The Vision of Volleyball

In 1964, athletic activities were largely unavailable to the women of John Brown University who desired different sports opportunities than cheerleading and intramurals. Although there was strong interest in intercollegiate athletics amongst JBU undergraduate women, there was no avenue through which they could pursue this dream. Having a background in both high school and intercollegiate athletics, Glenna Belle Davis sympathized with these women and recommended the inception of an official JBU organized club. With the permission of the athletic director and the approval of John Brown, Jr., the Women’s Recreation Association (WRA) was instituted as a campus club for the first time in 1965. Within the first year, basketball and fast-pitch softball were the only sports available to the WRA, but within the following year, a volleyball team was organized.

Women’s volleyball struggled its first couple years at JBU. Not only did these women have to organize their practice times around those of the competitive men’s teams, they worked hard to purchase their own uniforms and equipment while facing the challenge of not being recognized as a legitimate organization by much of the student body. According to Dr. Davis, it wasn’t until 1968 that “the university as a whole recognized the women as being interested in intercollegiate sports... even though we had a volleyball team that had participated against other colleges for two years”.

The WRA continued to exist with little recognition until 1973. Then, with the establishment of Title IX, a congressional emphasis was placed on equal opportunities regardless of one’s gender, including the realm of sports. The WRA dissolved, and in its place, women’s intercollegiate sports was born. Now recognized as an athletic team rather than a club, the women’s volleyball team had access to several necessities for which they had to fight as a mere club. Through educated coaching and new equipment, the JBU women’s volleyball team gradually grew into the fighting force we see today. Although women’s volleyball faced an uphill battle in its early years, the history of our team is filled with passion and determination. Though they may be separated by decades, these are traits which continue to be displayed by our athletes as they carry on the legacy of women’s volleyball at JBU.

Milestones

October 10, 1941

The Engineers’ Club begins installing the school’s first electric scoreboard on the western wall of the gym. Eight by four feet in dimensions, the basketball scoreboard was funded by the social committee for installation in the contemporary Recreational Hall.

October 2, 1950

Former circus owner E.L. McCal opens JBU’s Lyceum program for the year in the Cathedral with a trained animal show, featuring his pony Spangles and a group of Artic dogs. The pony counted, struck poses, identified colors, and walked up a ladder, while the Huskies demonstrated hoop tricks, rope jumping, and peg walking.
The second annual Chicken Olympics was held last Friday night, September 9, offering some free post-banquet entertainment.

There were five events in the Olympics: the human knot, Polish skis, tug-of-war, canoe races in the pool and leap frog. The class winning each event was awarded a certain number of points. The class with most collective points was awarded the coveted Chicken Olympics flag.

It was a close race all the way through each of the events. The Senior class pulled ahead in the final event, the canoe race, which they won in record time of one minute, forty seconds.

The final standings were: juniors, 4th place, tying for second place were the sophomore and freshmen, with the seniors taking first place- and the Chicken Olympic flag.

The living learning committee sponsored the Olympics, with the dorm council officers acting as judges for the events.

“How perfectly natural the words, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,” when they follow, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.” What a wonderful peace was the peace which stayed the mind and the heart of the Son of God! The most sublime picture in all literature is that which is found in the inspired record of the Last Supper.

One of His followers was to betray Him and sell Him into the hands of a bloodthirsty mob. Already this traitor had gone out into the dark night, a night the blackness of which seemed unusually portentous and sad. Just out there is the Garden if Gethsemane, with its sweat and blood! Just over there is the judgment hall, with its cruel scourge and crown of thorns! Just up there is Calvary’s hill, with the cross of the empty arms! Down in the streets the mob is already forming, and their muttered oaths are heard on the night air. Outside that little room, everything breathed of hatred and death! Amidst all this, and in the presence of all this, Jesus sat peacefully singing. “He sang a hymn,” is the official record of that last sad hour!

Grand, lonely, majestic, calm and peaceful soul, singing in the hour of His betrayal and in the hour of His death! What a wonderful peace God must have put into His soul, that He could sit and sing while the world rushed in to crucify! “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.” It must have been that a little of this peace possessed the heart of Stephen, for when they were stoning him to death he prayed, “Lay not this sin to their charge,” and kneeling quietly, with the face radiantly beautiful, he gave up the ghost.

It must have been that a little of this peace possessed the heart of St. Paul, for, with back torn by the cruel lash and feet made fast in chains and stocks, he sang songs in the night- songs in the night! […] Only the peace of Christ, placed in the heart of the believer by the Holy Ghost, can keep the heart singing while the mob gathers, and keep the heart singing while the stones are thrown and keep that heart singing while the cruel lash cracks and stings, and keep that heart singing while the nails are driven into hands and feet! This was the peace which possessed the heart of Christ, and this was the peace that He left with His disciples, and this is the peace that is the inheritance of the saints through all the ages.”