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Spring '16 - A Q&A with Tyson Summers

The head coach looks at the team heading into spring practice



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STATESBORO - The Georgia Southern Eagles will hit the field later today for the first of 15 spring practices under new head coach [Tyson Summers](#). With the session upon us, GSEagles.com caught up with the head Eagle to get his breakdown of each position group. On Tuesday, we previewed the offense, yesterday was the defense/special teams and today we have a Q&A with Summers.

Q: What are you expecting out of this team and what's your philosophy going into 2016?

TS: I think the big thing, in terms of the big things we want to find out coming out of spring practice is really what our leadership is. It's always the thing that you can't

always put your thumb on. What guys are going to lead and what guys are going to be the guys that don't. And you want to see how guys handle adversity when it comes to football. You can see a lot of those things in the weight room and off-season conditioning, but I'm looking to see which guys are going to be physical guys and which guys are going to want to compete and ball. Those are the types of things we're looking for. We're trying to identify who will be our leaders moving forward into 2016.

Q: What can fans expect a [Tyson Summers](#) defense to look like and who's a key player to watch?

TS: We'll be what I've been the past four or five years and that's a team that is predominantly four down, but we'll have some more odd packages in. We did that a little more at Colorado State than we did at UCF, but we'll be predominantly in that four down grouping. The guy that I'm excited to watch and see how he plays in [Ironhead Gallon](#). I think he's a guy that, since I've been here, has been exceptional in everything that he's done. I watched film from last year and he's a guy that can show up and make plays. I'm really looking forward to seeing how he plays and how he handles a leadership role."

Q: Same question as before, but with the offense.

TS: Offensively, I think a lot of it is going to look very similar from the television set. At the end of the day, we're still going to be a gun-option team and be very quarterback driven. I do expect to see a little bit more passing than what they've done, but most of it will be more based on what we're given and what the defense has shown us, so it will look very similar as far as that. But I think the thing that I'm looking forward to seeing offensively is the two quarterbacks. I'm looking forward to having the opportunity to be around and see how [Kevin Ellison](#) and [Favian Upshaw](#) handle the leadership roles. Those are guys who, in our off-season workouts, have done everything right. They can both do a good job of leading and both guys are really positive with the offense and I think that the players around them feel comfortable with both those guys. I'm looking forward to that position and seeing how those guys mature through the off-season.

Q: How their leadership qualities differ?

TS: I think that they are both high-character guys and they both have leadership qualities. I certainly think that they are both guys that have a lot of similarities. They both, in my opinion, run the ball exceptionally well; they both have good speed and both have a large amount of swagger about them. I think that what you'll be able to see is guys who are doing a good job of trying to refine their skills and hone into trying to be more efficient passers. So those are the guys that I think that you'll see there.

Q: What are some battles that you are looking closely at?

TS: I think certainly, what I have believed for a long time here, is that people have always kind of gone back to the option and the success Georgia Southern has had in running an option offense. But a lot of that success to me has gone back to the

offensive line. And the attitude, mentality and beliefs that those guys have and I think you'll see that continue to progress. I'm also excited to see how our receivers progress. And again, with looking to be able to see what they're able to do as far as their maturation over the 15 days of spring practice from a learning standpoint, and obviously there will be more opportunities to catch balls and do something with it.

Q: Who is the guy that may not make headlines every week, but probably could win a game for the Eagles?

TS: The guy that I'm excited about that I think is what you're talking about offensively is [Wesley Fields](#). He's that guy that kind of does everything right and a guy that is certainly a team-first guy. And the other guy that I mentioned earlier was Ironhead. I think that those are the guys that off the top of my head right now that I would say those are the guys that will be those kind of guys for us.

Q: What do you want people to know about this team going into your first year?

TS: I think the biggest thing that I'm looking for is guys that are disciplined. And what I hope to be able to see is that when people play us they see us as a disciplined football team – a team that plays extremely tough and extremely hard. And we certainly want to be a physical football team, we want them to show up and again we want to have the mental and the physical toughness factor combined. And when you do those things, what winds up happening for you is you become a disciplined football team.

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