

Sports

Both A-State basketball teams look to regain form

Men's basketball hits the road, women's basketball returns home

KRISHNAN COLLINS

SPORTS EDITOR

The Arkansas State men's basketball team continues its road trip Thursday and Saturday as the Red Wolves look to bounce back after a 90-87 loss to Little Rock.

The Red Wolves (15-10 overall, 7-7 SBC) currently ride a three game losing streak. A-State heads to UT-Arlington on Thursday before taking on Texas State on Saturday.

A-State sits tied for sixth in the Sun Belt Conference as both the Red Wolves and South Alabama boast a 7-7 record in the league.

A-State's in-state rival Little Rock holds a comfortable first place lead in the SBC with a 12-2 conference record while Georgia State and Georgia Southern trail the Trojans with 9-5 records each. Texas State and Appalachian State sit just above A-State and South Alabama with 8-6 records each.

Earlier in the season the Red Wolves hosted UTA (10-15 overall, 6-8 SBC) but fell by 21 points, 73-52, to the Mavericks. Melo Eggleston was the only A-State player to score in double digits in the game as the redshirt sophomore registered 10 points.

The Red Wolves really struggled from the field in the first matchup with the Mavericks making 16-of-56 attempts for a shooting percentage of 28.6%. It did not help that UTA shot an impressive 52.5% from the field.

However, Thursday the Red Wolves should not expect the Mavericks to be that lethal from the field. UTA holds a 41.6% shooting average on the year and the game against A-State could

most definitely have been an outlier.

That being said, UTA is the best free throw shooting team in the league in terms of free throw percentage. The Mavericks boast a 76.5% tally from the line. Winning on the road is hard in the SBC, but A-State really needs to get back to winning ways at UTA. It will not be easy, but a good all-around performance from the Red Wolves could secure a win. Tip off from Arlington, Texas is set for 7 p.m.

Saturday the Red Wolves head to Texas State to take on a Bobcat team that defeated the Red Wolves in Jonesboro 70-67 earlier in the year. Although four A-State players scored in double digits in the game, A-State's late comeback was not enough to derail the Bobcats' Nijal Pearson.

Pearson is not only the Bobcats' leading scorer, but Pearson leads the SBC in points per game and overall points. The senior guard has scored 467 points this season and averages 19.5 points per game. Appalachian State's Justin Forrest trails Pearson as Forrest averages 18.4 points per game.

Unlike Texas State, the Red Wolves do not rely on one scorer to carry the team. Any A-State player can lead the Red Wolves in scoring on any night.

Marquis Eaton leads the team by scoring 12 points per game, but Caleb Fields is right behind him with an average of 11.4. Canberk Kus, Eggleston, J.J. Matthews and Jerry Johnson Jr. are all capable of chipping in their fair amount of points as well.

All members of the Red Wolves' roster will need a big performance against the Bobcats.

Texas State ranks first in the league in scoring



Photo by: Krishnan Collins | Sports Editor

Marquis Eaton takes a shot against Appalachian State's Justin Forrest. A-State hits the road to UTA and Texas State.

defense and scoring margin. The Bobcats only allow 63.4 points per game and Texas State will look to play lockdown defense at home.

If A-State could steal a game in San Marcos, it would be a big momentum booster before the Red Wolves return home for their final two home games of the season.

Tip off against Texas State is set for 2 p.m.

The Arkansas State women's basketball team returns to Jonesboro for a two-game homestand after away losses to Georgia State and Georgia Southern.

The Red Wolves (9-13 overall, 6-5 SBC) host UT-Arlington and Texas State with the race in the middle of the Sun Belt Conference still wide open. While Troy and Coastal Carolina have separated themselves at the

top of the league with Little Rock just behind, UTA, South Alabama, Louisiana and A-State are all in touching distance of each other.

UTA and South Alabama both boast 7-4 league records while Louisiana is even with the Red Wolves at a 6-5 tally in the SBC.

Returning home should give the Red Wolves a boost as Matt Daniel's team is 6-1 in the First National Bank Arena and 3-11 on the road. A-State proved just how hard it is to win on the road in the SBC as the Red Wolves lost 67-56 and 80-67 to Georgia State and Georgia Southern respectively, two teams who are still below A-State in the league.

Looking ahead to Thursday, the Red Wolves host a UTA team who handily

beat A-State 71-44 in Texas earlier in the season. Jada Ford and Peyton Martin both scored in double digits in the early season matchup, but the rest of the squad struggled.

The Mavericks boast the second best scoring defense in the league only allowing their opponent to average 60.8 points per game. This means trouble for the Red Wolves who already do not have the most potent offense.

A-State is a league eighth in scoring offense only registering 62 points per game.

The Mavericks also have the league's best scorer in Marie Benson who averages 17.2 points per game.

UTA is a tough opponent, but the Red Wolves are undefeated at home in the SBC, tip off is set for 7 p.m.

Looking ahead to

Saturday, A-State welcomes a 1-10 in the SBC Texas State team. The Red Wolves took down the Bobcats in San Marcos 56-53 earlier in the year behind a 16 point performance from Jireh Washington.

Looking at statistics, the Bobcats do not really stand out as being exceptional or extremely poor in any one category, especially for a 1-10 in the league team.

The Bobcats are actually one of the most unselfish teams in the SBC, Texas State averages 13.8 assists per game and sophomore guard Taylor Kennedy leads the league in assists with 120.

The Red Wolves are a force at home and A-State should be able to secure a win against the Bobcats. Tip off is set for 4 p.m.

Rugby drops season opener and gears up for No. 1 team in the country

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The No. 7 Arkansas State rugby team held a chance to take down the opponent who knocked the Red Wolves out of last year's postseason tournament, but A-State fell short Saturday morning.

The Red Wolves lost to the No. 3 Lindenwood Lions 38-20 in A-State's opening match of the 2020 season.

Despite a tough loss in the opening match of the season, there were positives to take for such a young A-State team.

"In glimpses we showed some really good rugby," A-State head coach Blake White said. "There's flashes of what we've been working

on and we've got a very young and new team. We're still learning what we're trying to do and having the ability to do that under pressure is what changes the game. We showed that we can do it, now it's just how consistently we can do it."

For a full recap of A-State's loss to Lindenwood, head to The Herald's website.

A-State hosts No. 1 Life Saturday in yet another tough matchup for the Red Wolves. Some sloppy passes and small mistakes need to be cleaned up by the Red Wolves.

"That chemistry (is what we want to work on)," A-State forward Dale Hartmann said. "You know we want to start doing more team bonding. We do team

bonding things, but we need to spend more time together. This is a brotherhood. People don't understand how tough it is out there. The stronger the brotherhood, the stronger the chemistry, and the better we're going to play on Saturday."

Although Life poses a big challenge, A-State forward Asa Carter said not to treat the game as a special occasion.

"Treat them like any other opponent," Carter said. "They're just as good as us, we're just as good as them. Rankings don't really mean anything. It's just some old guys that don't play rugby anymore calling the shots. We're going to treat them like any other opponent and play our hearts out."



Photo by: Krishnan Collins | Sports Editor

Dante Bandoni carries the ball forward against Lindenwood in A-State's 38-20 loss to the Lions. The Red Wolves host the No. 1 team in the country Life on Saturday.