

NCAA

ElonSports



Men's basketball 1998-99: Looking to the challenge

Chrissie Taylor
The Pendulum

Challenge. Confidence. Success. These three words describe goals that the 1998-99 men's basketball team hopes to achieve.

The challenge starts early in the season. The team will face the University of Virginia, Old Dominion University and the University of Colorado even before their home opener on December 2 against VMI.

"We know our challenge and want to make everyday a challenge for us," head coach Mark Simons said. "We started the day the kids got here at the end of August with our goals for the season and pre-season conditioning."

Add these teams to the competition: Davidson College, who was first in the Southern Conference last season, 14 Big South games and Stanford University, a Final Four team in '98. This may be the toughest schedule Elon has ever faced.

What does Elon want to bring back from these games early on?

The number one thing is confidence," Simons said. "We are going in to win. These games will show us what are weaknesses are and what we need to work on."

If a team does lose early on, they may tend to lose their healthy and positive attitude.

Simons and first-year assistant coach Joel Haskins want their team to understand that playing a touch schedule is how you get better.

"We have a tremendous challenge early on, but if the team stays focused with our goals and does not get sidetracked, we have a chance to surprise some early on and be very competitive in the Big South," Haskins said.

Success. The third goal. The team will measure a successful season differently than in the past. They lose three strong players in Chris Kiger, Adam Roberts and Ken Spell, but they also have brought in a strong recruiting class.

We are very pleased with the kids approach so far," Simons said.

"At practice they are competitive and working hard. This team is as tight as we have had in a while. For this early in the season they compliment one another well."

The Players- Experience and Youth

The team lost Kiger, Roberts and Spell in the backcourt, but they are returning sophomore Dennis Gaskins and junior Joey Schwetz.

"We are going to depend on Joey for more scoring than in the past. Before he sat back and watched Chris and Adam," Simons said.

Along with these two returners the Fightin' Christians have freshmen David Hall, Brendan Rowell and Andrew Toole to help score and bring the ball up the court.

The team's experience inside is strong. Seniors Clint Walker and Mike Thomas, 6 foot 7 and 6 foot 5 respectively, 6 foot 6 junior George Dennis and 6 foot 9 sophomore Matt Acker all have played significant roles and are familiar

with the competition.

With the addition of 6-foot-10-inch junior transfer Morgan Bell, the team will have a solid front line.

"We will use a lot of combinations early on until we find a solid 7-8," Simons said.

What about the freshman?

1. They can play.
2. They may be the best recruiting class in the conference according to assistant coach Adam Chaskins.

3. They are strong and athletic.

4. They are all good defensively and they all can score.

All four of the freshman may have been able to play at higher levels.

"Hall is an incredible defender and really does it all, Toole can score with his jumper and Rowell is strong on the penetration," Chaskins said.

Freshman Chris Adams has more competition in the back court with strong returners. He may not get as much playing time at first, but he is one of the top pure athletes on the team and a strong defensive presence.

"These guys have game smarts, athleticism and they just know how to play," Chaskins said.

The Big South

Starting in January the team will begin their Big South Conference games. Although Radford, UNC Asheville and Charleston Southern are picked to finish one, two and three, the Christians think they will fair well overall.

The team swept both Coastal Carolina and High Point University last season. They hope to use home court advantage and support from the students this season to bring in more victories. They have seven home conference games compared to last seasons, when they had just one.

New on Board

Haskins is impressed with the team so far.

"They seem to be together. They have good work habits for the most. Some are still learning how to work," Haskins said.

He will know more when the team begins its season.

"When they go through adversity, we'll find out if they hang their heads or come back and work harder," Haskins said

Now the challenge is looking them in the face.

With the addition of Haskins and the four freshman, to combine with the experience of Simons and the returners, the team hopes to achieve the confidence and success they strive for.

Elon football overpowers Flames 36-14

Josh Phoebus
The Pendulum

Don't play Elon after a loss. It won't be pretty.

The Fightin' Christians seem to bring their best after a tough loss.

Liberty came as no exception. After a heartbreaking overtime loss to 13th-ranked Western Kentucky last week, Elon came out with a dominant offensive showing as they overpowered the Flames 36-14, upping their record to 4-5.

On the offensive side, it seemed to be business as usual. Derrick Moore led Elon with 168 yards rushing (season-best) on 23 carries as the offense chalked up 415 yards on the ground, 484 overall.

The defense was unbreakable, holding the Flames' offense to a single TD through three quarters. Kelly Forrest led the defense with 8 tackles and a sack.

The Fightin' Christian of-

fense struck first with 3:53 left in the opening quarter on a 30-yard field goal by Austin Boone.

Elon increased its lead to ten on a two-yard run by Darren Bethea with 10:35 left in the half. The Flames responded with 4:25 remaining, cap-



Elon recovering a fumble

Jenny Jarneke/*The Pendulum*

ping a four-play, 79-yard drive with a 12-yard TD that made it 10-7.

Just like a good heavyweight fight, though, Elon counter-punched

with an 11-yard touchdown scamper by running back Steven Ferguson, and a 39-yard Austin Boone field goal to make it 20-7 at the half.

Going into the second half, the only thing Elon left in the locker room at halftime was its mercy.

After a missed field goal on its first drive, Elon scored on three of its next four possessions, including a 41-yard TD pass from Moore to Broadie that made it 29-7. The play was a result of great protection from the offensive line, a perfect throw and sweet catch.

Elon dominated the Flames in both time of possession and turnovers as it held the ball thirteen minutes longer than Liberty and had a 3-0 turnover advantage.

"I'm pleased with our team's ability to succeed in critical situations, but I believe our best football is still ahead of us" head coach Al Seagraves said.



This Week in Elon Athletics...

Come and Support Your Fightin' Chistians!

Men's Basketball @ Home (Exhibition)

Monday, November 9 @ 7:30 p.m.

Alumni Gym

Men's Soccer @ Duke (Season Finale)

Saturday, November 7 @ 2 p.m.

*Wanted: Two students to alternate as mascots for basketball games!

All Football and Men's Basketball Games can be heard LIVE on 1150 AM, WBAG!