

Men's soccer makes last-minute comeback, loses in overtime



By Mara McLaurin
STAFF WRITER

As the rain cleared at 1 p.m. on Oct. 25, more fans began to show up at Hawthorn Field, the home of Guilford's men's soccer team. The team took to a slippery field in crisp white uniforms, which only awaited a muddy undertaking.

The excitement surrounding the game was building for the men as an Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC) tournament seat was resting on the match ahead. Standing in the way of the Quakers win was Emory & Henry College.

In the early goings of the first half it was all-Quakers, with the Emory & Henry Wasps' defense under constant pressure. The Quakers were able to get off five shots on goal in the first 25 minutes by sharpening the Wasps' defense with quick sharp passes, great ball handling, and communication.

Guilford held Emory & Henry scoreless for 27 minutes before a crowded goal box resulted in a goal for the Wasps. The goal was scored off of junior midfielder Erik Olson's head. Freshman goalkeeper Peter Truitt seemed unnerved by the goal but had confidence that the Quakers would

come back and win.

The first half came to a close and the Quakers remained scoreless. Five minutes into the second half, Truitt left the game with a head injury and was replaced by veteran goal-keeper Patrick Childs, who brought energy to his defense. Well into the second half the Wasps held a 1-0 lead, but the Quakers continued to charge the Wasps' defense.

The Quakers were able to finally break down the Wasps with seven minutes left in the game. A long ball from senior Scott Meguid resulted in a goal tapped in by first-year forward Jordan Alexander. Alexander, who has eight goals this year, is Guilford's leading scorer, and is ranked at the highest of scorers in the league.

At the highest of regulation, the Quakers and Wasps were tied 1-1. For the fifth time this season, the Quakers went into overtime.

During overtime, coaches, players, parents and fans, were all on the edge. Fans were nail-biting after the Wasps' two shots on goal in the first three minutes, which were blocked. A corner kick by the Wasps left the sidelines breathless. Finally, in the

96th minute, a breakaway goal was scored by Emory & Henry forward P.J. Henson. The goal was devastating, as the Quakers were defeated.

The game tested not only physical stamina but also sportsmanship. It was exciting from beginning to finish because of the competitive nature of both teams. Emory & Henry and Guilford fans were both vocal about pushes, trips, and grabs, and the referees agreed issuing three yellow cards, and 15 fouls in the game.

"We try and set the tone with a physical game, while at the same time we try and keep our mouths shut about calls the referees make and focus on our own goals and not let our issues get in the way of the game," said Alexander.

The Quakers lost another close game on Tuesday, Oct. 28 against Hampton Sydney College. The 2-0 defeat put the final nail in the season's coffin.

"It was a sad ending to an up and down season," said junior forward Jeff Floyd. "We had a lot of close games that just didn't go our way."

The Quakers may be excluded from an ODAC tournament run, but in staying positive, there's always next year.

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/GUILFORDIAN

Season-ending injury: Down but not out



By
Dan Etter

This season has been the culmination of my life as a soccer player to this point: my senior year, as a captain. I've played and trained my whole life dreaming of college soccer and a chance at a conference championship. What's more, I've labored beside my fellow seniors for three years, wins and losses together. This was our last season, our last chance, and mine ended four games early.

It took a few days to really hit me. I was weaning myself off the morphine drip I'd had since surgery when I realized the extent of it all. What seemed like just a regular hit to the leg had swelled with internal bleeding until doctors were worried my skin would burst and I was rushed to surgery. A week and two liters of blood later, my leg is drained and sutured closed, and

it's still hard to believe.

But accidents are inevitable and injuries can plague athletes and non-athletes alike. They're painful and a hassle; and they usually cost a pretty penny. Watching from the sidelines, it's hard not to rush my recovery along. It's hard to forget the 'coulda, shoulda, woulda' and stop thinking 'what if?' It's hard to stay positive. Remembering the bigger picture is imperative.

"Yeah, your season is definitely over," Dr. Wainer told me before the surgery. "But we got it in time and there's no permanent muscle damage. You'll live to play another day and you've got years of soccer ahead of you."

He was brutally honest and the truth hurt like hell, but Wainer was right. My season is over and I can't change what happened. Instead of wishing I could, I need to forget what might've been, accept the situation I'm in and fully commit myself to the recovery process. Like Wainer said, I've got years ahead of me and what I do now will determine how strong my leg will be then.

The whole ordeal is far from

over; it'll be months before I can even start to run again. Recovery is hard work and, while blame and lamentation may be easiest, perseverance is the key to revival both physically and mentally.

I've got to be diligent with physical therapy and do what's best for my body's long-term health. Cutting corners and rushing back may get me on the field quicker,

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but a mistreated injury can worsen, spread or cause permanent damage. Thoroughness and extra care now will prevent repeat injuries and debility down the road.

They say recuperation is hardest on athletes and I'm proof. I've gone from running to hobbling, independence to reliance. I can't drive, walk my dog or carry my groceries. With so much time off

my feet and on the couch, my brain seems to have a mind of its own and everyday is a battle against dejection.

Psychologically, energy put toward positive outlets helps to relieve the pain and avert depression. Now, my job as a captain is to support my team and encourage my replacements. I may be injured, but I haven't lost my experience or

knowledge. Where my team has been for me in the past, I now need to be for them.

Trading roles like this is a powerful experience. I've gone from starting every game to not playing a minute, from having people rely on me to being almost totally dependent. My month of using crutches and needing help for everyday chores is what some

people deal with their whole lives. I'm glimpsing another world and it's making me look at my own life through new eyes.

Despite all that's gone wrong, I've never been more appreciative in my life. I've realized that the players who love the sport most are those that work day after day in practice, scarcely play in games and yet would do anything for their team. I've realized that good friends don't care what time it is when you need their help; your family will drop everything and travel any distance to be at your side; and the people that love you most will stay with you for days and still feel bad when they need to get some rest.

Most importantly, I've learned that life can be disappointing and that we all get hurt. But there's always tomorrow and success often looks nothing like what we've imagined. Although my collegiate career is over, there are many games yet to play and there's lots of time still left on the clock. I guess it's like they say, what doesn't kill you only makes you stronger.