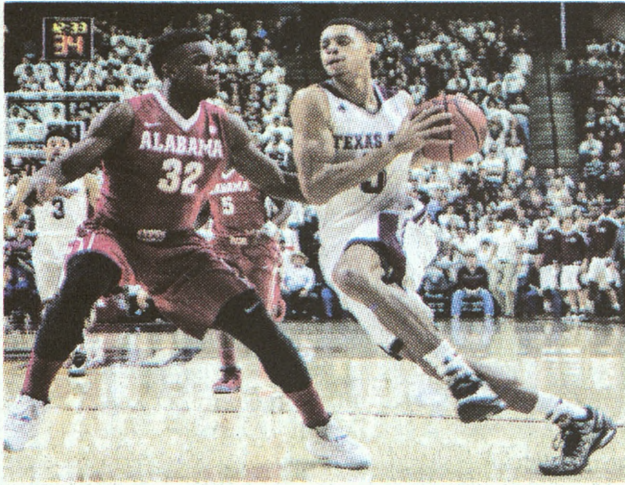


5 basketball takeaways

Sports reporter Cole Stenholm breaks down A&M's 61-60 loss to Alabama Saturday.



Cody Franklin — THE BATTALION

Guard **Jordan Green** attacks the rim in the loss Saturday against Alabama.

1 The Kennedy Era

Despite a sour ending to the regular season, Texas A&M has improved in each of its four regular seasons under head coach Billy Kennedy. A&M's record (20-10,11-7) marks the highest regular season win total since Kennedy arrived in 2011. And if his history as a head coach at Southeastern Louisiana and Murray State are of any indication, this upward trend should only continue.

2 The wrong kind of peaking

Ever heard the saying, "You want to peak toward the end of the season?" Well if there's any truth to it, the future for Texas A&M basketball — men's and women's — does not appear to be bright as they embark on postseason play. The teams are a combined 2-6 since Feb. 24. The men are riding a two game losing streak into their conference tournament while the women were ousted in the second game of theirs.

3 Tournament longings

Following an 80-55 thrashing of Auburn on Feb. 28, Texas A&M had its first NCAA Tournament appearance since 2011 in sight. Just over a week removed from that game and A&M's tournament hopes are fading. ESPN has expunged them from its latest bracketology projections, suggesting they will need a strong showing in the upcoming SEC Tournament to recapture hope for Selection Sunday.

4 House is a must

For the Aggies to make one final push toward the NCAA Tournament, the health of junior forward Danuel House will be requisite. The Aggies are 2-2 without their leading scorer, who sat out Saturday due to a nagging foot injury. At 6-foot-7, 200 pounds, House's athleticism and versatility match up well with the rosters of teams like Kentucky, a squad the Aggies would meet, hypothetically, in the tournament semifinals.

5 The killer instinct

Texas A&M lacked the ability to close out a 14-point first-half lead Saturday against a team with a sub .500 conference record. A&M came out of the break lacking energy and allowed a few controversial officiating decisions to get underneath its skin. The result was a squandered lead within eight minutes. Kennedy and his players, following Saturday's game, could not pinpoint exactly why the team fell flat in the second half, but efforts like Saturday's may not only have cut short A&M's NCAA Tournament hopes, but its conference tournament run as well.



Cody Franklin — THE BATTALION

Arnaus' scoring has decreased the last three years that he has been in the U.S.

ARNAUS CONTINUED

European Boys' Team Championship in 2011. However, when it came time to advance past his high school career, Arnaus felt that his native home did not offer a program that would entertain both his golf and academic pursuits.

Luckily though, Arnaus's resume caught the attention of several college scouts from the United States who sought unidentified talent overseas as potential prospects for their programs.

One of these scouts was Texas A&M head coach J.T. Higgins.

Higgins set up a campus visit for Arnaus while he was stateside for a junior event. On his visit, Arnaus fell in love with the A&M golf facilities, campus proximity and weather conditions, and soon after completing his event in Florida he decided to announce his commitment to the university.

His first semester on campus was not without tribulation.

Arnaus, as a first-year college student whose family resided on a separate continent, became homesick.

"It wasn't easy," he said. "At the beginning you're like, 'Ah man, I'm here, alone, things are not going as easy as I thought because the English wasn't as good as it is now, I guess. I was lucky to find my roommate Ben [Crancer] and all the team supporting me. They didn't give me a hard time or anything. They just helped me and I guess that made it easier first semester."

Assistant coach Brian Kortan said Arnaus could not be more at home as he is now in his third year with the team.

"Initially, I think it was hard for him," he said. "But as he's gotten deeper into Texas A&M and the team, he's really figured it out. He does great in school. He uses all the resources we have for him and has adjusted to where you can tell he's from Spain, but you really can't tell he's from Spain."

Arnaus, now fully acclimated to the American and collegiate culture, thrives within the Texas A&M men's golf program. His overall scoring average, relative to par, has declined in each of his three years here, from 77.67 in 2012-13, to 74.22 in 2013-14 and 72.36 in 2014-15.

He posted his career low round earlier this fall at the 2014 Dick's Sporting Goods Challenge Cup when he carded a six-under 65 in second-round action.

"You come here and you think that, coming from Spain, that you are good," he said. "But you see that the world is so big and then there's a lot of people. As good as you think you are, you are not even close to being as good as you could be. You get shocked at the beginning. You play different courses, you play different grass, you play different winds. Everything is real different. It's just hard to adapt. But once you get that down, you just try and work as hard as you can."

SOFTBALL CONTINUED

Kelsey Nunley, whose last pitch was a fastball that April Ryan smashed over the right field wall to end Friday's extra-inning thriller. She came out dialed in from the jump, allowing minimal base runners while striking out 10 Aggies in seven innings. Ryan said Nunley made adjustments after Friday's game.

"[Nunley] stuck to her outside pitches and my approach changed because I went out there hacking at the first pitch," Ryan said. "I wasn't worried when I got down in the count."

There was an odd series of events in the sixth when junior Nikki Sagermann got the barrel of her bat on a Marks fastball and drove it all the way into deep center field. Sagermann began to slow down as she rounded first assuming that the ball was going out of the park, but the ball hit right above the 220 sign in centerfield and popped straight up onto the warning track. Kentucky coaches and Sagermann argued their case for a homer, but the umpires stood with the original call of a double.

The Aggies couldn't get anything going on Nunley until freshman Kristen Cuyos loaded the bases with a single and Erica Russell drew a walk to get the first run across.



Cody Franklin — THE BATTALION

Shortstop **Kristen Cuyos** swings for a Kentucky pitch at the Aggie Softball Complex Sunday afternoon.

A&M completed the comeback when Brittany Clopton was grazed by a Nunley pitch with the bases loaded and tied the game.

The Wildcats took the lead for good with their third solo homer of the day from junior Maisie Steed and Nunley closed the door in the bottom half of the seventh to complete the Kentucky win.

The Aggies will play the final game of their homestand at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday against Sam Houston State.

CHAVIS CONTINUED

now," Chavis said. "I was impressed with what our guys were able to get done today. It was a challenge, it was a tough practice and they pushed through it and I think they were better at the end of the practice than we were to begin with."

The Aggie fan base expects change from the defenses of recent years and Chavis said the players' self-esteem is paramount.

"The first thing we need to do is we need to get our guys confident," Chavis said. "They're good enough to play, they're good enough to win in the SEC, and once they feel that way they're going to be able to compete."

Chavis — who has been in the business for 38 years and knows his way around the SEC — is a straightforward man that is looking to get results and do things the right way. He had nothing but positive things to say about the fan base here at A&M.

"There's no doubt, and I'm talking about classy, I'm talking about great people," Chavis said. "I've not seen a classier group of fans — and that's well before I ever came here — than I did in Aggieland."

Taking into consideration where he is in his career and his comfort level in College



Tim Lee — THE BATTALION

Defensive coordinator **John Chavis** supervises Spring 2015 football practices.

Station, Chavis wouldn't be opposed to staying at A&M for an extended amount of time.

"If I could get eight or 10 good years here. If I could go that long, it'd be great," Chavis said.

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