

Georgia Southern University

Digital Commons@Georgia Southern

---

Athletics News

Athletics

---

9-23-2017

## Preview: Men's Golf Primed for Another Run

Georgia Southern University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/athletics-news-online>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Preview: Men's Golf Primed for Another Run" (2017). *Athletics News*. 1117.  
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/athletics-news-online/1117>

This article is brought to you for free and open access by the Athletics at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Athletics News by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu).

# Georgia Southern University



Preview: Men's Golf Primed for Another Run  
Eagles open the season at Shoal Creek Monday.  
Marc Gignac  
Men's Golf  
Posted: 9/23/2017 1:58:00 PM

**STATESBORO** – Results beget expectations, and the better the results, the higher the expectations.

That is the echelon the Georgia Southern men's golf program has reached after making its 24th NCAA Championship appearance in 2017. It was the seventh postseason appearance in the last nine seasons.

With eight lettermen returning, including three All-Sun Belt selections, the Sun Belt Golfer of the Year and four of the five in the lineup at the Austin Regional, this may be the most experienced team returning in Coach [Carter Collins](#)' 11 years with the program.

Results beget expectations, and the Eagles have not advanced from the regionals to the finals since 2010.

They won't write it down, won't post it on the bathroom mirror and probably won't even talk about it, but taking the next step means advancing to the Finals and then going even further and advancing to match play. They believe they have the team to do it. The key is how to accomplish that goal.

"The word our team chose to describe us this year is 'improve,'" said Collins. "We want to improve on last year, improve on each week-to-week execution and improve our attitudes and skills through hard work. That word has been well represented by the team so far this season."

Improving fits right in with the other values of the program that Collins and assistant coach [Chan Metts](#) have established and nurtured.

"The overall philosophy for our program is hard work, positivity and focus," said Collins. "We want to work hard to accomplish our goals while having some fun at the same time. We focus on daily processes, on the daily work to get better one inch at a time, and we know that if we do the work all the way through next April, that will set us up for great success in May. It takes a ton of hard work, a ton of depth on the team and you need a little bit of luck sprinkled in."

The hard work has already begun, and Collins likes to press the reset button after

**Tournament Name:** Shoal Creek Invitational

**Host:** UAB

**Location:** Shoal Creek, Ala.

**Dates:** Sept. 25-26

**Course:** [Shoal Creek Country Club](#)

**Par:** 72 (6,479 yards)

**Format:** 54 holes (36 Monday, 18 Tuesday)

**Tee Times:** Shotgun start at 8:30 a.m ET Monday (continuous play) and tee times at 8:30 a.m. ET Tuesday

**Field:** Chattanooga, Georgia Southern, Kennesaw State, Liberty, Memphis, North Florida, Notre Dame, Ole Miss, South Alabama, Troy, UAB and Wake Forest

each season, good or bad.

"Everything starts back at zero," he said. "Nothing we did last year has to be validated. We can definitely work on some of the stuff that we didn't do well, but we still have the same goals, that's to go out there and give it our absolute best for 54 holes and see where that puts us every week, and then add up the results at the end of the year and see where we're going. So we focus on the work and we focus on the process and we focus on improving and trying to assemble the best team we can every week. Also one of our main goals this year is to make sure confidence is high no matter what battles are in front of us."

With three seniors and a junior with a combined 96 starts among them to choose from, assembling an experienced team each week will not be difficult. Collins, however, does expect qualifying for the lineup to be extremely competitive because of the depth of the team, which is certainly beneficial to its progress.

"I think you'll see a lot of lineup rotation this year," said Collins. "There are a lot of guys knocking on the door so it's going to be a little bit of a carousel ride throughout the year, but we feel confident with anybody getting in the lineup at any time."

Leading the way will be a trio of all-conference selections, two of whom tied for first at last year's Sun Belt Championship. Junior [Steven Fisk](#) wound up besting senior [Jake Storey](#) in a playoff, and the third all-league selection, senior [Archer Price](#), tied for 10th.

Fisk notched five top-10 finishes and placed in the top-30 in nine of 12 events this season. He led the squad in scoring average and shot par or better in 20 rounds, including 12 rounds in the 60s. Fisk kept the momentum in a summer which culminated with qualifying for the U.S. Amateur in August.

"Steven found that he belongs in the upper echelon of amateur golf this summer while competing in the US Amateur in Los Angeles," said Collins. "It gives you a ton of confidence that you do belong and I think that's one of the best things a golfer can hear. The amount of confidence that radiates from a person that gets that is unbelievable. I think Steven is showing that right now; he's playing some great golf."

Storey, the reigning Sun Belt Golfer of the Year, was second on the team in scoring average and posted four top-10 finishes, including one win and three in the top-5. He shot par or better in 19 rounds, including nine of the last 13 of the season. Rather than going home to England for the summer, Storey stayed in the U.S. to play the summer circuit.

"Jake had a very successful summer as well, and he played very consistent, very solid," said Collins. "He's been working on some things the last few weeks that's starting to take hold and his confidence is climbing, so I look forward to see what he can do this year. Jake has tremendous talent and we believe the sky is the limit for him in the future. He has asked for a bigger leadership role in the team this year and it has been a pleasure to watch him improve on and off the course over his career."

With 31 collegiate tournaments under his belt, Price has seen more action than any other Eagle. His continued improvement was rewarded with a second-team All-Sun Belt nod, and he logged eight top-30 finishes and tied for 10th at the Sun Belt Championship. Price ranked third on the team in scoring average and carded par or better in 17 rounds.

"His progression has been continuous and impressive," said Collins. "He's worked really hard on his golf swing to make it to where it's very repeatable and something he can have confidence in, and you can tell it on the golf course. Archer has also worked hard on his mental game and is the best it's ever been. He's always been very sharp and solid, but he's now even sharper and more solid, and it's fun to watch him play right now."

Senior [Jonas Vaisanen](#) is another Eagle with a lot of experience under his belt having played in 15 tournaments in two years at Georgia Southern and another five in his freshman season at Austin Peay.

"Jonas' golf game has improved every year since he got here as a sophomore," said Collins. "I look forward to seeing his progression through his senior year as he takes on more leadership responsibilities and a bigger role in this program."

Junior [Crawford Simmons](#) has continued to progress and played as an individual in the final three tournaments last spring. He knocked 1.75 strokes off his scoring average from his freshman campaign to his sophomore season.

"Crawford finished top-30 at the Schenkel in the spring, which I think that was kind of a turning point for him that showed him that he belongs, and he transitioned that into a very successful summer," said Collins. "He's taking a lot of confidence from the last few months into how he's playing now."

Sophomore [Brett Barron](#) stepped right in as a freshman and solidified his place in the lineup as the season went along. He logged three top-15 finishes and matched the school record with a 63 in the first round of the Furman Intercollegiate on his way to a tie for fifth.

"Brett has gotten more mature as a golfer and his ball striking is a little smoother now than last year, even though it was at a very high level last year," said Collins. "He needs to trust his short game and keep gaining confidence on the course. When he gets his first win in a college event, he's going to be off to the races, and he's really close."

Sophomores [Luukas Alakulppi](#) and [Alexander DeRosa](#) each got a little taste of the college golf tournament environment last season and certainly are hungry for more, while freshmen [Jacob Bayer](#) and [Avery Price](#) will push the veterans to get in the lineup.

"I think Luukas and Alexander are playing some of the best golf they've ever played right now, and they're taking a lot of what they learned as a freshman and applying it as sophomores," said Collins. "Both have shown good leadership skills that have developed over the past few months, and we expect them to be big parts of this program moving forward. We are also excited about the addition of two new guys, [Avery Price](#) and [Jacob Bayer](#). They have been impressive in the first month, and we expect both to make a huge impact on this program over their four years."

Competition in qualifying simulates the pressure-packed situations of college golf, and Collins is pleased with the competition of the qualifying rounds this fall.

"It's making qualifying that much more exciting because you have a couple freshmen who are trying to knock some veterans out of the lineup, and that's always a tough thing to do," he said. "That's making the veterans work even harder so it's been very competitive and exciting so far."

Some adversity set in early as Georgia Southern's first tournament, the Invitational at The Ocean Course, which was originally scheduled for Sept. 11-12, was canceled because of Hurricane Irma. That pushed the opener to Sept. 25-26, when the Eagles travel to the Shoal Creek Invitational. Fisk, Storey, Price, Barron and Alakulppi will be in the five-man lineup with Simmons and Bayer playing as individuals.

Expectations are high, but that is because of recent results. The Eagles acknowledge their presence but do not dwell on them.

"We don't focus on them, because they don't help you one bit," said Collins. "They don't lower your score every round or start you at a lower score than your competitors. Everybody starts at zero every tournament."

The reset button has been pressed, and the Eagles start the Shoal Creek Invitational at zero.

Georgia Southern Athletics provides current information on all its sports through its official website, [GSEagles.com](http://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](https://facebook.com/GSAthletics), [twitter.com/GSAthletics](https://twitter.com/GSAthletics) and [Instagram.com/GSAthletics](https://Instagram.com/GSAthletics). To purchase tickets to Georgia Southern athletics events, visit [GSEagles.com/tickets](http://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](http://GSEagles.com/ClearBag).

Copyright ©2018 Georgia Southern University