

# Softball's win secures second spot in SoCon

Pam Richter  
Editor-in-Chief

Sophomore pitcher Erin O'Shea dug her cleat into the rubber as she struck out College of Charleston's outfielder Amanda Lonergan looking to get out of a jam in the fifth inning. The Phoenix went on to win Sunday's game 5-4 and took two games out of three in the weekend series against College of Charleston. Elon will travel to North Carolina A&T University at 2:30 p.m. today in a doubleheader.

With the win on Sunday, the Phoenix earned its seventh Southern Conference victory of the season, which surpassed last season's total as the team went 6-15 in conference. The Phoenix is 20-7 overall and 7-2 in the SoCon this season.

"We're a mentally tough team," head coach Patti Raduenz said. "They believe in each other. That's the big difference in where we were from a year ago to now."

After the Phoenix's first inning in Sunday's game, the Phoenix had a 2-0 lead after O'Shea doubled scored with two runners. The Phoenix added two more runs in the second inning.

O'Shea said it was helpful to pitch with an early lead, but tries not to worry about it that much, telling herself that it is a 0-0 game.

The Cougars responded in the fifth, scoring a run in each inning and chipping into the Phoenix's lead.

The Phoenix ultimately haulted the Cougars' comeback in the seventh. Elon freshman pitcher Kari Pervell entered the game and got the final batter to ground out.

"It was definitely a team win and we battled the whole game," O'Shea said. "Defense was there when pitching wasn't."

Both Raduenz and O'Shea said winning two out of three against College of Charleston was important for the team.

"Each conference weekend we play three games," Raduenz said. "We look at each game as a battle but we want to win the war."

The Phoenix is currently in second place in the SoCon behind University of Tennessee Chattanooga. The Mocs stand at 6-0 in the conference and 22-8 overall. The Phoenix will face the Mocs beginning April 17.

Now, at the midpoint in the season, Raduenz said one of the challenges the team faces is to keep up the same excitement that it started within the beginning of the season.

"This is the time of year when you find the character of your team," Raduenz said.

Since N.C. A&T is not in the SoCon, these two games will give the Phoenix the opportunity to work on some things, Raduenz said.

"We got some things that we need to work on from an offensive execution standpoint," she said. "We just need to score runs and put runs across the plate."

The Phoenix resumes conference play 1 p.m. Saturday against UNC Greensboro. The Spartans are in fifth place in the conference with a 3-2 SoCon record and a 13-15 overall record.



## ONE ON ONE

Conor O'Neill and Russell Varner  
Sports Commentators

### March Madness

*Cinderella anyone? After 61 games of madness, we're down to four teams left in the NCAA Tournament. Butler University, Duke University, Michigan State University and West Virginia University have officially wrecked everybody's bracket, and now we head to Indianapolis for the Final Four. Who will win Saturday's matchups, and who will be crowned champion on April 5?*

#### Conor O'Neill:

Two weeks ago, when we published our tournament preview story, I was quite confident in my picks of Syracuse University to win the championship and Kansas University to easily make the Final Four. Now that the tournament has shown me yet again that I have no idea what I'm talking about, I'd like to make some more incorrect picks.

For the Butler-Michigan State game, how could you pick against Tom Izzo? This is a team that blew a 15-point halftime lead against the University of Maryland, then killed Cinderella in ousting Northern Iowa University and finally physically dominated a more athletic University of Tennessee team. But I am picking against them because the Butler Bulldogs are a more successful version of Gonzaga University. It starts with head coach Brad Stevens, the 33-year-old who looks closer to being 13-years-old. How scary is it to think what kind of coach he'll be with more experience. And the Bulldogs' best player, sophomore Gordon Hayward, looks like he is nine years old. But he plays with such experience and intelligence, fans must think he is playing 40 years after his time. I look for Butler to beat Izzo's Spartans and continue their "Hoosiers"-like story.

#### Russell Varner:

I completely agree with you on this game, Conor. How can you go against the most lovable team of this tournament? They are the first team to have "home court advantage" in the Final Four since UCLA in the 1970s. But, I think Tom Izzo is going to be the great equalizer in this. In a game like this, would you rather trust a 33-year-old coach who has never been to the Final Four or a coach who has brought his team to the Final Four four out of the last six years? And yes, Michigan State has lost Kalin Lucas for the tournament, but Raymar Morgan and Korie Lucious have stepped up their play big in his absence. I would love to see Butler's Cinderella story continue (you got to love those mid-majors), but I just can't see them beating Michigan State.

#### Conor:

Yes, Izzo is a great coach, but I feel like

Butler's defensive intensity will be the difference. Speaking of defensive intensity, how good has Duke looked so far in the tournament? The Blue Devils have held their opponents to 56 points per game, and have proven that they were underrated throughout the season. In their Elite Eight victory over Baylor, Kyle Singler went 0-10 from the field. But because of Nolan Smith and Jon Scheyer, this team kept rolling with a 78-71 win.

West Virginia did beat the most talented team in the tournament in Kentucky, but the Mountaineers will not be able to give up 22 offensive rebounds, (as they did against Kentucky), in their matchup against Duke. I see a Duke-Butler contest in the final, and while it's easy to say the hometown-team will prevail, I don't think the Bulldogs can match the Blue Devils in both defensive intensity and size. Coach K will have brought another championship to Tobacco Road by this time next week.

#### Russell:

This is true, but at the same time, who have they played? University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff, University of California, Berkeley and the weakest three and four seeds in the tournament, Baylor University and a Robbie Hummel-less Purdue University, respectively. This is not to take away from Duke's talent; this is to say they haven't faced a team of West Virginia's caliber. The key to Duke is Brian Zoubek. He is what Duke has not had since Carlos Boozer left — an inside presence. The problem is he is very susceptible to getting in foul trouble, and Duke will need him and his rebounds this game.

I think West Virginia will pull it out in the end, because they will be inspired by the return of Truck Bryant, will get great play from DaSean Butler and will shut down Duke's three-point shooting. They took out University of Kentucky's three-point shots (though some of them UK missed by themselves, not thanks to anything West Virginia did), which was the major key in their victory. It will be a relatively low-scoring chess match between Bob Huggins and Coach K, at least until the end of the game when Jon Scheyer and Butler try to take the games over late. Call it a hunch, but I say West Virginia wins. And why listen to my hunches you ask? Well, last time I had a hunch, it was that West Virginia would beat Kentucky to advance to the Final Four.

## ELON ATHLETICS THIS WEEK

MARCH 31 - APRIL 6

### Wednesday 3/31

Men's tennis @ UNC Greensboro - 2:30 p.m.  
Softball @ North Carolina A&T - 2:30 p.m.  
Softball @ North Carolina A&T - 2:30 p.m.  
Baseball vs. Wake Forest - 7 p.m.

### Friday 4/2

Track & field (Duke Invitational) - All Day  
Softball @ UNC Greensboro - 5 p.m.  
Baseball @ UNC Greensboro - 7 p.m.

### Saturday 4/3

Men's golf (Irish Creek Collegiate) - All Day  
Track & field (Duke Invitational) - All Day  
Women's tennis vs. Samford - 11 a.m.  
Softball @ UNC Greensboro - 1 p.m.  
Baseball @ UNC Greensboro - 2 p.m.  
Softball @ UNC Greensboro - 3 p.m.

### Sunday 4/4

Men's golf (Irish Creek Collegiate) - All Day  
Baseball @ UNC Greensboro - 1 p.m.

### Monday 4/5

Women's Golf (Mimosa Hills Invitational) - All Day

### Tuesday 4/6

Men's tennis vs. Davidson - 3 p.m.  
Women's tennis vs. Davidson - 3 p.m.  
Women's golf (Mimosa Hills Invitational) - All Day  
Baseball vs. North Carolina - 7 p.m.

## ATHLETIC RESULTS

MARCH 17 - MARCH 29

### Baseball

March 19  
Elon 4  
The Citadel 9

March 20  
Elon 15  
The Citadel 20

March 21  
Elon 8  
The Citadel 11

March 23  
Elon 15  
Clemson 10

March 24  
Elon 4  
Clemson 3

March 26  
Elon 8  
Davidson 3

March 27  
Elon 12  
Davidson 4

March 27  
Elon 4  
Davidson 2

### Softball

March 17  
North Carolina A&T 0  
Elon 1

March 20  
Appalachian State 5  
Elon 2

March 20  
Appalachian State 0  
Elon 1

March 21  
Appalachian State 2  
Elon 3

March 23  
Elon 13  
Coastal Carolina 13

March 23  
Elon 0  
Coastal Carolina 2

March 27  
College of Charleston 0  
Elon 8

March 27  
College of Charleston 4

Elon 1  
March 28  
College of Charleston 4  
Elon 5

### Men's Tennis

March 17  
Elon 1  
Radford 6

March 22  
Elon 3  
College of Charleston 4

March 23  
Elon 3  
The Citadel 4

### Women's Tennis

March 17  
Appalachian State 0  
Elon 7

March 22  
Elon 5  
Georgia Southern 2

March 24  
Elon 2  
College of Charleston 5