The Simplest Things Matter

Butch Maier



Friends, athletes, graduates, lend me your ears. If you leave this school year with one impression, just one memory that will stick with you until you sit on a swing one summer evening at an elderly age and think back on your days of youth, remember this: the simplest things are the things that matter.

Money in sports has apparently replaced games in order of importance. The actual contest is now a side-show compared to its financial aspects. Witness:

• Gambling is everywhere. Point spreads and tournament pools do not all filter out of Las Vegas and Atlantic City, but can be found all over the place—from the business offices on Main Street to the neighborhood parties in the suburbs.

• Salary arbitration, contract disputes, and bonuses for displaying a clothing logo encourage athletes to "get all they can."

 Fantasy sports leagues, which play for prizes in the thousands of dollars range, focus on buying players so that they can be "yours."

• Sports cards speculation boomed in the '80s and may explode in the '90s. Kids spend their lawn-mowing and babysitting money on rookie cards that they hope will escalate in value.

• Players sign autographs at shows for around \$15-20 per signature (No, that

doesn't come with dinner and a movie).

It is clear to me that somewhere along the line, we pushed aside the "lace 'em up, go out there, and have you some fun" mentality. In 1991, we are supposed to look good, rather than to try and be good at what we do. It's enough if you wear a pair of Nike tennis shoes on the basketball court, even if you didn't score in the second half. Come on now! People are being shot for their "Air Jordans" on the streets of L.A. Where have our values gone?

Money displays an image favorable to '90s sports figures. A desire for productivity and enjoyment of the delightful diver-

sions that athletics bring us should be in the forefront. Never lose the "kid at heart" motivation to perform a sport. Money blinds us to the pure joy and thankfulness we should have at simply being able to function physically.

Take off the blinders, lace 'em up, go out there, and have you some fun.

Work, play, friendship, and family. These are the things that matter. That's what we lost sight of—the simplest things

> -Robin Williams as Dr. Sayer in Awakenings



Mike Waddell

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Dear Son,

At the time you will be reading this, you will be embarking on your own college journey. I thought I would take this opportunity to tell you of my own collegiate experience, as the time when I write this will be during the waning hours of my three years at Guilford College.

I chose to attend Guilford for the opportunity to participate in the Sports Management Department under the guidance of Dr. Herb Appenzeller. The amount of knowledge that I was able to absorb both in and out of class with Dr. A and Dr. Kathy Tritschler has given me a sound foundation as I now embark on the job world.

But being at Guilford was more than just going to classes and learning of times gone by, it was a time when great things happened in my life—coming both by participation and observation.

Some of my most fond memories were intertwined with the athletic program at Guilford. My experiences with Coach Charles Forbes and the football program for two years taught me that things don't always turn out as you would like them to, but it also taught me that being a part of a team and the relationships which are cultivated in the team concept are ones which extend far beyond the chalk lines of the field.

During the course of my freshman year, the basketball team won the District Championship and earned a spot in the NAIA National Basketball Tournament. Being an avid basketball nut, I followed the team to Kansas City and was witness to what some call the "best seven days in college

basketball." Even though we lost in the first round, I could sense that I was seeing a part of Quaker athletic history coming to an end. It would be the last time that Coach Jack Jensen would guide the Quakers to an NAIA Playoff berth, but was also a team which was special because it, like most teams at Guilford, never accepted failure. That quality came right from the top. Coach Jensen never overestimated the importance of the game to his players. To him, it was important to win, but more important to make something good out of even the bad results that can sometimes happen in sport.

I was also on hand when the women's basketball team made its only NAIA Playoff appearance in 1990. This was a remarkable achievement as the ladies had only half a team of scholarship players left on the team, but still managed to top the competition to make it to the tournament.

Every sport had its individual characters at Guilford. This make it always entertaining to attend a Quaker athletic event.

My most fond memories are of cager Ian Russell, gridiron star Buddy Cunningham.

Russell was a towering 6'8" center who had begun his playing days at Oregon State University along with L.A. Laker A.C. Green. He chose to come to Guilford for many reasons, many of which were personal. He touched many people with his kindness and seemingly non-aggressive state of being. Yet once he was in the lane, he was a shot-blocking monster. As of my graduation, Ian was working with underprivileged children in his home area of New York. He always cared more for others than himself.

My memories of Buddy Cunningham being that he would never let an injury or an opponent get the best of him. He always gave everything he had both on the game field and the practice field. You hear of people like this everyday, yet they usually only pass through your mind for a minute. I feel as if I am truly fortunate to have seen this man perform on a first-hand basis.

The advent of a new era also came to be

during my time at Guilford, as the athletic program completed the shift from NAIA competition to a more erudite NCAA III brand of play. Under the leadership of Athletic Director Phil Roach, the change was made as swift as could be following the state of the Alan Platt regime. Roach implemented a new structure for the world of Quaker athletics and mended fences with alumni which had eroded along with the move. On my exit, I felt as if athletics at Guilford were on the right track.

Guilford was also an experience in the classroom, as teachers named Hobbs, Granger and Grice taught me different things about life which hold more than the actual classroom rhetoric.

Grimsley Hobbs, a philosophy man and former president of the school, was always making the effort to reach out to the students in his class who seemed to be struggling with Plato, Aristotle and just the subject in general. I'll never forget calling him at his Chapel Hill home on the eve of our final exam to ask a last minute question. He seemed to be thrilled to help a student in need, not angry that his personal time away from campus had been interrupted. A true educator.

John Grice and Garland Granger each had a unique way of communicating their message to the lucky students in their classes.

Granger, of the Accounting Department, was always telling us that if you earned a D on the first test, that you might as well drop the class because you were going to fail. Every lesson was a matter of life and death to him, and it sunk into the heads of his students as each of us got through what could be a very exhausting class.

A professor of justice and policy studies, John Grice was a gruff, stocky man who was as much of an entertainer as he was an instructor of our justice system. Our class met in the largest room on campus and was by far the biggest class I'd ever been in. He taped every lecture and left it on file in the library for the people

who may have missed his class.

Education at Guilford was an all-encompassing experience, as you could learn how "to" do things by the people who I have already mentioned and you could learn how "not" to do things.

My senior year was 1991, a time marked by budget cuts at the college which sent out shock waves to many different channels of the community. All in all, between 25 and 30 positions were cut around campus to offset the higher costs of operating a private college in the 1990s. "All colleges are making cuts," said one administration official. "We tried to be as fair and impartial as possible," said another. But how fair is fair, when the president of the college, along with his right hand man, are still driving Rolls Royces and Mercedes and pulling down their same salaries while housekeepers, maintenance men and leaders of established programs on campus are given the axe? Yes, Guilford spoke the gospel of respect for persons and equality for all, yet it did just the opposite. A great place to learn-yes, but a real disappointment in trying to teach the future leaders of the country how to treat their fellow man. Hypocrisy ran rampant, but then it does that everywhere, so why should I be surprised that it was at Guilford as well. I guess Guilford was just like Professor Grice said it was during his class period: "At Guilford, everyone in the administration is either in a meeting, on vacation or out to lunch."

I would not take anything for my time spent on Friendly Ave. The people, places and things which I was exposed to could not have been any better had I gone to a Stanford or a Carolina, surely nowhere like an Elon. Pitfalls will line your path throughout all of you life, but if you are fortunate to choose a route which is both challenging and rewarding, then you have chosen well. Guilford has been that type of experience for me; I hope your choice will turn out to be as fruitful.

Mike Waddell