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Georgia Southern University

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Big Runs Lead Mercer Past GS Women's Basketball, 72-45
Bears open up the game on a 16-2 run, use a 15-2 third-quarter run to knock off the Eagles
Women's Basketball
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MACON, Ga. - The Mercer University women's basketball team opened the game on a 16-0 run to claim a 72-45 non-conference victory over visiting Georgia Southern on Thursday evening at Hawkins Arena in Macon.

The Bears remained unbeaten on the year at 3-0, while the Eagles fell to 1-2. Georgia Southern will face a second straight postseason squad in its next action on Sunday, hosting Alabama in a 2 p.m. tip at Hanner Fieldhouse.

When these two teams met in Statesboro a year ago, the score was tied 6-all in the first quarter when the Bears used a 16-0 run to pull away and claim a 77-56 win. This time in Macon, Mercer would hit five of its first seven shots from the floor to open up the contest on a 16-0 run, before a three-pointer by senior Alexis Foulks with 4:54 left in the period halted the run.
Mercer would hit 10-of-19 shots from the floor in building a 27-10 lead at the end of the first period. The Bears would lead by 19, 32-13, on a three-pointer by Linnea Rosendal, but the Georgia Southern defense would hold Mercer without a point the rest of the period, allowing the Eagles to go on an 8-0 run and cut the lead to 11 at the break, 32-21.

"I was really proud of our kids [during that stretch]," Head Coach Kip Drown said. "I thought we had to switch and go some man, something we've been working on hard since the exhibition game, and I thought we got down and guarded really hard. Then we started making some baskets and got back into the game."

The second half would open with Mercer on an 11-0 run, building a 43-21 lead with 6:30 left in the third quarter as the Eagles turned the ball over on eight straight possessions during the stretch. The Bears ended the period outscoring Georgia Southern 27-7 to build a 59-28 lead heading to the fourth quarter.

"I was a little disappointed in the second half," Coach Drown said. "We got a great shot to start the half, but it didn't go, then we turned it over a few times in a row and that turned into a few layups. We just didn't respond as well as we did in the second quarter.

"Overall, there were some positives," Coach Drown said. "I looked out at the floor at times and we had three sophomores, a junior and a senior on the floor. Our kids battled for the most part, but we just couldn't overcome the turnovers on the second run in the third quarter."

Nakol Franks, who had a career-high 26 points when these two teams met last year, led the Eagles with nine points on 3-of-8 shooting from three-point range. KeKe Calloway led a quartet of Bears in double figures with 17 points.

The Eagles finished the night shooting 28.6 percent from the field (14-of-49), while hitting 9-of-23 threes (39.1 percent) and 8-of-13 from the free throw line (61.5 percent). Mercer shot 43.8 percent from the field (28-of-64), while hitting 7-of-13 three-pointers (53.8 percent) and 9-of-10 foul shots (90 percent). Georgia Southern turned the ball over a season-high 24 times, compared to 10 for the Bears, and Mercer had a slight edge on the glass, outrebounding the Eagles by one, 38-37.