

1997-98 Women's Golf Review

The Lady Seminoles entered the season with the experience and talent in place to be successful in tournament play. With all five golfers returning from a year ago, expectations for 1997-98 season were high. Faced with a difficult tournament schedule and tough postseason competition, the trip back to Regionals and the NCAA Championships would prove to be difficult.

The Lady Seminoles were led much of the year by junior Amy Bond. Bond, a native of Ocala, FL, culminated her junior year with a tournament championship and an All-ACC selection. Bond led the Tribe with a stroke average of 76.5, while playing in every tournament. She also captured her first tournament victory at Florida State with a one-stroke win over Riko Higashio of Florida at the Ryder-Florida State Championships.

The top five for FSU was shuffled at the beginning of the year, before playing with the same five for the last four of the last five tournaments. Juniors Amy Spooner and Sarah Capie joined Bond as the only players to participate in each tournament. Erika Iding played in all but one tournament, the Lady Gamecock Classic in the spring.

The spring season brought to an end the career of senior Aguri Okura. Okura, a native of Osaka, Japan, played in five tournaments, including all four in the fall. Okura finished her career with three top 10 finishes, including a second-place finish at the Ryder-Florida State Championships in 1997 in 35 events.

Head Coach Debbie Dillman added a freshman to the line-up that provided immediate impact in the spring season. Louise Wright played in five tournaments and finished with a stroke average of 79.6 in 14 rounds of play. A native of Suffolk, England, Wright's best finish was tied for 33rd at the Lady Gator Invitational and the Lady Gamecock Classic.

The Tribe started the fall season with the 22nd annual Lady Seminole Invitational at the Seminole Golf Course. Featuring 15 teams from across the Southeast, the Lady Seminole Invitational has become an important tournament in district rankings. The Lady Seminoles finished tied for third in this year's event with the University of Central Florida. Juniors Erika Iding and Sarah Capie led the Tribe, finishing tied for 12th with three-round total of 228. The University of Kentucky captured the tournament title, beating Mississippi State University by nine strokes.

In the following week, the Tribe traveled to Auburn, AL for the Auburn Tiger Invitational. The Lady Seminoles posted a first-round team total of 297 to pace them to a sixth-place finish among 12 teams, four strokes behind host Auburn University. Potential All-American candidate Amy Bond fired a 73 in the opening round of the tournament, forging her way to a tied for 16th place finish. The Lady Seminoles were once again led by Erika Iding. Iding, a native of Lansing, MI, carded a three-day total of 226 to finish tied for 14th with Christy Carter of Tulane University.

The Lady Seminoles had two weeks to prepare for the Beacon Woods Invitational at the Beacon Woods Country Club in Bayonet Point, FL. Iding paced the Tribe, finishing tied for 18th with a 234. Amy Bond and Aguri Okura both finished in the top 20, finishing tied for 20th.

The final tournament of the fall season was the very difficult Lady Paladin Invitational. A 21-team field faced the Lady Seminoles as they traveled to Greenville, SC for the annual event. The Tribe finished in 11th place out of 21 teams with a team total of

942. Amy Bond fired a final-round 77 to finish tied for 26th, while junior Amy Spooner finished tied for 33rd.

With the juggling of their line-up and the addition of a new player, the Lady Seminoles were poised to improve in their performance in the spring. The Tribe opened the spring with the Lady Gator Invitational. Iding once again led the team, finishing tied for 21st at 224. Wright, playing in her first tournament, carded a three-day total of 228. She finished tied for 33rd.

After a week off, the Tribe ventured to Baton Rouge for the LSU Fairwood Invitational. A national field of 15 teams faced the Lady Seminoles at the Fairwood Country Club. Spooner recorded her first top 20 finish of the year to end in 17th place alone at 229. Bond went into the final round in a tie for 11th place, but struggled with a final-round 80 to finish tied for 22nd.

Highly regarded as one of the toughest tournaments in the spring, the Lady Gamecock Classic brought together 12 teams from the region. Dealing with a very long course, the Lady Seminoles finished in 11th place. Bond opened with a 77 and finished tied for 27th. Okura returned to the line-up and finished tied for 49th.

The Lady Seminoles have had recent success at the Ryder-Florida State Championships. Okura lost on the first playoff hole to Higashio in 1997 and the Tribe finished in second place. Bond didn't allow that to happen as she captured the individual championship, holding off Higashio by two strokes. The Lady Seminoles finished tied for third with South Florida and Central Florida. Spooner captured her second top 20 finish of the season, ending in 17th place.

In the final tournament of the year the Lady Seminoles looked to improve on a fourth-place finish at last year's ACC Championships. The ACC's returned to the Grandover East Golf Course after a one-year stint in Atlanta, GA. Capie recorded back-to-back rounds of 77 in the final two rounds to finish tied for ninth with teammate Bond and two other golfers. She ended the tournament with a three-round total of 233. Iding ended one stroke back in 13th place.

The Lady Seminoles failed to make the NCAA Regional field for the first time since 1991. Widely regarded as the top regional in the country, the East Regional featured eight teams in the top 20.

Although the Lady Seminoles fell short of postseason play, the stage has been set for a bright future in women's golf at Florida State. The addition of young, talented players and the experience returning among the top five will solidify FSU's chances at returning to Regional competition.