

Sports

Basketball opens season



PHOTO BY ANTHONY GRECO

Senior guard Brett Carey battles a mass of Crossfire players. UNCA beat Crossfire 72-63.

Luke Knox
Staff Writer

The UNCA men's basketball team began the season with a 72-63 win over Crossfire, a traveling team coached by UNCA alumnus Randy Shepherd, in an exhibition game at the Justice Center Nov. 6.

"We should not lose to a team like Crossfire, ever," said UNCA's head coach Eddie Beidenbach. "They do have great players, and we had to play well in the second half to beat them. We are getting there."

utes to clinch the game for the Bulldogs.

Along with their battle on the court, the players sparred verbally, according to Smith. "We were talking back and forth," said Smith. "He was saying, 'I have seen that move before, do not try that one on me.' I was trying to get him back."

"No one likes to get showed up out there on the court," said Earnhardt. "It was like a little friendly competition." "Hughes is a great player, and I thought it was significant that Andre was still strong late in the game," said Beidenbach. "Andre has been a little injured lately, but he did fine in the game. Last year, he got better as the season went on, and I would expect the same thing this year."

Crossfire committed 19 turnovers. UNCA out-rebounded Crossfire 24-11 in the second half.

"I thought (rebounding and turnovers) made the biggest difference in the game," said Beidenbach.

Freshman forward Michael Harper, who scored 10 points off the bench for UNCA, impressed his teammates with his play against Crossfire.

"He is really basketball-smart," said Earnhardt. "I do not know how he does it, but Michael has a knack for knowing where the ball is going to bounce off the rim. He made a great play in the first half when he (tipped in) a rebound."

"I thought Michael played really well for us in the game," said Smith.

"Both Harper and (freshman forward) Billy Allen played great. I was proud of them," said Beidenbach. "I expect them to play this well in games this year because they have been working very hard in practice."

Besides the other players who scored the points for UNCA, sophomore Ben McGonagil was an unsung hero for his work on the boards, according to

Beidenbach.

"Even though Ben only made one field goal, he got 10 rebounds for us in the game, which is great," said Beidenbach. "He made a rebound and put-back (with 6:13 left in the game) that really made the difference. It gave us a little breathing room."

UNCA got a final tune-up for game competition Nov. 2 with the Blue-White Scrimmage, a split-squad matchup in the Justice Center.

The Blue team won the scrimmage 70-58 with a strong showing in the second half.

At halftime, the White team led 30-25, but the Bluesquad made 17 field goals and 11 free throws to dominate the second half 45-28.

The White team featured Smith, Earnhardt and Harper, while the Blue starters included McGonagil, senior guard Brett Carey and junior forward Robby Joyner.

Although Smith brought the crowd to its feet with two breakaway dunks in the second half, Joyner was the high scorer for the game with 16 points, six rebounds and three assists.

"Robby is really beginning to step up for us," said Earnhardt. "He has worked hard over the summer to improve his shot, and we are going to look to him a lot this season."

"We always knew he could jump, but he seems to be using it a lot more now."

"Robby has really gotten a lot better for us," Beidenbach said. "He is going to be a good one this year."

Sophomore forward Colin Shaw and McGonagil both had 13 points in a balanced attack for the Blue team.

Freshman forward Allen Lovett, also on the Blue team, chipped in nine rebounds and seven points.

Harper tallied 13 points to lead the White team in a losing effort. Smith had 10 points and four steals.

UNCA stomps Rage team in exhibition

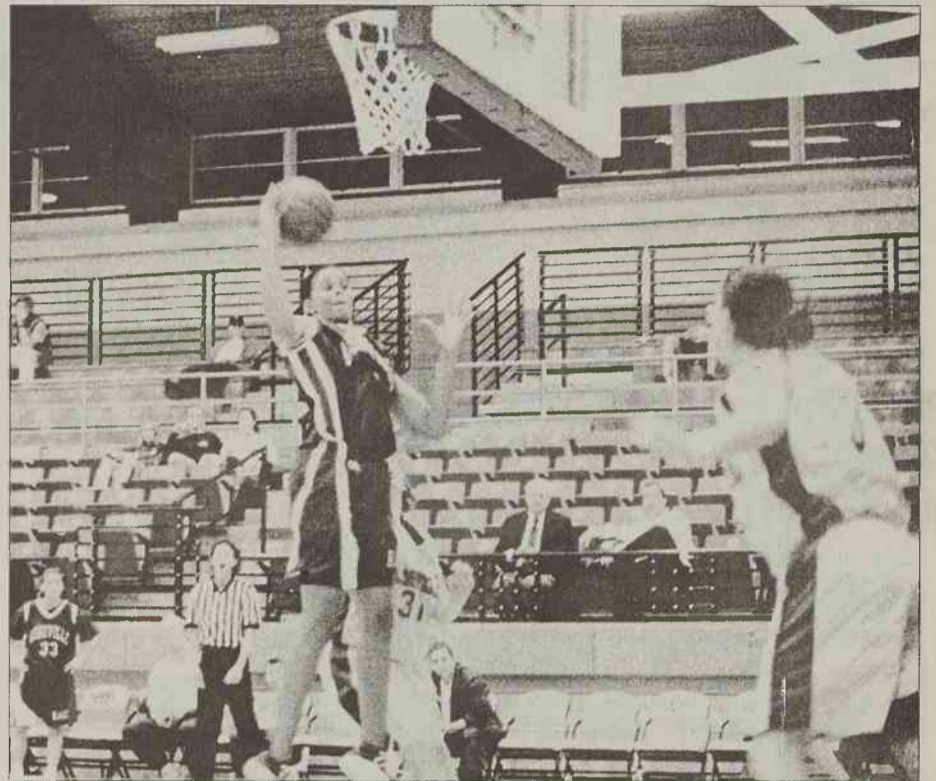


PHOTO BY ANTHONY GRECO

The women's team officially opened their season with their scrimmage game.

Angela Nantz
Staff Writer

UNCA played their first exhibition game against the Asheville Rage, a local basketball team led by Susie Shelton, a former Charlotte Sting player Nov. 6 at the Justice Center. UNCA won 64-47, and two Bulldogs scored 22 points to lead the team to the victory.

"We did some good things, and I was pleased with our inside play," said head coach Kathleen Weber. "We have some stuff to work on, and things got a little sloppy in the second half."

This game was the first of two exhibition games that the team will play before the season begins. The Bulldogs led the entire game, and never allowed the Rage to pull ahead. They managed to build a 20-point lead late in the game.

Sophomore center Tonisha

Jackson scored 16 of her 22 points in the first half. At the half, the Bulldogs led 32-20. After that, the Rage could not close the gap by more than nine points the rest of the game.

Sophomore forward Jessica Guarneri led the Bulldogs in the second half, as she scored 18 of her 22 points.

The Bulldogs controlled the backboards (48-38) as senior forward Nicole Sampson grabbed eight rebounds.

Freshman guard Julie Stephenson scored four points, had six assists and seven rebounds. Freshman guard Joanne Stephenson, Julie's twin sister, also pulled down seven rebounds, according to the athletics Web site.

Willow Russell scored 18 points, while Schiana Banner added 16 points to lead the Rage in scoring, according to the athletics Web site.

The UNCA women's basketball team played in their annual Blue-White scrimmage game at the Justice Cen-

ter Nov. 2.

In the middle of the first half, freshman guard Ansley Bienvenu was taken out of the game after suffering a knee injury.

Both teams played well, scoring about the same number of points. The White squad won the first half, 27-19, and the Blue squad picked up the second half, outscoring the White team 29-25.

Senior guard Denise Wilbanks led the White squad with 10 points, four rebounds and four steals, according to the athletics Web site. She picked up three-straight steals and lay ups to end the first half.

Sophomore forward Gillian Murray scored eight points in the second half to lead the Blue squad.

Jackson had six points, while Guarneri added five points and nine rebounds.

The Bulldogs play their final exhibition game Nov. 12 against Supreme Court Basketball at 2 p.m.

'Dogs pull off comeback after loss to CCU

Ben Ezell
Staff Writer

UNCA's volleyball team finished a two game road trip along the coast of South Carolina with a 3-0 loss to Coastal Carolina University Nov. 4, and a 3-2 win over Charleston Southern University Nov. 3.

Freshman outside hitter Kelly Budnik earned Big South Conference player of the Week honors for her performances against CCU, CSU and Wofford University.

"She is a real energetic spark on our team," said junior middle hitter Elizabeth Rodriguez. "It is really encouraging to see that from a freshman because she is the only freshman on our team."

Budnik posted career highs with 26 kills and 24 digs in the victory over CSU.

"Coastal is a really great team. They are very offensive, and have lots of strong hitters. We were not getting a lot of

blocks, but we were able to make some awesome digs," said junior outside hitter Allison Green.

The Bulldogs battled in each game, but could not come within four points of winning any of the games as they lost 11-15, 10-15 and 10-15.

Coming off the game the night before against CSU, the Bulldogs may have been a little bit tired, and they really needed all the energy they could muster against a Chanticleer team that had been so hot as of late, said Rodriguez.

The Chanticleers were led by Jeanne Lambert with 18 kills and 14 digs as CCU earned its school-record 11th straight victory.

"We did not play that badly, but we would have had to play great to have won that match," said Green.

Junior outside hitter Heather Terrell had 10 kills and 3 blocks for the Bulldogs, while junior setter Jessica Beal had 34 assists.

The match against CSU was

similar to the match against CCU, with UNCA playing tough but not being able to finish the job and come out with a win in either of the first two games.

"The first two games, we were not really playing together," said Rodriguez. "We just were not connecting, and we were playing real slow."

"During the first two games, we would spot them a bunch of points, and then just would not have that boost at the end to come back," said Rodriguez.

Trailing 13-9 in the third game, it looked as if the Bulldogs would be making a quick exit from the CSU gym, according to the team.

However, they fought their way to a win in the third set, and then finished off the comeback.

The Bulldogs won the fourth game easily, according to the team.

"After we blew them out in that fourth game, the team said to each other that we need to finish them off and win this

match," said Rodriguez.

The fifth set was close just as the first three had been, but for one of the first times in the season, some of the breaks seemed to be going UNCA's way, said Rodriguez.

"Normally, we have the most injuries, and we have the most problems," said Rodriguez.

The final play of the match, with UNCA leading 15-14, was a sign that it was the Bulldogs' night, according to the team.

A ball that was struck by the Buccaneers landed out of bounds, but the line judge called it in, according to the team.

However, the referee overturned the call and gave the Bulldogs a 16-14 win.

"Coach was jumping up in the air, and it was like we had won this gigantic match because we had given so much to this game. It felt good that something was finally going our way," said Rodriguez.

The match ended with players from both teams having

unusually high statistical numbers because of the length of the match.

Terrell had 20 kills while Beal had 51 assists and 15 digs for the Bulldogs in the winning effort.

For the Buccaneers, Jennifer Monson had 27 kills, while Michelle Lewandowski added a career-best 51 assists.

The BSC Tournament will be held Nov. 17 and 18 in High Point, N.C.

There is no predominant favorite to take home the championship, according to Green.

"We have been playing so much better here at the end of the season than we have in such a long time. All the coaches in the conference agree that anybody has a shot at winning," said Green.

The Bulldogs travel to Elon College Nov. 10, and to High Point University Nov. 11 for two BSC matches.

The volleyball team plays their final home match of the season against Gardner-Webb University Nov. 14 at 7 p.m.

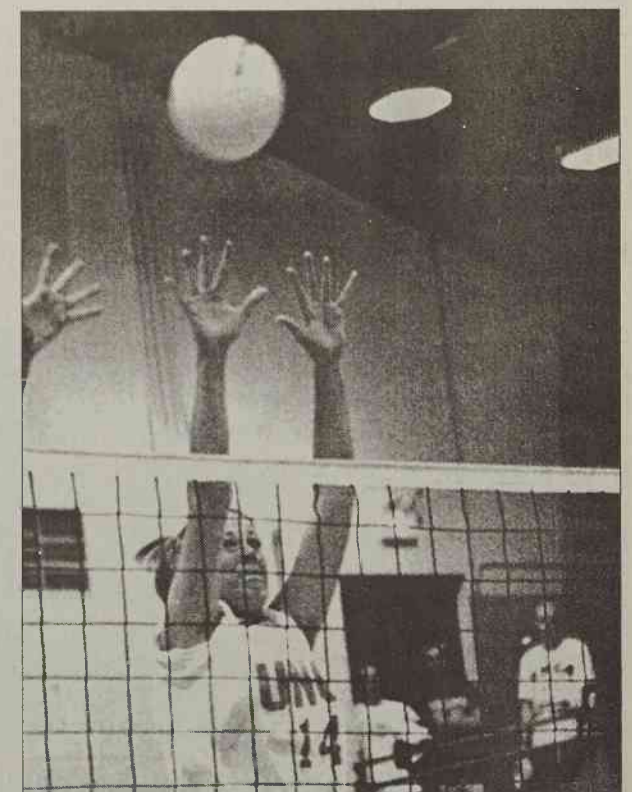


PHOTO BY ANTHONY GRECO

Sophomore middle hitter Jessica Jones helped UNCA defeat CSU, but was unable to beat CCU.