

Rutgers: drawing the line between coaching, abuse

BY HANNAH WALLER
STAFF WRITER

Four months. Over 23 games. Somewhere between 50 and 100 practices. That's how long it took for Rutgers University to fire Men's Basketball Head Coach Mike Rice after learning of Rice's abusive behavior towards his players.

In Dec. 2012, the university discovered video footage showing Rice abusing his players, resulting in Rice's three-game suspension and a \$50,000 fine. Rutgers Athletic Director Tim Perneti announced that Rice would also be attending anger management classes. On April 2, 2013, ESPN aired the same video footage. One day later, Rice was fired.

The clips showed Rice shoving, grabbing, verbally abusing and throwing basketballs at Rutgers basketball players during practices. The verbal abuse revealed offensive language such as homophobic slurs.

To many, Rice's coaching strategies crossed the line. However, there are often situations in which that line between intense coaching and abuse is harder to draw.

"It can be difficult to motivate players today," said Guilford College Head Women's Basketball Coach Stephanie Flamini in an email interview.

Flamini and Guilford Athletic Director and Head Men's Basketball Coach Tom Palombo try to find more positive ways to motivate the athletes they coach.

"It helps that we have won two ODAC championships, and they have gotten to experience the sense of accomplishment and self-pride," Flamini said. "So, we draw on that."

"The days of Bobby Knight and all that are gone," Palombo said. "You have to get to know your players and what motivates them."

Abusive coaching practices that use tactics like shaming can have lasting negative effects on young athletes.

"Producing cognitive, emotional and physical effects, shame changes the neural circuits of the brain," reported Psychology Today. "These neural changes can hold a young

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Richard Rogers, senior

person in a state of both active defense (ready to fight) and helplessness."

Senior Richard Rogers, a member of Guilford's track and field team, grew up dealing with different aspects of sports.

"If you show fear, if you cry, if you don't like getting hit or hurt, they say that you're a wuss — 'don't be a girl, suck it up, be a man,'" Rogers said. "Growing up with that ... as an athlete, you kind of put that on yourself."

"You make yourself feel awful about it, because they are degrading you to a point where you have to force yourself to take that extra step, so that it will stop and you will start getting respect."

Some players on the Rutgers men's basketball team have said that they did not consider Rice's behavior to be abusive. Rutgers junior and basketball player Wally Judge, who transferred in from Kansas State, did not find Rice's language to be "inappropriate" and overall thought that practices at Kansas State were tougher, reported ESPN. Other players also felt that Rice did not cross the line.

However, Judge's statement — that practices at Kansas State were harder than those at Rutgers — does raise questions about how common this kind of treatment of student athletes really is, and how often it gets swept under the rug or goes unchanged.

"I've had many coaches who thought that kind of a route was necessary," Rogers said.

He recalled a Pop Warner football practice where one player had knocked out another's tooth.

"(The coach) had the kid's tooth in his hand, and he was showing it to the team, like, 'If you don't give into pain, if you don't care that your tooth is knocked out, or that you break your bones, and you still play, then you are worthy of being on this field,'" Rogers said. Rogers and his team members were nine and 10 years old at the time.

Some hope that the number of scandals involving abuses of power by athletics coaches in educational institutions will bring a closer look at the pressure put on young athletes.

"This isn't the military," Rogers said. "This is sports. This is entertainment. This isn't a life-or-death situation."

SPRING TENNIS

Diary of a women's tennis captain

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"Fighting weather has been hard," said Assistant Tennis Coach Mark Lapiere. "It's difficult to get into a good routine."

The weather wasn't the only thing that our team had to struggle through this season.

"We have seven ladies that all peaked at different times," said Lapiere. "We are better than our record shows."

Sophomore Allison Hewitt reflected on one of her own personal disappointments during the season.

"There was the indoor match earlier in the season against Randolph Macon," said Hewitt. "I should have won that match, but I'm proud it went into three sets."

Though this season's record is discouraging, there were some definite positives that illuminated our team's efficiency.

"Seeing myself improve has been really good," said first-year Leah Meservey. "I can remember how I was at the beginning of the season."

After adapting to her first year, Meservey feels right at home. She has high hopes of continuing her track record for improvement on and off the court.

"Being with people that have something in common with me is one of my favorite parts," said Meservey. "It builds an important community, and I like the feeling of being a part of the team."

Even the girls who did not get to play

on a regular basis added to our team dynamic. Junior Madisen Forehand, true to her last name, has a wicked forehand.

Coaching for over 40 years, Head Men's and Women's Tennis Coach David McCain has seen it all, and he knows the ingredients for a successful team.

"You have got to have a good balance of personalities," said McCain. "Having mutual goals is important as well as wanting to be involved in the team."

It is exactly this mix of personalities that worked together to make our team unique — from first-year Allie Guy yelling token phrases like "Ain't nobody got time for that!" or "Work it, girl!" during practice, to junior Natalie Sutton, also known as my phenomenal doubles partner and co-captain, twerking on the fences of our courts. There's never been a dull moment on our team.

Sitting on the court and watching sophomore Haley Andrews put her heart and soul into her match reminded me that winning isn't everything, it's how you play the game. Even though Andrews did not win her match, the whole team circled around in true Quaker fashion, clapping and showing our support and appreciation of her efforts.

"I'm glad I met everyone here," said first-year Fernanda Gonzalez. "I probably would never have gotten to know so many of us if it hadn't been for tennis."

Love the game or hate the game, but at the end of the day, it's my teammates who've made the sunburns worth it.

Who will be number one in the NFL draft?

BY JOHN KLUPEL
STAFF WRITER

With the first selection in the 2013 NFL Draft, who will the Kansas City Chiefs pick? The general consensus is Texas A&M's Luke Joeckel, the offensive lineman who protected Johnny Manziel during his 2012 Heisman campaign and Ryan Tannehill in 2011.

The draft is deep at offensive and defensive linemen. The 2013 class is not built around the quarterback position like last year's draft. West Virginia's quarterback Geno Smith may be the only first-round lock at the position.

"There's not really a big marquee name," said senior Howard Hurt in an email interview. "The best pick in this draft in the future will probably be some sort of lineman or someone that doesn't receive much attention."

The Kansas City Chiefs finished with the league's worst record in 2012, earning the first pick. Their future looks bright after signing former Philadelphia Eagles Head Coach Andy Reid and possibly adding Joeckel to help protect Alex Smith.

"Joeckel will be a gem," said junior O'Shawn Bryant. "He is

gonna be a beast."

The Jacksonville Jaguars hold the second pick. The Jags need to strengthen their defense, which is why I have them selecting Ezekiel Ansah out of Brigham Young University. Ansah possesses crazy speed, long arms and strength. Ansah is raw but has the potential to anchor the Jags' defense for years to come.

The Oakland Raiders are rebuilding with the third pick. Their linebacker corps took a hit when they lost linebacker Phillip Wheeler to the Miami Dolphins, but if they select Oregon's Dion Jordan, it will help ease the pain. Jordan is no sure thing, but he can rush the quarterback, forcing sacks and turnovers.

Many believe Jordan will be a bust, due to his inconsistencies.

"Oregon linebackers don't have a great history of turning out in the NFL," said Bryant. "They're all based on speed but not strength."

After a disappointing 2012 season, the Philadelphia Eagles' new head coach Chip Kelly will hopefully use the fourth pick to incorporate his fast-paced offense. The key to the zone-read offense is a mobile quarterback that can make quick decisions, which is why I have the Eagles taking Geno Smith.

"Smith had these incredible moments when he dominated games and then these moments when he fell apart," said Coy. "He has all the physical attributes that you'd want. The question is whether he can transfer those skills to an NFL offense"

Offensive tackle Jeff Bacus retired, which leaves a gaping hole for the Detroit Lions at the fifth pick. Central Michigan's offensive tackle Eric Fisher is the safest choice for protecting quarterback Matt Stafford. Many scouts have pegged Fisher above Joeckel, and Detroit would be thrilled to see Fisher drop to five.

The 2013 NFL draft lacks the polarizing superstars and quarterback prowess of last year with Andrew Luck, Robert Griffin III, Russell Wilson and Ryan Tannehill, but this year's draft is deep with talent. Last year, the teams who drafted first, second and fourth all went from bottom feeder teams to the playoffs. The Chiefs, Jaguars and Eagles will look to continue the trend.

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