

# Softball's win secures second spot in SoCon

by Pam Richter, March 30, 2010

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 halted 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