

# Women's soccer leadership

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Only six players competed in all 22 of the Elon University women's soccer team's matches during the 2012 season. Of those six, only two started every game — Shannon Foley and Claire O'Keeffe.

Both senior captains throughout their final seasons with the team, Foley and O'Keeffe have since graduated and passed the reins on to a group of four more captains.

Tasked with transitioning the 12 freshmen

and two transfers, seniors Jennifer McGorty and Olivia Mackey and juniors Raychel Diver and Kate Murphy began the process of acclimating the group early in preseason with an assist from Greek Life by using the big/little system.

"They started, much like a sorority, a big sister/little sister-type program within the team," said Elon head coach Chris Neal. "They have given the younger players someone to ask questions to and hang out with and to ask for advice. They just get it. They understand how important it is for the team to mesh."

With 34 players on the team, each of the players are in small groups, which McGorty said has helped chemistry build quickly throughout the team.

"Each freshman is with a senior or a junior or a sophomore," she said. "And we'll do little activities within those groups which are really bringing this team together."

McGorty also said she and Diver, who entered

the program before the 2010 season, have an easier time leading the large team this season because of previous experience they had their freshmen years, when both entered as part of a class of 10 players.

"We came in with 10 and we were a big class then," McGorty said. "To be honest, it's a little bit easier for us just because we came in with a big class and they're coming in with a big class, so we can relate easier as captains compared to past captains."

Before each season, Neal said the team sets goals they want to accomplish throughout the year. Those goals are usually split into categories: non-conference, conference, community and academic.

This season, with such a large team, the Phoenix added another category: chemistry.

"We've made it very obvious that the larger the group, the harder team chemistry is to accomplish," Neal said. "The girls have done just an incredible job — spearheaded by the captains, specifically

