



Photo by Brian Vu - Staff Photographer

Men's Tennis defeats Mars Hill

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The UNC Asheville men's tennis team prevailed against nearby Mars Hill Sunday, and now look forward to the regular season.

"We start out every spring playing UNC Asheville to prepare for our season," said John Hunter, Mars Hill College second-year head coach. "They're one of the best teams in North Carolina."

The match between UNCA and Mars Hill College was an exhibition and did not count in the season standings.

"I felt good about how we competed tonight. I feel that we are ready for the season and our opponents," said Tom Hand UNCA assistant coach. "We have a challenging schedule in front of us and we have worked very hard to get here."

Earlier this week, the Big South Conference announced its preseason poll and predicted the UNCA men's tennis team to finish in eighth place in the conference this season.

"Our goal is to surprise people in our conference," said **Reid Dillon, UNCA men's tennis team member**. "We weren't picked very high in the Big South this year. Our team is ready to start the season."

A successful start to the season will not come easy as the Bulldogs square off against East Carolina University on Monday to start season play.

"We worked very hard to get to this point," said Hand, originally from England. "We have a very young team but I wouldn't say that we are rebuilding, our young players have progressed a lot this year. East Carolina is a very good challenge for us to

See **TENNIS** on page 8

Women's Basketball beats No. 1 in Big South

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With only 7 seconds left in overtime, **freshman guard Ja'Da Brayboy** pushed the UNC Asheville Bulldogs to victory over the Liberty Flames.

Brayboy stole the ball only to be fouled by Liberty's Emily Friazer. She made the next two free throws to push the Bulldogs 83-80 in overtime.

"I went for it, got the steal and made the play," Brayboy said. "It was a great team effort and a great team win."

After 17 seasons the UNC Asheville Bulldogs finally upset Liberty's five-game winning streak.

"It was a great win and it's a great confidence builder," said **Brenda Kirkpatrick, Asheville's head coach**. "All along we have been telling them, 'We believe in you, but you got to believe in yourselves,' and I think this win will reinforce

that belief."

Asheville nearly tripled Liberty in 3-pointers, with guard Shonese Jones accounting for 12 of Asheville's 3-point shots.

"One of the strategies coming into the game was to take away the post, but if we couldn't do that then we were at least going to take away their 3-point shots," Jones said.

According to Kirkpatrick, the Bulldogs' strategy focused on upsetting Liberty's rhythm and keeping the defensive pressure high.

"We didn't do a great job of keeping them out of the paint, but we did contest most of the three point shots," Kirkpatrick said.

In order to much up against the size of the Liberty players, Asheville matched their height with two taller players on the post. Kirkpatrick said.

"Normally we don't have Leah Wormack playing with KJ Weaver. They sub in and out for each other, and we had

them playing together some, or playing Rachel McGirt and Leah Wormack together," Kirkpatrick said. "So we were playing our big line up at the post position to try and counter some of that size."

Liberty upped Asheville with 49 total rebounds. The Bulldogs made up in speed what they lacked in height and rebounds to score 7 points of fast breaks, as opposed to Liberty's one sole fast break point.

"We knew we had to attack them in transition because they're big and not as mobile," said **Paige Love, sophomore guard**.

"We capitalized on offense," Jones said. "We only had seven turnovers, so we held possession of the ball."

According to Jones, Kirkpatrick encouraged the Bulldogs to use their speed advantage to attack. As a direct result, Asheville scored 15 points off Liberty's 17 turnovers. Being disciplined and forcing the

turnovers was key in winning the game, according to Kirkpatrick.

"By forcing Liberty to have so many turnovers, we were able to keep possession of the ball and limit their possession," Love said.

With less than two minutes less in overtime Liberty's high scorer, Ashley Rininger fouled out. However, Asheville's game plan did not change according to Love.

Six of Asheville's players scored in the double digits, whereas only four of Liberty's players scored in the double digits.

Jones led Asheville with 17 points, which accounted for most of the 3-pointers. Brayboy followed with 16 points and Love added 14 points. Freshman guard Tianna Knuckles attributed to 12 of the points, Weaver and Brittany Gwyn both added 10 points each.

See **BIG WIN** on page 8