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## One More Time: Jake Maples

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### Recommended Citation

Georgia Southern University, "One More Time: Jake Maples" (2020). *Athletics News*. 2401.  
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Men's Golf 6/17/2020 2:20:00 PM

## **One More Time: Jake Maples**

[Finish Strong Fundraising Campaign](#)

*By Jake Maples, Men's Golf Student-Athlete*

*Georgia Southern men's golf senior [Jake Maples](#) ranked 12th in the Sun Belt with a 71.72 scoring average when the NCAA and Sun Belt canceled all 2020 spring competition due to concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic. The McDonough, Georgia, native has been a staple in the Eagles' lineup since coming over to Statesboro in 2018 from Central Alabama Community College and won the GS Individual Collegiate after posting a 210 earlier this season.*

The week before the Schenkel was supposed to start I did an interview at Forest Heights with WSAV. Connor asked me if he thought we were peaking since we were coming off a huge win at Colleton River. I responded "I don't think we're peaking, I think we're just good." The response I gave created some buzz and laughter around the team since it was so far off my usual responses to interview questions like that. But the fact of the matter is, I believed it.

On the day before the Schenkel was supposed to start, I woke up and played nine holes with Jacob Bayer, Avery Price and Wilson Andress. When we finished up I headed over to the facility for a little practice and when I was done with my practice I walked inside, laid down on the couch, and took out my phone. That's when it started happening. In our team group messages, my teammates started talking about all of the teams leaving. I headed back over to the course to get a closer look at what was happening and get some last-minute putting work. It had to be about 2 o'clock. At that point, we were still having a Schenkel, just a reduced field. I think about eight teams were still planning on playing. I decided to call it a day and went home and took a shower. At 4:22, Ben Carr sent a screenshot of the NCAA's tweet stating that all spring championships were canceled. Coach Collins followed shortly asking if everyone could make it to the facility ASAP for a team

meeting. My mind started going a million miles an hour. **Coach Collins explained that there was a lot of uncertainty and he challenged us to look for positives in these, what was sure to be, tough times.** All I knew is that I was headed home and I was not playing a competitive round of golf for the foreseeable future.



Fast forward to March 29, the day before the NCAA is deciding whether or not to grant an extra year of eligibility to impacted athletes. CBS Sports and USA Today both released articles that basically said there's no way that athletic departments, especially mid-majors like Georgia Southern, would be able to afford the extra year. I swallowed the bait. It might've been the most lost I've ever felt. I had no clue what was next. **I thought for sure that I had put a Georgia Southern golf bag on my back for the last time.**



The next day, I turned on tweet notifications for just about every account that could tweet out the decision. I went to play golf to try to get my mind off everything but there was no way. I thought I was going to break my phone refreshing twitter. We finally got the news that the NCAA was, in fact, granting another year of eligibility. It felt like the weight of the world was lifted off my shoulders. Our coaches started reaching out to gauge my interest in returning next year and I told them all that I was 100% in.

**You see, my favorite part of playing golf at Georgia Southern is the blue-collar, chip-on-our-shoulder type of feeling that this university brings with it.** I, along with many others on this team, have a chip on my shoulder stemming all the way back from when I started playing golf. A thing I like to tell people is that I'll take our work ethic and tenacity over their private jets and Augusta National trips every day of the week. I'll take our rag tag, blue collar group of guys to war with anyone in the country. We haven't had anything handed to us and we know how to handle adversity.

"You see, my favorite part of playing golf at Georgia Southern is the blue-collar, chip-on-our-shoulder type of feeling that this university brings with it.



I love my teammates and coaches and I love the way they work and strive to be great in all aspects of life. I've never been around a group of guys that love each other and love what we do as much as this team.

I can't begin to express the gratitude I feel towards this athletic department for making this extra year possible. I feel indebted to the alumni, boosters, compliance department and the leadership of the athletic department. Y'all have changed my life in the most positive way and I look to represent Georgia Southern with class and I will work as hard as possible to make y'all proud. It feels good to be back.

Hail Southern,  
Jake