Black and Gold Player Spotlight:
Volleyball’s offense runs through Rebok

By Nick Phillips
Editor

What are your expectations for yourself and the team as you head towards the final stretch of the season?

The expectations I have for myself include continuing to efficiently run our offense as well as take care of defense on my side of the court. I want to be a good leader on the court and be able to help my team work through the ups and downs of every match. I feel that if I can create consistency in the sets then we can execute game plans that will give us a chance to win.

Describe your experience as a UNCP student athlete.

My experience so far as a UNCP student-athlete can be described in one word, busy. Our schedule on the court as well as off the court keeps us occupied, and maybe after the season is over I will be able to enjoy more of what it means to be a UNCP athlete.

What is your most exciting volleyball moment?

My most exciting volleyball moment to this point of my career was being able to play at the NJCAA Division II nationals my first two years in college before I transferred to UNCP. It was great to compete at a national level with players from all over the country as well as from other countries.

Who/what are your biggest inspirations, in volleyball and life?

One of my biggest inspirations in volleyball is Mike Schall; he was my coach and club director when I was in high school. He coached and played at Penn State University so he was full of knowledge and good advice about things on and off the court, including how to be a successful collegiate student athlete.

Talk a bit about what goes on in the locker room before a game.

In the locker room before a match there is usually a lot of loud music and goofing around. Most of the time everyone is trying to catch up on what happened with everyone that day as well as talk about whatever is on your mind. Serious game prep doesn’t happen until we talk to coach.

What is the last movie you watched?

The last movie I watched was “Little Fockers.”

Outside the Lines:
Rodgers at home on the American pitch

By Nick Phillips
Editor

Stuart Rodgers did not choose an easy path to Pembroke. The senior played at colleges in Texas and Maine before finding a home at UNCP.

Rodgers has started all 10 of UNCP’s games in 2011 and has tallied two goals and an assist from his defensive position. He has 13 total shots so far this season and has been named as one of the Braves two team captains.

Rodgers has changed schools three times since traveling to America from Retford, England, and he finds similarities in Pembroke and his small hometown, notably the weather.

“The major difference for me is the weather. The heat is great but playing in it is a killer and takes a lot of getting used to. I miss the rain sometimes. A similarity is the size. I am from a small village in a rural area so I’m used to being kind of “in the middle of nowhere,”” Rodgers said.

One thing that’s helped Rodgers adjust to UNCP while being an international student-athlete is the number of players on both the men’s and women’s soccer teams that are from foreign countries.

Rodgers has seven international teammates on his team, while there are also six foreign players on the Lady Braves roster, and Rodgers says they are all very close.

“I think it’s a big help that there are other foreigners on the men’s and women’s team, especially when you first arrive here and everything is new. It really helps having people in the same situation,” he said.

Rodgers came to the United States four years ago to play his freshman season in Texas at the University of Texas-Brownsville, but he was on the move again by his sophomore year, when he played at the University of Maine. He came to UNCP prior to last season and says that this is his favorite school of the three.

Off the soccer pitch, Rodgers says he likes spending time with his close friends and everyone getting together and hanging out at their apartments.

“One of my closest friends is an American and he has some good games going on of pool and hatchi. I love relaxing and having fun when you have some time off,” he said.

Rodgers said some of his favorite things about Pembroke are that it’s a tight community and that he likes how everyone knows each other and are really friendly, especially on campus.

He added that he loves traveling to big cities and seeing and experiencing new things in the U.S.

After four years across the pond from his home, family and friends, Rodgers has gotten the hang of the long distance relationships.

“The first couple years was really hard being away from home, but when you’re this far your team becomes your family and you get used to it and settle in,” he said.

“I miss home a lot and I’m always buzzing to get back, but at the same time I know being here is my family I miss more than anything, but my friends here really help me out and make it easier for me,” he added.

Bio of the week
Ashlyn Rebok
Year - Junior
Sport - Volleyball
Position - Setter

Hometown-Chambersburg, Pa.
Major - Health and Physical Education

2011 Stats - Through Oct. 11
22 games - 74 sets played, 586 assists, 151 digs, 34 kills

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