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# SBAL Preview: Softball Hosts Louisiana-Lafayette This Weekend, Set to Honor Senior A.J. Hamilton Sunday

*Eagles and Ragin' Cajuns will play three-game series at Eagle Field Saturday through Sunday*



Softball | 4/29/2016 1:56:00 PM

## Story Links

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

### **FINAL HOME GAMES - SENIOR DAY**

Georgia Southern wraps up the 2016 home campaign this weekend with a three-game

Sun Belt Conference series against the eighth-ranked Ragin' Cajuns of Louisiana-Lafayette. Sunday's single game at 1 p.m. will serve as Senior Day for lone senior, catcher [A.J. Hamilton](#). Hamilton is a four-year starter for the Eagles and has started all 220 games she has played in. She has registered 1,333 putouts as the only catcher for GS in those four seasons, has a career batting average of .231 (584 at-bats) and has collected 135 hits, including 24 doubles and 22 home runs.

### **RECORD CLIMBING**

- Senior catcher [A.J. Hamilton](#) ranks sixth all-time with 22 career home runs. She is also tied for 10th all-time with 89 career RBI.
- Junior outfielder [Emily Snider](#) has 90 runs scored for her career, ranking 9th all-time in program history.
- Junior first baseman [Morgan Robinson](#) currently has 105 runs batted in for her career and ranks fifth all-time for RBI. Her 47 RBI this season ranks tied for third for most RBI in a single season.
- Redshirt freshman outfielder [Lydia Witkowski](#) is currently tied for third in program history with five triples this season. She is also eighth all-time for runs scored in a single season with 39 runs so far this season.
- Freshman pitcher [Dixie Raley](#) recorded her 201st win of the season on Wednesday at Savannah State. The 21 wins marks the most by a freshman pitcher in program history and also has her in sole possession of second all-time for most wins in a single season. Raley is also currently tied for sixth in the single season record book with two saves, in sole possession of sixth with 173 strikeouts on the year, and is tied for seventh with 29 starts and as well as 37 appearances on the year.

### **150 WINS**

On Wednesday, Apr. 27, head coach [Annie Smith](#) recorded her 150th career win at the helm of the Georgia Southern softball program with a 1-0 victory over Savannah State. Smith now boasts a record of 150-132 (.532) in her fifth season.

### **FACILITY INFO**

This weekend's three-game, Sun Belt Conference series against nationally-ranked Louisiana-Lafayette will take place at Eagle Field in Statesboro, Ga. The address is 615 Fair Rd, Statesboro, GA 30458. Admission is free.

Live stats ([Game-1](#), [Game-2](#), [Game-3](#)) will be available through Georgia Southern and live video of the game will also be available via GS All-Access.

### **SCOUTING THE RAGIN' CAJUNS**

The Ragin' Cajuns of Louisiana Lafayette (35-6, 16-1 SBC) enter this weekend's series in Statesboro having claimed a three-game series over Appalachian State after dropping a series at No. 1 Florida the weekend prior. The lone blemish on the Cajuns' conference record came at the hands of UT Arlington in the final game of that series when the Mavericks won 3-1 in Arlington. In five games between GS and ULL, the Ragin' Cajuns own the all-time record at 5-0. The two met for the first time in 1993 and again in 1997 before Georgia Southern joined the Sun Belt last season.

At the plate, ULL boasts a team batting average of .341 led by Lexie Elkins' .538 in 29 games earlier this season. Aleah Craighton currently leads the team with a .387 batting average. She is one of seven players batting above .300. Craighton leads the team with 10 doubles and is slugging .901. Kassidy Zerinque, Haley Hayden, Shellie Landry, Sara Corbello and D.J. Sanders are all batting over .300 and have all started every game this season for the Ragin' Cajuns. While Elkins leads the team with 17 home runs, Sanders and Craighton are both second with 15. Sanders is batting .310. Landry, who is batting .331, leads the team with 46 RBI while Hayden is the Cajun's leader in runs scored with 47 and hits with 51. She bats at a .372 clip. Zerinque, Hayden and Kara Gremillion lead the team with eight stolen bases each. As a unit, ULL has swiped 43 bases in 48 attempts.

In the circle, the five pitchers for ULL have combined for a 1.95 earned run average spanning 248 innings. While Macey Smith leads the way with a 0.50 ERA, she has only made seven appearances. [Alex Stewart](#) and Kylee Jo Trahan have carried the load for the Ragin' Cajuns. Stewart, who boasts a 1.68 ERA and 20-3 record, has made 28 appearances and pitched 142 innings. She has pitched 16 complete games, has five shutouts to her name, as well as helping secure another, and has struck out a team-best 142 batters. Trahan holds a 10-3 record and 2.41 ERA in 18 appearances. She has pitched 69.2 innings and struck out 79 batters while holding opponents to a .171 batting average. Stewart's opposition have batted .237 against her. As a staff, the ULL pitchers have held opponents to a .216 batting average.

[ULL ROSTER](#)

[ULL SCHEDULE](#)

[ULL STATISTICS \(PDF\)](#)

### ***UP NEXT***

Georgia Southern will close out the regular-season on the road next weekend as they travel to in-state rival Georgia State for both a critical Sun Belt Conference series as well as a critical showdown in the Southern vs. State Rivalry Series. One point will be on the line in the series. To date, Georgia State leads the 2015-16 series 11-5. Georgia Southern and Georgia State will meet on the softball diamond in Atlanta for the first time since the 2013 season. The two will play a single game at 6 p.m. on Friday, May 6 and will then play a 1 p.m. doubleheader on Saturday, May 7.

### ***WEEKLY AWARD FOR RALEY (4/12/16)***

Georgia Southern softball player [Dixie Raley](#) was named the Madness Sun Belt Softball Player of the Week by College Sports Madness.

Raley, a freshman from Milledgeville, Ga., had a stellar weekend on the mound for Georgia Southern, securing two of the Eagles' three wins over longtime rival Appalachian State – including a shutout in game-3 – while setting a new career-high for strikeouts. She was so effective on the mound, that her opponents hit just .146 against her over the 14 innings she pitched and she finished the weekend with a 1.00 earned



run average and 18 strikeouts, six looking. Raley is now tied for second in the conference with 16 wins and she is third in strikeouts (139) as well as strikeouts looking (48), fourth in innings pitched (135.2) and fifth in opposing batting average (.228).

In Raley's first appearance of the weekend, a 6-2 win in game-1 on Saturday, Raley pitched the complete game and surrendered just four hits and a pair of runs while striking out four batters. In that game, she did not surrender a hit through the first two innings and gave up just two hits over the final four frames.

The next day, Raley was outstanding in the circle as she guided the Eagles to a 3-0 victory to secure the weekend sweep over the Mountaineers. Raley pitched the complete game in her third shutout of the season and allowed just three hits and three walks while striking out a career-high 14 batters, four looking. She led off the game by securing the Eagles' first 6 outs via strikeout and then proceeded to strike out two batters in each of the next three innings. Over the final four innings of the game, Raley gave up just one hit and did not walk a single batter.

#### **WEEKLY AWARD FOR WITKOWSKI (3/15/16)**

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 150-132. 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: 220 total - 220 C

Emily Snider: 157 total - 157 OF

Morgan Robinson: 154 total - 154 1B

Taylor Rogers: 122 total - 85 OF; 37 DP

Alesha Mann: 101 total - 63 SS; 31 2B; 7 DP

Michelle Mazur: 52 total - 42 3B; 5 OF; 3 DP; 2 2B

Kierra Camp: 40 total - 40 P

Rowan McGuire: 32 total - 31 DP; 1 OF

Heather Felt: 16 total - 16 P

Hannah Farrell: 50 total - 50 3B

Lydia Witkowski: 50 total - 47 OF; 3 INF

India Davis: 45 total - 44 2B; 1 SS

Dixie Raley: 29 total - 29 P

Macy Weeks: 21 total - 13 DP; 8 OF

Haley Carter: 10 total - 5 DP; 5 OF

### ***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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