

SPORTS

Tennis Season Gets Going

New coach hopes for 'good things' in Big South Conference

Jessica Welch
Sports Reporter

Paul Pound, UNCA's tennis coach, said he hopes to establish structure in the tennis program and build upon the teams strengths this year.

It is the first year for Pound at UNCA. Both the men's and women's tennis teams have had to adapt to his new approach.

One player discussed his view of the new coach.

"It is great to get such a fabulous new coach. He works us very hard with morning runs and tough practices," said Nick Neal, a freshman. "He is dedicated to the team fully and is always there to answer any questions."

The teams are starting to get some structure, according to Pound.

"Physically, we are beginning to work out a lot harder than we have done in the past, in terms of off-court training," said Pound.

The women's team is a fairly young team with no senior members. With three freshmen and two sophomores on the roster of eight players, the team's lineup is over 50 percent first and second year players.

However, the team has potential to become better and stronger, according to Pound.

UNCA recently played at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

The women played well, but "Charlotte's team was stronger," said Pound.

Stefanie Shuba, a UNCA junior, played well against Charlotte's top-ranked player.

"It was very pleasing," said Pound.

A few UNCA women came home with victories against the 49ers.

Sophomore Andrea Knight won her match in singles. Freshmen Emily Acker-Estes and Stacy Witkowski won in a doubles match, posting their first colle-



JUSTIN MECKES/
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Junior Nancy Livesay pounds a serve over the net.

giate win.

Even though the women lost overall, they made an impact against a stronger team, according to Pound.

"They played well at Charlotte," said Pound.

Like the women's team, the men's team lost overall to UNC-C.

"Charlotte was tough," said Pound. "They have an extremely strong team."

This year, the men's team has only one freshman on its roster, Nick Neal.

Neal has impressed the coaches with his work ethic and skill, according to Pound.

He is battling for the top ranking for the men's tennis team.

Pound said he is happy with the progress of the freshman so far this season.

"Neal is an exciting player for UNCA," said Pound. "He is a good

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-Paul Pound,
Tennis Coach

tennis player and an extremely hard worker, so it is good to have him on the team."

"It is hard being the only freshman, but my teammates are really supportive and help me out a lot," said Neal.

"I know with more experience, I will win more matches," said Neal. So far both teams have played seven matches and have won a couple of the matches played. UNCA has only played and lost to one team in the Big South Conference, High Point University.

High Point is a difficult team to beat, according to Pound.

"We will be competitive with some of the teams in the Big South, but we will find it difficult to win against some of the top teams," said Pound.

The Bulldogs will get a chance to take on some BSC opponents in their next few matches.

UNCA will be competing against Liberty University March 16, then against Radford University March 17.

Both Bulldog tennis teams will play Wofford College March 19 at UNCA.

Pound said he thanks fans who have come and supported the teams, and looks forward to meeting more supporters.

"We are hoping for some good things against Liberty University," said Pound about the upcoming match.

-Sports Feature-



DREA JACKSON/
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kristie Brinkley, an undeclared sophomore, leans into a shot.

Making a Racquet

Jessica Welch
Sports Reporter

Students improve fitness and social skills while learning to play racquetball in the racquetball classes held at UNCA, according to Eddie Biedenbach, head men's basketball coach and instructor of a racquetball class offered at UNCA.

"Racquetball is a lifetime sport," said Biedenbach.

Biedenbach has taught racquetball at UNCA since the courts in the gym became available. He teaches students different drills and correct terminology for racquetball competitions.

Also, students in the class learn more about developing their bodies by eating properly, getting into shape and improving overall fitness, according to Biedenbach.

"The class allows you to get a good workout early in the morning so you are awake for the rest of the day," said Seth Denton, a sophomore economics major. "Coach Biedenbach makes the class really fun and teaches us how to play well."

Biedenbach said he emphasizes the importance of students playing against someone more skilled than themselves, someone with the same playing ability, and someone less skilled than themselves.

By playing someone better, students can see how they should hit and move, said Biedenbach.

Playing someone with similar ability enables students to practice and provides them with fair competition, according to Biedenbach.

Students who play someone with less skill can practice their techniques and try to improve their game, according to Biedenbach.

Racquetball is also a social sport, according to students.

"This class allows me to always have someone to play and compete against," said Bobby Creasman, an undeclared freshman. "It is really fun."

Racquetball is an easy game to learn to play, according to Biedenbach.

This class provides students with social involvement, exercise and a different type of learning than academic classes.

"I really enjoy this class. It offers a break from the traditional classroom atmosphere," said Denton.

"I would recommend every student to take this class at some time while they are here," said Biedenbach.

Sports Question of the Week:

A: Gheorghe Muresan.

'Dogs Fall to Liberty

Eric Price
Sports Reporter

The UNCA women's basketball team, ranked eighth, lost to top-ranked Liberty University 57-49 in the first game of the Big South Conference basketball tournament Feb. 28.

"This game, the end of the game, is the trademark of the UNCA program. They never quit," said Coach Kathleen Weber, according to the BSC Web page.

In the quarterfinal game, held in Roanoke, Va, the Bulldogs were led by sophomore forward Jessica Guarneri, a First Team All-Conference selection, according to the BSC Web page.

Guarneri, who was also selected to the All-Tournament Team, led all scorers with 20 points and 17 rebounds.

The selection of Guarneri to the All-Tournament Team marks the first time in the history of the Big South Conference tournament that a player was selected to this team despite her team's loss in the quarterfinals, according to the UNCA athletics Web site.

Senior guard Izzy Medhanie finished her final collegiate game with 16 points and four assists. In the opening minutes of the game, Liberty leapt out to a 19-5 commanding lead.

Guarneri opened the game's scoring with a basket from the field.

At halftime, the Bulldogs went into the locker room down 32-11, with the Flames receiving points from eight different players.

In the second half of the game, UNCA jumped out to a 17-4 run at the 11:19 mark, which was sparked by Guarneri's and Medhanie's aggressive playing, according to the BSC Web site.

The Bulldogs came within a two-point deficit (44-42) at the 3:50 mark on a lay-up by Guarneri, only to let it slip away to Liberty in the final minutes.

"We threw the game away more than they picked up the intensity," said Guarneri, according to the BSC Web page.

Liberty coach Carey Green said his team's bad play in the second half nearly ruined their good play in the first half.

"We celebrated too early, and we were fortunate to get out of here with a victory," Green said, according to the BSC Web page.

"There were so many things we could have controlled that we stopped controlling in the second half," said Liberty forward Michelle Fricke, according to the BSC Web page.

"We did not come out less intense, but less focused," said Fricke on the site.

UNCA shot 35.2 percent from the field and 31.6 percent from beyond the three-point line.

Liberty went on to win the conference tournament for the fifth straight year, defeating Elon College 52-47 in the championship game Feb. 3.

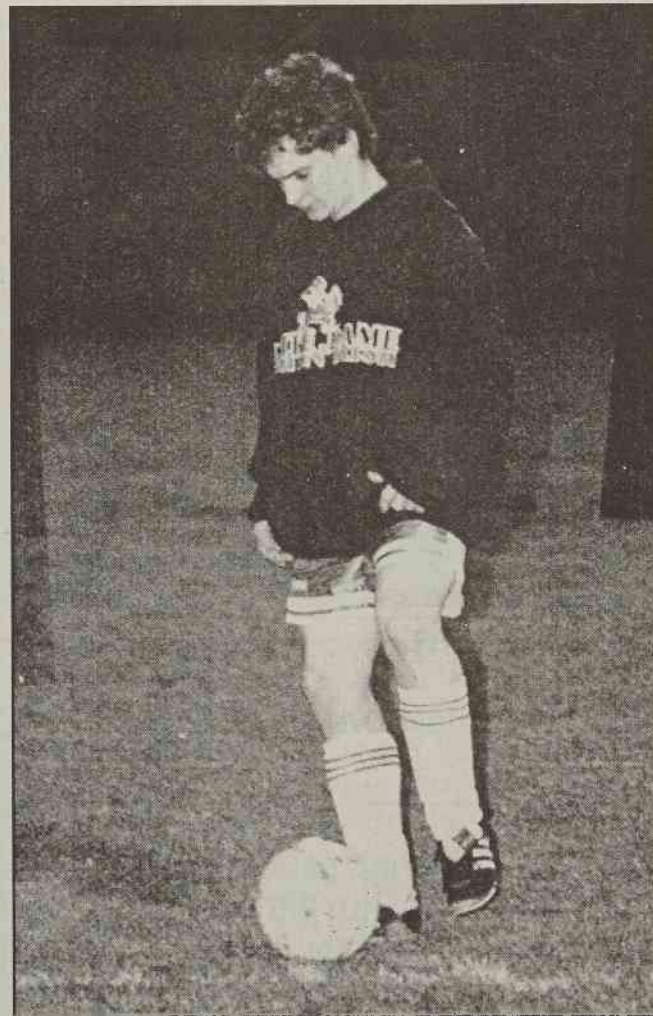
Liberty's next game will be against the University of Georgia in the first round of the women's NCAA basketball tournament in Athens, Ga.



PHOTO COURTESY OF
ATHLETICS WEB SITE

Sophomore forward Jessica Guarneri grabs a rebound.

Intramural Soccer Action



ANTHONY GRECO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Undeclared sophomore Casey May passes the ball during a recent intramural soccer game.

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