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Setting the Scene Game Preview

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SETTING THE SCENE

Game Preview

Site: Hanner Fieldhouse (3,897)

Tipoff: 7 p.m.

Listen: GS Sports Network (pregame show starts a half hour before tipoff) - WHKN 94.9 FM (Statesboro), 630 AM WBMQ (Savannah), 1370 AM WLOP (Jesup)

Watch: ESPN+

Series: GS leads 75-40, W1

Last meeting: 12/8/2018, W, 89-74

Promotions: Take me back Tuesday - Submit your favorite oldies songs [here](#); T-shirt Tuesday - Free t-shirts for students while they last!

Probable Starters:

#2 - Elijah McCadden

#3 - Ike Smith

#10 - Calvin Wishart

#13 - Quan Jackson

#53 - Isaiah Crawley

- Georgia Southern caps a two-game homestand against longtime rival Mercer Tuesday night. Tipoff is slated for 7 p.m. on ESPN+.
- The Eagles have played Mercer more than any other opponent, and this is the Bears' first trip to Hanner Fieldhouse since 2007.
- The Eagles are coming off a 76-73 win over Radford Friday night in Hanner Fieldhouse.
- Georgia Southern was picked third in the Sun Belt in the conference's Preseason Men's Basketball Coaches Poll. Quan Jackson was named first-team All-Sun Belt, Ike Smith was named second-team all-league and Isaiah Crawley was named third team all-conference.
- The Sun Belt poll follows a trend of preseason praise for the Eagles. Athlon, Lindy's, Street & Smith's and The Blue Ribbon College Basketball Yearbook all have the Eagles picked in the top-3 of the conference.
- The Eagles posted 20 wins in consecutive seasons for the first time in 30 years. The last time GS won 20 games two years in a row was in 1987-88 (24-7) and 1988-89 (22-6). GS has three 20-win seasons in the last five years.
- GS ranked fourth in the country in field goal percentage (.499) and 15th in scoring, averaging 82.6 points a game last year. The Eagles scored 80-plus 18 times, 90-plus seven times and over 100 three times. GS shot 50 percent or better in 17 contests and 60 percent or better three times.
- Senior Ike Smith received a medical hardship waiver to regain a year of eligibility. Smith

scored five points against Reinhardt Nov. 8 to pass 1,500 for his career and had four rebounds vs. Radford Nov. 15 to become the fifth Eagle with 1,500 career points and 500 rebounds, joining Jeff Sanders (1,861 pts, 893 reb), Kevin Anderson (1,843 pts, 986 reb), Matt Simpkins (1,684 pts, 642 reb) and Louis Graham (1,581 pts, 908 reb).

- Smith has been named to the Lou Henson Award Preseason Watch List. The award is given annually to the nation's top Division I Mid-Major player.
- The Eagles are 62-22 in Hanner Fieldhouse under Mark Byington and 35-12 in Sun Belt contests. GS is 22-3 in its last 25 non-conference home contests.
- Mercer was picked eighth in both the SoCon Coaches and Media Polls. Senior guard Ross Cummings was selected to the preseason All-SoCon Team and made his season debut with 14 points in the Bears' 84-68 home win over Florida Gulf Coast Friday.
- Mercer has won three straight since falling 109-79 in the season opener at St. John's. The Bears are led by Ethan Stair, who is averaging 19 points and 9.5 rebounds a game.

The Series

- Georgia Southern has played Mercer more than any opponent in the 90-year history of the program (115 times).
- The Eagles lead the all-time series, which began in 1933, 75-40, and won last year's contest 89-74 in Hawkins Arena in December.
- This is Mercer's first trip to Hanner Fieldhouse since 2007.
- The teams competed against each other as members of the Trans America Athletic Conference for 10 seasons. Georgia Southern held a 14-10 edge in the regular season and topped the Bears twice in the TAAC Tournament.