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UT Arlington Heats up Late to Top Women’s Basketball in Overtime

The Eagles play host to Texas State Saturday in Hanner Fieldhouse

STATESBORO, Ga. – Cierra Johnson scored seven of her 10 points in overtime, and UT Arlington outscored Georgia Southern 12-0 in the extra session to earn a 53-41 Sun Belt Conference women’s basketball victory over the Eagles Thursday evening in Hanner Fieldhouse.

Johnson opened the extra session with a triple from the wing, and after a defensive stop, LaShanda Green put the Mavericks on top 47-41 with a 3-pointer. The Eagles turned it over on their next possession, and Amara Wainwright fed Rebekah VanDijk for a layup and a 49-41 lead with 2:08 to play in the extra session.

After an Alexis Sams 3-point try from the corner rimmed out for Georgia Southern, the Eagles elected to foul, but UT Arlington made 4 of 6 from the line, including 4 for 4 by
Johnson, to eliminate any comeback threat.

Angel McGowan scored a game-high 13 points to go along with five rebounds and three assists for Georgia Southern (6-14, 3-8), and Alexis Foulks contributed seven points and two boards off the bench.

Johnson added five rebounds, two assists and a steal for UT Arlington (9-11, 4-6), and VanDijk collected 12 points, 13 rebounds, three blocks and two steals. Lauren Billie chipped in 11 points off the bench, and Green finished with nine points, five assists and three steals.

After starting the contest 2 of 17 from long distance through the first 29 minutes of the game against the vaunted Eagle zone, the Mavericks canned six of their last nine triple tries. Billie came off the bench to hit three, and Johnson made two.

Trailing by four points after a Johnson 3-pointer, Georgia Southern held UT Arlington scoreless for the final 3:38 of regulation. McGowan hit 1 of 2 from the free throw line at the other end, and Patrice Butler nailed a 3-pointer from the wing off a McGowan assist with 27 seconds left to tie the score 41-41 and send the game into overtime.

The teams combined to shoot 33 for 107 from the floor and committed 45 turnovers in the hard-fought, defensive struggle. The Mavs held a 46-32 edge on the boards and a 17-10 advantage on the offensive glass.

THE STORY
Trailing 26-20 at the break, UT Arlington held the Eagles to a season-low four points in the third period and used a 10-4 run to tie the score 30-30 heading into the fourth quarter. The Eagles were 2 of 9 from the floor and committed eight turnovers in the stanza. All told, the Mavs held Georgia Southern to 15 points in the final 25 minutes of the game.

All five of the Eagles' field goals in the first quarter were from 3-point range, and Georgia Southern forced seven Maverick turnovers to build a 16-9 cushion after the first period. UT Arlington shot 8 for 26 in the first half and 1 for 13 from 3-point range as the Eagles built a 26-20 cushion at intermission.

QUOTABLES FROM COACH DROWN
"We had some trouble all night on the boards. They got on us on the boards pretty hard. We zoned all night, and they were 1 for 13 from three in the first half, but I thought the big key was the second shots kept them in the game. In the second half, particularly down the stretch, no. 2 (Billie) hit three of them in a row, and Johnson stepped up and hit two back to back, and that really hurt us."

"In the end, they made some shots, and we didn't capitalize on some opportunities so it was a disappointing game. I just told our kids we were two shots away from probably being tied for fifth or sixth in this conference. We're still very much in the hunt and still..."
battling, but we need to get one of these."

"We still have a lot of basketball ahead of us. We still control our own destiny in terms of whether we're going to make the playoffs or not. But we need to start winning at home. That's two tough home losses back to back, and we need to get Texas State in here on Saturday."

**NEXT UP**
Georgia Southern plays host to Texas State on the Eagles’ 11th annual Pack the House in Pink Night, which supports breast cancer awareness and education. Tipoff is set for 4:30 p.m. in Hanner Fieldhouse.

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