



THE HISTORY OF GATOR WOMEN'S TENNIS

1971-72

- The inaugural women's tennis program is comprised of an intercollegiate team and a competitive club squad. Players who did not make the first 10 positions were members of the club. Linda Hall Thornton was the team's first coach.

1972-73

- The inaugural varsity women's tennis team posts a 9-0 victory over Trenton State on Jan. 5, 1973 in its season opener to begin a winning tradition.
- Sue Whiddon, who had served as Flagler College's Athletics Director, coaches the team to a 5-3 record. Whiddon currently serves as a graduate coordinator and teacher in the department of Exercise and Sport Sciences at UF.

1973-74

- The team makes its first appearance in national competition, finishing 14th at the AIAW Championships.
- The Gainesville Sun nicknames UF's women's teams "Lady Gators."

1974-75

- Judy Acker becomes the first Florida player to win the state singles title.
- The Lady Gators end the season finishing seventh in the nation.
- Sue Whiddon opts to leave the coaching ranks to pursue her doctoral studies at Florida Atlantic University. She currently serves as a graduate coordinator and teacher in the department of Exercise and Sport Sciences at UF.

1975-76

- B.E. Palmer is selected to coach the team.
- Five of the nine players receive athletic scholarships for the first time ever.
- The Lady Gators finish the season in 12th place.
- Judy Acker is named to the first-ever women's All-American Tennis Team.



The 1971-72 Lady Gator tennis team

1976-77

- Former player Debbie Dunkin becomes the program's first assistant coach.
- Sherry Acker joins her sister Judy on the tennis team, and team-up to finish an impressive third place at the AIAW National Doubles Championships.
- The Lady Gators defeat powerful Rollins College 6-3 for the first time in school history.
- UF ends the year in fifth place, its highest AIAW national finish.

1978-79

- Liz Broughton, who played at Rollins, becomes UF's third coach.
- The Lady Gators end the season with a sixth place national finish.
- Junior Joyce Portman leads the team in overall singles victories with a 29-7 record.

1979-80

- The Lady Gators capture the inaugural SEC Championship.
- UF wins the FAIAW State championship.
- The Lady Gators win the AIAW Region Championships and advance to the National AIAW Tournament.
- LSU hosts the first Division I Championships under AIAW's new division structure which includes 24 teams, 64 singles and 32 doubles players. The Lady Gators end the season as national runners-up, their highest finish ever.
- Joyce Portman ends her senior year with a career dual match record of 51-10, the most wins in program history.

1980-81

- The Lady Gators win their second straight SEC Championship
- UF finishes in fourth place at the AIAW National Tournament.
- Coach Liz Broughton resigns her position at the end of the season to work on her doctorate.

1981-82

- Former Gator tennis player Steve Beeland is named the team's fourth head coach.
- Cissie Donigan returns as the only Lady Gator to achieve All-State, All Region and AIAW All-America honors.
- The Gators claim their third SEC title, defeating surprise finalist Ole Miss in the finals.
- The team finishes 10th at the inaugural NCAA Tennis Championship for women, losing 5-4 to South Carolina in Salt Lake City, Utah.



1977-78

- The Lady Gators claim a share of the FAIAW state title for the first time ever when they tie with Rollins.
- UF advances to the regional championships played in Oxford, Miss., and defeats Rollins in a playoff for the Region III tennis crown.
- UF finishes the year in fourth place, which is one spot above its national ranking the previous season.
- The Lady Gators are honored at their season-ending banquet for maintaining a 3.8 team grade point average.



Above: The 1978 Lady Gators claimed a share of the FAIAW state title for the first time in school history.

Left: Debbie Dunkin (left) and UF's first All-American Judy Acker pose with the championship trophy for their 1976 state doubles title.



Members of the 1980 squad take a quick moment to snap a photo during a trip to Provo Canyon, Utah.

1982-83

- The Lady Gators lose four starters from last year, and have their top two spots filled by freshman Kathy Holton, and transfer Julie Quamme.
- The team loses to Georgia 5-4 and settles for second place at the SEC Championships.
- UF falls to UCLA 7-2 in the first round of the NCAA Championships.

1983-84

- Suzie Fain is named the team's new assistant coach.
- The Gators claim their fourth SEC title.
- Kim Clingan and Jill Hetherington receive individual bids to compete in the NCAA Championships.
- UF finishes in seventh place at the NCAA Championships.
- Coach Beeland resigns to become head coach of UF's men's tennis program.

1984-85

- Andy Brandi becomes the fifth head coach of the Gator women's team.
- Jill Hetherington wins the Southeast Collegiate Tennis Championship.
- The Gators win the SEC team title, with Jill Hetherington capturing the No. 1 singles title before teaming with Jan Martin to win the No. 1 doubles title, as well.
- The Gators finish in seventh place at the NCAA Championships, falling 7-2 to Miami in the quarterfinals.

1985-86

- The Gators claim their third straight SEC title.
- Jill Hetherington and Tammy Whittington are named to the All SEC team and Hetherington is also presented with the Sportsmanship Award.
- The Gators do not qualify for the NCAA Championships for the first time since the tournament began in 1982.

1986-87

- The Gators have an extremely strong line up this year, including the addition of freshman sensation Shaun Stafford from Gainesville.
- The Gators record their most successful season ever, entering the SEC Championships with an undefeated 27-0 record, and the honor of being ranked No. 1 in the nation.
- Jill Hetherington is the first-ever SEC champion to achieve victories in both singles and doubles for four straight years.
- The Gators finish the year winning the SEC Championships and are ranked the nation's No. 2 team behind Stanford University. Shaun Stafford reaches the finals of the NCAA Singles Championships.

1987-88

- The new tennis complex is completed. It includes 14 tennis courts, a 1,000 seat stadium, and six lighted courts among others.
- UF competes in the first-ever National Indoor Championships, and wins the event by posting a victory over national rival Stanford.
- The lady Gators who have never lost an SEC Championship under Andy Brandi, claim their fifth straight SEC crown.



NORMA SCHINDLER

Halle Cioffi was named the ITA Rookie and ITA Player of the Year in 1988.

- Lady Gators Shaun Stafford and Nicole Arendt are named to the United States National Team.
- Sophomore Shaun Stafford becomes the first Gator to win an individual NCAA tennis title when she defeats teammate Halle Cioffi in the first-ever singles final match up between players from the same school. Stafford is also honored as the 1987 United States Olympic Committee's Female Athlete of the Year for tennis.
- Florida loses to Stanford in the finals of the NCAA team event.



NORMA SCHINDLER

Coach Andy Brandi congratulates Shaun Stafford in 1988 after she became the first Gator to win the NCAA Singles Championship.

1988-89

- Freshman Andrea Berger becomes the first Lady Gator to achieve 20 victories for the season.
- Florida loses in the SEC Tournament to Georgia.
- Florida hosts the NCAA Championships, placing third in the event.

1989-90

- The Lady Gators claim their ninth SEC championship in 11 attempts.
- The Lady Gators finish in second place at the NCAA Championships, which is hosted by UF for the second straight year.
- Nicole Arendt reaches the finals of the NCAA Singles Championships.



Andy Brandi led the Gators to the 1985 SEC title in his first season as head coach. Front row (l-to-r) Jan Martin, Izel Rivera, Andy Brandi, Julie Quamme, Tammy Whittington; Back row (l-to-r) Monique Stolle, Jill Hetherington, Karen Huldi, Dana Fahey and Michele Sniffen.





THE HISTORY OF GATOR WOMEN'S TENNIS (CONT'D)

STEPHEN MCKONN



Andrea Farley, who posted a 116-23 singles record from 1990-93, is now an attorney in Atlanta, Ga.

1990-91

- Coach Brandi begins his seventh season as Florida's winningest coach.
- The doubles team of Nicole Arendt and Jillian Alexander are the first Florida players to win the NCAA doubles title.
- Florida sweeps the Rolex National Indoor Intercollegiate Championships with Nicole Arendt winning the singles title, before teaming with Jillian Alexander to claim the doubles title. Holly Lloyd wins the consolation singles draw.
- Florida wins the SEC title with a win over Georgia.
- Florida is defeated by UCLA in the semi finals of the NCAA championships held at Stanford University.
- Arendt ends her collegiate career as UF's all-time leading singles winner, with 126 wins and 25 losses. She is also the Gator's first -- and still only -- eight-time All-American, having earned the award for singles and doubles each of her four years.
- Six Gators players are named to the SEC Academic Honor Roll.

1991-92

- The Gators capture their first NCAA team title with 5-3 victory over Texas.
- Florida completes third undefeated regular season in five years, posting a 30-0 overall record.
- Florida wins third consecutive SEC title with a win over Georgia.
- UF wins the ROLEX National Team Indoor championship.
- Freshman Lisa Raymond becomes the first player in NCAA history to win three collegiate Grand Slam championships in a season, winning the singles titles at the ITCA National Clay Championships, the ROLEX National Indoor and NCAA Championship.
- Raymond is named the ITCA Rookie Player of the Year and is voted Tennis Magazine's Collegiate Player of the Year.
- Holly Lloyd is UF's and the state of Florida's NCAA Woman of the Year.
- Four Florida players are named to the 1992 SEC Academic Honor Roll.

1992-93

- Lisa Raymond claims her second consecutive NCAA Singles Championship title.
- Florida finishes third in the NCAA Championships.
- Andy Brandi is voted the SEC Co-Coach of the Year.
- Florida wins its fourth consecutive SEC title with a 5-2 win over Georgia in the final.
- Florida finishes second in the ROLEX National Team Indoor Championships.
- Lisa Raymond is named the SEC Player of the Year; and is a first team All-SEC selection, along with teammates Andrea Farley and Jill Brenner. Erika Kuttler is named second team All-SEC.
- Five Gators are named to the 1993 SEC Academic Honor Roll, posting the highest athletic team GPA in school history.

1993-94

- Reaches the finals of the ROLEX National Team Indoor Championships for the sixth time in seven years.
- Finishes second in the SEC tournament.
- Advances to the quarterfinals of the NCAA Team Championships for the eighth consecutive season.
- Four Florida players are named to the 1994 SEC Academic Honor Roll.
- Lori Ann Freedman, Erika Kuttler and Divya Merchant are named to first team All-SEC.
- Merchant is voted the SEC Player of the Year.



Kristin Osmond hugs Holly Lloyd after winning her no. 4 singles match to push the 1992 NCAA Team Final into doubles with a 4-2 UF advantage. The Gators polished off Texas 5-3 to claim their first NCAA team championship.

1994-95

- Jill Craybas is recognized as the SEC Player of the Year.
- Florida becomes first team in SEC history to place each player in its lineup on the first team All-SEC.
- Craybas advances to semifinals of the NCAA Singles Championships, becoming the seventh player in school history to advance to semifinals.
- Freshman Dawn Butth is named ITA Rookie of the Year, becoming the fourth player in school history to receive that honor.
- Butth earns first team All-America honors in singles play.
- Florida reaches the NCAA finals, becoming the first team in NCAA history to sweep through the first three rounds without dropping an individual match.
- UF wins its 13th SEC Championship title.
- Finishes fifth at the ROLEX National Team Indoor Championships.



Lisa Raymond was one of the most dominating players in collegiate history, posting an 84-4 record during her two-year career while capturing a pair of NCAA singles titles before joining the professional tour.

1995-96

- Florida claims its second NCAA Team Championship with an undefeated 31-0 season.
- UF becomes second team ever to sweep the NCAA Championships, winning the team, singles and doubles titles.
- Jill Craybas wins NCAA Singles Championship crown.
- Dawn Butth and Stephanie Nickitas become the second Gator pair to win the NCAA Doubles Championship.
- Five Gators are named to the 1996 SEC Academic Honor Roll.
- Dawn Butth and Stephanie Nickitas capture the ROLEX Indoor Doubles Championship.
- Florida claims its fourth National Team Indoor Championship in eight years
- Florida wins its 14th SEC Championship.
- Andy Brandi collects his 300th career coaching victory.
- Coach Brandi is named Wilson/ITA Coach of the Year
- Craybas is named Tennis Magazine/Rollex Player of the Year; and receives the Honda Award for Tennis.



Dawn Butth (left) and Stephanie Nickitas became the first doubles team in history to claim a pair of NCAA titles. They are also the only tandem to reach the NCAA Doubles finals three consecutive years (1996-97-98). Butth and Nickitas finished their collegiate career together with a 91-8 record.



JEFFREY L. GAGE



Divya Merchant became UF's all-time leader in singles victories in 1997, graduating with a 158-36 career record.

1997-98

- UF captures its third NCAA team championship with a 5-1 victory over Duke. Former Gator standout Shaun Stafford is an assistant coach for the Blue Devils.
- UF caps its third undefeated season with a 27-0 record.
- The Gators capture their 16th SEC title.
- Dawn Buth and Stephanie Nickitas reach the finals of the NCAA Doubles Championships for the third consecutive year. The Gator duo completes their collegiate career together with a 91-8 record as a doubles team.
- Seniors Dawn Buth and Bonnie Bleecker conclude their four-year collegiate careers leading UF to two NCAA team championships, two National Team Indoor Titles and four SEC regular season and tournament crowns. The pair helped UF compile a 116-4 dual match record during their tenure.

1998-99

- UF hosts the NCAA Championships for the fourth time.
- The Gators reach the NCAA finals for the fifth consecutive year, but lose to Stanford in the final, a defeat that snaps UF's 61-home match winning streak.
- Andy Brandi reaches the 400-win plateau faster than any other tennis coach in NCAA history.
- UF wins its 16th SEC title, but sees its 53-match winning streak end in the finals of the SEC Tournament.
- The Alfred Ring Tennis Complex, a \$1.7 million renovation project, is completed in January.



OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE PHOTO

The Gators met with First Lady Hillary Rodham-Clinton at the White House to celebrate winning the 1998 NCAA Championship.

2000-01

- Andy Brandi announces his resignation on May 29, ending his 17-year tenure at UF with a 460-43 career record and a 91.5-winning percentage - the highest in NCAA history among tennis coaches who have coached a minimum of five years.
- Whitney Laito and Jessica Lehnhoff win the NCAA Doubles title, giving the Gators their fourth NCAA Doubles crown.
- UF captures its 18th regular season SEC championship.
- Roland Thornqvist is introduced on June 22 as UF's sixth women's tennis head coach.



THE GAINESVILLE SUN



The 1996 Gators became only the second team in history to sweep the NCAA Championships, as they claimed the team, singles (Jill Craybas) and doubles (Dawn Buth and Stephanie Nickitas) titles.



JIM BURGESS

Jessica Lehnhoff won three Grand Slam titles during her collegiate tenure, was a seven-time All-American and recorded a combined 250 singles and doubles wins during her career.

1996-97

- UF finishes second at the NCAA Team Championships.
- Posts fifth undefeated regular season.
- Successfully defends its National Team Indoor title with a 4-3 victory over Stanford.
- Florida wins its 15th SEC title.
- Dawn Buth and Stephanie Nickitas become the first women's duo in history to win consecutive NCAA Doubles Championships.
- Five Gators earn All-America honors.
- Divya Merchant ends her collegiate career as UF's all-time leader in singles wins, posting a 158-36 record.
- UF compiles a school-record 62 match-winning streak, a run that began the previous year.

1999-2000

- UF wins the SEC Tournament title, upsetting no. 2-ranked Georgia 5-1 in the final.
- The Gators post a perfect 15-0 home record.
- Wake Forest snaps UF's regular season winning streak at 114 consecutive victories with a 5-4 setback on March 5th in Winston-Salem, N.C.
- Georgia halts the Gators' 65-match regular win streak against SEC opponents with a 5-2 decision in Athens on April 12.

2001-02

- The Gators are listed No. 2 in final ITA national ranking.
- UF reaches the NCAA Final for the ninth time in program history.
- Jessica Lehnhoff becomes the first ever Gator to advance to the semifinals of both the NCAA Singles and Doubles Championship in the same season. She reaches the singles final where she loses to Wake Forest's Bea Bielik.
- Lehnhoff captured the singles and doubles titles at the Riviera All-American Championships, becoming the third athlete in collegiate tennis history to sweep the crowns at this grand slam event.
- The Gators are ranked No. 1 for three weeks (March 27, April 3 & May 1).
- UF advances to the NCAA Semifinal for the 15th time in the last 16 years.
- The Gators capture the SEC Tournament title for the 11th time in the 15-year history of the event.
- UF posts its 650th program win by defeating Tennessee 4-1 in NCAA Semifinal on May 19, 2002.
- The Gators incur their first-ever home loss to an SEC opponent (4-3 vs. Georgia, April 7), having won 108 straight before the defeat.

