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# Georgia Southern University



Hoops Season is Here  
Men's basketball holds first official team practice.  
Marc Gignac  
Men's Basketball  
Posted: 9/30/2017 11:26:00 AM

**STATESBORO** – When the season changes to fall and the calendar heads toward October, it means basketball season is just around the corner.

The Georgia Southern men's basketball team held its first official team practice Friday in Hanner Fieldhouse. Head Coach [Mark Byington](#) and his staff put his team through a two-and-a-half hour workout and though there is much work to be done, he was pleased with the first day.

"Everybody is excited," he said. "I'm excited, the players are excited. It's nervousness, it's energy, it's excitement, it's just a lot of different emotions. I thought we had a great first day. The most apparent thing was that we have veteran guys who understand what it's like to practice and what it means to get better. For the first time, I have guys who have been here for four years, and for the first time in a couple years, I have seniors. So that showed in the first day of practice."

The Eagles have been one of the youngest teams in the country the last two years, and for the second year in a row, Georgia Southern returns 93 percent of its scoring and all five starters. Last year, Georgia Southern went 18-15 and advanced to the postseason for the first time since 2006.

The Eagles did allow its opponents 73.3 points a game and were outrebounded by almost five a contest. Needless to say, improving those numbers has been a point of emphasis throughout the offseason and will continue to be worked on in the preseason.

"Right now, we are trying to build habits, and a majority of our practice has been dedicated to defense and rebounding," said Byington. "What I want our guys to do is to have a solid base, so we're constantly on them about just doing the right thing all the time and not worrying about the results. If we build good habits, that will be major for us later on, but the way our practices are written up now, a majority of it is going to defense and rebounding."

The Eagles released their schedule last week, and their first game will be an exhibition contest against Georgia College Nov. 1 in Hanner. The official season opener is at Wake Forest Nov. 10. A number of college basketball publications are out and predicting Georgia Southern to be one of the top teams in the Sun Belt.

Fans will have a chance to get a glance at the Eagles at Hoops Fan Fest, which will be Oct. 18 in Hanner Fieldhouse. Details on that event will be announced soon.

The Hoops Tip-Off Breakfast, which has become an annual tradition, will be Oct. 25 in Hanner with doors opening at 7:30 a.m. Byington, women's basketball coach [Kip Drown](#) and student-athletes from both teams as well as Director of Athletics [Tom Kleinlein](#) will speak at that event.

For basketball ticket information, visit [GSEagles.com/tickets](http://GSEagles.com/tickets).

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).

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