

Braves' Pep Band takes home top honors

By Matt Smith
Sports Editor

The UNCP Pep Band and Cheerleading squad both put on top performances March 8 at the Peach Belt Conference Spirit Day Competition in Aiken, S.C.

The Braves' Pep Band took home first place honors out of the conference while the Black and Gold Cheerleaders took home second place honors.

The band competition, held at USC Aiken, features schools across the Peach Belt Conference. Each band was given a five minute time frame to play. The bands were then judged by two music adjudicators.

For their performance, the 27 UNCP musicians played a compilation of songs featuring, "The Final Countdown," the "ESPN Sports Theme," and the "UNCP Fight Song." The band's performance also included chants, cheers and choreography.

The band was evaluated using a score sheet that

was divided into sections. The score total was based on 50 percent on musicianship, 25 percent on musical impact and 25 percent on school spirit effectiveness.

Cheer team places

Also taking stage at the competition, the UNCP Cheerleader team took home second place honors at the spirit competition. The Braves were edged out by Columbus State for first place in the conference competition.

"It means a lot to me as well as my team. We have worked really hard to get where we are," UNCP junior cheerleader Sunni Haralalka said. "We have had morning practices as well as late night practices and have put a lot into all that we do. We have been going to Peach Belt [competitions] for numerous years and this is the first year that we have placed at the PBC."

The win was Columbus State's sixth consecutive Peach Belt Cheerleading title.



The Braves' band and cheerleading squad cheers on the UNCP football team at homecoming. The Braves' Pep Band picked up first place honors at the 2010 Peach Belt Conference competition. Photo by Nick Faulkner

Baseball stumbles against North Georgia

By Travis Anderson
Staff Writer

The Black and Gold baseball team entered play Feb. 27 with a 9-1 record and looked to pick up their first conference win with an early 6-1 lead over Peach Belt Conference opponent North Georgia.

But, UNCP learned that protecting a lead is a tough job to do, as the

team eventually fell 10-8 in their first PBC matchup of the season.

The loss snapped the Braves eight game winning streak and ended the momentum that the Black and Gold had carried into play for three weeks.

The Braves weekend started looking better when they evened the series 1-1 in the second match of the three-game series. Ten batters

appeared at the plate in the fifth inning of the second contest, posting five runs which gave Justin Yow plenty of run support for the remainder of the contest.

Protecting the lead

However, the final game of the three-game series on Feb. 28 proved to be another case of UNCP not being able to protect a lead. The Black

and Gold pounded out 13 hits and scored 10 runs, but they could not stop a late rally that led North Georgia to a 12-10 win over the Braves.

The final game of the series saw a familiar theme in the Braves' young season. UNCP jumped out to an early lead, but a late game rally spelled doom for the team. The two teams combined for 18 runs and

as many hits through the first five innings. Unfortunately for the Braves, the North Georgia squad was able to continue their scoring ways as UNCP's momentum fell off through the later innings.

The bright spot of the Braves' weekend was Kenny Mickens, who drove in his fourth home run of the season. The Black and Gold offense

was running on all cylinders during the series, but late game rallies spelled trouble for the Braves in all but one game.

The biggest disappointment on the weekend came from the usually reliable All-American Matt McGovern, who posted a loss on the mound for the first time in three years. McGovern allowed eight runs on as many hits and four walks.

Braves edge out Falcons

By Travis Anderson
Staff Writer

The Black and Gold baseball team produced just enough offense to slide past the Pfeiffer Falcons 12-11 in non conference play on Feb. 25.

The Braves had to rally from deficits on three separate occasions during the game and held back Pfeiffer's late attempt at a rally to seal the win.

On the offensive side of the ball, Aaron Parnell, Joe Mangum and Keith Whitman each crossed the plate three times for the Braves, going 3-for-4 on

the day and providing the spark for the offense.

UNCP also got a pair of hits from Seth Kivett and Tom Porricelli in the win, but Keith Whitman proved to be the offensive catalyst, recording a season best four RBIs.

UNCP relied heavily on their bullpen during the day, using five different pitchers in the outing.

The pitching staff totaled 16 strikeouts in the contest, the most for the team in six years, but it was Brian Willis who exited the game with a win, improving to 1-0 on the season.

Willis struck out five

and surrendered just one earned run on one hit in two innings of work to grab the coveted victory.

Rudy Brown, the second of four relievers in the game, struck out five and allowed three hits and no earned runs in two innings from the hill.

Aarin Sharpe turned in a 3-for-5 day at the plate for Pfeiffer to provide the bulk of their offense, while Zack Pou went 2-for-4 on the day.

With the win, the Braves ended Pfeiffer's two-game win streak. The Braves now own a 11-10-1 all time record against the Falcons.



UNCP's Aaron Parnell gathers a ball and throws to first to get a runner out. Photo by Matt Smith



Keith Whitman prepares for a pitch against Lander. Photo by Matt Smith

Braves sweep Lander at home

By Nick Phillips
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Carrying a number 30 national ranking, the UNCP Braves baseball team earned a three-game, weekend sweep over visiting Peach Belt Conference foe Lander on March 6 and 7 to improve their season record to 14-3 overall and 4-2 in the PBC.

The Braves earned a 17-4 game one victory in part thanks to a nine-run third inning that saw UNCP send 12 batters to the dish.

Braves' all-American Matt McGovern earned the win for the Braves, as

the senior struck out seven batters over 6.2 innings of work.

At the plate, senior Seth Kivett hit his first home run of the season, while junior teammate Jason Coker connected with a homer of his own as UNCP scored 17 runs for the second game in a row.

Braves rack up hits

Junior Kenny Mickens, sophomore Alex Pearce and junior Joe Mangum all had three hits in the game, while Mickens, Pearce and Coker all knocked in three runs in the game.

In game two, the

Braves continued to hit the ball well, as five different players had multi-hit performances in the 10-5 win.

Junior Justin Yow improved to 4-0 on the season, striking out seven batters over five innings. Sophomore Aaron Parnell finished the night with a 3-for-5 hitting line, while junior Keith Whitman knocked his seventh home run of the season as part of his 2-for-3 night.

Mickens, Mangum and sophomore Josh Haley all tallied two hits in the stat sheet for the Braves as well.

Game three saw Haley go off for a 4-for-5 hitting

day, as he doubled and homered while driving in five runs as the Braves finished off the sweep with a 14-7 win.

Brown closes

Coker added three RBIs and scored three times in a three hit performance, while Parnell doubled and scored twice himself.

UNCP reliever Rudy Brown earned the game three win, as the senior struck out seven batters in 3.2 innings of work. Braves closer Brian Willis also struck out two batters of his own in the ninth inning.