

# It's time we take Elon football seriously

## SPORTS BRIEFS



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My roommate and I jabbed in a number of heated debates last year regarding the sports world whenever we got the chance. As much as I hate to admit it, he won most of them.

I guessed the Carolina Panthers would return to the Super Bowl, while he said they wouldn't make the playoffs. He was right. I said Louisville quarterback Lamar Jackson wouldn't win the Heisman trophy. My roommate laughed at me when Jackson accepted the award after becoming the only Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) player to pass for 3,300 yards and rush for 1,500 in a season.

When he told me Elon University's football team finally turned the corner this offseason, I wanted to believe him, but I wasn't fully convinced. Now, I am never questioning what he says again.

Through six games this season, the Phoenix has lost only one game — and it was against an FBS opponent. It is Elon's best start to a season in nine years, and it seems like the team shatters every internal record each time it plays.

For a team that was picked to finish second to last in the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) preseason poll, it is safe to say it does not care what other people think.

And now, it's time people take Elon football seriously.

Elon's 25-17 win against William & Mary on Saturday was expected, but that is a situation the Phoenix has rarely experienced in years past. If the Phoenix fails to win another game, it is still guaranteed to have a 45 percent winning rate. Since 2014 — Elon's first season in the CAA — the Phoenix's winning per-



Junior running back Malcolm Summers rushes against the William & Mary defense on Oct. 7.

centages were 8 percent, 36 percent and 18 percent, respectively. The Phoenix is in uncharted territory, but first-year head coach Curt Cignetti wants to continue that heading into the bye week.

"It's a great team win, tremendous effort," Cignetti said. "I'm really happy for the guys. We have a chance to rest up and heal a little bit and with the goal being to have a strong second-half to the season."

Factors propelling the Phoenix have been its physicality on offense and defense. Through six games, running back Malcolm Summers already has 134 carries for 772 yards. Last season, he only had 108 carries.

On defense against William & Mary, the Phoenix shined. Elon snagged one interception, making it

three consecutive weeks Elon has taken the ball away in the air. Elon forced 11 sacks in the last two games, and has held three CAA opponents to under 200 yards for the first time since 2015. Quarterback Davis Cheek said Elon's seven sack, one safety performance is proof of the effort his defense puts in.

"It's nothing new. They put in the work and they do everything they can during the week to prepare and that's what you get," Cheek said.

The next five games on the schedule will be a true test for Elon. The Phoenix plays three ranked opponents including James Madison University, who won the national championship last year. No matter the result, Cignetti's revival of the Phoenix football team is evident.

My roommate tried to

### TEAM STATISTICS

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**11**

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**200**

yards or fewer by three CAA opponents for the first time since 2015.

warn me, but I did not believe him. Now that Elon football has proven themselves, hopefully the rest of Elon's community will not question them again.

## Football continues its winning streak

Following a win on Saturday, the Elon University football team continues its rise in national rankings. Moving up three spots, Elon comes in this week at No. 20 in the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) Coaches Poll. In the STATS FCS poll, Elon bumped up two spots to No. 16.

Elon's rise in the rankings came after the Phoenix defeated the William & Mary Tribe 25-17 this weekend. Freshman quarterback Davis Cheek went 12-16 for the Phoenix, throwing for 179 yards. Junior running back Malcolm Summers rushed for two touchdowns, but left the game early with an apparent hamstring injury, according to head coach Curt Cignetti.

With the win, the Phoenix takes a 5-1 record into the upcoming bye week.

## Busa reaches milestone on the road

The Elon University volleyball team returns home this week after battling three teams on the road.

The Phoenix lost both of their two matches last week against Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) rivals Hofstra University and Northeastern University. Sydney Busa added to her career statistics in the losses, recording 24 digs and reaching a milestone for the Phoenix. Busa joins only three other Elon volleyball players to have both 1,000 digs and 1,000 kills in their careers.

The Phoenix will be back in Alumni Gym on Friday when Elon welcomes CAA opponent College of Charleston at 7 p.m.

## Men's soccer returns to action this week

A week since their last game, the men of the Elon University soccer team will be back in action later this week against Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) competition.

Having not played since its 1-0 loss against the Duke University Blue Devils, the Phoenix takes to the road tonight to play William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia at 7 p.m. Elon defeated William & Mary 2-0 in regular-season play last year, but fell to the No. 5 ranked Tribe 1-0 in the CAA Championships at the end of the season.

If you want to watch the Phoenix, the men's soccer team will be back at Rudd Field on Saturday when it welcomes Northeastern at 7 p.m.

## Women's soccer battles in double OT

Having reached double overtime in both of its games this week, the Elon University women's soccer team walked away with two ties added to its record.

Playing against Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) teams William & Mary and reigning league champion Northeastern University, the Phoenix battled to a 2-2 and 3-3 tie this week, respectively. Freshman forward Meredith Christopher scored twice and added two assists for the Phoenix over the two games. She is currently first in the CAA in total points with 22.

The team will not play again until Sunday when Elon travels to Hempstead, New York to face off against Hofstra at 12:30 p.m.

## THE PHOENIX FOCUS



Junior wide receiver Corey Joyner runs for extra yards after catching a pass against William & Mary on Oct. 7.

### WOMEN'S SOCCER

RESULTS	8-4-4
OCT. 5 WILLIAM & MARY/ELON	2-2
OCT. 8 NORTHEASTERN/ELON	3-3

#### SCHEDULE

OCT. 15 HOFSTRA/HEMPSTEAD, NY 12:30 P.M.

### MEN'S SOCCER

RESULTS	3-2-6
OCT. 3 DUKE/DURHAM	0-1

#### SCHEDULE

OCT. 11 WILLIAM & MARY/  
WILLIAMSBURG, VA 7 P.M.  
OCT. 14 NORTHEASTERN/ELON 7 P.M.

### FOOTBALL

RESULTS	5-1
OCT. 7 WILLIAM & MARY/ELON	25-17

#### SCHEDULE

OCT. 14 BYE WEEK

### WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

RESULTS	13-8
OCT. 3 NC CENTRAL/DURHAM	3-0
OCT. 6 HOFSTRA/HEMPSTEAD, NY	0-3
OCT. 8 NORTHEASTERN/BOSTON, MA	2-3

#### SCHEDULE

OCT. 13 COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON/  
ELON 7 P.M.  
OCT. 15 UNCW/ELON 2 P.M.