



# 2003 LSU BASEBALL

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## 2003 LSU Baseball Notebook

Monday, March 31

Overall Record: 18-9-1

Southeastern Conference Record: 7-1-1 (2<sup>nd</sup> in West division, 2<sup>nd</sup> overall)

### Last week's results (2-2):

Tuesday—lost at New Orleans, 5-4

Friday—lost at Alabama, 4-2

Saturday—won at Alabama, 10-6

Sunday—won at Alabama, 11-10

### This week's games (all times CT):

Wednesday—Nicholls St., 6:30 p.m.

Friday—South Carolina, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday—South Carolina, 3 p.m. (live TV on SEC-TV)

Sunday—South Carolina, 1 p.m. (live TV on Louisiana Sports Network)

POSITION PLAYER OF THE WEEK NOMINEE: Sophomore RF Jon Zeringue (6-2, 210, Thibodaux—E.D. White HS)

### Notes on Zeringue:

- Zeringue finished the week as the Tigers' hottest hitter, belting one home run in each of LSU's four games this week, becoming the first LSU player to hit home runs in four straight games since Brad Cresse did so March 18-25, 2000.
- Batted .353 (6-for-17) with six RBI and a 1.059 slugging percentage during the Tigers' four games this week.
- Went 2-for-4 with an RBI infield single and a 450-foot home run on Tuesday night vs. New Orleans at Zephyr Field.
- Was also 2-for-5 with an RBI single to go along with his home run in Sunday's series finale at Alabama.
- Zeringue was re-inserted into the LSU lineup on March 22. He is batting .333 (9-for-27) since returning to the lineup after being mired in a 1-for-19 slump prior to that.
- Is among the Tigers' top two-out hitters, batting .364 (8-for-22) and collecting 10 of his RBI on the year with two out.
- Leads the Tigers with six home runs, and has hit home runs in five of the six games since his return to the LSU lineup.



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- Has raised his season batting average by 49 points since returning to the lineup, and is now batting .253 on the year.

Zeringue's game-by-game statistics this week:

Day	Opponent	W/L	Avg.	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB-SBA
Tue.	At New Orleans	L	.500	4	1	2	0	0	1	2	0-0
Fri.	at Alabama	L	.250	4	1	1	0	0	1	1	0-0
Sat.	at Alabama	W	.250	4	1	1	0	0	1	1	0-0
Sun.	at Alabama	W	.400	5	2	2	0	0	1	2	0-0
<b>TOTALS (4 Games)</b>		<b>2-2</b>	<b>.353</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0-0</b>
<b>SEASON TOTALS (20 Games)</b>			<b>.253</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0-1</b>

#### NO PITCHER OF THE WEEK NOMINEE

Notes on the week:

- LSU won its seventh consecutive Southeastern Conference series last weekend at Alabama, the Tigers' longest SEC series winning streak since winning seven in a row in 1996-97 (last two of 1996, first five of 1997). The Tigers need three more series wins to equal the school record of 10, which started in the last series of 1985 and continued in all nine series of 1986. The Tigers' streak of consecutive series wins is the longest active streak in the conference; Mississippi St. is next with four.
- LSU has now won its first three SEC series in a single season for the first time since 1997, and for only the third time since 1993; the other occurrence was in 1995.
- LSU's 7-1-1 SEC start is the its best in conference play since 1995, when the Tigers started off 8-1 in league play. Since starting off 2-5 in SEC play in 2002, the Tigers are 24-6-1 in the conference and have lost consecutive conference games only once during that span.
- LSU also continued its mastery of Alabama, as the 2-1 series victory gave the Tigers 10 victories in their last 11 meetings with the Crimson Tide dating back to the 2000 SEC Tournament. LSU has won four consecutive series from Alabama, the first time that has occurred since the Tigers won five in a row from 1988 through 1992.
- The Tigers achieved a milestone never before done in 110 years of baseball at LSU, and that's win a series in Tuscaloosa after losing the opener. In fact, this year's LSU-Alabama series marked only the second time since 1986—a span of 19 series—that the team losing the first game came back to win the series. Alabama pulled off the feat in 1996 at Alex Box Stadium.
- LSU completed the first half of its 2002 schedule at 18-9-1, an improvement of 2 ½ games over the 16-12 mark at the same point of 2002.
- The Tigers have made notable improvement in almost every facet of the game over the first half of 2002. LSU is hitting 24 points higher (.307 to .283) than at this time last year, but more importantly, opponents are hitting 32 points lower (.257 to .289). The Tigers have more home runs (33 to 19), have scored more runs (181 to 179) and have higher slugging (.482 to .402) and on-base (.379 to .372) percentages than at this time last year. On the pitcher side, LSU's ERA is nearly a full run lower (3.27 to 4.22), and the Tigers have given up 47 fewer runs (125 to 172), struck out more batters (223 to 212) and notched more saves (8 to 3).
- The biggest improvement, though, is in the field. LSU has cut its error total through the first half



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of the year by 20 (37 to 57), allowing the Tigers to give up 24 fewer unearned runs (29) than at this point of 2002 (53).

- The Tigers went 12-4-1 in March following a 6-5 start, their best March since going 13-4 in the month in 2000. LSU was just 9-9 in March of 2002.
- The Tigers continue to pound the baseball in SEC competition, as LSU collected 36 hits at Alabama and batted .316 in the series, leaving the Tigers' average in SEC games at .345. LSU has scored 68 runs and gathered 118 hits in the nine conference contests, and have scored eight or more runs six times in league games.
- The Tigers continue to be at their best with two out. LSU batted .364 (16-for-44) with two out in the Alabama series and scored a staggering 15 of its 23 runs with the end of an inning looming. Blake Gill, Clay Harris and Ivan Naccarata were all 3-for-6 in the series with two out, and five different Tigers garnered at least a pair of two-out RBI, with Blake Gill knocking in six.
- In nine SEC games this year, LSU is hitting a staggering .345 with two out and have scored 32 of 71 runs with two out.
- LSU flashed back a little bit to their "Geauxrilla Ball" days in the Alabama series, cranking seven home runs in the three games, by far the most LSU has hit in one series this year and the most since hitting seven in last year's three-game sweep of Georgia. The Tigers have hit 33 home runs through 28 games this year, way ahead of the 19 home runs LSU hit in the first 28 games of 2002. LSU didn't hit its 33<sup>rd</sup> home run of 2002 until its 35<sup>th</sup> game.
- On the mound, the Tigers took care of Alabama when it counted the most, allowing the Crimson Tide to hit just .194 (7-for-36) with runners in scoring position and forcing the Tide to leave 30 runners on base. For the year, LSU pitchers are allowing opponents to hit just .225 with RISP.
- It was yet another sterling week for sophomore 1B Clay Harris, who continues to hit the cover off the ball after his insertion into the starting lineup in early March. Harris led the Tigers with a .500 batting average (9-for-18) in four games this week, hitting two doubles, three home runs and compiling a 1.111 slugging percentage.
- Harris batted .538 (7-for-13) with a pair of home runs in the Alabama series to lead LSU at the plate. For the year, Harris is the Tigers' leader in batting average (.417) and slugging percentage (.800). Harris, a 2002 freshman All-American as a pitcher, is the Tigers' leading hitter in SEC games, batting .432 with 12 RBI, a .811 slugging percentage and a .476 on-base percentage.
- Although he batted only .250 in the Alabama series, sophomore 2B Blake Gill got the big hits when it counted the most. Gill drove in six runs-ALL WITH TWO OUT-in the three-game series in Tuscaloosa, including four in Saturday's victory. Gill gave LSU a lead in the fifth inning on Saturday with a three-run triple, and then added an RBI double in the ninth inning. Gill then got LSU on the board in Sunday's game with a two-run double in the first inning.
- Gill may be batting .282 in SEC games, but he's made the most of his hits, driving in 11 runs, the third highest total on the Tigers in SEC play behind Clay Harris and Ivan Naccarata, both of whom have 12.
- Junior 3B Ivan Naccarata bounced out of a slump during the Georgia series with a fine showing at Alabama, batting .385 (5-for-13) with six runs scored, a pair of home runs and five RBI. Naccarata hit a three-run home run on Saturday to give LSU a 4-2 lead after trailing 2-0 in the first inning, and then added another two-run home run on Sunday. For the year, Naccarata has raised his batting average back to .339 and leads the Tigers in runs scored (25) and RBI (24).



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- True freshman C Matt Liuzza got a hit in every game of the Alabama series, extending his hitting streak to nine consecutive games, the longest active streak on the Tigers this season. Liuzza is hitting .324 (12-for-37) during the streak and is hitting .295 on the year. Liuzza has also been quite adept behind the plate, allowing only six of 12 baserunners to steal successfully on him.
- Two LSU sophomore outfielders, J.C. Holt and Bruce Sprowl, also hit safely in each game of the Alabama series in which they played, and they carry seven game hitting streaks into the week.
- Sprowl continues to be a steady force at the top of the LSU lineup, as his .330 batting average leaves him one of five LSU players at .322 or better on the year. Sprowl has struck out just twice in 109 plate appearances, and he has put the ball in play an astounding 89 percent of the time while he is at the plate (97 out of 109).
- Sophomore OF Ryan Patterson had a quietly effective series at Alabama, batting .429 (6-for-14) from the seventh spot in the LSU lineup. Patterson has been one of the most effective LSU players with two out in SEC games this year, batting an even .500 (6-for-12) with two out in conference games.
- Junior SS Aaron Hill saw his 13-game hitting streak snapped on Friday, and LSU won two of three games despite the fact Hill went just 2-for-11 on the weekend in Tuscaloosa. Hill continues to enjoy a solid season, batting .347 and continuing to lead LSU with a .492 on-base percentage.
- Junior RHP Justin Meier enjoyed a solid week on the mound, allowing just two earned runs in seven innings on Tuesday night at New Orleans before earning his first career save on Sunday at Alabama. Meier is 3-0 with a 1.50 ERA this year, and has allowed opponents to bat just .206 against him.
- Senior RHP Jake Tompkins came back strong on Saturday after two rough outings, going the final 3 2/3 innings on Saturday to earn his second save of the year. Earlier in the week, Tompkins had been saddled with the loss at UNO after giving up the winning run in the bottom of the ninth, and then had given up a hit on Friday at Alabama that allowed the Tide to score an insurance run.
- LSU's only bugaboo at the plate has been its inconsistency with runners in scoring position. LSU hit just .281 with RISP in the Alabama series and is batting .294 in nine SEC games in those situations.
- The Tigers continue to play it close to the edge, as two more one-run games left LSU 5-2 in the closest of games in 2003. LSU is 17-10 under Smoke Laval in one-run games after going 19-23 in the close games in the final four years (1998-2001) of Skip Bertman's LSU tenure.

#### On deck for this week:

- LSU returns home after a seven-game road trip and will play eight of its next nine games at Alex Box Stadium, starting on Wednesday night against Nicholls St. The Tigers will play the Colonels from Thibodaux after a one-year hiatus. The Tigers enter the Nicholls game 6-2 this year against in-state foes, and this game is the first of six in April vs. Louisiana opponents.
- The Tigers have won nine consecutive games over the Colonels, including a 16-4 victory in the teams' last meeting in 2001. Nicholls' last win over LSU came in the last game played at Thibodaux, a 4-3, 13-inning victory in 1994, a game that is most remembered for LSU catcher Tim Lanier tying a school record with five strikeouts. LSU's current winning streak includes an 18-4 victory in the first game of the 1998 South II Regional in Baton Rouge, a game that featured grand slams from Danny



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Higgins and Clint Earnhart, as well as a nine-run fifth inning.

- The Tigers return to SEC play this weekend when they welcome defending conference champion South Carolina to Baton Rouge for the first time since 2000. The Gamecocks seek their first series victory at Alex Box Stadium, and the Tigers are 6-2-1 in the series at Baton Rouge since Carolina joined the SEC in 1992.
- The teams played six times in 2003, with the Gamecocks winning four of the meetings. Carolina dropped the series opener last April at Columbia before recovering to win the final two games, then won two of three meetings at the SEC Tournament in Birmingham in May. The Gamecocks won both SEC Tournament meetings in Saturday's bracket final, rallying from a deficit with a four-run eighth inning to force a second bracket championship game, and then winning 5-4 to advance to the tournament championship game.
- Last year's regular season series marked the first time that Carolina has won a series from LSU, but the Tigers still hold an 18-8-1 all-time edge. The teams did not meet until the Gamecocks came to the SEC from the Metro Conference in 1992.



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