

Braves outlast Patriots for 3-2 victory

By Matt Smith
Sports Editor

The Black and Gold volleyball team snapped an eight game Peach Belt Conference losing streak Nov. 4, outlasting the Francis Marion Patriots 3-2 at the English E. Jones Center.

In the team's last home game of 2009, the Braves took an 11-25, 25-23, 25-20, 19-25, 15-7 victory over the visiting Patriots.

The Black and Gold looked listless in the first set, falling behind early to Francis Marion 12-6 after seven straight points from the Patriots. During the run, sophomore Ashlyn Underhill registered three kills against the Braves' defense to open up the six point margin.

Francis Marion continued their rally, widening their lead to 18-9 in the middle of the set. The Patriots closed the set on a 5-0 run, highlighted by three attack errors by the Braves to give FMU the first set victory 25-11.

Back to back

But in the second set, the Braves offense came alive, as the team jumped on Francis Marion early for a 7-3 lead.

The Patriots rebounded to tie the score at 8-8, but the Braves gained separation late in the set with a 17-14 edge after a service error by Francis Marion and a service ace by freshman Morgan Ridge.

The two teams played

back and fourth for the rest of the contest until a kill by senior Lizzie O'Connor and an attack error by Underhill helped UNCP to the 25-23 win.

In the third set, the two teams again remained close, with Francis Marion pouncing on the Braves for a short lived 9-4 advantage. The Black and Gold battled back, scoring seven unanswered points off a Sam Smith kill, three attack errors by the Patriot's defense and three aces by Ridge.

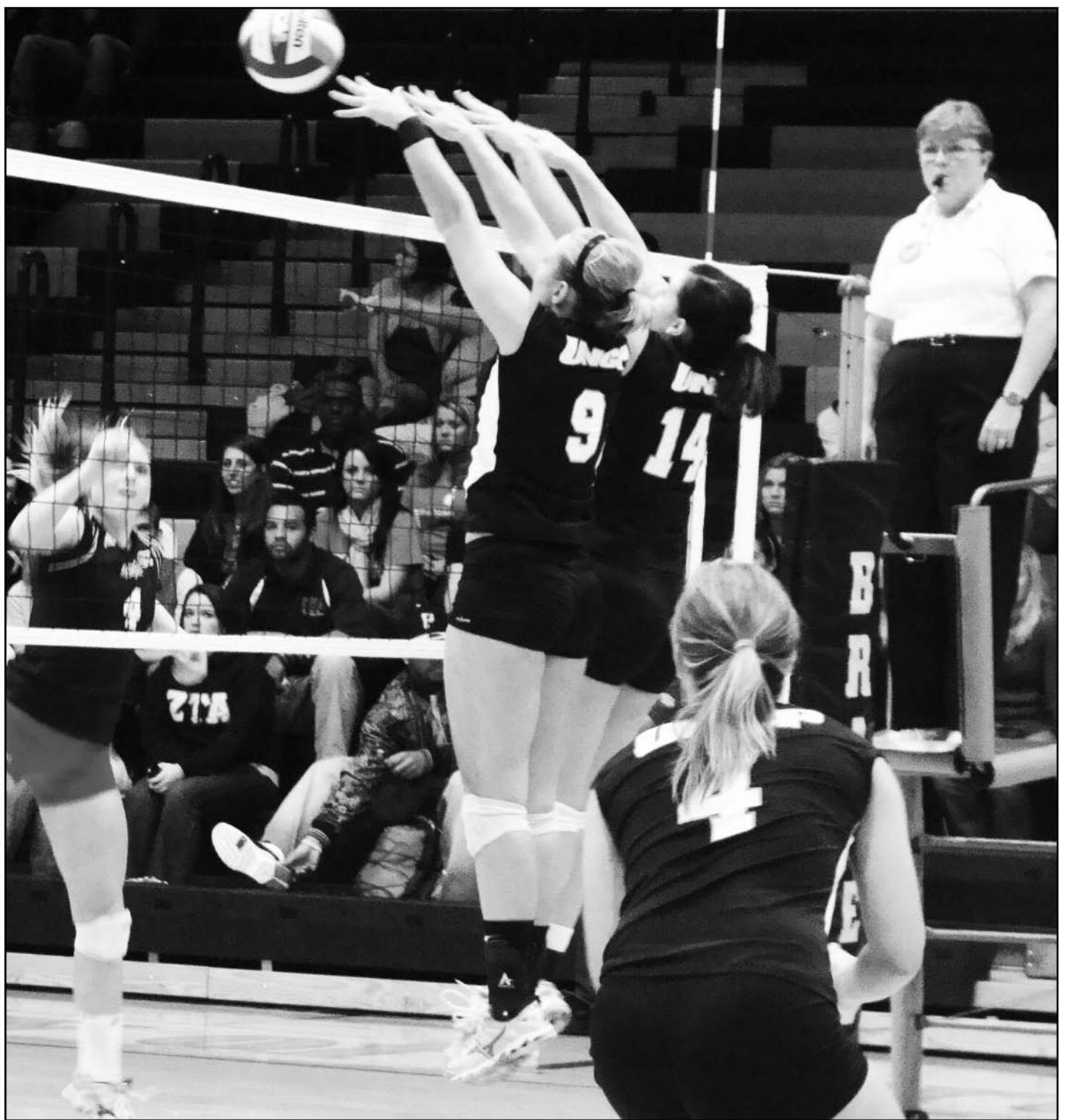
The two teams would remain tight for the contest, with UNCP holding as much as a three point advantage until Francis Marion knotted the score at 19 apiece. The Braves would finish on a 6-1 run to close out the match, in part by a Jessica Hartley kill, to take the match 25-20.

Final set win

The Braves again came out hot in the fourth set, taking a 4-0 lead, but quickly cooled when the Patriots regained momentum with a 12-11 advantage in the middle of the set. After going up by one, Francis Marion never relinquished the lead, as the team finished with a 13-8 spurt to top the Braves 25-19.

Attack errors plagued the Braves in the fourth set, as UNCP racked up 11 attack errors.

In the deciding fifth set, the Black and Gold took control of the match early and never looked back. The Braves opened



Jessica Hartley (9) and Tricia Varno (14) sky for a block in the Braves' game against Francis Marion.

Photo by Kayloni Wyatt

a 7-2 lead with three kills from Hartley and closed the set on an 8-3 run to take home the victory.

For the match, UNCP had two players with double digit kills, as O'Connor led the team

with 12 and Hartley contributing 11 of her own.

Freshman Sam Wylie led the Black and Gold with 36 assists and senior libero Andre Laza had 28 digs to pace the Braves.

Sophomore Ardelia

Morris paced the Patriots with 18 kills, while Underhill finished the game with 10.

Jess O'Leary led both teams with 37 assists in the loss. Four Patriots had double digits digs in the

contest, with sophomore Hallie Legg leading the way with 23.

The win was the Braves' second PBC win of 2009 and their first since a five-set Sept. 26 victory over USC Aiken.

2009 Volleyball Stats

Individual Stats

Kill Leaders

Tiara Anderson	275
Jessica Hartley	226
Lizzie O'Connor	182

Dig Leaders

Andrea Laza	392
Caitlin Haworth	348
Allie Schneider	248

Assist Leaders

Sam Wylie	585
Whitney Hanlin	301
Morgan Ridge	149

Attack Percentage Leaders

Jessica Hartley	.243
Whitney Hanlin	.218
Rachel Young	.217

Team Stats

Overall Record: 11-18

Conference Record: 2-10

Home Record: 5-5

Away Record: 2-7

Neutral Court Record: 4-6



Freshman Sam Smith looks to the bench for instructions in the Braves' win over the Patriots.

Photo by Kayloni Wyatt