

1997-98 Men's Golf Review

The Florida State men's golf team entered the 1997-98 season hoping to atone for a failing to make an appearance in postseason play at the conclusion of the 1997 spring season. Featuring three seniors and several experienced underclassmen, the Seminoles possessed the knowledge and talent to make that goal a reality. Led by senior George McNeill, the Seminoles finished with one tournament victory, two second-place finishes and 11 top 10 finishes in 12 events. Although the Seminoles failed to reach the ultimate goal of making the NCAA Championship field, they returned to the regional tournament after not qualifying for the Regional tournament in 1997.

The career of three Florida State golfers came to an end with a 12th place finish at the NCAA East Regional in Daufuskie Island, SC. Jason Pool, Barry Dyche and McNeill completed their eligibility, while claiming six tournament victories, one individual championship and two trips to the NCAA Championships in four years of competition. McNeill capped his senior season by being selected to the All-ACC team, a feat last accomplished by Richard Fulford in 1996. McNeill led the Seminoles with a stroke average of 72.4, while being the only golfer to participate in every tournament. McNeill, a native of North Fort Myers, FL, captured his first and only tournament victory in the fall at the Tennessee Tournament of Champions. He also led the ACC with 11 sub-par rounds and was second in the ACC with six rounds in the 60's.

Pool ended the season tied for second on the team in stroke average with junior Mark Monroe at 73.9. Playing in all but one tournament, Pool recorded five top 20 finishes in eleven tournaments. Pool was a staple of consistency at FSU as he participated in a total of 39 tournaments and finished his career with a stroke average of 74.6 in 112 rounds. Dyche ended his career at Florida State with six top 20 finishes, including two in the 1997-98 season. Dyche's stroke average of 74.2 in 32 rounds was fourth on the team.

The FSU line-up went relatively unchanged after the opening tournament of the fall and spring season. Junior college transfer Mark Monroe made an immediate impact for the Seminoles, playing in all but the first tournament of the year and recording six top 20 finishes this year. He also finished the season second on the team in stroke average. The final member of the top five at the completion of the season was sophomore Nathan Bertsch. Bertsch participated in nine tournaments as a freshman and rebounded to play in the same amount during his sophomore season. Bertsch's best finish was a tied for sixth at the Seminole Classic, after being in first place going into the final round at the Golden Eagle Country Club.

Coach Ernie Lanford was forced to experiment in the opening tournament of the year with hopes of filling two spots at the top of the Seminole line-up. Freshman Kris Hannah of Tallahassee, FL qualified for his first tournament as a collegiate after a heralded high school career. Hannah recorded a three-round total of 224 and finished tied for 44th. It was only tournament that Hannah participated in the top five. He also participated as an individual in the Seminole Classic and finished second in a FAMU tournament that featured several smaller Florida schools.

The Seminoles finished tied for seventh with Furman University and Mississippi State University. McNeill led the Seminoles, finishing tied for 19th with a three-round total of 218.

In the second tournament of the fall, McNeill captured the individual championship at the Tennessee Tournament of Champions with a three-round total 207.

McNeill posted a final-round 66 to edge Chad Wellhausen of Mississippi State and Tim Clark of North Carolina State by one stroke. The Seminoles finished tied for fourth with N.C. State in a tournament that featured nine East Regional teams. Monroe cracked the line-up for the first time, recording one of his six top 20 finishes. Monroe carded a final-round 72 to finish tied for 16th.

After one week off, the Tribe traveled to a Kroger Intercollegiate for the first time in Memphis, TN. Played at the prestigious Colonial Country Club, the Seminoles failed to crack the top 5, finishing tied for seventh with Vanderbilt University. Three Seminole golfers all finished tied for 24th with two-round totals of 152. The tournament was shortened to two rounds due to inclement weather.

In the final tournament of the fall season, the Seminoles traveled to the Country Club of Louisiana Intercollegiate. Held at the Country Club of Louisiana in Baton Rouge, it annually hosts several of the top teams in the country. The field featured ten regional teams and the Seminoles finished in eighth place, four strokes behind Louisiana State University. McNeill once again led the Seminoles, finishing tied for 12th at 219, while Pool ended the tournament tied for 20th.

The Seminoles concluded their fall season and looked forward to a couple of months of training and preparation for the spring season. Coach Lanford added a recruit to the team for the spring semester. Freshman Mark Donaldson entered the FSU program after a high-profile amateur career in Scotland. Donaldson looked to provide immediate help to a line-up that was inconsistent during the fall season.

In the opening tournament of the spring, the Seminoles returned to the Bridges All-American for their second consecutive year. The Seminole line-up featured three golfers that hadn't participated in tournament to that point. Craig Cochran and Donaldson saw their first and only tournament action of the season. Ryan Felty, a sophomore from Selinsgrove, PA, also saw his first tournament action of the year. Felty led the Seminoles, finishing tied for seventh with a two-round total of 144. It was only the fourth tournament of Felty's career, as he saw action in three events as a true freshman. The Tribe finished alone in eighth place with a two-day total of 599. Dyche competed as an individual, finishing tied for ninth at 12th place.

The Seminoles returned home for their lone home tournament of the year. The Seminole Classic moved from the Killlearn Country Club to the Golden Eagle Country Club after five years. Featuring five ACC teams and several top teams from the Southeast, the Seminole Classic has established itself as one of the premier tournaments of the Rolex spring season. The Tribe fell short of capturing the team title, losing to ACC-rival North Carolina by 12 strokes. Pool led all Seminole golfers, finishing with a three-round total of 221 and a fifth-place finish in cold and windy conditions. Bertsch and Monroe also finished in the top 10 as the Seminoles held off 1997 champion North Florida by eight strokes.

The Tribe repeated their performance of the Seminole Classic with a second-place finish at the Alabama Spring Invitational at the Lagoon Park Golf Course in Montgomery, AL. They couldn't catch the University of Georgia, losing by four strokes after being within one in the final round. Dyche continued his excellent play at Lagoon Park, recording a final-round 66 to finish tied for third with Jason Opal of Central Florida. Dyche recorded a top 10 finish in the same tournament during his sophomore season. Pool wasn't far behind, finishing one stroke behind Dyche at even-par 216.

In one of the most prestigious tournaments on the collegiate golf circuit, the Seminoles ran away with the team title at the U.S. Collegiate Golf Championships at the new World Golf Village in Jacksonville, FL. The Tribe beat a field that included the NCAA Champion UNLV and ten teams in the top 25 at the end of the year. They were also the feature attraction on the ESPN-televised portion of rounds two and three as they led the tournament from start to finish. McNeill paced the Seminoles with a four-under par total of 212 to finish two strokes behind winner D.J. Brigman of New Mexico. Bertsch also recorded his second top 10 finish in three tournaments, placing tied for ninth. All five Seminole golfers were in the top 21 in the strong 12 team field.

McNeill backed his second-place finish with a third place at the Billy Hitchcock Intercollegiate at the Saugahatchee Country Club. The Seminoles finished in sixth place, two strokes behind South Carolina in preparation for the ACC Championships.

The ACC Championships returned to the Old North State Club in New London, NC after one year as part of the ACC Spring Weekend in Atlanta, GA. The Seminoles struggled to a seventh place finish, one stroke behind Wake Forest University at two-over par. Monroe recorded his third straight top 20 finish, carding a final-round 71 to place tied for 13th. McNeill recorded back-to-back rounds of 70 after opening the tournament with a 75 to finish tied for 17th with two other golfers.

With their solid play in the spring, the Seminoles earned a trip to the NCAA East Regional in South Carolina as the No. 5 seed in the District 3S rankings. Regarded as the toughest regional of the three that take place, the Seminoles had their hands full with some of the top teams in the country. The Tribe failed to make the cut, finishing 12th at 876. Southeastern Louisiana was the final team to make the cut, beating the Tribe by seven strokes. Monroe finished his junior season with a tied for 29th-place finish.

The season was marked by several positive moments that will keep the Seminole golf program in the right direction. Combining excellent play on the golf course with the with the highest GPA among men's teams at Florida State, the Seminoles will continue to be among the top golf programs in the country. Claiming the team championship in front of a national audience and adding another All-ACC performer to the records at Florida State, the 1997-98 Seminole team will be one to remember.

1997-98 RESULTS

KESWICK CLUB CAVALIER CLASSIC CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA • SEPT. 19-20

Team Total	284-295-297	876	(t7)
G. McNeill	72-74-72	218	(t19)
N. Bertsch	70-73-76	219	(t24)
Jason Pool	73-74-75	222	(t34)
Kris Hannah	76-74-74	224	(t44)
Barry Dyche	69-76-81	226	(t48)

TENNESSEE TOURN. OF CHAMPIONS KNOXVILLE, TN • SEPTEMBER 29-30

Team Total	²⁹⁵⁻²⁹² 297 300-311	908	(6)
G. McNeill	72-69-66	207	(1)
Jason Pool	70-74-73	217	(t17)
N. Bertsch	72-75-71	218	(t21)
B. Dyche	71-74-74	219	(t24)
M. Monroe	75-76-72	223	(t40)

KROGER INTERCOLLEGIATE MEMPHIS, TN • OCTOBER 13-14

Team Total	302-306 608	(t7)
G. McNeill	78-74	152 (t24)
B. Dyche	76-76	152 (t24)
Jason Pool	74-78	152 (t24)
M. Monroe	74-78	152 (t24)
N. Bertsch	78-82	160 (t68)

COUNTRY CLUB OF LOUISIANA BATON ROUGE, LA • OCTOBER 27-28

Team Total	299-291-299	889	(8)
G. McNeill	74-71-74	219	(t12)
Jason Pool	75-73-73	221	(t20)
B. Dyche	75-74-76	225	(t34)
C. Cochran	75-75-78	228	(t47)
M. Monroe	80-73-76	229	(t49)

BRIDGES ALL-AMERICAN INTERC. HATTIESBURG, MS • FEB.. 16-17

Team Total	296-303 599	(8)
Ryan Felty	69-75	144 (t7)
G. McNeill	71-74	145 (t9)
M. Monroe	76-72	148 (t18)
M. Donaldson	80-82	162 (t77)
C. Cochran	80-82	162 (t77)

MERCEDES BENZ COLL. CHAMP. JACKSONVILLE, FL • FEB. 28-MAR 2

Team Total	281-294-292	867	(t4)
G. McNeill	68-74-69	211	(t2)
B. Dyche	72-72-72	216	(t16)
J. Pool	70-75-75	220	(t31)
M. Monroe	71-73-77	221	(t36)
R. Felty	74-75-76	225	(t53)

SEMINOLE CLASSIC TALLAHASSEE, FL • MARCH 10-11

Team Total	297-296-299	892	(2)
J. Pool	73-71-77	221	(5)
N. Bertsch	69-74-79	222	(t6)
M. Monroe	75-73-75	223	(t10)
B. Dyche	80-78-71	229	(t24)
G. McNeill	81-78-76	235	(t45)

ALABAMA SPRING INVITATIONAL MONTGOMERY, AL • MARCH 20-22

Team Total	285-297-292	874	(2)
B. Dyche	77-72-69	215	(t3)
J. Pool	69-73-74	216	(t5)
G. McNeill	69-77-74	220	(t11)
N. Bertsch	73-76-78	227	(t45)
M. Monroe	74-76-78	228	(t53)

US COLLEGIATE GOLF CHAMP. ST. AUGUSTINE, FL • APRIL 3-5

Team Total	286-292-290	808	(1)
G. McNeill	70-74-68	212	(3)
N. Bertsch	70-72-76	218	(t9)
J. Pool	72-77-71	220	(t15)
M. Monroe	74-72-75	221	(t17)
B. Dyche	74-74-76	224	(t21)

BILLY HITCHCOCK INTERC. AUBURN, AL • APRIL 10-12

Team Total	290-293-294	877	(6)
G. McNeill	69-70-71	210	(2)
M. Monroe	72-72-72	216	(t9)
B. Dyche	73-76-76	225	(t29)
J. Pool	76-75-75	226	(t34)
N. Bertsch	77-76-76	229	(t46)

ACC CHAMPIONSHIPS NEW LONDON, NC • APRIL 17-19

Team Total	294-286-286	866	(7)
M. Monroe	72-70-71	213	(t13)
G. McNeill	75-70-70	215	(t17)
J. Pool	72-77-72	221	(t32)
B. Dyche	75-73-73	221	(t32)
N. Bertsch	78-73-74	225	(t42)

NCAA EAST REGIONAL DAUFASKIE ISLAND, SC • MAY 14-16

Team Total	293-292-291	876	(12)
M. Monroe	70-75-72	217	(t29)
G. McNeill	75-72-72	219	(t40)
N. Bertsch	75-71-73	219	(t40)
B. Dyche	73-75-74	222	(t58)
J. Pool	80-74-74	228	(t85)

4-5240

