

Nestor says exhibition loss may prove helpful

Colin Donohue
Editor in chief

Athletes in Action left Elon's men's basketball team and coach Ernie Nestor with a clear idea of where the Phoenix is now and where it must be Nov. 17 when the season opens. The Phoenix dropped its first preseason scrimmage 73-62 Saturday night, but Nestor said the loss will ultimately help cure some ills.

"We knew we were going to get exposed," said Nestor, in his first year as men's basketball head coach. "That's why you play a team like (Athletes in Action). They're the kind of team that if you make a mistake, they'll kill you. It wasn't chopped liver we were playing against."

A point made all the more evident after six minutes of play. After Chris Chalko's layup, which gave the Phoenix an 11-10 lead, Elon's offense stalled for six minutes, effectively putting the game out of reach before the end of the first half.

The Phoenix made a slight run at the open of the second half, pulling to within 36-32. But Elon could get no closer.

"Our effort was pretty good,"

said guard Carlos Moreira. "We definitely got beat a couple of times. It was basically a learning experience. A couple of times we were playing not to make mistakes. We were a little out of sync."

The Phoenix received strong minutes from Moreira, quite possibly the quickest player on the floor. On several occasions, Moreira (seven points, two steals) was able to beat his man to the basket, only to see his layup attempt fall short.

"Carlos came with some good energy there," Nestor said.

Nestor said defensively, Moreira and the rest of the guard corps will be asked to utilize their speed and quickness to play a more in-your-face, up-tempo style.

That style, though, led to several easy back-door opportunities for Athletes in Action, a contributing factor to their soaring field goal percentage (57.8 percent).

"One-foot shots up your percentage," Nestor said of the repeated Athletes in Action layups. "We need to work on ball pressure."

Athletes in Action placed four players in double figures, including Ryan Sears, who scored 14 points and seven assists.

Elon's Gary Marsh led all scorers with 15 points and nine rebounds. Rasmi Gamble and Chalko added 10 apiece for Elon.

Scottie Rice, last season's primary offensive weapon, went scoreless, as a stout Athletes in Action defense cued on him all game.

Nestor also said the scrimmage provided a unique opportunity for him to play and assess the four freshmen new to the team.

"The best thing about freshmen," Nestor said, "is we can get them experience."

Experience may not come in the form of exhibition games, though. Elon doesn't have another tune up scheduled. But that doesn't bother Moreira.

"(Saturday night) is not really the way we're going to play," Moreira said. "As the season goes on, we will get better."

Contact Colin Donohue at pendulum@elon.edu or 278-7247.



Tim Rosner / Photo Editor
Rasmi Gamble (above, 5) and Steven Harvin (30) take the ball to the hole against Athletes in Action during the team's loss Saturday.

Schedule

11/17/2003	vs. Idaho
11/18/2003	Gardner-Webb or South Carolina
11/22/2003	Wake Forest
11/28/2003	Bluefield
12/2/2003	Methodist
12/4/2003	American
12/13/2003	Georgetown
12/17/2003	Mercer
12/20/2003	Chattanooga*
12/28/2003	Xavier
12/30/2003	Cincinnati
1/5/2004	App. St.*
1/8/2004	Fairfield
1/10/2004	Western Carolina*
1/14/2004	Maryland - Eastern Shore
1/17/2004	College of Charleston*
1/19/2004	East Tenn. St.*
1/24/2004	Davidson*
1/26/2004	App. St.*
1/31/2004	Wofford*
2/2/2004	Furman*
2/7/2004	UNC-G*
2/9/2004	The Citadel*
2/14/2004	East Tenn. St.*
2/16/2004	Chattanooga*
2/21/2004	Western* Carolina
2/23/2004	Georgia* Southern
2/28/2004	UNC-G*

-Home games in bold
*Southern Conference Game

Phoenix notes . . .

Athletes in Action's roster is comprised of former college basketball players, including Joe Crispin, formerly of The Pennsylvania State University, and Ryan Sears, who led Creighton University to the NCAA Tournament while he was in college . . . Elon's Jackson Atoyebi sat out Saturday's game due to a cut to his hand. He fell on his hand two days before the scrimmage and had to receive seven stitches between his pinky and ring fingers . . . Guard and three-point specialist Sean Newton has left the Phoenix permanently, according to Nestor . . . Point guard Steve Harvin did

not start Saturday's scrimmage due to lingering problems with his shoulder, which he had surgery on during the offseason. Montell Watson started in Harvin's place and scored two points and dished out five assists . . . Redshirt freshman Chris Chalko, who former head coach Mark Simons lauded last season, saw his first in-game action Saturday, coupling his low-post abilities with his outside game to score 10 points in 25 minutes. Nestor said he has no plans of confining the 6-foot, 8-inch Chalko to the low post. "He's an inside, outside player," Nestor said.