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# A&M finds 'strokes of genius' in Scanlin

By **TOM TAGLIABUE**  
*Sports Writer*

Mike Scanlin, who has become Texas A&M's most prolific home run hitter, wasn't always a long ball threat.

"In high school, I hit one home run throughout my whole career," said Scanlin, who slammed his 31st and 32nd career home runs against Louisiana Tech Friday to break the record of 30 set by Kyle Hawthorne (1977-1979).

**Baseball**

"It was like, my freshman year up here, the ball just started jumping out of the park in batting practice. It was just a stroke that happened to come to me."

The 16-7 Aggies will need Scanlin's "strokes of genius" when they host NCAA powerhouse Mississippi State in a two-game series at Olsen Field Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Bulldogs (6-5) finished third in the College World Series last season, but were wiped out when 12 players were lost to the major leagues.

Scanlin could have joined several of those MSU players in the majors last summer, after being drafted by the Seattle Mariners in the 24th round. But Scanlin said the money wasn't worth giving up his senior year at A&M.

"I'm glad I made that decision (to remain at A&M) because I'm that much further along in school and I'm very happy here on this team," he said.

After passing up the opportunity to turn pro, he sought the help of A&M Coach Mark Johnson, who signed him up to play in the Alaskan Summer League. Scanlin went on to be named the league's Most Valuable Player.

This fall, Scanlin's Aggie teammates named him captain, something he said doesn't bring on as much pressure as he thought it would.

"It's really opened my eyes," he said. "There's a great deal more responsibility on the team (as captain). I have the responsibility, if guys are really getting out of line, to say something and try to keep order along with Barry Smith and Fred Gegen (the other senior captains)."

"On the field, I'm more of an intense player. I'm not as much a captain/leader type. If I'm a leader, it's by my actions out on the field."

"I've been improving since Day 1 that I've been up here at A&M and I still feel that this is going to be my best year. I'm not finished yet. I've



A&M's Mike Scanlin (8) gets a handshake from Scott Livingstone (3) after Scanlin hit his 30th career home run to tie an A&M record. A&M, now 16-7 overall, hosts Mississippi State tonight at 7.

Photo by ANTHONY S. CASPER

never made (the All-Southwest Conference team) and that's just a goal I'd love to accomplish."

But the Aggies starting center fielder of the past two years knows every baseball player has highs and lows.

Scanlin said his first low came during his sophomore year and has haunted him for two years. He was mired in a 0-for-22 hitting slump, which started on a road trip to Louisiana and continued through the following home stand.

It was ironic that almost exactly two years later Scanlin broke A&M's career home run mark and went 7-for-18 on a similar Louisiana road trip over the weekend.

Scanlin said he has two goals for himself — a career in professional baseball and a college diploma. He said he is a physical education major by necessity, but an accounting major by heart. He lacks just 30 hours for a degree in P.E.

If he is drafted in June by the majors, Scanlin said he will return each

fall to finish his education at A&M. Scanlin said the Aggies hope to educate the always-tough Mississippi State Bulldogs tonight at 7 in Olsen Field.

Johnson will be trying to defeat his former team and Coach Ben Polk, who was named National Coach of the Year in 1985 by *Baseball America* magazine.

Johnson was an assistant coach under Polk for six years before joining A&M four years ago as an assistant.

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- MSC Mania T-Shirt Day
- MSC Mania Package Sale (1st Floor MSC)
- "Bring A Buddy to the Student Program Office," 216 MSC
- MSC Council Assistant Program Orientation, 8:30 p.m. 701 Rudder (open to all Freshmen)

(All activities to be held in the MSC/Rudder Complex)

