

Redbirds Defeat Texas A&M, 62-55; Advance to Semifinal Round of CBI

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[box score](#)

NORMAL, III. - The Illinois State men's basketball team's 62-55 win Monday night over Texas A&M in the quarterfinal round of the College Basketball Invitational (CBI) marks just the second time in program history that the Redbirds have won two postseason contests in the same season, with the last time coming during the 1995-96 season.

ISU was led by Daishon Knight, who connected on 50 percent of his shot attempts from the field, scoring 17 points. Knight also pulled down a career-high nine rebounds, all coming at the defensive end in 36 minutes. John Jones was the only other Redbird to score in double figures, as he tied a career-high 12 points, scoring nine-straight in the first half.

Illinois State shot 44 percent from the field, and Texas A&M connected on 34 percent of its shot attempts. The Aggies were led by Antwan Space, who netted 15 points, as three A&M players scored in double figures. Nick Zeisloft pulled down a career-high eight rebounds, as ISU pulled down 41 rebounds, six more than Texas A&M. The win also marks the first time in program history that the Redbirds topped a BIG EAST, Big Ten and SEC opponent in the same season.

The Redbirds got on the board first, but a four-minute scoring drought and a 7-0 run by Texas A&M gave the Aggies a 7-2 advantage five minutes into the game. Illinois State re-grouped and scored five-straight to tie the game at seven apiece thanks to a jumper by Bobby Hunter and an and-one play by Paris Lee. The two teams traded baskets, but the Aggies maintained a lead until Jones netted nine-straight points for the Redbirds, giving the 19-16 lead to ISU with 7:14 on the clock in the opening half. Jones was the offensive attack for ISU for nearly two and a half minutes, but Knight added a jumper to increase the lead to five and the run to 11-0 in favor of the Redbirds.

Texas A&M was scoreless from the floor for five minutes, but the struggle didn't last long, and the Aggies scored eight-straight to regain a three-point lead. After four minutes without a basket from the field, Jones went back to work and pulled ISU within one with 1:38 left before the break. Then, Zeisloft hit a three from the top of the key to tie the game, 27-27, which is how the two teams headed into the locker room at the break.

The two teams exchanged points early in the second half, but a three by Lee gave the Redbirds a one-point lead at 33-32 at the 15:53 mark. After two more ties, Knight scored seven of ISU's next 11 points to give Illinois State a four-point lead, 44-40, with 10:11 left to play. Texas A&M connected on two jumpers to tie the game, but a 6-0 run by ISU, including a three from Zeisloft and a jumper by Knight, gave the Redbirds a 50-44 advantage with just under seven minutes left in the game.

Late in the game, the Aggies tried to shift momentum in their favor, but a charge taken by Hunter and turnovers by A&M gave extra chances to ISU. Lynch maximized off of the extra chances, as he scored six-straight points, amounting to a 58-51 lead by the Redbirds with 2:19 to play. The seven-point lead was the largest for either team in the game. With just over a minute to play in the game, A&M's Space connected on a layup to pull the Aggies within three, 58-55. A late offensive board by Lynch forced Texas A&M to foul. Knight connected from the charity stripe on four-straight attempts to secure the 62-55 victory over the Aggies.

With the win, the Redbirds continue CBI play later in the week with game information to be announced at a later time. The final four teams in the tournament will be re-seeded before the next games can be scheduled. Check GoRedbirds.com for upcoming game information.

