

# Aggies finish season against OSU

## Women's basketball team hopes to avoid losing season with win over Cowgirls

By Kevin Espenlaub  
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M women's basketball team will look to avoid a losing record for the season when the Oklahoma State Cowgirls come to Reed Arena on Wednesday at 7 p.m. for the final game of the regular season.

The Aggies (13-14, 5-10 in Big 12) fell under .500 for the first time this season on Saturday after a lopsided defeat by the No. 14 University of Texas Longhorns, 91-63.

The offensive output of the Longhorns was the most points they have scored in a game this season.

"I don't think our defense showed up," said A&M head coach Peggie Gillom. "That's not to take anything away from them. They were playing hard from start to finish in that game."

The season already has been a record-setter for the Aggies, and a victory against Oklahoma State (14-14, 6-9) would give the Aggies their first non-losing season since 1996 when they finished with 20 wins.

The 13 wins this season already have exceeded their win total in any of the past five seasons, and the five conference victories are the most in a season for the Aggies since joining the Big 12 in 1997.

In the last matchup with Oklahoma State, the Aggies accomplished their first back-to-back conference wins in the Big 12.

The road victory against the Cowgirls followed a streak of seven consecutive

games against nationally ranked teams for the Aggies.

Junior forward Meg Banahan, the Aggies leading scorer at 11.9 points per game, scored 23 points against OSU, but the spark came from sophomore guard Toccara Williams.

Williams led the Aggies with a near triple-double performance recording 10 points, 10 rebounds and nine steals. Williams is currently leading the Big 12 in steals and assists and is ranked fourth and 11th, respectively, in the nation.

"In that game, the girls played really hard," Gillom said. "We stuck to the gameplan and were able to upset the things that they were used to doing. It gave the girls a lot of confidence, because they knew that they could win on the road."

The matchup will set up the Aggies' seed for the Big 12 Tournament that begins on March 5 in Kansas City, Mo. Their seed could range anywhere between number eight and 11 depending on the results of the other Big 12 games Wednesday night.

The Aggies will look for their first sweep of the Cowgirls, a team that owns a 15-5 all-time advantage over A&M, since the 1997 season.

Wednesday will also be "Senior Night" at Reed Arena as the team honors the final home game for seniors LaToya Rose and Celeria Washington.

Each has played for the Aggie team for four years and will likely finish their college careers at the conference tournament next week barring an advancement into a post-season tournament.



JOHN LIVAS • THE BATTALION

A&M sophomore guard Toccara Williams and the Texas A&M women's basketball team will host the Oklahoma State Cowgirls on Wednesday at 7 p.m. at Reed Arena.

# Longhorns outlast Texas Tech

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas has been through the Big 12 tournament enough to know what is at stake late in the regular season: a first-round bye that no tournament champion has done without.

Brandon Mouton scored 25 points as the Longhorns coasted past Texas Tech 96-71 Tuesday night to pull into a four-way tie for third place in the league standings with Tech, Oklahoma State and Missouri.

The top four teams in the league will earn a first-round bye in the conference tournament. No team has won the tournament without one.

With just one game left in the regular season, Texas owns the tie-breaker over Tech with two wins over the Red Raiders this season. The Longhorns grabbed a 74-71 overtime victory in Lubbock back on Jan. 14.

The Longhorns have won 11 in a row over their in-state rivals and avoided a three-game losing streak, what would have been their longest of the season, with the win.

"There's definitely a sense

of urgency," Mouton said. "We have to play every game like it's our last, a championship game."

Texas (18-10, 9-6 Big 12) looked primed for the league

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— Brandon Mouton  
Texas guard

tournament with 10-of-16 shooting from 3-point range and a dominating 39-18 rebounding advantage. The 25-point win was Texas' largest in league play this season.

Andy Ellis led Tech (20-7, 9-6) with 17 points. The Red Raiders shot 53 percent for the game but couldn't compensate for the Longhorns ability to

grab seemingly every ball off the rim.

"They just absolutely buried us on the boards," said Tech coach Bob Knight. "The difference was just so monumental."

It was also a complete turnaround from Texas' last game at home, an 85-80 loss to Oklahoma State last week in which the Longhorns were out-rebounded by 20.

"We knew we had to get to the glass," said Texas center James Thomas, who scored 18 points and grabbed a game-high eight boards. "Our main objective was just to go down and get physical."

Texas was just as effective shooting the ball, hitting 57 percent from the floor as Syd Mill Harris chipped in 14 points and Royal Ivey added 12.

Mouton hit 5-of-6 3-pointers. Texas point guard T.J. Ford, who leads the nation in assists, dished out 10 more assists and grabbed the game-high eight boards.

Texas never trailed and led 45-32 on Thomas' tip-in at the buzzer to end the first half. The Longhorns held a 26-7 rebounding edge by halftime and never let up.

The Longhorns opened the second with a 13-6 run with a 3-pointer by Mouton and took its first 20-point lead at 63-43 on Harris' 3 with 12:41 to play.

While his players are focusing on earning the bye in the league tournament, Texas coach Rick Barnes said he has not even discussed it with them.

"I guess it's important. I just told them it makes a difference in being 10-6 instead of 8-8," Barnes said.

"It just looks a lot better."



GUY ROGERS • THE BATTALION

A&M men's basketball coach Melvin Watkins sits on the bench frustrated during the Aggies' 92-77 loss to Colorado on Tuesday night.

### Toll

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from beyond the 3-point line. The Aggies had no answer for the Colorado sharpshooters.

"We were not communicating," King said. "Coach told us before we played them that they had good shooters. We had mental lapses and would back off of them and they would hit the three."

While mental lapses are common at the beginning of the season, a team in its sec-

ond to last game of the season should not be worrying about such things.

"It just didn't register," Watkins said. "The energy level wasn't high enough to play tonight. I don't want to say the guys have given in, but losing has obviously taken a toll on our mental approach to game and it's just difficult."

"The losing has worn on them. So then, fatigue and all those other things tend to be more present than they should be."

### Handle

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After stretching the lead to 73-65, Colorado's Michel Morandais made one of two free throws, but instead of the Aggies capitalizing on the miss, the Buffaloes got the rebound and Wilson knocked down a 3-pointer to make it a 77-65 lead with 4:15 left, effectively ending the Aggies' chances.

"The big part was the free throws," King said. "When they kept getting the rebound off a

miss, it seemed like they would hit a three or get back to the free-throw line. Everytime we tried to get over hump, they just hit big shots."

Free throws were the big difference down the stretch as Colorado hit 22-of-29 in the second half, while the Aggies managed only 7-of-11 from the line.

The Aggies close out league play this Saturday as they travel to Stillwater, Okla., to take on the Oklahoma State Cowboys.

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