

# The Banner Sports

## Bulldogs send Eagles, Panthers packing

By Jennifer Crowl  
Staff Writer

The UNCA women's basketball team won its third straight victory Jan. 29 against the Winthrop University Eagles 67-59 at Justice Gym after defeating the High Point Panthers 59-45 on Jan. 26, making the Bulldogs 4-2 in conference play and 5-12 overall.

"I think the team is extremely excited about the past two wins, and I think they are excited about the conference season," said head coach Kathleen Weber. "They are starting to see the benefits of playing such a tough schedule and how it can help us grow as a basketball team."

The Bulldogs have earned their first three-game winning streak in two seasons, and it has been five seasons since they had a 4-2 record in conference play, according to the department of athletics.

"The game Saturday isn't about Winthrop. The game Saturday is about winning a championship," said Weber before the game, "and Winthrop is one step along the way. We're taking one game at a time."

The Bulldogs played a strong game against the Eagles and were only down by one point with a score of 25-26 when the first timeout was called. After the first half, the Bul-



PHOTO BY ANTHONY GRECO

The women's basketball team faced Winthrop on Sat., Jan. 29 in Justice Gym. The Bulldogs won the game 67-59.

dogs bounced back to take the lead 34-32.

"When it gets down to those crucial minutes, they're learning how to scratch out a win," said Weber. "The teams were tied at 41-41 with just 12:14 left in the game. Sophomore guard Shamy Kenley and freshman center Tonisha Jackson helped the Bulldogs overcome the

tie. Jackson nailed a layup, making the score 59-54 with three minutes left in the game. The players worked well together on the floor and showed good defense.

"We just pulled together and really showed what we could do out there," said freshman guard Jessica Guarnieri, who is currently UNCA's

leading scorer with a 12.0 average.

In the last minutes of the game, junior guard Emily Hill, Guarnieri and junior guard/forward Izzy Medhanie scored points for the Bulldogs, helping them win.

"We just rose to the occasion, and it was a good win for us. It's helping us gain our confidence and know what we need to do to get a win,"

commented sophomore forward Tynisha King.

Guarnieri scored 13 points and grabbed 11 rebounds, and Jackson, Medhanie, and King, all contributed 11 points, according to the department of athletics.

"It was a great win. It was a team effort, and everybody contributed. So, hopefully, this is going to put us

on a winning streak; learning how to win," said Hill.

Despite sustaining injuries that made her red-shirt five games last season, Hill's presence on the court contributed to the win, according to Weber.

"I think her leadership with the team is vital, and it is just great to have her back on the floor," said Weber.

The women's team is excited about the rest of the season after their victories over Winthrop and High Point.

The game against High Point was led by Guarnieri, who tied a career high with 20 points and Jackson, who recorded her first double-double with 13 points and 11 rebounds, according to the Bulldogs Web site.

UNCA won this game early as it jumped to a 16-2 lead and then a 29-15 lead at halftime, according to the department of athletics.

"Right now, we are 4-2 in the conference, and I think that puts us in a tie for second place," said Weber.

"This is the first time since I have been here that the team has won three games in a row," said Weber. "We have played a brutal schedule this year, and I think that the team is learning how to win a game. Hopefully, this is going to be habit-forming."

The Bulldogs won't be home again until Feb. 18 when they, according to the High Point Panthers,

## UNCA graduate coaches Bulldogs New tennis coach excited about season

By Jennifer Crowl  
Staff Writer

UNCA welcomes back alumnus and former Bulldogs tennis standout, who is now head coach for the men's and women's tennis teams.

"It's kind of a new deal for a lot of players, and a new coach for me," said new head coach Jeff Duncan. "Just from a lot of the matches I've seen played, I was really impressed. I am excited about getting into the heart of the season and seeing where we will stand and where each individual will stand."

Duncan said he is glad to be back in Asheville, and feels coaching at UNCA has been a learning experience. He has enjoyed working with the teams during his first year back. "It's been fun," said Duncan. "I've been looking forward to traveling and working with these kids and just seeing how different it is from when I was playing."

Duncan was a four-year letterman at UNCA after transferring from Appalachian, where he red-shirted for a year, according to the athletics Web site. He played for the Bulldogs from 1988 to 1991 and was the team's number one player all four of his years here at UNCA.

"We're playing a pretty tough schedule with both the men's and women's teams," said Duncan. "Since I graduated, the quality of tennis has really gone up, and I am impressed with the teams I have now and the quality of players that we play against."

The men's tennis team will play hard, but were defeated by William and Mary on Jan. 22 in Williamsburg, Va.

"They are a competitive team that we play, but we did well," said Duncan. "We're playing a couple of ACC schools. The schools are strong, but we can play with them."

The men's and women's tennis teams have a lot of depth, accord-

ing to Duncan.

"We are going to hit a lot of matches due to our depth," said Duncan. "The men's side is young; we have three freshmen and no seniors. There is a base there for a lot of improvement."

The men's tennis team includes freshmen Andrew Herman, Mike Lefkic and Stephen Poulos; sopho-

more Zach Malina and juniors Scott Pryby, Jakob Jez and John Rockwell.

"Malina is a steady player, and he'll stay out there with you all day long and make you work," said Duncan. "Lefkic is another good player, and if he continues to work hard, he's got a bright future."

"Jez just came off an injury with his wrist, and I think the more matches he gets under his belt and plays, the better he's going to improve," said Duncan. "Poulos has been a real good athlete. The whole team will do well if they work hard."

The women's team has six girls now that are healthy and playable, according to Duncan.

"If we stay healthy, on that standpoint, we'll do well," said Duncan. "The women's side includes freshmen Laura Dye and Ashley Jones, sophomores Nancy Livesay and Stephanie Shuba, juniors Laura Hastay and Cathy Rhoney and senior Janelle Watson.

"Watson is a solid player, and she's a lot of balls down," said Duncan. "Shuba is a very good player, and she's got a big serve and good groundstrokes. Livesay is a solid player; she has good groundstrokes, and if she continues to improve, she'll win a lot of matches this year."

"Hastay is steady, and Jones will

run down everything," said Duncan. "Rhoney will stay out there until the last ball's hit."

Both teams placed in the top half of the Big South Conference last year.

"We have lost a couple of players, but have also gained new freshmen," said Duncan. "It will be interesting to see what happens."

"With it being my first year here, all I ask is for them to work hard," said Duncan. "By the time of the Big South Conference in April, they will have played a lot of matches. Hopefully, they will have been put through different situations with room to grow."

"Tennis is an individual sport, but you move on as a team. If we expect to win anything, we have to look at it as a whole."

— Jeff Duncan, head tennis coach

individual sport, but you move on as a team," replied Duncan. "If we expect to win anything, we have to look at it as a whole."

Duncan earned his all-conference honors in 1989 and 1990. Before coaching here, he worked two years as the head tennis pro for the Buncombe County Parks and Recreational Department.

Duncan also worked at the Birkmore Forest Country Club, the Great Smokies Hilton, and the Oaks Tennis Club, according to the athletics department Web site.

The men's tennis team will play against East Tennessee State University Feb. 4 at 7 p.m. in Johnson City, Tenn. The women's tennis team will start their season at East Tennessee State University on Feb. 4 at 2 p.m. Both tennis teams will play at UNCA on Feb. 25 against High Point University at 2 p.m.

By Teshania Wiley  
Staff Writer

The UNCA men's basketball team defeated defending Big South Conference champion Winthrop 64-63 on Jan. 29 at the Justice Gym just three days after beating Elon 88-76.

"It was a must-win game for us," said assistant coach Mike Matthews.

Freshman guard Brandon Carter made three 3-pointers in the first half, helping the Bulldogs gain momentum. UNCA was behind, but after tying the Eagles at 25-25, the Bulldogs managed to break away and end the half in the lead at 35-31.

"It was a very competitive game for the Bulldogs," said Matthews. "Winthrop is a good team. Both teams battled to win."

Several players on the team made plays that contributed to the Bulldogs' victory over the Eagles. Freshman forward/guard Colin Shaw made a 3-pointer with an assist by junior center Adam Earnhardt in the second half of the game.

Freshman guard Andre Smith made two back-to-back free throws in the last 17 seconds of the game, which put the Bulldogs in the lead 63-60. Before Carter threw the game's final score 64.

"Andre makes free throws and plays that count," said head coach Eddie Biedenbach.

Smith made a steal in the remaining four seconds of the game, according to the press release. The Bulldogs led 64-60 when Roger Toxey of Winthrop made a 3-pointer at the buzzer that made the final score 64-63.

Senior forward Matt Osikowicz led the Bulldogs with 16 points in the game, while Carter led second with 15 points on 5-6 shooting from the 3-point line. Smith finished with 11 points in the conference game, according to the department of athletics.

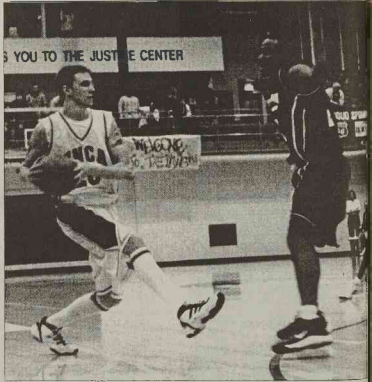


PHOTO BY ANTHONY GRECO

The men's basketball team battled the Eagles on Jan. 29.

"We toughed up, we're three in a row now," said Smith. "We just need to get some wins on the road now, and we'll be all right."

"We've battled, but we haven't been able to get any wins on the road," said Biedenbach. "If we take one game at a time we can begin to battle for our position for the tournament."

The UNCA men's basketball game against Elon was originally scheduled for Jan. 22 at the Justice Gym, but was postponed on Jan. 26 due to inclement weather.

UNCA ended a three-game losing streak with help from top scorer Osikowicz, who contributed 22 points in the game against the Fighting Christians. Smith added a career-high 19 points, and Earnhardt blocked five shots and earned 10 points for the Bulldogs.

"These guys are finally realizing they can compete," said Matthews. "I know they knew all along, but

now they are starting to get a visual picture and that's good."

The Bulldogs followed 37-31 late in the first half when Osikowicz scored the team's next eight points, making the team ahead of the Fighting Christians 39-38, according to the athletics home page. UNCA ended the first half with a lead score of 40-39.

The Bulldogs built their lead as high as 14 points in the second half before Brandon Rowell, who led Elon, made three 3-pointers making score 88-76.

Osikowicz was 10-of-3 from the field and pulled down nine rebounds, according to the press release. Smith was 12-of-12 from the free throw line while senior guard/forward John Rinsinger handed out 10 assists and pulled down five rebounds.

The Bulldogs battle Radford Feb. 5 at 7:30 p.m. in the Justice Gym.