

Aggies upset 12th-ranked Cowboys 64-59

BY JASON LINCOLN
The Battalion

The Aggie freshmen didn't know better. The four rookie starters for the Texas A&M men's basketball team were too young, inexperienced and brash to realize the magnitude of playing the No. 12 team in the nation.

That lack of knowledge played right into the hands of A&M coach Melvin Watkins as his young cast defeated No. 12 Oklahoma State University, 64-59 on Saturday.

A late second-half surge in free throws and second-chance points carried the Aggies to their first win over a ranked opponent since a 1987 victory over Texas Christian University in the first round of the Southwest Conference tournament.

The Aggies went on to win the tournament. Since then, A&M has lost 29 straight games to ranked competition, including three games since Jan. 8.

"We were just trying to get one. That's all we wanted," A&M freshman point guard Jamaal Gilchrist said about defeating a ranked team.

After losing to three ranked teams in a four-game stretch, the Aggies had reason to celebrate as many of Reed Arena's 5,563 fans stormed the court to celebrate the biggest A&M victory in 13 years.

The Cowboys (14-2; 3-1) received their first conference loss after winning the last eight meetings against the Aggies.

"It's a great win for Texas A&M..." OSU coach Eddie Sutton said. "Don't get me wrong, I'm disappointed that we lost, but I have to take my hat off to Texas A&M."

Oklahoma State was coming off its biggest win of the season, a 73-65 win over No. 14 University of Texas on Wednesday.

The veteran-laden Cowboys were not prepared for the attack of the young Aggie lineup. A&M's freshmen came out early, with the guards keeping Oklahoma State in reach despite the Aggies 2-10 free-throw shooting and a 22-12 rebounding deficit.

After OSU had built an eight-point lead early in the second half, A&M was on the verge of letting the game slip away. But a time-out by Watkins rejuvenated the Aggies, who came out on a 13-2 run to take the lead and turn the momentum of the game.

"We were in a dogfight. We were fighting for our lives," OSU point guard Doug Gottlieb said. "If you get a young team and let them hang around they think they can beat you. When in reality we should win this game."

"A young team like that doesn't know that you're better than them. They got rolling, thought they could beat us. If you have confidence, believe you can beat somebody — anything can happen."

Oklahoma State would capitalize on A&M's lack of shooting from the line to stretch back out to a five point lead with five minutes remaining.

Gilchrist was not ready to let down, stepping up to take the pressure shots for the Aggies.

"I wanted to get fouled to take some of the pressure off the other guys that were missing," Gilchrist said. "I felt like

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See the basketball column about the men's basketball game against OSU on page 11.



Top: Senior Aaron Jack celebrates with Aggie fans who stormed the court after A&M's victory Saturday. Bottom left: Jack drives the ball inside for four freshman starters that faced off against the senior dominated OSU line up.



PHOTOS BY GUY RODGERS/THE BATTALION

Faculty Senate debates grade distributions on Internet

BY MATT LOFTIS
The Battalion

Students may no longer be able to view professors' grade distributions on the Internet, depending on the effect of an upcoming Faculty Senate recommendation on Texas A&M University's policy.

An upcoming recommendation by the Faculty Senate may determine whether information will be collected or available in any form.

"Ever since we've been going to school we've been told that our grade was the only evaluative method we had to show that we've mastered the knowledge," Will Hurd, student body president and senior computer science major, said.

"So, the grades given in class are very important."

"I would hope a professor would stand behind the grades that they give in the classroom, and if for some reason they are afraid of the grades they give in the classroom being made public, then there is a problem," Hurd said.

Kenn Harding, Chairperson of the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee, said the issue is currently under discussion in the Academic Affairs committee.

Hurd said the Student Government Association has taken an active role in supporting the collection of grade distribution information, through the launching of a Website aimed at providing full information on each professor's classes.

The site includes information on professors' awards, grade distributions, core syllabi, student evaluations and comments from the professor on the course.

"Grade distribution alone is not an accurate metric for understanding the particular academic environment in a particular classroom," Hurd said.

"It's a combination of all those factors that are beneficial to students."

Hurd said taking a full package of this information together would provide students with the clearest look at their classes.

Student government is concerned with whether or not grade distribution will continue in any capacity.

Some staff members feel that students will

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— Will Hurd
Student Body President

misuse the information provided to take classes only considering the grade they expect.

Ken Poenisch, associate dean for the College of Science, said that grade distributions can be

misleading to students trying to decide what they will get out of a class.

"If students are making the decisions based on who gives the highest grade, that's a problem," Poenisch said.

Ron Douglas, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, said that both the leaders of the Student and Faculty Senates have been encouraged to reach an agreement on whether or not grade distributions are a good idea.

Douglas said the recommendation would move to achieve the goal of ensuring A&M has the best undergraduate academic program possible.

At the earliest, Faculty Senate will not discuss grade distributions until their February meeting.

A&M professor finds alternate theory to continental drift

BY STUART HUTSON
The Battalion

Research by Texas A&M Oceanography Professor William Sager may put a new spin on the theory of continental drift — or at least a new roll.

Sager said that approximately 84 million years ago, the earth's weight distribution suddenly changed, causing the planet to roll about 20 degrees southward, a change that would move modern-day Washington, D.C., to the latitude currently occupied by Cuba.

Sager's research, published in Friday's issue of the journal Science, indicates this shift took place over a period of about 2 million years, a time span which Sager says is just the blink of an eye in geologic terms.

Sager attributes the rapid movement to a shift of mass in the earth's magma caused by either the introduction of cold matter from the earth's crust or a surge of hot matter from the earth's core.

His theory seems to contradict a popular notion among geologists that a slow-

er polar shift resulted from a redistribution of weight caused by continental drift, the motion of the earth's crustal plates over a liquid layer of magma.

"The information we have collected indicates that continental drift alone probably cannot account for these changes," Sager said. "Continental plates currently move at about one degree every million years. Even though the plates were moving faster back then, they still wouldn't account for this rapid of a shift."

The theory's apparent contradiction has already brought forth some dissenting opinions from geological community.

"They are suggesting something quite challenging," John Tarduno, a professor of geology from University of Rochester, said last week in an interview with the Associated Press.

"Personally, I think there is a possibility that they have underestimated the errors in producing the data set."

Although Sager admits there is a degree of error in his observations, he pointed to similar, independent findings reported by a team of geologists in France



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

headed by Professor Michel Prevot from the University of Montpellier.

"Prevot's research results were almost identical to mine in many instances," Sager said. "Although he was focusing on a shift which occurred over 100 million years ago."

Sager worked with Dr. Anthony Koppers, a researcher from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, collecting information about magnetic fields contained in different layers of rock at several sites around the globe.

News in brief

Clinton proposes \$31 billion for college fees

Washington (AP) — President Clinton proposed a \$31 billion plan Thursday to make college education more affordable and upbraided Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott for suggesting that no major legislation would be enacted this election year.

The centerpiece of the proposal was a \$10,000 tax deduction to help millions of Americans pay for tuition, books and university fees. "When we make college more affordable, we make the American dream more achievable," Clinton said.

"Members of Congress who have been in their districts understand that education is the top priority for most Americans," White House press secretary Joe Lockhart said. "I think there will be a political cost for those who want to walk away."

When Clinton's \$30 billion "College Opportunity Tax Cut" is fully operational in 2003, a family earning \$120,000 or less annually could receive a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 for tuition, fees and

job-related training. Alternatively, taxpayers could seek a maximum credit of \$2,800 a year. A similar proposal sponsored by Schumer died in Congress last year.

Mrs. Clinton noted that average college tuition has doubled over the past 20 years, outpacing median incomes. "This touches Americans in all incomes from all walks of life," she said.

While the White House accused Republicans of threatening to put politics ahead of progress, officials played down the political benefits of the event to Mrs. Clinton's campaign and noted that she has long advocated education initiatives.

The president's proposal included \$35 million for the college Completion Challenge grants, designed to spur college dropouts to return to class; \$40 million for a new initiative to help minorities pursue five-year dual-degree programs in fields where they are under-represented; and \$716 million for Pell grants.

Clinton also will seek a combined \$400 million increase for initiatives such as the Gear Up program, which helps disadvantaged youths stay in high school; TRIO, which helps them stay in college; and Job Corps, a national education and job training program targeted at impoverished youths.

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