

The Banner

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Bulldogs excel in tournament

By Chris Brooker
News Editor

The UNCA women's basketball team made history at the Big South Tournament last weekend by becoming the lowest seed to ever reach the championship game.

The Bulldogs, who finished the regular season with a 5-21 record, were seeded sixth out of the seven teams playing in the tournament.

"I was happy with the seed we got," said UNCA Head Coach Kathleen Weber. "I was very happy to be able to play Coastal Carolina in the first round, a team we had already beaten once."

UNCA defeated Coastal Carolina, the tournament's third seed, in the quarterfinal round on Feb. 26, 60-59. The Bulldogs then upset the tournament's second seed, Radford, on Feb. 27, 81-74.

UNCA lost the championship game to Liberty, the tournament's number one seed, on Feb. 28, 53-65.

"I'm disappointed. My whole team is disappointed, but we showed ourselves this weekend," said UNCA Sophomore Guard Emily Hill. "I am proud of my teammates and our coaches. I think we did a great job."

Hill drained two free throws with seven seconds remaining on the clock against Coastal Carolina to give the Bulldogs a one-point victory in the quarterfinal game.

Against Radford in the semifinal game, UNCA made 52 percent of their shots. Radford was not able to come up with an answer to the UNCA offense.

Hill led UNCA with 29 points against Radford.

"I am very happy, and very proud of the players," said Weber. "The game against Radford was great."

"I knew we were going to be able to hang with them. It was just a matter of keeping it up until the last three minutes of the game."

In the championship game, Liberty



PHOTO BY CHRIS BROOKER

UNCA forward Elisa Fellers (pictured above) scored a career high 16 points in the Bulldogs' win over Radford at the Big South Tournament.

pulled ahead of UNCA at the 15:58 mark of the first half, and never looked back.

"I knew we were going to have our hands full with Liberty," Weber said. "They are definitely one of the best 64 teams in the country."

With the victory, Liberty earned an NCAA tournament berth, and remains undefeated with a record of 29-0.

Hill, who was named to the all-

conference team and the all-tournament team, was pleased with the overall effort of her teammates.

"Everybody laid their hearts out there today and I do not think you could ask for anything else," said Hill.

See page 6 for detailed coverage of the entire Big South Tournament. See the Banner on-line for additional pictures.

Men's basketball falls in Big South championship

By Chris Brooker
News Editor

The UNCA men's basketball team was upset in the championship game of the Big South Conference Tournament on Feb. 28 by the Radford Highlanders.

The loss left UNCA one victory short of being the first team in school history to reach the NCAA Basketball Tournament.

An automatic bid to the NCAA tournament is given to the champion of the Big South Tournament.

"It is really a tough, tough way to end the season," said UNCA Head Coach Eddie Biedenbach. "Our guys are taking it very hard, and rightfully so."

"We put so much into this season, on a weekly and daily basis, and we played well enough to go on to the NCAA," Biedenbach said.

The Bulldogs were the regular-season Big South champion, which earned them the number one seeding in the Big South Tournament.

UNCA was given a bye during the quarterfinal round, and defeated the fourth-seed Liberty Flames in the semi-final round on Feb. 27, 46-42.

Guard Josh Pittman scored a game-high 21 points in the Liberty game, and center Dirk Lommerse pulled down 12 rebounds. "There was a good defensive effort from all of our guys, and we got on the boards pretty well," said Biedenbach. "That is what won the game for us."

In the championship game, which was televised nationally on ESPN, UNCA jumped out to a 17-point lead early in the first half, but let the lead slip to seven by halftime.

The Bulldogs then watched second-seed

Radford build an eight-point lead at the 2:16 mark of the second half.

The Bulldogs staged a comeback in the final two minutes of the game, led by the shooting of Forward Kevin Martin, who scored a game-high 22 points in the contest. A three-pointer by Martin with 15 seconds left in the game tied the score at 61-61.

"Kevin Martin is a tough, tough basketball player who enjoys this kind of competition," said Biedenbach. "He stepped up and made some key baskets. He is tough, and he makes those kind of plays."

Radford Forward Kevin Robinson broke the tie on the last possession of the game by sinking a 12-foot buzzer-beating shot which gave the Highlanders a 63-61 win, and the automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament.

"We played as tough as we could," said Biedenbach. "Great games go like that. They are great for the fans, great for the conference, but not very good for UNCA-Asheville."

"It is particularly tough on our seniors, who have given us so much," Biedenbach said.

The Big South Championship was more than likely the last collegiate game played by seniors Josh Pittman, Robert Stevenson, Dirk Lommerse, and Vincent Krieger, as it is highly improbable that UNCA will receive an invitation to either the NCAA Tournament or the National Invitation Tournament (NIT).

Pittman and Martin were named to the all-tournament team at the conclusion of the championship game.

UNCA finished the season with an overall record of 19-9, with an 12-2 mark in conference play.

See page 6 for detailed coverage of the entire Big South Tournament.

Gregory named director of Public Safety

By Nicole Miller
Staff Writer

After a 17-month vacancy in the Director of Public Safety position, UNCA has appointed interim director Dennis Gregory to fill the opening.

Gregory's new position became effective Tuesday, said Eric Iovacchini, vice chancellor for student affairs.

Gregory has served as the interim director since the departure of former director Jeff Van Slyke in September 1996.

During that time, Gregory maintained his role as an investigative

officer in the public safety department.

"I have been in the position for a year and a half, so it's almost just another day," said Gregory of his new appointment Tuesday. "I feel pretty good about it. I think I have a chance to make the department more accessible to the students."

UNCA initially offered the position to an employee of UNC-Greensboro after the initial search last spring.

The candidate accepted the UNCA post, but then declined shortly thereafter because he ac-

cepted a promotion and salary increase at UNC-Greensboro.

Last year's search was open to UNCA employees, but none applied at that time.

According to Iovacchini, UNCA public safety employees began to show more interest in the director position after the first search was unsuccessful, and thus the recent search was open only to UNCA employees.

Although serving as the interim director during the previous search, Gregory did not wish to apply for the position at that time. He said

that he thought "a younger, more career-oriented administrator" might have been better for the job.

However, Gregory said that the department started working on many projects after Van Slyke left, and as director he felt that he would be able to ensure that the projects get finished.

"We have a lot of goals that we would like to be successful in," Gregory said. "I am so involved in them now that I would like to see the completion of them."

"Some of those goals are doing more programs and working much closer with the students, and getting back to community policing, where the officer is known by most people and is a problem solver as

opposed to a law enforcement officer," Gregory said.

Gregory also plans to continue working on two grant applications for the department and implement more programs to reach both resident and commuter students.

These programs include drug and alcohol awareness, personal safety classes, and a forum in which students can discuss personal experiences and concerns with public safety officers, and then address ways to handle them.

Gregory was chosen by a search committee consisting of Iovacchini, Director of the Counseling Center Margaret Weshner, and Nina East, director of student development. Iovacchini said that the committee

chose Gregory because "he had the most experience, the most creative ideas, and he certainly had an idea of what we need as a liberal arts institution."

"I think he brings with him a broad base of trust and respect throughout campus," said Iovacchini.

According to Iovacchini, the committee wanted to hire someone who understands the campus, understands liberal arts institutions, and relates well to the community.

Iovacchini also said that the new public safety director needed to be comfortable in public relations, providing information, guidance,

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Eleven vehicles broken into last Wednesday

By Gene Zaleski
Staff Writer

Eleven vehicles parked on the UNCA campus were broken into and burglarized in the early morning hours of Feb. 25.

According to Public Safety Officer Jerry Adams, six burglaries occurred in the residential parking lot on Division Street, two happened near the gate to the soccer field, two occurred in the resident lot directly across from Zageir Hall, and one happened in the old tennis court lots above Justice Gym.

Adams said that vehicles containing expensive stereo equipment were the primary targets.

"My car was cleaned out pretty good," said freshman Jason Davis, whose car was broken into during the crime wave. "I had a CD player, an amp, a 12 inch woofer in a box, and two five-by-seven speakers stolen."

Sophomore industrial engineering and accounting major Jason Boyles also had items stolen from his car.

"I found my car system was gone, along with my stereo, big box with speakers, and amps," said Boyles.

"They even had the nerve to steal my tool

boxes in the back of my car," Boyles said.

Adams said that all of the property stolen from cars parked in the Division Street lot, except for one radar detector, was recovered by the UNCA Public Safety Office and returned to its rightful owners.

"It was all piled up on the bank just above the parking lot," said Adams. "All of the equipment was recovered, brought up to Public Safety, identified by the owner, and released."

Equipment stolen from vehicles parked in other lots has not yet been recovered, Adams said.

Director of Public Safety Dennis Gregory said his office is in the process of

investigating a number of possible suspects.

"The night after the break-ins we stopped a vehicle on University Heights that contained two very undesirable people who had no purpose for being here," said Gregory. "Both had lengthy criminal records that we want to match fingerprints with. We are actively working on this case right now."

Freshman Josh Venning, whose car was one of the 11 burglarized, questioned the protection provided by the Public Safety Office.

"I am upset," said Venning. "Two days before this incident I parked in the faculty/

staff parking lot and of course got ticketed for that. I then parked where I was supposed to park and got my car busted into."

"The Public Safety Office is really good about giving tickets, but you would think we could get better protection for the money we pay," said Venning.

Davis also said that cars should be given more protection by Public Safety.

"I think Public Safety has to step up what they are doing," said White. "They should put somebody down at the [Division Street] lot at all times."

Gregory said that it is difficult for Public

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