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Aggies make history for Birmingham-Southern

Panthers exploit A&M weaknesses to win first Division I game by 20

By Jason Lincoln

The Battalion

Birmingham-Southern's 10-2 run in the final minute against Texas A&M Sunday afternoon merely put an exclamation mark on its first ever win in Division I basketball action.

The Panthers (1-3), in their first season in D-I, were helped by an Aggie squad (1-2) that made just 13 shots from the floor to make their first win an impressive 74-54 victory.

"This is a big win, because it's our first Division I win since making the transition," said Birmingham-Southern coach Duane Reboul.

A&M's group of highly touted freshman and sophomore prep stand-outs were completely ineffective.

Instead it was former walk-on Andy Leatherman, now on scholarship, taking over the point guard duties and scoring a team-high 16 points. Senior Carlton Brown shot four of five from the floor and five of six from the free-throw line to be the team's most effective shooter with 13 points.

Brown was the only member of the starting lineup to score in double figures.

Watkins was so frustrated by his starters' lack of effort, that he pulled all five just four minutes into the game after the Panthers worked to an 11-4 lead.

The remaining four shot a combined 7-for-26 from the field.

A&M had its best game of the season on both the boards and the free-throw line.

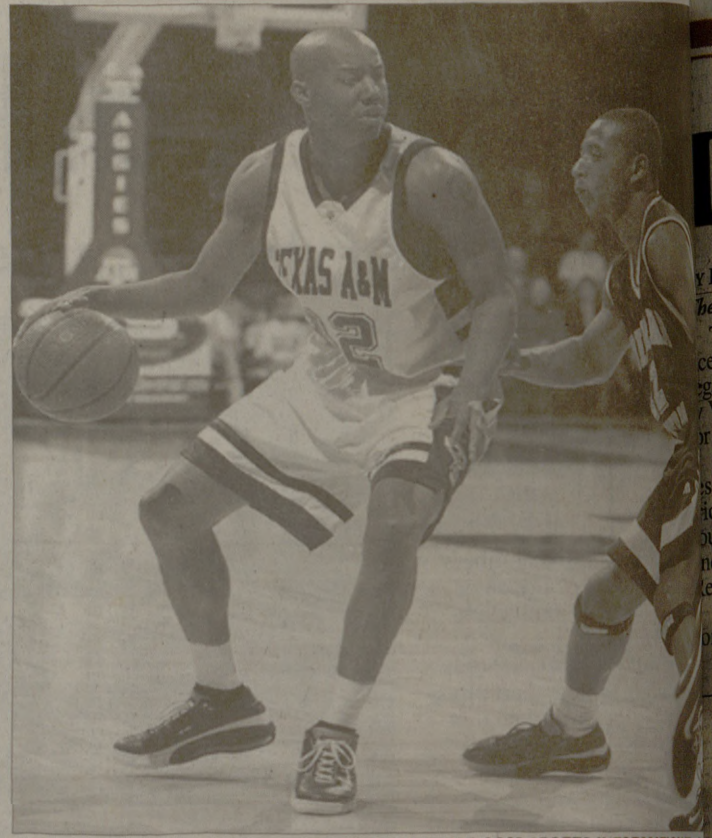
The Aggies shot a season high 82 percent from the charity stripe, a statistic shadowed by Birmingham-Southern's 84 percent showing that included a 9-for-10 performance in the second half.

The Aggies also played their best game on the board, allowing the Panthers just five offensive rebounds while out-rebounding them, 37-25.

But 26 turnovers, 18 in the first half, combined with Birmingham-Southern's 51 percent shooting, negated the Aggies' effort under the glass.

Watkins referred to the moment as the low point in both his time at A&M and his time in basketball.

The result is a change in attitude the coach plans to start Monday morning.



COURTESY TEXAS A&M SPORTS INFORMATION
Bernard King, Texas A&M's scoring leader in 1999 while earning Freshman of the Year honors, shot just 2-of-13 from the field as the Aggies dropped their second game of the season.

Watkins embarrassed by loss, promises change

By Jason Lincoln

The Battalion

It was not the 74-54 loss to first-year Division I team Birmingham-Southern that embarrassed Texas A&M men's basketball coach Melvin Watkins. It was the Aggies' effort.

A&M shot less than 30 percent from the floor with its four underclassmen starters shooting just 7 of 26 Sunday afternoon.

But that is something Watkins plans to change, one way or another.

"It's not frustrating, it's embarrassing," Watkins said. "That's not to take anything away from Birmingham-Southern, but we played so lifeless, with no emotion."

"It's the most embarrassed I've ever been around the game of basketball."

The weakness of A&M's youth — leadership — showed Sunday.

"Right now we have zero leadership on the team and I have to take responsibility for that," Watkins said. "We

are so far away from being a team — it's not even close."

According to the Aggie coach, the problems have all started at practice, where Watkins, encouraged after the first two workouts, has seen little effort by his squad.

"We have to make some changes. We'll start at 5:30 in the morning, taking responsibility. We'd go today but I believe it's a violation if we'd try to practice today."

"If some of them don't show up it means he won't be with us. I don't want the old team to show up with that old attitude — 'Hey, let's get through practice for the sake of getting through practice.' That can't show up in the morning. If some of them don't want to change, then they won't be with us."

Watkins has laid down the gauntlet. Now, A&M's young players with star potential will have to grow up and shape up fast.

The result is sure to be a new look for Aggie basketball, one that regardless of who is on the floor, will be better than the Aggie team that played Sunday.

Ag women in tourney

STAFF AND WIRE

The Texas A&M women's basketball started the season on a streak, winning three straight.

But Memphis, hosting the Tiger Classic, found enough home court to upend the 75-68.

A&M bolted out of the 22-9 run, but a seven-minute saw the Tigers score 11, gaining the momentum in them the tournament championship.

The Aggies return to action in their home opener at Arkansas-Pine Bluff at 7 p.m.

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