



Gator Dugout Days



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First Tailgate Event

Mother Nature isn't a Noles or Canes fan after all! The Gator Dugout Club held its first tailgate event of the year prior to the Saturday game against Texas A&M.



(Photos from 3/16/24 Tailgate Event)



March 30 – 80's Tailgate

The next Gator Dugout Club Tailgate is scheduled for Saturday, March 30, from 3-6 pm. It's going to be a special event!

More than 40 Gator Baseball Players and Coaches from the 1980's will be guests of the Gator Dugout Club as part of the big 1980's Gator Baseball reunion. Players and coaches will have special VIP name tags. GDC members will have the opportunity to share tasty food and great memories with these Gator Greats, reminiscing (or learning – for us younger members!) about these teams that helped lay the foundation for Gator baseball.

Among the many VIP Guests we will see: Coach Dusty Rhodes Assistant Coach of Gators from 1982-87 and Smoke Laval (82-84) former head coach of LSU and UNF baseball programs.

Second Baseman Steve Lambardozzi (80-81) who played on the 1987 World Series Champions Minnesota Twins.

Pitcher Jeff Fischer (84-85) pitched for Montreal Expos and Los Angeles Doges.

Outfielder Javier Ortiz (82) made his major league debut with Houston Astros in 1990

All 10 Gator baseball teams from 1980-1989 finished over .500 and won 4 SEC regular season and 4 tournament titles (1981, 1982, 1984, and 1988 – same years for each), with 6 appearances in the NCAA tournament, The highlight of the decade was the 1988 team, the first Gator team to make the College World Series.

Other planned tailgate events for 2024 are listed below:

- Sat. 4/13, 12:30-3:30pm (S. Carolina)
- Sat, 5/4 3:00-6:00pm (Tennessee)

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

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.

The next meeting will be on Monday, April 8th. The planned speaker is Scott Carter, floridagators.com Senior Writer.

Future GDC Meeting Dates:

- Monday, May 6th
- Monday, September 9th
- Monday, October 8th
- Monday, November 4th

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 are limited to the first 50 registrations.

As of March 17, only two bus- and game-ticket combos remain. Registration is 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 the morning of March 17.

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

2024 SEC Tournament

With the University of Texas and the University of Oklahoma joining the SEC in Fall 2024 (2025 baseball season), this is the last year of the current format of the SEC tournament.

The Gator Dugout Club has again arranged for discounted rates at La Quinta Inn & Suites by Wyndham Birmingham Hoover – \$89 per night, plus applicable taxes for a non-smoking room with 2 queen beds.

Please click this [link](#) to get this discounted rate. When link pops open Rooms will reflect availability of May 20 to May 26. Select the number of guests/rooms, click Search Rooms, and then “Book and Pay Later” on the following screen. Any questions feel free to contact Gary Carter at (904) 708-9025.

Club Sponsors

Please remember to patronize these fine businesses which give Club members discounts & thank them for their continued sponsorship:

Avon by Trudy
Ballyhoo Grill
Brittany’s Fine Jewelry
David’s Bar-B-Q
Donut Connection
Fairfield Inn by Marriott
Gator BTW
Gator’s Dockside

Hooters
Leonardo’s Pizza
Mi Apa Latin Café
PDQ
Piesanos Stone Fired Pizza
The Midnight Underground
World of Beer

Stats Corner – What is (SEC) Average?

Barring a great year in the ACC or an exceptional year in another conference, the SEC is the best conference in college baseball.

But what is average SEC performance?

Some key statistics are shown in the table below ('b' for batters and 'p' for pitchers). The additional walks and homers, plus the uptick in ERA between 2022 and 2023 confirms what we saw watching the games – the balls were a little “juicier” and the zone a little smaller last year than in 2022.

	2022	2023	2024*
AVG (b)	.282	.284	.304
OBP (b)	.382	.396	.436
SLG (b)	.475	.493	.535
ERA (p)	4.56	5.09	3.60
H/9 (p)	8.4	8.5	7.3
HR/9 (p)	1.1	1.3	0.8
BB/9 (p)	4.0	4.4	3.7
K/9 (p)	10.0	10.1	11.2

* – 2024 statistics are through March 14 (i.e.; prior to the beginning of SEC play)

Comparing 2024 (so far) and 2023 tells another story – SEC hitters are about 20 points in average, 40 points in OBP both and SLG better this year. On the bump, they're almost two pitching baserunners per game better, plus half a homer and another strikeout. This gives us an idea of the magnitude of the difference between the SEC & non-conference competition.

So far this year, the SEC is 197-44 vs. non-conference opposition.

(The non-conference SEC record is from WarrenNolan.com; all other statistics are from Baseball-Reference, property of Sports Reference LLC – [2024](#), [2023](#), and [2022](#) SEC summary pages.)

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