

WBBB sportscaster enjoys following Elon Football

Bill Huff witnesses 215 football games in a row

By Debra Taylor Staff Writer

It was in the early 1970's and the Elon Fighting Christians were playing one of their toughest rivals, Carson Newman.

Elon's attack featured, Mike Lawson, who still holds the single game rushing record for a collegiate football player in the state of North Carolina. (294 yards against Gardner-Webb).

Carson Newman apparently knew that their defense couldn't hold Lawson, so they had another plan. They left the water sprinklers on all night on the playing field, before the game so that Lawson couldn't run on it. The teams ended up playing in ankle-deep water. The final score was Carson Newman 42, Elon 28.

Several years later, the Fighting Christians were to play Carson Newman again. This time the Elon club arrived on a Friday night. The players had to sleep underneath the gym on cots. Right above them were the basketball courts. "Either on purpose or somehow" the hosts had somebody playing basketball or dribbling a basketball on the courts all night long to keep the Elon team awake.

Bill Huff, a sports broadcaster for WBBB in Burlington, has quite a few stories such as these. He has seen it all-good

and bad. Since 1964, he has been with the Elon football club. Last Saturday's game against Gardner-Webb was the 215th consecutive game, he has seen. Whether the team is playing in West Virginia, Louisiana or Texas, Huff is there. He hasn't missed a game since his first on on October 6, 1964, against Camp Lejeune.

In 1980, Elon made Huff an honorary team member and gave him on NAIA championship ring, which he said he cherishes "more than my N.C. State ring."

Huff grew up on a tobacco farm in a little town called Hurdles Hill in Person County, N.C. Hurdles Mill had a "less than 20 population", 13 people were in Huff's high school graduating class.

He was active in the 4-H and received a scholarship to N.C. State University to study agriculture," which I knew nothing about." He says. But he still graduated and went on to teach agriculture.

On September 24, 1964, he left teaching and got a job with WBBB radio as a salesman, farm director and helping with sports.

He had never had any formal training and the only sports background he had was watching games when he was an usher at Reynolds Coliseum. At his first Elon football game he was a 'gopher' for Bob Ray, who was then broadcasting the games. "You



Photo by Massengill

FOOTBALL FOLLOWED: Bill Huff has followed Elon football since 1964 broadcasting their games from as far as Texas and West Virginia. This past year Huff has broadcast for WSOE while working with Tom Westenhiser.

go fer' this and you 'go fer' that, Huff recalled.

Huff began working seven days a week for \$65. He has now worked his way up to station manager and was just elected president of the North Carolina Association of Sports Broadcasting.

Many times, Huff has broadcast a high school game on Fri-

day night, then driven all night to places such as Bluefield, W.V.A., and Birmingham Ala., to broadcast an Elon game on Saturday afternoon.

Huff has seen Elon go from a 1-9 record to winning the national championship. He has seen the team lose to a Junior College because the opposing team provided all night entertainment the night before. He was there in 1973, when the night before a game at Abilene Christian, Elon head coach Red Wilson got left at the banquet and had to hitch a ride to the hotel in the back of a pickup truck.

Huff has seen players such as Eddie Faust-a Williams High School graduate who at one time played a football game in the afternoon, came back to Elon and put on a basketball uniform because the basketball team needed help. That night he sank 14 out of 14 free throws to help win the game.

Huff has watched great athletes such as Rich McGeorge-an All American while at Elon in the late 1960s who went on to play pro football for 11 years with the Green Bay Packers.

Throughout these 19 years, Huff has become a friend to the team players. Many of them are "like my own kids," he says. He has five children of his own who are now grown and "scattered all over the world."

Players such as Bobby Hrick, John Bangley, Don Brown and Clint York, members of the national championship team in 1978 still come by to visit and talk whenever they are in town.

The students can talk to him and air out their problems whenever they want. Huff says. "These guys need somebody who is their home away from home."

Huff said that the Elon football players are "quality student athletes and "I like to feel that I can be a friend to them."

"Nobody knows how much these boys put in to represent the school Huff says. "People don't realize the hours they put in during the week just to play for three hours on Saturday afternoon. There's a lot of pressure on football players from other students, alumni and fans. "I have the greatest admiration for kids who play sports today."

The next game you attend look for the member of the broadcast team whose uniform is a cowboy hat and cowboy boots. The hat is one of 50 that Huff wears to cover up his bald spot. The cowboy hat is the hat that he bought at the Palm Bowl in 1978 while Elon was playing Angelo State for the national championship.

"It was my good luck hat that I still wear that hat to every Elon Football game," Huff says. And this Saturday's game will be his 216th.

Football to face Newberry

Record is 11-4-2

Soccer team beats Pfeiffer, makes 2nd playoff round

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G-W led Appalachian State 17-7 with seven minutes to go but the Mountaineers scored two TD's to win 21-17. So it was the unsuccessful onside kick by Elon that finally relaxed the visitors.

Elon now falls to 3-2 in the conference and 5-2 overall and most likely their national ranking of fifth will also drop. G-W is now 4-1 in the conference and 4-4 overall.

Elon travels this week to play Newberry as G-W will host Presbyterian. The Elon game will be broadcast by WSDE, 89.3 fm. and airtime will be 6:45 p.m.

The Elon soccer team won the first playoff game in its history 4-1 over Pfeiffer College here Tuesday. The Christians now advance to the second round at UNC-Asheville today.

Last week the team played its strongest opponent of the year, top-ranked UNC-Greensboro, but lost 4-1 after holding a 1-0 lead at halftime. According to coach Steve Ballard, the Elon team did not play up to its potential against UNC-G but also did not embarrass themselves.

The Fightin' Christians did play up to their potential against Pfeiffer as they took a 3-1 lead at the half on three goals by Sean Flanagan. The first was assisted by Paul Law-

son and the next two were unassisted.

Pfeiffer's lone goal was scored by Rick Cole as Elon held Pfeiffer to just 14 shots on goal while Elon's Joe Bartlinski saved four.

Chris Crusan rounded out the scoring in the second half with an unassisted goal. Shortly thereafter, Ballard was able to play some of this reserves. Elon took 19 shots on goal while Pfeiffer's goalie saved two.

While playing UNC-G, Elon lost its lead in the second half when Andrew Mehalko and Mike Sweeney each combined for two goals a piece to pace UNC-G to their victory.

UNC-G's talented squad took 27 shots on goal. Elon's Bart-

linski was able to save 13. Elon was only able to take eight shots on goal and UNC-G was able to save four of them.

Also last week Belmont Abbey gave Elon a scare until the end of the game. With five minutes to go Sean Flanagan was able to net a shot with a double assist going to Scott Spada and Marcel Miller.

Although Elon dominated the game, the Christians were only able to win 1-0. The Fightin' Christians took 25 shots on goal with Belmont Abbey coming up with three saves. The visitors had 11 shots on goal, Bartlinski saving seven.

Elon's record now is 11-4-2 overall as they enter the second round of playoffs today.



Photo by...

HEADS UP: Elon's Paul Lawson has his eyes on the ball last Saturday's match against top-ranked NCAA Division I foe UNC-G.