

Elon faces tough Southern Conference football schedule

Nick Palatiello
Sports Editor

Academic standards are not the only bar that has been raised since Elon became a university. Elon sports teams have been facing stiffer competition, as well. The Phoenix have been welcomed into the Southern Conference, but the warm welcome will end Aug. 30 when football season officially begins.

This year is Elon's inaugural sports season in the new conference and the Phoenix will be facing some of the premier football teams in Division I-AA football competition.

Elon will be up against five Top 25-ranked football teams this season, including Georgia Southern University, Furman University, Wofford College and Appalachian State University. Georgia Southern, the No. 2 squad this season, has been ranked in every Division I-AA poll since September 1997 and has won or tied for the last six

Southern Conference titles.

Though it does seem that Elon is at a disadvantage, the Phoenix has breaks in the schedule despite the tough competition ahead. In the first home game of the season, the Phoenix will take on the Pioneers of Tusculum College. The Pioneers finished the 2002 season with a 7-4 mark in Division II competition. The Phoenix have an opportunity to get a solid victory in front of the home stands with this match up.

If head coach Al Seagraves has one major advantage in this game it is playing at Rhodes Stadium. The team plays better in front of its home crowd than compared to the road.

Last season Elon was 3-2 at home, including an impressive fourth quarter victory over Florida International University, which was the first home contest of the season.

The Phoenix take on the Wofford College Terriers on Oct. 11 at Gibbs Stadium for the 27th meeting between the two teams

since 1921. Last season the Phoenix were defeated by Wofford 32-9 to close out the 2002 season at Rhodes Stadium. Elon could set itself up with a major upset over the Terriers in this match-up. Gibbs Stadium, which sports natural turf, has the same intimate feel as Rhodes Stadium, seating 13,000 fans.

If the players can pretend they are playing a home game they can improve their chance of a victory and mark a great upset, which would increase their morale during the middle of the season.

Elon will also have an opportunity to get a third win on the road against Towson University on Oct. 25.

The Phoenix must overcome two major challenges which have plagued the team every time they take on the Tigers. First, the team must get past the fact that the game is at the Johnny Unitas Stadium. The Phoenix is not a strong road team. Last season the Phoenix



Colin Donohue / Photographer

Phoenix kicker Anthony Turowski practices his form in practice Tuesday.

did not take any games on the road. The second hurdle the team must jump is adjusting to the different turf. The team may have a hard time putting a good foot down on the unfamiliar ground. The Phoenix does, however, have a harder schedule going into the match up, which may be one of the biggest advantages Seagraves can have.

These three games have the most potential for solid victories, but as Elon fans have seen in the past the squad could put up a

good fight with many of the teams on the schedule. Elon has faced Hofstra, Furman and Wofford the last four years and competed against East Tennessee State (Family Weekend) last season.

Since the Phoenix were defeated by all four of these teams last season they will be motivated to redeem themselves this year.

With an anticipated sell-out at Rhodes Stadium for three football games this season (Homecoming against Appalachian State University Nov. 8, East Tennessee State Sept. 20 and North Carolina A&T State University Sept. 27) and with Elon's performances in front of packed home crowds, this inaugural season in the Southern Conference may be intimidating to many fans, but it offers the Phoenix a chance to have a breakout season.

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Elon athletics: More than varsity sports

Adam Sherland
Reporter

If you are looking for an opportunity to meet new people and compete in a variety of sports, then the Campus Recreation intramurals program is for you. Intramurals are competitive and fun activities where you and a group of friends can team up to challenge other groups across campus.

No matter what sport you enjoy, Campus Rec probably offers something for you. If you were a baseball star in your hometown or just want to run the bases, sign up for intramural softball during the spring season. Or, if you want to try something completely new, such as volleyball or tennis, Campus Rec offers an environment for both beginners and pros.

To get involved in intramurals, you must first figure out

what activity best suits you. In the fall Campus Rec offers flag football, 4-on-4 basketball, soccer, volleyball, walleyball (a cross of volleyball and racquetball) and team tennis. They also offer a racquetball tournament, Sports Fest and the annual 3K Turkey Trot.

Still haven't found anything of interest? Don't worry, an entirely different array of options are offered during the winter and spring. In the spring, intramurals offers 4-on-4 flag football, indoor soccer, sand volleyball, 5-on-5 basketball, softball, and a Ping-Pong and Frisbee Golf tournament. With so many different options, intramurals can become an important aspect in many students' lives.



The culmination of the intramural season is a competition to determine which team can claim the title of intramural champion. But champion or not, intramurals

provide an opportunity for Elon students to compete in sports and meet new people in a safe and fun environment.

If you would like to join or create your own team, head to Campus Rec, located in Koury Center, to get more information. Form teams with your friends, suitemates or organization members and compete against other students from all over campus. The games are real, the competition is fierce, and it is fun for all participants win or lose.

Contact Adam Sherland at pendulum@elon.edu or 278-7247.

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