

# On the Sidelines: Women's volleyball... this year the fans must take a back seat

Wade Tomlinson

Staff Writer

A few years ago a group of students got together and started going to support the women's volleyball team. As the year progressed the fans started having more fun by bringing banners, etc. to give a sport that's definitely worthy, Guilford's support. This tight group of students went to every home game, made up songs, chants, and cheers for every aspect of the game.

Everything the "super-fans" did was creative, funny, a morale booster, and above all in accordance with the inherent rules of sportsmanship. As of last year the women's volleyball team won not only every home game (to the best of this writer's knowledge), but the ODAC conference in both the regular season and the tournament as well. Then the spirited group of women went to nationals! These achievements were incredible standing alone; in addition were the "superfans" who watched, cheered, and celebrated along side.

Last year nothing was said when the schedule dictated that the GuilCo women had to play more games away than at home last year... This year, this "Superfan" is! The point of contention: not only do the women this year have to play more games away, but the number is astounding! The women's volleyball team has

TWENTY-TWO games away and only THREE at home!!! For what reason? None other than that the women have received too much fan support! Allow me to repeat this in case that sentence slipped by you... None other than that the women have received TOO MUCH FAN SUPPORT!

Last year Bill and Bev Rogers (the president and first lady of the campus) joined the rest of the "superfans" in cheering at all the home games... In fact the "superfans" traveled all the way to Roanoke, VA to cheer on the women at the ODAC tourney. I've always thought that things like these should be rewarded, respected, and encouraged... instead the ODAC has essentially implied that fan support is not only unwarranted but unwanted also.

Support for sports is hard to come by here at Guilford. It is a fair criticism to say that Guilford students do not support their sports teams near as much as they should. It is for this reason that this writer is particularly disturbed.

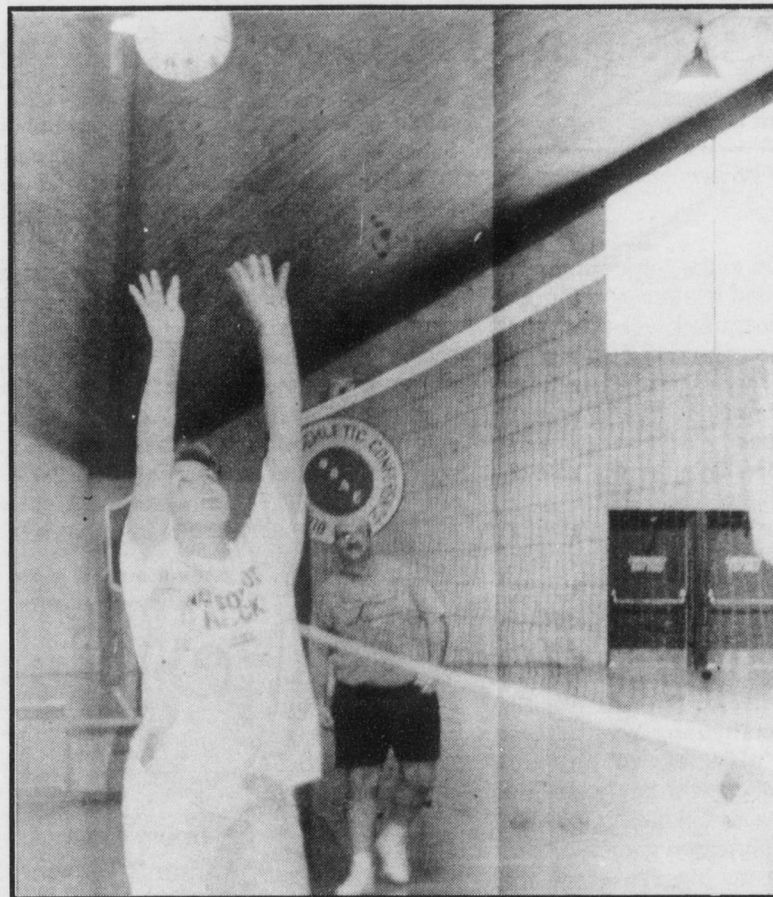
What if the NCAA told Notre Dame that they only can have a few games at home because they sell out too much... or what if the Big 10 told Michigan that home basketball games have to be decreased because fans there average more than at any other school... I think we all know what would happen; fans would be in an uproar.

There is also another aspect to all this. Because of these twenty-two away games (possibly more

due to small tournaments) the women's grades may suffer. Think about it. Not only do they have to practice day in and day out but now they have to spend two to three nights a week on the road. It has to be a detriment to work habits.

As for the fans? Well we will be stuck without a home... We'll try to make trips to Elon, Greensboro Co. and UNCG but as for the rest that are four to ten hours away (yes, one is in Pennsylvania), the "superfans" will have to wait for first-hand accounts by the women themselves.

I know the women are going to have another fantastic year, I know they are well disciplined, I know they are a spirited bunch, and I know they will manage without fan support on these long voyages...but I can't help but feeling bad for the women, the team, and the school. And I can't help but feeling left out and betrayed. I guess, for this year, the fans will just have to take a back seat.



Heather Glissen

Coach McCrackin looks on as the girls' volleyball team practices.

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