

Johnson Scores 11 in Overtime to Lift Eagles to Win

[box score \(PDF\)](#)

STATESBORO, Ga. – With 11 of his career-best 18 points coming in the overtime period, senior guard Antoine Johnson (Atlanta, Ga.) helped carry Georgia Southern to an 86-77 win over Arkansas-Fort Smith in the late game of Saturday's (November 28) Legends Classic. Tied at 68 at the end of regulation, Johnson picked up a steal in the first 15 seconds of overtime and converted a layup at the other end. Johnson had his second steal of the game, scored two more baskets and made five free throws down the stretch to cement the win for the Eagles. Coach Charlton "C.Y." Young had put Johnson in the starting lineup and while his 23 minutes in the final box score reflected solid play, Johnson's last five minutes made the difference in the game.

"A.J. (Antoine Johnson) carried us defensively and offensively during the most critical times in the game," said Young. "Winning a close game like this will help us more in the long run because it challenged us every minute."

Georgia Southern started off slow with Arkansas-Fort Smith building a nine-point margin in the first half and maintaining that lead. Ten points by senior guard Antonio Hanson (Ft. Worth, Texas) in the first period helped the Eagles cut the score to 23-26. Hanson followed up with another three to trim the Lions lead to two, 26-28, with 2:53 remaining. Arkansas-Fort Smith took a 31-27 lead into the locker room as junior transfer Chris Williams scored 14 of the Lions' total points.

In the second half, the combination of junior forward Rory Spencer (Atlanta, Ga.) and Ben Drayton III (St. Marys, Ga.) picked up the Eagle offense. Drayton had seven of his 11 total points in the first 2:44 after the break to pull Georgia Southern within one point of Arkansas-Fort Smith, 36-37. The Lions extended the lead to seven off a three-pointer by Josh Simmons before Spencer had a quick layup and went to the line to add another point. Hanson's third trey gave Georgia Southern its first lead since early in the first half. Over the next four minutes both teams traded missed shots before Lion Grant Clark hit the first of his four three-pointers to grab the lead back, 51-49, midway through the period.

The Eagles took their largest lead of the second half at 58-54 off a Spencer layup. Five lead changes over the next three minutes gave the advantage back to the Lions, 64-65, as Arkansas-Fort Smith's Williams scored his 20th point of the night. Georgia Southern's Spencer tipped in a missed layup for a one-point Eagle lead 66-65, and Johnson hit two free throws with 10 seconds remaining for a 68-65 score. With six seconds left in the regulation, Aaron McHenry hit a long three to tie the score at for the fifth time in the game.

Georgia Southern outscored Arkansas-Fort Smith 18-9 in the extra five minutes, taking the early lead off Johnson's layup and never looking back. Senior guard Willie Powers III (Gainesville, Ga.) had five of his 18 points during overtime, including three free throws to seal the win. Johnson and Hanson also had 18 points with Spencer contributing 16 and Drayton 11. Johntavious Rucker (Decatur, Ga.) had the game-high with nine rebounds and Powers had a career-best eight boards on the night. Spencer and the Lions Dean Neville each blocked five shots, a career-best for Spencer. Williams had 20 points to lead the Lions with McHenry adding 18, Clark 14 and Simmons 10.

In the early game, Troy utilized balanced scoring with four of five starters in double figures and held Valparaiso to 31 percent shooting in the first half to gain a early lead they would never relinquish. The Trojans capitalized on the Crusaders poor shooting from the three-point line, 14 percent in the first half, and took the win 80-64.

Antwayn Jones and Yamene Coleman each scored 10 points in the second half for Troy. Jones and Richard Delk each had 14 points with Coleman and Brandon Hazzard with 10. Brandon Wood had 10 for the Crusaders with Cory Johnson and Matt Kenney adding 11 each. Johnson tied Coleman for top rebounding honors with eight.

The final two games of the Legends Classic are Sunday, Nov. 29, with Arkansas-Fort Smith and Valparaiso squaring off at 1 p.m. and Troy and Georgia Southern meeting at 3:30 p.m. at Hanner Fieldhouse. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$4 for youth (ages 3-12) and are good for both games. The Athletics Ticket windows at Hanner Fieldhouse will open at noon.

