

Sports

Elon football staves off Western in home finale

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Sports Editor

Terrell Hudgins caught a pass in the fourth quarter on the Elon second yard line. As he began forcing his way toward the end zone, a Western Carolina defender grabbed his foot in a final attempt to bring the Southern Conference's all-time leading receiver down. Hudgins began shaking his foot free, in a move that looked more like a modern dance, and finally hopped backward into the end zone on one foot for a distinguishing score in a 33-14 Homecoming victory for the Phoenix.

"The corner cut me off. [Riddle] threw it behind me and it was just one-on-one after he grabbed me," Hudgins said. "He had my foot and I knew I was like on the 1-or 2-yard-line, so it was pointless to turn all the way around. My momentum was taking me toward the end zone anyway."

Just as Hudgins stepped out of the tackle, the Phoenix stepped out of a potential upset. With the Catamounts edging closer and closer, Hudgins and Elon were finally able to dance away from disaster in the fourth quarter.

Going into halftime with a 13-0 lead, the Phoenix looked to be having a happy fiesta, feasting on its three-win SoCon opponent. That quickly changed after a Scott Riddle interception turned into a 55-yard WCU return.

The Phoenix marched back down the field to regain a two-score lead of 20-7, but the Catamounts were not done fighting. They put together a seven-play, 69-yard drive that ended in a touchdown to bring the game within one-score, 20-14.

"You don't have time to be concerned," head coach Pete Lembo said. "You are just trying to find ways to respond and win the game."

Then came the Hudgins dance that brought the score to 27-14, while Jamal Shuman added another touchdown for good measure less than five minutes later to bring the final to 33-14.

"It would've been easy to get frustrated there because you could certainly feel like it shouldn't have been that close," Lembo said. "I think that was a good indication of our resiliency and ability to overcome adversity."



Terrell Hudgins grabs some yardage in Saturday's game against Western Carolina. The Phoenix defeated the Catamounts 33-14 for a 6-1 conference record. Next week Elon will face Appalachian State University, which remains undefeated in the conference.

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The win propelled the No. 11 Elon to an 8-2 overall, 6-1 SoCon record. The Phoenix sits in second place in the standings, behind unbeaten Appalachian State, which Elon faces Saturday in the last conference game of the season.

"It all comes down to a good week of preparation, a good week of practice leading up to the game," said defensive end Jordan Daniel. "This week we had a really strong week of practice, one of the best we've had all season and we

hoped to get it done on Saturday. All the preparation pays off."

Two weeks ago, Appalachian dominated Wofford 70-24 to maintain its undefeated conference record. A week before that, Elon was routed by then No. 4 Wofford 55-20. Wofford now sits in third place in the league standings with a 5-1 record.

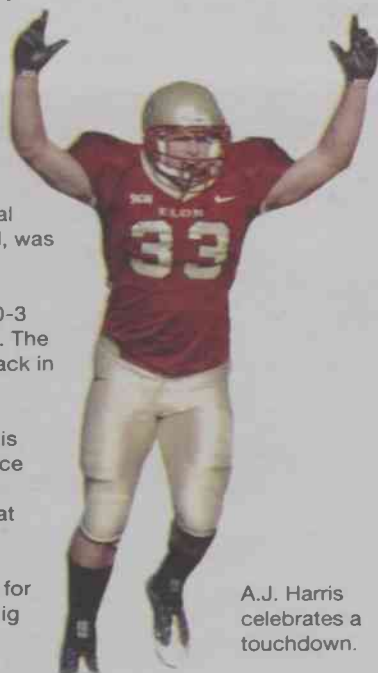
Wofford and Appalachian State both have two conference games left in the 2008 campaign, while Elon only has Appalachian on its plate before it ends

the season at non-conference Big South opponent Liberty University.

"I think we have played pretty well on the road," Lembo said. "As much as it is nice to play in front of the home crowd and have the support, when you travel you get to spend even more time together as a team. There are less distractions. When you travel you know you have the extra time to get focused and build that unity, that chemistry and avoid distractions."

Football Notebook: Highlights from Saturday's game against Western Carolina University

- In the first quarter, Terrell Hudgins became Elon's all-time leading receiver
- In the fourth quarter, Hudgins caught a Scott Riddle pass to become The Southern Conference's all-time leading receiver with 3,527 yards. The conference is 85 years old and is arguably the toughest football conference in the Football Championship Subdivision.
- "After they said my name, I think they should say Scott Riddle, the offensive line, the running backs and the receivers," Hudgins said. "They block and give [Riddle] an opportunity to throw the ball, [Riddle] gets it to me, so I think the whole offense [helps]. Obviously, the coaches for giving me opportunities to make the plays. I thank the rest of them for it."
- Senior place kicker Andrew Wilcox kicked three point-after-touchdown attempts to equal 129 to tie as Elon's all-time leader in career PAT kicks. His final attempt, for sole possession of the record, was a low snap that was blocked by Western.
- Since 1983, Western Carolina is just 11-60-3 against nationally-ranked FCS opponents. The Catamounts last road SoCon win came back in 2005 against Chattanooga.
- The Phoenix played its last home game this past Saturday but has one more conference game, visiting the undefeated, three-time defending champions Appalachian State at 3:30 p.m. in Boone, N.C.
- The last game of the season is scheduled for Nov. 22 against Liberty University, 2007 Big South Champions.



A.J. Harris celebrates a touchdown.



Brandon Newsome garnered 67 total offensive yards in the Elon Homecoming win against Western Carolina Saturday afternoon. He rushed a total of 13 times for 40 yards and caught two passes for an additional 27 yards on the way to a 33-14 victory.

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