

Georgia Southern University Athletics



THE BENKO BRIEFING



The Benko Briefing - October, 2024
AD addresses Eagle Nation in letter form
Football
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Dear Eagle Nation,

I hope this note finds you and your family well.

How about last Saturday night in Paulson Stadium?!? I'm pretty sure I have watched the replay and various game highlights multiple times each of the past few days ... what an incredible game and comeback for our Eagles! I know I speak for Eagle Nation when I share how proud I am of the perseverance and grit displayed on a national broadcast to secure the comeback 24-23 win over Marshall!

We anticipate a sellout crowd for this Saturday's game (4 p.m.) against a James Madison team that comes in with a 5-1 record. If you haven't bought your tickets yet, I'd encourage you to do so before they're gone by going to GSEagles.com/Tickets! It's Homecoming and this is a great week to celebrate the past, present and future of both Georgia Southern and our athletics department. This is another chance to make lasting memories like the ones created last Saturday. I encourage everyone to arrive early and create the home-field advantage that truly makes Paulson Stadium one of the most difficult environments to play in the country as we battle for first place in the Eastern Division of the Sun Belt.

Following the game, Georgia Southern alum and American Idol runner-up Will Moseley will play a free concert outside the stadium. The stage will be located between gate eight and the teal lot, facing the blue parking lot.

Our fall sports have gotten off to a great start! Below are some recent highlights:

- Volleyball is currently ranked No. 32 in the nation in the NCAA's RPI rankings. The team currently has the best overall record in the Sun Belt with a 14-1 start to the season.

- Men's soccer is currently ranked No. 76 in the NCAA's RPI ranking.
- Rifle is currently ranked as the No. 3 team in the country.
- Women's golf is ranked 39th nationally (its highest ranking in program history) and most recently secured its second team win of the season at The Southern in Savannah.
- Men's golf took home runner-up honors as a team this past Tuesday at the RedHawk Intercollegiate at the prestigious Pittsburgh Field Club.

Shifting gears, tomorrow is our "Pick Your Seat" event at the Jack and Ruth Ann Hill Convocation Center. We are very excited to show off this brand-new facility to everyone in Eagle Nation! Additionally, we are hosting the Bo Pitts Field dedication on Friday at 7 p.m. between our women's and men's soccer doubleheader. Bo was a multiple-time letterwinner for Georgia Southern as a goalkeeper from 1980-82, during the inception of the program, and made a generous contribution to help our men's soccer program. Please join us in thanking Bo for his unprecedented gift!

Lastly, I wanted to share some important updates regarding the *House v. NCAA* class action lawsuit. Recently, the U.S. District Court in Northern California granted preliminary approval for the settlement agreement, with a tentative approval hearing slated for April 7, 2025. The following changes are anticipated to be implemented beginning on July 1, 2025:

- NIL Remunerations: Institutions will now be able to direct up to \$22-\$23 million annually to student-athletes for the use of their name, image, and likeness (NIL).
- Roster Limits and Scholarships: Sports will no longer distribute financial aid via limits on a sport-to-sport basis. Institutions and conferences will create new roster numbers for each sport and will have the discretion and flexibility to provide full scholarships equivalent to the number of roster spots.
- NIL Back Damages: \$2.8 billion in damages to all NCAA Division I student-athletes who competed from 2016-2021 and were not eligible for NIL dollars. Georgia Southern Athletics will see its NCAA annual revenue distribution reduced by \$350,000 per year for the next 10 years to cover its portion of these damages.

Our competitive edge at Georgia Southern is YOU – everyone in Eagle Nation! With college athletics undergoing substantive change, our objective of providing an elite student-athlete experience remains paramount. While your continued support through buying tickets and supporting the Erk Russell Fund is critically important, please remember that having a strong NIL program is essential to be competitive in today's college athletics landscape.

I ask that you please visit www.EagleNationNIL.com and join as a monthly subscriber or place a one-time donation to support our Georgia Southern student-athletes. The Eagle Nation Collective has been instrumental in our student-athletes taking advantage of NIL programming made available to them. Our student-athletes continue to excel on and off the field, and we are relentless in our pursuit of competing for championships. Our leadership, particularly our head coaches, understand and agree that supporting the Eagle Nation Collective is imperative for future success.

Thank you for your steadfast support of the Eagles – your impact is felt daily by our 17 sports programs and our student-athletes.

Our best days are ahead. Thank you for your continued support!

Hail Southern! GATA!



Jared Benko
Georgia Southern Director of Athletics