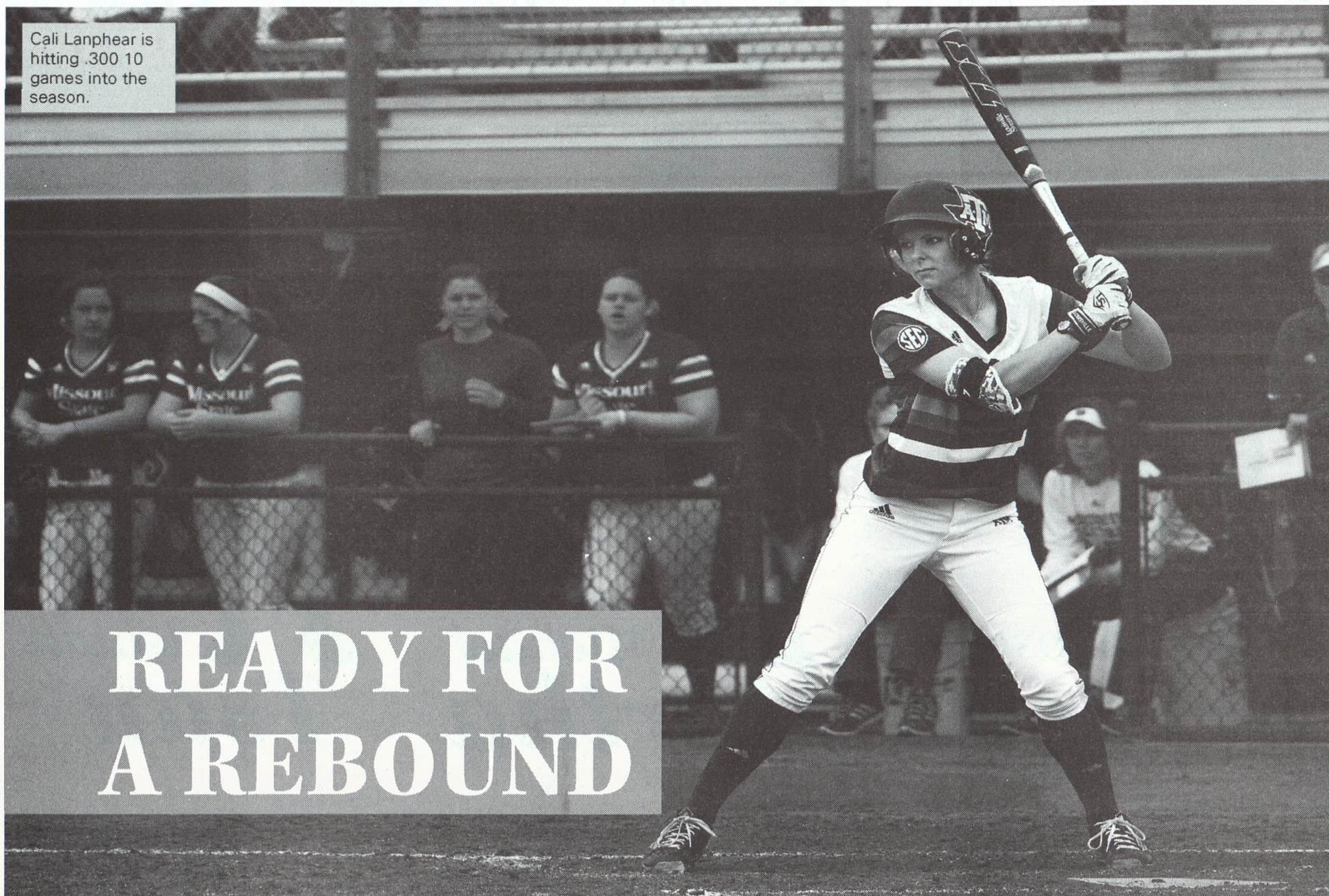


Cali Lanphear is hitting .300 10 games into the season.



Tim Lai — THE BATTALION

## READY FOR A REBOUND

BASEBALL

### Larkins' first start propels Aggies to win

A&M's perfect start continues Tuesday

By Andre Perrard

▶ The Aggie baseball team continued its hot start with a 6-0 win over Stephen F. Austin on Tuesday night.

The Aggies (4-0) were led by freshman pitcher Turner Larkins, who had nine strikeouts in 5 1/3 innings of work, giving up four hits and zero earned runs.

It was Larkins' first career start.

"After the third inning, coach came to me and told me to get my command right," Larkins said. "I lost it for a bit. But I fought through and gained control. To get guys out at this level is not easy."

The Lumberjacks (1-4) had no response to the Aggie pitching attack.

The scoring got started in the first inning for A&M. A sacrifice fly by Mitchell Nau and a Ryne Birk run on a groundout by Logan Nottebrok made it 2-0 A&M at the end of the inning.

The Aggies led 3-0 after three innings when Nau picked up his second RBI of the night on a sacrifice fly.

Birk was the story on offense. He went 3-for-5 with two RBIs, scored three runs and hit a home run. Nau picked up two RBIs in the effort. Nick Banks also went 4-for-4 with an RBI in the win.

Birk gave credit to his teammate JB Moss after the game.

"It felt good, but I could not have done it without JB Moss," Birk said about his home run. "His at-bat right before mine, he sucked nine or 10 pitches out of him, and that left me a cookie over the middle. I have to give a lot of credit to JB Moss."



Nikita Redkar — THE BATTALION

In his first career start Tuesday, freshman Turner Larkins struck out nine in 5 1/3 innings.

On a cold night at Olsen Field, the Aggie pitching took over.

Larkins saw his night end in the sixth inning. Kyle Simonds came through in relief in a bases-loaded jam to keep the shutout alive for the Aggies. Simonds pitched in the seventh and eighth inning as well, recording three strikeouts along the way.

A&M head coach Rob Chil-

dress was elated with the performance from his freshman.

"I am very proud of him," Childress said. "He got punched a little bit early, but finally got it together."

Birk hit a two-run homer in the seventh inning to give A&M a little cushion with a 5-0 lead. Banks had an RBI single later that made it 6-0 Aggies.

A&M is now 23-1 all time against the Lumberjacks in base-

ball. The lone victory for Stephen F. Austin over A&M came in a 7-6 win in 2010.

The Aggies will keep their 13-game home stand going this weekend against Penn State. It is the first time the Aggies will host a Big Ten opponent in baseball since sweeping Michigan State in 2012. First pitch is scheduled for 6:35 p.m. Friday night.

### SOFTBALL CONTINUED

teams all receiving votes in the preseason polls, the Ducks outscored their foes 55-15 over the six games.

Oregon hit eight home runs at the tournament while not allowing a single long ball. The Ducks hit .405 as a team while Oregon pitchers held opponents to a .204 combined average.

Texas A&M (7-3) is projected to face nine ranked opponents before the season comes to an end and is 1-1 against the top 25 after splitting games with now-No. 12 UCLA. The Aggies are riding a hot pitching staff with senior Rachel Fox and junior

Katie Marks leading the way. Fox said the relief pitching has been strong.

"I'm really proud of our staff out of the bullpen," Fox said. "Our pitching out of the bullpen has been exceptional."

Junior Cali Lanphear said momentum will be important going in to the clash with Oregon.

"We had some success this past weekend and that's huge, especially for the younger ones going into a big game playing against the likes of Oregon," Lanphear said.

First pitch is scheduled for 4:30 p.m. Fans are encouraged to wear camouflage in an effort to "hunt" the Ducks and the first 300 will receive a camouflage Texas A&M Softball drawstring bag.



Tim Lai — THE BATTALION

Freshman Ashley Walters is one of several underclassmen getting playing time early in the season.

### Junior Lanphear on her way to return to form after sophomore slump

By Milkyas Gashaw

After a freshman season that consisted of several shattered freshman Aggie records and a second-team All America selection, Cali Lanphear set high benchmarks for her sophomore campaign.

It didn't go as planned. For the first time, the outfielder struggled on the softball diamond. And she's ready to regain her old form this season as a junior tasked with leading a young team.

"Each year brings its own challenges and great moments so you have to take everything from each year," Lanphear said. "Of course I think back to [my freshman year] and it was great how my swing felt, but I think last year really set me on a good stage for this year. I really learned a lot. I've never been in a position where I was struggling like that through playing softball. I'd always had a lot of success and never really had to worry about struggling, but I think it has definitely made me a stronger player on and off the field."

Lanphear was recruited out of Montgomery, Texas, where she won three state championships. The accolades followed when she stepped onto the diamond in Aggieland.

In her freshman season, Lanphear made an immediate impact, earning 54 starts in the outfield. She led the team in batting average (.362), runs (48), RBI (58), home runs (21), extra-base hits (32), on base percentage (.439) and slugging percentage (.855). She was placed on the SEC All-Freshman team and later to the USA Softball Player of the Year Top 50 Watch List before the beginning of her sophomore year.

But she struggled from the plate and competed for playing time behind seniors Emily Albus and Cassie Tysarczyk and rising junior speedster Brittany Clopton.

Lanphear is showing improvement already this season with a .300 batting average and is second on the team with six RBIs. The duo of Lanphear and junior Alex Masek are ready to lead a young Aggie softball club and are out to prove people wrong.

"People aren't going to expect anything from us and we're going to use that to our advantage," Masek said.

Head coach Jo Evans said Lanphear gets along well with her teammates in the clubhouse.

"She's upbeat but kind of quiet, not real outgoing," Evans said. "She definitely likes to have fun, laugh and have a good time. She's someone that is really on task. She loves to have all of her stuff in order and be on top of things. She gets along great with everybody."

The Aggies will have perhaps their most difficult challenge of the year Wednesday when they host No. 2 Oregon at 4:30 p.m. Lanphear said her experience should help guide the team this season and through challenges like this.

"Coming from high school softball, we were all typically leaders on our high school teams," Lanphear said. "We were the above-average players on our high school teams, so we've all had experience of [leadership] in high school. Now, it's just your time to shine. Experience helps tremendously when you're playing in these big games. This year, we have a ton of underclassmen that we have to help along. Playing [softball] is the same and we've done that forever, but having that experience to pass on helps a lot when you're in those big games."