

Ashley Cooke: leader on the field

Alison Duncan
Staff Writer

Ashley Cooke is Guilford's starting catcher. As team captain, Cooke leads Guilford's softball team in ability and spirit.

"She has a .345 batting average, which is first on the team," said Dave Walters, Guilford Sports Information director. "She also leads the team with nine doubles, three home runs, and 24 runs batted in."

Last year she was the Offensive Most Valuable Player.

With a .978 fielding percent, she has a strong glove, too.

"She's generally more of a clutch player," said Coach Ty Cook. "She is able to produce when we need it."

"(My goals as a player are to) give 100% every day (and) support other team members," said Cooke. "Bad

performance days, pressure I put on myself, and frustration when I do not feel like I have helped the team (get in my way)."

Her coach can see her determination.

"Every time she goes up to bat she expects a hit," said Cook.

Her teammates see it too.

"It's easier to go to 6 a.m. practice when you know Ashley is there to cheer you on" said first-year Emily Dutton. "She's very good at keeping everyone up and into the game."

"She works hard to make people comfortable on the team," said

Dutton. "She talks to everyone and helps everyone out."

Cooke started playing Softball as soon as she was allowed on the field at five years old. She started fast-pitch in elementary school, played all

through high school at Eastern Guilford, but took a year off her first year of college because Guilford did not have a team yet.

While in high school, she made All Conference four times in softball, and twice in volleyball. She was the female athlete of the year her junior and senior years of high school, and the salutatorian of her graduating class.

Last year, her first year of college ball, she was one of two Guilford players named All-ODAC.

On top of all that, Cooke is a double accounting and mathematics major.

"Catcher is a rough position and I definitely see some similarities," said math professor Rudy Gordh, of Cooke in class. "She's a stickler for getting in there and getting the details right."

"She's always working away," said Gordh.

In the off-season, she works at The Disney Store, collects Disney snow globes, cross-stitches and plays with her two cats, Flora Belle and Callie.

The captains this year were coach's choice. "The catcher is kind of the leader on the field by nature," said Cook. Ashley fills the position well.



Ashley Cooke, winner of All-ODAC in softball last year, won All-Conference honors throughout all of high school

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National Sports Briefs

Kurt Cavanaugh
Sports Editor

LONDON — Soccer star David Beckham denied reports of an affair he supposedly had with a 26-year-old assistant in Madrid while his wife, pop star Victoria, was in England.

According to the tabloid *News of the World*, the young lady was an employee at SFX Group. The sport management firm looked after Beckham until last December. The company was involved in Beckham going from Real Madrid to Manchester United last summer.

Beckham issued a statement through his agent Carolina McAteer. "The simple truth is that I am very happily married, have a wonderful wife and two very special kids. There is nothing that any third party can do to change these facts."

*Quote from sportsillustrated.cnn.com

BAGHDAD — Iraq will compete at this summer's Olympic games in Athens, Greece.

On April 3 the country unveiled its new Olympic logo and at least 10 Iraqis will participate in the games.

The top athletes include a martial

artist, a 100-meter sprinter, a 200-meter sprinter and two wrestlers.

The limited number of athletes hears back to the Saddam regime, when Odai Hussein regularly tortured athletes if they did not win.

MORGANTOWN, W. Va. — A special task force will be studying tailgating, security and treatment of visiting fans this fall at WVU.

Fan Behavior Task Force hopes to have a plan in place by August to decrease the amount of on-campus destruction after big football games.

"We just want to make sure everyone has a good time," said Margaret

Phillips, chief of staff to WVU President David Hardesty. Hardesty ordered the 10-person task force.

The biggest problem on campus at WVU are intentionally-set fires. Between 1997 and 2003 over 1,100 intentional fires were set after athletic events.

The problem is not only at West Virginia. There is a similar task force at Maryland. Vulgar shirts were sold to students before the Terrapins hosted Duke in basketball in January.

The obscene writing on the shirts could be seen on the ESPN nationally televised game.