

## Sports

# Men's soccer sees bright future

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Staff Writer

The Guilford men's soccer team just completed a losing season, but the team has found that it will be a good foundation to build on for the seasons to come.

The team is still young and there are only about five seniors graduating. The 14 freshman that were on the team this year now have a year of experience under their belts and three more years with the team.

"For us younger guys [this year] was a total learning experience and even though we might have gotten killed in some games, we found a way to think positively about every loss. Sometimes you learn more from your losses than you do from your wins" says freshman Isaac Gowin. Gowin was a force for Guilford this year. He was second on the team in goals scored with six goals and made second team all conference in the ODAC. Both Issac and freshman Dennis Byrne are two players Coach Mercer hopes to build around.

"Issac is probably our best player. He can play anywhere on the field. Dennis works his butt off every single day," states Coach Mercer.

Having young talent combined

with a good team work ethic makes Guilford's future look bright. One thing this team never did this season was give up during a game and many players have emphasized this as the team's strength.

"We never gave up in any game even though we were down by big margins a lot of times" says Junior Forrest Collier.

A good example of this was in Guilford's last game against Roanoke. "We were losing 6-0 and then we scored two goals. We didn't stop, we just kept pushing" says Senior Derrick Lilly.

Over Guilford's fall break the Quakers won a game against Emory & Henry and lost two games, against Randolph Macon and Lynchburg. They also lost their final home game of the season to Greensboro College. Roanoke College beat Guilford 8-2 in the first round of the ODAC tournament to end the Quaker's season.

Eduardo Yodar lead the team in scoring this year with 14 points including six goals and two assists.

Gowin concludes, "We battled hard and even if the score was 5-0, we still played hard. You can still learn things and that is the most important thing about this year. There were so many new players that if they didn't learn something out of a game, then that game was pretty much useless. If you don't



Photo by Eric Forman

Anthony Raccuglia brings the ball upfield; Mark Keerseemaker and Forest Collier watch.

learn something then you're not going to be better next time you go out." This team had a rough year going 3-14-2, but they worked every game to improve.

"This team was relentless. We had a lot of guys with big hearts",

says Forrest Collier.

Regardless of how young this team is they had some tough competition this year, contributing to an even better learning experience. "I hope it made them realize what it takes to play at this level," said

Mercer.

Mercer also says that Guilford has a good recruiting class coming in and if the team gets a couple more talented players, they should become a big competitor in the conference.

# Women's soccer optimistic

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Another season has come and gone for the Guilford College Women's Soccer program. For all involved, the season seems to have been one of ups and downs. However, the team appears to have learned from the lessons of this season, which they plan to use to improve for the future.

As for late-season action, the Guilford team ended its regular schedule at Virginia Wesleyan. After a pretty miserable first half, the Guilford women came back to produce a respectable second half of action, though far short of victory. As coach Lisa O'Brien said, the team seemed to be playing a "completely different game."

The ODAC tournament took place the Tuesday following Fall Break and pitted the sixth-seeded Quakers against the third-seeded team of Washington & Lee. After a terrible practice on Monday, the team came out to play one of its

best games all season.

Forward Alicia Golden stated that it was "the best game we've ever played as a team."

Coach O'Brien added that "just about everyone on the team played phenomenal... everyone played to their potential."

However, this effort was simply not enough, as Washington & Lee scored two goals in the first ten minutes of the second-half, leading to the Quakers' elimination.

In the end, the team ended up with a 5-9 record. While this may have been disappointing to some, the record does not indicate the true talent that the team possesses. Coach O'Brien states that she felt that the team did not perform "up to [their] potential, for the most part, during the year."

As sophomore midfielder Amy Lewis said, "A lot of times what put us out of a game, or into it, was our outlook. That was the difference sometimes: who wanted it more?"

The team, despite occasional inconsistent performances, did participate in some good games.

The team performed well in close matches against both Ferrum and Greensboro College. The Ferrum game in particular sticks out in the minds of coach and players alike. O'Brien said, "It could have gone either way."

Tied 2-2 at the end of regulation, Guilford ended up dropping the game 4-2 in overtime. According to sweeper Becky Shotwell, the team simply "ran out of steam."

The leading individuals on the team this year were Shotwell and Golden. Both were named this week to the Second-Team ODAC All-Conference Team.

Golden's achievements were especially impressive due to the fact that, as a result of medical conditions, she was only able to play approximately thirty minutes of each game, and missed the last four games of the season altogether. Despite these limitations, she was able to accumulate the most goals and assists on the team. Their leadership was also a great help.

Amy Lewis, another stand-out on the team, stated that she "considered them [Shotwell and

Golden] like the roots of the team, and then everyone else built off of that." Strong contributions were also provided by Marissa Brooks, Amy Johnson, and Karen Rule.

To be sure, many lessons were learned from this season. O'Brien states that "we have to learn, as a team, to have more discipline." In addition, she feels that there is a strong "need to work on the offense: getting the midfield into the offense, getting some more forwards in with some speed." Also, O'Brien hopes to see improvement in "the air game," explaining that her players "don't leave the ground to challenge players in the air." If they improve upon that aspect of the game, O'Brien feels that the team is "going to take the game to a whole other level and be a lot more competitive at that level."

Everyone involved with the team foresees a bright future. Since most of the players are young, with several freshman and sophomores, there is much hope of future success. In speaking of this year's team, Amy Lewis stated that "if there is anything you can say about

this season, it is that we had potential."

O'Brien said that "other teams are taking a look at us. They are worried about us in the next couple of years."

A few changes will be attempted to make the Quakers' win-loss record better reflect their level of talent. O'Brien hopes to run shorter practices, instill more discipline, and schedule "more variety" of competition. In addition, she hopes to schedule more games, since they "only had thirteen games this year, and are allowed to have twenty." Finally, O'Brien hopes to bring in some instruction for the goalkeepers, since she has felt that this aspect of practice has been lacking.

As the team plays together more and gains more confidence, it is likely that they will improve exponentially. The talent base is certainly present and the players all seem very motivated. This coming spring season should prove to be a good test of the potential that lies within this unit.