The South Alabama men’s basketball team defeated Arkansas-Little Rock Thursday to reach the quarterfinals of the Sun Belt Conference Tournament, but fell to Louisiana-Monroe on Friday to finish the season.

On Thursday, the sixth-seeded Jaguars took down the No. 7 seeded Trojans 57-55, despite missing their last nine shots of the night.

South Alabama held UALR without a field goal for the last 3:49 of the game to get the win and advance to a quarterfinal matchup with the Louisiana-Monroe Warhawks.

"I'm extremely proud of my team," South Alabama head coach Matthew Graves said. "The preparation was really good. I thought we got off to a tremendous start in the first half. We did unbelievable job shrinking the floor, held them to under 30 percent in the first half, and that's what you have to do. If you want to win at tournament time, you have to really lock in and defend.”

Dionte Ferguson scored 10 points and added 12 rebounds and four blocks for his fifth double-double of the season. Barrington Stevens III led the Jaguars with 14 points, and Ken Williams added 12 points and six rebounds.

"What Dionte has meant to this program and what he has done for this program is absolutely tremendous," Graves said. "Where he came from in the spring, basically playing very few minutes as a junior, he came back, worked all summer, all fall and he is really reaping the benefits and I'm so proud of Dionte as our lone senior scholarship player."

The Jaguars led by 10 points at halftime, and as many as 18 in the second half, but UALR battled back to pull within one with 28.4 seconds left, but Ferguson blocked a Trojans field goal attempt with four seconds left to seal the victory.

"In the second half, I thought we got really tentative around the 12-minute mark, Graves said. ”You can say fatigue, all kinds of excuses, but the bottom line is we got tight, missed some shots and turned the ball over a few times. UALR is a very good team. They're very explosive. They're capable of making 3s and then they started putting the ball on the floor and getting into the paint and that really bothered us. We were trying to juggle some foul trouble, but the two possessions there late where we dug in defensively and got stops, those were two of the best possessions we've had all year long."

Roger Woods led UALR with 16 points and 10 rebounds, and Josh Hagins added 12 points, four rebounds and three assists. The Trojans dropped to 13-18 to finish their season.

On Friday, South Alabama’s season came to a close, as the Jaguars fell to No. 3-seeded Louisiana-Monroe 77-59. The Warhawks (21-11) out-rebounded the Jaguars 48-36, including 21-11 on the offensive glass.

"We knew it was going to be difficult coming into this game after playing last night," USA head coach Matthew Graves said. "I felt like we had a pretty good game plan in mind, but unfortunately we weren't able to rebound the ball. They did a lot of tough things and when you give up 21 offensive rebounds that is certainly a recipe for disaster. Congratulations to ULM and I wish them the best of luck.”

Dionte Ferguson led the way in his final game for the Jaguars with 16 points on 5-of-6 shooting and added seven rebounds and two blocks.

"I've talked a lot about what Dionte has meant to this program," Graves said. "Nobody can convince me that he's not the most improved player in the Sun Belt this year. That kid is an absolute warrior. He's going to be a tremendous success when he leaves the University of South Alabama with his degree in the spring."

The Jaguars got within seven points of the Warhawks in the second half, but shot just 22-of-60 (36.7 percent) for the game. ULM used a 14-2 run over 4:08 midway through the second half to pull away.

The Jaguars finished their season with a 12-21 record, but lose just one scholarship senior in Ferguson, whose 51 blocks rank eighth all-time in a single season at South Alabama.