

No. 16 Texas A&M pulls away from UC Santa Barbara 84-65

By DOUGLAS PILS

COLLEGE STATION, Texas (AP) — After missing the final seven games of his sophomore season with a left foot injury, Texas A&M forward DJ Hogg is making up for lost time.

He scored 24 points, 19 in the first 10 minutes of the second half, and No. 16 Texas A&M won its home opener going away, 84-65 against UC Santa Barbara on Friday night in the Progressive Legends Classic. The junior made 5 of 7 3-point attempts, making him 9 of 13 on the young season.

"I made a couple of shots and just got it going," said Hogg, who scored 19 points in A&M's season-opening victory over then-No. 11 West Virginia in Germany. "Once a couple fall, the basket just gets bigger. You lock in and it's hard to explain. You keep shooting and it keeps falling."

Hogg scored 19 of A&M's 24 points to open the half, helping the Aggies (2-0) stretch the lead to 70-47. A&M built a 75-47 lead with 8:45 to go before settling in for the victory.

Much like the win over the Mountaineers when Hogg also had seven rebounds and six assists, the 6-foot-7 forward played a well-rounded game against the Gauchos with six rebounds, three assists and two blocks.

"DJ Hogg has matured in a lot of areas," Texas A&M coach Billy Kennedy said. "He's not just relying on his jump shot. He did some things defensively and rebounded. He shared the ball. When he does other things, that's when he can be special."

First-year UCSB coach Joe Pasternack said there's no limit to how special Hogg can be.

"I think Hogg could be the best shooter in America," Pasternack said. "At his size, with his ability to shoot, to me he's an NBA no-brainer first-round pick."

Max Heidigger scored 24 points as the Gauchos (1-2) stuck around after the Aggies built an early 16-point lead. But Hogg's strong second-half kept UCSB from mounting a challenge.

Hogg led four starters in double-figure scoring, as Tyler Davis had 14 points, all in the first half, Admon Gilder had 13 and Tonny Trocha-Morelos scored 10.

BIG PICTURE

UCSB: That's two straight road losses to Power 5 conference schools in Pittsburgh and A&M. That should give Pasternack's team some confidence over the next six games as the schedule gets easier before a Dec. 17 matchup at No. 10 Southern Cal.

Texas A&M: Fresh off a big win over West Virginia in the Armed Forces Classic at Ramstein Air Base in Germany, the Aggies won their 17th straight home opener. They are 2-0 without forward Robert Williams and point guard J.J. Caldwell, who both are suspended for violating team rules.

STAT OF THE NIGHT: If not for Heidigger, UCSB's night would have been much worse. His 24 points came on 7-of-13 shooting from the field and 10 of 12 on free throws. Only one other Gaucho took free throws, and Clifton Powell missed both of those. Heidigger played a team-high 30 minutes and he had zero turnovers despite handling the ball most of the time.

TIP-INS: Texas A&M shot 50 percent overall (30 of 60) and from the 3-point line (11 of 22).

UCSB made just 3 of 17 3-point attempts (17.6), which dragged its overall percentage down to 42.6. Both teams made 12 turnovers, but the Aggies had 20 assists on their 30 baskets. The Gauchos had just 10 assists.