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Georgia Southern University Athletics



Volleyball Caps First Week of Practice

The Eagles are grateful to be back on the court.

Marc Gignac

Women's Volleyball

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STATESBORO – It had been a long five months since the Georgia Southern volleyball team had been on the court together when the Eagles opened practice Aug. 5, and the energy and excitement were palpable.

"Our team has talked a lot about being grateful for the opportunity to be back together and working and getting after it," said second-year head coach [Chad Willis](#). "The intensity level in the gym has been refreshing."

The Eagles are back in their normal preseason routine, practicing twice a day for three days in a row before taking a day off and then restarting the cycle. Morning sessions last an hour and a half and are geared toward technical drills in position groups, and afternoon sessions are more team-oriented with the implementation of schemes and systems.

A bulk of the roster is back with student-athletes who saw a lot of action last season and in year two under this coaching staff, they understand what the expectations are in terms of the way they practice.

"I feel like our team returners are definitely more acclimated to our staff, our expectations, our systems, knowing what to expect in a preseason and how we operate," said Willis. "We played a lot of young people last year, and they came back ready to go. The fitness level is good - clearly that was a priority for them in the five months that we were away. The three freshmen that have come in are adding a lot of competitiveness and depth right away and blending in nicely and continue to grow. It's an overall different feel with the team in terms of culture, which is a good thing."

With the five months off from team on-court activities, the Eagles hit the fundamentals hard during their first week.

"I think it's more about kicking the rust off the bucket more than anything else, but with so many returners coming back and the quality of the freshmen that we've added, we haven't had to jump too far back," said Willis. "I feel pretty comfortable with where our level is right now even with not being able to have a spring and only being able to lift and condition over the summer."

The Eagles ranked in the middle of the Sun Belt in most defensive categories and in the lower third in most offensive categories last season. Willis was installing some new offensive schemes in the spring when the pandemic shut things down, and a majority of time in the team sessions has been spent on the offensive side of the ball. The Eagles will work more on defensive systems as they move forward and as always, first contact has been a priority on both sides of the ball.

"No principles changed, and a lot of personnel is the same so I feel pretty good about what we can do on the defensive side of the ball," said Willis. "Our focus primarily this first week has been how do we score points and how do we generate a little bit more offense. I like where we're at and I think as we continue to work and get after it, we're going to see improvement on both the sides of the ball. I think the staff and I are all pretty excited about the potential we have in the gym right now."

Gallery: (8-13-2020) Volleyball Starts Practice

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