

# Phoenix overcomes first half deficit, defeats Radford

## Harvin scores career-high 21 points in team's third consecutive win

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Editor-in-Chief

Elon's primary offensive weapons of late fired on all cylinders Feb. 22, but it was sophomore Steve Harvin who secured a win for the Phoenix. Harvin scored a career-high 21 points in an 84-74 victory over Radford University at Alumni Gym on Senior Day.

Harvin sank 10-of-10 free throws in the last two minutes of the game to cap an impressive comeback by the Phoenix. Harvin went 12-for-14 from the free throw line for the game. He made more free throws than Radford attempted for the game (10).

"They said, 'Steve get open,'" Harvin said. "My teammates did a good job of getting me the ball."

The win evened the Phoenix's record in the Big South at 6-6, giving Elon a better chance of grabbing that fourth seed in the Big South Tournament. The first four seeds play their first-round tournament games at home. It was also Elon's third win in four games.

"We're playing for a home game," said freshman Scottie Rice, who scored 19 points, 16 of which came in the second half.



Big South Conference Freshman of the Week Scottie Rice dribbles past a Radford defender. Rice finished the game with 19 points.

"It's a big advantage to get that."

The game did not start well, though. Elon fell behind early and faced a 38-27 deficit at the half. The Phoenix could not generate any offensive flow and several times were limited to one shot for each possession.

"As I'm watching the first half," said head coach Mark Simons, "all the progress I think we've made is gone, and I was wrong about our team. I challenged them at halftime. I said we're a better team than that."

The Phoenix heeded Simons' words and fed off the energy of the 1,335 fans. Elon opened the second half in a soft press that resulted in five steals in the first five minutes.

"I didn't think it would generate turnovers," said Simons of the soft press. "I thought it would generate energy."

"I thought in the first five minutes [of the second half], the game's over. In the second half we were a different team. Gary [Marsh] came in and gave us great energy. Shamar [Johnson] had rebounds I haven't seen him get in a while."

Sophomore Jackson Atoyebi finished with 16 points, and it has been his performance in the last three games that have enabled the Phoenix to maintain some offensive consistency.

Rice has also noticed the difference in Elon's game since Atoyebi has asserted his dominance in the post. "It's been Jack," Rice said. "He's starting to get in shape. He's been killing."

"Because of Jack, we're playing with more confidence," said the senior Johnson. "Everything's starting to click."

Elon has beaten Radford, Charleston-Southern University and the University of North Carolina at Asheville on their current hot streak, with a loss to Birmingham Southern College in between.

With two games remaining against teams below Elon in the standings (Coastal Carolina University and High Point University), the Phoenix stand firmly on the brink of earning a first round game at home.

"We're starting to gel as a team," Harvin said. "We're



Photos by Tim Rosner / Photo Editor

Phoenix forward Gary Marsh puts an exclamation point on the victory over Radford with a monster dunk in the game's waning minutes.

playing much better defense. We've focused on [the] defensive and haven't looked back."

"The kids have bought into the way we're playing the last two weeks," Simons said.

Of late, Simons has instituted a "motion partners" offensive set with Atoyebi and Rice. They provide an established inside-outside game that could be successful for the future. "You've got to have at least

two," said Simons, referring to Rice and Atoyebi. "If you've got two offensively, then you've got a chance."

After the game, Simons expressed his sustained confidence in his team to continue to succeed in its final two games. "[After the game] I told them 'We're good,'"

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