

UNCA teams faced many challenges

By Geoff Cabe
Assistant Sports Editor

The sports year of 1986-87 was UNCA's initial year competing in NCAA Division I. UNCA had a little bit of everything in store for it this year. Throughout the year there were surprises, disappointments, individual achievements, and a championship.

So, in our final issue for this year, we decided to take a look back at the UNCA teams of 1986-87.

Soccer was the first sport to get underway. UNCA's men's team took to the field with a young squad that featured six sophomores, four freshmen, three juniors, and two seniors.

Just as young teams often do, the Bulldogs had trouble squeezing out close games and finished with an 8-10-3 record.

UNCA lost in the opening round of the Big South tournament to Winthrop 3-2.

However, Coach Hank Komodowski saw reason for optimism after the season. "The team was basically a sophomore team this year and next year they will be a junior team," he said. "We are looking forward to the next two years with this group because now they are both experienced and good, and out of that you get championships."

Sophomore Mark Magee was named to the all-conference team, while senior Larry Cook was named third team All-South as a goalkeeper.

Women's soccer was a new sport on the UNCA campus this year under the direction of Coach Ivan Cohen. The Lady Bulldogs were faced

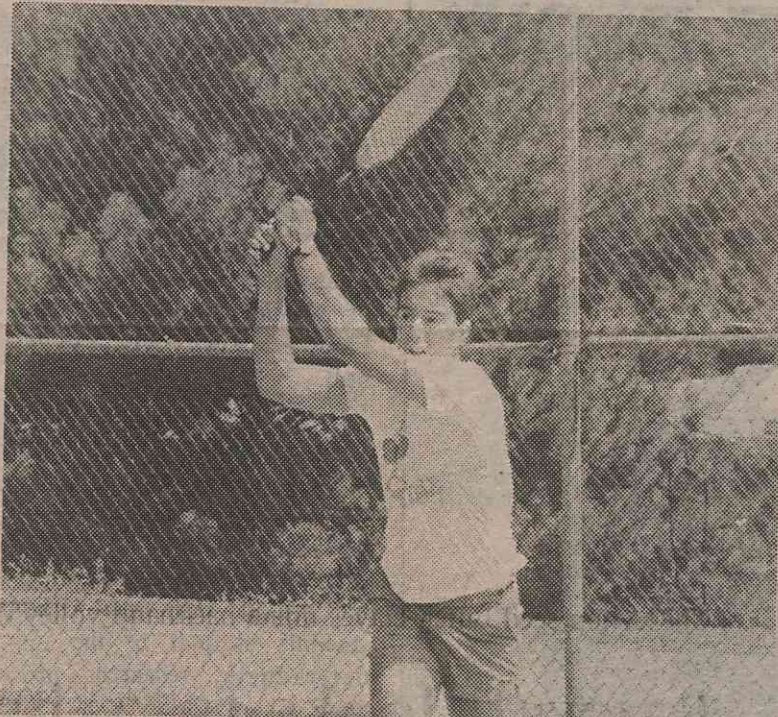
with the challenge of playing against more experienced and talented teams in their initial campaign.

The team lost all of its games except for a 1-1 tie with Warren Wilson. However, according to Cohen, taking initial lumps is only a step in building a competitive team. "Even though we're getting beat by these schools, we're learning how to play the game," he said.

Volleyball also went through a rebuilding stage this season as a freshman and sophomore dominated

Hartman expected his team to make a run for the fourth or fifth spot in the Big South tournament, but his team wound up placing seventh. "We had high hopes, but we just couldn't put it together," he said. "It was a disappointing season."

The lady runners did not fare much better in their division, as they wound up in sixth place. However, Coach Karen Stasel sees improvement as inevitable. "Our top four runners are coming back and that is a major plus," she said.



Staff photo--Chris Allison

UNCA's Rudy Schwab helped the men's tennis team claim third place at the recent Big South Conference tournament.

team went through a 9-24 season. "Experience was our biggest downfall," said Coach Suzanne Patterson. "We had so many freshman and so many young players."

Cross country was also a relatively new sport at UNCA. Men's Coach Bob

Coach Jerry Green and the men's basketball team went into their season with many question marks. The team was hit hard by graduation, and was facing a very tough Division I schedule. "We have so many positions that are untested," Green said before

the season.

However, the Bulldogs proved that while they may not be in the class of Clemson or N.C. State, they were more than a match for the Southern Conference, as they posted a 6-3 record against Southern teams.

The Bulldogs posted a 14-10 overall record and finished in third place in the Big South during the regular season. In the tournament, UNCA needed only one basket to go to the finals, as they were upended by Campbell.

Senior Van Wilkins was named to the all-conference team as he paced the Bulldogs in scoring all season.

The Lady Bulldogs went through a rebuilding process this season under Coach Mary Ann Myers. Though they had a rough time out of conference, the Lady Bulldogs, who have no seniors on the squad, managed to end up in fifth place in the conference with a 4-8 record.

Freshman Wendy Beecher made the all-conference team

in her first season of college ball.

After being picked to finish near the bottom of the conference, the women's softball team finished third in the Big South tournament despite having injuries to key players.

The tennis program had to endure the loss of two coaches in mid-season, as men's coach Doug Maynard and women's coach Mike Sams both stepped down.

However, the women's team was able to regroup under the guidance of new coach Chuck Schilling in time to capture the Big South Conference crown.

The Lady Bulldogs finished with 47 points, only one

point ahead of Coastal Carolina. Candi Earwood won and individual championship for UNCA in the number six singles division.

The men's team was not able to defend the crown they won a year earlier as they finished in third place in the tournament.

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