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THE PENDULUM

WHAT'S NEXT?



A SEMESTER WITHOUT SPORTS

PHOTOS BY CLARE GRANT | PHOTO EDITOR

SCHOLARSHIPS • PAGE 4

A look at what will happen to the scholarships of athletes in the future

HIGH SCHOOL • PAGE 8

A look at the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on local high school sports

CLUB SPORTS • PAGE 9

The rules and regulations for club sports in the fall

THE PENDULUM

A PUBLICATION OF
**ELON NEWS
NETWORK**

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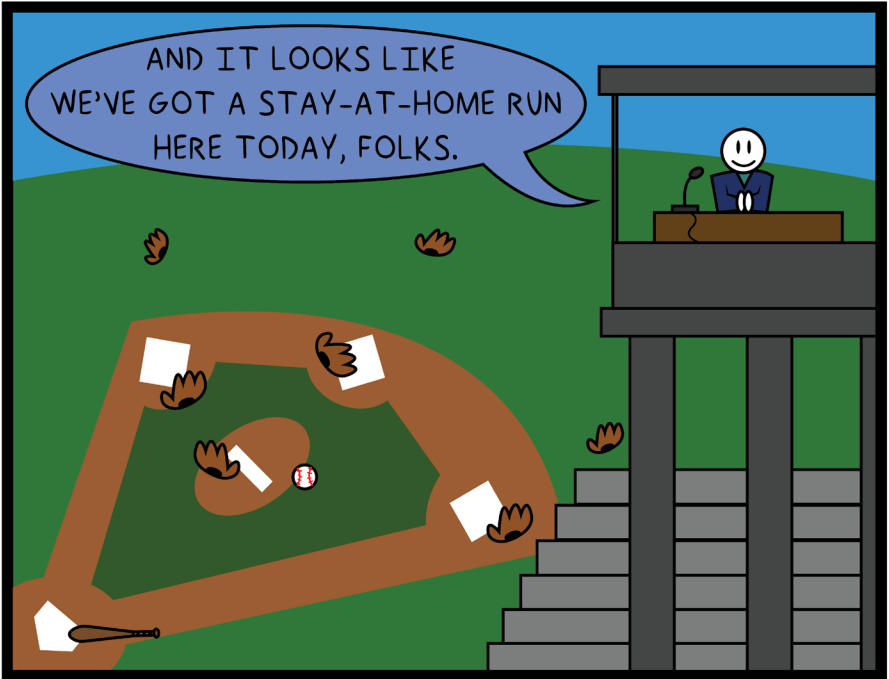
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CORRECTIONS

No corrections were issued for the last edition of The Pendulum.

COMIC

PANDEMIC BASEBALL



COMIC SAMS - SAM POROZOK

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GAMES

How to Play: Guess the missing word in the five clues, then find them in the word search below. Words can be found backwards, diagonal, etc.

1. 59% of Division 1 student-athletes in the _____ receive some form of financial aid. *See Page 4 for answer.*
2. Peter _____ is the new interim video and graphics coordinator for Elon University Athletics. *See Page 5 for answer.*
3. The Eastern Alamance High School _____ are still waiting to begin their football season, delayed by coronavirus pandemic. *See Page 8 for answer.*
4. High-risk club sports will not be allowed to _____ to compete this semester. *See Page 9 for answer.*

H G I K V T Y T N X E O R F K
L F P K K O V B S N N Q L T Z
E K K B R B D Q C S R U P A R
I F F O R T U N A T O G U C R
O N J S E T X A O Q U N Y C X
N G T Y W N U Y C B Y N C Q E
J U S L W E C W S T Y Y Q M F
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C X Z W R J A M G Z P T E R L
K Y G O I O A U I Q D I B V G

FROM THE SPORTS DIRECTOR



CLARE GRANT | PHOTO EDITOR

A LETTER FROM ELON NEWS NETWORK’S SPORTS DIRECTOR, CAITLIN RUNDLE

IN YEARS PAST, THIS edition of the Pendulum would have been dedicated to our varsity fall sports teams and the hard work they’ve put in to kick off their season. It grew nostalgia for the previous year and anticipation for what the Phoenix thought it could accomplish in the present. This year, as with most campus life, sports will look very different. Instead of dedicating the fall sports edition to our varsity athletes, although they are still deserving, we at Elon News Network decided to look elsewhere on campus and find the stories that might’ve gone otherwise unwritten.

When fall sports were postponed by the university, it seemed daunting to complete an edition dedicated to sports. However, our team is extremely adaptable and was ready to accept the challenge. This edition is the product of extreme determination, creativity and teamwork, and couldn’t be done without

the ability to adapt from each writer.

In sports, fans witness the ups and downs of their teams, allowing them to invest in the drama of it along with connecting personally to players. For the players, it is their livelihoods and years of hard work being put on display. Sports spark conversations as athletes use their influence to awaken change, and serve as an important role in our society. In a time where nothing is as it was, the sports department of ENN will strive to bring some of this passion back into the world. This edition has opened our eyes to the dynamics of sports at Elon University and Alamance County, and we hope we can share some of that with you.

In an unprecedented time, we will continue to serve the athletic community in whatever way we can. To the Elon University Phoenix, staff and fans, we look forward to continuing to tell your stories.

**HAVE SPORTS QUESTIONS OR STORY IDEAS?
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Elon athletics will honor **SCHOLARSHIPS** despite fall **SPORTS SUSPENSION**



The Phoenix running onto the field for their game against the Delaware Blue Hens in Rhodes Stadium on Oct. 12, 2019. The Phoenix beat the Blue Hens 42-7.

CLARE GRANT | PHOTO EDITOR

The university will follow NCAA guidelines for student-athlete scholarships

Kyra O'Connor
Enterprise Story Coordinator | @ko_reports

Despite the postponement of the fall sports season, student-athletes who have an athletic scholarship at Elon University will maintain their scholarships. According to Clay Hassard, senior associate director of athletics for administration, compliance and campus relations, athletics will be following the NCAA regulations regarding sports and athletes impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

“We are committed to honoring all of our athletic scholarships that we have issued over the year,” Hassard said. “We have no intention of removing a scholarship from a student athlete because of the COVID epidemic.”

According to the NCAA, 59% of student-athletes receive some sort of financial aid, as Division 1 and 2 schools provide more than \$3 billion in scholarships as of 2018.

In addition to maintaining scholarships throughout the pandemic, Hassard said athletes who do not come back to campus in the fall will also keep their athletic scholarships. Hassard said this includes remote instruction as well as taking a semester off.

“We are very sensitive to issues that arise,” Hassard said. “If a young, young man or woman has an issue with being comfortable in a certain situation ... the scholarship will not be impacted because of it.”

The NCAA announced in March that spring sport athletes whose seasons were cut short due to the pandemic will maintain their eligibility and scholarships for another year, something Hassard said “less than 10” Elon athletes decided to do. Winter sports in 2019/2020 were not included in this decision, according to the NCAA. The Division 1 Council also adjusted financial aid rules regarding spring sports, allowing teams to have more student athletes on scholarship than normally allowed to accommodate any athletes who chose to take a fifth year. There was no mention of fall sports for 2020.

Normally, there is a limit on how many student athletes can be offered scholarships on each sports team. Hassard said Elon

BY THE NUMBERS

59%

of student-athletes receive some sort of financial aid, according to the NCAA.

“

A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT EVERY DIVISION 1 COLLEGE ATHLETIC PROGRAM IS A BIG FOUNTAIN OF MONEY, PARTICULARLY FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL. AT A PROGRAM LIKE ELON'S, THEY HAVE A COUPLE DAYS A YEAR WHEN THEY DRAW BIG CROWDS: PARENT'S WEEKEND, MAYBE A GOOD RIVALRY GAME. BUT OTHER THAN THAT, THE REVENUES ARE PRETTY SMALL.

MARK CRYAN
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF SPORTS MANAGEMENT

athletics either have the same amount as the regulation states, or less, depending on the year.

The implications the coronavirus could have on collegiate sports going forward are widespread, changing recruiting efforts, revenue and how sports choose to practice and compete. Assistant professor of sports management Mark Cryan, once a collegiate athlete himself, said the pandemic could impact collegiate sports for several years.

Cryan said high school student-athletes normally would market themselves, use recruiting services and play in showcase tournaments, or participate in “scout days,” where the student athletes are evaluated on their skills. According to the NCAA, only approximately 2% of high school student athletes receive athletic financial assistance in college. However, due to spring seasons being canceled, recruiting efforts were changed.

“If you are a college baseball player or high school baseball player planning to go play in some showcase tournaments, those didn’t happen,” Cryan said. “Recruiting in a lot of sports right now has become very, very reliant on video.”

In addition to recruiting efforts, with the NCAA ruling to extend eligibility, Cryan said schools will now have to evaluate how to handle “five years worth of athletes.”

As seasons are postponed, students may be wondering how much money will be lost due to the lack of games and fans. A misconception Cryan sees frequently when students come into the sports management program is the amount of money generated by sports programs at universities. College athletics are a cost to the university much like any other part of the student experience, Cryan said.

“A lot of people are under the impression that every Division 1 college athletic program is a big fountain of money, particularly football, basketball,” Cryan said. “At a program like Elon’s, they have a couple days a year when they draw big crowds, parent’s weekend, maybe a good rivalry game. But other than that, the revenues are pretty small.”

At Elon, Hassard said while “things could change,” athletics does not anticipate at this time any changes to the number of scholarships the university is financially able to offer in the future.



The Elon University baseball team watches the game against the University of North Carolina Tarheels at UNC in Boshamer Stadium on Tuesday, Feb. 18. The Phoenix lost to the Tarheels 7-1.

CLARE GRANT | PHOTO EDITOR



Peter Fortunato sets up a photo with Elon football junior Avery Jones.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIAN AIMERICH / ELON FOOTBALL VIDEO

Elon senior Peter Fortunato faces adversity in new role

Caitlin Rundle
Sports Director | @caitlinr_21

When senior Peter Fortunato first picked up a camera during his internship with the Durham Bulls, it would start a years-long journey that got him to be the new interim video and graphics coordinator for the Elon University athletic department. After working for Elon Athletics - which is under a hiring freeze due to the coronavirus pandemic - for three years as an assistant to the video coordinator, he has been promoted to the leader as the new interim video and graphics coordinator.

“I’ve had people teach me up until sophomore year. I had phenomenal mentors, and junior year rolled around, and ... people are looking to me to teach them,” Fortunato said.

Fortunato’s roommate since sophomore year, senior Emmanuel Tobe, has watched Fortunato’s development since both of them interned with the Durham Bulls seven years ago. Since then, the two have worked together at WRAL-TV and co-produced the show “Elon Phoenix Weekly.”

“Because I’ve known him so long, I don’t think there is, between me and him, a work relationship and a friend relationship,” Tobe said. “He’s a workaholic, has a hard work ethic, one of the best work ethics I’ve ever seen. But he’s also extremely passionate about it as well. Pretty much every project that he does, he’s always passionate and wants it to be amazing, wants it to be great.”

Fortunato said it is unusual for a student at Elon to be hired as a full-time worker under athletics. He said being a part-time student this semester will help him complete his work duties, which he said was a factor in being hired.

“It’s hard to say if this is normal ... I hate

to say these are ‘unnormal’ times, these are weird times,” Fortunato said. “It is really cool to say that I have this position still as a student because not a lot of people in the entire country can say they are in a similar position as I am.”

Fortunato, a cinema major, has been a sports fan his whole life, and found his interest in video production in high school. Growing up in Apex, North Carolina, he said the close proximity to home from Elon was nice, but it was the strength of the cinema program Elon offered that drew his commitment.

Fortunato has been involved in video production with the Elon Phoenix since arriving on campus. He started out as a videographer for football practices, where his videos were what the team used to analyze their practices later. This connection would later introduce him to “The Spark.”

“As I was in the office more, I started seeing other students editing videos, and at the time, we were editing ‘The Spark,’ which was the documentary series that we were doing. I was like ‘oh this is really cool. How do I learn to do that?’” Fortunato said. “So there were a couple of students who really showed me early on what the world of creative content for sports really looks like. Then sophomore year rolled around, it was just more learning, learning, learning, learning. Then junior year, when they graduated, it was ‘alright Peter, it’s your show,’ and now we’re here.”

Fortunato completed four episodes for his sophomore year documentary series named “The Gold Standard,” along with photography and social media work. His junior year, he studied abroad in the spring, but was sent home early due to the coronavirus pandemic. Before he went abroad, he said he led the video efforts for football and made highlight videos for the players frequently.

Normally, Fortunato would be knee-deep in preseason coverage for football, and would be preparing for what would’ve



PHOTO COURTESY OF TROY SAYLES / ELON ATHLETICS

Peter Fortunato taking photos at an Elon University football game.

been the Phoenix opening game against The Citadel.

“A lot of that would be helping our coaches with our coaches’ videos, making sure practices are being filmed correctly, making sure they’re getting the right film from other teams,” Fortunato said. “Then also making sure our social content looks good, like making sure fans, recruits, donors and the Elon communities are excited for the fall.”

Because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, Fortunato said his job now focuses less on video production and more on social content. He said now is the chance to focus on the full student-athlete experience to show recruits the full potential of Elon athletics.

“They’re student-athletes for a reason; student first and then athletes. So, it’s interesting now that they’re ‘not an athlete,’ they’re not on the field,” Fortunato said. “It’s an interesting time for us to really explore different avenues. How can we really show the student-athlete experience at Elon University? And why is it better for a student-athlete to come here versus James Madison?”

Tobe said Fortunato’s developmental experience has made him well-equipped to handle his new job. He said the way Fortunato has created content has changed, but also the way that he’s consumed media has helped him become a better leader.

“I remember his first TV video, I was in his room when he was making it, and he wasn’t putting in, let’s just say, the most

time for the project. It probably didn’t come out the way that he wanted to,” Tobe said. “He has grown to not just someone who is interested in creating content, but someone who actively talks about creating content. He talks about different ways, different forums, we have conversations about the emergence of TikTok and all these kinds of different avenues of content creation. So to see his mind expand along with his overall technical skills has been cool to see.”

Tobe wishes his friend of seven years just one thing from this experience: happiness.

“I think senior year, as much as it’s a time to look forward, it’s also a kind of a time to look back and evaluate things, and to really celebrate where you’ve gotten,” Tobe said. “Right now, it’s such a stressful time worrying about jobs, the economy, masks, whatever, but I just hope that with the position that he has, I hope he spends time celebrating the work that he’s put in to get to where he is.”

Fortunato said although he hasn’t thought too hard about what he’s going to do once he graduates, he says he will always be thankful for Elon Athletics for giving him the opportunity to grow.

“They gave me a chance, but they also trusted a kid, they believed in a kid since freshman year all the way up until now,” Fortunato said. “They’ve been super supportive of me, and I wouldn’t be in this position if it wasn’t for them, if it wasn’t for the people in this athletic department that helped train me up for my three years and supported me.”





ELON NEWS NETWORK

CLARE GRANT | PHOTO EDITOR

Questions remain for Alamance County sports



PHOTO COURTESY OF JEFFREY SNUFFER

Alamance Burlington School System sports struggles with practices, official season start and recruitment process

Caitlin Rundle
Sports Director | @caitlinr_21

“You know the lighting rule? Where if lightning goes off, you wait half an hour and you keep waiting till there’s no more lightning? That’s what this has all felt like.”

John Kirby, head football coach of Eastern Alamance High School, was planning on starting his preseason in mid-June. Now, like a football game delayed by lightning, the Eagles’ season is in limbo because of the continued fallout from the coronavirus pandemic.

Kirby said the start date continued to be pushed back until the North Carolina High School Athletic Association announced that preseasons would be permitted to start on Feb. 8, 2021, meaning no North Carolina high school will be playing football this fall.

This Friday, Aug. 21, would’ve been EAHS’ first game against Graham High School. Instead, all North Carolina High School Athletic Association schools are continuing to wait for the day when play can resume.

While the Eagles have not been able to work out together since the postponement of their season, Kirby said they have been able to meet virtually over Zoom. The team started off by splitting meetings based on offense and defense, then broke it down to individual players.

“It’s probably as good as it could be; it’s not ideal. You don’t have them all there all the time, I think that sometimes, I don’t know how much focus you can get through Zoom,” Kirby said.

Western Alamance High School football head coach Jeff Snuffer said he has not been holding Zoom meetings, but his team has been working out individually.

“A lot of guys are lifting on their own and staying in shape. Our quarterback has been

throwing all summer,” Snuffer said about some of his players. He said he mostly talks to his captains, and leaves the leadership to them for now.

Both Snuffer and Kirby’s high schools have transitioned to distance learning. Snuffer said WAHS has been told by their administration that they will be online for the first nine weeks of instruction, at which point the school will determine how to continue.

Road to college unclear

With the coronavirus pandemic shutting down colleges across the country, high school athletes have had in-person interactions with college coaches limited, if not completely cut off. Kirby and Snuffer both have athletes who are trying to go through the college recruiting process. Kirby said the situation will hurt the players on the verge of being recruited more than the “shoe-in” players with multiple offers.

“Division 1 guys, they’re recognized a lot of times by these different social outlets, like 247 and Rivals and different websites — that’s their job to find these guys. They promote them, they rank them. Those guys have already been seen; they’ve already been identified,” Kirby said. “The guys who are maybe on the bubble, I think that this is gonna hurt.”

EAHS’s schedule is similar to a college schedule, meaning that it runs on a “four block schedule” where students take four classes every day. Students have to reach a certain amount of credits in order to graduate, which means that some students have the ability to graduate high school early.

“High school football right now, we’re gonna be playing in the spring. So, if Eastern Alamance has got a Division 1 player that was set to graduate early to go to [North] Carolina or to [North Carolina] State or to Duke or wherever early, are they going to stay to play high school football their senior year or are they going to leave early?” Kirby said. “Now that some of the football stuff and college levels are being moved to the



PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY PENNINGTON

Left: The Western Alamance High School football team walks across the field after their game.

Right: The Eastern Alamance High School football team runs onto the field for their game against Hunt High School.

“I’VE BEEN TELLING OUR GUYS, ‘LOOK, WE DON’T KNOW WHEN WE’RE GOING TO PLAY, WHEN WE’RE GOING TO BE ABLE TO GET TOGETHER AND DO MEETINGS OR PRACTICES. JUST PREPARE, HAVE A POSITIVE RESPONSE, BE STRONG, BE MENTALLY TOUGH, AND TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

JEFF SNUFFER
HEAD FOOTBALL COACH OF
WESTERN ALAMANCE HIGH SCHOOL

spring, what’s that going to do? Some of those guys are set to graduate in December, so are they going to stay or are they going to leave? If they stay, what does that do to the high school guys coming in?”

Snuffer said that normally, college coaches would be visiting his high school and high schools around the area year-round. He said if a coach was interested in a player, the college recruiter would receive that player’s transcript and then look at their highlight reels. The next step would be an invite to a combine in the summer in order for coaches to take a closer look at the players. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, college coaches have not been able to see players in person, and players have not been able to visit colleges.

“Right now, my quarterback has like nine offers. I think I might’ve had a few more guys that might have had a few more if they’d had a chance to work out this summer with some college prospects,” Snuffer said.

Snuffer said that although an abnormal situation, it’s one that everyone is in together. His team motto has always been to have a positive outlook, something he said isn’t changing anytime soon. He said a good mindset is more important than it has ever been.

“I’ve been telling our guys, ‘look, we don’t know when we’re going to play, when we’re going to be able to get together and do meetings or practices. Just prepare, have a positive response, be strong, be mentally tough, and take care of yourself,’” Snuffer said. “There’s so many questions you don’t know. We were ready to practice and it’s postponed. We think we’re gonna have a season and then they push it back. There’s been so many questions that I just can’t answer.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF JEFFREY SNUFFER

A Western Alamance High School football player kicks the ball for a field goal.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BAILEY PENNINGTON

An Eastern Alamance High School football player kicks the ball for a field goal in their game against Morehead High School.

Two different club sports prepare for a unique season

Elon club sports were divided into high-risk and low-risk categories to determine likelihood of a COVID-19 outbreak.

Annemarie Bonner
Elon News Network | @annemariebonner

As part of preparation for the fall semester, Elon University club sports were given guidelines for both practice and game play. Low-risk sports, such as climbing, equestrian, swimming and golf, are still allowed to travel to compete.

However, low-risk and high-risk sports have been given different guidelines, based on the contact level of their sport. High-risk sports will not be allowed to travel to compete and will not be holding games this fall.

During practices, masks must be worn when social distancing cannot be maintained. Due to the governor's current restrictions for outdoor gatherings, only 25 people will be allowed to participate per practice.

Teams must also submit a practice plan, including every drill that will take place during each practice that week. These instructions have required new methods of preparation for all club sports, specifically the ones considered high-risk.

Men's club lacrosse began preparing for this upcoming fall midway through the summer when Elon announced their plans for the semester. Max Kahan, president of the club, considers himself to be in an interesting position this fall as a leader during a time of change to how practices and games operate.

"There's still planning that I haven't been able to do because I don't know if I should be doing it. That's sort of an issue that we need to address in-person, because it's kind of one of those things where it's hard to articulate what's going on over email," he said.

For India Kirssin, president of women's club soccer, the same is also true regarding the restrictions around practices. The logistics of how they will be able to accommodate the normal amount of players — usually anywhere between 60 to 80 students — is still in the works.

"We are trying to figure out ways to make sure we can accommodate all of the girls that come, but still obviously comply with that restriction as well," Kirssin said. "I'm excited for us to really think outside the box and put some more creative ideas into play and hopefully there's things that stick."

According to Kirssin, these new guidelines are allowing her team to focus on elements they may not usually focus on. They are putting an emphasis on team fitness this year and enhancing basic soccer skills they may not



Elon women's club soccer team at a game.

PHOTO COURTESY OF INDIA KIRSSIN

“IT’LL BE A VERY INTERESTING SEMESTER, AND I’M JUST HOPING THAT WE’RE ALL GONNA BE ABLE TO SOMEHOW STICK TOGETHER THROUGH IT, AT A DISTANCE OF COURSE.”

INDIA KIRSSIN
PRESIDENT OF WOMEN'S CLUB SOCCER

usually focus on otherwise. There will also be more workout opportunities for team members.

The requirement to wear masks poses its own challenge for lacrosse, Kahan said.

"Obviously, we have a responsibility to make sure everyone is safe. But it's tough for just one person to do," he said.

Team traditions also need to be altered to fit social distancing guidelines. Previous team traditions for women's club soccer included a pasta party after tryouts, an overnight game per season and initiation for new players.

For men's club lacrosse, Kahan said it is hard to accept that the team can not hang out as friends as they would in past years.

The same also applies to women's club soccer.

"We're still planning on doing socially-distant bonding activities, as well just to try to keep that core feeling that's always there with soccer even through this crisis," Kirssin said.

The club's executive board has considered

planning activities such as an outdoor movie night, a socially-distanced picnic where members can bring their own food and one-on-one "dates" between upperclassmen and incoming freshmen.

The organization fair, which will be done virtually this year, is a key way for freshmen to understand more about organizations on campus, including club sports. Kahan said that since the fair will be held online this year, it will be a new challenge to present information to the freshman in an effective manner.

"There's only so much we can do virtually, where in-person we would have our helmets and some gear on the table, [and] maybe some players having a catch behind the table," he said.

However, with this change, he still hopes to give his teammates the same experience.

"I really want to make sure everything runs smoothly and everyone still enjoys themselves, even though it's very different times," he said.

Women's club soccer is ensuring that they will make an effort to recruit freshmen despite the challenges posed by the new organization fair rules. If they were not to invite new players, they could potentially lose a whole class of team members. Kirssin said it is essential to make sure these first-years are still getting involved.

Beyond recruiting concerns both presidents are also worried about the possibility of suspension due to strict guidelines created by the university. If one person in a club or organization breaks an Elon policy, it could result in serious consequences, according to both Kahan and Kirssin.

"They were saying during the student leader training that even one infraction of the policies can result in an organization getting suspended. So, we're going to have to be very careful and vigilant about everyone wearing masks," Kahan said.

The same concern also applies for Kirssin.

"As leaders of an organization and club, if we are at an official club event and are not following rules that means that myself and my co-president are both susceptible to discipline, which is totally fair," she said.

Also, if any player tests positive for COVID-19, the club is not allowed to practice for two weeks.

"It'll be a very interesting semester and I'm just hoping that we're all gonna be able to somehow stick together through it, at a distance of course," Kahan said.

Freshmen who would like to join any club or organization can do so through the virtual organization fair this Friday.



Elon men's club lacrosse in a match.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MAX KAHAN



Brian Martindale ‘95, is a member of the Phoenix Club advisory board and one of the founding members of the Elon 7am Tailgate Crew, a group of Elon sports fans known for regularly tailgating at various Elon sporting events.

This interview has been edited for clarity

Jon Sarver Jr. | Elon News Network | @sarver_jon

How did you come to be such a passionate Elon sports fan?

“I’ve just been a sports fan my whole life, regardless of what it is. I grew up in New Jersey and found this gem of the South in ‘91 and, for the most part, never left. Got an internship with a company who I am still employed with today. So 26 years later, my family enjoys the area and it helps that we’re close to Elon ... I try to get to as many events as possible. I’m a huge, huge soccer fan.”

What is your favorite Elon sports moment?

“Without a doubt, it was the men’s soccer team beating Clemson in the NCAA tournament.”

What is your favorite food to prepare at an Elon tailgate?

“Every homecoming we do a pig. And so when we actually throw on, we have to throw on the night before. So shout out to our chef, David Oakley. He’s the one that bears the brunt, unfortunately, and most of that is in the evening to check in on it throughout the night, but that one I like more because, one, it’s easy, and two, we always do it at Homecoming. So it gives everybody a chance to see old friends.”

What types of relationships have you been able to form as a result of your experience as an Elon fan and as part of the tailgate crew?

“Being on the advisory board, I’ve been fortunate enough to get to know some of these student athletes on a personal level. I also have a soccer scholarship endowment. So, in that regard, I get to meet, hopefully pretty personally, at least one student athlete a year. My wife and I like to post that recipient every year and get to know them ... Meeting those student athletes is just as fun and exciting for them and hopefully they’re realizing that there is an Elon network out there.”

What has your reaction been to the postponement of fall sports?

“I kind of thought it was inevitable. I just felt that that’s the way it was gonna happen unfortunately. I’m more disappointed for the student athletes but obviously the health and well-being of students period, whether they’re athletes or not, is paramount to having a successful fall. So we’re looking forward to the spring in the hopes that we will see some sporting events and hopefully, we will be able to tailgate at some of them.”

Athlete speaks about experience with coronavirus fallout

In uncertain times, Elon student-athlete grapples with the loss of the fall season

Caitlin Rundle & Grace Terry
Elon News Network | @elonnewsnetwork

Before Elon University postponed all fall sports via their website, the athletic community received an email from athletic director, Dave Blank. Blank broke the news to the athletes that they would not be having a season this fall, and hoped they would be able to resume come the spring of 2021.

Student-athletes, naturally, had an immediate reaction. “Morgan” is a student-athlete who requested anonymity to speak candidly without fear of repercussion, as Elon News Network did not receive consent to speak to athletes during the time this edition was written.

Morgan said they were not surprised by the announcement, and actually thought the season was going to be canceled completely.

“What I felt was more relief, not in a positive way, but relief in the sense that, ‘okay, finally we know what’s happening for sure. Like, this is set in stone,” Morgan said. “I wasn’t upset necessarily, because I already knew it was gonna happen. I wasn’t happy, I was just like, ‘okay finally, now we know for sure, this is canceled.”

Although Morgan thought the season was going to be canceled, they said that it didn’t stop them from initially going through training as if the season would continue.

“Not just because I wanted to impress my coach, but because there’s freshmen that are going to be on the team that need to be shown the ropes, and you don’t want to show up slacking,” they said. “You’re never not training. I’ve been training with the kids

in my apartment since the 6th, and then the freshman guys on the 12th.”

Morgan said that they don’t think the season being canceled has completely set in for them or their team. They said it’s going to be hard to judge how it will impact them until the semester progresses.

“For it to be harder, I feel like people will be less committed. When people start becoming less committed, then going to practice is harder and being involved is harder,” they said. “I definitely think there might be some

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“MORGAN”
ANONYMOUS STUDENT ATHLETE



CLARE GRANT | PHOTO EDITOR

The Phoenix statue on Phoenix Drive.

lack of focus now that we don’t exactly have a goal of conference or regionals or a bigger championship.”

Morgan said they were hearing hints of postponement being rumored across the athletic community long before the email from Blank was sent out. They said the earliest rumor they heard was in July when their coach suggested it in a team meeting.

“The athletic department had to work with the conference to figure out what they were going to do and they were in kind of a hard position to figure out what they were going to do without telling people,” Morgan said. “They didn’t want people to anticipate a season, so I think they did the best they could have done. I don’t think there was any way they could have gone that would’ve made it better or worse just because it is such an uncertain time.”

Morgan said there is a possibility of a spring championship season for fall sports, but besides that, they do not know what will happen next. They said that although they don’t have events to participate in for now, they hope that they “still have a good team culture.”

“We had a good, strong team culture last year and we were really committed and we knew what to prioritize and what not to,” Morgan said. “We can still set a good path for the freshman and go down and get a good recruiting class and just do the same thing next year.”

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