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Georgia Southern University

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Clay Helton Formally Introduced as Georgia Southern Football Coach
Helton is the 11th full-time head coach in the Georgia Southern modern football era.
STATESBORO - Georgia Southern Director of Athletics Jared Benko welcomed new Head Football Coach Clay Helton to Eagle Nation this afternoon at an introductory press conference in Bishop Field House.

More than 150 fans and media were present as Coach Helton and his wife, Angela, participated in an Eagle Walk through the Paulson Stadium parking lot and into the stadium before the press conference. After introductory remarks from Deputy AD Chris Davis and Benko, Helton gave introductory remarks and then answered questions from the media. Below is an excerpt of the remarks from both Benko and Coach Helton. You can watch the full archive of the introductory press conference here.

Director of Athletics Jared Benko
"What a great day to be an Eagle. This is such a special day for Georgia Southern football, Georgia Southern University and all of Eagle Nation. Our University President, Dr. Kyle Marrero, was an integral part of the search. He is a tremendous supporter and a visionary leader of this university, and he provided great counsel throughout the process. I also want to thank our search committee, Chris Davis, Tracy Ham, Dr. Chris Geyerman and Leonard Bevill for all their work. Each of them played a critical role, and they each have the desire to make Georgia Southern football elite."

"Over the last several weeks, we conducted a broad and comprehensive search. We had numerous conversations with people throughout college and professional football. We utilized all available tools. There were several key traits that emerged from all participants in the process that became the most essential criteria during the selection process. A high level of integrity and intelligence. A coach who leads a program with discipline. A visionary leader with a plan of success that translates well to Georgia Southern. A relentless recruiter. Clay Helton embodies these traits."

"Football is imprinted in his DNA. Clay knows the South through his time at Memphis, Duke, Auburn. Clay is an elite offensive mind with an impressive track record. He put together three top-10 recruiting classes at USC and developed numerous high NFL draft picks. He represents discipline, accountability and toughness. He can help our student-athletes reach their full potential academically, athletically and socially."

Head coach Clay Helton
"Man, what a great day to be an Eagle!"

"I am so glad to be a part of the tradition that is Georgia Southern University. So many things excited me about this opportunity. The first part that excited me was the leadership. The vision from the top down, the vision to be a platinum standard athletic program. The desire to win conference championships consistently and build a product on a national scale. It fit my own standards of what we expect as a football family and what I expect as a football coach and my staff."

"The tradition of excellence is so impressive. Myself and the staff I put together will honor that tradition. We will fight as hard as humanly possible to be innovative. Innovative in developing our student-athletes on and off the field. Innovative in how we recruit. Innovative in how we bring the best student-athletes in the Southeast here."

"Since touching down, I have been blown away by the love and passion for this University. Georgia Southern has a great alumni base that gives their time, their knowledge. The network, heart and resources. I watched the homecoming game, and I saw the passion in the stands. I see the love from the fan base. I got to meet Adrian Peterson, Tracy Ham, Coach Whitley. I saw the pride of the former players and the alumni. I'm honored to have the opportunity to represent Eagle Nation, and I'm ready to do the job that is needed to have them be proud of us."

"I was so impressed by Jared's proactiveness and by Dr. Marrero's proactiveness. It is rare and bold. To say that we're not going to wait for other universities to make their choice. To pick who fits us, who is best for us. A 10-minute conversation on the phone lasted an hour and a half. In the interview, I could see the great fit for my family, the fit for Georgia Southern and the opportunity to walk to campus today. It's going to pay dividends."

"I can not wait to get started and produce a culture of toughness, discipline and united accountability. A program that brings the GATA mindset. A program that Erk Russell would be proud of. Hail Southern!"

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