Black and Gold Player Spotlight

The Pine Needle sits down with UNCP baseball player Keith Whitman

By Matt Smith
Sports Editor

What do expect from the team as the 2009 season starts up?
I believe we are ready to get the season going. As always we are expecting good things from the team this year. We are hoping to be able to compete to be in the top of the Peach Belt and make the regionals.

Describe your experience as a student-athlete at UNCP.
Being a student-athlete, I believe, is alot harder than just being a student because you have to be able to balance a full class load and play a year round sport. You go to class in the morning and then as soon as you get out of your classes you are headed right to the field to get ready to start practice and by the time you get home you are tired, sore, and you don’t feel like staying up studying. Then when the season comes around you still have to carry a full class load and in baseball you play games during the week along with the weekend so you have to miss some classes to go on road trips and still must be able to keep up in the class.

What is your most exciting baseball moment in your career?
My most exciting baseball moment was when I tied the school home run record as a freshman, which was later broken by Jason Morales.

Talk a bit about the locker room before a big game.
Being able to go into the locker room before a big game is good because I don’t normally go in there on a normal day-to-day basis. So going into the locker room is a time that I can change my mind set from practice and know that it is game time. It is a time where you can just sit there and think about the upcoming game and get your mind right.

Who or what is your biggest baseball inspiration?
First would be my grandfather who passed away this year because he always loved baseball and played for a long time. I can remember as a little kid going to my grandparent’s house and going out back and playing Wiffle ball alot of the time when I would go up there during the summer. Recently, Jason Morales [former UNCP player] has become an inspiration to me because I get to play with him last year and he has about every batting record here at Pembroke, and now he is playing in the Royals’ organization.

What do you do personally before a game?
Before every game as a team we always go to the field and take batting practice and then have time to go and get some food before returning to the field for the game. I like to get to the field early and get my stuff out of the locker room so that I don’t have to rush around after batting practice to find all my gear. During the time we have to leave and get some food I just stay at the field and think about the game that we are about to play and watch the other team take batting practice so I can be able to see what kind of hitters they have so I can know a little about them before the game starts.

Braves handle St. Andrews in county rivalry

By Matt Smith
Sports Editor

Coming off a 1-2 showing at the East Coast Duels, the Black and Gold wrestling team handled the St. Andrews Knights 40-3 in Laurinburg, N.C., on Jan. 30 to pick up their fourth win of the season.

The St. Andrews Knights wrestling team handled Duels, the Black and Gold showing at the East Coast Sports Editor By Matt Smith

The win kept the Braves perfect in their nine matches in their cross-county rivalry. The Braves have never broken a sweat against the Knights, as the Black and Gold have outscores St. Andrews by a total of 146-3 in their contests.

St. Andrews’ Casey Gashaw was the lone winner for the Knights, as the freshman took the decision in the 133-pound weight class. Gashaw battled the Braves’ Marcelus Perry and took a 3-1 decision.

While the Braves did not face Newberry at the competition, they posted a 1-3 record at the event in December.

The Braves will return to Pembroke for the first time since November to host Anderson in the “Battle For The Belt” at the English E. Jones Center on Feb. 6.