



Gator Dugout Days



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2024 SEC Tournament

The Gators dropped SEC Tournament Game 3 by the score of 6-3 to Vanderbilt. Since the first round (5th through 12th seeds) is single elimination, that was the end of the Gators' trip to Hoover for this year. Some photos of GDC members and the team are at right – more are on the GDC Facebook page.

The loss also started nearly six tough days of waiting for the Gators and fans to learn the NCAA Tournament fate.

2024 NCAA Tournament

As announced shortly after noon on Monday, Gator baseball has earned its 16th consecutive bid to the NCAA Division 1 baseball tournament. The 2024 Gators played the toughest strength of schedule in the country and will be one of eleven SEC teams in the tournament, despite a record of just 28-27.

The Gators' first game is at **3:00 pm EDT on Friday, June 1st** as the #3 seed in the Stillwater Regional. You can stream the game via ESPN+ (subscription) or join the Gator Dugout Club for a **first-game watch party at Gators Dockside in Gainesville** (3842 Newberry Road #1a – [Google Maps Link](#)).

The full schedule for the Stillwater Regional be found at the official [NCAA](#) page for the tournament. All game times and channels (or streaming package) are subject to change due to [weather](#) or TV schedules.

See the next page for some information on the Gators' opponents in Stillwater.



(GDC members & 1B/LHP Jac Caglianone)



(The families of several Gator players join GDC members for "tailgoring".)



(Despite the loss, a Gators player still stops to sign an autograph for a young fan.)

Scouting for Stillwater



The Gators' Friday opponent is #2 seed **Nebraska** ([Warren Nolan](#) for game-by-game info, [Baseball Reference](#) for player stats), the Big Ten conference tournament champions (and 2nd place during the regular season). The 2024 Cornhuskers are built on pitching, with a 4.40 ERA that led the Big Ten by almost three-quarters of a run, a WHIP 0.20 lower than anyone else in the conference, and 35 fewer walks allowed than the next-closest Big Ten team. Brett Sears leads the way on the mound, with an ERA of 2.00. Early indications are that he'll start Friday afternoon against the Gators. Josh Caron (.320/.398/.605) is their biggest bat, but there are no easy outs in their lineup. Even their regular starter with the lowest OPS has earned 50 free passes (24 BB and 26 (!) HBP) on his way to a .400+ OBP, to go along with 16 sacrifice bunts.

The Big Ten isn't usually thought of as a big baseball conference, but the Cornhuskers are an exception. Nebraska often draws 5,000+ fans to their games, averaging three times more than any other Big Ten team. Haymarket Park, their home stadium [[Google Maps link](#)] is widely regarded as the best facility in the Big Ten. (If you click on that link, you can virtually walk around the ballpark. With its two-level main seating area, the 360° concrete path around the field, the shape of the picnic-table-lined berms, and the location of the bullpen in right – Haymarket could pass as Condrum North.)

If the Gators win their first game, their most likely opponent is regional host **Oklahoma State** ([WN](#), [BR](#)). The Cowboys come in as the #11 seed overall in the tournament, following a 3rd place regular season in the Big 12 Conference and a win in the conference tournament. They ranked first in HR and OPS and third in RS/G on offense in their conference, led by Nolan Schubart, Carson Benge (who also pitches), and Zach Ehrhard – each with a 1.000+ OPS.

Despite O'Brate Stadium being a hitter's park, Oklahoma State also led the Big 12 in ERA and RA/G, with a K/BB ratio of 3.34 (the next-closest team was 2.56). Sam Garcia and Brian Holliday, both starters with ERAs in the low 3's, headline the pitching staff. They're sure to be a challenging opponent who likely got some consideration for a top-eight national seed in this year's tournament.

The final team in the Stillwater regional is #4 seed **Niagara** ([WN](#), [BR](#)), who shared the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference regular season title with Farfield and won the MAAC conference tournament. Eric Rataczek leads their offense, with standout reliever Zach Cameron headlining the pitching staff. Niagara only allowed 38 home runs on the season (fewest in the MAAC). If they can keep the Cowboys in the yard (no easy task), they might have a chance to pull off an upset.

The winner of the Stillwater regional will play the winner of the Clemson regional for a chance to go to Omaha. Clemson (#6 national seed) is joined by Vanderbilt (#2 in the regional), Coastal Carolina (#3), and High Point (#4).

If the Gators and the High Point Panthers each win, the Super Regional would be held in Gainesville. If it's the Gators and the Coastal Carolina Chanticleers, the NCAA could choose either team as Super Regional host, based on a bidding process.

Future GDC Meetings

Regular GDC meetings for the 2024 season have concluded. We'll pick it up in the fall at the Fairfield Inn and Suites (3877 SW 37th Boulevard) with a 6 pm social hour and a 7 pm meeting.

Future GDC Meeting Dates:

Monday, September 9th

Monday, October 8th

Monday, November 4th

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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. Or mail to:

Amy Brown

P.O. Box 5204

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