

Sports

Swimmers capture first NEC title

Kat Harry
Pilot Staff

The Gardner Webb ladies swim team claimed the Northeast Conference Championship crown on Feb. 22 in Landover, MD.

Besides this team accomplishment freshman Terra Wilson was named Outstanding Swimmer and Rookie of the Year and Head Coach Mike Simpson was named Coach of the Year, respectively.

This is the first time a women's sports team has won their conference since Gardner Webb moved to the D-1 level of athletics in 2000. GWU was ranked third in the preseason polls but with a great team effort came out on top after a strong weekend of swimming. The Lady Bulldogs set 12 team records and five NEC records at the meet.

After the first day of competition GWU was in first place with 179 points, just ahead of Central Connecticut State by two

points.

After their first day the swimmers set five of their 12 team records and two NEC records. Terra Wilson won the 50 free title with a time of 23.36 and also helped the 400 medley relay win the title with her record setting 100 back time. The medley team of Wilson, Kourtney Hamilton, Lisa Fry, and Taylor Simpson missed an NEC record by seven seconds.

Simpson also placed second in the 200 IM and with the 200 free relay team of Kathryn Williams, Jessica Mischel, and Jennifer Chester captured second place. Samantha Lehman and Chester also placed fourth and fifth, respectively in the 500 free. Camille Palacio and Hamilton placed sixth and eight, respectively in the 200 IM for GWU.

GWU stretched its lead led once again by Wilson and Simpson in day two of the competition. Wilson's second individual title came in the 200 free where she

surpassed a team and NEC record after touching in 1:49.92. The 800 free relay, which included Chester, Lehman, and Simpson along with Wilson, set team and meet records with a time of 7:41.28. Simpson set a career best and new school record time of 4:27.15 to place second in the 400 IM. Stephanie Crawford, Hamilton, and Williams achieved a school record and second place finish in the 200 medley.

Fry finished third in the 100 fly and fifth in the 100 breast. Hamilton finished fourth in the 100 breast and Lehman came in fifth in the 200 free. Simpson placed second, Palacio placed fourth, Chester came in fifth, and Campbell finished seventh in the 400 IM to seal the first place conference win for the Bulldogs.

Since this event GWU placed fifth at the NIC championships in Michigan. Terra Wilson took first in the 100 and 200 free, setting new school records in both



Photo by Kaylin Bowers

Wilson gets ready to compete. Wilson will find out on March 4 if she makes NCAA's national competition.

events. Junior Jennifer

Bishop set a new school record in the 200 back. GWU did not take the entire swimming team to this event.

Notably, Terra Wilson

will find out March 4 if she makes the NCAA field. If Wilson does make the field she will compete at the NCAA Championships from March 18-20 in College Station, Texas.

Diamond Dogs sweep Davidson, 9-3

Jacob Conley
Pilot Staff

Gardner-Webb overcame an early two run deficit to beat the Davidson Wildcats 9-3 on Tuesday. With the win, Gardner Webb improves to 5-6 on the season, and a 3-0 home record.

"The guys definitely seem to have a home field advantage," said Head Coach Rusty Stroupe. "I just wish some of the bigger schools (like Clemson) would play here."

GWU took an 8-5 road loss to Clemson University

on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, the Bulldogs allowed Davidson (3-3) to score two runs in the top of the third inning. The 'Dogs answered in the bottom of the frame when senior David Futrelle led off with a single.

The Bulldogs took the lead in the fourth inning when Futrelle collected another RBI by driving in sophomore Matt Higginson via a fielder's choice.

Davidson would again tie the score in the fifth and it would remain knotted at three until the GWU half of

the seventh inning.

"Our bats have been asleep for the first ten games, but they finally woke up (today), and hopefully they will stay that way (for the rest of the season)," said Stroupe.

The four run rally began when pinch hitter, junior Ryan Sickles, doubled to left field. Senior Sammy Styers two-run triple gave the Bulldogs a 7-3 lead.

"Our bench players played a big part in the win today," said Stroupe. "Sickles came off the bench and got a big hit to spark a rally."

Staked to a four-run lead, true freshman reliever Matt Taffazoli shut the Wildcats down the rest of the way to earn his first ever-collegiate victory.

"We could have scheduled a couple of easy wins early in the season," said Stroupe. "By scheduling these top ranked teams there will be no surprises, and we will have seen everything come conference play."

GWU plays host to Southern conference member Furman on March 10. First pitch is scheduled for 3 p.m. at Varsity field.

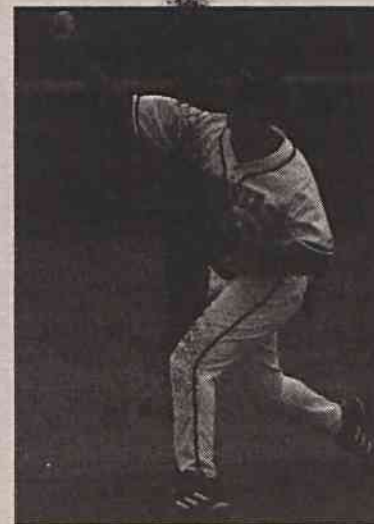


Photo by Scott Holstein

Matt Taffazoli, right-handed freshman, threw three scoreless innings in relief to pick up his first collegiate victory for GWU against Davidson on March 2.