



Gator Dugout Days



March 11, 2024

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Issue 2

March 2024 GDC Meeting

The March Gator Dugout Club meeting was held on March 4th. Jacob Rudner from Swamp 247 was this month's guest.



(Rudner discussing his overall thoughts on 2024 Gator Baseball so far)

He discussed the team's progress so far, with a focus on the newcomers – freshman pitchers and transfer portal acquisitions. With his experience in MLB reporting, he also discussed draft potential for current Gators. As might be expected, what The Show might hold for 1B/SP Jac Caglianone – hitter, pitcher, both? – was a major topic of discussion.

Did You Know –

That the Gators have an 8-game winning streak against defending national champions? (Sweep @ Ole Miss in 2023, sweep @ Mississippi State in 2022, and 2 of 3 at home vs. Vanderbilt in 2021.)

We'll find out if the streak "goes to 11" March 22-24, when the Gators try for some revenge in Baton Rouge vs. LSU.

Future GDC Meetings

Meetings are held at the Fairfield Inn and Suites (3877 SW 37th Boulevard) with a 6 pm social hour and a 7 pm meeting.

Monday, April 8th

Monday, May 6th

Monday, September 9th

Monday, October 8th

Monday, November 4th

Tailgate Events

The Gator Dugout Club hosts... well... The Gator Dugout Club *tries* to host several tailgates prior to home games each year, but Mother Nature doesn't always cooperate.

After the March 9th game vs. Saint Mary's was moved from 6:30 pm to 1 pm, GDC

cancelled our first tailgate for 2024... after such events went less than .500 in 2023.

Planned events for 2024 are listed below:

Saturday, March 16th, 3:00-6:00pm
(Texas A&M) – at least we've about a 2/3 chance, given the current forecast!

Saturday, March 30th, 3:00-6:00pm
(Mississippi State)

Saturday, April 13th, 12:30-3:30pm
(South Carolina)

Saturday, May 4th, 3:00-6:00pm
(Tennessee)

Events are held on the lawn to the Northwest of Condron Family Ballpark.

Bus Trip to the Sunshine Showdown in Jacksonville

The GDC has arranged a bus trip to see the Gators take on the Seminoles in Jacksonville on Tuesday, March 26.

Attendees will meet at the NW 34th Street Walmart parking lot at 2:00 pm, and the bus will depart *promptly* at 2:30 pm. Bus and ticket availability limited to the first 50 registrations.

As of the late evening of March 9, only four bus/game-ticket combos remain. Registration is now available, via link on the GDC website.

The game-ticket-only option through the GDC is sold out, but tickets are also available directly from the venue at [link](#). These are mostly limited to berm, disabled seating, resales, and a few scattered single tickets as of late March 9.

The game will be available on the radio via ESPN 98.1FM/850AM WRUF. No TV coverage has yet been announced.

Snack Fund

Help feed the team! During baseball season the Gator Dugout Club and friends provide nutritionist-approved snacks for the team. Donations are accepted through PayPal (link on the GDC website) or by check, payable to Amy Brown, Snack Coordinator. Mail checks to:

Amy Brown
P.O. Box 5204
Gainesville, FL 32627
Contact: AGBrown4852@gmail.com

Four Weeks In...

The first few weeks of the season haven't been all we'd hoped for.

Week 1: Gators host St. John's for a season-opening weekend series. After a disappointing Friday-night loss, the rest of the series was washed away by rain.

Week 2: 5-0! Home and away vs. North Florida and a three-game sweep against Columbia at home. A total of 7 shutout starting innings by freshman Liam Peterson led the way.

Week 3: "Not great, not terrible" – midweek split and then two of three at rival Miami. Perhaps the best start of Jac Caglianone's career (6 IP, 3 H, 2 BB, and 11! K) ensure a challenging week ends on the good side of .500.

Week 4: Midweeks are a rain-out and a loss vs. a hot-hitting UCF. The weekend series against St. Mary's was a series win – the 12-11 (10 inning) Friday, punctuated by Colby Shelton's walk-off HR sure was exciting, but didn't inspire confidence in pitching. Saturday's 7-9 loss didn't inspire, either. **The Sunday win ensured a week four 2-2 split.**

So... at the end of four weeks, the Gators have five losses and their record ranks 13th in the 14-team SEC.

Recall the wisdom of Annie Savoy from Bull Durham: "It's a long season, and you gotta trust." The 2017 team had 5 losses at this time, too – 8 by the end of week 5 after getting swept by Auburn in the first SEC weekend. It all worked out in the end.

And no matter how the rest of the season goes – a bad day at the ballpark still beats a good day at the office.

Opponents on Deck

The next game is one many have circled on calendars – home vs. (**undefeated**)

Florida State, Tuesday, March 12 (6 pm). This is during Spring Break for current Gator students...

Next weekend begins the SEC schedule with a weekend series against (**undefeated**) Texas A&M.

Following a midweek vs. JU, the Gators go to Baton Rouge to take on defending national champion (**1-loss**) LSU.

So it goes in the SEC...To be the best, you must beat the best.

2025 SEC Baseball Changes

Starting in Fall 2024 (2025 baseball season), Oklahoma and Texas will join the SEC, bringing the total number of teams to sixteen. To accommodate the larger league, the SEC will be eliminating divisions and moving to a single table in 2025.

Each team will have two permanent opponents (for Florida: Georgia & South Carolina) with the other eight conference series rotating among the remaining thirteen teams.

In addition, the SEC tournament format will change starting in 2025, with all sixteen teams qualifying. The top four teams will earn a double-bye, with teams 5-7 receiving a single-bye and 9-16 starting from the first round. The entire tournament will be single elimination.

The 2024 SEC Tournament will be the last in its current format. Opportunities to attend with the GDC will follow via e-mail, meetings, and future newsletters.

Online Resources

There may be no clearer sign of increased interest in college baseball than the improved online resources to follow the game. Around half a dozen beat writers report on Gator baseball, several of whom are guests at GDC meetings.

For those who want a broader view --- how are rival teams doing? What are the Gator baseball heroes of recent years up to? Here are some of my favorites, to supplement the [official UAA website](#) and media coverage.

Baseball Reference: [2024 Florida Gators](#)

The stats on this page are no more than you can get from the official site, but its value is in what it links to. Click any player and find out what they did last year (at UF, Alabama, FAU, Virginia Tech) and what they did in summer ball. Click the "Southeastern Conference" link and scout our boys' next opponent. Click "2023 Season" (and so on) to find out what former Gators are up to. However, it sometimes takes a few days to update.

Warren Nolan: [2024 Florida Gators](#)

Best features: up-to-the-minute scores, up-to-a-few-minutes RPI (the single most important metric in selecting and seeding the tournament), and efficient layout – miles above ESPN. Even though

the anti-ad-block is aggressive this year and the "Predicated Results" predict way too many sweeps, it's still my favorite in scoreboard watching season.

The site also tracks Women's Softball, for those who support Gator diamonds on both sides of Hull Road

[Massey Composite](#) – Wisdom of Crowds Every noteworthy poll plus computer algorithms is listed here early each week (Monday and Tuesday.)

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