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## Aggies' season comes to a close in second round of NIT

Career-high from Alex Robinson not enough to fend off Bulldogs

By Carter Karels

It was another career-high scoring performance for Aggie freshman Alex Robinson, but this time, it wasn't enough to hold off the high-flying Louisiana Tech Bulldogs, who knocked off Texas A&M 84-72 in the second round of the NIT.

Robinson ran the show in the first 20 minutes with seven points, four rebounds and four assists. This included a 3-pointer to beat the buzzer at the half from NBA range. After a career-high 15 points in the first round win over Montana, Robinson tallied 21 Monday.

Defense was lacking on the Aggies side, which began to fold in the second half, when the Bulldogs shot 17-for-27 from the field, including 7-for-11 from outside the arc. Junior Alex Hamilton led them with 25 points as the Bulldogs scored more points than any other A&M opponent all season.

With 7:42 left, the Aggies found themselves within six. Bulldog freshman Jacobi Boykins made sure there wasn't a comeback, knocking down consecutive 3-pointers at 7:26 and 6:13. A Hamilton dunk on the next possession capped the 8-0 run, putting Louisiana Tech on top of A&M 68-54. From that point on, the Aggies never got inside single digits.

A&M (21-12) kept it close at the beginning, and the Robinson buzzer beater sent the Aggies into halftime with a one-point deficit at 35-34. Head coach Billy Kennedy



Cody Franklin — THE BATTALION

Freshman Alex Robinson gets back on defense in career-high night.

elect not to start Robinson to open the second half, and in turn, Louisiana Tech took advantage.

To start the second half, the Bulldogs (27-8) temporarily created cushion when Kenneth "Speedy" Smith hit consecutive 3-pointers in the opening minutes. Smith finished 4-for-4 from 3-point land, and ended behind Hamilton in scoring with 16. "Louisiana Tech was really good, and I was really impressed with their guard play," A&M head coach Billy Kennedy said. "Speedy Smith was probably, besides Kentucky, for his team maybe the best point guard we've played against this year, [especially] when he's making threes like that and taking control of the game."

But the Aggies older leaders were reluctant to let another one slip away. Jordan Green and Jalen Jones quickly responded with consecutive 3-point plays. Kourtney

Roberson and Green, who scored 10 and 14, respectively, saw their last games in a Texas A&M jersey.

"Jordan Green and Kourtney, I think they maxed out on their abilities, and they gave us what they could give us," Kennedy said. "We've got to be able to build off this, and there are a lot of good things coming. I really like the guys we have coming back."

The Aggies will look to future seniors Danuel House, Alex Caruso and Jalen Jones to fill the void of the two lost starters, along with a top five recruiting class.

"We are in great position," Kennedy said. "Like I said, we are a tournament team, and I will go on record and say now that we will be a tournament team next year. We really look forward to next year. Our schedule is beefed up to play a top 10, top 15 type schedule, and we embrace that."

### UTSA CONTINUED

Always a dangerous hitter, Nick Banks comes in batting .418 with 17 RBI to his name. The lineup also features power, with four Aggie hitters having more than three home runs this season, led by Logan Taylor with five.

On the mound, freshman Brigham Hill

will most likely start for the Aggies. Hill is 1-0 this year with a 1.98 ERA and 19 strikeouts in three starts. The Aggie bullpen has also been one of the best in baseball. Kyle Simonds has allowed only one run with 18 strikeouts in eight appearances this season. Ryan Hendrix has been the closer for the Aggies this season, capturing five saves and tallying 10 strikeouts.

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