



VMI COACHING STAFF



VMI KEYDETS BASEBALL
2011 Media Guide



Head Coach Marlin Ikenberry

VMI '95 ♦ Eighth Season ♦ 194-189 Career Record

Winningest Coach In Program History

Over the past seven seasons, the VMI baseball program has enjoyed unprecedented success. Winning games against top-10 teams, receiving national rankings and being regarded as one of the top programs in the state and in the region are now attributes of a program built under head coach Marlin Ikenberry.

Ikenberry concluded his seventh season, 2010, at the helm of the program as the winningest coach in the history of VMI Baseball. In recent years, the Keydets posted three consecutive winning seasons for the first time in 52 years, defeated a ranked team for four straight years, and in 2010, earned VMI's first win over a top-ranked team in Institute history, beating #1 Virginia at Gray-Minor Stadium. This year's team set new school records for batting average (.325), slugging percentage (.529), hits (629), runs (414), doubles (133), home runs (78), RBIs (390),

at bats (1933) and total bases (1022).

On the mound, the staff's 441 strikeouts were tied for the most in school history, while the team's 8.26 strikeouts per nine innings rate is the third-best. In addition, the 11 saves the team posted is tied for fourth on the list and the 3.46 walks per nine innings rate comes in seventh. Finally, the team's ERA (5.43) ranks ninth in the Alumnum Bat Era.

Marlin Ikenberry was named head coach on July 22, 2003, being promoted to the top spot in the program after former head coach Tom Slater departed VMI in the summer of 2003 to accept a coaching position at the University of Florida.

As Slater's top assistant and recruiting coordinator for three years, Ikenberry played a key role in the resurgence of the VMI baseball program that set a school record for victories in 2003 at 24-28. That same year, the Keydets posted a 16-14 mark in the Southern Conference, securing their first winning conference mark since 1969.

Since taking over the program, Ikenberry has continued that success, breaking the school record for wins three times over the past five seasons. After winning 23 games in his first year and 27 contests in his second season, historic ground was broken in 2006, when the Keydets won 30 games for the first time in program history, while also marking the first time in 41 years that the program posted a winning record. That success continued in 2007, as Ikenberry guided his squad to a 34-21 record, knocking off a pair of teams ranked in the top 10 nationally for the first time in program history. As a result, VMI Baseball earned its first-ever national ranking, being tabbed 30th in the country by Collegiate Baseball in back-to-back weeks while also receiving votes in the Writers' Poll.

Hailed as one of the state's top recruiters, Ikenberry has signed several players that have enjoyed great success in Lexington. He is responsible for the signing of two Louisville Slugger Freshman All-Americans, a Southern Conference Freshman of the Year, five Big South First-Team All-Conference selections and a 2003 All-SoCon Tournament player.

Ikenberry, 38, served as VMI's recruiting coordinator and pitching and catching coach in 2003 and was vital in the staff's remarkable improvement that season. Working closely with the Keydet pitchers and catchers, Ikenberry helped guide the pitching staff to an improvement of nearly two runs in team earned run average from the previous season.

"We're very excited to have Marlin Ikenberry as our head baseball coach," VMI athletic director and former Keydets head baseball coach Donny White said upon Ikenberry's hiring. "He has all the ingredients to be a great head coach. His recruiting work has made a difference in the program and has certainly been instrumental to our success. He has the leadership and abilities to build on the program's recent performance and reach the goal of a conference championship."

A 1995 graduate of VMI, Ikenberry played for the Keydets and was recruited by VMI Hall of Famer Chris Finwood, now head coach at Western Kentucky. Ikenberry returned to his alma mater in the summer of 2000 after spending three years at the College of William and Mary as an assistant coach and recruiting coordinator. While in Williamsburg, Ikenberry earned a reputation as one of the state's top recruiters and landed two high school All-Americans and freshman All-Americans.

In 2000, the Tribe of William and Mary finished with a school record 32 wins and placed third in the Colonial Athletic Association Tournament. The next season, William and Mary won the CAA Championship and earned a berth in the NCAA Regional Tournament. During his time in Williamsburg, Ikenberry coached future Major Leaguer Brendan Harris and recruited future Major Leaguer Chris Ray and current professional player Chris Shaver.

During his coaching career, Ikenberry has helped guide 27 players on to professional careers in baseball. In recent years, Ikenberry was instrumental in the development of pitchers Trey Barham, Michael Bowman, Travis Smink, Corey Bachman, Duke Acors, Jeremy Harper, Phil Hendrix and J.J. Hollenbeck as well as catchers Andy Barden and Mike Roberts and infielders Matt Smith, Chad Rice and Kelly Sweppenhiser.

As a cadet, Ikenberry was a four-year starting catcher for the Keydets. While playing, he developed a reputation for his excellent defensive skills and his handling of the pitching staff. He also caught for former VMI and major league pitcher Ryan Glynn.

He played on VMI's 1993 squad that advanced to the Southern Conference Championship game and ranked third in the nation in defense. In 1994, he helped the Keydets in setting a then school record for wins along with a third place finish in the Southern Conference Tournament.

A native of Richmond, Va., Ikenberry has two brothers who both attended VMI. Twin brother Merlin Ikenberry was a teammate as a pitcher and designated hitter while his oldest brother Steve Ikenberry is an alum of the class of 1980. Ikenberry is a graduate of Douglas Freeman High School. He married the former Shannon Marshall in August 2000, and their son, Owen, was born in the fall of 2010.

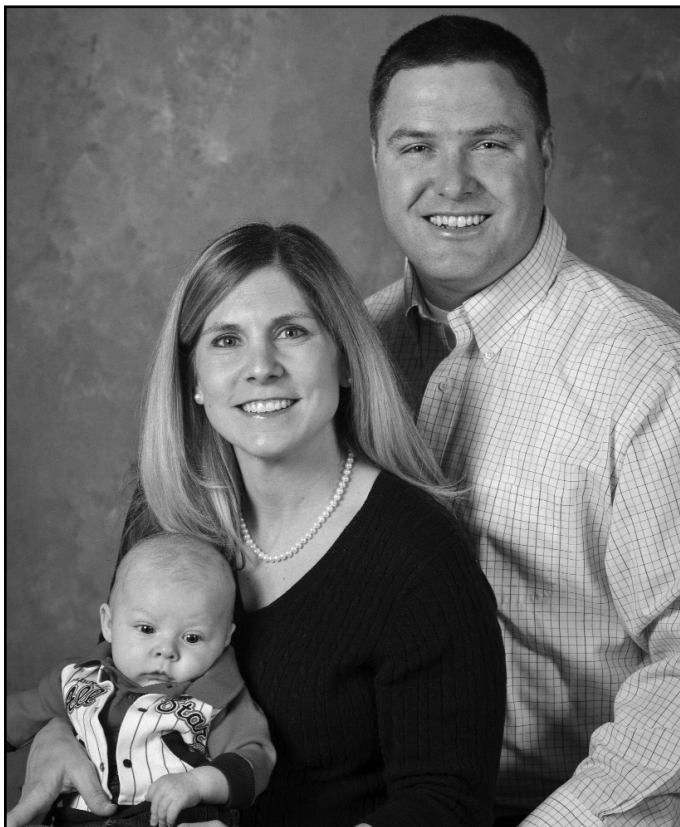


Marlin Ikenberry is now tied for the longest-tenured manager in VMI Baseball history.

Winningest Keydet Baseball Coaches

By Wins

1. Marlin Ikenberry (2004-Present)	194
2. Scott Gines (1995-2000)	104
3. Donny White (1974, 1982-87)	91
4. Charlie McGinnis (1961-65)	55
5. Chris Finwood (1992-94)	52



Marlin, Shannon and Owen Ikenberry



Marlin Ikenberry with World Series Champion Manager Charlie Manuel, a Buena Vista and Rockbridge County native.

The Ikenberry File

Education

- Douglas Freeman High School (1991)
- Virginia Military Institute (1995-B.S.)

Coaching Experience

- Assistant Coach, William & Mary (1998-2000)
- Assistant Coach, Virginia Military Institute (2000-03)
- Head Coach, Virginia Military Institute (2003-Present)

Personal

- Born: February 23, 1973 in Richmond, Va.
- Wife: Shannon, married August 12, 2000
- Son: Owen, born November 19, 2010

Year-By-Year Record

1992	VMI	11-39	Starting Catcher
1993	VMI	20-29#	Starting Catcher
1994	VMI	21-29*	Starting Catcher
1995	VMI	19-28	Starting Catcher
1998	W&M	24-28	Assistant Coach
1999	W&M	29-24	Assistant Coach
2000	W&M	32-25*	Assistant Coach
2001	VMI	15-32	Assistant Coach
2002	VMI	10-41	Assistant Coach
2003	VMI	25-27*	Assistant Coach
2004	VMI	23-32	Head Coach
2005	VMI	27-28*	Head Coach
2006	VMI	30-25*	Head Coach
2007	VMI	34-21*	Head Coach
2008	VMI	29-26	Head Coach
2009	VMI	18-35	Head Coach
2010	VMI	33-22	Head Coach
194-189			Head Coaching Career

Record

- *- Broke School Record for Wins
- #- Tied School Record for Wins

Ikenberry Facts

- Has coached VMI to several landmark victories, including 2010's 12-3 win over #1 Virginia at Gray-Minor Stadium, believed to be VMI Athletics' first win over a top-ranked team in any sport. The Keydets have also notched a pair of additional wins against top-10 opponents (both coming in 2007) under Ikenberry, knocking off #3 Virginia and #10 Auburn. Ikenberry has also led VMI to series wins against both Florida and Auburn, the program's first-ever series victories versus SEC opponents.

- Has been a part of five of the last six teams to break the VMI season wins mark. In 1994, was a senior starting catcher on the team that won 21 games; was an assistant on the 2003 team that achieved 24 wins; and was the head coach of the 2005 27-win team, the 2006 30-win squad and 2007's 34-win campaign. He was also an assistant on the 2000 William & Mary team that achieved a school-record 32 victories.

- Needed less than four seasons to become the winningest coach in program history, winning his 105th game on April 13, 2007, a 13-0 win over Coppin State. It also marked the 200th game of his head coaching career.

- Was mentioned in the NCAA News in 1993 when he and twin brother Merlin formed the battery for the Keydets vs. Duke, while the Blue Devils also had a battery of twins in the lineup at the same time.

- Starting catcher on the 1993 VMI team that made the Southern Conference Championship game before falling to Western Carolina.

Assistant Coach Jonathan Hadra

Second Season ♦ VMI '04

Jonathan Hadra, a four-year letterman and 2004 graduate of VMI, recently completed his first season back coaching with the Keydets. Hadra worked with the infielders and hitters during the 2010 season, and the team reaped immediate rewards.

Not only did the offense break nine school records, including batting average, home runs and total bases, but the team posted the third-best fielding percentage in VMI history. Junior Sam Roberts was a quarterfinalist for the Brooks Wallace Award, presented to the nation's top shortstop, while his fellow infielders Jordan Ballard and Cory Spangenberg also had banner years under Hadra's tutelage. Ballard hit 18 home runs, claimed the career VMI record in that category (41) and was a 33rd-round draft pick of the Colorado Rockies. Spangenberg earned three Freshman All-American honors, was the Big South Freshman of the Year and ranked in the top-10 in the conference in seven different categories.

Hadra, who spent the 2009 season at Bradley, brought five years of coaching experience back to Lexington. Upon his graduation, Hadra coached with VMI in 2005 before working three years at Western Kentucky under VMI graduate Chris Finwood, where he helped the Hilltoppers to a berth in the 2008 NCAA Regionals after capturing the Sun Belt Conference Tournament.

At Bradley, Hadra worked to bring in a freshman class of 16 that was named one of the top recruiting classes in the nation by Collegiate Baseball. Included in the haul were a pair of Junior College All-Americans, a High School All-American and three players that were drafted by MLB clubs. Under Hadra's tutelage, Bradley center fielder Nick Mitidiero earned All-Conference accolades.

Prior to his stint in Peoria, Hadra worked for three seasons at WKU. During that time, he oversaw outfield instruction, base running and bunting while coaching first base. In 2008, the Hilltoppers were picked seventh in the league's preseason poll, yet made just the third NCAA Tournament appearance in program history after capturing the conference tournament championship. Also that season, the WKU defense ranked third in the nation with a .976 team fielding percentage.

In Hadra's second season in Bowling Green, the Hilltoppers went 15-15 in Sun Belt play, recording a conference-record 10-game improvement from their league mark in 2006.

Before joining Finwood's staff in 2005, Hadra spent one season as an assistant coach at VMI. That season, the Keydets broke the school record for wins and knocked off a ranked opponent for the second straight year (#21 Coastal Carolina, 3-2), as Hadra worked with outfielders and assisted instruction in base running, bunting and positional defense.

As a cadet, Hadra was a four-year letterman who graduated with a degree in Economics and Business. Hadra served as team captain his senior year and helped the Keydets break the school record for wins during his junior season. His sophomore season, meanwhile, saw VMI finish with a 16-14 mark in the Southern Conference, breaking the program standard for most conference wins.

Hadra is married to the former Allison Toth, and the couple recently had their first child, Colton, in January 2010.

Ikenberry on Hadra- "I'm very excited to have the opportunity to bring Jonathan back to VMI. His passion for VMI and VMI Baseball shows up on the field daily when interacting with our players. He brings a great defensive mind to our infielders, and understands the kind of offense that we need to play to be successful."



Assistant Coach Jonathan Hadra, wife Allison and son Colton

Assistant Coach Daniel Latham

First Season ♦ Tulane '07

Daniel Latham, former assistant coach at High Point and 15th-round draft pick of the Minnesota Twins, has been named the new assistant coach for VMI baseball. Latham's primary responsibilities will be developing and mentoring the Keydet pitchers.

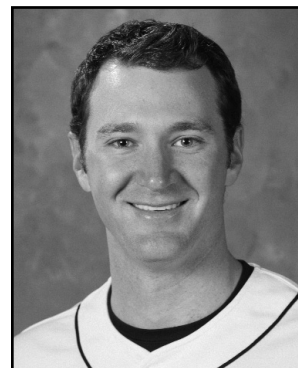
Latham comes to VMI from Big South rival High Point, where he primarily worked with the pitching staff. He was also responsible for the Panthers' baseball camps, as well as other areas of the program, including travel and academics. Latham came to High Point after playing one year in the Minnesota Twins organization, which he was drafted by following a standout career at Tulane.

Latham, who worked out of the bullpen while at Tulane, ranks as the all-time leader in saves in Conference USA (43). That total is also a Tulane record, while his 122 appearances (121 in relief) rank second. Among NCAA career leaders, Latham still ranks sixth in saves, ninth in relief appearances and 15th in overall appearances.

Perhaps Latham's strongest collegiate season was 2005, when he helped Tulane reach the College World Series as a sophomore. The new VMI assistant notched four saves and a win in postseason play that year, and would go on to be named team MVP for the Hyannis Mets in the well-known Cape Cod League that summer. He would return to the Cape the following season and earn All-Star honors, before being tabbed by the Twins in the 15th round in 2007.

Latham received his bachelor's degree in communications from Tulane in 2007, and is a native of Covington, La.

Ikenberry on Latham - "I am very excited to add Daniel to our staff. He played at a high level of college baseball at Tulane, and comes from a great mentor in Craig Cozart at High Point. I believe that Daniel will bring a lot of energy, passion and knowledge to our pitching staff."



Volunteer Assistant Nachion Moore

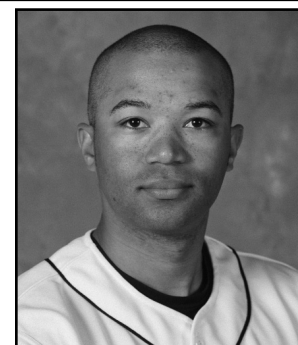
First Season ♦ Radford '09

Nachion Moore, a former Big South player, was named VMI's newest volunteer assistant on Sept. 28, 2010.

Moore was a four-year veteran of the Big South ranks as a utility infielder and catcher. He played under two different coaching staffs at Radford, and was an active member of the Student Athletic Advisory Committee. He also was nominated for the NCAA Leadership Conference during his time as a Highlander, which concluded the 2009 season. Moore graduated from Radford in May of 2009 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Sports Medicine.

The newest addition to the Keydet staff, Moore was employed in the business world at Lewis-Gale Hospital in Salem, Va., acting as an assistant to a Physical Therapist. He has also worked in a similar position in Blacksburg, Va., during his undergraduate career.

Ikenberry on Moore- "I am excited to have Nachion on staff, he has a passion to coach and will be a great addition to our program. He has coached the last two summers, and brings great energy to the field every day."



Baseball SID Brad Salois

Fourth Year at VMI ♦ Liberty '07

Brad Salois joined the Athletic Communications office in January of 2008 as an assistant in the Sports Information office, and has since been promoted to Associate Athletic Communications Director. With the promotion, Salois will now act as the SID for baseball, women's soccer, swimming and diving and all disciplines of track and field/cross country. In addition, he will also serve as the secondary contact for football and basketball.

Already in 2010-11, Salois has been at the forefront of continuing to move the majority of VMI's Athletic Publications to an online, virtual-format, as Keydet football and basketball joined the previous year's offerings for wrestling, track and field and lacrosse.

Later this year, he will serve as the host SID for the 2011 Big South Baseball Championships, to be held at Gray-Minor Stadium, as well as the host SID and public address announcer for the Big South Outdoor Track and Field Championships, which will take place in late April, also at VMI.

During his three-plus years at the Institute, Salois' primary focus has been on publicity for the track and field programs, including 2009 All-American Donnie Cowart, two-time national qualifier Felix Kitur and distance runner Hannah Granger, the first VMI woman to win a conference running championship in indoor track, outdoor track and cross country. In the fall of 2009, he added cross country to his list of sports, and in addition to the early season success of the men's team, was in charge of publicity for the women's program, which included Big South Runner of the Year Granger, conference Freshman of the Year Jenna Moye and Coach of the Year Paul Spangler. He then orchestrated the summer training blog, "Logging Miles", a first for cross country in the Big South.

In the first two years of his stay in Lexington, Salois handled publicity for the VMI lacrosse program, including the team's first-ever post-season appearance and victory (2008). He also spent two seasons as the contact for the men's soccer program.

In addition, Salois developed the Athletic Communications' office uses of Blogspot and Twitter to further advance communication of news and events. He has also blogged live from several events on VMIKeydets.com, including the 2008 MAAC Lacrosse Championships and the 2009 and 2010 Big South Outdoor Track and Field Championships.

Salois came to VMI from Liberty, where he was involved in the Athletic Media Relations office as a student worker for three years, including six months as an intern. During those six months, he was the main contact for the men's and women's tennis programs, as well as the secondary contact for the baseball program. During his time in Lynchburg, Salois also acted as a PA announcer at various Liberty athletic events, including baseball, and assisted in other capacities throughout the media relations department.

Salois graduated from Liberty in 2007 with a B.S. in Sport Management.



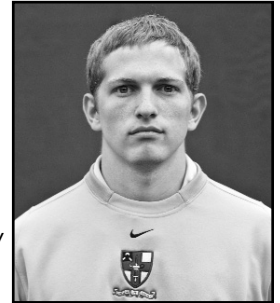
Athletic Trainer Thomas Newman

First Season ♦ Penn State '10

Thomas Newman is in his first season as a graduate assistant trainer in the VMI Athletic Training department. This past fall, Newman was the trainer for the Keydet men's soccer program.

Newman graduated from Penn State in 2009 with a degree in Kinesiology (Athletic Training Option). While with the Nittany Lions, he worked with the men's and women's swimming and diving, men's and women's gymnastics and men's ice hockey programs. He also worked with area high schools, working baseball, basketball and softball.

The native of Duncansville, Pa. is currently working on a Master's degree in Athletic Training at the University of Virginia.



Strength Coach Jimmy Whitten

Seventh Season ♦ Virginia Tech '90

Jimmy Whitten is in his seventh year as VMI Associate Head Strength and Conditioning Coach, where he has made a positive impact on the program.

Whitten came from East Carolina University in August 2004, where he was Director of Strength and Conditioning.

While at ECU, Whitten implemented the strength and conditioning programs for Pirate Football and Men's Basketball for three years. He also led the strength programs for the Pirate Men's Basketball, Baseball, Softball, Men's Track, Men's and Women's Soccer and Swimming teams.

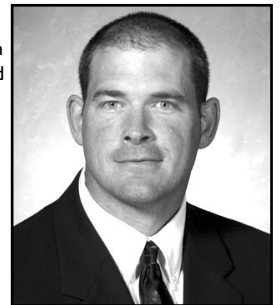
Prior to his ECU tenure, Whitten was head strength and conditioning coach for UNC Charlotte from July 1999, to February 2001. He was also assistant strength and conditioning coach at his alma mater, Virginia Tech, for two years after serving as a graduate assistant in the program for two years.

He was a defensive end standout for the Hokies and was named the team's Co-MVP as well as most valuable defensive lineman in 1990. He also held the Captain's Award for Hokie Football in 1990.

Whitten earned a Bachelor of Science in Education at Virginia Tech in 1991 and earned a Masters of Arts in Counseling Education at Virginia Tech in 1996.

Whitten is a member of the Collegiate Strength and Conditioning Coaches Association and National Strength and Conditioning Association.

A native of Danville, Va., Whitten and his wife, Eileen, have two children - daughter Mandolin (7), and son Luke (6).



The VMI Baseball Endowment Fund

Thanks to the foresight of interested alumni and friends, VMI Baseball benefits from a permanent endowment fund now valued in excess of \$1.3 million. This Fund annually provides income in support of the baseball program, everything from salaries to equipment.

The VMI Baseball Endowment Fund was created as part of a five-year campaign for baseball initiated in 1991. Leadership for this special effort came from the following VMI alumni: Gil Minor '63 (Campaign Chair and former All-Southern Conference catcher), Senator Elmon T. Gray '46 (Honorary Chairman and former VMI catcher), Steve Phelps '66, Thomas G. Slater Jr. '66, former VMI head coaches Donny White '65 (All-American and 1982 Southern Conference Coach-of-the-Year) and Paul Maini '66 (1988 Southern Conference Coach-of-the-Year), and former Keydet players John L. Morgan '55, William A. Paulette '69, and W. Ruben Terry '67.

In addition to this operational support, several scholarships have been endowed to assist the program: the R. H. Spessard 1915 Baseball Scholarship, the Class of 1942 Baseball Scholarship, the Class of 1950B Claude H. "Red" Patton Baseball Scholarship, the Kenneth F. Johnson 1962 Baseball Scholarship and the James R. Breckinridge 1967 Memorial Baseball Scholarship.

Private support plays a crucial role in maintaining and improving baseball at VMI. Those interested in "joining the team" should contact the VMI Keydet Club at (800) 444-1839.



VMI KEYDET CLUB, INC.

VMI Keydet Club, Inc. • P.O. Box 932 • Lexington, Va. 24450 • (phone) 800-444-1839 • kclub@vmiaa.org • www.vmikeydetclub.com

The VMI Keydet Club was founded in 1934 to provide the Institute the necessary funding for a successful athletic program. This relationship, now in its 77th year, continues to produce some of the nation's best student-athletes and citizen-soldiers. This year Keydet Club and VMI are setting their sights higher than ever by attempting to raise \$3.75 million in support of VMI athletics. With the thousands of dedicated alumni and Keydet fans, the Keydet Club and its devoted members challenge you to be the next member of our **Whole Damn Team!**



Keydet Club Mission:

Contributing to the Spirit and development of a successful Division I athletic program that benefits the whole of VMI.



The Keydet Club is managed by a volunteer Board of Governors that meets three times a year. Membership in the Keydet Club is available for a minimal gift of \$1; leadership level memberships are available for a minimum gift of \$1,000 (\$500 for Young Alumni).

The VMI Keydet Club, Inc. is committed to full compliance with NCAA rules and regulations.



Greg Cavallaro '84
Chief Executive Officer



Donnie Ross '74
Vice President



Doug Bartlett
Vice President



Robert Crumpler '07
Asst. Vice President



Jackie Flint
Executive Assistant

VMI Keydet Club Board of Governors



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1st Vice President

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Art Bushey '69
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Hunter Elliott '85
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Don Heslep '56
Richard Hewitt '83
Tom Jones '69
Bruce Kitchen '81

John Krovic '77
Jimmy Long '69
Bland Massie '77
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Tom Mortenson
Andy Mulcunry '94
John Munno '84
Bill O'Connor '70
Lewis Preston '92

Darrell Rickmond '73
Jeff Roseme '82
Scott Saunders '97
Kelly Sullivan '01
Helen Talbott
Cameron Thompson '74
Danny Thornton '78
T. J. Wilson '74
Kimo Wong '75

Attention VMI Baseball Fans!

The VMI Keydet Club Invites You to

PUT YOUR NAME ON A BASEBALL LOCKER!

Support Cadet-Athlete Scholarships and Baseball Operations with a gift of \$1,000, split evenly between the Scholarship Fund and the Athletic Operations-Baseball Fund.

With your gift, you will have your name* permanently placed on a locker in the Baseball Locker Room at Gray-Minor Stadium.

Gifts can be made in cash, by credit card or with a stock transfer.

Contact Robert Crumpler at the VMI Keydet Club for more information - 1-800-444-1839 or rcrumpler@vmiaa.org.

**Limited to 20 character spaces, including blank spaces and your class year with accompanying apostrophe.*

(Name plates can also be installed in other sport locker rooms for a gift of \$1,000. Call the Keydet Club for more information.)

Go Big Red!



The VMI Keydet Club, Inc. is committed to full compliance with NCAA rules.

Diamond Club

Keydet Baseball Fans:

The Diamond Club's mission has always been to help support the baseball program in areas that are deemed critical needs. Last year, our 200 Diamond Club members helped raise almost \$10,000 to support the transition of the baseball staff offices being moved down to the baseball field in the old welding shop. This transition is currently in the works, and we hope to have it completed very soon thanks to your help!



This year the idea of budget cuts are staring us right in the face, and we need to ensure that we can weather this economic storm and keep our program at the level it is now! We continue to strive to make our program one of the best in Virginia and the Big South Conference, and it is critical we provide adequate funding for our team!

Last season we had great success with the Diamond Club weekends and post game cookouts. This season we want to continue putting on post-game cook-outs with the team and their families (see application for cook-out dates).

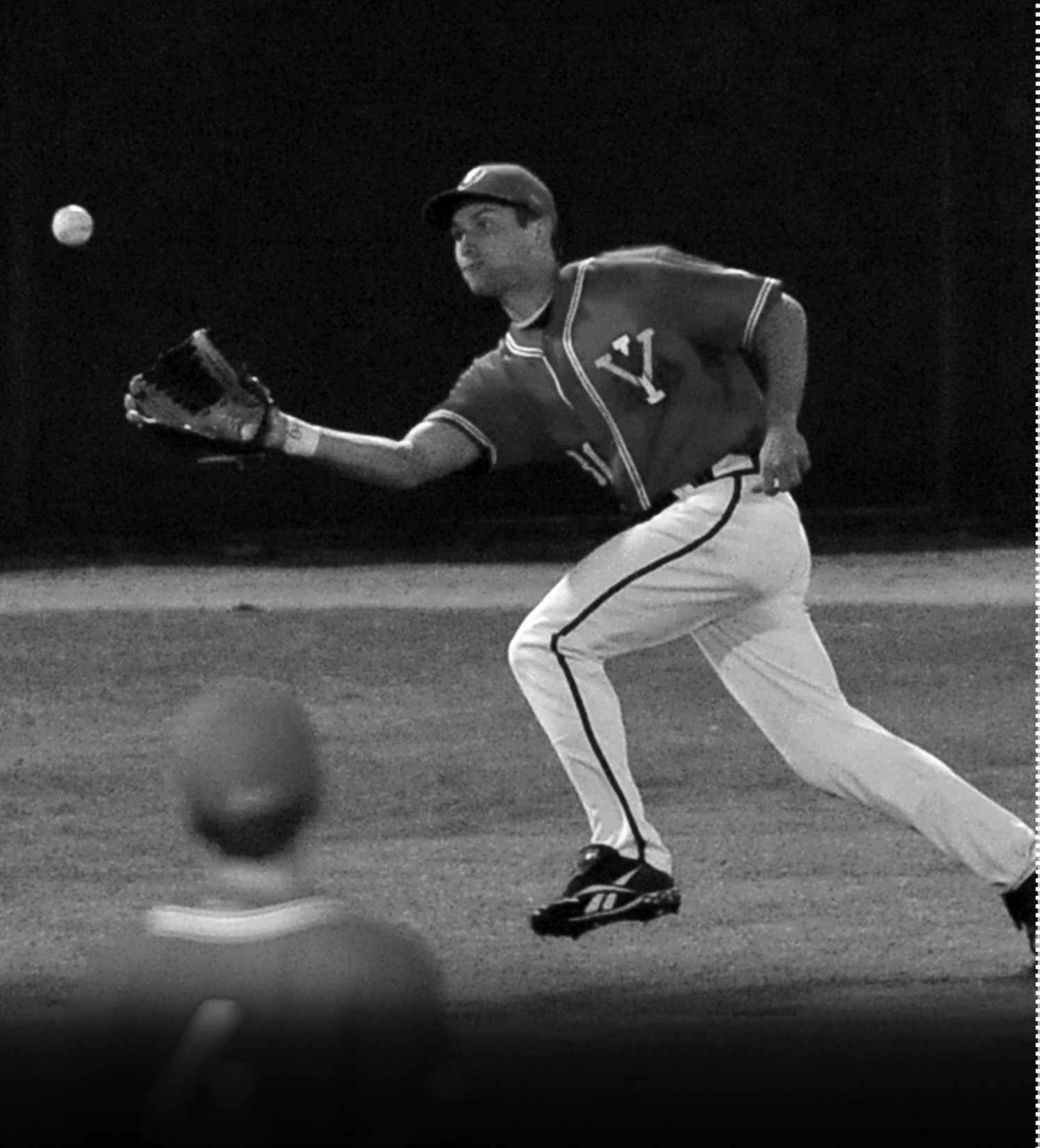
As in years past, we will let everyone know of any impromptu pregame functions. Last year the Diamond Club and the Keydet Club held a pregame event before the UVA game, and what a great time it was to enjoy both the pregame event and our program's win over #1 UVA at home! The team cook-outs are a great way to get to know today's players and see old faces of the baseball program at the same time.

All members of the Diamond Club this year will receive the weekly game notes and one, free game ticket to one of the three games that include post-game cookouts. As a charter member, your membership cost is still only \$50; for new members, it will be \$75 this year.

Thank you again for all of your generosity, let's help to continue and support our successful program, and I hope to see you at Gray-Minor Stadium over the next few months!

Let's Go Keydets!

Paul B. Maini '66
President



2011 VMI KEYDETS



VMI KEYDETS BASEBALL
2011 Media Guide

Season Preview

The VMI baseball program is about to begin a campaign that could signal a shift in the team's dynamic. For the first several years under head coach Marlin Ikenberry, the Keydets were known for their pitching. Names like Travis Smink, Michael Bowman and Trey Barham, all now in the professional ranks, led the way. In 2010, however, while the pitching remained solid, the offense exploded to break nine school records and push the team to its highest national ranking ever, 26th. Unfortunately for VMI, three starters, including Jordan Ballard, the program's career home run leader, and Tanner Biagini, the longtime third baseman, will not return in 2011.

With those losses, the team now appears to shift back to a pitching-oriented squad, led by an all-upperclass weekend rotation and a hard-throwing back end of the bullpen. The Keydets return 15 pitchers and 31 of their 33 wins from the 2010 squad, and lose just one, all while adding a solid supporting cast that includes lefties Campbell Henkel, Joey Zarella and Connor Bach, as well as right-hander Rian Ellis. This could set the stage for many well-pitched games at Gray-Minor Stadium this season, where the Keydets will host 26 regular season games, as well as the Big South Championship (May 24-28).



Catcher Alex Haitsuka hit .348 last season and hit for the cycle against Longwood.

“With the new standards for bats in collegiate baseball, I think there will be more of a focus on pitching and defense,” said VMI head coach Marlin Ikenberry. “This benefits us, as we return nearly our entire pitching staff from last season. Having Adam Lopez, Jason Farley and Sam Roberts back on our staff, along with mixing in Jeremy Brown, Coby Cowgill and Campbell Henkel as possible starters, is exciting for us. It's good to have that much rotation depth, and we have the same situation in the bullpen. We've got Alan Watts, John Garrett and Michael Devine at the back end of the ballgame, along with strong middle relief, which will help us shorten the game. We have a chance to get a lot of guys innings early. Going into the season, pitching is the name of the game, and we have a lot of depth in that area. We expect that will help us be extremely competitive.”

Catcher

The Keydets return Alex Haitsuka as their primary backstop for 2011. Haitsuka caught 48 games last season, and was named Second Team All-Big South on the strength of his best career campaign, a season that saw him hit .348 with seven home runs. He also drastically improved his defense during his junior season.

“We expect big things out of Alex this year,” said Coach Ikenberry. “Behind him, Andrew Montague and Justin Topping will be pushing for time. The big thing for Justin is to stay healthy, as we'll be looking to him to help fill a DH role as well. Matt Winn, a freshman, has the ability to see innings behind the plate, as he's an excellent defensive catcher.”

Backing Haitsuka up will be the aforementioned Topping and Montague, while all three could rotate in and out of the designated hitter role. Both Topping and Montague have seen time at catcher throughout their careers, with the veteran Topping going into his senior season and the youngster Montague coming off a strong freshman season. The sophomore hit .389 in 20 games last year, including posting hits in all three games of the Big South Championships. Topping struggled with injuries, hitting just .257, but will be looking to get back to his 2008 (.298 BA) levels in his final collegiate campaign. Winn, a freshman out of Richmond, will provide depth at the position.

Infield

The Keydet infield will have questions to answer in 2011, as the team loses three of its top players, including Jordan Ballard and Tanner Biagini to the professional ranks. None of those questions, however, will come from the shortstop position, where Sam Roberts is the infield's lone returning, full-time starter from a year ago. The senior was named to the Brooks Wallace Award Watch List last season, an honor given to the country's top shortstop, and thanks to his standing as the

Keydets' #3 starting pitcher, was also tabbed to the first John Olerud Award Watch List, given to the country's top two-way player.

Roberts had hits in 15 of the season's first 16 games, en route to a .336 batting average and becoming only the second Keydet ever to have 50 RBI and 50 runs scored in the same season. He has also started over 150 consecutive games at five different positions, as he has not missed a game since the 2008 season.

“Sam is the catalyst of our program,” offered Coach Ikenberry. “We've asked him to do a lot over the years, as he's moved from right field to shortstop, and from closer to the weekend rotation on the mound. Without question, he's one of the best players to come through VMI. The only question for him this season is if he'll be in the weekend rotation or pitching mid-week games, which depends on how our other starters do. Obviously, that will evolve as the season goes on.”

Currently slated to start alongside Roberts is junior George Piccirilli. Piccirilli showed flashes of potential last season, his first full year after moving out from behind the plate. The junior hit his first career home run Feb. 28 versus Lafayette, and also had two RBI in the first game of that series as well. He will be pressed by Justin Hess, who returns to the team after a two-year absence. Hess was the squad's regular center fielder in 2008, when he posted a 5 for 5 game against Maryland-Eastern Shore and hit .277 overall.

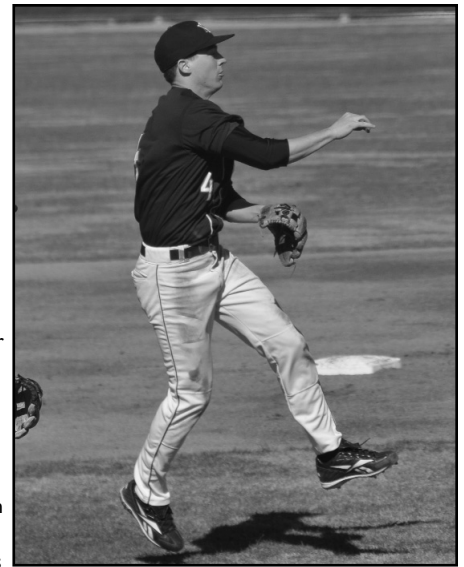
In 2011, Chase Worthington will become the full-time starter at the hot corner. Worthington stepped in last season, following a Biagini injury, and hit .367 in 38 games (25 starts). Those numbers included an on-base percentage of .420 and a 12-game hitting streak late in the season.

Across the diamond, Berkley Hawkins will begin the year as the regular first baseman. Hawkins, a freshman out of Richmond, distinguished himself during the fall season and will have the first chance to replace Ballard. The new Keydet first baseman comes to VMI as his high school's all-time home run leader, single-season home run leader and single-season RBI leader. Fellow freshman and two-way player Connor Bach, a solid left-handed hitter, will also see time.

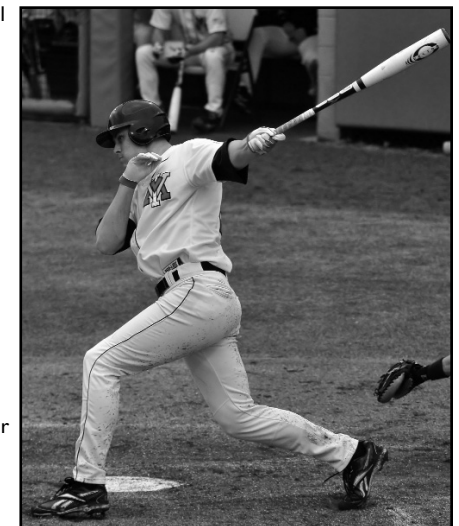
“In addition to playing Berkeley at first base, we'll also be playing Alex there occasionally early in the year, as well as Connor,” said Coach Ikenberry. “It will allow Alex to get rest from being behind the plate, as well as allow us to do things with our lineup that we haven't been able to do in the past.”

Finally, freshmen Chris Russo, Cody Holder and Jordan Tarsoyich will provide depth all over the infield.

“The biggest question mark on our infield is finding our everyday second baseman,” said Coach Ikenberry. “George had a great fall for us, but we do have depth there. Chris and Jordan will also be in the mix. One of our luxuries is Justin, a former starting outfielder who can also play infielder, and we'll use him in multiple roles to give us options as the season goes on. Cody Holder, another



Senior Sam Roberts became just the second Keydet ever to have 50 RBIs and score 50 runs in a single season in 2010.

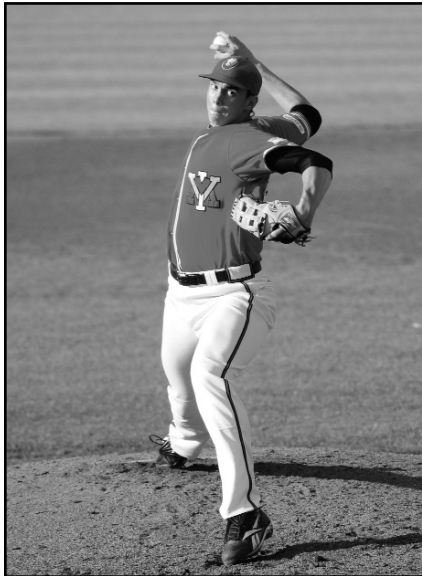


Outfielder Graham Sullivan hit .357 with 10 home runs in 2010, earning Second Team All-Big South honors.

freshman, is our best defensive infielder and will be used in different roles, including at shortstop when Sam moves to the mound. Chase had a great year last year, a solid fall, and will be our everyday third baseman."

Outfield

In contrast to the infield, the Keydet outfield returns all three starters from a season ago. Graham Sullivan will lead the way after a career year in 2010, a season that saw him hit .358 with 10 home runs. Sullivan also drove in 55 runs, as he started every game en route to Second Team All-Conference honors, just one season after being moved to left field. He will return to that position this year,



Junior Adam Lopez returns as VMI's Friday starter.

and will play alongside sophomore Rob Dickinson.

Dickinson, who was originally expected to be a platoon player as a freshman, was one of the Keydets' biggest surprises last year. He hit a robust .333 with 19 extra base hits, and struck out just 19 times in 165 at-bats. Dickinson served notice of his talent quickly, posting nine hits in his first six career games, including a pair of home runs. He also hit home runs against Virginia and Virginia Tech, and had his first career four-hit game late in the year against Presbyterian College.

"We return all three starting outfielders in 2011," said Coach Ikenberry. "Graham proved he was a legitimate outfielder last year, and Rob is our best defensive outfielder. They'll be mainstays in left and center

field, while Jacob Morley should be in right field every day. Freshman Eric Mayers can play the corner outfield positions and will push for time as well, while again, Justin Hess and Jordan Tarsovich could see time. In fact, we consider being able to play those two players in the outfield against left-handed pitching one of the major benefits of our team's depth. Brooks Martin also returns, and Matt "Lefty" Flora has converted to full-time outfielder and will give us a left-handed bat off the bench. He's done a nice job this fall. We can also run Andrew Montague out to the outfield to get his bat in the lineup."

Morley is currently slotted as the starting right fielder, a year after hitting .296 in 51 games. Morley also had four home runs, in addition to his team-leading 11 sacrifice bunts, a total that tied him for fourth in the Big South.



Left-hander Jason Farley ranked eighth in the Big South in ERA last season (4.12).

Starting Pitching

In contrast to last season, the Keydet rotation returns all three starters, led by Friday hurler Lopez. Last year, the 6-5 right-hander compiled a 5-3 mark and ranked fourth in the Big South in strikeouts with 89, which he accomplished while walking just 29. He also struck out better than a batter per inning and more than 11 per nine innings during his first full year as a starter.

In the #2 slot of the VMI rotation is left-hander Farley, a former high school All-American who came into his own last year, pitching a redshirt

sophomore. After opening the year in the bullpen, Farley moved into the rotation in early March and blossomed, finishing eighth in the Big South in ERA (4.12).

Rounding out the Keydet weekend starters will be Roberts. Roberts showed flashes of dominance last season, including a run of four starts out of five (Mar. 7 - April 3) when he pitched at least seven innings and gave up no more than two runs. VMI does, however, have the ability to move their senior leader to a midweek role, thanks to the presence of Brown, Cowgill and Henkel.

"Being able to keep Sam at shortstop would be important, and Coby's looked good this fall," offered Coach Ikenberry. "We would much rather be able to pitch Sam in the middle of the week, so that he could focus on shortstop duties during weekend series. He's one of the best utility players in college baseball, and we're going to utilize him to the best of his ability to help us be successful."

For midweek games, the Keydets will turn first to junior Brown. Brown was the starting pitcher, and winner, in VMI's 12-3 win over #1 Virginia last season, while Cowgill pitched a complete game at The Citadel in mid-March.

Also available for midweek games will be right-hander Thomas, who was solid last year in limited action. Freshman Henkel, a highly touted recruit out of St. Christopher's in Richmond, is a lefty who threw a perfect game and a no-hitter within 10 days of each other in last season's state playoffs.

Relief Pitching

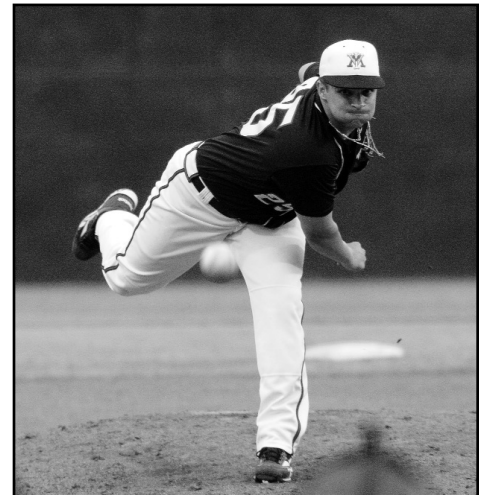
The bullpen may very well be the strength of the 2011 Keydets, as the unit returns the majority of its key cogs.

Devine will lead the way for VMI once again, a year after he ranked third in the Big South with seven saves. Devine is complemented by fellow right-handers Garrett and Watts. Garrett held opponents to a .215 average last season, while Watts showed greatly improved command this fall and could fit well into the seventh inning role. Having these three hurlers at the back end of the bullpen could effectively shorten games for the Keydets in 2011.

"We're very excited about the back end of our bullpen," said Coach Ikenberry. "With three potentially dominant pitchers, we can shorten games and really play to our strengths as a team. We also have depth in middle relief, with youngsters like Travis Thomas and veterans like Adam Kruihof. Andrew Deal and Karter Rivera will still be in the mix, as will many of our candidates for midweek starts."

From the right side, VMI boasts additional depth, as Ryan Barefoot returns and freshman Rian Ellis joins the program. Of the right-handed corps, Thomas was notably solid last season, despite his 6.94 ERA. When the two worst outings of Thomas' 2010 are taken out of the equation, that ERA falls to 4.12, a strong figure for a collegiate freshman.

From the left side, freshman Henkel could play a significant role. He will be joined by junior Karter Rivera and freshman Bach, while Joey Zarella could also see time.



Closer Michael Devine leads a formidable trio at the back end of the VMI bullpen.