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### Gardner-Webb Spring Sports Overview

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# Gardner-Webb Spring Sports Overview



Student life and comradery is a large part of everybody's college experience. Other than academics, a sense of community and entertainment is central to colleges. Collegiate sports programs, just like professional sports, entertain crowds that can rival those of professional sports depending on the institution. Students flock to games and matches on campus in their spare time and cheer on the home team. When rival teams come to town, the college community comes together to offer support. Athletic teams increase student satisfaction on campus, whether a student participates in a sport or not. But with the widespread pandemic that began last year with the outbreak of COVID-19 many college sports have just now slowly begun to restart their programs.

Larger institutions such as Clemson and Alabama restarted their sports last fall with the beginning of the college football season. While some restarted, others sat out and waited until the spring. As a member of the Big South conference, Gardner-Webb waited until the spring for most sporting events.

While we finally made it to the spring semester and matches and games are taking place, only limited fans are allowed to attend games. So, in order to keep up with all the sports happenings at Gardner-Webb, GWU-Today has outlined some key points to watch for during this unique spring athletic season.

## GARDNER-WEBB FOOTBALL

It certainly is uncommon for us to say that it is Runnin' Bulldog football season in the spring but with the pandemic this year that ended up making the Big South postpone their football season, we can finally say that football is back for the residents of Boiling Springs, N.C.

The Runnin' Bulldogs of Gardner-Webb kicks off their spring campaign this upcoming weekend as they take on the Elon Phoenix at Spangler Stadium at 3 p.m. Working within the current guidelines from Governor Roy Cooper's Executive Order and with careful consideration and dialogue with other schools across the state, Gardner-Webb will limit attendance at all outdoor athletic events to 100. Admission to all athletics events will be managed through a guest pass list. Names of attendees will be submitted by student-athletes to their respective sport coach based upon the parameters established for each sport. The athletics department will oversee this process.

Gardner-Webb will undergo an abbreviated six-game season that sees the Runnin' Bulldogs host four home games against Elon, Presbyterian, Monmouth and Kennesaw State to start the season. The team then finishes with two away games against Charleston Southern and Robert Morris. All games will be broadcasted live on ESPN+.

#### GARDNER-WEBB MEN'S BASKETBALL



**In game one of a two-game series, Gardner-Webb men's basketball fell to High Point University in a close ending 55-59 at home on January 30, 2021**

Runnin' Bulldog basketball is one of the few sports that started their season on time. After the first four games of the season the team may have rather postponed the season after going winless in facing four tough opponents. Since that they have rattled off a 10-10 record with seven of those wins coming at home. They are led by senior guard Jaheam Cornwall who averages a career high in points (14.6 ppg) and assists (3.9 apg). Freshman guard D'Maurian Williams has also made a name for himself in the offense as a role player off the bench. Williams in his first year playing for Gardner Webb is averaging 10.9 ppg, 2.1 apg, 2.9 rpg and 1.1 spg.

The men's regular season will conclude this Wednesday, Feb. 24, when they face USC Upstate.

#### GARDNER-WEBB WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

The Gardner-Webb women's basketball team started off much like the men's. They dropped 6 of their first 7 games with all but a series against Presbyterian being non-conference. They have recovered well though. Since that loss in the seventh game of the season, the team has gone 7-6 and improved upon their lackluster start. Sophomore Lauren Bevis, Junior Jhessyka Williams and Freshman Alasia Smith are all averaging over 11 points per game and the latter is bringing down over eight rebounds per game.



**GWU women's basketball ultimately fell to USC Upstate in a very close game with a final score of 68-70. The home game was the first in a weekend double-header between the women's and men's teams of Gardner-Webb and Upstate.**

The next action for the women's basketball team is a two-game series beginning this Thursday where they take on the 7-10 Radford Highlanders. The games are available to watch on ESPN+ beginning at 6:00 p.m.

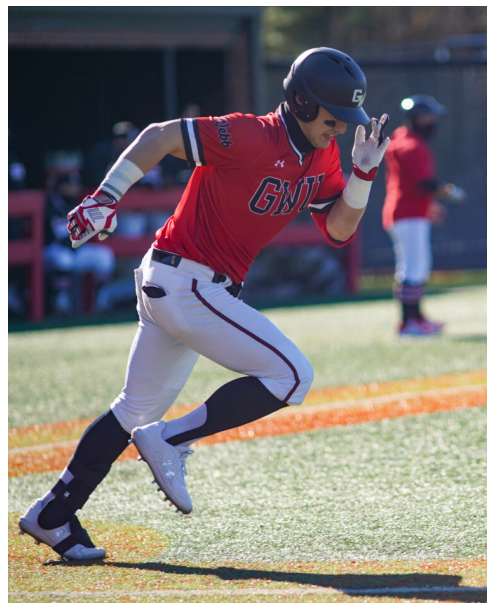
## GARDNER WEBB BASEBALL

The Gardner-Webb Baseball team completed their first series of the season this past weekend in a three-game showdown with Wofford. In the first game of the series, senior Mason Miller struck out 11 batters in six innings and allowed just two runs. On offense, Gardner-Webb hit two home runs in a 5-4 win over Wofford Friday in both teams' season opener. In the second game of the series, Wofford scored three runs in the top of the ninth to go in front, and Gardner-Webb couldn't bounce back in an 11-10 loss to the Terriers on Saturday to even the series. The team didn't recover the magic that they had in the first game of the series as they dropped their second straight to Wofford in a 9-0 defeat.

The Runnin' Bulldogs next series begins this weekend as they face Georgia in another three-game series beginning Friday.

## GARDNER-WEBB WOMEN'S LACROSSE

The Gardner-Webb Women's Lacrosse team kicked off their 2021 season in Spangler Stadium on Monday, Feb. 22 against Wofford



**The Runnin' Bulldogs fall in a close game to Wofford, 11-10, at home on Saturday afternoon.**

Graduate student Janice Donaldson, redshirt junior Tori Birks, senior Eilish Gately and junior Jessica Vetter were named as the players to serve as captains for the season.



In addition to 50 ground balls and 23 caused turnovers through the first four seasons in her career, the Ohio native was named to the 2021 Preseason All-Big South Conference Team. Donaldson has played in 44 games during her career and served as a captain during the 2020 season. Birks has been responsible for 26 points through the first three seasons of her career. Gately has tallied 55 goals during her career while dishing 11 assists. Gately also served as a captain during the 2020 season. Vetter started in all 23 games she has played in through the halfway point in her career. She has tallied 26 points and scored 21 goals. Through her first two seasons, she has racked up 30 ground balls.

#### GARDNER-WEBB MEN'S SOCCER

Gardner-Webb Men's Soccer opened their season with a 5-0 sweep over VMI on Sunday, February 14. Senior Abel Gebrekiros led the team netting two goals for the Bulldogs. Gebrekiros first goal came just after the 30-minute mark off an assist from Senior Ryan Mandondo, and his second goal of the day came in the 44-minute mark with an assisted pass from teammate Sophomore Owen Zaldivar. Sadly, their second game of the season didn't prove to be as fruitful as their first. The team dropped game two on the season 4-0 against the High Point Panthers this past Sunday.

After a .500 start to the campaign, the men's soccer team has a couple days rest before they do battle with the UNC-Greensboro Spartans at home.

#### GARDNER WEBB WOMEN'S SOCCER

Women's Soccer opened its 2021 spring season Sunday, Feb. 14, and dropped a 6-0 decision at Tennessee. Despite Goalkeepers Abby Atchley (two saves) and Paula Suarez Is (three saves) having a combined total of five saves in the match, it was not enough to overcome the 11 shots on goal that Tennessee had in the game. While their first game didn't go as planned, the soccer team didn't get down and recovered with a big 4-1 win over Big South rival Charleston Southern. Junior Forward Jada Newton scored two goals and assisted on another.

The women's next game is a match at Big South opponent Longwood when they face the Lancers at 2 p.m.

#### GARDNER WEBB SOFTBALL

Gardner-Webb softball was picked to win the 2021 Big South Conference title, with voting results for the league's preseason poll announced earlier this month. It marks the first time that the Runnin' Bulldogs have entered the season as league favorite. In addition to the team honor for head coach Tom Cole, Gardner-Webb also received a pair of significant individual accolades, as redshirt senior Brooke Perry was tabbed Preseason Pitcher of the Year and junior slugger Autumn Owen was named Preseason Co-Player of the Year.

After a slew of cancellations to start the season, the opening day for the softball team has been pushed back to this upcoming weekend where the team goes to Raleigh, N.C. and plays a four-game series against the NC State Wolfpack. With the first game starting at 3 p.m. on Friday.

#### GARDNER-WEBB VOLLEYBALL

Volleyball hits the court for the first time since the conclusion of the 2019 season due to the 2020 season being shifted to the spring of 2021 because of COVID-19. The season consists of a 16-match double-round robin slate spanning nine weeks with contests scheduled for consecutive days against the same opponent at the same location. This year's regular-season champion will earn the Big South's automatic bid to the NCAA Championship.

The Gardner-Webb volleyball team opened the 2021 spring season with two losses against Big South opponent Radford. They only took one set in the two-game series. They did recover and beat Presbyterian 3-2 in their next game but would then lose two straight before winning their most recent game against USC Upstate.

The Runnin' Bulldogs return to Paul Porter Arena for their next bout, hosting UNC Asheville on Saturday, Feb. 27 at noon.

## GARDNER-WEBB SWIMMING

For the first time in program history, Gardner-Webb men's swimming has been crowned as the 2021 CCSA Conference Champions. Taking home first place, the men racked up a grand total of 1,059 points over the three-day meet.

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**Gardner-Webb men's swimming has been crowned as the 2021 CCSA Conference Champions. Taking home first place, the men racked up a grand total of 1,059 points over the three-day meet.**

In the Men's 1,650 Free, Freshman Garrett Despres took home second-place for GWU with a time of 15:55.55 on the touchpad. Senior Will Anderson placed fifth with a time of 16:02.49, Freshman Sam Goldey placed sixth with a time of 16:08.18, and Freshman Brandy Vann took seventh with a time of 16:10.14.

Freshman Landon Clark placed third for the Runnin' Bulldogs in the Men's 200 Back, finishing at the wall with a time of 1:48.84. Junior Christian Jann placed fourth in the event with a time of 1:52.02, and Sophomore Bryan Dunne touched in at seventh with a time of 1:53.06.

As for the Men's 100 Free, Senior Seggio Bernardina placed third for Gardner-Webb with a time of 45.31. While teammate Brady Fields took fifth with a time of 45.46, and Junior Tim Bennett was just behind in sixth with a time of 45.61.

Check back for more updates of other sports as this unique spring sport season continues.