

## Guilford alum breaks the mold, pursues passion for football

By Casey Horgan  
STAFF WRITER

At first glance, it is nothing unusual: a Guilford alum who played two sports with the college goes on to excel in pro-football — twice voted team MVP and named All-American three seasons running.

What is important to note, however, is that the person under the pads is not male.

Jennifer King '06, has shattered stereotypes and achieved greatness in a sport that, until now, has been completely dominated by men.

"Since I was a little kid, I've always liked football," King said. "I would watch games on my dad's lap when I was a baby."

Growing up, she played the sport in her backyard and around the neighborhood. Playing football came naturally to her.

She pursued other sports, and eventually got an offer to play both basketball and softball at Guilford.

"I had offers to play basketball at much bigger schools, or softball, but they wouldn't let me play both," said King. "I talked to Guilford and they said 'Yeah, you can play both.'"

She went on to play the two sports at Guilford and studied sports management with a concentration in business.

"Once I graduated, I had the opportunity to go to Australia to play basketball on the U.S. team," said King. "It was a lot of fun, but while I was there, I started to grow tired of constantly practicing."

She returned to the U.S., and in a chance conversation with a friend learned about an independent football league for women.

"Football has always been my favorite

sport," said King. "Obviously, there weren't any opportunities for me to play it growing up. This is like an answer from God."

She became involved with the Independent Women's Football League (IWFL), and has

it; we just come up short. So hopefully in 2012 we'll be able to win it all."

"Jennifer is the consummate athlete," said Tim Holmes, head coach of the Phoenix. "She wants to be the best she can be, and that work



Jennifer King '06 poses in uniform on the grass of the Armfield Athletic Center. King stays active in Greensboro by playing football for the Phoenix and coaching basketball at Greensboro College.

just finished her fifth season with the Carolina Phoenix.

"My goal is to win a national championship," said King. "We've lost in the national semi-finals three years in a row. So that's the main goal ... We're right there. Every year, we're right there. We have what it takes to do

ethic drives her and drives the team. In five years of playing with us, she's made the all-star team five times."

"I call her the Franchise," said Holmes. "She was one of the very first players to join the Carolina Phoenix. I kind of built the team around her."

In her spare time, King serves as the assistant basketball coach at Greensboro College, works as a personal trainer, and broadcasts local football games. The biggest obstacle for her is trying to fit everything in.

"Finding time is hard, but I make time," said King.

The IWFL uses the same rules as the NFL, for the most part.

"It's real football," said King. "Usually people aren't sure of what to expect, but when they see it, it's regular football. Sometimes you can't even tell that it's women out there playing."

In the five seasons with the Phoenix, King has seen teammates who have torn ACLs, sprained ankles, and even one who broke a rib. When people tell her that football is a man's sport, King pulls up YouTube clips and lets them watch her team in action.

"Obviously, I can tell you over and over again, 'It's football,' but until people see it with their own eyes, they don't really realize that it's fast and it has big hits," said King.

Several weeks ago, the NFL announced that beginning with the 2012 season women would be allowed to play. King is not optimistic about participation, however.

"These men are 6'4", 250," King said. "I don't see women being able to cover that. I don't see it happening any time soon, but it would be awesome if it did."

"The women on my team are just happy to be playing," King added. "We've got a lot of women that work real hard. I've had a few men's semi-pro teams approach me and ask if I'd be interested in playing with them, but I'm happy where I am."

## Men's soccer team works to make a statement in the ODAC

By Natalie Sutton  
STAFF WRITER

Let us rewind to last year. The men's soccer team finished the season with 10 wins, six losses, and three ties. The Quakers lost in the quarterfinals to Randolph College in the Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC) tournament.

Now, let's return to the present, where the team looks to break out and have a special season in 2011, and to take care of unfinished business.

"The ultimate goal is to win the ODAC this year," said head coach Jeff Bateson. "In order to have a successful season we have to learn about the game of soccer, compete in every game, and enjoy the camaraderie of the team."

Currently, the team has one win, one loss, and one tie in three non-conference games played. That record does not illustrate how the players are learning and growing as a team.

"There have been only a few games, but it's easy to tell that our team is understanding and applying what Coach Bateson is telling us," said junior midfielder Richard Page. "The team is adjusting to changes in style well so far."

The adjusting period has gone well for the Quakers because they have leadership roles filled by proven upperclassmen. The team has veteran players that can bring the first-years comfortably into the system of play.

"We're a great group, a fully mature team that has talented and experienced players," said senior midfielder Kereith Pinnock. "We have a lot of returning guys and a good first-year class of players. We just need to keep the hard work going and communicate to have a real team effort."

Besides having experience and team chemistry, the team has attitude. Not the boisterous, "we're the best" attitude, but the quiet, calm attitude the great teams have. The attitude where they let their game on the field do most of the talking.

"We'll be in the first four of the ODAC at the end of the season," said junior Freddy Gomez. "It won't be easy and it will be tons of hard work, but it's possible."

When asked, Coach Bateson described this year's team in one word. "Driven."

"This group of players have camaraderie and a good sense of what a team should be: humble off the field, but bulldogs on the field,"

said Bateson.

This season will not be a walk in the park, however. The Quakers were picked to finish sixth in the ODA, in the annual pre-season poll. The conference is stacked with talented teams including defending champion Lynchburg College and Virginia Wesleyan.

"The poll is motivation for us as a team," said Pinnock. "It drives us to go out on the field and prove the critics wrong, and beat the teams

ahead of us."

Going into conference play, Guilford College will be the underdog, and they are perfectly fine with that. The Quakers have lots of indicators pointing in the right direction; they just need to prove it on the field.

"I'm excited to see how well we play up to our potential," said Page. "There's no doubt the skill is there, but we have to have a strong mental game that lasts the

season. Mix that with our talent and it could definitely be a year to remember."

For Bateson, this year is about the seniors finishing what they started.

"The seniors have turned this program around 180 degrees for the better," said Bateson. "I am excited to see them finish out their goals."

Hopefully, we can fast forward to the future, where we see the Quakers as ODAC champions.



Junior Freddy Gomez breaks away from two Wesleyan defenders. The game ended in a 0-0 draw after double overtime.