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Runnin' Bulldogs Excited for Home Opener



Photo by Hannah Haggerty.

By Jared McMurry

Last Saturday, the Gardner-Webb football team had an opportunity to achieve something special both for their school and the Big South Conference and nearly pulled it off.

After taking a 16-13 lead over Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) foe South Alabama, offensive miscues and poor tackling kept the Runnin' Bulldogs from upsetting the Jaguars.

"We took away a lot of plusses from the game, and our players had a very positive attitude when they came in Sunday afternoon," said Coach Carroll McCray.

McCray also noted that he could see a look in his players' eyes that they will have some exciting opportunities if they make some corrections. "Our film is invaluable, and it was important for our guys to see themselves right away to discover what they're doing wrong and how to fix it," he said.

Tyrell Maxwell stood out offensively for Gardner-Webb, rushing the ball for over 100 yards on 22 carries.

McCray would like to see his quarterback's running workload decrease heading into the game against Elon and see his backfield contribute on a higher level. "We need to get our skill guys out on the edge more," he said.

McCray also mentioned that for the second straight week, the running back core would be filled by committee. "We have a few guys we need to continue to look at including **Elijah Perry** who is a good speed back," he said. **Bobby Clark** ran the ball 13 times for 47 yards, while **Khalil Lewis** had seven carries against Elon.

Looking ahead to Elon, Coach McCray expects them to be a very similar team to the Runnin' Bulldogs. He said that they are very strong up front defensively and are young and inexperienced offensively, much like Gardner-Webb.

According to Coach McCray, his staff and the entire team love playing at home and are excited about the home opener this Saturday. Gardner-Webb hosts Elon at 6 pm at Spangler Stadium in Boiling Springs, and the game can also be streamed on the Big South Sports Network.