

Elon seniors' storied careers likely over



Austin Dunker is one of five seniors who comprise the winningest class in Elon history. ASHLEY KING | Staff Photographer

Kyle Maher
Senior Reporter

The Elon University men's soccer class of 2011 knew Father Time was at some point going to catch up with them and their time with the Phoenix would have to end. Despite the possibility that their season could extend into a fourth straight NCAA Tournament appearance, it appears unlikely after a disappointing quarterfinal exit in the Colonial Athletic Association tournament.

The Phoenix fell 2-0 to Northeastern University Nov. 8, leaving Elon with a re-

mote chance at an at-large NCAA Tournament bid.

It was an abrupt and agonizing end to what was a historic four years for the program.

"It's hard to swallow," said senior defender Austin Dunker. "I'm heartbroken. I've been blessed to play here. You never want it to end, but it is going to end eventually."

Two of the standouts in the class, goalkeeper Nathan Dean and forward Jason Waterman, have left their marks on the program, rewriting the record books and cementing their names into the discussion of the greatest players in program history.

Dean, who has been between the pipes for the Phoenix since the time he stepped on campus, has 25 career shutouts, the most in school history, and 254 saves to his credit. Waterman, meanwhile, has 19 career goals, nine assists and 47 total points.

The other three in the class, defender Tommy Allen, midfielder Eliot Browarsky and Dunker, were key cogs in a dominant back line that was consistently among the nation's best in goals allowed.

It isn't just their individual achievements and honors that make the senior class memorable. The group came in and immediately changed the culture and direction of the program, helping to guide it to its first ever Southern Conference Tournament championship and NCAA tournament appearance in 2011 as freshmen.

In their next two years, they helped guide the Phoenix to its first two regular season conference titles and second and third post-season championships. The class went to the NCAA tournament in each of its first three years and, in its third try, finally advanced to the second round on Waterman's decisive penalty kick to beat Clemson University.

"What they've done for our program is terrific," said Elon head coach Chris Little. "They've had such a great career and have had unprecedented success. I'm so proud of what they've accomplished."

Overall, the class of 2011 has 45 wins in its four years, the most of any class in program history. But it's the camaraderie more than any of the statistical feats Waterman will miss most about his time with the Phoenix.

"When [former players] are asked what their lasting memories are from Elon, it's always about their teammates. It's never about the on-field accomplishments," Waterman said. "They say it's not so much what you've done but who you've become by what you've done. I wouldn't be the person I am today without this program and these teammates."

Previewing Elon's game against Maine



—Maine is 4-5 overall on the season and 3-3 in the CAA. The Black Bears topped Richmond 33-20 at home last week.

—Elon and Maine have three common opponents in Towson, Stony Brook and Richmond. The Phoenix lost to Towson 21-19, while Maine edged the Tigers 27-24. Both teams lost to the Seawolves, Elon 20-3 and Maine 19-7. While the Black Bears beat Richmond 33-20 last week, Elon lost to the Spiders 30-10.

—Maine linebacker Benjamin Davis was named CAA Special Teams Player of the Week on Monday. He blocked a punt in the end zone and recovered it for a touchdown while also recovering a fumble on the kickoff against Richmond.

—The Black Bears rank last in the CAA in total offense, averaging just 248.2 yards per game. Maine is second in the CAA in pass defense, which poses a potential problem for pass-heavy Elon.

—Dan Collins is Maine's leading passer with 908 yards and nine touchdowns. But freshman Drew Belcher has handled the responsibilities in the last few games.

—Maine's Nigel Beckford has rushed for 343 yards and four touchdowns.

—Maine's Christophe Mulumba Tshimanga has 80 total tackles, while Zachary Hume has 5.5 sacks.

—Senior receiver Damarr Aultman is ranked eighth in Maine history in career receptions and ninth in receiving yards.

—Maine is the reigning CAA regular season champion. The Black Bears went 10-3 overall and were bounced by New Hampshire in the FCS Playoffs.

—Maine is coached by Jack Cosgrove, a 1978 alumnus of the school. He's held the head coaching position for 22 years after having previously served as offensive coordinator. He's the program's leader in career wins with 126.

Kickoff from Rhodes Stadium is 3 p.m. on Saturday. Elon will honor its seniors before the game.

Unheralded walk-on getting chance for Elon football

Matt Mallian
Assistant Sports Editor

A number of injuries have ravaged the Elon University football team's backfield.

Season-ending injuries to senior Karl Bostick, broken leg, and sophomore B.J. Bennett, broken arm, altered the landscape of the running back position from one of the deepest positions on the team to one of the thinnest.



Kelly Brooks-Muse

But with those injuries came opportunity for others. Junior Tracey Coppedge jumped into the starting role as the only healthy scholarship running back remaining, and redshirt freshman Kelly Brooks-Muse, a walk-on, slid into the backup role.

Coppedge's struggles against the bigger, more physical competition of the Colonial Athletic Association meant that Brooks-Muse got a chance to show what he can bring to the table.

"Kelly's been practicing pretty well," said Elon head coach Rich Skrosky. "We'll continue to get them about equal reps. Tracey's not a big, big back so you have to be careful on how much he handles it."

For Brooks-Muse, getting out onto the field for the first time was a dream come true.

"It's something that I've always

dreamed of since I was a little boy playing youth football," he said. "I've always told myself I'm going to play Division I football and now I'm having that chance and opportunity."

The Vienna, Virginia, native carried the ball three times for seven yards against the University of Delaware Oct. 10, the first carries of his college career. In the four games since, Brooks-Muse has carried the ball 13 times, but the most notable rush came against the University of Richmond Oct. 25.

Trailing in the fourth quarter to the nationally-ranked Spiders, Brooks-Muse shouldered the load on the ground. On second-and-goal from the Richmond 3-yard line, sophomore quarterback John Loughery handed the ball off to Brooks-Muse, who took it into the end zone for a touchdown.

"It was amazing," he said.

The game took place one day before Brooks-Muse's 20th birthday, and his touchdown was made extra special with his family in attendance.

But getting there wasn't easy. Brooks-Muse worked hard in the offseason to put himself in position to be ready if his number were to be called. Over the summer he lived with Coppedge, who he described as a valuable resource.

"I ask [Coppedge] questions whenever I need it," Brooks-Muse said. "I see him as like a big brother to me. I look up to him and he's a great guy."

For Brooks-Muse, stepping into

Skrosky's offensive system provided a level of comfort. He played in a similar up-tempo offense in high school and blitz pickups, among other facets, are much of the same.

"The biggest difference to me is the speed of the game," Brooks-Muse said. "During practice, we have mistakes and you can correct them right then and there but when you're out on the field, you can't make up your mistakes — you live or die by it."

With two games remaining in a lost season, Brooks-Muse wants to take advantage of his opportunity to be in the conversation at starting running back in 2015. Skrosky said that Coppedge and Brooks-Muse will get similar reps from here on out.

"I'm just trying to give all I got and show the coaches that I'm here and I'm ready to play no matter what," Brooks-Muse said. "I just keep trying to improve on my skill and level of play each and every game."

Whether that means getting just one carry in a game or getting 20, Brooks-Muse understands his position. He is a walk-on and will play in whatever role he is told.

"Being a walk-on, my position was to be the player or have the role that the team wanted me to be," he said. "I'm giving 100 percent and I'm doing that right now. If they wanted me just to be a scout-team player, I would've done that. I just want to do my part."