6-1-2008

Sports shorts: Latham Stadium, cycling success and student honors

Furman University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine

Recommended Citation

University, Furman (2008) 'Sports shorts: Latham Stadium, cycling success and student honors,' Furman Magazine: Vol. 51 : Iss. 1 , Article 22.
Available at: https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol51/iss1/22

This Regular Feature is made available online by Journals, part of the Furman University Scholar Exchange (FUSE). It has been accepted for inclusion in Furman Magazine by an authorized FUSE administrator. For terms of use, please refer to the FUSE Institutional Repository Guidelines. For more information, please contact scholarexchange@furman.edu.
The home of Furman baseball has always been known simply as the "baseball stadium."

Until now.

When Tom Latham ’70 and his wife, Gina, began looking for a way to honor Tom’s parents, John T., Sr., and Gloria Latham, they turned to Furman — and to the sport Tom played during his student days. He was an all-Southern Conference outfielder in 1970 and played for the Paladins in the 1969 NCAA playoffs.

After graduating with a degree in biology, he went on to medical school at Vanderbilt University. Today he is president of Upstate Pathology in Greenville. His father was a dermatologist in Greenville for four decades and a big baseball fan.

Given Tom’s experience at Furman and his family’s love for the game, he and Gina decided to provide the naming gift for the John T. and Gloria Latham Baseball Stadium. The dedication ceremony was held May 3 before a 13-9 victory over Davidson.

Tom, a member of Furman’s Advisory Council, says of the gift, “When the opportunity presented itself to honor two of my greatest loves, my parents and baseball, I felt compelled to jump at the chance. The fact that this opportunity allows me to help yet another great love, Furman University, makes the blessing to give all the more special to me.”

The Lathams have also endowed a baseball scholarship at Furman and provided support for the production of Shakespeare lectures by John H. Crabtree, Jr., former vice president and dean and revered professor of English.

Cycling may not be a varsity sport at Furman, but the club cycling team is putting the university on the map in its own way.

At the USA Cycling Collegiate Road Nationals, held in Fort Collins, Colo., in May, the team of Spencer Beamer ’10, Chris Butler ’10, Todd McClure ’08 and Craig McKinney ’10 captured the Division II team time trial over a 20-kilometer course. The victory gave them bragging rights as the “Fastest Four in the Nation.”

As a follow-up, Butler went on to win the 68-mile Road Race, and Beamer captured second in the National Criterium, a shorter, faster-paced event on a circular course.

All this is pretty heady stuff for a team that has existed for only two years. But the hard-training group has developed a strong following among interested alumni and the Greenville community, where cycling is extremely popular. And they are fortunate to have a savvy veteran on site to serve as coach: Glenn Thrift, who works in Furman’s Physical Activities Center and is a legend in local cycling circles.

To learn more about the cycling team and their report on the nationals, visit http://furmancycling.blogspot.com. To purchase a Furman cycling jersey (proceeds go to support the team), visit http://alumni.furman.edu and click on the link.

When Page Bridges ’08 wasn’t winning cross country races or setting school records in the steeplechase, she was garnering her fair share of academic awards.

Bridges, a chemistry major, joined Joe Watson ’08, a receiver on the football team, in earning two of the six graduate awards given by the Southern Conference to top student athletes.

A Beckman Scholar and holder of the Furman Bisher Academic-Athletic Scholarship, which is awarded to an outstanding student-athlete at Furman, Bridges received the conference’s David Knight Graduate Scholarship. A member of Phi Beta Kappa, she also received an NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship. She plans to enroll in the joint M.D./Ph.D. program at the University of North Carolina.

Watson, a political science major, earned the conference’s Bob McCloskey Insurance Graduate Scholarship. He plans to attend law school at the University of Tennessee.

Also a member of Phi Beta Kappa, he volunteered with the Meyer Center for Special Children and the Clubhouse Kids after-school program for at-risk youth. He was a four-year letter winner in football and four-time member of the league’s Academic Honor Roll.

In addition, the NCAA honored six Furman athletic teams this spring for their Academic Progress Rate (APR) scores. The teams cited were football, men’s golf, men’s indoor track and field, men’s and women’s outdoor track and field, and women’s basketball. All posted multi-year APR scores in the top 10 percent of all squads in their respective sports.

The APR, developed by the NCAA’s Committee on Academic Performance, rewards a school’s record in regard to eligibility, retention and graduation.