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## ANALYSIS

## Inexperienced but ready

Texas A&M is the first team to reach 30 wins despite losing two weekend pitchers



Carter Karels  
@CarterKarels

This year's narrative for sports has followed a common story line: a team doesn't necessarily need experience to be at the top.

Let's look at Ohio State for example. The Buckeyes rummaged through three quarterbacks, including Cardale Jones, who didn't start a down until the 13th game of the season. A little over a month later, the sophomore hoisted a national championship trophy over his shoulders, and was projected high in the draft before deciding to return.

Kentucky basketball coach John Calipari experimented with this phenomenon recently, and gathered a national title and four Final Four appearances in the process with the Wildcats.

Even Duke basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski, who historically features teams with seasoned veterans and chemistry, won the national championship last night with his youngest team in his 35 years of coaching the Blue Devils.

Rob Childress and the No. 1 Texas A&M baseball team fit in well with this narrative.

Blake Allemand, Mitchell Nau and Jason Freeman are the only players that were part of the 2011 College World Series squad. Leadership was needed coming in to this season, and it was surely provided.

Over the weekend, Texas A&M became the first collegiate baseball team to reach 30 wins, securing its spot at No. 1 in the country. This is no coincidence, for the Aggies have shown all the right tools to prove its top-ranked position.

A relatable story that could explain the Aggie's success is the Louisville basketball team of 2012-2013. In the Elite Eight, Cardinals guard Kevin



Vanessa Peña — THE BATTALION

Sophomore outfielder **Nick Banks** slides into third base during the series win over Missouri.

Ware suffered a gruesome injury in the national spotlight against Duke. Moving forward, Louisville used that as inspiration, and the Cardinals eventually won the title game. Similarly, A&M faced adversity with the loss of two weekend pitchers, Tyler Stubblefield (ACL) right before the season, and AJ Minter (Tommy John surgery) in the midst of this season.

Nevertheless, A&M ranks second in the country in ERA at 2.03. Childress' recruiting success and defensive mindedness gave him the luxury to bring in arms at the level of the players lost to injury.

But the credit doesn't all go toward the pitching staff, and that's what makes the Aggies top notch. The A&M hitting is just as good, if not better, than the pitching with the depth of the lineup. Every Aggie hitter in the order has collected a home run, with Ronnie Gideon and Logan Taylor leading the way with six apiece. Eight players also have 20 or more RBIs, while seven are batting higher than .300. Through April 1, A&M stood at No. 5 as a team in batting average.

An even spread is A&M's strong suit on both sides, but it has specific players that can step up when it matters the most. Nick Banks bats .431,

ranking fourth among all player. Two of the Aggies weekend pitchers, Grayson Long and Matt Kent, remain undefeated at 6-0 each, aiding in only allowing five home runs and 87 total runs all season, which both rank best in the SEC.

The Aggies boast a 30-2 record after opening the season 24-0 as they host the No. 15 Rice Owls at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday. A&M remains undefeated in midweek series, despite usually throwing out freshmen in Turner Larkins and Brigham Hill, proving again that experience isn't everything. This game provides the Aggies with their first ranked opponent in a midweek series, and a win with a freshman at the mound could add to the bevy of impressive feats collected this year.

The young, promising Aggies came into this season with one goal on their mind: making the College World Series again. Despite losing two of their best players and calling on freshmen and sophomores for help, A&M has shown the nation that its season might just end with something more: a title shot.

Carter Karels is sports editor for The Battalion and a freshman journalism major.

## GERMANWINGS CONTINUED

around inside the aircraft and bumping into things."

A few days after the crash, investigators uncovered the plane's black box, which provided insight on how the plane went down and which investigators finished looking into over the weekend. Talreja said a black box provides a complete picture on how a flight is taking place.

"A black box records all sounds coming from the cockpit as well as any conversations," Talreja said. "It records altitude at any point and signals from various parts of the aircraft, such as the wings, backside and front."

In this particular case, the black box recorded the flight's entire descent, including the screams of the passengers, the frantic knocking of the captain and Lubitz's silence all while the plane descended rapidly from 38,000 feet (about the height of 380 Rudder Towers stacked one atop the other) to 100 feet.

Brak said Lubitz's actions do not reflect the norm.

"That's just not normal pilot mentality," Brak said. "Most pilots love their job and want their ride to be as smooth

as possible. Most of the time, the sky is our happiest place where everything is just so beautiful and awesome."

Shannon Smith, clinical psychology doctoral candidate, researches models of psychopathic personality. She said a possible motive as to why Lubitz hid his tendencies is because mental illness is stigmatized and encourages people to "tough it out" rather than seek help.

"People who commit large-scale acts of violence such as this may do so for reasons such as seeking notoriety or wanting to be remembered after death," Smith said. "Another factor is personality features involving a self-centered focus through which the person is unconcerned about the impact of his or her actions on other people."

Though Lubitz was diagnosed with mental instability, Smith said she encourages caution in all regards as people diagnosed with mental illnesses are no more likely to exhibit violent behavior than people who are not.

With the increasing presence of airline crashes publicized in recent years, questions of an automatic flying system controlled from the ground have been gaining traction. Talreja said while some automation is necessary, relinquishing the pilot of all control is unrealistic.

"You can't account for all situations from a control tower, such as when a passenger within the aircraft is being difficult," Talreja said. "It is unwise and dangerous to completely unman an aircraft."

Brak said passengers often exaggerate cockpit technology and forget planes are manned by actual people, not robots.

"On some airbuses, there is some ground control in which altitude is automatically adjusted if the aircraft is too close to dangerous terrain," Brak said. "But I don't know how much more automation they can put in there, especially if a pilot strays off the established course. It's not going to function completely without pilots."

Despite the Germanwings incident and other plane accidents within the last year, such as the missing Malaysian Airlines flight and AirAsia crash, Talreja said flying still remains the safest mode of transportation. According to an MIT statistics report on flying safety, a global average of 100,000 flights land safely every day.

"Aircraft inspections happen every day and are extremely thorough," Talreja said. "It's essentially pilot error left to cause disasters."

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