

## Core values, testimonies influence athletics at Guilford

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STAFF WRITER

"Are you honest and truthful in all you say and do? Do you maintain strict integrity in business transactions and in your dealings with individuals and organizations?"

The Guilford College website outlines these questions dedicated to describing the Quaker testimonies that directly influence the core values that our campus embraces.

Although Guilford no longer directly affiliated with the local Quaker meeting in North Carolina, the school continues to embody core values that the Quaker testimonies influenced. For those of you unaware of the testimonies, they are simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship.

How does this Quaker lingo fit into the sports section of the newspaper? Athletes and coaches cite an overwhelming influence of integrity, one of the Quaker testimonies, on their experience with sports.

One might say that athletics have no room for integrity and that athletes just get on the field or the court and, at the start of a game, immediately initiate aggressive and violent behavior. Think again.

Most Guilford athletes have a different approach to playing their sport. Athletes, especially on a college level, bring a thought-out approach to sports. In fact, teamwork and camaraderie define "athlete."

Binford resident advisor and sophomore offensive lineman Faris El-Ali values teamwork and levelheadedness in game situations.

"If you fight (in a game), you're undisciplined and selfish," said El-Ali.

He believes that playing sports, specifically football, does require a certain level of aggressive competition, but to allow aggressive tendencies to take over during game play is unfair to your teammates.

"You have to be aggressive, but you have to understand that it's between the whistles," said El-Ali.

Beyond individual athletic dedication to maintaining good sportsmanlike behavior, coaches also work to instill an attitude of communication and teamwork in their athletes.

"I think communication is the biggest key," said Dennis Shores, head softball coach.

Coach Shores emphasizes the importance of teaching players not only how to play softball, but how to apply skills learned on the field to their lives.

"I'm pretty clear from day one; they don't walk," said Shores. "They give 100 percent, and once you instill that, it carries over into their studies."

But, do athletes continue to practice their athletic integrity off the field once the referee has blown the final whistle and the clock flashes zero? Athletes replied by saying that

the discipline and dedication learned from playing sports directly affects their lives outside of sports.

Senior softball captain Morgan Andrews says that playing softball and creating a family environment on the team has taught her invaluable lessons that influence her daily life.

"Athletic integrity consists of good sportsmanship, hard work, desire, dedication, and having respect for not only yourself, but also for your teammates and the other team," said Andrews.

The word integrity manages to encompass both religious integrity and athletic integrity.

Chad Wagoner, a sophomore transfer from East Carolina University, finds that his Quaker faith and his attitude on the baseball field share common aspects.

"In worship I just relax and let my mind go: and, in a game, I also try to relax and stay focused on the task at hand," said Wagoner. "If I'm not relaxed, I'm uptight and can't play well."

Practicing dedication to his team and playing baseball at a competitive level relates directly to Wagoner's hard work in school as well.

Beyond dedicating time to a sport and ensuring that the time spent on the field, in the weight room, or on the court is used well, lies the ultimate goal.

"You have to find something inside of yourself that you didn't know you had, or

you're not going to make it," said senior power forward Will Cloyd.

Running sprints, wiping sweat from your brow, high-fiving your teammates all add up to defining the term athlete.

The culmination of repeated motions and actions identify not only someone who plays sports casually, but also an athlete. Remaining in the gym well after practice ends in order to continue perfecting your foul shots instills a behavior filled to the brim with intention.

Encouraging your fellow team member not to skip practice. Pushing through grueling sprints at the end of practice, despite trembling legs that can't possibly carry you even one more step, are facets that also define an athlete.

These actions result in preparing athletes for game play and life off of the court, field, pool, or track.

Athletic Director and Head Men's Basketball Coach Tom Palombo explains the reasoning behind instilling a mindset of integrity in players.

"Coaches want to teach their players a lot more than how to win a game," said Palombo. "You're going to remember all of the things that went into being on the team."

Ultimately, Palombo, and arguably all quality coaches, hopes to inspire the same goal in their players.

"Playing a sport has to mean more than winning one game," said Palombo.

### PALOMBO

## Palombo is a positive role model for his children and students

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are girls and the two youngest are boys.

The four of them are involved in a countless amount of activities, including hockey, soccer and gymnastics.

"My parents always put me first," said Palombo in an email interview. "My wife Amy always puts our kids' needs above hers and makes a tremendous sacrifice for our family. Because of the long hours I work, I don't get to spend much time with the kids. I try to make the time I do have with them special."

"I want to be there for them and guide them along the way and share my experiences with them," Palombo said.

So what does the hardest working man in Division III do to have a moment to himself?

Golf is his downtime.

"It's my one little thing I like to do," Palombo said.

Guilford's Vice-President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Aaron Fetrow has been Tom's golf partner for the past six years.

"Tom and I started our friendship in 2005 because we were working here, but also because we both love to golf," Fetrow said. "He's an intense competitor. He always wants to have something on the line and he wants to win ... another piece about him that I have so much respect for is that while he's so intense, really the base of Tom is integrity. I think his players really look at him as a father figure and a mentor ... they have a lot of respect for him."

Palombo's players are indeed very lucky to have a coach that isn't all about basketball.

"I think they understand that we are just trying to make them better and prepare them for life after basketball," Palombo said. "I believe my players want to be successful and want to be pushed toward

greatness."

Fetrow and Palombo also spend time together with their families.

"What I notice is how happy Tom is when he's with his kids," said Fetrow. "When we're in the backyard cooking and we're throwing the baseball around with all the kids together, he's really having fun doing that."

Senior center Justin Stafford is in his fourth year under the tutelage of Palombo.

"He is such a devoted coach," said Stafford in an email interview. "He balances his duties as a basketball coach with the additional task of being athletic director and still finds time to be a devoted husband and father. I've really appreciated these last four years (with him)."

Providing just as much entertainment as his team does for him, Palombo's children attend as many home games as their schedules allow.

"I always enjoy seeing his kids run onto the court after games, giving him a big hug and kiss," Stafford said.

Now, you may wonder, how does this Quaker dynamo keep going and going? How does he do it all? It has to be an expending lifestyle, but many would attest that he maintains it at such a high level.

"It is very difficult," said Palombo. "There certainly is not much free time during the basketball season ... I rarely get back to Virginia Beach to see my Mom, sisters and brothers. However, we have a great coaching staff, I feel that I have a great relationship with my boss, and our team is full of quality people so that certainly makes a big difference. I enjoy coming to work every day and trying to be successful in that one single day."

"I try not to look too far ahead," Palombo said. "One day at a time is plenty for me."



**Football team tackles the end of the season**

(Above) Wide receiver **Ben King** gains positive yardage against the Emory & Henry defense during Saturday's game. **King** led all receivers with 87 YDS. (Below) Quarterback **Zac Halbert** has a receiver in his sights against the Wasps defense. The Quakers lost their final game 30-6 ending the season 1-5 (ODAC) and 2-8 overall.

