

Black and Gold Player Spotlight

The Pine Needle sits down with UNCP basketball player Illya Hunt at the start of the 2009 season

By Matt Smith
Sports Editor

What do you expect from the team as the 2009 season starts up?

Our team is going to do great things this year. I am really excited about what we have been able to do so far in practice and our first scrimmage and what I believe we will do in our conference games to come. We have a lot of great talent on our team and I can't wait for everyone to come out and support us.

Describe your experience as a student-athlete at UNCP.

My experience so far as a UNCP student-athlete has been great. The professors really help out a lot as far as schedules and such. The faculty here at UNCP is really supportive of athletes and I really appreciate it.

What is your most exciting basketball moment in your career?

The most exciting basketball moment in my career was when my high school won regionals and we went to the state tournament. We were so excited because it had never been done before by our women's basketball team.

Talk a bit about the locker room before a big game.

Before a big game, we usually run through the scouting report for the other team and "dummy" some offense that they may do against us. We work on how we will defend them. Also, in the locker room, we listen to some upbeat music to make us hype before the game.

Who is your biggest basketball inspiration?

My biggest basketball inspiration would have to be my mother and father. They are very supportive of me and try to attend every basketball game whether it is home or away. Without them I don't know what I would do. There has never been a game that they just didn't want to go to. They have always been cheering for me.

What's on your iPod before the game starts up?

I don't usually listen to my iPod before a home game. Away game trips I try to listen to slow music so that I don't get anxious for the game and end up making stupid turnovers and mistakes. Therefore, I try to listen to some country music so that I am calm and mentally ready to play.



Photo courtesy of Sports Information

Bio of the week

Illya Hunt

2008 Season

In 2008, Hunt averaged 2.8 points for the Black and Gold while leading the team with 2.7 assists per game. Hunt was second on the team in minutes per game, averaging 24.7 minutes a contest and also averaged one steal a game. Hunt started 20 games in 2008.



Sophomore Tiara Anderson had six kills against the Pirates in the Braves' loss to Armstrong Atlantic.

Photo courtesy of UNCP Sports Information

Volleyball drops regular-season finale on the road

By Nick Phillips
Asst. Sports Editor

The UNCP volleyball team dropped its final match of the 2009 regular season on Nov. 7, against Armstrong Atlantic State, losing in three sets.

Hartley leads

Sophomore Tiara Anderson and senior Jessica Hartley each totaled three kills, while freshman Sam Wylie passed out 20 assists.

The first set saw 13 tied scores and three lead changes before Armstrong Atlantic took the set by a 25-17 score.

Armstrong Atlantic went on an 8-0 run in the middle of the set when the two teams were tied at 14-14.

The run included two attack errors by the Black and Gold and four bad

sets by the Braves.

The final two sets were not as competitive, with the Lady Braves only tallying 24 points over both sets, losing set two 25-11 and set three 25-13.

In the second set, Armstrong Atlantic went on another long 8-0 run. The run included four kills by two different Pirates.

The Lady Braves finished the regular season with an 11-20 overall record, and 2-12 Peach Belt Conference mark.

Eighth place

UNCP finished eighth in the PBC, and will be the number eight seed in next week's conference tournament. They will face off against league champion Flagler in the first round, a team that the Lady Braves have lost to twice this season.

Laza sets Peach Belt record

By Nick Phillips
Asst. Sports Editor

UNCP senior Andrea Laza broke the Peach Belt Conference's record for career digs on Nov. 6, as the Lady Braves traveled to Flagler College. UNCP would drop the match in three sets.

Laza came into the match needing just three digs to break the Peach

Belt Conference record, which was held by former Francis Marion player Jessica Strader. Laza collected six digs to bring her career total to 2,252, and put herself in the conference's record books.

Laza leads

In four years at UNCP, Laza has been the team leader in digs each season. Her freshman year, she totaled 521 digs before

recording her career-high 798 digs in her sophomore season. Last season, she dug a total of 535 balls and has tallied 398 this season.

The Lady Braves lost the three straight sets, by scores of 25-16, 25-16, and 25-23. Offensively, they were led by sophomore Tiara Anderson, who tallied seven kills.

Freshmen Morgan Ridge and Sam Wylie

each recorded 10 assists each from the setter position. On defense, senior Jessica Hartley and sophomore Tricia Varno each blocked two shots.

Flagler clinched the PBC regular-season championship and the No. 11 seed for next week's conference tournament with the win. UNCP's record drops to 11-19 overall, and 2-11 in conference.



Photo courtesy of UNCP Sports Information

UNCP libero Andrea Laza (8) used six digs to help herself break the Peach Belt Conference record for career digs with 2,252.