

SPORTS

UNCA off to shaky 0-4 start to begin hoops season

Hollie Childers
Staff Reporter

The UNCA men's basketball team did not eat turkey last week because they went on the road to play.

Campbell University, the University of Minnesota, UNC-Greensboro and West Virginia University all beat the Bulldogs, but the team's chemistry and new players are still adjusting to the new season.

"Chemistry is what the team strives for, and that is why these early games are there, so we can get that," said Head Coach Eddie Biedenbach.

UNCA fell in overtime to Campbell University 77-72 Nov. 24 in Buies Creek, NC.

The Fighting Camels, (2-1) broke to an 18-point lead in the first half, but had to rally to win in the overtime session.

The 'Dogs trailed 27-9 at one point in the first half due to missed foul shots and turnovers.

The Fighting Camels made 19 of 22 foul shots and UNCA hit only five of 12. The second half started out better for the 'Dogs, but the intensity fell and the Camels took over.

"We came out and played very well in the second half, and with less than two minutes to go, we went up four points," said Biedenbach. "It went into overtime, and we had some bad breaks. Had we done better in the free throw situation, we would have won in regulation."

Junior center Ben McGonagil led UNCA with 20 points and nine rebounds. This was the second-straight game the 'Dogs have played without junior guard and leading scorer Andre Smith.

Smith is suffering from an arch injury, and a bruised heel, said Biedenbach.

"It is a nagging injury, and he bruised the other foot favoring it and trying to play with it," said Biedenbach. "He could have played, but we felt it would hurt him for the future."

Junior forward Colin Shaw and sophomore forward Billy Allen are also injured, but that cannot be an excuse for the team's losses, said Biedenbach.

"We have to learn to play without Andre Smith," said



Junior center Ben McGonagil goes up for a shot amidst heavy pressure from an opposing defender last year. UNCA finished 15-13 in 2000-01, but has stumbled out to an 0-4 start in the 2001-02 season.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE GORE

Biedenbach. "He is going to get in foul trouble, he is going to have to be sick and he is going to get hurt again. It is hard on him not being able to play, but it is harder on us right now."

On Nov. 21, UNCA played the Golden Gophers of Minnesota for the first time ever.

"It was a good experience for us from the standpoint that it is a Big 10 team," said Biedenbach. "They have a great tradition of basketball."

The 'Dogs traveled to Minneapolis, Minn., where they lost 92-65. UNCA committed 22 turnovers in the game, 11 of which were in the first half, according to the *Asheville Citizen-Times*

Web site.

Minnesota made just five of its first 20 shots in the first half, and the Bulldogs made half of their shots to take a 15-12 lead midway through the half. Junior guard Brandon Carter scored 12 points for the Bulldogs, according to the Web site.

"We had the lead for much of the first half, but when they brought in their three substitutes, those guys played very well against us," said Biedenbach. "We did not attack their zone very well, and as a result, they inched back into the game."

The Bulldogs played UNC-Greensboro at home Nov. 19, where they were defeated 75-49.

UNCG led midway through the first half in a 49-26 lead. The 'Dogs shot poorly, hitting only 32 percent from the field and 38 percent at the free throw line, according to the Web site.

Although the Bulldogs have played the Spartans before, a lot of things have changed, for both teams, said Biedenbach.

"Last year, we played those guys, and we had a 13-point lead at their place, but we ended up giving it away," said Biedenbach. "They are playing extremely hard and they were picked 100 in the country, which is better than anyone in our league. They won the Southern Conference last year, and they are favored to win it again."

The Spartans out-rebounded the Bulldogs 46-33, and the 'Dogs had 20 turnovers in the game.

They went 8-of-21 from the free throw line for 38 percent, while they shot only 28 percent from the field in the second half.

McGonagil scored a career-high

15 points and grabbed seven rebounds to lead the Bulldogs.

The 'Dogs cut the deficit to 61-44, but the Spartans were too strong.

"Our guys were surprised at the high level of intensity that these guys played. Their players are a little better than ours, a little bigger and they play harder," said Biedenbach. "I do not think there are 30 teams in the country that play as hard as Greensboro does. That was a good lesson for us."

The Bulldogs also traveled to Morgantown, West Virginia to play their 2001 season opener Nov. 16 against West Virginia. The 'Dogs were defeated 83-57.

WVU dominated the 'Dogs by leading 46-20 at halftime.

"It was opening game and we have eight new players," said Biedenbach. "It was a good game for us in the fact that we realized we have to play harder."

The score was tied 37-37 at one point in the game. Shaw led the 'Dogs in scoring with 13 points. Senior forward Robby Joyner had 11 points and Smith had 10 points.

UNCA had 24 turnovers in the game, and their rebounding was also lacking. The WVU Mountaineers had 17 rebounds to UNCA's three.

"We missed a lot of easy shots and they out-rebounded us, and that was probably the biggest problem we had," said Biedenbach. "We did cut our turnovers down in the second half, and we rebounded better. We really beat them in the second half, and we executed better."

New players and uncertain chemistry could have caused the losses for the 'Dogs, said Biedenbach.

"We have eight new players and as a result, each game you are trying to get those guys implemented and used to playing at this level," said Biedenbach. "You have to play extremely hard to win at this level."

UNCA was picked third in the Big South Conference in the pre-season this year, but expectations are greater for the Bulldogs.

"We expect that Winthrop is better than us, but we can beat them. Radford is better than us, but we can beat them," said Biedenbach. "They pick us in the league because we had success over the past five years coming in first twice, and third three times."

"They just expect us to be there. Come conference time, we should get better and win the BSC tournament," said Biedenbach.

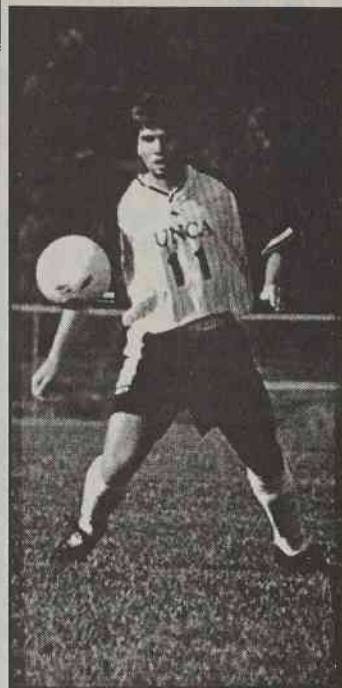


PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE GORE

Senior midfielder Colin Barnes is shown controlling the ball.

Panthers claw 'Dogs in upset shutout

Ben Martin
Staff Reporter

The UNCA men's soccer team ended their season by losing 2-0 to High Point University in the first round of the Big South Conference Tournament Nov. 8.

"We're very disappointed," said Head Coach Steve Cornish, according to the UNCA athletics Web site. "We didn't play badly, but their goalkeeper came up with some big saves when we had some opportunities. We weren't as sharp as we needed to be today, and that early goal was a real killer."

"If we could have ever tied the game, we would have been in good shape," said Cornish.

The Bulldogs went 9-8-0 this season, their best record since their start in Division I play in 1986, according to the Web site.

It is also the second year in a row that the number 8 seed has upset the number 1 seed in the first round of the BSC tournament.

High Point scored early in the first half with an unassisted goal by John Sitaridis at the 12:18 mark. The 'Dogs turned things around for a while after the goal with six cornerkicks.

Panther goalie Eric Lona made some big saves and finished the match with a total of five.

High Point added another goal with less than five minutes left in the game to seal the victory for the Panthers.

"It hurts right now, but two weeks from now, we'll realize what a good season we had," said Cornish on the Web site. "We graduate some good lads, but we have a lot returning for next year. I'm already looking forward to next year with this team. We made some significant progress this year, and that will continue next season."

In other soccer news, Cornish was named Big South Coach of the Year for the second time in his career. Freshman defender Kyle Britton received Rookie of the Year honors and senior midfielder Mike Roach was named Big South Scholar Athlete of the Year.

The Bulldogs also had four players named to the all-conference first team and two players named to the all-conference second team. Midfielders Greg Garrison and Colin Barnes, defender Kyle Britton

See SHUTOUT Page 8

Highlanders eliminate the Bulldogs in tournament

Jenna Lahmeyer
Staff Reporter

The UNCA volleyball team finished up their season in Lynchburg, VA., as Liberty University held the 2001 Big South conference women's volleyball tournament Nov 14 through 17.

The Bulldogs went into the tournament in 5 place overall, and were matched up with fourth seeded Charleston Southern University.

The Bulldogs defeated the Buccaneers in the first round on November 22, and advanced to the second round to face the Radford University Highlanders.

The Highlanders defeated the Bulldogs in three games, and then went on to lose in the championship game to the Liberty University Flames.

"We knew it was going to be tough playing Radford, but I'm really happy with our performance," said team captain and senior middle hitter Elizabeth Rodriguez.

"Radford is a very strong team, and we tried our hardest, but we

just couldn't pull out the win," said freshman setter Bonny Sneed.

The Highlanders defeated the Bulldogs 30-17, 30-22 and 30-26 Nov. 16 in the Vines Center.

BSC player of the year, Katie Sherwood, and first team all-conference selection, Laura Marcuson, both had 17 kills and 10 digs, and Bliss Mulligan had a game-high of 51 assists for the Highlanders.

For the Bulldogs, junior middle hitter Jessica Jones recorded 11 kills and 2 block assists, and junior outside hitter Adrienne Moore added 10 kills. Sneed, an all-rookie honoree setter for UNCA, finished with a team best of 28 assists.

Radford attempted to defend their 2000-championship title to the Liberty Flames but were defeated in the championship match Nov. 17.

"We played better towards the end of the match, so it felt good to end our season putting up a fight, Radford played really well," said sophomore middle hitter Suzanne Aubel.

In first round action against CSU, the Bulldogs quickly attacked the Buccaneers and won 30-23, 30-22 and 30-26.

The Bulldogs faced the Buccaneers

twice before and split with them, so this was a deciding match between the two teams, according to several players.

"That was our best game of the season," said Moore. "I've never seen our team play that well. We were very prepared for the match."

The first two games, UNCA took off with big leads over CSU, but in the third game the Bucs battled the 'Dogs for every point until five points in a row by the Bulldogs clinched their victory.

Leading scorers for UNCA were senior middle hitter Heather Terrell with 17 kills and 10 digs, and sophomore outside hitter Kelly Budnik with 13 kills and nine digs. Sneed recorded 45 assists.

For CSU, Tricia Wilson led with 17 kills and nine digs, and Jennifer Monson added 15 kills and seven digs.

"We had one win and one loss (vs. CSU), so we were really excited to have the chance and play them again," said Rodriguez. "We just played together and everything clicked. We definitely had the upper-hand and didn't let down."

"We were really prepared and excited to play CSU," said Sneed.

"We played better towards the end of the match, so it felt good to end our season putting up a fight."

Suzanne Aubel
Sophomore, Outside Hitter

"We had changed up our defense and were ready to play."

Sneed, a Marietta, Ga. native, received all-rookie honors Nov. 21 at the conference awards banquet.

Since preseason, Sneed has been the starting setter for the Bulldogs. She is one of the top setters in the BSC with an average of 10.96 assists per game.

Also receiving honors was Budnik from New Berlin, Wis., who received All-Conference second team honors, and was awarded to the All-Academic team.

Budnik has a current grade point average of 3.35.

These awards are voted on by the conference coaches and Sports Information Directors.

Budnik is second on the team in kills, and leads the team in service aces and digs.

Earlier in the season, she recorded 30 kills, which is the most of any UNCA player in five seasons. Her play has been a major contribution to this young Bulldog squad this season.

Budnik was also awarded at the conclusion of the BSC tournament to the All-Tournament team.

Budnik was named Big South Rookie of the year last season.

"Our season was disappointing," said Budnik. "It felt good to play hard at the tournament and to know we have a lot to work for."

The Bulldogs finish their season with a record of 7-21.