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ATHLETICS

Gardner-Webb Inducts Four Into Hall of Fame During a Gala on Oct. 22

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON OCTOBER 25, 2021



Quartet Included Daniel Cooke, Daniel Elliott, Tyler Kettering and Evgeny Slesarev

By GWU Athletic Media Relations

BOILING SPRINGS – Gardner-Webb inducted its 2021 Athletics Hall of Fame Class Friday evening, Oct. 22, during a gala in the Tucker Student Center on campus.

The quartet included Daniel Cooke (Baseball and Football, 2002-2006), [Daniel Elliott](https://gwusports.com/coaches.aspx?rc=633) (<https://gwusports.com/coaches.aspx?rc=633>) (Wrestling, 2001-2006), Tyler Kettering (Soccer, 2003-2006) and Evgeny Slesarev (Tennis, 2006-2010).

Two-sport star Daniel Cooke started 251 games in football and baseball during his time in Boiling Springs. Cooke was named first-team All-Big South Conference in football four times while starting at safety. The Football Gazette tabbed Cooke a third-team All-American in 2006. He was a member of the 2006 Atlantic Sun Conference All-Freshman Team in baseball, earned a spot on the A-Sun's 2008 All-Tournament Team and was a 2009 All-Big South selection on the diamond. Cooke started all four years in both sports. On the gridiron, he finished with 282 tackles, 12.0 tackles for loss and eight interceptions. He also broke up 21 passes. As a freshman he led the team with 99 total tackles, becoming the first rookie in a decade to do so. In baseball, Cooke finished his 207-game career with a strong .324 batting average to go with 17 home runs, 145 RBI, 91 walks and 94 stolen bases. He ranks in the top-10 in program history in 12 different offensive categories, and is the career leader in steals, walks and run scored. Cooke remains the only man in Big South Conference history to earn All-

Conference honors in both football and baseball.

One of the most decorated wrestlers in Gardner-Webb program history, *Daniel Elliott* (<https://gwusports.com/coaches.aspx?rc=633>) earned his spot in Runnin' Bulldog lore with hard work, sweat and dedication to his sport. Elliott got better each season on the mat, wrapping up his time with a school-record 108 career victories. He won 20 matches as a freshman and, after a redshirt season, won 21 matches. He posted 27 wins as a junior and earned his first trip to the NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships at 149 pounds. Elliott established new school marks for single-season wins and consecutive wins as a senior, culminating with a 39-2 regular season mark in 2005-2006. That dominance allowed Elliott to earn a final top-10 ranking going into the postseason. He qualified for the NCAA Championships again and won his second East Regional title at 149 pounds. The Fuquay-Varina, N.C., native was also named Regional Most Outstanding Wrestler as a senior in 2006. He led Gardner-Webb for the third season in a row with 84 takedowns and finished with a team-high eight pins. Elliott finished third that season at the prestigious Southern Scuffle in Chattanooga, knocking off several nationally-ranked opponents.

A stalwart who became one of Gardner-Webb soccer's first stars at the Division I level, goalkeeper Tyler Kettering left his mark all over the program's record book before his four-year career was complete. The Xenia, Ohio, native led the nation in saves twice and set Gardner-Webb and Atlantic Sun Conference records with 446 career stops. Kettering set a Gardner-Webb single-season mark in 2004 with 134 stops, his first time atop the national statistics list. He followed with 116 stops in 2006 to climb back atop the national stats sheet. Kettering topped the 100-save mark three different times during his 73-game career. He posted 15.0 shutouts during that career, which ranks second in Gardner-Webb history and ninth in the A-Sun record book. Kettering earned second-team All-Atlantic Sun Conference honors in 2004 and 2006, and was a member of the league's All-Freshman team after posting 113 saves in 2003. He also earned All-Tournament honors from the A-Sun in both 2003 and 2006. His nine saves in the magical NCAA Tournament win over UAB in 2006 ranks second in Atlantic Sun history for a national tournament match. Following his collegiate playing career, Kettering went on to play professionally for the Wilmington Hammerheads of the USL (2006-2007) and the MLS Chicago Fire (2008-2009).

Legendary tennis player Evgeny Slesarev excelled at every step of his career at Gardner-Webb and he finished his four years in Boiling Springs, N.C., with 116 total wins on the court. The native of Krasnoyarsk, Russia, won 70 singles matches during that stretch and remains one of the most dominant players to step on a tennis court in a Gardner-Webb uniform. Those 70 victories established a new school record, as did his 46 doubles wins. In 2010, Slesarev posted an 18-3 overall record, including a 5-1 mark in league play, to earn Big South Conference Men's Tennis Player of the Year honors. He set a new school season record with 21 singles wins as a junior, going 21-5 at the No. 1 position. He earned All-Conference honors in two different conferences, twice in the Big South (2009 and 2010) and twice in the Atlantic Sun Conference (2007 and 2008). Slesarev was the first male student-athlete in Gardner-Webb history to earn Player of the Year honors from the Big South

Conference.

The group was also honored during Gardner-Webb's football game Saturday vs. Robert Morris.

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.