

**EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
CHAMPIONSHIP BASEBALL**

**New England's Winningest Program
1949-2020**

72 Seasons/2,425 Games: Won 1,681, Lost 736, Tied 8 (69.5 percent)

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Compiled by Jon Wilson'22

Four national championships. Forty-seven regional tournaments. 14 national tournaments. 21 Little East Conference tournament and regular-season championships (more than any other program). 56 All-Americans. Seven national Player and Pitcher-of-the-Year selections. 31 professional signees.

The history of the Eastern Connecticut State University baseball program has been a source of pride and joy for the university spanning decades. From a hall-of-fame head coach to Major League Baseball players and a quartet of national championships, this program has reached levels most can only imagine.

Former head baseball coach Bill Holowaty is the tenacious winner that propelled the Warrior baseball program to nationwide recognition. Holowaty was hired in 1969 and spent an extraordinary 45 years as the chief of a roaring baseball powerhouse. In those 45 years, he amassed 1,404 wins in 1,936 games for 72.7 winning percentage. He advanced to 12 NCAA national tournaments, winning 11 NCAA New England or Northeast regional titles and one New York regional championship.

Holowaty won his first of four NCAA Division III national championships in 1982 in the program's first appearance in the NCAA nationals (the program also reached the NAIA World Series twice in the 1970s), going on to win in 1990, 1998, and 2002.

After joining the Little East Conference in 1997, the Warriors went on to win 11 regular season and seven tournament championships before Holowaty ended his legendary career in 2013. He is a member of five halls of fame, including the American Baseball Coaches Association (2012), National College Baseball (2015), Little East Conference (2016), and the New England Intercollegiate Baseball Association (2018).

Only one program in Division III has won more than Eastern's four NCAA national titles, with the Warriors the only program to claim national titles at four different sites.

In 1982, the Warriors swept through the NCAA Northeast Regional, hosted at Alumni Field due to a 31-5-1 regular season tally. They went on to their first ever national championship, winning

four straight at Marietta, OH after losing their opener, avenging the opening loss to California Stanislaus by defeating the West Coast Warriors twice (the first in 12 innings).

In 1990, the Warriors went undefeated in NCAA tournament play. A 3-0 regional-winning record (two of the wins coming against 1989 regional champion Ithaca College) sent the Warriors to Battle Creek, MI, where they were never tested (winning by a composite 27-9 score) in bringing their second national championship back to Willimantic and finishing with their first 40-win season and an 87.0 winning percentage.

In 1998, the Warriors christened the Eastern Baseball Stadium by hosting and winning the New England Regional – which included three LEC teams -- where they would be sent off to win their third national championship, in Salem, VA by bludgeoning Montclair State University, 16-1, in the most lopsided final in NCAA Division III tournament history.

Four years later, in Grand Chute, WI the Warriors completed an unlikely run to their fourth national championship. After slipping into their 24th NCAA tournament as an ‘at-large’ selection, Eastern battled through the losers’ bracket of the New England Regional on Cape Cod, MA with three straight wins – defeating Tufts University, 19-2, then denying Wheaton College (which had sent the Warriors into the losers’ bracket earlier in the tournament) its first regional title with a 3-2 ten-inning win and 4-2 decision.

Through 2020, Eastern boasts an overall 72-season program record of 1,681-736-8 for an astounding 69.5 winning percentage, qualifying for 41 NAIA and NCAA post-season tournaments -- including 23 straight from 1969 through 1991 – and beginning with the 2002 national title, reached the national tournament five times in a span of six years.

Since 1976, Eastern has competed in 183 NCAA tournament games, winning 116 for a winning percentage of 63.4.

Since the advent of Little East play in 1997, the best overall team has been the Warriors. Eastern holds a 23-year overall conference record of 303-110 (73.4 percent) – 245-80 (75.4) in the LEC regular season and 58-30 (65.9) in tournament play. The Warriors hold LEC standards for regular-season and tournament wins, winning percentage and championships.

They have also been honored with 122 All-LEC players, with a program-record nine -- including the LEC Player, Pitcher and Rookie-of-the-Year – coming in 2005. In all, Eastern is home to six LEC Player-of-the-Year, Pitcher-of-the-Year and Rookie-of-the-Year selections, and nine LEC tournament MVPs.

Of the 31 professional signees since 1969, two right-handed pitchers have reached the major leagues: John Caneira (1971-74) with the Anaheim Angels and Scott Chiasson (1996-98) with the Chicago Cubs.

In addition to 56 All-America players and seven national Player and Pitcher-of-the-Year selections, the program features 131 NCAA and 19 NAIA all-region players and 51 Alumni Hall of Famers.

The program's all-time leader in batting average goes all the way back to Gary Johnson '72, who hit an incredible .417. Alex Zachary '17, Eastern's most recent All-America (2016-17), holds the program record for longest hitting streak at 35 games, while All-America Melvin Castillo '10 jacked 46 career long balls and drove in 231 runs with 496 total bases – all program-bests.

The great hitters of this program go back decades, but the pitching has kept pace. Steve Thomas '76 is the program's all-time leader in wins with 40, while Caneira is atop the record books in ERA (1.34), strikeouts (547), strikeouts per nine innings (13.04), and complete games (27). Pat Murphy '92, leads the program in saves with 19.

The list of historic careers, seasons, and games is endless. There are dozens upon dozens of legends from this great program, something this school is very proud of. Every team, player, and coach through the years has contributed to one of the best Division III baseball programs in the nation.

The Warriors are currently under the direction of Terryville native Brian Hamm, who averaged 25 wins in nine seasons at Amherst College before taking over at Eastern prior to the 2019 campaign. Hamm is assisted by Steve Cervizzi – in his 14th year overall on the staff – as well as Eastern graduates Chris Wojick '11, Len Reed '73 and Ismael Bolorin '09. Wojick is in his third season, Reed in his 24th season overall, and Bolorin in his second.