

No. 16 Aggies win Progressive Legends Classic behind Williams

By DENIS P. GORMAN

NEW YORK (AP) — Without prompting, Texas A&M coach Billy Kennedy and Robert Williams and Duane Wilson took turns speaking about the long term aspirations for the Aggies.

The words they used were "special" and "March."

No false modesty here. The 16th-ranked Aggies know they're good and have set their sights on the NCAA Tournament, facts that they unequivocally reiterated after a 98-87 victory over Penn State in the championship game of the Progressive Legends Classic on Tuesday night at Barclays Center.

"It shows we're capable of doing something special," Kennedy said.

Indeed.

All it takes is a brief glance at the final stat sheet to support his argument. Five Aggies finished in double figures. Williams finished with 21 points and nine rebounds. Wilson led the Aggies (4-0) with 22 points while Tyler Davis chipped in 15, Admon Gilder had 14 and Tonny Torcha-Morelos finished with 11.

"We're deep. We're talented. We can make special plays," said Kennedy, who later added, "We have a deep team. We have a lot of guys.

"We have a lot of weapons."

A fact which wasn't lost on Penn State coach Pat Chambers.

Despite getting a career-high 31 points from Tony Carr, Penn State (5-1) lost its first game of the season. Lamar Stevens added 25 points for Penn State.

"Our halfcourt defense, specifically our ball screen defense has to be better," said Chambers, who jabbed the table with his fingers for emphasis. "If you told me (DJ Hogg) was only going to have seven (points) and we scored 87, I'd (have) thought we'd be sitting here with a win."

The Aggies took a 42-40 lead into halftime due to Williams' two-hand follow jam with 4 seconds left in the half. Seven of the eight players who got into the game in the first half for Texas A&M scored, led by Williams' 12.

And the Aggies needed every point, as Carr was a one-man offensive onslaught for the Nittany Lions. Carr had 21 points in the opening half on 7-of-8 shooting including 2 for 2 from 3-point range. He made 5 of 6 free throws.

Texas A&M took a 63-51 lead on Wilson's scoop layup 6:41 into the second half. Wilson's layup was the culmination of a stretch in which the Aggies outscored the Nittany Lions 21-11.

Following Wilson's layup, Chambers called time out. DJ Hogg hit a 3 for the Aggies, Gilder made two free throws and Williams finished a 2-on-1 break with a two-handed jam off an alley-oop pass which pushed the lead to 70-53.

"Give Texas A&M credit. They jumped us," Chambers said. "They got to a big lead."

Penn State used an 8-0 run to cut the deficit to 70-61.

After a layup by Gilder pushed the lead to 72-61, the Nittany Lions scored the next five points on a layup by Carr and three free throws from Stevens. That was as close as they would get.

"Keep your composure at the end," Williams said. "Don't lose it."

Williams was named tournament MVP, and was joined on the all-tournament team by Wilson, Carr, Stevens and Oklahoma State's Jeffrey Carroll.

BIG PICTURE:

Penn State: The positive for Penn State is that Carr and Stevens combined for 56 points. The negative? The rest of the Nittany Lions totaled 31.

Texas A&M: The defensively stout Aggies were able to flex their offensive muscle against Penn State. Texas A&M made 33 of 54 shots (61 percent) from the field and knocked down 26 of 29 (89.7 percent) free throws.

NOTABLE:

Penn State: In the Chambers Era, the Nittany Lions are 4-3 all-time in games played in New York City, and 2-2 at games held at Barclays Center.

Texas A&M: The Aggies improved to 4-0 all-time against the Nittany Lions. Texas A&M is 2-0 at neutral site venues against Penn State.