

BEN HILL GRIFFIN AWARD



Stacey Nelson
Softball

As a Gator, senior pitcher Stacey Nelson wrote her name in the Florida record books immediately. Nelson tied the UF record for wins by a freshman (14) and saves (5). Her 18 complete games still ranks as the most by a UF freshman. She was the winning pitcher in the 3-2 victory over top-ranked Michigan, marking the Gators' first win over a No. 1 team.

During her sophomore year, the Gators recorded their first-ever 50-win season. Responsible for 34 victories, 285 strikeouts, and owning a 0.95 earned run average, Nelson was named an Easton first-team and NFCA second-team All-American, as well as a SEC second team honoree.

In her junior year, the Gators won an NCAA-record 70 games in 2008, as the team reached the Women's College World Series for the first time in the program's history. Nelson earned Easton and NFCA first-team honors and All-SEC accolades. She

This award is presented annually to the top University of Florida female and male student-athlete for outstanding levels of success in academics, athletics and leadership. This award was established in 1992 in honor of the entire Griffin family for their loyal support over the years of Gator athletics. Ben Hill Griffin Award winners are chosen from nominations provided by the head coach of each sport. The award is open to all student-athletes and is based on the calendar year 2008.

led the nation in winning percentage with a 47-5 record (.904), and led the SEC and set UF records for strikeouts (363) and ERA (0.75). Nelson's 21-1 SEC record led to her 2008 SEC Pitcher of the Year title, as she struck out 127 SEC rivals, allowing only 84 hits and a .178 opponent batting average. She was named SEC Tournament MVP and to the Women's College World Series All-Tournament team.

As a senior in 2009, Nelson's ERA of .061 led Division I play. She earned first-team All-America honors by both the NFCA and Easton. Nelson led UF to a runner-up finish at the 2009 Women's College World Series. She holds 24 records at Florida and is sixth in NCAA history with her 136 career wins.

In 2008 and 2009, Nelson earned ESPN The Magazine First-Team Academic All-America honors and is first Gator softball player to be honored with athletic and academic accolades in the

same season. She was named the Academic All-American of the Year as a senior, another first for the Gator softball program. A philosophy major, Nelson was an SEC Academic Honor Roll pick three times and upon graduation, she aspires to become an advocate for children soldiers in Africa.

The number of Nelson's extra-curricular activities rivals her athletic awards. A representative for the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, she was a co-chairman of Climb for Cancer, mentored local Gainesville elementary school students and participated with Habitat for Humanity. She has spent the last four holiday seasons delivering sneakers to children through the UAA's Gator Tracks program.

For her numerous accomplishments, we honor Stacey Nelson as the 2008 Ben Hill Griffin Award recipient for best female student-athlete at the University of Florida.



Tim Tebow
Football

Tim Tebow will go down as one of the greatest UF football players to ever play the game. Making an immediate impact, the freshman All-American played in all 14 games in Florida's 2006 national championship season, leading the team with eight rushing touchdowns and throwing for five.

As a starter his sophomore year, he became the first quarterback in college history to pass and rush for 20 touchdowns, finishing with 32 and 23, respectively. His 23 rushing touchdowns tied an NCAA single-season record for quarterbacks. He concluded his conference play as a first-team All-SEC selection and an All-American.

For his efforts in his sophomore campaign, Tebow was awarded both the Davey O'Brien and the Maxwell Awards and named the AP Player of the Year. Tebow was named the 73rd Heisman Trophy

Winner, joining former Gator recipients Steve Spurrier and Danny Wuerffel.

As a junior, Tebow led the Gators to their second national championship in three years and was named the 2009 FedEx BCS National Championship Offensive MVP. The All-American quarterback threw for 30 touchdowns and rushed for 12. Named SEC Offensive Player of the Year and the ESPY Award winner for Best Male College Athlete, Tebow now holds 17 records at UF.

He earned the Wuerffel Trophy and the Disney Sports Spirit Award for dedication on the field and his commitment to helping others off it. Tebow has spent over 500 hours on community service and appearances, including going on hospital visits and meeting with inmates in state prisons. He also takes advantage of his school breaks to go abroad on mis-

sion trips. Each Sunday, he leads his teammates in a Bible study, a ritual he began as a freshman.

Additionally, Tebow is a two-time ESPN The Magazine Academic All-American, maintaining a 3.70 cumulative GPA. In 2008, he was honored with the SEC Scholar-Athlete of the Year and ESPN The Magazine Academic All-American of the Year awards. Tebow is the only player in college football history to win the Heisman Trophy, the Maxwell Trophy, Davey O'Brien Award and been part of a team that won two national titles.

For his many accomplishments both as a student and a football star as well as his leadership qualities, we honor Tim Tebow as the 2008 Ben Hill Griffin Award recipient for best male student-athlete at the University of Florida.