



## **Chronology of Flames Baseball**

### **1971**

Lynchburg Baptist College is founded by Dr. Jerry Falwell, pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church.

### **1972**

Lynchburg Baptist gains affiliation with the National Christian Collegiate Association.

### **1973**

Lynchburg Baptist fields its first club baseball team, coached by Gaylord Davis. The team practices at Miller Park and Sandusky Elementary School. The games are held at Lynchburg City Stadium.

### **1974**

Lynchburg Baptist fields its first intercollegiate varsity team, coached by Al Worthington.

### **1975**

Lynchburg Baptist College is renamed Liberty Baptist College with its colors changing from Green and Gold to Red, White and Blue. The Flames join the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics as an associate member.

### **1976**

Clay Elliott and Jeff Mincey are the first Flames to be drafted. Elliott is picked by the Atlanta Braves and Mincey by the Pittsburgh Pirates. The Flames post their first 30-win season, finishing 31-10.

### **1979**

The Flames move to Liberty Field, their first on-campus home.

### **1980**

Liberty Baptist joins the NCAA at the Division II level as an associate member. The Flames post their second 30-plus win season. Richard DeWitt is named the school's first CoSIDA Academic All-American.

### **1981**

Liberty Baptist joins the NCAA at the Division II level and becomes eligible for NAIA postseason competition. The team finishes fifth at the NAIA World Series. Sid Bream and Le Guetterman earned All-American honors. The two are drafted, Bream by the Los Angeles Dodgers and Guetterman by the Seattle Mariners.

### **1982**

The Flames finish fifth in the NAIA World Series for the second consecutive year. Renard Brown is selected as an All-American and drafted by the Seattle Mariners. Doug Smith is drafted by the Minnesota Twins.

**1983**

Sid Bream becomes the first former Liberty baseball player to break into the major leagues with the Los Angeles Dodgers. Liberty Baptist finishes fifth in the NAIA World Series for the third consecutive season. Darrell Manuel earns All-American honors. Liberty Baptist finishes with its first-ever 40-plus win season.

**1984**

Liberty drops its NAIA membership and becomes eligible for NCAA Division II postseason participation. Baseball moves from NAIA to NCAA Division I, the only sport at the school to make the move to Division I in 1984. Lee Guetterman becomes the second Liberty baseball player to reach the major leagues with Seattle Mariners.

**1985**

Liberty Baptist College becomes Liberty University.

**1986**

Liberty Field is renamed Worthington Field in honor of the school's first baseball coach, Al Worthington. In May, Bobby Richardson becomes Liberty's second head baseball coach, replacing Worthington who started the program.

**1988**

Randy Tomlin is drafted by the Pittsburgh Pirates in the 18<sup>th</sup> round of the MLB draft.

**1989**

In September, all of Liberty's athletic teams move to the NCAA Division I level.

**1990**

Johnny Hunton becomes Liberty's third head baseball coach, replacing Bobby Richardson, in May. Former Flames pitcher Randy Tomlin becomes the third Liberty player to reach the majors, debuting for Pittsburgh in August.

**1991**

Doug Brady is chosen All-South Atlantic Region and to the ECAC All-Star teams. Head Coach Johnny Hunton is named the Virginia State Coach of the Year by the Virginia Sports Information Directors. In June, Brady is drafted by the Chicago White Sox. Liberty becomes an official member of the Big South Conference in July.

**1992**

In May, Danny Brahn becomes the first Liberty player to earn Big South All-Conference first team honors.

**1993**

Liberty wins the Big South Conference Baseball Tournament in May and becomes the school's first NCAA Division I team to see action in the postseason.

**1995**

Doug Brady becomes the fourth former Flame to don a major league uniform, debuting with the Chicago White Sox in September.

**1996**

Liberty University announces plans to build a baseball clubhouse adjacent to the third base dugout in October. This will be equipped with a locker room.

**1997**

Liberty announces that long-time assistant coach Dave Pastors will become the fourth head coach in the school's history in August.

**1998**

Liberty wins the Big South Conference Tournament in Rock Hill, S.C. The Flames represent the conference in the NCAA Atlantic II Regional Tournament in Tallahassee, Fla., facing No. 10 Florida State and No. 8 Auburn.

Jason Benham is named the program's first CoSIDA Academic All-American, while in June, the Flames have five players selected in the major league draft, tying Arizona State and Florida State with the most players drafted from one team. David Benham, Steve Wright, Tim Harrell, Benji Miller and Jason Benham are Liberty's draftees.

**1999**

During the summer of 1999, a 5,200 square-foot hitting area is constructed along the leftfield side of Worthington Stadium. It is complete with lighted batting cages and modern hitting equipment. The field receives a face-lift as new Bermuda grass is laid in the infield. During the winter, a new netting backstop is put in place and a new sound system is purchased for the stadium.

**2000**

The Flames win the Big South Championship for the second time in three years and the third time in the history of the program. Liberty represents the Big South Conference at the NCAA Regionals in Columbia, S.C., where they win the first NCAA Division I Tournament game for any Liberty sports team, a 10-2 victory over Seton Hall.

Liberty's Keith Butler and Joey Monahan become Liberty's first Freshman All-Americans, achieving the honors given out by *Baseball America* and *Collegiate Baseball*.

**2001**

During the fall, Liberty opens its brand new, state-of-the-art, Crowder/Muckel Field House. The 13,000 square-foot building contains two retractable batting and pitching tunnels; home, visitor, coach and umpire locker rooms; uniform laundry and storage room, training room, weight room and team room. The new fieldhouse is also home to new offices for the Liberty coaching staff and houses enclosed box seats for booster club members, complete with a kitchen area and closed-circuit television.

In June, pitcher Josh Brey is taken by the St. Louis Cardinals in the fourth round of the MLB draft, the highest a Liberty player has been taken since 1982.

**2002**

Five Flames, Joey Monahan, Keith Butler, Matt Hagen, Jonathan Schneider and Steve Baker, are chosen in the 2002 MLB Draft.

On July 18, Matt Royer is named the program's fifth head coach. Royer, a 1980 Liberty graduate,

replaces Dave Pastors, who resigned at the end of the 2002 season.

## **2005**

The Flames post the ninth 30-plus win season in program history and tie the program record for Division I victories with 36. Aaron Grijalva becomes Liberty's third Freshman All-America as he is honored by *Collegiate Baseball*. Left-hander David Bechtold (Colorado-28<sup>th</sup>) is chosen in the 2005 MLB Draft.

## **2006**

Matt Royer's squad breaks the school record for Division I wins with 39 victories. It marks the fourth time in program history the Flames have posted back-to-back 30-plus win seasons after their 36 in 2005

## **2007**

Liberty posts a 30-plus win campaign for the third straight season for only the second time in school history.

In late June, Jim Toman is named the program's sixth head coach. Toman replaces Matt Royer, who resigned at the end of the 2007 season.

## **2008**

The Flames record their fourth straight 30-plus win season for the first time in the history of the program under first-year coach Jim Toman.

## **2009**

Liberty recorded its fifth consecutive 30-plus win season for the first time in program history. The Flames also posted 17 wins in Big South play, the most ever in a season. During the season, outfielder Curran Redal hit safely in 32 consecutive games to set a conference record.

Third baseman Tyler Bream is selected a Freshman All-American by the *Collegiate Baseball News*.

## **2010**

Liberty posts 43 wins, setting a new school record for victories in a season. In addition, head coach Jim Toman's team records 19 conference victories, the most by Flames in Big South play.

## **2011**

Liberty has seven players taken during June's MLB Draft, the most players chosen in a single draft in the 38-year history of the program. The Flames also tied the 2007 and 2010 Coastal Carolina squads for the Big South Conference record for most players picked in a single draft.

## **2012**

In April, construction begins on a new 2,500-seat stadium for the program to be completed in time for the 2013 season.

On the field, Liberty wins 41 games, the second time in three years the Flames have won 40 or more games and only the third time in program history. First baseman Alex Close is selected as a Freshman All-American by both *Collegiate Baseball News* and the *National Collegiate Baseball*

Writers of America (NCBWA).

### **2013**

The Flames open the Liberty Baseball Stadium with a 4-1 victory over Penn State on Feb. 23 and go on to sweep the Nittany Lions in the first three-game series at the facility.

Liberty claims the 2013 Big South title and makes its first appearance in an NCAA Regional since 2000. The Flames defeat Clemson twice at the Columbia, S.C. Regional and reach a regional final for the first time in school history.

### **2014**

After capturing the Big South regular season title with a school-record 23-3 conference mark, Liberty receives the program's first at-large selection to an NCAA Regional. The Flames finish the year with a 41-18 overall record, its fourth 40-plus win season and third during head coach Jim Toman's tenure.

Second baseman Ryan Seiz is named to three All-America teams. Pitcher Trey Lambert and first baseman Alex Close become the first players in program history to be named to the CoSIDA Academic All-America first team.

In June, Liberty Baseball Stadium is ranked fifth nationally for best college ballpark experiences of 2014 by the Stadium Journey.

### **2015**

First baseman Alex Close is named to the CoSIDA Academic All-America first team for the second consecutive year. He becomes the first player in program history and the seventh Liberty student-athlete to be selected to the academic team multiple times.

Pitcher Jared Lyons is named to the Louisville Slugger All-America team selected by *Collegiate Baseball Newspaper*.

In June, Liberty Baseball Stadium is ranked fourth nationally for best college ballpark experiences of 2015 by the Stadium Journey.

### **2016**

Outfielder D.J. Artis is named a Freshman All-American by five different organizations.

In July, Scott Jackson is named the program's seventh head coach. Jackson replaces Jim Toman, who resigned at the end of the season.

### **2017**

Outfielder D.J. Artis is selected to three All-America teams. Artis finishes the year, leading the nation in bases on balls and finishing second in on base percentage.

Ian Parmley becomes the fifth former Flame to reach the major leagues, debuting with the Toronto Blue Jays in late June.

## **2018**

Liberty joins the Atlantic Sun Conference as a full-time member in July.

Ryan Cordell becomes the sixth former Flame to reach the major leagues, debuting with the Chicago White Sox in September.

## **2019**

The Flames tie the school record for wins in a season, posting a 43-21 record. Liberty captures the ASUN Conference title in its first year in the league. With the title, the Flames receive the conference's automatic bid and participate in the Chapel Hill, N.C. Regional.

Relief pitcher Evan Brabrand is selected to three All-America teams, finishing the year among the national save leaders.

## **2020**

In October, Liberty Baseball Stadium is renamed Worthington Field at Liberty Baseball Stadium in honor of the first Liberty baseball coach Al Worthington.

On March 12, the NCAA halts all spring competitions due to the health concerns caused by the outbreak of the COVID-19 Virus.

## **2021**

The Flames make their second straight NCAA postseason appearance (2019, 2021), posting a 41-16 (.719) record, setting the school mark for best winning percentage in a season at the NCAA Division I level. Liberty secures an NCAA at-large bid for the second time in the program's history.

Left-hander Trevor DeLaitte becomes the first pitcher named one of the six finalists for the 2021 National Pitcher of the Year Award. He is also included on several All-America teams. Fellow pitcher Trey Gibson is named to the several Freshman All-American teams, while outfielder Aaron Anderson earns inclusion on the 2021 CoSIDA Academic All-American first team.