

# SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 5 • Monday, January 13, 2003

## Aggies falter against OSU in Big 12 opener

By Dallas Shipp  
THE BATTALION

It was a tale of two halves for the Texas A&M men's basketball team Saturday night which fell to Oklahoma State 93-76 in front of 7,822 fans, the largest crowd of the year at Reed Arena and the seventh largest crowd in Reed Arena history.

The Aggies came into the game against Oklahoma State looking for their first ever win in a Big 12 Conference opener and hoping to improve their season mark to 9-3, an accomplishment that hasn't been reached by an Aggie basketball squad since the 1986-87 season.

Things looked promising for the first 16 minutes of play as the Aggies shot nearly 70 percent from the field. That statistic would come crashing down with 3:38 remaining in the first half.

After taking a 39-30 lead over the Cowboys, the Aggies missed their final three shots of the first half as OSU went on a 10-2 run to cut the Aggies' lead down to 41-40 at halftime. A&M did not bounce back after the half.

"(The 10-2 run) was a momentum switch," said A&M freshman forward Antoine Wright. "But I still think we went into halftime feeling confident. We just didn't come out and execute in the second half."

A&M head coach Melvin Watkins blamed the lack of defensive effort for the Aggies' demise as the first half came to an end.

"We stopped playing good defense at the end of the first half, and that carried over into the second half," Watkins said. "That can't happen, but it did."

Oklahoma State's run in the final minutes of the first half was due in large part to the Cowboys' junior guard Tony Allen, who scored six of the Cowboys' 10 points in the final 3:16 of the first half.

### MEN'S BASKETBALL

<b>A&amp;M</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>OSU</b>	<b>93</b>

Allen posted a game high of 29 points against the Aggies. This was a new career high for the junior transfer who played for Wabash Valley Community College in Illinois last season.

Allen was 10-of-17 (59 percent) from the field, including 4-5 from behind the three-point line.

OSU head coach Eddie Sutton said that

the coaches expected Allen to contribute to the team's offensive success but never imagined that Allen would adjust so quickly to Division I basketball.

"He is a better player than we ever expected him to be," Sutton said. "He can shoot, he can penetrate, he can get offensive rebounds and he has a good mid-range shot. He's a really good basketball player."

Following the Cowboys' win over the Aggies, Sutton complimented the recent success of the Aggies' basketball program and said that they were much improved over last year's squad.

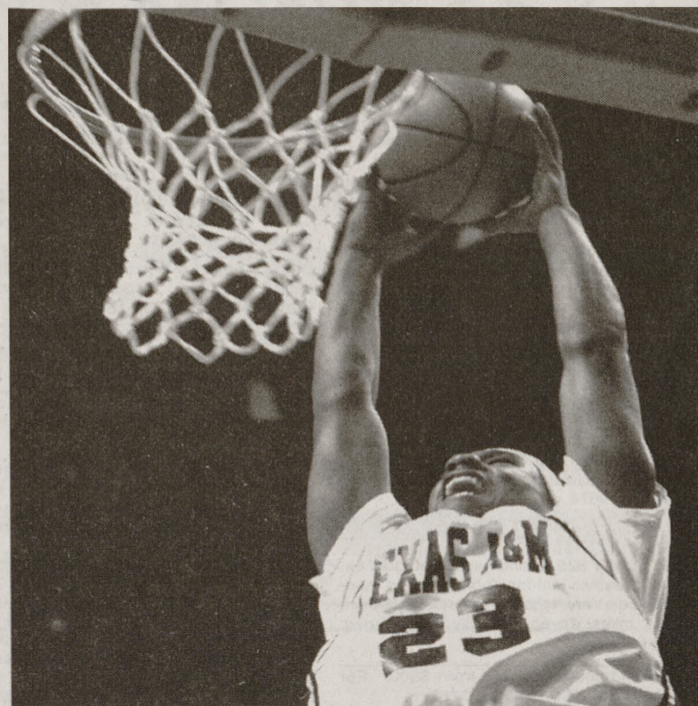
"We beat a good ball club," Sutton said. "This is the best team A&M has had since the Big 12 started."

Despite their home loss against the Cowboys, the Aggies aren't throwing in the towel, something that Watkins said some teams in the past have been prone to do.

"It was different in the locker room after the game than it has ever been," Watkins said. "I felt like they understood what I was saying after the game."

"This team isn't going to quit. There is a lot of basketball to be played and we're going to be in the mix. We will bounce back and get that next one on the road (Wednesday at Nebraska)."

The Aggies' next home game is Saturday, Jan. 25, at 3 p.m.



ALISSA HOLLIMON • THE BATTALION

Texas A&M guard Marcus Watkins dunks the ball on a fast break against the Cowboys. The Aggies lost the game Saturday night.

### SPORTS IN BRIEF

#### Women's basketball topples OSU, 69-54

The Texas A&M women's basketball team gained its first conference win on Saturday, defeating Oklahoma State 69-54 at Gallagher-Iba Arena.

Junior guard Toccarra Williams, on her 21st birthday, led the Aggies in scoring with 18 points. Williams, who leads the nation in steals, also contributed six take-aways in the game.

The Aggies took a 36-20 lead into the intermission and maintained control in the second half

with strong defense and aggressive rebounding. The Cowgirls were down 22 points late in the contest before gaining ground in the game's closing minutes.

Trisha Skibbe stood out for OSU in the losing effort, putting up season-bests with 31 points and 14 rebounds.

The Aggies' victory put an end to the team's struggles on the road, where it had dropped three straight entering Saturday's game.

On Wednesday, the Aggies return to Reed Arena, hosting the University of Texas.

The game is scheduled to tipoff at 7 p.m.

## Quarterback recruit withdraws pledge

By Troy Miller  
THE BATTALION

Former Texas A&M head football coach R.C. Slocum left new head coach Dennis Franchione one parting gift: a 2003 recruiting class highly regarded as one of the top five in the nation.

Of Slocum's 15 verbal commitments, only Baytown Lee quarterback Drew Tate has decided to go elsewhere. Tate called new Aggie offensive coordinator Les Koenning Jr. to tell him of the decision. Verbal commitments are non-binding.

"The offense they're going to be running is going to fit Reggie (McNeal) more than me," Tate told the Baytown Sun. "When they had Kevin (Sumlin) in there, they were going to throw it more, and I would have a chance to get in there, show what I can do and compete."

In his 2002 campaign for the Ganders, Tate threw 306 completions for 3,621 yards on 471 attempts. He also passed for 35 touchdowns.

During his four-year career, Tate has broken the Texas high school record in completions (970), attempts (1,576), passing yards (12,183) and passing touchdowns (113).

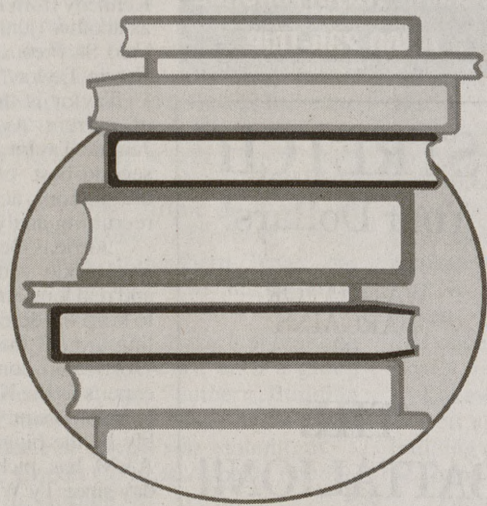
"Hands down (McNeal) is a ten times better runner than I am," Tate told Houston television station KRIV. "It hurts me to watch a game from the sidelines, and I know I would probably do that at A&M for awhile. To me, I just want to go someplace I know I am going to play and do what I do best - sit in the shotgun and throw the ball."

In reality, Tate would be behind McNeal, Dustin Long, and Jason Carter at the beginning of summer workouts.

The 6'0", 160 pound quarterback is said to be considering the University of Houston,

See **Tate** on page 6

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