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Georgia Southern University

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Blake Wilson Records First Career Hat Trick, Eagles Win Season Opener 4-1

Wilson scored twice in the first half and once in the second to earn the Eagles’ first hat trick since 1999

HOUSTON, Texas – The John Murphy era for Georgia Southern men's soccer kicked off with a bang Friday night as the Eagles secured a 4-1 win over Houston Baptist at Sorrels Field in the season opener for both teams. The Eagles were led to the victory by junior forward Blake Wilson’s hat trick and freshman Sander Wang’s first career collegiate goal.

Wilson started the scoring barrage early in the first half and Wang followed that up with his first career goal a few minutes later. Wilson then put the Eagles up 3-0 before the Huskies could blink.
Juan Vega got a goal back for HBU before the end of the first half, but Wilson stretched the lead back out to three at 4-1 early in the second half when he scored his third goal. With that goal, Wilson recorded the first hat trick by a Georgia Southern player since Jeff Russell recorded the second of his career on October 31, 1999 against Wofford. There have now been 11 hat tricks in program history.

**MATCH FACTS**
Georgia Southern (1-0-0) – 4
Houston Baptist (0-1-0) – 1

**NOTES**
- By winning the first game of his tenure, Coach Murphy joins former head coaches Ray Wells, Tom Norton and Kevin Kennedy in the distinction of having won their first games at the helm of the program.
- **Blake Wilson** recorded Georgia Southern's first hat trick since Jeremy McClure and Jeff Russell each had one in 1999. Russell recorded the most recent hat trick prior to Friday night on October 31, 1999 against Wofford. The three goals by Wilson is also tied for fourth-most goals by an Eagle in a single game.
- Georgia Southern has now won two of their last three season openers, both on the road.

**QUOTE FROM COACH MURPHY**
"I was very pleased for the team, tonight and this was a fantastic group performance. We really played well on both sides of the ball. The team came out very strong and were led out front by **Blake Wilson**, who not only scored a hat trick tonight but his all-around play was outstanding. He was supported well by **Christian Duncan** and we also had great wide play from **Jeremy Rector** and **Nick Wells**. In the middle, **Thor Sveinbjornsson** and **Sander Wang** were very solid for us. The back four were outstanding, in particular **David Rhoades** had a fantastic game and **Chase Herzog** in goal was solid with his distribution and leadership. It was a great effort by everyone and we received excellent effort from the guys coming off the bench. We were quite dangerous against a team that was playing at home, so we have to be pleased with that, but we know there is still more to do and we hope to build on this and use it to prepare for Sunday against a dangerous Texas Rio Grande Valley team."

**NEXT UP**
Georgia Southern plays the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley on Sunday, August 28. The Eagles and Vaqueros will face off at 2 p.m. Eastern daylight time.

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