

Ags down Team Ezybonds

By DOUG FUENTES
THE BATTALION

If the Texas A&M men's basketball team's performance in its first exhibition game of the season Thursday is a sign of things to come, the Aggies' season prospects could be looking up.

Six Aggies scored in double figures as A&M raced to an early first half lead and coasted home in the second half, defeating Team Ezybonds, 96-78, at Reed Arena in front of 2,706 fans.

A&M junior guard Bernard King led the six Aggies in double figures with 17 points. Sophomore Nick Anderson chipped in 14 points and senior guard Andy Leatherman added 12 points.

Freshman guard Daryl Mason and sophomore guard Michael Gardener, each playing in their first game, and junior forward Keith Bean rounded out the Aggies in double digits with 10 each.

"We got a lot of guys in the game," said A&M men's basketball coach Melvin Watkins. "We threw out some different combinations during the game. Quite honestly, we got a little sluggish in the second half. Some of the combinations and some of my substitutions may have helped that, but that's what exhibition games are for."

The Aggies jumped to an 18-point lead midway through the first half when a lay-up by Bean made it 28-10. A&M pushed its lead to the largest of the game with 5:58 left in the first half at 39-12 on a lay-up by Mason.

The Aggies maintained the lead for the rest of the half and made it a 55-29 game on a layup by sophomore forward Tomas Ressa with no time remaining on the clock.

A&M came out in the second half and relaxed, looking uncomfortable playing with the big lead.

Team Ezybonds opened the second half with a 20-6 run and cut the lead to 12 with 14:38 to play in the game on a 3-pointer by Jon Croft. Croft exploded in the second half, scoring 25 of his game-high 27 points in the second frame.

Team Ezybonds never got any closer as the Aggies pushed the lead back to 20 points at 84-64 with 6:39 remaining on a tip-in by Bean.

An alley-oop layup from King to Mason closed the scoring as the Aggies notched the victory.



GUY ROGERS • THE BATTALION
Freshman guard Daryl Mason soars over Ezybonds player Andrew Knowles during the Aggies 98-76 victory over the Australian team. Mason netted 10 points for the Aggies in his first collegiate action.

In addition to balanced scoring, A&M passed the ball extremely well, racking up 33 assists as a team. King led the way with nine assists and all 12 A&M players who played had at least one assist.

"I thought we really shared the basketball," Watkins said. "That's something we want to

expand on during the season. That's a big plus for this team." The Aggies unselfish play allowed the pressure to be taken off King from having to be the go-to-guy.

"Everybody who played scored except for Jesse [King]," King said. "That gives us a lot of confidence. That

tells us that this year you just can't key on me. Because if you key on me, somebody else can score. That's a big boost for me and the team."

The Aggies finish up their exhibition season on Wednesday when they hosts the EA Sports All-Stars at Reed Arena at 7 p.m.



GUY ROGERS • THE BATTALION

A&M sophomore running back Oschlor Flemming tries to run through the Texas Tech interior line last Saturday.

Aggies look to rebound

By TRUE BROWN
THE BATTALION

After putting up an offensive goose egg against the No. 10 defense in the Big 12 last weekend, the job does not get any easier for the Texas A&M football team. The Aggies' offensive offense must now square off against the sixth-best defense in the nation on the road in Norman, Okla., against the defending national champion Oklahoma University Sooners.

A&M (7-2, 4-2 Big 12) has dropped its last two meetings with No. 3 OU (8-1, 4-1), including a 51-6 setback at Norman in 1999.

"They are one of the best teams in the country," said junior quarterback Mark Farris. "It's not going to be easy to go up there and beat them, but I think we can do it. It will take our best game of the year."

A&M's lack of offensive production came to a peak last week in Lubbock. The Aggies wasted their only two drives into the Texas Tech red zone with turnovers.

Despite A&M's scoreless outing against Tech, OU head coach Bob Stoops is not looking past the A&M offense.

"The more I've watched them, I see how much they continue to be strong and work the running game," Stoops

said. "You've got to take away the big plays on them. They have a lot of mobility at receiver and some speed guys who can really run."

Last weekend's scoreless performance was the first for the Aggies since Penn State blanked A&M, 24-0, in the Alamo Bowl in 1999.

"Shutouts hurt a lot," said A&M offensive coordinator Dino Babers. "You put a lot of time in and you expect to be able to find ways to score. We need to let that go because all the opportunities we had are still out there in front of us."

Specifically, the Aggies still control their fate in the Big 12 South division race.

With wins over OU and the University of Texas, A&M would guarantee itself a spot in the Big 12 championship game.

At the same time, the Sooners also control their destiny after having knocked off UT on Oct. 6.

When OU and A&M met last season, the roles were similar. OU came into the game as one of the top teams in the nation while the Aggies were 7-2 and hovering near the bottom spot in the AP Top 25 rankings. The Sooners overcame a 10 point fourth quarter deficit to keep their undefeated streak alive while the Aggies

See REBOUND on page 8.

Young A&M squad travels to Austin to take on Longhorns

By MARK MERRELL
THE BATTALION

Growing up fast is never easy. Just ask the Texas A&M women's swimming and diving team. The young Aggies head into the fire on Friday as they visit the University of Texas to face a Longhorn squad that finished No. 3 last season.

"We're not preparing any different," said A&M Coach Steve Bultman. "They were third at NCAA's last year so it's going to be tough ... We have our work cut-out for us."

The Aggies entered the 2001 season with 15 new swimmers, 13 of whom are freshmen. "The first meet was kind of a learning experience," Bultman said. "But we've definitely got some good stuff done lately and we're

quite a bit better when we swam TCU."

The Aggies enter the dual meet with Texas with a record of 1-1. After a disappointing fourth place finish at the Big 12 relays, the women bounced back with an impressive 169-109 victory over the Horned Frogs.

Last season the Aggies finished one spot behind the Longhorns in the Big 12 standings and Bultman said they have to compete against the best.

"If we're going to do something on the national level eventually, we have to step up and face whatever the competition is," he said.

As tough as the meet will be, the weekend does not begin on Friday for the Aggies. After their trip to Austin, the women return home for their first dual meet of the year against the University of North Texas on Saturday. Last season the Aggies defeated

North Texas, 103-37.

"The girls are really excited about the meet," Bultman said. "We'll swim some events that we haven't gotten a chance to swim so far this year so I think they're looking forward to that. Plus, it's our first and only home meet of the fall."

The action on Saturday kicks off at 1 p.m. at the Student Recreation Center and Natatorium.

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