

Guilford rugby clubs: more than meets the black eye

BY QUINCY MALESOVAS
STAFF WRITER

Do you have any friends who are hookers?
What about flankers?

If your answer is no, then you probably are unfamiliar with the Guilford College rugby teams.

For those who do not play the sport, rugby may seem like an enigma. The most common assumptions are that it is rough and something like football.

"I would not describe myself or any of my teammates as violent by any means," said sophomore player Danni Lawrence-Cohen in an email interview. "In fact, I would say the exact opposite."

Senior player Richard Adamson wholeheartedly agrees.

"Rugby is known as 'a gentleman's sport' in most countries where it's played," said Adamson. "Even though the game can be rough, it's also supposed to be a supportive, encouraging environment where both teams can lend a hand."

The Guilford rugby players say their passion for the sport is due to the camaraderie that it provides.

"Your team always has your back," said senior women's rugby president A.C. Canup, who goes by the name



The women's team does a line-outs during a practice.



Rugby player **Jerone Holman '18** passes to **Collin Gendron '16** as part of a running drill during practice on Haworth Field.

"Sheriff Sweetie" on the field.

"It is a crucial part of the sport, and it translates into everyday life."

The women's team is not the only one with a focus on fellowship.

"I have to say that everything I did rugby related ... was the reason my sophomore year was so much better than my freshman year," said senior player Brandon "Swag" Wagstaff.

Along with the bonds that are formed, there is a strong sense of acceptance within the rugby community, both on and off campus.

"As with much of Guilford, we come from different backgrounds, we have a wealth of personalities and we all have many differing interests outside of rugby," said senior player Jennifer Riddle in an email interview.

"But we also have a diversity in shape and size. As we like to say, every body is a rugby body."

This standard of acceptance is constant in the professional ranks as well.

Professional Australian rugger Ian Roberts came out as gay in 1995 and -- even as the first publicly "out" player in the world -- was met with great encouragement.

"In the 20 years since I played with the Rabbitohs I've never felt any serious sense of homophobia," Roberts said in an interview with The Australian.

More recently, British player Gareth "Alfie" Thomas came out as well and received high praise.

In fact, Thomas received Stonewall's Hero of the Year Award shortly after the announcement.

Guilford ruggers hope that rugby's tolerant culture will attract new members in the same way it attracted them. The men's team advertise themselves as an "all-inclusive organization on campus for players of all skill levels and

sizes" on their Facebook page.

The rugby teams encourage everyone to come out to games and practices, regardless of interest or experience.

"Rugby is not the sort of sport you hear about or see unless you are really looking for it," said sophomore player Ruby Wyatt in an email interview.

"Everyone on the team started as a beginner so we all know what's it is like and are really good at teaching."

The rugby team recruits year-round and is always looking for support. Men's and women's practices are every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 4 - 6 p.m. at Haworth field. For even more rugby action, Canup advised getting ready for the 2016 Olympics, where rugby will be an event.

Upcoming Rugby Games

WOMEN'S:
SAT. 20 - 11 A.M.
VS. UNCW
HAWORTH FIELD

MEN'S:
SAT. 27 - 2 P.M.
@ WINGATE UNIVERSITY

INSIDE SPORTS

First-year athlete profiles



BY LILY LOU
STAFF WRITER

NFL mishandled Rice issue



BY LANDON FRIED
STAFF WRITER

SPORTS EVENTS

September

1 2 3

MEN'S GOLF

Sept. 21 - 22
Championship Preview
Armfield Athletic Center

MEN'S SOCCER

Sept. 24 @ 7 p.m.
vs. Hampden-Sydney
Armfield Athletic Center

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Sept. 24 @ 4:30 p.m.
vs. Randolph
Armfield Athletic Center

VOLLEYBALL

Sept. 24 @ 7 p.m.
vs. Bridgewater
Ragan-Brown Fieldhouse