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Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Newsroom" (2015). *Newsroom*. 673.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/newsroom/673>

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Tyson Summers Named Next Head Coach of Georgia Southern Football

DECEMBER 20, 2015



Georgia Southern Interim President Jean Bartels, Ph.D., R.N., Director of Athletics Tom Kleinlein and the Georgia Southern Board of Regents announced Sunday evening that Tyson Summers has formally accepted an offer to become Georgia Southern's head football coach. He will be officially introduced at a press conference on Dec. 26 in Statesboro, Georgia. Summers, who has ties to Statesboro from his time with the Eagles in 2006, has a coaching career that has spanned almost 15 years and seven schools.

"Besides the day I married my wife and the days my children were born, this is right up there as one of the most exciting moments in my life," Summers said. "This is home for my wife, Beth, and I and we're excited to be able to get to Statesboro and carry on the proud traditions of both Georgia Southern University and the Eagle football program. I'm looking forward to building off the offense that is in place and continuing to progress with the defense. I'm just exceptionally excited to be a Georgia Southern Eagle!"

A native of Tifton, Georgia, Summers comes back home from Colorado State, where he served as the Rams' defensive coordinator and safeties coach in 2015. Under his tutelage, the Rams defense is ranked 20th in the country in passing defense, giving up just 186.3 yards per game heading into the

Arizona Bowl. After dropping two overtime games early in the season, the Rams closed the regular season on a four-game win streak, with three of those victories coming on the road.

"The search committee and myself went through a long process and evaluated a number of candidates and we have decided on Tyson Summers, who is a great fit for us here at Georgia Southern," Kleinlein said. "I'm excited about Tyson coming in and leading our program. What we get in Tyson is someone who knows Georgia, someone who was born and raised in Georgia, someone who has recruited Georgia his entire career, and someone who has been a part of a Group of 5 school that has played on New Year's Day, which is the level we're aspiring to get to.

"His dad was a high school coach in the state of Georgia. He played for a number of former great Eagles who were his high school coaches and he played at Presbyterian College for coaches who coached at Georgia Southern. We've gotten someone who is excited to be here and is excited to carry on the traditions of Georgia Southern University and is excited to build on where we're already at in the FBS and take us to new heights."

Prior to his work at CSU, he spent three seasons at UCF, where he served as defensive coordinator in 2014 for a unit that ranked among the best in the nation.

In his first full season as a defensive coordinator in 2014, Summers guided the top defense in the American Athletic Conference, and one that ranked in the top 10 among FBS schools in total defense (5th, 298.5 ypg), rushing defense (6th, 104.3 ypg), scoring defense (9th, 19.2 ppg) and red zone defense (6th, 71.4%). Summers' defense helped UCF to a 9-4 record, a second consecutive American Athletic Conference title and a berth in the Bitcoin St. Petersburg Bowl. The Knights held six opponents under 100 rushing yards and nine under 200 passing yards.

Three of Summers' defensive players earned first-team all-conference honors, while three more garnered second-team honors. That included cornerback Jacoby Glenn, who was The American's Co-Defensive Player of the Year and UCF's first Associated Press All-American (second team) since it joined the FBS level in 1996. Glenn signed as an undrafted free agent with the Chicago Bears in 2015.

Under Summers' leadership, linebacker Terrance Plummer earned back-to-back first-team all-conference honors, who was on the All-American Athletic Conference First Team in 2013 and 2014. He also was a two-time national defensive player of the week his final two years at UCF.

Summers was hired at UCF as a defensive assistant coach in 2012, and earned the title of linebackers coach one month later. For the 2014 Tostitos Fiesta Bowl and that spring season, he was named interim defensive coordinator before being promoted to full-time defensive coordinator in April when spring camp concluded.

Summers helped call the plays in UCF's upset victory over high-powered Baylor in the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, capping an unforgettable season for the Knights. The win enabled UCF to set a school record with 12 victories overall and achieve a program-high by being ranked No. 10 in the final AP Top 25 Poll. Plummer was named Defensive MVP of the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, along with his first-team all-conference honors.

Leading the UCF linebackers in 2012, Summers tutored three Knights into consistent starters en route to a Conference USA East Division crown, a Beef `O` Brady's Bowl win and a 10-4 record. Plummer, in his first year as the Knights' middle linebacker, went on to rack up 108 tackles with seven for loss. On the outsides, Ray Shipman broke out in just his second full season as he amassed 91 tackles. Previously a running back, Jonathan Davis was named the team's Most Improved Defensive Player, capping off the year with 99 tackles, including nine for a loss.

Summers' tenure at UCF came after a five-year stint at UAB that began in December 2006. He served as the Blazers' linebackers coach and added the roles of safeties coach and co-special teams coordinator in the final season of his tenure.

In his first year working with the UAB safeties in 2011, Summers helped mentor Jamie Bender in his senior season as he led the Blazers with 119 tackles. Bender also posted 7.5 tackles for loss, two interceptions, six break-ups and four forced fumbles. He was voted on to the All-C-USA Second Team for that performance. On special teams, UAB ranked 17th in the nation by allowing just 4.71 yards per punt return, while freshman kicker Ty Long was named a 2011 Freshman All-American by Phil Steele's College Football Preview.

In Summers' first year at UAB, linebacker Joe Henderson was named to the All-C-USA Second Team. In 2008, Henderson climbed up to the first team thanks to a team-high 87 tackles as well as 12.5 tackles for loss, and went on to play for the BC Lions of the CFL from 2010-11. With a new wave of linebackers under Summers' control in 2010, Marvin Burdette paced the Blazers with 114 tackles en route to All-C-USA Honorable Mention accolades. While Summers was with UAB, kicker Swayze Waters was an All-C-USA First Team pick in 2007 and 2008, and has appeared in NFL preseason games highlighted by a stint with the Pittsburgh Steelers in 2011.

Summers coached the safeties at Georgia Southern in 2006 a year after serving as a graduate assistant for Georgia in 2005. That season the Bulldogs won the SEC title and earned a berth in the Sugar Bowl. Summers worked with the secondary and witnessed three UGA defensive backs being selected in the NFL Draft: Tim Jennings (second round, first-team All-SEC), DeMario Minter (fifth round, first-team All-SEC) and Greg Blue (fifth round, first-team All-American).

During the 2004 season Summers was a graduate assistant at Troy, which reached the postseason and the Silicon Valley Classic, and in 2003 he helped guide the defensive backs at Presbyterian

College. Summers earned his first coaching position at Tift County High School in Georgia where coached the defensive backs in 2002.

A four-year letterwinner at Presbyterian College, Summers earned preseason All-South Atlantic honors as a linebacker in 1999 and was selected as team captain as a senior for the Blue Hose. He received his bachelor's degree in political science from Presbyterian College in 2002.

Summers is married to the former Beth King, and the couple has three sons, Jake, Walker and Anderson.

The Summers File

Personal

Hometown: Tifton, Ga.

Birthday: April 11 in Tifton, Ga.

Alma Mater: Presbyterian College (2002)

Education: Bachelor's (political science)

Family: wife, Beth; sons, Colby, Walker and Anderson

Playing Experience

Presbyterian College (1998-01)

Coaching Experience

2016-: Georgia Southern (head coach)

2015: Colorado State (defensive coordinator/safeties)

2014: UCF (defensive coordinator/linebackers)

2012-13: UCF (linebackers)

2011: UAB (safeties/co-special teams coordinator)

2007-10: UAB (linebackers)

2006: Georgia Southern (safeties)

2005: Georgia (G.A.)

2004: Troy (G.A.)

2003: Presbyterian College (defensive backs)

2002: Tift County (GA) HS (defensive backs)

Postseason Experience

2015: Arizona (Colorado State vs. Nevada)

2014: St. Petersburg (UCF vs. NC State)

2013: Fiesta (UCF vs. Baylor)

2012: Beef 'O' Brady's (UCF vs. Ball State)

2005: Sugar (Georgia vs. West Virginia)

2004: Silicon Valley (Troy vs. Northern Illinois)