

Keeping it cool in the heat of play: staying composed to stay in the game

By Colleen Gonzalez
STAFF WRITER

Imagine watching a championship game, basketball, soccer, or any other sport. All of a sudden, an official blows the whistle, indicating a foul on the favored team. This ends up allowing the opposing team to be one point ahead.

Then, it happens: a player gets irate with an official as they attempt to appeal their case with angry and heated words and ends up taken out of the game.

A recent example involves Serena Williams in the finals match of the U.S. Open. According to The National, a call made by the official cost Williams the win. Williams then proceeded to verbally attack the official for the call and was fined \$2,000, \$500 more than the minimum. Although Williams has been an icon of women's tennis for years, her outbursts beg the question: where is the limit for athletes similar to Williams?

Passion is a key factor to play a sport. However, should the more boisterous athletes be given more freedom to express their sentiments during a game than they have now?

"My first reaction is to say no," said Sports Information Director Dave Walters. "Because there is so much passion and intensity and so much at stake ... it could disrupt the entire event and could be injurious to the opponent in some way."

"It's having mutual respect for the game and your opponent," said sophomore tennis player Tyler Mercier. "He's out there making the same mistakes you're making so it depends on how you control yourself."

Some sports can get more intense than others. Basketball, for example, can become very heated when each player is eager to get the ball into their hands in order to score a point. Cross country can become somewhat a contact sport when runners are elbowing each other at the starting line.

However, it should be assumed that all athletes should uphold a sense of what is appropriate and to respect the other team and the officials.

"I believe they also need to help maintain a fair atmosphere by enforcing those rules that manage behavior," said Walters.

What should be taken into account is that all student-athletes represent Guilford College. Whenever there is an away game or meet at another school, athletes are expected to uphold the fact they are representing their school.

"You don't want to disgrace the school and give them a bad rep," said Mercier.

Although it is difficult to be level-headed in a competition, that does not seem like an excuse to go against the rules of good sportsmanship.

"Allowing more heat-of-the-moments to come into play, you're opening yourself to the opportunity for more violent outbursts," said Walters. "Which I don't think anyone wants."

Take into consideration the spectators who have come to watch the event and then have to see their player get into an argument that ends up with them being taken out of the game. Not only would it ruin the event, but it would also be a bad example for the young spectators who idolize the players.

"It doesn't look that good when players are cursing and acting childish,"

said Mercier. "The fans don't want to see a player lash out because he made a mistake. It's just how you control yourself and move on ... that proves to me how good of a player you are."

Another question that should be considered is how the coaches deal with these athletes who have trouble keeping their passion from overriding their level-headedness. In a way, an athlete is a product of the effort the coach has put forth into helping this athlete reach a new level.

"I think the coach has to know ... how to best contain and excite and motivate so that his or her particular athlete is performing his or her best without disrupting or bringing penalties to the team," said Walters.

There will always be those athletes who are more passionate than others about what they play, and that is what will make them top contenders in their sport. However, there are rules that should be upheld in order for a fair game to be played.

"I don't think any accommodation should be given to someone arguing off a point or goal or touchdown," said first-year Guilford tennis player Meredith Shaffer. "You can express opinion and passion, but don't expect sympathy back."

As the years progress, there may be changes in the rules of sports deciding whether the most passionate players should have more say in the games they play. In the meantime, bad etiquette does not go unpunished.

"The player can say whatever he or she wants, hopefully keeping in the back of their head that there are such things as consequences for certain verbal outbreaks," said Shaffer.



(Top) Sophomores **Malikah French** (#18) and **Taylor Whitley** (#1) volley with Salem College on Tuesday, Sept. 27, in the Ragan Brown Field House.

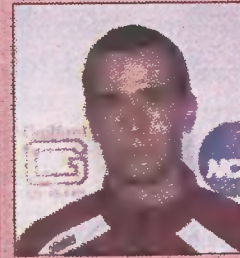


(Bottom left) Seniors **Mary Moody** (#5), **Taylor Phillips** (#12) defend their territory. (Right) Senior **Laura Kopald** (#13) spikes the ball as sophomore **Malikah French** (#18) supports her teammate. The Quakers fell to Washington and Lee 0-3 and defeated Salem College 3-0.



To see more volleyball photos, visit www.guilfordian.com

Quaker Quality Players



Chad Norton
Cross Country
15:24.9 (school record)-15th overall-Team 5th of 9



Lawrence Blake
Football
9 receptions-136 yds.-Team 1-2



Taylor Phillips
Volleyball
41 digs-Team 3-11



Mary Moody
Volleyball
15 kills-35 digs-Team 3-11



Carma Whitlock
Soccer
Almond-2 Assists-Team 7-3-2



Hannah Schiltz
Soccer
2 Goals-Team 7-3-2



Freddy Gomez
Soccer
2 Goals-Team 3-4-2



Jaclyn Nucci
Soccer
1 Goal-Team 7-3-2



Chris Jessup
Football
6 solo tackles-1/2 sacks-1.5 tackles for loss (10 yards)-Team 1-2



Anne Mogavero
Cross Country
20:00.9 (school record)-35th overall-Team 9th of 10