

Sports

Bulldogs provide memories in transition

Mike Shade
Pilot sports editor

The Men's Basketball team's impressive 23-9 record doesn't come close to explaining what a season it was for the program.

In the team's second year of Division I play, the team excelled beyond expectations. As the competition got stronger, the team stepped up its play. With big wins over such schools as Georgia Southern, Centenary, Colorado State and Murray State (who qualified for the NCAA Tournament), the Bulldogs proved they belonged.

The 23-win season was the third-straight 20-win season for Coach Scruggs and the Bulldogs. Gardner-Webb returned nine players from last year's squad—including five seniors: James Colwell, Chas Criss, Bruce Fields, Jamie Roller and Kerek Taylor. The team combined their maturity and talent for a winning combination.

In arguably the best season in GWU basketball history, stats alone do not tell the entire story. Senior forward Fields, who led the team in points, rebounds, assists and steals explained why this season was so special.

"This season, more than any other season, was more enjoyable because it was my last one, and our team was a lot closer this year than in the



Photo by Angela Murtiff

ABOVE: A rare moment of silence from the Dog Pound exemplifies their grief. **RIGHT:** A Mt. Vernon player drives past Eli Strait (12) in the finals of the NCCAA Championship.

past," Fields said. "We had fun out there. When you have a great group of guys like we did this year, it's easy to get along with everyone."

"The fact that we are all friends off the court played a big part in our success. Our team has a mutual trust in one another, and it carries over onto the court. We have complete respect for each other, because we are all striving towards the same goal together."

Junior guard Eli Strait agreed that team unity was the key ingredient to this year's success.

"This season was overall the best I have experienced here at GWU," he said. "The bond that the team had together was something special and unique. The Lord really blessed the team with great chemistry that instilled in us the drive to want to win as a team. We don't care who plays; we just want to

see each other succeed."

The GWU Basketball team got it done this year, with hard work and discipline, and had a good time doing it.

"My favorite moment was probably the Lipscomb game because Chas [Criss] won it on the last second," said Fields. "Also, it was Senior Night, so it was a very special game for me."

"The best moment of the season was probably the way the students and community showed up to the Colorado State game," Strait said. "The best part of the game was after we won, celebrating with my team and classmates."

The Bulldogs provided the fans with many memories and excitement this year. From the shocking of Colorado State to the continuation of a 33-game home win streak, it was a season to remember for Gardner-Webb basketball.

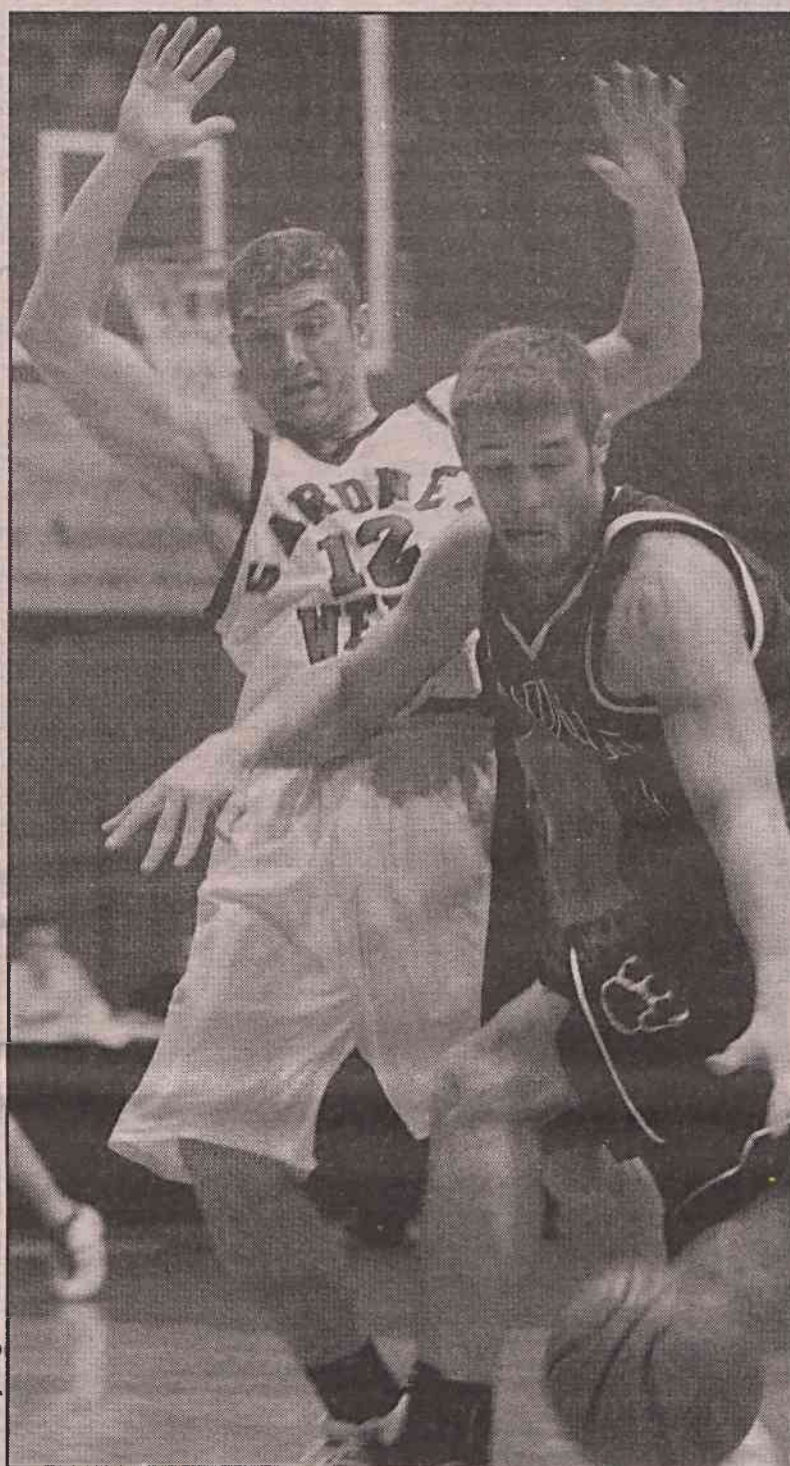


Photo by Angela Murtiff

GWU athletic trainers emphasize awareness month

Jamesia Brown
Pilot staff

March is National Athletic Training Month across the nation, including Gardner-Webb University. The theme is "Prevention: Avoid Injury-Stay Active."

National Athletic Training Month is a way to raise the awareness of what Athletic Trainers do. The theme is to build more public awareness of how to prevent injuries.

Athletic Trainers are also working to present firsthand knowledge in preventative care for injuries of any physical

activity.

The National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA), which is composed of 27,000 members, is a non-profit organization based out of Dallas, Texas.

According to their website, NATA's mission is to "enhance the quality of health care of athletes and those engaged in physical activities, and to advance the profession of athletic training through education and research in the prevention, evaluation, management and rehabilitation of injuries."

On March 14, Gardner-Webb's local athletic trainers were honored at the NCCAA Basketball Tournament. There

was a booth set up at the tournament with pamphlets explaining what the trainers do. Also, during the last two games, tours were given of the training and rehab rooms in the LYCC.

Gardner-Webb honored four of their alumni at the half-time presentation: Tracy Curry, Jimmy Brackett, Cat Ayotte, and Ewell Vernon.

"We had a good turn out of parents, doctors and athletes," said athletic trainer Kim Anderson.

The special emphasis of the month has allowed students to get a look behind the scenes of sporting events.



Photo by Joy Marinelli

Athletic trainer Shaun Arnett and Head Trainer Kevin Jones escort a player off the field during a game against Liberty University last fall.