

# Sports

## Guarneri posting big numbers for UNCA

By Brett Muhlihan  
Staff Writer

The UNCA women's basketball team has some new muscle in the post this year in freshman forward and center Jessica Guarneri. Guarneri comes to UNCA after a brilliant prep career at Piscataway High School in Piscataway, N.J. There, she averaged 22 points and 13 rebounds per game in her senior year while en route to all-state honors. She also helped guide her school to a record of 92-13 during her four years there, including a state title in her sophomore year playing along-

side two of her sisters. "It was awesome winning a state title while playing with two of my sisters," said Guarneri. "But everything is so much different in college than in high school."

Guarneri said one of these differences is that everything is done with a specific purpose and goal in mind.

"In high school, we would just go through the motions sometimes," said Guarneri. "We got stuff done, but not like we do here. Everything we do here, whether it is lifting or shooting, is done with a specific purpose and goal to be accomplished. That focus makes us better."

The UNCA coaching staff is excited about having Guarneri. She will add some physical presence down low in the post for the Bulldogs, which is an area of weakness for the Bulldogs the last couple of years.

"Jessica was one of top six players in the state of New Jersey last year, and we're delighted to have her at UNCA," said women's head basketball coach, Kathleen Weber. "She has a great court sense and is just very strong physically."

This was evident in one of UNCA's exhibition games where Guarneri had 24 points and 20 rebounds.

Guarneri said that the Bulldogs

were off to a tough start in the regular season due to the fierce competition.

"We have played some really big schools early on this year like Tulane, Louisville and LSU," said Guarneri. "Their girls are bigger, stronger and faster than we are, so we have to outsmart them and use better technique in order to win."

Guarneri said that the tough schedule that the Bulldogs have early will help them prepare for the upcoming conference season.

Guarneri has played well, even against the tough opponents.

"I think I am averaging around 11 points and 5 rebounds per game," said Guarneri. "But that is not good enough. I have to do so much more offensively as well as defensively to help my team win games."

Weber and the rest of the coaching staff like the aggressiveness of Guarneri.

"The key with Jessica will be for her to stay out of foul trouble," said Weber. "She's an aggressive player, and we want her to be, but not too aggressive where she has to come out of the game due to fouls."

If Guarneri can stay out of foul trouble while putting up consistent numbers alongside Nicole Sampson, the Bulldogs have a real chance to be a dominant inside team in the conference.

"We have really good players here," said Guarneri. "Once we get in a better offensive rhythm, we will win a lot of basketball games."

The Bulldogs will try to improve their 0-3 record at home Dec. 2 against Western Carolina.

### Profile

## Catamounts chow on 'Dogs

### WCU wins renewal of mountain rivalry 94-86

By Tripp Shelton  
Staff Writer

The UNCA men's basketball team is off to its worst start in school history after a 94-86 loss to Western Carolina on Dec. 1. Junior Brett Carey scored a game-high 26 points for the Bulldogs, who dropped to 0-6 on the year.

Virginia Tech handed the UNCA men's basketball team its fifth defeat of the season on Nov. 29, beating the Bulldogs 83-61 in their home opener at the Asheville Civic Center.

"We didn't handle their press very well," said head coach Eddie Biedenbach. "We did some nice things in the second half, but we were too behind to make a real run at them. We'll keep working to get better, and, hopefully, we will."

Leading the way for the Bulldogs was junior guard Carey with 14 points, while junior center Adam Earnhardt finished with 11 points, and senior guard John Risinger with 10.

After coming off a four-game road trip over the Thanksgiving holiday, the Bulldogs have now dropped five straight games, but have competed against some big name schools with a considerable amount of experience and talent.

"It's tough when you lose five in a row," said Biedenbach. "It's your opening five, and whether you've just come to college or just gotten on a team, or even if you are an experienced player, it's tough, but understandable. Hopefully, we'll get this thing rectified real soon."

The Bulldogs opened their season against the Missouri Tigers on Nov. 19, and battled them all the way to the final minutes. UNCA shot a season-high 53 percent from the field in the 75-69 loss. The Bulldogs were led by Risinger who scored 22 points in a losing effort.

"Overall, it was a decent opener for a young team that has some guards that are freshmen, and some other players who are also playing as newcomers," said Biedenbach. "But we expected that there could be some inexperienced factors that could hurt us."

The Bulldogs outrebounded the Tigers 41-26, and held them to only 38 percent shooting for the game, but turnovers seemed to be the difference in the end.

UNCA is averaging around 20 turnovers a game, which is common for a team with so many new faces on the court.

Handling the press is something that the Bulldogs are hoping to improve before league play begins.

"I expect that we will get pressed every night, until we get a little experience under our belt," said Biedenbach. "That's fine because you have to learn to handle those things come tournament time."

Although the Bulldogs are 0-6 on the season, hopes are still high for the Big South Conference games.

"We feel that we can be a good

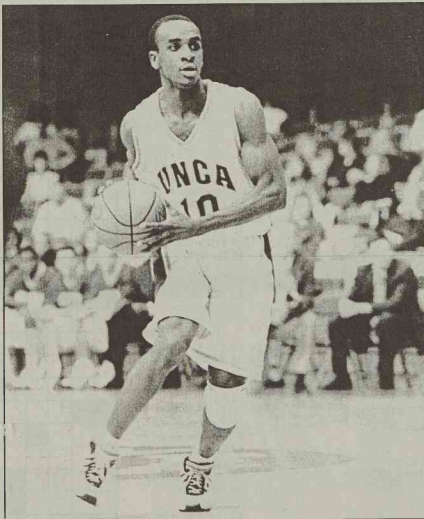


PHOTO BY JASON GRAHAM

### Freshman Andre Smith looks for an open man in the Bulldogs 83-61 loss to Virginia Tech. UNCA plays NCAA champs UConn on Dec. 4.

When we get to our league, which is our major goal every year," said Biedenbach. "They are exposing us a little right now and early in the season that's tough, but that is what we have to do."

The tough schedule is helping UNCA get a grip on things that need to be worked on before playing games within the conference.

"We need to work on timing and execution," said Biedenbach. "We need to be tougher on defense, but I like the fight and the non-quitting attitude. We just need to keep battling, and we'll get better as the season goes along."

The Bulldogs will resume play on Dec. 4 at Connecticut, before traveling to Kentucky on Dec. 7.

## Radford eliminates UNCA in tourney

By Christine Cooke  
Staff Writer

The UNCA volleyball team traveled to Charleston, S.C. for the Big South Conference Tournament, held Nov. 19-20.

On Nov. 19, the fourth seed Bulldogs beat fifth seed Elon College in the first round. The Bulldogs then went on to the semifinals on Nov. 20, and lost to top seeded Eagles of Radford. The Bulldogs finished the season with a record of 16-17 overall and 8-6 in the conference.

"I thought we played alright," said Bulldog's head coach Julie Torbett. "We didn't play the best matches of the season, which you like to have happen at the conference tournament. I felt like we peaked earlier in the season, playing our best volleyball earlier."

The Bulldogs had a victory over Elon's Fighting Christians, winning in four games. Senior Jennifer Baker led the team with 15 kills and 9 digs, while sophomore Heather Terrell added 13 kills. Senior Chandra Hicks grabbed seven kills.

"I feel like we pretty much controlled the match, especially in the first game," said Torbett.

During the match, the servers were switched. Freshman Katie Merindl played the first half of the match, and then sophomore Jessica Beal played the second half. Baker played an exceptional match against Elon, according to Torbett.

"Jen Baker was phenomenal both offensively and defensively. The best I've ever

seen her in four years. That was a real spark for us," said Torbett.

On Nov. 20, the Bulldogs ended their season with a 3-0 loss to Radford. The Highlanders won the match 15-4, 15-4, and 15-11. UNCA had the lead 8-5 in the third game, but inconsistent serving cost the Bulldogs.

"(Radford) did not want to play us, and we felt like that was a psychological advantage," said Torbett. "They were not really happy about getting paired with us. We had hoped just the fear that they had lost to us before would help us, but they played very, very strongly against us."

After the second game, the lineup was switched, and sophomore Elizabeth Rodriguez, who had been injured, played middle hitter for UNCA.

The Bulldogs had a good match, but a better team can expose another team's weaknesses, according to Torbett.

"It wasn't that we played poorly. Sometimes when you are playing a better team they are able to expose your weaknesses," Torbett said. "I felt that Radford did a good job of that. We tried to counter them, and we knew what they were going to do, but we just weren't able to execute that."

The highlight of the weekend for Torbett was watching the seniors play in their final matches for UNCA. Torbett coached Baker and Hicks for four years, and Rebecca Clausen, a transfer, for two years.

Even though the Bulldogs will lose three skilled players, Torbett is looking forward to a good season next year with the addition of good recruits.

## Bulldogs face tough schedule, fall to 0-3

By Jessica Ball  
Staff Writer

The UNCA women's basketball team began its season with three disappointing losses on the road.

The Bulldogs fell to Louisville 76-56 on Nov. 20 before consecutive losses on Nov. 23 to LSU and Nov. 26 to Tulane.

"We're a young team whose great strengths are energy and enthusiasm," said Bulldogs' head coach Kathleen Weber. "That can make for some good possessions and some sloppy possessions. Right now, we're trying to channel that energy into good basketball."

The Bulldogs started the season against some very strong teams on the road. First, they took on the Louisville Cardinals, who led 53-32 at the end of the first half, following a 19-6 run.

UNCA then responded with an 11-2 run to get back within 12. However, Louisville responded by taking a 20-point lead and putting the Bulldogs out of reach.

The Cardinals' defense forced UNCA to commit 23 turnovers. Top scorers for the Bulldogs were junior center Nicole

Sampson with 14 points, and junior guard Denise Wilbanks with 10.

On Nov. 26, UNCA opened the scoring against Tulane, but the Green Wave came back strong with a 20-4 run over the next five minutes, bringing the score to 20-6.

The Bulldogs, playing with only eight healthy players, couldn't match the Green Wave, who led by as much as 68 points, before winning the game 96-32.

UNCA will play its first home game of the season on Dec. 2 at 7 p.m. against Western Carolina.

UNCA senior Willow Koerber recently captured the women's A individual title for the third time at the National Collegiate Cycling Association Mountain Biking Championships held in Helen, Ga.



PHOTO BY JASON GRAHAM

Junior Brett Carey dribbles in against a Hokie defender on Nov. 29.