

ELON PHOENIX

After a 2-9 finish in 2016, the Phoenix's 6th straight losing season, they hired HC Curt Cigetti. They started 2017, 8-1 and despite losing their final 2 regular season games to #16 New Hampshire & #1 James Madison, they made the playoffs. In a back and forth game against #22 Furman, they looked to have tied the game early 4Q but the extra point was blocked and they lost 28-27. In 2018 Elon started the season ranked #12 but opened with an expected loss USF (trailed 31-0). Then they got revenge for their playoff loss, destroying #21 Furman 45-7. Their game vs William & Mary was canceled due to threat of a Hurricane. They trailed Charleston Southern 22-10 in the 3Q before scoring 21 unanswered to win 31-22. They only led New Hampshire 14-9 late 2Q but scored the final 16 to win by 21. Elon led #2 James Madison 10-9 with 7 min left 3Q. The lead changed hands 4 times, with Elon scoring the GW TD with 1:17 left. Off that Huge win they were ranked #5 but allowed Delaware 14 unanswered in the 4Q and lost 28-16. They never trailed vs Richmond but the game was tied 3 times including 21-21 before Elon pulled away for a 38-28 win. They almost fell apart again after leading Rhode Island 21-7 at HT as they kicked a game winning 19 yd FG with 2:41 left in a 24-21 win. For a 2nd straight year they lost their final 2 regular season games to ranked foes. They never led in a 41-10 loss to #20 Towson, allowing the final 20 pts. Against #16 Maine, which was playing for the CAA Title, they trailed 27-13 late 3Q and their comeback came up just short, losing 27-26. Ranked #17, they made their 2nd straight playoffs and led #12 Wofford 7-6 at HT but were outscored 13-0 in 2H. They finished ranked #19 but were just 6-5. HC Cigetti left for James Madison. New head coach was two year DC Tony Trisciani was promoted to HC after Cigetti's departure. OC Drew Folmer returned for his third season. The new DC was Billy Crocker, who was the DC at UConn the previous 2 years and previously was the DC at Villanova from '12-'16. Elon opened 2019 2-1 but lost 3 in a row losing to Wake Forest, James Madison and New Hampshire. They beat both Delaware and Rhode Island but they lost by 2 to W&M and by 14 to Maine before edging Towson in the finale to finishe just 5-6 and were 4-4 in the Colonial but -57 ypg in league play. After 3 straight years of .500 or better in the Colonial they went opened this past spring at 1-0 beating Davidson but they lost all 5 conference games going 0-5 losing by an avg of 30-15 and being -196 ypg in Colonial play.

In 2019 got back 6 starters to the CAA's #8 scoring (24.4 ppg) & #4 total offense (374 ypg). They returned starting QB Davis Cheek (6 st, 1018, 65.8%, 4-2 but lost 3rd tm CAA RB Malcolm Summers, who was the #2 rusher (591, 6.1) despite being OFY with injury after starting the first 5 in '18. They return 3 of their top 4 RB led by CAA OROY Jaylan Thomas (761, 6.6, 4 td). The receiving corps only lost 1 of their top 8 receivers (320, 15.2). They get back their top 2 in WR Cole Taylor (524, 16.9) & WR Kortez Weeks (484, 13.4). The OLine lost three 11 gm starters in an AA RT, 1st tm CAA LT & C. They

returned RG Matt Kowalski (11 st), LG Chad Nelson (10 st) & backup LT Cooper Cromer (1 st). Losing all 3 offensive all-CAA players, including 2 from the OLine that paved the way for 4.6 ypc, had them struggle and they had just 3.3 ypc rush with 11% sacks allowed in 2019. QB Cheek threw for 2175 (58%, 15-6) and RB Thomas led with 415 (3.7). Elon dropped from 388 ypg and 24 ppg in conference play in '18 to 330 ypg but 27 ppg in Colonial play. Last year they had 3 Frosh OL again and just 2.1 ypc rush with 10.2% sacks. QB Cheek missed the spring with Joey Baughman starting 2 games, JR Martin had 3 starts and Justin Allen 1 start. The 3 QB's combined to hit 57.5% with a 6-7 ratio. Thomas led again with 307 (4.0) but had 129 in the opener then was injured and banged up the rest of the year. They had to replace their top 2 WR's last year and Jackson Parham led with 197 (14.1) with Bryson Daughtry #2 with 156 (9.2) and Chandler Brayboy #3 with 149 (16.6). This year they get their QB's back but also get the return of long time starter Cheek. Thomas returns healthy so the RB's should be much improved. The top 5 WR's are back as is TE Donovan Williams who has good size. The offensive line had to replace three 4 years starters again last year and the frosh now have experience. With all 11 starters back this offense will be much stronger than the spring.

In 2019 the defense returned 6 starters to the CAA's #7 scoring (23.6 ppg) & #7 total defense. They returned their top 5 DL including all 3 starters led by 3rd tm CAA DE Marcus Willoughby (11 st, 58 tkl, 2.5 sk, 4 tfl) & DE Jordan Dollerson (33 tkl, 3.5 tfl). They lost their top 2 LB in 1st tm CAA MLB Warren Messar (11 st, 93 tkl, 4 sk, 7 tfl) & 3rd tm CAA WLB Matt Baker (11 st, 50 tkl, 7.5 sk, 4.5 tfl). They returned 6 of their top 8 including 3 that combined for 11 sts led by SLB Zack Monson (5 st, 45 tkl, 3.5 sk, 1.5) & Jarquez Bizzell (31 tkl, 1.5 tfl). The secondary lost 4 of their top 7 DB, who combined 33 sts, 160 tkl, 11 int & 18 pbu including 2nd tm CAA CB Greg Liggs (65 tkl, 4 int, 9 pbu) & 3rd tm CAA FS Tyler Campbell (33 tkl, 2 int, 4 pbu). They returned 2 of their top 3 DB in BAN Cole Coleman (62 tkl, 2 tfl) and CB Daniel Reid-Benneett (55 tkl, 8 pd). They lost 3 of their top 6 tacklers including their top 2, but returned 16 of their top 21 giving them depth but with the loss of 4 of their 5 all-CAA players and slipped to allowing 387 ypg and 25 ppg. In the spring Elon slipped even further to allowing 412 ypg with 211 (5.0) rush with just 8 sacks. This year return a veteran defensive front with 25 of the top 28 tacklers returning. The only losses are LB Ty Sponseller (#8 tklr), DB Jarquez Bizzell (#9 tklr) and McAllister Ingram (#10 tklr). S Cole Coleman is HM Colonial conference preseason. They add DL Joe Kane from Virginia Tech and DL Simeon Phillips from Liberty. This defense should be much improved but will not be at the top of the Colonial.

The Special Teams returned all their top players in '19 including P Hunter Stephenson (40.0 avg), K/KO Skylar Davis (17-22 FG, 2 TB/17 KO) and K/O Christian VanSickle (5 TB/41 KO). Last year Davis hit 7-9 FG's with a miss from 50+ but a long of just 34. He is back. They do lose P Stephenson (43.4 avg, 38.7 net). All conf PR Trevon Jones (7.3 PR) is back. This should be a decent unit.

After 3 straight .500 or better season in Colonial action Elon went 0-4 last year with a young team. This is year #3 for Tony Trisciani who is 6-11 and 4-8 in his two years but he does have 48 lettermen back but only lose 8 lettermen from the spring.

Elon was picked dead last in the 12 team Colonial despite having 20 of 22 returning starters. While I do not see them contending for the conference title the Stock Market Indicator is calling for a bounceback year especiall getting their QB Davis Cheek back after missing the spring.