

## Women's volleyball comes up short against Mercer

BEN DEFOE

STAFF WRITER

The UNC Wilmington volleyball team showed outstanding effort in a long fought match against Mercer University last Saturday, losing in five games to the Bears. The Seahawks displayed positive energy with great poise, but were unable to squeak out a victory.

UNCW came into the gym with great intensity and confidence showing that they knew they could win this match. The Seahawks had something to play for because a special crowd was in the audience. The families of these proud women attended the match. As each member of the team was announced, the players presented carnations to their parents.

Mercer started out strong in the first game even though both teams looked as though they were lacking communication. UNCW in the beginning of the game looked like they needed some help getting their serves up. The Seahawks would improve on this throughout the entire match.

Mercer had trouble early on getting their kills across because Angela Bodner, Emily Steele, and Heather White built a wall across the net. The score was 8-6 and UNCW looked like they were cruising when Mercer scored six unanswered points, two of them were aces hit by server Amy Schreiber, who led both teams with nine service aces. Mercer won the first game 15-10 regardless to sloppy play.

The second game started out where the first game left off. Both teams were not playing up to potential. Mercer's serves were penetrating the zone of the Seahawks as they looked to be too spread out. Mercer was making plenty of mistakes as well as UNCW and it showed on their coach's face. Mercer coach Allen Edwards was very vocal towards his players as they did capitalize on the mistakes made by UNCW. This game went back and forth, as the longest volley of the game took place when it was 8-7 in favor of UNCW. The game was much closer and well played, but UNCW still could not break

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of from Coastal Carolina with an 8-4 victory in Flight One. The Seahawks also saw five more doubles victories on Friday with dominating scores including a shutout by the doubles teams of Bowles and McRae and Phelps and Perry.

Overall, both coaches were happy with their teams play and were happy to see some of the strides the teams made, especially in doubles. "In these fall tournaments we're really looking at our doubles combinations to try to get them set for the main season in the spring," said Men's Head Coach Allen Farfour.

"I think for the fall season we're where we need to be performance wise," said Josh Franceschina.

"I think a lot of good things came out of



James Flint/The Seahawks

Holly Abbuhl (#15) and Bailey Lee go up for the block against Mercer on Saturday. The Seahawks fell in five games to the Bears.

10 points as Mercer went on to win 15-10.

UNCW regrouped at halftime because they knew that they had to win the next game or the match would be over. The third game still looked as though UNCW had not changed anything because they came out with a slow start. UNCW finally started to pull it together thanks to the help of Erin Fowler and Holly Abbuhl. Abbuhl would set the ball up and Fowler would knock them down. "The sets were awesome...I felt really good about the sets," said junior outside hitter Fowler. Abbuhl led both teams with 59 assists. UNCW revamped itself and won game three, 15-11.

UNCW appeared to be turning the momentum in their favor, and were mounting a huge comeback. The Seahawks jumped out to an early lead in game four of 8-5 but began to slip. Mercer came back and tied the game at 10 all. Even though UNCW was having some problems keeping the ball in play, they received some big help from

this weekend, I saw vast improvements, we're attempting the right shot, but not always making them, but I believe that in the spring we'll not only be attempting them, but making them," said women's head coach Jenny Garnity. "I think everyone did a good job in competing in their matches," said Garnity.

Speaking on what can be taken from this early tournament, Senior Stephanie Phelps said, "I think it took us a while to get into a groove, but I think we took mental toughness from this tournament."

The teams will continue to compete all season, with the next match for the women's team coming in three weeks at the Charleston Southern Invitational, Oct. 13-14. The men's team heads to Raleigh Oct. 13-15 to play in the N.C. State Invitational.

Bodner with some key blocks. The Seahawks did not look back after the score was tied, winning the game 15-10.

It was all tied up at two games apiece heading into the last and final game. Volleyball rules state in the fifth game every point counts. This last game was a nail-biter, as both teams went back and forth until it was all tied up at 14. The next two points would decide the winner, and they belonged to Mercer as they defeated UNCW in five games.

Coach China Jude had only positive things to say about her team even though they lost. "I am very proud and impressed with my team. Their consistency in the last two games was great and I have a new found respect for them because they bounced back from a two game deficit."

The volleyball team heads to East Carolina University for an Oct. 2 matchup. "The team is so pumped up about ECU because it is a big rival and we don't want to lose," senior setter Holly Abbuhl said.

## Volleyball falls to JMU

DAN GUY

ASST. NEWS EDITOR

UNC Wilmington's volleyball team began conference play against James Madison (14-3) Friday night at Hanover Hall, in front of 179 loud fans. UNCW (2-12) was defeated in straight games, 15-10, 15-6, 15-6.

Holly Abbuhl had 10 digs, and Bailey Lee led the Seahawks with eight kills. As a team, JMU hit .346 for the match, while UNCW marked .089.

"I thought we stayed really intense, we went out there focused, and we came out really strong," said Angela Bodner. "We kind of let down a little bit, but we never gave up."

The Seahawks opened game one excited and confident on a 4-0 run. JMU then went on a 9-1 run to take a 9-5 lead.

UNCW battled back to tie the game at 10-10 before JMU went on a 5-0 run to win the game.

"We really jumped out on them, and grabbed the first three points," said Head Coach China Jude. "We stayed aggressive, intense, and that was really a great game. I am very, very pleased. We really have had a chance to get our heads together over the last couple of days, got mentally prepared, studied the tape, and worked on a brand new defense."

"We put a lot of things together, our offense worked, our defense was going crazy, it felt good, we played good," said Holly Abbuhl. "[James Madison] normally ranks one or two in the conference, they're probably one of our biggest challenges. It's kind of a tough start, but it's a great way to open it up. If we played JMU like we did today, that says a lot about how we're going to play at ECU."

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