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Georgia Southern University

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Women’s Basketball Preview: Georgia Southern to Face Trojans in Saturday Sun Belt Contest

Eagles and Trojans tip off at 2:30 p.m.

Georgia Southern (4-8, 1-2) vs. Troy (7-5, 2-1)
Saturday, Jan. 9 – Hanner Fieldhouse (4,325) – 2:30 p.m.
Radio: 91.9 FM the Buzz
Promotions: Youth League Day - Group rate of $5 is available to Youth Basketball Leagues; Halftime Show – Dublin Jump Rope Team.
Series: TU leads 6-2, L6
In Statesboro: Tied, 2-2
Last Meeting: 2/19/15 - L, 99-93 (ot) (Statesboro, Ga.)
Probable Starters for Georgia Southern:

#11 Angel McGowan, G  
#20 Sierra Kirkland, F  
#23 Alexis Sams, G  
#25 Sierra Butler, F  
#35 Patrice Butler, C

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

• The Eagles opened up their second season in the Sun Belt Conference with a two-game road swing through Texas last weekend, going 0-2, but opened their four-game Sun Belt homestand with a crucial 57-43 win over South Alabama on Thursday.
• Last season, the Eagles went 2-18 in Sun Belt play with both wins coming on the road at South Alabama and at Georgia State.
• GSU's first-ever Sun Belt Conference win came on the road at South Alabama. The Eagles defeated the Jaguars 67-53 on January 10, 2015 in the program's fourth conference game of the season.
• All but one of Georgia Southern's 2015-16 Sun Belt Conference games will be doubleheaders with the men's teams following. The lone exception will be the Eagles' home game against Georgia State on Monday, Feb. 22. The Eagle women and Panther women will play that Monday at 7 p.m. with the men playing on Tuesday, Feb. 23 due to that game airing on ESPN2.

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

• After playing the four games on the road to close out 2015 and open 2016, the Eagles return home to Statesboro for a four-game Sun Belt Conference homestand.
• The Eagles have one more long homestand coming in February when they host the schools from Arkansas as well as Appalachian State and rival Georgia State.
• So far this season the Eagles are 3-2 at home with wins over Jacksonville State, Charleston Southern and South Alabama.

QUICK HITTERS

• When the Eagles played at Texas State on Dec. 30, 2015, it was head coach Kip Drown's 800th career game as a head coach in the college ranks. Drown currently boasts a career record of 467-335 (.582) over 28 seasons, including a 4-8 record for this campaign.
• Senior Briana Jones is currently six points away from 500 career points, all at Georgia Southern. For her career, she averages 7.2 points per game and has 25 so far this season.
• Junior Patrice Butler entered the week needing just four points to reach the 600 point total for her collegiate career. As a freshman at Furman, she scored 131 points and has 478 at Georgia Southern to date. In Thursday's win over South Alabama, the junior center from Norcross recorded 13 points, giving her 609 for her collegiate career.

• In Thursday's win over South Alabama, junior guard Angel McGowan finished the game with seven steals. Those seven steals match the fifth-most steals in a single game by an Eagle player. She now has 25 steals for the season and 115 for her career.
THE HISTORY WITH TROY
• Troy holds a 6-2 all-time record over the Eagles dating back to Dec. 11, 1978, including winning the last 6 meetings. The Trojans are 2-0 over the Eagles as Sun Belt Conference foes.
• Georgia Southern, under the direction of Linda Crowder, won the first two meetings (when Troy was Troy State) 69-65 on Dec. 11, 1978 and 77-67 on Dec. 13, 1978. Both games were played in Statesboro.
• The two programs did not face off again until the 1996-97 season, 18 seasons later, when Rusty Cram took the Eagles to Troy in his first season, falling 86-82.
• In Statesboro, the two programs are tied 2-2. Georgia Southern's 10-point, 77-67 win on Dec. 13, 1978 is the largest margin of victory in the series in Statesboro while the first meeting, a four-point, 69-65 win by the Eagles is the closest margin of victory for the series in Statesboro.

SCOUTING THE TROJANS
• The Trojans (7-5, 2-1 SBC) began this week with a 97-90 win at Georgia State and enter Saturday's game in Statesboro having won two in a row and three of their last five games.
• The back-to-back wins over UA-Little Rock and Georgia State marks the first time the Trojans have won consecutive games this season.
• The Trojans started Sun Belt play at home last week against the two Arkansas schools, first falling 101-81 before bouncing back to claim a 78-71 win over UA-Little Rock.
• The Trojans are 3-4 on the road this season with wins over Alabama State, Southeastern Louisiana and Georgia State.
• Troy has eclipsed the 100-point mark four times this season (and won all four games), scoring 103 at home against West Alabama, 118 at home against Fort Valley State, 104 at home against Nicholls and 100 on the road at Southeastern Louisiana. They were just three points away from the feat on Thursday.
• In Thursday's win over Georgia State, three Trojan players scored 20+ points led by Ashley Beverly Kelley's 26. Caitlyn Ramirez and Amahni Upshaw scored 22 and 21 points respectively.
• As a team, they are averaging 85.5 points per game, shooting 43.1% from the field and are collecting an average of 39.4 rebounds per outing.
• The Trojans are holding opponents to 80.6 points per outing (+4.7 scoring margin) but they are allowing the opposition to hit on 46.1% of their shots from the field including 35.0% from three-point range.
• The Trojans are led by senior Ashley Beverly Kelley's 19.7 points and 31.2 minutes per game.
• Kelley is the reigning Sun Belt Conference Student-Athlete of the Week. In a span of five games, she averaged 20.6 points, 6.2 rebounds, 4.8 assists and 4.0 steals per game. Behind Kelley, Caitlyn Ramirez averages 13.0 points per contest and 5.8 boards. Kelley and Ramirez are the only two Trojan players to start every game while seven other players have appeared in all 12 games and three more have seen action in 11 games.