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Milledge Austin

Game Recap: Men's Soccer | 10/25/2016 10:08:00 PM

Georgia Southern Drops Hard-Fought Battle at No. 5 Clemson

The Eagles gave the nationally-ranked Tigers all they could handle, but fell 1-0

CLEMSON, S.C. – The Georgia Southern men's soccer team battled hard for 90 minutes Tuesday night, taking nationally-ranked Clemson down to the wire at Historic Riggs Field. Despite a furious battle and several good looks by the Eagles, the No. 5 Tigers were able to escape with a 1-0 win off a goal that came in the 84th minute.

The Eagles, playing their first nationally-ranked team of the year, were able to apply heavy pressure at times on the Tigers. In the opening minutes of the second half, freshman [Josh Bronstorph](#) had the best look for the Eagles as he accepted a pass from midfield and appeared poised to score, but his shot from the left of the box went high and just left. Redshirt freshman goalkeeper [Torgeir Fjaer](#) made two saves on the night in goal for the Eagles as the offense accounted for six shots compared to 15 by the Tigers.

MATCH FACTS

Georgia Southern (7-6-3) – 0
#5 Clemson (10-2-4) – 1

SCORING SUMMARY

84' – CU – Aaron Jones (1), Unassisted – Free kick from 28 yards out scored into upper right corner

NOTES

- Georgia Southern is now 1-7-2 against Clemson all-time with all 10 games having been contested in Clemson.
- Fifth-ranked Clemson is the fourth top-five opponent Georgia Southern has played all-time in men's soccer. It is also the second time the Eagles have played a top-five Clemson team with the first time being last season on Oct. 20, 2015, when the Tigers were ranked fourth.
- Prior to Tuesday's match, Georgia Southern moved up a spot in the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) Southeast Region standings. The Eagles are now seventh in the region. Charlotte remains atop the Southeast Region standings with Kentucky second, Florida Gulf Coast third, South Carolina fourth and North Florida fifth. There are also two Sun Belt opponents joining GS in the top-10, Georgia State is currently sixth and Hartwick 10th.
- The Tigers are currently third in the South Region. Wake Forest is atop the South Region standings with North Carolina second, Syracuse fourth and Louisville fifth.
- Saturday night's victory marked the fourth time this season that the Eagles defeated a team ranked in the top-10 of the Southeast Region by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA). Hartwick entered the week fifth in the region while the Eagles were eighth. Earlier this year, the Eagles beat Stetson (seventh), North Florida (fifth) and Georgia State (ninth) with the wins over the Hatters and Panthers coming on the road.
- Georgia Southern has been moving up the NCAA Rating Percentage Index (RPI) in the last few weeks. The RPI is a ranking system used to rank teams based upon the team's record and strength of schedule. Two weeks ago, the Eagles were 151 before moving up to 141 last week. At the start of this week, GS is 113 marking a 28 spot increase after going 1-0-1 against Presbyterian and Hartwick. The Eagles boast wins this season over four top-100 teams in North Florida (24), Mercer (48), Georgia State (63) and Hartwick (83) and they also tied Coastal Carolina (47).

QUOTE FROM COACH JOHN MURPHY

On playing well against nationally-ranked Clemson

"It was a good game and it was played in the right spirit. I have a ton of respect for Clemson and everything that Coach Noonan, his staff and the players have built over the years. I was very proud to bring a team to Historic Riggs Field, one of the great college soccer venues, and I thought we gave as good as we got. If I had to be critical, I would say the final touch wasn't there, but in regards to building up to significant Clemson pressure, there aren't too many teams that can pass well against Clemson because they defend so well collectively. I think the fact that we were able to pass very

well tonight, says a lot about us.

"Overall, I never felt like the game was out of reach. I felt like the goal was probably the highlight of the game and was a great piece that was well struck. Sometimes you have to tip your hat to the opposition and say 'Well done.' I think the guys will come away from this game with a lot of confidence and I think we got better as a team. Hopefully this will spur us on heading into our weekend game with Howard and that is where our focus will be now."

On the defense playing well, setting up the offense

"In our sport, your attacks are platformed by how you defend and your defense is going to come from how you attack. It's just the way our game is. There is a lot of flow to it. I thought that the way we set up defensively was quite good, I thought that our spacing was excellent and I thought we went to close on the ball well. The times when we didn't close on the ball well, we were forcing crosses and long shots.

"I couldn't be more proud of the effort, but it's a collective effort. It wasn't just our goalkeeper and the defenders that defended, the entire team defended well. We try to play collectively, as a unit and overall I thought we were very good, just maybe lacking the final touch in a pass and a shot. But the good news is we are putting ourselves into those positions and it just becomes a matter of time before we turn those half chances into full chances and turn those full chances into goals."

NEXT UP

The Eagles will remain on the road for the final road game of the regular-season this Saturday, Oct. 29. GS will travel to Washington, D.C. on Saturday to take on Howard in a Sun Belt Conference match. The Eagles and Bison will kick off at 7 p.m.

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