December 21, 2017

From the Desk of Tom Kleinlein

Dear Stephanie,

It’s hard to believe the first semester is over already and that we’re rolling into the winter sports. It seems like yesterday our teams were reporting for August practice, but the action is non-stop in college athletics. With us reaching the halfway point of the sports year, I thought now would be a good time to recap the first semester and to look ahead to what’s in store for 2018.

- Our Student-Athlete Services Department continues to do good work as Georgia Southern’s student-athletes recorded one of the most successful semesters in program history. Collectively, the student-athletes earned a 3.04 for the fall 2017 semester. This is the first time in program history that the student-athletes have been over a 3.0 during the fall semester. Ten teams had a 3.0 or higher during fall 2017, and 242 student-athletes made the honor roll. Baseball earned its highest team GPA in program history with a 3.25 and women’s swimming had its highest GPA in program history with a 3.55. Football also earned its highest fall GPA in program history.

- The men’s basketball team is off to a hot start, opening its season with a thrilling win at Wake Forest and picking up quality wins over Cal-State Bakersfield, George Mason, Missouri State and UMKC. The squad has the top RPI in the Sun Belt and has a real shot of making it to the NCAA Tournament this March. League play starts after Christmas, and we need Eagle Nation to Pack Hanner for every home men’s and women’s game as they make a push in conference action.

- Football may have ended earlier this month, but the excitement for our new staff is making waves nationwide. Coach Chad Lunsford earned the head coaching job over a very talented applicant pool that stretched from coast to coast and now it’s time for him to make his mark on the program. I’m excited about the hires he has already made and look forward to seeing how he rounds out his staff. This spring football session will be fun to watch with the new faces in place running the offense and defense, and we should be able to announce the date of the Spring Game here in the next few weeks.

The day after we announced Coach Lunsford as our new head coach, a large contingent of Georgia Southern representatives and donors went to New York City to be with Adrian Peterson as he was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame. The National Football Foundation put on a first-class event, and it was nice to be able to celebrate with AP on his special day. As Georgia Southern Football fans and alumni, you should be proud that your school has two representatives in the College Football Hall of Fame.
Season ticket/parking renewals begin Wednesday, January 3, 2018, and end on Thursday, March 1. We have six home games next year and for the foreseeable future. Also, season ticket prices are NOT increasing for 2018 even though there’s an additional home contest. While the full schedule won’t be released by the league until late February or early March, we know we’re hosting Presbyterian (Sept. 1), UMass (Sept. 8), Appalachian State, Arkansas State, South Alabama and Troy. Next year also marks the first Sun Belt Conference Championship, which will be played at one of the participating school’s home field, so maybe we can get a seventh home game!

I’m sure you’ve seen the releases about future football opponents. We’ve worked extremely hard to not only have six home games each year but also to put quality opponents on our schedules. Getting Boise State, BYU, Houston, Florida Atlantic and other top Group of Five schools to come to Statesboro is a big deal, and we are looking forward to those games.

- **Baseball** and **softball** seasons are right around the corner, and we’re expecting big things from both programs. Baseball season tickets are on sale now, and we just announced that softball will become a ticketed sport on campus. Season tickets for softball are also on sale. Admission to sporting events not only help our coaches maintain a self-sustaining budget, but it also encourages our coaches and student-athletes to perform at the highest level. Be sure to go to [GSEagles.com/Tickets](http://GSEagles.com/Tickets) for all of your ticketing needs.

- Finally, I wanted to use this forum to announce our new GUSPY’s Award Show that we’ll debut this April. Our Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) is really excited about combing the current year-end academic awards ceremony with an awards show to highlight on-field achievements our student-athletes make during the year. We’ll have several categories such as “Best Victory” and “Play of the Year” and the student-athletes will vote on the winners. This should be an exciting event, and we’ll share more information as we get closer to the date.

As always, thank you for your support of Georgia Southern Athletics and from our department to your family, have a great holiday season and GO EAGLES!

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Tom Kleinlein  
Director of Athletics, Georgia Southern University
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IMPORTANT DATES

• WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3 - **Football Season Ticket/Parking Renewals & Preorders Begin**
  Renew in January for a 6-month payment plan. Don't forget to renew your 2018-19 Eagle Fund membership, too!
• FRIDAY, JANUARY 26 - **2018 Evening with the All-Stars, featuring Fred McGriff**
• THURSDAY, MARCH 1 - **Football Season Tickets/Parking Renewal Deadline**
  All tickets and parking must be renewed and paid in full or set up on a monthly payment plan, or they will be released to the general public.

STUDENT-ATHLETE SUCCESS

• SWIMMING & DIVING - **Hannah Mudge Named CCSA Diver of the Week**
• WOMEN'S TENNIS - **Eagles Earn Highest GPA During the Fall**
• MEN'S BASKETBALL - **Brown Named Sun Belt Men's Basketball Player of the Week**
• MEN'S SOCCER - **Emil Laursen Earns First-Team CoSIDA Academic All-American Honors**

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

• ALUMNI - **AP Officially Enshrined in CFB Hall of Fame**
• DEPARTMENT - **Student-Athletes Receive Stoles Prior to Graduation Ceremony**

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