

## New coaches, arena mark 1998-99 season

### Men's Basketball Team makes 5-game jump under Watkins

BY SANTOSH VENKATARAMAN  
The Battalion

It has been a season of ups and downs for the Texas A&M Men's Basketball Team in coach Melvin Watkins' inaugural season.

The Aggies finished 12-14 and 5-11 in Big 12 play, an improvement from last year's records of 7-20 and 1-15.

After roaring out to a 7-1 start, A&M dropped seven straight, including their first five Big 12 con-

ferences. The Aggies recovered, however, to finish the year by winning five out of 11 games.

Some would attribute the Aggies' quick start to the soft non-conference schedule put together by former coach Tony Barone.

A&M easily won games against the University of North Texas, Lamar Uni-

versity, Centenary College and Sam Houston State University.

Included in the 7-1 stretch, however, was a 65-58 victory over Southeastern Conference power University of Alabama on Dec. 1.

A&M began conference play with a loss at the University of Kansas on Jan. 2. Subsequent defeats to Texas Tech University and Iowa State University followed.

However, Jan. 23, on the game's final play, senior Chris Clayton's three-pointer at the buzzer off freshman Joe White's full-court inbound pass defeated

Baylor University, 57-56, and gave the Ags their first Big 12 victory.

The play, in which Jerald Brown assisted, was featured in the March 1st issue of *The Sporting News*.

A&M would go on to alternate home wins with road losses for the rest of the season as the Ags soundly defeated Tech at home, defeated Baylor again in a rematch and subdued Kansas State University.

One of A&M's most noteworthy victories came in their final home game against the University of Oklahoma.

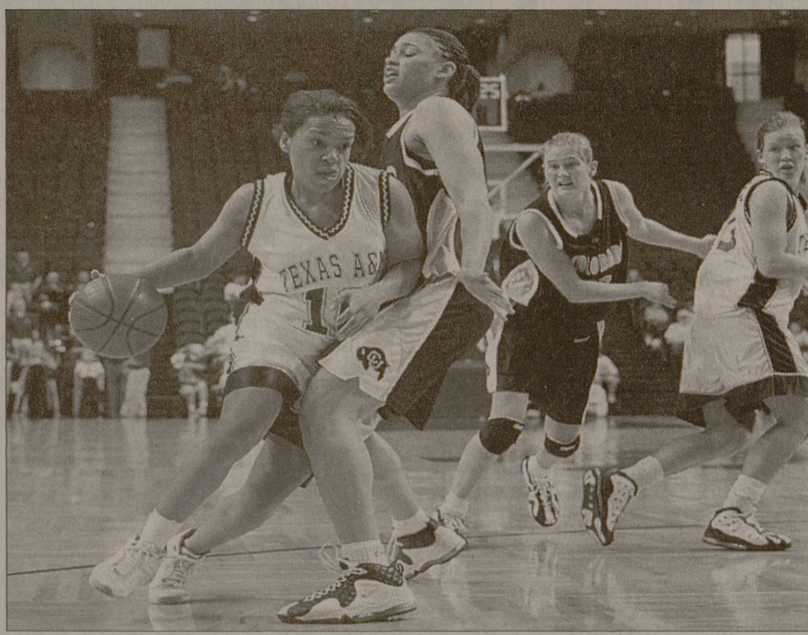
OU had crushed A&M only 11 days earlier by 27 points in Norman. But in the rematch, the Aggies rallied from an 11-point deficit and won the game on junior Jerald Brown's short jumper at the buzzer.

There were positives to be seen for A&M this season. The two victories at the buzzer stand out for most as the year's most exciting moments.

The emergence of Cook as a solid floor leader was a key to the Aggies' success. Cook served as the catalyst for the team. For his efforts, Cook was named to the All-Big 12 third team and received Rookie of the Week honors a record five times.

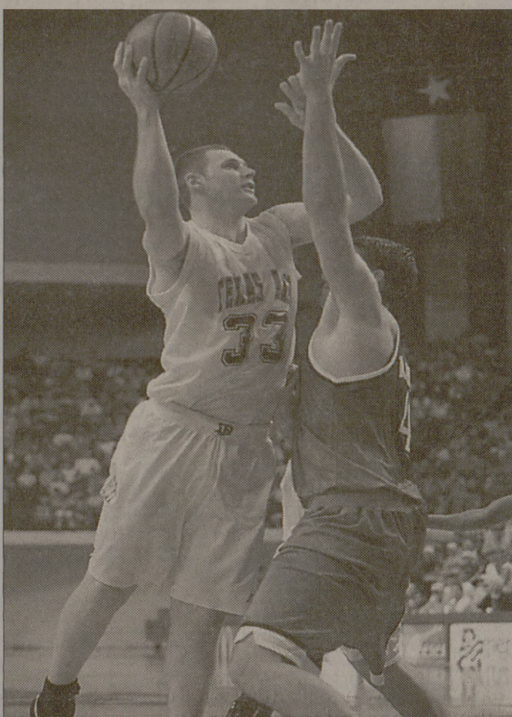
Senior forward Shanne Jones was once again a steady force in

SEE AGGIES ON PAGE 10.



GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

**TOP:** Senior guard **Kerrie Patterson** averaged 4.8 points, 4.1 assist and 1.1 steals per game for the Texas A&M Women's Basketball Team this season.



**LEFT:** Freshman center **Joe White** contributed 6.0 points, 3.4 rebounds and 0.92 blocks per game in his first year with the Texas A&M Men's Basketball Team.

MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

### Last-second finishes big story in Gillom's first year at A&M

BY TRAVIS HARSCH  
The Battalion

Prairie View A&M.

The Aggies opened conference play at home with a loss to the University of Kansas, but won their next game on the road against Oklahoma State University.

The Aggies would then go on to lose four consecutive close games to the University of Missouri, Texas Tech University, which was ranked seventh at the time, Iowa State University and Oklahoma State University by a total of 12 points.

A&M would get its second conference win of the year against Kansas State University before closing its season with 10 consecutive losses.

A&M failed to win a conference game at home and ended the year with a 2-11 mark at Reed Arena, compared to a 3-7 road record.

The Aggies, with only two players over six feet who saw serious playing time, had trouble against teams with size, as demonstrated by a 604-518 rebounding edge for opponents in conference play, and were often their own worst enemy, turning the ball over 285 times in Big 12 play.

Despite these difficulties, the Aggies look for next year to be a bright one, as they will return 11 players from this year's squad, including junior All-Big 12 selection Prissy Sharpe, who averaged 18.3 points and 8.5 rebounds per game this season, and junior Kera

SEE HOOPS ON PAGE 10.

Close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades, and the Texas A&M Women's Basketball Team was not playing either in its first season at Reed Arena and under a new coach.

A&M ended its season with a 82-71 loss to Nebraska Tuesday at the Big 12 Tournament. The Aggies finished their first season under coach Peggie Gillom with a 7-20 mark overall and a 2-12 record in conference play.

Nine times the Aggies lost by five points or fewer, and 13 of the 20 losses came by a ten-point margin or less.

Gillom, who was an assistant for the two-time defending WNBA champion Houston Comets, took the job that was vacated by Candi Harvey, who left to take a head coaching position in the American Basketball League.

The Aggies got off to a less-than-auspicious start, losing their first game in Reed Arena to North Texas. A&M won its next two games at home before splitting two games in Dallas at the SMU Classic. The Ags then traveled to New York City for the Big Apple Classic, where they defeated both then University of Massachusetts and Manhattan University.

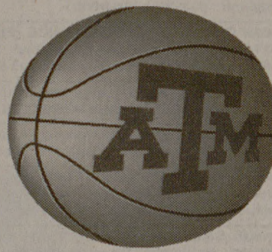
The Aggies then lost to both Rice University and Tulane University before closing out nonconference play with a 72-45 win over

### A&M Women's Season Leaders

Points:  
**Prissy Sharpe (18.3)**

Rebound:  
**Prissy Sharpe (9.0)**

Assists:  
**Kim Tarkington (4.7)**



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