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WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. - A short-handed Georgia Southern men's soccer team battled the top-ranked team in the nation tough, falling 2-0 to Wake Forest on Tuesday evening at Spry Stadium in Winston-Salem, N.C.

The Eagles (2-2-1) dropped their second straight match, while Wake Forest remained unscathed on the season, improving to 6-0. Georgia Southern returns to action on Saturday, traveling to Jacksonville for a 7 p.m. non-conference matchup against the Dolphins in Florida.

A tight first half saw the Eagles take the Demon Deacons to halftime tied at 0-0. Wake Forest had a 7-4 edge in shots, but the Eagles enjoyed a 4-3 edge in corner kicks.

The match turned in the 54th minute as Eagle sophomore Gonzalo Talavera was sent off with a red card, meaning Georgia Southern would have to play a man down for the rest of the match. It was the first time that the Eagles had to play a man down since Sept. 4 of last year, when Georgia Southern played more than 75 minutes a man down in a 2-1 overtime loss to No. 5 Clemson.

The Demon Deacons held the Eagles to just one shot with the man advantage, and finally broke through the Georgia Southern defense in the 75th minute as Omir Fernandez scored his fifth goal of the season with a left-footed shot just inside the left post.

The Eagles' lone shot in the second half came from freshman Lee Flowers, in the 84th minute.
Wake Forest would complete the scoring in the match in the 87th minute on a goal by Alistair Johnson.

"I thought the guys put an almighty shift in," Georgia Southern Head Coach John Murphy said. "We started brightly. I thought they moved the ball very well, but we were their equal for most of it. The game was called very tight, which will always be the advantage of the team who has the ball. I think that fed into their possession having more of an impact in the game.

Then the red card changes the game, it makes it very difficult for us from then out. But I can't fault anyone that went out there tonight. Even our guys on the bench, who didn't get into the game, were giving everything they had. It was a passionate, comprehensive effort. I feel we will grow from this and it will help us come together as a team. But for now, we have to get ourselves ready for a tough Jacksonville match with just couple of days to prepare."

The Demon Deacons finished the night with an 18-5 edge in shots and a 6-4 edge in corner kicks. Freshman Jokull Blaengsson made three saves in net on the evening for Georgia Southern. The Eagles were whistled for 19 fouls and were shown five cards, including the red, while Wake Forest committed 13 fouls and had one yellow card. Wake Forest was offsides three times and Georgia Southern was offsides twice.

Tuesday’s match was the second time in program history that the Eagles had faced the top-ranked team in the nation. The previous time was also against Wake Forest, an 8-0 loss in Statesboro on November 9, 2002.

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