

In the beginning there was church ball



Sophomore Nathan Blocker (#10) defends the lane against a Westminster Church player, as the Jew Crew holds for a win. The games take place every Thursday throughout February at First Baptist Church.

The Church Basketball League has grown into a popular, mainstream event for student athletes who are involved in a respective church.

By Ashish Sharda
Reporter

You are not good enough to make the school basketball team. You are too lazy to practice every-day after school. But just like most people, you want to be active, have

fun, and be with friends at the same time. If any of these statements pertain to you, then the solution may be Church Ball.

Church Ball allows teenagers throughout the city of Greensboro to proudly represent their churches, and many Grimsley students participate. Teams such as the Jew Crew, First Presbyterian, Westover, and First Baptist currently have numerous players who attend Grimsley.

Senior Chris Ritter said, "Another reason why so many Grimsley students play Church

Ball is because we all enjoy the game of basketball and like playing against our friends. A good number of students come to the games, and all the support and participation allow the league to have a unique and exciting atmosphere."

The Church Basketball League is far less time consuming than a school sport, but it still stresses the same positive messages such as moral conduct, teamwork, and companionship. Teams practice once a week at their respective churches, but all games take place

at First Baptist. A person of any faith is welcome to participate, and it is free to join.

Senior Josef Salami likes other benefits of the league. "In my eyes the Church Ball league promotes and encourages diversity. I play for the Jew Crew, and we have a variety of races such as African American, Asian, and Caucasian, and different religions like Hinduism, Catholicism, and Judaism. People should just think of our team as the United Nations of basketball."

Church Ball is a competitive league. Sometimes, however, the importance of games is blown out of proportion by vexed parents or dishonest coaches.

For example, the league has strict rules about the number of guest players (those people who do not belong to the specified church) a team is allowed to keep. The league rule specifies three outside players per team. Some teams have far more than the "legal" amount,

just in hopes of winning games. Many question whether coaches, who are supposed to teach honesty, should be so success-hungry in a Church Ball league.

Junior David Senter said, "Many people take Church Ball too seriously. It is supposed to be about having fun and playing with friends, but coaches and even players turn it into an NBA style competition. When the coaches do this, they are going against everything they promised to do at the beginning of the season which was to teach good sportsmanship and ethics while incorporating how we should live our lives as God wants us to."

Despite minor controversy, Church basketball has remained a popular recreational sports activity for Greensboro's high school students over the years. Through the simple game of basketball, teenagers learn more about themselves and those around them in an overall positive environment.

Water polo waves in newcomers

Water polo has been a pastime in America for hundreds of years, but the recent trend has made it popular with Grimsley swimmers.

By Emily Durham
Staff Writer

What do twenty Grimsley students, one yellow ball, two goals, and the deep end of the pool have in common? They are the elements for a demanding, fast-paced match of water polo—the only sport where you can work up a sweat and still stay cool.

Water polo has quickly become a Saturday morning tradition for members of the newly-founded water polo club at Grimsley. Sophomore Ross Martin said, "I play water polo because it gives me a chance to have lots of fun and hang out with my friends while participating in an exciting sport that is very competitive."

When the referee throws the yellow ball to the middle of the pool, players swim to the center vying to be the first in possession of the ball. Once in play, shouts of "I'm open" and "Go up, go up!" ring out as the ball is passed above water from teammate to teammate. Each team then attempts to swim with the ball and throw it in the opposing team's goal.

The rules of water polo are simple and easy to learn. Keeping

the ball above water and throwing with only one hand are the most important rules of the game. A violation of these regulations results in a turnover of the ball to the other team.

The demands high school students have on their weekends leaves little free time. That students would be willing to give up their Saturday mornings to play says a lot about the game. "It's a very unique and exciting sport. You obtain great exercise from it. Since its introduction into the Olympics, water polo's popularity is growing in the United States. We hope to enlarge the club in the future," said junior Ben Thompson.

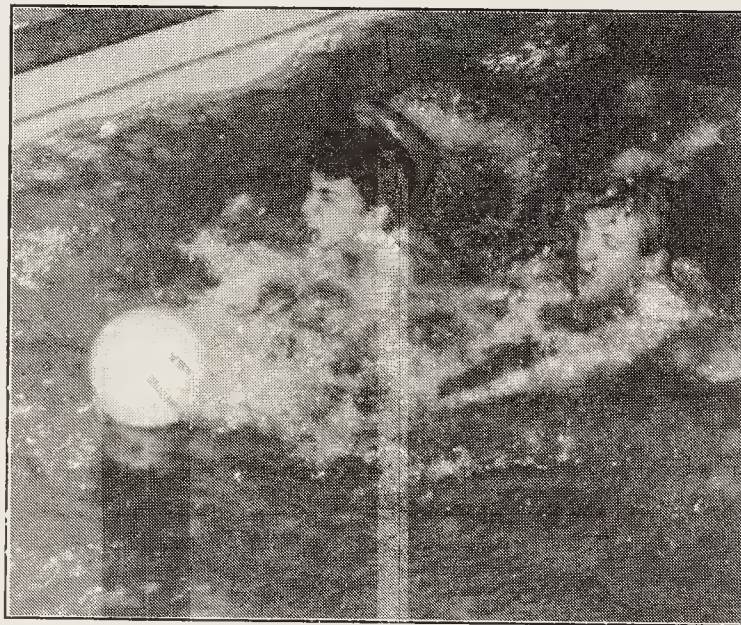
The appeal of water polo comes naturally for swimmers and those who enjoy the combination of the water and a competitive ball sport. "I've swam for over eight years and the idea of a water sport that involves a goalie and a ball and is similar to lacrosse or soccer interests me. The guys on the swim team decided to form a water polo club at Grimsley and we got huge turnouts so it became a weekly thing," said sophomore Ross Martin.

Once a person has seen the game played, its excitement draws many back to play. "I've seen people playing it and it looked like fun, so I wanted to give it a try," said junior Matt Guttentag.

The origins of water polo can be traced back to the Native Americans who played a sort of rugby

football on the lakes and rivers. Later the sport was played in Britain where it was an all-out game of brute strength. A favorite trick of the British players in the late 1800s was to swim underwater with the ball hidden under their swimsuit and emerge as close to the goal as possible. Often they were jumped on by the goalie who was permitted to stand on the pool deck. When the game was brought to the United States, players engaged in underwater battles, fighting until one passed out.

Water polo at Grimsley has evolved a long way from the brutal games of the British and early Americans. Although turnout for



Durham photo

Juniors Cason Dwyer and Colin Jones struggle for the ball to score in the competitive and rigorous match. The players meet at Grimsley's pool Saturday mornings to compete in the newly-founded water polo club.

the games is usually predominantly male, there are always a few girls who share in the excitement of the game. Freshman Lila Cummings said, "After watching the guys play on Saturday I thought I'd give it a try and it turned out to be even more fun than it looked."

With constant swimming to gain possession of the ball, players leave the pool exhausted after the one-hour matches on Saturdays, but eager to return next week for another game. Its surprising growth and popularity has certainly made a big splash here at Grimsley.

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