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Georgia Southern Softball Prepared for Upcoming Season

The season starts Feb. 11 with the Bulldog Kickoff Classic in Starkville, MS.

Kristina Horsley



Bryan Johnston

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Story Links

STATESBORO, Ga. – The Georgia Southern softball team, a program with a rich history of winning, is looking forward to its second year in the Sun Belt Conference under the direction of fifth-year Coach [Annie Smith](#). The team benefited from a strong off-season together this fall, which has both coaches and players ready to get the 2016 season started.

"I'm excited to see what our team can do," Smith said. "We've worked hard this off season; it's probably one of the best off seasons we've had since I've been here and the

team is on a mission to compete and do well. The chemistry has been very good and that's really what we have been working toward, both on and off the field."

Smith is two-deep at each position, giving the team an advantage when competing at a high level. With one senior, six juniors and a combined total of 11 freshman and sophomores on the roster – including returning five of last season's top six offensive producers – this season, and upcoming seasons look promising for the Eagles.

There are four pitchers on the roster this spring, two of which are returning from last year. Behind them, the team will benefit defensively from a total of five infielders, two catchers, five outfielders and two utility players. Catcher AJ Hamilton is returning this season as the only senior, as is junior outfielder Taylor Rogers, a 2016 Preseason All-Sun Belt Conference selection.

"The entire team is ready and they've worked very hard," Smith said. "I'm ready to see how all of the hard work that they have been putting in this off-season pays off this spring."

With an 18 player roster of teammates whose strengths work well together, the upcoming season is sure to be an exciting one for the program and fans alike. Coach Smith and her team are ready to hit the field with a strong schedule of 55 games planned, 19 of which will be hosted at Eagle Field.

The Eagles start the season at the Bulldog Kickoff Classic in Starkville, MS Feb. 11-13 with the unveiling of Mississippi State's new softball facility. Smith was an assistant coach and then associate head coach for the Bulldogs for nine years before coming to Georgia Southern as the head coach. The Eagles will play Mississippi State opening night on the SEC Network+, followed by Tennessee Tech and Alabama A&M on the 12th and Houston on the 13th. This will be the first of five tournaments for the Eagles.

Following the season opener, the Eagles travel to Madeira Beach, FL for the Eastern Michigan University Madeira Beach Invitational Feb. 19-20, then head home to host their home opener Feb. 23 against Kennesaw State.

Next, the Eagles head to Conway, SC Feb. 26-28 to take on Coastal Carolina and Iowa University at the Coastal Carolina Invitational, then travel back home to host their own Eagle Classic at Eagle Field March 4-6.

The Eagles then make their way to Texas for a three-game Sun Belt Conference series against Texas State in San Marcos March 12-13, and a contest against Texas A&M in College Station March 15. The Eagles finish their time in Texas with the Texas Tech Tournament in Lubbock March 18-20. Once back from Texas, the Eagles travel to Athens to face the Georgia Bulldogs on March 23.

Coming off 10 straight road games, the team will get to play five games at home, including a three-game Sun Belt Conference series against UT Arlington March 25-26

and a double header against Jacksonville on the 30th.

Georgia Southern opens the month of April with a three-game Sun Belt Conference series at UL Monroe April 2-3, followed by two Conference series at home against App State April 9-10 and South Alabama April 16-17. Next, the team hits the road, first to Columbia, SC April 19 to play South Carolina, then to Troy, AL for Sun Belt Conference series on the 23rd and 24th. The Eagles finish their week on the road with a double header against Savannah State on the 27th.

The final three home games will be against Sun Belt Conference opponent UL Lafayette April 30-May1. The Eagles end the season with a series against Sun Belt Conference rival Georgia State May 6-7 in Atlanta.

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