

## Aggies Hoping to Carry Momentum to Georgia

Written by Pat Clifton  
Friday, 02 March 2012 16:43

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Texas A&M opened its season with a 71-20 loss at Arkansas State last month. It looked as though the Aggies might have taken a step back after losing a trio of really good players: Connor Bertrand, Hunter Leland and Chris Parker.

Then A&M walloped Oklahoma 85-0 last Saturday in College Station, Texas. That win, and the impressive winning margin, raised the antennae of every team in the Mid-South.

“It was a good performance. They’re always a big, scrappy team and they’ve got a big front row and some nifty wings and they played a pretty good brand of rugby last week at their place,” Life coach Dan Payne said.

The Running Eagles, who host A&M Saturday in Marietta, Ga., beat Oklahoma 77-5 on Feb. 18.

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“On paper, they’re better than us now, aren’t they?” said Payne of A&M.

“That’s what we looked at all week, and whenever you put that many points on a team you have to (take notice). We respect everybody as it is, but you have to give a lot of credit to the type of offensive potential they have. We definitely are looking forward to a good game tomorrow.”

A&M coach Brett Mills said the loss to Arkansas State was sobering, and it fueled the massive win over OU.

“There’s a lot of clichés in sports, but I think it was a reality check for us with ASU. I think we thought we were a pretty decent team, and then we went up there and just got smashed, and we had to do a total mental reload on that. It was like massive surgery, because if we came out and played poor against Oklahoma then the seasons’ over right there,” Mills said.

If A&M wants a new lease on the season, a win at Life will certainly provide it. And for Mills, the biggest change his team needs to make is believing it can beat one of the best teams in the country.

“We had a great week of training. We really worked on the mental aspect. My thing is that skill-wise and physicality, we’re OK. Where we’ve had problems in the past is we don’t expect to win or play even with some of these top teams,” Mills said.

“That’s what we’ve really worked on this week. I’ve got to be careful what I say, because I thought we were ready to go against ASU and we go the hell beat out of us, but I think the kids are ready to go.”

Unfortunately for the Aggies, two A&M kids aren’t ready to go – Brian Guillen and John Young. They make up a great one-two punch in the midfield for A&M, but Guillen is still in New York doing an internship and Young is injured.

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Fortunately for the Aggies, Brett Mills is A-OK. The former U20 flyhalf conducts the A&M attack.

“When you have somebody running the game for them like that and your defense isn’t structured, you can get into a lot of trouble,” said Payne.

“We’ll keep our 10 pretty straight up on him as well (have our No. 7 go after him). We’ll run our system, and if they move it wide, rotate our wings up. But we’ll try to keep him bracketed most of the time and make him move the ball.”