

## Freeman returns to court, sets example for her team

BY ANNA OATES  
STAFF WRITER

"Brittany Freeman is the ideal student athlete for Guilford," said head volleyball coach Emily Gann.

The 5'11" senior outside hitter is considered a star on and off the court by her coaches and teammates.

"She gets involved in things other than athletics, but she's still very committed," Gann said. "She's figured out how to be both a student and an athlete successfully."

When it was time to decide her college path, Freeman decided on a different route than that of most successful high school athletes.

"I come from competitive volleyball up in the Asheville area, so I probably could have gone for the first or second division schools," Freeman said. "But I chose Guilford because they value academics over athletics."

Freeman played as a first-year at Guilford, but after her sophomore campaign, she decided to take a break from athletics.

"At the time, I wanted to focus on school and the culture," Freeman said. "I needed time to adjust to the school."

And the choice seemed to pay off. Freeman will graduate in December with a double major in history and political science.

As her senior year rolled around, she yearned to show her talents on the court once again.

"This was my first year playing with Freeman," said sophomore teammate Marinda Popp. "I had a great experience with her."

"She's a real team player. When we aren't doing drills, we're all hanging out and having fun."

Freeman proved to teammates that she could be trusted when it was time to perform as a teammate and friend.

"I've never played with anyone like her before," said sophomore Maile Munro. "I think it's brought a new level to my game and a new understanding to how teammates should act."

During the offseason, Freeman voluntarily practiced with the team for hours during the week.

"I said to her, 'You want to help, why wouldn't you want to play?'" Gann said.

Freeman said she was worried about fitting back in with the team, which turned out to be the least of her problems.

"This group of girls encourages me to be who I am and



EILEEN MARTIN/GUILDFORDIAN

Senior outside hitter **Brittany Freeman** is an integral part of the volleyball team and well-respected by teammates and coaches.

play how I play," said Freeman. "They accept this slight abrasiveness I have, and I enjoy them outside the court."

"I never played on a team of girls who are as kind and accepting."

And she was not just accepted but also admired by her team.

"It's actually inspiring to hear her talk about leaving and finding the passion, strength and will to come back," said Munro.

Freeman said it was not just the team who had developed.

"I've changed a lot in two years," said Freeman. "I coached and learned some more aspects of being a team player and not just a star player."

"Plus, I'm 22, and I'm married now."

But does that make a difference on the court?

"It's like, 'Brittany, girl, you're still just like us,'" said Munro. "We're all sprinting for the ball."

## Intramural sports lets students practice, gain experience without pressure

BY CHRISTIANNA VAN DALSEN  
STAFF WRITER

Intramural sports allow Guilford College students to unite under the same goal: to play as hard as they can and have fun doing it. And who knows? You might just reap some unexpected rewards.

Take senior defender Jovanni Catalan for example. Catalan played intramural soccer for three years before he made the varsity men's soccer team.

"The guys knew him and said I should put him on the field, and I'd seen him play," said head men's soccer coach Jeff Bateson. "He has great work ethic. He always kept playing ... and got better by playing in leagues and intramural sports."

Even if you are not shooting for the big

leagues, intramural sports might just be for you. Experience, gender, year, major: none of it matters.

"It's a program that the whole student body can get involved with," said senior and Assistant Director of Intramural Sports Ryan Phillips. "Some people have been playing their entire lives, and others have never played before."

Anyone can experience the benefits intramural sports offers.

"It gives students a way to work in teams and have fun while getting a chance to exercise," said Assistant Director for Student Leadership and Engagement Emily Lott. "We really focus on the learning aspect and having fun."

If you are intimidated by the time commitment, do not be. Games are only

once a week.

Practice? We talking about practice. Individual teams may decide to have practices, but they are not a requirement.

What about the competition? Intramurals are not like club sports that compete against other schools. You never have to leave your stomping ground.

Do not let fear hold you back. You may evolve from some of the new experiences intramural sports could offer.

"I went in expecting to play a position I used to, like striker or an offensive position, and I wound up playing goalie," said first-year intramural soccer player Simon McLane. "I definitely grew from the experience, though. It was kind of frustrating at first (while) learning — but then I really came to enjoy it."

Soccer and flag football are coming to a wrap as winter approaches. Look forward to spring when students hit the court for volleyball and basketball.

Basketball has the highest participation of all the sports offered, but not so much among the ladies.

"They don't usually have a lot of girls on the team, so they asked me to participate," said sophomore Cassie Vaughn. "Also, I've always been interested in playing but never had the chance to. With intramural sports, you can do something you wanted to do in high school or in life but never could, and still be competitive but not intense."

Sports, friends and easygoing fun: what more could you ask for? All you need is two things to get in the game: an insurance waiver and a copy of your insurance card.

