11-19-2021

Volleyball Comeback Bid Comes Up Short

Georgia Southern University

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FOLEY, Ala. – Brooke Townsend tallied 13 kills, nine digs and a block to lead UTA to a 3-2 (28-26, 25-22, 18-25, 18-25, 15-12) victory over Georgia Southern in the quarterfinals of the Sun Belt Conference Volleyball Championship Friday afternoon in the Foley Sports Complex.

Georgia Southern setter Madison Brown matched her career-high with 54 assists in her final contest and passed the 3,000 career assist mark, finishing with 3,005, which ranks fifth all-time at Georgia Southern.

Eagles of the Match
Baylor Bumford matched her career high with 19 kills to go along with seven blocks, and Maddie Bryant finished with 14 kills and two blocks. Hannah McGlockton chipped in 13 kills, and Ashlyn Lovett registered 19 digs. Brown also recorded 11 digs, five blocks, four kills and two aces.

Key Moments
McGlockton put down two kills as the Eagles (17-11) scored four straight points to open a 7-4 cushion in the fifth. UTA came roaring back and scored the next five points to take the lead, 9-7, but GS, sparked by a pair of kills by Bryant, answered by scoring four of the next five to go back in front 12-10. After a UTA kill cut the margin to one point, Georgia Southern had chances to add to the lead, but consecutive attack attempts sailed just wide. UTA’s Brianna Ford took over from there, putting down two kills for the final two points of the match. The fifth set saw seven ties and six lead changes.

The first set had a bit of controversy with a lengthy on-court discussion and even a rule book consultation. With the Eagles trailing 23-22, Brown tried to set the ball with one hand to keep it from going over the net, but the ball rolled off her hand, over the net and down to the floor. She was originally whistled for a back-row attack, but the officials changed the call on the floor, sparking a delay to ascertain whether the call could be challenged. It finally became a kill for Brown that tied the score 23-23. UTA (12-14) had to fight off two set points, and the Eagles fought off one before a UTA kill made the score 27-26 and an Eagle hitting error gave the Mavs the 28-26 win and a 1-0 lead in the match.

Stats of the Match
Georgia Southern held the edge over UTA in kills (67-59), blocks (11-9) and aces (8-6), and the teams were tied with each posting 61 digs. But the Eagles had 10 more hitting errors than the Mavs (32-22).

Quotables from Coach Chad Willis
"Just a heck of an effort today; I know it's not the result we wanted, but I'm so incredibly proud of this group—they battled and stayed resilient, did everything we asked them to do and left it on the floor. You can't learn from moments unless you're in them, so we'll use this experience as another step forward as we continue to pursue excellence and build for championships."