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# Georgia Southern University Athletics



The Long And Short Of It: Eagles' Freeman, Love-Hill Share Experiences And Goals  
Georgia Southern's tallest and shortest player both hoping to bring high school successes to the Eagles  
Women's Basketball

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**STATESBORO** - Looking at Georgia Southern sophomore point guard [Ja'nya Love-Hill](#) and senior [Lydia Freeman](#), one might think the two players have nothing in common at all.

Standing at 6-foot-5, Freeman is the tallest student-athlete to don the Eagle women's basketball uniform since 2005. Love-Hill, meanwhile, is listed on the roster at 5-foot-6 - and a generous 5-foot-6 at that.

"That might have got bumped up a little bit," Love-Hill says, laughing. "I'm like 5-foot-4. Five-foot-3 and a half maybe. Five-foot-4 on a good day. But on my MaxPreps [high school profile] it says 5-foot-6."

Freeman has had her height questioned as well, but on the lower end of the scale. "Everyone thinks I'm like 6-foot-3, but I'm really 6-foot-5."

The two share a commonality, however, that goes back just a couple of years. While Love-Hill was a senior in high school in Columbus, Ga., playing for Carver HS. Freeman, meanwhile, was a junior playing for defending Georgia 7A State Champion Westlake HS.

During that 2018-19 girls basketball season, both Love-Hill and Freeman led their respective high school teams to Georgia state titles - and undefeated seasons as well.

For Love-Hill, it was a journey that capped three years, starting with a championship game loss during her sophomore season.

"My senior year, I was hungry," Love-Hill said. "I had to go out with a bang. We went to the State championship in my 10th grade year, and lost at the buzzer. We went to the Final Four in 11th grade, and lost. But in my senior year, we got to the State championship and played the team we played the previous year. It was like revenge, we just had to win."

And win they did - a 56-44 decision over Spalding HS to capture the Georgia 4A State Championship, a first for the program as well as capping the undefeated campaign. But the win was bittersweet for Love-Hill, who was injured during the contest.

"It had felt like I lost still, honestly," Love-Hill said about the injury. "Everyone was celebrating, and I was happy because we won - but it was also tragic. When it was time to shake hands, I couldn't shake everyone's hand. They carried me through the line because they wouldn't let me walk on crutches."

Freeman's season at 7A Westlake was different in one crucial way. Yes, Westlake was the defending champions from Lydia's sophomore year. But few expected them to repeat.

"That year was special because we lost five seniors," Freeman said. "We were young, nobody thought we could do it. But we proved everyone wrong. None of the games were close. The game against Collins Hill was close at first, but we pulled away in the fourth quarter. We ended up going undefeated, it was a special year for everybody. And it was the first year that I really played a lot of varsity minutes."

Freeman was named the most improved player in the state that season for helping guide Westlake to the title. The improvement wouldn't stop there as Westlake would go on to complete the three-peat during her senior season in 2019-20.



Coming from their winning traditions, the one thing both young Eagles want to do is help instill that winning mentality in Georgia Southern women's basketball.

"I just want to bring the win," Freeman said about what she wants to contribute to the Eagles. "I don't like to lose, I want to win everything. Regular season, conference title. I want to make the NCAAs and help turn the program around."

As a point guard, Love-Hill is used to being a leader on the teams she has played for. And that's what she wants to contribute.

"I want to bring that leadership," Love-Hill said. "I had that my senior year, leading the team to the State championship. Even when I got hurt, I felt like they played for me because I had led them that far. I just want to be able to lead the team."

Both Freeman and Love-Hill have had to make adjustments to the college game, like all high school players. What were their biggest adjustments?

"Coming off of my injury, I was slower than everybody," Love-Hill said. "That was a big adjustment. Also, everyone is so much bigger. There were things I could get away with in high school that you can't get away with in college. Like not getting too deep in the paint when you're driving in. It was easy to do in high school. Here, you get smacked. \*laughs\*"

"In high school, I played against dainty posts," Freeman said. "Smaller girls who just play post. Here, you're playing 6-foot-2 built, big posts. And the game is quicker in college. Also, being on the bench. I'm coming in from starting, to having to earn your playing time coming off the bench. You've got to work for it, and making sure you do something when you get your minutes."

So how good can the Eagles be?

"I think we can be great," Love-Hill said. "I feel like this team is just like my Carver team. We just need to stay disciplined throughout the whole season. We can be a championship team also. If we trust in each other. That's a big key. Being able to trust each other."

Freeman agrees. "I think we're good, and I think we can win the whole thing. We've got to lock in, focus and bring it home."

Take it from a pair of young players who have experienced what many shoot for in their careers.  
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