASEBALL 1995-98)

A 1998 All-American . . . Tied for first in Florida baseball history for saves in a season (13) . . . Helped UF to two SEC Championships in 1996 & 1998 and two College World Series appearances in '96 and '98.

### REX GROSSMAN (FOOTBALL 2000-02)

The 2001 SEC Player of the Year . . . A 2001 All-American, the first sophomore quarterback in school history to earn first-team All-America honors . . . 2001 Heisman Trophy Runner-up . . . The 2001 AP National Player of the Year.

### RIKO HIGASHIO (WOMEN'S GOLF, 1995-98)

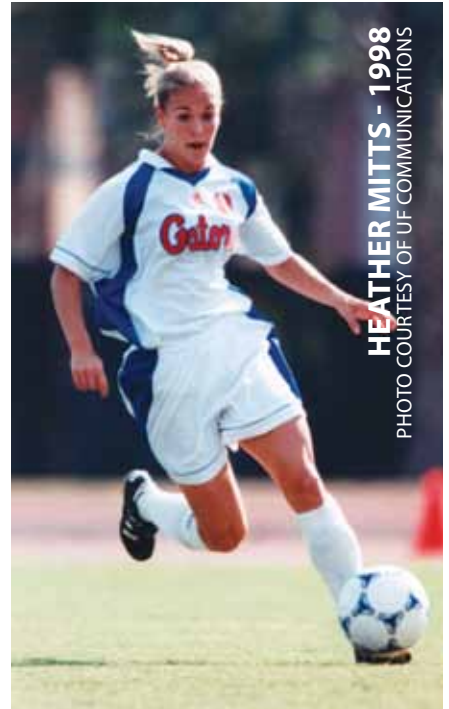
A 1998 All-American . . . The 1996 SEC Freshman of the Year . . . Recipient of the 1998 Dinah Shore Trophy . . . Three-time All-SEC first-team pick 1996-98 . . . Tied for second in UF history for the lowest round (67).

### HEATHER MITTS (SOCCER, 1996-99)

A two-time All-American for the Orange and Blue . . . A 1998 and 1999 All-SEC first-team selection . . . Named to the 1998 NCAA Championship All-Tournament Team . . . Member of US Women's National Team.

### MIKE PEARSON (FOOTBALL, 1999-01)

A 2001 All-American . . . The 2000 James W. Kynes Award Recipient . . . A two-time All-SEC selection as an offensive lineman for the Gators . . . Second-round NFL Draft pick by the Jacksonville Jaguars.



### CHRISSY VAN FLEET (GYMNASTICS, 1997-00)

An 11-Time All-American . . . The 2000 SEC Gymnast of the Year . . . Southeastern Conference beam champion in 1999 . . . Four-time All-SEC selection.

## 2013 DISTINGUISHED LETTERWINNER

### LARRY MORRIS (FOOTBALL, 1970-72)

Attorney at Levin Law Firm in Pensacola . . . UF Assistant Football Coach in 1973 . . . Longtime Bull Gator and season ticket holder . . . Past member of the F Club Committee.

## 2013 HONORARY LETTERWINNER

### ERNESTINE RUSSELL WEAVER

University of Florida Gymnastics Coach from 1979-1992 . . . Five-time SEC Championship Team . . . Eleven-straight NCAA Championship Appearances . . . Coached a total of 35 All-American Gymnasts.

# MORE DEPTH EQUALS BETTER PRODUCTION

BY MARTY COHEN  
GATOR BAIT EDITOR

For seven of the past eight seasons – excluding 2008 – Florida has begun the season 4-0. Sometimes the fast start paved the way to championship runs, in leaner years, the Gators soon crashed and burned. The past two seasons, in particular, featured a rapid descent, with the Gators dropping five of their next eight games en route to an 8-5 record, and then losing six of the following eight games last fall to finish 7-6.

But in his second season, head coach Will Muschamp had plenty of reasons to support the notion that opening 4-0 in 2012 was going to produce better results.

“I think we’re much better than we were a year ago,” Muschamp said. “We’re much deeper, more mature, more experienced. I think we’re stronger, I think we handle adversity a lot better. I think anybody that was a part of watching us, and being a part of our organization, last year to this year, will notice a night and day difference between our football team. I think we’ve made tremendous improvements in a short period of time. Are we where we want to be? Absolutely not. I’m not trying to say that we’ve arrived by any stretch of the imagination, but I do think we’ve improved and we’ve addressed the things we need to address.”

There is little doubt that Florida’s improved depth from a year ago is a main factor in the team’s early-season development. The amplified productivity off the bench, with more players available and more guys contributing on both sides of the ball, was never more evident than in the Gators 38-0 whitewash of Kentucky last month.

For the Gators, razor-thin at a number of spots last season, the increased depth has been a factor since the season opener, but using that win over Kentucky as a barometer, the stats from that triumph reveal 10 different players on offense catching at least one pass and six different players running the ball. Same scenario on defense for UF, where 25 players were credited with at least one tackle.

“It’s a combination of a few things: one, it’s everybody kind of finding their role, what they can do, two, there were some guys who had to step in for guys who were either down for a moment in the series or injured at the time, and the other is Jeff (Driskel) starting to make reads and find where the open guy is,” offensive coordinator Brent Pease said. “Some of the plays are created off scrambles and guys are working to him and he’s finding open guys. It’s kind of a mixture of all that. Guys are fitting into being productive, being playmakers in the offense.”

A case in point came on the ground against the Wildcats, where Florida rushed for an even 200 yards, but only 56 from the team’s leading runner Mike Gillislee. Still nursing a minor groin injury, Gillislee carried 13 times for 56 yards, his lowest output of the season, and caught a pass for 11 yards.

But accompanying Gillislee was 45 yards in 10 carries by freshman tailback Matt Jones, 31 yards in four carries by sophomore Mack Brown (who had two runs totaling 30 yards erased by penalty), 35 yards from sophomore Chris Johnson and another 35 from Driskel.

“Our identity has been established, and we’re going to do that with the



#90 JONATHAN BULLARD  
PHOTOS BY STEVE JOHNSON

guys we have,” Pease said. “The roles change on a game-to-game basis in how you’re getting it done. (Against Kentucky) Mike (Gillislee) had a good game, but he didn’t have all the yards, the rushing yards were pretty spread out and that’s good when you have some depth and can do it with various guys. It’s not always going to be the same, it’s going to be different week-to-week, series-to-series and that’s the great thing about it, everybody has to step up and make plays.”

On the line of scrimmage, true freshman D.J. Humphries stepped in at left tackle and played the entire second half in place of senior Xavier Nixon. For Humphries, rated the No. 1 prep offensive tackle in the nation last year, it was a great baptism into SEC football.

“He came out and played in the second half and for a young kid like that it’s about experience,” Pease said. “You’re going to make some mistakes here and there because there’s a lot of changing parts, moving parts in front of you, and he’s getting better and better. He needed that game to get some experience in a real live situation instead of just practice, knowing how the flow of the game is going to change, whatever he has to do with his responsibilities. He did a really nice job, I thought he got a lot better.”

On the other side of the line of scrimmage, probably the most glaring upgrade over last season is the ability to rotate eight or nine guys along the defensive front. Reserves like tackles Damien Jacobs and Leon Orr and Earl Okine at end, plus rookies Jonathan Bullard and Dante Fowler, Jr., at end, have given the coaching staff valuable minutes to pro-

vide ample rest for starters Omar Hunter, Sharrif Floyd, Dominique Easley and Lereatee McCray.

"There's been a few guys – as you guys know, with any defensive line, you better have some guys available to rush at the end of the game to finish some games," defensive coordinator Dan Quinn said. "We really have a lot of confidence in a couple of guys up front – first is Damian Jacobs, who plays both three-technique and nose tackle. He's got good quickness, can push the pocket – on one of the interceptions this past week he had a pressure up the middle that forced a bad throw that Mike (Taylor) had (intercepted).

"Leon Orr certainly has got the size and strength and he has played some valuable minutes for us inside. Not only can he stand in there against the run but we feel he can push the pocket against the pass. Earl Okine is a veteran guy who's had some experience playing end and tackle and we played him a little bit at tackle in nickel situations. And the last two guys are the young players (freshmen Jonathan) Bullard and (Dante) Fowler. They've had meaningful snaps for us in meaningful parts of the game and that experience only helps us, where we have the ability to keep the defensive line fresh longer in a game."

The element of substitution up front without losing productivity is a factor in Florida's second-half dominance. In the first four games of the season, the Gators have outscored their opponents 64-13 in the second half and have not given up a

single point in the fourth quarter.

"At the end of the game you saw guys with more speed in their rush and more quickness in their get-off," Quinn said. "They certainly played as hard last year, but when you get into a 50- or 60-play game as opposed to a 40, you've got a little more energy to go at the end of the ballgame. When the big guys run out of gas, it's hard to keep 'em going and for us, the ability to have those guys rush for us late in the game is big."

With the infusion of more players on the roster, there has been less reliance on freshmen to contribute immediately. Last year 11 true freshmen played while through the opening month of 2012, nine have gotten action – tailback Matt Jones, receivers Latroy Pittman and Raphael Andrades, tight end Kent Taylor, offensive tackle Humphries, defensive ends Bullard and Fowler, linebacker Antonio Morrison and safety Brian Poole. All but Taylor, Andrades and Poole have been major contributors in their rookie year.

"Yeah, it's real tough any time you stick a freshman out there and you put him under fire like that," Pease said. "You've got to make so many mistakes before you become really, really good at some things. They say you've got to have 2,500 repetitions before you perfect something. Well, that's not totally going to happen until about your senior year. A guy like (Humphries) is working through all that and he's done a good job.

"The last game against Kentucky, when he got put in there from second half on, the kid played pretty well!"



**#70 D.J. HUMPHRIES**



#34 LERENTEE MCCRAY  
PHOTO BY STEVE JOHNSON

# MCCRAY FINDS PERSONAL DRIVE

BY THOMAS GOLDKAMP  
GATOR BAIT STAFF WRITER

Senior defensive end Lerentee McCray was on a mission. Florida was tied with Tennessee 20-20, and McCray knew he had to make something happen. He lined up to the left of the formation and set his sights on Tennessee quarterback Tyler Bray.

Truth is, McCray's sights shift to a different quarterback every week. What has remained unchanged are his long-term goals, his work ethic and the reason for both.

"I have a lot of motivation coming from the family that I come from," McCray said. "Just because my momma comes from a single-parent home. My oldest brother I looked up to, he went to jail when I was in high school, and he's still locked up to this day. So just not having him there, just (had) to step up and kind of be the man of my house."

Up until last year, the frustrations of not getting much of a chance to contribute on the football field made life rough for the Ocala native, who had a glittering prep career at Dunnellon High School and participated in the U.S. Army All-American Game.

McCray had played in each of his first three years on campus, but could never make much of an impact. He didn't end a season with more than six tackles until last year, when he was in on 24 tackles with 7.5 tackles for losses, 1.5 sacks and a forced fumble.

"The more difficult point was hearing everybody back home talking to my parents and stuff and just asking my mom what is going on with me and all that," he said. "That and just a couple of injuries that bumped me down the road. That's been the hardest part."

Finally, though, he's making an impact. His incarcerated 24-year-old brother has even taken some grief on his behalf as McCray asserts himself as one of the top players on the Florida defense.

"He definitely has some people in there that don't like the Gators, so he has to deal with that sometimes," McCray said.

His younger brother, a senior in high school, and his mother are never far from his mind, either. Like many players, McCray's goal is to play in the NFL.

Even if he doesn't make it, he knows he's got a job to do.

"I definitely feel pressure, but I mean it's nothing really because I'm going to take care of my family regardless of what I do," he said.

He has been responding to pressure his whole

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life. He knows how to handle it. So with the lights on and 102,455 people holding their breath as Bray dropped back to pass, McCray's motor kicked in. He drove past the offensive tackle and launched toward Bray, keeping him from stepping into a throw down the field.

Safety Matt Elam stepped in front and picked off the pass, providing the pivotal moment in a heated rivalry game the Gators would go on to win 37-20. And earlier in the game, utilizing a cleverly disguised zone blitz, McCray recorded his first career interception.

"A guy that gives everything he's got," coach Will Muschamp said. "It's really, really important to him playing at Florida and (pass rush) is a huge, huge talent of his."

McCray, who grew up a Miami fan and was once a Hurricanes commitment, came to Florida to take care of his family.

Now, he finds himself with two of them.

The entire Gator Nation has embraced him as each game of his senior season slips by and he gets closer to the moment he has worked for the past five years, the reason he decided to don the Orange and Blue in the first place.

"I just felt like I had to stay close to home, just stay close to my mom and support her and my little brother," he said.

And McCray hopes his play can inspire his older brother, too.

"Just kind of giving him a little extra motivation to stay humble and keep pushing forward and keep fighting," he said. "Just to give him something to look forward to when he gets out."

Florida fans who have watched McCray mature into the player and leader he is now over the past few years know he'll be successful.

The numbers are backing it up now. McCray has 10 tackles and is tied for the team lead in sacks, interceptions and quarterback hurries. Following his performance at Tennessee, he was named one of the SEC's outstanding performers of the week.

With each down, his lifelong dream of reaching the NFL and being able to provide for his mother permanently gets a little closer.

Along the way, he's teaching the rest of his teammates what it means to be a Gator.

"He does the little things it takes to be successful," Muschamp said. "He's a great leader. He's a guy that goes out and works hard every day. He's a great example for our football team and our younger players."



# GATOR BAIT EXPRESS FOOTBALL PREVIEW EDITIONS

Don't forget to check out our Internet-only weekly Gator Bait Express game preview issues, available every Wednesday. It's part of your Gator Bait Magazine annual subscription. Each Gator Bait Express during football season features a complete up-to-the-minute analysis of the upcoming Florida game that is the most in-depth preview you'll find anywhere.

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### MIKE GILLISLEE

Florida's senior tailback has gotten off to a great start and has been the bellcow for the Florida offense in the early going, rushing for 146 yards in the victory over LSU.

PHOTOS BY STEVE JOHNSON



# INSIDE THE NUMBERS

BY MARTY COHEN  
GATOR BAIT EDITOR

Some notes and anecdotes through the first month of the college football season as we forge through into October and a trio of super-charged games for Florida:

Statistics can be both relevant and meaningless, based on the situation or the slant you choose to view the numbers. Time of possession is one of those deals, where the numbers are sometimes very revealing, and other times completely useless. It's interesting that Florida, so long near the bottom of the time of possession charts, now leads the SEC in that category (34:47), by contrast more than 10 minutes more than Kentucky, dead last at barely 24 minutes a game (24:32). By hogging the ball for nearly 35 minutes a game, the Gators stand second in the nation in that category behind Oregon State.

Time of possession has never been a kind statistic to Florida, which has held the ball more than 30 minutes – therefore more than its opponent – just five times since 1986. But time of possession is one of those deals that can be significant or hollow, or sometimes both, depending on the nature of the offense and its overall success. Every coach would rather score in one minute than not score in five minutes of possession time, but if the desire is to foster an old-school, physical, run-oriented mentality, than time of possession could carry some weight.

"I don't really care about time of possession other than the fact that we need to score points when we maintain the ball," Florida head coach Will Muschamp said. "I think it's a stat that can tilted really however you want to look at it. I look at points scored and points allowed and turnovers and explosive plays, (those) are really the things that I pay attention to. Because I think time of possession can be a little misleading.

"If you're an explosive offense and you score real fast, you're not going to have a great time of possession. I don't know how effective the stat is, but I do know that from the standpoint of you look at that (opening second-half nine-minute Florida) drive (against Kentucky), they were worn down after that drive defensively. We could have done a lot of different things offensively, but we had the game in hand and I'm not a big stat guy at the end to go pad all of our stats like a lot of guys are."

As a big time of possession team, it goes without saying that Florida has thrown the fewest passes in the league (85, just 21 per game). On average, only eight teams in the country have attempted fewer passes than Florida – Kansas State (80 in four games), Georgia Tech (76 in five games), Navy (70 in four games), Southern Miss (80 in four games), Air Force (44 in four games), Temple (55 in three games), New Mexico (68 in five games) and Army (28 in four games). Factoring out Kansas State 4-0 record, the other seven teams who don't throw the ball are a combined 8-21.

Of 113 plays on first down, Florida has attempted 85 runs and 28 passes. Florida's opponents have a closer to 50-50 split – 62 runs and 52 passes. And then there's third down-conversions – Florida is an incredibly awful 7 of 20 on third-and-1 (5 for 13) and third-and-2 (2 for 7). The Gators are an average 23 of 58 overall on third down for season (39.7 percent), while opponents' offenses haven't fared well (27.4 percent – 17 of 62).

One statistic I harped on since the end of last season was perhaps the most indicative sign of a struggling offense – that Florida was last in the nation, repeat last in the nation, in the number of plays run per game. Obviously there were many mitigating factors, headed

by the injury to starting quarterback John Brantley against Alabama in Week Five, but it doesn't take an advanced degree to know if the offense can't stay on the field, well, that's when you lose six of eight games in October and November.

Well one year later, and Florida is in a much different position. Last season, the Gators ran 789 plays, an average of just under 61 per game, the lowest figure since 1989. Through four games, the Gators have taken 263 snaps, an average of 65.8 per game. Running a ton of plays is no guarantee of success – after all, undefeated Alabama (63.2) and South Carolina (64.6) are averaging fewer snaps per game – but flipping it and giving your defense on the field for an inordinate amount of time can only cause problems.

With that in mind, I created my own stat, called Play Differential, meaning the number of plays a team runs on offense versus how many snaps its defense is facing. Some of it will be skewed by style of play on offense, and to a degree the caliber of opposition in the early going, but the numbers are fairly interesting:

Leading the way are LSU (plus-34), Tennessee (plus-32) and Alabama (plus-26), to no surprise, given the fact at least the Tigers and the Tide are run-oriented offenses with terrific defenses. There are only three other teams who've run more plays than its defense has faced – Texas A&M (plus-7), Ole Miss (plus-6) and Missouri (plus-3).

The other eight teams in the league are in the minus category: South Carolina (minus-7), Vanderbilt (minus-14), Florida (minus-16), Mississippi State (minus-22), Kentucky (minus-23), Georgia (minus-31) and a couple of mammoth numbers, Arkansas (minus-49) and Auburn (minus-74).

We've mentioned how strong sophomore punter Kyle Christy has been out



of the gates, averaging 45.4 yards per punt, with six punts inside the 20-yard line and five punts better than 50 yards in 17 attempts. Florida is third in the nation in net punting behind Texas A&M and Air Force. The Gators have given up just four yards in punt returns, and if you factor out Jeff Driskel's 15-yard shank in the season opener, Florida's net punting average would be 45.35, second in the nation.

"Kyle Christy's just been outstanding," Muschamp said. "He needs to continue to progress forward but that's been a huge weapon for us as far as flipping the field and the job he has done."

One statistic where Florida stands out is in pass defense efficiency, a Rubik's Cube-type deal where we'll just have to take their word for it. The Gators are giving up nearly 186 yards passing per game, middle of the road, but in terms of efficiency, they stand fifth in nation behind Texas Tech (who's played North-

western State, Texas State, New Mexico and Iowa State), TCU (Grambling, Kansas, Virginia and SMU), Alabama (Michigan, Western Kentucky, Arkansas, Florida Atlantic and Ole Miss) and Florida State (Murray State, Savannah State, Wake Forest, Clemson and South Florida).

With two more field goals of 50 yards or better, senior Caleb Sturgis continues to increase his school lead in that category. Sturgis now has seven of the 29 field goals of 50 yards or more in school history. The others are: Berj Yepremian (4), Jeff Chandler (3), Chris Perkins (3), Matt Leach (3), David Posey (3), Brian Clark (2), Robert McGinty (2), John Williams (1) and Judd Davis (1).

With 54 career field goals, Sturgis is 13 behind the UF career leader Chandler, and with eight so far, he is on pace to break the single-season mark of 23 set by Bobby Raymond in 1984 (Sturgis had 22 back in 2009 and last season). Maybe in one of the chump games at the end

of the season, like Jacksonville State, Muschamp can let Sturgis try to set the school record for longest field goal, which Perkins owns at 60 yards against Tulane in 1984, the last game Charley Pell coached.

The Florida defense has been scored on eight times this season – seven touchdowns and one field goal. And all but one scoring drive has been methodical long marches – touchdowns drives of 89, 81, 81, 79, 76, 60 and 55 yards and a field goal march of 66 yards. The average numbers for the scoring drives on Florida's defense: 11 plays, 73 yards and 4:19 of possession time. Every score has come in the Red Zone – the longest scoring play against the Gator defense was a 12-yard run by Bowling Green. For contrast, Florida has scored eight touchdowns this season on plays longer than 12 yards.

## #19 CALEB STURGIS

PHOTO BY STEVE JOHNSON



# FLORIDA 14 LSU 6

OCTOBER 6, 2012

GAINESVILLE, FL • BEN HILL GRIFFIN STADIUM

ATTENDANCE: 90,824





## SIGNATURE WIN

Mike Gillislee (top left) races to the endzone for the game's first touchdown as the Gators pounded the Tigers on the ground in the second half; Mistakes hampered the Gator offense early as Frankie Hammond fumbled (bottom left); Josh Evans celebrates a great day for the defense (left); Jeff Driskel was only asked to throw a dozen passes (below).

**ALL PHOTOS BY STEVE JOHNSON**



# FLORIDA 38 KENTUCKY 0

SEPTEMBER 22, 2012

GAINESVILLE, FL • BEN HILL GRIFFIN STADIUM

ATTENDANCE: 87,102



# GAME 4

## AN EASY BREEZE

For 26 years Kentucky has had no answer for Florida and this time around was no different as Jaylen Watkins returns an interception for a touchdown (above); Omarius Hines hollers after a big catch (right); Jon Bostic (top middle) and Omar Hunter (below right) put the squeeze on Kentucky; De'Ante Saunders rejoices after an interception (top right).

ALL PHOTOS BY STEVE JOHNSON







## FLORIDA 37 TENNESSEE 20

SEPTEMBER 15, 2012

KNOXVILLE, TN • NEYLAND STADIUM

ATTENDANCE: 102,455

# GAME 4

## VOLS TOPPLED

It was Florida's second consecutive big road victory before a massive crowd in Knoxville, punctuated by huge offensive plays from Frankie Hammond (above) and Trey Burton (right); before the game the ESPN GameDay crew was on hand (far right) and after the contest, Florida players frolic with the fans (above right).

ALL PHOTOS BY STEVE JOHNSON







## THE RETURN OF THE SWAMP

**I**t has been a long time since I could really get excited to walk on to the field in The Swamp. Not because I dislike the Gators, but because I have been jaded by so many SEC stadiums with (as each school claims) the best fans in college football.

I've been spoiled by sold out crowds packing the streets of Knoxville to watch the Vol Walk - a very impressive sight to see. It reminded me of the days of Tim Tebow at Florida - except this was a regular occurrence.

I've been in awe of the power of the Crimson Tide in Bryant-Denny Stadium (though it is less of a stadium and more of a memorial to all things college football).

And I've lost my hearing in Death Valley as a recovering Tebow and the Gator defense held off LSU for a 13-3 classic SEC win - a similar sight to their 2012 matchup in The Swamp.

But I am thrilled to have all of those sights and sounds back home in The Swamp. Being a photojournalist, I get to see a lot of exciting moments in time from a very exciting perspective - this includes some of the most thrilling moments in sports.

Unfortunately, (and most Gator fans will agree) there have not been a lot of these moments in Gator Football history lately.

Even in the days of Tebow, there were blowout performances by the Gators, but as far as nail-biting, teeth-gritting, white-knuckle football - we didn't see much of that. We didn't hear much of it in The Swamp and we certainly didn't feel much of it in The Swamp.

The pessimist inside of me always

said, I'd rather be at LSU or Tennessee or Alabama each weekend, because the games were louder, the fans stayed until the very end and the crowd made a difference in the game.

Will Muschamp said it best after the truly dramatic win over LSU, "It was alive in there tonight," he said. "There's no question our fans made a difference in our football game, and they energized our football team."

### THE BEGINNINGS OF A SHAKESPEARIAN PLAY

Last month, I wrote about the Shakespearean characters we used to know covering Gator Football. I think it is safe to say that Muschamp is beginning to develop these characters as they climb his mountain that he calls a season in the Southeastern Conference.

Jeff Driskel is no Tebow, though the comparisons will ultimately be made, but he is his own character. While his wins are a little less dynamic than the defensive-line-smashing victories that we knew so well with Tebow, Driskel is giving fans (and photographers) a show that is worth staying until the very end.

We've barely reached intermission of this season of Gator Football, but as the Gators take on worthy opponents in Georgia, South Carolina and, the ultimate villain, FSU, shooting from the sidelines is going to provide a much better story to capture.

### A BUSY (AND PACKED) DAY AT THE OFFICE

So what does all of this excitement

The following is our newest feature, a look at sports from behind the lens by our noted staff photographer Steve Johnson. We'll try and present the games from a little different perspective, and maybe shed some light as to what it takes to make all the wonderful art Steve provides possible.

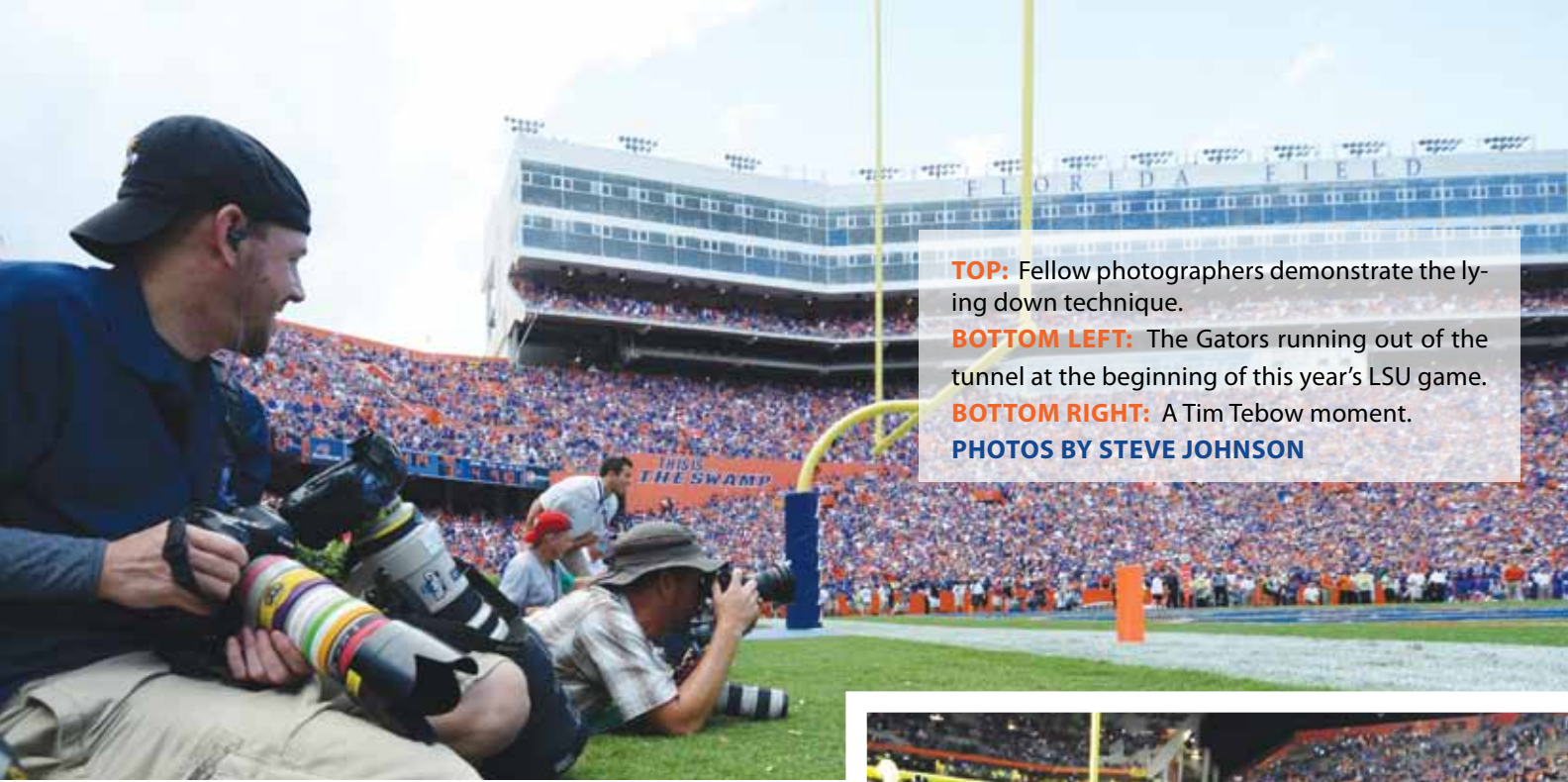
around Gator Football again mean for you? Well, it means a packed sideline, which means less room to make pictures.

We bring a slew of gear to football games to make sure Gator Bait never misses a shot. For example - from the South Endzone, we can shoot play-by-play action from the 20-yard line on the North side of the field with a Nikon 600mm f/4 lens. This is about 50 percent longer than most lenses sports photographers bring to Gator games. The majority of the big lenses you see on the sidelines are 400mm f/2.8 lenses - don't worry we have one of those, too.

On average, we are walking on to the field with five to six cameras and eight lenses ranging from 14mm to 600mm. This gives us the variety of focal lengths to create a picture in any situation - even when there are 20 other photographers crowded around Muschamp and LSU counterpart Les Miles all trying to get the same photo of a post-game handshake.

This most recent game against LSU proved to be one of the busiest games since Tebow departed The Swamp after his final match against FSU in 2009.





**TOP:** Fellow photographers demonstrate the lying down technique.

**BOTTOM LEFT:** The Gators running out of the tunnel at the beginning of this year's LSU game.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** A Tim Tebow moment.

**PHOTOS BY STEVE JOHNSON**



While it is always good to see my friends from every newspaper and media outlet in the state, it becomes increasingly difficult to maneuver a game.

A few weeks ago, during the dramatic victory over Tennessee, I don't remember staying in one spot for more than three or four plays.

This week against LSU, I sat comfortably in the endzone for the majority of the game. This is why you'll see more "dead on" angled photos this week as opposed to variety of angles you saw in the Tennessee gallery.

No one technique is better than the other. Many photographers say to "let the action come to you," which is always good advice. I chose this method because going into this game, we knew

it was going to be a defensive battle. I wanted to focus on the line of scrimmage. Often, I'd be lying down on the field to get an even lower angle than just kneeling to get under the helmets of the linemen.

If the game started to turn into an offensive battle with big plays (like we saw in the second half when the Gators scored 27 of their 37 points against Tennessee) then I'll get off my butt and start hustling for different angles because there is a larger variety of plays.

## RESEARCH EQUALS GREAT PICTURES

All of this planning goes into making the pictures you see on the pages of

Gator Bait Magazine every month and GatorBait.net every day. Each game is carefully calculated, and I rely on the expertise of Editor Marty Cohen and Staff Writer Thomas Goldkamp to break down each opponent to help me decide how I am going to cover a game. I'll study game film just like a team prepares for an opponent so I know what story I am going to tell and what is the best way to tell it.

But in the end, like every football coach will preach, it is the adjustments you make during the game, which will get you the "W," or (in my case) the best pictures.



# MORRISON RELISHES EARLY CHANCE

BY THOMAS GOLDKAMP  
GATOR BAIT STAFF WRITER

**T** rue freshman linebacker Antonio Morrison earned his first college start for Florida last month when weakside linebacker Jelani Jenkins was sidelined with a fractured thumb. Turns out he has something in common with the opponent, Tennessee. He can't seem to figure out how to beat his rival in NCAA 2013.

"He hasn't beat me in a while, it's about a seven-game winning streak," teammate Mike Taylor joked.

The two set down the joysticks when its time for the Gators to hit the field. But that doesn't mean the "Truck Stick" is going anywhere.

If there's one thing Morrison does well, it's laying the wood.

"He loves to hit. I enjoy being out there with him. He's fun," Taylor said. "We both like to talk our share of trash."

Both Morrison and Taylor played extensively in place of Jenkins, one of the two veterans in the Florida linebacker corps. Both are young guys who have shown a lot of promise. Taylor may have the upper hand when the two play video games, but Morrison has battled him at every turn for reps at linebacker. Both can play either the middle or weakside spots vying for time behind Jenkins and senior Jon Bostic.

That competitive drive is part of what helped Morrison earn the start in one of Florida's most important early-season games. Morrison recorded five tackles against the Vols, a week after making six stops after Jenkins departed in the first quarter against Texas A&M.

"He really wanted to play in the SEC. What a challenge," defensive coordinator Dan Quinn said. "This guy's a real competitor saying, 'Ok, I'm from Illinois, I want to go to the SEC, I'm going early, I'm going to Florida, and he really came in with this competitive linebacker mindset that you love.'"

Florida got into the mix with the Bolingbrook, Ill., prospect through defensive tackles coach Bryant Young, a Chicago native who has some connections up in that area.

It didn't take long for the Gators to sell Morrison on coming to compete against some of the best players in college football in the SEC.

Anyone who has watched Morrison play in the opening month is well aware he's not a normal freshman. His instincts are top-notch, and he doesn't seem to be dealing with the adjustment to the speed of the game most freshmen have to make.

"When he came in early as an early enrollee, he really had a maturity level that was not of the normal college freshman," Quinn said. "He asked really good questions. He was really on it in terms of the details of playing linebacker. I think that carried through in the spring and all the way through training camp."

Even with the return of Jenkins and his gradual easing back into the starting lineup, Morrison still remains one of the main cogs in a somewhat-thin linebacker corps. If you ask Quinn, Morrison isn't just ready for the opportunity – he's embracing it.

"That's one of the things I respect most about him," Quinn said. "Early on in his career, it was not too big. It was not that, 'I just want to fit in early.' It was, 'I want to come in and I want to play and I want to show that I belong.' He's certainly done that."

**#12 ANTONIO MORRISON**  
PHOTO BY STEVE JOHNSON



# OFFENSE UTILIZING MANY 'PLAYMAKERS'

BY THOMAS GOLDKAMP  
GATOR BAIT STAFF WRITER

Going into the 2012 season, Florida's players had heard the talk. "The Gators have no playmakers on offense."

Two starting running backs were gone, and not a single receiver returning had caught 20 passes a year ago. With a new starting quarterback set to take over, the questions on offense went far beyond just who would line up under center.

The Gators listened to the concerns and collectively chuckled as they dug into new offensive coordinator Brent Pease's playbook.

"As far as the playmakers, we have them," receiver Frankie Hammond Jr. said. "We just have to get the ball out there, get the ball in our hands and we'll do the rest. The playmakers out there just have to get our opportunities and take advantage of them."

So far, Pease's offense has helped them do just that.

Running back Mike Gillislee is averaging 100 yards a game on the ground and stands second in the SEC in rushing. Four players have averaged multiple catches per game. In the first month of the season, the Gators recorded 30 big plays (deemed a run of 10 yards or more and a reception of 20 yards or more) by 11 different players, with nine of those explosions resulting in touchdowns.

For Hammond Jr., averaging 22.8 yards per reception through the first four gamers, the improvement on offense is a result of being able to read and beat the defense. That's something the Gators didn't do much of a year ago.

"It's a totally different offense, that's the benefit," he said. "Different reads for the quarterback and for me, like breaking off routes and different things, reading things. That'd probably be the biggest thing, just reading the defense and know what to expect."

Pease's attention to detail and willingness to work with every position group hasn't hurt either. The first-year coordinator has stressed that being a "playmaker" isn't just catching passes or scoring touchdowns. It's all the little things that go into making those plays possible.

"Every kid has an opportunity when you have a chance to make a play," he said. "Like I've told them, everybody's a playmaker whether you're catching deep balls or catching an 8-yard pass and getting a first down out of it. That's a playmaker to me."

The play-caller on offense has also stressed the importance of learning the entire offense. If the receivers know what the running back's job is, it's easier for them to put themselves in position to block and open holes for him. If the running back knows the quarterback's progressions, he can feel for where he needs to be during the play.

The final aspect of Pease's offense is spreading the ball around. No longer is Florida turning around and putting the ball into Chris Rainey or Jeff Demps' hands on 56 percent of the offensive touches.

A year ago, 18 players got an offensive touch. Already this year, 17 different Gators have an offensive touch. Eleven players have a carry in the running game, while 13 players have caught a pass.

As the Gators spread the ball around even more, the offense gets tougher to defend and harder to predict. And that's just how Pease drew it up.



FROM THE PAGES OF  
GATORBAIT.NET



**#85 FRANKIE HAMMOND, JR.**

PHOTO BY STEVE JOHNSON

# FLORIDA ADDS NEBRASKA OL TRANSFER

BY LUKE STAMPINI & THOMAS GOLDKAMP  
GATORBAIT.NET STAFF WRITERS

If there was one reason above all others why former Nebraska offensive lineman **Tyler Moore** committed to Florida recently over Florida State, it was the relationship he built with the staff, his father told 247Sports.

"He connected much better with them," Brian Moore said. "From (head coach Will) Muschamp to (offensive line coach Tim) Davis, to (strength coach Jeff) Dillman to Jon Haskins, the coordinator of player personnel. Those guys went way above and beyond. They really busted their tails to get Tyler."

A four-star prospect in the 2011 class, the 6-6, 287-pound Moore played a significant role as a true freshman for Nebraska last season but left the program this summer, citing personal reasons. The former standout at Clearwater Countryside returned home and currently attends classes at St. Petersburg College.

Moore will have three years of eligibility remaining.

"Unless something unforeseen happens, he'll be able to enroll (at Florida) in January," Brian Moore said.

Moore visited Florida to see the Gators play their season opener last month, than attended Florida State home game with Wake Forest. Prior to his commitment, Moore's father confirmed his son enjoyed the visit to Gainesville better and told 247Sports the Gators had opened up a "huge lead." Moore decided to end the process Thursday morning.

"He called Muschamp, and when he told him, Muschamp said to Davis, 'We got him!'" Brian Moore said. "And from what I was told, Davis just about jumped through the ceiling."

Tyler Moore was equally pumped, according to his father.

"He was excited -- he went out and bought himself a Gator shirt," Brian Moore said. "He wanted something to wear to the game Saturday. He's been watching their games intently when they're on TV. And if he's not there, he records them."

Florida's offensive line, a weakness in 2011 but now doing significantly better, figures to be a strength in 2012. In February, the Gators signed five-star tackle D.J. Humphries and four-star guard/tackle Jessamen Dunker. During the offseason, they added Maryland transfer Max Garcia, who can play guard or tackle. Now, they've landed Moore and currently lead for four-star juco tackle Trenton Brown of Georgia Military.

Moore played tackle at Nebraska. The question is, which position will he play in Gainesville?

"They're talking tackle," Brian Moore said. "They're not saying which side."

The Gators finished second to Nebraska for Tyler Moore a couple cycles ago. The primary person in his recruitment from Florida was then-offensive line coach Steve Addazio, now the head coach at Temple. According to Moore's father, who once played tight end for the Cornhuskers, the Gators never really had a shot back then.

"The last time, I don't think he gave them a strong look because he was so set on going to Nebraska," Brian Moore said.

"This time, he went in with his eyes open, and he liked everything he saw. And it doesn't hurt that Florida plays in the best conference in the country. Looking at what Muschamp is building, I think Florida's better years are ahead. He's only in his second year. They're very young, but showing signs of improvement. They've got a bright future ahead of them."

Moore made history at Nebraska becoming the first true freshman to start on the offensive line in the season opener. Moore started the first four games of the season at right tackle and played in a total of nine on the year.

## DANIEL TO VISIT UF

Avon (Ind.) High Top247 defensive end **Elijah Daniel**, a Clemson commit, was scheduled to take an official visit to Florida for the LSU game. The 6-4, 250-pound Daniel visited Gainesville last fall for the Alabama game.

"It's set officially," Daniel said. "I want to see everything I didn't see the first time, and get to hang out with the players and connect with the coaches. The first time I just went to the game so I didn't get to see the campus, academics and everything."

Committed to Clemson since June, Daniel continued to stay in contact with Florida assistant coach Bryant Young and the two have a strong relationship.

"I like everything about Florida," Daniel said. "They rotate in their d-linemen a lot and their defense is the focal point of their team."

Daniel took an official visit to Marshall the weekend of Sept. 14, where his older brother Armonze is a redshirt freshman defensive lineman. He actually watched his brother and his teammates take on Purdue last Saturday in West Lafayette.

Other schools Daniel says he's still considering are Indiana, Ole Miss, Mississippi State, Arizona State and Miami.

An Under Armour All-American, Daniel is ranked as the nation's No. 6 strong-side defensive end, the No. 99 prospect overall and the No. 3 player in Indiana by 247Sports.

## TOUTED DT LIKED UF VISIT

Highly touted defensive tackle **Greg Gilmore** took his first official visit of the fall last month when he arrived at the University of Florida. The Hope Mills (N.C.) South View standout, who took in the Gators' thrashing of Kentucky, gave the visit to Gainesville high marks.

"One through ten, I would say eleven," Gilmore said. "I really liked it just for the fact everything was what I wanted. Hospitality wise, everything they told me, you can't believe everything, but there wasn't no B.S. wasn't no false things and I appreciate that from them. After sitting down with the players and hanging out with them I had a great time with them. They made me feel like their own, you know."

"At the end of the day I got everything I wanted out of it. The

game was great.”

The efforts from the staff and how the players accepted him as one of their own did not go unnoticed by Gilmore.

“There was definitely 100-percent, maximized effort from the coaches when it came to recruiting me,” he said. “Then hearing from the players, they treated me like I was one of their players and I learned a lot. My dad really liked the academic part, so it was a good visit.”

Gilmore’s mother, who visited Gainesville with Greg this summer, was unable to make this trip due to an illness in the family. The 6-4, 280-pound defensive tackle also spent plenty of time with head coach Will Muschamp during his time on campus.

“I talked to him a lot actually, hung out with him,” Gilmore said of Muschamp. “He’s always in your ear, always talking and he says they need a young defensive tackle to build the defense around. He started a true freshman in Jonathan Bullard on Saturday and he’s started two true freshman defensive ends this year. So it’s possible.”

The four-star prospect, rated No. 108 overall, the No. 8 defensive tackle and the No. 3 prospect in North Carolina, still noted LSU and Florida are the top two schools, but would not give the edge to either one.

## UF PURSUING 2014 QB

During the bye week in late September, the Florida Gator coaching staff hit several schools during their first big week on the road recruiting this fall. One of the first stops for Florida offensive coordinator Brent Pease was to stop by the school of four-star 2014 quarterback **Will Grier**.

The Davidson (N.C.) Day standout was impressed he got a visit on the Gators’ first day on the road and feels like he is a high priority for Florida in the 2014 class.

“Just the fact he made the trip up to my school knowing this was the first day they are getting out and I’m kind of a priority on his list,” Grier said. “He did tell me he wants me in the 2014 class and I’m a priority to him. We just want to build a relationship with things like this, talking to him on the phone, I want to get down there for the game on October 6, but I want to go down after my season is over and see the school, get a feel for the campus and stuff. Just having him up here is really cool!”

As mentioned, the 6-3, 180-pound gunslinger was in Gainesville when LSU came to town. He already visited Tennessee when the Vols hosted Florida just a couple weeks back and has plans to see North Carolina host N.C. State at the end of October. In speaking with Pease in the past, Grier already has an understanding of how the quarterback position at Florida likely will play out over the next couple years. It certainly is an appealing situation to Grier if he were to choose the Gators.

“He said that (Jeff) Driskel obviously has stepped up and he plans on keeping that up and playing all the way through,” Grier said. “He’s a sophomore, so it would work out perfectly if I were to earn my spot.

“The plan would be for me if I went there, I would redshirt my first year and Jeff would be a senior, so I would kind of learn from him. Be around the guy that’s been there a couple years in the system and succeeded in it and learn from him for a year. Then play as a redshirt freshman for four years, which I can’t ask for any better than that.”

247Sports currently ranks Grier as the nation’s No. 78 prospect overall in the 2014 class, the No. 6 pro-style quarterback and the No. 3 player in North Carolina.

**Information in this article was taken from reports on GatorBait.net and 247Sports.com. For the latest and most up-to-date recruiting news, visit GatorBait.net and 247Sports.**

## UF’S 2013 COMMITMENTS

Alvin Bailey	WR	5-10	175	Seffner Armwood
Caleb Brantley	DT	6-3	285	Crescent City
Cameron Dillard	OL	6-3	290	Canton, Mich.
Ahmad Fulwood	WR	6-4	200	Jacksonville Bishop Kenny
Max Garcia	OT	6-4	290	Norcross, Ga./Maryland (transfer)
Vernon Hargreaves III	DB	5-11	185	Tampa Wharton
James Hearn	LB	6-3	235	Tallahassee Lincoln
Marqui Hawkins	WR	6-1	195	Columbus (Ga.) Carver
Joey Ivie	DL	6-4	270	Dade City Pasco
Octavius Jackson	OL	6-4	280	Moultrie (Ga.) Colquitt Co.
Adam Lane	RB	5-8	200	Winter Haven
Daniel McMillian	LB	6-2	220	Jacksonville First Coast
Tyler Moore	OL	6-6	287	Clearwater Countryside/Nebraska (trans.)
Keanu Neal	DB	6-0	200	Bushnell South Sumter
Quinton Powell	LB	6-2	195	Daytona Beach Mainland
Antonio Riles	DL	6-4	265	Lawrenceville (Ga.) Archer
Jordan Sherit	DL	6-4	240	Tampa Hillsborough
Max Staver	QB	6-5	238	Brentwood (Tenn.) Brentwood Academy
Kelvin Taylor	RB	5-10	205	Belle Glade Glades Day
Chris Thompson	WR	5-11	165	Gainesville
Nick Washington	DB	6-0	182	Jacksonville Trinity Christian





# FOUR EARLY-SEASON TRUTHS

**H**ere are four thoughts after the first Saturday of play in October, none of which have anything to do with predicting the BCS Championship Game or speculating about the possibility of multiple teams from major conferences finishing undefeated. In other words, it's like nothing you will hear on talk radio:

## 1) IF YOU HAVE NOT BEATEN OREGON BY HALFTIME, FORGET ABOUT IT.

The Ducks are hardly the only team to run the fast-break offense, but they are the only no-huddle team whose defense gets stronger in the second half. The West Virginias and Oklahoma States and Bayers of the college football world just try to outscore opponents, and their defenses appear exhausted by the end of the day. Oregon shuts them down, and its defense is just as fresh as its fast-break offense by the fourth quarter.

Two years ago, Chip Kelly's squad outscored opponents 285-83 in the second half en route to the BCS national championship game, crushing their will and watching them wilt after the break. It is understandable that opposing defenses wore down against Oregon's fast-paced, no-huddle system, but opposing offenses appeared to give up, too. The Ducks allowed 6.4 points per game in the second half, an unbelievable statistic considering the defense had little incentive late in blowout after blowout.

Even last year, when USC halted Oregon's 19-game Pac-10 win streak, the Trojans wilted. USC led 38-14 late in the

third quarter and held on to win 38-35, punting, throwing an interception and losing a fumble on its final three possessions.

The Ducks are back to their 2009 brilliance this season. In consecutive games, they outscored Arizona 36-0 and Washington State 28-7 in the second half. This, despite Arizona running 84 plays and Washington running 85 plays. The Ducks defense also scored three touchdowns in those two games.

Kelly is an amazing coach. Whatever he is telling or selling his defensive players, it works.

## 2) STEVE SPURRIER LOVES COACHING AGAINST THE GEORGIA BULLDOGS.

In 12 years as Florida coach, Spurrier erased the horrible history the Gator had against the Bulldogs. He won 11 times, set the record for most points scored against Georgia between the hedges (52 in 1995), hung half-a-hundred on the Bulldogs in Gainesville (52 in 1994) and won by 30 or more in Jacksonville four times. Florida had never beaten Georgia by that margin before his arrival.

Now he is re-writing the South Carolina-Georgia record books.

With the Gamecocks' 35-7 trouncing of the Bulldogs, Spurrier handed Georgia its worst whipping ever in the series and gave the Gamecocks their third consecutive victory in the series for the first time.

South Carolina threw only 10 passes but rushed for 230 yards, returned a punt for a touchdown and relied on

dominant defense to embarrass the fifth-ranked Bulldogs. The formula is totally different from Spurrier's Gainesville tenure, but the results are the same.

## 3) TEXAS IS A BIG PROGRAM IN NAME ONLY.

The most mystifying point spread of October was Texas minus-5.5 over West Virginia. Did I miss something? Apparently not.

Texas went 5-7 in 2010 and 8-5 in 2011, losing by 17 points or more five times and beating one ranked team in that span. In 2009, when the Longhorns played Alabama in the BCS title game, they did not even play a top-10 team or beat anyone that lost fewer than four times.

The week before playing West Virginia, Texas gave up 576 yards to Oklahoma State, which is sort of West Virginia light. The Cowboys run the offense that Mountaineers coach Dana Holgorsen installed when he was Oklahoma State's offensive coordinator. Their quarterback, redshirt freshman J.W. Walsh, is nowhere nears as accomplished as early Heisman Trophy favorite Geno Smith of West Virginia.

Predictably, a record home crowd at Texas Memorial Stadium was not enough to overcome the Longhorns' mediocre recent history. West Virginia won 48-45 in a game that would have been more one-sided if Smith had not lost a fumble in his own endzone and another one inside the West Virginia 20.

Smith completed 25 of 35 passes for 268 yards and four touchdowns. The previously undistinguished Andrew

Buie rushed 31 times for 207 yards.

Texas was helpless to stop them, a not-too-infrequent occurrence in the last three years. Somehow, the Longhorns were supposed to be back after hammering SEC bottom-feeder Ole Miss and beating Oklahoma State 41-36 thanks to a phantom touchdown (hook 'em, Horns?) in the final minutes, with replays indicating a fumble inside the 1-yard line. Oklahoma State already had lost to Arizona 59-38.

Next time, maybe Texas actually will have to beat someone significant before it gets credit for being significant.

#### 4) LSU'S HANGOVER FROM LAST YEAR'S BCS HUMILIATION IS REAL.

It was surprising how few people expected LSU's 21-0 loss to Alabama in the BCS title game last year to hurt its performance this season. Florida's 14-6 victory in Gainesville confirmed that the Tigers have not recovered from that embarrassment.

The Tigers were being lauded in Louisiana as one of the best teams of all time

before the goose egg in the Superdome last January. They had an inept game plan and even more inept execution against a loaded Alabama team bent on payback for an unlucky overtime loss earlier in the season.

Nothing has been the same for LSU since then. The Honey Badger got kicked off the team for his addiction to a substance a little less sweet. The coaches responsible for the BCS debacle returned, minus former Florida assistant Billy Gonzales.

Les Miles is back to being Les Miles, the questionable sideline boss who many Tiger fans would have been happy to see leave for Michigan after 2010. He can recruit. His players care about him and play hard. But his concept of a pass offense is prehistoric and the Tigers sideline resembles disorganized chaos.

Florida held LSU to eight first downs. The Tigers had none on their final six series of the first half. Group that performance with the SEC Championship Game against Georgia a year ago, when they had zero first downs in the first half, the Alabama debacle, when they had five for the game, and their 12-10

squeaker against 1-4 Auburn earlier this season, and Miles had a crisis on his hands.

### THIS AND THAT

If you're looking for the worst team of the first half of the year, stop at Tulane. The Green Wave, which was outscored 212-45 through five games, averaged a nation's worst 14.6 rushing yards and 195.0 total yards while allowing 267 rushing yards (third worst) and 481.4 total yards (ninth worst). In rushing, passing, total and scoring offense and defense, Tulane ranked better than 100th out of 120 teams in one category – pass efficiency defense (94th) . . . For the first time, the Sun Belt is not the worst bowl subdivision conference. Louisiana-Monroe beat Arkansas and lost to Auburn on overtime. Middle Tennessee hammered Georgia Tech on the road. Western Kentucky won at Kentucky and routed Southern Miss. The worst league is Conference USA, which had no team start 2-0 and is winless against the big six leagues.



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**W**hat have we learned from the SEC around the halfway point of the season?

**ALABAMA:** The Tide continue to be the gold standard of the league. They are very balanced in all phases of the game. Quarterback A. J. McCarron continues to improve his accuracy. Freshman receiver Amari Cooper has a promising future. Season-ending injuries to fullback Jalston Fowler, receiver DeAndrew White and running back Dee Hart has hurt the overall depth.

**LSU:** Could Tiger fans be wishing for the return of quarterbacks Jarrett Lee and Jordan Jefferson after the struggles of quarterback Zach Mettenberger? Attrition has cost the Tigers some crucial players such as defensive back Tyrann Mathieu to suspension, linebacker Tahj Jones to academics and running back Alfred Blue and offensive lineman Chris Faulk to injuries. What baffles most Tiger fans is how this team has so few playmakers. Tiger coaches have not been able to figure out what to do with players like Russell Shepard. If the Tigers don't pick up the pace they could wind up one of the most disappointing teams in the league.

**AUBURN:** It is hard to fathom how a team goes from winning a national title two years ago to bottom of the league's barrel? Coach Gene Chizik changed his coordinators and offensive scheme, but nothing has worked. Kiehl Frazier, long considered the quarterback of the future, has looked inept and lost since changing the scheme. The guess here is that Chizik will keep his job even with a losing season because former Tiger coach Pat Dye, the school's main power broker, is still in his corner.

**ARKANSAS:** John L. Smith is one of the worst coaching hires, even as an

## MID-TERM LOOK AT THE LEAGUE

interim, in the history of the SEC. Smith was at best a 10-month fix. Still, this team should have done more with quarterback Tyler Wilson coming back for his senior year in order to play for a chance at a title. Whoever athletic director Jeff Long hires must have an inclination toward building a defense, which has been the Achilles heel for the Hogs for years. The Hogs would be smart to try to lure Louisville's Charlie Strong, Baylor's Art Briles or FIU's Mario Cristobal.

**MISSISSIPPI STATE:** The Bulldogs will have a gaudy record going into late October and early November mostly because of a soft schedule. Yet, quarterback Tyler Russell has been impressive as the starting quarterback. The biggest strength of the Bulldogs is their ability to create turnovers. The blessing and curse of the a successful season raises a dilemma for coach Dan Mullen – make a move to higher-level school or stay and continue to build the program?

**MISSOURI:** The Tigers have struggled due to various injuries to quarterback James Franklin and an undersized, depleted offensive line. Missouri is at least two recruiting classes away from being in position to challenge the division leaders on the line of scrimmage.

**TEXAS A&M:** Conversely, the Aggies have gotten the better results of the two newbies. Quarterback Johnny Manziel should be the freshman of the year with his dual-threat ability. Once coach Kevin Sumlin improves his defense, the Aggies will be even more of a threat in

the league.

**TENNESSEE:** Coach Derek Dooley will likely keep his job if the Vols are able to win seven games or more. They have a potent passing game, but as the season continues the Vols have to find a way to run the ball better and improve their defense under new coordinator Sal Sunseri. If Dooley is canned, Sunseri will receive heavy consideration for the job.

**SOUTH CAROLINA:** Along with surprising Florida, the Gamecocks have the most potential to challenge Alabama. Quarterback Connor Shaw is possibly the best dual-threat quarterback next to the Aggies' Manziel. Receiver Ace Sanders has stepped up his game. The Gamecocks have not missed a beat defensively after Lorenzo Ward took over the reins as defensive coordinator. Defensive end Jadeveon Clowney continues to remain a force

**GEORGIA:** Despite coach Mark Richt's popularity, the Bulldogs continue to fail to live up to the expectations of their talent level. Just when Bulldog faithful thinks this team has turned the corner they come out with a performance like they did against South Carolina. This team is too good to struggle with Tennessee and to be mauled by the Gamecocks. Preseason discipline continues to be an issue. It hurt Georgia to be without the likes of Alec Ogletree and Baccari Rambo for most of the month of September.





# FLORIDA FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

## 2012 GATORS

Sept. 1	<b>BOWLING GREEN</b>	<b>W 27-14</b>
Sept. 8	Texas A&M*	W 20-17
Sept. 15	Tennessee*	W 37-20
Sept. 22	<b>KENTUCKY*</b>	<b>W 38-0</b>
Oct. 6	<b>LSU*</b>	<b>W 14-6</b>
Oct. 13	Vanderbilt*      ESPNU	6:00 PM
Oct. 20	<b>SOUTH CAROLINA*</b>	<b>TBA</b>
Oct. 27	Georgia*      CBS	3:30 PM
Nov. 3	<b>MISSOURI*</b>	<b>TBA</b>
Nov. 10	<b>LA-LAFAYETTE (HC)</b>	<b>TBA</b>
Nov. 17	<b>JACKSONVILLE STATE</b>	<b>TBA</b>
Nov. 24	Florida State	TBA

## YEAH, BABY!

Never one to hide his emotions, Florida head coach Will Muschamp exults with the home fans following the dramatic win over LSU.

PHOTO BY STEVE JOHNSON



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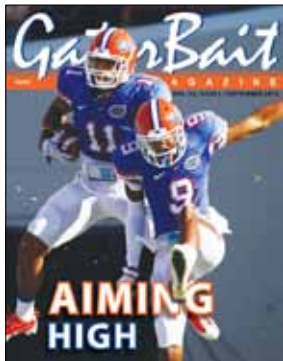
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