

Speaking the truth

ADAM LUCAS
sports editor

Truth and sports rarely mix.

Consider: the high point of any season for most fans occurs when the season is still in its infant stages, when they can still try to convince themselves that the pitching will hold up, or that the running back is durable enough.

NBC sportscaster Bob Costas subjected himself to none of these delusions, and it landed him in trouble.

While speaking about China during an Olympics broadcast, Costas commented that "Every economic power, including the United States, wants to tap into that huge potential market [China], but of course there are problems with human rights, property rights, the threat posed to Taiwan." He then went on to detail the suspicions of drug abuse that have followed Chinese athletes.

Wow, what biting commentary.

Nevertheless, some overzealous groups, both American and abroad, have castigated Costas for his "insensitivity." If telling the truth is insensitive, then I suppose that label fits.

See, that's the difference between China and America—over here, it's OK for us to state the facts, even if they might not be the "party line."

NBC Sports President Dick Ebersol saw the situation with amazing lucidity when he pointed out that "It's bizarre because no one has questioned the accuracy of Bob's remarks...the bottom line is Bob's remarks were completely based on factual and pertinent events."

Good call, Dick. If China doesn't like the opinion people in America hold of them, perhaps they should have considered that before they sent the tanks into Tianmen Square. Brutal force on a group of helpless people rarely makes a favorable impression.

What's even more ridiculous is that NBC issued a written apology for the statements, saying that "No one at NBC ever intends to offend anyone."

Well, isn't this just one big happy world.

In today's era of self-persecution, someone is going to be offended by everything. However, only the foolish argue with the facts.

These are the facts: China is a huge economic market. China is not exactly Switzerland when it comes to the way they treat their citizens. Therefore, America has not been able to cultivate China, either athletically or politically, in the fashion they might have liked.

If you're offended by those facts, don't shoot the messenger. Take it up with the Chinese government.

Bob Costas had a choice to make. He could distort the truth and insult the intelligence of the American viewing public—as the Chinese government would have liked him to—and paint a rosy picture of Chinese human rights. Or, as is customary in America in our form of government, he could call them like he sees them.

It is not a difficult choice to make, nor is it one that requires an apology.

Heggie runs down a dream

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David Heggie doesn't know he's a star. Sure, he's seen the amazing numbers—ODAC player-of-the-year as a freshman, third-team All-America last season as a punter, shattering Guilford's career rushing mark with two seasons of eligibility left, all-ODAC both of his seasons with the Quakers—but they don't seem to make an impression.

He says he's "just an average Joe." Tell that to his gridiron opponents, the ones that most often see the back of his #5 jersey as he gallops toward yet another touchdown.

Heggie almost never had a chance to shine for the Quakers. Pointed towards Guilford by a high school teacher, he sent in a tape of his prep highlights for football coach Mike Ketchum to review.

The coach liked what he saw, but Ketchum remembers that in Heggie's first game for Guilford, he only carried the ball three times. "Then in the staff meeting on Monday, I said I think there might be something there," Ketchum said. "It just so happened that in the next game, our first-string running back was injured on the first play of the game, and the rest, as they say, is history."

Heggie also recalls not being sure of his potential. "I figured maybe I could punt here, and I thought my role might be as a second-string punter," he said.

Well, he did punt, finishing fourth in the nation last season with a 39.3 average, but the Guilford coaching staff also discovered quite a backfield talent.

Heggie finished 1994, his freshman campaign, by winning the conference

player-of-the-year award. "We went out there carefree because no one expected anything of us, and that's why we were so successful," he said.

One thing you notice when you sit down to talk to Heggie is how often "we" comes out of his mouth. Despite all the accolades, team still seems to come first. That's why last sea-

sometimes I felt like when I needed to step up and yell at somebody or encourage somebody I didn't always do it," Heggie said. "This year I really want to redeem myself. I have no doubt we can beat anyone in our conference if we play with intensity."

Yelling does not come naturally to the Apex, North Carolina native, a self-described introvert. However, Ketchum says that his star doesn't have to talk to be a leader. "He's one of those guys that lead by example, and his example is so close to perfect it's hard not to pay attention to. When he says something to you, you know he really means it."

While it may sound as if he has breezed through Guilford, Heggie says that his toughest challenges have come off the field. "It's funny to me that here, it's bad to be a jock. I don't wish I was anywhere else, but it's funny how people who have 'freed their minds' still fall into the same type of stereotypes about athletes. It's funny because here you have to be a student first or you're going to find yourself at home the next semester."

With a new season beginning, Heggie has two things to request of what by all rights should be his adoring legions of fans, better known as the student body. "First, come watch us play at least once," he said. "If it's good, then you had a nice experience. If you don't like it, then you say it's just as bad as you thought it was. Second, before you judge all football players by some freshman eating pretzels in the lounge, get to know a couple more players."

It's too bad those things even have to be said. But yet, when you're a star, maybe people will listen.

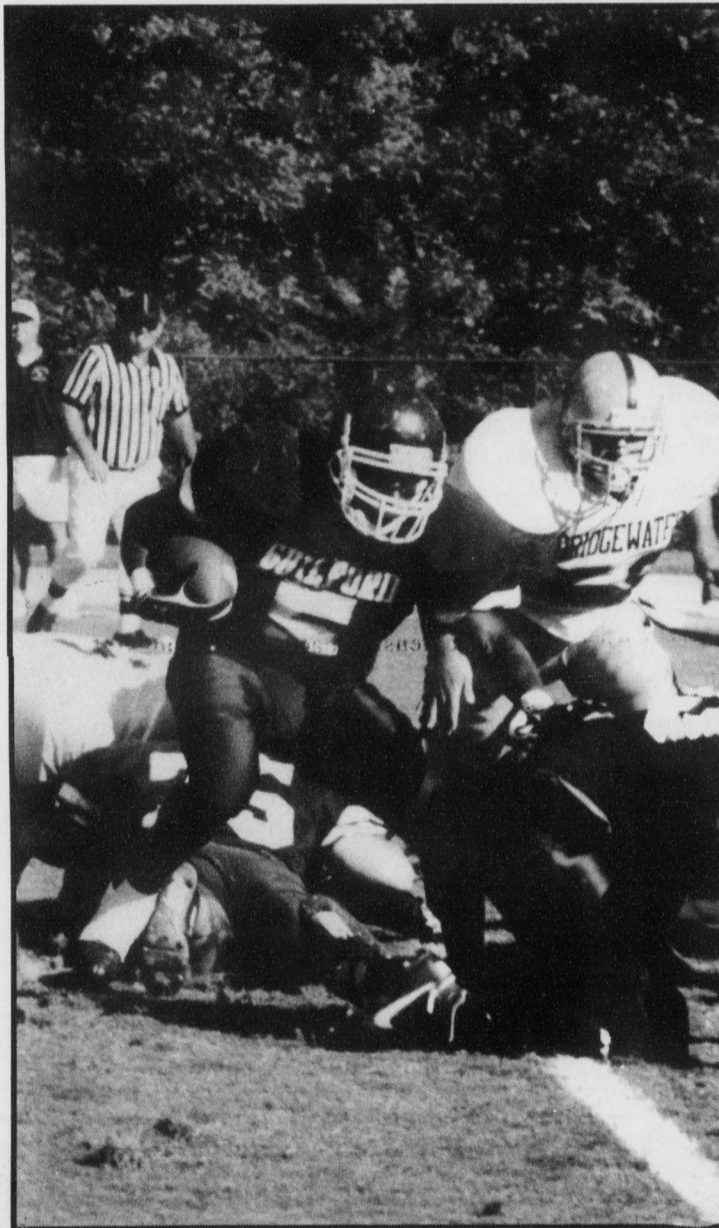


Photo by Sports Information

Last season, Heggie rushed for 123 yards against tomorrow's opponent, Methodist.

son, when the Quakers slipped to 3-6, was so miserable.

"The passion wasn't there last year, and

Ketchum takes over as Athletic Director

DAN MORSE
staff writer

The athletic department will have a new look this year as Mike Ketchum takes over as the interim athletic director. He replaces Gail Currie, who had been the A.D. for the past four years.

Currie resigned the first of June after a six-month leave of absence. The school is expected to conduct a nationwide search for a new athletic director sometime around the first of the year.

Currie was the only female A.D. in the ODAC to have a football program and was well liked by her co-workers. Currie is talking to the college about a different position other than athletic director or coach.

Brett Ayers, the acting athletic director during the spring semester of last year, also resigned at the beginning of the summer and now lives with his wife and family in Holland.

Although Coach Mike Ketchum did not volunteer his services, he does not mind the

extra work. "So far it's been fine, but it is still early in the year" he said. Some new duties that the football coach now has include: attending meetings, attending Guilford sporting events, and overseeing the athletic budget. "I enjoy all of those things and I also get to spend a lot more time with the other coaches," Ketchum said. "I am trying to be aggressive in addressing all of their needs."

Look for our new A.D. at this year's Guilford sporting events.