

Why do college athletes quit their sport?

BY KATY ANDREWS
STAFF WRITER

There has been a recent phenomenon at Guilford College of student-athletes walking away from their varsity sport teams.

Since Guilford was founded in 1837, sports have been a part of the community. However, participating in athletics can mean abandoning activities you enjoy.

"The time commitment and knowing that I wouldn't be able to commit as much as my teammates were the main reasons I quit tennis," said senior Adelaide Ayres. "It prevented me from taking classes that I had wanted to take in the past.

College sports are an enormous time commitment with multiple practices a day, games during the week, and tournaments out of state.

"When I came to Guilford, I was really looking for the Guilford cross country team to fill the same role it did in high school," said runner Meg Holden '12. "Running in college was all about the competition because the women's team had seven people on a good day, which is the minimum number needed to score in a race."

Quitting a team varies in reasons, but overall, valuable players are missed due to the unfortunate decision.

"The loss of these athletes has affected the team as we had to adjust relays, and some were possible point scorers for us at the conference championships," said Danny Cash, head coach of the cross country and track team. "It also hurts the continuity and structure of the team."

Once a player is lost, squads must pick up the pieces and move forward.

"My objective is to help them through their decision and not to convince them one way or another," said Chris Rusiewicz, head football coach. "Some students quit because they may have come to a realization ... as they lose that passion and can't keep up with the talent level and time commitment."

Cash also had a similar perspective on why students quit their sport.

"It is very hard to be an athlete here at Guilford," said Cash. "Not only do you have a very demanding academic standard, but you are expected to be involved in the community and also practice, travel and compete in the name of the college. Some of those who get here are able to manage this and some cannot and have to make hard decisions about what to give up."

One athlete opened up about an experience while on the team.

"My coach exhibited much favoritism and played injured players when he had a whole bench full of people ready to play," said an anonymous athlete. "My coach ruined my confidence and made me hate a sport I loved."

However, there's also a flipside to vacating a sport. There is more time for that person to grow in other ways throughout the community of their college.

"I don't think that we should always view leaving a team as a negative for the student-athlete who leaves or for the team that they are leaving," said Nick Black, head baseball coach. "As a coach, I would never want a player who does not enjoy playing their sport anymore or feels the need to move on due to a shift in priorities to continue with a team just because they feel like they have to."

At Guilford, we value students who can think and act for themselves and the well-being of others. If this means quitting a sport to better the lives of themselves and others, who are we to say they cannot do just that?

Men's rugby season beating the odds

BY LAURA HAY
STAFF WRITER

Men's rugby at Guilford is a tight-knit brotherhood. This contrasts sharply with last season when discord caused players to quit and the team to collapse. This season was different as the group was determined to make sure it never happened again.

Rugby is a club sport, so students can come and go as needed. If athletes are not committed, the team suffers.

"We canceled (last season) due to the commitment level of the players," said junior Zach Kronisch, rugby team president. "The leadership and officers weren't doing the tasks assigned them. The president last year did a poor job of recruiting and that left us with poor numbers to do the work that we need to do."

The lack of leadership poked holes in the fabric of the team causing conflict between members.

"This left a lot of infrastructure problems," said senior Aaron Craig, team captain. "Morale dipped by the wayside, and players stopped coming to practice."

Seeing such a rift left them disappointed but not willing to give up.

"This year, our drive came from not wanting another season like last year's," said Craig. "We've won our last two matches in convincing fashion, and a lot of our first-year and second-year players have really stepped it up."

Players striving for success have created a level of commitment that has kept the team intact.

"Right now, we're at a stable point where we have at least 15 (players) and enough to field at least one or two backups," said sophomore Brandon Wagstaff.

Having plenty of players led to improved results.

"The team is much more competitive this season compared to last," said Dan Hayden, team coach. "Despite the small numbers, they have managed to go 3-1 in the early part of the season with another three matches to go."

The team worked hard this time to avoid internal problems. They practice encouraging teammates, something they take tremendous pride in.

"One of the most positive aspects is that we don't yell at each other during a game, even if someone makes a mistake," said Wagstaff. "We're like, 'don't worry about it, let's get back out there.' Not yelling at each other is very important."

They also encourage friendship off the field.

"The level of bonding is really high," said junior Ronnie Nguyen. "We know each others' weaknesses and strengths by spending time together."

This helps create the brotherhood and will keep them on track for seasons to come.

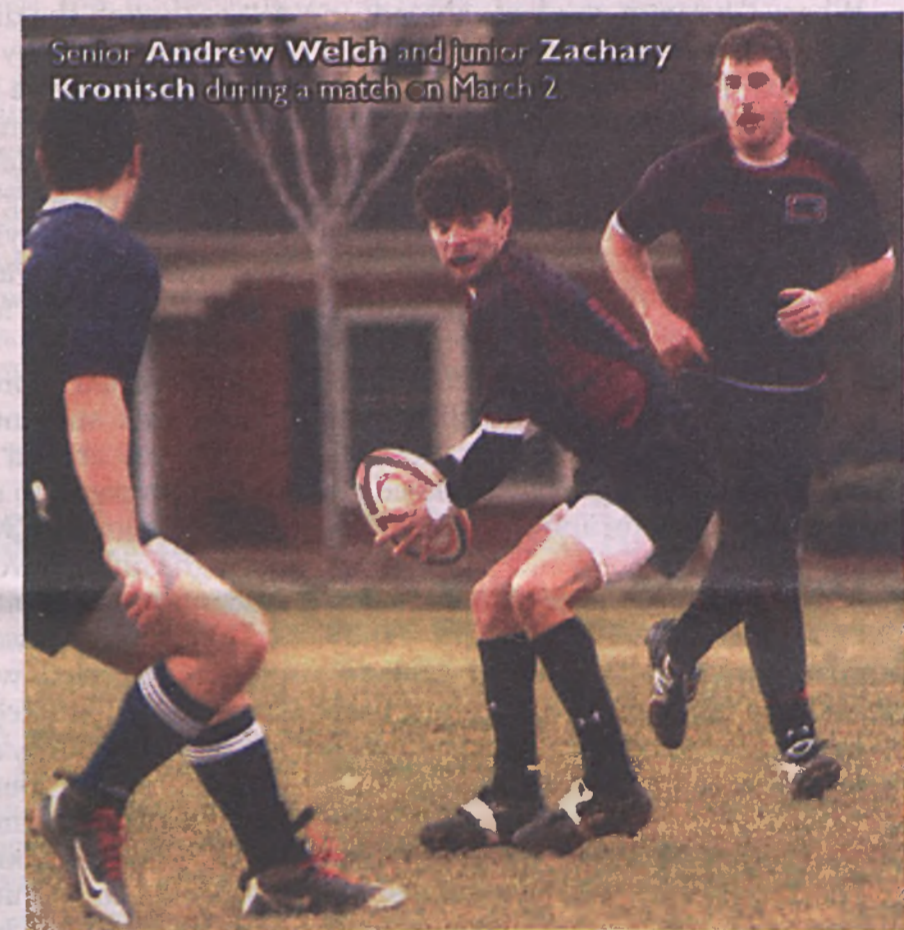
"The only obstacle is making sure the season doesn't end like it did last season," said Kronisch. "That the guys stay committed and keep their hearts in it; stay focused on the future of the team and keep the next season going."

One key to maintaining the future of rugby at Guilford is recruiting new members.

"If people try it once, I think they'll like it," said Kronisch with a laugh. "It's a lot of fast action, people smashing into each other — why wouldn't you want to watch that?"

The brotherhood is not exclusive. Everyone who wants to try rugby is welcome.

"Come play rugby," said Nguyen.



COURTESY OF DOUGLAS REYES-CERON

Softball players organize cancer awareness fundraiser

BY CHLOE LINDEMAN
STAFF WRITER

"There's a driving force behind why I do it," said sophomore Rachel Howard. "All my aunts have had some form of cancer. It's a big thing in my family."

Howard plays first base on the softball team, which is planning the second annual Relay for Life event on May 3 from 6:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. at the Armfield Athletic Center.

Relay for Life spreads awareness of cancer and raises money for the American Cancer Society. Relays are organized around the world by different groups looking for ways to give back.

Before the event, community members who want to participate create or join a team and get people and businesses to sponsor them by donating to the American Cancer Society.

Those who attend alternately walk laps around the field, enjoy live music from local bands, play games like water pong, devour baked goods and much more.

"What was it like last year? Hilarious," said Howard. "Oh, God, it was so fun. I met a whole bunch of new people —

athletes, non-athletes, people from the neighborhood ... I had a blast."

One major goal of the team is to get everyone on campus involved, bridging the divide between athletes and non-athletes.

"You always hear the negatives about athletes," said Head Women's Softball coach Dennis Shores. "You always hear when they get in trouble, but you don't hear the good things about them."

"We're trying to ... shed the light on what college athletes are all about."

Some of the team members also stressed the importance of including the entire campus.

"I think we just wanted to focus on getting more of the community at Guilford — non-athletes — involved," said junior Morgan Myers.

Senior Sarah Cutright said that the team is doing as much as possible to get the community to participate.

"Yes, (Relay for Life) is sponsored by the softball team, but at the same time we want community involvement in helping to run it and organize it and to actually be at this event," said Cutright. "Any way we can get the community out really right now is how we want to do it."

High hopes remain for the upcoming relay, especially after last year's success. In 2012, the softball team helped raise around \$9,000, and more than 200 people attended.

The goal for May is to double the amount of money raised last year by including as many people as possible.

"Cancer strikes everybody in one form or another, whether it's a parent, a sibling, a relative, a close friend," said Shores. "At some point in time in your life, you'll be touched with it, so it's really a good thing to get involved in."

Even before beginning its work with Relay, the softball team worked to raise money for the American Cancer Society.

"We've historically done a 'Score for the Cure' game to fight breast cancer, and I contacted the American Cancer Society to ask them, 'What else can we do?'" said Shores. "Their initial comment was, 'Well, there's Relay for Life.'"

Shores may have initiated the effort, but the team members have taken over.

"We all decided ... that this is a pretty good cause," said Howard. "We have so many people on our team that can reach out in the community. We thought that, with our resources, we could do it."