

## Women's soccer's Lily Wotkyns is the epitome of focus and dedication

By Zach Morgan  
SPORTS EDITOR

As the wind blows through the stadium a distinct chill enters the air and you know that fall is upon us. On the field in their white home uniforms stands the Guilford College women's soccer team. In the middle of all the athletes eager to hear the whistle designate the beginning of play stands a 5'2", bronze-skinned giant with her long, flowing, silky black hair tucked neatly into a ponytail.

She is quiet, stealthy, and seems to be in her own world. As she prepares for yet another game in her senior year of college Lily Wotkyns affixes the game-time scowl she is known for, looks to the heavens and sets her focus on her opponent.

Some players have a pre-game routine that is legendary. Michael Jordan always wore his UNC shorts under his Chicago Bulls uniform. Former New York Jets running back Curtis Martin always read Psalm 91 prior to games.

For Wotkyns it is her focus that is her pre-game routine. This same focus has been a benefit to her on and off the field.

Adopted from China when she was a mere five years old, Wotkyns has been a special addition to her family and friends since she arrived in the United States.

"Lily is an extremely diligent person," said Jeanette Wotkyns, her mother. "She knows everyone, so when I go anywhere in Denver they always say 'Oh, you're Lily's mom.'"

Always pushing forward and never being happy resting on her laurels, Wotkyns is scheduled to graduate from Guilford early.

"I'm pretty focused academically," said Wotkyns. "I would like to attend graduate school after Guilford to receive my Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology."

That desire to achieve has been evident in all that Wotkyns participates in. When it comes to sports, she is a teammate first.

"This year's team is amazing," said Wotkyns. "I am so happy to see the girls come together. We had struggles in the past but now we are determined to win and most of all trust each other to win. The first-years are dedicated and we all push each other daily."

Wotkyns has pushed herself to the limit since she first set foot on the soccer field.

"I remember when she was very young and her older sister Alice would have soccer games," said Kip Wotkyns, her father. "Lily just couldn't understand why she couldn't play so we realized at that point that we had to get her on a team. Shortly thereafter, we signed her up and she started playing and has been a natural talent ever since. She has

found great solace in soccer."

And the rest, as they say, is history. Wotkyns played soccer all four years in high school in Denver, Colorado at East High School. Upon graduation she took many colleges into consideration but settled on Guilford.

"I picked a Division III school because don't have any intentions on going pro and also so I could have a life outside of sports," said Wotkyns. "I picked Guilford because it was a small school and it has a good student teacher relationship. That was very important to me."

That determination to find the right fit has paid off. Wotkyns has been named to the Dean's List, twice named Academic All-ODAC, four times honored as Guilford College Honor Roll recipient and is secretary of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.

"Lily has a lot of determination and follow through," said Alice Wotkyns, her older sister. "She is a social butterfly and that helps her remain active and keep moving forward in her life."

She works hard, she studies hard and she makes her family extremely proud of her. Is not that what having a great life is all about?

After a hard-fought match the women's soccer team has been victorious yet again. They celebrate at midfield and soon Wotkyns emerges from the middle of the huddle of high-fives. With a quick flick of the wrist she whips her hair out of her eyes. One more achievement for this athlete that continues to press on and remain focused.

"This was a great win for us, today," said Wotkyns. "I'm so happy that we were able to trust each other to win. But I have got so much homework to do tonight."

And with that statement the focus shifts ever so slightly from student athlete back to student in the blink of an eye. But is not that what focus is all about? Realizing responsibilities and ensuring that you stay the course to ensure the final goal is met. That is focus and Wotkyns exudes it.



Third-year Lily Wotkyns concentrates on a kick during seasonal practice with her teammates at Armfield Athletic Center. She has been honored frequently for her work both on and off the field.

ZACH MORGAN/GUILFORDIAN

## Students, student-athletes on converging roads to success

By Catherine Schurz  
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There's been talk of a divide among students for years, often attributed to a lack of respect between students and student-athletes. Much of this disconnect is a result of misunderstanding. Many Guilfordians are unable to see past the athletic gloves and helmets and into the hearts and minds of the athletes who wear them.

Passion is a prized quality in Guilford College students. All students have something that gives us cause to wake up in the morning, whether it be heading to class, a work-study job, sports practice, or a club meeting. We all find that thing that makes us tick and we live our lives in its rhythm.

Sophomore cross-country and track runner Jodie Geddes is active in many corners of campus. From her involvement in the Community Aids Awareness Project to working in the Multicultural Resource Center to serving as a Principled Problem Solving scholar, her hands are full with activism. Jodie was also named to the 2010 Student-Athlete Honor Roll and works in the Guilford Admissions department.

"Academics and athletics hold equal

importance in my time at Guilford," said Geddes. "I try not to live a divided life. I think that if I give myself all around, the success will simply flow."

For student-athletes, their respective sport is certainly a source of passion. However, to assume their athletic ability defines them belittles their various contributions to Guilford's community.

"I'm passionate about a lot of things," said first-year lacrosse attack man Chandler Zirkle. "I think spreading love is really important. I like to make people laugh and always try to do everything to the best of my ability."

Sometimes there's a competitive nature compelling students to compare how hard they work, and thus, degrade others' hard work in return. From the sidelines, many students are unable to see the effort and dedication behind each tackle or every lap run.

"I think that many don't see the hard work that runners endure," said Geddes. "I commend my team and my coaches for always pushing me. They gave me the kind of faith that pushed me to believe in myself more at every practice."

With each day spent at Guilford, we become more. Whether it is in the classroom

or out on the field, we are being challenged to improve.

It is narrow-minded to believe that student-athletes are somehow less concerned with academics than the remaining student population.

Junior Vanessa Johnson is a member of Guilford's Sister-to-Sister and Blacks Unifying Society organizations. Johnson not only works within the Guilford community, but takes her enthusiasm off-campus into the Greensboro area with her volunteer work for her child and adolescent Psychology course.

"I think student-athletes deserve a higher level of respect," said Johnson. "I see them as working hard at something they love to do, while working hard as students at the same time."

When asked about their post-graduation goals, both Zirkle and Geddes said that they plan to attend graduate school. Geddes hopes to work at Guilford's Office of Admissions and then work with art and people, while Zirkle remains open to what possibilities may unfold over his next four years.

"Both athletics and academics are important, but, in the long run, while lacrosse is a large focus now, academics are what will help me succeed after college," said Zirkle.

All of us work tirelessly for something. For these students, success comes in many forms. Succeeding academically is critical to their futures and their development, but so is their sport.

"One of my biggest achievements is definitely when I made it to the state championship game with my East Chapel Hill high school team," said Zirkle. "I worked hard for that forever."

An accomplishment of any kind is worthy of pride. The feeling some students have at the sight of an "A" letter grade on a research paper after slaving away for weeks might be comparable to the feeling of scoring a goal in a soccer game against the school's rival team.

"When I get an "A" I feel like all of my hard work finally paid off," said Johnson.

At the end of the day, Guilford students all wander into the same dorm buildings and crawl into the same single-sized beds, tired and exhausted from a long day of hard work. Whatever moments from the day float through your head before falling asleep, rest easy knowing that your next-door neighbors aren't much different from you.

Goals, aspirations, non-stop striving for success — we are Guilford college students, one and all.