

Men's soccer kick-starts season

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The men's soccer team begins their regular season against Appalachian State this Saturday with two pre-season victories on their side.

According to Head Coach Steve Cornish, this season will be a lot better than last season.

"We have a good balance between experience and youth." We've got a lot of flair going forward and defensively we're better than we were last year," said Cornish, entering his sixteenth season. "We will make it difficult for teams to play here against us and will score lots of goals."

A pre-season poll predicted UNCA to finish sixth in the Big South Conference this season.

Cornish said the poll does not concern him.

"Everyone will tell you pre-season polls are a somewhat academic exercise," Cornish said. "You have to do them, but a lot of them are based on historic performances."

He said his squad can compete with anyone in the Big South Conference.

As long as his players stay healthy, they have a chance to compete.

Cornish said last year his team couldn't have gotten off to a better start.

"Last year we won our first game 4-3 at a tournament after leading 4-1 with 15 minutes remaining,"

Cornish said. "We then played a series



SUSAN TERRY - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Photos clockwise from left: Derrick Filip, 18, freshman from Newton, NC; Chris Zarzar, 19; Lassi Hurskainen, freshman from Finland all make saves at a practice to gear up for the game against Appalachian State on Saturday at 2 p.m.

of tight games against teams like Kentucky and Furman, which we knew were very difficult games going in."

Following those games the team had a two week break and really struggled to get going after that, Cornish said.

"After that loss to Furman, we then lost a series of close games,"

Cornish said. "A couple of them were overtime games, then all of a sudden the results were going against us, which affect confidence."

He said the team managed to get back on track in their historic 2-1 win over Clemson University.

The team always felt they could go against any team and beat them.

"We gave a lot of teams a run for their money and they were good teams too,"

Cornish said. "We were unable to score goals and finish last year and when you're unable to score goals you've got to play perfect defense."

This year 17 freshmen and nine seniors comprise the roster.

Cornish said he is impressed by the freshmen's performances.

"They're giving the returning players a run for their money," Cornish said. "They're very smart, very quick and hungry for success, and a number of them will play early."

Edwin Wotortsi, a senior defender and captain, said he and the fellow seniors' main goal is to watch over the freshmen this year.

"We want to make sure none of the freshmen get out of

line and keep them focused on the season," Wotortsi said. "We just have to make sure they learn all the things they need to know."

Wotortsi said he thought it might be difficult to control 17 freshmen. He said he was surprised to find out they were not.

"They're all really well-disciplined guys," Wotortsi said. "It's resulted in good team chemistry all around."

He said he feels confident in the freshmen to step in for injured seniors this year if need be.

"We have a couple of line-ups that we can go to and I'm comfortable with it either way,"

Wotortsi said. "Last year I was iffy about one or the other, but this year is different."

Lassi Hurskainen, a freshman goalkeeper

and Finland native, said he wants to have a successful year by winning games.

"We have three really good goalkeepers and everyone wants to start and play," Hurskainen said. "I've started two games, but it's not for certain that I will start, and I have to work hard."

Hurskainen said that because everyone wants to play it makes for great competition in practices. He said the competition has made the team better.

"I don't know what the team was like last year, but this year we look good," Hurskainen said.

UNCA will host Appalachian State on Saturday.

The game will mark the start of the regular season for the men's soccer team.

Cornish said he expects the game to be tough.

He said that Appalachian State is usually a very robust team.

"They've got some very good returning players," Cornish said. "They're strong in the air, quick on the sides and always a handful."

He said that he thinks Asheville will take next weekend's game. He said he couldn't predict the score, but promised it will be worth watching.

"There will be a lot of goals scored,"

Cornish said. Hurskainen said he, too, feels confident that UNCA will win next weekend.

"We're going to keep it zero on our side," Hurskainen said. "UNC Asheville wins 2-0, 3-0."

Senior Slam!!

Attention Seniors: Come check out the men's soccer team as they take on Appalachian State at 2 p.m. this Saturday.

Before the game, from 12 until 1:30 p.m., join other members of the Class of 2009 for free food and drinks at the roundabout outside of Governor's Hall.

Seniors 21 and up can bring beer to enjoy before the game. Then we'll wrap up and then head down to the field to cheer on the Bulldogs!

Brought to you by the

Senior Class Board



When: Saturday, Sept. 6 @ 12 p.m.

Where: Turnabout behind Governor's Hall

Why: To get to know fellow seniors, drink beer & support the Bulldogs!

September Sports Calendar

Sept. 5

Women's Soccer at Murray State
4:30 p.m. (CST)

Women's Volleyball Tournament
6 p.m.

Sept. 6

Women's Volleyball Tournament
11:30 a.m.

Men's Soccer vs. Appalachian State
2 p.m.

Women's Volleyball at USC Upstate
7 p.m.

Sept. 7

Women's Soccer at UT-Martin
Noon (CST)

Sept. 10

Women's Soccer at Furman
6 p.m.

For more information, visit the athletic Web site,
www.uncabulldogs.com