

Interviews with students who traveled to NYC

Christopher Shaver
Intrepid Pilot staff reporter

Shaver asked students the following questions about activities surrounding the Runnin' Bulldogs basketball team and the trip to the tournament in New York City last Thursday and Friday.

1) How would you sum up the trip and all the trouble involved in getting tickets (like camping out) and the long bus trips?

2) What was it like watching GWU play in Madison Square Garden? Was it different than watching them play in Porter?

3) How do you feel about GWU now?

4) What did you do in the Big Apple?

5) Anything else you want to add?

Here's what the students had to say:

Marcus Polite (junior, business administration major, from Charlotte)

1. The camping and bus ride were cold as far as weather is concerned, but very well worth it. I most definitely enjoyed myself in NYC.

2. It was very different because I never thought I'd see myself watching a basketball game there. It was very different than watching them here at Boiling Springs.

3. I'm proud of my buddies on the team doing what they love to do best, the best they can do it.

4. I got to hang out with friends, got lost because of one of them which was still fun, walked around the city and went to Chinatown. I called my grandmother who lived in Brooklyn to let her know that I was in town. I had so much fun with my friends and watching basketball in one of the best cities in the world. It can't get much better than that.

5. For those people who criticized us for camping

out in freezing weather for 3 days for tickets, I just want to say that you really missed out on a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Kam Durr (alum from Charlotte)

1. The trip was awesome, I couldn't ask for a better \$50 dollar ticket trip. For anybody who hasn't been to New York. It's a beautiful experience. I think the standing out in the cold for tickets was insane, but someone had to do it. We were tent number 2 and I was on the verge of quitting. It was so cold out there, but I will do it again in a heartbeat. I met a lot of interesting people.

2. Madison Square Garden was awesome! That should sum it all up. There wasn't really that much of a difference.

3. Gardner-Webb looks pretty good overall.

4. Went to Times Square, the M & M store, a shoe store, China Town, ate at a couple of restaurants. We went to the Apple store, the "Today" show. We rode the subway to Newark, N.J. to get back home after we got lost, because of one of my friends, and I took my first cab ride ever.

Justin Keziah (junior, sports management major from Salisbury)

1. If I were to sum up the trip and everything else, I first think about not a lot of sleep but a whole lot of fun. Waiting outside for the tickets the entire weekend was very cold and it was impossible to get good sleep, but it was all good times with friends and meeting new people.

The night before the bus left I stayed up all night in hopes of sleeping the whole way to NYC, but that did not work out at all. I only slept about 2 hours on the bus and that was all the sleep that I got. But the bus ride back was all sleep because I also stayed up all night in NYC

making sure I did not waste any time in the city. But I had the best time in NYC and I was basically always on the go so I would not fall asleep. But as long as you have great friends with you, long trips and waits are not bad at all.

2. I thought it was great watching GWU play at Madison Square Garden because that arena has so much history and so many great games have taken place there. Playing in a big arena is a lot different than at home because the arena is so much bigger and you do not have your reserved "Dog Pound" cheering section, so everyone has to yell even louder to be heard. I know the basketball team loved playing there because of the history of the court and fans get excited because it is such a nice place, and a little over 100 GWU fans really stick out.

3. I run cross country and track at GWU so I have a lot of pride for GWU and I am a big supporter of GWU athletics. I think it is pretty cool how when I was walking around in NYC with a Gardner-Webb hoodie on that a lot of different people would ask about GWU. It makes you feel good that people can recognize your small school all the way in NYC and that people will stop to ask you questions as well.

4. I had made a trip to NYC a couple weeks before school started so I had already seen and viewed all of the main tourist attractions such as the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, Central Park and others. So on this trip we did a lot of shopping and I went around with a bunch of my friends taking them places. We spent a lot of time in Chinatown and Times Square which are two of the best places in NYC. We took lots of pictures with the fun stuff in NYC and had a great time hanging out.

5. I thought this trip it

was amazing and was so glad that GWU took a group to the games. I think it went very well and was one of the best things that I have done since I have been at GWU.

James Kernicky (senior, mathematics major from Shelby)

1. Everything was set up well. It was like a real college experience with getting the tickets.

2. It was pretty awesome to see people I know play at a historic arena. I've always wanted to go there. So it was even better getting to see Gardner-Webb play there.

3. I feel the same way I've always felt about them. I've always been a fan. I've travelled for years to see them play. So, it was just cool to see them play in New York City. I've always been proud of them.

4. I went to Ground Zero, Times Square and the Statue of Liberty.

5. It was a good trip and I was glad to get to experience it.

Bethany Ray (sophomore, math education major from Wingate)

1. It was amazing, although there were a few complications. It didn't feel like it was as organized, but that comes with any trip.

2. It was really exciting, but I almost like it better when we play at home because it was packed at our last home game. It wasn't as full at the Garden.

3. I love Gardner-Webb! I think the game has brought out a lot of school spirit and it united Gardner-Webb

4. I woke up with a bunch of friends at 4:30 in the morning to see the "Today" show. We were interviewed by Al Roker. We also went to Times Square, the Statue of Liberty, shopped, went to Chinatown, went to Central Park and visited Ground Zero.



Photo by Kate Gazaway

GWU students display their signs supporting the Bulldogs at Friday morning's filming of The Today Show in New York City.

Rebekah Stanford (sophomore, sociology major from Clover, S.C.)

1. It was all worth it. It was kind of fun, too. The camping out and long trips were miserable, but fun.

2. It was different. People were more excited because they were at Madison Square Garden; but when we're home the attraction is Gardner-Webb. We felt like we were famous, because people on the street wanted to know where we were from and all.

3. I was really proud of them. Even though we lost, everyone has been really supportive of the team.

4. I went to Rockefeller Center, Times Square and

shopped at Macy's. **Sarah Gaddis** (sophomore, athletic training major from Dallas)

1. It was worth it to experience it. I enjoyed it, but I'm glad to be back home.

2. It seemed like it was on a different level because it was such a big arena. It was great to see all the Gardner-Webb students cheer them on.

3. I am extremely proud of them. They played really hard.

4. I hit all the tourist spots like Radio City Music Hall, the Statue of Liberty and Ground Zero.

5. I had a good time and I was glad I experienced it.

For Samba Fall, the Garden is the ultimate thrill

By Nancy-Pat Dire
Pilot advisor

As of Sunday afternoon, Runnin' Bulldog basketball player Samba Fall hadn't told his parents about any of the events that had dominated his life for nearly two weeks. He planned on getting around to it soon, though.

His parents didn't know about the surprise win over Kentucky, the 2K Coaches vs. Cancer tournament in Madison Square Garden or the media frenzy related to it all.

It's not because his family wouldn't care. It's just that living in Senegal, on Africa's western coast, he

doesn't get to contact them frequently. Lately he's been busy, too. Very busy. And more than that, Fall said his family doesn't know much about basketball, so immediately sharing the news wasn't essential.

He knew they'd be happy for him when he explained all that had happened beginning with the Kentucky game Nov. 7.

But don't think he's missed out. Fall shared the excitement and glory with a family member who does know basketball and the significance of playing the court in Madison Square Garden.

His cousin Elhadji Kende has lived in New York City

"I will never forget this. It was a great experience for the entire college."

Samba Fall

for seven years and never been to the Garden. He'd passed by it often enough, but never had a reason to stop in, until last Thursday's game against the University of Connecticut.

Not only was it Kende's first time in the Garden, but also the first time he'd ever seen Fall play on a team.

"It has been a great night for me and him, too," Fall said. "He came with one of his friends. I must have made him proud."

Pride is an abundant sentiment on campus these days, and Fall has his share.

"I am proud to be at Gardner-Webb," he said. "I thought coming to America would be the most exciting thing in my life. But the last two weeks has been absolutely the most exciting thing in my life."

"If somebody told me five or six years ago I'd be playing at Madison Square Garden, I'd say he was crazy."

He believes that the team earned its spot in the tournament. The victory over Kentucky wasn't a fluke.

"We deserved to be there because we worked hard in the preseason," Fall said.

"We worked as a team. It was a team effort to beat Kentucky, and that is what the coaches wanted us to do."

He said the team's motto is "play hard, play together" and that has been its watchword since the game at Rupp Arena.

"We were very focused

on trying to do our best, and play hard and play together."

That effort didn't bring the team a win against UConn Thursday, though.

"That was a very harsh feeling," said Fall. "It was our first loss of the season. We thought we would have been able to compete against them."

"We played smarter. They beat us because we didn't have a good first half."

Still, he said, it was thrilling to see fans including GWU President Frank Bonner; Vice President for Athletics Chuck Burch; and the students who made the bus trip from Boiling Springs cheering for them from the stands.

Victory slipped by the team Friday night, too, as the University of Oklahoma came out on top.

However, Fall was able to keep that in perspective, after the visit the Bulldogs had made Wednesday to Hope Lodge in New York City.

It's a facility where people undergoing cancer treatment can stay, free of charge, for anywhere from three days to six months, he said.

Although the team members didn't get to visit any cancer patients directly, the message was clear.

"It opened our eyes to the main reason for the tournament," said Fall. "It is to help out people who are suffering. It's not just about basketball."

Still, the overall significance of what occurred in the past 11 days hadn't been dampened.

"I will never forget this. It was a great experience for the entire college."



Photo by Bob Carey

They sure grow them big at UConn. Samba Falls guards a UConn player during the game in Madison Square Garden.

Thanksgiving Traditions

Here's what we love to do

From staff reports

Thanksgiving traditions are part of what makes the holiday special. Some Gardner-Webb students share what they love best about Thanksgiving Day:

Maegan Marlowe

Major: Nursing

Year: Junior

Hometown: Taylorsville

Favorite tradition: "Eating with my family. We all get together at my aunt's house."

Rebecca Silleman

Major: Accounting

Year: Senior

Hometown: Charlotte

Favorite tradition: "We watch football. And we always have a big Thanksgiving dinner."

Mark Reid

Major: Sociology; Minor: Criminal Justice

Year: Freshman

Hometown: Gastonia

Favorite tradition: "My family meets up at my grandma's house and we have a big ol' feast. We catch up on each other's lives."

Steven Miller

Year: Sophomore

Major: Video/Film and Spanish

Hometown: Shelby

Favorite tradition: Eating with family.

Felicia Belk

Year: Freshman

Major: Nursing

Hometown: Charlotte

Favorite tradition: Eating at home with family, then go out to see a movie with family members.

Alex McKay

Year: Sophomore

Major: Business

Hometown: Waynesville

Favorite tradition: Everybody around the dinner table tells what he or she is thankful for.