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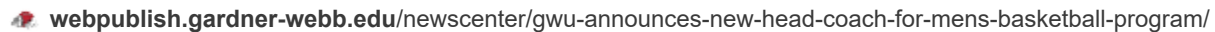
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GWU Announces New Head Coach for Men's Basketball Program



Office of University Communications

July 22, 2013

Tim Craft Takes Reins of GWU Program for His Inaugural Head Coaching Appointment

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Gardner-Webb University announced Monday that Tim Craft would take over as head coach of the men's basketball program. An introductory press conference is scheduled at 3 p.m. Monday in the Tucker Student Center on campus.

Craft, 36, returns to Gardner-Webb after spending the past three seasons as an assistant coach at East Carolina and the previous three seasons on staff at Auburn – one as Director of Basketball Operations and two as an assistant coach. Craft spent each of those six seasons at the side of former North Carolina point guard standout Jeff Lebo, who starred for the Tar Heels from 1986-1989. Auburn and East Carolina combined to win 109 games and make three postseason appearances during Craft's time on staff, averaging more than 18 wins per season.

Prior to his time on Lebo's staff, Craft spent three seasons as an assistant coach at Gardner-Webb (2004-2007) and played a critical role in the two best seasons the Runnin' Bulldogs enjoyed as members of the Atlantic Sun Conference. Craft will retain the current coaching staff in place at Gardner-Webb, which includes assistant coaches Jay McAuley, Mike Netti and Takayo Siddle and Director of Operations Paul Hemrick. Craft worked with Netti during his first stint in Boiling Springs and recruited and coached Siddle.

“As we searched for the man best suited to lead our basketball program, Tim Craft proved to be a perfect fit,” said Gardner-Webb president Dr. Frank Bonner. “Tim has been blessed with a great deal of success as an assistant coach, from his time at Gardner-Webb to the highest levels of Division I basketball. His character, commitment to Christian higher education and enthusiasm for our university and its mission are paramount to maintaining positive momentum on campus and in the community.”



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/wnQiJEsRkT4>

Craft is coming off of the best season in East Carolina basketball history. The Pirates won a school-record 23 games in 2012-2013 and capped the run with a CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament (CIT) championship.

The Pirates tied for fourth place in Conference USA and advanced to the league's tournament quarterfinals. ECU ranked second in C-USA in scoring, averaging a sizzling 76.5 points per game and led the league in assists per game (17.2), assist-turnover ratio (1.36) and 3-pointers made per game (7.8). Defensively, the Pirates ranked No. 3 in the conference in 3-point field goal percentage defense and were among the circuit's best in blocked shots (4.46 per game) and steals (7.97 per game). Nationally, East Carolina ranked No. 2 in assists per game and No. 18 in scoring offense.

Forward Maurice Kemp became the first ECU player to earn first-team All-Conference USA honors, averaging a league-best 18.9 points per game in addition to a solid 8.0 rebounds per game. Kemp was named MVP of the CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament. Two-time All-C-USA guard Miguel Paul led the league in assists and averaged 13.3 points per game, turning that production into an NBA tryout with the Orlando Magic and Washington Wizards following the season.

Craft helped the Pirates to 56 wins during his three seasons in Greenville, N.C., helping oversee a complete turnaround of a program that had not experienced as many as 15 wins in a season since 1996-97. East Carolina posted 18 wins in Craft's first season, the program's first above .500 in 14 years.

Craft spent three seasons on staff at Auburn (2007-2010) and helped the Tigers average nearly 18 wins per season during his time in the Southeastern Conference. In 2008-09, Craft helped Auburn to 24 wins, a second-place finish in the SEC and a postseason run that ended in the quarterfinals of the NIT.

Craft has been a part of major success in Boiling Springs before. His first season on the bench in Paul Porter Arena saw Gardner-Webb win its first Division I team title, bolting to the top of the Atlantic Sun Conference in 2004-2005 to win the league's regular season crown. The Runnin' Bulldogs advanced to the A-Sun title game in the postseason, and finished with an 18-12 record. Gardner-Webb followed that effort with 17 wins in 2005-2006.

Craft helped develop four All-Conference players during his time with Gardner-Webb as an assistant coach, including two-time A-Sun Defensive Player of the Year Tim Jennings. He also helped assemble a recruiting class in his final season with the program that was ranked No. 49 nationally by Hoop Scoop.

"I am thrilled and blessed to have this opportunity at a place I truly love in Gardner-Webb University," said Craft. "We have wonderful memories of our three years in Boiling Spring and the Christian mission of the University is exciting for my family and I to support. There is history of success at Gardner-Webb and I am honored and humbled to help build upon that tradition.

"Chris Holtmann has been an important mentor and close friend throughout my career, and I have tremendous respect for the success that he and his staff have worked so hard to achieve over the last three years. I look forward to working with the talented coaches and student-athletes already in place in the program and continuing to build on what they have begun. I want to thank Dr. Bonner and Chuck Burch for allowing me the chance to realize the dream of becoming a head coach, and entrusting me with the future of Gardner-Webb Basketball."

Prior to coaching at Gardner-Webb, Craft spent two seasons as an assistant at Pensacola (Fla.) Junior College (PJC) under coach Paul Swanson. In 2003-04, the Pirates went 20-10 and were ranked as high as No. 13 nationally.

At PJC, he coached forward Joel Anthony, who has won a pair of NBA titles as a member of the Miami Heat. Anthony was the 2007 Mountain West Player of the Year at UNLV. He also coached Tim Jennings, who went on to star at Gardner-Webb for two seasons. Twelve of the players Craft coached at PJC signed Division I scholarships and 91 percent earned their two-year degrees.

"We are excited to bring Tim back to Boiling Springs as our head coach," said Vice President for Athletics Chuck Burch. "After learning and growing during six seasons at Auburn and East Carolina he is ready for the task of leading our basketball program. The momentum

gained with last season's success was thrilling, and we are confident in Tim's ability to continue that process."

Craft began his coaching career as the assistant varsity coach and head junior varsity coach at Robert F. Munroe School in Quincy, Fla., in 2000-01. He was promoted to the Head Varsity Boy's Basketball Coach at Munroe the following season in 2001-02 before moving to PJC in 2002-03.

He earned his bachelors of arts degree in history with a minor in secondary education from the University of Florida in 2000. Craft and his wife, Jessica, have three children – Lola (6), Macy (4) and Bennett (6 months).

Gardner-Webb returns three key starters in forwards Donta Harper and Jerome Hill and point guard Tyler Strange from its 21-win season in 2012-13. GWU also welcomes back five other letter winners expected to play key roles – and adds immediate firepower in transfers Naji Hibbert (Texas A&M) and Josh Castellanos (Mount St. Mary's). Hibbert (6-6, 190) was a top-60 recruit as a senior at national power DeMatha Catholic and Castellanos (6-1, 185) averaged 8.1 points per game as a sophomore at Mount St. Mary's two seasons ago.

Gardner-Webb also added a pair of very talented freshmen post players as part of its incoming recruiting class – and both Tyrell Nelson (6-7, 235) and Donnell Tuff (6-6, 215) add athleticism and toughness to the roster.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University offers a comprehensive academic experience that introduces students to the diverse world of ideas and to the people who think them, preparing them for professional success and for productive citizenship.