

## Eagles Advance to FCS Semifinals

Written by SoCon Sports Information  
Sunday, 11 December 2011 10:15

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Behind 360 yards rushing on offense and three interceptions on defense, the Georgia Southern Eagles defeated the Maine Black Bears 35-23 to reach the semifinals for the second-straight season. The Eagles compiled 300 yards on the ground

for the third-straight game and intercepted three passes for just the second time this year.

"I thought it was a great football game. I am so proud of our players and the dedication they have shown to get this far," said Head Coach Jeff Monken.

Behind three touchdowns from Jaybo Shaw, Georgia Southern (11-2) opened up a 14-0 lead in the first quarter and led

35-17 in the third quarter. Shaw rushed for a pair of short-yardage scores and completed a 25-yard touchdown pass to Kentrellis Showers with 7:32 to play in the third quarter.

Shaw completed seven of eight passes for 116 yards to up Georgia Southern's total yardage to 476. J.J. Wilcox led the Eagle rushing attack with 99 yards on eight carries and tallied two scores. Dominique Swope pounded the ball inside 23 times for a total of 81 yards.

Despite the three interceptions, Maine (9-4) pulled within four points in the second quarter, and again in the third quarter on 295 yards of total offense. Warren Smith completed 15 passes out of 29 attempts for 229 yards and two touchdowns. His favorite target, Damarr Aultman caught six passes for 108 yards.

Wilcox put Georgia Southern on top, 21-10, at halftime with a seven-yard scamper, his second score of the half. All three touchdown drives were of 60 yards or more and all three were capped by short-yardage runs.

"Being able to control the ball in the first half, we gave ourselves some advantages. For Maine to be able to score 10 points with only nine offensive plays is pretty impressive," said Monken.

The Eagle defense held Maine to just 61 yards in the first half, but the Black Bears capitalized on a 91-yard kickoff return for a touchdown by Roosevelt Boone and a 21-yard field goal to trail by just four points, 14-10, before the Wilcox score with 35 seconds remaining before the break.

Both teams scored two touchdowns in the second half with all four of them coming in the third quarter. GSU extended a 21-17 lead with a one-yard score and a touchdown pass by Shaw.

Smith completed a three-yard pass to John Ebeling to cap off an 80-yard drive with 5:17 remaining.

Jerick McKinnon, who played his second-straight game at nickle corner, intercepted his second pass of the contest with 2:40 to go in the fourth quarter to end the Black Bear's chances and seal the victory. The Eagles play at North Dakota State in the national semifinals next weekend. North Dakota state defeated Lehigh 24-0.

## NCAA/FCS NATIONAL QUARTER-FINALS

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### **FRIDAY'S GAMES**

MONTANA 48, NORTHERN IOWA 10

### **SATURDAY'S GAMES**

GEORGIA SOUTHERN 35, MAINE 23

NORTH DAKOTA STATE 24, LEHIGH 0  
SAM HOUSTON STATE 49, MONTANTA STATE 13

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**Photo Courtesy: Jaybo Shaw, Southern Conference Athletics**