

Sports

Women lose to Western Carolina 72-66 in Southern Conference semi-finals

Michelle Longo
Sports Editor

The women's basketball team fell just a few minutes short of making their first finals appearance in the Southern Conference Championship.

Seniors Tierra Bumbrey, Nicole Allison, Shashonna Moore and Katie Whidden played their last collegiate game Sunday afternoon in Charleston, S.C.

In the first game of the SoCon tournament, sixth-seeded Elon claimed the upset victory over third-seeded Davidson University 68-49 to advance the team to the semi-finals.

It was only the second time since Elon joined the Southern Conference that the team tallied a victory over Davidson. Davidson dominated the two regular season meetings between the teams, winning 68-54 and 50-40. For the Phoenix, its first victory came at precisely the right time.

Junior Kitara McMoore led the Phoenix with 19 points and 12 rebounds. Her basket with 5:42 left to play in the first half gave the Phoenix the lead for good [21-16].

With seven minutes left to play, Elon put together a 14-5 run to give the Phoenix a 21-point lead, the largest of the day.

Elon shot 45.6 percent from the field. Tiffany Davis recorded 15 points, Allison scored 12 and Bumbrey added 11 more. Amber Wall grabbed nine rebounds helping the Phoenix out-rebound the Wildcats 43-33.

Sunday afternoon saw the Phoenix fall to the second-seeded Western Carolina Catamounts 72-66 in the semi-final game of the SoCon tournament.

Bumbrey, the physical and mental leader of the Phoenix, led all scorers with 25 points, including seven three-pointers to tie a SoCon tournament record for most threes in a

game.

Going into the locker room at halftime, the Catamounts held a 14-point lead, 37-23. They continued to dominate the scoreboard earning their largest lead 45-25 three minutes into the second half.

The Phoenix refused to give up going on a 20-6 run to take the lead 52-51 with less than eight minutes remaining. After both teams scored two more points, Western Carolina put together an 11-0 run to regain the lead with a little more than three minutes left.

Although Elon put a dent in the score, the team could get no closer than five points as the Catamounts sailed on to victory and the championship game against top-seeded Chattanooga. Allison added 14 points and four assists while Davis also had four assists and posted 10 points. Wall and McMoore led the Phoenix with nine rebounds each.

The regular season showdown between Western Carolina and Elon was a historic one, with the Catamounts eventually sealing the victory 102-101 in a four overtime win.

"The memories aren't always of the wins, it's how great you played," head coach Brenda Paul said. "It's the satisfaction knowing that you put it all out there on the court. That's what competition is all about."

The teams battled the whole game with 15 ties and 23 lead changes. It equals the longest game in Southern Conference history.

The Phoenix attempted a SoCon-record 100 field goals, surpassing Chattanooga's 98 shots against Lincoln Memorial during the 1989-90 campaign.

But, the Phoenix could not defeat Western Carolina in the regular season or the post-season, ending their roller coaster 2007-2008 season with an overall record of 12-20 and a 6-12 mark in Southern Conference play.



Coach Brenda Paul instructs her team from the sidelines on Saturday's quarter-final game against Davidson.

Women's basketball season in review

Pam Richter
Reporter

The Phoenix started off 2-0 in conference play before dropping 11 straight conference games.

The entire season Elon had been plagued with injuries. Junior Kitara McMoore finally began to play consistently in February. McMoore missed all of last season with a knee injury.

Senior guard Nicole Allison also missed time in January due to a knee injury.

Once the Phoenix got healthy, it showed the Southern Conference what it could do with all of its weapons.

Going into the Southern Conference Tournament, the Phoenix had won four of its last five games. Coach Brenda Paul said her team was one of the hottest teams going into the tournament.

With victories against

Appalachian State, UNC-Greensboro, Furman and Wofford, the Phoenix had a boost of confidence, allowing the team to get to the semi-finals before falling to Western Carolina.

Although Elon's season was filled with its share of ups and downs, there was one thing that remained consistent — strong senior leadership.

Elon is graduating four seniors: Bumbrey, Allison, Moore and Whidden.

Bumbrey had a spectacular senior season. She is ranked second in three-point field goals and minutes played, third in steals, and fifth in scoring assists and three-point field goal percentage in the Southern Conference. Bumbrey was recently selected to the all-conference first team for the SoCon.

In the infamous four-overtime game against

Western Carolina University, Bumbrey hit eight three-pointers, marking the most made in a single game by a Southern Conference player since 2000. Bumbrey also scored a career-high 36 points in that loss.

Bumbrey's performance ranks her third in Elon history in two single-game categories — the most points scored and the most three-point field goals made.

The other seniors also had a breakout game. Allison had a season-high 15 points and Whidden tallied a career-high 12 points, career-high 10 rebounds and two blocked shots.

"I am so proud because this group of seniors is great leaders," Paul said. "It's been great to be part of their lives and they are just going to do so well out in the world."

Men's golf rebounding nicely after troublesome fall season

Michelle Longo
Sports Editor

After a disappointing fall season, the Elon men's golf team has picked up the intensity and is not settling for anything less than second place in the spring season.

Of the two two-day tournaments they have played in the spring, the Phoenix has two first place and two second place trophies to highlight its accomplishments.

In the fall season, Elon finished first in its own tournament, fourth in one other tournament and failed to finish any higher than eighth for the rest of the season.

"The overall season has had highs and lows," senior Jimmy Lytle said. "Unfortunately, the lows were pretty

low in the fall so we have some work to do this spring."

The third-annual Wexford Plantation Intercollegiate men's golf tournament in South Carolina, held at the end of February, was the spring opener for Elon.

At the end of the first day of play, Lytle was ahead of the 81-player field by four shots. Fellow senior Jayson Judy was in second, quickly coming up on the heels of Lytle.

Furman University held a four-stroke team advantage over Elon entering the final round of the two-day event, but Lytle and the Phoenix rallied back over the final 18 holes to claim an 890-891 win.

"The come-from-behind win at Wexford meant a lot to all of us," freshman Stephen Dressel said. "It

was a great way to kick off the spring season and we learned that if we just play one shot at a time and don't think about the overall outcome that we focus and perform much better."

Lytle (69-69-72-210), who received an individual medal, pulled away from runner-up Oliver West, of Kennesaw State, in the last two rounds.

Judy (73-69-78-220) supported Lytle, earning a share of third place, and Justin Newton tied for 25th.

Both Lytle's score and Elon's team score were records for the three-year-old tournament.

The Lonnie D. Small Spring Classic hosted by Campbell University saw the Phoenix jump out to an early lead in opening day action.

After the first 18 holes and a day of action, the Phoenix produced a score

of 289 to lead the 14-team field. Lytle carded a five-under-par 67 to tie for the lowest shot in the history of the tournament. The Phoenix also owns the record for the lowest team round with 279.

The second and final day of the tournament was not as kind to the Phoenix as it saw its lead slowly slip out of grasp. Host Campbell University slipped past Elon 583-584 to claim its fourth consecutive Small Classic title.

Dressel recorded an even-par 72 and Newton produced fashioned a one-over 73 to lead Elon golfers for the day. "Our season is going well," Dressel said. "We've started off with a win and a second and I believe that if we keep our good play up we will have a chance to win every tournament this spring."