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# Flames fans on the move

September 02, 2008 ¦ Eric Brown

Over the last two seasons, Liberty University football fans have packed Williams Stadium, averaging more spectators than the venue's maximum capacity. This season, those same fans can feel right at home — even when traveling to away games. At every 2008 Flames road game, LU's Athletics Department will host a tailgate party where fans can gather to root for the defending Big South Champions.

The tailgate party was conceived two years ago as a way to boost Liberty's fan presence on the road. After a successful trial run, the athletics department purchased a 50-foot inflatable tent. The tent made its appearance at four of the five Liberty away games last season.

"It becomes a visual our fans can relate to right away. They see it; they know it, they head right for it," Liberty University Athletics Department Associate AD, External Operations, Kevin Keys said. "It's just an effort to try to give people a rallying point."

Fans who attend the games can buy a ticket that includes a meal catered by a local food vendor for an additional $10. The menu varies depending on the vendor, but ticket holders will enjoy tasty tailgate fare such as hotdogs, hamburgers, barbeque chicken and various side items.

Postcard invitations are sent out to season ticket holders, alumni and other Liberty football supporters that live within a 75-mile radius of each opposing team's site. Those planning to attend the game can reserve a spot with the LU ticket office and enjoy food, fellowship and fun with numerous Flames fans. There is no charge for visitor parking at most venues, so tailgaters can park near the tent.

Flames Club member John Williams has been a longtime supporter of Liberty athletics. He and his wife, Ellie, attended several tailgating events last year and are looking forward to meeting other Flames fans this season.

“I love being there,” said Williams. “There is nothing like getting involved in the excitement of the football game.”

Liberty’s Director of Athletics Jeff Barber also enjoyed the excitement last season, as he met with tailgaters under the giant red, white and blue tent. As the 2008 season approaches, he hopes even more fans will travel to support the Flames this year.

“I just encourage fans to come out,” said Barber. “It’s a lot of fun. The food is always good. You meet new people and see some old faces that you haven’t seen in a while and enjoy Liberty football as well.”

*If you would like to reserve a spot at an away game tailgate party near you, please call the Flames ticket office at (434) 582-SEAT.*