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**Tim Cowie**

Game Recap: Men's Basketball | 1/9/2016 8:09:00 PM | Marc Gignac

## Men's Basketball Fends off Troy for 93-88 OT Win

*The Eagles continue their four-game homestand Thursday against UL Lafayette.*

**STATESBORO, Ga. –** Ike Smith hit the go-ahead basket in overtime, and Georgia Southern held Troy scoreless on its final four possessions of the game to hang on for a 93-88 Sun Belt Conference men's basketball victory over the Trojans Saturday evening in Hanner Fieldhouse.

Smith drove the lane and hit a right-handed runner with 1:02 left in the extra session, and after Jeremy Holliman was whistled for a travel, Coye Simmons made 1 of 2 from the foul line to give the Eagles a three-point lead with 31.1 to play. Wesley Person's 3-point try with Eagle freshman Tookie Brown in his face hit nothing, and the Eagles dug out the rebound. Brown connected on a pair from the charity stripe with 13.3 seconds left, and Troy missed two desperation 3-point tries on their its final trip down the floor.

Mike Hughes led the Eagles with a game-high 22 points, and Brown finished with 19 points, four assists and four steals. Smith posted 16 points and six rebounds, and Jake Allsmiller chipped in 16 points and three assists. Simmons finished with 10 points.

Person had 19 points to lead Troy (5-10, 0-4), and Jordon Varnado collected 18 points and nine rebounds. B.J. Miller tallied 17 points and three assists, while John Walton III notched 14 points and nine boards.

Georgia Southern (5-9, 1-3) shot a season-high 53 percent from the floor and forced 14 Troy turnovers while only committing six. Troy shot 54 percent from the field but was held to 5 of 22 from 3-point range.

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### **The story**

The Eagles led 80-71 with 4:08 left in the game when Simmons was whistled for a foul after Walton III's shot missed the mark, and Georgia Southern was also assessed a technical foul for protesting the call. The Trojans cashed in on three points from the free-throw line, sparking an 8-0 run, and Miller's fast-break layup cut the margin to 80-79 with 3:11 remaining. Both teams went cold from the floor over the next two minutes with Hughes providing 1-of-2 from the free-throw line to make the score 81-79. Person hit a runner with 23.5 seconds left to tie the game, and Brown's 3-point attempt after drawing some contact was wayward, sending the game into overtime. The Eagles made 11 of their last 15 shots of the first half, and used a 15-4 run over the final 3:56 of the period to open a 51-36 cushion at the break. Hughes scored five during the stretch, while Smith and Simmons each netted four. Person scored eight points, and Troy netted the first 11 of the second half to trim the margin to four just 2:13 into the stanza.

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### **Quotable from Coach Mark Byington**

"It was a hard-fought game. I thought we were tremendous in the first half. We were active, we made shots and we played hard. In the second half, we had to fight through adversity which is something we haven't done. Troy made a lot of plays in the second half, and Wesley Person made some shots that were ridiculous, where I thought we played good defense."

"We have to embrace the game. It's not always going to be perfect. There's going to be runs and good times and bad times. I was talking to them going into overtime and looked at their faces, and some of them were discouraged. I said, 'man, this is great! Let's go place some more basketball and have some fun and make a memory.'"

"Our crowd was great tonight. Our guys were down and out, and they helped us out."