

## UNC Asheville Volleyball holds first tournament of the 2018 season

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UNC Asheville's volleyball team held the UNC Asheville Invitational in the Justice Center, hosting Coppin State, The Citadel and Appalachian State. Through three games the Bulldogs finished with two wins and one loss.

"I think the team played really well," said Frederico Santos, head coach of the volleyball team.

The Bulldogs first two opponents of the invitational were Coppin State and The Citadel. UNCA swept them both, not dropping a set throughout the two games.

"They were dominant in the first two games," said Wilson Matthews, a sophomore at UNCA and a self-proclaimed rabid fan of the volleyball team. "I support the team because the games are always really hype and it's always good to support UNCA."

The Bulldogs final game of the invitational resulted in a loss against Appalachian State. While they kept each set close, the Bulldogs fell without taking one. The start of a new season introduces new struggles, Santos said. "I think the difficulty is when you introduce new players into a lineup you never know how those players that were introduced are going to react

or how the other players are going to react to their introduction to the team," Santos said.

But this shouldn't stop the Bulldogs from performing well through the 2018 season according to Santos.

"We always want to be a consistent finisher in the Big South and I think historically volleyball has been," the 2007 UNCA graduate said. Maddy Zyburdt, a senior at UNCA and the libero on the volleyball team felt the team performed well for their first showing of the season.

"It was definitely a great start to my senior year," Zyburdt said. "We were really connecting well and had a lot of good team chemistry."

Team chemistry plays an important role for the Bulldogs, Santos said.

"They were very supportive of each other which is great to see, that builds a lot of trust and confidence within the players," Santos said.

"People that are coming into the game are also feeling that confidence that everything in here is cool everybody is getting along."

The Bulldogs come into the season with high hopes after finishing last season with 13 wins and 15 losses.

"We've always been top six, top four, top two, we won the thing," Santos said. "I



Julia Borges and Julia Loveday block a spike from Coppin's Asia Stennis with Chelsie Kolibar behind her for support. PHOTO BY EMMA JORDAN

think that's the consistency that this program has which also puts pressure on me, I put that pressure on myself because I want this program to succeed."

Success in a team sport means wins, but according to Santos, that's not all success means to the Bulldogs.

"They know they need to win, they know that winning is the definition of success, although I tell them that's not the definition for us," the former professional volleyball player said. "I tell them let's be cohesive as a team, let's perform well as a team, let's feel good about all those things that we're doing, then

I think you can judge us much better than, you won you're good you lost you're not good."

The Bulldogs wins did not come without a few highlights, one of which took off on social media, Santos said. "The play that's made Twitter and Instagram has like 35,000 views now," Santos said.

Julia Borges miraculous kick save against The Citadel made waves in the volleyball community when NCAA Volleyball tweeted a video of the play.

The tournament may have

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