

# Elon students go to Burlington gym for MMA training, instruction

Conor O'Neill  
Assistant Sports Editor

The sensation that is mixed martial arts training does not fall short of having an impact on Elon University students.

Several students participate in MMA training at the Alamance Black Belt Academy in Burlington, and the program is drawing new members every week.

Jason Thomas is the owner of the gym and an instructor of not only MMA students, but also of taekwondo students in Burlington.

Junior Elon student Connor Locklin, who regularly trains at the gym, said he noticed three new participants from Elon a few weeks ago.

"Students come in and either like it and stick with it, or it's just not their thing and they leave pretty quick," Locklin said.

The sport is defined as being a full contact sport in which a variety of fighting techniques are used to pin an opponent. Part of the reason for the gain in popularity is the fact that martial artists of different backgrounds are able to compete.

The draw of the sport attracts college students who have had prior experience with contact sports or martial arts.

"I would say anyone who may have wrestled in high school has gone in there at some point to try their hand and see how it fits," Locklin said. "My background was karate. I did that for 11 years before coming here and wanted to stay active in martial arts."

But even beyond those with previous wrestling and martial arts backgrounds, there is another group of students drawn to the gym, as well, Thomas said.

"A couple guys coming in here now are rugby guys, and they just like contact," Thomas said.

While the Academy also attracts youth members who are interested in karate, most of the college-aged members are interested in the MMA aspect of the training.

"For families and kids, mostly they want to do the traditional martial arts and get their black belt," Thomas said. "Guys who are 18, 20 years old and up are doing mixed martial arts."

The difference in interests between age groups is because of the target audience for MMA.

"It's just the demographic," Thomas said. "A lot of guys who are doing mixed martial arts now have done karate or

taekwondo before."

MMA contestants must go through extreme conditioning and weight lifting training in order to compete, and there are many ways for athletes to train for competitions.

"The new rage in MMA is CrossFit, which is primarily exercises with minimal equipment to cover the same areas of strength training," Locklin said.

Thomas said that CrossFit is the new way for MMA athletes to train and the benefits of the workout are evident.

"It's more applicable to real world strength, and you're doing a lot of timed stuff," Thomas said. "A typical workout might be run 400 meters and do so many number of pull-ups and so many numbers of medicine ball throws or something like that. And do five rounds of that for time."

As one can imagine, a workout of that magnitude can wear on athletes who are not in the best shape.

"The workouts are usually pretty intense," Locklin said. "I do what I can, but I'm not in the greatest shape right now."

With a little less than two years remaining until his graduation, Locklin plans to head to Las Vegas, an area he describes as a 'hotbed' for MMA training schools.

"I've been to Las Vegas for a few days randomly and gone by to see some of the gyms, and they are pretty impressive," Locklin said. "If you imagine a Gold's Gym, a boxing school and a college wrestling room with really high tech equipment."

While the Alamance Black Belt Academy may not be as elaborate as the gyms in Las Vegas, it still provides Elon students place to train and hone their skills.

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-CONOR LOCKLIN  
ELON UNIVERSITY JUNIOR

## The Alamance Black Belt Academy

The facility is located about four miles off Elon's campus and offers instruction in:

- Tae Kwon Do
- Brazilian Jiu Jitsu
- Judo
- Mixed Martial Arts
- Muay Thai
- Kickboxing
- Wrestling

## ELON ATHLETICS THIS WEEK

SEPT. 24 - 28

### Friday 9/24

Men's tennis (Georgia Intercollegiate) — All Day  
Men's golf (Sea Trails Intercollegiate) — All Day  
Women's golf (Sea Trails Intercollegiate) — All Day  
Women's soccer @ Samford — 8 p.m.

### Saturday 9/25

Men's tennis (Georgia Intercollegiate) — All Day  
Men's golf (Sea Trails Intercollegiate) — All Day  
Women's golf (Sea Trails Intercollegiate) — All Day  
Football @ Georgia Southern — 6 p.m.  
Men's soccer @ Davidson — 7 p.m.  
Volleyball vs. Samford — 7 p.m.

### Sunday 9/26

Men's tennis (Georgia Intercollegiate) — All Day  
Men's golf (Sea Trails Intercollegiate) — All Day  
Women's golf (Sea Trails Intercollegiate) — All Day  
Volleyball vs. Chattanooga — 2 p.m.  
Women's soccer at Chattanooga — 2 p.m.

### Tuesday 9/28

Men's soccer vs. Duke — 7 p.m.

## ATHLETIC RESULTS

SEPT. 17 — SEPT. 19

**Football**  
Sept. 18  
Elon 1  
Sept. 19  
Elon 21  
Richmond 27  
Sept. 19  
Elon 1  
Virginia Commonwealth 1

**Men's Soccer**  
Sept. 17  
Richmond 0  
Elon 4  
Sept. 18  
Elon 1  
UNCW 3

**Women's Soccer**  
Sept. 17  
Elon 0  
Longwood 6  
Sept. 18  
Elon 2  
UNCW 3

**Volleyball**  
Sept. 17  
Elon 1  
Campbell 3  
Sept. 18  
Elon 2  
UNCW 3  
Elon 0  
North Carolina State 3



## ONE ON ONE

Tom Waterman and Josh Norris  
Sports Commentators

### College football standouts

Now that we are a few weeks into college football season, which teams have really stood out and impressed so far, and who are the early Heisman Trophy Favorites?

#### TOM WATERMAN

A few of the teams that have really impressed me so far would have to be the University of Nebraska and the University of Arkansas. These two teams with highly contrasting styles of play both entered this year with very high expectations and have not disappointed. Nebraska has been dominating opponents and made potential first round pick Jake Locker look terrible last weekend as he completed only four of 20 passes en route to a 56-21 Nebraska victory. And Arkansas has been just as strong as they head into their weekend showdown against No. 1 University of Alabama.

#### JOSH NORRIS

I agree with you on Nebraska. Head coach Bo Pelini finally has a few recruiting classes under his belt, giving him the type of players he needs to succeed. Regarding Arkansas, I think they are irrelevant. As you mentioned, the Razorbacks play Alabama next week, which is just the beginning of the rugged SEC schedule. Arkansas will be just another team in a few weeks.

I am going with the University of Arizona. Head coach Mike Stoops relishes in the underdog role, and this team is loaded with hard-working talent and play in a wide-open Pac-10 conference. Nick Foles, the Wildcats quarterback, is forgotten in the discussion of the quarterback-heavy Pac-10, but that will soon change. Another good sign is they have passed their toughest defensive challenge, which was stopping the top defensive talent in the country, the University of Iowa's Adrian Clayborn. Arizona's final four weeks of the season have them facing difficult opponents, but look for them to be in the picture when crowning the Pac-10 champion.

#### TOM

I like Arizona a lot too, but that brutal three-game stretch against Stanford University, an underrated University of Southern California team and the University of Oregon is going to ultimately be Arizona's undoing in the Pac-10 race.

Now as we look towards the early Heisman favorites, there are a few notable names that really stick out to me — they are Oregon's LaMichael James, University of Michigan's Denard Robinson, Boise State University's Kellen Moore and University of Alabama's Mark Ingram. All four of these players are going to put up monster numbers for their respective teams, and you can never overlook the best player on the best teams in the country in the case of both Moore and Ingram.

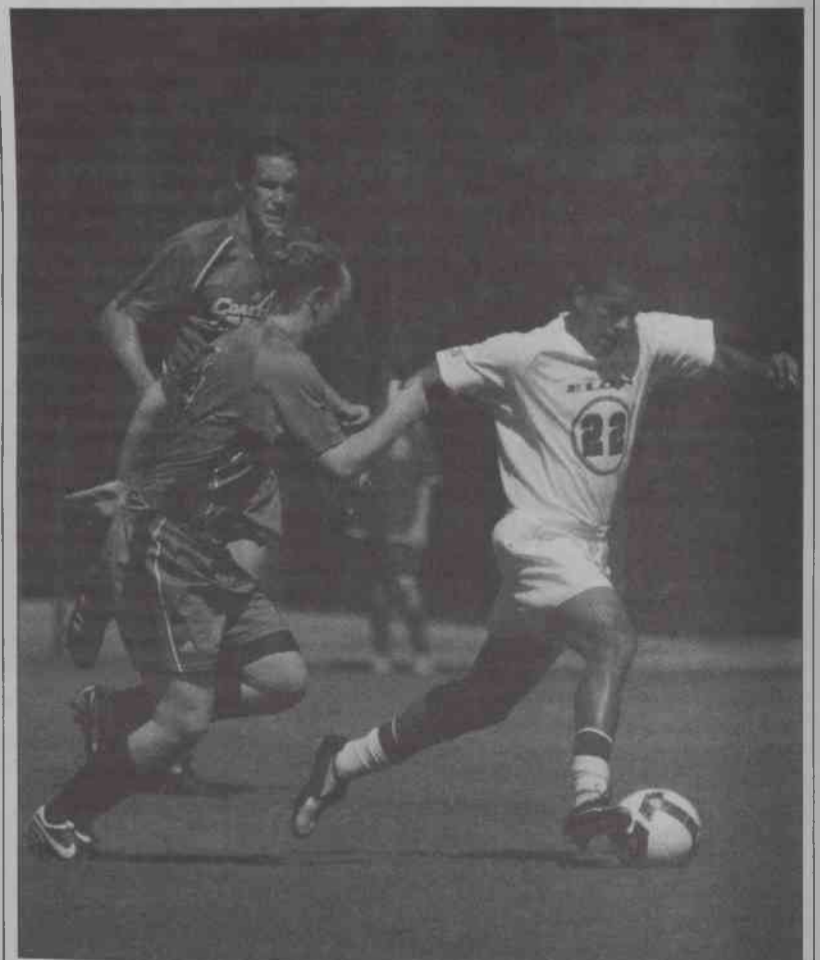
#### JOSH

How about two more names, Andy Dalton of Texas Christian University and Jacquizz Rodgers of Oregon State University? Dalton has a very strong chance, especially if the teams ranked above Texas Christian falter.

A longtime starter for the Horned Frogs, Dalton understands the offense and is a great decision maker. He is the typical college quarterback that lacks the skills to make it in the NFL, but we have seen many of those types of players win the Heisman Trophy before, one being Ty Detmer, who was the last winner from a non-BCS conference. If Dalton wins, he becomes the holder of that title.

It is easy to love Jacquizz Rodgers' game. He is a very undersized and shifty running back that consistently makes plays. In a conference with no clear frontrunner, Rodgers could become a highly discussed player if Oregon State can assert themselves as a contender in the Pac-10.

## Men's soccer overcomes early deficit, plays to tie



MOLLY CAREY | Staff Photographer

Sophomore midfielder Gabe Latigue had four shots and one shot on goal in the Elon University men's soccer game Sept. 19 at home against Coastal Carolina University. He was one of 10 players with shots in the contest and five with shots on goal.

After getting down 2-0 in the first half, Elon battled back with a goal by senior midfielder Hunter Miller in the first half and one by sophomore forward Chris Thomas in the second half and brought the game to a tie — where it ended after overtime.

Next up for the Phoenix is a trip to Davidson College for a 7 p.m. matchup Saturday against the Wildcats.