

Sophomore Gabby Oglesby blocks out the pressure and succeeds on the court

By Zach Morgan
SPORTS EDITOR

Coaches make statements in practices and games to motivate young athletes. "Good job." "Run ten gassers, because you didn't get back on "D" in last night's game." Many are supportive, others are building blocks for success, while some are words that breed a passionate motivation deep inside of an athlete.

How would you handle being told, "You will never be able to make the team"?

Welcome to the world of sophomore center Gabby Oglesby. Attempting to make her childhood dream of becoming a basketball player a reality, she attended tryouts for her middle-school basketball team. During those tryouts, Oglesby would hear the same words that the great Michael Jordan heard at Laney High.

Consumed with the same passion that lives within Jordan,

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Oglesby used that statement as motivation to not only make her team better but also to become the best basketball player she could. That impetus has its roots from her upbringing and passion for God.

"My mom is the most influential in my life," said Oglesby. "She only missed one game this season, and she even made the trip to the Old Dominion Athletic Conference Tournament. I can't remember her missing more than five games in my entire career. I cannot put into words what she means to me."

Oglesby's mother, Melinda Howard, rests her support and her influence on her daughter on the basis of religion.

"The thing that makes me most proud of Gabby is her humility," said Howard. "She has put a lot of hard work into her accomplishments and has remained the same appreciative, kind, little girl I have had the pleasure of raising. She could have developed a big-head but she remains humble. Church is the foundation."

A member of Galilee Missionary Baptist Church since before she could crawl, Oglesby is very forthcoming when discussing her "foundation."

"I was always taught you can't do anything without God," said Oglesby. "I try and put him first in everything. I do everything that I do in glory to God. During the national anthem, I pray that he is getting the glory out of the talent that he has given me."

That talent has begun to be noticed by others outside of the Guilford bubble.

This season, the 5'11" forward received a plethora of recognition from her peers. She was recently named ODAC Women's Player of the Year and Most Outstanding Player of the ODAC Tournament after posting 14.7 points per game, pulling down just under a hair below 8 rebounds per game, shooting 51.4 percent from the field and leading the ODAC in blocked shots (66) and blocked shots per game (2.3).

Oglesby's blocked shot total and average place her number one all-time in Quaker season totals and third all-time in Quaker career history. With the pace she is on, Oglesby is set to break the career record in her senior season.

"Every coach I have ever had, has been very defensive minded and I think that was just the way I was taught coming up playing basketball. Defense first, and then offense we can fix later," said Oglesby.

Some would argue that coaching is the reason for her

success, even now. Oglesby doesn't dispute that, and adds an interesting piece of food for thought.

"Coach (Flamini) isn't all about basketball. The thing that stands out most to me about her is that she always cares so much about everything else that's going on and basketball is like, secondary," said Oglesby "That type of atmosphere is conducive to being able to be successful as a team."

Additionally, Oglesby was named to the D3hoops.com All-South Region team, as well as the North Carolina Collegiate Sports Information Association College Division All-State Team.

When asked what accomplishment she is most proud of, Oglesby gleamed and stated, "I'm most proud of my blocked shots. I was shocked when told that I set the record in only 56 games. It was a huge accomplishment for me."

Producing at such a high level on the court, as a sophomore is very impressive. Oglesby's father, Larry Oglesby, noticed her passion for life and sports at a very young age.

"I refereed high school games and she traveled with me," said Larry. "It all began at five years old at the YMCA, when she would play all types of sports with her brothers. What most people don't know about her, though, is that she has a natural gift to relate to children. I see Gabby teaching children after graduating college."

When Oglesby returns home on the weekends that she isn't on the court, she attends church and volunteers her time to the youth.

"I remember when she signed her letter of intent to attend Guilford," said Youth Minister Thomas Barksdale. "There was not a dry eye in the house. It's a joy to see that she has manifested her goals she articulated in high school."

"Being the resilient young woman that she is, Gabby comes back to Winston-Salem, to our church and schools, and volunteers to teach the youth," added Barksdale. "It fills me with such joy to see her blooming with success, as we all knew she could. No one is more deserving of their accolades than Gabby."

That passion is a reality now, as Oglesby prepares for her junior season on the court. Coach Flamini has constructed a team of achievers that win and lose as one. Winning the ODAC title, the first for women's basketball since 2002, was

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an achievement Oglesby doesn't take lightly.

"I'll always remember when we won the ODAC title," said Oglesby. "I was on the bench, Jazlyn (Gibbs) was beside me crying; I started crying and everyone else started. We could see our parents waving signs across the floor. Even if we win next year, that moment, just being overwhelmed realizing that we won, will always stand out to me."

As Oglesby's career is bright, her future is blinding with mind-blowing possibilities. All from a player that was told she didn't have the skills to even make a seventh-grade team.

Words are powerful, but not as powerful as the passion that lives within a true athlete. It only drives them to be better than others wish to be.

"I remember a picture of Gabby when she was three years old, wearing her Air Jordans," said Howard. "She was standing in front of a small goal looking up at it like 'I know I can do it.' Whenever I think about that picture, I smile."

Keep smiling Mrs. Howard, because Gabby has done it.



Haley Andrews – Tennis
8-5 Doubles
Win v. Bridgewater College



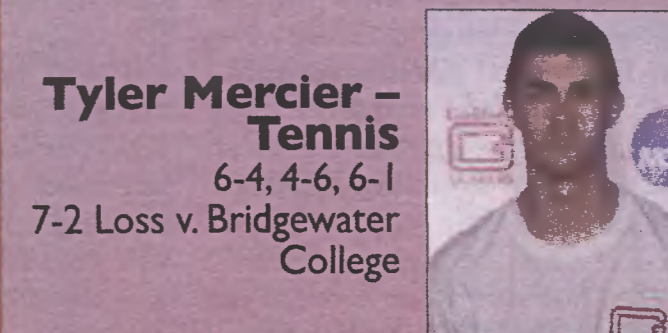
Summer Frazier – Lacrosse
5 goals
16-10 Win v. Randolph-Macon College



Allison Hewitt – Tennis
8-5 Doubles
Win v. Bridgewater College



Rachel Howard – Softball
4 hits – 4 at bats
(1 double) – 3 runs scored – 4 runs batted in



Tyler Mercier – Tennis
6-4, 4-6, 6-1
7-2 Loss v. Bridgewater College



Zack Montalbano – Baseball
2 hits – 4 at bats
– 2 runs scored (1 homerun) – 2 runs batted in – 9-8 Win v. Bridgewater College

Players are listed in alphabetical order by last name. Individuals' statistics are from the past week's games and the final score of the game is listed.

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