

Sports

Bulldogs avenge earlier loss to Colonels

By Chris Allison
Sports Editor

The UNCA Bulldogs avenged an earlier loss at the hands of the Eastern Kentucky Colonels by defeating them 73-72 at the Civic Center on Tuesday.

In the earlier meeting, Eastern Kentucky shot a blistering 63 percent from the floor, including 15 of 18 three-point shots.

Eastern Kentucky Coach Max Good had predicted a much different game when his team came to Asheville and this turned out to be the case.

The Bulldogs led most of the first half but trailed 67-69 with 1:19 to go. Gerald Rutherford scored on an in-

side shot and was fouled at the 0:38 mark. After converting the free throw, the Bulldogs led 70-69.

Eastern Kentucky then turned the ball over on a foul that sent UNCA's Milton More to the line for a one and one. He connected on both giving the Bulldogs a 72-69 lead. After Eastern's Bobby Collins missed two free throws, Moore scored on another free throw that would give UNCA the cushion to hold on for the win.

"When it's close late in the game we have won," Coach Jerry Green said, "except for the Baptist game where we self destructed."

Adding to his offensive effort, Moore also made crucial defensive plays late in the game. "When the game

was on the line, Milton made three defensive plays that helped us a lot," Green said.

The Bulldogs had been in a slight slump as a result of a recent stretch of road games. Before Saturday's win over Campbell, the Bulldogs had lost four of their last six outings.

Despite the slump, the Bulldogs still came away with victories over Appalachian State University and Augusta College.

"I think when you shoot less than 30 or 40 percent, you're lucky to be alive," Green said. "When we shoot well, our defense is good enough to keep us in the game."

With the win over Eastern Kentucky, Green now has

some breathing room. "I think tension wise it gives us a big lift," Green said. "It kind of expands us out."

UNCA struggled early in the first half with Eastern going up 17-8 at the 13:50 mark. Green began to substitute freely and the Bulldogs began to make a slow comeback.

"I felt good about subbing," Green said. "These guys work hard in practice and I'm not afraid to play them."

"We felt like we could improve and keep people fresher by subbing freely."

The Bulldogs tied the game 22-22 when Derrick Worrels hit two free throws at the 8:40 mark. UNCA went up by as much as six on two other occasions. Van Wilkins scored almost at will pumping in 19 first half points for UNCA, but the Colonels kept coming back. At the half the score was tied 41-41.

In the second half, Wilkins opened up for UNCA with a three-point basket. He finished the night hitting 4 of 6 three-pointers.

Eastern Kentucky's Antonio Parris answered for the Colonels with a three-pointer at the other end. After a score by Derrick Worrels tied the score at 48-46, both teams struggled offensively. Moore broke this drought when he scored for UNCA with 14:45 left in the game.

The Bulldogs took their second six point lead of the half on a driving layup by William Funderburk with 4:58 left. UNCA then faltered as they turned the ball over two consecutive times and Eastern Kentucky tied the game

at 67. Rutherford then scored on the three-point play and Moore's offensive and defensive play lifted the Bulldogs to the win.

"Our kids showed a lot of character when the game was on the line," Green said. "I think the people at the game were impressed with their play."

"The crowd is getting more and more in the game," he said. "We've got such a small student body that we need community support."

Wilkins led the Bulldogs in scoring with 30 points. Ricky Chatman added 14 points and 8 rebounds for UNCA while Moore pumped in 11.

Eastern Kentucky defeated Western Kentucky, a former top twenty team, earlier in the season. They also were competitive with defending NCAA champion Louisville and an Auburn team that is ranked in the top twenty. They are also shooting .451 from three-point range, which is best in the NCAA Division I.

"This may be the best team we've played in the category of N.C. State and Clemson," Green said. "This win puts us up in the Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana area," he continued. "People know that it takes a good team to beat us."

However the team's success has its drawbacks. "As we've gained success, expectations have risen," he said. "It puts a little more pressure on us, but then nobody said the move (to NCAA Division I) was going to be easy."

The team will travel to Charleston, S.C. to face The Citadel on Thursday.



Staff Photo--Melanie Floyd

UNCA's Van Wilkins shoots for three points as teammates Ricky Chatman and Derrick Worrels look on. The Bulldogs avenged an earlier loss to the Colonels winning 73-72.



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