

ATHLETICS

Gardner-Webb Names New Head Soccer Coach

BY GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY ON DECEMBER 22, 2022



Coventry, England Native Scott Wells to Helm the Runnin' Bulldogs

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Gardner-Webb University VP and Director of Athletics Dr. Andrew Goodrich announced the hiring of Scott Wells as the Runnin' Bulldogs head men's soccer coach on Thursday.

"We empowered our men's soccer student-athletes to discuss and develop the criteria and values they wanted from their next head coach," said Goodrich. "They made it clear they wanted a person who cared deeply about the players on and off the field, a person with a proven NCAA championship pedigree, and a person who is skillful in helping diverse international and domestic players come together to play their best as a unified team. I am proud to say that we found all that and so much more in Scott Wells"

The Coventry, England, native is the third head coach in the program's history. He comes to Gardner-Webb after building UNC Greensboro into a top-5 national program as Associate Head Coach and lead recruiter.

"First, I would like to thank President Dr. Downs for the ultimate decision on allowing me to be part of Gardner Webb University," said Wells. "I want to say a very special thank you to Dr. Goodrich, who has been a major factor in my decision. He is a winner, and it was evident early in the process that he is willing to be in the trenches with me as we start the new era of Bulldog Soccer. I want to thank UNC Greensboro and the entire athletics department, specifically Head Coach Chris Rich for giving me the opportunity to help elevate the team in to a top-5 program. Lastly, but most importantly, I want to thank my Wife Carissa Wells. There is a huge difference between a wife and a coach's wife. Thank you for all the sacrifice you have given our family and the support to ultimately be in this position today."

Wells helped engineer a sensational 2022 season for the Spartans, which started with a 10-match unbeaten streak in August and September. UNCG finished the campaign with a 13-2-6 mark, won the Southern Conference regular season and conference titles and advanced all the way to the NCAA Elite Eight with tournament wins over Ohio State and Stanford. The Spartans finished the 2022 season ranked in the top-25 nationally in 12 different statistical categories. UNCG ranked ninth in total goals, 10th in shot accuracy, 12th in goal differential, 13th in total points and winning percentage, 16th in scoring offense, 18th in total assists, 19th in points per game, 20th in shots on goal, 22nd in goals against average and corner kicks per game and 25th in assists per game.

UNCG earned its highest ever ranking in the final national polls, coming in at No. 5 when the United Soccer Coaches poll was released in mid-December. The Spartans cracked the top-25 in early September and moved back into the polls for good on October 11.

Sophomore midfielder J.C. Ngando earned first-team United Soccer Coaches All-America honors after scoring 22 points and posting 14 assists – which ranked second nationally by season’s end. A dozen Spartans earned postseason accolades from the Southern Conference in November.

Wells was also part of UNCG’s 2021 SoCon championship during the spring, which saw Theo Collomb earn SoCon Freshman of the Year honors. Collomb went on to earn second-team All-America honors the following fall and was selected by Vancouver Whitecaps FC in the 2022 MLS SuperDraft following his sophomore season.

Wells’ first stint with the Spartans began in 2019 and success followed soon after. UNCG won six of its final seven regular season matches that season, won a conference regular season title and advanced all the way to the SoCon Tournament finals.

Wells also spearheaded the recruitment of four top-25 recruiting classes for UNCG, providing the foundation for the program’s recent success. The Spartans saw 23 student-athletes earn SoCon postseason honors during Wells’ tenure.

Two of his recruits, Ngando and Joey Skinner, were selected in the first round of the 2023 MLS SuperDraft on December 21. Ngando was chosen No. 5 overall by Vancouver Whitecaps FC and Skinner was taken with the No. 11 overall pick by Nashville SC. Another, defender Ethan Conley, was drafted in the second round by New York Red Bulls.

“Our goal is to build a consistent soccer powerhouse at Gardner-Webb,” underscored GWU President Dr. William Downs. “That means winning conference championships and making deep runs in the NCAA tournament...nothing less. It takes energy, expertise, and a good measure of audacity to realize such a goal, and in Coach Scott Wells I believe we have found the right potent combination. Scott knows he’s got a turnaround project on his hands, and I’m confident he’s up to the challenge.”

Success has followed Wells at each of his career stops in the sport. He came to UNCG after a terrific two-year stint as the top assistant at the University of Charleston (WV). While there, he helped guide the team to a pair of NCAA Sweet Sixteen appearances and the 2017 NCAA Division II National Championship. The Golden Eagles went 21-2-1 in 2017 and followed with an 18-1-2 mark – and unbeaten regular season – in 2018. Charleston outscored its opponents 54-3 during the 2018 campaign.

Wells' entrance into the college coaching ranks was sensational as well. He began as a graduate assistant coach at the University of Rio Grande (OH), helping the Red Storm to a 19-2-2 mark and a No. 1 national ranking during the 2014 regular season. The following season, as the program's top assistant, Wells saw Rio Grande win the 2015 NAIA National Championship and post a 25-2 record. The Red Storm finished the season riding a 13-match win streak.

Wells played collegiately at Limestone in nearby Gaffney, S.C., helping the Saints to 24 wins over two seasons as a team captain. He transferred to the school after beginning his career at Santa Barbara (Calif.) City College. Wells was a first-team All-Western State Conference choice in each of his two seasons with the Vaqueros.

"I have been very strategic about the road I wanted my career to take," added Wells. "First and foremost, I seek relationships and the ability to be around good human beings. This is something I immediately felt within the campus. Gardner Webb University athletics has the people, plans, and vision to be a top Division 1 program. Dr. Downs and Dr. Goodrich expressed this vision to me, and when leaving campus last week, I was already excited to get started. Go Bulldogs!"

Wells earned his B.A. in liberal studies from Limestone and a Master's Degree with a focus on collegiate leadership from Rio Grande.

He grew up in the Coventry City academy system in England before moving to Derby County in 2003 and Sheffield Wednesday in 2006. He came to the United States in 2007 to begin his college soccer career at Santa Barbara.

Wells and his wife, Carissa, are parents to three young children.

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/>).