

# The Banner Sports

## SLAP SHOTS

### Year of the Bucs?

By Kyle S. Phipps  
Sports Editor

It has been a bizarre beginning to this National Football League season. Five weeks into the season, there are no front-runners in the race for the Vince Lombardi Trophy. Here's how the NFL season is shaping up so far.

**Green Bay Packers:** The Pack came out of the gates strong and then fell to the Philadelphia Eagles in the third week of the season. Brett Favre, while looking strong, hasn't been playing like a two-time NFL Most Valuable Player. Green Bay's defense looks weaker than in past years, and Reggie White has been bottled up by opposing offensive lines.

**Dallas Cowboys:** The 'Boys started the season playing like a team that was hungry for another NFL crown by decimating the Steelers. Since then, they've fallen to the Arizona Cardinals, and needed a miracle botched field goal attempt to beat the Eagles. Dallas' high-powered offense still isn't putting big numbers on the board, and the offensive line isn't opening gaping holes for Emmitt Smith or giving Troy Aikman enough time to deliver the ball to Michael Irvin and Anthony Miller. The Cowboy offense is going to have to open things up for Dallas to have another shot at the Super Bowl.

**Carolina Panthers:** There are serious problems with the Panthers this year. The Carolina defense is being played like sucker chumps by opposing offensive coordinators. While Dom Capers continues to run his zone blitz packages, offensive coordinators across the league have figured out that a properly-run screen pass or misdirection play is going to work every time. Carolina QB Kerry Collins is back from the injured reserve list, but he hasn't been playing like a "quarterback of the future." He's been playing like a junior varsity quarterback thrown into the NFL fire. It's going to be a long season for Panthers' fans unless Capers can arrange to play the Falcons for the next 12 weeks.

**Tampa Bay Buccaneers:** Go ahead and give Tony Dungy the NFL Coach of the Year award. He's taken the NFC doormat and turned them into a real honest-to-God football team. NFL laughingstock Trent Dilfer is playing like an All-Pro, and rookie running back Warrick Dunn is picking up where he left off at Florida State. The Bucs need Warren Sapp to return to the lineup, or there may be trouble down the road.

**Denver Broncos:** The Broncos may make a return to the Super Bowl if QB John Elway and back Terrell Davis stay healthy. Elway may be getting old, but he can still deliver the long ball, and he still tattoos receivers with the "Elway Cross" on short passes.

**Jacksonville Jaguars:** The Jags have taken a situation that would sink most NFL clubs and have turned it into an undefeated season. With starting quarterback Mark Brunell on the sidelines at the beginning of the season, Jacksonville went to backups and continued in a businesslike fashion. Jacksonville may very well be the team to end the AFC drought in the Super Bowl.

**New England Patriots:** New England is looking to make a return to the Super Bowl, even without Bill Parcells at the helm of the team. Quarterback Drew Bledsoe is having another excellent season and tailback Curtis Martin is running the ball as well as he ever has.

## Volleyball team has three-game winning streak

By Robert Payne  
Staff Writer

The UNCA volleyball team captured a hard-fought victory with their win over UNC-Charlotte on Sept. 23 in five games, 9-15, 15-4, 15-6, 16-18, 15-10. The win over the 49ers improved the Bulldogs' record to 8-8 for the season and 2-0 at home. The loss was the eighth straight for the 49ers.

In the first game, the Bulldogs were down early, 8-3. They came back and played close, but at 8-7 the 'Dogs began to fall behind due to unforced errors, and eventually lost the first game, 15-9.

Game two saw the Bulldogs respond by blowing out the 49ers. The 'Dogs established an early 5-1 advantage. Leading at 11-3, the Bulldogs kept the pressure on UNCC on their way to a second game victory of 15-4.

In the third game the Bulldogs kept up their dominance as they rallied to score six straight points and lead the game, 11-2. The 'Dogs eventually won the game, 15-6.

Game four was a marathon game for the Bulldogs and 49ers as they tangled for over an hour. The 49ers took an early 6-1 edge, but the Bulldogs scored seven straight points to pull even at 8-8.

UNCA once again overcame another deficit to stun the 49ers attempt at game point. It was now 15-15, but the 49ers finally took the game 18-16.

In a decisive game five, determined by rally points, the Bulldogs traded point after point with the 49ers until taking the lead, 11-7. UNCA prevailed and captured the game, 15-10, to secure the win over UNCC.

In the victory over the 49ers, the Bulldogs were led by Cally Geiger's 24 kills. Lorelee Smith paced the team with a team and personal season high 71 assists.

The Blocksport Bulldog Challenge volleyball tournament on Sept. 19-20, took place at the Justice Center as the UNCA Bulldogs saw action against teams from Providence College, Samford University, and Belmont University.

The UNCA volleyball team dropped their first match of the tournament to Providence College, but managed to take wins over Samford University and Belmont University to finish second in the Blocksport Bulldog Challenge.

On Sept. 19, the Bulldogs opened the Blocksport Bulldog Challenge with a loss to Providence College in a three-game match. The Bulldogs dropped the match, 15-12, 15-10, 15-7.

"I don't know what it is," said Torbett. "We win the games we're supposed to, but we're not able to pull out the upsets, like with Providence. I was a little disappointed with the loss to Providence, but we bounced back to beat both Samford and Belmont."

Leading the Bulldogs in the match against Providence was Geiger with 11 kills. Smith led the team with 21 assists and had four digs along with sophomore Jennifer Baker.

Following the loss to Providence, the Bulldogs' losing streak stood at five matches, and they could only hope for Providence to suffer a loss to have a chance for the Blocksport Bulldog Challenge title.

"I don't know if we have ever lost that many in a row since we have had a winning season," said Torbett.

The Bulldogs had their second match of the tournament on Sept. 20, against Samford University.

The Bulldogs started the first game with 10 straight points as freshman Kristine Ambrose held serve. The Bulldogs eventually took that game, 15-10.

The next game was tight down to the wire until the Bulldogs came out victorious, 16-14. Then, in the final game of the match, the Bulldogs easily defeated Samford, 15-6.



Torbett said the Bulldogs captured a well-deserved win after a long losing skid, 15-10, 16-14, 15-6.

"We were very determined not to lose our sixth game in a row," said Torbett. "We played a really clean match and it was the first time that we had all of our hitters hitting positive."

The Bulldogs were paced by Geiger with 16 kills and four digs.

Ambrose led the team with four service aces and had four digs.

"I think our girls did a really good job by not making those stupid errors like hitting the ball into the net," said Torbett. "We had our highest hitting percentage yet."

The Bulldogs faced Belmont University in their second game on Sept. 20.

They went three games with Belmont and easily took the win, 15-2, 15-4, 15-9.

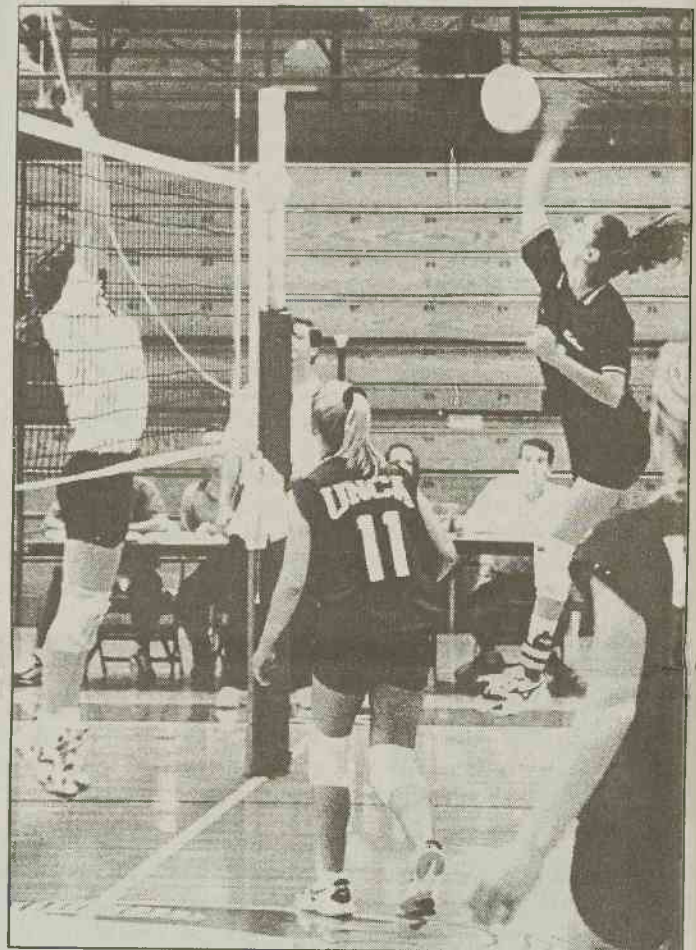
"Belmont really laid down against us and I was able to notice how conditioned we were," said Torbett.

They just didn't seem to fight against us. They weren't as conditioned as us," Torbett said.

In the final match, the Bulldogs were once again led by Geiger with 10 kills and five digs.

The all-tournament team selections included two UNCA players, Geiger and Baker.

On Sept. 16, the Bulldogs faced the Mountaineers from Appalachian State on the ASU campus. The final score was 15-9, 15-17, 15-7, 9-15, 16-14.



PHOTOS BY MAURIE HILL

(Top) UNCA team members huddle between points in a game versus Belmont University. This match was during the Blocksport Bulldog Challenge. (Bottom) Junior Cally Geiger unleashes a spike on a Belmont University defender.

## Men's soccer rocked by Big South newcomer

By Kimara Parker  
Staff Writer

After ending their three game losing streak with a win over The Citadel, the UNCA men's soccer team returned to their losing ways with a 4-2 defeat at the hands of South Alabama, a newcomer to the Big South Conference.

UNCA Head Coach Steve Cornish said his team is playing well, then falling apart when it comes to crunch time.

"We are learning that the game is all about playing 90 minutes, and we are playing for about 70," said Cornish.

"We are quite competitive up until that point, but we have not been able to put teams away," said Cornish.

South Alabama's aggressive style of play earned them 21 shots on goal, four of which found the back of the Bulldogs' net. The Bulldogs took a lowly five shots in the first half, and an equally dismal number in the second half.

As the game progressed, it became more physical. South Alabama were whistled for 16 fouls, and the Bulldogs received 11. Three South Alabama players and their coach all received yellow cards, and one player from UNCA received a yellow card.

The first half of the game proved to be a defensive struggle. Few shots were taken by either team. At the halfway point in the game, the Bulldogs had their five shots on goal, and South Alabama had attempted only four of their own.

"UNCA came strong in the first half," said South Alabama's Head Coach Stuart

Fitzsimmons. "They played very well." "We played pretty well in the first half," said UNCA defender Todd Williams. "We pretty much controlled the game."

"We (South Alabama) made some adjustments at halftime to become more organized, which allowed us to go forward with more ease," said Fitzsimmons.

The goal scoring commenced in the 48th minute as South Alabama benefited from a UNCA own goal. South Alabama midfielder Mike McCanlou's shot deflected off a UNCA defender to give South Alabama an early second-half lead.

"In the second half of the game, we gave up an own goal," said Williams. "That kind of set the tone for the second half of the game."

Cornish explained the own goal. "There was a lack of pressure on the ball initially, and then when the ball got crossed over, one of our players miss hit it and miss hit a clearance. (UNCA midfielder) Brad Northington was placed in a situation where he had to head clear, so he decided to head for a corner," said Cornish.

"He (Northington) did not quite get his head perfectly on it, so he did not deflect it far enough. He just knocked it into the goal," said Cornish. "As our goalkeeper came out, he was stranded."

"Own goals happen once a season, twice a season, maybe," said Cornish. "It just so happened that was the way they opened up."

In the 55th minute, Hartmann evened the score by chipping the ball past South Alabama's goalkeeper Arve Warholm.

"Then we equalized, and once again it was a great game. We dominated in the first half," said Cornish. "Then we made another mis-

take which led to them going 2-1. Then we lost our concentration once again and they punished us for it."

"It's like we had two separate teams on the field," said Hartmann. "The game was kind of a wakeup call for us, letting us know we need to really start playing. We are really a young team."

Between the 63rd and the 73rd minute, there was a 10-minute defensive breakdown for UNCA.

"We had a couple of breakdowns during the game," said Hartmann. "The defense and the offense were not playing together."

During the breakdown, South Alabama connected on three goals. Forward Nick Walsh made a goal in the 63rd minute, and

forward Alle Rognerud connected on a goal in the 69th minute. In the 73rd minute Alabama's defender Carl Schmitt scored yet another goal.

"We were caught ball watching. They capitalized on a couple of our mistakes and we couldn't get back into the game from there," said Williams.

In the 80th minute, Hartmann scored another goal for the Bulldogs, leaving the score at 4-2.

The two goals that Hartmann scored were his first two career goals.

"South Alabama is a good team," said Cornish. "I was encouraged by the way we played for about an hour, but we have to make sure we can concentrate for 90 minutes."



PHOTO BY ROB HAMMONDS

UNCA senior midfielder Jenkins Powell threads a pass between Citadel defenders Andy Crotts (6) and Charlie Mottram (16). The Bulldogs won the game against The Citadel, but then fell to South Alabama on Sept. 19.