



Dionte Ferguson closed the season with strong performances to help the Jaguars earn two straight wins.

USAJAGUARS

# Men's hoops finishes regular season

## Jaguars win two straight to end the year and earn bid in conference tournament

By DREW SCELSI  
Sports Editor

The South Alabama men's basketball team wrapped up its regular season by winning two of its final three games over the last two weeks.

### ULM 75, USA 57

On Thursday Feb. 26, the Jaguars fell to Louisiana-Monroe 75-57, after allowing the Warhawks to grab 19 offensive rebounds.

"We talked about being physical, being aggressive and boxing out," said South Alabama head coach Matthew Graves. "Obviously, the message didn't get through. When you give up 19 offensive rebounds, they got back almost half of their shots. That's a recipe for disaster."

Ken Williams scored 21 points during the loss, leading all scorers. He shot 6-of-9 overall and 4-of-6 from deep. Williams also had 3 rebounds and 5 turnovers.

"He was very efficient shooting

the basketball," Graves said of Williams. "Obviously you would like to have back some of those turnovers. You can't fault him. He was trying to make plays and get in the paint and do some things. It just wasn't our night. Again, you have to credit ULM on their defense. They held us to 40 percent. It was a great effort by them."

John Brown finished with 9 points and 4 rebounds, while Dionte Ferguson had 7 points and 7 rebounds. Abdul Lewis had 6 points and 6 rebounds, and Taishaun Johnson recorded 5 points, 4 rebounds and 3 assists.

As a team, the Jags shot 38.8% from the field and 38.9% from three-point territory. The Warhawks (19-9, 13-4 Sun Belt Conference) shot 45.9% from the field and 40.0% from behind the arc.

### USA 81, ASU 76

Last Thursday, the Jaguars held on to beat Arkansas State 81-76 in

Jonesboro, Arkansas after leading by as many as 24 points in the second half.

South Alabama scored 8 of the last 11 points in the game to come away with the victory and secure a spot in the Sun Belt Conference Tournament.

Dionte Ferguson led the Jaguars with 20 points and added 5 rebounds. Taishaun Johnson added 17 points, 9 rebounds and 7 assists. Johnson's 17 points brought his season total up to 396, setting a USA single-season record for points scored by a freshman.

"I can't begin to say enough about how proud I am of this team and what they've accomplished," USA head coach Matthew Graves said. "They hung tough and made some tough plays in those last couple of minutes to secure the victory.

The Jaguars got off to a hot start, shooting 17-of-28 (60.7 percent) from the floor in the first half and building a 14-point lead at half-

time. The Red Wolves (11-17, 6-13) tried to mount a comeback late in the game, but Ken Williams put the game out of reach on two free throws with 10.4 seconds left in the game. Anthony Livingston led the Red Wolves with 22 points and 9 rebounds.

### USA 96, Troy 93

On Saturday, South Alabama concluded its regular season with a 96-93 win over Troy at the Mitchell Center.

Three players had career days for the Jaguars: Ken Williams tied a career-high with 28 points, Barrington Stevens III set a new personal best with 19 points, and Dionte Ferguson tied a career best with 14 rebounds. Ferguson finished with his team-high fourth double-double of the year, scoring 19 points on 6-of-8 shooting.

USA (11-20, 9-11) used a 19-3 run in the second half to take its eighth win in the last nine games

against Troy (10-19, 5-15).

"I think we have a lot of confidence, and we have a lot of guys that can score the basketball," head coach Matthew Graves said. "Obviously Ken [Williams] stepped up and made a big '3' at Arkansas State on Thursday, and I like a guy that wants to take that big shot. He's not only taking that big shot, but he's making it. So he's playing with a lot of confidence and doing some really good things."

Troy's Musa Abdul-Aleem scored 37 points on 13-of-20 shooting, including 8-of-10 from three-point range, good enough for second in Mitchell Center history. Wesley Person added 25 points and John Walton III added 21 points.

South Alabama earned the No. 6 seed in the Sun Belt Conference Tournament and will play the No. 7 seed Arkansas-Little Rock Thursday at 7:30 p.m. The winner will face No. 3-seeded Louisiana-Monroe on Friday.



# Lady Jags finish season with three straight losses

By DREW SCELSI  
Sports Editor

After getting a big win against Georgia Southern Saturday, Feb. 21, the South Alabama women's basketball team dropped its final three games of the regular season.

## ULM 45, USA 38

On Thursday Feb. 26, the Jaguars fell to Louisiana-Monroe 45-38 at the Mitchell Center and shot just 14-of-62 (22.6 percent) from the field. After the first five minutes, the Lady Jags were down 9-2 and the team's three leading scorers, Breanna Hall, Rachel Cumbo and Marquita Daniels were all scoreless.

"I was just disappointed in the way we shot the ball — if you're going to shoot 22 percent, you're going to have a tough time beating anybody," USA head coach Terry Fowler said. "This was one of the few games where we had a double-digit advantage in shot attempts than our opponent, but we didn't capitalize on those opportunities."

Daniels came to life at the start of the second half. Five minutes in, she hit two 3-pointers to give the Jags their first lead of the game, but ULM (11-15, 7-10 Sun Belt Conference) immediately responded with a 9-0 run to go up 33-27, and wouldn't relinquish the lead again.

Chyna Ellis finished the day with a double-double, posting 14 points and 13 rebounds and adding 6 blocked shots.

## ASU 70, USA 60

Last Thursday, the Lady Jags almost pulled out a win at Arkansas State, getting within three points on three different occasions in the second half, but ultimately losing 70-60.

Breanna Hall led the Jaguars with 16 points and 4 assists, and Marquita Daniels added 13 points.

"We got in some early foul trouble," South Alabama head coach Terry Fowler said. "(Marquita) Daniels wasn't able to play a lot in the first half and our post players got in some early foul trouble, so we had to

play with some different line ups, but our kids fought and I'm really proud of what they did tonight. We had chances, but it came down to turnovers and some second chance opportunities. When we needed a clutch three, we just couldn't come up with it. I was proud of how scrappy we played though. Arkansas State is a championship-caliber team and we were able to give them a challenge tonight."

Arkansas State's Jasmine Hunt led all players with 20 points and 11 rebounds. Aundrea Gamble contributed 18 points and 7 assists for the Red Wolves (20-9, 15-4).

## Troy 86, USA 79

On Saturday, the Lady Jags led Troy by four points at halftime, but let the lead slip away and lost 86-79 on Senior Night.

Breanna Hall scored 14 points and grabbed 8 rebounds in her final game for the Jaguars. Hall became the first Jaguar to end her career shooting better than 80 percent on free throws (80.9 percent).

I can't say enough about Breanna Hall and what she has done for our program, just the hard work on and off the floor; every success that she has, she deserves," head coach Terry Fowler said. "One thing we told our kids [coming into the game] is that you always lay it on the line for seniors — Senior Night is important to us. One day they will be seniors and we want someone to lay it on the line for you."

Marquita Daniels led all players with 33 points and added 6 rebounds and 5 assists. Chyna Ellis recorded her seventh double-double of the year with 10 points and 16 rebounds. Ellis also blocked three shots, and ended the season as USA's freshman blocks leader with 56.

Troy (20-9, 15-5) got 20 points and 7 rebounds from Ashley Beverly-Kelley, and 13 points and 16 rebounds from Ronita Garrett.

The Lady Jags finished the season with a 5-24 overall record, and ranked last in the Sun Belt with a 2-18 conference record.

ADAM SHUBERT  
CONTRIBUTED TO THIS ARTICLE

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Brittany Webb



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# Baseball opens up conference play against UALR

By AARON POIROUX  
Sports Reporter

The South Alabama baseball team was busy over the last two weeks and performed well, going 7-2 over that stretch.

## USA 6, Alabama St. 3

After trailing by three for the first six innings, the South Alabama baseball team scored six unanswered runs in the final three innings to secure a 6-3 victory against the Alabama State Hornets on February 24.

Left-hander Shane McKinley earned the win for the Jags, pitching 1 1/3 scoreless relief innings.

"That was huge," said South Alabama head coach Mark Calvi. "The game did not look good for us through 21 outs. Our guys hung in there, and our pitchers competed like crazy. (Austin) Bembnowski was pretty good, not great, but the mark of a good pitcher is still giving your team a chance when you don't have your best stuff. The guys behind him — Luke Morgan, Shane McKinley, Cody Van Aken and Ben Taylor — kept competing. We played pretty good defense behind them, and the pitchers kept competing and gave us a chance to win the game late."

Daniel Martinez finished the game with 1 run, 2 hits and 2 RBI. Cole Billingsley had 1 run, 2 hits and a single RBI, while Bud Collura had a run and a hit. Jared Barnes, Matt Bolger and Knapp Davis all had 1 run apiece. Cole Gleason and Adam Ballew recorded 1 hit and 1 RBI.

The South Alabama baseball team swept the Brown Bears in four games during the weekend. The Jags improved to 9-3 after the weekend, with conference plays rapidly approaching.

## USA 9, Brown 7

The Jags opened the weekend with a 9-7 victory against the Bears on Friday. South trailed for half of the game until a five run surge in the bottom of the fifth propelled the Jags past their opponent.

Daniel Martinez finished with 1 run, 2 hits and 4 RBI. Adam Ballew had 2 hits and 2 RBI.

"Daniel Martinez and Adam Ballew came through with some big hits when we needed them tonight," South Alabama head coach

Mark Calvi said. "Their (Brown) pitcher did a good job of shutting us down early. I give him credit; we weren't getting good swings off of him. But we hung in there and kept battling. We haven't been very good with men in scoring position, but we were much better tonight. We need a couple more guys to get settled in and comfortable in their own skin in the box, but it was good to see tonight."

Bud Collura had 2 runs, as well as a pair of hits in the victory, and Cole Billingsley recorded 2 runs, 1 hit and 1 RBI. Cole Gleason finished with 1 run, 1 hit and 1 RBI. Jared Barnes, Matt Bolger and Drew LaBounty all had 1 run and 1 hit apiece.

South Alabama Right-hander pitched 3 1/3 innings to earn the win for the Jags.

"I thought Dolloff did a really good job," Calvi said. "He was aggressive and kept us in that game. Dolloff, Cody Van Aken and (Shane) McKinley were outstanding for us tonight, and we needed them to be every bit as good as they were to win this one tonight. I'm impressed with the way Brown came out and swung the bat and played defense with it being their first game of the year. It says a lot about their kids and the way they're coached. I was thoroughly impressed with their team."

## USA 13, Brown 12

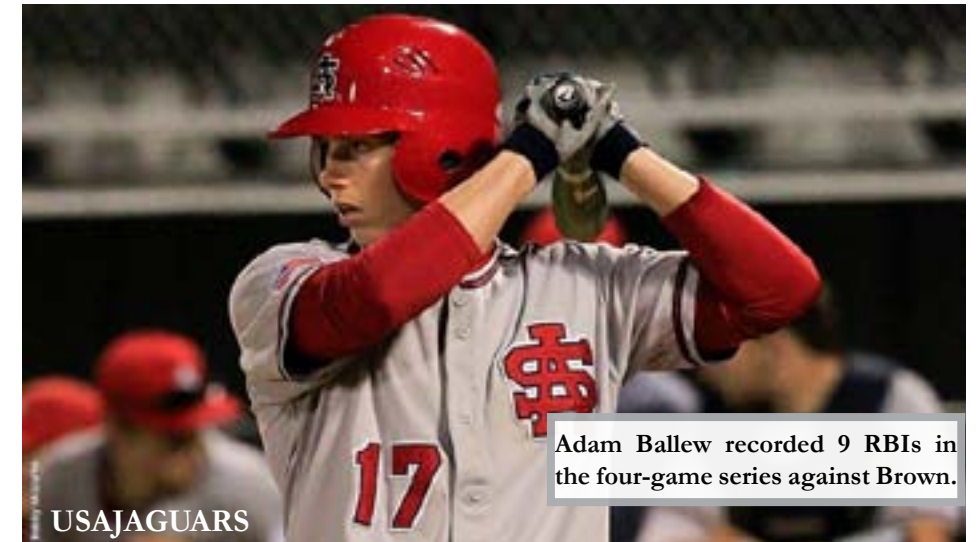
The Jags narrowly won the first game of a double-header 13-12 on Saturday. Bolger's walk-off single in the bottom of the tenth inning broke the stalemate and helped the Jags secure the victory.

Right-hander Ben Taylor earned his first win after pitching a single scoreless relief inning.

In addition to his run, Bolger also had 1 hit and 1 RBI. Collura finished with 1 run, 3 hits and 4 RBI, while Ballew had 2 runs, 2 hits and 2 RBI. Billingsley recorded 3 hits, 2 RBI and a single run. Cameron Cummings had 2 runs, a hit and an RBI, and Knapp Davis recorded 3 runs and a single hit. LaBounty added 2 runs, 2 hits and 2 RBI, and Ryan Raspino had a run and a hit.

## USA 7, Brown 0

The Jags concluded their doubleheader on Saturday with a 7-0 shutout. Right-hander Ryne Long started for the Jags and threw for seven



Adam Ballew recorded 9 RBIs in the four-game series against Brown.

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innings to earn the win, his first as a Jaguar.

"Ryne Long was great," said Calvi. "Quality starts have been hard to come by. We have had some decent pitchers who have not given us quality starts. Long was good last week against Arkansas; he competed his tail off. He kept us in this ballgame. He mixed all of his pitches well, and kept the running game in check. He was outstanding. The team had a lot of confidence with him out there, so that was big. He went deep into the game and did a fantastic job. He saved us from having to go to the bullpen too early. Brown can swing the bats. I was just looking for a starter that could hold down the game from the start. Long threw strikes, and really competed for us. I am super-proud of him and his effort tonight."

Ballew had 1 run, 2 hits and 3 RBI, and Collura finished with a pair of runs. Cummings and Jason Cryar both put up 1 run and 1 hit. LaBounty had 1 run, 1 hit and 1 RBI, while Garrett DeGallier added a single run.

## USA 21, Brown 1

The team finished the weekend with a 21-1 victory over the Bears. The Jags put up eight runs in the fifth inning during the win.

Left-hander Jared Gates earned the win for the Jags, pitching for six innings and allowing 3 hits.

Cryar went 5-of-6, recording 2 runs and 4 RBI during the victory. LaBounty had 3 runs, 3 hits and 2 RBI, and Cummings had 3 runs, 1 hit and 1 RBI. Martinez, DeGallier and Ballew all had 2 runs, 1 hit and 2 RBI. Connor Hawthorne finished with 2 runs, 1 hit and a single RBI, and Ben Gann added 2 runs. Raspino and Davis both finished with a single run. Collura had 3 hits, 1 run and 1 RBI, and Bolger finished with 3 hits and 2 RBI.

## USA 0, USM 3

The Jags started the week with a 3-0 loss the Southern Miss on Tuesday. Four Golden Eagle pitchers combined on the shut-out, and Jaguar right-hander took the loss for the Jags.

Bud Collura and Garrett DeGallier both had 2 hits apiece during the loss. Cole Billingsley, Jared Barnes, Adam Ballew and Drew LaBounty all finished with a single run.

Connor Barron, Dylan Burdeaux and Matt Durst all scored a single run apiece for Southern Miss.

## USA 3, UALR 4

The Jags opened up Sun Belt play with a 4-3

loss to the University of Arkansas-Little Rock on Friday. Right-hander Justin Flores took the loss for South.

Cole Billingsley recorded 1 run and 3 hits. Cameron Cummins and Daniel Martinez both finished with 1 run and 1 hit. Collura and Barnes both recorded 2 hits and a single RBI, while Matt Bolger registered 1 hit.

For the Trojans, James Gillean had 2 runs, while Petr Silla and Ryan Scott both recorded 1 run apiece.

## USA 1, UALR 0

The Jags continued their weekend series against the Trojans with a 1-0 victory on Saturday. Three Jaguar pitchers, Ryne Long, Hunter Soleymani and Cody Van Aken, combined on the shut-out, with Soleymani taking home the win.

"Long was very good," head coach Mark Calvi said. "Soleymani came in and did a nice job for us, and Van Aken was outstanding at the end. But I am super-proud of Ryne Long and Soleymani. This is Soleymani's third year in the program. He was one of the first high school kids I offered here, and in a game like this I was willing to go down to the wire as long as the game dictated it. I felt great bringing in a guy who has been in the program as long as anyone in him, so my hat's off to Soleymani and Van Aken."

Billingsley recorded the Jags only run of the game, and also had 1 hit. Ballew, Bolger, DeGallier, Knapp Davis and Ryan Raspino all finished with 1 hit apiece. Martinez registered a hit and an RBI.

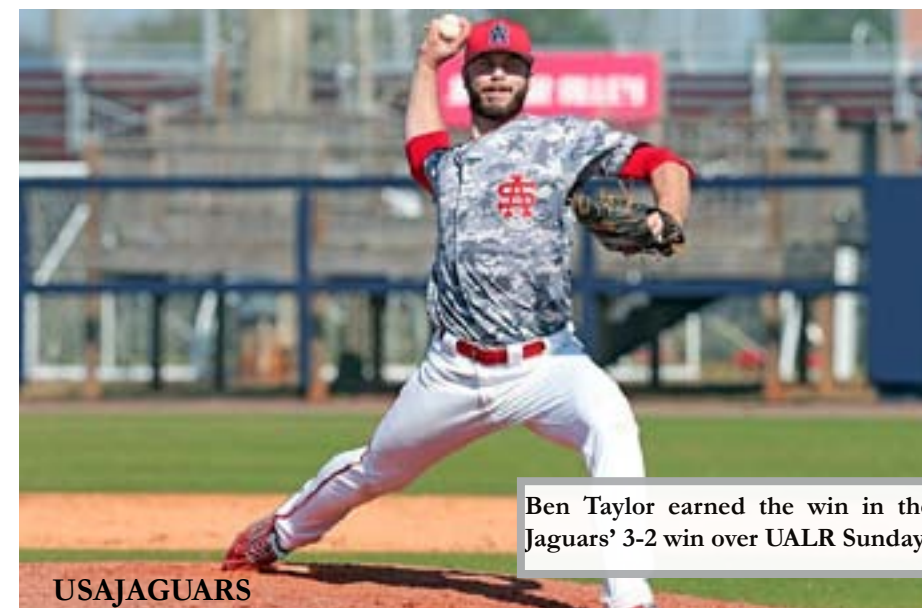
## USA 3, UALR 2

The team concluded the series with a 3-2 win on Sunday. Jaguar right-hander Ben Taylor threw two scoreless innings to earn the win for the Jags.

Collura recorded 1 run and 2 hits, while both Martinez and Bolger had 1 run and 1 hit. Billingsley had 2 hits, while Ballew finished with 1 hit and a pair of RBI. Ryan Raspino added a single hit.

Kyle Kirk and Ryan Scott scored the Trojans' two runs with one apiece.

After the weekend, the Jags' record improved to 11-5 overall and 2-1 in conference play. The baseball team will take the field on Tuesday, March 10 at home to take on Southeastern Louisiana University. First pitch is scheduled for 6:30 P.M.



Ben Taylor earned the win in the Jaguars' 3-2 win over UALR Sunday.

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# No. 24 softball opens conference play against ULL

By **AARON POIROUX**  
Sports Reporter

The No. 24 South Alabama softball team kicked off Sun Belt play this weekend, when they hosted the No. 7 University of Louisiana-Lafayette Ragin' Cajuns. The Jags lost both games of a double-header on Saturday, but turned it around on Saturday with an 8-5 victory.

## USA 2, ULL 3

The Jags opened up the weekend with a 3-2 loss during the first game of Saturday's double-header. Freshman pitcher Devin Brown took the loss, being relieved by Kalen McGill who pitched for 3 and 1/3 innings.

Emily Messer and Kaleigh Todd were the only Jags to find home plate, both of them scoring a single run. Messer also recorded 2 hits during the game. Chloe Rathburn had 1 hit and 1 RBI, and Amanda Minahan had a single RBI.

For ULL, Shellie Landry, Lexie Elkins

and Cassidy White recorded one run apiece.

## USA 3, ULL 9

The softball team concluded Saturday with another loss to ULL, this time losing 9-3. Brown again took the loss, and McGill once again relieved her, pitching for 5 and 2/3 innings.

Messer score 2 of South Alabama's 3 runs, and also registered 2 hits. Blair Johnson scored 1 run, 1 hit and 1 RBI. Stephanie Pilkington finished with a pair of hits, while Rathburn had 1 hit and 2 RBI and Minahan recorded a single run.

"ULL played well and did what they needed to win," said South Alabama head coach Becky Clark. "They got hits when they had the opportunities, and they played hard. We've got to take a look at what we did today, and try to come out tomorrow and get better."

## USA 8, ULL 5

The Jags concluded the weekend on a positive note: with an 8-5 win against the Ra-

gin' Cajuns on Sunday. Brown pitched again for the Jags, this time earning the win. She pitched for 4 innings before being replaced by McGill again.

Johnson recorded 1 run, 2 hits and 1 RBI, while Kaitlyn Griffith had 1 run, 1 hit and 3 RBI. Rathburn had 1 run, 1 hit and 1 RBI.

Messer, Todd, Gwen Jones, Kristian Foster and Alyssa Linn all registered 1 run. Pilkington finished with a hit and 2 RBI.

The Jags, now 16-5, will return to action again at home against Alabama State on Wednesday, March 11. First pitch is scheduled for 6 P.M.



ALYSSA NEWTON

Chloe Rathburn leads the Jaguars with 23 RBIs.

## #JagTweets

Finding the best tweets from South Alabama athletes.



**Bud Collura**  
@BudCollura

Baseball

I can't get 1,000 RTs to get Dan to the game but y'all will retweet some picture of a dress 50,000 times...



**Emily Messer**  
@emily\_messer20

Softball

Ever just stare out a window with music in your headphones and imagine you're in a movie and the music is just background music? Am I weird?



**Amanda Minahan**  
@Minivan\_\_

Softball

Hide yo kids hide yo couches cuz they stealing everything up in here. Thief at campus quarters you will be caught.



**Taishaun Johnson**  
@HoopDreaming1

Basketball

Felt so good to win for the seniors tonight on senior day!!! #JagNation #NOLABound



**Zach Blahnik**  
@ZBlahn\_44

T&F

Mixed emotions after finishing season 3 of #HouseOfCards ...

## Women's tennis improves to 8-0

By **AARON POIROUX**  
Sports Reporter

The USA women's tennis team improved to 8-0 after two matches against the University of Southern Mississippi and Samford University last week.

The Jags swept Southern Miss on Friday, March 6. In singles play, No. 1 Laura Valkova defeated Carolin Drescher 6-3, 6-2, while No. 2 Monica Mitta took down Lisa Schneider 6-2, 6-0. On the No. 3 court, Emily Newton beat Karen Gurgenyanyan 6-3, 6-0. No. 4 Michaela Meszarosova defeated Claudia Castella 6-1, 6-0, and on the No. 5 court, Mary Angela Martin beat Alex Kitchen 7-6, 6-4. No. 6 Laura Matuskova beat out Elena Roca 7-6, 6-3.

"We've got a little bit of confidence go-

ing," USA head coach Jaco Keyser said. "The key for us is we are practicing at a really good level at the moment, and some of it is carrying over into matches."

In doubles action, Valkova and Newton teamed up to defeat Drescher and Kitchen 8-3 on the No. 1 court. No. 2 Meszarosova and Martin beat Castella and Schneider 8-2, and on the No. 3 court Mitta and Paula Sanchez took down Elena Roca and Kathrin Waidner.

"It was a good day," Keyser remarked. "We really played some good doubles, and I think that set the tone."

On Saturday, the Jags beat the Samford Bulldogs 5-2. In singles action, No. 1 Valkova was defeated by Stephanie N'tcha 7-6, 6-2. No. 2 Newton beat Yasmee Ebata 7-6, 6-0 and Mitta defeated Jessica Northcutt 6-2, 1-6,

6-1 on the No. 3 court. No. 4 Meszarosova was topped by Carita Moolman 7-5, 6-4. On the No. 5 court, Matuskova defeated Iva Parapunova 6-1, 6-2 and No. 6 Martin beat Savannah Wood 6-2, 6-3.

"We competed once again at a very high level," said Keyser. "Samford is a good team. They take you out of your comfort zone, but overall I love the way we competed."

The Jags won two matches in doubles action and tied another. On the No. 1 court, Newton and Valkova beat N'tcha and Moolman 8-4, while No. 2 Martin and Meszarosova tied Ebada and Northcutt 5-5. On the No. 3 court, Sanchez and Mitt took down Parapunova and Wood 8-5.

The undefeated Jags will return to action on Thursday, March 12 against George Washington University in Jacksonville Florida.

## Men's tennis splits matches in Florida

By **AARON POIROUX**  
Sports Reporter

The South Alabama men's tennis team is 7-4 after last week's play. The Jags played in two matches, one against Florida A&M and a second against North Florida.

The Jaguars started the week with a sweep of Florida A&M on Monday, March 2. In singles play, No. 1 Tim Srkala beat Karlyn Small 6-3, 5-7. On the No. 2 court, Daniel Leitner defeated Walner Espinoza 6-3, 6-3. At No. 3, Gerhard Grundeligh took down Carlos Waitman 6-3, 6-2. On the No. 4 court, Tuki Jacobs topped Courage Okungbowa 6-1, 6-7, and at the No. 5 spot Juan Troglia took down Joel Ovonlen-Jones 1-6, 6-1, 6-3. At No. 6, Oliver Gringras defeated Jason Ula-cio 6-1, 6-1.

"It feels good to get a 7-0 win," said USA head coach Nick Brochu. "Some guys still

struggled but closed the match in good fashion."

In doubles action, Leitner and Troglia beat Espinoza and Okungbowa at the No. 1 spot. On the No. 2 court, Srkala and Gringras topped Waitman and Ula-cio, and at No. 3, Grundeligh and Jacobs defeated Ovonlen-Jones and Small.

"It was great to see how our doubles was good and energetic," said Brochu. "Today was great preparation for our next match against a strong North Florida opponent. We will polish a few things tomorrow at practice before battling it out on Wednesday night."

On Wednesday, the Jags took on North Florida, a match they would lose 4-1. Leitner won the only singles match when he beat Jack Findel-Hawkins at the No. 1 spot.

"We had a great showing by our top guy," said Brochu. "Daniel was playing very solid at No. 1."

At the No. 2 spot, Caio Gomes beat Srkala 3-6, 6-4, 1-5. On the No. 3 court, Norbert Nemscek defeated Grundeligh. Julian Bradley topped Jacobs 6-4, 2-6, 2-0 at the No. 4 spot, and Lasse Muscheites secured the No. 5 spot with his 6-4, 2-6, 6-3 victory over Grinfas. At No. 6, Zach Goldberg took down Troglia 6-0, 4-6, 6-1.

"We fought hard in singles, but we came up short," said Brochu. "Some guys had a slow start but came back and took their match to a third set. It is good to see our guys fight so hard and push the match to the limit."

In doubles action, UNF earned a pair of victories at the Nos. 2 and 3 spots. At No. 2, Gomes and Yannick Zuern defeated Troglia and Jacobs 6-1, and on the No. 3 court, Goldberg and Muscheites took down Srkala and Gringras 6-1.

The Jags will take on Southern Illinois on Tuesday, March 10 at 2 P.M. in Mobile.