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Kennedy: A winning program is a 'process,' says he'll be back for 4th season

Posted on March 18, 2014 | By Brent Zwerneman

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COLLEGE STATION – Texas A&M coach Billy Kennedy and his players all agree the College Basketball Invitational isn't the postseason they envisioned at the beginning of the season – but it is indeed a postseason.

"I've told them all season long, we want to play in the postseason, no matter what tournament we're in," Kennedy said Tuesday afternoon. "Obviously the NCAA tournament was our goal. ... (But) I want to coach another game. And there have been situations where I haven't always wanted to do that."

Kennedy also said he's been reassured he'll lead the program into a fourth season, despite not making the NCAA tournament in any of his three years at A&M, after the Aggies made the NCAA postseason six consecutive years under coaches Billy Gillispie and Mark Turgeon.

"In our third year, we're probably a year behind where we anticipated being," Kennedy said of his program's progress. "But (everyone) knows it's a process. That's where we're at."

So what gives Kennedy confidence his program will improve from this year's 17-15 overall mark, including 8-10 in Southeastern Conference play?

"We've got seven guys (in the rotation) back," he said. "To win eight games in the SEC is a positive step ... we improved from last year. I like the guys we have coming in and the guys we had sitting out. We've got a good nucleus to grow and get better with."

Kennedy added that freshman guard Shawn Smith is still not with the program, and that he'll sit down with Smith following the season to discuss his future with the Aggies. No reason has been given for Smith's absence, except for Kennedy saying Smith needed time away from the program. A&M finished 18-15 and 7-11 last year in SEC play, after going 4-14 against Big 12 competition in Kennedy's first year. The Aggies play host to Wyoming starting 7 p.m. Wednesday in the first round of the 16-team CBI.

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