LAST CALL

Sports bar closes after three years in Statesboro

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TWELFTH NIGHT

Shakespeare meets the roarin' 20s

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Miss GSU

The woman behind the crown

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FIRST PITCH

Eagles to face UGA in season opener

Page 11
CHOCOLATE RUN TO BUILD A HOMELESS SHELTER THIS WEEKEND

Registration is currently open for Open Hearts Community Mission’s 4th Annual Chocolate Run. The event will take place at 9 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 20, in the DAC Pavilion. The event is held to benefit the construction of a 30-bed homeless shelter by Open Hearts Community Mission. The 30-bed homeless shelter has a definitive purpose, as outlined on its website: “to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, restore the downtrodden and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

According to the Statesboro Herald, Reverend Jim Lewis, executive director of Open Hearts Community Mission, along with board of directors chairman, Debra Mobley are spearheading the construction of the homeless shelter. Open Hearts Community Mission is attempting to surpass the total of $32,000 raised at last year’s Chocolate Run.

The Chocolate Run offsets some costs for the shelter as well citizens and donors in the Bulloch community. The community has been generous with donations and support, churches, individuals, civic groups.”

Registration for the Chocolate Run will close the day of the event. For more information on the Chocolate Run and to register, go to www.thesweetestrace.com.

EMPOWERING WOMEN SERIES: MIND, BODY, AND SOUL

The Empowering Southern Women Spring 2016 series will focus on three important aspects of women: Mind, Body, and Soul. The main point of this series is to make women feel more confident and happy.

The Division of Continuing Education will be hosting their first series at the Nessmith-Lane Conference Center.

The first series will take place on February 25 at 8:00 pm. This series will focus on the Mind. There will be two speakers, Susanne Jackson and Jill Johns. Jackson is the owner of Your Power Yoga and will speak about the health benefits of yoga and meditation.

STATESBORO NOW A MINOR LEAGUE CITY

“it’s an honor having a professional player such as Perez for our coach,” Oscar Gutierrez, forward player, said. “He’s played for teams such as Real Madrid and Santa Maria Pilas.”

Tormenta FC’s team colors are navy, sky blue, silver and magenta. Como May, the team will play in the Premier Development League (PDL), also known as the fourth tier in the American Soccer Pyramid.

Tryouts for the team have been held since 2015 and the final open tryout will take place on February 27th. Practice, games, and related events will be held at Eagle Field at the Eric Russell Athletic Park.

“Thetranslated, tormenta is Spanish for storm, and that’s exactly what our team is going to bring: a storm,” Tormenta FC Co-owner Jeremy Aven said.

Team products, season tickets and more information can all be found on tormentafc.com.

THIS DAY IN BLACK HISTORY

Henry E. Newton was born yesterday, Feb. 17. He is the founder of the Black Panther Party, which was formed in 1966. At its peak, the party had 2,000 members. In 1971, he changed the party’s manifesto to include nonviolence, aiming to provide a service to the black community.

According to blackfacts.com, Newton received a Ph.D in 1980 from the University of California for social philosophy. However after much pressure from the government the Black Panthers were disbanded in 1983, and seven years later he was found shot dead in the streets.

In the Feb. 11 issue, the information provided by Kerry Greenstein in the article “Can students and teachers actually date?” was incorrect. The policy very clearly states “any romantic relationship with a student is strictly prohibited.”

CORRECTION
Celebrity influence has been 
vast all year. Beyoncé and King Kendrick
have had a positive influence on social issues.

**SKYLER BLACK**
Black is a senior writing and linguistics major from
Warner Robins, Ga.

The last few years have been
political ideology for decades.
A platform for social and
the conversation has been
and through social media,
two of the biggest stars in the
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Before Super Bowl 50, when
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Celebrities have been
using their fame as
a platform for social and
political ideology for decades.
The last few years have been
controversial to say the least,
and through social media,
the conversation has been
started. It is only fitting that
during Black History month,
two of the biggest stars
in the music industry would start
the biggest conversation of all
on the two biggest stages available.

In the last two weeks, the
world has gravitated around
the musical performances of
Kendrick Lammr and Beyoncé.
Knowles. From the day
Super Bowl 50, when
Beyoncé released her newest
hit “Formation,” to Kendrick’s
performance at the Grammy
Awards, the music industry
has shown us, once again,
it can be used to send a message.
Beyoncé’s “Formation”
video is a powerful
compilation of imagery from
her childhood and the present
state of the United States. She
shows scenes from a hurricane
tornado Oklahoma. Beyoncé is also able to show
her southern heritage through
the lyrics and imagery paired
Together. With the imagery
of Louisiana and the Black Lives Matter movement,
we are shown things that should
open our eyes. The message
she is telling the world is
something that we should
already be aware of but are
too scared to talk about. She is
showing the volatile nature of
the nation when dealing with
matters of equality. A crudely
spray painted “stop shooting
us” juxtaposed with a line
of police officers in front
of a child tell the public to start
paying attention to the social
issue that is taking place.

While the music Kendrick
performed was not brand
new music, the images that he
depicted while at the Grammy
Awards were used to create
a new reaction from the people
viewing them. He performed a
mashup of two of his hit
songs and a never before
heard song. Kendrick
kicked out onto the stage in chains
and a prison uniform with a
group of men while singing
“The Blacker the Berry” to
help shed light on a struggle
of racial injustice. Again, the
issues and ideas that Kendrick
brings forward in his music
and performance are not new.
Racial injustice is not a new
idea that is surprising people
when it is brought up. The
final image that the audience
is left with is a silhouetted
Kendrick standing in front of a
stark white image of Africa
with the word “Compton”
written in the center.

The purpose of both of
these performances is to create
this conversation with
America about the inequality
that runs rampant across the
nation. A quote from Victor Hugo, a French poet, states
that music expresses that
which cannot be said and
on which it is impossible to
be silent. But sadly, a large
population believes that
these performances were
racist and wanted to organize
rallies against Beyoncé and Kendrick.

I am genuinely terrified
when the people of this
country cannot understand
that these topics need to be
brought up. We are meant to
create a community where
the members within it can
voice their opinions and not
be created into pariahs. These
celebrities are trying to bring
the voices of millions forward
for the face of America.
Beyoncé and Kendrick
choose the date and venues
for these performances for
a specific purpose. They were aware that the eyes
of America would be watching
these televised events.
Super Bowl 50 drew in 111.9
million viewers on television
according to CNN while the
Grammy Awards drew in 24.9
million viewers according
to Deadline.com. Two of
the biggest celebrities in the
nation were able to show millions
of people around the world
a message that was bigger than
the songs themselves.

People seem to not understand
that the Black Lives Matter movement
is not a fad that is going away.
These movements do not
need to go away. In fact, they
are necessary to continue
conversations that America
is desperately lacking.
Clebrities are not the only
people who can start the
conversation. We can make
the change in our own society
if we just understand the
issues and address them.
After three years, Bigshow's has closed. The sports bar was well known for its wide selection of burgers.

BY BAILEY ADCOCK
The George-Anne staff

Statesboro favorite, Bigshow's Burgers and Bar, has officially closed its doors. Bigshow's was known for their burgers, claiming to have "the best burgers in the 'Boro."

Bigshow's was considered a local version of Hooter's with a friendly female wait staff, special activities and musical performances. Students across Georgia Southern's campus are shocked by the news. 'I was disappointed because it was the only place within walking distance that I could go relax, get a burger, and play trivia with my friends," Russell Land, freshman finance and economics major, said.

The establishment featured trivia on Monday nights, beer pong on Tuesdays, poker on Wednesdays, open mic night on Thursdays and live local bands on Friday and Saturday nights. "They also had a wing challenge I wanted to try, but I won't get to do that," Land said.

Bigshow's opened originally in January 2013 at their first location on Brampton Avenue. The restaurant and bar was a hit when it first opened. "I don't know if it had to do with the fact that it was just like a new restaurant in town that everybody wanted to try, or if it was just because we were a burger joint that served beer and it was a female-only wait staff," Jessica Frary, GSU alum and former Bigshow's waitress, said.

Bigshow's not only featured a lengthy menu of burgers and other classic bar food, the bar was fully stocked with a wide range of beers and liquors. Though Bigshow's had their loyal student fan base, some people were not happy with their service in the past few months. Former managers were unwilling to give relevant comments about why the restaurant closed down, but online reviews show that there was much to be desired at the restaurant. A few of the more recent reviews retrieved from Yelp say "this restaurant is a nightmare" and "you're better off going to the McDonald's down the road."

The closing of Bigshow's follows the closing of many other local favorites. Fuzzy's Taco Shop closed at the end of last year, as well as Hungry Howie's Pizza. Though these restaurants have shut down their businesses, their closing opens up the chance for more restaurants to possibly come into town in the future.
Construction of a new Flash Foods is underway on Fair Rd. No timetable has been given for the project.

BY BAILEY ADCOCK
The George-Anne Staff

Developers are constructing a new Flash Foods on Fair Road between Popeye's and Heritage Bank. Construction is being done by the Solid Rock Company, a construction company out of Jesup, Ga.

This will be the second Flash Foods in Statesboro, with the other located at the corner of Main Street and Veteran's Memorial Parkway.

Flash Foods is known to many students as having some of the cheapest gas in town. As of Tuesday, Feb. 16, the Flash Foods on Main St. was only charging about $1.69 per gallon of regular fuel.

"I like Flash Foods. I like cheap and convenient gas," Rachel Parker, junior childhood and family development major, said.

The new location on Fair Road will be closer for most Georgia Southern students.

"I feel like it will make cheap gas more convenient so I don't have to drive all the way across town," Jessica Browning, sophomore childhood and family development major, said.

Like many gas stations around town, Flash Foods has a few loyalty programs you can take part in.

Their Go Blue payment card, a franchise credit card, allows cardholders to save 5 cents per gallon and receive 2 percent cash back on purchases made within the store.

As a non-credit alternative, Flash Foods provides customers with a loyalty program called Rewards in a Flash. This program provides frequent customers with discounts and rewards just for being customers. These rewards range from free drinks to cash back to contests and sweepstakes.

Flash Foods features monthly and daily specials on snacks, gas, and other purchases. February's specials include two Java Monsters for $4, Crack Jack'd snack mix two for $4 and all Stride gum flavors are only 99 cents.

On the other hand, their daily deals include two king-sized Hershey's bars for $3.33, Buy 10, Get 1 free beverage clubs and 49 cents money orders.

"I don't have a car so I don't pay attention to the gas prices, but if I could walk to one to get snacks and stuff that'd be great," Megan Moss, freshman accounting major, said.

Construction permits were acquired in November 2015, but no date has been announced for completion.

"I feel like it will make cheap gas more convenient so I don't have to drive all the way across town," Jessica Browning, sophomore childhood and family development major
SHAKESPEARE COMES TO GEORGIA SOUTHERN

By Rachel Kelso

The traditional Shakespearean play is reimagined in the 1920s. Both the set and costumes were inspired by the Great Gatsby.

It's Shakespeare like you've never seen before. The Georgia Southern Theatre Department is performing a new rendition of William Shakespeare's famous comedy "Twelfth Night."

"Twelfth Night" tells the story of a crash-landed woman tangled up in a complicated and comedic love triangle. However, there's a twist.

"Our production of 'Twelfth Night' is taking place in the 1920s and kind of has a New Orleans French Quarter flavor to it," Gage Crook, director and GSU alumni, said.

According to Crook, the change of setting did not greatly affect the show or its content. He did, however, make small adjustments to the productions such as cutting all lines referencing swords due to the more modernized weaponry in the 1920s.

"I think that it is a fun place to set the story," William Leach, sophomore theatre major, said. "The thing I love about William Shakespeare's work is that you can really take it and make it your own and do so much with it."

Leach will be playing Sir Andrew Aguecheek, a rich, cocky and foolish character. "He's a little overwhelming," Leach said. "Ifs a huge challenge to learn a whole different language," he said.

Crook agreed with Leach, admitting that the language barrier is difficult at first for everyone involved.

"Twelfth Night" will be opening Thursday, March 3 at 7 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center. Student tickets are $6 and all others are $12.

Dress in the Press Team Submissions

Now Accepting Team Applications!

You and three of your friends can create an outfit from recycled student media publications, display it in a fashion show, and win prizes!

The event will take place on Thursday, March 31st. The theme for this year's Dress in the Press is Greek Mythology! Each team will be assigned a different character to be the inspiration for their outfit.

Submissions are due by March 9th.

To contact the sports editor, email gasports@georgiasouthern.edu

QUESTIONS YOU HAVE TO LAUREN LITTLE, PR COORDINATOR FROM RECYCLED STUDENT MEDIA PUBLICATIONS, DISPLAY IT IN A FASHION SHOW, AND WIN PRIZES!

House for Rent

4 Bedroom / Fully Furnished / All appliances included / Immediate Repairs.

Call Dr. Hood at 912-682-7468.

To contact the sports editor, email gasports@georgiasouthern.edu
Keeping you in the know about Student Affairs and Enrollment Management events, designed with you in mind.

FEBRUARY 18TH

• UPB: Mr. CSU Scholarship Pageant Informational Session
  Time: Tuesday, February 16th, Wednesday, February 17th
  Thursday, February 18th 5:00 - 6:30 pm
  Location: Russell Union 2052
  Mr. CSU selects traditional and community events and represents the student body in all that he does. Anyone that is interested in participating must attend at least one information session (no exceptions) and submit an application.
  Application timeline:
  Opens: Tuesday, February 16th at 6:00pm (via MyInvolvement)
  Closes: Monday, February 29th at 5:00pm
  **Applications must reach Mr. CSU to be eligible.
  Contact Information: unicornstudent@georgiasouthern.edu

FEBRUARY 23RD

• SOLD Series Workshop - It’s Too Busy To Be Mindful! How to Incorporate Mindfulness Into Your Daily Life
  Time: Tuesday, February 23rd, 5:30 - 6:30 pm
  Location: Nessmith-Lane Assembly Hall Room 1915
  College students are very busy people! It’s easy to become stressed out, annoyed, and anxious when thinking of the ever-growing To Do lists that we all have. Incorporating mindfulness into your life can help you reduce stress, improve your memory, and have fewer relationship issues. Come learn how just 10 minutes a day can help.
  Contact Information: Kristen Van Noord
  Kvannoord@GeorgiaSouthern.edu

FEBRUARY 24TH

• UPB Presents: 80’s Skate Party
  Time: Wednesday, February 24th 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm
  Location: Williams Center Multipurpose Room
  Join the University Programming Board for the first ever 80’s Skate Party! Break out your neon sweatbands, leotards and leg warmers and roller skate the night away with us! We’re transforming campus life and this is a new event that you won’t want to miss! Students you must bring your Eagle IDs. Also must have socks to participate.
  Contact Information: UPB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu

• Leadership and Civic Engagement Awards
  Recognize and award yourself a friend, exemplary students and student organizations. Take a moment to complete the appropriate nomination form for any deserving student leaders or student organizations. Nominations are due no later than Friday, March 11th by 5:00 PM. http://students.georgiasouthern.edu/LeadServe/leadawards/
  Contact Information: randi.bastian@georgiasouthern.edu

• Academic Success Workshops.
  To register call 912-478-5371 or email asc@georgiasouthern.edu
  Locations: Cone Hall Room 2003
  Thursday, Feb 18th 5:45-6:30pm
  Monday, Feb 22nd 2:00-3:00pm
  Wednesday, Feb 24th 5:30pm - 6:20pm
  Study Tips for Political Science Dr. Kevin Cook
  Learning Styles Dr. Marie Green
  Time Management Ms. Jackie Vannell
  Ms. Mike Vaughn

YOUR STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES AT WORK

The Weekly Buzz is sponsored by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management.

To contact the features editor: email gaartsandent@georgiasouthern.edu

THE
BUZZ
LIST

KAT SHUMAN
Assistant features editor

- It’s Kanye’s World: Kanye West has finally released his long awaited gospel album. "The Life of Pablo" has ten tracks, but none of them are more talked about than "Famous." Taylor Swift is certainly not a fan of the song, as she is mentioned in it: "I feel like me and Taylor might still have sex? Why? I made that bitch famous." Though West claims he got Swift’s approval for the song, she denies it and said that she objects to the song’s "strong misogynistic message."

- We’re Just Living In It: "Famous" isn’t the only headline Kanye West made this week. On Saturday, West announced, “I write this to you my brothers while still 55 million dollars in personal debt... Please pray we overcome... This is my true heart...” on Twitter. The world was shocked and wondered how West could be in so much debt. He quickly went to Twitter and responded, “Yes I am personally rich and I can buy furs and houses for my family, but I need access to more money in order to bring more beautiful ideas to the world.”

- Swift Sasses Back: Did you think I was done talking about Taylor? Of course not, Swift won Album of the Year at the Grammys Monday. In her acceptance speech, she called out Kanye West saying, “... there are going to be people along the way who will try to undercut your success or take credit for your accomplishments or your fame. But if you just focus on the work and you don’t let those people sidetrack you, someday, when you get where you are going, you will look around and you will know that it was you and the people who love you who put you there.” #TeamTaylor.

- The Frozen Look: No, I’m not talking about Elsa, though millions of girls have spent hours braiding their hair in attempts to look like the Disney Princess. I am talking about the Frozen look developed by Rihanna for the New York Fashion week that has caught a lot of attention. Model Gigi Hadid and her sister Bella rocked this look walking down the runway. Will it catch on? Girls everywhere were wearing feathers in their hair only a few years ago, so I’m not ruling anything out.
FEATURES

BY ASHLEY GILLEY

Whether it’s hunting or having her own gun collection, Harley Strickland, the winner of Miss GSU, is proving that there is more to pageant queens than meets the eye.

“I love to hunt and fish,” Strickland said. “If I’m not in classes or pageants I’m out in the woods doing something.”

A lot of time and effort goes into Strickland preparing for a pageant. It includes work outs, interview coaches and watching the news so that she knows what’s going on in the world.

Putting oneself through all of this seems a little odd, but Strickland has her own reasons for participating in pageants. In her youth she was shy and would hide behind her mother, but participating in pageants improved her public speaking and ultimately bought her out of her shell.

She isn’t all business, as explained by her fun tradition before a pageant. “I always have a huge coke before I compete,” Strickland said.

Strickland is also a huge fan of Reba McEntire and her music. She listens to her on the way to interviews and especially likes songs such as “Fancy” and “The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia.”

One of the things she loves the most about competing are the elegant dresses. She works at a gown shop called Frills by Scott.

“I love feeling beautiful in a beautiful gown,” said Strickland.

Strickland wants to help people with the recognition that comes from winning the crown, her personal platform is patients in hospice care. She uses her talent for sewing to make the hospice patients pouches for their walkers, as well as outfits for her dog Ozzy, the morkie.

Strickland shared an anecdote that illustrates why her advice to other competitors is to never give up.

Junior year of high school she competed in the school pageant and didn’t place after messing up an onstage question. To make it even more humiliating, the mother of a fellow competitor was a substitute teacher and made fun of her afterwards in front of the entire class.

Strickland decided to prove this woman wrong. With practice, she made sure to be ready when the next pageant came along. The following year she not only placed, but also won the title and proved to the woman and herself that she could go above and beyond.

BY ASHLEY GILLEY

The George-Anne writer staff

Harley Strickland isn’t your typical beauty queen. Outside of pageantry she enjoys hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities.

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MEET COACH B

Mark Byington is in his third season as head coach for the men’s basketball team.

BY MARCUS WILLIAMS
The Georgia-Anne Staff

Mark Byington is in his third season as head coach for the Eagles. After his basketball career in college was over he went through some travel and semi-professional teams before his playing career ended.

Even though his playing career ended, he realized he still wanted basketball to be in his daily life, which enticed him to the career of coaching. “I never thought I was going to be a basketball coach until basketball was taken away from me. I wasn’t one of those people saying I wanted to be a basketball coach,” Byington said. “I look empty inside and I missed the competitiveness, I missed being around teams and then the fight kind of clicked on.”

He returned to graduate school and became a graduate assistant at the University of Virginia from 2004-2005.

Byington is the cool, calm and collected kind of coach that can get intense in the heat of the game and truly knows his guys better than most. He knows the values of the lessons and teachings learned from his past coaching experiences, as well as the tough and busy schedule of a student athlete and how to bond with his players.

Byington is a player’s coach and his players have shown the respect and trust in him to make them into better players and people by always believing in what he says and playing as hard as they can.

BY KEEGH SMILEY
The Georgia-Anne Staff

EAGLES FIGHT FOR A SPOT IN SUN BELT TOURNAMENT

The women’s basketball team is currently one game back from the final spot in the tournament. They begin a four-game homestand tonight against Arkansas State.

BY CATHY DROWN
The Georgia-Anne Staff

The Eagles box out the UT-Arlington Mavericks under the rim. They are 4-0 in the Sun Belt this season.
The Eagles are returning to the diamond after finishing with a 50-27 record in their 2015 campaign. The first home game will be against Georgia Tech on Feb. 24.

BY KEVIN KENEELY
The Georgia-Anne staff

This Friday, the Georgia Southern University baseball team will travel north to Athens to take on the University of Georgia to open up the 2016 season. It will be a three-game series and will wrap up Sunday afternoon.

GSU is looking to keep its winning streak going against UGA as it swept UGA last year and is 7-2 against them over the last three seasons.

UGA had a dismal season last year, finishing 26-28 overall and 10-19 in SEC play, giving them a 7th place finish in the SEC East last season.

Kellogg feels pretty good about his team entering the season. He is not worried about the team's upcoming season and feels like these younger guys will be able to step in and contribute to the team's success this season.

"Obviously they wouldn't be here if they didn't belong so we are excited about what some of these guys will be able to do to help our team," Henmon said.

Similar to GSU, UGA is losing a good bit of their starters from last season. UGA lost its top pitcher and co-captain, Jared Walsh, after the 2015 season to the draft. Walsh finished his senior year going 5-2, with a 2.40 ERA. Walsh also made 41 starts in the field, playing first base, right field, and designated hitter. He ended his senior season with a .306 batting average, which was the team's second best last season.

Outside of losing their top pitcher, UGA will be returning some of their top players, including center fielder Stephen Wrenn, outfielder Keegan McCormick, and RHP Mike Mancuso.

The opening series with UGA, the Eagles will host Georgia Tech next Wednesday at J.I. Clements Stadium in the 2016 home opener. First pitch for that game will be at 6 p.m.

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Swim & Dive prepares to take on Athens

The Eagles are heading north to compete in the CCSA Championships. The meet will run from Feb. 17-20.

BY KEVIN KENEELY
The George-Anne staff

The swimming and diving team will travel to Athens this Wednesday to compete in the CCSA Swimming & Diving Championships.

"The kids are looking pretty sharp right now and starting to feel a little bit of rest," head coach Nate Kellogg said. "They have a little more bounce in their step."

Kellogg feels pretty good about his team's chances going into the meet.

"I think that we have a shot to feel a little bit of rest," Kellogg said. "Just stay in the moment because in (a couple days) they wont have any of the opportunity to compete together, Kellogg has been really stressing to them to take in everything leading up to the championship."

The seniors will have some of those guys will be able to step in and contribute to the team's success.

"Soak up the moments the seniors will have one of the three starting pitchers they had last season. Head Coach Rodney Henmon has been making sure his team gets better every day and feels very confident in his team entering the season. He is not worried about the team's upcoming season and feels like these younger guys will be able to step in and contribute to the team's success this season."

"They have a little more bounce in their step."

Swimming and diving are honest sports and by that I mean, whatever you put in, you'll get out," Kellogg said.

The team finished 5-2 this season and 4-0 in conference play. More impressively, the team is mainly made up of freshmen.

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The CCSA Swimming & Diving Championships start this Wednesday and will run through Saturday.

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The CCSA Swimming & Diving Championships start this Wednesday and will run through Saturday.

The swimming and diving team will travel to Athens this Wednesday to compete in the CCSA Swimming & Diving Championships.

"The kids are looking pretty sharp right now and starting to feel a little bit of rest," head coach Nate Kellogg said. "They have a little more bounce in their step."

Kellogg feels pretty good about his team's chances going into the meet.

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"Soak up the moments the seniors will have one of the three starting pitchers they had last season. Head Coach Rodney Henmon has been making sure his team gets better every day and feels very confident in his team entering the season. He is not worried about the team's upcoming season and feels like these younger guys will be able to step in and contribute to the team's success this season."

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Swimming and diving are honest sports and by that I mean, whatever you put in, you'll get out," Kellogg said.

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EAGLES COMPETE IN SUN BELT INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Track & Field team will travel to Birmingham, Ala. for the meet. It will run from Feb. 22-23.

BY DERIK WUCHTE
The George-Anne Staff

The Sun Belt Indoor Championship will be taking place this coming weekend in Birmingham, AL. The team has gotten a chance to compete indoors this season, giving them a feel of what to expect. With the main event of the indoor season approaching, the Eagles are ready to give it their all.

The primary reason for competing at Samford was because of the indoor venue. This will be the same exact track and field used for the Sun Belt Indoor Championship.

Head Coach Kelly Carter knew about the meet. As he explained, although the meet wasn’t exclusively Sun Belt competition, it was still an opportunity for the Eagles to compete at the venue. It helped prepare them and acclimatize the team to the location.

With the indoor championship approaching, the team is able to take their past experiences and put them ahead.

"As a whole, I think that everyone is ready. They’re putting their best foot forward," Carter said. "They’ve had chances to go to different places. We’ve gone to Clemson, we’ve gone to Winston-Salem at JDL and they’ve run against some really good competition. They got a chance to see what it’s like and experience that, so I think they’re going to be prepared."

The teams have been split across the board with their indoor competitions this season. Since indoor regulations differ from outdoor, not every event is the same for the two. A variety of Eagles have been seeing a lot of competition over the past few weeks.

"I’d say all of them are doing well. Our seniors are doing well. Our seniors: I’m really happy for," Carter said. "They had a chance to experience Sun Belt for the first time last year and some of them got a chance to see what they were up against. In terms of preparing, the difference, I can’t say, but they’re ready now. They had a chance to go out there, prepare for this and it gives us an opportunity for our underclassmen to see what it takes. They’ve modeled that behavior. I’m excited and looking forward to conferences."

Keyanna Harris is a senior who has been an Eagle for four years. She is a normal top-5 placer at competitions. At Samford, she just finished with a sixth place finish in her event of the High Jump.

"I’m really excited for the championship that we have coming up," Harris said. 

"We’re looking to build on what we’ve been doing so far, this semester and this track season, improving individually and focusing overall, as a team. We’re making sure that all the moving parts of our team are doing each thing they have to do."

Harris explained, indoor to outdoor can differ greatly, or hardly at all. It normally comes down to track versus field events.

"For me, I’m a high jumper," Harris said. "For high jump, which is a field event, it doesn’t change as much, like indoor to outdoor. But for most events on the track, indoor, it can sometimes be a little more tough. Indoor can be a little tougher with the air and the tighter space, but once you have run on a couple of tracks indoors, it’s easier to get used to. We’ve got a couple of meets under our belt so I think we’re ready for our meet in Birmingham."

With her senior status, this will be Harris’ final indoor championship of her career.

"I’ve been doing track since I was eight years old. I’m 22 now so it’s been a really long road. This is going to be my last indoor season ever. It’s weird to think about and I haven’t been able to think about it," Harris said. "I’ve been trying to focus on getting my workouts in and everything like that. We started off, the senior class, as sort of a large group and we’ve dwindled down a little bit. It means a lot to us, who are still here, and still working to finish off the season, finish our indoor season and graduate. It’s the last go-around; we’re just trying to do all that we can in order to make it a meaningful one."

Track and field will compete in the Sun Belt Indoor Championship in Birmingham, AL from Monday, Feb. 22 to Tuesday, Feb. 23.

"Come out and support us, if you can; if you can make it to Birmingham," Carter said. "Come out and support us. Follow us on social media. Come out and support the girls if you can. They love to have people contact them. We love the family atmosphere of the university and our girls would love to feel that more also."