



Men's basketball, 2B.



McGovern awarded, 6B.



Braves' wrestling, 8B.

SPORTS

SECTION
B

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UNCP junior guard Talena Faison drives to the basket against Armstrong Atlantic. The Lady Braves won their matchup 63-48, with the men picking up their sixth victory of the season with a 75-60 win. Photo by Gabrielle Lovier

UNCP basketball teams pick up big wins

By Matt Smith
Sports Editor

Excitement was in the air Jan. 23 at the English E. Jones Center, as both the women's and men's basketball teams picked up much needed Peach Belt Conference wins over Armstrong Atlantic at home.

In the day's first game, the Lady Braves surged past Armstrong Atlantic with a 15-point 63-48 win, while the men picked up an easy 75-60 victory in the day's second game.

In the women's game, four Lady Braves scored in double figures to lead the Black and Gold offense, who shot 39 percent from the floor to topple the Pirates.

"We had a couple of players who played a very good game today," said UNCP head coach John Haskins. "If you look at the beginning of this game where we are down five and then look again with nine minutes left in the second half and we are up 22 - that is some good basketball.

"Our defense continues to be solid and we just need to continue executing and taking care of the ball for a full 40 minutes," he said.

Armstrong Atlantic created a fast start for the road time, scoring the game's first five points against the Lady Braves. The Pirates led by as much as 19-12 in the first half, but the Black and Gold regained momentum, going on a 24-8 run to close the half. The run, started by a 3-pointer by guard Talena Faison, featured an array of jump shots and fastbreak layups for the Lady Braves.

With the run, UNCP went into halftime with a 36-27 lead, which they never relinquished in the second half.

The Lady Braves built another long run in the second period, this time by the tune of 22-9, taking a 58-36 lead to give the team their largest lead of the night. The Pirates would battle back on a 10-2 run of their own during the period, but the Lady Braves never let their lead dwindle to less than 13 in the victory.

Junior Briana Stanton and sophomore DeDe Cotten led the Lady Braves with 12 points apiece, a career high for Cotten.

Men roll

In the men's game, freshman forward George Blakeney led the Braves with a

career high 20 points and 12 rebounds, as the Braves took down the Pirates 75-60 for the team's sixth win of the season.

The Black and Gold committed just 15 turnovers during the game, a problem that has plagued the team all season, and posted 17 assists in the win.

"We need that win - our players, our coaches and even our trainers - we needed that," said UNCP head coach Ben Miller. "That was the first time in I don't know how long that we were positive as a team on the assist-to-turnover ratio.

"It's just hard to take advantage of our size and our scorers when we turn the ball over, and I thought we did a good job taking care of the ball today, especially in the second half," he said.

Both teams struggled in the first half to score, battling to a 29-27 mark at the half with the Braves leading at the break.

But in the second half, the Braves' offense rolled as UNCP pushed their lead to 16 with just over 10 minutes left in the second half. The Pirates battled back to cut the lead to just seven at 58-51 with seven minutes to play, but the Braves kept the Pirates at bay to earn the 15-point victory.