

Systematic or superstitious

Athletes begin each game day with the same ritual

Kristina Foster
Reporter

Imagine your team is fresh off a losing slump and looking to continue a winning streak. You're facing a top-ranked opponent, Clemson University. In times like this Elon's baseball team pulls out "Rally Sam," a lucky Gatorade cup wrapped in sports tape with its name written in marker. This good luck charm, according to numerous baseball players, helped the team come back 11 runs to defeat Clemson.

Superstitions such as "Rally Sam" and pre-game rituals are a tradition in sports that some athletes are keeping alive, while others have dismissed them as complete nonsense. Along with the baseball team's good luck charm, freshman center fielder Drew Davis has pre-game rituals involving sandwiches from Arby's.

"Every time I eat an Arby's super roast beef, I hit a double," said Davis.

Elon football's senior defensive end, Wesley Wheeler, has an extensive pre-game ritual. It begins with him eating three pancakes or pieces of French toast and one piece of chicken and a roll, if Harden is serving any that day. Then he tends to some personal matters before putting his pads in his pants.

"Same pads in the same spot every time," said Wheeler.

Next he gets his ankles taped and then goes to his locker, puts his jersey over his head and takes a nap. Finally, he attends a team meeting and gets his wrists taped. Along with his pre-game routine, he also wears rubber bands on his wrists.

"[I'll] never take them off unless they break or fall off," said Wheeler.

His teammate, junior linebacker Mike

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Every game I have to have gum. Two pieces. One for the first half and one for the second.
—Kerry McCarren, sophomore
”

Warren, chooses the silent routine when it comes to rituals.

"I listen to my headphones, walk around the field and don't talk to anyone," said Warren.

The women's soccer team has a handful of superstitions. For most of the female players it's all about routine.

"Every game I have to have gum," said sophomore forward Kerry McCarren. "Two pieces. One for the first half and one for the second."

Sophomore defender Lacey Whitmer has to tie her right cleat first and wears the same sports bra for every game. Fellow defender junior Erin Gaeng has a similar superstition except for one slight difference.

"I wear the same underwear," said Gaeng with a laugh.

The men's soccer team has a full team huddle before every game and then a starting team huddle on the field.

However, the only prominent superstition is junior goalkeeper Kyle Ostendorf and his T-shirt. "I've worn the same T-shirt under my jersey since freshman year of high school," said Ostendorf.

Cross country isn't much for superstitions and rituals, according to sophomore Alana Black.

"The night before a meet we all have dinner together," said Black.

However, when it comes to her own beliefs she said she's not very superstitious. Her teammate, senior Lilian Ciany, said she only has one ritual: She puts her left shoe on first.

So for next game day, be sure to clean that lucky sports bra or eat that Arby's sandwich. You never know, these rituals and superstitions may seem bizarre, but to a player it's the difference between scoring a point and making a bad play.

Contact Kristina Foster at pendulum@elon.edu or 278-7247.



Kristina Foster / Photographer

"Rally Sam" is just one superstition that Elon athletes follow when playing their sports. Individual teams and players have rituals they perform before each game.

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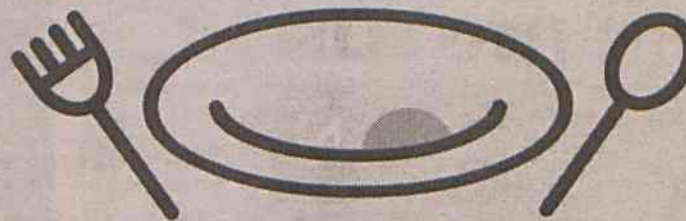
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