They’re Taking the Ultimate Challenge

By Justin Boer
Contributing Writer

EMU is in the process of developing an expansion team. But don’t expect them to bungle in the beginning of the EMU ultimate Frisbee era.

In order to start a sports tradition a team needs to be created. Well, EMU sports have extended themselves with an expansion team in Ultimate Frisbee. But unlike other expansion teams, this team shouldn’t have a problem with a strong start, having Mennonites that know the game like the back of their Bible (or maybe the inside). They had a good showing in their first tournament, at Washington and Lee, where they won against such worthy opponents as JMU, Radford, and Liberty.

For anyone that is unfamiliar with the sport, it involves a Frisbee, as the name of the sport implies. Two teams of seven compete on almost a football-sized field, forty-five by seventy-five yards. There is a ten-yard end zone at each side with one five yards. There is a ten-yard sized field, forty-five by seventy-five yards. To compete on almost a football-sized field, forty-five by seventy-five yards.

The majority of the setup and organization has been done by Brad Hertzler who said he had support from a core group of people: Dave and Dan Brubaker, Ben Sawatzky, Ben Browand, and Ben Tyson. Jason Axford is supervising the crew as advisor. The teams are hoping to play in two tournaments this semester and have a couple of scrimmages against other college teams such as JMU and Radford. The team is open to anyone, men and women alike.

It’s a low contact sport with anything to be scared of, skilled or unskilled players. There is nothing to be scared of, so come alone or with a group of friends and take the ultimate challenge.

Freshman Laura Ludholtz drives to the basket while teammate Carrie Grandstaff stands by. The EMU Lady Royals beat Bridgewater for the second time on Tuesday, Feb. 4 with a score of 73-65. The Lady Royals are 10-4 in ODAC games and have an overall record of 13-4. As quoted on the EMU website, on Wednesday, Feb. 5, “the NCAA released their second Division III women’s basketball poll of the 2002-03 season. The Lady Royals are off to their best start since the 1987-88 season when the Royals finished with a 20-6 record. With 13 wins in the NCAA South Region (12 wins at the release of the current poll) the Royals received the seventh place ranking in the NCAA South Region. This regional ranking marks a significant turnaround in the women’s basketball program at Eastern Mennonite University. The Royals ended the 2000-01 season with a disappointing 4-20 record but improved to 12-13 the following season after the hiring of head coach Mike Dunavant. So far this season the Royals have already surpassed their win total from the 2001-02 season and are in third place in the ODAC.”

Also, EMU has poor financial aid compared to the rest of ODAC. “EMU students have to pay an average of $10,000 each year out of their pocket,” said Baker. “As Hampden Sydney, the average student pays about $3,000. Over four years, that difference comes to $28,000. Since EMU is a division three school, it can’t give athletic scholarships to compensate for that difference.”

If you’re a Mennonite kid you might be willing to pay that much to come here,” said Baker. “But if Hampden Sydney is recruiting you, and I’m recruiting you, it’s very hard to convince them.”

Players concur with Baker. “From a coaching standpoint, it’s hard when you struggle to get people here and struggle to keep them here because financial aid is so poor,” said junior guard Jeremy Newman. “It’s hard to build and keep a strong base; it’s not fair for the coach to have a rebuilding year every year.”

“I think that Coach Baker is a good guy, and I know that he wants the best for the team,” said freshman forward Bryan Williams. “But I feel that the school isn’t serious enough about the basketball program. To place all the blame on the coach isn’t fair.”

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