**2018 RAYCOM MEDIA CAMELLIA BOWL**

**Saturday, Dec. 15, 2018**

**BASS’ GAME-WINNING FG GIVES GEORGIA SOUTHERN THRILLING WIN**

**MONTGOMERY –** Georgia Southern junior kicker Tyler Bass hit the game-winning 40-yard field goal as time expired to lift the Eagles to a 23-21 win over Eastern Michigan in the fifth annual Raycom Media Camellia Bowl at the historic Cramton Bowl in Montgomery.

Bass’ game-winning field goal was the second in the brief history of the bowl. Appalachian State kicker Zach Matics’ 23-yard FG as time expired lifted the Mountaineers to a 31-29 win over Ohio in 2015. The five Camellia Bowl games have been decided by 17 total points and all five have come down to the final minutes.

“I knew after Shai made the first down, I would have a chance to kick it,” Bass said. “I’ve waited all year for this. I just concentrated on the snap, the hold and just kicking it through.”

Eastern Michigan (7-6) marched 75 yards in 16 plays to take its only lead with 3:33 left. EMU quarterback Mike Glass threw a 5-yard TD pass to Arthur Jackson on fourth-and-4 from the GS 5-yard line to put the Eagles in front 21-20. The 16-play scoring drive was the longest in bowl history, eclipsing Georgia Southern’s 15-play scoring drive in the second quarter.

Georgia Southern (10-3) answered with a 9-play, 52-yard drive for the game-winning field goal. After a 15-yard pass from quarterback Shai Werts to tight end Ellis Richardson the offense bogged down near midfield.

Facing a fourth-and-10 from its own 41-yard line, Werts scrambled 29 yards for a first down at the EMU 30-yard line. After two running plays, Bass trotted onto the field and hit the game-winning field goal.

“Actually, I should have thrown the ball,” Werts said. “Ellis (Richardson) was wide open, Wes (Kennedy) made a block on the linebacker and there was nobody in front of me and I got the first down.”

It was a tough swing of emotion for Eastern Michigan.

“It was like a bad dream to me,” Eastern Michigan head coach Chris Creighton said. “The game was decided by two fourth down plays.”

Bass, who tied the Camellia Bowl record with three field goals, nailed a 35-yard field goal with 9:49 left to extend the GS lead to 20-14. Bass finished the game with 11 points, setting the Camellia Bowl record for most points by a kicker.

Eastern Michigan scored on the first play of the third quarter to set the tone in the second half. Glass found Jackson down the left sideline for a 75-yard touchdown pass to get the Eagles back in the game at 17-14.

Georgia Southern led 17-7 at halftime. The Eagles scored on three of their five first-half possessions and controlled the ball for more than 20 minutes of the half.

The Eagles engineered a 15-play, 95-yard drive that consumed 9:01 off the clock to take a 7-0 lead. The Eagles were 3-for-3 on third down on the drive, including Werts’ 13-yard completion to Malik Murray on a third-and-12 from the EMU 48-yard line. Two plays later, Werts scampered 26 yards for the first touchdown of the game.

Eastern Michigan took advantage of a short field following the first blocked punt in Camellia Bowl history by junior wide receiver Matthew Sexton. The Eagles took over at midfield and needed only six plays for the game-tying touchdown. Glass threw a 1-yard touchdown pass to sophomore fullback Tyler Lyle on third-and-goal to tie the game at 7-7 with 7:53 left in the half.

Glass completed his first seven passes for 53 yards and one TD in the first half.

Georgia Southern answered on its next possession with a seven-play, 82-yard scoring drive. Kennedy exploded for a 46-yard run to give the Eagles first-and-goal at the EMU 9-yard line. Werts scored his second touchdown of the game, this time on a 5-yrd run to give Georgia Southern a 14-7 lead.

Kennedy’s 46-yard run put him over the 1,000-yard mark for the season.

After a three-and-out by the Georgia Southern defense, the offense took over at the GS 38-yard line with 2:46 left in the half. The Eagles marched to the Eastern Michigan 33-yard line to set up Bass’ 50-yard field goal on the final play of the half to put Georgia Southern up by 10 points. Bass’ 50-ayrd field goal was the longest in Camellia Bowl history.