



# Spurrier: The Bulldog Killer

By Jeff Dantzler  
Bulldawg Illustrated

No coach has reigned over more morbid Georgia Saturday's than Steve Spurrier, the biggest Bulldog beater of them all.

One of the great players in Southeastern Conference history, Spurrier won the Heisman Trophy at Florida in 1966. That Gator team lost once, to Georgia 27-10. A week after a heroic performance, capped with a field goal of all things on his one and only career attempt, led Florida to a three-point victory over Auburn, Spurrier's Gators led Georgia 10-3 at the half in Jacksonville. But a Bulldog onslaught in the second half sent the Bulldogs towards the SEC Championship. Georgia won 27-10, a dominating defense holding the Gators without a first down. All-American Bill Stanfill led a pass-rush that harassed Spurrier, and All-American safety Lynn Hughes returned an interception 39 yards for a touchdown. Erk Russell's defense had one of its greatest days. The Dogs went 10-1, finishing No. 4 in the nation, and capturing the first of six conference titles under the watch of Vince Dooley. Florida, which at halftime on November 5, 1966 appeared bound for its first SEC title, would have to wait a quarter century to join the league's list of champions.

Spurrier has not forgotten.

He takes great joy in winning and in needling the fans and coaches of the opposition. There is no school he enjoys beating more than the Bulldogs.

When Florida finally won that elusive SEC crown in 1991, Spurrier was in his second season as the head coach at his alma mater. That Gator team destroyed Georgia 45-13. The year before, in his first season as the head Gator, Florida slaughtered the Bulldogs 38-7.

In his 12 seasons as the Gators head coach, Spurrier led Florida to 11 wins over Georgia – several by humiliating margins. A program that had never won the SEC title or produced a double digit win season became the league's best under his watch.

Spurrier led Florida to six SEC championships and nine seasons with at least 10 wins. From 1993-98, the Gators has six straight double-digit victory campaigns, won four straight SEC Championship Games from '93-'96 and captured the 1996 national title.

When Spurrier arrived as the Gators coach, Georgia led the all-time series with Florida 44-22-2. It is now 50-41-2. The entire series flipped, and it carried over. Inferior Florida teams

with a lesser coach in Ron Zook than Georgia's Mark Richt dealt the Bulldogs devastating losses in 2002 and 2003, costing the Bulldogs potential national title cracks. Urban Meyer presided over five Jacksonville wins and a pair of national championships in six years. Then Will Muschamp arrived and Georgia won three in a row. But Richt suffered the ugliest and most puzzling loss of his career, as Muschamp led an inferior Florida team to a Georgia team that was in the championship race.

Spurrier turned the series.

Just as there was a 25-year period from 1966 to 1991, and the 1966 Georgia victory in Jacksonville that broke Spurrier's heart until that elusive title, in the 25 seasons since he became Florida's head coach, the Gators have won 19 games to the Bulldogs six.

Spurrier left Florida and coached the Washington Redskins for two seasons in 2002-2003, then sat out the '04 campaign. He shocked the college football world by taking over at South Carolina, a program mired in mediocrity since its inception.

Though the Gamecocks didn't and don't possess the resources and potential of Florida, he has led South Carolina to its greatest days. The 'Cocks had one double digit win season in their history, posting a 10-2 mark in 1984.

Much like the complete turnaround he triggered in Gainesville, Spurrier has taken South Carolina to heights that even its most ardent of supporters may have felt were out of reach. In 2010, the Gamecocks went to the SEC Championship Game. From 2011-2013, Spurrier led South Carolina to three consecutive 11-2 campaigns, top ten campaigns. Over that stretch, South Carolina had winning records against Florida, Tennessee, Clemson and Georgia. The Gamecocks beat Alabama in 2010 and won bowl games against Nebraska, Michigan and Wisconsin to cap their trio of top ten seasons.

Since taking over the South Carolina program in 2005, Spurrier has led the Gamecocks to a 5-5 record against the Bulldogs. The only school with more wins over Georgia during that stretch is Florida, with six. Over those 10 years, Georgia is 7-3 vs. Auburn (winner of seven of the last nine), 7-3 vs. Tennessee and 8-2 vs. Tech (two too many).

Prior to Spurrier's arrival in Columbia, the Bulldogs led the all-time series with the Gamecocks 42-13-2. South Carolina's success had essentially all come in five back-to-back stretches, as the 'Cocks beat the Bulldogs in 1903-04, 1958-59, 1978-79, 1988-89 and 2000-2001. It is now 47-18-2, still substan-



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tially in Georgia's favor, but Spurrier has led the 'Cocks to wins over Georgia in four of five years, including three straight from 2010-2012. His other win over Georgia proved to be one of the costliest the Bulldogs have suffered. A 16-12 loss to the "Head Ball Coach" in 2007 proved to be even more devastating as the Bulldogs wound up at 11-2 and ranked No. 2 nationally, but out of the SEC Championship Game with a shot at the college football's crystal ball.

Last year, Spurrier worked his magic again, taking advantage of a couple of self-inflicted Georgia wounds, a blown call that went the Gamecocks way, and a poor play call by Georgia. South Carolina won 38-35, Georgia was scratching its head and a pall was cast over a promising season.

Once again the Bulldogs come in ranked in the top ten with great aspirations for 2015. Though the Bulldogs have had some outstanding seasons in years past when losing to the Gamecocks, like 1959, 1978 and 2007, if Georgia doesn't beat South Carolina this season, book an 8-4 season. At best. The rest of the schedule is too tough. If a top ten Bulldog team, the consensus pick to play in the SEC Championship Game, can't beat a South Carolina squad that is generally regarded as a "middle of the pack" team, then it is "wait 'til next year," and yet another notch in the belt of the biggest Bulldog beater ever, still hurting, steaming and exacting revenge from that first November Saturday of 1966.

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David Greene



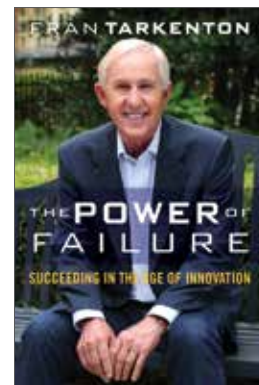
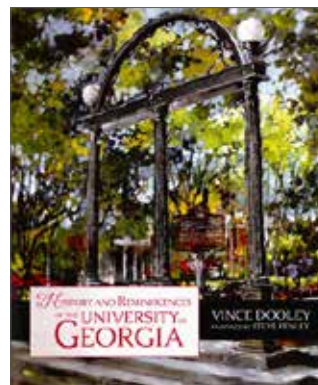
September 19, 12-2pm


Michael Bennett





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