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Georgia Southern University Athletics



Sun Belt Conference Honors Five From Georgia Southern Men's Soccer
Emil Laursen named Defensive Player of the Year, John Murphy Coach of the Year
Men's Soccer
Posted: 11/9/2016 3:15:00 PM

NEW ORLEANS, La. – The Sun Belt Conference announced the 2016 All-Sun Belt Conference teams, as well as the individual award winners, Wednesday afternoon. Four Georgia Southern men's soccer players along with head coach [John Murphy](#) were honored by the league office after the Eagles claimed their first-ever regular-season conference title last week.

Sophomore defender [Emil Laursen](#) was named a first-team All-Sun Belt selection and was honored as the Defensive Player of the Year as voted on by the league's coaches. Murphy, in his first season at the helm of the program, was honored as the Sun Belt Coach of the Year. Joining Laursen on the first team is junior forward [Blake Wilson](#). Midfielders [Nick Wells](#) and [Sander Wang](#) were named to the second team.

Laursen, a sophomore from Silkeborg, Denmark, was twice named the Sun Belt Conference Defensive Student-Athlete of the Week (Sept. 20, Oct. 25). He has started 13 games on the back row for the Eagles, anchoring a young Eagles defense that has featured three freshmen and Laursen. He has been a vital part of the defense, rarely leaving the pitch as he has played every minute in 10 games so far this season. In those 10 games, the Eagles are 5-2-3 on the year. Laursen has taken six shots on the year, five being on frame, and has scored a team-best three game-winning goals. His three game-winners has him currently tied for tops in the conference and tied for 43rd in all of NCAA Division I. His game-winners have come against Stetson, Georgia State and Hartwick. Away from the pitch, Laursen is a 4.00 student and was recently named to the 2016 CoSIDA Academic All-District 4 First-Team.

Wilson, a junior forward who hails from Tampa, Fla., has earned Sun Belt Conference Offensive Student-Athlete of the Week honors twice this season (Sept. 20, Oct. 11). He has played in 17 of the Eagles' 18 games, earning 14 starts. He currently leads the team with 18 points and eight goals, both of which have him currently tied for second in the league. Wilson has scored multiple goals in three contests, including starting the season off by recording a hat trick at Houston Baptist, the first hat trick for Georgia Southern since the 1999 season. He also scored two goals at Mercer, including the game-winner, and another two against rival Georgia State. Wilson has taken a team-high 46 shots with 23 being on frame and has two assists on the year.

Wells, who was also named to the 2015 All-Sun Belt Conference Second Team, is a junior midfielder/forward who has also spent time on the back row, proving his versatility to contribute all over the pitch. He has played in 17 games, including 15 starts, and has played over 1,077 minutes. He played every minute in four games, including at Duke as well as at home against North Florida, Gardner-Webb and Hartwick. He also played 100 of the 110 minutes at Coastal Carolina. On the year, Wells has taken 19 shots with nine being on goal and he has converted two for goals. He scored the game-winning goal against North Florida off just one shot and scored the equalizer against Gardner-Webb.

A true freshman from Skedsmokorset, Norway, Wang has appeared in 14 games, making 13 starts in the midfield for the Eagles. As the year has progressed, he has seen his role increase as he currently rarely leaves the pitch. Wang has played every minute in eight games, including three of the last four, while

averaging just over 82 minutes per game. He scored his first collegiate goal on Aug. 26 in the season-opener at Houston Baptist. He has also recorded three assists on the year, tied for second on the team. His assists in the wins over Georgia State and Hartwick were corner kicks that set up the game-winners. For the year, Wang has five points and has taken 18 shots, five on goal.

A 20-year coaching veteran, Murphy has guided Georgia Southern to an 8-7-3 record, including 3-1-1 in conference action, and has the Eagles in the top-two of five statistical categories within the conference. The 3-1-1 (.700) conference mark is the best league record for Georgia Southern since the 2006 Eagles went 4-1-2 (.714) in the SoCon. The league mark earned Georgia Southern its first-ever conference title in men's soccer after the Eagles defeated long-time rival Appalachian State 3-1 in the regular-season finale. During the regular season, Murphy's Eagles defeated four teams that were ranked in the top-10 of the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) Southeast Region Poll. Those victories include: 2-1 on the road over Stetson (7th) on Sept. 2, 2-0 at home over North Florida (5th) on Sept. 24, 3-1 on the road over Georgia State (9th) on Oct. 8 and 2-1 at home against Hartwick (5th) on Oct. 22. Murphy has now claimed 10 conference titles in his coaching career at the collegiate level. He was also named the Coach of the Year for the Northeast-10 Conference in 2000 when he guided Assumption College to a 13-6-2 record.

Georgia Southern returns to action on Friday, Nov. 11 in the semifinal round of the Sun Belt Conference Championships hosted by Georgia State. The Eagles are the No. 2 seed in the tournament and earned a first-round bye for the third consecutive year. They will play at 6:30 p.m. against the winner of the first-round game between Georgia State and Howard.

2016 All-Sun Belt Conference Teams

First Team

Stephen Chapman (Appalachian State, Senior, Forward)

Frantzdy Pierrot (Coastal Carolina, Junior, Forward)

Blake Wilson (Georgia Southern, Junior, Forward)

Hannes Burmeister (Georgia State, Sophomore, Midfielder)

Max Hemmings (Georgia State, Sophomore, Midfielder)

Johnny McBeth (Hartwick, Junior, Midfielder)

Einar Einarsson (Coastal Carolina, Senior, Defender)

Emil Laursen (Georgia Southern, Sophomore, Defender)

Kyle Clinton (Georgia State, Freshman, Defender)

Elliott Bentley (Hartwick, Freshman, Defender)

Yannic Horn (Georgia State, Junior, Goalkeeper)

Second Team

Martin Melchor (Coastal Carolina, Junior, Forward)

Frank Rosenwald (Georgia State, Freshman, Forward)

Mike Rood (Hartwick, Senior, Forward)

Sander Wang (Georgia Southern, Freshman, Midfielder)

Nick Wells (Georgia Southern, Junior, Midfielder)

Jack Donaldson (Hartwick, Senior, Midfielder)

Hamish Ritchie (Hartwick, Freshman, Midfielder)

Elis Bjornsson (Coastal Carolina, Senior, Defender)

Ryan Reid (Coastal Carolina, Senior, Defender)

Liam Fitzsimmons (Georgia State, Junior, Defender)

Braulio Linares-Ortiz (Coastal Carolina, Junior, Goalkeeper)

Player of the Year

Hannes Burmeister (Georgia State, Sophomore, Midfielder)

Offensive Player of the Year

Hannes Burmeister (Georgia State, Sophomore, Midfielder)

Defensive Player of the Year

Emil Laursen (Georgia Southern, Sophomore, Defender)

Newcomer of the Year

Nick Hague (Georgia State, Junior, Midfielder)

Co-Freshmen of the Year

Kyle Clinton (Georgia State, Freshman, Defender)

Hamish Ritchie (Hartwick, Freshman, Midfielder)

Coach of the Year

John Murphy, Georgia Southern

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