

Rob Vernon leads Bulldogs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

we were able to accomplish that." This year, Vernon leads the Bulldogs with 38 RBIs, 34 runs, 63 hits, six home runs and a slugging percentage of .644. His batting average, .387, is second behind freshman Justin Schumer, who only has 29 at bats.

"There are always things that I'm working on," the senior said. "In terms of numbers I've obviously improved this year from last year. I'd like to think that I'm more mature and a little bit

"

I'll certainly look back at my time here and have a lot of fond memories, especially our championship season

ROB VERNON
Senior Outfielder

smarter." Last season Vernon batted .330, with 37 runs, 59 hits, seven home runs and a .547 slugging percentage.

"As a coach, it's been a pleasure to coach him and watch him become a better baseball player," Stewart said.

Vernon said UNC Asheville baseball provided him with a great opportunity. He leaves the Bulldogs hoping that he made a positive impact on the team and UNC Asheville athletics in general.

"I'll certainly look back at my time here and have a lot of fond memories," Vernon said. "Especially our championship season, the teams that we've been able to play and the places we've been able to go."

Vernon is set to graduate in May with a degree in literature.

He hopes to continue his baseball career after graduating, and leave his name in the record book



TREY BOUVIER - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Rob Vernon leads the Bulldogs in RBIs with 38, runs with 34 hits with 64 slugging percentage with .635 and home runs with six. Against Gardner-Webb on Tuesday Vernon went 1-4 from the plate.

at UNC Asheville. The only baseball player active in the major leagues is Ty Wigginton, who plays third base for the Tampa Bay Devil Rays. No former-players are currently active in the minor leagues, but 17 Bulldogs

have been drafted since 1989. "That's always been one of my goals, ever since I was a little kid," Vernon said. "If I keep playing well I think I'll have the opportunity, but a lot of it's luck and timing."

Baseball

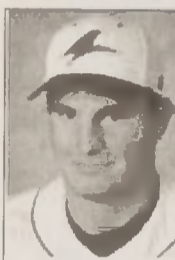
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ter and we are all going out there playing tough to the end."

Radford series

The sweep against the Radford Highlanders marks the first BSC series sweep by the Bulldogs since they did it last year against VMI. In the first game of the series there was precision pitching by junior Alan DeRatt. DeRatt went a season-high seven innings giving up two runs on ten hits. Sophomore Jordan Dorsett pitched the final innings allowing just one walk.

"The series we had with Radford was a good one for us," said



Alan DeRatt

Whited. "When we got them down early, we kept them down. In some of our past games this season we have not been able to close the door on teams and we did that against them."

"They are a good ball team, but when we get ahead four or five runs and add on to that every inning it's going to be hard to come back on us."

Alan DeRatt, Josh Lett and Graham Baughn picked up the three victories over the weekend.

"We had some great individual performances this weekend," Baughn said. "Alan DeRatt threw really well for us. Getting Ben Buchanan back on the mound proved to be huge as well, and he got the win in the second game on Friday and came in for the save on Saturday."

In game two of the series, Vernon hit his sixth home run of the season with a man on board in the first inning to put the Bulldogs up 2-0. Smith made it 3-0 with a solo home run in the second inning, his second of the season. Radford made five errors in the bottom of the seventh inning allowing five Bulldogs to score on just one hit.

The Bulldogs added to the lead with two runs in the eighth to make the score 11-4. The final score was 11-5.

"We came ready to play, and we hit the ball really well and pitched well too," Mattison said. "We also capitalized on Radford's mistakes, which were also a key to put them away and not let them in the game. Timely hits and good stop innings from our pitchers were a big part of our success in the game."

In the final installment of the weekend sweep, Smith went 3-5 with an RBI and junior infielder Elliott Arrington went 2-3 with two RBIs as the Bulldogs won 5-3. Baughn, the starter for the Bulldogs, gave up only two hits through six innings.

Closing the game for the Bulldogs on the mound was junior Ben Buchanan who racked up his 11th save of his career as a Bulldog, tying former Bulldog Jason Tyner for the career saves record.

"It was huge for us to sweep Radford," Baughn said. "Their record might not indicate it, but they are a pretty good hitting team who beat one of the best pitchers in the conference the weekend before they played us. For us to come out and get three Big South Conference wins was huge. Getting the sweep gave us lots of confidence heading into another big series this upcoming weekend against High Point."

BIG SOUTH CONFERENCE

Baseball Rankings

1. Coastal Carolina (8-1)
2. Winthrop (8-1)
3. UNCA (7-5)
4. High Point (6-6)
5. VMI (5-4)
6. Liberty (5-4)
7. Charleston So. (2-10)
8. Radford (1-11)

Tennis

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singles and doubles matches.

Rhoney's younger sister plays for Mars Hill tennis team at the No. 5 spot.

The Bulldogs (4-11, 0-7 BSC), seeded last in the conference face first place Winthrop (8-14, 7-0 conference) in the Big South Conference Tournament.

The Bulldogs lost 7-0 to the Eagles in their March 31 face-off. "It's a David and Goliath match," head coach Larry Hubbard said.

If the Bulldogs fall, it will be Rhoney's last match.

Hubbard said he hopes assistant

coach Joanna Cahi will stay with the program for the next two years as she completes her Master's

"It's a David and Goliath match."

LARRY HUBBARD
on the upcoming tennis match against Winthrop

Western Carolina University.

On Thursday, heavy winds cancelled the women's match against Brevard College.

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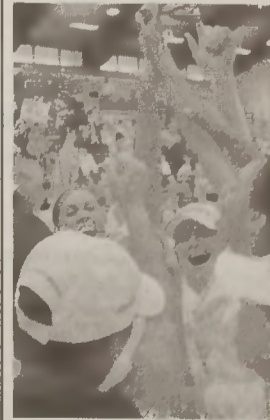
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BIG SOUTH CONFERENCE

women's basketball CHAMPIONS



On part of The Blue Banner staff, congratulations to the 2007 Big South Women's Basketball Champions, the UNC Asheville Bulldogs