

# Sports

## Women champions return...

**Mark Plemmons**  
Staff Writer

Last season, the UNCA women's soccer team ended with a 16-5 overall record, a Big South Conference championship, and a number seven ranking in the regional poll.

This fall, eleven starters from last season's championship team returned to UNCA. But things change after you've won a championship, said women's coach Michelle Cornish.

"Expectations are higher this year and we know that," said Cornish. "But that's okay. We want to be in the position as one of the teams to beat. We like that kind of pressure and are anxious to get started."

"However, we know that the days of sneaking up on people are over," added Cornish. "We know that people will be gunning for us this season, and

again, that's fine with us."

Senior Jill Young returned this year as the starting goalie. Young registered 12 shutouts last year and was co-MVP of the Big South Conference tournament, ending her season with a 76 percent average stopping goals.

The good news for the Bulldogs and Young is that UNCA has a backup for her this year, freshman Christine Geske, from Brea, California.

"The last two years we've basically gone without a backup for Jill," Cornish said. "We've been fortunate that Jill hasn't gotten hurt and has been able to play every game for us. We can rest a little easier now with Christine Geske. We think she'll fit in quite well for us."

The Lady Bulldogs have an experienced defensive line this year, and have added another newcomer, freshman Kirsten Kiphardt. Kiphardt is expected

to provide more depth in the defense this season.

Returning senior Kristi Cummings, the school's all-time leading scorer, provides leadership and experience for the forwards. Also back are Lynae King and Mackenzie Miller, both of whom were high scorers last year as well.

While the midfield is also full of experienced players, the school's third all-time leading scorer, senior Sandy Dror, was injured last season and only played in six games. Scheduled for surgery in the preseason, her status is unknown for this year.

The UNCA women opened their regular season play at Clemson University last Saturday, losing 4-1. Young injured her shoulder in the game and will miss part of the season.



Freshman Joe Granack guards the ball in an exhibition game against Warren Wilson last week. UNCA won the game 4-0. In regular season play, UNCA lost to Clemson, 11-1.

Photo by Del Delorm

## ... and the men follow their lead

**Mark Plemmons**  
Staff Writer

The men's soccer team was 7-2 at the midpoint of last season, tying a school record with five straight wins, and picking up big non-conference wins over Appalachian State University, Stetson University, and Virginia Commonwealth University.

But in October, UNCA lost six straight before defeating Winthrop University 1-0 in the final regular season game of the year. This win allowed the Bulldogs to make the Big South Conference tournament for the first time in four seasons.

"We made some huge strides

last year and got off to a strong start," said men's coach Steve Cornish. "However, we ended the season on a disappointing note and we have only ourselves to blame."

Eight starters and 16 lettermen have returned from last year. With experienced players returning, Cornish is grateful that the new players won't be under as much pressure to perform right away.

Sean Gorbell, UNCA's starting goalie, graduated this past spring, leaving senior Mark Robinson, who backed up Gorbell for three seasons, to take over the position.

"Sean Gorbell spoiled us for three years, but Mark is certainly capable," Cornish said. "He had a good spring for us

and his height (6'4") is certainly an advantage."

Neither is Cornish worried about the defensive returnees, headed by Rodney Levy. "Our lads in the back have extensive playing experience and are well organized. We should be fine here this year," said Cornish.

In the midfield is a mix of both new and experienced players, including senior Adam Stein, who earned first team all-conference honors, and freshman Brian Fairchild.

Senior Mark Acquista, who led the Dogs in scoring last year, is constantly being marked by the opposing teams, and needs support to help him. "This (scoring) is an area we must get better in," said Cornish.



Sophomore Mackenzie Miller (center, in white) scores the first goal of an exhibition game against Warren Wilson. UNCA opened the regular season on last Saturday at Clemson University. The Bulldogs lost, 4-1.

Photo by Jennifer Thurston

## Volleyball team opens challenging season in Charlotte

**Brad Davis**  
Staff Writer

The UNCA women's volleyball team opened its season with the UNC Preview tournament in Charlotte on Aug. 30-31.

"We won the tournament last year and I think last year nobody expected us to come in and do anything. We kind of took them by surprise and won the whole thing," said Julie Torbett, UNCA's women's volleyball coach.

The Lady Bulldogs posted a 24-11 record last season and finished the season ranked tenth in the regional poll. Last season, UNCA started off by

winning their first eight matches, a school record, including last year's UNC Preview.

"I think that I have a better team than I had last year," said Torbett, "but we have a tougher schedule and so our record may not show that we are better."

The Lady Bulldogs are ranked tenth in the preseason regional poll.

"UMBC (University of Maryland-Baltimore County) and UNC-Greensboro will be the two teams to watch for. They always have good athletes in there, they have good programs, and good coaching, so they are always tough," said Torbett.

Five starters returned from last

season including first team all-conference players Kimberly Osborne and Lorelee Smith, and one second team all-conference player, Cally Geiger.

"We've got three deep at each position, and we've got four girls six foot and over which is a first for UNCA," said Torbett.

Torbett believes that depth at the positions and height of the players will be the keys to success for UNCA this season and avoiding injuries.

"Last year, our injuries towards the end of the season hurt us in our overall finish in the tournament," said Torbett, "so we're just hop-

ing that we'll stay strong and healthy instead of going downhill at the end. We want to peak at the tournament."

"We've always been real consistent on ball handling and defense, that's what I stress, but this year we have the luxury of having some height to go with it," said Torbett.

UNCA defeated UNC-Wilmington in four games on Friday and then defeated WCU in three games on Saturday at the UNC Preview, but lost in the final to UNC-Charlotte.

The Dogs had two players make the all-tournament team, senior Kimberly Osborne and sophomore Cally Geiger.

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