

sports

Dogs silence Rifles

By Tim Riddle

UNCA used a combination of defensive and offensive strategies to shoot down the defending NAIA national champion Rifles of USC-Spartanburg 59-48 before 2,000 enthusiastic fans at Justice Gym, Jan. 17.

The game was in doubt for the entire first half, as neither team could find the easy basket. Paul Allen did manage a couple of inside layups and Randy Shepherd hit from long range to keep the Bulldogs in the contest. But the Rifles maintained a slim 21-20 halftime edge.

UNCA came out smoking in the second half, scoring the first six points to take a 26-21 lead. The Bulldogs never relinquished that lead in the final period, but USC-S rallied midway in the half to knot the score at 36-36.

One key to the second half comeback was UNCA's man-to-man and zone defenses which created numerous turnovers and forced the Rifles to take the low percentage shot. With the zone opening up the inside, the Bulldogs were free to sweep the boards and run the fast break.

Pat Jolley, 6-10 junior, pulled down a game-high 13 rebounds, while teammate Tom Haus added nine boards.

Coach Jerry Green was pleased with the way his Bulldogs stifled the Rifles. "In the second half, both our man and zone defenses were looking

good. We really didn't have a preference. But I noticed we were rebounding better out of our zone, so we went with that. And one of the things that came out of it was Jolley doing a good job of shutting down the middle."

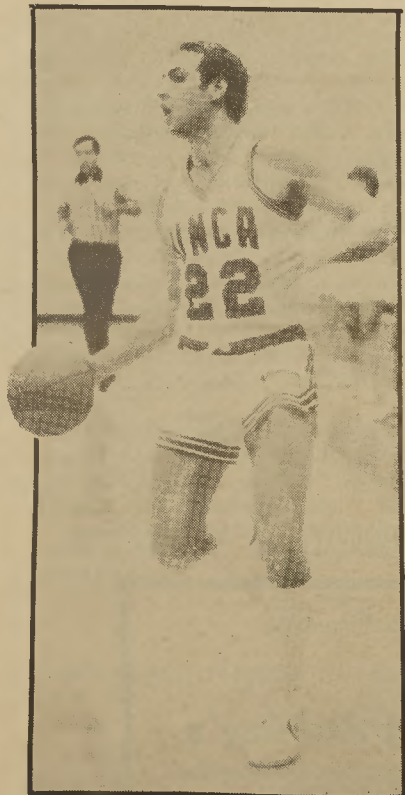
Offensively, the Bulldogs came alive following the tie to outscore USC-S 9-1 in a four and a half minute spurt. Tom Haus led the second half surge with 13 points to finish the night with 17.

Paul Allen also contributed 17 points, with nine of those coming in the first half. Shepherd chipped in double figures with 13 points.

"I can't single out any individual for praise," said Green; "it was that much of a team effort." He added, "Haus shot the ball pretty well for us in the second half, Jolley rebounded well the whole game and Shepherd was really shooting the ball from the outside."

UNCA held off USC-S in the final minutes with a fine showing at the free throw line to register the 59-48 win. That final score represents the worst loss for the Rifles this season. They lost only two others by a total of three points. The Rifles now stand at 12-3.

It was the 19th straight win at home for UNCA which improves to 13-4 on the season. Ironically, the last home loss for the Bulldogs was to USC-S last season, 54-48. The Rifles are ranked twentieth in the latest NAIA poll.



David Clark exhibits his ball-handling form in UNCA win.



No. 44 Tom Haus has catapulted to UNCA's second leading scorer.

Photo by Carol Whitener



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Twenty is plenty

By Keith Flynn

The basketball Bulldogs recorded their 20th straight win at home Thursday, holding off a late Lincoln Memorial rally to come out on top 70-58. Despite a sizzling 68 percent from the field and 90 percent from the line in the first half, UNCA held only a 44-35 lead at the halfway mark.

"The defense gave up a lot of easy baskets in the first half, and we emphasized that at halftime," said Coach Jerry Green. "In the first half, we were changing up our defenses, and we ended up with four kids in one defense and one in another. So I just told them to play straight man-to-man." The transition in strategy also slowed the LMU Railsplitters fast-paced offensive game to enable the Dogs to build a 57-39 bulge in the second half.

UNCA, which leads the NAIA District 26 in defense (68.1 points allowed per game), still allowed the Splitters to rally late in the second half to whittle the margin down to six at the 2:25 mark. The comeback could be attributed mainly to the 6-8 tandem of Barry Garner (22 points) and Keith Beck (16 points), who dominated the offensive boards down an almost disastrous second half skid for the Dogs.

Then Paul Allen went to work. Allen climaxed his perfect night at the line (13 for 13), with four straight free throws in the last two minutes to steal the seventh straight victory for UNCA and up their record to 14-4. Allen wound up with 23 points after hitting five of eight attempts from the field. Tom Haus continued his torrid pace adding 19 points to the cause. Jeff Dooley chipped in with excellent defensive play and 10 points in relief.

The second half appeared to tire the Dogs during the midway stretch, but the Bulldogs of late have refused to play dead. Excellent guard play from the trio of Randy Shepherd, Winfred Basnight, and Andy Herzer has stabilized the attack. The ace in the hole for the Dogs is still their bench strength. There are eight to ten quality athletes capable of relieving the men on the floor. This can wear down opponents quickly, especially at home in the "Dog's House."

Coach Green was pleased with the grit of his team but still is wary of inconsistency. "We're still a spotty team. We let them back in the game by hurrying our shots and not scoring four straight times down the court with a big lead," said Green. "It was good to beat a team you've lost to earlier, but I still can't be pleased with the way we played after we got up by 18."