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Georgia Southern University

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WBB Weekend Preview: Eagles Continue Home Stretch Against South Alabama and Troy

Georgia Southern will face off against Sun Belt foes in Hanner Fieldhouse on Thursday evening and Saturday afternoon



Milledge Austin

Women's Basketball | 1/4/2017 12:04:00 PM

Story Links

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STATESBORO, Ga. – The Georgia Southern women's basketball team hosts two Sun Belt matchups inside of Hanner Fieldhouse this weekend. The Eagles will face off against South Alabama on Thursday evening and Troy on Saturday afternoon. Thursday night's game against the Jaguars is set to tip off at 7 p.m. and will be broadcasted live on ESPN3. Saturday's game against the Trojans will begin at 2 p.m., with the men to follow shortly after.

THURSDAY GAME SNAPSHOT

South Alabama vs. Georgia Southern

Thursday, Jan. 5 | 7:00 p.m. EST | [Hanner Fieldhouse \(Statesboro, Ga.\)](#)
[Live Video \(ESPN3\)](#) | [Live Stats](#) | [Live Audio \(GS Sports Network\)](#)

PROMOTION: THROWBACK THURSDAY

Fans are encouraged to visit gseagles.com/throwback and submit their favorite oldies songs to be played at the game against South Alabama on Thursday night.

SCOUTING THE JAGUARS (Twitter - [@SouthALWBB](#))

The Eagles and Jaguars have met eleven times in school history, with the Eagles holding a 6-5 overall record over the Jaguars. The two teams have split the season series in each of the last two years during their only two meetings as Sun Belt foes. The series was rekindled in 2015 when Georgia Southern joined the Sun Belt Conference, after the two had not met in seven years. In 2016 the Eagles and Jaguars split in their matchups, where GS lost on the road (45-48) but defeated South Alabama at home earlier that season (57-43).

South Alabama is coached by fourth-year head coach Terry Fowler. Fowler, a graduate of Lane (Tenn) College, holds a 18 year career record of 239-243, including a 33-66 mark in Mobile. Prior to coaching at South Alabama, Fowler spent seven seasons at the helm of North Alabama, where he guided the Lions to NCAA Tournament appearances in both 2011 and 2013 while winning 20-plus games in each of those years. During his time as head coach of the Jaguars, Fowler has coached four All-Sun Belt selections and led the conference in blocks, field-goal defense and defensive rebounding.

South Alabama enters Thursday's game on a three-game losing skid after falling to in-state conference rival Troy, 73-57 on Saturday. The Jaguars have lost five of their last seven contests. In the seven losses on the season, South Alabama has fallen by 25 or more points in 3 games, including a 40 point deficit twice on the season.

South Alabama has one Jag averaging double digit points with Chyna Ellis scoring 10.7 points per game. Along with leading the Jaguars in scoring, Ellis is also the team's top rebounder with 7.1 rebounds per contest. Ellis is responsible for 20% of the team's scoring and 20% of the team's rebounds per game. South Alabama enters the contest

with the lowest scoring offense in the Sun Belt with 50.4 points per game, while also holding opponents to the second lowest output in the conference at 60.3 points per game.

[2016-17 South Alabama Roster](#)

[2016-17 South Alabama Schedule](#)

[2016-17 South Alabama Statistics](#)

SATURDAY GAME SNAPSHOT

Troy vs. Georgia Southern

Saturday, Jan. 7 | 2:00 p.m. EST | [Hanner Fieldhouse \(Statesboro, Ga.\)](#)

[Live Stats](#) | [Live Audio \(GS Sports Network\)](#) | [Live Video \(GS All-Access\)](#)

SCOUTING THE TROJANS (Twitter - [@TroyTrojansWBB](#))

Georgia Southern and Troy have met in women's basketball ten times, with Troy owning a 2-8 record over the Eagles. The two teams have met twice a season for the last two years since Georgia Southern entering the Sun Belt, and previously had not matched up since 2006. In 2016, the Eagles fell to Troy during both of their matchups, 68-84 at Troy and 66-81 at home.

Head Coach Chanda Rigby is in her fifth season at the helm of the Trojans program after spending the previous seven seasons as the head coach at Pensacola State. In her four seasons coaching the Trojans, Rigby has coached six first or second team All-Sun Belt selections, led the Sun Belt in scoring offense each year, and the most recent three teams have all finished in the NCAA's top 20 in scoring offense.

Last season, the Trojans finished 20-13, won the Sun Belt Conference Tournament and qualified for the NCAA Tournament for just the second time in program history. This year, Troy has started the campaign 8-4 with notable road wins over Villanova, South Alabama, Alabama State and Loyola Chicago. The Trojans are averaging 87.8 points per game while holding their opponents to 73.3 points. As a team, Troy enters the weekend shooting 41.7% (389-933) from the field and averaging 7.8 three-pointers per game. The Trojans have forced 19.3 turnovers per game, but have turned the ball over 22.6 times per game themselves.

Jayla Chills leads the Trojans in scoring with 11.8 points per game and a total of 142 points on the year. The senior guard has started all 12 games, averaging 23.8 minutes per game. Behind her, senior guard Claresa Banks averages 10.6 points per game with a total of 127 points on the year. Banks is also an offensive threat from three-point range, averaging 40.4% (21-52) with an average of 1.8 a game. Caitlyn Ramirez leads the team with 7.8 rebounds per game in 6 starts while Amanda Mendoza leads the team with 36 assists on the year.

[2016-17 Troy Roster](#)

[2016-17 Troy Schedule](#)

[2016-17 Troy Statistics](#)

LAST TIME OUT (L, 54-58 vs. Georgia State)

The Georgia Southern women's basketball team closed out the 2016 calendar year with a 58-54 loss to in-state rival Georgia State Saturday morning inside Hanner Fieldhouse in both team's Sun Belt opener.

Georgia Southern led at the break, 32-21, but the Panthers (5-7, 1-0 SBC) shot 45.8 percent from the field in the second half while the Eagles (4-8, 0-1 SBC) shot just 21.2 percent for the half and 27.3 percent for the game.

Angel McGowan led the Eagles with 14 points and seven rebounds, but only two other players had eight points or more: Alexis Brown and Sierra Butler (8 points, 14 rebounds). The 14 rebounds for Butler tied a career high and set a new season best. The Panthers had three players in double figures: Astaja Tyghter (16 points), Makeba Ponder (16 points) and Tiffany Holston (15 points, 17 rebounds).

With the win, Georgia State added a point in the Rivalry Series and now leads 6-3 after the Georgia Southern men won the second half of the women and men's doubleheader.

RECORD CLIMBING

- With a start today, Senior Alexis Sams will move into a tie for fifth all-time in games started (93) with Sharon Mitchell (1996-01). Sams eclipsed the 500 career point mark with six points against UCF (12/17). She has now scored 511 career points during her collegiate career. She is also in the top-11 of three career categories, including 11th in three-point field goals made (114), 8th in three-point field goals attempted (378) and sixth in games started (92).
- Senior Patrice Butler scored her 800th career point while at Georgia Southern earlier this season against Mercer (11/29). She has scored 859 points while in Statesboro and has 990 collegiate points between her time at Furman (131) and Georgia Southern (856).
- Senior Angel McGowan is currently in the top-20 in program history of four career categories, including the top-10 of two. McGowan is 16th all-time for points scored (1,136), 11th in steals (162), ninth in three-point field goals made (125) and fourth in three-point field goals attempted (442).
- Junior Sierra Butler is currently in the top-20 of school history with 33 blocks.

YEAR TWO FOR DROWN AND COMPANY

When Kip Drown took over the reins of the Georgia Southern women's basketball program over a year ago, he knew the rebuild would be a process that required him, his staff and the players to be patient. After the first year, the Eagles are looking to take the next step in building a successful program and they will have plenty of experience to draw from both on the coaching side as well as on the court.

Despite being chosen 10th in the Preseason Sun Belt Conference Coaches' Poll, the team isn't looking to just roll over. The Eagles return plenty of talent and are a year older with more experience overall while also adding key pieces at every position. Last

season, the Eagles had plenty of depth at certain positions, but were inexperienced at others. With at least three players at every position this year, and some players cross-trained at multiple positions, GS is prepared to take the next step.

MCGOWAN AND BUTLER EARN PRESEASON ALL-SUN BELT HONORS

Georgia Southern women's basketball student-athletes [Angel McGowan](#) and [Patrice Butler](#) earned Preseason All-Sun Belt Conference honors as voted on by the league's coaches prior to the season. McGowan, a senior guard from Greenville, S.C., earned first team honors and Butler, a senior forward/center from Norcross, Ga., was named to the third team.

NEXT UP

The Eagles will travel to Louisiana to continue Sun Belt play against UL Monroe and Louisiana next week. GS will face off against the UL Monroe Warhawks on Thursday, Jan. 12 at 7 p.m. EST and the Louisiana Rajun Cajuns on Saturday, Jan. 14 at 2 p.m. EST.

The 2017 Sun Belt Conference Men's and Women's Basketball Championships are scheduled for a week of March Madness in the Big Easy. New Orleans will once again be home to the two championships that will take place at Lakefront Arena from March 7-12 and ticket books can now be purchased from your our ticket office. For more information, visit the Sun Belt Conference's championship central websites - [Men's Championship](#) – [Women's Championship](#) – and be sure to follow the [@FunBelt](#) on social media - [@SunBelt](#).

*Georgia Southern Athletics provides up-to-date information on all its sports through its official website, [GSEagles.com](#), through social media channels [facebook.com/GSAthletics](#), [twitter.com/GSAthletics](#), iOS app *Georgia Southern Eagles* and Android app *Eagles GATA*. Fans can purchase tickets to Georgia Southern Athletics events by visiting [GSEagles.com/Tickets](#).*

[Print Friendly Version](#)

PLAYERS MENTIONED

#35 Patrice Butler

F/C

6' 2"

Senior

#25 Sierra Butler

F/C

6' 2"

Junior

#11 Angel McGowan

G/F

5' 9"

Senior

#23 Alexis Sams

G

5' 5"

Redshirt Senior

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.