SUN BELT TOURNAMENT PREVIEW

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* Discover Irish traditions
* Great brews
* Half-asleep history

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2016
GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
WWW.THEGEORGEANNE.COM
VOLUME 90, ISSUE 47

D BRANDON WARNock

Study abroad in Ireland
Discover Irish traditions
Great brews
Half-asleep history
It is looking like a cloudy weekend, however, by the time Spring Break is here, the weather should clear up once the weekend ends.

**RYAN'S IN STATESBORO HAS CLOSED**

Ryan's buffet in Statesboro has officially closed its doors. It is one of 40 other locations that have closed, including the location in Augusta. Sunday March 6 was the buffet's last day of operation. The closing was cited as happening because of financial reasons. On Monday, the parent company in Texas that owns Ryan's and other related restaurants filed for bankruptcy.

The unusual thing about the closing of the location is that the restaurant was continuing to get new items. According to 2TOC, one employee Jennifer Beaulieu, describes the closing as a total surprise. 74 stores had just closed in February, but when the Statesboro location didn't close, Beaulieu and her 50 co-workers thought that everything was okay. "We just got a new heating and air system installed. They had just brought us a new ice cream machine. They kept bringing us new equipment," Beaulieu says. Yet, at 5 a.m. on Sunday management came to inform her of it's closing.

The workers are now forced to look for new employment. "It is awful because most of the staff didn't even know about it and woke up the next morning without a job," Jonathan Baggett, sophomore IT major, said.

Ryan did have a loyal customer base, with patrons disappointed at its closing. "I loved Ryan's! Were they better than Golden Corral? No, but man they had some good rolls," Christina Catchings, sophomore, Pre-Nursing major, said.

Some others were not as surprised at their closing. "Thank God. I've never been one for dumpster food," Gregory Eason, junior Mechanical Engineering major, said.

**NUMBER OF GEORGIA HATE GROUPS INCREASED IN 2015**

The AJC is reporting that the number of hate groups located in Georgia increased in 2015. According to a study by the Southern Poverty Law center (SPLC), the number of hate groups in Georgia increased from 28 in 2014 to 39 in 2015, an increase of approximately 39 percent.

The amount of hate groups across the nation rose as well, though not at the rate in Georgia. The number of hate groups rose from 784 to 892, an increase of almost 14 percent. Almost 10 percent of new hate groups were started in Georgia.

While most Georgia hate groups are located in the Atlanta area, there are a few in the Southeast Georgia area. The closest hate group located to Georgia Southern is located in Savannah, Georgia.

**Layout at The George-Anne: What we would be as animals**

In this week's layout video, we try to figure out what animal most personifies us. Jozsef will be dancing into our hearts and Lauren will reenacting a classic meme.

Go to thegeorgeanne.com/multimedia to check out the video!
Perseverance is a young man's game

I hate it. My voice gets shaky, my limbs weak. I become significantly less coherent and worst of all, I seem to lose all capacity for reason. So what right is it wrong to be passionate, even extremely so? Well no of course not, as a matter of fact I think it's great if you care so much about something that it affects you on multiple levels. But this isn't about how you feel on the inside, but rather how you project these feelings and ideas to those around you when your patience is wearing thin.

Like I said beforehand, there's certainly nothing wrong with caring. Personally, I believe if you don't have at least one thing, in which you are extremely invested, you need to go find it. No one should force yourself to do something you really don't want to do. Sometimes you'll find that something simply may not be for you and if really do feel that way you should simply move on to your next endeavor. I'm simply suggesting that before you consider giving up on anything, you see, most of us are at a dynamic and formative moment in our lives. We're starting careers, forging relationships that could last a lifetime, some of us are still even trying to figure out who we are and what we want out of life. Like I said, many of us are still trying to find our passion or purpose in life, so it's only natural we may get frustrated when we start to feel like the things aren't going quite as planned. However it's important to consider what kind of person you want to be. There are going to be times where you feel as if your option is to quit, but you have to think about the others around you may be letting down and above all else you have to make sure you aren't cheating yourself out of a chance to grow and gain some valuable experience. Now of course you shouldn't force yourself into doing something you really don't want to do. Sometimes you'll find that something simply may not be for you and if really do feel that way you should simply move on to your next endeavor.

Ultimately it's up to you to decide how you spend your time and talents. You may find that, even though a certain activity may be tough right now, further down the road you'll truly benefit from having experienced this hardship. Personally, I believe if you don't have at least one thing in which you are extremely invested, you need to go find it.
GSU Greek life engages with community through philanthropy events

Many of the fraternities and sororities on Greek Row hold events throughout the year. Events range from fundraisers to 5k runs and community service projects.

BY TANDRA SMITH
The George-Anne contributor

To many organizations in Georgia Southern University’s Greek community, philanthropy is a huge deal. In fact, according to Georgia Southern’s Greek Life website, more than 20,000 hours of volunteer time and $80,000 dollars were raised through philanthropic events in 2012.

“Most Greek organizations stand for community service. Even though we are all different, we all stand for community service.”

Fraternity, sorority or alumni organizations were built on the mission that each of our organizations was a vehicle for change. Each organization, Fraternity, Sorority, or alumni organization has the potential to make a positive impact on the community. This impact can be measured through service, philanthropy, and leadership.

Volunteer time and $80,000 dollars were raised through philanthropic events in 2012.

“Most Greek organizations stand for community service. Even though we are all different, we all stand for community service.”

BY CHYNA JAMES
The George-Anne contributor


Throughout the last four years, the graphic design professional practice class has partnered with the museum to create exhibits for everyone to enjoy and to give students experience with designing and executing projects. Each year there is a “changing” themed exhibit that creates the opportunity for research to bring change to the campus through different multidisciplinary topics.

Visitors of the Click! exhibit have the chance to explore the art, history and science of photography through a wide variety of historic cameras, creative hands-on activities about how they work and how they have changed overtime.

Graphic design professor, Santamu Majumdar and his students were a big part of making the exhibit available. “The current generation has no idea how cameras work and they just take a picture with their camera phone,” Majumdar said. “They don’t understand cameras and how it’s a science so they should go and see it. There are a lot of old cameras with the original packing and it’s very interesting. It’s enjoyable because of the look but we were also able to bring certain elements that are important for the community and students.”

Museum director, Brent Tharp, works with the graphic design class to produce the new exhibit. “It’s important to make students a part of the creation and fabrication and not just visitors,” Tharp said. “It’s great that we were able to use a core collection of cameras that had been donated by alumni. We wanted to bring those back for the exhibit, seeing as though we’re in a distinct time today.”

Students around campus are interested in seeing the new exhibit as well. Junior graphic design major, Lyanna Mitchell plans to learn a little more about cameras by visiting the exhibit. “Even if you only use cameras for social media, the new exhibit would be a good place to learn about cameras, professionally and recreationally.” Designing usually takes a month and half and execution takes about 2-3 weeks. The exhibit will stay in the museum for one year. The next exhibit committee is already working on will be “The Great War that Changed Georgia.”

Say cheese

Museum exhibit features history of cameras

BY CHYNA JAMES
The George-Anne contributor

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GSU’s inaugural canoe race to be hosted by UPB

The canoe race will take place at Lake Ruby. This will be the first time the event will be implemented after its proposal last year.

BY TANDRA SMITH
The George-Anne Staff

The University Programming Board (UPB) at Georgia Southern University will be hosting their first Canoe Race on March 30 from 3 p.m. until 6 p.m. at Lake Ruby, right beside Lakeside Dining Commons.

The race is a competitive water sport event, in which student organizations that have signed up will compete against each other for a prize.

“This event is to get the campus excited about GSU and have fun on the water. It also allows student organizations to collaborate,” Ashlynn Jenkins, Spirit and Traditions Chair for UPB, said.

Interested organizations must be in good standing to participate. Only 20 organizations will be allowed to sign up for this event, where four people from each organization will be seated, two to a canoe.

Those not apart of an organization, aren’t allowed to take part in the race, but are encouraged to cheer on their friends, eat some free food and enjoy the music.

“I think it’s cool but it’s definitely more of an obscure event that might attract some different interests. I like the diversity of it,” Brooks Robin, senior education major, said.

The Canoe Race was proposed last year, but was unable to be executed due to unforeseen events. Jenkins’ goal is to make this event an annual one. Some students feel that the reason some events don’t do as well is due to a lack of advertising.

“I think that if the events were advertised more then it would be a good thing for the students, but we aren’t informed very well on a lot of the activities that are going on around the school,” William Pope, senior exercise science major, said.

Currently, registration is still open for interested organizations and will close on Friday, March 25 at 5 p.m. In addition to meeting this deadline, at least one member will have to attend one captain’s meeting, which will be held on March 8 from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m. in RU 2052, in the Russell Union, March 23 from 6:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. in RU 2048 and March 29 from 5:30 until 6:30 p.m. in RU 2073.
GSU enrollment stagnates over past five years

BY TAISHA WHITE
The George-Anne contributor

Every year, Georgia Southern’s admission office welcomes numerous amount of people, regardless of qualification to campus to begin their college careers. Since 2006, GSU’s enrollment has increased for the fall semester, however, over the past five years, the numbers have been relatively stagnant, ranging from its lowest of 19,691 students in 2010 to its highest of 20,574 students in 2012.

Amy Smith, director of undergraduate admissions, discusses possible answers to why GSU enrollment rates have been unchanging.

“The number of qualified students graduating from a Georgia high school has decreased or remained steady,” said Smith. “Also, there is also an increase in competition from schools within our state to tap students and growth.”

Although the graduation rate for high schoolers in Georgia has increased over the years, the average required scores are low. According to GSU’s admissions, the requirement to attend GSU for freshmen is higher than Georgia’s average statistics.

Smith pinpoints specific demographics that admissions would like to focus on when it comes to bringing in more students for the upcoming fall semester.

“We are placing an emphasis on recruiting transfer students to Georgia Southern,” said Smith. “We are also working harder to recruit out-of-state students too.”

Although admissions has its approach of how to bring in students, others have their own perspective on how to bring more students into GSU.

Sophomore public health major Chidinma Uzoagu, who is also an international student, has a suggestion on how to bring in more students from around the world.

“In the view of being an international student, I know the school has an international student diversity waiver and it helps international students in terms of financial situations and they have a limited number of people that can use it,” Uzoagu said. “If they can increase the number a little, it might help.

Others believe in the method of reaching out to others.

Sophomore criminal justice major Emily Jackson recommends GSU bring more of its own to others, “Representatives from clubs and organizations should go to different schools, have a table set up and tell everyone about GSU.”

GSU Admission Requirements

- **Required SAT score of at least 1010** (math + critical reading only)
- **Required ACT score of at least 21**
- **Average GPA for admitted freshmen in 2015: 3.29**
- **State of Georgia requires at least a 430 in critical reading and 400 in math**
- **State of Georgia requires at least 17 in English and a 17 in math**
- **High School diploma is required; GED not accepted**
DISCOVER: IRISH STUDIES CLUB

FUN FACTS:

GREEN: We all associate St. Patrick’s Day with two things, beer and the color green. This is why it is so surprising to find out that the national color of Ireland is actually blue. The color green is most likely associated with Ireland because that is the color that supporters of the Irish Rebellion of 1798 wore.

BOWL FULL OF LUCK: The Prime Minister of Ireland is never actually in Ireland on St. Patrick’s Day. Oddly enough, he visits the White House in order to present the President of the United States with a crystal bowl full of shamrocks. President Obama will be receiving his eighth bowl of shamrocks this year. What a lucky guy!

PINCH OF THE IRISH?: Many children grew up wearing green on St. Patrick’s Day not just to celebrate, but to avoid being pinched. What does pinching have to do with the holiday? The answer is absolutely nothing. “I grew up in Ireland because the color green is most likely associated with Pinching Day and the color green is most likely associated with the holiday.”

BEER: According to Dr. Keeley the stereotype of the ‘drunk Irishman’ is offensive. The idea of drinking on St. Patrick’s Day most likely comes from how people used to meet in Public Houses, or Pubs, which people associate with drinking.
For many college students, beer is an important staple of celebratory and daily life. Sometimes it's difficult to decide which beer is suitable for certain situations: whether it be preparing for a party, choosing a special brew six pack to enjoy at home or grabbing a cold one by the pool.

When trying to decide what to enjoy on St. Patty’s Day, it may be best to go for an Irish beer to get into the holiday spirit. If you are unsure about Irish beers, or beers in general for that matter, seeking a professional’s opinion isn’t that far out of reach. Luckily, there is a beer provider in Statesboro that can help you with your important beverage decision.

Two Guys, which has been open for about two years now, has an extensive selection for both domestic and craft beers, wines and tobacco.

To keep customers in a festive style of thought, Two Guys offers beers suitable to all seasons and holidays. For the upcoming festivities, Two Guys has set up a small stand in their store displaying Irish beers, both imported and locally brewed, to offer different beers to drink other than the typical Guinness stout.

“I always try to push people to try something new,” Paige McClure, sales associate for Two Guys, said. “Guinness is always the best seller for the holiday, but my Irish beer of choice has to be Innis and Gunn Original.”

Innis and Gunn is an Irish style beer that matures in whiskey casks before being sold. It has flavor with hints of toffee, creamy vanilla and oak. At 6.6%, it’s an appropriate beer to drink while celebrating the holiday.

If Innis and Gunn doesn’t sound like a personal style but drinking like the Irish is the goal, Two Guys has much more to offer. They now carry a selection from the Sam Adams Nitro Project, which varies in several different types of Irish style brews. They also carry Highland Gaelic Ale and an Irish beer made by Monday Night brewing company called the Drafty Kilt, which was described as tasting “kind of like a campfire” by McClure.

With all of these Irish beers available, why stick with only Guinness to sip on during the holiday? For the hardcore Guinness fan’s out there, try their new Nitro IPA which is similar to that classic Guinness taste, but stronger.

In Savannah during the big celebration, the ‘green beer’ that one can see everywhere is actually Guinness Blonde, a smoother, light Irish beer with green food coloring. Whatever the plans may be for the holiday, drink like the Irish. They take this holiday very seriously, so respect the beer. What they don’t mention is that it’s really craft beer at the end of the rainbow, not just pots of gold. Happy drinking (responsibly)!
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Student Conduct: V.A.L.U.E.S. Photo Contest!
Time: Monday, February 29th - April 15th
Do you know YOUR CSU V.A.L.U.E.S. (Voices, Accountability, Lasting Traditions, Unity, Ethical Behavior, Scholarship)? V.A.L.U.E.S. aims to produce productive citizens with an informed set of ethics and community standards, and to create an environment of respect and civility. This is your chance to show us your V.A.L.U.E.S. Find what you think represents each value and take a photo. Each value has its own submission date, so be sure to submit your photo before the deadline. For a chance to win some GREAT prizes.

Photo Contest Submissions OPEN NOW!
Time: Monday, March 21st - March 11th
It is on expectation that we will hold each other accountable. Show us how you capture this value. Find something that you think represents that ACCOUNTABILITY, and take a photo.

**To submit your photo send it in to one of these three places and make sure to include your contact information:
- Email studentconduct@georgiasouthern.edu
- Facebook: CSU Office of Student Conduct
- Twitter: @CSU_Conduct

**Photo submissions may be used by the Office of Student Conduct**

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SSS@georgiasouthern.edu.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Aye wee lads and lasses, 'ere is the story of St. Patrick's Day, a day dedicated to the man who wasn't originally named Patrick at all. Awkward.

It's fifth century Britain. The hills are green and rolling, with little cows and sheep frolicking here and there. A 16-year-old boy named Maewyn Succat (mah-when Sug-goot) was hangin' out with his dad Calpurnius and his grandpa Pottius. It was probably a nice day. They didn't have any global warming to worry about, but unfortunately, they did have pirates. One day young Maewyn was snatched away from his family by a band of Irish Pirates. He was brought to Ireland and sold into slavery. They didn't have amber alerts back then.

He was bought by a man named Milchu, who was a hot-shot priest in the country at the time, and tended to his sheep for six years. While in Ireland he did have a chance to test his faith. God didn't answer, because I mean, he's God - he isn't very much of a talker, so Maewyn was like "Challenge accepted bro," and decided this was all to test his faith.

He would pray every night, and then he had a dream. He was like "I Have A Dream, that would never catch on. "Salutations gentleman, think you could book a guy up with a quick trip to Britain?" It was a mess. After days of sailing, the crew abandoned ship and Maewyn ended up in France alone, completely lost. Luckily France had some pretty good schools, so he studied his butt off, became a priest and decided to rename himself Patrick. At least it's a timeless name right?

Happy St. Maewyn Day! No, that would never catch on.

Pat's first mission was to spread the gospel to the nonbelievers of Ireland. People weren't very educated back then, so he used a shamrock to tech the Holy Trinity. People started to like his funny little clover stories and managed to spread Christianity far and wide. He was the man back then because of it, you kind of have to be in order for millions of people to celebrate your death every year. Our main man Pat died around 461 and took his place in heaven among the greats - so the legend says.

And that's the gospel truth. Check out Pat's bibliography called "Confessio" for more of his adventures.

This was written around 4 a.m. Yes, it's incredibly cheesy, but it's a true fact that a brain shuts down after a certain hour. For the most part, this story is true and fact-checkable on History Channel, but is totally salivated. Enjoy!
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Beat KSU on a walk-off balk

J. I. Clements Stadium, GSU

Drew Reeves that brought in Southern. The contest also

Kennesaw State and Georgia game ever played between

Eagle 2B Eric Furphy.

off by Owls relief pitcher

12

C J Brazil connects on a pitch. He went 1-4 with a double in

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Just 13 days after falling to

This was the longest

Southern women's basketball

sports and for the Georgia

team, it was just that.

season with a 7-22 overall

The team finished the

streak. The disappointing part

things that mattered most.

Anthony Pasano fell

outlasts Kennesaw State in

Georgia Tech earlier in the

season as the longest game of

the season. This one lasted 4

hours and 50 minutes.

“It would’ve been easy to let

that one get away tonight, but I

thought the guys hung in there

and continued to play,” head

coach Rodney Hennon said.

Anthony Pasano picked

up his first win of the season

tonight for the Eagles. He only

pitched one-third of an inning

on the night. Will Hudgins

also kept a hot bat, extending

his hitting streak to five games.

Coming into Tuesday

night’s game, KSU was 5-0 on

the season when scoring first.

GSU gave them their first loss

in that category. It was also the

first time GSU had beat KSU at

home since 2012.

Coach Hennon was very

pleased with how his team was

able to overcome adversity

and grind out the win.

“This is a game where

you’ve really gotta focus and

with a three-game series

Test ya,” Coach Hennon said.

The Eagles begin Sun Belt

Conference play this weekend

with a three-game series

against App State.

GSU has managed to win

six of their last seven games,

and is riding tremendous

momentum as they prepare

to begin Sun Belt play against

App State this weekend.

GSU won’t be home again

until March 18 when they take

on Troy.

BY KEVIN KENEELY

the Georgia Anne staff

Just 13 days after falling to,

Georgia Tech in 16 innings at

J. I. Clements Stadium, GSU

beat KSU on a walk-off balk

off by Owls relief pitcher

Drew Reeves that brought in

Southern. The contest also

Kennesaw State and Georgia

game ever played between

Eagle 2B Eric Furphy.

off by Owls relief pitcher

CJ Brazil connects on a pitch. He went 1-4 with a double in

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL

The Eagles finished 7-22 overall and 4-16

in the Sun Belt. Our reporter offers his

thoughts on the season.

KEITH SMILEY

Senior is a senior journalism

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

Page designed by Erin Fortenberry
MEN'S BASKETBALL EARNS TWO ALL-SUN BELT SELECTIONS

Tookie Brown was named Sun Belt Freshman of the Year and Mike Hughes was selected to the third-team All-Sun Belt.

BY MARCUS WILLIAMS

Standout guards Tookie Brown and Mike Hughes were given All-Sun Belt honors on Tuesday morning. They have been important members of the team this season.

Brown earned First Team All-Sun Belt honors while also capturing the Sun Belt Freshman Player of the Year award this season. He is fourth in the conference in scoring averaging 17.9 points per game with 3.1 rebounds and 3.4 assists. He has been a steady shooter for the Eagles all season as fellow guard Hughes has said it's a toss-up between Brown and Jake Allsmiller for best shooter on the team. Brown is also an under-the-radar talent when it comes to free throw shooting as he's tied sixth in the conference shooting 81 percent from the line.

Brown is also the record holder for most points by a freshman in the history of Georgia Southern basketball.

Hughes earned a spot on the Third Team All-Sun Belt list. He was one of the most experienced players playing for the Eagles this season. Hughes is an essential leader for the Eagles ranking ninth in the conference in points with 15.1 points per game while also capturing 4.8 rebounds per game, ranking second on the team. Though his offensive prowess is recognized by many, his defensive talents are just as good, as he leads the Sun Belt in steals with 2.1 per game.

These two players have earned these respective accomplishments, but the season isn't over yet. With all the accolades they have received, the objective in sight is to win today against South Alabama in the Sun Belt tournament and find the magic to win it all.

Sophomore Mike Hughes has consistently led the team in scoring this season. The shooting guard has averaged 15.1 points per game this season.

ANGEL MCGOWAN NAMED TO ALL-SUN BELT SECOND TEAM

McGowan is the first Georgia Southern player to be selected for an All-Sun Belt honor. She also joined the 1,000 point club earlier this season.

BY CHRIS SMITH

The Sun Belt conference announced their all-team selections for women's basketball and Georgia Southern guard Angel McGowan was named to the Sun Belt All-Conference Second Team. McGowan is a junior from Greenville, S.C., and she is the first player in the history of Georgia Southern women's basketball to be named as an All-Sun Belt selection.

McGowan had a terrific season; stamping her name in the record books here at GSU, she was able to score her 1,000th point against UL Lafayette. She averaged a team-high 14.7 points per game along with 4.5 rebounds and 2.1 steals per game. McGowan finished sixth in the Sun Belt conference in points per game and tied for second in the steals category in conference play.

She is a player that every coach has had to game plan against, because she could go for 20 points on any given night. She has dealt with numerous injuries and bumps in the road this season, but she did not let it stop her. She kept letting the game come to her and it paid off. McGowan has already created a legacy and she still has one more season left to play with Eagles. She has a chance to repeat another performance like this and possibly be better next year.

McGowan was named to the All-Sun Belt Second Team.
The college basketball season is a long and often times grueling endeavor. Student-athletes are trying to balance the pressures of handling schoolwork and competing at a high level on the court. Coaches are operating year-round with recruiting, offseason workouts and practicing while the rest of the program's staff is hard at work doing whatever they can to support the team.

After the season and hard work is over, fans and athletes remember the killer three-pointers and crucial final points made. But what are only faint memories are the faces of these athletes—and sometimes those faces can be quite comical. Luckily, our team of photographers have been there for every funny expression and side-eye glance.

As we move out of regular season and into the Sun Belt Tournament, let's look back at those moments forever memorialized in our photos.

1. Forward Jake Allsmiller
2. Guard Tookie Brown
3. Forward Shawn O'Connell
4. Forward Ike Smith
5. True Blue fan, avid dancer Mark Garno
6. Guard Mike Hughes
7. Guard Tookie Brown
8. Head coach Mark Byington
The Eagles face off against the University of South Alabama today at 5 p.m. in the first round of the tournament.

BY MARQUIS WILLIAMS
The George-Anne staff

The Georgia Southern Eagles are going into the Sun Belt tournament as the fifth seed. They play this Thursday against South Alabama in New Orleans, heading back to the state after losing to Louisiana-Lafayette and Louisiana-Monroe last weekend.

The Eagles have to go through South Alabama, Louisiana-Lafayette, and Arkansas-Little Rock in order to advance to the Sun Belt Championship. The road for last year’s team to this year’s team is completely flipped, but the end goal is still the same.

The Eagles’ first opponent is the South Alabama Jaguars, who swept the Eagles this season going 2-0 in conference play. The Eagles lost both games by a combined 12 points and are hoping that the third time will be the charm this time around.

“We lost to them twice, but they’re a good team and both times we played them we just weren’t ready and we know we can be better,” sophomore forward Jake Allsmiller, who put up 29 points in the last game against the Jaguars, said.

The Eagles know they have the skill set to match up with the Jaguars, but they have to put it all together and set it in motion. Last weekend’s matchups reminded the Eagles how tough conference play can get at any moment and having lapses during games can be the deciding factor in winning or losing.

“We need to stay consistent on defense, there were times we had lapses in our defense and we gave up easy baskets. We should just stay focused and stay consistent with it and we should be good to go,” Mike Hughes, sophomore guard, said on how to survive in the tournament.

If the Eagles beat South Alabama on Thursday, they square off against two teams who have also had their number this season. The Eagles are 0-4 this season against Louisiana-Lafayette and Arkansas-Little Rock. They have struggled with Lafayette, partly because of the Sun Belt Player of the Year, Shawn Long, who averages a double-double with 18.8 points and 12.9 rebounds per game. He is also a highly regarded NBA prospect and arguably the best talent in the league.

Arkansas-Little Rock will likely be the toughest of the Eagles challenges as the Trojans are number one in the conference and have asserted themselves as the best team in the Sun Belt, hands down. The Eagles were beaten by double-digits in both games against them this season. Creating momentum early with quick scores and catching the Trojans off guard will be a major key if the Eagles want to pull off the upset.

The Eagles’ tournament draw has been unfortunate as they are 0-6 this season against the teams on their side of the bracket, but they still have a chance.

“Winning a tournament game is special, and we’ve been fortunate going on my third year here to win a couple in Nashville and going to the Finals last year. It’s such a fun ride once you start winning and going on and winning another one and keep on moving forward. I love watching the guys and how they react, so you just gotta catch some magic and play well,” head coach Mark Byington said.

The Eagles need some tournament “magic” to win the Sun Belt and hope is far from lost. The conference tournaments this year have already seen five upsets on number one seeds this season and if the trend continues, GSU could be another team with a Cinderella story waiting to be told.
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