

Valdosta State College



1976 BASEBALL

ALL-CONFERENCE RETURNEES

Dave Taylor and Jeff Greenhalgh return to bolster the Valdosta State infield and the Blazers' offensive attack in 1976. An all-South Atlantic Conference shortstop last season, Taylor led the Blazers in hitting with a .354 average and is co-captain this year. Greenhalgh, conference all-star first baseman in '75, led the team in home runs with 9 and hit a solid .291. The left field scoreboard behind them is the newest addition to Blazer Field.

Seven Consecutive Years In Post-Season Tournaments



Beale



Jones



Demersseman



Viers



Tyler



McLendon



Clarington



Petty



VALDOSTA STATE COLLEGE
1976 BASEBALL ROSTER



Greenhalgh



Alford

NO.	PLAYER	POS.	HGT.	WGT.	AGE	B-T	YR.	HOMETOWN
7	Jeff Greenhalgh	1b	6-3	200	22	L-R	Sr.	Tampa, Fla.
12	Skip Fite	2b-ss	5-11	175	20	L-R	Jr.	Douglasville, Ga.
13	Danny Blizzard	3b	6-1	195	21	R-R	Sr.	Cordele, Ga.
1	Dave Taylor	ss-2b	6-1	170	21	R-R	Sr.	Sanibel, Fla.
9	Bart Shuman	util.	5-11	165	19	L-R	Fr.	Monticello, Fla.
44	Billy Tyler	1b-p	6-1	185	20	L-L	Jr.	Jacksonville, Fla.
30	Craig Viers	lf-cf	5-9	165	20	L-R	So.	Crown Point, Ind.
43	Chuck Beale	lf-p	5-8	160	20	L-R	Jr.	Macon, Ga.
27	David Demersseman	lf-rf	6-0	185	20	R-R	So.	Valdosta, Ga.
21	Kim Jones	cf-rf	5-8	180	19	L-L	So.	Greencastle, Ind.
4	Dan Alford	rf-lf	6-0	190	21	R-R	Sr.	Gainesville, Fla.
19	Mike Balboni	c	5-10	200	21	L-R	Sr.	Ocala, Fla.
24	Cecil Whitehead	c	6-0	185	19	R-R	Fr.	Valdosta, Ga.
41	Gary Giddens	p	6-1	230	21	R-R	Sr.	Fitzgerald, Ga.
34	Bill Petty	p	6-0	170	20	L-L	Jr.	Grove City, Ohio
54	Steve McDiffitt	p	6-0	180	20	R-R	Jr.	New Martinsville, W. Va.
35	Hodges McLendon	p	6-0	180	20	L-L	Jr.	Dawson, Ga.
46	Vic Feist	p	6-4	210	21	L-L	Jr.	Medina, Ohio
22	Richard Sullivan	p	6-0	170	20	L-L	Jr.	Live Oak, Fla.
39	Lawrence Clarington	p	5-9	155	21	R-L	So.	Perry, Ga.



Taylor



Balboni



McDiffitt



Blizzard



Shuman



Whitehead



Sullivan



Feist



Giddens



Fite

VALDOSTA STATE COLLEGE BASEBALL STAFF

Success and Tommy Thomas have gone hand-in-hand ever since the 35-year-old Valdosta native assumed the head coaching reins at Valdosta State in 1968. In his eight years at the Blazer helm, VSC has compiled a 236-112 record for a sparkling .678 percentage.



For seven consecutive years the Blazers have been invited to post-season tournaments, winning five straight NAIA district crowns before switching to the NCAA and winning the South Atlantic Regional two years ago.

Thomas led VSC to the title of the South Atlantic Conference in its inaugural year of 1974 and directed his team to a second place finish a year ago. Besides being named 1974 Coach-of-the-Year for the NCAA South Region, Thomas is the only coach in history to guide his team to the NAIA World Series one year (1973) and the NCAA World Series the next (1974).

Thomas received his BS degree from Valdosta State in 1962 and the MST degree from Georgia Southern in 1967. He has done additional graduate work at the University of Georgia.

Dave Waples begins his fourth season as Blazer baseball assistant. The Columbus, Ohio native has been around for VSC's two most successful seasons (43-14 in 1973 and 38-13 in 1974). He also coaches the Blazer cross-country team, which won the SAC championship in 1975 and participated in the NCAA Division II national tournament in California last November.

Before coming South, Waples led his West Liberty State (W.Va.) team to a two-year 43-13 mark, including West Virginia Conference and NAIA district championships.

Waples spent two years at the University of New Mexico as an assistant football coach, and a year at West Virginia University as assistant baseball coach. He earned the BA degree from West Liberty State in 1963, an MEd from Temple University in 1964 and the EdD from West Virginia in 1972.



Steve Roberts serves the dual role of Valdosta State Sports Information Director and Sunday Editor of the Valdosta Daily Times.



A 1965 graduate of the University of Georgia, Roberts handles statistics and press releases and is in charge of seating arrangements in the press box located above the VSC dugout. Visiting radio and newspaper crews are welcome in the press box. The VSC Athletic Department requests advance notice, which should be directed to Roberts' attention, so arrangements can be made.

Roberts worked for four years at the Savannah Morning News in sports and as Sunday Editor before assuming his positions with VSC and The Times respectively.

Thomas Drazdowski	Head Manager
Joe Drazdowski	Assistant Manager
Jess Wright	Ground Crew Chief
Sam Moody	PA Announcer
Bill Postell	PA Announcer

VALDOSTA STATE COLLEGE 1976 SEASON OUTLOOK

A good recruiting year and solid veteran returnees are two reasons Valdosta State baseball coach Tommy Thomas is looking forward to the 1976 campaign with optimism.

Thomas expects this year's squad to be improved over last season's respectable 36-17 club which narrowly missed winning the school's second straight South Atlantic Conference championship. That team was marked by a lack of consistency in all phases of the game. The shortcoming that blossomed most often was hitting — or rather a lack of hitting — especially at the end of the season when it was needed most.

This year's club, on paper at least, looks to be more offensively potent. Two outstanding junior college performers have been added as well as two prep standouts from Valdosta High School. The JC transfers, while expected to bolster the offensive attack, are also excellent defensive players and should give VSC its best infield in recent history.

A close look at the infield finds Jeff "Moose" Greenhalgh (.291) returning for his senior year at first base. Greenhalgh, an all-conference performer, had a good offensive year in 1975, leading the team in home runs with 9 and knocking in 32 runs. He hit over .300 most of the season but a late slump dropped his average. JC recruits Skip Fite (Chipola) at second base and Danny Blizzard (ABAC) at third base give the Blazers much more quickness than a year ago. Last season's leading hitter and all-conference standout Dave Taylor (.354) returns at shortstop, which he played well in 1975, leading the team with 161 assists. Bart Shuman (Jefferson County, Fla.) and JC transfer Billy Tyler (St. John's River) will provide depth, Shuman at second, third and short and Tyler at first.

Catching is in adequate hands with senior Mike Balboni (.214) and high school standout Cecil Whitehead (Valdosta) backing him up. Balboni is expected to be more productive at the plate. Defensively, he does a good job and possesses a strong and accurate arm. Whitehead will be brought along slowly, doing some catching and filling in as a designated hitter on occasion.

Two starting outfielders from a year ago are gone, including Dan Darden, the most consistent offensive player in 1975 who led the team in 7 offensive categories and was second in 2 others. The lone returning starter is sophomore Craig Viers (.284), who played left field and banded out 52 hits including 9 doubles and 3 home runs. The only other returning outfielder is sophomore Kim Jones (.212), who played in right field on occasion in 1975 but will probably play center field this year. Senior Dan Alford (.250) played second base last year but has moved to right field for his final season. Newcomers David Demersseman (Valdosta) and JC transfer Chuck Beale (Middle Georgia) complete the outfield roster. Beale is also a pitcher.

Pitching should be strong with four returnees and two impressive JC transfers plus Beale and Tyler. Bill Petty (7-6, 2.94 ERA), Steve McDiffitt (5-5, 3.24 ERA), Gary "Bull" Giddens (4-2, 1.83 ERA) and Lawrence Clarrington (5-1, 1.66 ERA). Also returning is junior Vic Feist, who missed 1975 with arm problems. He underwent corrective surgery in the off-season and is a question mark.

Expected to step in and pull yeoman's duty are JC transfers Hodges McLendon (ABAC) and Richard Sullivan (ABAC). Petty, a junior, has posted 18 victories in two seasons and would write his name in the VSC record book with another good year.

In summary, Thomas expects marked improvement in the infield and pitching departments and believes his catching and outfield crews will be in the same class as 1975. Whether or not the Blazers improve on last year's 36-17 record depends on how well and how quickly the team jells.

The impressive 56-game schedule begins March 5 against Georgia, and the 20-game SAC race gets underway April 3. Forty-one games will be played in Valdosta, 39 at Blazer Field, which has been further improved with the addition of an electric scoreboard behind the left field fence.

SCOUTING THE 1976 OPPONENTS

Valdosta State's 56-game 1976 schedule is the most attractive in the school's history from a "big-name team" standpoint. Eight NCAA Division I schools, including Georgia, Florida, Florida State, Duke, Tennessee, Western Kentucky, Georgia Southern and Mercer, grace the slate as well as NAIA's 1974 and 1975 national champion Lewis University.

Two of the "majors" help the Blazers open a 41-game home schedule March 5 as Georgia (21-15) and Western Kentucky (7-20) come to town. Another big name, Duke University (9-18) of the Atlantic Coast Conference, visits before Morris Harvey (8-19) comes in for its annual three-game series. West Liberty State (17-12), Illinois Benedictine (24-25) and Howard (28-12) play at Blazer Field before VSC takes its first road trip to powerful Florida State University (49-10).

The remainder of the non-conference schedule includes, among others, Tennessee (32-16), Georgia Southern (34-19), Florida (23-25), Mercer (31-17), Albany State (20-9) and Lewis (46-16).

In the tough South Atlantic Conference, the Blazers will be battling last year's champion Columbus (32-19), West Georgia, Armstrong State, Augusta and Southern Tech. At stake will be not only the SAC title but also a probable trip to the NCAA South Regional.

1976 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE	TIME
March 5	†Georgia	Valdosta	5:00
March 5	†Western Kentucky	Valdosta	8:30
March 6	Western Kentucky	Valdosta	1:00
March 7	Duke	Valdosta	2:00
March 8	Morris Harvey (W.Va.)	Valdosta	3:00
March 9	Morris Harvey (W.Va.)	Valdosta	3:00
March 10	Morris Harvey (W.Va.)	Valdosta	3:00
March 11	West Liberty (W.Va.)	Valdosta	3:00
March 12	Illinois Benedictine	Valdosta	3:00
March 13	(2) Illinois Benedictine	Valdosta	1:00
March 14	Illinois Benedictine	Valdosta	2:00
March 19	Howard (D.C.)	Valdosta	3:00
March 20	Florida State	Tallahassee, Fla.	- -
March 21	Tennessee	Valdosta	2:00
March 22	Ft. Valley State	Valdosta	3:00
March 23	Ft. Valley State	Valdosta	3:00
March 24	Otterbein (Ohio)	Valdosta	3:00
March 25	Otterbein (Ohio)	Valdosta	3:00
March 26	Wright State (Ohio)	Valdosta	3:00
March 27	(2) Erskine	Valdosta	1:00
March 28	Florida State	Valdosta	2:00
March 30	Albany State	Albany, Ga.	5:00
March 31	(2) Georgia Southern	Valdosta	2:00
April 1	Georgia Southwestern	Americus, Ga.	- -
April 3	(2)*Southern Tech	Valdosta	1:00
April 6	(2)*Armstrong State	Savannah, Ga.	- -
April 7	Mercer	Valdosta	3:00
April 8	Florida	Valdosta	3:00
April 10	(2)*West Georgia	Carrollton, Ga.	- -
April 13	(2)*Columbus	Valdosta	2:00
April 14	Lewis	Valdosta	3:00
April 15	Lewis	Valdosta	3:00
April 16	Lewis	Valdosta	3:00
April 17	(2)*Augusta	Valdosta	1:00
April 20	(2)*Armstrong State	Valdosta	2:00
April 21	Georgia Southwestern	Valdosta	3:00
April 24	(2)*Southern Tech	Marietta, Ga.	- -
April 27	(2)*Columbus	Columbus, Ga.	- -
April 29	Florida	Ocala, Fla.	7:30
May 1	(2)*West Georgia	Valdosta	1:00
May 5	Albany State	Valdosta	3:00
May 8	(2)*Augusta	Augusta, Ga.	- -
May 12	Mercer	Macon, Ga.	- -

†To Be Played At Pendleton Park

*Conference Game

VALDOSTA STATE RECORDS

RECORD BY SEASONS

1955 — 6-5 Walter Cottingham	1965 — 18-11 Bill Grant
1956 — 2-8 Walter Cottingham	1966 — 15-9 Bill Grant
1957 — 2-7 Walter Cottingham	1967 — 14-16 Bill Grant
1958 — 2-5 Walter Cottingham	1968 — 15-9 Tommy Thomas
1959 — 10-11 Gary Colson	1969 — 27-10 Tommy Thomas
1960 — 15-5 Bill Grant	1970 — 25-16 Tommy Thomas
1961 — 8-15 Bill Grant	1971 — 24-18 Tommy Thomas
1962 — 9-9 Bill Grant	1972 — 28-15 Tommy Thomas
1963 — 4-8 Bill Grant	1973 — 43-14 Tommy Thomas
1964 — 10-10 Bill Grant	1974 — 38-13 Tommy Thomas
1975 — 36-17 Tommy Thomas	
TOTAL — 351-231, .603	

INDIVIDUAL RECORDS — GAME

Most Runs — 5, Steve Crawford vs. Lake Forest, 1968
Most Hits — 5, Buck Ethredge vs. North Georgia 1968
5, Spence Kiser vs. Armstrong St., 1970
5 Bobby Tripp vs. Ga. Southwestern, 1972
5 Gene Felts vs. Columbus, 1973
Most RBIs — 7, Buck Ethredge vs. North Georgia, 1960
Most Doubles — 3, Sam Bowen vs. Shorter, 1974
Most Triples — 2, Hansel Faulkner vs. West Georgia 1960
2, Spence Kiser vs. Ouachita Baptist, 1970
2, Sam Bowen vs. Arkansas St., 1973
Most Home Runs — 3, Gene Felts vs. Erskine, 1972
Most Total Bases — 13, Gene Felts vs. Georgia State, 1972
Most Stolen Bases — 6, Claude Speck vs. Georgia Tech, 1967
Most Assists — 8, Rusty Simpson vs. David Lipscomb, 1968
Most Put Outs — 18, Frank Sumner vs. Birmingham Sou., 1973
Most Innings Pitched — 15, Dan Chadwick vs. Mercer, 1973
Most Strike Outs — 17, Sam Bowen vs. Birmingham Sou., 1973

INDIVIDUAL RECORDS — SEASON

Most At Bats — 223, Dan Darden, 1975
Most Runs — 54, Gene Felts, 1972
Most Hits — 78, Gene Felts, 1973
Most Consecutive Hits, — 8, Jerome Register, 1974
Most Extra Base Hits — 28, Gene Felts, 1972
Most RBIs — 50, Gene Felts, 1972
Best Batting Average — .394, Craig Courtney, 1969
Best Slugging Percentage — .720, Gene Felts, 1972
Most Doubles — 13, Craig Courtney, 1969
Most Triples — 8, Dan Darden, 1975
Most Home Runs — 13, Gene Felts, 1972
Most Total Bases — 142, Dan Darden, 1975
Most Stolen Bases — 31, Claude Speck, 1967
Most Walks — 48, Sam Bowen, 1973
Longest Hitting Streak — 20 Games, Craig Courtney, 1969

PITCHING

Most Innings Pitched — 117.2, Pat Arnett, 1973
Most Consecutive Scoreless Innings — 26, Rusty Simpson, 1970
Most Strike Outs — 101, Eddie Fisher, 1969
Most Wins — 11, Eddie Fisher, 1969, Bill Petty, 1974
Best Winning Percentage — 11-0, Eddie Fisher, 1969
Most Appearances — 17, Pat Arnett, 1973
Most Decisions — 14, Lee Daney, 1973
Best ERA - 0.78, Mike Perry, 1964
Most Shut Outs — 3, Many players share record
Best Strike Out Avg. Per 9 Innings — 12.7, Sam Bowen, 1973

1975 RESULTS AND STATISTICS

Won — 36 Lost — 17

VSC 0, Florida State	9	VSC 7, Armstrong State	4
VSC 3, Florida State	8	VSC 7, Armstrong State	3
VSC 6, Morris Harvey	3	VSC 12, Georgia Southwestern	11
VSC 21, Morris Harvey	1	VSC 5, West Georgia	2
VSC 3, Morris Harvey	2	VSC 3, West Georgia	0
VSC 3, West Liberty State	2	VSC 2, Columbus	3
VSC 3, David Lipscomb	1	VSC 3, Columbus	4
VSC 0, David Lipscomb	1	VSC 7, Mercer	6
VSC 4, Illinois Benedictine	3	VSC 10, Georgia College	2
VSC 2, Illinois Benedictine	1	VSC 2, Augusta	1
VSC 3, Illinois Benedictine	4	VSC 4, Augusta	0
VSC 3, Florida	11	VSC 6, Armstrong State	5
VSC 8, Lewis	7	VSC 1, Armstrong State	0
VSC 6, Lewis	5	VSC 3, Albany State	4
VSC 5, Lewis	4	VSC 9, Southern Tech	2
VSC 6, Macalester	0	VSC 5, Southern Tech	0
VSC 4, Macalester	2	VSC 2, Georgia Southern	9
VSC 2, Erskine	3	VSC 2, Georgia Southwestern	1
VSC 4, Erskine	3	VSC 11, Florida A&M	3
VSC 10, Ft. Valley St.	2	VSC 6, Columbus	4
VSC 7, Westmar	4	VSC 3, Columbus	4
VSC 23, Westmar	1	VSC 3, Florida A&M	4
VSC 8, Southern Tech	3	VSC 17, Georgia College	1
VSC 10, Southern Tech	5	VSC 1, Albany State	6
VSC 4, Mercer	6	VSC 1, Augusta	6
		VSC 6, Augusta	1

NCAA SOUTH ATLANTIC REGIONAL

VSC 0, Florida Southern	6	VSC 2, Columbus	5
-----------------------------------	---	---------------------------	---

BATTING

	AB	R	H	BI	AVG	2B	3B	HR	SB
DAVE TAYLOR, ss	164	40	58	28	.354	7	1	3	2
Dan Darden, dh	223	45	74	36	.332	12	8	5	25
JEFF GREENHALGH, 1b	175	35	51	32	.291	5	2	9	1
CRAIG VIERS, lf	183	30	52	31	.284	9	1	3	10
Darrell Branam, c	157	29	43	24	.274	4	0	5	3
DAN ALFORD, 2b	104	13	26	15	.250	2	1	1	8
Foster Foran, dh	119	7	28	15	.235	4	1	1	1
Steve Sumner, 3b	137	17	30	11	.219	3	0	0	4
MIKE BALBONI, c	103	12	22	12	.214	6	0	0	1
Pete Reeves, ss	70	12	9	4	.129	0	0	0	4
others	263	48	52	36	.198	6	1	1	25
TOTALS	1698	288	445	245	.262	58	16	28	84

PITCHING

	G	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	W-L	ERA
LAWRENCE CLARINGTON	13	54.1	38	18	10	31	28	5-1	1.66
GARY GIDDENS	6	39.1	36	12	8	9	24	4-2	1.83
Dan Darden	1	4.1	2	3	1	7	3	0-0	2.08
Tony Ferrara	9	46.1	43	20	12	23	32	5-1	2.33
Bill Parsons	16	48.2	45	14	13	15	19	5-0	2.40
BILL PETTY	14	104	102	45	34	29	49	7-6	2.94
STEVE McDIFFITT	13	91.2	81	44	33	41	61	5-5	3.24
Lavon Keadle	7	42.1	39	20	16	21	23	3-1	3.40
Carlton Bassett	4	8	9	4	4	2	4	0-1	4.50
Foster Foran	1	1	2	2	2	1	0	0-0	18.00
TOTALS		458	405	188	135	191	254	36-17	2.65