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### **Gardner-Webb University CrossFit Teams Compete in National Event**

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# Gardner-Webb University CrossFit Teams Compete in National Event

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Office of University  
Communications

February 5, 2020

*GWU Women's Team Achieves First Place in Local Gym; Men's Team Has Good Showing*



BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Two CrossFit teams from Gardner-Webb University recently competed in the Granite Games Winter Throwdown, a nationwide competition conducted on the same day at different gyms around the country.

The GWU competitors traveled to CrossFit Unite in Concord, N.C., to participate. During the event, teams completed four workout sets, which are comprised of a variety of functional movements performed at high intensity.

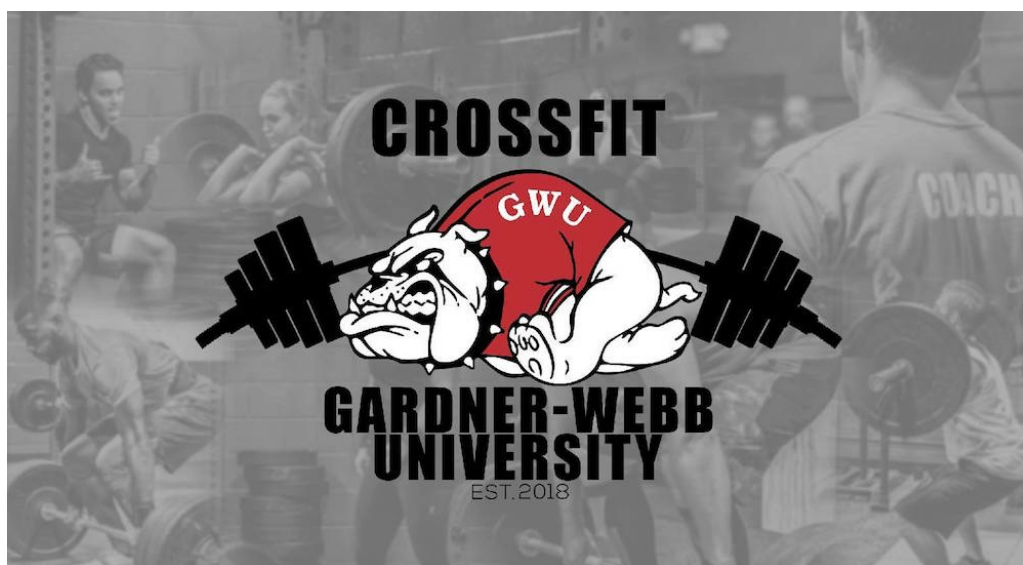
The female team members were GWU CrossFit Coach Melissa Battista, Jasmine Jones, undergraduate student from Guam, and Shauna Ward, a graduate student from Boiling Springs. They took first place at the Concord location. “We surprised ourselves with the first place,” Battista offered. “We weren’t sure what to expect.”

The male team included GWU admissions counselor and graduate student, Ezekiel Martin, of Boiling Springs, Cason Sarvis, an undergraduate student from Durham, N.C., and Jared Reeder, an undergraduate student from Asheboro, N.C. They had a good showing as they faced older teams of seasoned competitors. “We found out later that of the seven male teams competing at that location, three of them placed in the top 10 in the entire nation,” Battista shared.

Gardner-Webb became an officially-licensed CrossFit affiliate in 2018, and Battista, a 2011 alumna, was hired in August 2019. Since then, the number of participants in the program has grown to more than 100 GWU students, faculty and staff. Battista helps them pursue their individual goals, said Brian Arnold, GWU director of Student Activities, Campus Recreation, and New Student Orientation.

“She helps the CrossFit athletes who want to compete and go to the next level,” related Arnold, who is also a CrossFit Level 1 Trainer. “CrossFit is something different every day. The variety helps you prepare for any kind of workout at a competition. With CrossFit we don’t want to be pigeonholed. You train for everything—train for the unknowable. It’s just like, you don’t know what is coming in life, so you need to be trained for everything.”

Battista is also available for those who only want to improve their health. “I do it because I like it,” she observed. “You can make it as fun or as silly, or as hard and serious as you want it to be.”



In addition to promoting fitness, CrossFit is about building community, Arnold observed. “We can all be in the same class at different fitness levels doing the same thing, but we

connect with each other,” he affirmed. “CrossFit is helping us connect with a lot of alumni, and we want to highlight what they are doing in the CrossFit world. Daniel Abrahao owns the WOD League and he is helping us with our first CrossFit Competition in April. Jason Bright and Amy Bennett Bright are at CrossFit Northlake North, and Adam Wilson is at CrossFit Northlake West (both in Charlotte, N.C.). Mike Vialpando is at CrossFit Perimeter in Georgia, and Bailey Bush is at Bull City CrossFit in Durham (N.C.). Alumnus Jeremy Martin does strength and speed training in Charlotte, and we are making connections with him.”

For more information about GWU’s CrossFit Program, contact Battista at [mbattista@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:mbattista@gardner-webb.edu).

[Learn more about CrossFit Gardner-Webb University.](#)

*Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at [Gardner-Webb.edu](http://Gardner-Webb.edu).*