

Men's basketball bests Virginia Wesleyan, Roanoke

By Patrick Childs
STAFF WRITER

The Virginia Wesleyan Marlins have been a headache that the Guilford men's basketball team couldn't get rid of, until they faced off on Jan. 13 in the Ragan-Brown Field House.

The Quakers, ranked 17th nationally with a 9-4 record, put to rest an eight-game losing streak against Virginia Wesleyan, defeating the defending Division III champions in a bittersweet victory.

Virginia Wesleyan ended the Quakers storied season in the NCAA quarterfinals in 2007 and last year's exit marked the fourth straight season finished by the Marlins.

Head Coach Tom Palombo felt satisfied after defeating the school he played for and graduated from.

"It's good to win," Palombo said. "As we prepared for the game, it was no different, it's good to beat every team."

Cheering and celebrating followed last week's win over the Marlins. During the past two seasons, the Quakers have given fans a lot to cheer about.

In the 2006-07 campaign, the team com-

pleted a 24-5 record, and a trip to NCAA's elite eight. This year, the Quakers continue to drain shots, gather rebounds and dunk over opponents, which helped accumulate a devoted Quaker fan base.

Supporters, especially juniors and twin brothers Alex and Andy Parker have gone out of their way to attract fans to games by creating a Facebook group.

In the past two years the online group, with 215 members, used organization as a technique to make as much noise as possible at home games. Messages are sent to every member of the group, which informs members of games and colors to wear.

The converging of the Quakers fan base was evident this season. When walking into Ragan-Brown gym during a home game, all that is seen is white.

A "white out" was the exact term used on the Facebook group referring to the hundreds of white shirts worn by students.

"Last year there was no organization. It was amazing that first game with all the white," said Alex Parker.

The Quaker football players have shown their presence at home games with their painted faces and white t-shirts. Most of

their t-shirts have the number of players, such as Ben Strong, Clay Henson and Caleb Kimbrough on their backs.

According to the Guilford men's basketball team's website, the average home attendance for the Quakers in the 2006-07 season was 590, a vast growth from the previous year of 307. The average attendance for this year's Quakers is 460, a number that is expected to reach, or even surpass, last year's mark.

"The fans are awesome," said junior forward George Neville, who appreciates the fan base. "It's incredible walking on the floor and seeing fans screaming and yelling."

Now that bleachers are full, one of the goals for the Facebook group is to make as much noise as possible. From the vibration of the bleachers to the echoing voices, the group has obviously reached their goal.

Yelling, jumping and cheering cannot be ignored. During games fans stand as close as a couple feet from the playing floor. Being that close makes antagonizing opposing players much easier.

With the exception of a few close losses, the Quakers continue to win. Although they are not playing at their highest potential every game, they are optimistic about the

rest of their season.

Going into Wednesday night's game against Roanoke, the men's team had 12 games remaining on their regular season schedule, including six home games.

Roanoke brought an 11-2 record to Ragan-Brown and carried a seven-game winning streak, which included a 68-56 victory over the Quakers the preceding Wednesday. The Maroons were also ranked number two in the Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC), and is currently carrying a seven game win

In a message sent to members of the Facebook group, Andy Parker, encouraged everyone to wear white to the upcoming game.

"Come Wednesday, support your Quakers with our colors on your backs," said Parker, "and your voice in your lungs. Go Quakers."

The inspiration appears to have worked. The Quakers crushed the Maroons in the rematch, 92-56.

For photos from Wednesday's win over Roanoke, check out Guilfordian.com.

Women's basketball loses three, keeps winning record

By Deena Zaru
SENIOR WRITER

"Even though we may not have come out on top on the scoreboard, we certainly left it all out there," said women's basketball Head Coach Stephanie Flamini. "Sometimes things don't go your way, but I feel these kids left it all out there this weekend and just didn't get the win. So my evaluation of the weekend was positive."

The Quakers fell to the Lynchburg College Hornets (57-65) on Tuesday, Jan. 22, the Eastern Mennonite Royals (48-57) on Friday, Jan. 25, and Bridgewater College (68-77) on Saturday, Jan. 26.

"We have to improve on being a better second half team and finishing games strong," said sophomore Jasmine Wood. "We've been great at hanging with most teams we play, but lately we haven't been able to close out games."

Despite hitting a rough patch, the Quakers look ahead with optimism, boasting a strong 9-5 record.

"We have to stay optimistic, because games are so close together," said junior Shevon Hackett. "We can't let the emotion from one game carry over, especially if it is a loss, because we need to focus on the upcoming game."

The team's greatest strength this season has consistently been their defense.

"(Defense) is something that we have really worked on since last season and I think that we really pride ourselves on

it," said junior Brittany Bumgarner.

Defense played a major role in two of the team's biggest victories of the season, a 67-51 win over conference leaders Virginia Wesleyan, and a 63-52 win over Greensboro College.

"The highlight of the season for me would have to be the (Jan. 12) win over Virginia Wesleyan at Virginia Wesleyan," said junior Jessica Casto. "They were ranked number one in the conference and were also undefeated in conference (games), and we beat them by 16 points."

Others agree the 67-51 victory was a highpoint of their season, so far.

"We played 40 minutes of confident, intense team basketball," said coach Flamini. "It was great to see the determination and heart that everyone showed for the entire game."

"It felt good to make a statement in the conference and show that we can really play with anybody if we come out and play the best we can," Wood said.

The Quakers' Nov. 20 win against Greensboro College was also significant, since the victory was the first over Greensboro in four years and it was on Greensboro's court.

"We did well getting the job done and playing on the road with very few fans," said sophomore Ann Seuffer.

The team plans to rely on their defensive strength and depth off the bench to end their season as strongly as they've begun.

"If one person isn't having a great

game one night, you can count on someone else stepping up and getting the job done," Seuffer said. "We also play a sort of run-and-gun game, which means that when people work hard and get tired, we have people ready to come off the bench and keep up the pressure."

Equally important are the relationships between players, both on and off the court.

"We have a very versatile, skilled group that gets along well on and off the court," Wood said. "This helps us be on the same page on the court and we have a new found focus on defense collectively, as a team because we know that is a key in us winning games."

Although the team may have a deep bench to draw from, it is important to realize that they're still a young team with room to grow.

"What needs to be remembered here is that this team is very young, with four juniors, five sophomores and three freshmen, and that they are still learning," Flamini said.

The team has worked hard to help one another, both on the court and off.

"We had a buddy system this year, where veteran players took new players kind of under our wing and made them feel real comfortable," said Tracey Croner. "I love the new girls; we all mesh well together."

Expect big things from this group of talented players working hard for one another, and come out and support the team.



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