

# Bulldogs earn first Big South Conference win of the season

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The UNC Asheville baseball team gave Big South Conference rival Liberty University all they could handle last weekend with a 2-1 series win.

The first game of the three-game series was a nail biter with the score tied 3-3 at the top of the eighth inning.

In the bottom of the eighth, senior Justin Schumer reached first base on a walk then quickly made it back around to home to put UNCA in the lead 4-3.

"I knew if our offense got back to where it was at the start of the season we would have a good weekend," Schumer said.

The Bulldogs (2-4 BSC) were able to capitalize on Liberty's errors, adding another run to the scoreboard with two outs in the bottom of the eighth, pushing the lead to 5-3.

The Flames (1-2 BSC) were able to add a run in the top of the ninth inning on a Bulldogs' error, but closing pitcher Ryan Dull sealed the win for UNCA, earning himself his first save of the season.

"Our strategy was to stay consistent with our strong pitching and defense," Schumer said.

Left-handed freshmen pitcher Drew Spear threw eight innings for the Bulldogs, and picked up his first win of the season. Along with his first win of the season, the Bulldogs picked up their first conference win.

"We know that conference wins lead to the conference tournament,



Steven Hall - Assistant Photography Editor



Maureen McManus - Staff Photographer

**Top, Dan Weller delivers a strike early on against Liberty. Mike Vaughn knocks a hit down the third base line in the second game of UNCA's three-game series against the visiting Liberty Flames.**

which is our main objective right now," Schumer said.

The second game proved to be a defensive matchup as both teams pitching decided the flow of the game.

Dull came out on top for the Bulldogs, pitching a complete game while earning himself a third win for the season.

Steven Evans, a junior right-handed

pitcher for the Flames, earned his first loss of the season.

Despite Liberty's strong defensive effort, UNCA managed to keep the game tied in the bottom of the ninth.

With the game tied at one run each, Schumer stepped up to the plate and dropped a solo bomb in what was one of his most clutch hits of the season.

"I try to put our team in a position to win every game we possibly can," Schumer said. "I try to lead by example on and off the field. I'm not much of a talker, so I try to do the right thing in the classroom and on the baseball field."

According to Schumer, these series wins boost the team's chance of a post-season.

"Making the conference tournament gives us a shot at the NCAA tournament as well," he said.

Coaches called upon Schumer to help the Bulldogs on both the offensive and defensive sides of the ball, as he was the starter for the final game of the series.

"Coach Rembert keeps the starters on a seven day schedule to prepare us for starting," Schumer said. "Mentally, I like to go over the lineup I am going to face the night before and review the scouting report."

Although Schumer was prepared, UNCA could not muster any offense and Liberty went on to win the final game 7-3, taking away the hope the Bulldogs had for a series sweep.

UNCA next travels to USC Upstate tonight before returning home to play against conference rival VMI.

## Loss

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teams of Matt Waissen/Jonas Brobeck and Nonnenbroich/Nathan White both lost on 8-3 decisions.

The final duo of Rees and Langeard saw their first action as partners since Langeard's injury. Despite losing 8-4, Rees said that he is confident the pair is a top doubles team.

"Adrien and I have had a very start-stop season. There's no doubt in my mind that we are one of the best No. 3 doubles teams in the conference," he said. "We'll be working hard on doubles in training these next few days to prepare for Winston-Salem State."

Bulldog Assistant Coach Tom Hand

said he was pleased with the team splitting the singles, but it was disappointing to lose the doubles matches.

"We certainly had our chances," Hand said. "All the guys just came out a little flat (in doubles). None of the guys played their best by any stretch. We got down early on all three courts and just struggled uphill from there on."

The loss drops the Bulldogs to 3-9 on the season, including 0-2 in the Big South Conference. The team looks to take the first steps toward turning the year around this Wednesday against the Winston-Salem State Rams.

## Snapped

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was Smith playing at No. 1, Stephanie Schon at two, Devon Cavanaugh at three, Britney Cloer at four, Nicole Schon at five and Bottomley at six.

In doubles play, the Bulldogs clinched the point with comfortable wins from S. Schon and Smith, and N. Schon and Cloer. The scores were 8-5 and 8-6, respectively.

"Getting the doubles point was definitely good because it gave us momentum for the singles," Mateva said. "Steph (Schon) and Leslie (Smith) especially were really fired up."

Despite their individual wins, Gregory stressed the victory was all because

of the solid lineup the Bulldogs boast.

"We have been up and down in different positions in the past but the last couple of weeks were solid," she said. "If you're solid from 1-6 you're giving yourself a good chance of a win. I think that's why we're finally coming through to beat some of these teams that we should have in the past."

Whatever the reason, Smith said she was definitely relieved they finally got the win.

"It felt really good that I've finished my senior year by beating them," she said. "It's redemption and stuff. We not only beat them, we killed them."