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Rugby players ruck through rainy season



COURTESY OF ZACHARY MORGAN, JR.

BY BRIANNA PARKER
STAFF WRITER

Scrum. Tackle. Ruck. Hooker. Prop. Knock-on. No, this is not a random string of words. These are rugby terms.

If you have never heard those terms before, it is okay — many people have not. But for the men's and women's rugby teams, they are an important part of a game they love, a game that brings people together not just on the field but as a community.

The rugby clubs have had a strange season this semester. Many games were rained out, so neither team played more than three contests all semester.

"We won our first game, so that was awesome, and that got us pumped," said senior Amanda Wimer. "A lot of the teams that we usually play in the area are dropping out because they don't have enough players, so we didn't play a lot this semester."

Senior Becca Bacewicz said that they played four games the whole school year and won three of them.

"We've won more than the men's team," said Bacewicz. "You should put that in the article."

"This semester was very interesting especially when it came to the weather," said senior men's team president Brandon Wagstaff. "We had many home games, but it rained so much that we only played two, and we lost both of them."

"A lot of our newer guys weren't able to really experience rugby through the game."

Wagstaff said that the key to performing better next year is recruitment. New rugby players, known as ruglets, are prized members of the rugby teams. Since rugby is a relatively unknown sport and people do not know much about it, recruiting ruglets can be difficult.

"A lot of our players are seniors this year, so a lot of the team is leaving," said Wagstaff. "It's up to the younger guys to step up. Hopefully, they will do a good job recruiting new players."

"Sometimes it's hard to recruit for rugby because people get scared. They think of it as football without pads, which can be intimidating."

The women's team did well with recruitment this year, bringing in many new faces. Because many scheduled games were rained out, the more experienced team members decided to take this semester to really educate the ruglets on the ins-and-outs of rugby.

"We love the ruglets, we absolutely do," said Wimer. "Teaching them how to tackle is my favorite because the first thing they want to do is hug you around the waist to bring you down, which really doesn't work. So, the first thing we teach them is how to bring someone down around the knees."

"Once they learn how to tackle, they fall in love with the sport."

Many players' favorite part of rugby, besides the tackling of course, has nothing to do with being on the field. The best thing about rugby is just being on the team.

"I love the team," said senior A.C. Canup.



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(Top) The men's rugby team circles up before a game against Wingate University earlier this season. (Bottom) Danielle Lawrence-Cohen '17 and Becca Bacewicz '15 run drills at practice.

"The team is where it's at. You just gain this family of people who have your back and like you for you and needs you for you because everyone has their own use. That goes for not only on the field but off the field because everyone has their own job in the friend group."

"I love how it's very team oriented," Wagstaff

said of the game. "That's one of the things that really got me into it. You have to rely on others to succeed. Rugby is all about supporting your teammates."

"It is a club sport. We aren't here to win championships or anything; we're here to have fun."

2015 English Award recipients embody excellence

BY WILLIAM BURTON
STAFF WRITER

An annual tradition for Guilford College athletics is the presentation of the English Awards. It is the most prestigious award given to athletes that excel not only in their respective sports but in the classroom and in their communities. These recipients are leaders on and off the field, and they are prime examples of what it means to be a student-athlete.

The English Award is named after Nereus C. English and was originally an athletic scholarship given to students.

"It was designed to recognize the top student-athletes in the athletics department for their leadership, their scholarship and their overall ability," said Sports Information Director and Assistant Athletics Director Dave Walters.

Since Guilford is a Division III school, athletic scholarships are not given. However, the English Award remains a top honor for student athletes at Guilford.

Six student athletes were named as English Award recipients for the 2014-15 seasons, the highest number in several years. The recipients include senior Andris Goncarvos for track and field, senior Eleanora Keene for women's lacrosse, senior Matt McCarthy for men's basketball, senior Turner Votipka for tennis, junior Matt Pawlowski for football and senior Drew Thompson for golf.

All of these student-athletes were nominated and then selected by members of the athletics department to receive the award.

"I was very honored and did not expect to receive the award at all," said Keene.

"It's a great honor, especially being named with those other kids who have won," said McCarthy. "I know that they are great athletes and great people so to be in the same category as them; that is also a great honor."

The student-athletes also gave credit to having great team members as one of the reasons for their success in their sports.

"A lot of the guys work really hard on their own too, and I think I have just been blessed with a good team," said Votipka.

The recipients' coaches saw leadership abilities earlier in their athletic careers.

"(Turner) showed leadership skills, and he would take over and do things," said head tennis coach David McCain. "I look for smart guys; guys that are reliable and can follow orders. I knew early that he would be a team captain, and he's been a really good one."

A great work ethic is something that was consistent among English Award winners. This year's student-athletes worked extremely hard in their sports and in the classroom to be successful.

"(Andris) will do anything we ask," said head cross-country and track and field coach Danny Cash. "He does multiple events at races to help out. On training days he does his workout and then comes back and helps with other team members."

The athletes are an excellent example of what it means to be a student-athlete at Guilford College.

"(Andris) is just a really genuine human being and a great representation of what an athlete can be here at Guilford," said assistant cross-country and track and field coach Kimberly Cash.

These student athletes also work hard in the classroom to maintain good grades. It is not easy, but they work to make it happen.

"(Balancing school work and athletics) is definitely a grind," said McCarthy. "But the coaches do a good job of making us go to study hall and having time set aside so that we get our work done before or after practice."

Matt Pawlowski was the only non-senior to receive the English award this year. As a junior, unlike the other award recipients, Pawlowski still leads by example in everything he does.

"When I look at leadership, I look at leadership as a big picture not just on the football field but also off the football field," said head football coach Chris Rusiewicz. "(Matt) puts in the work, in terms of the mental part of the game as well as the physical part of the game, to prepare himself to play."

The English Award winners this year worked not only extremely hard in their respective sports but outside of their sports as well. They have gone above and beyond what is expected, truly demonstrating what it means to be a student-athlete.

"This the highest honor that the department bestows upon its student athletes," said Walters. "The folks who are recognized this year join a very impressive legacy."