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ATHLETICS

Hearty Meal, Hefty Trophy on the Line in Saturday's Inaugural East/West BBQ Bowl

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON OCTOBER 4, 2021



▲ A barbecue plate from Red Bridges in Shelby, N.C., and one from White Swan in Smithfield, N.C.

Gardner-Webb and Campbell Football Programs Face Off in Big South Rivalry Game

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University and Campbell University football programs are gearing up for the inaugural East/West BBQ Bowl on Saturday, Oct. 9. While each team wants to be the first to hoist and keep the Hog Trophy, there's also a hearty meal on the line.

Kickoff for the inaugural rivalry game is set for 6 p.m. in Ernest W. Spangler Stadium. The losing team will be tasked with supplying a barbecue feast from its region—eastern-style for the Camels, western or Lexington-style for the Bulldogs—to the winning side. Gardner-Webb has chosen Red Bridges Barbecue of Shelby, N.C., for its meal, and Campbell has selected White Swan Barbecue in Smithfield, N.C.



Started in 1946 by Red and Lyttle Bridges, [Red Bridges Barbecue](http://www.bridgesbbq.com/) (<http://www.bridgesbbq.com/>) is owned today by their grandchildren, Natalie Ramsey and Chase Webb. For more than 75 years, they've used the same recipe and cooked pork over hickory all night long. Recently, Lyttle was inducted into the Barbecue Hall of Fame in Kansas City, Kan. [White Swan Bar-B-Q](https://www.whiteswanbarbeque.com/) (<https://www.whiteswanbarbeque.com/>), owned by Linwood Parker, is made from a 50-year-old secret family recipe. Parker and his family have owned the restaurant since the late 80s, but the White Swan BBQ name has been in Johnston County, N.C., for over 87 years.

The award-winning restaurants are true representatives of their region's style, said North Carolina BBQ expert, [Bob Garner](https://video.pbsnc.org/search/?q=Bob+Garner%5C), (<https://video.pbsnc.org/search/?q=Bob+Garner%5C>) who will attend the game to present the trophy. The hefty prize is topped with a decorative hog and adorned with a placard to engrave each year's winning team and score.



▲ Bob Garner

In his travels across North Carolina, Garner has eaten at both establishments. “White Swan is whole hog barbecue with both drier white meat from the loins and hams and moist dark meat from the shoulders, chopped together and anointed with a straightforward eastern, pepper-vinegar sauce and accompanied by yellow-white coleslaw,” Garner described. “Red Bridges features luscious, juicy meat from pork shoulders, pit-cooked over live coals for hours, served with a warmed vinegar sauce to which has been added a small amount of tomato to render it slightly thicker than some versions, accompanied by spicy red ‘BBQ’ coleslaw.”

Garner has written three books on North Carolina’s favorite food, and was a regular food columnist in “Our State” magazine. He has appeared on Food Network, ABC’s “Good Morning America,” the Travel Channel’s “Road Trip,” and recently retired from PBS North Carolina.

His books trace the history of barbecue in North Carolina. The Eastern N.C. tradition goes back to the Spanish, the native Americans and, later, the primarily English and Scots-Irish settlers of the area. “They cooked whole hogs over wood coals and dressed it with a spicy vinegar, salt and pepper sauce for flavor,” he shared.

The Western tradition traces its roots back to German settlers who migrated down from Pennsylvania and the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia to the Piedmont area, Winston-Salem and Lexington. “The German settlers were fond of the pork shoulder, which is a darker, more marbled meat with fat, and more tender and moist,” Garner noted. “They also cooked with a fruit-flavored sauce and in the 1900s began to add commercial ketchup. The sauce was a little sweeter.”

Through the years, the East/West barbecue rivalry has been passed down and become a tradition with each side claiming its style is the best. “We love to keep that controversy going,” Garner mused. “Regional foodways are important to preserve, especially in our nation of identical chain restaurants, and barbecue is a perfect metaphor for an East-West athletic rivalry in North Carolina.”

Season tickets, season parking passes, along with single-game tickets and parking for Gardner-Webb football are available online at [GWUSports.com](https://gwusports.com/) (<https://gwusports.com/>), or by calling (704) 406-4340

during regular business hours.

About Campbell University

Located in Buies Creek, North Carolina, Campbell University is committed to graduating students with exemplary academic and professional skills who are prepared for purposeful lives and meaningful service. Learn more at campbell.edu

About Gardner-Webb

Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina's recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to six professional schools, 14 academic departments, more than 80 undergraduate and graduate majors, and a world-class faculty. Located on a beautiful 225-acre campus in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb prepares graduates to impact their chosen professions, equips them with the skills to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and inspires them to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of others. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.