A-STATE MIDSEASON

"The way we are playing is exactly how we need to be playing. We are hungry. A lot of players are confident in what we have been doing. We are confident in Coach Jones and this blueprint he has laid out for us," Quarterback James Blackman said.

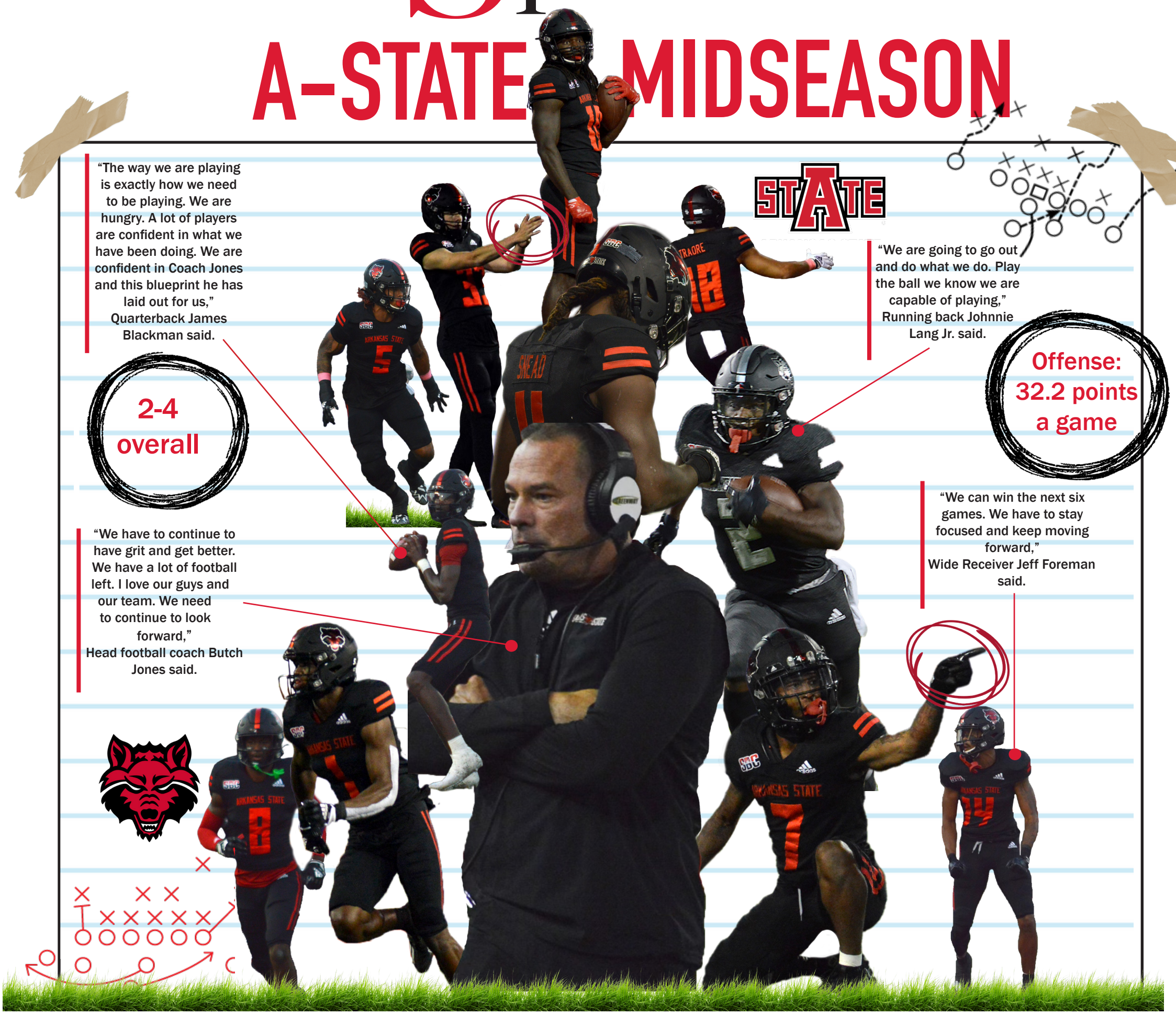
2-4 overall

"We have to continue to have grit and get better. We have a lot of football left. I love our guys and our team. We need to continue to look forward," Head football coach Butch Jones said.

"We are going to go out and do what we do. Play the ball we know we are capable of playing," Running back Johnnie Lang Jr. said.

Offense: 32.2 points a game

"We can win the next six games. We have to stay focused and keep moving forward," Wide Receiver Jeff Foreman said.



ALL PHOTOS BY JESSICA McMILLAN | CUTOUTS BY SYDNEY GREEN

Todd Centeio, James Madison remain undefeated, beating A-State on the road

BRAYDEN MORSE

SPORTS EDITOR

James Madison won 42-20 in a week six matchup against Arkansas State. JMU quarterback Todd Centeio finished 28-37, 394 yards and a dazzling four touchdown passes as the passing leader for the team. James Madison running back Percy Agyei-Obese had a career-best 21 carries, 158 yards and two rushing touchdowns as the rushing leader for the team. JMU wide receiver Kris Thornton had nine receptions and 173 yards as the receiving leader for the team. A career-high in receiving yards for Thornton.

James Blackman was sacked six times in the loss. He went 16-26 with 247 passing yards and two passing touchdowns as the passing leader for the team. The offensive line could not maintain James Madison's defensive front all game long, as they only helped for 20 rushing yards on 27 carries, averaging 0.7 yards per carry.

A-State running back Johnnie Lang was non-existent in the running game, having one carry for one yard. He only contributed on special teams with three kick returns and one punt return for a total of 107 yards.

"Johnnie Lang Jr. was limited in the game against James Madison, due to injury. We did not want to overload him. It hurts a team when you take out a great playmaker like him," Head Coach Butch Jones said.

The Red Wolf defense could not stop the JMU offense, allowing 33 first downs and 598 total yards. 394 out of the 598 were passing yards. 204 out of the 598 were rushing yards. The defense could not get to the quarterback, as they had zero sacks.

The Arkansas State offense continued their third down struggles, going 4-13 in the game. They only had 267 total yards. The offense also accounted for one turnover early in the fourth quarter.

"We have to put the ball in the end-zone, especially in games like this. We have to do a better job of picking up the blitz. Taking what the defense gives us. Finding holes in the zone and executing at a high level," James Blackman said.

"People look towards the end of the game without realizing what happened in the first half. The first half is also very important. You can not have several three and outs in the first half. It puts too much pressure on the defense to hold the opponent's offense from scoring. Our offensive line also has to step up, but it is not just the offensive line's fault. James Blackman held the ball in the pocket too long," Butch Jones said.

Dominic Zvada stayed perfect on field goals and extra points, as he went 2-2 on both for eight points. Zvada seems to be the highlight of this Arkansas State football team thus far.

ASU Safety Eddie Smith had a major pass breakup on third down on James Madison's first drive of the game. JMU kicker Camden Wise missed a field goal late in the first quarter. 0-0 after the first quarter. A-State tight-end Seydou Traore made a great catch on 3rd and 14 late in the first quarter for 47 yards.

James Blackman was sacked on third down with 13 minutes left in the second quarter resulting in #33 Dominic Zvada attempting a field goal. Roughing the kicker penalty on Zvada's kick attempt, resulting in an automatic first down for A-State. Blackman rushed hard on third down and five resulting in a Zvada kicking attempt. Kick was good from 25 yards with 11:09 left in the second quarter. James Madison wide receiver Terrance Green Jr. with a 41-yard reception on third down early in the second quarter. Todd Centeio threw a touchdown pass to Solomon Vanhorse for 13 yards with 7:40 left in the second quarter. Todd Centeio threw a touchdown pass to Devin Ravenel for 10 yards with 26 seconds left in the second quarter. James Madison led 14-3 at halftime.

James Madison had an outstanding 17 first downs and 255 total yards in the first half as Arkansas State had only three first downs and 77 total yards. The Red Wolf offense continued their struggles on third down going 1-7 in the first half. They had zero penalties in the first half. A-State only had 21 rushing yards while James Madison had 72 yards. 183 passing yards for JMU as Arkansas State had 56.

Dominic Zvada kicked a 37-yard field goal with 10:05 left in the third quarter. Todd Centeio passed to Kris Thornton for 54 yards to the A-State 19-yard line for a first down, setting up a 17-yard rushing touchdown by Percy Agyei-Obese, early in the third quarter, to increase James Madison's lead 21-6. James Blackman passed to Jeff Foreman for 40 yards to James Madison's 23-yard line for a first down, setting up a 13-yard touchdown pass from James Blackman again to Jeff Foreman, minimizing the lead for JMU, 21-13 in the third quarter. #40 Camden Wise missed his second field goal of the day, early in the fourth quarter. After the missed field goal by James Madison, the Red Wolf offense failed to take advantage of the situation, as they ended up punting.

Todd Centeio threw a touchdown pass to Zach Horton for nine yards, increasing the JMU lead, 28-13. That was Zach Horton's first career receiving touchdown. James Blackman passed to Champ Flemings for 37 yard with 11:39 left in the fourth quarter. Blackman passed to Te'Vailance Hunt for 33 yards, following up with another pass to Hunt for a 4-yard touchdown, minimizing James Madison's lead 28-20 early in the fourth quarter. Todd Centeio passed to Kris Thornton for 35 yards at the A-State 40-yard line for a first down. They would end up being stopped on third down resulting in a fourth down. JMU converted on fourth down with Percy Agyei-Obese running for a 31-yard touchdown, James Madison's lead increased 35-20. James Madison's Jamare Edwards recovered a fumble by James Blackman, giving Todd Centeio the chance to throw a 28-yard touchdown pass to Drew Painter, JMU up 42-20 with 7:56 left in the fourth quarter. Arkansas State could not get anything done on offense for the remainder of the game, as James Madison would kneel out the game to beat the Red Wolves 42-20.

Arkansas State 2-4 at the midseason mark

BRAYDEN MORSE

SPORTS EDITOR

The Arkansas State Red Wolves football team is 2-4 at midseason. They are also 1-2 in the Sun Belt conference.

It has obviously been a roller coaster of a season thus far, for the Red Wolves. They have been close to winning every game, except the Ohio State game in week two.

A-State lost to Memphis 44-32 in week three, due to penalties and the lack of converting on third downs. They lost in week four against Old Dominion, 29-26.

Losing by only three points makes it obvious that this team is fighting hard until the last snap. Arkansas State lost against Old Dominion due to lacking on third downs once again.

To this point, the road has not been fair to this team. Having three straight away games can be difficult, but there is no excuse for losing all three of them.

Arkansas State has back to back road games coming up, against Southern Miss in week seven and Louisiana Lafayette in week eight. They must find a way to win both games, with both games being conference games.

The main thing that is killing this team, is the fact that the Red Wolves have 193 points for the team and 191 points against them, thus far. This means the offense is producing high every game, while the defense is performing poorly.

Defense wins games and it is showing for this team.

Up to this point, the Arkansas State offense is averaging 32.2 points per game.

The points are coming at ease for this team, but their third down efficiency is still a weak point. Their third down percentage is at 38.04 percent on the season. Winning games becomes difficult with a percentage like that.

The Arkansas State defense only has 12 sacks and one interception through six weeks. They are allowing an average of 31.83 points per game, and an average of 400.8 yards per game. They are also allowing 6.4 yards per play. It is really hard to win games when a team's defense is giving up more than 30 points per game.

James Blackman has 1,459 passing yards, nine touchdown passes, one interception and a quarterback rating of 67.4 through six games. He is 40th in the nation in passing yards, tied for 54th in passing touchdowns, tied for sixth in interceptions and 47th in quarterback rating. Blackman seems to make very few mistakes with the ball in his hands. He only has two rushing touchdowns, but that is because he is not involved in the running game much. More quarterback designed run plays would provide a spark for this offense. It would catch the defense off guard.

Blackman has game changing speed that has not been utilized much through six weeks of the season. The Red Wolf offense is using Blackman as a pocket quarterback when everyone knows he can be a mobile quarterback. All he does is stand in the pocket, waiting for a receiver to get open, which results in him getting sacked a lot. Blackman could get rid of the ball quicker in the pocket, but it could result in him making bad decisions and throwing interceptions.

He has the ability to extend the play outside of the pocket and throw on the run. It will prevent him from getting sacked as often, and he could provide a new style of play for this offense.

Brian Snead and Johnnie Lang Jr. are combined for 542 rushing yards and eight touchdowns on the year. Snead has six of those eight touchdowns, while Lang Jr. has two of those eight.

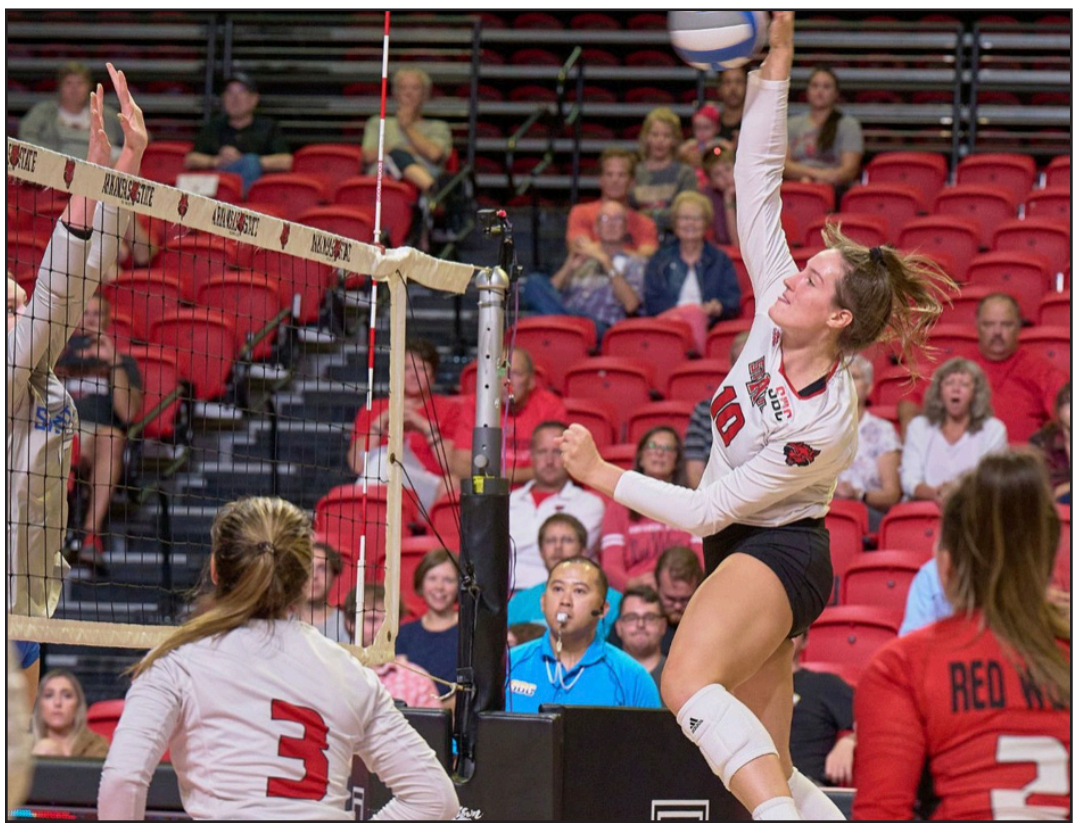
There are six games left in the season, which seems like a lot, but they will go by really fast. A-State has to have a sense of urgency to win now, if they want to get back in the race for the Sun Belt conference.

GRAPHIC BY SHARLINE VANPELT

2022 Sun Belt Standings

EAST	CONF	OVR
Coastal Carolina	3-0	6-0
James Madison	3-0	5-0
Old Dominion	1-0	2-3
Georgia State	1-1	2-4
Appalachian State	1-2	3-3
Marshall	0-1	3-2
Georgia Southern	0-2	3-3
WEST	**CONF**	**OVR**
South Alabama	1-0	4-1
Troy	2-1	4-2
Texas State	1-1	3-3
Arkansas State	1-2	2-4
UL Monroe	1-2	2-4
Southern Miss	0-1	2-3
Louisiana	0-2	2-3

Volleyball's 12 game losing streak



COURTESY OF ARKANSAS STATE ATHLETICS

The volleyball team huddling up during a matchup against South Alabama.

The volleyball team is 5-13 on the season. They are also 0-6 in the Sun Belt conference, with a 12 game losing streak.

They play back to back days against Troy at home. First game is on Friday at 6 p.m. The second game is on Saturday at 1 p.m. Both games are conference games, with the team needing to desperately win to get in the win column for the SBC.

Outside hitter #20 Macey Putt leads the team in kills with 232. Setter #18 Lauren Musante is leading the team with 372 assists. Libero/defensive specialist #21 Sarah Martinez leads the team in digs with 256. Middle blocker #10 Kyla Wiersema is leading the team with 53 blocks. Setter #3 Kassidy Reeves and right-side hitter #2 Elise Wilcox are tied for the most service aces on the team, with 19.

Arkansas State has a total of 767 kills, while their opponents have 795. They have 383 errors while their opponents have 318. Errors are killing this Red Wolf volleyball team.

Centennial Bank Stadium needs more fans



PHOTO BY JESSICA McMILLAN

Centennial Bank Stadium barely filled with fans in the season opener against Grambling State.

BRAYDEN MORSE

SPORTS EDITOR

At the Arkansas State home football games, there are around 15,000 people in attendance so far this season. Centennial Bank Stadium holds 30,964 seats. With that being said, only half of the stadium is being filled every game. What exactly is keeping fans away from the stadium?

On-field performance could be the main reason that fans are not showing up to home games. It could also be the fact of not promoting the games enough. Sports are very popular, but not everyone is into them. Promoting the games everywhere on campus gives attraction. Students and/or citizens of Jonesboro that are not into sports, could get interested in the games with more promotions. Exciting events before the games start, would also draw in more people.

A lot of students at Arkansas State hang out outside of the stadium during the games. Students that are fans provide an energy spark for the games and players. A lot of players love when fans show up to support them during their games. It could also have a positive effect on their performance.

Brad Bobo is the associate athletic director for marketing and fan engagement at Arkansas State. He provides his thoughts on the lack of fans during the home games when he says, "If there were 25,000 people in the stands, all there with the mindset of affecting the game (and also given the improvement of the roster), how difficult would it be for a road team to leave Centennial Bank Stadium with a win?," Brad Bobo said.

Manikanth Reddy is a sophomore student from India, who is majoring in engineering management. He provides his reasoning for not going to the football games when he says, "Since my childhood, I have been a cricket player. I never played football and I literally do not know any rules of football. I used to wake up early in the morning to play cricket, so I never had interest in playing football," Manikanth Reddy said.

Remaining Fall baseball schedule:

- Friday, Oct. 14 3 p.m.
- Saturday, Oct. 15 11 a.m.
- Sunday, Oct. 16 2 p.m.
- Tuesday, Oct. 18 3 p.m.
- Thursday, Oct. 20 3 p.m.
- Saturday, Oct. 22 **(Fall Exhibition at Southern Illioniios)**
- Tuesday, Oct. 25 3 p.m.
- Thursday, Oct. 27 3 p.m.
- Saturday, Oct. 29 **(Fall Exhibition at Missouri)**

Fall World Series

- Thursday, Nov. 3 2:30 p.m.
- Friday, Nov. 4 2:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Nov. 5 10 a.m.