

Guilford College

SPORTS INFORMATION

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GUILFORD MEN'S BASKETBALL NOTES - MARCH 9, 2007

Guilford in the NCAA Tournament

Guilford owns a 2-0 record in NCAA Tournament play after last weekend's first- and second-round victories over Manhattanville and Johns Hopkins, respectively.

Before joining the NCAA Division III ranks in 1991, Guilford competed in the NAIA and posted an 8-8 record in seven national tournament appearances, most recently in 1989. Led by future NBA players **M.L. Carr '73**, **World B. Free '76** and **Greg Jackson '74**, the Quakers won the 1973 NAIA men's basketball championship. Guilford placed fourth in the 1970 NAIA Tournament.

Last Time Out

Ben Strong scored 29 points and grabbed nine boards in Guilford's 80-73 win at Johns Hopkins last Saturday in a second-round NCAA game. The Quakers led throughout the contest and held off a Blue Jays' rally that trimmed a 17-point deficit to six points with just under a minute left. Clay Henson iced the game with three free throws in the final minute and Guilford's defense limited the hosts to just one field goal in the final 2:30.

The Quakers made 57 percent of their field goals and held Johns Hopkins to 34.4 percent shooting. Jordan Snipes and Justin Strickland scored 12 points apiece.

Scouting the Quakers

The Quakers have won nine of their last 10 games, with the lone setback versus Bridgewater in the Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC) Tournament quarterfinals.

Guilford ranks 15th in NCAA Division III with 83.6 points per game and likes to push the ball up the floor. The team's starting five has started together for each of the past three seasons, which breeds integral familiarity and experience. Guilford's experience has proved valuable in close games as the Quakers are 7-2 in games determined by six or fewer points and 2-0 in overtime games.

Tom Palombo has built the team around 6-11 junior center Ben Strong, who this season became Guilford's first ODAC Men's Basketball Player of the Year. Strong ranks sixth among this week's NCAA Division III scoring leaders (23.9 ppg.), 10th in rebounding (10.9 rpg.) and 13th in blocks (2.5 bpg.). He has made significant improvement in each of his three seasons and the team has progressed as well. With Strong patrolling the paint, senior Jordan Snipes has developed into the Quakers' top perimeter scorer. The athletic wingman can fill it up from all over the court and is especially dangerous when he finds his comfort zone, like he did Feb. 14 against Washington and Lee when he hit for 32 points in 33 minutes on 10-of-14 field-goal shooting.

When Snipes and Strong score consistently, an additional scoring presence makes Guilford tough to beat. The Quakers are 16-1 when at least three students score in double figures. Junior Eric Belkoski has increased his scoring in the past three weeks and made some critical late-game baskets.

The Quakers have shot the ball well all year long and the team's 49.8 field-goal percentage ranks 11th nationally and is the

GUILFORD COLLEGE QUAKERS

(23-4, 15-3 ODAC)

Date	Opponent	Time
11/18	v. Robert Morris (III.) [^] ...	W 101-77
11/19	v. Univ. of the South [^]	W 91-78
11/29	v. Greensboro &	W 78-74 (ot)
12/02	LYNCHBURG*	W 102-80
12/06	at Hampden-Sydney*	W 66-63
12/09	ROANOKE*	W 77-67
12/18	SHENANDOAH	W 70-58
12/30	at Methodist	W 108-102 (2ot)
01/02	at Averett	W 74-69
01/06	at Randolph-Macon*	W 80-73
01/07	at Virginia Wesleyan*	L 55-75
01/13	EMORY & HENRY*	W 130-114
01/17	at Roanoke*	L 68-72
01/20	BRIDGEWATER*	W 70-66
01/21	E. MENNONITE*	W 79-69
01/27	RANDOLPH-MACON*	W 76-65
01/28	VIRGINIA WESLEYAN* ...	L 69-72
01/31	at Washington and Lee* ..	W 62-61
02/03	at Lynchburg*	W 95-70
02/07	HAMPDEN-SYDNEY*	W 86-72
02/10	at Bridgewater*	W 74-52
02/11	at Eastern Mennonite*	W 84-75
02/14	WASHINGTON & LEE* ...	W 95-77
02/17	at Emory & Henry*	W 108-107
02/22	v. Bridgewater#	L 78-88
03/02	v. Manhattanville+	W 101-81
03/03	at Johns Hopkins+	W 80-73
03/09	v. Lincoln (Pa.)%	6:00 pm

GUILFORD QUICK FACTS

Location: Greensboro, N.C.
Founded: 1837
Enrollment: 2,687
Nickname: Quakers
Affiliation: NCAA Division III
Conference: Old Dominion Athletic Conf.
Head Coach: Tom Palombo
Alma Mater: Virginia Wesleyan '89
Overall Men's Record: 166-104 (10th season)
Guilford Record: 66-41 (4th season)
All-Time Record: 857-995 (93rd season)
Sports Info. Director: Dave Walters

PROBABLE STARTERS

F	#40	Eric Belkoski (Jr., Rockingham, N.C.)	8.2 ppg., 4.3 rpg.
C	#42	Ben Strong (Jr., Chapel Hill, N.C.)	23.9 ppg., 10.9 rpg.
G	#10	Thomas Burge (Sr., Winston-Salem, N.C.) ...	5.9 ppg., 3.0 apg.
G	#13	Caleb Kimbrough (Jr., Carrboro, N.C.)	6.9 ppg., 3.3 apg.
G	#21	Jordan Snipes (Sr., Siler City, N.C.)	17.5 ppg., 5.4 rpg.

KEY RESERVES

F	#23	George Neville (So., Westminster, Md.)	4.3 ppg., 3.7 rpg.
G	#11	Clay Henson (Fr., Glen Alpine, N.C.)	5.4 ppg., 2.3 rpg.
G	#15	Justin Strickland (Fr., Thomasville, N.C.)	6.5 ppg., 2.0 apg.
C	#34	Tyler Sanborn (Fr., Elkin, N.C.)	3.4 ppg., 3.4 rpg.

school's best since 1992-93. Guilford has made at least 50 percent of its shots from the floor in 13 games this year, including six of its last eight.

A Season For the Ages

Guilford opened the season with 10 straight wins for the first time in the team's 93-season history and continues to accumulate victories. The Quakers' 23 wins mark their most since 1977-78 and their 23-4 record is the best 27-game standard since 1974-75. Guilford also set a school record with 15 ODAC wins and the second seed at the ODAC Tournament was an all-time high.

As a result of the team's success, Guilford earned its first national ranking as an NCAA Division III school Jan. 22 when the Quakers' debuted at number-22 in the D3hoops.com Top 25 Poll. Guilford has remained in the top 25 for each of the next six weeks and sits 19th in the current poll. The Quakers were third in the final published NCAA Division III South Region Poll, a position held in all three rankings.

Head Coach Tom Palombo

The 14th head coach in Guilford history, **Tom Palombo** took over for Butch Estes in July, 2003, after Estes departed Guilford following four seasons of restoring the Quakers' program to respectability. Earlier this year Palombo became Guilford's first two-time ODAC Men's Basketball Coach of the Year. In 2004, Palombo joined Estes as Guilford's lone recipients of the ODAC's top coaching honor when he shared the prize with Emory & Henry's Bob Johnson. Palombo is the only person to win the ODAC's Men's and Women's Basketball Coach of the Year Award. He won the women's prize at Virginia Wesleyan in 1992.

A 1989 Virginia Wesleyan graduate, Palombo returned to his ODAC roots from Defiance (Ohio), where he led the men's basketball team to a 100-63 record and two NCAA Division III Tournament appearances in six seasons. His teams were known for their full-court defensive pressure and high-scoring offense. The Yellow Jackets routinely ranked among the national scoring leaders. He coached Defiance's women's basketball team to a 78-7 record and three NCAA playoff berths in as many seasons before taking over the men's team.

In 10 overall seasons as a men's coach, Palombo's career record is 166-104. He is 66-41 in four Guilford campaigns and stands third among the program's career wins leaders. Palombo and his wife, Amy, live in

Greensboro with their three children Kylee, Reagan, and Davis.

The Man In The Middle

At 6-11, junior center **Ben Strong** is the ODAC's tallest student-athlete. Last month he picked up the league's biggest prize, the Men's Basketball Player of the Year Award. The two-time First Team All-ODAC pick ranks among the national leaders in points (23.9-6th), rebounds (10.9-10th) and blocked shots (2.5-13th) per game. He won a school-record five ODAC Men's Basketball Player of the Week awards this season, which gives him eight weekly honors in his career. His career-high 16 double-doubles and 17 20-point games lead the league. Strong scored a Guilford Division III-record 41 points in a Dec. 30 win at Methodist, one of his five 30-point games this season. He averaged 23.8 points and 10.9 rebounds in 18 ODAC contests.

Strong, who broke his own Guilford NCAA Division III season scoring record this year with 644 points, ranks seventh on the school's all-time season points list. He reached the 1,000 career-points mark this season and holds 14th place on the Quakers' all-time scoring chart with 1,401 points in 81 games. He also eclipsed the 500 career rebounds plateau and has 585 boards, the Quakers' second-highest Division III total. Strong received Guilford's prestigious English Athletic Leadership Award Feb. 19 and a year ago became Guilford's first Division III student selected to the National Association of Basketball Coaches All-South Second Team. D3hoops.com placed him on its 2006 All-South Third Team.

More Than Just "The Shot"

Guilford's **Jordan Snipes** captured international attention in 2005 when a videographer captured his game-winning 86-foot heave at the final buzzer of Guilford's 91-89 overtime win at Randolph-Macon. The shot was shown five times on ESPN's SportsCenter Top-10 Plays of the Day and garnered widespread publicity. He made almost the same shot two days later in Guilford's Alumni Gym during a reenactment for a live local television audience.

Two years later, Snipes is still making shots and earned First Team All-ODAC honors. The 6-4, 190-pound guard stands among the ODAC's scoring leaders with a career-best 17.5 points per game. He was the only Guilford student with prior NCAA Tournament experience as he was a reserve on Methodist's 2004 NCAA club. An hon-

orable mention All-ODAC pick last year, Snipes ranks among the league's best in seven different categories, including rebounding and steals. He has a club-high 38 three-pointers and stands second on the club in rebounds and free-throw percentage (.741). Guilford's scoring leader in eight games, Snipes has eight 20-point games, including a Guilford-Division III record 41-point effort in the Quakers' 130-114 win over Emory & Henry Jan. 13. He averaged 18.2 points and 5.2 boards in 18 league games this season.

Like Strong, Snipes passed the 1,000 career-points standard this year and enters tonight's game with 1,110 career points, 1,054 for the Quakers. He stands 23rd among Guilford's all-time scoring leaders, second in the Quakers' NCAA Division III era.

Belkoski Comes Through

When junior **Eric Belkoski** broke a tie game late in overtime against crosstown-rival Greensboro College Nov. 30, he probably did not realize he was starting a trend of making clutch baskets. The hard-working 6-3 forward has delivered a number of key buckets for Guilford this year and provided the winning margin in one-point wins at Washington and Lee and Emory & Henry. His winning three-pointer Jan. 31 at Washington and Lee instilled such confidence that two games later he went six-for-six from three-point range en route to a career-high 21 points in the Quakers' win over Hampden-Sydney. He had eight trifectas in 30 attempts (.267) after 19 games, but has made 12-of-25 three pointers (.480) in his last eight contests, during which time he has averaged 8.6 points and 5.5 rebounds per game.

Did You Know?

Guilford has sent four players to NBA. **Bob Kauffman '68**, Guilford's career scoring and rebounding leader, was the third pick of the 1968 NBA Draft and played seven years in the league. **M.L. Carr '73** and **World B. Free** helped the Quakers to the 1972-73 NAIA national title before enjoying successful pro careers. Carr played on two world championship teams for Boston prior to serving as the Celtics' head coach and general manager. Free left Guilford after his junior year and scored 17,955 points in 13 NBA seasons. A third member of Guilford's 1972-73 team, **Greg Jackson '74**, was drafted by the New York Knicks and also played with Phoenix and Washington.