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Eagles Get Back to Winning Ways with 76-62 Triumph over ULM

Smith, Hughes combine to hit 10 3-pointers in SBC victory.

STATESBORO, Ga. - Behind 22 points from sophomore Ike Smith, the Georgia Southern men's basketball team improved to 8-1 at home, rolling past ULM 76-62 in Sun Belt men's basketball action Saturday evening in Hanner Fieldhouse.

Smith tied his career high with five made 3-pointers to lead the way while Mike Hughes scored 17 points - five via the 3-point shot - and grabbed six rebounds. Tookie Brown dropped in 15 points and hit a pair of long-range shots. Defensively, Coye Simmons grabbed nine rebounds, and the Eagles blocked four ULM shots.

Marcus Washington led the way for ULM, scoring 15 points.
For the game, GS shot 47.2 percent from the field and hit 13 of 22 3-pointers.

With the win, Georgia Southern improved to 15-8 overall, 8-2 in the Sun Belt to remain in a tie for the league lead. GS has now won 11 of its last 14 games. ULM fell to 7-16, 1-9 in the SBC.

The Story
Georgia Southern used a 9-2 run midway through the first half, keyed by a 3-pointer from Smith, to get off to a 16-10 lead at the second media timeout. The Eagles stretched their lead to 11 when Hughes drained a deep 3-pointer with 5:25 left. Smith made it a 13-point lead with a layup and then Hughes drained another 3-pointer all while ULM went over four minutes without scoring any points. After a dunk by ULM broke the 10-0 run, Smith came right back with his second long ball of the half, and Brown hit two free throws late to send the Eagles into the locker room with a 44-27 lead.

GS was blistering from the field in the first half, shooting 57.1 percent on 16-of-28 from the field. The Eagles drained six 3-pointers and out-rebounded the Warhawks 18-12 in the first stanza.

The Warhawks got off to a quick start in the second half, hitting five of their first seven shots and went on a 7-0 run to cut into the lead and force a GS timeout. ULM clawed its way to within nine points, but a Smith 3-pointer with just under 14 minutes left broke an 0-for-7 shooting stretch for the Eagles. After missing his first two attempts, Jake Allsmiller hit a 3-pointer to make it a 16-point lead and force a ULM timeout with 12:40 to play. Another 3-pointer by Smith, the conference's top scorer, gave the Eagles a 19-point cushion during a 10-0 run that stretched over a 4:09 span.

Quotables
Sophomore guard Ike Smith
On his play tonight
"I just feed off guys like Mike (Hughes) and Jake (Allsmiller) and Tookie (Brown). When they start hitting shots, it just gets contagious and rubs off on me and the other guys as well."

On tonight's outcome
"It all comes down to defense. When we get stops, it's kind of hard to stop us in transition so coach preaches getting stops so we can play our game."

Junior guard Mike Hughes
On getting everybody involved
"I just have faith in my teammates, and I know how much hard work everybody puts in between these lines when nobody is in here. So I know what plays they can make so I just try to get them going."

On getting back on track
"Just get back to playing our brand of basketball. We just weren't doing the same things that we were doing during that win streak, and we wanted to get back to that and play our brand of basketball."

**Head coach Mark Byington**

**On tonight's performance**

"If you shoot 59 percent from the 3-point line and you make 13 of them, it's certainly going to give you a chance to win. The biggest thing with that is that I thought we were very unselfish and we made some good passes. We made a couple big plays that kind of led to the threes. It's the style that teams sometimes play against us, where they try to take away our drives and load the paint up and we just have to take what the defense gives us. So this was a game where they wanted to take away our drives and over-help, and we have to kick it out and make threes."

**Next up**

The Eagles take on Louisiana (14-9, 4-6 SBC) Monday in a 7 p.m. Sun Belt contest in Hanner Fieldhouse. The game will be broadcast on ESPN3.

**Promotions for Monday:** Glowstick Night - Free glowsticks for fans! Make sure you wave your glowsticks high when the lights go out for the starting lineup! Scholar Student-Athlete Recognition - Georgia Southern Student-Athletes will be recognized for their hard work in the classroom. These student-athletes earned a term GPA of 3.0 or higher in the fall 2016 semester.

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. For tickets to Georgia Southern athletics events, visit GSEagles.com/tickets.

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