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Auburn Softball Quick Facts

Auburn University

Location: Auburn, Ala.
Founded: 1856
Enrollment: 22,928
Nickname: Tigers
Colors: Burnt Orange and Navy Blue
Conference: Southeastern (Western Division)
President: Dr. Ed Richardson
Athletics Director: Jay Jacobs
Senior Associate AD/Senior Women's Administrator: Meredith Jenkins
Faculty Representative: Marcia Boosinger
Stadium: Jane B. Moore Field
Capacity: 1,500
Dimensions: LF-190, CF-220, RF-190
Wall Height: 12 Feet

Coaching Staff

Head Coach: Tina Deese (Florida State, 1986)
Overall Record: 620-409-1 (Entering 19th year)
Auburn Record: 334-286-1 (Entering 11th year)
Assistant Coach: Jack Byerley, third year (South Alabama, 1980)
Assistant Coach: Stewart McGill, first year

Softball Phone: 334-844-9563
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Media Relations

Assistant AD/Media Relations: Kirk Sampson
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Web Site: www.auburntigers.com
Media Relations Mailing Address:
 392 South Donahue Dr. (36849)
 P.O. Box 351
 Auburn, AL 36831-0351

Team Information

2006 Overall Record: 36-22
2006 NCAA Regional play: 2-2 at Tucson Regional
2006 SEC Record/Finish: 15-15/3rd West
Letterwinners Returning/Lost: 10/7
Key Losses: Ashley Griffin (IF), Amy Shaw (OF), Robin Martin (IF), Kristina McCain (IF), Beth DiPietro (P)
Starters Returning/Lost: 5/4
Pitchers Returning/Lost: 2/1
Newcomers: 6

Program History

Overall Record: 334-286-1
SEC Overall Record: 135-159
Jane B. Moore Field Record: 128-90-1
SEC Tournament Record: 10-15
NCAA Postseason Record: 3-8

About The 2007 Auburn Softball Media Guide

The 2007 Auburn Softball Media Guide is published by the Auburn Media Relations Office, a division of the Auburn Athletics Department, Jay Jacobs Director. The guide was edited and designed by Hank Hager. Special thanks to Kirk Sampson, Kathy Harker, Drew Crowson, Rachel Gordon, Tony Williams and the Auburn softball staff. Cover artwork by Pamela Welch. Photography provided by Todd Van Emst, Emily McLain, Tony Hall and AU Photo Services (Jeff Etheridge, Trice Meggison). The guide was printed by Interstate, Inc., of Mobile, Ala.



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Todd Van Emst
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Steve Sain
Videographer

On The Web

www.auburntigers.com

For all your Auburn Athletics needs, visit www.auburntigers.com, the official Tiger Web site.

Updated statistics and a 2007 Auburn softball schedule are available by clicking on the "softball" link of the front page of the site.

Photos, game results and all other softball information can be found on the Web site. Additionally, selected games are broadcast live on local radio and www.auburntigers.com.



The Auburn Softball Media Guide is a source of information for the news media. Additional information is available upon request by contacting Hank Hager in the Media Relations Office. The Auburn Media Relations Office is located in the Auburn Athletic Complex.

Credentials

All media credential requests should be submitted at least 24 hours prior to home games. Credentials can be picked up on the day of the game in the Jane B. Moore Field Press Box. Requests should be made through Hank Hager in the Media Relations Office.

Interviews

Head Coach Tina Deese, assistants Jack Byerley and Stewart McGill and all Auburn players are available for personal or telephone interviews by contacting Hank Hager in the Media Relations Office. Deese is available for interviews on weekday mornings or prior to practice. Her office is located on the second floor of the McWhorter Center, near Jane B. Moore Field. Please notify Hager at least 24 hours in advance of any interview requests. Player availability is subject to class and practice schedules.

Because it would be difficult for players to distinguish legitimate media calls from individuals claiming to represent the media, players are instructed to not conduct a telephone interview unless it is cleared through Auburn Media Relations.

Post-Game Interviews

Interviews with players and coaches are done in an informal manner on the field following each game. Please allow for a brief cooling off period after the game. For assistance in locating any members of the team, please contact Hank Hager.



Press Services

Game notes for each Auburn softball game, series or tournament, will be available via email approximately 1-2 days prior, depending on the team's schedule for the week. Please contact Hank Hager to be included in the email list for the game notes and post-game releases. Members of the working media will be provided statistics and rosters prior to each Auburn softball game. A final box score will be made available as soon as possible following the conclusion of each game. Anyone wishing to file a story may do so from the Jane B. Moore Field Press Box or the Auburn Media Relations Office.

Auburn Media Relations

The Auburn Media Relations department is located on the third floor of the Auburn Athletic Complex.

Phone(334) 844-9800
Fax.....(334) 844-9807
Hager Office(334) 844-9810
Hager Cell(334) 707-1588
Jane B. Moore Field(334) 844-5232

Mailing Address

Auburn Media Relations
P.O. Box 351
Auburn, AL 36831

Overnight Address

Auburn Media Relations
392 South Donahue Dr.
Auburn, AL 36849

2007 SEC Tournament

Auburn softball is proud to host the 2007 SEC Tournament at Jane B. Moore Field. The facility's press box is well equipped with rooms dedicated for home and visiting radio, print media, television and game operations.

Check www.auburntigers.com and www.secsports.com for up-to-date information during the tournament.

Prior to the eight-team tournament, a credential request form will be sent to competing schools for print and radio requests.

Auburn Media Outlets

Newspapers

	Phone	Fax
Anniston Star Joe Medley, <i>Beat Writer</i>	(256) 235-3576 jmedley@annistonstar.com	(256) 241-1991
Associated Press John Zenor	(334) 262-5947 jzenor@ap.org	(334) 265-7177
Birmingham News Charles Goldberg, <i>Beat Writer</i>	(205) 325-2431 goldcrim@hotmail.com	(205) 325-2425
Columbus Ledger-Enquirer Christa Turner, <i>Beat Writer</i>	(706) 571-8500 turnerc@ledger-enquirer.com	(706) 576-6290
Decatur Daily Bradley Handwerger, <i>Beat Writer</i>	(256) 353-4612 bshand82@yahoo.com	(256) 340-2392
Huntsville Times Phillip Marshall, <i>Beat Writer</i>	(256) 532-4430 pmarsh9485@yahoo.com	(256) 532-4420
Mobile Register Evan Woodbery, <i>Beat Writer</i>	(800) 239-1340 ewoodbery@yahoo.com	(251) 219-5797
Montgomery Advertiser Jay G. Tate, <i>Beat Writer</i>	(334) 240-0193 advertiserjay@yahoo.com	(334) 261-1548
Opelika-Auburn News Collin Mickle, <i>Beat Writer</i>	(334) 749-6271 cmickle@oanow.com	(334) 749-1228

Television

	Phone	Fax
ABC 33/40 (Birmingham) Mike Raita, <i>Sports Director</i>	(205) 982-3988 miker@abc3340.com	(205) 982-3942
WBRC (Fox 6, Birmingham) Rick Karle, <i>Sports Director</i>	(205) 583-4345 sports@wbrc.com	(205) 583-4356
WVTM (NBC 13, Birmingham) Don Hawes, <i>Sports Director</i>	(205) 558-7348 don.hawes@nbc.com	(205) 323-3314
WAKA (CBS 8, Montgomery) Dee Jackson, <i>Sports Director</i>	(334) 420-3227 djackson@waka.com	(334) 244-7859
WNCF (ABC 32, Montgomery) David Wilkinson, <i>Sports Director</i>	(334) 270-3200 dwilkinson@wncftv.com	(334) 271-6348
WSFA (NBC 12, Montgomery) Jeff Shearer, <i>Sports Director</i>	(334) 613-8299 jshearer@wsfa.com	(334) 613-8303
WRBL (CBS 3, Columbus) Dan Edward, <i>Sports Director</i>	(706) 324-6397 dedward@wrbl.com	(706) 323-0841
WTVM (ABC 9, Columbus) Dave Platta, <i>Sports Director</i>	(706) 322-5734 thenewsleader@wtvm.com	(706) 327-0179

Photographic Services

Working press photographers will be permitted to shoot from Auburn's dugout but must do so away from the team, if possible. Those wishing to shoot from inside the visiting team's dugout must contact that school's sports information director prior to doing so.

AT NO TIME during the game will photographers be permitted to shoot from the playing surface.

For those photographers wishing to shoot from the Jane B. Moore Field stands, please be conscious of fans in the section. Also, please be aware that batted balls may leave the playing surface at any time.

Satellite Feeds

The Auburn Athletics Department operates a satellite feed on a weekly basis. Those feeds include game footage, player and coach sound bites and various features material and packages. Contact Steve Sain at (334) 844-9809 for specific information regarding the feed.

Visiting Radio

A dedicated phone line, ethernet capabilities and a scoring monitor is found within the visiting radio booth at the Jane B. Moore Field press box. Please notify Hager at least 24 hours before the game of any additional visiting radio needs.

Auburn Radio • Auburn Network

The Auburn Network, a division of ISP Sports, is the exclusive producer and marketer of Auburn sports programming and offers radio and television programming, gameday publications, and Internet services to Auburn fans worldwide.

The network is responsible for all marketing and advertising opportunities associated with Auburn athletics. Such projects include radio and television broadcasts, coaches' television shows and pay-per view and cable telecasts for various sports. Additionally, the network is responsible for a myriad of signage, event marketing and promotional opportunities.

The official web site for Auburn sports, AuburnTigers.com, is maintained by the network.

A full schedule of Auburn softball games on the radio will be made available prior to the season. Nathan Ealy and Ben Taylor will team together as the primary play-by-play crew for the third straight year.

For more information on the multimedia rights held by Auburn Network or for advertising opportunities, call (334) 826-2929, or visit them on the web at www.AuburnTigers.com.



NATHAN EALY

Third Season

Nathan Ealy enters his third year with the Auburn softball team and fourth year with the Auburn Network broadcast team.

In addition to his work with Auburn softball, Ealy is also the voice of the Auburn soccer team, assists with play-by-play and color commentary for Auburn baseball, and is the gameday host for Marshall University football and basketball.

Ealy has also hosted Auburn basketball games from the studio and provided feature stories for the Auburn Football Preview Show. Ealy is currently the Production Coordinator for the Auburn ISP Sports Network.

Originally from Memphis, Tenn., he graduated from Auburn in 2002 with a degree in Mass Communications. Before returning to Auburn, Ealy spent time with the Tennessee Titans Radio Network as an associate producer, and with WJOX sports radio in Birmingham.



BEN TAYLOR

Third Season

Ben Taylor enters his third season calling Auburn softball.

Taylor, the sports director at WANI-AM 1400, is responsible for news and coverage of local events around the Auburn/Opelika area. Originally from Red Level, Ala., he has been in the radio business for the past seven years, having worked with FOX, ESPN, ESPN 2 and CBS. He previously interned with FOX Sports Net South and SEC-TV and was employed with Root Communications for five years before making the move to the Auburn Network and WANI-AM 1400.

Taylor has previously served as a play-by-play broadcaster for Auburn volleyball and has taken his turn as the public address announcer for AU soccer, baseball, men's basketball and softball. He is also the Game Day Host for Southern Methodist University Football and Basketball through the Mustangs ISP Sports Network.

Taylor is married to the former Lori Black. The couple lives in Auburn.



JANE B. MOORE FIELD

Built: 1998
Dedication: April 26, 2003 (Renamed Jane B. Moore Field in 2002)
Capacity: 1,500
Distances (Feet): Left: 190, Center: 220, Right: 190
Wall Height: 12 Feet

Jane B. Moore Field Year-By-Year

Year	Wins	Loss	Pct.
1998	1	7	.125
1999	7	12	.375
2000	21	12	.636
2001	8	12	.400
2002	21	7	.750
2003	8	12	.400
2004	19	5	.792
2005	26	5	.839
2006	19	8	.704
Totals	130	80	.619

Most Wins: 26 (2005)
Most Losses: 12, four times (1999, 2000, 2001, 2003)
Longest Winning Streak: 10 games, twice (2/1/02-3/13/02, 2/19/05-3/19/05)
Longest Losing Streak: 6 games (4/18/98-4/26/98)

Jane B. Moore Field Attendance

Yearly Attendance

Year	Dates	Total	Average
1998	8	953	119
1999	19	2417	127
2000	31	5982	192
2001	19	5609	295
2002	26	8897	342
2003	21	5708	271
2004	24	5733	280
2005	27	7454	276
2006	22	9664	439
Totals	197	52417	266

Top 10 Crowds

Date	Opponent	Attendance
1. 2/28/06	Michigan	1,371
2. 5/4/02	Alabama	1,187
3. 4/25/06	Alabama (DH)	1,078
4. 4/26/06	Alabama	923
5. 4/23/05	LSU (DH)	721
6. 5/5/02	Alabama	682
7. 5/6/01	LSU	612
8. 4/9/05	Tennessee (DH)	609
9. 4/24/05	LSU	601
10. 4/26/03	LSU (DH)	579

(DH) Denotes Doubleheader

Jane B. Moore Field Firsts

Game: April 24, 1998 (Georgia 4, Auburn 1)
Batter: Chrissy Gavin, Georgia
Pitcher: Brenda Espinoza, Auburn
Putout: Brenda Espinoza, Auburn
Hit: Kim Blair, Auburn (single, 1st inning)
Double: Ashley Camp, Auburn (3rd inning)
Home Run: Sondra Hall, South Carolina (4/26/98)
Stolen Base: Chris Steiner, Auburn (4/24/98)

Jane B. Moore Field, the home to Auburn softball, is entering its fifth full season and it has never looked better. And the Tigers fully intend to use it to their advantage.

Auburn is coming off its third straight winning season at home, going 19-8 at the venerable facility en route to its third straight NCAA Regional appearance.

The 19-8 record was due in large part to Jane B. Moore Field, which saw an average attendance of 439 fans per game, by far the best in the program's history.

The 1,500 seat complex will have the opportunity to shine under the Southeastern Conference microscope in May when Auburn hosts the 2007 SEC Tournament. With seven games in three days, the facility will be tested but the Tigers fully expect it to come through and impress the rest of the conference.

It will, however, not be the first chance for Jane B. Moore Field to shine under the spotlight. Auburn's 50-18 overall record in 2005 enabled the Tigers to host their first ever NCAA Regional. More than 2,500 fans witnessed the three-day tournament at the picturesque stadium.

The Tigers have utilized their home field advantage, going 93-37 (.715) at Jane B. Moore Field since 2002. Since playing their first game at scenic Jane B. Moore Field in 1998, Auburn has posted a .619 winning percentage.

"Jane B. Moore Field has become a real benefit to our program," Auburn head coach Tina Deese said. "Hosting an NCAA Regional in 2005 was a great step for us. It shows how much we love our complex."

The Tigers played their first full season at the modern Moore Field in 2003, and, in 2004, went 19-5 en route to an NCAA Regional appearance.

The final phase of the softball complex, completed prior to the 2003 season, added 1,400 seats, a concession area, indoor batting cages and a state-of-the-art press box with two luxury boxes.

The Tigers started playing at the facility on April 24, 1998, when they played their first home game at the new on-campus field. The Tigers hosted Georgia, also making it the first SEC game played at the facility. Junior Kim Blair recorded the first hit for the Tigers while senior Ashley Camp drove in Blair for the first run at the new park.

1999 marked the first full season the field was in use. Prior to the new complex, the team played its games at the Auburn city complex.

"The Auburn Complex was adequate," Deese said. "It just wasn't ours. It didn't offer the stadium-type environment that we want to have."

The dream of an on campus facility, which began when softball was added as an intercollegiate, sport started to take form in November of 1996, when the Board of Trustees approved a bid from French and Associates Landscape Architects for the construction of phase one which was intended to include the actual playing surface. French and Associates was responsible for the design and construction of Golden Park in Columbus, Ga., which was host to the 1996 NCAA Women's College World Series and the 1996 Summer Olympic Games Softball competition.

The firm was also responsible for the construction of the South Commons Softball Complex in Columbus, including its centerpiece, the South Commons Stadium, which was the host to the SEC tournament from 1997-2000.

Groundbreaking ceremonies for the new complex were held on August 4, 1998, on a plot of land adjacent to the intramural fields, in an area of campus that would eventually be home to the women's sports complex, the McWhorter Center. The complex houses offices for soccer, softball and gymnastics, and also contains the gymnastics team's practice area.

Phase one of the softball complex consisted of the construction of the playing field, including the outfield fences, bullpens, dugouts, and restroom facilities and a state-of-the-art scoreboard.

"We are extremely excited about having a facility of our own. It is hard to be competitive in the SEC without your own on-campus complex," Deese said.

During 1997, the league's inaugural season of softball, six of the eleven sponsoring schools had stadiums. That list included brand new facilities at Tennessee, Florida, Arkansas and Mississippi State. In addition to the obvious recruiting benefits, the complex offers other benefits to the Tigers as well.

The plans for the facility called for it to resemble a scaled down version of the home of Auburn Baseball, Samford Stadium and Hitchcock Field at Plainsman Park. Permanent seating for 1,500 was built in phase two of the project. The Auburn Softball Complex was renamed Jane B. Moore Field in 2002 in honor of Dr. Jane Moore who served more than 20 years as a member of Auburn's Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics. It was dedicated on April 26, 2003.





MCWHORTER CENTER/AUBURN FACILITIES

Built in 2001, the McWhorter Center is the home to the Auburn softball and gymnastics teams. The facility, which was dedicated on September 1, 2001, houses head coach Tina Deese's and assistant coach offices, as well as team locker rooms, a training room and a team room available to student-athletes.

"The McWhorter Center is a spectacular facility for our players," Auburn head coach Tina Deese said. "It is a first-class facility and allows us to have the amenities to be successful."

The 44,000-square foot McWhorter Center is situated beyond the Jane B. Moore Field outfield fence. The coaches' offices offer a spectacular view of the field. Players, coaches and staff are afforded just a short walk away from the field after leaving the McWhorter Center locker and training rooms.

The Tigers believe the McWhorter Center is one of the finest facilities in the nation.



Athletic Training Room

The training room consists of taping tables, a whirlpool, ice machine and various rehabilitation equipment. Student athletes use the training room before and after practices and games. The softball team has a full-time certified trainer to supervise all activities.



Team Lounge

The team lounge contains a 51" big screen television, a DVD for viewing game film and computers with Internet access for homework, research and e-mail. Chairs, tables and couches provide a great atmosphere for team meetings and post-game events.



Locker Room

The carpeted locker room has wooden lockers for each student-athlete, individually stalled showers, restrooms and a state-of-the-art stereo system.



The James T. Tatum Strength and Conditioning Center (bottom) and Lowder Academic Center (top two floors)

Additional Facilities

The Auburn softball team has the finest in weight training equipment. The team trains at the James T. Tatum Strength and Conditioning Center, a 14,000 square foot facility which opened in 2002 and is situated at the Auburn Athletic Complex.

Adjacent to the weight room is a 20-yard astroturf hill, set at 45 degrees, which is used for speed and endurance conditioning. The center also houses the strength and conditioning coaches' offices.

Auburn athletes train indoors at the John H. Watson Fieldhouse, which contains a 40-yard artificial turf field. The facility, which measures 155 feet by 210 feet, has a heating system and is cooled by large fans. It was dedicated on Sept. 4, 1999. In addition, the Tigers also have the use of a Sprinturf artificial field outside the fieldhouse. The Sprinturf field is available to all Auburn athletes and is regularly used by the Tiger football team.

The Tigers have the benefits of one of the finest strength and conditioning staffs in the nation. Head strength and conditioning coach Kevin Yoxall supervises all strength programs for men's and women's sports and has been at Auburn since 1999. Jason Loscalzo serves as the strength and conditioning coach for the Auburn softball team and is entering his fourth season on the Plains.

In the last three seasons, the Auburn softball team has gone 128-58, made three NCAA Regional appearances and has seen nine players earn All-Southeastern Conference honors.

The 2007 Tiger senior class has been the most successful in program history. Auburn will have four seniors in 2007 -- Holly Currie, Sara Ghezzi, Lauren Walton and Nicole Russo -- who bring a wealth of experience and talent. They will form a solid nucleus that has one goal -- a fourth-straight NCAA Regional, which would make it the first senior class in Tiger history to reach the postseason every year.

Auburn returns four starters from a season ago and welcomes six new Tigers, including two transfers and four seniors.

"We have an experienced group of seniors who know how to win," Auburn head coach Tina Deese said. "They came in as an acclaimed freshman class three years and have been very successful at the collegiate level. We are looking for big things from them this season."

Pitching

The Tiger pitching staff is expected to be a strong point for Auburn in 2007 and will be led by one of the most successful pitchers in team history.

Currie, who went 19-14 last season, returns for her senior year to anchor the staff. She struck out 286 in 219 innings last year, proving to be the workhorse for the Tigers.

Currie's role will remain effectively unchanged this season. She is expected to lead the staff and mentor the team's younger players. When she's not pitching, Currie will serve as the team's designated player.

"Holly is going to be a leader for us, there's no doubt about that," Deese said. "She's going to need to fill a couple roles, both on and off the field, but she is a hard worker and has proven that before."

Brittany Day went just 1-0 in 12 appearances for Auburn last season, but that record does not begin to describe what she has done for the Tigers and what the team is expecting from her this season. Day, from



Sara Ghezzi

Columbus, Ga., is 4-1 in two years with the Tigers and is ready to make her mark.

"Brittany is an incredibly hard worker," Deese said. "She has improved greatly since she stepped on the Auburn campus and we are really looking for her to take a big step forward her junior season."

Anna Thompson joins the Auburn program and will be the Tigers' third pitcher this season. The right-hander from Huntsville, Ala., led the team with 34 strikeouts during fall play and is the most recent winner of the Alabama Miss Softball title, joining Currie, who won the honor in 2003.

"Anna is very talented and has shown a great work ethic," Deese said. "She is definitely going to play a big role for the team this season."

Outfield

The Tiger outfield will come into the 2007 season with a great deal of talent and experience. It will be led by Ghezzi, who is the only player in the history of the Auburn program to be recognized by the SEC in each of her first three seasons.

Ghezzi earned All-Freshman honors in 2004 and was an All-SEC First Team selection in 2005. Last season, after batting .295 with 13 RBI in 30 conference games, Ghezzi was named to the All-SEC Second Team.

"Sara Ghezzi is nothing if not consistent," Deese said. "She has shown to be an incredibly valuable outfielder for us and we are looking for another great year from her in right field."

The speedy Walton, one of Auburn's four seniors, will patrol center field after splitting time in center and in left last year. The slapper has a penchant for getting on base, but her most valuable tool comes defensively. The Palmetto, Fla., native, has the ability to anticipate where the ball is going to be hit. That has aided her with a number of spectacular catches the past three years.

"Lauren isn't flashy," Deese said, "and is so valuable to this team. Offensively and defensively, she really sets the pace for this team."

The final position in the outfield is expected to be filled by a junior and a pair of sophomores. Brittany Scott, a junior utility player, is one of the fastest Tigers. She can play both corner outfield positions and can be used at the designated player slot in the lineup.

In two seasons with Auburn, Scott has stolen 12 bases in 16 attempts.

"Brittany really worked hard during the fall," Deese said. "She's learned in the program for two years now and is ready to play a big role this season."

Myesha Finney, a sophomore from Atlanta, and Taryn Gray, a sophomore from Vestavia Hills, Ala., are both expected to see time in left field and at designated player. Finney batted .250 with three triples and 17 RBI in 45 games her first season.

"Myesha had a pretty good first season," Deese said. "She didn't see much playing time in the first month of the season, but really blossomed midway through."

Gray is the final piece of the outfield puzzle and showed brilliance at times during her freshman season. While playing in left field, she started off the season with at least one hit in her first nine games, including a 3-for-3 effort with a double in her first career game.



Holly Currie

"Taryn has a great eye at the plate," Deese said. "She needs to be consistent, but that comes with experience. We have no doubt she will play a valuable role for us this season."

Infield

The Tiger infield will have talent but inexperience as it heads into the 2007 season. Of the five Tiger starters from last season, only sophomores Ashley Arcuri and Tatiana Fernandez return.

Auburn will welcome five newcomers to the infield this season, including three freshmen. They will be expected to help fill gaps at first base, third base and shortstop. In addition, Currie could certainly expect to help fill the void at first when she isn't dominating on the mound.

Arcuri, for one, is expected to be the leader of the infield after playing in 40 games last season at second base. She finished the year with a .962 fielding percentage.

"Ashley has a good work ethic and great range," Deese said. "She's going to need to be a leader out there through her hard work and dedication."

Fernandez is expected to return to the starting role at catcher after batting .311 last season. She was named to the All-SEC Freshman team after setting the AU single-season freshman mark with eight home runs.

"Tatiana sure showed flashes of brilliance last season," Deese said. "She lacked consistency last season, but that's a common theme with freshmen in the SEC."

Returning to the infield is senior Nicole Russo and junior Starr Dorsey. Russo played in 31 games a year ago, primarily as a pinch runner, but has proven to be valuable at either corner position. Dorsey, meanwhile, saw time at first base last season, starting 30 games. She has the ability to play second base as well, a valuable tool.

"Nicole and Starr can do a variety of things in the infield, which will be key as we find our best lineup," Deese said. "We are expecting consistency from both

in whatever role they play.”

Inexperience from that point on will be the best way to describe the Tigers, but only due to the fact the team will possess youth. Freshman Krista Klein comes to Auburn from Garden Grove, Calif.'s Pacifica High School. She impressed during the fall and is expected to challenge for a starting infield spot.

Then there is Whitney Wyatt, who also has the capabilities to play both corner infield spots. The freshman hails from Dublin, Ala.

The final freshman to join Auburn is Alicia Hunolt from Ironwood Ridge High School in Tucson, Ariz.

“We will have youth and talent joining the infield this season,” Deese said. “Krista, Whitney and Alicia are going to have to step in and learn as freshmen. We have a track record with freshmen the past few seasons, so we are not afraid to let them learn as they play.”

Auburn received two commitments from transfers, both coming from Central Alabama Community College. The first, Lindsey Harrelson, is a sophomore and played third base during fall games.

The second, junior Jessica Martin, is a 5'9" catcher from CACC.

“Lindsey and Jessica played for a very competitive program at CACC and know what it takes to be successful at the collegiate level,” Deese said. “They're going to be tested at the D-I level. I expect them to fight through that and be successful this season.”

Schedule

The 2007 schedule will mark one of the toughest in the history of the Auburn program. Eighteen of the team's 37 opponents this season advanced to an NCAA Regional last season, while Alabama and Tennessee, SEC opponents, made it to the Women's College World Series.

By the time Auburn opens SEC play March 10, the Tigers will have already played nine opponents who made the postseason in 2006, including four at the NFCA Leadoff Classic Feb. 23-25 in Columbus, Ga.

“This is definitely a very tough schedule,” Deese said. “It has been building up the past few seasons and I really felt it was a perfect time to advance it further. We will be



Lauren Walton

tested early on and I expect that to pay off in the end.”

The Tigers will open their conference slate with a three-game series at Kentucky March 10-11. That will open up an SEC slate that was reduced to 28 games instead of 30. The conference elected to reduce the schedule by two games, making it so that teams will only play mid-week doubleheaders instead of three-game series.

As usual, the teams will play one mid-week doubleheader on the road and one at home. The Tigers play their home SEC doubleheader March 14 against Georgia and its road March 27 at Arkansas.

“The change in schedule will not have too much bearing on how we play,” Deese said, “but it will make each conference game that much more important. You never could take an inning off before, but that's really the case now.”

Non-conference games for the Tigers this season at Jane B. Moore Field include Georgia State in the home-opener Feb. 14, Houston on March 15, Florida Atlantic on April 4 and South Alabama, which is in its first season, on April 10. Alabama A&M will come for a doubleheader April 18, while the Tigers will host Florida State and Mercer on May 6.

2007 SEC Tournament

Auburn is set to host the 2007 SEC Tournament at picturesque Jane B. Moore Field from May 10-12. It will mark the first time the Tigers have hosted the three-day, single-elimination tournament and Auburn will be the fourth program to do so since the tournament moved to campus sites in 2004. Alabama, Florida and Georgia have all served as hosts in prior years.

Auburn, which is 10-15 in seven trips to the SEC Tournament, will attempt to use the home-field advantage. No team that has hosted the SEC Tournament has reached the championship game.

“Hosting the SEC Tournament will be very big for us this season,” Deese said. “We will have an advantage in close games because we know and love our field. Entering the tournament with a top seed will be a goal of ours through the conference season.”

The tournament will not be the first time Auburn has hosted a postseason event, however. In 2005, the Tigers hosted their first ever NCAA Regional, a three-day double-elimination tournament that featured Auburn, Florida A&M, Florida State and Baylor.



2007 Auburn Schedule

Date	Opponent	Time
2/8	(1) vs. DePaul	3 p.m.
2/8	(1) vs. Nebraska	7 p.m.
2/9	(1) vs. Portland State	5 p.m.
2/9	(1) vs. Hawaii	9 p.m.
2/10	(1) vs. TBA	TBA
2/11	(1) vs. TBA	TBA
2/14	Georgia State	5 p.m.
2/16	(2) vs. Tennessee Tech	12:30 p.m.
2/16	(2) vs. Notre Dame	3 p.m.
2/17	(2) vs. Virginia Tech	12:30 p.m.
2/17	(2) vs. Tulsa	3 p.m.
2/18	(2) vs. UAB	3 p.m.
2/23	(3) vs. North Carolina	11 a.m.
2/23	(3) vs. Michigan	1:30 p.m.
2/24	(3) vs. Southern Illinois	9:30 a.m.
2/24	(3) vs. Hofstra	12 p.m.
2/25	(3) vs. TBA	TBA
2/27	@ Jacksonville State	6 p.m.
3/2	(4) vs. Utah	10 a.m.
3/2	(4) vs. South Florida	3 p.m.
3/3	(4) vs. Central Michigan	8 a.m.
3/3	(4) vs. Maryland	12:30 p.m.
3/4	(4) vs. New Mexico State	8 a.m.
3/7	@ Troy	6 p.m.
3/10	@ Kentucky (DH)	12 p.m.
3/11	@ Kentucky	12 p.m.
3/14	Georgia (DH)	4 p.m.
3/15	Houston	6 p.m.
3/17	Ole Miss (DH)	1 p.m.
3/18	Ole Miss	1 p.m.
3/24	@ Mississippi State (DH)	1 p.m.
3/25	@ Mississippi State	1 p.m.
3/27	@ Arkansas (DH)	4 p.m.
3/31	LSU (DH)	1 p.m.
4/1	LSU	1 p.m.
4/4	Florida Atlantic	6 p.m.
4/6	@ Alabama (DH)	5 p.m.
4/7	@ Alabama	2 p.m.
4/10	South Alabama	6 p.m.
4/14	Florida (DH)	1 p.m.
4/15	Florida	1 p.m.
4/18	Alabama A&M (DH)	4 p.m.
4/21	@ Tennessee (DH)	12 p.m.
4/22	@ Tennessee	12 p.m.
4/28	South Carolina (DH)	1 p.m.
4/29	South Carolina	1 p.m.
5/6	Florida State	1 p.m.
5/6	Mercer	3:30 p.m.
5/10-12	(5) SEC Tournament	TBA
5/18-20	NCAA Regionals	TBA
5/25-26	NCAA Super Regionals	TBA
5/31-6/6	College World Series	TBA

All times Central • Home games played at Jane B. Moore Field • (DH) Denotes doubleheader

Key

- (1) Oceanic Time Warner Cable Hawaii Paradise Classic; Honolulu, Hawaii
- (2) Tiger Invitational; Auburn, Ala.
- (3) NFCA Leadoff Classic; Columbus, Ga.
- (4) USF Louisville Slugger Tournament; Tampa, Fla.