UF may soon eliminate early decision
Board of Trustees will discuss it today

By KIMBERLY FULSCHER
Alligator Contributing Writer

UF’s early decision admissions program will be in jeopardy when the UF Board of Trustees meets today.

At a meeting Thursday, the board’s Educational Policy and Strategy Committee decided to recommend that the board eliminate the program.

In an interview after the meeting, UF Provost Janie Fouke said, "We'd be doing a disservice to our student applicants if we kept it." There are three deadlines for applicants now — October, November and January. But under the new system, there would only be one mid-November deadline.

Applying early requires applicants to contractually agree to come to UF if accepted.

Fouke said during the meeting that a main reason for eliminating the program is that some applicants who are turned down during early admissions could have had a better chance during the regular admissions period. Because there are fewer slots open in the early period, it is more competitive.

The committee’s chairman, Carlos Alfonso, said the new deadline would allow students to take the SAT at least one more time than the previous deadline allowed.

Fouke and the Office of Admissions will have the final say if the board axes the program, he said.

Students party against prejudice

By KATIE PACKER
Alligator Contributing Writer

As the sun began to set Thursday night, students slowly trickled to a small patch of grass between the Institute of Hispanic-Latino Cultures — more commonly known as “La Casita” — and the Institute of Black Culture.

Whether it was the strong smell of curried chicken and plantains or the loud, Hispanic pop music booming from speakers, students were helping to bring an end to racism simply by eating and chatting.

Students Taking Action Against Racism, a Student Government organization, hosted its International Block Party as part of its weeklong festivities promoting diversity.

“We are trying to get ethnic groups together in a social gathering,” said Delia Hernandez, a UF senior and director of the organization. “It’s a really relaxed environment.”

Hernandez — who was born in Guatemala but calls Miami home — became interested in the organization as a sophomore because she felt that she was a target of racism.

Being Multicultural Affairs

At UF, I tend to really feel like a minority in the classroom, and whenever a sensitive issue like race is brought up, everyone turns around and looks at me,” Hernandez said.

The block party offered a safe haven for students to mingle and openly discuss the issue of race over food that was donated by local restaurants for the event.

Students of different na-

SEE PARTY, PAGE 4

UF basketball pep band to enjoy Final Four perks

THE BAND WILL ACCOMPANY THE TEAM TO SATURDAY’S GAME.

By BRITTANY DAVIS
Alligator Writer
bdavis@alligator.org

Students who camped in line for days or spent hundreds of dollars on basketball tickets this season have every reason to be jealous of the UF Basketball Pep Band.

Twenty-five of the band’s 75 members, who play instruments from piccolo to saxophone, will accompany the Gators men’s basketball team to Atlanta this weekend and rouse crowds to stomp, sing and yell.

In addition to playing at men’s and women’s home games, the musicians travel to basketball tournaments where they stay in hotels with players, cheerleaders and dancers.

No matter where the game is, the best perk of the job is the under-the-net view of the court. "During home games, it’s electric in the O’Connell Center," said Jordan McDonald, who’s been in the band for four years.

McDonald said the men’s basketball team lost early his first two years. So when the team advanced to the Final Four last year, the band was ecstatic.

"It’s something you always dream about," he said. "It’s like going to a Super Bowl or a World Series."

This Saturday, when UF plays in the Georgia Dome, McDonald anticipates an intense atmosphere at the stadium.

"It’s so difficult to make the Final Four two years in a row," he said. "The fact that they’ve
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The Alligator is published Monday through Friday, except during holidays and exam periods. During UF summer academic terms The Alligator is published Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Alligator offices are located at 101 E University Avenue. The Alligator is not officially associated with the University of Florida.

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The Independent Florida Alligator is a student newspaper serving the University of Florida, published by a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) educational organization, Campus Communications Inc., P.O. Box 14207, Gainesville, Florida 32604-2077. The Alligator is published Monday through Friday, except during holidays and exam periods. During UF summer academic terms The Alligator is published Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Alligator is a member of the Newspaper Association of America, National Newspaper Association, Florida Press Association and Southwest University News Association.

Subscription Rates:
One Semester (Fall or Spring) $18
Summer Semester $10
Two Semesters (Fall or Spring) $35
Full Year (All Semesters) $40

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To park or not to park? A few facts about roam towing

By JESSICA PONN
Alligator Writer

For some UF students, the truth about Gainesville towing is masked in rumors and tall tales.

Some student drivers, convinced that towing companies have the right to temporarily steal their cars, feel helpless.

Here are the myths and the facts:

Myth: If a tow truck driver sees that you are parked illegally and starts to approach your car, he or she has the right to tow it at that point.
Fact: If you reach your car before the tow truck driver has physically connected your vehicle to the tow truck, he or she cannot tow your car and cannot charge you a fee.

Myth: If you reach your car after the driver has hooked it to the tow truck, he or she has the right to take it to the towing lot.
Fact: If your car is still on the lot where you parked it, the tow truck driver must release your vehicle, provided you give him or her half of the standard towing fee on the spot. In Gainesville, no towing company can charge more than $76, so if you pay the driver $38 in the lot, he or she has to let your car go. That money is supposed to go to the company, not the driver's pocket. If the driver does not release your car for half of the standard towing rate and provide you with a signed receipt, he or she has committed a third-degree felony.

Myth: If a tow truck driver damages your car while transporting it, you have to pay to fix it.
Fact: Tow companies are liable for any damages they cause. It is illegal for a tow company to force you to sign a document waiving its liability before it gives you your car back. Property managers who have contracts with the tow companies are not liable for damages.

Myth: Apartment complexes and businesses get paid in kickbacks when you get towed.
Fact: Contracts between towing companies and property management cannot, by law, include any monetary exchange. Transfer of funds is a third-degree felony. All contracts between management companies and towing companies are filed with the Gainesville Police Department to ensure they're consistent with the law.

Myth: If you get towed late at night, the towing lot may be closed and you will have to wait until the next day to get your vehicle.
Fact: By law, all towing lots must be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. After those hours, a sign must be posted with the phone number of the towing operator. You can call that number at any time, and the operator must show up to give you back your car within one hour. If the operator doesn't show up, he or she has committed a third-degree felony.

Myth: A tow truck driver can't break into your car to tow it.
Fact: Legally, the driver can. But he or she has to use "reasonable care" and can only enter your vehicle for the purpose of removing it from the lot.

Myth: If it's late at night and a business is closed, you can park there if it's convenient and then walk to wherever you are going.
Fact: Property managers can be held liable for an accident that happens in their lot, even if it happens outside of their business hours. So if you are not a customer, they don't want you there. Most towing companies will not hesitate to tow your vehicle 24/7.

All information comes from the 2006 Florida Statutes and the City of Gainesville Code of Ordinances.

Roam towing in the College Park area has been troublesome for some residents—especially those who don't know the rules of the road when it comes to towing.

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DANCE MARATHON
Dancers prepare to endure night

By JESSILYN THIBOUT
Alligator Contributing Writer

The matter most on UF students’ minds this weekend might be what kind of shoes they’re wearing. About 650 Dance Marathon participants will try to stay awake and on their feet in the O’Connell Center for 32 hours. The annual event, which begins Saturday at 8 a.m., raises money and awareness for Children’s Miracle Network.

The challenge has prompted several students to develop strategies to keep going during the difficult hours. As a two-year veteran, finance junior Ana Mathur knows one of the most important parts of preparation is picking her shoes. “Not flip-flops this year — they hurt,” she said. “I’ll have a couple of pairs of trainers and a few changes of socks.”

Mathur said she has seen a lot of dancers prepare to endure -night and a few changes of socks. “The more people you see and have there to support you, the less you think about how much your feet hurt,” Ashley Gordon, the community events captain, said. “Dancing will help keep the energy up, but Gordon said she also suggests that dancers create a rotating schedule of friends to visit during the event. She said she thinks it could make the difference between a dancer being OK for a few more hours or quitting.

“Not flip-flops this year — they hurt,” Ashley Gordon, the community events captain, said. “Dancing will help keep the energy up, but Gordon said she also suggests that dancers create a rotating schedule of friends to visit during the event. She said she thinks it could make the difference between a dancer being OK for a few more hours or quitting.

“Starting from 9 a.m. on Friday, I will be at the O’Dome setting up for the event,” he said. “We usually get done around 8 p.m.” Mathur said she has seen Turlington Plaza bustling with energy this week as morale captains bring their boom boxes and perform line dances from previous years.

“When you see the kids up for the first time, it’s pretty cool,” Mathur said.”

Members of the morale team are gearing up to cheer on the students, said morale Chairman Tony Whetstone. “Starting from 9 a.m. on Friday, I will be at the O’Dome setting up for the event,” he said. “We usually get done around 8 p.m.”

Dancing will help keep the energy up, but Gordon said she also suggests that dancers create a rotating schedule of friends to visit during the event. She said she thinks it could make the difference between a dancer being OK for a few more hours or quitting.

“The more people you see and have there to support you, the less you think about how much your feet hurt,” Gordon said.

Besides making arrangement for companionship, Gordon also suggests bringing a toothbrush and a tube of toothpaste. She said the feeling of freshly cleaned teeth helps keep her rejuvenated. She also said she’ll be looking forward to the 10 pounds of boiled spaghetti noodles her friends will bring for her to stand in.

She said it sounds gross but really helps after being on your feet for that long.

The Alligator Staff
BAND, from page 1

been able to keep up with that pressure, it's incredible.

Though McDonald would go to the games even if he weren't in the band, he said the perks are nice. He earns about $20 per game and gets free airfare and travel expenses.

Band members usually travel on the plane with the players, but there isn't much opportunity to socialize with them.

"They sit in first class, and we sit on the back of the plane," he explained with a laugh.

"Since returning to Florida, we got to hold first public signing in Jacksonville

By BRIAN MEE
Alligator Contributing Writer

Former UF quarterback Chris Leak is scheduled to make his first public autograph signing this Saturday.

From 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., Leak and five other graduating UF football players will join the legion of previous Gators football stars who have made appearances at the Palm Beach Autographs store in the Avenues Mall in Jacksonville.

The list includes Reggie Nelson, Dallas Baker and Jarvis Moss.

"Since returning to Florida from the BCS Championship, we have been working toward bringing in every graduating member from the championship team," Jim Dodson said. UF alumni Dodson and his brother, Steve, founded and own Palm Beach Autographs. Their younger brother, Dan, is currently a sophomore at UF and also helps with the store.

The store moved from a different location, and its reopening in the Avenues Mall is an absolute delight, Dodson said.

"There's no better way to re-open a store than to bring in the national champion quarterback of the Florida Gators," Garcia said.
Editorial

One more week down. Three and a half to go. Then it's just the drinking — ahem, reading — days and exam week, and we'll be home free. We can already feel the shift. Winter is officially over — it's downright hot. We're having thoughts of internships, study abroad and summer jobs. We're planning days at the beach and nights at the bars.

Of course, the end of the semester also means it's time to think about term papers — well, maybe in two weeks. But for now, it's business as usual. And that means we have, for your reading pleasure, a shiny new edition of...

Darts & Laurels

First off it's a this-cat-fight-has-turned-into-an-embar- rassment DART to all parties involved in the "Jeb Affair." At least, that's what we hear from a reliable source. We'll battle to the death between the Faculty Senate and the combined efforts of the Student Senate, the Alumni Association and UF President Bernie Machen. It has gotten out of control, and now it's just bringing unneeded negative attention to our university. Hopefully the basketball team can make up for it.

On that note, we have a the-Gator-Nation-has-definitely-extended-to-Atlanta LAUREL for the men's basketball team for making it to the NCAA Final Four Tournament this weekend. This is the second year in a row we're competing for the national title. No matter the outcome of the games, the Gators are champions in our book.

Also around campus, we've got a pull-up-a-chair-and-stay-awhile LAUREL for Chomp the Vote, which is accepting applications for a new director after the entire organization disappeared in the midst of state and local elections.

Chomp has the potential to be one of the most important student organizations on campus — but without hiring a well-qualified director, it's got nothing. We hope acting director Tyler Antar can find a great one, because the next round of elections is just around the corner.

Here is a you-always-give-us-more-reasons-to-hate-you DART to towing companies around town. Sure, things have gotten better recently, especially since taxi truck drivers are now required to take digital photographs of cars before towing them. But if towers say they won't tow in certain cases and the photos show they do, it's hard to let them off for being the bad guys.

But it's not just the towing companies. One party alone could not create so much evil. So we have a we-should-have-known-you-were-secretly-behind-it-the-whole-time DART to apartment complexes with particularly stringent contracts with towing companies — like those that allow a car to be towed just for touching a white line. It's a little outrageous, guys. Encroaching on another parking spot is one thing, but as long as all the complex's residents can park, we see no reason for these apartment complexes to tow our cars.

Next up, we have a you-can-get-yourself-clean-and-you-can-have-a-good-meal LAUREL to the Gainesville City Commission for choosing a location for the new one-stop homeless center. It's about time. The search began in late 2005 from a list of more than 125 possible locations, and in the end, it's a former warehouse and office building on North Main Street was selected.

We just hope it doesn't take as long for them to renovate the building and get it up and running as it did to decide on a location. After all, there are only eight and a half years left to end homelessness in Gainesville.

Opinions

Column

UF should require religion courses

Gordon Van Owen

letters@allgator.org

Religion is making a comeback in the classroom, send me a copy of the CliffNotes.

For as long as I can remember, discussing religion in a public classroom has been a taboo subject. But according to this week's issue of Time magazine, more than 60 percent of Americans favor teaching the history of the Bible in the classroom — a surprising statistic considering the negative stigma associated with religion in the classroom. Why not teach it? There's even a CliffNotes version.

But evangelicals beware — there's a twist. Most Americans want teachers to explain the Bible to their children in a cultural context instead of preaching the book to them.

Well, can CliffNotes adequately explain how many of today's social and cultural issues relate back to the Bible with out getting too religious? Can teachers hold suitable discussions with students without the conversation getting out of control? This has been debated for years, but the time has come for universities to take up the challenge.

As usual, Harvard University seemed to get the memo about this religion-in-the-classroom thing before most other schools. In October 2006, a faculty committee considered recommending that the university require all students to take at least one religion course as a general education requirement.

Although this proposition was eventually modified to suggest students take a course about "culture and belief," at least administrators considered their options. Most UF students' only interaction with religion is passing the Hare Krishnas on the way to class or being assaulted by the in-your-face preachers on Turlington Plaza.

With the wide range of religious diversity found on a campus with more than 50,000 students, UF should consider a proposition like Harvard's.

I'm not proposing a Bible-free-for-all in the classroom. I suggest requiring students to take a religion course of their choice. Students could study the history of a religion or the cultural context of a religion. This would give them the opportunity to better understand a religion — even if it is their own.

Who knows, maybe other departments could offer religion-themed classes as well. The English department already offers a course that examines the Bible as a literary work rather than a work of divine intervention. Maybe the mathematics department could offer a course that explains biblical calculations — Lord knows I couldn't build a table made on the dimensions given in the book of Exodus.

Of course, coordinating such courses would require professors to put aside personal beliefs and allow students to come to their own realizations about the course material. But isn't that what the college experience is all about?

However, there's a key to making this process a success: teaching, not preaching. Often that's the problem with these preachers on Turlington Plaza. They preach, we run.

Meanwhile, professors teach and we're intrigued, even when we don't agree with what they're saying.

There lies the solution. Allow professors to discuss religion in their respective fields and help students come to their own realizations about the subject matter, rather than forcing them to believe what is being presented to them. By doing so, UF and its teachers will help raise a generation that will be able to see the historical, religious context of modern events.

So maybe "CliffNotes on the Bible" may not tell me the complete history of Christianity, but at least it could help me understand the religious undertones behind the Superman movie and the Matrix trilogy. The Bible is important in a historical context, but we should adapt it to better understand modern society.

Gordon Van Owen is a mass communications graduate student. His column appears on Fridays.

Reader response

Today’s question: Should UF require every student take a religion-based course?

Thursday’s question: Should the Faculty Senate have denied Bush an honorary degree?

Vote or post a message at www.alligator.org

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40% NO

ALLIGATOR www.alligator.org/opinions
Guest column

Diversity education begins on campus with culture institutes

I applaud the recent editorial about the history of establishing the Institute of Black Culture. However, we cannot forget the cultural and historical context that movement came out of. During the post-civil rights era, the black power movement attempted to reclaim an identity that was systematically looked down upon and threatened. This movement helped ignite other communities to reclaim their identities through the brown and yellow power movements; African-American studies minor program and cultural competency?

One of the most dynamic exhibits was the booth devoted to volcanism. Professor Matt Smith's enthusiasm was matched only by the explosiveness of his volcano and his bubbly demonstration of pyroclastic properties. Relegated outside of the museum because of his messy and explosive experiments, Smith said, while reflecting upon his presentation, that the explosion needs to be BIGGER! Who knows how far away from the museum they'll place him next year.

Cave mapping, cool geological tools, microscopic examinations of kaleidoscope-like crystalline, chain saw core samplers to measure magnetic properties and many more demonstrations were made. Judging by the smiles in the crowd, it can safely be said a fun and educational time was had by all.

Kudos to the dedicated and enthusiastic team of faculty, graduate students, undergraduates and volunteers of the geological sciences department of UF. They truly exemplify the spirit of our much-hailed Gator Nation.

Leo Esclamado is a UF alumnus.

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Phelps breaks another record as Lochte takes silver

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Ohio State writer: UF is better school

OHIO STATE from page 20

of college's two major sports. And lately, the two schools have crossed paths.

Halfway through the basketball regular season, UF football coach Urban Meyer spoke to the men's basketball team. His sermon compared the Gators' then-No. 1-ranked basketball team to the Buckeyes' No. 1-ranked football team prior to playing the Gators. Meyer wanted them to realize they must fend off every team's best shot and avoid complacency, something the Buckeyes failed to do.

"Everybody had picked Ohio State and there was no chance Florida could beat the big, bad Ohio State," forward Joakim Homan said. "(The media) made (the Gators) angry. They played possessed out there. They read so much negative press about themselves that they were just like, 'You know what? F-this; let's just go."

Interestingly enough, Kevin Homan, a sports writer for Ohio State's school paper, The Lantern, wrote a column contrasting the two schools. After visiting Gainesville, Homan concluded UF is a better university. If the Gators win against UCLA on Saturday and Ohio State ousts Georgetown, the Buckeyes will have a chance to prove him wrong.

Sub-.500 Bulldogs struggle to find consistency against conference foes

BASE from page 20

Association.

"These are nice, but I couldn't have done it without my team," LaPorta said. "I just want us to keep playing the way we've been playing (lately) for the rest of the season."

Georgia (10-14, 3-3 SEC) has struggled with consistency as well.

The Bulldogs were swept at home last weekend by Tennessee after sweeping Auburn on the road a week earlier.

Georgia's 197.45-194.075 win against N.C. State on March 2 made the trip for the football team's national championship game in Glendale, Ariz., won't be able to make this one.

They've got class to go to on Monday," McMahon said. "But we are going to be rooting like heck for the Gators."

Hartung proves worth in All-Around

GYMNASTICS from page 20

Despite not performing her best during the past competitions, Faehn assures that junior Ashley Reed, who won the Gators' first SEC Gymnast of the Week this season, will be a force to reckon with at the meet.

"Right now, we're expecting and almost demanding perfection from the athletes." Rhonda Faehn

UF gymnastics coach

"They've got class to go to on Monday," McMahon said. "But we are going to be rooting like heck for the Gators."

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Ratliff surges for hot Gators

By KARL HYPPOLITE
Alligator Writer

Mary Ratliff is smitten with her new-found power. It took the junior more than two years and 136 at-bats to smash her first collegiate home run, but she's been hot lately, hitting two homers last week. The UF softball team's strong play has coincided with Ratliff's explosion.

The Gators (27-14, 5-6 Southeastern Conference) are hoping to extend a seven-game winning streak as they take on Mississippi (14-21, 5-6 SEC) beginning Saturday at 1 p.m. in Oxford. If recent history is any indication, more long balls could come against the Rebels.

Ratliff's first home run came in the Gators' 9-0 rout against Princeton last week, and she took a liking to it. Her second came just two days later in UF's 14-0 win against Georgia last Saturday.

Not bad for someone whose teammates joked had only "warning track power."

"We joke with her because she probably hits more balls off the fence than any other person on the team," pitcher Stacey Stevens said. "So we joke with her and say WTP — warning track power — because her balls always seem to be on the warning track."

"Coach (Tim) Walton challenged her, and lately she's been really hot, so it was really good to see her respond with two really big home runs."

The night fielder has hit 8 for 16 and driven in seven runs during UF's winning streak.

"I'm very proud of Mary," Walton said. "She's one of those determined hitters. She's got a lot of determination, a lot of excitement in her. If Mary gets a big hit, you're going to feel Mary."

Continuing to get opportunities is the key for Ratliff.

She was used as a pinch hitter for most of the last two seasons and made just 71 appearances at the plate.

This season, Ratliff has already reached a career-high 72 at-bats and is second on the team with a .292 batting average.

"The more you get to see pitchers, the more success you're going to have," Ratliff said. "In a pinch hitting role, you're limited to one at-bat a game, where as a regular player you have, two, three maybe four chances to see the same pitcher."

Though she hopes she's finally shed her "WTP" label, Ratliff isn't expecting to challenge 2006 SEC Player of the Year and former Gators catcher Kristen Butler's school-record 17 homers.

"By no means does that make me a home run hitter or anything like that," she said. "I can hit line drives all day, and I'll be just fine. Hopefully they'll get off my back a little bit."
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By LOUIS ANASTASIS
Alligator Staff Writer
Ianastasis@alligator.org

ST. LOUIS — UF and Ohio State are like conjoined twins always after the same crush. Except the Gators end up with the girl.

That’s how the Buckeyes’ football and men’s basketball teams must feel, anyway. The torture started on Dec. 23, when UF’s hoops team blasted then-No. 3 Ohio State out of Gainesville with an 86-60 win.

Some Gators fans worried the blowout might anger Ohio State’s No. 1 football team, which was to play UF in the BCS National Championship game on Jan. 8. Everyone knows how that panned out.

Now the Gators and Buckeyes could meet again — as hoops opponents in the championship game.

“That would be really ironic,” UF forward Al Horford said. “There would just be too many coincidences.”

At first glance, you can’t find many common traits between the two schools. True, both have built reputations as football powerhouses. But Ohio State has more tradition and its own mystique, from the Horseshoe to Woody Hayes to hoops legends like Jerry Lucas and John Havlicek.

UF, meanwhile, often gets the fair-weather, party-school stereotype. Its football team has only been a consistent player on the national scene since Steve Spurrier coached. Basketball-wise, you might as well demarcate the school’s history into B.D. and A.D. — Before Donovan and After Donovan, as in Coach Billy Donovan.

But recently, both schools have become mainstays at the pinnacle of the Southeastern Conference (SEC) first chance comes this Saturday in Little Rock, Ark., at the SEC Championships when they attempt to dethrone Alabama and Georgia from the podium. Since 1999, the title has belonged to the Crimson Tide or the Bulldogs. Georgia is the defending champion.

The Gators’ (15-0-1, 5-0-1 Southeastern Conference) first chance comes this Saturday in Little Rock, Ark., at the SEC Championships when they attempt to dethrone Alabama and Georgia from the podium. Since 1999, the title has belonged to the Crimson Tide or the Bulldogs. Georgia is the defending champion.

This year’s SEC meet features the top four teams in the nation, UF, Georgia, Alabama and LSU.

“It’s unbelievable the level of talent that is in this conference,” UF coach Rhonda Faehn said. “This SEC competition, you have more talent and more difficulty, especially in the top four teams competing right now, than you do at nationals. It’s going to be a great competition. We have to do our job or we are not going to get the results we want.”

To prepare for the tournament, UF organized a mock meet last Saturday night. Feahn and her two assistant coaches served as the judges, and they were not playing favorites.

“They didn’t do a bad job at all,” Faehn said. “Right now, we’re expecting and almost demand-

Gators head to Athens with newly found confidence

By ALEX WEINTRAUB
Alligator Writer
aweintraub@alligator.org

A little more than a week ago, the UF baseball team was in a different place.

The squad had dropped seven of nine games and had fallen to 11-13.

The Gators (15-3, 4-2 Southeastern Conference) were just getting started with the toughest part of their schedule against SEC opponents. But then something unexpected happened.

UF went to Auburn last weekend and swept the Tigers, who came into the series boasting an 18-6 record.

Now the Gators look to continue that momentum at Georgia this weekend.

“Auburn is an outstanding club,” UF coach Pat McMahon said. “To win three games in that environment, particularly a one-run game ... by doing the little things right is huge.”

After the Auburn series, UF won its midweek game 5-3 against Bethune-Cookman, extending its winning streak to four games.

If you ask McMahon what has happened, he will tell you nothing has changed.

“It’s a process the entire year,” he said. “We’ve just got to keep going up in areas. We are defending the field well, but we’ve got to pitch well to be successful.”

Prior to the Auburn series, the Gators were struggling to find consistency.

Against Mississippi State one week earlier, the Gators dropped two of three, allowing 34 runs.

Then, in a midweek game against Stetson, the pitching came through, but the hitting failed as UF fell 4-3.

But last weekend against the Tigers, the hitting and pitching came through as needed, giving the squad its most impressive performance of the year.

Senior first baseman Matt LaPorta played a large role in the team’s success, going 7 for 13 with three home runs and 7 RBI in the series. Sunday’s match, the slugger went 4 for 4 from the plate.

The weekend showing won LaPorta SEC Player of the Week honors.

He also was named National Hitter of the Week by the National Collegiate Baseball Writers

ON TELEVISION

■ NBA: Pacers vs. Magic
ESPN, 8 p.m.

■ NBA: Rockets vs. Lakers
ESPN, 10:30 p.m.

TODAY IN UF SPORTS HISTORY

1962: Tom Moore stabs a school record six bases. The Gators baseball team finished the season 25-10-1 and led the Southeastern Conference East Division.

WEEKEND GAMES

■ Women’s Tennis: UF vs Alabama
Ring Tennis Complex, Friday, 5 p.m.

■ Baseball: Santa Fe vs.
St. Johns River Community College
SFC, Saturday, 4 p.m.

UP NEXT

■ Check out alligatorSports.org during the weekend for daily coverage of the Final Four. The defending champion Gators arrived in Atlanta on Thursday and are ready to go against UCLA.
Back 4 More
Gators smash Bruins for school’s first hoops title

By DAN TREAT
Alligator Staff Writer
dtreat@aligator.org
Original Run Date: April 4

INDIANAPOLIS — They were labeled the team that was a year away, the team that was too inexperienced to win a title, so excuse them for their celebration.

As the confetti flew into the air and the pile formed at center court, Corey Brewer and Al Horford made a beeline for the section of UF students, who instantly embraced them.

And that’s when Joakim Noah, the one whom fans have revered the most, ascended atop press row and threw his fists towards the heavens and Gator Chomped to the crowd, signifying that there was not a greater time to be a Florida Gator.

It took 91 years, but the Gators can finally call themselves the best team in the land.

“I can’t wait to get back to Gainesville, and Coach, don’t get distracted, enjoy it, our administration, I really mean that,” said UF coach Billy Donovan, who became the second-youngest coach to win a national title.

“It’s about the people you coach all the time. I get a great deal of pleasure seeing these kids enjoy it, seeing our university enjoy it, our administration, these kids enjoy it, seeing our many as possible, said UF coach Billy Donovan, who became the second-youngest coach to win a national title.

“Like I said, the Gator boys are hot right now,” Noah said. “I can’t wait to get back to Gainesville, and Coach, don’t get distracted, enjoy it, our administration, I really mean that,” said UF coach Billy Donovan, who became the second-youngest coach to win a national title.

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It took Arron Afflalo all but a few seconds to describe last season’s NCAA Championship loss to the Gators.

“It was horrible,” he said. 

“No, not the game itself, but the thought of losing. You always want to make your mark and do something special. Winners are never forgotten. Finishing second-best just isn’t good enough. It was very painful that night.”

Not only did UF dismantle UCLA 73-57, but Afflalo struggled, scoring just 10 points while contributing a paltry two rebounds, one assist and one steal. The first team Associated Press All-American would like nothing better than to make restitution.

“No, that’s where it’s at, it’s a great thing,” Afflalo said. “It gives us a chance to kill two birds with one stone in a sense: A chance at revenge and moving toward the championship.”

Afflalo usually gets his way.

The junior guard out of Compton, Calif. (Centennial High) has solidified a reputation as one of the premier players nationally by averaging 16.9 points and draining 84 3-pointers. At 6-foot-5, Afflalo can do it all. Sure, he can hit from the outside, but he is also a strong finisher.

And when, UCLA point guard Darren Collison was asked who the Bruins best defender is, he hardly hesitated.

“That’s an easy question: It’s Afflalo,” Collison said. “When Coach (Ben Howland) tells him, ‘Stop the other team’s best player,’ we don’t have a problem with that. We know Arron is in it to get the job done. He’s been doing it all along, ever since he got here.”

**IT WAS HORRIBLE.**

Not the game itself, but the thought of losing. You always want to make your mark and do something special. Winners are never forgotten. Finishing second-best just isn’t good enough.

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**Arron Afflalo**

Added Howland: “In the backcourt, Afflalo is continuing to draw the best perimeter player on the other team all year long for the last three years.”

But even All-Americans have struggles.

California shut down Afflalo during the Pacific-10 Tournament, limiting him to just three points on 1-of-7 shooting. It marked only the second time all season that Afflalo failed to score in double digits.

“Arron’s only had one bad game in three years,” Howland said.

Perhaps he was being too kind. Save for a Weber State game sandwiched in between, Afflalo recently hit a four-game rut during which he made just 10-of-43 field goals. Howland instructed him to forget about jump shots and drive to the hoop instead. Afflalo burst out of the funk against Kansas in the Elite Eight when he exploded for 24 points, three 3-pointers, four rebounds and three assists.

“As one of the more experienced guys on the team, I have to find other ways to help my team, whether it’s defense on the floor, making a pass, doing something else,” Afflalo said.

Oftentimes, Howland feels like Afflalo’s best trait goes unnoticed.

“Arron is about winning and making his team win,” Howland said. “You do so many other things to help your team win than just shooting the basketball. Like (former Utah coach) Rick Majerus said, ‘On ESPN all you ever see are dunks. You never see the 15-foot shot. You never see the things that are actually the staple that wins games for you. It’s all about highlight film, highlight reel. That’s fun.’ I understand that. But Arron gets it. Arron defends.”

Meanwhile, Horford tallied 14 points, seven boards and two blocks.

“They’re the best big-man tandem I can remember,” Howland said. “I can’t remember one that good on any team. They’re both very good passers. Big-time shot-blockers. Very unselfish. They’re all about winning.”

If any program should know about quality post players, it’s UCLA, who featured two record-setting players more than 30 years ago.

“It’s always great to have a quality big man,” Howland said. “In my office, looking at (Kareem-Abdul) Jabbar and (Bill) Walton. Two (of the best) big men to ever play college basketball.”

While in college, Jabbar, then Lew Alcindor, earned Player of the Year twice and played on three championship teams.

Walton entered the program one year after Alcindor’s departure and was voted the Naismith College Player of the Year three years in a row while leading UCLA to two national titles.

The duo’s reputation is something the Gators aspire to reach.

“Hopefully if we win another one people will be talking about us one day, too,” Noah said.

“That’s what I love about winning the most.

“People can talk bad about you all they want but if you win a national championship, He’s a champ.” There’s nothing more you can say.

The Gators are starting to learn about how legacy affects the way teams approach playing them.

“Legacy doesn’t help you win basketball games,” Noah said. “Just like last year’s national championship game. Do you think Butler and Purdue cared about our title? That doesn’t mean anything. They just wanted to keep their season going, and they didn’t want to go home.”

UCLA certainly doesn’t want to go home empty-handed again.

“No one was happy with the season we had last year, especially with the effort we displayed in that final game,” Bruins guard Arron Afflalo said. “That’s going to be in the minds in our players. We want to beat Florida.”
UF star shares special bond with sibling

By JENNA MARINA

Before forward Corey Brewer set foot in the O'Connell Center, he already knew there was a reason for his presence. Before he even set foot in the Georgia Dome to watch the SEC Championship game, he knew there was a reason for his presence.

There was no Thunder Dome.

The arena was a sizable coliseum nestled in the small town of Portland, Maine. Brewer and his older brother, Jason, spent their time playing soccer and baseball with neighborhood kids.

Brewer’s father, Ellis, coached a minor league baseball team and often brought his son along to games. Brewer and his father would sit in the back, but Brewer always went to the park because it was his spot.

"I like to go in some park," Brewer said.

Brewer has been a long way since his Thunder Dome days. As he continued in the Garden last season against Wake Forest and Syracuse — and when he enters the Georgia Dome on Saturday for the Final Four, he has one person to thank more than anybody else in his career — his big brother.

They’re five years apart, but no age difference could break the bond Brewer and Jason possess.

The pair stood around in the tiny country house and spoke to their back.

Brewer crept to the back, so no one noticed he had come in.

With Brewer’s early days, he and his brother have never been able to be out of the spotlight.

"We’re both in the back, and whenever someone would talk to us, we’d tell them to come here," Brewer said.

Instead of working collaboratively, the boys found another way to drive up the work.

"We’d go outside and play on one court, and whoever had the ball in their hand, that’s who’d make the shot," Brewer said. "I used to hate the ball every time, and sometimes I’d throw it off the iron."

Brewer was six and finished out five of his years. His older brother, now 25, still comes in the fold.

"I didn’t like to play basketball," Brewer said. "But he would."

He could tell you where every player played college — probably even high school. He used to make me read to the players.

Throughout their years, the brothers played for hours, and as the sun went down, Brewer and his older brother would sit in a small light to illuminate the night and continued to play until morning.

The time the boys dedicated to the court paid off. Brewer, led Florida basketball, breaking all the records as it was a step closer to the NBA.

Brewer’s former coach, Al Grodman, said, "It used to motivate me a lot because you used to always say that you can’t get close to my brother."

Brewer slammed his first dunk in the eighth grade. By sixth grade, he was slamming dunks.

"My brother used to get on me saying, ‘You can’t dunk, you can’t dunk,’" Brewer said. "I used to get on his butt about that."

The brothers would test their limits by putting a rim on top of an old taxi. But Brewer got the best of Brewer.

"The teen was like 3-foot tall, so we always tried to dunk it all the time," Brewer said. "One time I got lucky and got it, but the tax broke down."

When Brewer在生活中, his brother would have sat on the bench. But Brewer’s time was with the Gators, and with Brewer sitting on the bench, Brewer is thankful for.

"There’s two less things to do — watch Gators on TV and cook food," Brewer said. "It’s a flake in his mind when he cooks."

On Saturday night’s game, Brewer will be the only player in the family, and with the brother by his side, he’s been able to experience the best of both worlds.

"It’s a flake in his mind when he cooks."

Corey Brewer kisses his mother, Glenda, after the Gators’ 87-77 win against Oregon on March 20 in St. Louis.
HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

No. 3 UF 57  No. 7 Georgetown 53
March 24, 2006—Sweet 16
Minneapolis—Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome

Top Players: GATORS
F Joakim Noah
15 points, 10 rebounds, 5 blocks
F Al Horford
12 points, 6 rebounds, 2 blocks

Top Players: HOYAS
SF Jeff Green
15 points, 6 rebounds, 4 assists
C Roy Hibbert
10 points, 7 rebounds, 3 blocks

RECAP:
Falling down, Corey Brewer reached for his Superman cape.
After a Joakim Noah missed layup, there was a mad scramble for the rebound with 33 seconds left.
Brewer grabbed it, split two defenders and tossed in a jumper before falling flat on his back after a Brandon Bowman foul.
"He really saved my butt," Noah said. "I missed a wide-open lay-up. I should have dunked it. I was like 'Gator Nation is going to hate me.'"
After a missed Brandon Bowman 3-pointer and two Al Horford free throws, the Gators were headed to the Elite 8.
Brewer only finished with 9 points, and Noah had 15 with 10 rebounds and five blocks, but The Worm was the hero with that last shot.
UF was down by as many as 8 in the first half but scored the opening 8 points in the second to take a 36-30 lead. After a Jeff Green tip-in with 10:18 remaining,
knocking the score at 42, the two teams went back and forth until Brewer's shot.
Afterward, Horford said the Gators didn't play their style. The victory gave UF its first ever 30-win season.

No. 5 UF 86  No. 3 Ohio State 60
Dec. 23—O'Connell Center

Top Players: GATORS
PG Taurean Green
24 points, 2 assists, 2 steals
F Al Horford
11 points, 11 rebounds, 3 blocks

Top Players: BUCKEYES
PG Mike Conley Jr.
13 points, 7 assists, 4 steals
SG Jamar Butler
11 points

RECAP:
Al Horford went from not playing to shutting down Buckeyes freshman phenom Greg Oden. UF coach Billy Donovan said three days before the showdown that he did not expect Horford to play with his high ankle sprain.
He thought wrong. Horford scored 11 points, all in the second half, and gobblled up 11 rebounds. He held Oden to 7 points and six rebounds, only shooting 2 of 6 from the field.
With a man in a banana suit watching on with a sign that read: "Tell Troy (Smith) he's next." UF dominated Ohio State in every facet. Taurean Green led the Gators with 24 points on a blistering 9-of-12 shooting from the field, and forward Corey Brewer also chipped in 18 points with five boards. UF bombarded OSU in the second half, outscoring them 71 percent to 37.5 percent.
Donovan said it was the best game his team had probably played to that point.
The Buckeyes had only two players score in double figures, and their high scorer, Mike Conley Jr., had only 13. Since the loss, OSU has gone on to win 24 of 25, with its only loss against Wisconsin by a score of 72-69 on Jan. 9.
FRIDAY, MARCH 30, 2007 • ALLIGATOR, DEFENDING THE CROWN

Road to the Final Four

UF 80 Kansas 62 — It was the Gators' first loss of the season, and dethroned them from their No. 1 ranking in the only overtime game of UF's season. The majority of the 8,500 at Las Vegas' Orleans Arena were rooting for the Jayhawks and made the neutral site more like a road game.

December 3
at Florida State

December 23
vs Ohio State

UF 94 Tennessee 78 — The only scary thing about this win was when forward Corey Brewer fell to the ground clutching his knee with less than a minute left. Brewer would be fine, and the Gators added another win to their conference total.

February 10
at Kentucky

UF 79 Tennessee 88 — It was the Gators' second-straight loss and third in four games. It was ugly, too. UF was down by 19 at halftime: 50-31, and it took a massive second-half rally to even make it respectable. In a game that featured Volunteers women's coach Pat Summit in a cheerleading outfit, everything went Tennessee's way.

UF 70 Tennessee 88

UF 74 Purdue 67 — You just can't stop the jump hook. The Gators turned to Al Horford and his signature shot down the stretch to fend off pesky Purdue 74-67 in New Orleans. Horford finished with 57 points and nine rebounds as UF advanced to the Sweet 16. In the second half, he didn't miss, hitting the team's final three field goals to help the Gators overcome a 41-29 halftime deficit.

March 16
Jackson State-NCAA Tournament First Round

March 25
Oregon-Elite Eight

UF 66 Florida State 70 — Watching your rival rush the court isn't what you want to see. The champs played uninspired and were defeated by a more aggressive Seminoles squad. Less than two weeks after the Kansas loss, UF struggled again and trailed for nearly the whole game.

February 3
vs. Tennessee

UF 64 Kansas 61 — After building a 14-point first-half lead, the Gators nearly blew it. As Corey Brewer put it: "We made some bad plays at the end, totally." Wildcat guard Ramel Bradley missed a 3 pointer at the buzzer as the Gators held on for the defining win. It was the fifth consecutive win against Kentucky, and UF is the first team in 30 years to complete such a feat.

February 27
at Tennessee

March 11
Arkansas-SEC Championship

March 13
Jackson State 69 — The Tigers never stood a chance. Yes, they kept it close in the first half, but they just weren't strong enough to handle the Gators' size and athleticism. Even reserve ChrisRichard got in on the action, scoring a career-high 17 points and hitting 5 of 7 shots from the field.

March 18
Purdue-NCAA Tournament Second Round

March 31
vs UCLA

UF 85 Oregon 77 — The champs were just too deep for the Ducks. The Gators' backcourt of Taurean Green and Lee Humphrey scooped the nets and combined for 44 points and 11 3-pointers. On one of Humphrey's three, the ball swished through the hoop, so hard the netting scraped off the rim.

March 25
Oregon-Elite Eight

?
Underrated Green bears weight of expectations

By LOUIS ANASTASIS
Alligator Staff Writer
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If there is one thing Taurean Green has learned as a three-year point guard of the Gators it is this: Steer clear of Coach Billy Donovan after hoisting an ill-advised shot, "Green joked.

No. 1 seed UF—which plays UCLA in the Final Four on Saturday—probably wouldn’t be chasing another national championship were it not for Green, who averages a team-high 13.3 points.

Earlier this week, Bruins coach Ben Howland called Green the most underrated point guard in America.

Although Green has exceeded everyone’s expectations at UF, he still makes mistakes.

Like UF’s regular-season game against Tennessee when he turned three key passes into turnovers during a brief second-half stretch.

Donovan isn’t shy in pointing out these mistakes.

He places more expectations on Green than any other player on the team. He has screamed in Green’s face and will sometimes resort to public acts of frustration coming off as cruel.

Donovan feels a special bond with Green because we can joke around, I’Il appreciate it later on," Green said.

The junior will still be a problem for UCLA since he is averaging 6.6 double-doubles in NCAA Tournament play with 11.3 points and 11.0 rebounds per game.

Most of the time, Donovan has little reason to scold Green. He has scored in double digits in seven of the last eight games, including 22 3-pointers.

He was named Most Outstanding Player of the Midwest Region on Sunday after scoring 17 and 21 points against Butler and Oregon, respectively.

But Green’s also had his slump.

While UF lost three of four games in February, he made just 6-of-32 shots and averaged 3.25 turnovers.

Green, regarded by teammates as an energetic goofball who is always amped for 6 a.m. workouts, consulted with his roommates — Al Horford, Joakim Noah and Corey Brewer.

After several late-night conversations and game-film sessions, Green realized he had been pressing and altered his approach.

"I just think it’s been a matter of calming down and taking what the defense gives me," he said.

The burning question is if he will join the Bruins after the tournament.

A double-double in last year’s game was one of his most memorable nights.

UF and UCLA meeting in Orlando for a third time to decide the National Championship is a lot to fathom.

The junior will still be a problem for UCLA since he is averaging 6.6 double-doubles in NCAA Tournament play with 11.3 points and 11.0 rebounds per game.

He has the capability to provide offensive firepower to balance UCLA’s tenacious defense.

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