

# Women's basketball dominates at exhibition game

Jordan Scahill  
Reporter

The women's basketball team was six points away from a 100-point victory Sunday afternoon in an exhibition game against MI Express at the Nest.

By halftime, the Phoenix had garnered a 45-point lead, well on its way to its first win of the 2008-2009 campaign under new head coach Karen Barefoot.

Sophomore guard Julie Taylor led the Phoenix with 24 points, followed by freshman guard Aiesha Harper with 14 points.

"I think everyone contributes both offensively and defensively," Taylor said. "I got into a rhythm pretty early."

As one of the youngest teams in the league with no seniors, the team places an emphasis on pressure defense and works hard to surprise teams, since they are underestimated.

Picked to finish last in conference play by league coaches, the Phoenix has a lot to prove if it is to improve from their losing record last year.

The team also faces new experiences this season with new head coach, who has never had a losing season in her head coaching career.

"We have to thrive on our defense to generate our offense," Barefoot said. "I have played in it and I have coached it."

Barefoot said she is proud of her team's hard work in the preseason as they have turned into great, in-shape players.

"It feels really good to finally get out there on the court," Taylor said. "To see all of our hard work paying off."

With a 54-point victory, the Phoenix has set the tone for a season filled with new, exciting expectations. Barefoot said she and the team came up with an entire list of expectations for the 2008-2009 season.



LINDSAY FENDT | Asst. Photo Editor

Junior Tiffany Davis takes the ball to the hoop. During the exhibition game, the Phoenix never trailed MI Express in points.



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Sophomore Jess Luedtke takes a shot as she overcomes the MI Express Defense. She scored nine total points in the game on Sunday afternoon.

Throughout the game, the team practiced a number of different defensive systems. Every player had a chance to play in the game, as Barefoot stressed the importance of getting all of her players, especially freshmen, playing time before the regular season begins.

The Phoenix had an overall team effort in its goal to force the opposing team to take the first time-out, then to aggressively set and keep the tempo. As the first time the freshmen played on a college court, Sunday's game held great potential for the players to prove themselves and raised the bar for the rest of the season. Since it is such a young team, the freshmen have a unique chance to get significant playing time early in their careers.

"I always work on keeping my focus

and keeping my head in the game without hesitating," Harper said.

Defense, an aggressive mentality and a strong transition game are some strengths of the young Phoenix squad, while connecting passes and mental toughness are the elements the team is working on the most.

"Your mind is the strongest and most important thing," Barefoot said.

With a team theme of "Leave a

Mark," Barefoot expects to use her coaching methods with the team chemistry to set high goals for the coming year.

The Phoenix will kick off its regular season at 7 p.m. Friday night as it hosts non-conference opponent Winston-Salem State in the ISES Cancer-Awareness Tipoff tournament, held in honor of the late Ann Lashley, Elon's former assistant coach.

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