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Georgia Southern University Athletics



Trio Represent Georgia Southern at Sun Belt Media Day
Lunsford, Bass, Vildor take center stage in New Orleans
Football
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Gallery: (7/22/2019) Sun Belt Football Media Day 2019

NEW ORLEANS - With the start of preseason camp just over a week away, Georgia Southern head football coach [Chad Lunsford](#), along with senior kicker [Tyler Bass](#) and senior cornerback [Kindle Vildor](#) represented the Eagles at the 2019 Sun Belt Media Day, held in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome on Monday.

The three went through the car wash of media interviews throughout the morning and into the afternoon and will head back to Statesboro on Eagle One Monday evening so the players can finish up off-season workouts and head home for a few days before returning for the start of camp on Aug. 1.

For Lunsford, he did several radio interviews, an ESPN3 studio shot, Facebook Live with the GS Radio Network, and also did one-on-ones with The Athletic, Reddit and several local television stations. With the Eagles opening up at LSU, which is just over an hour from here, the local attention was a little higher than usual. In fact, the Eagles will play three teams from the Bayou State - LSU, ULM and Louisiana - and may be the only team in the country to do so. There's a lot of hype around this team after winning 10 games, including a bowl game, and the amount of media attention mirrors that interest level.

Bass, believed to be the first kicker ever to be brought to this event, and Vildor were two of the more popular interviews. With both earning All-America honors a year ago and first-team all-conference plaudits this preseason, many in the media wanted to talk to them. They both were on ESPN3, Facebook Live and talked to a few New Orleans and Baton Rouge stations about the big opener in Death Valley.

Select Quotes From Media Day

Head Coach [Chad Lunsford](#)

Opening Statement:

"First off, just want to say thank you for having us here today. It's always exciting to be able to come and talk about Georgia Southern football. This is a platform for me and very appreciative of it and don't take that lightly."

"We talked about last year about being W.I.N. - what's important now - and we're trying to figure out how to go from a good season to a great season. 2017, we went from 2-10, went to 10-3, and that was a huge improvement. And now to go from 10-3 to whatever this year is going to look like, it's going to be about the little things. We understand going from good to great has a lot to do with making sure we pay attention to detail and taking care of little things."

"Last year we ended up third in the Sun Belt on the east side, and we've been voted that way this year. And obviously that's something our guys will use as motivation to try to go through and see if we can get better in that area."

"I think it's important at Georgia Southern that we learn to play with a bull's eye on our back. Last year probably not a lot of expectations for us, and we got in a position where there were some, and we didn't handle that very well. And so looking forward to going into this year and seeing if we can handle that, not sneaking up on anybody and seeing if we can handle that pressure and those expectations."

"Our identity at Georgia Southern is being blue collar, disciplined and tough. We're not going to shy away from that. To do that type of thing, it doesn't take talent. We've got all different levels of talent on our football team, but being able to be blue collar, disciplined and tough is how we can go from good to great."

"Very excited about that. Looking forward to seeing what our 2019 team can do and see what they can do to add to the legacy of Georgia Southern football."

Q. Does being one of the few teams in the east with continuity in the coaching staff give you an advantage?

"Well, I don't know about that. When you start talking about the Sun Belt, there's a lot of good football teams. There's a lot of good players. When you start seeing all those guys that are on watch lists and preseason awards and accolades, a lot of great coaching, quality coaching, and you've got to bring your A game every week."

"You know, again, I think it is important that our coaches' continuity is there. I think having the same offensive coordinator, same defensive coordinator, I think that's big for Georgia Southern football. Our guys will be a lot more comfortable this year, but we've got to obviously not be complacent, either, and we've got to understand that we've got to continue to get better."

Q. Sometimes when you play an out-of-conference game, you can sneak up on people. You start with LSU. Do you think your team can do that in that game?:

"Well, I think it's important for our guys to understand that we're not going to sneak up on anybody, and they've got to understand that each and every game is important. And so when we talk about what's important now, we're not looking so far in the future that we can't get ourselves in position to perform that week."

"So we're not going to go into any game thinking we're sneaking up on anybody. We're going to assume that they're bringing their 'A' game and we've got to bring our best game."

Q. How is the mood this year compared to a year ago?

"Well, it is different. There were a lot of unknowns coming off that 2017 season. We had some momentum. We didn't end 2017 very well. We went two of the last three. But there was some optimism. But the guys needed proof and they did a tremendous job. Our staff, our players, they did a tremendous job of buying into what we were preaching and selling, and then to have the results that we did from that, that continued buy-in is still there."

"There's a positive vibe in our building. Our guys love to come over to the building, and they love to hang out and not just work. We've created a culture, a family environment at Georgia Southern that I think has lent to us being a better football team."

Q. You guys are scheduled to play an SEC team, LSU, this year. How difficult is that matchup going to be?

"You know, that's definitely a tremendous challenge. It's something that our guys look forward to, though. They get an opportunity to go try to perform against a Power Five school. They're going to work hard to make sure that they're ready. They're going to work hard to make sure that they put their best product on the field."

"I think it's a good thing, and for us to be able to open up with LSU, that's a lot of excitement for our fan base. There's a lot of excitement for our players, and we're looking forward to it."

Q. What are your thoughts on the LSU game to open the season?

"Well, they've got great players, and it's going to be tough. I mean, it's going to be tough for us to go in there and do the things that we want to be able to do. But again, if we go in there with the mindset of being blue collar, disciplined and tough and playing our game and making sure that we don't - one, on offense, make sure we protect the football and then on defense try to take the football away, that'll give us a chance. And that's all we're asking for, is just a chance."

Q. What is going to be like going into an environment like LSU?

"Well, I think you've got to be smart. I think you do have to understand it's probably going to be a little bit different than what you're used to, but we don't want to get too far away from how we prepare for a football game and make it too much different. If you make it much different than your guys' thought process, your guys' attention span, they start to go other places."

"We'll work on crowd noise, we'll work on the different things that could distract us, but we talk to our guys all the time about have a plan, execute, finish. And if we can continue to work with that process of making sure that we have a plan before the ball snaps, we execute when we execute and then we finish the play, good things happen for us. We'll address those things that may be distractions and understand that we can only control what we can control."

Q. What are your thoughts on the NCAA Transfer Portal?

"You know, the transfer portal, I'm for student-athletes' rights, and if that's an option for them and it's built in and we're making a way that makes it work for everybody, I'm all for it. I'm all for guys if they're not in a good situation or they're in a situation that they need to change and it makes sense, I'm all for it."

"You know, I'd like to see us go away from maybe guys that sit there and think, well, I'm not getting my playing time here so I'm going to go here. I still think there's something to earning what you get. But again, it's a part of college football now, and we've got to make sure we move with the times."

"And so as a staff, we always said -- we talk about it, we talk about do we want to look at the transfer portal, do we want to look at bringing guys in that are in the transfer portal. But if we do that, we want to make sure we look at background and understand why they're transferring. But I'm all for the guys having their rights, and I think the NCAA is doing a good job as far as trying to put a good plan in place. I know this is a little bit bigger and we're having to work through some different scenarios and things like that, but again, we're going to try to move with the times and try to make sure we're up to date with it."

Q. How has the Transfer Portal affected your program?

"I don't think a great deal. This year, we saw some guys transfer, but it looked kind of like it's always looked. I think now it's become more visible because it is in a portal. There's people that can look at it. There's a lot less back-door things that happen with that. It's a little bit more visible, but it seems to be about the same for us right now."

Q. Do you feel like the offense you run gives you an advantage and why don't other teams run it?

"Yeah, you know, when I came in in 2003, we were under center triple option, Paul Johnson and Coach (Mike) Sewak was the head coach there, and then I came back in 2013 with Coach (Jeff) Monken, and that's what I had kind of cut my teeth on. Then Coach (Willie) Fritz came in in 2014 and we went to more of a gun option

attack. It was a lot more double option. It was lot more inside zone-type stuff and then have option off of it."

"When I became the head coach, we're all about building relationships and doing our homework, a year-round type of deal so when December comes around we feel like we've done our homework and we've signed the guys that fit us."

Q. Your'e not going to sneak up on anyone this year after last year's success. What do you have to do to build upon last year?

"Well, I think we've got to have the mentality -- people said that maybe our schedule was a little bit easier than going into this year, and that may be the case. And when you look at it, that's fine. But you've got to start building -- we've got to start building that mentality at Georgia Southern that we've got to be able to play anywhere, anytime, anyplace."

"That's what Georgia Southern has always done. Last year we didn't handle the bull's-eye on our back very well when we got ourselves in position to win the conference. We dropped two games in a row, and that's something that's kind of stuck with our kids through this off-season of, hey, we don't want it easy, we want it the way it is and we want to go earn it. We don't want anything given to us. And as long as we can build that mentality with our kids, I don't know what's going to happen in 2019, but I know we're going to give it everything we've got to get it done."

Redshirt-Senior Placekicker [Tyler Bass](#) On why coach considers him a leader:

"Although I'm not very vocal, I do know how to handle business and I make sure to take care of my specialist group lead on the field with my actions. That's what got me here."

On going from a walk-on to representing his team at Sun Belt Football Media Day:

"I didn't have any offers coming out. I walked on at Georgia Southern. I had to be mentally strong and I really put in the work. I never got discouraged and I competed every day, and when something didn't go my way. I just took it with a grain of salt. I never stopped believing because I always knew what I was capable of."

Senior Defensive Back [Kindle Vildor](#) On what does the team motto (Good to Great) mean to you:

"It means just doing the little things and doing the extra that you usually don't do. We might be in the weight room working out, doing a little extra more. Always trying to go from go to great in whatever you do."

On how do you feel about upholding your stellar level of play as of late:

"It just shows that my game thrives on technique. Just always being a technician in whatever I do. And I feel that's what shows a lot and that's what stands out when people watch me on film."

On entering your senior year having accomplished what you have, what else do you hope to achieve:

"I'm just chasing that conference championship ring. I feel like I have pretty much done everything else."

Camp begins on Aug. 1 as the Eagles prepare for their season opener on Aug. 31 at nationally ranked LSU. Season tickets are on sale now and can be purchased at [GSEagles.com/Tickets](https://gsueagles.com/tickets).