In a similar fashion to the 2008 season, the 2009 Lady Flames started slowly in January, only to steadily improve throughout the year and march to the Big South Championship title game, before falling to regular season champion and No. 1 seed Radford.

Liberty's performance in the tournament marked the Lady Flames' second-straight and fifth overall appearance in the Big South Championship title game, which ranks third in Big South history behind Coastal Carolina (11) and Winthrop (10).

"We are very pleased that we had the opportunity to play in the championship game for the second year in a row," commented Head Coach Paul Wetmore. "We challenged our team with a very difficult schedule once again, and it paid off in the Big South tournament. "

The Lady Flames returned six starters entering 2009, including senior standouts Beth Bennett and Sarah Ellis, while welcoming 10 newcomers to the squad.

Liberty continued its tradition of facing the country's top teams, jumping right into a pool of ranked competitors at the Cathedral City Kick Off in Palm Springs, Calif., Feb. 6 – 8. The Lady Flames were winless in the opening tournament, falling to No. 17 California, No. 24 Long Beach State, and were barely edged by No. 14 Fresno State, 2-0. Other teams the Lady Flames faced in the event were Cal State Northridge and UC Davis.

After a single-game loss to No. 9 Tennessee on Feb. 24, the Lady Flames traveled to Wilmington, N.C. to compete in the Seahawk Classic, where they went undefeated in the tournament, beating Delaware State twice and UNC Wilmington once. A highlight of the tournament was sophomore pitcher Tiffani Smith's first career no-hitter in a 2-0 victory over the Hornets on Feb. 28. Soon after the accomplishment, Smith was honored as the Big South New Balance Pitcher of the Week.

2009 Lady Flames Softball Team - Big South Championship Runners-Up

As the season rolled into March, the Lady Flames began a 12-day road trip to Florida, making appearances in the FSU Invitational in Tallahassee, Fla., the FAU Parents' Weekend Tournament in Boca Raton, Fla., and doubleheaders against Jacksonville and Stetson. Liberty sparked chatter amongst spectators in Boca Raton, defeating Rutgers, Bethune-Cookman and Purdue, and barely falling to No. 18 Texas A&M, 1-0. The Lady Flames also set a new school record for the longest game in Liberty history, falling in a 12-inning thriller to Florida Atlantic, 7-5. Ellis' performance in that tournament helped claim her first Big South New Balance Pitcher of the Week honor of her career, on March 17.

Keely McMillon - 2009 Big South Championship All-Tournament Team

Liberty played its first home contests on March 19, sweeping Norfolk State in a doubleheader, 4-0 and 3-1. On March 24, the Lady Flames split a doubleheader with visiting Hampton, falling, 2-0, in the opener before rebounding for a 5-1 victory in the second game.

Conference play began the next weekend, as the Lady Flames traveled to Rock Hill, S.C. to take on the 2008 Big South champion Winthrop Eagles on March 29 and 30. But an experienced Winthrop squad prevailed over the Lady Flames taking all three contests.

After dropping two close games to Virginia on April 1, the Lady Flames stormed back with three straight wins over Big South opponent Charleston Southern at home, 2-1, 4-2 and 4-2, improving to 3-3 in conference play.

After being swept by James Madison, 4-1 and 2-1, in Harrisonburg, Va., the Lady

Kelly Strickland - 2009 Big South Second Team All-Conference and All-Tournament Team

Flames made a trip to Boiling Springs, N.C., to continue conference play with a three-game series against the Bulldogs of Gardner-Webb. Liberty won the first game, 5-1, before dropping the next two by one-run margins, 2-1 and 6-5. The following Monday, Smith claimed her second Big South Pitcher of the Week honor on April 13.

After dropping two to Virginia Tech and splitting a road doubleheader with Longwood, the Lady Flames hosted Radford for two games on April 22, falling 4-1 and 3-2 in eight innings. But Liberty responded by sweeping visiting Presbyterian, 3-1, 10-0 and 2-1, two days later, to improve to 7-7 in Big South play.

The Lady Flames dropped a third contest to Radford on the road on April 28, 2-1, before being swept by UNC Greensboro, 2-1 and 3-1, in a non-conference doubleheader. The Lady Flames continued on to Conway, S.C., where they swept the Chanticleers of Coastal Carolina, 8-1, 8-3 and 11-9, to close out the 2009 regular season. Liberty freshman shortstop Kelly Strickland was named the Big South Choice Hotels Player of the Week after two consecutive two-homer performances against the Chants.

Garnering a No. 3 seed in the Big South Softball Championship in Radford, Va., the Lady Flames faced No. 6 Coastal Carolina in the first round, coming out on top, 4-2. In the next round, Liberty knocked No. 2 seed Winthrop into the loser's bracket with a 5-1 victory, setting up another matchup with No. 1 seed Radford. The Lady Flames held a 1-0 lead throughout the game, but the Highlanders were able to score two runs in the bottom of the seventh to advance to the championship final.

But the Lady Flames were not ready to go home just yet, defeating Charleston Southern, 3-1 to advance to their second consecutive Big South Championship title game, where they faced the daunting task of having to defeat Radford twice to take the title. The offense sparked in the first game, as the Lady Flames stunned the Highlanders, 5-3, handing the No. 1 seed its first loss of the tournament. In the final game, the Highlanders jumped all over the Lady Flames, claiming the title with a 10-1 win.

Liberty concluded the 2009 season with an overall record of 26-35. The team was 10-8 in Big South play, marking the fourth time in program history Liberty has won 10 or more conference games.

Three Lady Flames received all-conference accolades, as Smith was named to the Big South all-conference first team, while Strickland was named to the all-conference second-team and Bennett was given all-academic team honors for the second straight year.

Bennett, Strickland and Keely McMillon were each named to the Big South Championship all-tournament team.

Bennett finished her noteworthy career etching her name in the record books, setting a new school record for 248 games started, which was every game since her freshman campaign. She also leaves her name on several career top-five lists, including at-bats (second place with 730), hits (fourth place with 206), doubles (fifth, 40), RBIs (fourth, 126) and home runs (ties for fifth with 25). Ellis finished her collegiate career ranked third in school history for innings pitched (649.1) and second with eight saves, as well as fourth in total wins (44) and fifth in complete games (56).

"We played some of the best teams in the country in preparation for conference play, and had the opportunity to play in some beautiful softball venues," Wetmore said. "This season puts us right where we want to be in the growth and recognition of our program. I am very proud of how well we finished on the field, as well as in the classroom. Graduating our two seniors in four years is a testament to being a well rounded program. The future continues to look very bright for Lady Flames Softball."

Beth Bennett - 2009 Big South All-Tournament Team, Academic All-Conference

Overall Record: 26-35
Home: 9-5
Away: 8-22
Neutral: 9-8
Big South: 10-8

Player	AVG	GP	GS	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	TB	SLG%	BB	HBP	SO	GDP	OB%	SF	SH	SB	ATT	PO	A	E	FLD%
BENNETT, Beth	.294	61	61	163	26	48	12	0	11	34	93	.571	28	0	25	1	.396	1	1	2	3	365	21	7	.982
JEFFERSON, J'nae	.274	60	60	179	21	49	10	2	4	19	75	.419	11	2	21	2	.321	1	8	9	12	66	102	19	.898
STRICKLAND, Kelly	.271	58	24	140	19	38	9	0	8	25	71	.507	13	5	26	2	.354	0	3	0	0	68	74	20	.877
DePASQUALE, Amber	.255	59	57	149	15	38	6	1	2	8	52	.349	6	2	27	0	.293	0	12	7	8	66	1	4	.944
MCMILLON, Keely	.243	59	57	152	8	37	5	1	1	17	47	.309	9	1	10	1	.290	0	10	0	0	318	28	5	.986
HOWARD, Danielle	.232	59	58	155	19	36	4	0	2	14	46	.297	24	2	36	1	.343	0	5	7	12	62	14	5	.938
EATMON, Jenna	.231	39	24	65	8	15	3	2	2	7	28	.431	4	1	17	0	.286	0	1	1	1	13	0	0	1.000
HENDRIX, Cassie	.211	60	59	147	20	31	0	0	0	2	31	.211	15	3	31	0	.297	0	5	13	15	135	79	9	.960
BENSINGER, Ashley	.208	46	30	101	6	21	3	1	1	6	29	.287	6	2	18	2	.266	0	3	1	2	43	15	0	1.000
WEST, Kaylee	.208	51	47	130	6	27	6	0	1	15	36	.277	6	0	21	0	.239	2	5	0	0	28	1	2	.935
LAW, Jenny	.181	49	33	116	9	21	5	0	0	7	26	.224	3	0	13	1	.202	0	6	4	4	8	1	1	.900
BAISDEN, Meredith	.100	24	5	10	4	1	0	0	0	0	1	.100	4	0	4	0	.357	0	1	3	5	2	0	1	.667
WOODS, Bridgett	.000	9	4	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	2	2	3	0	.364	0	1	0	0	9	4	1	.929
HUDSON, Allyson	.000	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	1	0	1	0	.333	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000
PITTMAN, Jennifer	.000	37	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	.000
SMITH, Tiffani	.000	37	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000
ELLIS, Sarah	.000	33	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000
KEENEY, Brittany	.000	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0	0	.000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000
Totals	**.239**	**61**	**1516**		**172**	**362**	**63**	**7**	**32**	**154**	**535**	**.353**	**132**	**20**	**253**	**10**	**.307**	**4**	**61**	**48**	**65**	**1201**	**434**	**77**	**.955**
Opponents	**.255**	**61**	**1548**		**219**	**394**	**61**	**6**	**39**	**192**	**584**	**.377**	**136**	**21**	**334**	**6**	**.321**	**14**	**55**	**60**	**72**	**1227**	**574**	**54**	**.974**

LOB - Team (343), Opp (363). DPs turned - Team (16), Opp (24). IBB - Team (3), STRICKLAND, K. 2, BENNETT, B. 1, Opp (5). Picked off - BENNETT, B. 1.

Player	ERA	W	L	APP	GS	CG	SHO	CBO	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	2B	3B	HR	AB	B/Avg	WP	HBP	BK	SFA	SHA
SMITH, Tiffani	2.21	12	12	37	28	15	2		2	184.0	155	80	58	68	174	23	0	23		.226	7	5	4	8	23
ELLIS, Sarah	2.64	14	23	43	33	22	4		0	209.2	218	116	79	59	157	36	6	11		.266	5	15	0	6	32
HUDSON, Allyson	14.00	0	0	5	0	0	0		0	5.0	13	16	10	7	2	2	0	3		.433	1	1	1	0	0
KEENEY, Brittany	29.40	0	0	2	0	0	0		0	1.2	8	7	7	2	1	0	0	2		.571	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	**2.59**	**26**	**35**	**61**	**61**	**37**	**6**		**2**	**400.1**	**394**	**219**	**148**	**136**	**334**	**61**	**6**	**39**		**.255**	**13**	**21**	**5**	**14**	**55**
Opponents	**2.04**	**35**	**26**	**61**	**61**	**31**	**8**		**1**	**409.0**	**362**	**172**	**119**	**132**	**253**	**63**	**7**	**32**		**.239**	**26**	**20**	**1**	**4**	**61**

PB - Team (11), MCMILLON, K. 11, Opp (10). Pickoffs - Team (0), Opp (1).
SBA/ATT - MCMILLON, K. (54-66), ELLIS, S. (29-39), SMITH, T. (31-33), BENSINGER, A. (6-6).

Hitting minimums - 1 Games 1.0 AB/Game 1.0 TPA/Game
Pitching minimums - 1 Games 1.0 IP/Game

Jenna Eatmon

Cassie Hendrix

	Game date	Opposing team		Score		r-h-e	r-h-e	Inns	Overall	Big South	Pitcher of record	Attend	Time
!	02-06-09	vs Cal State Northridge		0-13	L	0-2-3	13-12-0	5	0-1-0	0-0-0	ELLIS, S. (L 0-1)	112	1:45
!	02-06-09	vs No. 17 California		1-15	L	1-3-3	15-12-2	5	0-2-0	0-0-0	SMITH, T. (L 0-1)	125	1:58
!	02-07-09	vs No. 14 Fresno State		0-2	L	0-2-2	2-7-1	7	0-3-0	0-0-0	ELLIS, S. (L 0-2)	205	1:28
!	02-07-09	vs UC Davis		0-5	L	0-2-1	5-10-1	7	0-4-0	0-0-0	SMITH, T. (L 0-2)	165	2:05
!	02-08-09	vs No. 24 Long Beach State		2-5	L	2-6-3	5-9-0	7	0-5-0	0-0-0	ELLIS, S. (L 0-3)	165	1:19
	02-24-09	at No. 9 Tennessee		1-11	L	1-3-1	11-13-1	5	0-6-0	0-0-0	ELLIS, S. (L 0-4)	61	1:28
@	02-27-09	vs Delaware State	W	6-2		6-7-2	2-3-1	7	1-6-0	0-0-0	SMITH, T. (W 1-2)	45	1:42
@	02-28-09	vs UNC Wilmington	W	4-1		4-8-1	1-6-0	7	2-6-0	0-0-0	ELLIS, S. (W 1-4)	75	1:40
@	02-28-09	vs Delaware State	W	2-0		2-4-1	0-0-1	5	3-6-0	0-0-0	SMITH, T. (W 2-2)	50	1:30
#	03-06-09	vs Middle Tennessee State		2-3	L	2-4-3	3-4-0	7	3-7-0	0-0-0	ELLIS, S. (L 1-5)	870	1:46
#	03-06-09	at No. 25Florida State		3-11	L	3-5-3	11-12-2	5	3-8-0	0-0-0	ELLIS, S. (L 1-6)	870	1:37
#	03-07-09	vs Troy		0-3	L	0-2-0	3-8-1	7	3-9-0	0-0-0	SMITH, T. (L 2-3)	553	1:55
#	03-07-09	vs Middle Tennessee State	W	5-2		5-4-0	2-6-1	7	4-9-0	0-0-0	SMITH, T. (W 3-3)	553	1:48
	03-09-09	at Jacksonville		1-2	L	1-7-1	2-7-1	7	4-10-0	0-0-0	SMITH, T. (L 3-4)	456	1:28
	03-09-09	at Jacksonville		4-6	L	4-7-1	6-7-4	7	4-11-0	0-0-0	ELLIS, S. (L 1-7)	467	2:03
	03-10-09	at Stetson	W	1-0		1-8-0	0-2-2	7	5-11-0	0-0-0	ELLIS, S. (W 2-7)	93	1:32
	03-10-09	at Stetson		3-4	L	3-2-0	4-3-1	(8)	5-12-0	0-0-0	SMITH, T. (L 3-5)	116	2:03
	03-12-09	at Florida Atlantic		1-4	L	1-3-0	4-3-0	7	5-13-0	0-0-0	SMITH, T. (L 3-6)	136	1:32
$	03-13-09	vs Rutgers	W	3-0		3-4-1	0-2-4	7	6-13-0	0-0-0	ELLIS, S. (W 3-7)	65	1:27
$	03-13-09	at Florida Atlantic		5-7	L	5-10-3	7-8-1	(12)	6-14-0	0-0-0	ELLIS, S. (L 3-8)	152	2:23
$	03-14-09	vs Bethune-Cookman	W	1-0		1-7-0	0-4-0	7	7-14-0	0-0-0	SMITH, T. (W 4-6)	59	1:39
$	03-14-09	vs No. 18 Texas A&M		0-1	L	0-4-1	1-5-1	7	7-15-0	0-0-0	ELLIS, S. (L 3-9)	94	1:31
$	03-15-09	vs Purdue	W	4-2		4-4-0	2-6-3	7	8-15-0	0-0-0	ELLIS, S. (W 4-9)	102	1:34
	03-19-09	**NORFOLK STATE**	**W**	**4-0**		**4-6-1**	**0-1-2**	**7**	**9-15-0**	**0-0-0**	**ELLIS, S. (W 5-9)**	**189**	**1:27**
	03-19-09	**NORFOLK STATE**	**W**	**3-1**		**3-6-2**	**1-4-1**	**7**	**10-15-0**	**0-0-0**	**SMITH, T. (W 5-6)**	**189**	**1:15**
	03-24-09	**HAMPTON**		**0-2**	**L**	**0-6-1**	**2-7-0**	**7**	**10-16-0**	**0-0-0**	**ELLIS, S. (L 5-10)**	**103**	**1:15**
	03-24-09	**HAMPTON**	**W**	**5-1**		**5-4-2**	**1-4-1**	**7**	**11-16-0**	**0-0-0**	**SMITH, T. (W 6-6)**	**103**	**1:26**
*	03-29-09	at Winthrop		1-9	L	1-3-1	9-10-0	6	11-17-0	0-1-0	SMITH, T. (L 6-7)	143	1:34
*	03-29-09	at Winthrop		5-7	L	5-10-4	7-8-1	7	11-18-0	0-2-0	ELLIS, S. (L 5-11)	143	1:25
*	03-30-09	at Winthrop		0-5	L	0-2-0	5-8-0	7	11-19-0	0-3-0	ELLIS, S. (L 5-12)	67	1:05
	04-01-09	at Virginia		1-2	L	1-7-3	2-2-0	(8)	11-20-0	0-3-0	ELLIS, S. (L 5-13)	57	2:04
	04-01-09	at Virginia		6-7	L	6-11-0	7-10-3	7	11-21-0	0-3-0	ELLIS, S. (L 5-14)	57	1:36
*****	**04-04-09**	**CHARLESTON SOUTHERN**	**W**	**2-1**		**2-4-0**	**1-4-0**	**7**	**12-21-0**	**1-3-0**	**ELLIS, S. (W 6-14)**	**235**	**1:37**
*****	**04-04-09**	**CHARLESTON SOUTHERN**	**W**	**4-2**		**4-10-0**	**2-8-2**	**7**	**13-21-0**	**2-3-0**	**ELLIS, S. (W 7-14)**	**235**	**1:25**
*****	**04-05-09**	**CHARLESTON SOUTHERN**	**W**	**4-2**		**4-11-3**	**2-5-0**	**7**	**14-21-0**	**3-3-0**	**ELLIS, S. (W 8-14)**	**265**	**1:27**
	04-08-09	at James Madison		1-4	L	1-6-5	4-6-1	7	14-22-0	3-3-0	ELLIS, S. (L 8-15)	80	1:24
	04-08-09	at James Madison		1-2	L	1-2-2	2-4-1	7	14-23-0	3-3-0	ELLIS, S. (L 8-16)	80	1:33
*	04-10-09	at Gardner-Webb	W	5-1		5-8-1	1-3-0	7	15-23-0	4-3-0	SMITH, T. (W 7-7)	45	1:48
*	04-11-09	at Gardner-Webb		1-2	L	1-6-0	2-6-0	7	15-24-0	4-4-0	SMITH, T. (L 7-8)	72	1:13
*	04-11-09	at Gardner-Webb		5-6	L	5-7-1	6-11-0	7	15-25-0	4-5-0	ELLIS, S. (L 8-17)	72	1:13
	04-16-09	**VIRGINIA TECH**		**3-10**	**L**	**3-5-3**	**10-14-2**	**7**	**15-26-0**	**4-5-0**	**SMITH, T. (L 7-9)**	**357**	**2:04**
	04-16-09	**VIRGINIA TECH**		**3-4**	**L**	**3-7-2**	**4-12-0**	**7**	**15-27-0**	**4-5-0**	**ELLIS, S. (L 8-18)**	**357**	**1:48**
	04-18-09	at Longwood		0-3	L	0-6-3	3-5-0	7	15-28-0	4-5-0	SMITH, T. (L 7-10)	225	1:33
	04-18-09	at Longwood	W	2-1		2-11-1	1-6-1	7	16-28-0	4-5-0	ELLIS, S. (W 9-18)	225	1:45
*****	**04-22-09**	**RADFORD**		**1-4**	**L**	**1-4-0**	**4-9-0**	**7**	**16-29-0**	**4-6-0**	**ELLIS, S. (L 9-19)**	**175**	**1:25**
*****	**04-22-09**	**RADFORD**		**2-3**	**L**	**2-5-1**	**3-9-1**	**(8)**	**16-30-0**	**4-7-0**	**SMITH, T. (L 7-11)**	**175**	**2:06**
*****	**04-24-09**	**PRESBYTERIAN**	**W**	**3-1**		**3-5-0**	**1-4-1**	**7**	**17-30-0**	**5-7-0**	**SMITH, T. (W 8-11)**	**156**	**1:52**
*****	**04-24-09**	**PRESBYTERIAN**	**W**	**10-0**		**10-11-1**	**0-3-3**	**5**	**18-30-0**	**6-7-0**	**ELLIS, S. (W 10-19)**	**187**	**1:07**
*****	**04-25-09**	**PRESBYTERIAN**	**W**	**2-1**		**2-5-0**	**1-3-0**	**7**	**19-30-0**	**7-7-0**	**ELLIS, S. (W 11-19)**	**227**	**1:55**
*	04-28-09	at Radford		1-2	L	1-7-2	2-6-0	7	19-31-0	7-8-0	ELLIS, S. (L 11-20)	117	1:17
	04-29-09	at UNC Greensboro		1-2	L	1-4-0	2-7-0	7	19-32-0	7-8-0	SMITH, T. (L 8-12)	74	1:35
*	04-29-09	at UNC Greensboro		1-3	L	1-4-0	3-5-0	7	19-33-0	7-8-0	ELLIS, S. (L 11-21)	74	1:29
*	05-01-09	at Coastal Carolina	W	8-1		8-11-1	1-5-0	7	20-33-0	8-8-0	ELLIS, S. (W 12-21)	113	1:36
*	05-02-09	at Coastal Carolina	W	8-3		8-8-1	3-6-0	7	21-33-0	9-8-0	SMITH, T. (W 9-12)	317	2:01
*	05-02-09	at Coastal Carolina	W	11-9		11-12-2	9-11-1	7	22-33-0	10-8-0	SMITH, T. (W 10-12)	317	2:33
%	05-07-09	vs Coastal Carolina	W	4-2		4-4-1	2-4-1	7	23-33-0	10-8-0	ELLIS, S. (L 13-21)	223	1:45
%	05-07-09	vs Winthrop	W	5-1		5-7-0	1-5-0	7	24-33-0	10-8-0	SMITH, T. (W 11-12)	223	1:23
%	05-08-09	at Radford		1-2	L	1-6-0	2-5-1	7	24-34-0	10-8-0	ELLIS, S. (L 13-22)	209	1:19
%	05-09-09	vs Charleston Southern	W	3-1		3-10-1	1-5-2	7	25-34-0	10-8-0	ELLIS, S. (W 14-22)	404	1:50
%	05-09-09	at Radford	W	5-3		5-8-0	3-7-0	7	26-34-0	10-8-0	SMITH, T. (W 12-12)	404	1:47
%	05-09-09	at Radford		1-10	L	1-5-2	10-13-1	6	26-35-0	10-8-0	ELLIS, S. (L 14-23)	404	1:30

! - Cathedral City Kick Off - Palm Springs, Calif.
@ - Seahawk Classic - Wilmington, N.C.
# -FSU Invitational - Tallahassee, Fla.
$ - FAU Parents' Weekend Tournament - Boca Raton, Fla.
% - 2009 Big South Softball Championship - Radford, Va.
* - Big South Conference game
() extra inning game