

# SPORTS

THE BATTALION

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## Self enjoying first season at Kansas

By Stephen Hawkins  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FORT WORTH, Texas — Kansas coach Bill Self is still learning a lot about his new team, which has made a quick rise to the No. 1 spot.



SELF

While Self doesn't think the top ranking means too much right now, he likes what he's seen — even if things aren't perfect.

"I know that we don't play as smart as we should all of the time, but it was a good win," Self said after the Jayhawks beat TCU 85-66 Monday night in their first game as No. 1. "We've got to be a much smarter team, but I do like our team a lot."

With the post players virtually forgotten against a heavy pressure defense in its first road game, Kansas (3-0) got big performances from a pair of young guards and an impressive homecoming by Keith Langford.

Forward Wayne Simien and center David Padgett were held to just one basket each, and Simien had just six points coming off a career-best 28 against Michigan State. The guards made up for that.

"Coming on the road, and your two starting big guys combine for two baskets ... it gives us confidence knowing guys can score from the perimeter," Self said.

Sophomore Jeff Hawkins had 19 points on 7-of-9 shooting, including five 3-pointers. Freshman J.R. Giddens, starting in place of injured guard Michael Lee (broken collarbone), had 12 points on 5-of-7 shooting.

"He made a lot of great plays and there's no substitute for good shooting," Self said about Hawkins. "And J.R. in his first college start, he's one of the unsung heroes. That's something we can build on."

Not to mention the 24-point showing on 9-of-10 shooting in 24 minutes by Langford, playing in his hometown against the TCU coach who helped recruit him. He missed most of the first half after two early fouls.

## Blair, Aags open home slate

By Rob Phillips  
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M women's basketball team has set a lofty goal for its final month of non-conference action — perfection.

The new goal seems attainable to the Aggies (2-2), who start a seven-game stretch at Reed Arena Wednesday against the University of Arkansas-Little Rock.

"We want to go into conference 9-2," said senior A&M guard Toccara Williams, who leads the Aggies in points, assists, steals and minutes played. "That would have our confidence up extremely high."

The Aggies hope to shed the inconsistent play that hampered them last week at the "Junkanoo Jam" in the Bahamas, where they trailed by as many as 32 in an 88-72 loss to No. 9 Minnesota and had to rally from a 20-point halftime deficit to slip past Seton Hall, 54-52.

Junior A&M guard Charlette Castile said the Aggies can't afford to piece just one solid half together against the Trojans.

"We've talked about coming out hard the first half instead of waiting until the second half and trying to come back from a deficit of 20 like we did last game," Castile said.

A 9-2 start would be a landmark achievement for an A&M program searching for its first winning season in seven years, but its first test during this home stretch won't be a pushover.

The Trojans (2-1) have started strong this season with a new coach and cast of players. Little Rock coach Joe Foley is loaded with a bevy of freshmen and sophomores who average a combined 46.7 points per game. Freshman point guard Heather Morris leads the team with 17.3.

"Texas A&M is a very athletic team and has an explosive guard in Toccara Williams," Foley said. "They will be a good test for us coming from the Big 12, which is one of the best conferences in the nation."

First-year A&M coach David Blair, who spent the past 10 years coaching the University of Arkansas, said he is familiar with Arkansas-Little Rock's roster from his days coaching in the state.

"The majority of the kids on his team I



JP BEATO III • THE BATTALION

Texas A&M women's basketball coach Gary Blair talks to A&M guard Toccara Williams during an exhibition game in November. A&M opens its home schedule tonight at 7 p.m. against Arkansas-Little Rock.

saw play more than the kids on my team," Blair said.

A&M will look to muscle the Trojans inside with its superior size, an advantage it's lacked this season. Opponents have out-rebounded the Aggies by nearly seven boards per game this season.

"I think this is one of the few teams we'll be able to rebound with if we don't let ourselves get boxed out like we've been getting boxed out," Blair said. "Hopefully we can

get the ball inside and do a little bit better job of scoring in there."

The Aggies will also provide some full-court pressure against the Trojans, which is a customary trait of Blair-coached teams.

"A key to the game will definitely be pressuring the ball," Williams said. "When we've turned up the pressure, that's when we create turnovers."

Tip-off is scheduled for 7 p.m. Wednesday at Reed Arena.

### SPORTS IN BRIEF

#### Men's basketball loses season opener

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Scooter McFadgon scored 23 points and Brandon Crump added 18 Tuesday night to lead Tennessee to a 108-84 win over Texas A&M.

The Volunteers (3-0) never trailed in the second half in a rematch of last year's meeting the Aggies (3-1) won 83-66 using 3-pointers to stymie a late Tennessee run.

Texas A&M, playing its first road game of the season, was led by Acie Law's 19 points. LaKeith Blanks had 12 and Kevin Turner added 10.

Crump scored three baskets during a 13-2 run at the beginning of the second half that Tennessee used to take a 58-46 lead and control of the game.

The Aggies got as close as seven again, the last with 12:22 left, before Tennessee started an 11-1 run.

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