Eagles Earn SBC Championship Berth With 2-1 Comeback Win Over ULM

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Georgia Southern scores twice in a four-minute second-half span to play for a league title on Sunday

Women's Soccer
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FOLEY, Ala. - Georgia Southern women's soccer scored two goals in a four-minute second-half stretch to erase a 1-0 halftime deficit and defeat ULM, 2-1, earning its first berth in a Sun Belt Conference Tournament Championship match on Friday evening at the Foley Sports Tourism Complex.

The fourth-seeded Eagles (11-6-4) will meet second-seeded South Alabama - 1-0 winners over Georgia State in the other semifinal match - on Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m. ULM finishes its season at 8-12.

The Warhawks struck first in the contest, getting a header by Paula Gaba off of a corner kick by Mara Grutkamp in the 37th minute to take a 1-0 lead. ULM would carry that advantage into the break, despite the Eagles holding a 9-3 edge in shots.

The Eagles got a bit of good fortune to equalize the score in the 47th minute. A service by Maddie Klintworth towards the near post was mishandled by ULM goalkeeper Hailey Hillock. The ball slipped through her hands and into the net for an own goal, making the score 1-1.

Exactly four minutes later, the Eagles took the lead as Nora Falnes headed a ball into the box, where Vala Kristin Theodorsdottir struck it off the first touch and inside the right post for the 2-1 lead.

The Warhawks had one last chance at an equalizer in the 88th minute, but Taylor Henry's shot from distance was easily saved by Michaela English, and the Eagles saw the match out to earn their first Sun Belt tournament final berth.

It is the first appearance in a conference tournament championship match for Georgia Southern since the 2012 squad that captured the SoCon title. Georgia Southern faces a South Alabama squad in the final that has won seven of the last eight Sun Belt tournament titles. The two teams played earlier this season on October 21st in Mobile, with South Alabama collecting a 3-2 win in double overtime.

"I couldn't be more proud of this team," Georgia Southern Head Women's Soccer Coach Chris Adams said. "In the first half, we were a little rattled. It took us a little white to settle in. But it's a testament to the character of these kids. All season long, they've been equal to the challenge. Just couldn't be more proud of being down 1-0, not having our best half of soccer, but coming out and finding a way in the second half to win."

The Eagles finished the match with 16-9 edge in shots. English made four saves for the Eagles, while Hillock made seven saves for ULM. Each team had three corner kicks and each team was whistled for eight fouls. Georgia Southern was offsides three times, while ULM was offsides once.

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