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PREVIEW: GS Men's Soccer at Sun Belt Tournament, 11/9-12

Eagles open up action on Thursday, taking on Appalachian State at 4 p.m. in Conway, S.C.

Men's Soccer

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CONWAY, S.C. - The Georgia Southern men's soccer team opens up action in the 2017 Sun Belt Conference Tournament on Thursday as the No. 3 seed, facing No. 6 seed Appalachian State in a 4 p.m. contest on the campus of Coastal Carolina in Conway, S.C.

The Eagles (9-7, 3-2 SBC) will be facing the Mountaineers (5-8-5, 0-3-2 SBC) for the second time in five days as the two teams finished the 2017 regular season on Saturday. Georgia Southern used two first-half goals to claim a 2-0 shutout win at Appalachian State.

Georgia Southern has never won a conference tournament title in its program history, and for the Eagles to accomplish the feat, they will have to play three matches in a four-day span. The winner of Thursday's first-round match will take on second-seeded Georgia State (11-6-1, 3-1-1 SBC) in a 4 p.m. semifinal match on Friday. The 2017 Sun Belt Conference Championship match will be Sunday at 1 p.m.

"I think that's the reality of the structure of the tournament," Head Coach [John Murphy](#) said about the prospect of three matches in four days. "Every conference does it a

little different. You have to play the cards you're dealt, and we're the 3rd seed. All of our attention is on Appalachian State. They are a well-coached team, very disciplined and resolute, and that's going to be a difficult game for us. We can't look beyond that game on Thursday. There's not a Friday game, not a Sunday game without getting the right result on Thursday. I'm actually looking forward to knockout soccer. I think it's going to benefit our team, because I think we have players that are used to dealing with high pressure situations. We're good squad, we've played a very very good schedule on purpose to prepare ourselves for this situation. We have a ton of respect for our colleagues in the conference, but we feel we're as good as any team here and we're going to go to Coastal and give it everything we've got."

The Eagles are 1-2-1 all-time in Sun Belt Conference tournament play, beginning in 2014 when Georgia Southern hosted the tournament and reached the final. Five times, the Eagles have been conference tournament runners-up, twice while in the TAAC (1980, 1990) and twice while in the Southern Conference (1996, 2006).

Head coach [John Murphy](#) doesn't expect a lot of changes on the field in Thursday's match against Appalachian State, given the recency in which the two teams played each other.

"I think the difficult thing about changing things in a short amount of time is that you have the personnel that you have, there's not much you can change for either team," Murphy said. "I'm not anticipating anything different. Whether we change formation or personnel slightly, the game will take a similar tone. It's going to be a very tight game, and I'm not expecting it to be a high scoring game. It's going to require our collective efforts to get the right result. I think, in some ways, it's good that we played them so recently. We have a lot of respect for them, it's not like we've forgotten what kind of team they are."

All of the Sun Belt Conference tournament matches will be broadcast live on ESPN3. Check out the direct links to [live stats](#) and the [live webcast](#) of Thursday's matches, and also read up on the Eagles with [tournament notes](#).

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