



Photo by Jorja Smith- Staff Photographer

Senior Grace Blaylock looks for a way around Coastal Carolina's Angelica Henry on Saturday.

## Women's basketball remains winless in Big South

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Plagued by injuries throughout the season, the women's basketball team recently lost two close conference games to Charleston Southern and Coastal Carolina.

"We have tons of injuries, but, I want these kids to understand that we're still accountable for the result," said head coach **Brenda Kirkpatrick**. "We have to play through those things and we have to respond. And that's who we are, not what our record is."

Injured players remain an important part of the team, said senior guard **Grace Blaylock**.

"We have lost several key pieces this year to injury. While it is frustrating for everyone involved, it is unfortunately part of athletics," Blaylock said. "We have worked hard to make adjustments and continue to play hard each game. Our injured players are still an integral part of the team and continue to add positive energy through their enthusiasm and support."

Both of the games held a very special importance with regards to the rest of the season, Blaylock said.

"The two games are important games that could give

us some positive momentum as we head into the last few games of the season," she said.

Kirkpatrick really wants the wins for the players whose last games at UNC Asheville evolve into special memories.

"We've got three seniors on our team. They're all three starters, so they impact the game," the Waynesville native said. "I'm excited for them because every game is special when you're a senior. Every game is your last opportunity, and we've only got four home games left. So I'm really hoping for a win for them as well."

In the loss against Charleston Southern last Thursday, senior forward **Kelli Riles** opened the scoring. Blaylock said early scores from Charleston Southern forced the team to play catch-up.

"We let them get some early baskets which gave them confidence," Blaylock, a health and wellness promotion student, said. "We have to work to set the tone on our home court early in the game to help put us in a position to win."

Protecting the ball and their house remains important during home games, said Kirkpatrick.

"For us, it'll be taking care of the ball and limiting turnovers. Another thing is that we need to win the rebounding war. We need to out-rebound our opponents," she said.

Riles gathered nine rebounds and scored 11 points in the game, adding to her already impressive total. Well on her way to scoring 1,000 rebounds and points, Riles could be the first woman in Division I women's basketball to achieve this feat, Kirkpatrick said.

"It's a great accomplishment and I don't think words can explain it. I didn't come in with a goal of getting 1,000 points and 1,000 rebounds, it just happened," Riles said. "My team encourages me and reminds me each day of this accomplishment, and they're definitely an inspiration to me making this happen, so I do share this honor with them."

Nail-biter describes the atmosphere of the game against Coastal Carolina. The game stayed close with both teams tied at 46 until the last 20 seconds of the game. Two late free throws from Coastal Carolina pushed the Chanticleers to victory.

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