



# SEASON OUTLOOK

## GENERAL OUTLOOK

### Notes:

- Florida State returns seven of nine starters from a team that had the third-highest batting average in school history, tied an all-time record for walks and was also in the top five all time at FSU for doubles and home runs in a season.
- For the first time in Florida State history, FSU returns the ACC's top pitcher (Casey Hunter) and top hitter (Jessica van der Linden) in the same season.

**According to coach Graf:** I think this is going to be a good year. Our schedule is the toughest that it has ever been but I think that we have a fairly veteran team coming back. Our new players are capable of stepping up to the challenge. I think it is going to be a strong year for us. The key will be Casey (Hunter) and Jessica (van der Linden) staying healthy. Our offensive power is going to increase despite the changes in the bats and the balls. We are going to have more team speed than we've ever had so I think it will be exciting year for us.

## ▶ RULES CHANGES

**According to coach Graf:** What the NCAA has done, all at the same time, is that the bats are going to lose a little bit of their rebounding speed, which will make the bats less lively. They have also changed the core co-efficient in the balls, which means they will be a little deader. You won't see quite the offensive power you saw last season but the better teams that hit well will continue to hit well. It will reduce the number of home runs you will see throughout the country. I think it will be fine for us. Because of our speed we will get more doubles and triples than we will home runs but I don't think it will hurt this team at all.

## POSTSEASON GOALS

### Notes:

- Florida State has captured the Atlantic Coast Conference championship nine times in 12 years.
- The Seminoles have played for the NCAA Regional title three times in the last four years on top of advancing to the Women's College World Series semifinals.
- Only four teams in the history of NCAA Division I softball have been to more WCWS than Florida State.



JESSICA VAN DER LINDEN

- The Seminoles have been to the NCAA Tournament 16 times in the last 18 years.

**According to coach Graf:** We want to obviously repeat our ACC Championship. Winning an ACC Title is prestigious and that is one of our main goals. Sometimes I think we overlook that looking ahead to NCAA Regionals. I think the kids now have a sense of what that tradition is. That is our number one goal. Next we want to qualify for the NCAA Tournament. Once you have been to the World Series recently, and we have been to six but just one in the last few years, that taste is always there. Getting beyond regionals and really kind of stepping up at the NCAA Tournament is really the focus we want to have this year. I think last year's showing in the regional will add fuel to the fire because I think they will remember what happened. There are enough players on the team that have been to the series and didn't go back that they know what that feels like and I think that will fuel them. Maybe that will get them a little more pumped up at regionals.

## THE ACC

### Notes:

- Florida State is 73-16 all-time in ACC play winning a gaudy 82% of its conference games and the Tribe has finished atop the ACC regular season standings 10 times in 12 years.
- Florida State has won more ACC MVP awards, more ACC Coach of the Year awards and more ACC Tournament MVP awards than any school in the conference.
- The Seminoles' 18 All-Americans are more than the entire ACC's total combined (12).

**According to coach Graf:** I think the ACC is an underrated conference. We have had the number two RPI in the country as far as conferences for several years right behind the Pac-10. I think the coaches in our conference have done an excellent job



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in strengthening their schedules, their facilities are all getting better and we have quality coaches and players. I definitely think the region of the country you play in sometimes gets looked down upon a little bit because we aren't the west and we aren't the mid-west. The fact that ACC teams have done really well in the postseason in the last few years and have upset some pretty big teams has helped. It is a strong conference and it is only getting better especially in the future with the addition of NC State this year and Virginia Tech and Boston College down the road.

## ACC EXPANSION

### Notes:

- NC State's addition to the ACC this year marks the first new softball team to play in the ACC since Maryland joined in 1995.
- When Boston College and Virginia Tech join the ACC, the conference will have doubled in size in a decade going from four teams to eight.
- The Eagles, who played in the 2003 NCAA Tournament, have been to regionals three times since 1997.

### According to coach Graf:

I think expansion is good because it makes things more competitive. For a team like Florida State its good. It keeps you challenged and makes you work a little bit harder. I think the quality and depth is going to make dominance a little tougher for any team. You will see more balance, which has been a trend the last few years. North Carolina and Georgia Tech have both won the ACC Tournament in the last three years. The balance is definitely there and it is going to help us nationally.

CASEY HUNTER

## SCHEDULE STRENGTH

### Notes:

- The Seminoles are scheduled to face 15 teams that played in the 2003 NCAA Tournament and will play half of the field from the 2003 Women's College World Series.
- Including tournaments, FSU could possibly face as many as 25 teams that played in the 64-team NCAA Tournament last season.
- The Tribe will host two WCWS teams in Tallahassee (Oklahoma and Louisiana-Lafayette) and will face at least 10 NCAA Tournament teams at the Seminole Softball Complex.

**According to coach Graf:** We have a great schedule this year. When you combine the teams we play out of conference with the ACC and our traditional rivals like Florida, it is going to be an awesome schedule. I really think this group is up for that and they are looking forward to that challenge. I believe it will pay off for us in the postseason. Playing this strong of a schedule



TATIANA GEORGE

does a lot of positive things. It may hurt your won/loss record a little bit but the positives are that your kids will get recognized for postseason honors because everyone around the country will see them play. The pitchers will get tested and learn they just can't get up there and try to blow a ball past somebody because they are going to see great hitters and really good hitting teams. It will elevate us. We will see the best pitching in the country really early and I don't think anybody will intimidate us down the road.

## RETURNING TWO ALL-AMERICANS

### Notes:

- This is just the second time in FSU softball history that the Tribe will begin a season with two current NFCA All-Americans on the roster.
- Elisa Vasquez is the first catcher in Florida State history to be named an NFCA All-American.



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- Since switching to fastpitch, Florida State has never returned two players that have combined for more than the 81 RBIs Vasquez and van der Linden drove in during the 2003 season.

**According to coach Graf:** It is a great thing for them if they keep their focus up. Sometimes seniors have a way of letting down as they look toward their future. Both of those kids are looking at their future but hopefully we can keep them focused on the season. If they have the same type of year they had last year, it is going to really help us a lot and take some pressure off other players. I am keeping my fingers crossed on that.

## ▶ BERNDT ON FSU'S ALL-AMERICANS

"Elisa Vasquez has become one of our top hitters over the last couple of years. She understands her role when she steps into the batter's box and is much more aggressive with the outside pitch. Her hard work has paid off, as she is a very dangerous hitter with runners on base. She is one of the better hitters in the south region and a very tough out for opponents."

"Jessica is a very smart hitter putting the ball in play on whatever pitch she is thrown. A controlled hitter, but she can hit the ball deep. A true lefty with a sweet swing, Jessica is one of the best in the country. A very tough out and I glad she's a Seminole!"

## AT THE PLATE

### Notes:

- The 2003 Seminoles had one of the best seasons at the plate when it comes to hitting for power. No previous squad has ever combined for more doubles, home runs and RBIs in a season than the 2003 team.
- Three returning Seminole starters slugged over .520 last year. That was just the second time in two decades that three Seminoles slugged over .500 in one season and this will be the first time all three are returning.

**According to coach Graf:** Offensively, we will not have any easy out and that is great for me as a coach. We have kids that don't strikeout a lot so the ball will always be put in play. That will allow us to do some hit and runs. We have two exciting freshmen that will be starting in Veronica Wootson and LaShaun Davis. Both of those kids have a lot of speed and are so confident at this age. They are very mature for freshmen. They are going to provide awesome stability to us and bring excitement. With the seniors we have returning, Jessica, E (Elisa Vasquez) and Beth (Wade), they all have good power and



ELISA VASQUEZ

can get the bat on the ball. They do a lot of good things, know our system and know what we like to do. Lesley (Palmer) has had another year here and will be a lot stronger. This is what I kind of look at as her breakout year because she will have now been at Florida State for a whole year. She is going to be even better this year. She started slow last year but she didn't have a fall practice and that hurt her. With a great fall behind her, she is going to start off really strong and will get better and better. Tasha (Natasha Jacob) is experienced now and is really developing. Tatiana (George) has some experience as a junior and none of them will be an easy out.

## IN THE FIELD

### Notes:

- Last year's Seminoles and the fifth-fewest errors in school history and posted the best fielding percentage since 1998.
- Florida State catchers Elisa Vasquez and BillieAnne Gay threw-out almost 47% of the players that tried to steal against them and each player fielded over .992 last season.
- Five of Florida State's returners fielded over .982 last season including left fielder Natasha Jacob who was perfect in 34 chances while starting 53 games.

**According to coach Graf:** We have a great group of defensive starters and very good back-ups at every position as well. The only change in the infield is at second base where we have to replace a two-time All-American in Brandi Stuart. Veronica Wootsen had a great fall, which makes me confident she will adjust pretty quickly. The outfield might be a little different at times. We will probably have five players playing out there since Jess will vacate her centerfield spot to pitch but they are all capable and can really pick it up and get the job done.



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## IN THE CIRCLE

### Notes:

- It has been more than a decade since FSU returned two pitchers who's numbers were as good as Jessica van der Linden's and Casey Hunter's were in 2003.
- The 2003 staff's ERA was the fourth lowest in the NCAA.
- Florida State was the only school in the country last year to have two pitchers finish the season ranked in the top 16 by the NCAA for ERA.
- Last year, Seminole pitchers allowed no triples for the first time in school history.

**According to coach Graf:** Casey and Jess will be the keys to our success. Both of those kids need to stay healthy all year. Both of them need to have great years. They are experienced and great competitors. They don't like to lose. They are very confident pitchers and they have thrown against the best during their careers. They are ready for another challenge and they are excited about the upcoming season. We haven't returned two pitchers coming off the type of seasons that Jess and Casey had in a long time and that's exciting. We know what they can do. When you get a new pitcher you have no idea how they will react in competition but with those two you know exactly what you are going to get game in and game out. We know their strengths and weaknesses and I am

## ▶ GAW ON FSU'S STAFF

"Jessica van der Linden is the consummate competitor. Last year she turned a corner when she was able to take that aggressive attitude that she has in the box and in the outfield into the pitching circle. Technically speaking Jessica gives you a lot of options in terms of setting up a hitter. The fact that she is left-handed gives her an added advantage, in that the majority of pitchers are right handed. That coupled with a repertoire that includes a variety of pitches that she can throw on command makes her a tremendous weapon on this staff."

"Casey Hunter in what was her first season pitching full time, showed that she has the makeup to become a dominant pitcher in this game. Having made huge strides throughout the season in terms of her mental toughness, situational awareness, and pitch development, I look forward to how that experience translates into more a more confident Casey Hunter."

"As a pitching coach I can't help but feel blessed, this staff has a tremendous amount of potential. Casey and Jessica are the elder statement of the staff and have helped a great deal in bringing along freshman pitcher Amy Harrison. The three combined give us a lot of options."

excited. They are quality players and both potential All-Americans. Amy Harrison is a freshman and she knows her role. She will get some opportunities and her future is down the road a little bit.

## FRESHMAN CLASS

### Notes:

LaShaun Davis, who will start for FSU in the outfield, was one of 20 at-large players selected to tryout for the USA Junior Women's National Team.

Davis and Veronica Wootson are both scheduled to start for FSU when the Tribe takes the diamond opening day. The last time FSU started two freshmen was 1999 when Leslie Malerich and Kimmy Carter started for the Seminoles. Those two players went on to lead FSU to three NCAA Regional finals and a College World Series during their FSU careers.

**According to coach Graf:** They (the freshman class) are going to be really exciting. Lena Sifen brings some depth to the catcher position and can come off the bench and DH. She can get the bat on the ball and is a really steady kid. She works very hard on her own and she will get better and better. Amy (Harrison) will be our number three pitcher and we will use her in some games. She will come in from the bullpen if we get ahead in games to get her a little bit of experience at the collegiate level. Both of those players have a little bit of developing to do. I expect LaShaun and Veronica to both be starters. They have a lot of experience versus tough competition and are very mature softball players. They are both going to contribute immediately.

## LEADERSHIP

### Notes:

- Seniors Jessica van der Linden and Elisa Vasquez came to FSU together in 2000 and fellow senior Beth Wade took a redshirt in 1999.
- Junior Tatiana George, who coach Graf thinks will assume a leadership role this year, is in her third year as the Tribe's starting shortstop. She is the first Seminole since Jesse McGregor in 1996 to start at short as a freshman.

**According to coach Graf:** Jessica will be a big leader for us. I also expect someone like Carly (Brieske) or Tatiana (George) to step up. Beth and E are both pretty quiet and will lead by example but Carly and Tat are more verbal along with Jess. That is the core of our leadership. Jessica has it all and is in every inning of every game. This team knows how competitive she is and this team follows her lead. She is also a great student-athlete as far as classroom work. When she says something she really means it and will act on it.





# 2004 FSU SOFTBALL ROSTER

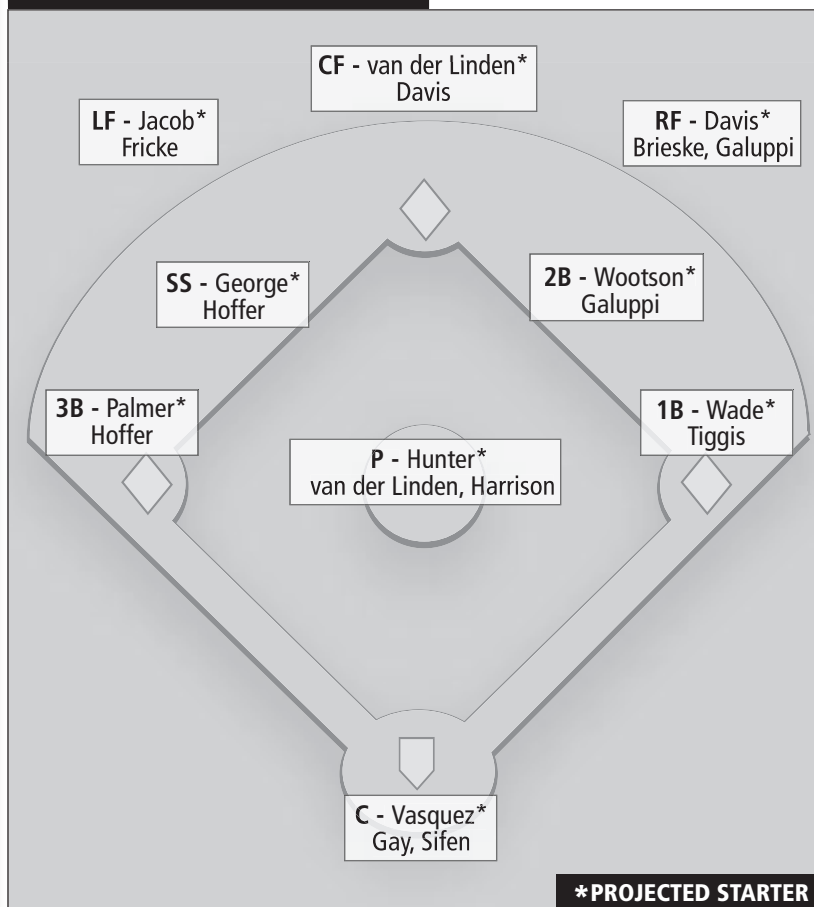


NO	NAME	POS	YR	B/T	HOMETOWN/SCHOOL
12	Brieske, Carly	OF	SO	R/R	Safety Harbor, FL/Countryside HS
22	Davis, LaShaun	OF	FR	L/R	Marietta, GA /Walton HS
24	Fricke, Katie	OF	JR	R/R	Dale City, VA/Lake City CC
44	Galuppi, Carey	OF/2B	SO	R/R	Boca Raton, FL/Westminster Academy
8	Gay, BillieAnne	C	SO	R/R	Tallahassee, FL /Lincoln HS
33	George, Tatiana	SS	JR	R/R	Fontana, CA/Bloomington HS
21	Harrison, Amy	P	FR	R/R	Chipley,FL/Chipley HS
6	Hoffer, Kim	INF	SO	R/R	Magnolia,TX/Pensacola JC
7	Hunter, Casey	P	JR	R/R	Millstadt, IL/Belleville West HS
13	Jacob, Natasha	OF	SO	R/S	Coppell, TX/Coppell HS
15	Palmer, Lesley	3B	JR	R/R	Dale City, VA/Lake City CC
4	Sifen, Lena	C	FR	R/R	Chesapeake,VA/Great Bridge HS
2	Tiggis, Julie	1B	SO	R/R	Royal Palm Beach, FL/ Royal Palm Beach HS
99	van der Linden, Jessica	P/OF	SR	L/L	Cerritos, CA/Cerritos HS
9	Vasquez, Elisa	C/DP	SR	R/R	Hesperia, CA/A.B. Miller HS
11	Wade, Beth	1B	SR	R/R	Colquitt, GA/Miller County HS
1	Wootson, Veronica	2B	FR	R/R	Fontana, CA/A.B. Miller HS

**HEAD COACH: DR. JOANNE GRAF**

**ASSISTANT COACHES: LOUIE BERNDT & EVE GAW**

## ▶ FLORIDA STATE DEPTH CHART



## PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

<b>Carly Brieske:</b>	Bris-key
<b>Katie Fricke:</b>	Frick-ey
<b>Carey Galuppi:</b>	Gull-up-E
<b>Tatiana George:</b>	Tat-E-ana
<b>Lena Sifen:</b>	LEE-na Sy-fin
<b>Julie Tiggis:</b>	Tig-iss
<b>Elisa Vasquez:</b>	E-lisa vas-kez
<b>Veronica Wootson:</b>	whut-son

## NUMERICAL ROSTER

<b>1</b>	Wootson, Veronica
<b>2</b>	Tiggis, Julie
<b>4</b>	Sifen, Lena
<b>6</b>	Hoffer, Kim
<b>7</b>	Hunter, Casey
<b>8</b>	Gay, BillieAnne
<b>9</b>	Vasquez, Elisa
<b>11</b>	Wade, Beth
<b>12</b>	Brieske, Carly
<b>13</b>	Jacob, Natasha
<b>15</b>	Palmer, Lesley
<b>21</b>	Harrison, Amy
<b>22</b>	Davis, LaShaun
<b>24</b>	Fricke, Katie
<b>33</b>	George, Tatiana
<b>44</b>	Galuppi, Carey
<b>99</b>	van der Linden, Jessica

**\* PROJECTED STARTER**



# PHOTO ROSTER



**#12 • Carly Brieske**  
Sophomore • OF  
Safety Harbor, FL



**#22 • LaShaun Davis**  
Freshman • OF  
Marietta, GA



**#24 • Katie Fricke**  
Junior • OF  
Dale City, VA



**#44 • Carey Galuppi**  
Sophomore • OF/2B  
Boca Raton, FL



**#8 • BillieAnne Gay**  
Sophomore • C  
Tallahassee, FL



**#33 • Tatiana George**  
Junior • SS  
Fontana, CA



**#21 • Amy Harrison**  
Freshman • P  
ChIPLEY, FL



**#6 • Kim Hoffer**  
Sophomore • INF  
Magnolia, TX



**#7 • Casey Hunter**  
Junior • P  
Millstadt, IL



**#13 • Natasha Jacob**  
Sophomore • OF  
Coppell, TX



**#15 • Lesley Palmer**  
Junior • 3B  
Dale City, VA



**#4 • Lena Sifen**  
Freshman • C  
Chesapeake, VA



**#2 • Julie Tiggis**  
Sophomore • 1B  
Royal Palm Beach, FL



**#99 • Jessica van der Linden**  
Senior • P/OF  
Cerritos, CA



**#9 • Elisa Vasquez**  
Senior • C/DP  
Hesperia, CA



**#11 • Beth Wade**  
Senior • 1B  
Colquitt, GA



**#1 • Veronica Wootson**  
Freshman • 2B  
Fontana, CA



**Dr. JoAnne Graf**  
Head Coach • 26th Season  
Florida State 1975



**Louie Berndt**  
Assistant Coach • 5th Season  
Western Michigan 1983



**Eve Gaw**  
Assistant Coach • 2nd Season  
Washington 1998

## ▶ 2004 FLORIDA STATE SOFTBALL TEAM

