

Older athletes prove that age is merely a number

BY ALLISON DEBUSK
STAFF WRITER

"I asked the coach when I first came out, 'Is there an AARP discount?' He told me 'Shut up. You're not that old.'"

That is how Matthew McKeown describes the beginning of his cross country career at Guilford College as a Center for Continuing Education student. And he's not the only athlete who is older than his other teammates; several CCE students participate in athletics.

These athletes chose to pursue sports for different reasons. For McKeown, it was about returning to an activity he had once loved.

"I hadn't run in 12 years," said McKeown. "I ran a 5k in March and finished fourth."

After that, he began looking for a college with an adult program that would allow him to participate in cross country.

Greg Carnovale, a CCE student and a captain of the soccer team, joined with several other older students.

"We've had plenty of CCE students over the last couple years," said Jeff Bateson, head coach of men's soccer.

Bateson explained that several CCE students, specifically Jordan Alexander '11, Sean Dwyer and Carnovale all joined the team together.

Although these athletes love what they do, juggling practices, academics, and personal lives is not always easy.

"My first couple of weeks here I didn't think I was going to ever sleep again," said McKeown. "I work 14 hours (on) Sunday. I come home and stay up studying until 5 a.m. and have practice at 6:15. ... I sleep in the library before class."

Danny Cash, head coach of the cross country team, also sees the difficulties that McKeown faces, such as running late to a practice because his son was sick.

Despite facing many hurdles, these athletes appreciate the opportunity to compete and be part of a team.

"I am so grateful to Coach Cash and his wife for allowing me to experience my dream of attending a four-year college and being able to run at the same time," said McKeown.

Having CCE student benefits not only other CCE students, but their teammates as well.

"I can remember the first race of the season and I was not running my best, but Matthew was right there with the coach, cheering me on like a teammate, brother, and friend," said junior Jodie Geddes, a member of the cross country team.

"Matt treats me like his little brother," said first-year Yashua Clemmons. "Being that I am the only freshman on



COURTESY OF MATTHEW MCKEOWN

Matthew McKeown, center, is a CCE student who runs for Guilford's cross-country team. His coach appreciates his dedication, while his teammates appreciate his constant encouragement. As a student, parent and athlete, he excels both on and off the track.

the team, he made sure I was ok during training and well-adjusted with school."

The coaches also appreciate the presence of CCE students on their teams.

"One thing CCE students do is they not only provide leadership and maturity on the team, but also there's a reason they're back at college, and they can relate their stories to the other team members," said Bateson.

There are not many CCE students who participate in athletics, but any who are interested are encouraged to do so.

"I think the more any student is engaged on campus, the better their overall educational experience, so I would like to see more CCE participation all around, not just in sports,"

said Martee Holt, assistant dean of the Center for Continuing Education, in an email interview.

"I'd love to have more CCE students if they have the same dedication (as McKeown)," said Kimberly Cash, assistant coach of the cross country team.

For CCE student athletes, balancing academics, sports, and a private life is not easy, but there is a secret to success. When asked if he would encourage other CCE students to participate in sports he said, "Yes with a caution."

Be aware of how much time you're going to invest. You have to have a lot of support from your family to make it possible."

Football team uses inner light to shine to victory

BY EMILY CURRIE
STAFF WRITER

Guilford's football team is disciplined, tenacious, and unified. They are one team — a family really — with one common goal: to win football games and go to playoffs. The team won three games in a row, which is the longest winning streak since 2007. They are more focused and determined than ever to continue

winning.

On Oct. 11, during a rare Thursday night game — the first since 1966 — Guilford's football team rose from the ashes and beat Bridgewater College 23-20 to secure an Old Dominion Athletic Conference win.

"(Bridgewater) was a team that had embarrassed us as a program last year, so we had to come into that game ready to make a statement that we're not the same team as last

year," said first-year offensive lineman Estavio Jones.

This was a tough win for the Quakers, who worked hard to correct deficits during the game.

Two key players in the game were first-year quarterback Matt Pawlowski and junior running back Nick Mearite. Pawlowski had a 10-yard touchdown pass to Mearite with only a little over seven minutes on the clock. Mearite took the pass and carried it to victory, scoring the winning touchdown of the game.

Pawlowski assisted in all three of Guilford's touchdowns and passed for 258 yards without being intercepted. Mearite also made five amazing catches during the game.

This was the first home win for second-year head football coach Chris Rusiewicz, and the first triumph over their conference rival since 2006. "I believe the winning streak has something to do with the loss to Washington and Lee University (Sept. 29). They were a big loss to us, (which) I believe sort of woke us up and made us realize if we wanted to win, we had to want it more than any other team in the conference," said Jones.

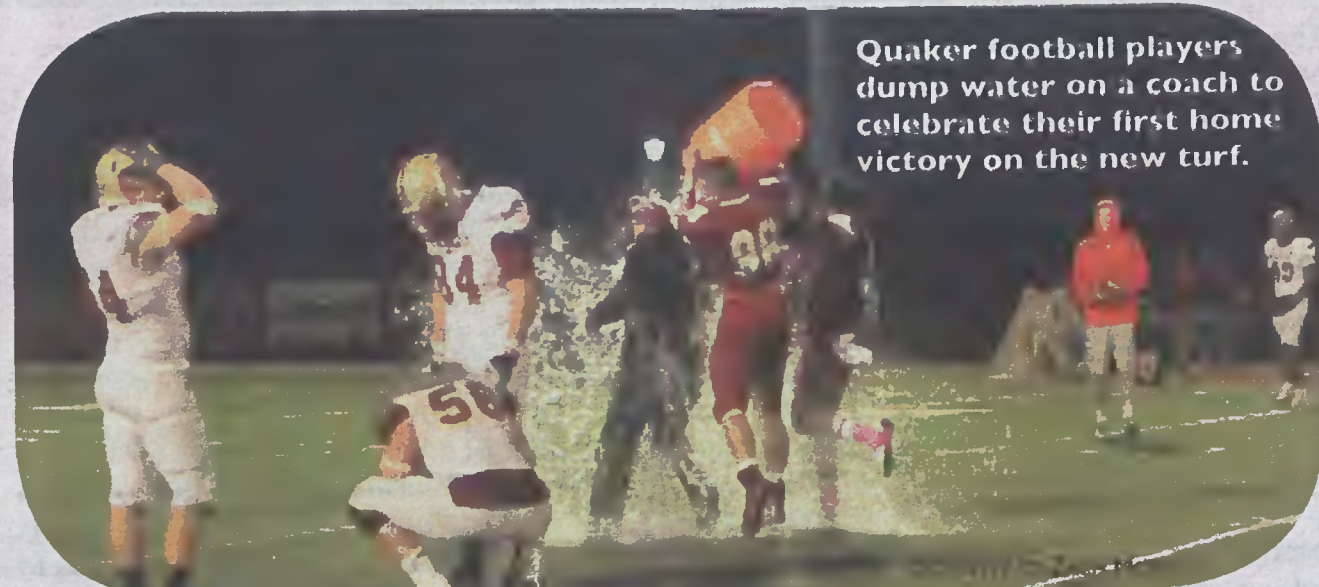
"I think the best part about (that) game is

that we never (gave) up as a program," said Rusiewicz. "The kids just kept fighting and pushing through, and one of the big examples of that is (that) we got down late in that game, and we came back to win the game."

"When we beat Shenandoah University the week before Bridgewater, we realized that this is how we need to play every game," said junior defensive lineman Kyle Ennis. "We are not satisfied with 3-1 in the conference. We are going for 6-1, and to be conference champs."

"When you bring a hundred young men together from all walks of life, one of the most important things is to get them to become unified," said Rusiewicz. "I think they started to do that a year ago, and it happened really quickly. Any time you bring unification and build love and trust, it goes a long way."

Unfortunately, Guilford lost to ODAC rival Hampden-Sydney College Oct. 27, with a final tally of 68-24. The Quakers still have two more games scheduled to play before their season closes, with their final home game on Nov. 3 against Catholic University. Although the winning streak may have come to an end, the team knows they have the potential to bounce back and come out on top.



Quaker football players dump water on a coach to celebrate their first home victory on the new turf.