

# A LOOK AT SPORTS

Go  
Christians

## You play ball where?

by Vicki Blankenship  
Sports Editor

Elon College? Where is Elon College? Ten years ago that response was common when an athlete from Elon told where he or she played intercollegiate ball. It does not hold true now. Elon College athletes are making their claim in conference titles, district titles, and even top ranking national teams.

There are 12 intercollegiate sports at Elon, and every sport except for women's tennis (only in its third year) has held a conference title several times and even district titles. Several teams have made it to regional tournaments and national tournaments.

Elon football is considered the powerhouse of small colleges. The football program at Elon has held 16 conference titles, 3 district titles, and has been in the top ten national rankings six times since 1973. The year 1980 saw Elon football at its best with the NAIA National Championship over Northeastern Oklahoma State held

on Elon's own home stadium.

Men's basketball has claimed 10 conference titles plus three NAIA District 26 championships, along with winning over 25 different invitational tournaments. The women's program since it began in 1972 has won and been in the top three of their conference several times. In addition, they have won a State AIAW championship, a Regional 2 AIAW consolation championship. Lack of funds kept the girls from competing in the nationals.

The baseball program has grown tremendously. In the past several years the Elon baseball team has faced tough competition such as University of North Carolina. The baseball team has held 17 conference titles, two district titles and in 1979 the baseball team was ranked 13th in the nation for small colleges. The bat is not only being swung by the men though. In 1977 the first intercollegiate women's softball team was formed. In

their first year of play the Golden Girls were 6th in the NCAIAW Tournament and 4th in overall team stats. In 1978 they captured the NCAIAW Championship and also won the Appalachian State University Invitational Tournament in which mostly large colleges competed. In 1979 the Golden Girls placed 4th in the state and in 1980 the girls returned to win the conference championship and place 4th in the state.

The matmen at Elon have come to life winning the District 26 tournament five times since 1971. In 1978 the wrestlers were 5th in the NAIA Regional VII championship.

Volleyball at Elon has been in the top three of the state four times since its beginning in 1972. The Golden Girls even made it to the regionals in 1974 where they took second place. The Golden Girls remain a threat in their conference.

There is a lone sport at Elon that individual players put forth their best efforts

## The Elon Sports Corner

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and do not get much recognition, and that sport is the Elon golf team. Since 1972 the golf team has put their individual efforts together to come up with four conference titles, a second, third, and fourth place in the conference, two NAIA District 26 championships along with three second place finishes in the district, and have been nationally ranked in the top ten for five years. In 1976 and 1978 the golfers were second in the nation.

The soccer program at Elon has been having a face lift the last two years. For the first time in soccer history at Elon College, the soccer team had a winning record in 1979. This was the beginning of getting respect from other colleges. In 1980

the soccer team rose to victory to claim the conference title. The team advanced to district playoffs.

Once a small college hardly known for its athletics, Elon has become known and feared for its power in the Carolina's Conference. But not only has it captured the respect in its conference, it has become well known in district and national play. Elon College? Oh Yea! That is the school near Burlington that does so well in athletics.



## Christians claim championship

by David Temple

1980 was a banner year for Elon College football as the Fighting Christians captured the national championship with a 17-10 win over Northeastern State University on December 20.

Bobby Hedrick became one of the leading running backs in the history of college football by pushing his career rushing total to 5,503, which set a new NAIA record. Hedrick's 1,793 yards during the season pushed him over the 1000 yard mark for the fourth season in a row. Hedrick's performance earned him several post season honors including All SAC-8, All District 26, AP Little All-American, NAIA All-American, and Honorable Mention in the Sporting News All-American poll.

Yet Hedrick was not the entire offensive story for Elon this season. Freshman Fred Jordan took over at the other runningback spot and

scampered for 914 yards on only 146 attempts for an impressive average of 6.3 yards per carry. Jordan's six touchdowns were second only to Hedrick's record setting 18.

John Bangley, a transfer from VMI, guided the offense at quarterback as he threw for 1,202 yards and 2 touchdowns. Bangley got off to a shaky start early in the season and raised a few question marks. However those question marks quickly became exclamation points as he led the Fighting Christians to the championship. At the other end of most of Bangley's passes was tight end Joey Hackett. Hackett grabbed 30 passes for 481 yards and 3 touchdowns. Elon head Coach Jerry Tolley had high praise for his tight end, pointing out the number of game saving or game breaking catches that he made throughout the season.

Elon's receiving corps was



All District 26 nose guard Chris Worst displays his championship fever behind the NAIA National Playoff banner. Photo by Paul DeFord.

also strengthened by the play of Steve Vargus. Vargus caught 23 passes totaling 352 yards, 5 of those catches were for touchdowns. The kicking unit also enjoyed better success this season as punter Phil Melton averaged 36.9 yards per boot and kept the opponents deep in their own territory, often inside

the ten yard line. Kicker Phil Melton had his best season to date by hitting 10 of his 16 field goal attempts with eight of them coming from beyond the twenty. Renn also added 46 extra point kicks to total 76 total points. Behind much of Elon's offensive success, however, was a greatly improved of-

fensive line led by Donovan Brown, Clint York, Harold Hill, and Alan Peters. The line not only led the way for the rushing game but gave Bangley excellent pass protection.

The Fighting Christian defense also enjoyed a fine

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