

Soccer hits the road for final regular season road trip

Red Wolves still in battle for a top spot in the league

KRISHNAN COLLINS

SPORTS EDITOR

The Arkansas State women's soccer team heads on their final road trip of the regular season on Friday as the Red Wolves travel to Georgia Southern before traveling to Appalachian State on Sunday.

A-State heads to Georgia Southern on the back of a 1-1 draw with the Troy Trojans at the A-State Soccer Park. The draw with the Trojans saw the Red Wolves' Sun Belt Conference record improve to 3-1-2 on the season and overall record to 7-4-2.

The match against Troy was extremely physical as both teams looked to solidify their position towards the top of the SBC table. Olivia Smith played one half at left back and one half at right back during the match for the Red Wolves.

"It was really hard," Smith said. "We were going back and forth a lot. We had a lot of chances, we just didn't finish them as well as we should have."

Sarah Sodoma scored the only goal in the match for A-State before picking up an injury that forced her to the sidelines until the second

half. Sodoma returned not only for the second half but also the overtime period.

For a full match recap of A-State's draw with Troy, head to The Herald's website.

Looking ahead to Friday, the Red Wolves travel to a 2-3-1 SBC Georgia Southern team. The Eagles' two conference wins came against Coastal Carolina and Georgia State. Georgia Southern holds a 5-7-1 overall record and heads into the matchup with A-State on a single game win streak.

The Eagles took down fellow Georgia opponent Georgia State 2-0 with goals from Nora Falnes and Frida Brattum.

Brattum leads the Eagles with seven goals but her teammates are not supporting her with many goals themselves. A few Eagles have two goals to their name but no one else is putting up numbers like Norway native.

The Eagles allow 1.62 goals per game and the Red Wolves have a great chance to exploit Georgia Southern's backline as A-State boasts a SBC third-best goals per game ratio.

That being said, goals have dried up recently for A-State. The Red Wolves scored a single goal each in three out



Photo by: Krishnan Collins | Sports Editor

In a goal mouth scramble against Troy, Sophia Restrepo (No.9), Abby Glockzin and Riley Minard attempt to score.

of their five last games and scored no goals in the other two of those matches. A weak backline is just what the Red Wolves need to get their attacking force firing on all cylinders again. The SBC is especially volatile in soccer. Any team can really get a result out of any match on any day. Kick off from Statesboro is set for 3 p.m. CDT.

On Sunday, the Red Wolves travel to a struggling Appalachian State. The Mountaineers are on a three

game losing streak and hold a 1-4-1 SBC record.

The Mountaineers do not have a prolific goal scorer. Senior Ava Dawson leads App State with four goals on the season as multiple players on the Mountaineers roster have chipped in to their goal tally with just a single goal each.

Last season, a much better App State team traveled to Jonesboro and lost to the Red Wolves in an instant classic. A-State scored late in the

final minute of the match to force overtime before Sodoma scored the winning golden goal.

Road games are tough in the SBC but A-State has a great chance of taking down the Mountaineers in Boone. Kick off is set for 11 a.m. CDT.

The battle in the middle of the SBC table is very tight. Three teams sit on 10 points while two teams sit on 11, including A-State. South Alabama has a healthy lead

at the top of the table with 19 points and Troy follows behind with 14. That being said, South Alabama only has two conference games left having played eight matches, while A-State still has four conference games left to play.

On paper, the Red Wolves have played the hardest part of their conference schedule already.

A-State is very much in the conversation for a top-three finish in the league.

Football hosts Louisiana in SBC divisional matchup

KRISHNAN COLLINS

SPORTS EDITOR

The Arkansas State football team returns from a bye week as the Red Wolves host the Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns on Thursday night.

The Red Wolves are 3-3 overall and 1-1 in the Sun Belt Conference as A-State hosts a quality Ragin' Cajun team. Louisiana boasts a 4-2 overall record while the Ragin' Cajuns also have a 1-1 record in the SBC.

The Red Wolves are battered and bruised as A-State's roster is filled to the brim with injuries. Head coach Blake Anderson addressed the media in a press conference on Monday.

"We're trying to figure out where we're at moving forward," Anderson said. "Not the team that we planned on having at this point of the season with injuries, but it's the team we got."

A-State's defensive line is heavily depleted. However, Kevin Thurmon is on his way back and will have to play with his hand wrapped

coming off of surgery.

"Obviously there are some things he can't do with it," Anderson said. "He's not going to be able to grasp with it so there's going to be some times that he's in a position to use that like he has in the past and he's not going to be able to. But in terms of punch and just being explosive, he's already shown that in practice. We've done a good job of keeping his cardio up."

Louisiana is a very physical team upfront and the Ragin' Cajuns boast quality offensive line and running back play.

"If we can't make them uncomfortable upfront, it puts us at a huge disadvantage," Anderson said. "They're built to control the clock, control the ball, run the ball effectively. They're going to start with the run, they always do. They got great running backs and big, big o-lineman and even the quarterback can hurt you with his feet."

Louisiana's most recent SBC game came against powerhouse and now ranked No. 24 in the nation Appalachian State. The teams played in a very low



Photo by: Ammar Taqi

The Red Wolves defense is filled with injuries as A-State hosts a potent rushing offense in Louisiana on Thursday.

scoring game that saw the Mountaineers just edge out Louisiana 17-7.

Louisiana's rushing attack is potent enough to put the Ragin' Cajuns at sixth in rushing yards per game in the country. Louisiana averages 282.2 rushing yards per game and are led by junior running

back Elijah Mitchell and redshirt junior running back Trey Ragas.

The Red Wolves are 14th in the nation in passing yards per game with a 317.2 average. Even after a bye week, Omar Bayless still leads the entire country in receiving yards with 843 total receiving yards

on the year.

"We got to stop the run every week, not just this week," Anderson said. "We've got to make them one dimensional. That's the plan. It is a challenge and yeah I'm concerned about it. So is everybody else that's in the building."

Last season, the Red Wolves lost a very close contest at Louisiana 47-43.

The Red Wolves and Louisiana meet in a divisional matchup that is set to be a heated battle. Kick off from Centennial Bank Stadium is set for 6:30 p.m.