By Nick Phillips

Sports Editor

Volleyball makes strides

Coming off a 11-win season in 2009, the 2010 edition of the UNCP Lady Braves volleyball team had an eight-win improvement on their final record, finishing 19-14 overall.

A team full of questions to begin the season, the Lady Braves brought in eight newcomers to go with eight returning players. Six freshmen combined with two sophomore, six juniors and only two seniors to produce a season rivaling the 2007 edition that finished with 21 wins, head coach Jeff Billington’s highest win total in his time at UNCP.

In late October, the Lady Braves rose to a No. 8 ranking in the Southeast Regional poll, their first ranking in the Southeast Region in several seasons.

Picked in the preseason coaches’ poll to finish last in the Peach Belt Conference, the Lady Braves finished tied for fifth with a 5-9 PBC record.

Prior to the season, Billington stressed the importance of the team getting off to a good start early in the season.

UNCP began the 2010 campaign with seven wins in their first 10 games, and adding to that seven more wins over the following 10 matchups.

But, in their final 13 matches of the season, with six of those contests against PBC foes, the Lady Braves went 5-8.

UNCP closed the season with four straight losses, including a first round defeat to Armstrong Atlantic in the PBC tournament, unable to reach the 20-win plateau.

Junior Rebecca Morgan, in her final season donning the Black and Gold, registered a team-high 281 kills during the season, while fellow sophomore Hunter Bolwerk ran the UNCP offense and dished out 918 assists for the season. Bolwerk also led the Lady Braves in total sets played, seeing action in 109 of the team’s 114 total sets over the season.

Senior Rachel Young finished her final season as a Lady Brave with a team-high 74 total blocks.

In addition to her play on the court, Young was rewarded for her work in the classroom as well, being named to the 2010 PBC all-academic team.

Young was also named to the team as a sophomore before an injury shortened her junior campaign.

Freshman Marissa Baker saw her first season at UNCP end with a team-high 479 digs as part of the Lady Braves’ backbone play.

Looking ahead to the 2011 season, the Lady Braves will have an experienced group of players returning, with six rising sophomores and six rising seniors.

Football trips up

By Nick Phillips

Sports Editor

Coming off their second consecutive 9-1 season and their first-ever trip to the NCAA Division II playoffs, the 2010 UNCP football team and its fans were looking for continued success.

The season had more similarities to the Braves’ initial season than the idea of getting back to the national playoffs in hopes of a first postseason win.

The Braves finished with 5-5 overall, although they limped to the finish line with three losses to end the season.

After beginning the season 4-1, in their first five games, including a 39-0 thumping of rival Fayetteville State in the second annual Two Rivers Classic, the Braves only win in their first five games was against Fairmont State at home on Oct. 16.

Following the season-opening win over Fayetteville State, which set a new attendance record with 6,429 fans, the Braves blew apart St. Paul’s on the road before traveling to another regional rival in Wingate.

The Braves, ranked No. 14 at the time, fell short in a comeback effort to drop their record to 1-3 all-time against the Bulldogs.

Returning home after the loss, UNCP bounced back in a big way against the Bulldogs.

Returning home after the loss against the Bulldogs, the Braves lost at Glenville State on Oct. 23, the Braves found themselves in an unfamiliar situation against the Rams.

Following a convincing, 30-7 win over nationally prominent Carson-Newman to grace P. Johnson Stadium.

With all thoughts of the playoffs gone, the Braves lost at home for the first time since their opening campaign, a game-changing interception with under a minute to play saddled UNCP with a 30-26 loss to Concord on Homecoming.

A 24-0 home victory over Fairmont State left the Braves at 5-2 and kept slim hopes alive for a return trip to the national playoffs.

Football

Final Record: 5-5