

Higgins to lead Aggie men's golf team

Former New Mexico coach replaces Hall of Fame coach Ellis after 27 years at A&M

Mark Passwaters
The Battalion

Replacing a coach who is a member of the Golf Coaches Association of America Hall of Fame with 27 years on the job is no easy task. Texas A&M thinks they have found that man in University of New Mexico golf coach J.T. Higgins.

"I am extremely pleased J.T. Higgins has accepted our offer to become the men's golf coach at Texas A&M," said Athletic Director Wally Groff. "I think he will be a tremendous recruiter and an excellent fit for our program. He was the choice of our search committee and I had a good feel for him after our interview."

"J.T. will do a fantastic job for Texas

A&M," said retiring coach Bob Ellis. "I'm very excited for him and the golf program."

Higgins became the Lobos head coach

"I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to be the men's golf coach at Texas A&M."

— J.T. Higgins
new A&M men's golf coach

in 1998 after being the assistant coach at UNLV from 1991-97. Higgins' New

Mexico team never finished lower than fourth in the Mountain West Conference tournaments and advanced to the NCAA regionals in 1999 and 2001. In 1998 and 2000, the Lobos advanced to the NCAA championships.

This season, UNM finished 17th nationally in the Golfweek and the College Golf Foundation polls, and Higgins was named the 2001 Mountain West Conference Coach of the Year.

"I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to be the men's golf coach at Texas A&M. I had heard great things about the traditions and the pride in the school and the city," Higgins said. "I was thoroughly impressed with the facilities. And, to top it

off, I fell in love with College Station."

Higgins' goals for the Aggie golf program are not small. "We have a good nucleus and a lot of young talent," he said. "We can compete right away."

"If we can compete for the Big 12 championship, we'll have a great chance nationally. In the long term, I want to win some national championships."

Higgins said that Traditions — the Jack Nicklaus designed course in Bryan, which will become the Aggies' home course in 2002 — will be a great asset in recruiting.

"The addition of Traditions will enable us to recruit the best players in Texas and will naturally be a great asset to the program," he said.

The Higgins Record

at New Mexico

- Named 2001 Mountain West Conference Coach of the Year
- Led UNM to its first-ever West Regional championship in 1998
- UNM finished third at the WAC Championships in 1998 and 1999, second at the Mountain West Championships in 2000 and fourth in the MWC in 2001
- Led UNM to four straight NCAA regionals and two NCAA Championship appearances



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

Aggie basketball fills out roster with new recruits

Watkins optimistic about incoming junior college point guards, Bryan High School standout Daryl Mason

Michael Blahoff and Matthew Thigpen
The Battalion

During the 2000/01 basketball season, Texas A&M head coach Melvin Watkins realized that the team would need a significant upgrade of the guard positions to see an improvement.

In order to see that improvement, the Aggies have signed Bryan High School standout Daryl Mason and junior college point guards Michael Gardener and Bradley Jackson, three players who hope to improve the production and depth of the guard spots.

"We felt like the guard spot was the hot spot for us in terms of what our immediate needs were," Watkins said. "We surely had some concerns, especially with the point guard position and

we think we have addressed that with the addition of the two junior college transfers."

Watkins said he focused was on junior college players because of their advantages over high school players.

"We feel their skill level will make their transition a lot smoother than we probably could have gotten out of the high school ranks, and their maturity level will hopefully make an adjustment a shorter process," Watkins said.

Watkins said he saw a talent in Daryl Mason that he simply could not pass up.

The 6-foot-6 inch Mason averaged 21.9 points, 8.3 rebounds, 4.3 assists and 1.5 steals while helping Bryan to a 33-4 record and a berth in the state championship game. Mason, a

versatile player who played all five positions, was the 13-5A MVP last season and the 16-5A MVP this season, shooting 59.6 percent from the field. "Daryl is a winner," Watkins said. "I would think it's going to be very difficult to keep him sit-

"We feel we have a chance to have what we would call a breakout season."



WATKINS

ting beside me because I think he'll do things that say, 'Hey, coach, I need to be out there on the floor.' We are very excited to have Daryl, and I think our fans will see why we're excited."

In signing Michael Gardener, who will have three years of eligibility at A&M, Watkins hopes he has a player who will bring the leadership the

team that has been lacking the last couple of years.

Gardener, a 5-foot-10 inch point guard, averaged 13.4 points and 7.7 assists while leading Garden City Community College to a 25-6 record, earning second-team all conference honors. He was a high school teammate of Aggie forward Jesse King in Detroit.

"[Gardner] brings a lot of energy to the game, and plays at a pace that we would like to get to," Watkins said. "He plays very fast."

Watkins did not want to get caught short-handed at the point guard position and began pursuing Bradley Jackson late in the recruiting season.

Coming out of high school two years ago, Jackson was rated as the eighth best point guard in the nation. This past season, Jackson posted a 3:1 assist to turnover ratio while helping Southern Idaho to a 29-4 record.

"The thing about Bradley is that he might not play as fast as Michael, but he's just so solid in his play in terms of running the team and getting into

See BASKETBALL on Page 4.

Daryl Mason (Bryan High) - SG 21.9 points 8.3 rebounds 4.3 assists 1.5 steals 16-5A MVP 59.6% FG
Michael Gardener - PG Garden City Community College 13.4 points 7.7 assists
Bradley Jackson (Southern Idaho) - PG 4.5 points 4.6 assists 3:1 assists to turnovers

RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

313 S. COLLEGE
846-3343

Wednesday

Hawaiian Tropic Model Search
All Ladies FREE All Night
50¢ Mixed Drinks } 9-11
\$1.00 Longnecks }
\$1.50 Sex on the Beach
ALL NIGHT

Bikini Contest for Cash & Prizes

Thursday

Ladies, Lids & Longnecks
75¢ Mixed Drinks } 9-11
75¢ Longnecks }
\$2.50 Chuggers
ALL NIGHT

Ladies 18 & up FREE 'til 11
Ladies 21 & up FREE 'til midnight
Guys with Cowboy Hats FREE 'til 10

CODY'S

COLLEGE STATIONS #1 DANCE CLUB

COLLEGE NITE

THURSDAYS

50 cent BAR DRINKS
75 cent LONGNECKS
8 - 11 P.M.
18 + NO COVER CHARGE WITH COLLEGE I.D.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY

\$1.00 BAR DRINKS & LONGNECKS
TILL 11 P.M.

OVER 21 NO COVER WITH COLLEGE I.D. \$3.00 Without	UNDER 21 NO COVER WITH COLLEGE I.D. \$5.00 Without
--	---

OUR DRESS CODE IS CASUAL BUT WE NEVER ALLOW JERSEYS OR ATHLETIC APPAREL
DRESS CODE IS DOORMANS DISCRETION

Texas Avenue @ Southwest Pkwy. (Next to 4.0 & Go) 694-0018