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Georgia Southern University



State Runs Away from Southern Men's Basketball
The Eagles host Texas State on Salute to Heroes Night Thursday.

Marc Gignac

Men's Basketball

Posted: 1/20/2018 5:08:00 PM

ATLANTA – D'Marcus Simonds tallied 24 points, 10 rebounds and six assists, and Georgia State extended its win streak over Georgia Southern in the GSU Sports Arena to eight games with an 83-66 Sun Belt men's basketball victory over the Eagles Saturday afternoon.

The win gives the Panthers another point in the Southern vs. State Rivalry Series, which State leads 8.5-0.5.

[Ike Smith](#) recorded 16 points and seven rebounds for the Eagles (14-6, 5-2), and [Quan Jackson](#) chipped in 11 points and six rebounds. BJ Gladden contributed a season-high 10 points with seven rebounds.

Jeff Thomas made five 3-pointers and finished with 15 points for Georgia State (14-6, 5-2), and Isaiah Williams posted 16 points and four rebounds. Malik Benlevi collected 11 points, seven rebounds and four assists.

The story

Thomas hit consecutive 3-pointers to spark what would become a 22-6 State run in the second half. Devin Mitchell added a triple from the wing, and three run-out dunks by Simonds gave the Panthers a 70-57 cushion with 5:36 to go. The Eagles were held scoreless and missed 10 straight shots over 4:03 of the stretch.

The first 26 minutes of the contest featured 10 lead changes and three ties, but the Panthers wound up outscoring the Eagles 46-28 in the second half. Southern shot 28 percent in the second half and 34 percent for the game, while State shot 55 percent in the second period and 51 percent for the contest.

Southern's two-time first team all-league point guard, [Tookie Brown](#), missed the game with an injury. It's the first game he's missed in his career. The Eagles have not won a game at Georgia State since 1992.

Quotables

Head coach [Mark Byington](#)

On State's second-half run

"The easy answer is we ran out of gas. The technical answer is that we quit playing defense the way we were playing defense. We let them get some open looks and some open shots, we made some scouting report errors, some tactical errors and we let the game get away from us. Then we tried to respond by making a big play instead of staying the course. I thought we came in and played to win and then in the second half, we just ran out of gas and ran out of defensive focus."

On [Tookie Brown](#) being out

"He has a good tempo and a good demeanor to his game, and I think it calms other guys down. In the second half there, we got a little wild and that's usually where he will step in and make a play for us. I thought us being down a perimeter sub tonight was probably why we faded in the second half, and we're used to a guy, who is one of the best guards in the country, out there playing 31 minutes a game. I thought the other guys played well, but they just wore down by not having another guy come in and give them an extra boost."

On turnovers and offensive rebounds

"The score is not indicative of what the game was. We were a possession or two away in the second half where I thought we had some good looks and if those go down, and we get the stops, that's a five, six or seven-point swing right there. It went the opposite way, where we didn't get the stop and they made some halfway contested or tough shots. I thought their crowd also gave them the extra energy that they needed and kind of pushed them through, and when we hit the wall, they were able to keep on going."

On upcoming home stretch

"Right now, we're 5-2, and we're in a position to be a regular-season champion. What we've done to this point has been really good. We've won on the road and now we get to finish with a lot of them at home, and hopefully, our fans get behind us like these fans got behind Georgia State today."

Next up

The Eagles finish the regular season with seven of 11 contests at home, starting Thursday, Jan. 25, against Texas State at 7:30 p.m. It's Salute to Heroes Night – all active duty and veteran military personnel, police officers, firefighters and EMS receive free admission with valid ID and may purchase discount \$5 general admission tickets for either game or \$10 for both games for family members.

Georgia Southern Athletics provides current information on all its sports through its official website, GSEagles.com, which is fully responsive across all mobile devices. Information on Eagle athletics can also be found through social media channels facebook.com/GSATHletics, twitter.com/GSATHletics and Instagram.com/GSATHletics. To purchase tickets to Georgia Southern athletics events, visit GSEagles.com/tickets.

In order to expedite entry and provide a safe environment for all patrons and participants, Georgia Southern Athletics has implemented a Clear Bag Policy for all ticketed sporting events, effective Aug. 1, 2017. Fans can find the complete policy as well as an FAQ section at GSEagles.com/ClearBag.

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