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Eagles Hope to Set Tone for the Stretch Run at Schenkel Invitational

Georgia Southern's home tournament runs March 18-20.

Marc Gignac

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Henry Mabbett tied for fourth in 2014.

Men's Golf | 3/17/2016 4:37:00 PM

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STATESBORO, Ga. - The clock is ticking on the 2015-16 men's golf season, and with three tournaments left before the Sun Belt Championship in April, Georgia Southern is looking to continue its season-long progression at its annual home tournament, the Schenkel Invitational.

Eight top-50 teams descend upon Statesboro and Forest Heights Country Club this week to make up a high-caliber field similar to an NCAA Regional. The tournament runs Friday through Sunday with 18 holes each day. Tee times off holes 1 and 10 start at 9 a.m. Friday and Saturday and at 8:30 a.m. Sunday.

It's the third tournament of the spring for Georgia Southern and offers the Eagles a chance to set the tone for the rest of the season as well as a chance to improve their ranking and position themselves for a fourth-straight NCAA bid.

"We got off to a rough start this spring, but in the last tournament, we played well the last two days and this tournament can do a lot for us going forward," said redshirt senior [Henry Mabbett](#).

Mabbett will be the wily veteran in this year's lineup. He has played in the Schenkel twice and tied for fourth as an individual in 2014. He and sophomore [Jake Storey](#) are the only Eagles in this week's lineup who were in the Eagles' quintet that placed third last season. [Archer Price](#) played as an individual last season and will be in the lineup this weekend.

Freshman [Steven Fisk](#) and sophomore transfer [Jonas Vaisanen](#) will make their Schenkel debuts. With all the local support for the Schenkel, it can sometimes be a little daunting for an Eagle golfer, especially the first time around.

"It's a tough balance for this event - to realize how important this tournament is to this program - but also understanding that it is just another tournament," said Georgia Southern coach [Carter Collins](#). "The sooner they can wrap their head around that, the sooner they can ease the pressure off themselves and help them play their best."

It's also a tournament that draws a pretty good crowd with bleachers set up around some of the holes. Most amateur golfers are not accustomed to the large galleries that often form at the Schenkel.

"You just have to embrace all the people out here," said Mabbett. "It can be overwhelming for golfers - we don't usually have to many more people than our parents watching. You come out here, and there's several hundred people watching you so you just have to enjoy it."

The Eagles have had plenty of success in the Schenkel recently after winning it for the first time in school history in 2014 and following that up by shooting their lowest score ever last season and tying for third. Georgia Southern has placed in the top-10 for three

straight seasons, and the Eagles have not finished in the top-10 in four straight years since doing it 11 straight times from 1971-81.

"Our team chemistry has been great throughout the season," said Collins. "I give a lot of credit to the young guys for fitting in immediately, and they have done a great job in realizing their role in the program and working hard each and every day to make this team better. We've been preparing for this all year, especially this semester and the last few weeks, and I expect us to be ready."

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