

GWU tennis teams look to youth to spell success in spring season

by Randy Capps
co-editor

The Gardner-Webb tennis teams hope that an infusion of young players will lead to more victories this season.

Coach Andy Smith enters his third year as coach of both the men's and women's teams, and both squads are very young.

The men's team is composed of all freshmen and sophomores. Murray Wellington, a freshman from Australia, is the team's top player. Among his accomplishments this season are victories over the number one seeds from UNC-Charlotte and High Point. Sophomores Jason Allen and Mitch Lake have also played a major role in the squad's success so far.

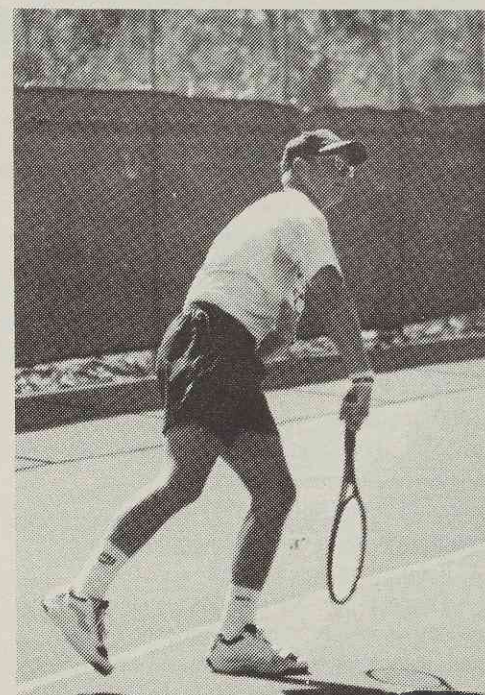
GWU's men's team has gotten off to a good start this year, but the key to any further success the team has this season will be its depth. "We have fairly good depth...but we're not a proven team yet," Smith said.

The women's team is in a similar situation. There is one senior on the squad, but the rest are freshmen and sophomores.

Senior Mindy Mallard and sophomore Hannah Valdez have been leading the women's team against a difficult non-conference schedule in the early part of the season. Despite an injury to Mallard, who is the number one-seed, the women's team has opened the 1997 campaign with an overall mark of 5-2.

"It's good to play against tough non-conference teams. We have to play good teams to get better," Smith said.

The Gardner-Webb men's and women's tennis teams already have run up impressive records on the season, with easy victories over Newberry and North Greenville. With some tough South Atlantic Conference matches coming up soon, Coach Smith and his young players hope to keep up their good play for the entire season.



Jason Allen, a sophomore from Palatka, Florida, follows through on a serve during a recent practice. Allen will play an integral role on the men's tennis team this year.

(Photo by Garry Eller)

Golf team gets season underway

by B.J. Johnson
staff writer

While most students were enjoying their spring break or watching the NCAA Tournament last week, the GWU golf team was busy competing in its first tournament of the season.

The team traveled to Burlington to take part in the Max Ward Invitational. The Bulldogs shot a 643 (326/317) as a team in the two-day tournament, which was good for seventeenth place out of twenty-two teams.

Pacing Gardner-Webb was junior Chad Shumate who shot a 156 over two rounds. Jeff Hooper, playing in his first collegiate tournament, shot a 159. Josh Lail shot 164; Jason Winn, 165; and Jason Fulbright rounded out the team with 168.

The team didn't fare as well in its next tournament, however. GWU traveled to Holden Beach for the 1997 Cheerwine-Alan Holden Realty Challenge. They finished sixteenth out of eighteen teams while shooting a 664 (334/330).

The Bulldogs will look to rebound when they travel to Hickory for the Lenoir-Rhyne Spring Invitational Tournament on March 24-25. On March 29-30 they will compete in the Pfeiffer College Invitational.

Baseball team off to slow start

by Carlton Hurt
sports editor

In a regular season which comprises 53 games, the advice one has to keep in mind is this: Don't get too high after a win nor too low after a loss.

Such is the case for the Gardner-Webb baseball team. The Bulldogs have started slow in conference play (1-5), but are showing signs of potential as they look to turn this season around.

In last weekend's series against league-leading Carson-Newman, GWU got some outstanding individual performances despite being swept all three games. In the first game of a doubleheader on Saturday, GWU's Jason Walker went two for five with two RBI's. Walker, a freshman, is second on the team in hits as well as runs scored.

In game two of that same doubleheader, junior righthander Brian Rhodes turned in a stellar pitching performance. He went the distance, striking out nine, while giving up just two earned runs in the loss.

Sunday's game was a coming-out party for sophomore Wes Gentry. Gentry went three for five with two RBI's, belting his third home run, a team high, along the way. He has been GWU's offensive leader so far this season, leading the team in RBI's as well as slugging percentage.

The Bulldogs, who are 10-13 overall this season, hope these individual performances can be molded into team success in the next few weeks. With 28 games remaining, a few wins and a little confidence can go a long way.

GWU takes on West Virginia St. this Friday, March 21, then will travel to Elon College for a three-game series this weekend.

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pick. But don't count out that team over in Chapel Hill. The Tar Heels are the hottest team in the country and they may have -- forgotten how to lose, what with a 12-game winning streak.

But, I'm going to go out on a limb and say UCLA will take home the title. This team has loads of talent and it will beat Kansas in the championship game.

So maybe our picks will be right - maybe they won't. No one will know for sure until "March Madness" is over and the '97 champ is crowned. Until then stayed tuned to your television sets and may the best, or luckiest team win.

Oh yeah...I almost forgot this week's trivia question. Here it is: "In 1982, the year UNC won the national championship, name the team the Tar Heels beat in the Final Four to get to the title game."