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SBAL Preview: Eagles Host Alumni, Mountaineers for Weekend Series

GS hosting Alumni Day Saturday, Eagles play App State in 1 p.m. doubleheader Saturday & 1 p.m. single game Sunday

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[**GAME NOTES \(PDF\)**](#)

ALUMNI DAY

The Georgia Southern softball program will host its annual Alumni Day on Saturday, Apr. 9 at Eagle Field. The day will begin with a Pregame Tailgate at 12 p.m. for the alumni and their families. All alumni in attendance will then be recognized prior to the first game of Saturday's 1 p.m. doubleheader with long-time rival Appalachian State.

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

The Georgia Southern softball team will play their next seven games at home at Eagle Field. This weekend, the Eagles open the stretch with a weekend Sun Belt series against Appalachian State with a doubleheader on Saturday, Apr. 9. The Eagles and Mountaineers will close out the series with a single game on Sunday, Apr. 10 before Kennesaw State comes to town for a midweek game on Wednesday, Apr. 13. The Eagles will close out the two-week homestand with another weekend conference series, this one against South Alabama on Saturday, Apr. 16 and Sunday, Apr. 17. So far this season, the Eagles are 7-2 at home.

FACILITY INFO

This weekend's three-game series against Appalachian State will take place at Eagle Field in Statesboro, Ga. The address is 615 Fair Rd, Statesboro, GA 30458. Admission is free.

Live stats will be available through Georgia Southern and live video of the games will also be available via GS All-Access.

SCOUTING APPALACHIAN STATE

Appalachian State (9-30, 2-10 SBC) went 2-3 in the last five games including splitting a home midweek doubleheader with Radford on Wednesday, Apr. 4 after claiming the third game of a three-game Sun Belt Conference series at UT Arlington last weekend. In their last 10 games, the Mountaineers went 3-7. GS is 39-12 all-time against App State dating back to 2001. In Statesboro, Georgia Southern boasts a 16-5 record all-time. The last time the two programs played at Eagle Field came during the 2013 season.

As a team, the Mountaineers are batting .263 on the season led by Natalie Orcutt's .383 batting average. She also leads the team with 25 runs scored and 26 walks while Cara Parker, who is batting .372 entering the week, leads App State with 42 hits, nine doubles, nine home runs and 38 RBI. Parker is one of four Mountaineers to have started every game including Jenny Dodd, Pepper Butler and Tiffany Taynor. Dodd is the third and final App State player batting over .300 this season with a .319 in 113 at-bats. Butler leads the team with five stolen bases in seven attempts.

App State's pitching staff enters the three-game series at Georgia Southern with a combined 6.93 earned run average. The Mountaineers have turned to five different pitchers this season led by Vanessa Ciocatto's 4.63 ERA in 31 appearances. Ciocatto (7-14) has made 21 starts, pitching 113.1 innings to go along with six complete games. She leads the team with 51 strikeouts. Behind Ciocatto, Annaleise Kennedy (2-10) is second with a 6.38 ERA through 23 appearances, including nine starts. She has pitched 74.2 innings and struck out 31 batters.

[APP STATE ROSTER](#)

[APP STATE SCHEDULE](#)

[APP STATE STATS](#)

UP NEXT

Georgia Southern will once again dip back out of their Sun Belt Conference slate on Wednesday, Apr. 13 when Kennesaw State travels to Statesboro for a single game at 5 p.m.

WEEKLY AWARD FOR WITKOWSKI

Georgia Southern softball player [Lydia Witkowski](#) was named the Sun Belt Conference Community Coffee Student-Athlete of the Week as released by the conference office on Tuesday, Mar. 15.

A redshirt freshman from Alpharetta, Ga., Witkowski led Georgia Southern on offense in the Eagles' Sun Belt Conference opening series at Texas State as the Eagles went 2-1 in San Marcos. The Eagles' starting left fielder went 6-for-11 (.545) at the plate with a triple and an RBI and scored a pair of runs herself. She slugged .727 with eight total bases and finished the three games with a .545 on-base percentage.

In the field, she recorded four putouts and had an assist in the first game when she gunned down a runner tagging up at third, trying to make it home. The throw out at home from left field completed one of the Eagles' two double plays on the weekend.

In the first game of the series, Witkowski went 4-for-4 at the plate with three singles and a triple for a 1.500 slugging percentage. She also batted in a runner and scored a pair of runs herself as the Eagles defeated Texas State 6-1. Witkowski followed that up by going 2-for-4 at the plate in the Eagles' 5-4 win over the Bobcats in the first game of a Sunday doubleheader, sealing the series victory for the Eagles. The win also pushed the Eagles' longest winning streak of the season to eight games.

YEAR NO. 5

Georgia Southern head coach [Annie Smith](#) is in her fifth season at the helm of the Eagles. Her tenure in Statesboro has taken the Eagles to new heights with two SoCon Regular Season Championships and two SoCon Tournament Championships as well as overseeing the transition to the Sun Belt Conference in Smith's four previous seasons. During her tenure, Smith has advanced to the NCAA Tournament twice (2012 and 2013) as the Eagles have quickly made a name for themselves within the regional and national landscape.

Smith has an overall career record of 142-127. In 2014, she became the fastest coach in Georgia Southern history to reach 100 career wins when her team posted a 4-0 victory over Appalachian State on April 5.

Smith joined Georgia Southern with 16 years of experience as a collegiate assistant coach, serving at Missouri for six seasons before heading to Mississippi State for nine years, handling all aspects of the program. In 2006, Smith was promoted to associate head coach of the Bulldogs.

RANDOM STATS AND NOTES

Career Games Started - by position (active)

A.J. Hamilton: 207 total - 207 C

Emily Snider: 144 total - 144 OF

Morgan Robinson: 141 total - 141 1B

Taylor Rogers: 109 total - 81 OF; 28 DP

Alesha Mann: 88 total - 31 2B; 50 SS; 7 DP

Michelle Mazur: 45 total - 42 3B; 3 DP

Kierra Camp: 37 total - 37 P

Rowan McGuire: 30 total - 30 DP

Heather Felt: 15 total - 15 P

Hannah Farrell: 37 total - 37 3B

Lydia Witkowski: 37 total - 34 OF; 3 INF

India Davis: 35 total - 34 2B; 1 SS

Dixie Raley: 20 total - 20 P

Macy Weeks: 20 total - 13 DP; 7 OF

Haley Carter: 5 total - 5 DP

EAGLES BY STATE (18)

Georgia: 13

Florida: 2

Illinois: 2

Tennessee: 1

EAGLES BY CLASS (18)

Seniors: 1

Juniors: 6

Sophomores: 6

Freshmen: 5 freshmen (3 redshirt)

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