

SPORTS

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Baseball underdogs ready for season

BY WILLIAM BURTON
STAFF WRITER

As the weather makes its shift to spring, with warm temperatures on the horizon, the baseball team is getting ready to get into full swing. The Guilford College 2015 baseball season began on Feb. 6 down in Mount Berry, Georgia, at Berry College. With this comes a lot of excitement and support for the guys on the team from the Guilford Family.

This season, the Quakers were ranked ninth in the annual preseason ODAC poll. This ranking is something the Quakers hope to use as a motivation to start their season.

"We don't really look into the preseason rankings," said first-year pitcher Carter Hicks in an email interview. "Ultimately, the rankings that matter are the ones that are published at the end of the year, and we are ready to show what we can do."

This appears to be a common consensus among the baseball team.

"I actually don't mind that we were only ranked ninth," said junior catcher Nathan Fulbright in an email interview. "This way everyone in the ODAC will underestimate our willingness to win."

"As a team, it fuels a fire within us to go out to prove everyone wrong."

In 2013, Fulbright was a third-team All-ODAC selection, and he is statistically the second best returning hitter for the team.

This confidence is something the players not only have in themselves but in the team as a whole. It is contagious among the team, from players to coaches.

"I feel good about the team this year," said head coach Nick Black in an email interview. "It is a group of guys that work extremely hard and grind things out."

"They are a close knit group and have each other's backs no matter what the situation."

Team chemistry is extremely important to the success of any team. This team appears to have that chemistry that is needed to win.

"We are very excited about this year," said Fulbright. "We have a good squad that believes in one another's ability, which I think will lead to success on the field."

Last season, the Quakers went 19-20 overall and 9-11 in



Guilford's baseball team practiced at McBane Field last week to prepare for the start of the 2015 season, which began on Feb. 6.

the conference. The Quakers are returning five starters from that team—three fielders, two pitchers. One of these players is senior outfielder Herc Ingles is the team's returning leading hitter who hit for a .333 batting average with 7 doubles and 16 RBIs.

Senior Drew Crawford appears to be Guilford's go-to ace this season. Last season, he recorded a 5.51 ERA and 21 strikeouts in 49 innings. Seniors Justin Morrison and Avery Rodgers are two key returning relief pitchers that plan on making an even bigger impact this season.

The team also hopes to translate their off field success in the classroom to the diamond. These guys have worked really hard to manage their time and to balance their studies with their athletics.

This hard work and dedication are two concepts that Hicks said that he has learned from being a student athlete.

"The hardest part about being a student athlete is the fact that you must handle the same things all other students deal with," said Hicks. "It is a very rewarding experience but definitely not easy."

This baseball season will be an exciting one for not only the coaches and players, but for the fans as well. As the players look forward to proving themselves in the ODAC, the fans look forward to cheering them on this season.

"We need to play solid defense, score runs and pitch well to be successful this season," said Fulbright. "If we do all the little things on the field, then we believe it will transfer to wins and being able to reach our goals as a program."

Black History MONTH 2015

Contact mrc@guilford.edu to register for the All Black Everything Symposium

15 SUNDAY
Movie Night
6 p.m. King Hall 127
Contact bus@guilford.edu for details

16 MONDAY
Mosaic Leadership Series
Featuring: Senator Floyd B. McKissick, Jr. & Floyd B. McKissick, III '04
5:30 p.m.-7 p.m.
Gilmer Room of Cafeteria - Founders Hall

18 WEDNESDAY
Brothers and Sisters in Blackness Welcome Back Kick Back - Activism
4:30 p.m.-6 p.m.
King Hall 127

19-21 FRIDAY-SUNDAY
Atlanta Civil Rights Tour
Atlanta, Georgia
Contact mrc@guilford.edu to sign up

25 WEDNESDAY
The Who Is Black?
Panel Discussion Power, Colorism & Identity
6 p.m.-8 p.m.
Joseph M. Bryan Jr. Auditorium

27 FRIDAY
All Black Everything Symposium
Featuring: Sudie Nallo, professor of social work at the University of South Carolina
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Joseph M. Bryan Jr. Auditorium

28 SATURDAY
Brothers and Sisters in Blackness Caribbean Dance Party
Time To Be Announced
Community Center

7 SATURDAY (MARCH)
Our City Tour: Civil Rights & Mural Tour of Greensboro
Only 75 seats available
Contact mrc@guilford.edu to sign up