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Communications

May 1, 2019

Tallahassee, Fla., Native Has Posted Five Winning Season Overall Since 2013



Gardner-Webb head men's basketball coach Tim Craft signs a contract extension through the 2026-2027 season.

BOILING SPRINGS – Gardner-Webb University and head men's basketball coach Tim Craft agreed to a raise and contract extension through the 2026-2027 season, the school announced Wednesday, May 1.

Craft, 42, led the Runnin' Bulldogs to the 2019 Big South Conference title and the program's first appearance in the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament. Details of the new contract will not be made public.

The Tallahassee, Fla., native has gone 111-90 in his six seasons at the helm. Only Hall of Famer Eddie Holbrook (141 wins) had more over his first six seasons in Boiling Springs.

"My family and I are thankful for the commitment made by our administration to the Gardner-Webb men's basketball program and our staff. We are truly humbled and blessed," said Craft. "This campus and community are special in countless ways and they

love college basketball, especially their Runnin' Bulldogs. The support we have experienced during our time here is second to none. I would like to publicly thank Dr. [Bill] Downs, Dr. [Ben] Leslie and Chuck Burch, along with the Board of Trustees, for their confidence in our program. I would also like to thank all of our current and former players and coaches who have contributed so much to the success of Gardner-Webb basketball over the last six years.”

Craft has been a consistent winner as head coach, posting five winning seasons overall and never experiencing a losing season in Big South Conference play since taking over the program on July 22, 2013. Twice he has led teams to 20-win seasons, including a Division I era best mark of 23 wins this past season.



Coach Tim Craft talks to reporters in Columbia, S.C., before the GWU Men's Basketball Team's first round game in the NCAA Tournament.

The home court advantage under Craft is a significant factor, as Paul Porter Arena has become one of the toughest venues for road teams in the Big South. This past season, his squad went 13-0 at home – one of only seven teams in Division I to go undefeated on their home court. GWU is a sizzling 25-2 since the end of the 2016-2017 season in Paul Porter Arena and is 58-14 since the 2014-2015 campaign (80.6%).

During his first six campaigns, Craft has directed his Runnin' Bulldogs to several notable wins, including Power 5 Conference victories over Clemson, Purdue, Nebraska, Georgia Tech and Wake Forest.

“Tim has been a terrific representative of our institution, on the court, around campus and in the community. He has earned this type of commitment and validation,” said Vice President of Athletics Chuck Burch. “We were confident Tim was the right choice in 2013

and that has proven to be true. The present and future is very bright for the men's basketball program, and we are excited that Tim is in our head coach's seat."

Craft is one of four current Big South Conference who have at least 100 wins and a winning record at their current institutions. He was only the second coach in Big South Conference history to win 17 or more games in each of his first four seasons, joining former Winthrop boss and current Wichita State head coach Gregg Marshall in that exclusive club.

"This is an exciting time for our University and the men's basketball program. Tim is an exemplary coach and has made a significant investment in our campus and community," said interim President Dr. Ben Leslie. "We are pleased that he and his family will continue in that role for years to come."

Craft first came to Gardner-Webb as an assistant coach prior to the 2004-2005 season, helping the Runnin' Bulldogs capture a share of the Atlantic Sun Conference regular season title in his first season on the bench. He spent three seasons in that role, before moving on to assistant coaching stops at Auburn and East Carolina.

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