

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY 2003 BASEBALL

Tommy Thomas

Scott Simpson

Scoreboard with advertisements for Coca-Cola and Guinness. The scoreboard shows 'AT BAT' and 'GUEST HOME' sections. The Guinness advertisement includes 'H/E', 'TS', and 'ERR' columns.

Advertisements for TEL, Valdosta's Biggest Hit!, GEORGIA LOTTO, GASS BURCH, Jeep, and Blin Subs.

VSU's

BROWN MEN

2003 Outlook

When you have success, Gulf South Conference coaches like to reward you .. or put the monkey on your back. Valdosta State, winner of the league championship last season, has been picked by eastern division coaches to be the "beasts of the east" this year. The Blazers are the choice despite the loss of pitchers which were responsible for 32 of last year's 41 wins.

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Last year's club finished 41-20, went through the GSC tournament undefeated and advanced to the South Central Regional because of pitching, defense and timely hitting. The defense and timely hitting return. The pitching staff must be rebuilt.

The senior-laden returnees are led by last year's three leading hitters - leftfielder Sammy Watson (.383), second baseman Josh Grube (.382) and first baseman Scott Simpson (.375, 48 RBI, 19 stolen bases). Simpson, along with Thomas the "iron men" of VSU baseball, will start his 172nd straight game when the 2003 campaign begins February 1.

That trio is joined by Jay Berryman (.308, 18 doubles), last year's DH who will take over at third base, centerfielder Scott Fletcher (.293), catcher Tim Kelly (.287) and shortstop Josh Veres (.279, 17 stolen bases). Sophomore David Lewis (.319, 17 stolen bases), the only non-senior, returns in right field, and sophomore Blake Thompson (.244) will be in the mix.

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Sophomore lefthander Zach Stewart (2-0, 3.38) watched as a broken hand healed in the fall and should step in as a prime time starter. Other top starters could be sophomore Michael Martinez, whose medical chart reads much like Lingenfelter's, and junior Jacques Wattecamps. Both are righthanders, and both missed fall work for injury (Martinez) and academic (Wattecamps) reasons.

Two returnees, junior righthander Render Parkman (1-0, 3.51) and senior righty Davey Covey (0-2, 5.88) are in the mix as is JC transfer Bryan Bennett. Parkman likely will get a shot at the closer role.

Eight other pitchers are on the roster, and all will get their chance to work toward pitching meaningful innings. They include seniors Jay Neundorfer and Blake Dykes, juniors Brett McMillan and Jason Van Nus, sophomores Mason Smith and Brandon Wolcott, and freshmen Nickolas Kitchens and Brandon Miller. Miller is the only lefthander in that group.

To defend its conference championship, Valdosta State must finish among the top four teams in the eastern division. Four of the seven three-game series against GSC East clubs will be at home beginning with Montevallo on March 15. The league tournament will be held at the USA Baseball facility in Millington, Tennessee May 3-6.

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Number and Name	Bats/Throws	Age	Height	Weight	Class	Hometown
PITCHERS						
35 Bryan Bennett	R/R	21	6-3	210	Jr	Homerville, GA
21 Davey Covey	R/R	23	6-0	150	Sr	Gray, GA
27 Blake Dykes	R/R	21	6-2	165	Sr	Valdosta, GA
13 Nickolas Kitchens	R/R	19	6-2	185	Fr	Augusta, GA
29 Adam Lingenfelter	R/R	23	6-3	215	Jr	Gainesville, FL
34 Michael Martinez	R/R	20	5-11	200	So	New York, NY
15 Brett McMillan	R/R	21	6-0	175	Jr	Nashville, GA
41 Brandon Miller	L/L	18	6-0	160	Fr	Washington, DC
16 Jay Neundorfer	R/R	23	6-0	170	Sr	Toledo, OH
17 Render Parkman	R/R	21	6-0	175	Jr	Sylvestor, GA
26 Mason Smith	R/R	20	6-3	220	So	Americus, GA
25 Zach Stewart	L/L	20	5-11	175	So	Atlanta, GA
54 Jason Van Nus	R/R	21	6-3	200	Jr	Valdosta, GA
44 Jacques Wattecamps	R/R	21	5-11	195	Jr	Smyrna, GA
CATCHERS						
39 Jake Cosper	B/R	21	5-11	180	Jr	Tallahassee, FL
18 Brian Crawford	R/R	21	6-0	180	So	Jesup, GA
23 Tim Kelly	R/R	22	5-10	190	Sr	Columbus, GA
7 Eric Stiefel	R/R	22	6-0	195	Sr	Valdosta, GA
INFIELDERS						
22 Jay Berryman	R/R	22	6-1	200	Sr	Athens, GA
33 Greg Connell	R/R	20	6-0	205	Jr	Moultrie, GA
4 Josh Grube	R/R	23	5-11	180	Sr	Warner Robins, GA
6 Scott Simpson	R/R	21	6-2	190	Sr	Valdosta, GA
37 Blake Thompson	R/R	20	6-4	175	So	Valdosta, GA
1 Josh Veres	R/R	22	5-10	155	Sr	Jacksonville, FL
OUTFIELDERS						
24 Scott Fletcher	R/R	22	5-11	175	Sr	Valdosta, GA
9 David Lewis	R/R	21	5-9	170	So	Valdosta, GA
11 Joey Nijem	L/R	20	5-10	160	So	Valdosta, GA
28 Micah Smith	L/L	21	5-10	165	Jr	Butler, GA
12 Sammy Watson	R/L	21	5-11	190	Sr	Valdosta, GA

2003 Baseball Schedule

FEBRUARY

1, Saturday	Clark Atlanta (2)	Valdosta	2:30 pm
2, Sunday	Clark Atlanta	Valdosta	2 pm
5, Wednesday	Columbus State	Columbus	4 pm
8, Saturday	Eckerd (2)	Valdosta	1 pm
9, Sunday	Eckerd	Valdosta	2 pm
11, Tuesday	Albany State	Valdosta	4 pm
13, Thursday	Saint Leo	Saint Leo, FL	6 pm
15, Saturday	Saint Leo	Valdosta	2 pm
16, Sunday	Edward Waters (2)	Valdosta	2 pm
19, Wednesday	Thomas	Valdosta	4 pm
21, Friday	Lynn	Lakeland, FL	4 pm
22, Saturday	Florida Southern	Lakeland, FL	4 pm
23, Sunday	Presbyterian	Lakeland, FL	10 am
26, Wednesday	Georgia College & State	Valdosta	4 pm

NIJEM JEWELERS CLASSIC (thru 3/2)

28, Friday	Lynn	Valdosta	4:30 pm
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MARCH

1, Saturday	Berry	Valdosta	4:30 pm
2, Sunday	Georgia College & State	Valdosta	3 pm
4, Tuesday	Flagler	Valdosta	5 pm
8, Saturday	Barry	Valdosta	3 pm
9, Sunday	Barry	Valdosta	1 pm
13, Thursday	Albany State	Albany	2 pm
15, Saturday	Montevallo* (2)	Valdosta	1 pm
16, Sunday	Montevallo*	Valdosta	1:30 pm
19, Wednesday	Thomas	Thomasville	6 pm
22, Saturday	West Florida* (2)	Pensacola	3 pm
23, Sunday	West Florida*	Pensacola	2 pm
25, Tuesday	Columbus State	Valdosta	6 pm
26, Wednesday	North Florida	Jacksonville	6 pm
29, Saturday	West Alabama*(2)	Valdosta	1 pm
30, Sunday	West Alabama*	Valdosta	1:30 pm

APRIL

2, Wednesday	Maine-Presque Isle (2)	Valdosta	4 pm
3, Thursday	Armstrong Atlantic State	Savannah	2 pm
5, Saturday	Alabama-Huntsville*(2)	Huntsville	2 pm
6, Sunday	Alabama-Huntsville*	Huntsville	2 pm
9, Wednesday	Edward Waters	Jacksonville, FL	5 pm
12, Saturday	West Georgia*(2)	Valdosta	1 pm
13, Sunday	West Georgia*	Valdosta	1:30 pm
15, Tuesday	Armstrong Atlantic State	Valdosta	6 pm
16, Wednesday	North Florida	Valdosta	6 pm
18, Friday	Lincoln Memorial*(2)	Valdosta	4 pm
19, Saturday	Lincoln Memorial*	Valdosta	1 pm
22, Tuesday	Georgia College & State	Millidgeville	4 pm
26, Saturday	North Alabama*(2)	Florence	5 pm
27, Sunday	North Alabama*	Florence	2 pm

MAY

3-6	Gulf South Conference	Millington, TN	TBA
Sat.-Tues	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
Most ABs	751, Craig Viers, '75-78
Most Runs	183, Sal Amadeo, '77-79
Most Hits	261, Bobby McDonald, '96-99
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	261, 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	11, Chuck Beale, '76-77
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...



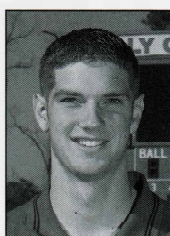
Ryan Page
Graduate Assistant



Jason Brett
Student Assistant



Lori Howard
Baseball Trainer



Bryan MacMunn
Student Trainer



David Huffman
Student Trainer



Kelly Huesler
Game Operations



Greta Truitt
Game Operations

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12 Sammy Watson	R/L	21	5-11	190	Sr	Valdosta, GA



Josh Veres
Shortstop
5-10 Senior
Jacksonville, FL **1**



Josh Grube
Second Base
5-11 Senior
Warner Robins, GA **4**



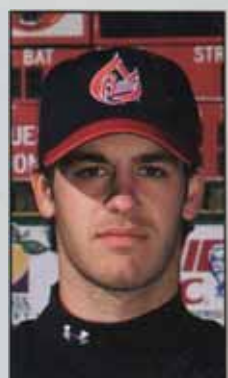
Scott Simpson
Second Base
6-2 Senior
Valdosta, GA **6**



Eric Stiefel
Catcher
6-0 Senior
Valdosta, GA **7**



David Lewis
Right Field
5-9 Sophomore
Valdosta, GA **9**



Joey Nijem
Outfield
5-10 Sophomore
Valdosta, GA **11**



Davey Covey
Pitcher
6-0 Senior
Gray, GA **21**



Scott Fletcher
Center Field
5-11 Senior
Valdosta, GA **24**



Blake Dykes
Pitcher
6-2 Senior
Valdosta, GA **27**



Micah Smith
Outfield
5-10 Junior
Butler, GA **28**



Adam Lingenfelter
Pitcher
6-3 Junior
Gainesville, FL **29**



Brandon Wolcott
Pitcher
6-3 Sophomore
Americus, GA **30**



Greg Connell
First Base
6-0 Junior
Moultrie, GA **33**



Michael Martinez
Pitcher
5-11 Sophomore
New York, NY **34**

Head Coach Tommy Thomas

Entering his 36th season as the outstanding head coach of Valdosta State's Blazer baseball team, Tommy Thomas has enjoyed success gained by very few. In 35 seasons, Thomas-led teams have compiled an overall record of 1164-699, a .625 winning percentage. Only four times in those 35 years have the Blazers finished below .500. In 1997, he became only the second NCAA Division II coach to win 1000 games, and his 1164 wins are the most among active Division II coaches. He needs 35 wins to become the all-time winningest coach in Division II history.

Twenty-three of his 35 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 62-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

1. Tommy Thomas, Valdosta State
2. Frank Vieira, New Haven
3. Joe Roberts, Armstrong Atlantic State
4. Irish O'Reilly, Lewis
5. Bob Riesener, Montevallo
6. Dean Bowyer, Minnesota State-Mankato
7. Ron Davies, Adelphi
8. Gary Collins, SIU Edwardsville
9. Jim Stone, UMass-Lowell
10. Steve Goodheart, Southern Arkansas



Sammy Watson 12
 Left Field
 5-11 Senior
 Valdosta, GA



Nickolas Kitchens 13
 Pitcher
 6-2 Freshman
 Augusta, GA



Brett McMillan 15
 Pitcher
 6-0 Junior
 Nashville, GA



Jay Neundorfer 16
 Pitcher
 6-0 Senior
 Toledo, OH



Render Parkman 17
 Pitcher
 6-0 Junior
 Sylvester, GA



Brian Crawford 18
 Catcher
 6-0 Sophomore
 Jesup, GA

Assistant Coach Shannon Jernigan

Shannon Jernigan, a two-year starting catcher for Valdosta State's 1994 and 1995 clubs who spent two seasons in student and graduate assistant roles, was elevated to the top assistant's position four years ago. The 28-year-old Live Oak, Fla., native received his master's degree in 1998 and is a member of VSU's kinesiology and physical education faculty.

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

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

"Shannon 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 unbelievable patience, which makes him a valuable teacher and mentor."

ON THE COVER

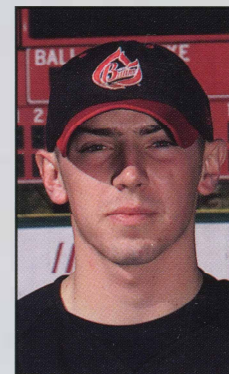
The "Iron Men" of Valdosta State baseball are pictured on this year's cover. Senior first baseman Scott Simpson has started every game in his Blazer career, 171 so far, and head coach Tommy Thomas begins his 36th season. He is 35 wins away from becoming the all-time winningest coach in Division II baseball history.



Jay Berryman 22
 Third Base
 6-1 Senior
 Athens, GA



Tim Kelly 23
 Catcher
 5-10 Senior
 Columbus, GA



Zach Stewart 25
 Pitcher
 5-11 Sophomore
 Atlanta, GA



Mason Smith 26
 Pitcher
 6-3 Sophomore
 Dublin, GA



Bryan Bennett 35
 Pitcher
 6-3 Junior
 Homerville, GA



Blake Thompson 37
 Third Base
 6-4 Sophomore
 Valdosta, GA



Jake Cospier 39
 Catcher
 5-11 Junior
 Tallahassee, FL



Brandon Miller 41
 Pitcher
 6-0 Freshman
 Washington, DC



Jacques Watecamps 44
 Pitcher
 5-11 Junior
 Smyrna, GA



Jason Van Nus 54
 Pitcher
 6-3 Junior
 Valdosta, GA