

Volleyball loses heartbreaker in four to Coastal Carolina

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STAFF WRITER

Last Wednesday, the UNC Wilmington volleyball team sustained an emotional loss at the hands of Coastal Carolina in four games. The Seahawks' record continues to spiral downward, as the loss moves them to 4-21, while Coastal advances to a game above .500 at 13-12.

The first game witnessed the Seahawks falling behind Coastal by a count of 4-0, forcing UNCW to call a timeout to regroup. After the timeout, UNCW tried to answer the excellent play of Coastal by coming within one point behind the efforts of senior Angela Bodnar. Again, Coastal Carolina extended their lead, pushing it out to 9-4. Then UNCW made another comeback attempt and eventually tied the first game at 12-12; although, they would never lead. Coastal eventually climbed ahead again for a final time and ended the game by a count of 16-14.

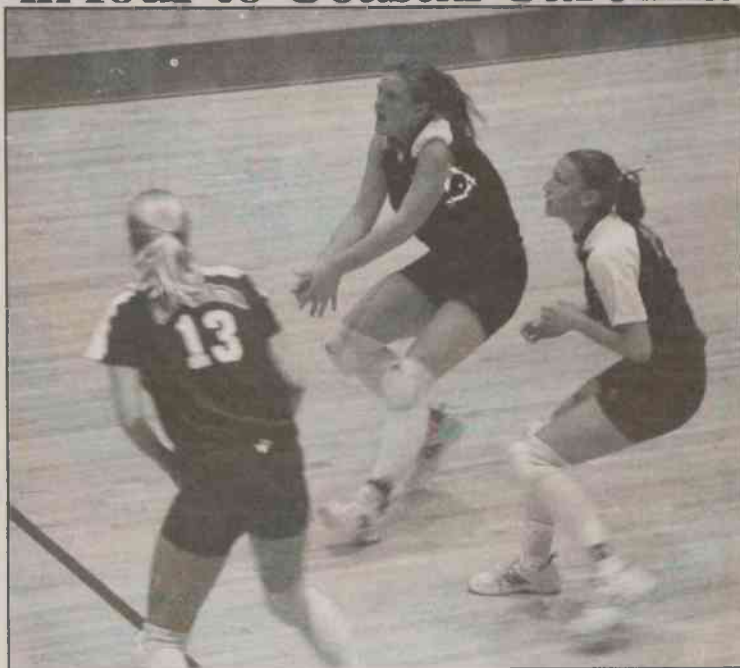
As the second game began, the Seahawk squad seemed to be entirely different compared to the one that lost the first game. Taking a 6-0 lead behind some strong play at the net, UNCW forced Coastal to take a timeout. The Seahawks continued their dominance reaching an 8-0 lead before Coastal would respond by scoring four consecutive points. Those points would be the last that Coastal would post in the second game, as UNCW

closed out the game by a 15-4 score.

Game three proved to be a trip back to reality for UNCW. As Coastal Carolina scored first, the Seahawks answered to lead at 2-1 before nearly falling apart. Coastal pushed back, took the lead and forced a UNCW timeout at 5-2. Following the TO, Coastal went on to run off five more consecutive points. The Seahawks, seemingly complacent after the easy victory in the second game, could never come any closer than five. They dropped the game, 15-10, and in turn, gave Coastal a 2-1 game advantage.

Coastal entered the fourth game looking to put UNCW away for good. At first, it looked as if Coastal's goal was not far from being met, as they took an early 6-2 lead. After a UNCW timeout, the outlook for the Seahawks grew more dismal as Coastal extended their lead to 11-2. With their backs against the wall, UNCW made a valiant effort to come back from such a large deficit behind some hard-hitting net play. After the Seahawks got within three points, Coastal again pulled away and ended the game at 15-11, and the match at 3-2.

Throughout the match, the Seahawks showed moments of brilliance. However, Coastal Carolina was the dominant team on Wednesday night. Leading the way for UNCW's attempt at victory was senior outside hitter, Brittany Sutton. Sutton produced 19 kills, 33 assists and eight digs. Junior



Juniors Brittany Sutton and Erin Fowler prepare to receive a kill from the Chanticleer side of the court, while senior Angela Bodnar preps for a kill of her own.

Bailey Lee also helped the Seahawks' efforts with 15 kills, 29 assists and 13 digs.

After the match, an emotional Angela Bodnar spoke about the positive aspects of UNCW's play.

"We did come up short, but we had a good comeback and played really hard. We fought and we didn't give up. I think that's the most important thing," said Bodnar.

Bodnar finished the night with 10 kills at the net.

During most of the match, the Seahawks were fighting from behind.

"We let them jump on us and we had to

play catch up... it's a lot harder to come from behind and win," Lee said.

UNCW Head Coach China Jude tried to emphasize the positive points of the match rather than dwell on the loss.

"Even though we did lose, we did fight for every single point," said Jude.

Now, as UNCW goes into the home stretch of what has proven to be a sub-par season, Coach Jude hopes to focus on mastery of the little aspects of the game.

"We're not going to create anything new, just keep what we have and master it," said Jude.

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for a game-high 17 points. He was, however, happy with the effort and intensity of the newcomers. "They play hard," he said. "You can learn how to be in the right spot, but you can't learn how to play hard."

The Stars closed the difference to six when Malik Prather scored at the 16:56 mark of the second half, but fatigue set in for the older Charlotte team, as the Seahawks pulled away, outscoring the Stars 37-22 during the final minutes of the game.

"The tempo of the game forced [the Stars] to get tired," Wainwright said. "It got us some easy baskets."

UNCW had the advantage in just about every statistical area other than rebounds. Charlotte out-rebounded the Seahawks 49-43, taking advantage of the lack of size on the UNCW roster. The Stars grabbed 15 offensive boards, and were able to convert on a number of second-chance opportunities. Against tougher teams during the regular season, the Seahawks will have to use their quickness to compensate for their small size.

Without Green, Scott, and Williams, the chemistry of UNCW's team is somewhat of



Freshman forward Anthony Terrell marked up 11 points off-the-bench in Saturday's rout.

a question mark. "We're just kind of stymied right now by injuries," Wainwright said, as he still is not sure who will be able to compete in the first game of the season.

The exhibition was a good confidence-builder for UNCW, who defeated the Stars by a 42-point margin in last year's exhibition. The Seahawks will play one more exhibition game against the Charlotte Royals this Saturday in Trask before heading to the Sooner Holiday Classic in Oklahoma on Nov. 17 and 18.