

SPORTS

THE BATTALION

Page 7 • Tuesday, January 28, 2003

Aggies travel to Norman to face No. 7 OU

By Michael Crow
THE BATTALION

When the Texas A&M men's basketball team visits Norman, Okla. on Tuesday, a national audience will be watching. The game, set to air on ESPN 2, will pit the Aggies (10-5, 2-2 Big 12) against the No. 7 ranked Oklahoma Sooners (13-3, 4-1 Big 12), with A&M seeking its first-ever victory at the Lloyd Noble Center. Currently, the Sooners boast a 7-0 home record against the Aggies.

Still, A&M coaches and players have repeatedly put forth reminders that this is not last year's team. The most recent reminder came in the form of a 79-66 defeat of the Kansas State Wildcats. Freshman guard Antoine Wright hit four of six shots from three-point range in the outing, leading all A&M scorers with 24 points in the victory.

Senior guard Bernard King added

18 points and 11 assists of his own, now needing only 10 points versus Oklahoma to break A&M's all-time scoring record.

Wright and King have given the Aggies a prolific scoring tandem, creating opportunities for one another to contribute.

Bernard King RECORD WATCH:	
Points needed:	
A&M	10
Big XII	62



"If they try to shut me down, I just give it to Antoine and let him score," King said. "When they try to shut him down, he gives it right back to me."

While A&M Head Coach Melvin Watkins has to be pleased with his team's hot start this season, he is also

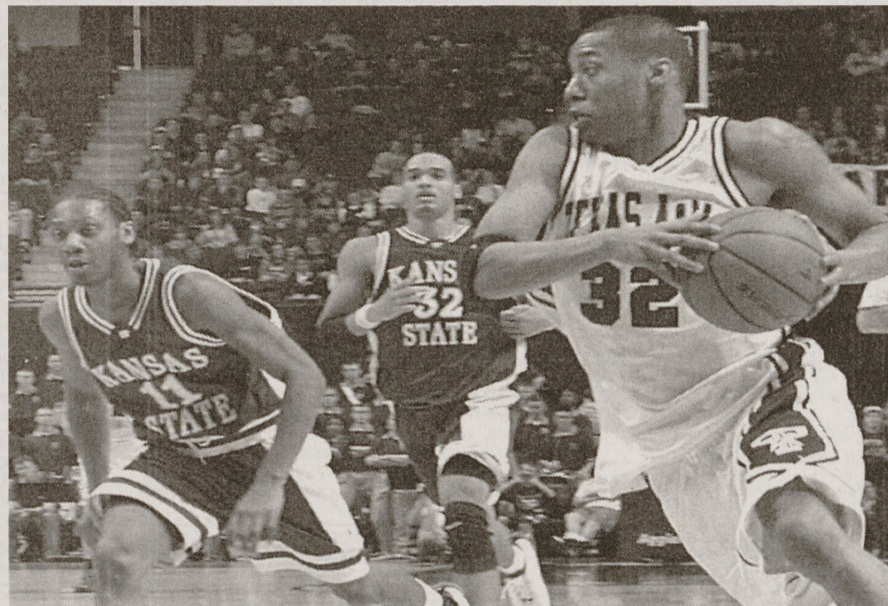
fully aware of the challenge that lies ahead in Oklahoma.

"We are coming off a big win in which our whole team played well," Watkins said. "We hope that gives us some momentum heading into Oklahoma, which is one of the toughest places to play in the Big 12."

The Baylor Bears recently discovered that a victory against the Sooners is tough to come by, regardless of the setting. In their most recent outing, Oklahoma visited Baylor and came away with a 67-54 victory.

The Sooners were led in the game by 6-foot-8-inch freshman Kevin Bookout's 18 points, 14 of which came in the first half. The Bears were simply unable to counter Bookout's play inside the paint, frequently allowing the forward open looks under the basket.

"(Kevin's) got his confidence going," said senior OU guard Hollis Price. "We



JP BEATO III • THE BATTALION

A&M senior guard Bernard King breaks away from Kansas State's junior guard Tim Ellis (11) and senior forward Gibson DeJesus (32) on Saturday at Reed Arena.

See **Oklahoma** on page 9

High school star cleared in investigation into new vehicle

By Tom Withers
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LeBron James did not violate state amateur bylaws by accepting a sports utility vehicle as a gift, officials said Monday.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association concluded its two-week investigation by clearing James, the nation's top prep player, of any wrongdoing.

OHSAA commissioner Clair Muscaro spent the past two weeks gathering information and documentation to determine how James got a Hummer H2 vehicle, which has a base retail price of \$50,000.

Muscaro said no violations of the OHSAA amateur bylaws "as currently written" have been found and that James is still eligible to play.

Gloria James said she obtained a bank loan to buy the SUV for her son's 18th birthday and provided financial information to the OHSAA for its inquiry.

"In working with the attorney for the James family and the OHSAA attorney, I was shown official business

records from the bank and the dealership which established that the financing and acquisition of the vehicle were procured by the student-athlete's mother alone," Muscaro said in a statement.

If the OHSAA had stripped James of his amateur status, he would have been ineligible to play for the rest of the season, and St. Vincent-St. Mary, the nation's No. 1 team, would have forfeited its games from the time James accepted the SUV.

He also said the OHSAA will review its bylaws on amateurism and could make changes if recommended to

do so by its member schools.

James has had the SUV for several weeks. On Friday night, he parked the platinum-colored Hummer just outside the school's gym doors, giving fans arriving to watch him in his final home game on campus a chance to see the vehicle.

Gloria James would not comment on the inquiry Sunday following her son's game as the Fighting Irish beat Akron Buchtel 82-71.

LeBron James, who had 25 points, 15 rebounds and eight assists, was not available to reporters.

James and his teammates appeared flat from the outset in Sunday's game — their only regular-season matchup against an Akron-area school.

Coach Dru Joyce said the Hummer investigation may have been a reason for the sluggishness.

"It's not a major distraction," he said. "But let's face it, when something like this is going on, no matter how much you try to keep it from affecting us, it's still there. LeBron is newsworthy. If he breathes too hard it's going to be in the newspaper."

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