

No. 19 Aggies Defeat Liberty in Season-Opener, 81-59

[box score](#)

COLLEGE STATION, Texas (AP) - Ray Turner scored a career-high 20 points and No. 19/20 Texas A&M shot 65 percent from the field while cruising past Liberty 81-59 on Wednesday night in the season opener for both teams.

The Aggies played without first-year coach Billy Kennedy, on leave following his recent diagnosis of an early stage of Parkinson's disease. Texas A&M associate head coach Glynn Cyprien has run the team in Kennedy's absence.

Kennedy has visited the arena daily over the past week and Cyprien has said Kennedy is expected back full-time "soon."

Texas A&M put away the Flames early with a 24-4 run midway through the first half. The Aggies shot 59.3 percent (16 of 27) from the field in the first half and jumped to a 37-14 lead at the break before a crowd of 6,118 at Reed Arena.

Elston Turner had 16 points and David Loubeau added 14 for the Aggies, who began their 100th season in the 2K Sports Classic benefiting Coaches vs. Cancer. Next up, they host Southern on Sunday.

Texas A&M has won 61 straight non-conference games dating to 2005.

David Minaya led Liberty with 14 points.

With the game well in hand, the Aggies shot 72 percent (18 of 25) in the second half and finished at 65.4 percent from the floor (34 for 52), the fifth-highest mark in school history. Still, the Flames outscored the Aggies 45-44 in the second half.

Cyprien said guard Khris Middleton strained his hamstring and is day to day.

The Aggies outrebounded the Flames 39-29, with Elston Turner, Ray Turner and Keith Davis grabbing six boards apiece.

A&M is one of 12 teams in the country that has been to six consecutive NCAA tournaments.

