

# SPORTS

## Student athletes face same academic challenges as others — plus more

Stephanie Douthit  
ARGUS STAFF

Student-athletes receive scholarships, public recognition, travel to various places around the country, a full athletic wardrobe, and more. But athletic participation may not be as glamorous as many perceive it to be.

Winston-Salem State athletes have had many changes and adjustments to their lifestyles.

"It is much harder in college to be a student and an athlete. Not only do we practice every day and sometimes play three times in a week, but we also do homework, prepare for tests and make time for a social life," said Leslie Hollis, shortstop for the Rams softball team.

Athletes not only have academic responsibilities, but they also spend countless hours outside the

classroom doing various activities in their respective sports. For example, many athletic teams return early to campus to begin pre-season conditioning.

The volleyball team arrives two weeks prior to the start of classes to begin pre-season conditioning. The daily schedule consists of 6 a.m. conditioning, noon workouts, and 3 p.m. court practices.

During the season, morning sessions are completed as needed, either at 5 or 6 a.m. Next, players go to their daily classes, and there is evening court practice from 4 to 7 p.m. Following practice is a mandatory study hall from 8 to 10 p.m. In addition, meetings, video review, and treatment of injuries take place in between these activities.

Lastly, the team travels to and from various universities in athletic competition, and when schedul-

ing permits, the team does community service work.

If that is not enough, WSSU athletes have to follow all the same university rules and regulations as other students, as well as team rules and, ultimately, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules. All of these rules and regulations can become stressful to student-athletes.

"One has to remember what one can and cannot do, such as eating or drinking medicines or fluids that may have illegal substances; and sometimes, even normal extracurricular activities that most college students can participate in are frowned on by the NCAA," said Andrew Jones, who plays tennis at WSSU.

By following these rules and regulations, athletes make many changes in order to maintain a scholarship and team membership.

NCAA rules are the governing

rules for collegiate athletic participation. Some of the mandated requirements by the NCAA include a certain percentage of progress toward graduation every academic year, and athletes are limited to four years of athletic competition and aid.

For example, a regular student goes out and returns to his or her dorm intoxicated at 4 a.m. and does not awaken for class the next day. This is an individual problem. However, when an athlete takes these types of actions, he or she can be suspended for a few games or suspended indefinitely.

The role of the NCAA and others such as coaches is tremendous in the lives of athletes. Sophomore quarterback Jarrett Dunston says other sources of pressure include "peers, the media, and the pursuit of winning."



Photo by

Student-athletes must juggle academics and athletics.

## Valentina Pushkina works hard on and off the court

Stephanie Douthit  
ARGUS STAFF

She is a tall, lanky, campus standout with a passion for fashion, graphic design and volleyball. She also enjoys art in general and designing and making clothing. She is a quiet and reserved person but gains a lot of campus attention.

Valentina Pushkina is a junior from Moscow, Russia, majoring in graphic design. As a member of the Rams' volleyball team, Val is a team utility; she often plays in many positions.

Since her arrival in fall 2005, many people on campus have wondered why or how she got to Winston-Salem State. *The News Argus* wanted to tell her story and reveal the mystery of who she is and where she came from.

**Q. How did you get to WSSU?**

A. I have played volleyball for 12 years, and my coach made a resume on me and put it online. There is an office in Moscow that places Russian athletes in American universities. Coach Gray, WSSU former volleyball coach, was searching for

international athletes and she came across my profile. She contacted me and we communicated for about a year before my arrival.

**Q. Were you recruited by any other universities?**

A. Yes, I had other choices but I would have had to pass English proficiency tests and I did not know English at all.

**Q. When you arrived in 2005, you had to be in culture shock. What were your biggest adjustments?**

A. I was not scared about being in a new place; I was very excited to be coming to the U.S. I have wanted to come to the U.S. for a long time. Therefore, if I were to get lost in New York from my flight or whatever, I was just happy to be in the U.S.

Food was one of the adjustments I had to endure. I did not know what many of the foods were, and when people tried to explain them to me I didn't understand; therefore, I had to try everything. The biggest adjustment was taking classes. I would be sitting in a lecture and I would not understand any-

thing they were saying. The professors were very helpful, which allowed me to pass my classes. Playing on the volleyball team was another adjustment. I had been used to playing with the same people for most of years I played volleyball in Moscow.

**Q. Why did you want to study in the United States?**

A. In Russia, a U.S. degree is really good and you have experience in language and travel. English language is key in communicating with others; by coming here I was not just learning certain words and phrases, I was communicating with other English-speaking people. It is also easy to obtain a job in Moscow with the English language and my degree.

**Q. What are your career goals after you graduate?**

A. I want to go back to Moscow and get a master's degree in fashion design.

**Q. Describe your hometown ... How's the food and social life?**

A. Moscow is similar to New York. Everyone lives in an apartment, even rich

people. It is really expensive to get an apartment in Moscow. Many people have a house out of town which has gardens, etc. ... There are a lot of parks and museums in Moscow, and lots of public entertainment places.

Food in Moscow: A typical meal includes wheat sandwiches and oatmeal for breakfast, a large lunch of soup, meat with rice or potatoes or macaroni, and salad, and at dinner there is some kind of meat, macaroni, and rice.

Social life: I am a night person; I like to go somewhere evenings and nighttime. I go to clubs, water parks, museums, and casually walk around because it is a beautiful city.

**Q. Any advice to future international students?**

A. Don't be scared of miscommunication because it will take only a short time to adjust. Have fun and enjoy the experience.

*The Rams volleyball team will face its MEAC opponents in the final home match of the season at 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 8, against Campbell University.*

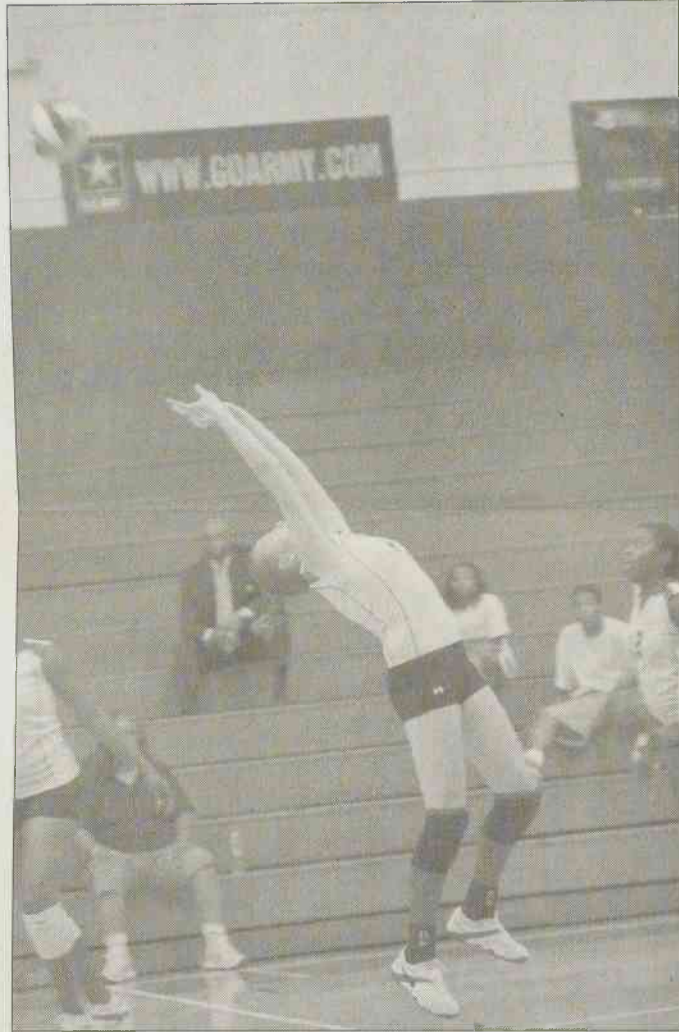


Photo by Garrett Garms

In less than two years, Russian native Valentina Pushkina has adjusted to life in Winston-Salem.

## Rams come full circle in Indy

Steven J. Gaither  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Faced with a fourth-and-one at their own 38-yard line with less than three minutes to go in the fourth quarter, Winston-Salem State head coach Kermit Blount called a timeout. After the Rams broke the huddle, running back Jed Bines broke through a hole in Florida A&M's defense for a three yard game that essentially clinched the Ram's 27-23 victory in the Circle City Classic.

What remains a mystery to the fans, as well as the coaches and the players, is who was calling for what play during the break.

"It was back and forth on what play we were gonna run," said Purvis. "The O-line felt like we could do one play, coach Calcutta felt like we could do another play, coach Blount felt like we could do another play, then I had something to say."

Blount didn't remember the huddle quite the same way. When asked if there were any dissenting opinions in the huddle he said there weren't any that he could remember.

"We had to take that chance, that was a call that I had to make," said Blount.

Whatever the discussion was that took place in the huddle, everyone on the Rams' side was satisfied with the results.

"The play we called worked," said Purvis.

Purvis, coming off the best passing performance of his career the previous week against Howard, completed only 4 of 10 passes for 17 yards. Purvis did most of his damage against the Rattlers on the ground, weaving through FAMU defenders for 89 yards and a touchdown.

Jed Bines, who was voted the Rams offensive MVP, rushed for a game-high 126 yards and also added three touchdowns. Reserve running back Rodrick Fluellen added 82 yards as the Rams gained nearly 300 yards on the ground.

The Rams were able to jump out to an early 14-point lead in the first half as they capitalized of FAMU's mistakes. Jamaine Mack's fumble recovery on the Rattler's 1-yard line set up Purvis' rushing touchdown in the first quarter. In the second quarter, defensive-lineman Michael Moore recovered the Rattler's bumbled snap deep in their own territory and eight plays later Jed Bines found the endzone from one-yard out, and the two point conversion gave the Rams a 14-0 lead. The Rattlers were able to cut into the lead when Wesley Taylor's 46-yard field goal split the uprights as time expired in the first half.

The Rattlers came out hot in the second half, scoring on their first play from scrimmage as Anthony Edwards scored from 18-yards out. FAMU struck again when Taylor connected on another field goal, this

time from 44-yards out, cutting the Rams lead 14-13 heading into the fourth quarter.

Each time the Rattlers got within striking distance, the Rams answered. WSSU found the endzone on their first drive of the fourth quarter when Bines scored his second touchdown from 8 yards out. However, freshman kicker Matt Miler had his extra-point attempted blocked for the second time, making the score 20-13 and leaving the door open for the Rattlers to creep back in the game.

FAMU responded by going on a six-play, 60-yard drive that culminated in a nine-yard touchdown by Philly Sylvester, and tied the game at 20 with the extra point.

WSSU responded with 76-yard scoring drive, capped off by Bines' third touchdown of the afternoon. Taylor hit yet another field goal attempt, bringing the score to 27-23 before Bines' three-yard gain effectively ended the game.

WSSU defensive end William Hayes had 10 tackles and two sacks on the day, a week after missing the Howard game for disciplinary reasons. Michael McMillian led FAMU with 12 tackles and two sacks.

The game was played in the RCA Dome in Indianapolis on Oct. 6 in front of more than 42,000 fans.

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