

## Urban Meyer's Career Ranks among Coaching Elite

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The SEC has not only produced some of college football's outstanding players the game of college has—or will ever—seen; but also many of highly successful head coaches, once patrolled a conference sideline.

The earliest mentor to make his mark was Alabama's Wallace Wade; who career in the mid-1920s hold a slim three percentage point lead over, are yall ready for this, a coach from Vanderbilt, who 20 years earlier had produced some outstanding teams ever on the Nashville gridiron.

Before you go and say, the conference celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary last fall, there wasn't an SEC per se back then.

You would be right, SEC fan; but before there was an SEC most of today's current conference line-up were members of the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference and later the Southern Conference, both precursors to the SEC.

As Wade's accomplishments brought an early recognition to the conference in his first four years, 1919-23 at the helm; the coach that would compile the highest winning percent over the first four years of his SEC coaching career was just getting started.

At the start of his tenure in Knoxville, Robert Neyland's charges equaled Wade win total but had a higher winning percentage, .934—to-- .837, respectively.

Why are the first four seasons used to rank the coaches? Simple, Florida's Urban Meyer in 2008 completed his fourth season in Gainesville; as this compilation will show how he compares to other coaching greats that have called a SEC school home.

The coach with fourth highest mark—by percent—was Dan McGugin of Vanderbilt.

McGugin is one of two SEC coaches whose playing career was almost as stellar as his time on the sidelines.

The popular Vanderbilt leader was the starting left guard on the very first Rose Bowl team—Michigan's famed *Point-a-Minute* eleven.

His playing career, 1901-03, under the legendary Fielding "Hurry-up" Yost saw his team compile a 33-0-1 record. While his first four years in Nashville weren't spotless, they were, however, successful: 29-3-1.

Of the many outstanding SEC coaches, just 6 of the Top 10 compiled a mark over .800.

Of the six, just two have won at the 80% clip done so in the last 20 years; (by adding current South Carolina coach Steve Spurrier to the list; makes three coaches who began their careers worthy to make this list.

Spurrier's winning percent was .796, just missing the .800 club.

Former Tennessee head coach, Phil Fulmer is sixth on the list; while current Florida boss, is at No. 5.

Ranked fourth was another Tide boss is third—and *it's not The Bear*.

After four years in the land of the Chattanooga Choo Cho, Thomas came to Tuscaloosa 1931.

What keyed Thomas' success was a talented sophomore class in 1932.

*See if these names ring-a-bell:* Dixie Howell. Don Hutson. Riley Smith. And the other end, who came out of Moro Bottoms, Ark—Paul “Bear” Bryant.

Meyer has won 44 of 53 games, in his first four years in Gainesville; leading the school to a pair of National Championships—and is the early season choice to make it No. 3 in 2009.

And like more fuel would ever be needed to ignite more fuel for the big game on the Third Saturday in October, this will.

Meyer's first four SEC teams registered a higher mark than former University of Tennessee coach, Phil Fulmer compiled.

Fulmer's coaching career began in 1992, replacing Volunteer legend, Johnny Majors; with a 4-0 start—and it is with this mark is what is used below with the other SEC Coaches.

For the record, his mark from 1993-96 was 39-9-0, .813.

Turning the how Meyer ranks with the other coaching greats in his first sixth season; he ranks ninth.

OK Volunteer fans, your turn to boast.

Three of college football's greatest leaders compiled a winning percent over .900—and one from the SEC, General Robert Neyland.

Leahy's mentor, college football's winningest coach, in terms of percentage of games won (0.881), is sixth, 0.893—six points off Fielding “Hurry-up” Yost mark. Yost coached McGugin; while Rockne coached both Leahy and Thomas.

<b>Top 10 Winningest Coaches based on a career winning percentage of at least .700</b>	
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	<b>The First Six Seasons</b>	<b>as a Head Coach</b>	
George Woodruff	Penn	1892-99	109-9-2 .912
Frank Leahy	Boston College, Notre Dame	1939-40; 41-43, 46-48	70-5-5 .906
Robert Neyland	Tennessee	1926-31	68-5-5 .903
Barry Switzer	Oklahoma	1973-80	83-9-2 .894
Fielding "Hurry-up" Yost	Ohio Wesleyan, Nebraska, Kansas, Stanford, Michigan	1897-1904	74-7-3 .899
Knut Rockne	Notre Dame	1918-1925	65-6-4 .893
Bud Wilkinson	Oklahoma	1947-54	73-8-3 .887
Percy Haughton	Cornell, Harvard	1899-1900; 1908-13	66-9-3 .865
<b>URBAN MEYER</b>	<b>Bowling Green, Utah Florida</b>	<b>2001-06</b>	<b>61-12-0 .836</b>
Tom Osborne	Nebraska	1973-80	75-20-2 .784
Jock Sutherland	Lafayette, Pittsburgh	1919-26	51-14-5 .764
<b>SEC Coaches</b>	<b>Career Winning Percentage over 0.700</b>	<b>1st 4 Years as SEC Coach*</b>	
Robert Neyland	Tennessee	1926-29	34-1-3 .934
Wade Wallace	Alabama	1923-26	34-3-2 .897
Dan McGugin	Vanderbilt	1904-07	29-3-1 .894
Frank Thomas	Alabama	1931-34	34-4-1 .885
<b>URBAN MEYER</b>	<b>Florida</b>	<b>2005-08</b>	<b>44-9-0 .830</b>
Phil Fulmer	Tennessee	1992-95	33-7-0 .805
Steve Spurrier	Florida	1990-93	39-10-0 .796
Bobby Dodd	Georgia Tech	1945-48	30-12-0 .714
Vince Dooley	Georgia	1964-67	30-12-1 .709
Pat Dye	Auburn	1981-84	34-14-0 .708
Bear Bryant	Kentucky	1946-49	29-12-2 .698
John Vaught	Ole Miss	1947-50	26-13-1 .663
	<i>*Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference; Southern Conference and SEC</i>		