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Georgia Southern University

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# Women's Golf Primed for First Sun Belt Championship

*The tournament runs from April 17-19 in Destin, Fla.*

Marc Gignac



**SE Sports Media/Sideline Sports**

Ariana Macioce is second on the team in scoring average.

Women's Golf | 4/16/2016 8:59:00 PM

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**DESTIN, Fla.** – It has been a season of firsts for the Georgia

**Tournament Name:** Sun Belt Championship  
**Host:** Sun Belt  
**Location:** Destin, Fla.  
**Dates:** April 17-19  
**Course:** [Raven Golf Club](#)  
**Par:** 71 (6,171 yards)  
**Format:** 54 holes (18 each day)  
**Tee Times:** 7:30 a.m. CT tee times all three days  
**Field:** Appalachian State, Arkansas State, Georgia Southern, Georgia State, Little Rock, ULM, South Alabama, Texas State, Troy

Southern women's golf program, and another one is set for this weekend when the Eagles compete in their first Sun Belt Championship April 17-19 at Raven Golf Club in Destin, Fla.

Almost three years have passed since Georgia Southern announced it would start the program and that the 2015-16 season would be the first year of competition. Countless hours were spent laying the groundwork for the program prior to the student-athletes' arrival on campus last summer, and they have spent countless more practicing and developing their games with their ultimate sights set on the year's final tournament, which opens Sunday.

The inaugural season has seen its share of ups and downs, but the Eagles are coming off their best finish of the campaign, a fourth-place outing at the Bearcat Classic March 27, and may just be peaking at the right time.

"The spring semester is the time when you want to be playing good, and I feel like we are," said junior [Iben Hvass](#).

Hvass is the only Eagle to be in the lineup for all nine tournaments and leads the team in scoring average with 76.44 strokes a round. Joining Hvass in the lineup this week will be classmate [Taylor Thompson](#) and freshmen [Ansley Bowman](#), [Ariana Macioce](#) and [Yeji Shin](#). The quintet has played together in four tournaments this season, including the Bearcat.

Despite it being their first Sun Belt Championship, Georgia Southern has some familiarity with their competition this weekend after having played against a majority of Sun Belt schools at various tournaments this year.

"We've played against pretty much every one in conference at one point or another so far this year and held our own," said Georgia Southern coach [Emily Kuhfeld](#). "So, I think we have a really good chance. If we play our games and do our thing then we'll be right where we need to be. We can't control what other teams do, but we can do what we do best."

Kuhfeld described in detail two major keys for the Eagles this weekend. The first is to trust their preparation and stick to the game plan. The Eagles have done a great job in practice rounds throughout the season in determining where they need to be and what

types of shots they want to have into the green. The temptation when they get out on the course, especially during a conference championship, is to try to push the envelope and take risks. The second key is to understand that mistakes are going to be made, put it behind them and move on to the next shot.

"The key for us is playing smart, playing to our game plan and our strengths and then get over any adversity as fast as we can," said Kuhfeld. "If we hold onto mistakes for three, four or five holes, that just really adds up. There are going to be emotional highs and lows out there, and we need to play our games one shot at a time."

The Eagles showed their ability to overcome adversity at the Bearcat Classic, which saw exactly one individual shoot under par in a round the entire weekend. Georgia Southern regrouped and finished with excellent back nines after struggling on the front in two of the three rounds.

"For me, in my second round, I had a bad front nine and came back on the back nine, which was really good," said Hvass. "I have been using that momentum since then in practice and going forward."

Though it will be the first Sun Belt Championship in school history, the Eagles are trying to look at it as the next tournament on the schedule and keep their approach consistent with what they have been doing.

"We've played in so many tournaments now that I don't think it will feel too different," said Macioce. "I think we're ready, and we can handle it."

Paired with Georgia State and Arkansas State, the Eagles will tee it up on hole 1 at 7:30 a.m. CT Sunday.

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