Basketball teams work hard in 2008-2009

By Latavia Riggins
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Finishing 12-12 over-all for the season and 8-12 in the Peach Belt Conference the women’s basketball team at UNCP has a lot to be proud of as the team and individual players collect awards for their performance during the 2008-2009 season.

As a team, the Black and Gold take home the PBC’s Institution of the Year Sportsmanship Award. The award is given out to the team voted by other teams in the sport that have displayed sportsmanship and character and class.

Women’s basketball
Sophomore A-Terra Kemp showed improvement over the season as she was selected for the PBC’s all-conference team ranking 11th in the PBC for her field efficiency from the floor at 47.5 per-cent and her average of 6.72 blocks per game. Kemp leads the Braves in points per game with 10.7 points per game and rebounding average with 7.5 rebounds per game. She has played in 27 of the team’s 28 games and started in 22.

Academically, two members of the Black and Gold squad have been honored for their achievements this season. Sophomore Illya Hunt and senior Natalie Ray were named to the 2008-2009 PBC all-academic team.

In her final season Hunt was named to the women’s third team and earned the title as the player with the highest grade point average from both the men’s and women’s teams. She started in 20 of the team’s 28 games. Hunt ranks first on the team and 13th in the PBC in assists with 2.7 for the season. Ray was named to the women’s second team for her academic achieve- ments. In her final season with the Braves, Ray set season highs in scoring with 15 points, and rebounding with 13.

Ray leads the team for the season with the high- est field goal percentage. She ranks second on the team in offensive rebounds, blocked shots and field goals made.

As a team the Braves saw their highest score for the season against Clayton State on Jan. 11. Even though the Braves were defeated in the road game the 80 points scored was the highest of the season. Point guard St. Andrews in the season opener on Nov. 18 the Braves allowed the fewest points of the season. Allowing St. Andrews to collect only 45 points, the Braves were able to capture the win with 75 points of their own.

In the game against St. Andrews, the Black and Gold also won by the largest point difference of the season, defeating their opponent by 32 points.

In their last four sen- iors this season will benefit the Braves’ squad for the coming season. DeNeer Davis, Lavantay Johnson, Ashley Morales and Natalie Ray were honored with a victory over South Carolina State on Feb. 21 in their Senior Night per- formance.

Three of the four sen- iors honored registered double-digits for the night as Morales led the Braves with a career-high 16 points.

Overall the Braves improved their record from last season’s 10-18 finish. In the 2007-2008 season the Black and Gold finished 5-15 in the PBC.

Men’s basketball
The men’s basketball team of UNCP finished its first season with new head coach Ben Miller, semi-successful with an overall record of 6-21 and 3-17 in the Peach Belt Conference.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill defeated the Braves 102-62 in an exhibition game, but the game gave Miller an idea of what the team should be working on for the season.

The Braves started the regular season a little slow but were able to capture their first win against Belmont Abbey on Dec. 6 at the English E. Jones Center.

Delivering the 72-69 triumph over the Crusaders snapped the Black and Gold’s four- game losing streak.

UNCP was unable to secure the win to bid farewell to the team’s four seniors on Feb. 20.

Georgia College State University snatched away their 2008-2009 season on a high note as they scored 72-69 in favor of the Bobcats.

In their last game at home Cortez Brown, Demarcus Lyuda, David Smith and John Walters scored a total 54 points for the night.

The Braves ended their 2008-2009 season on a high note as they scored 102 points over Columbus State on Feb. 28.

The game would mark the first time since the 1995-1996 season that UNCP has scored over 100 points.

The 100-point win over the Cougars snapped an 11-game losing streak for the Black and Gold and ended the team’s regular season.

The Braves’ perform- ance on the court proved to be matched by their performance in the class- room as Walters was named to the PBC all-aca- demic team for the year.

Walters was selected for the second team in the men’s voting. He played in 26 of the Black and Gold’s 27 games for the season and started in three.

Walters contributed to the team mostly on defense as a guard. He finished this season with 85.7 percent average from the free-throw line.

Miller is already working to build his pro- gram for the coming sea- son. On April 16 he announced signing prep- standout Shalmil Brackett to the 2009 recruiting class.

Brackett, a product of Wilson High School in Florence, S.C., averaged 22.4 points, six assists and 4.7 rebounds per game his senior year.

Miller said he is excited that Brackett has cho- sen to join the UNCP fam- ily.

In the next season Miller will continue to build on his team’s confi- dence and work to get the team working together. With a year at UNC under his belt Miller will be able to build on learn- ing experiences from this past season.

UNCP women’s Natalie Ray looks for a pass in the Lady Braves’ game against ASU.

Photo by Nick Faulkner

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