

## **FSU Kicks Off 50th Anniversary Of Women's Athletics**

By Jim Henry  
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It's an important milestone, one that must be embraced and applauded.

In fact, the average Florida State fan may not realize just how far women's athletics at FSU has traveled the past five decades.

The university's year-long celebration of that 50th anniversary starts this weekend and will help us gain better insight into the program now and how it got here.

Here's high-fiving the ladies.

"I think it's pretty special and going to be phenomenal," said FSU women's golf coach Amy Bond, also a three-time team MVP as a player at FSU (1997-99).

"I am looking forward to having conversations with the people who were here 50 years ago and listening to their stories. They have some great perspectives on our sports and Florida State. We've come so far in a short period of time.

"I don't think people grasp that."

Women's athletics has been an important part of Tallahassee since the early 1900s, when FSU was the Florida State College for Women - the institution grew to become the third largest women's college in the nation during the 1930s. However, the 2018-19 season marks the 50th Anniversary of a continuous women's intercollegiate program at FSU.

Let's get this party started.

Volleyball, coached by Martha Pat Moore, was the first women's intercollegiate sport for the Seminoles in 1968. She gave way to Billie Jones, who was followed by Cecile Reynaud in 1976.

The memories shared over the years are unforgettable, amazing moments in time and FSU folklore.

"She (Moore) told me a wonderful story about how in the early days of some women's sports they would have bowling contests against other schools and send their scores via telegram to determine the winner," said Reynaud, inducted into FSU's Athletics Hall of Fame in 2009.

"So virtual sports were around a long time ago. I would call her every few weeks just to let her know I was thinking about her and I know she appreciated that. I'm not sure which one of us enjoyed the conversations more. It was my honor to get to know the first women's volleyball coach at Florida State University.

"While she was very small in stature, she was a larger-than-life person."

FSU's women are winners, too.

The Seminoles have won seven national championships over the last 50 years.

Softball earned back-to-back AIAW (Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women the precursor to the NCAA) national titles in 1981-82, and captured the NCAA title last season. Golf won the AIAW national title in 1981, and

track & field took the NCAA National Championship at the 1984 outdoor meet and 1985 indoors. Soccer won the 2014 NCAA National Championship.

FSU currently features 200 student-athletes in 11 women's programs. This year-long celebration, diligently planned by a diverse committee that features administrators, boosters, community members, former coaches and players, is a wonderful way to connect Seminole athletes across the years.

And share stories that should never be forgotten.

"It has been an honor and I am learning so much," said Vanessa Fuchs, FSU's senior associate athletics director, senior woman administrator and a former basketball player.

"It's a real opportunity to dive back into our history and learn more about our earliest teams and the many women who have been a special part of building our Florida State legacy. We want to make it really special."

Of course, these days are so much different from days gone by for student-athletes, men and women alike.

Colleges are spending more and more on their student-athletes, from scholarships to uniforms to travel to incidental expenses. Facilities, from fields to locker rooms to video boards, continue to be upgraded.

When the women's soccer team made its debut in 1995, the team played its home games at the Seminole Intramural Field. Padding was wrapped around telephone poles for safety precautions. Who can remember softballs, albeit foul balls, pelting the street behind the Lady Seminole Field, home to the softball team - and now part of the southeast parking lot at Doak Campbell Stadium? And Tully Gym. ... well, Tully Gym's unique appeal, combined with several renovations over the years, has served volleyball since the early 1970s.

Bond respects the players and coaches who helped build the Seminoles' foundation in women's athletics. Former female athletes will be recognized prior to FSU's football season opener against Virginia Tech Labor Day night at Doak Campbell Stadium. Player helmets will feature a decal honoring the 50-year anniversary.

"They had to love their sport and really make the best of the situation, from piling people in hotel rooms, traveling in cars - sometimes their own cars," said Bond, the 2017 ACC Coach of the Year who has led the Seminoles to a school-record three consecutive appearances in the NCAA Championship Finals and to eight straight NCAA Tournament appearances.

Bond is in Ireland until Sunday, supporting incoming freshmen Frida Kinhult and Beatrice Wallin as the duo compete in the 2018 World Amateur Team Championships.

"It's neat to see how far women's athletics has come from the beginning, and in such a short period of time. ... our women's sports are pretty spectacular," Bond said.

"The fact we can hang with the big dogs (nationally) is really cool."

#### **Women's Alumnae Social**

**When:** Saturday, 5 to 7 p.m.

**Where:** The Gathering, 705. S. Woodward Avenue

**Who:** All former women's sports alumni, former women's sports coaches & staff welcome to attend.

**What:** Beer & wine, appetizers, 21-plus

#### **Garnet and Golden Celebration**

**When:** Sunday, 3 to 4:30 p.m., Tully Gym

**What:** Event will launch FSU's year-long celebration. ... Highlight video recapping the 50-year history. ... Unveil "50th anniversary traveling display" capturing the 50-year history in picture format. ... Discuss fundraising opportunities

for women's sports. ... Launch online auction – all proceeds will benefit the Coaches Clubs for our women's sports programs. ... Auction items (memorabilia, trips with teams, vacation packages, etc.) will be posted online in the fall; then more auction items will be posted online in the spring.

**Cost:** \$20 adults, \$10 kids

**Women's Sports Alumni Reunions**

**Sept. 1-3:** Soccer

**Oct. 5-7:** Indoor volleyball

**Oct. 6:** Swimming and Diving

**Nov. 16-17:** Golf

**Jan. 12-13:** Basketball

**March 15-17:** Softball

**March 15:** Beach volleyball

**March 22-23:** Track & field, cross country

**Women's Tennis:** TBD

**Garnet and Golden Gala**

**When:** Spring 2019, location and time TBD

**What:** Grand finale event will close out our year-long celebration. ... Reveal total funds raised throughout year. ... Celebrate donors who have given to women's athletics. ... Award Femina Perfecta and Champion Beyond the Game Recipients