

2012 SEC Soccer Preseason Watch List

Birmingham, Ala. – The Southeastern Conference unveiled its soccer coaches preseason watch list, Wednesday, to kick off another great season of SEC women's soccer.

Alabama

- Alabama returns 14 letterwinners and eight starters to a team that made its first NCAA tournament appearance since 1998 and just its second in program history.
- The Crimson Tide returns 94 percent of its goal scoring from a year ago but lose a combined 82 starts on its backline, including 20 from four-time SEC award winning goalkeeper Justine Bernier.
- Alabama returns SEC All-Freshmen selections, Theresa Diederich (Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.) and Pia Rijsdijk (Numansdorp, Netherlands). The duo combined to score 12 goals while Rijsdijk also was named to the NSCAA All-South Region third team.

Alabama Players to Watch:

Theresa Diederich – Midfielder
Pia Rijsdijk – Forward
Molly Atherton – Midfielder
Ashley Willis – Defender

Arkansas

- Twenty letterwinners return from last year, including seven starters: forwards Beth Stratton and Jeriann Okoro; midfielders Allie Chandler, Tyler Allen and Sam Wolf; and defenders Kaylyn Cooper and Melanie Foncham.
- Colby Hale is in his first season as head coach after spending the previous nine at Central Florida, including the last five as associate head coach. He helped the Knights to 130 wins, six conference championships, seven NCAA Tournament bids, eight wins in the NCAA Tournament with a trip to the Elite Eight in 2011, 19 wins or ties against teams ranked in the top 25, six final top 25 RPI rankings and a total of 398 goals scored for an average of 44 per season.
- Arkansas ranked No. 32 in the nation in average attendance last year with 904 fans per game. The Razorbacks drew three crowds of 1,000 or more, including a high of 1,268 against LSU.
- In a seven-game spring season under Hale, the Razorbacks allowed only 11 goals for an average of 1.57 per game.

Arkansas Players to Watch:

Allie Chandler – Midfielder
Jeriann Okoro – Forward
Kelly Roliard – Goalkeeper

Auburn

- Auburn enters the 2012 season coming off the team's first-ever SEC Tournament Championship, which was also the first-ever won by a SEC West team. Earning the league's automatic bid, Auburn played in the NCAA Tournament for the 10th time, and the sixth consecutive.
- Auburn's top returning scorers are senior Ana Cate (9 goals, 6 assists) and sophomore Tatiana Coleman (7 G, 8 A). In total, Auburn returns 62 percent of last season's 50 goals, which was the second-highest total in school history.
- Senior goalkeeper Amy Howard will anchor the Auburn defense for a fourth straight season. A three-year starter, she posted a 1.33 GAA in 16 games last season after missing the first half of the season due to injury. In three seasons she has a career 1.24 GAA and has posted 15 shutouts, making 257 saves.

Auburn Players to Watch:

Ana Cate – Midfielder
Amy Howard – Goalkeeper
Tatiana Coleman – Forward
Jessica Rightmer – Midfielder

Florida

- Three of Florida's 2011 National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) All-South Region and All-Southeastern Conference selections return in 2011 – midfielders Holly King and Erika Tymrak plus defender Kathryn Williamson. Both Tymrak and Williamson were named NSCAA All-Americans as juniors in 2011.
- Three of the top four Gator goal scorers and point leaders from the 2011 campaign are back this season, including the top two scorers – Tymrak (12 goals, 8 assists, 32 points), Annie Speese (8g, 9a, 25 pts) and the No. 4 scorer Havana Solaun (6g, 6a, 18 pts).
- The nine-member incoming class brings experience with state, regional and/or national Olympic Development Program (ODP) teams. Claire Falknor (Dayton, Ohio), Christen Westphal (Brecksville, Ohio) and Brittney Reed (Venice, Fla.) have been part of youth national teams for ODP or U.S. play. Paulina Speckmaier (Miami, Fla.) played with the Venezuelan National Team earlier this year in Under-20 South America World Cup Qualifier action.

Florida Players to Watch:

Erika Tymrak – Midfielder/Forward
Kathryn Williamson – Defender

Georgia

- Junior Alexa Newfield returns from a record-breaking sophomore season in 2011 in which she broke the Georgia record for shots in a single season (102) and points (40), while finishing with the second-most goals in a season in UGA history with 16. Newfield will enter 2012 fourth all-time in career points (60), fifth all-time in career goals (24) and second in shots (189).
- Georgia welcomes in a recruiting class of eight, including six Georgia products as well as one player from New York and one from New Jersey. The class includes a variety of skills, comprised of three forwards, three backs, and two midfielders.
- Senior goalkeeper Ashley Baker is back for her final season after gaining more experience with the England U23 squad this summer. In 2011 as a junior Baker was again among the top goalkeepers in the Southeastern Conference, logging over 2,000 minutes in goal while posting a 1.20 goals-against average, 96 saves and six shutouts.
- Third-year head coach Steve Holeman is just 11 wins away of his 200th career victory, standing at 189-137-37 for a winning percentage of 0.572 in 18 seasons at Auburn, Ole Miss, and Georgia. Holeman is widely regarded as "The Dean" of SEC women's soccer coaches as the league's longest-tenured head coach.
- Georgia Soccer is aiming for its fifth NCAA Tournament bid in the last six seasons and ninth overall in 2012. The Bulldogs received an at-large bid into the field of 64 in 2011, and reached the second round for just the sixth time in school history. The 2012 NCAA Women's College Cup will be held in Nov. 30-Dec. 2 in San Diego. The squad returns 16 letterwinners and nine starters.

Georgia Players to Watch:

Alexa Newfield – Midfielder
Ashley Baker – Goalkeeper
Jenna Owens – Forward
Nikki Hill – Defender

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Kentucky

- The Wildcats return nine starters and 18 letterwinners from last year's NCAA Tournament team.
- UK's 2012 freshman class was ranked sixth by Top Drawer Soccer.
- Caitlin Landis is Kentucky's leading returning scorer. The junior forward tallied 14 points on six goals and two assists.
- The Wildcat back line returns three of its four starters, including sophomore Arin Gilliland who was named All-SEC and Freshman All-SEC last season.

Kentucky Players to Watch:

Arin Gilliland – Defender
Caitlin Landis – Forward
Alyssa Telang – Defender

LSU

- LSU Soccer enters the 2012 season as the defending SEC Western Division champion and SEC regular season runner-up from a year ago.
- The Tigers have captured the SEC Western Division title in four of the last five seasons and have finished in second place on the final SEC table in three of the last four seasons.
- The Tigers also earned their fourth NCAA Tournament berth in five seasons a year ago after wrapping up the campaign with a 13-8-1 overall record and an 8-3 mark in SEC play.

LSU Players to Watch:

Jodi Calloway – Defender
Addie Eggleston – Forward

Ole Miss

- Ole Miss enters the 2012 season under the direction of third-year head coach Matt Mott. Mott has a career record of 15-19-5 overall (7-12-3 SEC), all with the Rebels.
- Senior Alix Hildal, a two-time All-SEC Second Team selection, looks to become just the fifth player in Ole Miss history to be named to an All-SEC team three times.
- Rafaelle Souza returns for her junior season with the Rebels. In her first year with the team last year, Souza led the team in points (25), goals (9) and assists (7).
- Junior Mandy McCalla joins teammates, junior Erin Emerson and senior Alix Hildal, as the three current players who have started and played in every game during their Ole Miss careers entering 2012.

Ole Miss Players to Watch:

Alix Hildal – Defender
Mandy McCalla – Midfielder
Rafaelle Souza – Forward

Mississippi State

- Mississippi State returns 10 starters and 14 letterwinners from last year's squad that claimed the most SEC wins and conference goals since 2004.
- MSU returns 88-percent of its goal production from a year ago, including top scorers Elisabeth Sullivan (13 points, 5 goals, 3 assists) and Jasmine Simmons (12 points, 5 goals, 2 assists)
- The Dawgs also bring back Skylar Rosson in goal. Rosson led the SEC with 131 saves, the second-most in single-season school history.

Mississippi State Players to Watch:

Skylar Rosson – Goalkeeper
Elisabeth Sullivan – Forward
Morganne Grimes – Defender
Lauren Morgan – Midfielder
Shannen Jainudeen – Defender

Missouri

- Mizzou returns nine starters and 15 letter winners from the 2011 team that posted a 12-8-1 record.
- The Tigers also return six of the top seven scorers from a season ago. Overall, Mizzou returns 76.4 percent of its scoring and 79.2 percent of its total points from 2011.
- Three members of the 2012 squad earned all-conference honors last year: junior Alyssa Diggs earned All-Big 12 first team accolades, junior Dominique Richardson was named to the All-Big 12 second team and sophomore Kaysie Clark was a member of the Big 12 All-Newcomer team.
- Head Coach Bryan Blitz enters his 17th season at the helm of the Tigers and owns a 174-142-17 record with the squad.

Missouri Players to Watch:

Alyssa Diggs – Forward
Allison Hu – Defender
Danielle Nottingham – Forward/Midfielder
Dominique Richardson – Midfielder
McKenzie Sauerwein – Goalkeeper

South Carolina

- South Carolina has advanced to five consecutive NCAA Tournaments (2007 First Round, 2008 First Round, 2009 Round of 16, 2010 Second Round, 2011 Second Round) and is one of just two team in the league to have won an NCAA game each of the past three seasons.
- Head Coach Shelley Smith, the 2011 SEC and NSCAA South Region Coach of the Year, ranks second among the league's active coaches for SEC wins (34) since the 2007 season.
- Sophomore goalkeeper Sabrina D'Angelo became the first player in SEC history to earn to player of the year honors in the same season after being named the SEC Freshman of the Year and SEC Co-Defensive Player of the Year last season in addition to being the First Team All-SEC goalkeeper. D'Angelo will miss the non-conference portion of the season while captaining the Canada U-20 Women's National Team at the U-20 Women's World Cup.
- The Gamecocks return 16 letterwinners and six starters from last season's 16-7-0 SEC regular season championship team. The conference crown was the first in program history with a 9-2-0 SEC record.

South Carolina Players to Watch:

Sabrina D'Angelo – Goalkeeper
Danielle Au – Forward
Dani Henry – Defender
Stevi Parker – Midfielder

Tennessee

- Tennessee begins a new era of soccer with new head coach Brian Pensky and 17 returning players from the 2011 squad that went 15-7 with a Top 16 seeding in the NCAA Tournament.
- Pensky led Maryland's soccer program from 2005-11 and was the 2010 Soccer America National Coach of the Year. Over the last three seasons, his teams have compiled a 44-14-9 record, posted two Sweet 16 appearances in the NCAA Tournament and finished ranked in the top 11 of NSCAA Coaches Poll.
- UT returns a pair of 2011 All-SEC honorees. Junior forward Caroline Brown is the Vols' top returning scorer after earning second team accolades and NSCAA All-South Region honors with 11 goals and six game-winners. Sophomore goalkeeper Julie Eckel was a Freshman All-SEC selection, leading the league with an .833 save percentage.
- Two of the biggest spots to fill for Tennessee will be those previously held by recent graduates Emily Dowd (team-high 12 goals, 31 points) and Chelsea Hatcher (five goals and five assists in 2011).

Tennessee Players to Watch:

Kylie Bono – Midfielder
Caroline Brown – Midfielder/Forward
Julie Eckel – Goalkeeper
Amy Harrison – Midfielder

Texas A&M

- The Aggies won a conference-best 12 Big 12 Championships in their 16 years in the conference, including the 2011 Big 12 Tournament Championship.
- Head Coach G Guerrieri enters his 20th season at the helm of A&M soccer and is the only head coach in program history.
- A&M earned its 17th-consecutive NCAA Tournament berth in 2011, ending last season in the second round with a 16-6-2 record.
- The Aggies return eight 2011 starters and four All-Big 12 selections including Kelley Monogue, who was also titled the Big 12 Offensive Player of the Year and the Big 12 Rookie of the Year.

Texas A&M Players to Watch:

Kelley Monogue – Forward
Beth West – Midfielder
Meghan Streight – Defender
Katie Perry – Forward/Midfielder

Vanderbilt

- The Commodores return three of their top four goal scorers from last season, including senior Dana Schwartz and sophomores Gena Inbusch and Cherrelle Jarrett.
- Vanderbilt is looking to make it back to the SEC Tournament after missing out last season for the first time since 2008.
- The squad will play nine of its first 11 games this season away from the Vanderbilt Soccer Complex
- Derek Greene enters his second season as Vanderbilt's head coach—his first following a full year of offseason training.

Vanderbilt Players to Watch:

Cherrelle Jarrett – Midfielder
Taylor Richardson – Midfielder
Alexa Levick – Goalkeeper