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PREVIEW: GS Women's Basketball Opens Sun Belt Play With Weekend Alabama Swing
Eagles take on Troy on Friday evening, then face South Alabama on Sunday in first league games of the year
Women's Basketball
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STATESBORO, Ga. - The Georgia Southern women's basketball team opens up Sun Belt Conference play this weekend, visiting Troy on Friday and South Alabama on Sunday in its final contests of the calendar 2017 year.

The Eagles (3-8, 0-0 SBC) are looking to halt a five-game losing streak this weekend, starting with Friday's 5 p.m. central time matchup against Troy (5-6, 0-0). The game will be shown on ESPN3.

Georgia Southern lost a 68-49 contest to Stony Brook on Dec. 21 in its last action. Senior [Trellanie English-Lurry](#) was perfect from the floor, hitting three three-pointers and a three-point play en route to her season-high 12 points, but the Eagles could not cut into a double-digit lead by the Seawolves in the second half. The 49-point output was the fifth time in eight losses this season in which the Eagles have scored under 50 points.

The Trojans, however, present an intriguing matchup for Georgia Southern as Troy is 13th in the nation in scoring offense (85.4 ppg) but 344th out of 345 teams in scoring defense (81.5 ppg). Georgia Southern will have an opportunity to get open shots, but must take care of the basketball against a team that averages 12.5 steals per game and has a +5.7 turnover margin.

Troy won both meetings between the two teams last season, capturing an 89-86 win in Statesboro on Jan. 7, and a 77-67 win in Troy on Jan. 26. The Trojans hold a 10-2 edge in the overall series and have won 10 straight, dating back to 1996.

Follow all the action from Friday night's contest against the Trojans here: [ESPN3 Live Video](#) [Georgia Southern Sports Network Live Audio](#) [Live Stats](#)

Sunday, the Eagles make the journey down the state of Alabama to Mobile, to take on South Alabama (7-4, 0-0 SBC) at 1:05 p.m. central time. The Jaguars have been one of the most successful Sun Belt teams during non-conference play, picking up impressive road wins at North Carolina (W 85-84) and at Southern Miss (W 78-57).

South Alabama has used a suffocating defense (59.8 ppg) and the duo of Chyna Ellis (15.5 ppg, 9.2 rpg) and Savannah Jones (13.3 ppg) in its early season success. Ellis was a preseason first-team All-Sun Belt Conference pick at center, while Jones has been a scoring revelation off the bench, averaging just 22.7 minutes per game but making the most of those minutes to rank second on the team in scoring.

The Eagles split with the Jaguars last season, with each team winning at home. USA won, 55-46, in Mobile on Jan. 5, while Georgia Southern won, 53-45, on Jan. 28 in Statesboro. Overall, the Eagles hold a slim 7-6 lead in the series between the two teams.

Check out the action from Sunday's New Year's Eve contest against the Jaguars here: [Live Video](#) [Georgia Southern Sports Network Live Audio](#) [Live Stats](#)

Last season, Head Coach [Kip Drown](#) and the Eagles went 4-8 in non-conference play, but rebounded to go 9-9 in Sun Belt competition. The conference record was a five-win improvement over 2016-17, and represented the biggest jump in league play for Georgia Southern women's basketball since 2007-08, when the Eagles went 13-5 in the Southern Conference, a year after going 7-11 in the league.

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