

Women's basketball team carries strong momentum into final stages of schedule

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Elon women's basketball head coach Karen Barefoot said she is already encouraged by the growth shown by her team this season.

But she said she is not yet satisfied and knows the Phoenix has five more games to prepare for the Southern Conference tournament, which begins March 4.

"(Our growth) is exciting," Barefoot said. "We just want to get better every day, and we've got five more games to work things out."

Some of those things were worked out on Monday night, when the team traveled to Davidson College and captured a 77-63 victory over the Wildcats.

The Phoenix used its up-tempo style of play to race to a 38-26 halftime advantage. The team then went on an 8-0 run in the first two minutes of the second half and never let Davidson back into the game.

Before Monday, Elon had a road record of 4-8. With the win, the Phoenix improves to 10-15 on the season, 5-11 in the SoCon.

Leading the way for the Phoenix was freshman guard Ali Ford, with 22 points. She is averaging 16 points per game for the team this season.

In Monday's game, Elon made 21 of its 25 free throws, a much better statistic than the 65 percent mark it entered the game carrying.

While improving its free throw



Senior forward Urysla Cotton takes a foul shot. She scored 12 points in the Phoenix 77-63 victory against Davidson College.

COREY GROOM | Staff Photographer

shooting will help down the stretch, the Phoenix will also try to improve its decision-making, Barefoot said.

"I think that once we can mature a little bit, we'll be able to make better decisions for easy baskets," Barefoot said.

The team turned the ball over 16 times on Monday, compared to 31 times in the Saturday loss to Appalachian State University.

Another area the team will look to

improve is the communication between players during games.

"Communication all around, on offense and defense, needs to improve," sophomore forward Courtney Medley said. "We need to know that if someone gets beat, there's going to be help."

The Phoenix took a step toward better communication against Davidson, particularly on defense, holding the Wildcats to 36 percent in field goal shooting.

One factor in improving the communication on the floor is the leadership of senior forward Urysla Cotton.

"I think the younger players look up to me, in a sense," Cotton said.

On Monday night, Cotton scored 12 points, grabbed four rebounds and also blocked four shots.

Barefoot said she feels that the most important aspect for the team in the closing stretch of the season is having a complete effort put forth every night.

"We need to play really well defensively and play extremely hard for 40 minutes," Barefoot said. "We're going to have to keep up our defensive pressure and limit our opponents' second chance opportunities."

Barefoot said there is no doubt that she is encouraged by the growth of the Phoenix this season.

"Last year we made the best with what we had, and this year we've brought a lot of new faces in," Barefoot said. "It takes time, and we've been playing some exciting basketball."

The next game for the Phoenix comes Saturday, when it hosts the Western Carolina Catamounts. The Phoenix was able to beat the Catamounts on the road earlier this season, and goes for the regular season series sweep at 2 p.m. in Alumni Gym.

Indoor track finishes well despite early difficulties

Student athletes claim top spots at the Vince Brown Invitational

Sam Calvert
Sports Editor

Despite early season setbacks, Elon's indoor track team saw victories Saturday at the Vince Brown Invitational in Newport News, Va.

Junior Veronica Day broke her own school record in the triple jump with a distance of three feet and four inches. Day, along with junior Melissa Turowski, sophomore Amy Salek and senior Jennine Strange, also placed first in the 4-by-400 meter relay with a time of four minutes and 5.11 seconds.

"I think it was a really great meet for us," Turowski said. "We did really well."

Elon also had three jumpers who placed in the top-10 in the long jump. Day finished third, senior Monique Vines finished fourth and junior Lauren Hawkesworth finished eighth.

Freshmen Emily Tryon and Morgan Denecke finished fourth and fifth over-all, respectively, in the mile run. Sophomore Amanda Rice ran the 55-meter hurdles in 8.66 seconds, placing her in the top-four in the event.

"I think we're starting to make some headway," head coach Mark Elliston said. "We're moving in the right direction, but it's just slow."

The team has met several obstacles so far this season, beginning with the weather.

Because Elon does not have an indoor track facility, the team has to train outside. With the recent snow and ice, this has become difficult, Elliston said.

"It's been a hard winter," Elliston said. "Some of that training that we're not getting is really starting to show."

Injuries have also held the Phoenix back this season, Elliston said.

"We've really been plagued with things," Elliston said. "This is really a tough year for us."

Although the team traveled to Newport News, Va. for Saturday's meet, it goes back to Lynchburg, Va. this weekend for the third time this season for the Liberty Invite.



Junior distance runner Lauren Fredrickson runs the 800 meter at the UNC Classic. On Saturday, Fredrickson competed in the mile run at the Vince Brown Invitational and finished with a time of 5:24:63.

JUSTINE SCHULERUD | Photo Editor

This will be the fifth meet of the season, and the last before the Southern Conference meet Feb. 25 in Clemson, S.C.

According to Elliston, the meets leading up to the SoCon meet become "aggressive practices" because it is the only chance that the team has to practice in an indoor facility.

"It helps us really get in competition mode," Turowski said. "The more we race, the better we get."

At the meets the team has attended, it has had the chance to see many other Southern Conference schools compete, including Appalachian State University, The Citadel, College of Charleston and Davidson College.

"We're seeing (the other conference teams), and I'm seeing some of the same things going on with them that we're dealing with," Elliston said. "It's a matter of really buckling down and working hard to deal with it."