

# Braves open fall seasons with good showings

By Nick Phillips  
Editor

As we set to turn the calendar to October, the fall UNCP athletic teams are ready to jump into the heart of their schedules.

## From the Hawk's Nest

The month of October is make-or-break time for many sports, and what each team does in this coming month will determine if they continue play past Halloween as we look at the Big Four sports teams.

### Football

The big boys. All eyes are on them, and after losing 22 seniors from last season's squad, head coach Pete Shinnick's team is about where most people were predicting them at this

point in the season.

In their three wins over Fayetteville State, Chowan and Glenville State, the Braves defense showed up in time to provide a fourth quarter stop, and UNCP held on for the victory. In the loss to Wingate, the defense was not there, and the Braves paid for it with an overtime loss.

In the past, names such as Adam Deese and Caylon Hann have come to mind as defensive leaders, but this year's team seems to be lacking that one guy in the huddle who has the ability to speak and have everyone listen.

On the other side of the ball, it has been the Travis Daniels show so far for the Braves' offense. He entered the Glenville State game as the nation's leading rusher, and barring someone else putting up some absurd totals last weekend, he will stay atop that category.

Quarterback Luke Charles is also producing nice totals through the first month of the season, his first four collegiate starts.

This next month is huge for the young gridiron Braves.

### Volleyball

There have been moments of confusion and lack of communication, such as the rare loss to Fayetteville State, only their fifth loss in 48 meetings, but there has also been the other side, evident on back-to-back nights on Sept. 23 and 24 when they opened Peach Belt Conference play with two wins in straight sets each day.

Freshmen Hannah Hill and Chelsea Phillips have worked their way into the Lady Braves' offense flawlessly, while junior Rebecca Morgan is living up to her preseason all-conference selection.

Furthermore, we have yet to see the full potential of several veterans that have posted big numbers in the past – if they can get going, look out.

The Lady Braves have five-game conference road trip coming up that will give us a great idea of the potential of this squad.

### Soccer

The UNCP men's and women's soccer teams both got off to great starts, with the men jumping out to a 5-0 record and the women opening 4-0-1 before, coincidentally, both found their first losses of the season on Sept. 17 at North Georgia in PBC matchups.

For the men, year No. 2 under head coach Phil Hindson has already surpassed the first campaign.

The Braves, 6-2-0 through Sept. 26, finished 2010 at only 5-9-4 overall.

The women have seen

four of their eight games go to overtime – with two of those four going into the second overtime period.

The Lady Braves scored 17 combined goals in their first two games, but since then have not netted more than two goals in a game and, excluding their tied game, have seen the last five contests all end with one goal differences.

Soccer is one of those few sports where one goal might be the difference in a win or loss. Both the men's and women's soccer teams have allowed only four goals against them in eight games each.

More ironic is that both UNCP squads lost to the same two foes – PBC rivals North Georgia and Flagler.

Both squads have nine remaining regular season games left with four of those contests being played at home.

# 'Energizer bunny' with an 'infectious' personality

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Whether she's singing, dancing, flashing a huge grin as she laughs with teammates or a combination of it all, Baker is always doing something.

"They call me the Energizer bunny," Baker says, adding another nickname to her list.

"Her personality is definitely the type you want out there on the floor. She's infectious," Billington says.

She says she often doesn't feel as loose as she appears before games.

"It's just something I do to get myself ready for the

game," Baker says of her pregame antics.

"In a game you can't be nervous. Your athletic ability can't be showing if you're tight," she adds.

Baker never is one to appear tight in matches, as she carries over the free spirit into play. As she enters the court at the start of each match, she bows to the referee, something that gives her and her teammates a good laugh.

Coming out of timeouts, she has been known to dance and sing to the music on multiple occasions.

"I think I'm just kind of weird. I just think about

something and I do it. It gives me a little laugh, so it works," Baker said.

What you see on the court is what you get off the court as well, she adds.

"I'm probably worse off the court because I'm not using as much energy, but I'm the exact same way," she says with a laugh.

Just because she might be the only one with the antics on the court, Baker is not the only interesting one on the team.

"I think we are all kind of out there," she says, quickly adding "a lot of them try to think they are not, but they really are."

Despite not being able to attack the net offensively, Baker says she wouldn't change anything about her situation.

Not even to be taller. She says she likes always being in the game, and she has the unique job of being the leader on the floor as she tells her teammates where to play or where to aim a potential kill.

When UNCP is on defense, Baker points out different defensive assignments before serves. Offensively, she picks the weak spots on the floor and tells her teammates where to aim their shots.

"When our hitters are hitting, it's my job to look at the block and see where (the other team) is at...to help them see where to hit it, because they can't always see," she says.

"It comes with the job," she adds.

Despite sticking out on the court, Baker doesn't want to trade positions (or jerseys) anytime soon.

"I like where I'm at. I like this position; I like the leadership. I don't think I would trade it."

Don't bother thinking her personality will change anytime soon either.

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**Oct. 1**  
Join us for the Give N Go tour that's increasing awareness of domestic violence. Event will include a forum and panel, theatrical play, and concert.  
**12pm-4pm**

**VSA Festival**  
**Oct. 5**  
Volunteer to work with disabled students from the Public Schools of Robeson County. Enjoy doing arts and crafts with students grades K-12.  
Sign up now!  
**9am-12pm UNCP Quad**

**Table Talk: MLK Service Challenge**  
**Oct. 12**  
Join us in the University Center Mall to learn more on the Martin Luther King Jr. Service Challenge and sign up for the challenge.  
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