

HAPPY APRIL FOOL'S DAY

GWU pitcher leads baseball team

Big weekend for Bulldogs

Ronda Carpenter
Pilot staff

The Diamond 'Dogs had an impressive Atlantic Sun Conference series against Troy this past weekend bringing in two wins plus an additional win against Belmont Abbey on Monday.

Zach Ward allowed only three hits and struck out eight in a complete game, 4-2, win over Troy in Friday's series opener. However, Troy came back to win the second game 8-2.

In the first game, Gardner-Webb University went on top 1-0 in the bottom of the first after Joey Testa hit a double and scored from third on an RBI ground out from Blake Lalli. The 'Dogs added to that lead in the third, as Jeremy McCann ripped an RBI triple to right center field.

After a two-run homer by Troy, that barely cleared the fence, to tie the game, the 'Dogs did not let the Trojans score again and took advantage of a Troy error in the fifth to score the winning runs.

In the second game, Troy got ahead quickly, scoring five runs in the top of the first inning off of starter Clay Konas.

Konas took the loss for GWU, working 5.0 innings and allowing seven runs on nine hits. Wes Cogdill worked a pair of scoreless innings in relief, and Andrew Martin came on to close the game out with 1.1 innings of scoreless baseball.

The Bulldogs came back to defeat Troy on Saturday 9-5. Freshman standout Jay McConnell went 3-for-3 with an RBI and two runs scored.

The 'Dogs tied the game with a run in the bottom of the second, as Matt Bridges hit a double to left field and got McConnell across the plate.

McConnell singled to right to load the bases with no outs, and a suicide squeeze bunt by Ryan Sickles turned into an infield hit as Lalli scored for a 4-1 edge. Bridges also had a suicide squeeze to plate Jeremy McCann. Nate MacDonald gave GWU a 6-1 lead with a deep sacrifice fly to right, and Joey Testa drove in a pair of runs for an 8-1 lead.

GWU also had a 15-6 win over Belmont Abbey on Monday, giving the bulldogs their third win in the last four games. The 'Dogs are 10-14 overall and 3-6 in the conference.

"We're a little disappointed with the season so far," said Rusty Stroupe, head coach. "We have a good team, but it just hasn't showed up in the win-loss column yet."

Ward hopes to go pro

Ronda Carpenter
Pilot staff

Many college baseball players dream of going pro but only a small percentage of them actually get the chance.

This chance is a reality for Bulldog pitcher Zach Ward.

Ward, a junior and starting right-handed pitcher for the Diamond 'Dogs, has had a phenomenal season so far as his numbers reveal. Ward is 5-1, has a 1.69 ERA, 62 strikeouts, pitched a no-hitter and has had one save.

Besides his impressive stats, he is consistently throwing at 92-94 miles per hour and tops out at 96.

"Zach is obviously making a major contribution to our team," said Rusty Stroupe, Gardner-Webb University head baseball coach. "Out of the 10 games we have won, Zach has pitched in six of them. He has gained the university and our team national attention, and he's doing a great job."

Clay Konas, fifth-year senior and fellow pitcher, also believes Ward is doing an incredible job on the mound.

"Zach has contributed a lot of team confidence," said Konas. "When he goes out on the mound, the team feels like they have a really good chance of winning. Zach is a team player. He gives leadership to the team and he expects the best that our team can give."

Ward has a love for the game and has been a standout since he began his career in baseball. He began pitching when he started playing ball at age 6.

"You're in more control of the game as a pitcher," Ward said. "It's more competitive because you're in on every play. I don't really remember why I started playing ball, I just enjoyed the game."

The Kannapolis native and A.L.



WARD



photo by Amy Hipskind

Patently waiting for his turn to pitch with his coach, GWU's Zach Ward shows off his balancing skills. Ward is currently 5-1 on the season with a 1.69 ERA and 62 strikeouts. He hopes to go in the first round of the MLB draft.

Brown High School graduate decided to come to GWU because the school offered him the best scholarship money, and he had always wanted to play Division I baseball.

Ward first realized he had a chance to play professional ball after his freshman year. He was a Louisville Slugger Freshman All-American selection and named to the Atlantic Sun Conference's All-Freshman Team.

However, his remarkable talent and the reality of going pro became blatantly obvious after the 2004 summer when he pitched at Cape Cod.

Ward spent a season with the Harwich Mariners and was rated the No. 13 prospect in the Cape Cod League. He had

an ERA of 1.05, was 2-3, had 57 strikeouts in 42.2 innings of work, allowed only five earned runs all season and finished second in the league with 12.0 strikeouts per nine innings.

In the preseason predictions this year, Ward was projected to be drafted in the top two rounds.

As of right now, he is anticipated to go in the first round.

If or when Ward gets drafted, he will have a signing bonus ranging anywhere from \$1 million to \$2.5 million.

Zach plans to be represented by Jett Sports Management, which is the same agency that represents Atlanta Braves' third baseman Chipper Jones.

Coach: Miller still a part of GWU family

from page 1

choked-up Setzer. "He was a shining example of what a Gardner-Webb coach should be."

Andrew Martin, current baseball player, worked with Miller his freshman year on the team. Martin said Miller really loved baseball and loved every one of his players.

"He was a man of few words," said Martin, a senior nursing major from Marietta, Ga. "But when he did talk, he said a lot."

Miller also was popular with the faculty and staff. According to Barry Hambright, GWU professor of political science, Miller often drove the bus for faculty retreats.

"He was a very nice, low-key guy," Hambright said. "When I think of him, it's nothing but positive."

Hambright, a huge baseball fan, said he would often sit around with Miller and quote off baseball trivia.

Miller, who passed away March 22, at the age of 64, was currently working at GWU as assistant athletic director. Miller passed away at a hospital in Winston-Salem after a prolonged illness. He had been employed with GWU for 16 years, 13 as head baseball coach and the last three as assistant athletic director.

A memorial service was

held in his honor March 24 in Dover Chapel.

"It was really touching," said David Futrelle, who finished classes in December at GWU and graduates in May. "All his family was there and a lot of players."

Futrelle, who played for Miller for two years, drove five hours to come to the memorial.

Other players drove two to three hours to come last Thursday night. Futrelle said that shows the scope of the impact Miller had on everyone.

"He meant a lot to me," Futrelle said. "He's going to be missed."

Futrelle said Miller gave him confidence - both on and off the diamond.

"I was pinch hitting one game with a hurt ankle and got a hit," Futrelle said. "They sent in a runner for me because I was hurt, and Miller came over to me in the dugout, shook my hand and said, 'Great Job.'"

"That stuck with me and gave me confidence."

Marc Rabb, GWU sports director, said after the news of Miller's death, he received a flood of calls from former players for information on the funeral, which was held in Georgia, Miller's home state, last Saturday.

"He was a well-liked guy," Rabb said. "He was still a big part of the Gardner-Webb family."

Tennis

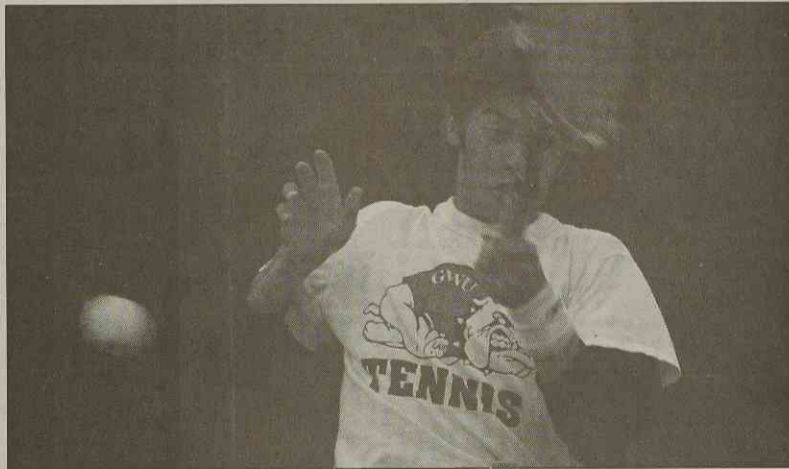


photo by Scott Holstein

GWU's Roberto Vasques returns the ball to his Lipscomb opponent at the match on March 22. GWU lost the match 4-3. Vasques, Daniel Abrahao and Taylor Ferrier received singles victories. Abrahao and Phillip Kern were the only pair to record a doubles victory. The men will be back in action today at 2:30 vs. UNC Asheville.

Madness: students gear up for title game

from page 1

"Honestly, they are probably not going to win, but they could," said J.P. McNamara, sophomore from Charlotte, who is a Duke Blue Devils fan.

McNamara was right. Duke lost last Friday to Michigan State.

For others, there is no hope left.

"I was pulling for UConn, but they are out," said Robert Dowden, freshman from Connecticut.

As far as making a bracket, some students get really involved in it.

"I did a bracket and turned in to the Gaston Gazette, and if you get it right you get \$500," said Greg Humphrey, sophomore from Gastonia.

"My bracket is dead because Bucknell beat Kansas," said Vickers.

The students' plans for watching the championship game range from the traditional "get together with friends to watch it" to more extravagant plans such as having a party, and some haven't planned

anything.

"Me and my buddies are getting together to watch it," said Jason Mills, sophomore religious studies major from Asheville.

"Just chill and eat a bunch of food," is McNamara's plan for the big game.

"We're going to have a hall party," said Vickers.

"Maybe a little party at the house, it depends on who's playing," said Sarah Neunzig, freshman from Dallas, who was pulling for Duke.