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MSOC Preview: Eagles Host Hartwick In Battle For Top Spot In Conference

GS and Hartwick sit atop the Sun Belt Conference standings



Andrew Hardyway

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Story Links

STATESBORO – The Georgia Southern men's soccer team will host the Hartwick Hawks on Saturday, Oct. 22, for the Eagles' annual GATA Game. The contest between the Eagles and the Hawks will be an important Sun Belt Conference matchup as the two teams currently sit atop the conference standings with matching 1-0-1 records. GS and HC will kick off at 7 p.m. Saturday night at Eagle Field.

MATCH SNAPSHOT

Hartwick vs. Georgia Southern

Saturday, Oct. 22 | 7 p.m. EDT | Eagle Field (Statesboro, Ga.)

[Live Stats](#) | [Video \(GS All-Access\)](#)

SCOUTING THE HAWKS

Georgia Southern and Hartwick have only met three times on the soccer pitch with the Hawks owning a slight 2-1 advantage over the Eagles. The two are tied 1-1 at Eagle Field with both of those games having been played during the 2014 season. GS won the 2014 regular-season meeting 2-0 and 'Wick claimed the meeting in the Sun Belt Conference tournament held at Eagle Field 1-0. Last season, the Hawks defeated Georgia Southern 3-0 in Oneonta, N.Y. The Hawks are coached by John Scott, a Hartwick alum, in his seventh season at the helm of the program. He is currently 41-57-22 all-time.

Hartwick is currently 13th as a program in NCAA Division I history with 25 trips to the NCAA Tournament. The Hawks have won the last two regular season and tournament titles for the Sun Belt and are 24-18-10 overall and 9-1-2 in Sun Belt play since joining the league. Hartwick posted nine straight SBC wins from Oct. 18, 2014, to Oct. 8, 2016, and saw that streak of wins broken on Oct. 15 of this year when they earned a scoreless draw at home against Appalachian State. The tie brings the Hawks' current streak of positive results in conference play to 10 matches. This season, the Hawks are 7-2-3, including 4-2-1 on the road. They went 3-0-1 earlier this year when they played four-straight games on the road. The Hawks are currently fifth in the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) Southeast Region Poll.

Hartwick has been led this season by Mike Rood, Jamie O'Grady and Johnny McBeth in scoring. O'Grady hasn't played a game since early September, but Rood and McBeth have both played in 11 of the Hawks' 12 games, making 10 starts each. Rood leads the team with nine points. Eight other Hawks have scored a goal on the year and nine players have recorded an assist. Rood and Kyle Honor both have two game-winning goals on the year. Four players have started every game this season and two others have seen action in every match. Lenny Wilson has been the starting goalkeeper for Hartwick in 10 matches, recording 30 saves compared to eight goals surrendered. He has three shutouts on the year and boasts a 0.78 goals against average.

[2016 HART Roster](#)

[2016 HART Schedule](#)

[2016 HART Statistics](#)

BATTLE FOR THE TOP SPOT IN THE SUN BELT

There is currently a four-way tie atop the Sun Belt Conference standings between Georgia Southern, Hartwick, Appalachian State and Coastal Carolina, all of which have four points towards the regular-season crown. However, GS and 'Wick are the only two without a blemish on their conference records (both are 1-0-1) as App State and Coastal have each dropped a game in recent weeks. App State plays Georgia State on Saturday while Coastal hosts Howard. Georgia State is currently fifth in the conference standings with three points and Howard is sixth with zero.

EAGLES HOSTING ALUMNI FOR WEEKEND

Georgia Southern head men's soccer coach [John Murphy](#) has announced two

upcoming events for alumni of the program to reconnect with each other while also connecting with the current team. The two events will be held in Statesboro (October) and Atlanta (November).

The first alumni event of the fall will be a full weekend planned around the Eagles' home Sun Belt Conference game against Hartwick. The weekend will start Friday, Oct. 21 with a social in Statesboro for both alumni as well as the current team at the Gene Bishop Field House located on the west side of Allen E. Paulson Stadium. A social hour will start at 6:30 p.m. featuring appetizers and soft drinks followed by a mentoring forum at 7 p.m.

On Saturday, Oct. 22 at 9 a.m., the coaches and current team invite alumni to partake in a casual round of golf at the Georgia Southern University Golf Course. Everyone is then invited to a showing of the Liverpool vs. West Brom EPL match at 1 p.m. followed by the team's pregame meal at 3 p.m. All alumni are also invited to the Eagles' Sun Belt Conference game against Hartwick and those alumni in attendance will be invited to a post-game social at the Clubhouse.

The second event will be held on Saturday, Nov. 19 in Atlanta as part of the rivalry football game between Georgia Southern and Georgia State. The function will include the True Blue Tailgate, tickets to the game and a post-game social at a local establishment.

The fall soccer reunion events will be hosted by both the men's soccer program and the Eagle Soccer Alumni Association (ESAA). As a division of the GATA Club, the ESAA is comprised of former Georgia Southern University soccer student-athletes, coaches, equipment managers and athletic trainers who all share the bond of being a Georgia Southern Eagle. The association adheres to the mission of "Getting Athletes Together Again" while also supporting the soccer program at Georgia Southern through annual dues and donations.

Questions about the event should be forwarded to Hannah Youmans at 1 (800) GSU-WINS (1-800-478-9467) or HYoumans@georgiasouthern.edu.

Alumni of the soccer program interested in these events and more can sign up to receive more information at GSEagles.com/GATA.

GEORGIA SOUTHERN EIGHTH IN SOUTHEAST REGION POLL

Georgia Southern entered last week ninth in the NSCAA Southeast Region poll. The Eagles are one spot ahead of rival Georgia State. Florida Gulf Coast is first in the Southeast, Charlotte is second, Kentucky third, South Carolina fourth and Sun Belt Conference foe Hartwick is fifth. Georgia Southern has defeated three teams that were ranked in the top-10 in the Southeast Region at the time, including Stetson, North Florida and Georgia State.

WILSON, FJAER AMONG NATION'S BEST IN FIVE STATISTICAL CATEGORIES

Junior forward [Blake Wilson](#) and redshirt freshman [Torgeir Fjaer](#) are both high up in the national rankings for individual performances.

Wilson is currently tied for 25th in goals scored (8) and tied for 41st in goals per game (0.57) and total points (18).

Fjaer is currently eighth nationally with 5.7 saves per game and is 40th with a .803 save percentage.

FANS ENCOURAGED TO BRING LAWN CHAIRS TO THE GAME

Georgia Southern invites fans to bring their own lawn chairs to all home soccer games and sit in the grassy areas to the sides of the goals just off of the playing surface. Tents are not allowed and pets must be kept off the track and field.

GEORGIA SOUTHERN ATHLETICS TO AID LOUISIANA FLOOD RELIEF

Georgia Southern student-athletes are joining together to help raise funds for flood relief in Louisiana. GS Athletics will be asking patrons to join this effort during football, men's soccer, women's soccer and volleyball home games until Nov. 7. The money raised will be presented at the home football game against the UL Lafayette on Nov. 10.

This cause is a significant for one of the Georgia Southern student-athletes. The Sun Belt has two peer members based in Louisiana and while only one student-athlete hails from the Bayou State, she was directly affected by the disaster. The home of Taylor Thompson's grandmother was destroyed due to 4 feet of flood waters. Thompson is from Baton Rouge – one of the hardest areas hit - and is a senior on the GS women's golf team. The student-athletes at Georgia Southern find it particularly meaningful to be able to directly help someone with such a close tie to this university.

Georgia Southern student-athletes will be at each home game collecting funds. The athletes will be holding buckets located at the guest relations tents near Gate 8 and Gate 12 for football games, and at the entrance of the facilities for soccer and volleyball games. Georgia Southern is asking the fans of both teams to give generously for such an important cause. Cash or checks made out to "Georgia Southern Athletic Foundation" will be accepted. Donations can also be made at the Athletics Ticket Office on Lanier Drive during normal business hours or online at GSEagles.com/Login.

LAST TIME OUT

The Georgia Southern men's soccer team went on the road Tuesday night for the ninth time this season and earned a fourth positive result in a row, working to a 1-1 double overtime draw at Presbyterian College.

Despite giving up an early goal to the Blue Hose, the Eagles were able to battle back in the second half behind a [David Rhoades](#) goal and eight saves by [Torgeir Fjaer](#). The Eagles out-shot the Blue Hose 28-23 and had 10 corner kicks compared to six by PC.

NEXT UP

Georgia Southern will next travel to nationally-ranked Clemson on Tuesday, Oct. 25. The Tigers are currently ranked eighth by the NSCAA and fourth by Top Drawer Soccer. They are also No. 1 in the RPI standings. The game between the Eagles and Tigers will air on the ACC Network Extra and will kick off at 7 p.m. from Historic Riggs Field in Clemson, S.C.

Georgia Southern Athletics provides up-to-date information on all its sports through its official website, GSEagles.com, through social media channels facebook.com/GSAthletics, twitter.com/GSAthletics, iOS app Georgia Southern Eagles and Android app Eagles GATA. Fans can purchase tickets to Georgia Southern Athletics events by visiting GSEagles.com/Tickets.

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