

ATHLETICS

GWU Hosts North Carolina A&T for Big South Championship Saturday

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GWU Competing for First Title Since 2003

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—The Gardner-Webb Runnin' Bulldogs (5-5, 4-0 Big South) will host North Carolina A&T (7-3, 4-0 Big South) in the [Big South Conference Championship Game](https://gwusports.com/news/2022/11/16/football-game-notes-gardner-webb-hosts-north-carolina-a-t-saturday-for-big-south-title.aspx) (<https://gwusports.com/news/2022/11/16/football-game-notes-gardner-webb-hosts-north-carolina-a-t-saturday-for-big-south-title.aspx>) on Saturday, Nov. 19, at noon in Ernest W. Spangler Stadium. Tickets for the Big South title game in Boiling Springs are on sale at GWUSports.com (<http://GWUSports.com>) and can also be purchased by calling Gardner-Webb athletics at (704) 406-4340. General admission tickets are \$25 and reserved seating is \$30.

"Our players deserve a packed house on Saturday," said GWU Head Football Coach Tre Lamb. "It has been a process of two and a half years of creating daily habits and developing a roster that expects to win on the biggest stage when their best is required. We have an opportunity to create a special moment in Gardner-Webb football's rich history, and our team is highly focused on execution and controlling our controllables," added Lamb. "These games are the ones you dream of playing and coaching in. The vision meets reality! The future is now! Be there, show up, and impact the football game. Go Dawgs!"



Gardner-Webb has won four of its last five games, and this Saturday's season-finale will decide the Big South's automatic qualifier to the FCS Playoffs. It will be the league's second-straight "Winner Take All" Championship game regular-season finale. The winner of Saturday's contest will emerge with the 13th outright Big South championship title, as well the 13th champion with a perfect conference record.

"Runnin' Bulldog fans have been dreaming of this moment for a long, long time," emphasized GWU President Dr. William Downs. "Now, our players and coaching staff have delivered us a special championship opportunity. When I hired Coach Lamb back in December 2019, I was confident he'd turn our program around. We're right there on the edge of glory, and with a large and loud crowd at Spangler this Saturday, this team can write the next headline in Gardner-Webb sports history."

Gardner-Webb is looking for its third Big South football championship and first since 2003, when the Runnin' Bulldogs repeated as Big South champions after winning the inaugural league season of 2002. North Carolina A&T will play for its first Big South title in its final year of conference affiliation. The Aggies' last championship was in 2019 as members of the MEAC.

"Our community understands that winning a college football championship is going to make an impact far beyond the field of play," noted Andrew T. Goodrich, vice president and director of Athletics. "Few things can make a positive impact on enrollment, name recognition, and philanthropy as does winning a team championship. It sends a clear signal that this is a university comprised of students, faculty, staff, and alumni on a mission for something bigger than ourselves," remarked Goodrich.

The game will stream live on ESPN+ with Phil Constantino and Mark Covert calling the action and will air live on WGNC 1450 AM / 101.1 FM and wgnradio.com (<https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.wgnradio.com%2F&data=05%7C01%7Cjbridges9%40Gardner-Webb.edu%7Ca4d5c00c5def4dce05e608dac8a90b39%7Cb75d79c569584457972cfe8241c63355%7C0%7C0%7C638042925609349041%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZstFriedman and Chuck Burch on the call>).

**By the numbers:*



▲ Bailey Fisher



▲ T.J. Luther



▲ Narii Gaither

Gardner-Webb QB Bailey Fisher has tied a Big South record with three consecutive games with 350+ yards of total offense. Fisher has amassed 452, 384 and 414 total offensive yards during his current streak, and his four career games with 400+ total yards of offense is tied for the most in Big South history (Coastal Carolina's Alex Ross, 2012-15). Fisher gained Offensive Player of the Week when he completed 30-of-38 passes for 366 yards and three touchdowns, while rushing for 48 yards and a score in leading the Runnin' Bulldogs to a 42-35 victory over Campbell in the NC Pork East/West BBQ Bowl. He was a perfect 10-of-10 on short throws while going 10-of-11 on mid-range passes to help GWU collect 33 first downs and 583 yards of offense.

Gardner-Webb WR T.J. Luther is the Big South leader with 1,010 receiving yards, the first GWU receiver with 1,000 receiving yards in a season since Izaiah Gathings in 2019. Luther is first in the Big South with seven 100-yard receiving games. His current streak of five-straight 100-yard receiving games is one shy of matching the overall league mark of six (Stony Brook's Kevin Norrell in 2012).

Gardner-Webb RB Narii Gaither became the 30th player in Big South history with 2,000 career rushing yards when he eclipsed the milestone this past Saturday at Campbell. Gaither enters the regular-season finale with 2,057 career rushing yards, which ranks 29th in league history. He has 11 career 100+ rushing games, which includes four this season, and he has caught 73 passes out of the backfield for 634 yards and six scores. Gaither is fourth among Big South running backs for career receptions, and he needs five to move into second-place.

Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina's recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to nine colleges and schools, 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](https://gardner-webb.edu/) (<https://gardner-webb.edu/>).

**stats provided by the Big South Conference*