

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FLORIDA STATE FOOTBALL...

- 1851: Florida State University actually began in 1851 when a legislative act established the Seminary West of the Suwannee. The first students enrolled in 1857 and the Florida State College was co-educational until 1905 when the Buckman Bill sent all the female students to the "new" Florida State College for Women. The huge numbers of male college students wishing to enter school on the G.I. Bill after World War II forced the legislature to make FSU co-educational in 1946.
- 1902-04: 33 years after Princeton and Rutgers kicked off American college football, the Florida State College played three seasons of football in Tallahassee. From 1902-1904, FSC played wearing the colors purple and gold. The 1904 squad was crowned state champions after defeating the University of Florida at Lake City and Stetson.
- 1946: Florida State University became a co-educational institution in 1946 when the first male students were enrolled, most of who were coming back from World War II. The transition from FSCW, which was regarded as one of the nation's top colleges, to the new institution was remarkably quick and the development of an athletics program was almost as rapid.
- 1947: Florida State University fielded a football team in 1947 coached by Ed Williamson. On October 18, 1947, Stetson kicked off to the FSU 3. Don Grant returned the kickoff to the FSU 32 and 7,165 fans at Centennial Field celebrated the first football game. The team finished 0-5 on the season.
- 1948: Don Veller became FSU's second football coach in 1948 and would coach the team until 1952. An outstanding player at Indiana University, Veller inherited 20 lettermen from the first year, but only 12 would letter in 1948. Veller would lose just two games over his first three years, including an undefeated 8-0 campaign in 1950. His attention to detail and high standard for himself and his program were instrumental in FSU getting such a solid start.
- 1950: Florida State played its first football game in Doak S. Campbell Stadium on October 7, 1950 against Randolph Macon. 9,676 fans watched the Seminoles win 40-7, but the new home field was a story in itself. It was built on a former cow pasture and was completed in just five months. Tallahassee Rainey Cawthon was instrumental in selling over 1,000 season tickets at \$50.00 each to fund the stadium and won a wheelbarrow ride down Monroe Street from contractor Red Coleman, who missed the completion date by two days. FSU players painted the stadium over the next summer for \$1 per hour.
- 1953: Tom Nugent became FSU's third head coach in 1953 and would coach the Seminoles until leaving to become Maryland's head coach in 1958. An innovator on a national level, Nugent developed the I-formation and the typewriter huddle used by most teams today. Among the players he coached were FSU greats Bobby Renn and Lee Corso as well as a talented tailback named Burt Reynolds whose career was cut short by injury.
- 1959: Perry Moss lasted just one season as FSU head coach in 1959. He was hired at a salary of \$14,000 and left at the end of the year for triple that figure to coach the Montreal Alouettes. His staff that year included future head coaches Don James (Washington and Kent State), John Coatta (Wisconsin and Mankato State), Vince Gibson (Louisville, Kansas St. and Tulane), and Ken Shipp (NY Jets). His FSU team posted a 4-6-0 record.
- 1960-70: Florida State's arrival on the national map occurred during Bill Peterson's 11 seasons as head coach. He came in 1960 when free substitution was still five years away in the game. He moved FSU boldly into the forefront of the passing game and led the Tribe to its biggest win yet when they topped No. 5 Kentucky 48-6 in 1964. He would post a 62-42-11 record in Tallahassee. Among a host of other things, Peterson developed the concept of the "hot receiver" in 1964 that remains in most offenses today.
- 1964: Fred Biletnikoff became FSU's first consensus All-American as a senior in 1964. He ranked fourth nationally with 57 receptions for 11 touchdowns which did not include his four touchdowns in the Gator Bowl win over Oklahoma. Biletnikoff put FSU on the map and he was married under the goalposts at Doak Campbell in 1965. He would go on to have a Hall of Fame career with the Oakland Raiders. The national award given to the top college receiver in the country is named after him.
- 1966: Ron Sellar's began a career at Florida State that would prove one of the most prolific in college history. He gained an unheard of 3,979 yards over his career. His statistics were so impressive that most lasted as national records all the way until 1987. He caught passes in 30 consecutive games and averaged 119.9 yards per game. He is a member of the college football Hall of Fame.
- 1970: While integration of schools throughout the country came painfully slow, Florida State's first African-American player took the field in 1970. J.T. Thomas was a starter from the first game he played at FSU and he backed a sterling college career with three Super Bowl rings earned as a member of the Pittsburgh Steelers.
- 1971: Larry Jones coached the Seminoles from 1971-1973. An 0-11 campaign in his last year spelled the end for the coach. Among notable players during his era were outstanding wide receiver Barry Smith, quarterback Gary Huff and Alabama transfer Billy Sexton.
- 1974-75: Darryl Mudra coached the Seminoles for two seasons and did his work from the pressbox on game day. Perhaps the biggest accomplishment of Mudra's brief tenure, that included the NCAA mandated scholarship limits for the first time, was the signing of an unheralded running back named Larry Key. Key would prove to be one of the finest running backs in Seminole history.
- 1976: FSU president Stanley Marshall and athletic director John Bridgers set up a dinner meeting at an airport hotel in Tampa where West Virginia head coach Bobby Bowden was coaching an all-star game known as the American Bowl. They offered him a four-year contract worth \$37,500 and he became the Seminoles' eighth head coach on January 12. Bowden was interviewed for the job six years earlier when it went to Larry Jones, but FSU officials felt he lacked the experience.
- 1979-80: Florida State got its first taste of the real big-time in 1979 and 1980 going to back-to-back Orange Bowls against Oklahoma. FSU went undefeated (11-0) over the regular season in 1979, but lost 24-7 to the Sooners and finished sixth in the final AP poll. The Tribe took a 10-1 record into the Orange Bowl showdown the next year before losing a heartbreaker 18-17.
- 1980: If one game can be singled out as the most important in the recent run of unprecedented success at Florida State, it would be the contest at Nebraska on September 7, 1980. FSU won in Lincoln by a 18-14 score that opened the eyes of the entire country. Nebraska fans shook of a mixture of shock and confusion to stand and give Bobby Bowden and his Seminoles a standing ovation as they left the field.
- 1981: FSU takes on the following schools in order all on the road: Nebraska, Ohio State, Notre Dame, Pittsburgh, and LSU. FSU won at Ohio State, Notre Dame and LSU, but, more importantly, won fans coast to coast for its undaunted spirit.
- 1981: In 1981 a freshman tailback named Greg Allen was given the football in the middle of legendary Death Valley with a sea of LSU fans around him. He finished the day with a remarkable school record 202 yards that signaled the arrival of a superstar for the Seminoles. Later that year, he would rip Western Carolina for 322 rushing yards, which still stands as the best rushing game ever for a Seminole.
- 1986: Deion Sanders spent a quiet first two years at Florida State before exploding on the national scene in a pre-season press conference. He would become one of the most popular players ever in college football and one of the greatest athletes in FSU history. Florida State and college football would never be the same after Sanders' career.
- 1992: On July 1, 1991, the Atlantic Coast Conference accepted Florida State University, as its ninth member and the first addition to the league since Georgia Tech joined in 1978. FSU had competed in the Metro Conference for all sports other than football, which had been an independent. FSU's first ACC football game was a 48-21 win over Duke on September 7, 1992.
- 1993: The Seminoles won their first national championship behind Heisman Trophy winner Charlie Ward in 1993. FSU played Nebraska in the national title game at the Orange Bowl and used freshman Scott Bentley's late field goal to win 18-16.
- 1995: A 31-26 come-from-behind win in the fourth quarter of the Orange Bowl against Notre Dame was FSU's 11th consecutive bowl win. The streak set an NCAA record as was FSU's 14-game unbeaten streak in bowls that was spoiled only by a 17-17 tie with Georgia in the 1984 Citrus Bowl.
- 1999: Bobby Bowden used to keep an empty picture frame in his office, which was reserved for his first perfect season. He filled the frame with a 1999 team photo. The Seminoles finished the year 12-0 and topped off the record run with a 46-29 win over Virginia Tech for the national championship in the Sugar Bowl.
- 2000: Chris Weinke literally rewrote the FSU record book over his senior season and took home the second Heisman Trophy for a Seminole player when he won the award in December of 2000. He would finish his career with a record of 32-3 as a starter.
- 2002: Bobby Bowden passed Bear Bryant into second place on the all-time coaching wins list.
- 2003: Bobby Bowden defeats Wake Forest to become all-time winningest major college coach. The Seminoles won the ACC and earned the BCS bid.
- 2004: Bobby Bowden Field at Doak S. Campbell Stadium was dedicated on November 20, 2004 prior to the Florida game.
- 2005: Florida State wins the inaugural ACC Championship game by a score of 27-22 over Virginia Tech in Jacksonville. Willie Reid was named the game's MVP. The conference title was FSU's 12th since joining the league in 1992.
- 2006: The College Football Hall of Fame announced that Bobby Bowden and Charlie Ward would be two of the year's 15 inductees. Bowden and Joe Paterno, who will also be inducted, are the first two active coaches to be honored.