

1-15-2016

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### Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "Men's Basketball Preview: Eagles Face ULM on Frank Kerns Night" (2016). *Athletics News*. 1439.  
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# Men's Basketball Preview: Eagles Face ULM on Frank Kerns Night

*It's also Alumni Day and GoDaddy Bowl Champions Night*

Marc Gignac



**Jeremy Wilburn**

Devonte Boykins and the Eagles cap a four-game homestand Saturday.

Men's Basketball | 1/15/2016 1:16:00 PM

## Story Links

**Georgia Southern (5-10, 1-4) vs. ULM (6-10, 2-3)**

**Saturday, Jan. 16 - Hanner Fieldhouse (4,325) – 5 p.m.**

[Live Video](#) | [Live Stats](#) | [Tickets](#) | [Season Promotions](#) | [Gameday Guide: Basketball](#)

**Radio:** 103.7 WBMZ-FM (Statesboro/Metter/Swainsboro), 102.1 WZAT-FM (Savannah), 1370 WLOP-AM (Jesup)

**Promotions:** It's Frank Kerns night, and Georgia Southern will honor the former men's basketball coach prior to the tipoff of the men's game; Georgia Southern will celebrate the school's first bowl championship football team at halftime of the men's game, and the GoDaddy Bowl Championship Trophy will be on display during the women's game and through the first half of the men's contest; Alumni Night – All men's basketball alumni are invited back for a fun weekend!; Two students will win \$1,000 courtesy of the Georgia Lottery

**Television:** [ESPN3](#) with Drew Fellios and Bob Donewald on the call

**Series Record:** GS trails 9-4, W1

**Last meeting:** 3/14/2015, W 44-43 (SBC Semifinals)

**Probable Starters:**

#2 [Mike Hughes](#)

#3 [Ike Smith](#)

#4 [Tookie Brown](#)

#10 [Jake Allsmiller](#)

#14 [Coye Simmons](#)

**Layup Line**

- Georgia Southern caps a four-game homestand by hosting ULM Saturday.
- It's the first of two meetings against the Warhawks this season.
- Georgia Southern is 1-4 in its last five contests and coming off a 74-65 home loss to UL Lafayette Thursday night.
- Georgia Southern freshman [Tookie Brown](#) is ranked in the top-15 in the Sun Belt in scoring (5th, 17.3 ppg), assists (7th, 3.3 apg), free-throw percentage (14th, .764), steals (2nd, 2.1), 3-point percentage (12th, .364) and assist/turnover ratio (5th, 1.7).
- Brown has scored 20-plus points in five games and reached double figures in 14 of 15 contests.
- Georgia Southern is 24-11 under head coach [Mark Byington](#) in Hanner Fieldhouse and posted a 13-2 record in the building last season. The Eagles are 4-3 this season.
- With 11 of 12 scholarship student-athletes who are freshmen, redshirt freshmen or sophomores (92 percent), Georgia Southern has the highest percentage of underclassmen on its current roster of the 345 NCAA Division I squads. Liberty (91 percent), Ohio State (85 percent), Fairleigh Dickinson (85 percent) and Wyoming (80 percent) round out the top 5.
- Georgia Southern lost 76 percent of its scoring and 72 percent of its rebounding from last season.
- The Eagles were picked 10th in the Preseason Sun Belt Conference Coaches Poll.
- ULM is 1-4 in its last five and coming off a 65-51 loss at Georgia State Thursday night.
- The Warhawks are 1-8 on the road and 1-10 in contests away from home. ULM is 0-3 in road league games.
- ULM was picked third in the Preseason Sun Belt Conference Coaches Poll, while Majok Deng (2nd team) and Nick Coppola (3rd team) earned preseason all-conference honors.
- Deng leads the Warhawks in scoring and rebounding, averaging 18.8 points and 7.3 rebounds a contest.

## The Series

- ULM leads the all-time series, which began in 1976, 9-4 and has won four of the last six.
- All three meetings last season were decided by four points or less, and Georgia Southern won two of them, including a 44-43 decision in the semifinals of the Sun Belt Tournament.
- **Last Meeting - 3/14/2015 - Lakefront Arena - SBC Tourney**
- Curtis Diamond drilled a 3-pointer with 1:49 left, and Georgia Southern held ULM scoreless the rest of the way to earn a 44-43 win in the semifinal round of the Sun Belt Conference Men's Basketball Championship.
- Diamond's game-winning triple came after Eric Ferguson grabbed an offensive rebound and kicked it out to the senior. Diamond momentarily put the ball on his hip, thinking the Eagles would run some offense, but realized he was unguarded and nailed the dagger 3-ball.
- The Eagles got four defensive stops to finish the game after missing the front end of two 1-and-1 free-throw opportunities. The last came off the rim with 8.2 seconds left, and the ball was tossed ahead to Justin Roberson, who drove the length of the court only to see his runner hit the front of the rim as the buzzer sounded.
- Trent Wiedeman tallied 11 points and seven rebounds for Georgia Southern, and Jelani Hewitt scored 11. Diamond finished with 10 points and two steals, and Ferguson notched a game-high 12 rebounds to go along with seven points.
- Nick Coppola scored 12 points to lead ULM, and Jamaal Samuel tallied 12 points and six rebounds. Majok Deng had 10 points and nine rebounds, and Roberson finished with eight points and nine boards. The Eagles held ULM's leading scorer, Tylor Ongwae, scoreless on 0-for-9 shooting.
- **Last time in Hanner - 2/7/2015**
- Tylor Ongwae scored 19 points for ULM, and Georgia Southern guard Mike Hughes' jumper from the wing with 3.2 seconds left in the extra session rimmed out as the Warhawks held on for a 71-68 overtime win.
- The Eagles trailed 69-68 and had the ball with the opportunity for the go-head basket. Hughes took a pass in the corner, pump faked, drove right and took a 17-foot jumper that popped in and out. Ongwae secured the rebound was fouled and hit two free throws with 0.9 seconds on the clock. The Eagles last-gasp 35-foot 3-point try was off the mark.
- Curtis Diamond sent the game into the extra session by canning 1-of-2 free throws with 4.6 seconds left in regulation after getting fouled trying to convert a layup. Justin Roberson cleared the rebound off the miss and fed Mack Foster, who drove the length of the floor and got a shot off. Roberson was there to tip in the miss, but officials ruled that time had expired before the basket.
- Nick Coppola hit a triple from the wing to give the Warhawks the early lead in overtime, and Ongwae scored a fast-break layup to make it a 67-62 cushion. Jelani Hewitt netted a pair of free throws for the Eagles, and Eric Ferguson added a jumper in the paint to cut the margin to 67-66.
- Roberson hit a pair of free throws on ULM's trip down the floor, and Ferguson scored on a driving layup to make the score 69-68 with 56 seconds remaining. The Warhawks turned the ball over with 28 seconds left to give the Eagles a chance at a game winner.

- Hewitt tallied 14 points and seven rebounds for Georgia Southern, and [Trent Wiedeman](#) posted 14 points and three assists. Ferguson finished with 13 points.
- Jamaal Samuel finished with 17 points and five rebounds for ULM, while Foster scored 12.

### Quick Hitters

- The Eagles are led in scoring by a pair of freshmen in [Tookie Brown](#) and [Ike Smith](#). The last time a freshman led Georgia Southern in scoring was the 1999-2000 season, when the school's all-time scoring leader Julius Jenkins led the Eagles with 15.5 points a game. Elton Nesbitt averaged 15.7 points a game to lead the Eagles in scoring as a newcomer to the program in 2003-04, but it was his sophomore season after spending a year at Compton Community College.
- [Ike Smith](#) is one of two freshman in the league ranked in the top-20 in both points (12.1) and rebounds (4.9).
- Sophomore [Mike Hughes](#) has started 45 of 46 games in his career.
- Hughes' six steals vs. Stetson Dec. 22, were a career high and two shy of the school record. He leads the Sun Belt in steals with 2.3 a game.
- Georgia Southern has just 19 turnovers in its last 125 minutes of game time.
- The Eagles have never lost a Sun Belt game when leading at the half (10-0).
- Since joining the Sun Belt in 2014, 11 Georgia Southern games have been decided by five points or less, and the Eagles are 7-4.
- Georgia Southern is 12-8 in games decided by six points or less since 2014, and 3-5 games decided by three points or less.
- The Eagles are averaging 78.2 points a game this season and have scored 80-plus points in six games. Georgia Southern scored 80-plus points in just six contests last year.
- Eleven different Eagles have scored 10 or more points in a game this season.
- [Devonte Boykins](#) has been named one of 154 nominees for the NABC Allstate Insurance Good Works Team.
- Georgia Southern is 16-5 in Hanner Fieldhouse in its last 21 contests there.
- [Tookie Brown](#) was named the Sun Belt Player of the Week by College Sports Madness Dec. 28. He averaged 24 points, 4.3 assists, three rebounds and two steals in three games from Dec. 15-22. Brown shot 51 percent from field and 56 percent from 3-point range.
- Georgia Southern posted a 4-6 record in the non-conference portion of its schedule.
- Georgia Southern has used nine different combinations of starting lineups this season.
- The Eagles played their Sun Belt opener on the road for the second straight season. Georgia Southern is 0-2 in Sun Belt openers.

- Georgia Southern played its first ranked opponent since 2008 when the Eagles traveled to No. 7/6 Duke Dec. 15. Their last game against a ranked opponent was also at Duke Nov. 11, 2008.
- Georgia Southern's 21 steals against Bob Jones (11/30) was one shy of the school record set against Little Rock in 1981 and tied against The Citadel in 2004.
- After not playing an SEC opponent since a 78-75 loss to Auburn Dec. 30, 2011, the Eagles have faced two this season. Georgia Southern fell 82-72 at Ole Miss Nov. 16 and 92-62 at Auburn Nov. 20.
- Georgia Southern's 116 points in a 116-49 season-opening win over Webber International Nov. 13 were tied for the 16th most all-time and the most since a 116-73 neutral site win over UC Davis Nov. 12, 2006, which was the 2006-07 season opener.
- The Eagles' 40 3-point attempts tied for the second-most in school history (West Georgia, 1/2/1992).

### **Boarding the Mothership**

- Thirteen Georgia Southern games will be broadcast on the ESPN family of Networks this season.
- Games at Duke (12/15) and vs. Georgia State at home (2/23) will air on ESPN2.
- Eight Sun Belt contests will be broadcast live on ESPN3, and the Eagles' game at USC Upstate Nov. 27 was shown on ESPN3.
- The matchups at Ole Miss and Auburn were shown on the SEC Network +.