

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

2004
BASEBALL



RED HOT!

2004 Outlook

When fans enter Billy Grant Field for a Valdosta State baseball game, they can pick up a free game program. They'll need it this season because this band of Blazers, primarily the position players, is new to the perennial Division II baseball power.

Half this year's team are returnees, but eight are pitchers with senior righthander Adam Lingenfelter the only returning starter with big game experience. Two starters - senior Greg Connell and junior David Lewis - return to the lineup, and both were productive performers for last year's 37-18 club which made it to the Gulf South Conference tournament.

"There are a lot of question marks," said veteran head coach Tommy Thomas, who enters his 37th season as Division II's winningest coach with 1201 victories. The 2003 team gave him the record on the final home weekend of the regular season. "We can have a good year, but we need to stay healthy and we need our pitching staff to grow up in a hurry."

With the exception of Connell and Lewis, this year's starting cast is brand new. Connell, coming off a solid season in which he hit .346 with four home runs and 46 RBI, will play third after spending most of 2003 filling the designated hitter role. Lewis, last year's rightfielder who hit .341 with 42 RBI, will play both right and left. He'll move to left when Georgia College & State transfer John McDonald (.313, 11 doubles, 21 RBI), who has a great arm, starts in right. Jermaine Johnson, a highly-regarded recruit from Lake City CC, will patrol center field.

Outfield depth will be provided by junior Joey Nijem (.455 in 22 at bats), Micah Smith (.306 in 36 at bats) and converted pitchers Scott Brinson and Brandon Wolcott. That quartet will take turns filling the DH role (Nijem, Smith and Brinson all swing from the left side).

The starting infield will have a totally new look, starting with Connell at third. Junior Ryan Chromek, who sat out last year after transferring from Armstrong Atlantic State, and senior Rander Parkman (also a top reliever) will divide time at second base. The shortstop will be junior Robert Morgan, a transfer from South Georgia, and the first baseman will be senior Greg Adams, who transferred from Georgia after playing junior college baseball at Tallahassee CC.

Junior Jeff Owsley, another South Georgia transfer, will be a utility player around the horn, and freshmen Rance Morgan and Scott Booker will be available if needed but are likely redshirt candidates, Thomas said.

It's critical the catching position remain healthy. Junior Matt Rucker, a transfer from Darton College, is the only full-time receiver on the roster after his backup was declared academically ineligible on the eve of the season.

Rucker will be on the receiving end from a staff with a variety of experience. The 10-man contingent is led by Lingenfelter, a big game starter last year who finished 8-5 with a 3.68 ERA. He had a team high 73 strikeouts and

made the all-conference team.

"Adam's our No. 1 pitcher," Thomas said. "Then there's a gap. Everybody else is unproven in big games."

Parkman (3-2, 5.56 ERA) will get the call out of the pen after saving seven games a year ago, and junior lefthander Grafton Kent, a Middle Georgia transfer, will also work in short relief.

Thomas and his staff will use a trial by fire to find other mainline starters. Candidates are senior Bryan Bennett (3-2, 3.32 ERA), junior Zach Stewart (4-1, 5.00 ERA) and junior Michael Martinez (1-0, 2.70). Three others - junior Mason Smith and sophomores Nickolas Kitchens and Brandon Miller - will try to make their mark.

New to the staff are Middle Georgia transfer Robbie Wachman, who'll get a shot as a top starter, and lefthander Parks Robinson, who pitched sparingly at Georgia in 2002.

The schedule as always is challenging as top teams from the Sunshine State and Peach Belt conferences join the always competitive Gulf South contingent. The 21-game league slate begins at Lincoln Memorial March 20.

Valdosta Daily Times Sports Editor Greg McIlvain contributed to this outlook.

2004 Valdosta State Baseball Roster

Number and Name	Bats/Throws	Age	Height	Weight	Class	Hometown
PITCHERS						
35 Bryan Bennett	R/R	22	6-3	210	Sr	Homerville, GA
12 Grafton Kent	L/L	21	6-0	180	Jr	Nashville, GA
13 Nickolas Kitchens	R/R	20	6-2	195	So	Hepzibah, GA
29 Adam Lingenfelter	R/R	24	6-3	215	Sr	Gainesville, FL
34 Michael Martinez	R/R	21	5-11	205	Jr	New York, NY
41 Brandon Miller	L/L	20	6-2	170	So	Waldorf, MD
17 Rander Parkman	R/R	22	5-11	180	Sr	Sylvester, Ga
23 Parks Robinson	L/L	22	6-2	195	Jr	Bradenton, FL
25 Zach Stewart	L/L	21	5-11	180	Jr	Atlanta, GA
26 Robbie Wachman	R/R	21	6-5	205	Jr	Valdosta, GA
CATCHER						
15 Matt Rucker	L/R	21	6-1	195	Jr	Leesburg, GA
INFIELDERS						
22 Greg Adams	R/R	22	5-10	190	Sr	Jacksonville, FL
46 Scott Brooker	L/R	19	6-0	180	Fr	Hoboken, GA
4 Ryan Chromek	R/R	23	5-7	165	Jr	Suwanee, GA
33 Greg Connell	R/R	21	6-1	215	Sr	Moultrie, GA
28 Rance Morgan	R/R	18	6-3	200	Fr	Homerville, GA
2 Robert Morgan	R/R	20	5-10	190	Jr	Cordele, GA
23 Josh Owsley	R/R	21	6-2	180	Jr	Adel, GA
OUTFIELDERS						
30 Scott Brinson	L/L	22	6-0	195	Sr	Bainbridge, GA
24 Jermaine Johnson	L/R	20	6-3	200	Jr	Brunswick, GA
9 David Lewis	R/R	22	5-10	160	Jr	Valdosta, GA
21 John McDonald	R/R	22	6-0	210	Jr	Sandersville, GA
11 Joey Nijem	L/R	21	5-10	160	Jr	Valdosta, GA
28 Micah Smith	L/L	22	5-10	170	Sr	Kathleen, GA
20 Brandon Wolcott	R/R	21	6-3	215	Jr	Americus, GA

2004 Baseball Schedule

FEBRUARY

4, Wednesday	Saint Leo	Saint Leo, FL	4 pm
7, Saturday	Barry (2)	Valdosta	1 pm
8, Sunday	Barry	Valdosta	1 pm
10, Tuesday	Flagler	Valdosta	4 pm
11, Wednesday	Saint Leo	Valdosta	4 pm
13, Friday	Barry	Miami Shores, FL	3 pm
14, Saturday	Barry	Miami Shores, FL	Noon
18, Wednesday	Thomas	Thomasville	3 pm
21, Saturday	Tampa	Valdosta	2 pm
22, Sunday	Tampa (2)	Valdosta	1:30 pm
26, Thursday	Albany State	Albany	4 pm
NIJEM JEWELERS CLASSIC (thru 2/29)			
27, Friday	Dowling	Valdosta	7 pm
28, Saturday	Florida Southern	Valdosta	4:30 pm
29, Sunday	Ga. College & St.	Valdosta	3 pm

MARCH

3, Wednesday	Columbus State	Columbus	4 pm
6, Saturday	N. Kentucky (2)	Valdosta	1 pm
7, Sunday	N. Kentucky (2)	Valdosta	1:30 pm
10, Wednesday	Ga. College & St.	Valdosta	4 pm
15, Monday	Edward Waters	Valdosta	5 pm
16, Tuesday	Flagler	St. Augustine, FL	5 pm
17, Wednesday	Thomas	Valdosta	5 pm
20, Saturday	Lincoln Mem.* (2)	Harrogate, TN	Noon
21, Sunday	Lincoln Mem.*	Harrogate, TN	1 pm
24, Wednesday	Columbus State	Valdosta	6 pm
27, Saturday	Al. Huntsville*(2)	Valdosta	1 pm
28, Sunday	Al. Huntsville*	Valdosta	1:30 pm
30, Tuesday	Armstrong Atl. St.	Savannah	3 pm

APRIL

3, Saturday	W. Alabama* (2)	Valdosta	1 pm
4, Sunday	W. Alabama*	Valdosta	1:30 pm
8, Thursday	Ga. College & St.	Milledgeville	3 pm
9, Friday	W. Georgia* (2)	Carrollton	1 pm
10, Saturday	W. Georgia*	Carrollton	1 pm
13, Tuesday	North Florida	Valdosta	6 pm
17, Saturday	N. Alabama* (2)	Florence	5 pm
18, Sunday	N. Alabama*	Florence	2 pm
20, Tuesday	Armstrong Atl. St.	Valdosta	5 pm
21, Wednesday	North Florida	Jacksonville	6 pm
24, Saturday	Montevallo* (2)	Valdosta	1 pm
25, Sunday	Montevallo*	Valdosta	1:30 pm
27, Tuesday	Albany State	Valdosta	5 pm

MAY

1, Saturday	West Florida* (2)	Pensacola	2 pm
2, Sunday	West Florida*	Pensacola	2 pm
6-9	Gulf South Conf.	Millington, TN	TBA
Thursday-Sunday	Tournament		

* Gulf South Conference games
ALL TIMES EASTERN

THE RECORD BOOK

INDIVIDUAL - GAME

Most ABs	7, 14 players tied
Most Runs	5, Steve Crawford, '68
	David DeMersseman, '77
	June Munford, '83
	Mike White, '85
	Toby Evans, '01
Most Hits	6, Mike Jones, '85
Most 2Bs	3, Sam Bowen, '74
	Seo Torres, '80
	June Munford, '83
	Mike Cassala, '88
	Darrien Teals, '88
	Tom White, '91
Most 3Bs	2, 9 players tied
Most HRs	3, Gene Felts, '72
	Bobby McDonald, '97
Most HRs: Inning	2, Billy Tyler, '76
	Sal Amadeo, '78
Most TBs	13, Gene Felts, '72
	Bobby McDonald, '97
Most RBIs	9, Rob Busch, '85
Most SBs	6, Claude Speck, '67
Most Put Outs	20, Kevin Spooner, '85
Most Assists	10, John Gordon, '86
Most Errors	4, 5 players tied
Most IP	15, Danny Chadwick, '73
Most Ks	18, Kelly Scott, '80
Perfect Game	Leroy Purdy, '70
No Hitters	Eddie Fisher, '69
	Steve Sorgious, '70
	Dan Darden, '74
	Dwayne Cushman, '94

INDIVIDUAL - SEASON

Best B.A.	433, Chuck Devane, '83
Best Slugging %	839, Cecil Whitehead, '78
Most AB	271, Mike Jones, '85
Most Runs	96, Andy Anthony, '85
Most Hits	114, Mike Jones, '85
Most 2Bs	25, Danny Antonelli, '99
Most 3Bs	8, Dan Darden, '75
Most HRs	23, Bobby McDonald, '97
Most Consecutive Hits	9, Rob Bush, '85
Longest Hitting Streak	25, Rusty Brown, '90
Most Extra Base Hits	39, JoJo Blaha, '86
	Kevin Spooner, '85
Most Total Bases	166, Mike Jones, '85
Most RBIs	76, JoJo Blaha, '85
Most BBs (drawn)	91, Richie Johnson, '82
Most SBs	46, Mike White, '85
Most Appearances	29, Jason Bulger, '01
	Corey Wachman, '02
Most IP	127.1, Jeff Agerter, '83
Most Consecutive Shutout Innings	28.2, Jimmy Wall, '77
Most Ks	112, Bryan Shover, '93
Most Ks per 9 innings	12.7, Sam Bowen, '73
Most Wins	13, Jeff Agerter, '82
Most Decisions	17, Jeff Agerter, '82
Most Saves	12, Corey Wachman, '02
Best ERA	0.78, Mike Perry, '64
Most Shutouts	3, 9 players tied

INDIVIDUAL - CAREER

Best B.A.	390, John Gordon, '86-87
Best Slugging %	643, Cecil Whitehead, '76-78
Consecutive Starts	226, Scott Simpson, '00-03
Most ABs	834, Scott Simpson, '00-03
Most Runs	183, Sal Amadeo, '77-79

Most Hits	276, Scott Simpson, '00-03
Most 2Bs	52, JoJo Blaha, '84-87
Most 3Bs	18, Gene Felts, '71-74
	Craig Viers, '75-78
Most HRs	44, Bobby McDonald, '96-99
Most TBs	445, JoJo Blaha, '84-87
Most RBIs	209, JoJo Blaha, '84-87
Most SBs	91, Sal Amadeo, '77-79
Most Appearances	70, Ted West, '85-88
Most IP	353, Jimmy Wall, '77-80
Most Ks	365, Bryan Shover, '92-95
Most Wins	31, Bill Petty, '74-77
	Jimmy Wall, '77-80
	Bryan Shover, '92-95
Best Winning Percentage	.950, Kelly Scott, '79-80
Most Saves	12, Corey Wachman, '02
Best ERA	1.48, Eddie Fisher, '66-69
Most Shutouts	7, Bill Petty, '74-77

TEAM - GAME

Most ABs	50 vs. Morris Brown, '01
Most Runs	29 vs. Morris Brown, '01
Most Runs: Inning	13 vs. Jacksonville State, '79
	Fort Valley State, '85
Most Hits	30 vs. Shippensburg, '85
Most RBIs	25 vs. Morris Brown, '01
Most 2Bs	10 vs. Morris Brown, '01
Most 3Bs	4 vs. Oglethorpe, '65
	Ouachita Baptist, '70
	Fort Valley State, '83
Most HRs	6 vs. Eckerd, '85
Most Runs Against	28 vs. Jacksonville State, '90
Most Runs: Both Teams	39 vs. N. Ala. (18-21), '95
Most Extra Base Hits	16 vs. Morris Brown, '01
Most TBs	52 vs. Morris Brown, '01
Most Errors	9 vs. Florida Southern, '89
Most SBs	13 vs. Armstrong State, '68
Most DPs	5 vs. New Orleans, '74
Most Innings	17 vs. David Lipscomb, '68

TEAM - SEASON

Most Games	71, 1982
Most Wins	49, 1982
Most Consecutive Wins	22, 1983
Best Winning Percentage	.804 (45-11), 1980
Most Losses	31, 1989, 1990, 1999
Best Batting Average	.343, 1985
Worst Batting Average	.216, 1957
Best Slugging Percentage	.566, 1985
Most ABs	2261, 1985
Most Runs	620, 1985
Most Runs Per Game	9.8, 1986
Most Times Shut Out	8, 1976
Fewest Runs Allowed Per Game	2.3, 1960
Most Hits	776, 1985
Most 2Bs	144, 1985
Most 3Bs	31, 1985
Most HRs	99, 1985
Most Extra Base Hits	274, 1985
Most Total Bases	1279, 1985
Most RBIs	545, 1985
Most Stolen Bases	179, 1985
Most Double Plays	67, 1985
Best Fielding Percentage	.964, 1965
Most Innings Pitched	577.1, 1982
Most Strikeouts	488, 1995
Most Walks	404, 1981
Best ERA	1.45, 1964
Worst ERA	7.36, 1990
Most Shutouts	12, 1973
Most Consecutive Shutouts	4, 1971

Blazer Baseball Support Personnel...



Adam Cline
Baseball Trainer



Nick Foster
Baseball Trainer



David Bruce
Student Trainer



Larry Bell
Student Trainer



Jay Johnson
Student Trainer



Michelle Williams
Game Operations



Herb Reinhard
Batboy

FINAL HITTING STATISTICS

	AB	R	H	RBI	AVG	2B	3B	HR	BB	K	Slug%	OB%	SB-A
Sammy Watson	201	54	85	57	.423	16	3	6	23	14	.622	.478	21-26
Greg Connell	185	44	64	41	.346	5	1	4	19	29	.449	.401	4-4
Josh Grube	224	56	77	34	.344	8	4	2	11	18	.442	.377	7-7
David Lewis	182	31	62	42	.341	8	3	1	19	25	.434	.406	9-13
Scott Fletcher	186	35	62	34	.333	10	2	2	14	18	.441	.402	11-17
Scott Simpson	194	38	62	23	.320	6	0	3	14	13	.397	.378	15-17
Tim Kelly	108	17	29	18	.269	3	0	3	9	20	.380	.331	4-6
Josh Veres	220	54	59	28	.268	9	1	2	19	16	.345	.344	18-21
Jay Berryman	89	11	15	11	.169	1	0	1	15	13	.213	.324	2-3
Jay Neundorfer	1	4	1	2	1.000	0	0	1	0	0	4.000	1.000	0-0
Render Parkman	17	6	8	9	.471	5	0	1	3	1	.941	.571	1-1
Joey Nijem	22	5	10	6	.455	2	1	1	3	4	.773	.520	1-1
Eric Stiefel	25	4	9	3	.360	0	0	0	2	4	.360	.429	0-0
Micah Smith	36	11	11	4	.306	2	1	0	8	8	.417	.457	4-7
Blake Thompson	72	16	21	7	.292	4	0	0	11	13	.347	.388	0-1
Jake Cosper	60	10	14	16	.233	2	0	3	5	16	.417	.333	1-1
Brian Crawford	10	1	1	2	.100	0	0	0	0	3	.100	.100	0-0
Jason Van Nus	1	1	0	0	.000	0	0	0	0	1	.000	.000	0-0
VSU	1833	398	590	337	.262	81	16	30	175	216	.433	.391	98-125
Opponents	1753	277	469	231	.288	75	9	25	190	380	.363	.354	64-83

FINAL PITCHING STATISTICS

	G	W	L	S	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	ERA	GS	CG
Davey Covey	13	8	2	0	75	73	40	27	26	51	3.24	13	0
Bryan Bennett	12	3	2	1	38	42	18	14	10	31	3.32	5	1
Adam Lingenfelter	14	8	5	0	85.2	97	50	35	28	73	3.68	14	6
Jacques Wattecamp	14	6	2	0	69.1	75	47	34	40	50	4.41	14	11
Zach Stewart	13	4	1	0	27	27	23	15	18	34	5.00	5	0
Render Parkman	25	3	2	7	43.2	50	31	27	17	34	5.56	0	0
Brandon Wolcott	16	1	1	1	19	16	7	5	9	16	2.37	0	0
Michael Martinez	11	1	0	0	16.2	19	7	5	6	13	2.70	1	0
Blake Dykes	8	0	0	0	8.2	11	4	4	0	10	4.15	1	0
Nickolas Kitchens	7	0	0	0	11	10	6	6	15	4.91	1	0	
Jason Van Nus	8	0	1	0	22.2	17	18	14	14	18	5.56	2	0
Mason Smith	8	1	0	0	14.1	14	10	9	4	15	5.65	0	0
Jay Neundorfer	8	1	2	0	10.2	9	8	7	11	11	5.91	2	0
Brett McMillan	5	0	0	0	3	6	6	4	1	6	12.00	0	0
Brandon Miller	2	1	0	0	1.1	3	2	2	0	3	13.50	0	0
VSU	55	37	18	9	446	469	277	208	190	380	4.20	55	8
Opponents	55	18	37	3	430.1	590	398	306	175	216	6.40	55	8

FINAL FIELDING STATISTICS

	C	PO	A	E	PCT	DP	PB	SBA	CSB
Scott Fletcher	107	106	1	0	1.000	0	0	0	0
Brian Crawford	27	25	2	0	1.000	0	0	4	0
Render Parkman	21	6	15	0	1.000	2	0	8	1
Eric Stiefel	16	15	1	0	1.000	0	0	2	0
Jason Van Nus	3	0	3	0	1.000	0	0	3	1
Mason Smith	2	0	2	0	1.000	0	0	5	2
Michael Martinez	2	0	2	0	1.000	1	0	4	1
Nickolas Kitchens	2	1	1	0	1.000	0	0	0	2
Scott Simpson	443	407	31	5	.989	45	0	0	0
Tim Kelly	243	217	22	4	.984	2	5	25	6
Greg Connell	39	36	2	1	.974	3	0	0	0
Sammy Watson	49	47	0	2	.959	0	0	0	0
David Lewis	105	95	4	6	.943	2	0	0	0
Jake Cosper	144	123	12	9	.938	1	5	33	10
Josh Grube	259	95	145	19	.927	34	0	0	0
Josh Veres	266	87	155	24	.910	36	0	0	0
Jay Berryman	103	30	63	10	.903	9	0	0	0
Micah Smith	10	8	1	1	.900	0	0	0	0
Blake Thompson	66	19	40	7	.894	5	0	0	0
Adam Lingenfelter	21	5	13	3	.857	2	0	7	4
Davey Covey	27	6	17	4	.852	3	0	6	1
Jacques Wattecamp	19	7	9	3	.842	1	0	6	5
Zach Stewart	8	1	5	2	.750	0	0	11	1
Bryan Bennett	7	1	4	2	.714	0	0	7	0
Brandon Wolcott	3	0	2	1	.667	0	0	4	0
Joey Nijem	2	1	0	1	.500	0	0	0	0
Jay Neundorfer	1	0	0	1	.000	0	0	0	0
Blake Dykes	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	3	1
VSU	1995	1338	552	105	.947	55	10	64	19
Opponents	1961	1291	548	122	.938	28	17	98	27

SCORING

Score by Innings:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	XInn	Total	AvPG
Valdosta State	62	58	62	35	57	61	34	18	10	1	398	7.2
Opponents	27	21	30	40	33	43	33	36	11	3	277	5.0

General Information

Name Valdosta State University
 Location Valdosta, Georgia
 Founded 1906
 Enrollment 10,500
 President Dr. Ronald M. Zaccari
 Colors Red and Black
 Nickname Blazers
 Home Facility Billy Grant Field (1100)
 Conference Gulf South

National Affiliation NCAA, Division II
 2002 Record 37-18 overall,
 14-7 in GSC East (3rd)

Athletic Staff

Athletic Director Herb Reinhard
 Faculty Athletic Representative Bobby Tucker
 Compliance Coordinator Danielle Lehman
 Sports Information Director Steve Roberts
 Trainer Russ Hoff

2003 IN REVIEW

GAME SUMMARY (ALL GAMES)

Record: W-37 L-18 (H: 28-6 A: 7-10) Gulf South: 14-7

Date	Opponent	Score
2/1	Clark Atlanta	14-0
2/1	Clark Atlanta	9-3
2/2	Clark Atlanta	28-0
2/5	at Columbus State	4-13
2/8	Eckerd	3-2
2/8	Eckerd	7-1
2/9	Eckerd	12-11
2/11	Albany State	15-0
2/13	at Saint Leo	4-2
2/15	Saint Leo	10-5
2/19	Thomas	8-3
2/21	Lynn	5-4
2/22	Florida Southern	7-12
2/23	Presbyterian	5-3
2/26	Georgia College & State	9-7
2/28	Lynn	2-11
3/2	Barry	16-7
3/5	Flagler	9-3
3/8	Barry	1-4
3/8	Barry	13-6
3/13	at Albany State	6-5
3/15	Montevallo*	4-3
3/15	Montevallo*	7-6
3/16	Montevallo*	8-1
3/18	Edward Waters	9-1
3/18	Edward Waters	9-5
3/19	at Thomas	9-2
3/22	at West Florida*	9-2
3/22	at West Florida*	0-1
3/23	at West Florida*	4-5
3/25	Columbus State	2-6
3/26	at North Florida	5-8
3/29	West Alabama*	7-6
3/29	West Alabama*	6-5
3/30	West Alabama*	9-4
4/2	Maine Presque Isle	13-1
4/2	Maine Presque Isle	4-0
4/3	at Armstrong Atlantic St.	3-6
4/5	at Alabama-Huntsville*	3-7
4/5	at Alabama-Huntsville*	7-2
4/6	at Alabama-Huntsville*	6-8
4/12	West Georgia*	1-11
4/12	West Georgia*	13-7
4/13	West Georgia*	9-12
4/15	Armstrong Atlantic St.	4-0
4/16	North Florida	4-9
4/18	Lincoln Memorial*	3-1
4/18	Lincoln Memorial*	5-0
4/19	Lincoln Memorial*	9-1
4/22	at Georgia College & St.	2-8
4/26	at North Alabama*	5-11
4/26	at North Alabama*	6-4
4/27	at North Alabama*	15-4
5/3	Delta State#	9-12
5/4	Central Arkansas#	3-12

* Gulf South Conference games

#Gulf South Conference Tournament games

Baseball Staff

Head Coach Tommy Thomas
 Assistant Coach Shannon Jernigan
 Graduate Assistant Jason Brett
 Student Assistant Rick Hagan
 Baseball Trainer Adams Cline
 Student Trainers Jay Johnson, David Bruce, Larry Bell
 Press Box Crew Michelle Williams

Photos by Jack Hartley, US Photo



Robert Morgan
Shortstop
5-10 Junior
Cordele, GA

2



Ryan Chromek
Second Base
5-7 Junior
Suwannee, GA

4



Parks Robinson
Pitcher
6-2 Junior
Bradenton, FL

7



David Lewis
Outfield
5-10 Junior
Valdosta, GA

9



Joey Nijem
Outfield
5-10 Junior
Valdosta, GA

11



Grafton Kent
Pitcher
6-0 Junior
Nashville, GA

12

Head Coach Tommy Thomas

Entering his 37th season as the outstanding head coach of Valdosta State's Blazer baseball team, Tommy Thomas has enjoyed success gained by very few. In 36 seasons, Thomas-led teams have compiled an overall record of 1201-717, a .626 winning percentage. Only four times in those 36 years have the Blazers finished below .500. In 1997, he became only the second NCAA Division II coach to win 1000 games, and last season he became the all-time winningest coach in Division II history when he won his 1199th game, surpassing John Scolinas of Cal Poly-Pomona.

Twenty-four of his 36 teams have reached post-season play, and eight teams, including the 1995 club, have made it to the national tournament with the 1979 team winning the national championship. As a result, Thomas has been the recipient of numerous individual awards and honors. Following the national title year, he was named National Coach of the Year for NCAA Division II by the American Baseball Coaches Association. On seven occasions he has been named regional coach of the year, once in the NAIA Area V (1969) and five times in the NCAA South Atlantic region (1974, 1977, 1979, 1983 and 1985) and once in the South Central region (1995).

The 63-year-old Valdosta native received the BS degree from Valdosta State, where he was a four-year letterman in baseball from 1959-62, ending his career with a .316 batting average. Thomas, who is single, earned the MST degree from Georgia Southern in 1967.



Division II's Winningest Coaches

	Years	Wins
1. Tommy Thomas, Valdosta State	36	1201
2. Frank Vieira, New Haven	41	1054
3. Joe Roberts, Armstrong Atlantic State	24	977
4. Mike Metheny, Southeastern Oklahoma	23	937
5. Irish O'Reilly, Lewis	25	937
6. Dean Bowyer, Minnesota State-Mankato	29	883
7. Jim Stone, UMass-Lowell	37	801
8. Gary Collins, SIU Edwardsville	25	794
9. Warren Turner, Missouri Southern St.	27	753
10. Mike Lane, North Alabama	20	736

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Josh Owsley
Infield
6-2 Junior
Adel, GA

23



Jermaine Johnson
Center Field
6-3 Junior
Brunswick, GA

24



Zach Stewart
Pitcher
5-11 Junior
Atlanta, GA

25



Mason Smith
Pitcher
6-3 Junior
Dublin, GA

26



Rance Morgan
Infield
6-3 Freshman
Homerville, GA

28



Adam Lingenfeller
Pitcher
6-3 Senior
Gainesville, FL

29



Nickolas Kitchens 13
Pitcher
6-2 Sophomore
Hepzibah, GA



Matt Rucker 15
Catcher
6-1 Junior
Leesburg, GA



Render Parkman 17
Pitcher/Infield
5-11 Senior
Sylvester, GA



Robbie Wachman 18
Pitcher
6-5 Junior
Valdosta, GA



Micah Smith 19
Outfield
5-10 Senior
Kathleen, GA



Brandon Wolcott 20
Utility
6-3 Junior
Americus, GA

Head Coach Lannon Jernigan

Lannon Jernigan, a two-year starting pitcher at Valdosta State's 1994 and 1995 teams, spent two seasons in student manager and assistant roles, was elevated to the head coach's position five years ago. The Live Oak, Fla., native received his bachelor's degree in 1998 and is a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society in psychology and physical education.

Jernigan earned all-conference honors last season, helping the Blazers qualify for the conference tournament. His senior season he commanded a solid pitching staff and in an excellent 3.43 ERA as the team won their first Gulf South Conference championship. That team also won the South Divisional and returned to the Division II World Series for the first time since 1985.

Thomas's top assistant, Jernigan, who is married to the former Jill Vickers, an assistant counselor at VSU, has assumed the lion's share of recruiting duties in addition to the day operation of the baseball program. Thomas considers his top aide, who has additional experience as a coach in the Cape Cod Summer League, an integral part of the program and predicts a bright future in the sport.

"Lannon has grown up in this program and will continue to be a tremendous asset," Thomas said. "I have great confidence in his coaching, teaching and recruiting ability. He has the valuable patience, which makes him a valuable teacher and mentor."



Jason Brett
Graduate Assistant



John McDonald 21
Outfield
6-0 Junior
Sandersville, GA



Rick Hagan
Student Assistant



Greg Adams 22
First Base
5-10 Senior
Jacksonville, FL



Scott Brinson 30
Outfield
6-0 Senior
Bainbridge, GA



Greg Connell 33
Third Base
6-1 Senior
Moultrie, GA



Michael Martinez 34
Pitcher
5-11 Junior
New York, NY



Bryan Bennett 35
Pitcher
6-3 Senior
Homerville, GA



Brandon Miller 41
Pitcher
6-2 Sophomore
Waldorf, MD



Scott Brooker 46
Infield
6-0 Freshman
Hoboken, GA