

# Bearkats roll to victory on second night of the Progressive Legends Classic

[box score](#)

Sam Houston State picked up its first win of the season over a Division I opponent with Tuesday night's 64-50 victory against Liberty. Transfer forward Terrance Motley led the way for the Bearkats with 14 points, eight rebounds, three blocks and three steals.

Motley, still recovering from breaking his wrist on his shooting hand over the summer, was all over the floor and was a big part of Sam Houston's 32 bench points. James Thomas also had a big game for the Bearkats, putting up 13 points and eight rebounds.

Thomas' energy and Motley's inside presence is exactly what Sam Houston head coach Jason Hooten said he'd been looking for following Monday's loss to Southern Mississippi. Before the Liberty game, Hooten met with his inside players to let them know the team needed more from them.

The Bearkats are thin on bigs. They only have three players taller than 6-foot-5 on the entire roster, and one of them is inactive. That just leaves the 6-11 Michael Holyfield, 6-7 Motley and James, who at 6-5 plays bigger than his size.

"Those guys all stepped up to the plate," Hooten said after the win. "J.T. had a great game and Terrance probably had his best game as a Division I player. The exciting thing is that I think J.T. was who he is tonight - great energy guy who really rebounds the ball, plays hard and tough. He's a great defensive player. Tonight, at times he was guarding everything from the two-guard to the post man.

"He and I had a good talk this morning about being who you are and getting back to who you are. As far as Terrance is concerned, he broke his wrist in July so he's just way behind. He's learning and getting better every day. He's got to stay patient. I think big thing with Terrance is him understanding who he is and what he does best. His ceiling is really high."

Sam Houston trailed briefly midway through the first half but was in control for most of the game. They led by nine points at halftime, a margin Hooten said could have been wider if the Bearkats played better toward the end of the half.

The Kats led by as many as 23 points before winning by 14, but that was also due to finishing the second half with some sloppy play.

The Bearkats, by their own admission, didn't play a great game. But Hooten said he was impressed with how decisively the Kats won without attempting many 3-point shots.

Sam Houston went 4-for-12 from beyond the arc on Tuesday night after going 6-for-25 against Southern Mississippi a night earlier. But coming away with a win against a Division I opponent was by far the most important statistic for the Bearkats.

"We really needed that tonight," Thomas said. "That was one of the main things we were focusing on."

Sam Houston rounds out its play in the Progressive Legends Classic with a game against UC-Irvine tonight at 7 p.m.

