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# Special teams could loom large in Homecoming game



Photo by Hannah Haggerty.

By: Jared McMurry

With the football game against Liberty coming the week of homecoming and the conference opener, a little extra is riding on the game for the Runnin' Bulldogs. "We have a lot to play for, this is a game that means something very special and we need to fight and represent our university," said McCray.

With Gardner-Webb football having an open date last weekend, Runnin' Bulldog head Coach Carroll McCray viewed video\* of the Liberty Flames as they battled Football Bowl Subdivision [FBS] foe, Georgia State. The Flames, a competitive conference rival of Gardner-Webb, took care of business on the road, and McCray witnessed something that was worth taking note. Kicker John Lunsford notched a 56-yard field goal that would have been good from 60+ according to McCray.

"They have a darn good kicker, and when they cross the 50 yard line they will be thinking points," he said. McCray believes that field position will be key in attaining a victory.

Most teams use their open week to get healthy, but this wasn't so much the case for Gardner-Webb. According to McCray, they are walking with much less of a limp but still have many guys that aren't ready to go at full speed yet. He mentioned that [Charlie Eudy](#), a young player who brings a large physicality presence, has been settled in at tackle and expects him to make an immediate impact. Coach McCray also said at his press luncheon that some players who have not seen much field action this year could see ample playing time on

special teams this week.

Liberty comes into the game ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in the Football Championship Subdivision [FCS]. They shutout Gardner-Webb last season 34-0 in Lynchburg. Although the Flames bring a high-powered offense to the table, McCray knows that it's his offense who must step up for the Runnin' Bulldogs to find success. He alluded that his offensive unit must establish a run game and execute better for there to be little to no margin for error.

"If quarterback **Tyrell Maxwell** is on the mark, our lineman can come through for us, and we win the field position battle. Then hopefully we can make something happen in the fourth quarter," he said.

The game against Liberty is set for Saturday at 7:00 p.m. in Spangler Stadium.

*\*A previous version of this story mistakenly noted that a Gardner-Webb coach attended Liberty's game at Georgia State in person. This version has been edited to reflect that only video of the game was viewed, as is standard practice.*