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Liberty University

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## Taking Flames football from 'Good2Great'

September 02, 2008 | Todd Wetmore

It's not uncommon in the world of athletics for one to pick up a media guide and catch a slogan pasted on the cover of the annual publication.

Youthful programs will often corner the market on phrases that involve "construction" and "building for the future," while themes such as "on the move" frequent the covers of up-and-coming programs.

But how often do you see a team live up to its billing? For those among the record-setting crowds to see Liberty grace the gridiron in 2007, they witnessed just that, in a season that saw Liberty go from "Good2Great."

In 2005, Liberty posted a 1-10 record, a low point in the three-decade history of the program. Head coach Danny Rocco, now entering his third year with the Flames, was brought in to right the ship.

He did, as the Flames tied for the nation's best turnaround during his first season. Liberty's five-game improvement enabled the Flames to post a 6-5 record.

Following the 2006 "Season to Remember," when a stingy Liberty defense allowed a minuscule 15.6 points per game, Rocco deemed the 2007 campaign a year he wanted to move the program from "Good2Great."

Liberty accomplished its feat in diametric fashion, exploding on the offensive side of the ball. Liberty bested the program's team record for points scored in a season by more than 100 points. Liberty outscored its opponents by more than 20 points a game, enabling the Flames to post an 8-3 record.

However, the more important benchmark for the program could be found within half those victories. Liberty's prolific offense stormed through the Big South, posting a 4-0 record en route to the program's first-ever conference title.

"What we've accomplished during our first two years is really exciting for our program, university, and the community," stated Rocco. "We are at a point where I sense support for the program is at an all-time high. In light of that, we have very high expectations for the upcoming season."

Rocco has properly dubbed each of his first two years as head coach, steering the direction of the program upward toward play at a championship level. Lending the question, how has the skipper labeled 2008?

"I've been saying in the offseason that we have unfinished business," stated Rocco. "I think this team is capable of being even better than last year, but we still have a lot of work to do."

In 2006, Liberty brought a smile to the face of a two-decade veteran of defensive football by keeping points off the board. Last year, the pendulum swung the opposite direction with Liberty erasing offensive records nearly each game.

"What I am hoping for this year is a more balanced football team," remarked Rocco. "I want a team which shows signs it has abilities on offense to be explosive and to continue to be able to control the football with both our power run game and a short high-percentage pass game. Defensively, I think we need to get back to being a little more dominant."

A season of "Unfinished Business" awaits a well-balanced squad of 40 returning letterwinners and 12 starters, mixed in with a solid base of youthful players ready to carry on the rich tradition that is quickly becoming the trademark of the Danny Rocco era at Liberty.

*Todd Wetmore is Liberty University's Assistant AD for Athletic Media Relations.*