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Georgia Southern University

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Werts Leads Eagles To Impressive Season-Opening Victory
Georgia Southern rolls to 37-6 win over South Carolina State
Football
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Chad Lunsford Post-Game Interview

STATESBORO - The Georgia Southern football team picked up a workmanlike 37-6 victory over South Carolina State Saturday evening at Allen E. Paulson Stadium in the season opener for both squads.

Key Moment: With the Eagles holding a 6-0 lead late in the first quarter, senior Deshon Cooper sacked SCSU quarterback Dewann Ford Jr. and forced a fumble the nose tackle Ty Phillips picked up and returned 17 yards. It sparked a quick GS touchdown and the Eagles cruised from there to the victory.

Play of the Game: Senior linebacker Tomarcio Reese's diving interception on a tipped pass brought the crowd to its feet and led to a 19-yard field goal from Tyler Bass.

Key Stat: Wesley Kennedy III led the way with 158 all-purpose yards, coming four different ways. The sophomore had 67 yards on punt returns, 61 yards on kickoff returns, 22 yards rushing and 8 yards rushing.

Key Scoring Plays:
- The Eagles got on the board first when Monteo Garrett punched it in from 1 yard out to cap a 42-yard scoring drive on the second drive of the game. GS 6-0
- After Ty Phillips picked up a fumble and rumbled 17 yards to put the Eagles in scoring position, Shai Werts faked the pitch and kept in on the near side, bouncing off several tacklers for a 23-yard touchdown. GS 13-0
Wesley Fields capped off the opening drive of the second half with a 1-0 yard plunge to widen the gap. GS 23-0

South Carolina State finally got on the board late in the third quarter with a time-consuming 18-play drive that ate up over 9 minutes off the clock, but the PAT was blocked by Raymond Johnson III. GS 23-6

Shai Werts scored his third touchdown of the game late in the fourth quarter, keeping on the option and scampering 14 yards for the score GS 37-6

**Player of the Game:** Sophomore quarterback Shai Werts rushed for a career-high 163 yards and three touchdowns on 22 carries, topping his 124 yards he racked up against New Hampshire last season in Birmingham. He also went 5-for-7 for 29 yards passing and even had a 40-yard punt.

**Up Next:** The Eagles (1-0) will return to action next Saturday at home, hosting UMass (1-1) at 6 p.m. in a non-conference game at Allen E. Paulson Stadium. The game will be broadcast online through ESPN+.