

Rugby opens 10 game club schedule Sat. against UNCC

Baker Koppleman
Staff Writer

They walk around aimlessly with hands clenched around their heads trying to catch their breath before the next drill.

Drops of sweat roll down their tired faces but a look of determination remains fixed in their eyes.

Their coach yells out for them to begin yet another of many tiring conditioning drills that make up a rugby practice but no one seems to mind.

"We'll be in the best shape of any team that has ever played at Guilford," said team captain senior Kevin Fritlen.

Conditioning is important to a Guilford Rugby Club who is looking to change its image and have some success this season while building for the future.

The season begins this Saturday at 1:00 p.m. when the rugers take on UNC-Charlotte on the Guilford campus in their first of their ten match schedule. Guilford competes in the North Carolina Collegiate Rugby Union League (NCCRU), which consists of all major colleges and universities in the state, but this will mark the second year of competition in the "A" division, the highest in the league. Guilford had replaced UNC-Greensboro who is on probation for violations of safety and insurance rules.

"We will play a very tough schedule with some very big schools but I believe we can be at least above .500," said new coach Jaamy Zarnegar.

Zarnegar, 31, a native of Iran, currently coaches the Triad Dogs Men's Rugby Club and comes to Guilford in a volunteer capacity after coaching UNC-G for six

years.

Zarnegar represents a major stabilizing change and brings a new attitude to a Guilford rugby team which has never had a true coach in the past.

"We are a lot more serious," said Fritlen. "There were a lot of negative attitudes on the team in the past. It's a lot more fun than before and I think our team is just as good, but our opponents have gotten better."

Image is always a problem for rugby teams because of the violence and drinking associated with the sport, but the Guilford club is looking to change this stereotype.

"If [the Guilford College community] saw one of our practices they'd see a structured two hours. We want to prove our seriousness."

Academics have also become more important in portraying a positive image.

Currently, as a team rule, all players must have at least a 2.0 grade point average to be eligible to play, which is a requirement more stringent than any varsity team.

"We really stress academics on the team," said Fritlen. "People don't take us seriously but we take the sport and our participation seriously."

The team is made up of 26 players who Zarnegar said are a combination of people who never played sports in high school, athletes who have defected from varsity teams, or those whose varsity eligibility has run out.

"The attendance in numbers has doubled but there is a lot of inexperience because of the lack of a full-time coach in the past," said Zarnegar. "I've had to teach the basic tactics of rugby since practice started."

The team is a young one, with



photo by Dave Brown

John Krause squares up against a defender.

only three seniors, but Zarnegar said that the team is always open to new players who meet the academic requirements and are main campus students.

"We're always taking players," said Zarnegar, "and people shouldn't feel it's too late because they can catch up quickly on anything they've missed."

Insurance is another requirement for each player under NCCRU rules, and referees will usually check the insurance cards of each player before a game. Guilford College also requires

insurance before any match can take place on campus.

Actually, playing on campus is something relatively new to Guilford rugby team as up until last year, when they played two home matches, they had not been permitted to play on campus.

This year all home contests will be played at Guilford.

"The dean of students, Nancy Cable-Wells, gave us her blessing and we feel happy and fortunate to be able to play on campus," said Zarnegar.

There is no such thing as a

varsity rugby team at any school but, as a club sport, rugby is fully recognized by Guilford and thus gets money from the budget which helps to pay for dues and other expenses.

The team is now stable as it has ever been since its inception at Guilford in the mid-1970's and now they just want to play and earn the respect of the community.

"We've got a lot more players out here than in the past," said Fritlen, "and now I hope we can get a lot of people to support us."

Men's basketball wins 2 in hectic schedule

Scott Genualdi
Sports Editor

Against the Shipbuilders, the Quakers hung on for a nine-point victory following a 75-75 tie with four minutes left. But key foul shots and a high field goal percentage carried Guilford.

"We shot 60 percent from the field and almost 90 percent from the floor," said Jensen. "If we hadn't done that, we would have lost."

On Monday, Guilford was not as fortunate. The Quakers lost their fifth District 26 game.

"I started that game with a box-in-one defense on their best player, Martin Belemy," said Jensen. "In his first four shots, he made three 3-pointers. Mt. Olive scored almost at will."

"They were ahead and playing loose," said Jensen. "They are an up-and-down team."

Senior point guard David Yancey injured his left shoulder in the game against Mt. Olive.

"I didn't know he was hurt before [Thursday's] practice," said Jensen. "It was probably a bruise. He

The men's basketball team won two games in three attempts last week. They defeated Roanoke 74-67 on February 3 before they lost to Mt. Olive 103-85 last Monday. On Tuesday, the Quakers beat Newport News Apprentice by 9 points, 90-81.

The Quakers played three games in four days that required traveling time that was more stringent than some professional basketball teams play.

The Quakers are now 10-10, 2-5 in District 26 play.

The traveling took its toll on the Quakers. They arrived in Newport News at 2:30 Tuesday morning and back at Guilford at 2:30 Wednesday morning.

"I made a mistake before the Newport News game," said coach Jack Jensen. "I asked them if they were tired, and four of them said 'yes.'"

see BASKETBALL on page 12

UPCOMING SPORTS EVENTS

Men's Basketball:

Feb. 13	H	Pfeiffer	8:00
Feb. 17	H	Newport News	2:00

Women's Basketball:

Feb. 14	A	Pfeiffer	7:00
Feb. 17	A	Pembroke State	7:00