

# SPORTS

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Bronaza Fitzgerald, left, and Lydia Rivers, right, reach for the ball during the Feb 6 game.

## UNCA women's basketball falls to Radford

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UNC Asheville's women's basketball team fell to Radford Feb 6, bringing their record to 8-3. The Bulldogs are now tied for second place with High Point and Radford in the Big South Conference standings.

UNCA started the game impressively Tuesday night. Senior center Bronaza Fitzgerald won the opening tip which found junior guard Jessica Wall, who converted a layup to open the game's scoring.

Following the game's first timeout, freshman guard Nadiria Evans came off the bench and began her night with a strong take to the hole that resulted in a foul. Evans converted both free throws and scored UNCA's next bucket, bringing their total to 10.

Wall beat the buzzer to put the Bulldogs within one when she hit a three as time expired in the first quarter to make the score 13-14.

The Bulldogs capitalized on this momentum shift and were able to hold the Radford Highlanders to only eight points in the second

quarter.

Fitzgerald scored the first four points of the second half to put the Bulldogs up 17-14. Senior guard Khalia Webb scored twice as the shot-clock expired, including the only three of the quarter, to put a dagger in the heart of the Radford defense who were excellent throughout the game.

UNCA went into halftime leading 26-22.

"In the first half Asheville did a really good job with their defensive pressure. A lot of the passes were contested. It forced us to make some careless turnovers, so we knew we had to clean that up at halftime," said Mike McGuire, head coach at Radford.

Following a difficult first half in which they struggled to find any rhythm against UNCA's stellar defense, the Highlanders found another gear in the second half. Radford's ball movement improved and they were able to make knock-down open looks.

"Our kids executed really well. That's probably the best half we've played all year long," McGuire said.

Radford came out firing in the second half. The Highlanders hit a three to open the second half scoring and clawing back to within a point of the Bulldogs. Junior guard Destinee Walker and senior forward Jayda Worthy of the Highlanders were standouts in the second half.

"The first half was pretty good, I thought we had the right mentality. I just don't think our response was where it needed to be when they made their run. We didn't counter that," said Brenda Mock Kirkpatrick, head coach at UNCA.

Three of the game's five lead changes came in the third quarter. Any time the Bulldogs went ahead, Worthy was able to find an answer as she repeatedly came up with clutch buckets. Worthy finished with 14 points, shot 78 percent from the field and was named the game's MVP.

"This is always a fun game, very physical, it's like a tournament game," Worthy said. "I'm glad we executed and got our stops when we needed them, proud of my team's effort today and the chemistry we had."

Junior forward Tiffany Wilson made it 46-44 and brought the Bulldogs within two with 7:43 left in the fourth quarter, but this was as close as the game would get. Radford went on to execute both flawless offense and defense for the remainder of the fourth quarter, holding UNCA to two points in the final seven minutes of the game.

"Particularly in the fourth quarter, I've got to credit Radford for outplaying us. Efforts to loose balls, executing their offense and locking us up on defense. I thought they did a wonderful job," Mock Kirkpatrick said. "They put their foot down and instead of matching that intensity, we backed up. When it got a little hard for our kids, we sort of gave in. That's not something I've seen from us in a long time. I'm disappointed, I know the kids are disappointed, we know we can do better."

Radford ended the game on an 18-2 run during which they played tenacious defense and clicked on all cylinders offensively.

Senior center Fitzgerald looked

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