

Sports

No season's end for these GWU swimmers

By Jacob Conley
Special to The Pilot

The Gardner-Webb swim season concluded in February, but Mallory Weggemann and Tucker Dupree are still hard at work in the pool.

Under the tutelage of GWU swim coach Mike Simpson, both athletes hope to represent the United States in the London Paralympics in 2012.

"There is really no off season," said Weggemann. "It seems like we are always training for something."

Weggemann, a recent paraplegic, does not mind the extra work, however,

and relishes being back in the pool. She returned to swimming in April 2008.

"I missed it and had been doing it since I was 7," said Weggemann. "And after what happened I realized I had to get back in the pool."

This realization was solidified when Weggemann attended the Paralympic trials in her home state of Minnesota as a spectator.

"I talked to some of the athletes, coaches and parents and they encouraged me to compete," said Weggemann.

An athlete who Weggemann met at another competition was future

Bulldog teammate Dupree, who participated in the Beijing Paralympic games in 2008.

"He's the one who told me about Gardner-Webb," said Weggemann. "I love it here so much I don't mind being so far from home."

Dupree is a veteran of international competition. The visually impaired swimmer, a Raleigh native, has set 25 world records, most of them at the Beijing games.

"I got to swim in the same pool as Michael Phelps," said Dupree, a note of pride in his voice. "And I eventually want to hold all the records for

visually impaired swimmers."

While swimming in international competition is challenging, both athletes admit that competing against able-bodied swimmers on the collegiate level presents unique obstacles and opportunities.

"I have to slow down going into the turn because I can't see the wall," said Dupree. "That's when I get taken but I still manage to hang with the pack most of the time."

As for Weggemann, her biggest challenge is to keep her legs from fish-tailing in the water.

"Swimming is a lot

harder now than it was before," said Weggemann. "I have to put in a lot more work than I used to."

Their work ethic has not gone unnoticed by their coach.

"What these guys do is amazing," said Simpson. "They are always looking for ways to improve technique, get stronger and swim faster."

It is this striving for perpetual improvement that will drive Weggemann and Dupree to success in the pool, whether it is swimming for the red and black of the Bulldogs or the red, white and blue of the United States of America.

Grapplers set regional record, fall in NCAAs

By Lanny Newton
Pilot sports editor

A school-record eight wrestlers placed in the East Regional hosted by Gardner-Webb, but only one qualified for the NCAA Tournament.

Dustin Porter moved on to St. Louis to compete in the tournament for the third time, but was given a tough draw despite being ranked 18th nationally. Porter was pinned in both of his matches.

"Dustin had wins over three of the guys who were in the round of 12, one round from being All-American," said Head Coach Scott Shipman. "It shows he's good enough to be in the final mix, but Dustin as of right now has a few issues to address about his performances out there."

"We were picked sixth going in and to finish third it was one of those things where it was a good performance and it was a step in the right direction."

Porter, a junior, has qualified for the tournament every year of his collegiate career. In his first match he drew No. 11 seed Zach Rey from Lehigh. Rey earned a quick take-down before getting the pin at the 40 second mark.

In the consolation match Porter faced Joe Fendone. In a virtual repeat of the first match, Fendone took down Porter and earned a pin at the 2:04 mark in the first period.

Gardner-Webb finished third in the regionals behind a first-place finish by Porter and second-place finishes by David Pelsang and Alex Piasecki.

Rob Tate and Matthias Piasecki took third while Cortney Roberts, Austin Reece and Thomas Knapp also scored for the Bulldogs, taking fourth.

Lanny's Logic

Tourney time: Heroes as well as heartbreak

By Lanny Newton
Pilot sports writer

Having watched ACC basketball for more than 20 years, this past weekend was dismal because several teams from the conference came up well short of their capabilities.

The tourney has not been a total disappointment, though, as despite the gut-wrenching losses, there were also the euphoric highs. Though the number of mid-major upsets was fewer than in years past, they were just as memorable.

While they were only a No. 9 seed, Siena won a double-overtime thriller over Ohio State University. Kenny Hasbrouck scored the last 4 points in regulation for Siena, hitting a clutch 3-pointer with 52 seconds left, and one of two free throws with 8 seconds remaining.

Ronald Moore then hit a 3 with three seconds remaining in the first OT for Siena, to send it into the second OT. Following Ohio State's Evan Turner converting a lay-up with 19 seconds left to put the Buckeyes up by 2, Moore hit a 3 with 12 seconds left to make it 74-72 Siena.

Turner missed a 2 to tie with two seconds left and Siena went on to face Louisville in the second round.

Though Siena led as late as midway through the second half, Louisville ultimately won the game by 7 points.

Cleveland State played one of its best games of the season as it jumped out in

front of Wake Forest early and cruised to victory. Wake Forest never really showed the same fire and ability that led them to start the season 16-0, and it ended their season earlier than expected.

In stark contrast, Cleveland State's second-round game against Arizona was almost the exact opposite. The team never really showed the offensive prowess it had in the first round and fell to the team from the Pac-10 by 14 points.

Western Kentucky played in its second straight NCAA Tournament as a No. 12 seed and provided their second straight run. Though not as dramatic as the overtime win over Drake last year, the first-round 4-point win over Illinois last Thursday provided more thrilling action in a day that saw many double-digit victories.

Unfortunately, the Hilltoppers couldn't continue the success as Gonzaga's Demetri Goodson went the length of the court to bank in the game-winner with 0.9 seconds left to send the Bulldogs to the Sweet Sixteen.

Though the only "mid-majors" left are Gonzaga and Xavier, plenty of excitement remains as the Sweet Sixteen kicks off tomorrow and the Elite Eight starts Saturday.

The Big East still has a record five teams in the round of 16, while UNC and Duke are the only two remaining ACC teams and are still on course for a possible collision in the Final Four.

Men 3rd, women 4th at CCSAs

By Lanny Newton
Pilot sports editor

Seeking their first CCSA titles, the men's and women's swim teams came up a little short at the University of Georgia.

The men's team came in third in its second year of existence.

The women's team came in fourth – despite getting faster overall from last year – due to an overall increase in the quality of the conference.

Gardner-Webb had seven swimmers take all-conference honors.

"On the guy's side we're definitely closing the gap between us and the two teams ahead of us, College of Charleston and Davidson," said Head Coach Mike Simpson.

"The meet was a lot faster, it was a lot faster, but we also swam a lot faster on both the girl's and guy's side."

The men had a couple of performances that just missed the NCAA B qualifying times, including Patrick Elerding's time of 48.93 in the 100 fly.

This was less than a half-second from giving him a chance to go to the NCAA championships.

His victory was the lone first-place finish for the day for the men.

Gardner-Webb took third in both the 200 and 400 medley relays, with Samuel Woods, Collin Burchins, Elerding, and Matthew Leonard swimming the 200 and Elerding, George Partin, Casey Brutus and Woods going in the 400.

Continuing the trend the 200 free relay team of Elerding, Leonard, Partin

and Burchins placed third with a time of 1:23.96.

Elerding finished third in the 50 free at the 21.13 mark.

GWU went two-three in the 100 breast as Elerding took silver and Brutus took bronze.

The Bulldogs repeated the feat in the 200 breast as Burchins took second and Brutus touched the wall third. Even though he finished second, Steven Caudill still broke the old conference record in the 200 fly.

For the women, Corey Hughey headlined with an NCAA B qualifying time in the 100 back at 54.95. It also established a new conference record.

Hughey just missed another B qualifying time finishing the 50 free in 23.46, only .03 seconds off the benchmark. She took second in the event.

The Lady Bulldogs got off to a fast start as the 400 medley relay team of Hughey, Victoria Bryant, Rachel Warkentin and Stepheni Stadnik smashed the old conference record by over 4.5 seconds.

In the 200 medley relay Hughey, Stadnik, Warkentin and Sarah Steadman also broke the old conference record, but still finished second in the event.

Stadnik took third in the 100 breast while Steadman finished third in the 200 back.

Hughey also placed third in the 100 free at the 51.17 mark.

Just to epitomize the speed at the meet, Hughey, Steadman, Kelly Gueltig and Veronica Case outpaced the old conference record, but still took third in the 400 free relay.

Track and field impressive in first meet of 2009

By Blake DuDonis
Pilot editor in chief

Opening up its outdoor season for 2009, the Gardner-Webb track and field team went into Charlotte and came out with some good performances to build on.

Participating in the 49er Classic at UNC-Charlotte, the Bulldogs saw a total of nine athletes set new personal best in their events.

On the woman's side, senior Kelly Bridges soared to a first place finish in the pole vault, making it over the bar at 3.40 meters. Senior Victoria Argus also came in first place, her event being the woman's heptathlon, with a score of 4,432.

Yet another senior, Bree Tharpe, put out an impressive performance. She came in second place in the 3,000 meter steeplechase with a time of 12:02.58, just seconds off of the school record.

Other impressive performances on the woman's side included a second place finish by freshman Gwenetta Jones in the shot put, with a distance of 12.77 meters. Abby Callahan set new personal-best times in the 800 and 1,500 meter run.

Laura Scott, Lia Hudak, Diana Palka, Allye Littrell and Rebecca Sillemann all set new personal best in the 3,000 meter run, with Scott coming in fourth place overall.

For the men, senior Jake Didion

won the triple jump with an outstanding leap of 14.82 meters. Didion also turned in a seventh place finish in the long jump with a distance of 6.69 meters.

Sophomore Johnathan Rucker set a new personal best time in the 110 meter preliminaries with a time of 14.88. Rucker also came in ninth place in the high jump, clearing the bar at a height of 1.95 meters.

Junior Paul Steinke broke his old personal best in the 400 meter hurdles, turning in a time of 53.68, which put him in second place.

The Bulldogs will head to Rock Hill, S.C., this weekend to Winthrop University to participate in the Asics Winthrop Invitational.

Blue Hose team too tight for Lady Diamond Dawgs

By Lanny Newton
Pilot sports editor

In its first conference game, the Lady Bulldogs softball team was unable to get its offense going against Presbyterian. With all the scoring occurring in the top of the fifth, Presbyterian won 4-0.

Christine Murray had a no-

hitter through the fourth inning for Gardner-Webb before the wheels fell off.

"When we get pitching we haven't got hitting, and when we've gotten hitting we haven't gotten pitching. "We need to just get our pitching and our hitting on the same page and we'll be fine," said Head Coach Tom Cole.

"We have to score runs. The fact that we didn't score runs means that even if we played a perfect game we wouldn't have won it."

The Bulldogs struggled from the plate all day as Kelsey Witter and Christa Fullwood both finished 2-for-3.

The only other base runner was Adrienne Smith, who was

hit by a pitch.

Murray struck out six and allowed only five hits in a complete game.

The Bulldogs play a double header Saturday against conference foe Radford before completing the series on Sunday. The start time on Saturday will be 1 p.m. while the Sunday game will start at 2 p.m.

Women's basketball team comes up short of ticket to Big Dance

By Lanny Newton
Pilot sports editor

The iron was unkind to the Lady Bulldogs as Dominique Hudson's runner in the lane rolled out with no time remaining in the Big South Tournament Championship game.

GWU came up just short against conference favorite Liberty, falling 51-50.

Gardner-Webb entered the tournament as the sixth seed but knocked off No. 3 Radford and No. 2 High Point before facing top-seeded Liberty. The tournament was hosted by High Point.

"I just thought our run in the tournament just showed the amazing heart and spirit these young ladies have.

"Words can't express how proud I am of them representing the university so well," said Head Coach Rick Reeves. "The keys were they executed, never gave up, and never lost faith in their teammates."

In the game against Liberty, the teams were at 11 apiece at the 11:53 mark in the first half.

After Liberty took another 4-point lead, the Bulldogs went on a 10-0 run keyed by back-to-back three-pointers by Courtney Epps and Meran-

da Burnett to take their largest lead at 21-15.

The rest of the half was marked by neither team able to make a run as Gardner-Webb took a 28-23 lead into the locker room.

Liberty started out the second half with another run taking a 29-28 lead before Burnett hit two free throws to temporarily slow the Flames.

After back and forth action by the two teams, Liberty pushed the lead out to 10 at 47-37 with 7:37 remaining.

Gardner-Webb freshman Breynna Winkler provided a spark off the bench for the

Bulldogs, scoring on back-to-back plays to cut the Lady Flames' lead to 47-41 with 4:22 remaining in the game.

The Bulldogs fought back, as a lay up by Epps with 53 seconds left cut it to 51-50. After Gardner-Webb forced a shot-clock violation on Liberty with 12 seconds left, the Bulldogs went to Hudson, who drove the right side of the lane.

She fired up a runner over the outstretched hands of two Liberty defenders.

The ball rolled around on the rim and then off the left side, as Liberty escaped with the 51-50 win.

The Pilot

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