

NBA prospect Kinsey, Marshall beats A-State 87-78 in OT

BRAYDEN MORSE

SPORTS EDITOR

The Red Wolves forced overtime, but could not finish as they dropped seven straight games.

Even though Arkansas State University lost, it was likely to happen. Marshall University is one of the best teams in the Sun Belt Conference, and it shows with their now 17-4 record.

Before the game, the Thundering Herd had an 89.2% chance of winning according to ESPN Analytics. They also have an NBA prospect on their team, senior guard #24 Taevion Kinsey.

Kinsey is a playmaker who can get the job done when needed most. He is averaging 21.2 points per game for 14th best in the nation.

"Obviously Kinsey is an excellent player. I do not know what else you can do to guard him. He rolls over everybody and he is going to play in the NBA," Head Coach Mike Balado said.

In the first half, the Red Wolves were down 31-23. They were 9-28 (32.1%) from field-goal range, 3-13 (23.1%) from three-point range and 2-2 from free-throws. They also outrebounded Marshall with 20 compared to their 15. Senior guard #1 Markise Davis led the team with 10 points and two three-pointers.

This past Saturday, Marshall was 11-28 (39.3%) from field-goal range, 4-8 (50%) from three-point range and 5-6 (83.3%) from free-throws. Junior guard #0 Andrew Taylor led the Thundering Herd with 14 points and shooting



Junior guard #0 Caleb Fields going up for a layup.

PHOTO BY EMILIANO CEBALLOS

5-9 from field-goal range.

The second half shooting was a lot better for the Red Wolves with 54.5% from field-goal range, 46.2% from three-point range and 75% from free-throws.

Sophomore guard #2 Avery Felts finished the game with a team-leading 18 points, while junior guard #0 Caleb Fields had 17 points. They both played the majority of the game as Fields played 41 minutes and Felts played 36.

Marshall was 48.4% from field-goal range, 50% from three-point range and 77.8% from free-

throws in the second half.

Kinsey is such a great player that he only played 28 minutes and 23 points. Taylor finished with a team-leading 27 points.

Arkansas State was able to fight all game long even with the absence of first-year guard Terrance Ford Jr., due to a bone bruise. The biggest issue for this team remains to be the injuries and not any bench players to rotate in to give starters rest. Only eight scholarship players played in this game.

Another issue is trying to get their big guys playing more consistently. It is hard to win games without a lot of offensive

and defensive rebounds.

"We need Omar (El-Sheikh) playing more consistently. He is not playing consistently right now, and we need to get him back to the way he was playing in late December," Balado said.

Overtime was a lot different for A-State compared to the final minutes in regulation. With eight seconds left in regulation, sophomore forward #23 Julian Lual had a steal that set up Fields making a layup to force overtime. They were not able to get the stops and defensive rebounds that they needed in overtime.

"In overtime, whoever

scores first will get the momentum early. We have to work on getting those stops on contested shots," Fields said.

As mentioned previously, the Red Wolves fought the entire game. That is the biggest positive for this team.

"If we can bring it like that every single game, we have a chance to win everytime. If we can do it against those guys (Marshall), we can do it against anybody," Felts said.

A-State has back-to-back road games against Southern Miss on Thursday at 7 p.m. and Saturday against Appalachian State University

at 3:30 p.m. Both games will be held on ESPN+.

Southern Miss is 17-4 on the season and has a 94.3% chance of beating the Red Wolves according to ESPN Analytics. They average 75.6 points per game and 38.5 rebounds. The Golden Eagles also have three players averaging double-digit points. Junior guard #1 Austin Crowley, senior forward #22 Felipe Haase and senior forward #5 Deandre Pinckney are among the few.

To beat Southern Miss, A-State will have to continue their approach of aggressive defense that allows them to stay competitive with these juggernaut squads.

"We are going to continue the aggressive defense. We are going to trust ourselves more on the ball than having so much gap help. It allows us to pick the speed up more," Balado said.

Then, the Saturday game against Appalachian State will be another difficult one. The Mountaineers are 11-10 and are projected to beat Arkansas State with a 90.3% chance according to ESPN Analytics. They are averaging 73.5 points per game and 36.5 rebounds.

Once again, the Red Wolves game plan will be their aggressive defensive approach along with being able to rotate players off the bench to get fresh legs for the starters who get tired throughout the game.

Both Southern Miss and Appalachian State have the winning formula, so A-State has a tough road ahead.

The Red Wolves have 10 games left to turn their season around.

Red Wolves lose in OT by one at Louisiana

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The Arkansas State women's basketball team lost to Louisiana Lafayette 49-48 in overtime.

The game came down to the final six seconds on a shot by A-State, which could have been a game-winner, that was rimmed out.

This past Saturday, the Lady Red Wolves fought through adversity the entire game, especially in the first half. They were down by double-digits at halftime and tied the game in the fourth quarter. Sophomore guard #24 Lauryn Pendleton drilled a jump-shot with nine seconds left in regulation to send the game to overtime.

"These kids are prepared for every game. We tell them what is coming, and they know what is coming. It is a heart issue. You have to have the heart and toughness to do what your coaches are asking you to do. Period," Head Coach Destinee Rogers said.

That is what Rogers said

last week following the loss to Southern Miss. It seems like this quote stood out for this team as they had the heart and determination to win at all costs against Louisiana.

Although the team has lost eight of their last 10 games, to have a coach who can give the mindset of a winner is key.

Sophomore guard #23 Izzy Higginbottom led Arkansas State with 12 points and only played 27 minutes, compared to the other starters playing 29 or more.

Redshirt sophomore forward/guard #2 Leilani Augmon made a name for herself as she had 8 points and 10 rebounds off the bench, while playing 37 minutes. Maybe there is a chance she plays more in the future, and even gets to start.

The biggest issue for the Red Wolves was shooting. They shot 20-59 (33.9%) from field-goal range. They were 12.5% from three-point range. These numbers have to go up in order to win, although Arkansas State was

perfect from the free-throw line. Louisiana was only 50% from the free-throw line.

Defense was a whole other story. They forced 22 turnovers and held the perimeter shooting to just 8.3% for the Ragin' Cajuns. A-State also won the battle 7-6.

Overtime was a battle of its own on defense. Louisiana only had a layup and a free-throw to make it 49-46. Then, Augmon made a layup to minimize the Ragin' Cajun's lead 49-48.

As mentioned previously, Pendleton's shot was the last shot for A-State as it rimmed out, and time expired.

A disappointing loss, but a learning experience for this young team.

They are now at a 6-13 record. The team has 10 games left to improve their record.

The Lady Red Wolves will look to bounce back as they have back-to-back home games on Thursday at 7 p.m. on ESPN+ and Saturday at 2 p.m. on ESPN+.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARKANSAS STATE ATHLETICS

Sophomore guard #24 Lauryn Pendleton dribbling down the court.