A Quick Look Ahead to 2018

Georgia Southern University

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A Quick Look Ahead to 2018
Eagles expected to return 17 starters next season
Football
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With 2017 in the books, it's time to look ahead to 2018 and what can be expected of the Georgia Southern Eagles.

Below are a few bullet points on what happened in 2017 and what you can look forward to next season.

• Georgia Southern won two of its final three games of the 2017 campaign to take momentum into the 2018 season under new head coach Chad Lunsford.

• The Eagles placed seven players on the All-Sun Belt teams, all of which are expected to be back next year next season.

• Georgia Southern is slated to return 17 starters combined on offense and defense in 2018, plus its placekicker in all-conference selection Tyler Bass. The Eagles should return eight starters on offense and nine on defense in 2018.
Redshirt freshman Shai Werts enjoyed quite the rookie campaign, starting 11 of the Eagles' 12 games. He caught fire late, earning Sun Belt Offensive Player of the Week after leading the Eagles to a 52-0 win over South Alabama. The Clinton, South Carolina, native finished his freshman year with 929 passing yards, a new school record for freshman quarterbacks. Hall of Famer Tracy Ham previously held the school record for freshman passing yards with 886 yards in 1983. Werts finished with 1,486 yards of total offense (929 pass, 722 rush), setting a new freshman record for total offense in a season by a quarterback with 1,651 yards. Kevin Ellison previously held the record with 1,642 yards (886 run, 756 pass) set in 2013.

The cornerback duo of Monquavion Brinson (5) and Kindle Vildor (3) combined to pick off eight passes and break up 19 more. Both were sophomores in 2017 and will be back, along with junior safeties Joshua Moon and RJ Murray. The Eagle secondary picked off 12 passes in 2017.

Wesley Fields led the Eagles with 811 rushing yards, the ninth most in program history for a junior. Fields will enter his senior campaign in 2018 just 15 yards shy of the 2,000-yard mark as he sits with 1,985 career rushing yards, 18th most in program history.

Werts' 722 rushing yards were the seventh most in program history for a freshman. He also had four 100-yard rushing games.

Bass had a breakout year stepping in 2016 Lou Groza Award finalist Younghoe Koo, who made the Los Angeles Chargers' opening-day roster. Bass, a rising junior in 2018, made 15 of 19 field goals on the year, including nine from 40 yards or longer. His nine long-range kicks were the second most in program history for a single season, just falling short of Tim Foley's 10 in 1987.

Junior defensive end Deshon Cooper had nine quarterback hurries, which is tied for the seventh most in program history for a single season and true freshman Raymond Johnson III had seven QB hurries, tied for the 11th most in program history.

After playing in Paulson Stadium just four times in 2017, the Eagles will play at home six times in 2018. GS will open the 2018 slate with a pair of home games, hosting Presbyterian on Sept. 1 and UMass on Sept. 8. Season ticket renewals begin on Jan. 1, 2018.