Armed and Dangerous

the independent florida
alligator
Dedicated coach inspires Gators to unite team, unlock full potential

By BRIAN STEELE
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MIAMI — You stumble in at around 5 in the morning. You're met headfirst with a view of your normal weight room, your sanctuary, warped into a Wes Craven horror film. You can't see anything besides the four walls, because the windows are blocked with panels. It feels like you're in jail.

"It's like watching high school players try to prove themselves to their peers, the undersized kid growing up in Pittsburgh agreed upon: The summer of 2006 to 2007 was com-pletely different. He'll finally have a bad game against them. But it's their chance to have another massacre."

USF linebacker Brandon Spikes, left, Dustin Doo, center, and Ryan Stamper stretch during the Gators' practice at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton on Sunday.

The Best?
Meyer was standing before his team, giving them a pep talk special to the SEC Championship Game against Alabama on Dec. 2. It's that M"Watkins said. "That's what when they're backed against a wall. It's sort of like watching us and let's physical take over.

"Let's watch this move to my sixth when I watch" Film from 2007," Jr." linebacker Ryan Stamper said. "I see guys that just didn't play hard. We were playing for the Florida Gators, and that's pretty much a privilege. We had guys taking advantage of that. We have kids from all over the world trying to play football.

The Bad, The Worse and The Losing
"The motivational factor that (Marotti) brought to our whole program is the best I've ever seen," senior Butch Rowley joked. "He must've gotten picked on when he was young.

The finishing statement that (Marotti) made to the team that's going to be: 'I'm going to win, I'm going to win, I'm going to win.'" Spikes said. "That's when Meyer had a conversa-

tion that lasted at least an hour and a half with middle linebacker Brandon Spikes. Quarterback Tim Tebow, offensive linemen giving them a pregame speech at de-

it's time to learn they're not a group that can be one of the most dominant teams in college football history."

The triumph of a national championship against the best in the world.

If you didn't know the teammate, whoever Marotti knew little," senior Butch Rowley joked. "He must've got picked on when he was young.

"Whatever Marotti said to his team, it's going to win, it became obvious heaters could becoaWhing staff. They were revealed to the na- Per. The Best?
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"You kids don't want to call us, we basically were. "When push came to shove, we felt when "Everybody's screaming and yelling," Spikes said. "We got to do it (in 2008) because we got to do it (in 2008) because we got to do it (in 2008).

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Police prepare for post-BCS celebrations

By KATIE EMMETS
Alligator Writer
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After the BCS named the Gators SEC champs, the Gainesville Police Department began preparations to keep people safe for Thursday’s Championship Game.

“We will be working with almost every agency that you can think of in this city,” GPD spokeswoman Summer Hallett said.

The GPD is coordinating with the Alachua County Sheriff’s Office, the University Police Department and the Florida Department of Transportation.

This will be the second national football championship game for UF in three years.

“It’s not the first time, so it’s not like we don’t know what to expect,” she said. “But we’re not sitting back on our laurels. We’re planning like it’s the very first national championship the city has ever seen.”

“We will be working with almost every agency that you can think of in this city.”

Summer Hallett
GPD spokeswoman

The GPD will determine the night’s plan based on the outcome of the game. She said fans could still get in trouble if the Gators lose.

“People don’t realize what we have to go through to make sure everything is looked at and prepared to make the city safe for everyone,” she said.

SEE POLICE, PAGE 8

SPECIAL REPORT

Soldiers bond over football

By THOMAS STEWART
Alligator Writer
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For 14 months, their Swamp was the sandy desert of war-torn Iraq.

But that didn’t stop them from cheering for the Gators, who played about 7,000 miles away in front of capacity crowds at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium.

Capt. Brian Hayes and 1st Lt. Dezi King, part of an 81-member military intelligence company in the U.S. Army, missed most of the regular season while serving in Iraq, but they still made sure to let everyone in their unit know who they thought was the best team in college football.

“It didn’t take them long to realize that I was a Gator fan, and it didn’t take them long to let me know that they weren’t,” said Hayes, who was commander of the company.

Hayes said his company, which is based in Fort Campbell, Ky., near the Tennessee border, includes Tennessee and Kentucky fans as well as Alabama, FSU and University of Miami fans.

The rivalries were plentiful, he said, but one set of fans gave him the most trouble.

“Oh, God, the FSU guys are the worst,” he said. “They always come in with, you know, the biggest talk, and I keep tellin’ ‘em, I’m like, ‘It’s not gonna happen, you’re just embarrassing yourself,’” he said. “But they talk smack anyway.”

SEE WAR, PAGE 5

RTS buses rerouted to steer clear of fan-packed roads

By MORGAN COLLINS
Alligator Contributing Writer

Buses that cross West University Avenue will be rerouted on Thursday’s BCS National Championship Game.

Gainesville’s Regional Transit System announced that it will change Route 5, Later Gator A and Later Gator C beginning at 10 p.m. to make sure buses steer clear of congested areas.

Route 5 will avoid West University Avenue between Southeast Third Street and Northwest 39th Road. Later Gator A will travel from Rosa Parks RTS Downtown Station, head west onto Second Avenue, cross 13th Street to campus, travel through campus on Union Road, Buckman Drive and Stadium Road and return to downtown via its normal route.

Later Gator C will follow the same reroute to campus as Later Gator A before continuing through Fraternity and West Fraternity drives to the Oaks Mall. It will follow the reverse reroute to return, according to an RTS news release.

SEE RTS, PAGE 8

Disney’s Space Mountain to get renovations

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Space Mountain — one of Walt Disney World’s most iconic attractions — will be closing this spring for a makeover.

Disney reported Wednesday that the Magic Kingdom ride will close April 19 so that the 34-year-old attraction can be freshened up. Park officials expect the ride to reopen later in the year, but no date has been set.

The renovations will include new track inside the enclosed coaster, but the layout of the track will remain the same. A new enclosure will be added to the ride’s queuing area, along with a new ceiling inside its prominent, white dome.

UF President Bernie Machen created a council to increase diversity among faculty and the student body. See story, Page 4.

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Professor donates $250K to spur creativity in entomology

Nan-Yao Su, a professor of entomology at UF, donated $250,000 to the Entomological Society of America last month.

Interest from the donation will be presented as a yearly award for innovation and creativity in entomology. Su said he made the donation following the death of Robert Cade, inventor of Gatorade.

"He was inspired by their theme of innovation," Su said. "I don't care," he said, adding he was protesting as an Alachua county citizen, not an elected official.

"It was a misunderstanding between friends one night after the LSU game," said Michael Canney, a friend of Grapski.

"Someone overheard the argument and called the cops, he said.

"He is not a criminal society needs to be protected from," Canney said. "He is not a threat to society or himself, and he is not a flight risk. A bond should be re-instated."

"It was a misunderstanding between friends one night after the LSU game."

Michael Canney
friend of Charlie Grapski

Commissioner Mike Byerly stood among the neon-colored signs that urged people to honk for Grapski’s release. He said he was protesting as an Alachua county citizen, not an elected official.

"Until Grapski is found guilty, he shouldn’t be in jail," Byerly said.

"If you look at a dragonfly’s mouthparts, you can see a very intricate structure there. That is just amazing to me," he said. "But innovation is not limited to the study of bugs, Su said.

"Creativity is needed everywhere," he said. "But I happen to be an entomologist."
Machen wants diversity

BY CHELSEA KEenan
Alligator Contributing Writer

UF President Bernie Machen is expanding efforts to further diversity among UF’s faculty and student body. The newly created Council on Diversity will be in charge of collecting and analyzing data from different colleges and departments, as well as proposing policies to increase diversity around UF, according to an e-mail sent by Machen on the Deans, Directors and Department Chairs Listserv.

UF spokesman Steve Orlando said the search for diversity is an ongoing issue.

“Diversity is always a challenge that we face,” Orlando said. “It is difficult to create that level of diversity where everyone is comfortable and happy.”

Orlando said the creation of the new council is one way the president believes we can achieve this level.

Several universities have taken similar actions throughout Florida, such as Florida State University, which is in the process of creating its diversity council.

The University of Central Florida, Florida Atlantic University and the University of North Florida also have similar groups.

UF’s committee will examine approaches by fellow universities, according to the e-mail.

“People look for a rich culture that Gainesville doesn’t offer.”

Larry Ellis
director of administration and equal employment opportunities

Larry Ellis, director of administration and equal employment opportunities at UF, said larger cities such as Orlando and Miami have an easier time recruiting a diverse student body and faculty.

“People look for a rich culture that Gainesville doesn’t offer,” he said.

Ellis said the implementation of the new council is a step in the right direction.

“Our goal is to have a faculty as diverse as the state of Florida,” he said. “And students as diverse as our faculty.”

UF fines faculty for not posting book info

By THOMAS STEWART
Alligator Writer
thstew1@alligator.org

It took some time and the threat of a $10 fine, but UF faculty are getting the hang of Florida’s textbook affordability law.

The law, which went into effect July 1, states that textbook requirements for courses at state universities and community colleges should be posted on the school’s Web site at least 30 days before the start of classes.

Just over 90 percent of all classes at UF had their textbooks posted on the UF Web site by UF’s deadline for spring semester, according to UF’s textbook adoption Web site.

About 73 percent of professors complied before the start of fall semester—the first semester the law was applied—according to information from the UF Provost’s office.

UF requires that faculty post textbook information roughly two months before classes start, instead of the minimum of 30 days. This requirement gives students more time to shop, and it gives bookstores a better idea of which books they will buy back from students at the semester’s end, said UF Provost Joseph Glover.

To increase faculty compliance with the new law, UF decided to start slapping colleges with less than 90 percent compliance with a $10 fine this semester for each book not posted by the deadline, which was Nov. 17.

The money from the fines, which hasn’t been levied yet, will be given to student assistance programs in the Provost’s office, such as the Office for Academic Support and Institutional Services or the Honors Program, Glover said.

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Residents take part in festivities

By HUNTER SIZEMORE
Alligator Contributing Writer

The wait is over. Tonight, Gainesville residents will root on the Gators alongside students during the BCS National Championship Game.

If the Gators win, University Avenue will overflow with excited fans.

One day, he said, one of the other officers, who was an FSU fan and had a desk next to his, got an FSU flag in the mail from his wife and decided to hang that up so he can stare at it up on the wall.

“Where he can see it, he puts it up on the wall. So he puts his FSU flag up, not where he can see it, (but he) puts it to where I can see it,” Hayes said.

“I had to get my own Gator flag and hang that up so he can stare at that,” he said.

Eventually, the two decided to call a truce and placed their respective flags in front of their own desks, he said.

King, who served under Hayes in the company, said he would go against military policy by wearing a 2006 national championship T-shirt and Gators hat while watching football games via a military satellite TV station on the American Forces Network.

The military doesn’t allow soldiers to bring civilian clothes to Iraq, he said.

The company returned from Iraq in November in time to watch UF play Alabama in the Southeastern Conference Championship game.

Hayes and King said they are both grateful to be able to watch the BCS National Championship Game at home.

“It’s absolutely awesome,” King said. “It’s like, not only are you at home, but you’re like whoooo!”

Football teams raised morale among troops

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Opinions

BCS Filibuster
Machen ideology rocks Capitol Hill

Tim Tebow, take a seat—the Editorial Board has a new hero.
He’s—dare we say—a Republican. Enter United States House Rep. Cliff Stearns stage left.

In just a mildly more important matter than a missed class or four, Stearns petitioned U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to accommodate his schedule with aspirations of attending the BCS National Championship Game on Thursday.

With hopes that Stearns could work on his tan and rub elbows with the likes of Percy Harvin and co. down in Miami, the Ocala congressman kindly inquired to Pelosi she would push the voting times on Thursday to a much more BCS-palatable Thursday morning.

Can we fault the man for wanting to look good in high definition on C-SPAN?

Stealing a page from the Bernie Machen playbook for how to lose friends and alienate people, Pelosi pulled the plug on Stearns’ weekend jaunt that undoubtedly would have included stops to South Beach hot spots like Mansion and Club Madonna.

The Editorial Board feels for you, Cliff. As the masses of Gators fans descend upon Miami or stay local to enjoy what will surely be a historic Gainesville evening, Stearns is no different—a victim of an unapologetic overseer clearly lacking any foresight.

But as stuffy as D.C. may appear, there is no shortage of bars that should provide Stearns the necessary libations to enjoy his evening.

We all joke about how success at UF is something we can for granted, but who knows the next time the football team will be competing on such a grand stage for the ultimate in bragging rights?

While tickets to Thursday’s game appear scarce, two decades in Congress clearly reveal that Stearns is not some freshly-minted politico looking to exploit his newfound status.

The man is simply a fan at heart who knows that the key to a well-rounded life is balancing his obligations in Washington and rooting for the Gators.

And even though he lunched other Florida and Oklahoma congressmen into his request—whose signatures were mysteriously absent from Stearns’ memo—we can’t fault him for thinking of his fellow football fans come Thursday night.

The Editorial Board applauds Stearns as a champion for fun in a time in which pessimism spreads across America nearly as fast as Brandon Spikes will return a Sam Bradford interception in this house for pick six.

Let us take solace in the fact that UF students no longer seem ludicrous for expecting a schedule change to accommodate the “outlandish” request of a repercussion-free trip to Miami.

For all we know, Pelosi possibly snubbed Stearns solely based on his party affiliation.

Hey Bernie, what’s your excuse?

The Editorial Board would hardly be shocked if word out of Washington, D.C., revealed Pelosi to be MIA come oh, say early evening on Thursday.

Not to mention if she’s seen boarding an orange and blue plane as the guest of honor of you-know-who.

Bright Futures intentions fall short

The first week of class is a wonderful, joyous week—it’s financial aid disbursement time. So when 73 percent of you collect your Bright Futures checks, think about the implications of that money.

The Bright Futures Scholarship Program has become a great entitlement that gives every high school graduate who can manage a 970 SAT—hardly Ivy League—a practically free education.

But this was never the intent of the program. The program was developed to encourage the brightest Florida students who might otherwise go out of state institutions to stay in state—hence a well-educated Florida with a “Bright Future.”

It didn’t take long for the Florida Legislature, in all of its infinite wisdom, to completely undermine every intention of this program. Bright Futures is now a public entitlement available to nearly every student who wants it.

This problem creates a strikingly apparent disconnect when the economic picture is down. Bright Futures is limited to the amount of funding it receives from the lottery, yet it is set up as an entitlement for anyone who meets the requirements.

This is great for students, even those who don’t qualify for Bright Futures, but it keeps our higher education in the guts of an upper-middle-class entitlement.

Florida is not going anywhere but down in the rankings if it keeps cutting departments because of budget woes.

How can we turn this upper-middle-class entitlement back to a program designed to keep Florida’s best and brightest in state?

Look only to the program that has nothing to do with keeping Florida’s best—the Florida Medallion Scholars Award (FMS), which pays 75 percent tuition to anyone who meets the minimum requirements—a 3.0 weighted high school GPA and a 970 composite SAT score.

In other words, FMS creates an entitlement for anyone who meets pitifully low testing requirements. Most of these students wouldn’t get any sort of scholarship to an out of state school, so it makes no sense to pay them to stay in state. Yet this program accounts for 75 percent of all Bright Futures disbursement.

I say, abolish the 75 percent FMS program.

The 100 percent Florida Academic Scholars (FAS) program applies to only the top 15 percent of college-bound students, so we should keep it as a legitimate means to keep the best students in state. With FMS abolished, FAS would have plenty of funding. We could then afford to raise tuition at Florida’s schools to competitive levels.

Since the FMS program makes up three quarters of all Bright Futures spending, there would still be plenty of money left over after raising tuition. We could use this money to fund need-based scholarships for those who otherwise couldn’t afford college.

These are often the same people shut out of Bright Futures because they can’t meet the arbitrary testing requirements. Gone would be the days of Bright Futures as an upper-middle-class entitlement—it would go only to those who earn it and those who need it.

Those on the 75 percent program who don’t qualify for need-based aid may just have to do something unheard of in our welfare state: pay a bit for college.

College is an investment. Investments aren’t supposed to be free.

So happy financial aid week to everyone! Enjoy your entitlements, courtesy of the state of Florida.

Johnathan Lott is political science and economics sophomore. His column appears on Thursdays.

Editorial  

The Alligator encourages comments from readers. Letters to the editor should not exceed 150 words, include your first and last name, school major, class standing and phone number. Letters are subject to editing for brevity. Alligator reserves the right to post all letters. View letters online at alligator.org.

Letters should be submitted to: 601 University Ave, Gainesville, FL 32611-1105. E-mail letters to letters@alligator.org. Fax letters to 352-378-4406. Visit the Alligator Online at www.alligator.org. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of the Alligator.

www.alligator.org/opinions

CONGRESS
A Florida representative has petitioned to have time off to watch the National Championship. He was turned down.

Wow, that Cliff Stearns is really a Gator! Too bad he can’t go to the game cause he has to be here.

Wait a minute, is that a real gator? Did Stearns just dress up a gator in a suit as a decoy so that he could go to Miami?

Column
Bright Futures intentions fall short

Johnathan Lott
letters@alligator.org

Readers' response

The views expressed here are not necessarily those of the Alligator.

Today's question: Are you going to skip class on Friday?

24% YES
76% NO

Wednesday's question: Should Roland Burris be seated in the Senate?

Vote or post a message at www.alligator.org
Israel attacks not in self-defense

In reading yesterday’s article regarding the UF student reaction to the conflict in Gaza, I felt that Naomi Fireman’s comments were extremely insensitive to the plight that the Palestinian people now face.

She claimed that the attacks were not meant to hurt civilians, but can she explain how three UN schools – used primarily by civilians – were “accidentally” bombed, killing more than 40 civilians? How about the hospitals that have been bombed with patients in them re-

Y

Hamas doesn't want peace

What would you do if you lived under the constant threat of rocket attack? Since Israel pulled out of Gaza in 2005, the people of southern Israel have been held hostage by Hamas. The truth is that there never really was a ceasefire to begin with. Since Israel left Gaza, Hamas, which is recognized as a terrorist group by both the U.S. and the EU, has fired more than 6,000 rockets into civilian areas of Israel.

Critics love to point the finger at Israel for “collectively punish-
ings” the Palestinians. However, isn’t firing rockets at Israeli civil-
ians a form of indiscriminate, collective punishment? Unfortunately, Hamas has also decided to pun-

Hammas rocket fire, which rarely hits Israeli territory, is now being fired more frequently than before, hitting hospitals and schools as launching pads for rockets. Most disturbingly, Hamas uses houses, schools and hospitals as launching pads for rockets. Most disturbingly, Hamas uses human shields – a blatant viola-
tion of international law. Israel is doing the world’s work by fighting a radical group that has become a cancer in the Middle East.

As long as Hamas holds inno-
cent people hostage and continues to put its own population under fire, there can be no hope for peace in the region. Israel wants to live in peace with its neighbors.

That’s why Israel made painful concessions to make peace with Egypt and Jordan. The problem is that Hamas doesn’t want peace with Israel. It wants an end to peaceful nations altogether.

Spencer Solis

Guest column

Skin-tight shirts fail to make men into campus tough guys

You’ve got to love fads. The concept is solid gold.

Skin-tight shirts fail to make men into campus tough guys. The fad that’s sweeping college campuses this year is solid gold. It’s a new trend that’s making men feel like they’re the ultimate fitness freaks.

One of the biggest advantages of wearing skin-tight shirts is that they make guys look slimmer and more defined. They also highlight the muscles in your arms, shoulders, and back.

I think that the main reason why men are flocking to this trend is because they want to look good. Most guys are interested in attracting attention and getting noticed. Wearing skin-tight shirts can definitely draw attention to your physique.

However, just because a guy is wearing skin-tight shirts doesn’t mean that he’s a tough guy. Many guys are wearing them because they want to look good or because they’re trying to impress someone.

Unfortunately, this trend can be misleading. Men who wear skin-tight shirts might come across as being shallow, only interested in looks. It’s important to remember that there are many other ways to appear confident and strong without having to rely on clothing.

Some other ways to look tough are:

1. Build your body. Exercise regularly and make sure to focus on building your muscles. This will help you look strong and confident.

2. Dress to the part. Wear clothing that makes you feel like you’re a tough guy. This could include clothing like jeans, t-shirts, and sneakers.

3. Be confident. Believe in yourself and your abilities. This will help you appear confident and strong.

4. Stay focused. Don’t get distracted by people who are only interested in appearances. Focus on your goals and work hard to achieve them.

So, while skin-tight shirts might be a new trend, it’s important to remember that there are many other ways to appear tough and confident. Don’t let one fad define who you are.
GPD to grease local light poles

**POLICE, from page 1**

The GPD learned from former championships, said GPD spokesman Keith Kameg.

“The biggest problem we had last time was with cars that were parked in lots on University Avenue,” said Kameg.

After the national basketball championship in 2007, people climbed on car rooftops to get a bird’s-eye view of the chaos.

Hallett said that GPD is also greasing the light poles on University Avenue.

“No one looks at the guy on the greased pole as the cool guy, and no one thinks it’s funny when they get down,” Hallett said.

For the Gainesville Police Department, the game is a reminder of Lt. Corey Dahlem, who was killed by a drunken driver after the Gators basketball national championship in April 2007.

“Our main goal is that people have fun. But fun is only fun when it’s safe,” Hallett said. “We don’t want that to happen again to anyone. It mars the event itself.”

The Miami-Dade Police Department is also preparing for the game at Dolphin Stadium in Miami.

“We are hoping for a very peaceful event,” said police Detective Juan Villalba, “but we have contingencies in place if crimes do happen.”

“Detours help prevent fan injury

**RTS, from page 1**

RTS planned the reroutes after a joint meeting between UF, the Gainesville Police Department, the Florida Department of Transportation and the City of Gainesville Public Works Department, which includes RTS, said Theresa Harrison, an RTS spokeswom-an. Officials discussed plans to prepare for the championship game’s crowds.

Harrison said the goal of the reroutes is to provide reliable transportation to RTS customers and keep revelers out of the way of traffic.

“This is a wonderful thing because you know we’re going to win,” she said. “We need to support it, but support it in the safest way possible.”

Other preparations for Thursday night include blocking areas on University Avenue and First Avenue with dump trucks and greasing traffic polls with PAM cooking spray to deter climbing, said Gainesville Public Works spokeswoman Gina Hawkins.

“We definitely know that this is a good idea,” she said.

“Detours help prevent fan injury

**Gators Gather for Championship**

Gators fans who can’t make the trip to Miami will celebrate the Gators’ BCS Championship victory over Oklahoma at Café Gardens Thursday. They will enjoy:

- Really Good Food
- Really Cold Beer
- No Cover Charge
- Extra TVs for the game
- GO GATORS!!

**Detours help prevent fan injury**

**Butler Plaza**

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**332-3937**

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**Find more information and to register for the tournament, visit thegenerationconnection.com or call Joel Daunic at 352.378.4389**

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- All Stars Basketball Tournament

- Contact Alligator Classifieds at [352] 373.4482 -
I have always had the same New Year resolutions: to stop smoking, to start wearing a bra and to stop shopping.

Cameron Diaz

Stephanie Granada writes about spring fashion and color therapy in this week’s fashion column. Added bonuses: an interview and photo with a stylish UF student.

Sex columnist Ashley Ross gives advice on how to tell if your fall flame has burned out. Also, Robbie Hilson reviews the new All-American Rejects album.

If you want to see more streetwear fashion or learn more about the long-awaited Guns N’ Roses album, go to www.alligator.org/the_avenue.

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online

The A-List [resolutions]

January is hardly in full swing, meaning you still have time to reevaluate all of the mistakes you made in 2008 (which includes anything that happened on New Year’s Eve). Just avoid these cliché resolutions if you want to keep your promises until February.

Resolution No. 1: Get in shape
You fantasize about your future toned body and even bought new workout clothes. Too bad you can hardly handle the weight of the two textbooks in your backpack and consider Pop-Tarts a balanced breakfast.

Resolution No. 2: Discover a new hobby
The slow-motion pace of winter break has led you to believe you have time on your hands. But it’s all a mirage to conceal your anxiety about the 18-credit course load your adviser talked you into. The closest thing you’ll get to a hobby is working, or maybe even studying.

Resolution No. 3: Be a better person
The soup kitchen beckons, and you’re ready to get your Mother Teresa on. But are you really going to wake up at 8 a.m. on a Saturday to build a house for Habitat for Humanity?

Resolution No. 4: Lay off the caffeine
You swear you’re going to save the $3.99 you usually spend on your daily grande, non-fat, half-caf latte. This will work for about a week until all of the reading you’re putting off requires an all-nighter.

11:

Indie-rock band Starmaker is playing a benefit show Saturday at the Kickstand. Photo courtesy of John Waller.
The malls were packed, elaborate sale signs hung decoratively in store windows and anxious souls swarmed the racks searching for the perfect gifts to go under the tree, but nobody bought much. Despite the garland and 20-inch snowflakes, shoppers were in unprecedentedly low spirits this holiday season. Perhaps it’s the economy or the warm weather that kept wallets shut this December. Whatever the reason may be, designers aren’t having it. In the upcoming season, prepare to see fashion magazines and stores bursting with colorful, bubble-gum-pop clothes, the kind of garments that make you giddy just looking at them.

On the Street: Flavia Cervantes Must-Haves: “For spring I am looking for the perfect pair of bright platforms. I also really like oversized clutches.”

Her Way: “I like to wear a mixture of old and new things, like vintage and contemporary pieces. I also mix a lot of opposites, such as girly florals with edgy boots.”

Style Icons: “Since I have short hair, I look to people like Audrey Hepburn or Liza Minnelli. I am crazy about florals, especially vintage, and I look to fashion bloggers for inspiration.”

What She’s Wearing: “Betsey Johnson accessories, a Forever 21 skirt, Urban Outfitters flats, and an H & M cardigan.”

During the spring fashion shows, designers took advantage of the effects of colors by presenting bright and vibrant clothing lines. Zac Posen showed a series of willowy yellow dresses and blouses, and John Galliano’s designs ranged in color from cherry-red to lime-sorbet-greens.

Children’s prints are in full swing too, with Michael Kors’ picnic table plaid and Lanvin’s super-tailored, Minnie Mouse-style polka dot dress.

High-end designers aren’t alone in the color craze. Shopping mall stores have started pulling out the color wheel hues. For example, the window display at Express in the Oaks Mall has mannequins dressed in jazzy dresses and shiny tanks.

Go head-to-toe with the playground cheer or tone down a bright blouse with dark or neutral bottoms.

If you walk out of your house this season looking unusually bright, fun and young, rest assured that you are doing your part in restoring the economy and overall well-being of the community. Now skip on to the mall for a happier us.

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Band stages benefit

LANE NIESET • AVENUE EDITOR

In a small village in El Salvador, one man has not left in 10 or 12 years. So much time has passed that he can’t remember the last time he left. The nearest stream, which is barely a trickle, is a 10 minute hike over hills and poor health conditions prevent many people in the town of El Limon from leaving.

On Saturday at the Kickstand, there will be an Indie Dance Party with DJ Cameron to raise money for a public health project benefiting El Limon. The show starts at 9:30 and will feature the bands Starmaker and Waylon Thornton and the Hands. Pre-sale tickets are a $5 donation or $6 the day of the event.

The show will be the first event in a series of fundraisers for the UF-affiliated group Student Outreach: El Limon (S.O.L) and its trip in May. This is the third year the group is making a trip to El Limon. This year, the group is looking for donations of shoes, children’s clothing, dental supplies, and computers and microscopes for the clinic. The group’s goals for the future include creating a small community farm, bringing more water to the area, making the community more prosperous, and improving the diet of the people, Amaya said.

Susan Fesperman, the other co-president, hopes the benefit show will help people learn more about the group and become interested in the cause. “These people have so little, but they are so generous and opened their homes to us,” she said. “It is hard to see anyone living with so little.”
Afternoon Tea Time Meridian Treats
Join us and experience a unique selection  from British and Japanese snacks and teas. Our traditional scones are served with a pot of tea of your choice. Over 24 types of tea available. Seating available for up to 50 people. Private rooms available. Time between teas: 3:30-5:00pm
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www.meridiansweettea.net

American Cafe Gardens Cafe Gardens has been just across from campus since 1976. This quintessential landmark establishment with award winning chef creating delicious food is perfect for any date or gathering of friends. For live music schedule, call 352-273-2188.
1645 NW 1st Ave

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Panasonic Cafe Bistro 1245
Open daily from 11am to 9pm. We have a full bar available and now serving dinner nights. We have a full bar, including wine, whiskey, vodka, and a vast selection of spirits. We also serve a variety of beers and wines. We have a large selection of appetizers, entrees, and desserts. We have a full bar with a variety of beers, wines, and spirits. We offer a wide selection of beers, wines, and spirits, as well as a variety of appetizers and entrees.

American
Apple Fritters, made from Granny smith apples, topped in cinnamon sugar and drizzled with a drizzle of honey. We also offer breakfast options daily. Our menu includes eggs benedict, hash browns, toast, and more. Our menu includes eggs benedict, hash browns, toast, and more. Our menu includes eggs benedict, hash browns, toast, and more.

Golden Buddha
Where eating with meaning meets great Chinese food. Our menu includes a variety of dishes, including sushi, rolls, and Specials. As always, generous portions, fast service & super lunch combo. FREE DELIVERY

Barbeque
David’s BBQ
Lunch, Dinner, Drive-In. Eat In, Take-Out, Drive-In. Enjoy your meal in the comfort of your own home or office. We offer a variety of dishes, including BBQ ribs, pulled pork, and a variety of sides. We also offer a variety of drinks, including beer and wine. We have a full bar with a variety of beers, wines, and spirits. We offer a wide selection of beers, wines, and spirits, as well as a variety of appetizers and entrees.

Coffee Shop
Maudie’s Classic Coffee
A gourmet coffee shop with a variety of fresh coffee drinks made daily. We also serve delicious sandwiches, salads, appetizers, beer, & wine. Maudie’s Classic Coffee offers a variety of drinks, including beer and wine. We have a full bar with a variety of beers, wines, and spirits. We offer a wide selection of beers, wines, and spirits, as well as a variety of appetizers and entrees.

Asian

Cuba
Cuban Restaurant & Advertor Caffeine
Open daily from 12-5pm in addition to our regular hours. We have a full bar with a variety of beers, wines, and spirits. We offer a wide selection of beers, wines, and spirits, as well as a variety of appetizers and entrees.

Breakfast and Lunch
Bagels Unlimited
Serving breakfast and lunch daily from 6am to 5pm. We offer a variety of bagels, lox, cream cheese, and other deli items. We also have a variety of pastries, including a variety of bagels, lox, cream cheese, and other deli items. We also have a variety of pastries, including a variety of bagels, lox, cream cheese, and other deli items.

Key West Style
Mellow Mushroom
Now offering a variety of dishes, including pizza, salads, and more! We also offer a variety of appetizers, including garlic knots, onion rings, and more. We offer a variety of appetizers, including garlic knots, onion rings, and more. We offer a variety of appetizers, including garlic knots, onion rings, and more.

Local & Organic
Mildred’s Big City
Food in Gainesville is more fun when you live, work, and play on the city’s best streets! Our menu includes a variety of dishes, including pizza, salads, and more! We also offer a variety of appetizers, including garlic knots, onion rings, and more. We offer a variety of appetizers, including garlic knots, onion rings, and more.

Pizza
restraunt before you take them. Lunch & Dinner 7 days, Outside Seating. Unique Birds. Call for specific hours and delivery information.

Original Pizza Palace
Our philosophy has been that fresh is best. Enjoy daily bread baked in stone, pizza grapes soals & salads, homemade beer and wine, ground sausage; beer, wine, and awesone desserts. Comforter, organic coffee, Bagi Bagi, Artie’s Pizza. Open for Breakfast and Lunch: Mon-Sun 8-3pm. Dinner: Sun-Thur 12-5pm, Fri-Sat 12-10pm.

Vegetarian
Book Lover’s Cafe Vegetarian and vegan cuisine. Natural, organic, fair trade, meatless, salads, and whole foods. Located at 100 SE 11th St., Gainesville, FL 32601.

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FOOTBALL
Monthlong rest allows Gators’ injuries time to heal

By EVAN DREXLER
Alligator Staff Writer
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MIAMI — While the time between the Gators’ last two games may have been tough on players mentally, it’s a good thing they had those 33 days to recover from injuries.

UF coach Urban Meyer thinks the extra time off will be crucial to the Gators’ success tonight.

“If we played this game any earlier than Jan. 8, I don’t think we’d have a chance to win just because of our injury situation,” Meyer said.

Wide receiver Percy Harvin, who sprained his right ankle against FSU on Nov. 29 and missed the Southeastern Conference Championship, should be fine to play against FSU on Nov. 29 and missed who sprained his right ankle as well as running back Kestahn Moore (all knee injuries) will be available for UF as well.

Meyer knows part of the problem with playing, for the Sooners’ defense is that there is very little video of them playing their best.

Since the Sooners are usually ahead by a good margin at halftime, there was little reason for them to go all-out in the second half.

While looking at game film for most teams, Meyer sees 800 to 900 “competitive snaps.” But for Oklahoma?

“You take that and probably cut it right in half, because they’re just beating the mess out of teams,” Meyer said.

This is part of the reason Oklahoma’s defense is underrated, Meyer said — it’s barely playing in situations where it has had to try.

“So I see a fine defense, I see an excellent defense that we’re getting ready to face, especially when you look at the competitive snaps,” Meyer said.

QUIT WHILE YOU’RE AHEAD: Don’t expect to see a cane-wielding Meyer roaming the sidelines in 30 years.

The UF coach said Wednesday morning that he’ll be out of coaching long before he turns 70.

“There will be no chance I’ll be doing this into my 70s or 80s,” Meyer said. “Zero. None.”

The era of long-tenured coaches like Penn State’s Joe Paterno and FSU’s Bobby Bowden is a thing of the past, Meyer said.

“I don’t know if you’ll ever see that again,” Meyer said. “You certainly won’t see it at the same institution. People get tired and they want to run you out of town.”

Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops also sees an end to his coaching career coming earlier than his eighth decade.

“No way,” Stoops said while laughing. “I don’t need it. I love what I do. I mean, I absolutely love it. It’s exciting, it’s everything you want. You know you’re alive every day.”

WHO’S NO. 1? Utah upended Alabama in the Sugar Bowl on Friday and finished its season as the only undefeated team in the FBS.

Meyer, who coached at Utah previous to UF, understands completely why the Utes feel they are deserving of a national championship and why coach Kyle Whittingham would vote for his team in the final Coaches Poll as the No. 1 team.

USC coach Pete Carroll and Texas coach Mack Brown have said in the media that they are also going to vote their teams as No. 1.

“Well, that’s absolutely what they should do,” Meyer said.

“I’ve got news: I’m representing the University of Florida, and I’m an employee of the University of Florida, and I represent my players. I’m going to fight like a dog to take care of them.”

Meyer was widely accused of “lobbying” for UF to make the 2006 BCS National Championship Game, which received negative publicity.

“I love that term. I was lobbying,” Meyer said. “I simply said that we belonged in the game. ... If a coach would win a game (and go 15-1) and not fight for their players, that’s not a good coach.”

Stoops, however, did not want to comment about other teams’ claims for a national title and said those things are up for the media to decide.

“I mean, that’s not for me to do,” Stoops said. “They’re all good football teams, everyone realizes that.”

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Gators enter SEC play, new season

**UF IS RIDING A 14-GAME WINNING STREAK.**

By CHRISTOPHER YAZBEC
Alligator Writer
cyazbec@alligator.org

Forget about their record. Forget about what they’ve done over the past two months.

At this point in the season, none of it matters.

Because, when the UF women’s basketball team takes the court at 5 p.m. against Mississippi State in the O’Connell Center, Southeastern Conference play begins, and the No. 18 Gators’ record in-conference is 0-0.

Some of UF’s players are looking at this as the second part of the season and are throwing their 14-1 record out the window.

“This is where it all goes down,” senior forward Mariah Dotson said. “It’s a new season. We’ve got to start off right.”

UF coach Amanda Butler has sent a subtle reminder in practice this week that SEC play has arrived.

“Coach, she turned it up a notch, and we had to turn it up too,” Dotson said. “If not, we were going to get left behind or get kicked out of practice, one of the two.”

Senior guard Sha Brooks agreed. “She’s kind of amped up practice more,” Brooks said. “Practice is 10 times more intense than it was in the preseason. Right now we really need that because we’re really going after the SEC Championship, and we can win it this year.”

For Brooks and Dotson, seniors who were on a 9-22 team just two years ago, having expectations of challenging to win one of the nation’s toughest leagues never seemed possible until now.

Dotson knows based on past experiences the SEC grind will be a lot more intense and physical than the Gators’ out-of-conference matchups.

UF did prepare well, though, for the physicality of the conference by playing and beating teams like Florida State, Arizona State, North Carolina State and Pittsburgh.

Junior transfer Stefie Sorensen only knows how tough the SEC slate will be based off what she has seen and heard from her teammates and coaches.

“I’m a newcomer. I don’t really know much about this SEC thing,” Sorensen said. “Based on coaches, I kind of got that vibe that it’s time to step it up. Non-conference is over and this is a whole new playing field. I feel like it’s going to be a battle, basically, and I’m ready to go to war.”

Sorensen has seen her team go from being the hunters to the hunted in a conference that currently has four ranked teams. That will likely factor in to the way teams like Mississippi State (12-2) approach playing against a ranked UF squad, giving them added motivation.

“I just feel like the more games we started winning, the bigger the X gets on your back,” Sorensen said. “Now people are like, ‘OK, Florida might be the team to beat.’”

Brooks couldn’t be more ready to take on the challenge of the SEC, and when asked how excited she was, all she could do was smile.

“These past few weeks, when we get ready to play, Mississippi State is going to show us how ready we are to actually accept the challenge of the SEC,” Brooks said. “The energy, just knowing that at any given time, if you don’t bring your A-game, that you could get knocked off. It’s ridiculous.”

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By PHIL KEGLER
Alligator Staff Writer
pgkepler@alligator.org

MIAMI — It all started with a playful jab. It’s become a war of the words.

CBS analyst Verne Lundquist said during the Southeastern Conference Championship Game broadcast that UF quarterback Tim Tebow, while discussing his Heisman vote, had joked he would like to go up against a Big 12 opponent. The comment referred to some critics who have deemed the offensive statistics put up by Oklahoma’s Sam Bradford, Texas Tech’s Graham Harrell, and Texas’s Colt McCoy inflated.

The Sooners’ defense is tired you look at the three best receivers in the country. The Sooners out to prove Big 12 can play defense, too.

The Sooners’ defense is tired you look at the three best receivers in the country. The Sooners out to prove Big 12 can play defense, too.

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**OKLAHOMA FOOTBALL**

Sooners out to prove Big 12 can play defense, too

By CHRISTOPHER YAZBEC
Alligator Staff Writer
cyazbec@alligator.org

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Oklahoma’s defense will have plenty of motivation but will have to improve on its regular-season statistics. Nationally, the Sooners ranked 63rd in total defense and 98th in pass defense.

Defensive back Nic Harris was short when asked about preparing for UF playmaker Percy Harvin.

“No other difference than preparing for (Texas Tech receiver) Michael Crabtree or (Missouri back) Dominique McLean,” Harris said. “Next question.”

Sooners coach Bob Stoops said his defense has had clutch tendencies. Oklahoma leads the nation in turnover margin and ranks third in sacks per game (3.23).

“We have stepped up in different times when we’ve had to,” Stoops said. “But we’ve been inconsistent. I think that’s fair to say.”

Harris added that all the statistics will go down the drain after 60 minutes of football.

“At the end of the day, the only thing that’s going to matter is who plays better defense (Thursday night),” Harris said. “The old cliché is offense wins games, defense wins championships. This is a championship.”

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Monday, December 8, 2008

SWEETER THAN SUGAR

Members of the UF football team celebrate as they view the announcement that they will play in the BCS National Championship Game in Miami on Jan. 8 against Oklahoma. They got the news during a dinner in the Gator Room in the Heavener Football Complex at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium on Sunday night.

Gators earn spot in BCS Championship Game against Oklahoma
By EVAN DREXLER

After UF defeated Arkansas, the Gators found themselves in a very sweet situation.

Seven days after the Orange Bowl is played at the same site, the two teams that make the BCS Championship Game will be announced.

The Gators are ranked No. 2 in the current BCS standings, but they still have a chance to rise to No. 1. Oklahoma is ranked No. 1 and has a good chance to stay there.

If the Sooners win their game against Nebraska, the Sooners will have a chance to win a national title.

The Gators need to win their game against Arkansas to keep their chances alive.

The Gators are currently ranked No. 2 in the BCS standings, but they still have a chance to rise to No. 1.

The Gators need to win their game against Arkansas to keep their chances alive.

The Gators need to win their game against Arkansas to keep their chances alive.

By Evan Drexler

For a photo gallery from the Southeastern Conference Championship Game, visit www.aligator.org/gallery.
OKLAHOMA FOOTBALL

OU’s linemen step up game

BY BRIAN STEELE
Alligator Staff Writer
bsteele@alligator.org

MIAMI — Oklahoma senior center Jon Cooper chuckles and agrees it’s usually a good sign when the offensive linemen aren’t in the spotlight. Cooper’s content not to deal with “100 cameras” and is happy to take the occasional slap on the back or get a free dinner.

So when Texas held Oklahoma to 48 rushing yards on 26 attempts in the Sooners’ 45-35 loss on Oct. 11 and the linemen took much of the heat for not opening up holes, it got ugly. The Oklahoma offensive line entered the season as one of the highest-rated in the country, but for the first time in quite a while, they were dealing with criticisms.

“It wasn’t very fun,” Cooper said of what offensive coordinator Kevin Wilson was like that following week in practice.

“He said a lot of words I can’t repeat.”

Instead, it was the fans and media who used words that were repeated.

“These guys (on the offensive line) were fed up,” junior running back Chris Brown said. “(Critics) were saying we can’t run the ball. We wanted to make a statement.”

That statement now has several exclamation points at the end. Ever since their loss to Texas, the Sooners’ only missstep of the season, Oklahoma has had at least 17 rushing yards every game and has eclipsed the 200-yard mark regularly.

“It did kind of put our head on straight and gave us the reality that we’re not unstoppable.” — Jon Cooper

Oklahoma senior center

“Just you have to make your mind up. We’re going to run the football,” senior right guard Brandon Walker said. “You have to have that attitude that we’re going to run the football no matter how many people you have in the box.”

Walker and Cooper said the line lacked physicality in the Texas game and, after having the run game shut down early, they couldn’t get it going again, as the Sooners relied only on their passing game.

Sometimes, even the top students in their class need to fail a test to realize they need to work harder.

“It did kind of put our head on straight and gave us the reality that we’re not unstoppable.” — Jon Cooper

Oklahoma senior center

BRIAN from page 24


If he returns next year, he has the chance to win three national championships and two Heisman trophies in his tenure.

Tebow had to prove it on the field to get these opportunities, but he does that almost every time his cleats touch grass.

He has had unprecedented statistics, becoming the first player ever to score 20 passing and 20 rushing touchdowns in a single season.

He was the first sophomore to ever win the Heisman Trophy. These are only the sub-points of why he deserves to be known as the greatest.

When people look back on college football in 2008, if the Gators win tonight, the image of Tebow proclaiming nobody will work harder than him after a 31-20 loss to Mississippi will be what’s remembered.

He is not just the greatest player. He’s the greatest person. He chest-bumps offensive coordinator Dan Mullen before games and then thanks Jesus Christ afterward. He runs over opponents after they say they will find a way to stop him, and then goes into the defense and special teams huddles, telling them to play harder than ever.

This is what greatness is about, and this is Tim Tebow. This may be the greatest college football player ever.

Will it happen? Let’s go find out.

BCS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
PREDICTIONS

WITH alligatorSports

In a year when much of the talk has focused on conference supremacy — SEC or Big 12 — the Gators will keep the SEC on top of the list with a tight win tonight.

FINAL SCORE: UF 28, OKLAHOMA 24

After all the buildup and hoopla, the big game is finally here, and it will live up to its billing. The Gators’ defense will do an admirable job holding Oklahoma’s offense to “just” 32 points. But Tim Tebow will add to his legend by leading his offense down the field for the game-winning drive.

FINAL SCORE: UF 33, OKLAHOMA 20

Is this the game where UF meets its match? Will Oklahoma’s high-powered offense finally shut the Gators’ defense? These questions have me stuck for weeks. Oklahoma’s D will not be able to stop UF. The Gators will be able to slow but not stop the Sooners.

FINAL SCORE: UF 49, OKLAHOMA 26

Both teams have excellent offenses, but Oklahoma’s has a much tougher task against the Gators’ defense and its newfound swagger. UF might not shut down Sam Bradford and the Sooners, but the secondary will make a few big plays, and that can turn an evenly matched game into a yawner.

FINAL SCORE: UF 38, OKLAHOMA 20

Sam Bradford steps back, and there’s a missed block on the Oklahoma offensive line. The Heisman winner is forced to rush his throw, and it’s picked off. Whether it be Bradford, Tim Tebow, Percy Harvin or anybody else, there will be key turnovers in this game, and that’s what will decide it.

And with the way the Gators intercept passes, that’s a good thing for them.

FINAL SCORE: UF 34, OKLAHOMA 27
UF RUN vs. OKLAHOMA RUN DEFENSE
UF rushes for 229.8 yards per game, OKLAHOMA allows 106.0 yards per game.

KEY PLAYERS: UF: Fr, RB Jeff Demps (69 att – 582 yards, 8.4 avg, 7 TDs), Fr, RB Chadbon Smith (94 att – 810 yards, 8.6 avg, 1 TD); So, RB Mike Thomas (77 att – 450 yards, 5.8 avg, 3 TDs); Sr, RB Ahmad Black (54 tackles, 12.0 TFL, 3.5 sacks, 4 INTs, 106 yds); Jf, LB Keenan Clayton (76 tackles, 10.0 TFL, 4.5 sacks, 1 INT)

ANALYSIS: Speed. Yes. That’s the buzzword here in Miami. Can the Oklahoma defense keep up with the speed of the UF offense? Is the speed of the Sooners defensive backs going to catch the Gators by surprise? We’re going with no to both of those questions. Oklahoma hasn’t seen players as dynamic as Demps, Rainey and Harvin, and they will get a large dose of them tonight.

ADVANTAGE: UF

UF PASS vs. OKLAHOMA PASS DEFENSE
UF passes for 212.6 yards per game, OKLAHOMA allows 253.1 yards per game.

KEY PLAYERS: UF: Jr, QB Tim Tebow (2,515 yds, 28 TDs, 2 INTs, 64.9 pct, 176.74 rating); Jr, WR Percy Harvin (35 rec, 595 yds, 17.0 avg, 7 TDs); Sr, WR Louis Murphy (36 rec, 611 yds, 17.0 avg, 6 TDs); OU: Sr, D8 Lendy Holmes (79 tackles, 1.5 TFL, 5 INTs, 73 yds); Jr, DB Brian Jackson (67 tackles, 4.0 TFL, 2 INTs, 21 yds)

ANALYSIS: For the first time all year, Murphy has more receiving yards than Harvin. Expect Harvin to reclaim his spot atop the receiving charts. Murphy, a senior leader, might be the one to make the long touchdown catch at the end of the night.

ADVANTAGE: UF

OKLAHOMA RUN vs. UF RUN DEFENSE
OKLAHOMA rushes for 356.5 yards per game, UF allows 105.3 yards per game.

KEY PLAYERS: OU: Jr, RB Chris Brown (195 att – 1,110 yds, 5.7 avg, 20 TDs); So, RB Mossis Madu (111 att – 463, 4.2 avg, 6 TDs); UF: Jr, MLB Brandon Spikes (87 tackles, 8.0 TFL, 2.0 sacks, 4 INTs, 93 yds); Jr, DE Jermaine Cunningham (51 tackles, 10.0 TFL, 6.0 sacks)

ANALYSIS: The Oklahoma running game is impressive, sure, but it will be missing DeMarco Murray, the Sooners’ leading rusher. Murray’s absence will put more pressure on Brown and Madu, who may get tired as their workload increases. Spikes and company are completely healthy for what seems like the first time all season, and they’ll be thankful to face only two-thirds of the Sooners’ best runners. This is a close category, but Murray’s absence swings it toward the Gators.

ADVANTAGE: UF

OKLAHOMA PASS vs. UF PASS DEFENSE
OKLAHOMA passes for 205.5 yards per game, UF allows 174.0 yards per game.

KEY PLAYERS: OU: Sr, QB Sam Bradford (4,464 yds, 48 TDs, 15.3 avg, 12 TDs), Jr, WR Juaquin Iglesias (69 rec, 1,092 yds, 15.8 avg, 10 TDs), Jr, TE Jermaine Gresham (68 rec, 888 yds, 15.3 avg, 12 TDs); UF: Sr, CB Joe Haden (77 tackles, 0.5 TFL, 3 INTs, 136 yds), So, S Major Wright (57 tackles, 3 INTs, 35 yds), So, S Ahmad Black (54 tackles, 6 INTs, 192 yds)

ANALYSIS: The UF passing defense has been a phenomenally improved unit all year. In 2007, it was a joke. But in 2008, the Gators secondary has shut down opponents. Despite all their hard work, there’s no way to completely shut down Bradford, the reigning Heisman winner. He’ll have a less-impressive night than usual, but don’t be surprised to see Iglesias or Gresham burn the Gators defensive backs on a play or two.

ADVANTAGE: OU

SPECIAL TEAMS

KEY PLAYERS: UF: Sr, Kicker Jonathan Phillips (11-12 FGs, long 42), Sr, Punter Chas Henry (41 punts, 42.8 avg, long 60), Jr, KR Brandon James (2,515 yds, 28 TDs, 2 INTs, 64.9 pct, 176.74 rating); Jr, WR Juaquin Iglesias (69 rec, 595 yds, 17.0 avg, 7 TDs); Jr, TE Jermaine Gresham (68 rec, 888 yds, 15.3 avg, 12 TDs); Ou: Sr, CB Joe Haden (77 tackles, 0.5 TFL, 3 INTs, 136 yds), So, S Major Wright (57 tackles, 3 INTs, 35 yds), So, S Ahmad Black (54 tackles, 6 INTs, 192 yds)

ANALYSIS: Murray’s absence also hurts the Sooners’ kick return game, as he was the their leading kick returner before he got hurt. Combine that with a freshman field goal kicker — usually not something you can trust in a pressure situation — and you’ve got a matchup that favors the Gators. James is well-overdue for a touchdown on a punt return, and the Sooners’ kick coverage has been lackluster this year.

ADVANTAGE: UF

INTANGIBLES

The coaching matchup between Urban Meyer and Bob Stoops is too close to call. The teams’ recent histories indicate greatness on both sides. Oklahoma and UF have equally dedicated and rabid fan bases. Both teams share some form of an underdog aspect (UF is No. 2 in the BCS rankings, while Oklahoma is actually not favored to win). Yeah. This game is pretty even on paper. Just two little things decide this category in UF’s favor: A slight home-field advantage in proximity to the schools and the fact that UF has a couple players who won a title in 2006.
MIAMI — Joe Haden is a starting cornerback for UF — one of the nation’s most well-known and respected teams — and he’s about to play for the Gators in their second BCS Championship appearance in three seasons.

It would seem as though Haden is sitting atop the college football world, but he doesn’t see it that way just yet. He knows UF still has work to do before it can lay claim to being America’s preeminent program, and he marvels at the school that currently holds that honor.

“I look at college football and see a lot of good teams, but when I look at USC, even though I’m playing college football, I’m still just like, ‘Man, that’s a great team,’” Haden said. “They have one guy, (safety) Taylor Mays, when I look at him, he looks like a superhero or something.”

For most of the 2000s, Southern Cal has ruled the NCAA. The Trojans have finished in the top five of the final Associated Press rankings every year since 2002, and they’re poised to extend that streak after defeating Penn State in the Rose Bowl.

USC has been the benchmark for success in college football lately, but if Haden and No. 1 UF can get past No. 2 Oklahoma tonight in the BCS title game, they’ll accomplish something even the Trojans haven’t.

Since the BCS started in 1998, just one team has won two outright championships, and both the Gators (2006) and Sooners (2000) have a title in hand, meaning tonight’s winner will join 2007 champion LSU as the only teams with two BCS titles.

MIA

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“I look at college football and see a lot of good teams, but when I look at USC, even though I’m playing college football, I’m still just like, ‘Man, that’s a great team,’” Haden said. “They have one guy, (safety) Taylor Mays, when I look at him, he looks like a superhero or something.”

For most of the 2000s, Southern Cal has ruled the NCAA. The Trojans have finished in the top five of the final Associated Press rankings every year since 2002, and they’re poised to extend that streak after defeating Penn State in the Rose Bowl.

USC has been the benchmark for success in college football lately, but if Haden and No. 1 UF can get past No. 2 Oklahoma tonight in the BCS title game, they’ll accomplish something even the Trojans haven’t.

Since the BCS started in 1998, just one team has won two outright championships, and both the Gators (2006) and Sooners (2000) have a title in hand, meaning tonight’s winner will join 2007 champion LSU as the only teams with two BCS titles.

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2009 Spring Fraternity Recruitment

Recruitment Kickoff Forum This Sunday
January 11th, 6 p.m., Reitz Union
Learn about the IFC community, find out about the recruitment process, and meet representatives from all IFC chapters at once.

Schedule for January 11th through the 16th
Lunch: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Dinner: 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Evening Event: 8 p.m. - 11 p.m.

For more information, visit our website at:
www.GreekGator.com
or Clint McDaniel: cfmgator@ufl.edu