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South Alabama Clips GS Women's Basketball, 81-74, In Overtime

Eagles locked into the 11th seed in the upcoming Sun Belt Tournament; Amira Atwater passes 100 assist mark

Women's Basketball

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STATESBORO, Ga. - The South Alabama women's basketball team notched an 80-72 Sun Belt Conference victory in overtime over host Georgia Southern on Thursday evening at Hanner Fieldhouse, locking the Eagles into an 11th seed for the upcoming Sun Belt tournament next week.

Georgia Southern (5-23, 2-15 SBC) will take on the six seed on Tuesday, March 6, at 8:30 p.m. ET in first round action of the 2018 Sun Belt Championships in New Orleans. South Alabama (17-11, 10-7 SBC) remains tied for the fifth spot in the league standings heading into Saturday's final day of league play. Georgia Southern will host Troy at 2 p.m. on Saturday for Senior Day at Hanner Fieldhouse. The Eagles will honor three student-athletes - [Alexis Foulks](#), [Trellanie English-Lurry](#) and [Jakayvea Akins](#) - in a pre-game ceremony as they play the final home games of their careers at Hanner.

The Eagles and the Jaguars played an even first quarter, with a [Nakol Franks](#) three-pointer with one minute left giving Georgia Southern an 18-16 lead at the end of the first quarter. During the opening period of action, [Amira Atwater](#) notched her 100th assist of the season, setting up [Alexis Brown](#)'s three-pointer with 3:34 left in the quarter. She becomes the first Georgia Southern women's basketball player to record 100+ assists in a season since Carolyn Whitney had 104 assists during the 2006-07 season.

With the score tied at 27-all in the second quarter, South Alabama embarked on a 7-0 run to take a 34-27 lead with 2:04 left to go in the half. The Jaguars kept that lead into the break, leading 39-31 at halftime.

In the second half, the Eagles put together a 11-2 run to retake the lead, 48-47, capped by a Franks three-pointer with 4:11 left in the third quarter. South Alabama's Chyna Ellis scored a bucket to give the Jaguars back the lead, 49-48, with 3:48 left, and the Jaguars kept that one-point lead to the end of the third quarter, 57-56.

The fourth quarter had the Eagles start the period on a 11-3 run to take a seven-point lead, 67-60, with 6:06 left. South Alabama would then hold Georgia Southern without a point for more than five minutes, using an 9-0 run to take a 69-67 lead with 1:42 left. A three-point play by [Nakol Franks](#) with 22.5 seconds left put Georgia Southern back in front, then South Alabama's Ellis made one of two free throws with 20.8 seconds left to tie the game up at 70-all. Franks' game-winning attempt at the end of regulation was blocked, sending the game to overtime.

In overtime, South Alabama held Georgia Southern without a field goal for the first four minutes and 32 seconds in outpointing the Eagles, 11-4, to collect the win.

Franks led a trio of Eagles in double figures on the night with 19 points on 6-of-12 shooting from the floor, including 4-of-7 from three-point range and 3-of-3 from the foul line. Brown tied her season high with 18 points, while [Alexis Foulks](#) chipped in 10 points. Atwater finished the night with six points, six rebounds and six assists, giving her 105 assists on the year. Shatoria Kines led four South Alabama players in double figures with 23 points, while Chyna Ellis notched 20 points, to go with 10 rebounds and a Hanner Fieldhouse record-tying six blocked shots. Savannah Jones and Antoinette Lewis each added 12 points.

Georgia Southern shot just 31.5 percent from the floor (23-of-73) while hitting 31 percent from three-point range (9-of-29) but excelled at the foul line, knocking down 19 of 20 free throws (95 percent). South Alabama shot 44.8 percent from the floor (30-of-67), while hitting 7-of-23 from three-point range (30.4 percent) and 14-of-21 from the foul line (66.7 percent).

Quotables from head coach [Kip Drown](#)

On post play

"I thought our post players did a much better job tonight. I know Ellis got 20, but I thought we did a much better job. She had a tougher 20, and I was really proud of our fives and fours. They really battled."

On having the seven-point lead in the fourth

"When we got up seven, we probably could have gotten a better shot a couple of times and probably got a little impatient. That's learning how to finish games, but I'm proud of our kids. Our kids battled, and they have gotten so much better. We've come a long way since we played this team in Mobile."

On last play in regulation

"We ran something to try to get AB in isolation, and they had a foul to give and gave it. Then we had to call another timeout, and we had it in AB's hands and she slipped. So then we had 2.9 to go, and we were just trying to bring somebody off a screen and didn't quite get the look we wanted to there."

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