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Georgia Southern University



South Alabama Survives Men's Basketball 69-67

The Eagles play their first home game in nearly a month Thursday.

Marc Gignac

Men's Basketball

Posted: 12/31/2017 7:36:00 PM

MOBILE, Ala. – Rodrick Sikes scored 27 points to lead South Alabama, and [Quan Jackson](#)'s 3-point try at the buzzer rimmed out for Georgia Southern as the Jags hung on to top the Eagles 69-67 in Sun Belt men's basketball action Sunday afternoon in the Mitchell Center.

Jackson led the Eagles with 14 points and added seven rebounds, three blocked shots, two assists and two steals, while [Mike Hughes](#) chipped in 13 points. [Tookie Brown](#) finished with 12 points and five rebounds for Georgia Southern (10-5, 1-1), and [Montae Glenn](#) collected 11 points and nine boards.

Sikes made 5 of 10 from 3-point range and 8 of 9 from the free-throw line, and his three shots from the charity stripe broke a 63-63 tie with 1:39 remaining. Herb McGee chipped in nine points and four assists for South Alabama (8-6, 2-0), and Nick Davis posted eight points and seven boards.

The story

After Sikes' free throws put the Jags up by three, Brown made two free throws at the other end, and South Alabama turned it over on their next possession. Jackson drove into the lane and made a tough finish to put the Eagles ahead 67-66 with 49 seconds left.

GS forced Ajayi to take a tough shot in the lane, but Davis was there to clean up the miss with a tip-in to put the Jags back on top 68-67 with 28.2 to go. Jackson missed a 3-pointer from the corner for the Eagles, and they fouled McGee, who made 1 of 2 with 15.4 seconds on the clock. GS inbounded to Brown, who came off a ball screen with the matchup he wanted, began to attack the basket and then threw a bullet to Jackson in the corner. The shot was on line but popped out, and the teams battled for the rebound as the final horn sounded.

The Eagles got off to a poor start and trailed 13-1 early, but a 10-3 run, capped by consecutive Hughes triples, trimmed the lead to 33-32 with 2:54 left in the half. GS missed its next eight shots while South Alabama scored six points, but Brown split a double team and hoisted a 45-footer that found the bottom of the net as the buzzer sounded, making the score 39-35 at the break.

The second half featured seven ties and eight lead changes. GS finished a stretch of six true road games, their longest since 1963, with a 3-3 record.

Quotables from head coach [Mark Byington](#)

On today's game

"There are a lot of things that we did that I'm happy with, but when you lose a game by two points, there are obviously a lot of things that are regrettable. We got off to a poor start, but then we played the way we had to to win a game like this. We took the lead multiple times in the second half, but we couldn't take control of the game and

had a couple opportunities. We missed some crucial free throws, we probably missed 10 or 12 shots that were two or three feet from the rim that we just have to be tough and figure out to get them in there. The positive part was that I was happy with our defense, I think we guarded and I think we locked in after the first couple minutes and we did a great job of rebounding. Some of the turnovers and free throws and chippies around the rim are some of the things we're going to regret about this game."

On [Quan Jackson](#)

"Quan has figured out a niche on this team, and he's staying aggressive and he's one of our best defensive players. He had a challenge tonight in guarding Sikes, and we did a better job on him in the second half in making his shots tougher and Quan had a lot to do with that."

On the six-game road trip

"I think I've slept in my own bed once since Dec. 9, and the guys are the same way so we need to get back and get some normalcy, get our legs underneath us and some rest and some familiarity. Now we got some home games. We've been away for a while, and this team has done a great job in the 2017 part of the schedule. Hopefully, the fans get behind this team, and we do a good job our home court and make it a tough environment. It's a team that plays really hard and plays basketball the right way. We have some really talented players, and I think they are fun to watch. We represent something bigger than just the basketball team so hopefully Eagle Nation and Statesboro get behind this team."

Next up

The Eagles return home for the first time in nearly a month when they host Arkansas State Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in Hanner Fieldhouse. Promotions: National Trivia Day, Faculty/Staff Appreciation Night – General admission tickets are only \$5 with an Eagle ID and available for faculty/staff and their whole family (up to 4 members), Throwback Thursday.

Georgia Southern Athletics provides current information on all its sports through its official website, 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, twitter.com/GSAthletics and Instagram.com/GSAthletics. To purchase tickets to Georgia Southern athletics events, visit 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.

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