

Courtesy Florida Athletics Florida's Kristen Butler leads the Gators with a .311 batting average. The Gators are the No. 4 seed and the Ducks the No. 2 seed in the Tallahassee, Fla. regional. Regional play begins Thursday for all eight regions in the NCAA Tournament.



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No. 3 South Florida The Bulls (57-12), ranked 19th in the country, were eliminated Saturday by DePaul in the Conference USA Tournament after winning their first two games of the conference title race.

Four seniors depart from South Florida after this season, including the Bulls' two leading hitters. Holly Groves tops the team with a .424 batting average and Leigh Ann Ellis is second at .400.

"We are very excited for the opportunity to play in regionals," associate head coach Stacey Heintz said in a release Sunday. "It's great to be able to play in the state and have our family and friends there with us to join us as we go for our goal to play in the College World Series.

South Florida plays Ohio State to open the Tallahassee regional at 7 a.m. Thursday.

No. 4 Florida

Kristen Butler leads Florida with a .311 batting average and 26 RBI.

'I am glad that we can play close to home," head coach Karen Johns said in a release Sunday. "It will be great to play in front of some Florida fans as we set out to win a regional and advance to the College World Series."

Florida will face Northridge at noon Thursday.

No. 5 Cal State Northridge

Northridge (33-17), one of four Big West Conference teams to be selected for NCAA regional play, closed its regular season with a 3-2 loss to Big West champion Long Beach State. The Matadors have lost twice to Florida this season, both by a 6-1 score in a doubleheader March 12.

The Matadors had a 12-game winning streak coming into Friday's doubleheader against Long Beach State, but they lost both games

No. 6 Ohio State

The Buckeyes (34-23) are fresh off a No. 6 seed in the Big Ten Tournament last weekend. After a 5-1 win against No. 3-seeded Iowa, Ohio State lost to No. 2-seeded Illinois, 5-0. Ohio State finished 8-11 in conference play.

Senior pitcher Kristi DeVries, Ohio State's go-to pitcher, recently became the second Buckeye ever to throw more than 600 career strikeouts. De-Vries passed the 500- and 600-strikeout milestone this season and currently has 613 in her career.

No. 7 Bethune-Cookman

The Wildcats (44-26), from Daytona Beach, Fla., won their fifthstraight Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference championship to garner a spot in the NCAA Regionals. Bethune-Cookman has never won a game in regional play, but the Wildcats are on a roll after coming from the losers' bracket to win the MEAC title.

No. 8 Long Island

Long Island (27-26) earned a berth in the tournament with its eighth Northeast Conference title. The Blackbirds are led by freshman Jessie DePippo, who is batting .373 while playing catcher. Three more Long Island players

Sayde Marzolf (.370), Krystal Mejia (.346) and Alicia Ciccarello (.304) -



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The 21st-ranked Gators (40-18) ended their season Friday with a 7-5 loss to Tennessee in the Southeastern Conference Softball Tournament. Sophomore

are batting over .300 this season.

Contact the senior sports reporter at mindirice@dailyemerald.com.

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Nyhus, who spent the past two years playing at Central Arizona College, picked up her 10th conference victory in Oregon's 10th conference win — the lone victory of those six games, a 1-0 defeat of Stanford.

The Ducks, who want to put the past two weeks behind them, are determined to find success in Tallahassee, Fla., this weekend. They know there are lessons to be learned from every game this season, but for now they just want to play.

As for Nyhus, she wants to see her new home succeed as well. As with most pitchers, the pressure will not faze her. Instead, she will use it to fuel her game.

"It could be any of us (that steps up)," Nyhus said. "I hope it's me. I'm sure Amy hopes it's her, Anissa hopes it's her and Lindsey hopes it's her. It's one of those things where we'll see where it goes.

Contact the senior sports reporter at mindirice@dailyemerald.com. Her opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.



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