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# Preview: Consistency is Key for Men's Golf

*Eagles open the season at The Ocean Course Monday.*

Marc Gignac



**Jeremy Wilburn**

Junior Archer Price is one of six returning lettermen.

Men's Golf | 9/11/2016 7:48:00 AM

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**Tournament Name:** The Invitational at The Ocean Course  
**Host:** College of Charleston  
**Location:** Kiawah Island, S.C.  
**Dates:** Sept. 12-13  
**Course:** [The Ocean Course](#)  
**Par:** 72 (7,115 yards)  
**Format:** 54 holes (36 Monday, 18 Tuesday)  
**Tee Times:** Shotgun start at 7:30 a.m Monday (continuous play) and at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday  
**Field:** Augusta, Charleston Southern, Cincinnati, Coastal Carolina, College of Charleston, Francis Marion, Georgia Southern, Georgia State, Maryland, Middle Tennessee, Ole Miss, South Alabama, Troy, VCU, Winthrop and West Virginia

**STATESBORO, Ga.** – With a majority of its key personnel back and three talented newcomers on campus, the Georgia Southern men's golf program looks to build on its own lofty standards in 2016-17.

Success is certainly a relative term, but for Eagle men's golf, the definition of success does not change much from year to year – finish in the top-5 in each tournament, win a conference championship, advance to NCAA Regionals and advance to the NCAA Championship.

Last season was a roller coaster ride full of twists and turns. There were successes, like winning the Invitational at The Ocean Course to start the year and backing it up with two straight second-place outings, but the finish left something to be desired for a program that has gone to the NCAA Regionals six times in the last nine years.

"Everything we go through is experience, and whether it's something good or something bad, we can learn from it and get better from it," said head coach [Carter Collins](#). "We had our share of successes last year as well, and we'll build off of those experiences."

Georgia Southern returns six of its eight lettermen from last season, including Sun Belt Freshman of the Year [Steven Fisk](#). Senior [Cody O'Toole](#), juniors [Archer Price](#), [Jonas Vaisanen](#) and [Jake Storey](#) as well as sophomore [Crawford Simmons](#) are also back, giving the Eagles a roster of seasoned veterans, despite carrying only one senior. Collins was pleased with the improvement the veterans made in the summer.

"We had a lot of good summers from the guys," he said. "The team made a lot of progress in the summer, and we have been practicing very hard so far since returning to school in August. Many of our practices have been 'outside the box' kind of practices, and I'm excited about the progress we have made. The ultimate test is what you will accomplish on the course, and I'm excited to get on the road and get this season started."

Three freshmen, [Luukas Alakulppi](#), [Brett Barron](#) and [Alexander DeRosa](#), joined the roster and have faired well in qualifying. Barron and DeRosa played well enough to earn spots in the lineup for the first tournament of the season, the Invitational at the Ocean Course, which starts Monday in Charleston, S.C.

Collins says more consistent play from the Eagles is the key to the season. He has seen improvement in that area from the returners throughout the summer and so far this fall and believes the newcomers will help provide it as well.

"All three freshmen bring some explosiveness but also some consistency so I think adding in those two areas will really help us," said Collins. "That was something we missed last year. We had our explosive rounds that really jumped us up the leaderboard, but we also had the rounds that would drop us. Having some more level play will maintain us around the lead and then when we have that explosive round, it will put us where we can have a chance to win the tournament."

Fisk, Price and Storey will be in the lineup Monday as well, while O'Toole and Vaisanen will compete as individuals. The season's first tournament will provide a good barometer of where the Eagles are early in the campaign.

"The Ocean Course is a wonderful golf course that has hosted major championships and the Ryder Cup," said Collins. "It's one of best courses you can find, and it's also a very tough test so we'll find out where we are pretty quick in the first week."

The Ocean Course is the first stop in a five-tournament fall season for the Eagles. With a more seasoned group than last year, Collins planned a tougher schedule than last year.

"All the courses we're playing at are tremendous golf courses, and all the events are very good with tough fields," said Collins. "I feel like with the progress we made this summer and so far this fall, having a tougher schedule week to week will be good for us."

The fall slate culminates in a trip to Hawaii for the Warrior Princeville Invitational at the Princeville Makai Golf Course. Only five student-athletes will make the lineup that week, which provides some extra motivation for the Eagles to push each other throughout the fall.

"It's one of the more adventurous trips we take at Georgia Southern, and we're really excited for these guys to have the opportunity," said Collins. "That's motivation for them to take care of business now and have a chance to go to Hawaii and compete for Georgia Southern."

To have success this season, the Eagles will need to play consistently well shot to shot, hole to hole, round to round and ultimately tournament to tournament. Assessing the Eagles' ability to do just that began in qualifying when the team returned to campus in mid-August and will be put to the test repeatedly under tournament conditions this fall.

"I look for us to be a little more explosive than we were last season but at the same time a little more consistent," said Collins "We're excited to get on the golf course and compete for Georgia Southern."

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