

SPORTS

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Big South Champs lose four in a row

Losses to Birmingham Southern, Gardner-Webb, WCU and App. State hurt the Bulldogs' stats, not their spirit

By Gordon Gundlach
STAFF WRITER

Optimism remains high for women's soccer despite a rocky (1-4) start to the season.

"We played some quality teams; we just could not get it together," said Sarah Holland junior.

"We got some good play from Robyn and Keri, but we just could not hold it together in the end of our games."

After losing to Western Carolina at home 2-1 last Wednesday, the Bulldogs participated in the Gardner-Webb Classic during the weekend and lost 5-1 to the host team, Gardner-Webb University. Sunday, the Bulldogs faced former Big South opponent Birmingham Southern and lost 3-1. Tuesday the Bulldogs fell to Appalachian State 2-0 in Boone.

"It is hard for any team to go on a losing streak," said junior Robyn Busha. "We cannot let that stop us from turning things around, and I do not believe that it will stop our determination."

Busha leads the Bulldogs in goals scored with three. Officials of the Gardner-Webb classic selected Busha and sophomore Keri Skelton to the all-tournament team.

"It was nice to be selected for the all-tournament team, but I would rather have the wins for the team, rather than the losses," Busha said.

While Busha recorded her third goal of the season over the weekend, the Bulldogs were out-shot by Gardner-Webb, 22-8, contributing to the loss. In the second game of



TREY BOUVIER - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Junior forward Robyn Busha sprints past a Western Carolina defender. Busha was selected to the all-tournament team at the Gardner-Webb Classic.

the tournament, the Bulldogs broke even with Birmingham Southern, with each team recording 13 shots on goal.

"We want to get back to our winning ways," Holland said. "We just have to continue to work on the areas of our game that need revamping."

The Bulldogs play their next two games on the road against

Appalachian State and Austin Peay State. They will return to home action on Thursday, Sept. 20 as they take on Furman University.

"We are a good team," Busha said. "We have speed, and we are strong on defense. Keri being selected to the all-tournament team is an example of that. We just had a rough three-game stretch, and we will get out of this."

Veronica Lazar, sophomore goalie, secured nine saves in the UNC Asheville women's soccer team's close loss last Wednesday against Western Carolina (3-2-0), 2-1.

"She was very good but wasn't forced to make spectacular plays," said Head Coach Michele Cornish.

The Bulldogs scored the first goal early in the game, at 8:42 in the first half. Busha passed to senior Joy

Haynes, who broke away from the defense to score, putting the Bulldogs ahead 1-0.

"Joy is a patient player; that goal resulted from her composure," Cornish said.

Eleven minutes later, Western Carolina caught up, scoring a goal off a throw-in, which Catamount team member Arian Whittle tapped in for the goal.

"We did well the first 15 to 20 minutes, then they went flat out for us and Western never let up," Cornish said.

The Bulldogs had several opportunities to score with seven shots on goal. With 20 seconds left in the first half, sophomore Emily Elstrom crossed the ball across the pitch to Busha, whose open shot was narrowly saved by the Catamount goalie.

At the beginning of the second half, the Catamounts turned up the tempo.

"The second half was awful, didn't win many 50-50 chances," Cornish said. "We let them out muscle us."

In minute 67, the Catamounts' Rachael Shomper put in another goal on the Bulldogs, putting Western Carolina ahead 2-1, a lead the Bulldogs never overcame.

"I think, as a whole, it went pretty well. We just need to pick up the work. We need to close the gaps between the mids and forwards a little bit," said sophomore Lauren Turnburke. "Everyone needs to work hard for one another. That's what Western did, that's how they beat us."

The Bulldogs had five substitutions as opposed to Western Carolina's 11 substitutions.

"Lindsey Bragg did really well for us, she came off the bench and changed the pace of the game for us," Cornish said.

With the loss, the Bulldogs are 1-1 at home.

"We're still a fairly young team, though we're well seasoned from last year," Cornish said.

Volleyball team shut out in Tennessee Tournament

Freshman Kelsey Bernoder is selected to her second all tournament team despite the Bulldog loss

By Meagan Rawls
STAFF WRITER

Youth proved a fatal factor last weekend as the majority underclassmen Bulldog squad went winless in the Country Inns and Suites Challenge in Chattanooga, Tenn.

"We didn't produce the results we obviously went there for," said Head Coach Julie Torbett.

Freshman outside hitter Kelsey Benorden led the team with 11 kills and 11 digs. Hitter Alysha Greer, freshman, had eight kills, followed by Lauren Ficker with five kills. Ashley Wrihtenberry and Heather Burns both had four kills.

"We played very well in the first match, and I was pleased with that performance against a highly ranked Missouri State team," Torbett said.

Sophomore Raquel Miotto took lead in defense with 16 digs in the first match.

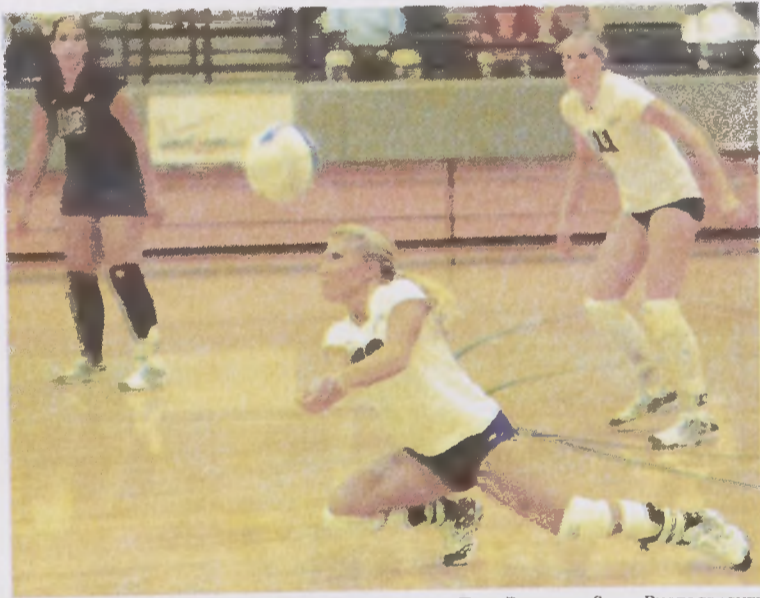
"We led most of the first game, and the scores were very close. The coach actually afterwards commented that we outplayed them," Torbett said. "They were just slightly better than us. I felt really good, that being the first match of the tournament, against the strongest team in the tournament."

The Bulldogs played host University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (2-4) Saturday. Chattanooga won 30-28, 30-14, 30-17.

"We felt like we were better than them, and had a good game plan going into the match," Torbett said. "The difference between their team and my team was they were all seniors."

Greer had 14 kills in the match. Benorden had 10 kills and eight digs.

"We need to work on chemistry," said Burns junior. "As a team, we need to get better. We hope to work it all out before conference games begin."



TREY BOUVIER - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Sophomore Brittany Holliday attempts a save. The young Volleyball team has of only two upperclassmen.

Miotto continued to lead defensively with 16 digs. Sophomore Brooke Holliday had 15 digs.

"Individually we are good players, but it is the aspect of playing well together that has to improve," Holliday said. "We are a young team, our coach is working very hard at making sure we get better. That is all she can do. The rest of the responsibility is on the player's shoulders."

The Bulldogs only had a 40 minute break between the matches with the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and Tennessee University.

"We had to play immediately following the loss to Chattanooga. We battled hard in the first game," Torbett said. "We still felt like we could compete with that team and be successful with that team after watching them play."

Tennessee Tech (5-6) won the final match against the Bulldogs 32-30, 30-12, 30-13. Benorden, who was named all-tournament this weekend, continued her double-figure kills with another 10 kills and eight digs.

"Kelsey had a good tournament," Holliday said. "She is really a big help to our team. When she is out there on the court, she competes at such a high level."

Greer added 11 kills and had two blocks, while Miotto led defensively once more with 17 digs. Holliday added another 10 digs.

"We started out last year very slow, very similar to this," Torbett said.

"To repeat that is almost like starting over. It's very frustrating."

The Bulldogs returned to UNC Asheville disappointed by the losses.

"We play preseason to get ready for conference, so it was another opportunity to see that we're not where we need to be to win this conference," Torbett said. "That has been the goal, and still is the goal."

Torbett said she is willing to take losses early in the season in order to improve later on.

"As long as they're committed to getting better and working hard, then yes, the rest of the season, we should have more success," Torbett said.

Szymanski is ready to take part in the Bulldogs success

By Nora Stoney
STAFF WRITER

After returning from his semester abroad in Australia, junior forward Scott Szymanski has come back strong to lead the Bulldogs in scoring with four goals in the team's first three games.

"It feels good to be able to help the team out with scoring so early in the season," Szymanski said. "Coach Cornish has a great program. He is the main reason I came here. He is very talented and encouraging, and he influences you to play hard and do well."

In 2005 as a freshman, Szymanski was the leading scorer with five goals for the season. He also led the Bulldogs with 33 total shots and 14 of those shots taken were on goal. He was second on the team in points that year, scoring 10.

"We find him to be most effective as a forward," said Head Coach Steve Cornish. "We are playing with three up top and he can play in any one of those positions. He is very effective in all three areas."

Szymanski performed impressively his sophomore year as well. He played in 16 matches and started in 11. In his best game plated against Wofford College where he scored two goals and made two assists to help his team to a 5-0 win.

He also scored against rival High Point University and was third on his team with 22 shots taken.

"He can be a real handful," Cornish said. "He's quick, he's elusive and he plays with a passion. He's still learning when and where to make good runs, but when he does that he is very difficult to stop. I'm

anticipating great things from this kid over the next two years. I'm glad he plays for us."

Szymanski recently took a semester off from soccer and spent time studying in Australia.

"He did a semester abroad which meant that when he came back he was a little bit behind some of the players in terms of what we are trying to do this season," Cornish said. "But his experience in Australia meant he came back a much more mature person and you can see that in the way he has trained."

Szymanski worked hard to make up for the lost time, according to his teammates.

"He came back in shape and ready to go," said senior for-

ward Daniel Bandoly. "I think it is a little easier when there is a level of maturity not just in the games but in practice as well. They are a driven bunch of guys and hopefully that will translate into good results."

According to Cornish, the team's ultimate goal is to win the Big South Tournament and get into the NCAA tournament.

"You know watching the women's team do it last year, and also baseball and women's basketball, it's a thrill and I would love for our guys to be able to experience that too," Cornish said.

Szymanski said good team chemistry will help them reach that goal this season.

"This year is really the year that we've all started to mature and come together as a team," Szymanski said. "We really have a good time together. The team chemistry has been the best out of the three years I've been there."

The players and coaches agree there is always room for improvement, as a team and individually.

"We would like to train Scott so that his effectiveness isn't just in five minutes here and there but throughout the 90 minutes of a game," Cornish said.

"As all players do, he is going through a growth period and trying to perfect his game. What he does, he does extremely well, but there are still parts of his game we would like him to improve on, but he knows that. He is fortunate in that he is with a bunch of guys all of whom work very hard."

The Bulldogs' next home game is against Elon on Wednesday Sept. 19.



Scott Szymanski



Steve Cornish
Head Coach

He can be a handful. He's quick, he's elusive and he plays with a passion. He's still learning when and where to make good runs, but when he does he is very difficult to stop.

STEVE CORNISH
Head Coach

ward Daniel Bandoly. "He fit right back in with the team and didn't skip a beat. It was like he wasn't even gone."

The trip was something that most college athletes don't typically get to enjoy.

"For my coach to let me take a semester off is really cool because most colleges won't let you do that," Szymanski said.

This year's team, consisting mainly of upperclassmen, look forward to having a successful season.

"They've worked their socks off over the past few years," Cornish said. "It is nice to