

# Sports

## THE PHOENIX HEATING UP: SPRING FOOTBALL STARTS NEW SEASON



Sam Calvert  
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As the month of March comes to an end, many signs of spring begin to arrive on Elon University's campus: flowers in bloom, top-tees in tow and boys growns in action. But there is one milestone to identify that spring has sprung: spring football.

The spring season began Monday with the first of 15 scheduled practices, leading up to the Spring Game at 6 p.m. April 24 at Rhodes Stadium.

With the season kicking off, here's a look at what the spring season entails.

MOLLEY CAREY | Staff Photographer

Junior running back Brandon Newsome attempts to rush past redshirt freshman Thonda Taylor in drills on the first day of spring practice Monday. The players practiced in just helmets in its first of 15 practices of the spring season.

### Q&A WITH HEAD COACH PETE LEMBO:

**Q:** What is the team looking to do entering the spring season as a new cohesive group?

**A:** "Well, I think it's important that you build upon the confidence that they've built in previous years, while at the same time acknowledge that it is a new year, and it is a new team, and each year presents its own unique set of challenges.

One of the things that we emphasize and value the most is competition, and when it comes to spring practice, the focus is on internal competition. There's a lot of playing time that is now up for grabs due to the graduation of some of our seniors. A lot of guys that have been playing roles for us over the last year or two are now in a position where they can vie for some serious playing time in the fall."

**Q:** How does the internal competition during spring practices help prepare for the regular season?

**A:** "We're so multiple in everything we do on offense, defense and special teams that a lot of what our players see from the opposite side of the ball is similar to what

they will see from various teams on the schedule."

**Q:** With the loss of the seniors, how will the team fill the holes that remain after their departures?

**A:** "You do it every year through recruiting. The best programs have depth and have players who are anxious to get their opportunity, and so as we enter the fifth year of our tenure here, this will be a really good test of the quality of our recruiting."

**Q:** What is the main goal for the team this spring season?

**A:** "We have a number of goals in all three phases of the game that we talk about on a daily basis, but the biggest, most general goal is to develop an identity. Every team has got its own identity. Every team leaves a certain legacy.

We want our players to understand that every practice that we get under our belt puts us one step further to establishing that identity and leaving that legacy."

### FILLING IN THE GAPS

At the end of the 2009 season, the Elon University football team bid farewell to 13 seniors. Those 13 players averaged playing time in almost 11.5 games, with nine of them playing in all 12 games of the season.

Head coach Pete Lembo said the hole left by these players will be felt by the team as it begins its new year with the spring season.

"Any time you lose high profile players like Terrell Hudgins or Eric Ludwig or Andre Campbell, ultimately several guys need to step up and replace great players like that," Lembo said.

Five of those seniors could be found working out a week ago for NFL scouts from teams such as the Carolina Panthers, Denver Broncos and New York Giants.

The team will work this season to try and replace these professional-caliber players this spring as the players compete for 22 starting roles come next September.

Lembo said he hopes multiple players in each position rise to the occasion to become main players and leaders on the team.

"Take, for example, our receiver core," he said. "We have some talented young guys, and hopefully it isn't just one player who steps up this spring but three or four that earn the confidence of the coaching staff and the quarterbacks and so forth."

Each team is a new team, Lembo said, and he said he hopes this team can come out of spring practice with an idea of who the 2010 Elon football team is — not who it's missing.

### PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Although the team took the field in Rhodes Stadium for its inaugural practice of the season, most sessions will take place on Hunt and Tucker field.

"The practices themselves are very similar to preseason camp in August," head coach Pete Lembo said. "We start off just in helmets, later in the week we'll go in uppers (shoulder pads) and as we get closer to the middle of the spring practices, they'll be several small scrimmages that lead us up to the Spring Game."

#### 2010 SPRING PRACTICE SCHEDULE

- Today – 4 p.m.
- Friday – 4 p.m.
- Saturday – 9:45 a.m.
- Monday – 7 p.m.
- April 7 – 4 p.m.
- April 9 – 4 p.m.
- April 10 – 9:45 a.m.
- April 12 – 7 p.m.
- April 14 – 4 p.m.
- April 16 – 4 p.m.
- April 17 – 9:45 a.m.
- April 19 – 7 p.m.
- April 21 – 4 p.m.
- April 24 – 6 p.m. Spring Game (Rhodes Stadium)



MOLLEY CAREY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
Elon junior quarterback Scott Riddle gears up for his senior season.