



Kentucky Basketball **Head Coach**

Billy Gillispie



After some of the most dramatic single-season turnarounds in NCAA history at Texas-El Paso and Texas A&M, Billy Gillispie becomes the 21st coach of the Kentucky Wildcats.

In just three seasons at Texas A&M, the three-time Big 12 Coach of the Year engineered one of the most amazing turnarounds in college basketball history, leading ESPN's Steve Lavin, among others, to christen him a "miracle worker."

In the 2006-07 season, Gillispie, who was a finalist for the 2007 Naismith National Coach of the Year and Jim Phelan National Coach of the Year led the Aggies to a school record 27-7 record which included a school best No. 3 seed in the NCAA's, in which they advanced to the Sweet 16 for the first time since 1980.

In addition to leading the Aggies a final No. 9 ranking in 2007, he led A&M to a top 10 ranking in both polls for 11 straight weeks. Before the 2007 season, the last time A&M was ranked in the top 10 in either poll was Jan. 3, 1979, when the Aggies were ranked 10th by the AP. The only other time A&M was ranked in the top 10 was a four-week run in the AP poll in 1959-60. That team was ranked No. 8 one week and 10th the following three weeks.

In Gillispie's first season in College Station in 2004-05, the Aggies were picked to finish last in the rugged Big 12, but shot out to a perfect 11-0 start and went on to finish 21-10, earning accolades as the country's most improved team. Gillispie became the only coach in history to lead the most improved team in consecutive seasons.

Even more impressive, A&M went 8-8 in Big 12 play, including victories against No. 9-ranked Texas and No. 25-ranked Texas Tech, to become only the third college team ever to finish .500 in league play after going winless the previous season. The Aggies won two games in the National Invitation Tournament, A&M's first postseason appearance in 11 years.

The following season in 2005-06, A&M finished 22-9 and placed fourth in the Big 12 with a 10-6 mark, its best finish in the league's 10-year history. In addition, A&M advanced to the NCAA Tournament for the first time in 19 years.

But Gillispie was not finished yet as the Aggies pulled off a stunning first-round upset of national power Syracuse, then took LSU to the wire in the second round before losing on a three-point basket in the final seconds. The Tigers went on to the Final Four.

Gillispie was honored as Big 12 Coach of the Year by several major newspapers and was selected Texas College Coach of the Year by the TABC.

A native of the tiny West Texas town of Graford, Gillispie began his Division I career at Baylor in the mid-1990s. He went on to successful assistant coaching stints at Tulsa and Illinois before becoming UTEP's head coach in 2002.

The Miners finished 6-24 in his first season, but went 24-8 and advanced to the NCAA Tournament in 2004, an incredible 18-win improvement that ranks among the best in history. As a result, Gillispie was named district coach of the year by the USBWA, Texas coach of the year by the TABC, and was a finalist for national coach of the year honors.

The Miners captured the 2004 Western Athletic Conference title, its first in 12 years, after being picked to finish ninth in the preseason poll. UTEP became only the third WAC team in history — and the first in 35 years — to win a league title after finishing last the previous year. In the exhibition season, the Miners ended the Harlem Globetrotters' 288-game winning streak with an 89-88 victory.

The Miners completed a 16-1 home ledger and built a huge following in El Paso, averaging 10,282 fans per game and ranking first in the NCAA in increased attendance. UTEP had eight sellout crowds of more than 12,000.

A tireless worker, the 47-year-old Gillispie has built a deserved reputation as one of the country's best recruiters. His prowess was reflected in his first recruiting class at UTEP, which featured a pair of first-team junior college All-Americans — Filiberto Rivera and Omar Thomas — and earned a top 25 ranking.

Rivera was the 2003 national junior college player of the year, while Thomas was the all-time leading scoring in junior college basketball and was the only JUCO player ever to score 2,000 points with 1,000 rebounds.

At A&M, Gillispie signed three straight top-25 recruiting classes.

Prior to being hired at UTEP in 2002, Gillispie served eight years as an assistant coach at Baylor, Tulsa and Illinois. He was a member of Bill Self's staffs at Tulsa from 1997-00 and at Illinois from 2000-02. Self is now the head coach at Kansas.

Gillispie was part of a coaching unit that recorded 85 wins over three years, the second-highest total in the nation in that period, and captured four consecutive conference championships — two in the Big Ten and two in the Western Athletic Conference.

When the WAC title at UTEP is included, Gillispie was a part of conference championship teams in five of six years, a record matched by few others.

In addition, Gillispie was a member of the only coaching staff in NCAA history to lead two different schools to the Elite Eight in successive seasons — Tulsa in 2000 and Illinois in 2001.

Tulsa registered a 32-5 mark in 1999-00 and Illinois fashioned a composite mark of 53-17 in 2000-01 and 2001-02, winning back-to-back Big Ten titles for the first time in 50 years. The Illinois staff became the first since 1913 to win Big Ten titles in each of its first two seasons in the league. Illinois advanced to the Sweet 16 in the 2002 NCAA Tournament.

Tulsa earned a No. 9 national ranking in the final coaches' poll in 2000, while Illinois was rated No. 6 in 2001 and No. 11 in 2002.

His efforts on the recruiting trail helped Illinois land one of the nation's top 10 classes in 2002, featuring All-American Dee Brown, James Augustine, Aaron Spears, Deron Williams and Kyle Wilson.

Gillispie was the top assistant and recruiting coordinator at Baylor from 1994-97 under head coach Harry Miller. The Bears notched 18 victories in 1996-97 after consecutive nine-win seasons the previous two years. Baylor's 1996 recruiting class was ranked as high as No. 6 in the country.

A 1983 graduate of Southwest Texas State with a bachelor's degree in Education, Gillispie got his start in coaching as a graduate assistant at his alma mater from 1982-85.

From 1987-93, Gillispie served as head coach at three different high schools in Texas — Copperas Cove, New Braunfels Canyon and Killeen Ellison. His last prep team at Killeen Ellison recorded a 32-6 record in 1992-93 and set school records for winning percentage and points scored while finishing the year ranked No. 4 in the state.

Gillispie joined the JUCO ranks from 1993-94 as an assistant and recruiting coordinator at South Plains Junior College in Levelland, Texas.

Born in Abilene on Nov. 7, 1959, Gillispie was the middle of five children and the only boy. When he was in second grade, the family moved to Graford (pop. 578), located 65 miles northwest of Fort Worth.

He played point guard at Graford High School and was a two-sport athlete in basketball and baseball at Ranger (Texas) Junior College from 1978-80.

Gillispie attended Sam Houston State for one year, where he was a student assistant under coach Bob Derryberry, then transferred to Texas State, where he served three years as a graduate assistant for Derryberry. He received a degree in education from Texas State in 1983.

Gillispie is a member of the NABC, TABC, Texas High School Coaches Association and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.



Kentucky Basketball **Head Coach**

Billy Gillispie

HIGHLIGHTS

- 2007 Big 12 Coach of the Year (Big 12 coaches' poll) / 2007 NABC District 9 Coach of the Year
- Finalist for 2007 Naismith National Coach of the Year and Jim Phelan National Coach of the Year
- Led Texas A&M to 27 wins in 2006-07, the most in school history
- 2006 Big 12 Coach of the Year (most major Big 12 newspapers) after being a consensus pick in 2005
- A&M had three straight 20-win seasons for the first time in history after going 7-21 three years ago
- In 2004-05, A&M had the best turnaround in the nation and the best in school history
- A&M won 31 Big 12 games in three years under Gillispie after winning just 25 in the first eight years of Big 12 play
- Three-time finalist for Naismith National Coach of the Year honors (2004, 2005, 2007)
- Two-time USBWA District Coach of the Year (2004 and 2005)
- Two-time Texas Association of Basketball Coaches Senior College Coach of the Year (2004 and 2005)
- Two-time NABC District Coach of the Year (2005, 2007)
- Only coach in college basketball history to coach the nation's most improved team in consecutive seasons (2003-04 and 2004-05)
- 2003-04 UTEP team tied for the most improved team in college basketball history (+18 wins)
- 2005 Aggies went 8-8 in Big 12 play after finishing 0-16 the previous year, making A&M only the third college team ever to go .500 in a conference after going winless the previous season.
- Last three A&M recruiting classes were ranked among top 15 nationally.

Biographical Information

Birthdate: November 7, 1959 (Abilene, Texas)

College: Texas State, 1983 (B.A. in Education)

Head Coaching Record

| Year | School | Season | Conference | Postseason |
|----------------|-----------|---------------|--------------|------------|
| 2002-03 | UTEP | 6-24 | 3-15 | -- |
| 2003-04 | UTEP | 24-8 | 13-5 | NCAA (0-1) |
| 2004-05 | Texas A&M | 21-10 | 8-8 | NIT (2-1) |
| 2005-06 | Texas A&M | 22-9 | 10-6 | NCAA (1-1) |
| 2006-07 | Texas A&M | 27-7 | 13-3 | NCAA (2-1) |
| 5 Years | | 100-58 | 47-37 | 5-4 |

Coaching Career

1982-85: Texas State, graduate assistant

1985-87: Killeen (Texas) HS, assistant coach

1987-88: Copperas Cove (Texas) HS, head coach

1988-90: New Braunfels (Texas) Canyon HS, head coach

1990-93: Killeen (Texas) Ellison HS, head coach

1993-94: South Plains JC, assistant coach/recruiting coordinator

1994-97: Baylor, assistant coach/recruiting coordinator

1997-00: Tulsa, assistant coach

2000-02: Illinois, assistant coach, recruiting coordinator

2002-04: UTEP, head coach

2004-07: Texas A&M, head coach

Miscellaneous

Overall Record100-58

Conference Record 47-37

Home Record 72-19

Road Record 19-29

Neutral Site Record 7-7

vs. Top 25 Teams 9-15

vs. Top 10 Teams 3-8

Scoring 100+ Points 6-0

Scoring 90+ Points 19-2

Opponent Scores Under 70 79-23

Last Four Years

Overall Record 94-34

Conference Record 44-22

Home Record 67-7

Road Record 21-20

Neutral Site Record 6-7

vs. Top 25 Teams 9-15

vs. Top 10 Teams 3-8

Scoring 100+ Points 6-0

Scoring 90+ Points 18-2

Opponent Scores Under 70 76-16