



# After big win, football prepares for The Citadel

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Out of the eight teams the Elon University football team has played, five of them have been ranked in the top-25 in the Football Championship Subdivision. Another was a member of the ACC in the Football Bowl Subdivision.

And until Oct. 30, the Phoenix was unable to topple these top-tier programs. But last weekend, the team traveled to Tennessee and took down the No. 20 University of Tennessee Chattanooga 49-35.

"I'm happy for the players," head coach Pete Lembo said. "They've been so resilient. They never doubted, never wavered. It's nice to get positive results in the win column."

The Phoenix forced six turnovers en route to the win, with five interceptions by five different players.

On the offensive side of the ball, junior running back A.J. Harris led the team with four touchdowns, 165 yards rushing and 17 yards receiving. Senior wide receiver Sean Jeffcoat was responsible for the team's other two touchdowns.

Senior quarterback Scott Riddle passed for 260 yards, completing 21 of 29 passes before being taken out of the game because of shoulder injuries. Sophomore quarterback Thomas Wilson then came in and threw for 57 yards to finish the game.

But despite the win, the team has to stay focused, Lembo said.

"We can't get too high on the highs or too low on the lows," he said.

Now, Elon has to look to its next matchup against The Citadel at 2 p.m. Saturday in Charleston, S.C.

The Bulldogs are 0-6 in the Southern Conference and 2-7 overall.

"We don't talk a whole lot about people's records," Lembo said. "We know in this league you have to show up ready to play."

The team has to be ready for anything, senior defensive lineman Brandon Ward said.

"When you're playing in the Southern Conference, there are no gimme games," Ward said. "Any team can beat you."

The Citadel not only has home-field advantage in this weekend's game, but is also celebrating homecoming.

Elon expects a big crowd and a hostile atmosphere because this is a release for the cadets that have had a hard week in the barracks, Lembo said.

He also said the cadets get the weekend off if the football team wins, so there is a lot of motivation.

"It's going to be big," Wilson said. "The cadets are always pretty rowdy and loud. The atmosphere is going to be big, but it's not like we haven't played in a big atmosphere before."

The environment will not be a problem, Ward said. Instead it will provide impetus for the Phoenix to perform better.

"I love that environment," he said. "It's not a problem. The team loves to go out and play in front of the big crowds."

Another factor in The Citadel game is the Bulldogs'

offense. The team runs a triple option offense, which is the third time Elon has faced this scheme this season.

Both Georgia Southern University and Wofford College ran a triple option offense, and both teams came up victorious against the Phoenix.

But Elon's offensive scouts are working to replicate that system in practice, so the team can be as prepared as possible come Saturday, Lembo said.

"If we go out there and have a big Tuesday practice, the week typically goes good," Wilson said.

And if practice goes well, Wilson said the game on

the weekend typically goes well, too.

The offense Elon will be preparing for is more similar to Georgia Southern's, rather than Wofford's, Lembo said, because the Bulldogs stay under center more often.

The defense feels good about its ability to defend the triple option at this point in the season because it has improved each time it's had to play the system, from Georgia Southern to Wofford to now, Ward said.

"I want a shutout," he said. "We can do it if we put our minds to it."

## 5 things to look for against The Citadel:

- 1. Will the Phoenix stay focused after a big win against No. 20 Chattanooga?** Elon's win against No. 20 University of Tennessee Chattanooga was the team's first win against a ranked opponent this season.
- 2. How will senior quarterback Scott Riddle recover from last week's injury?** Against Chattanooga, Riddle was hit and left the game in the fourth quarter. Head coach Pete Lembo said he hurt his shoulder but should return to play this week against The Citadel.
- 3. Who will punt for the Phoenix?** With Riddle's injury, Lembo said it was not likely that he would punt against the Bulldogs Saturday. Instead, the job would go to either sophomore John Reece or redshirt freshman Kenton Beal. Reece has punted 13 times for an average of 35.5 yards, while Beal has yet to punt this season.
- 4. Will the team be able to stop the triple option offense of The Citadel?** The Bulldogs will be the third triple option team the Phoenix will face this season. Previously, the team has lost to Georgia Southern University and Wofford College, who both execute the system. Elon's defense gave up a total of 805 yards and 66 points to the two teams.
- 5. Can the Phoenix protect the football against the Bulldogs?** Against Chattanooga, Riddle, freshman wide receiver Kierre Brown and junior running backs A.J. Harris and Dontay Taylor all fumbled the ball, and Elon lost all four fumbles. The team has fumbled the ball 11 times all season.

## BY THE NUMBERS

- 165** rushing yards for junior running back A.J. Harris, along with four touchdowns
- 490** total yards of offense for Elon
- 5** interceptions by five different players for the Phoenix
- 1** penalty, for a loss of 15 yards, against Elon
- 6-10** third down conversion rate for Pete Lembo's offense
- 154** receiving yards on seven catches for senior wide receiver Sean Jeffcoat
- 12** tackles for senior linebacker Brandon Wiggins, leading the team
- 2:47** minute between a tied game at 35-35 to an Elon lead of 49-35
- 4** fumbles lost for Elon, each by a different player