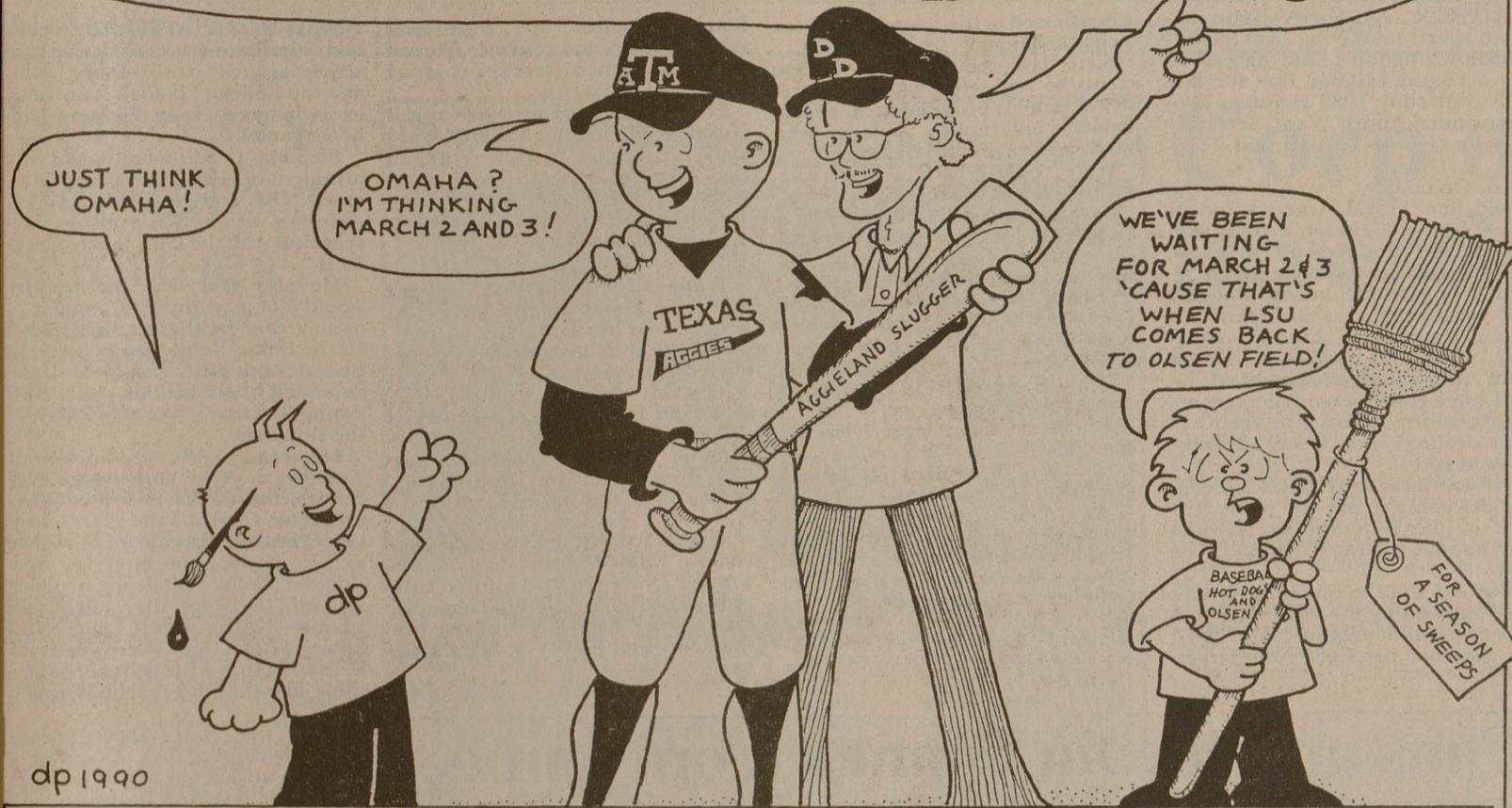


THE MAGIC IS BACK AT THE SHACK BY THE TRACK!



SEASON OPENER FRIDAY AT OLSEN FIELD 3PM

Witte 'living a dream' at second base

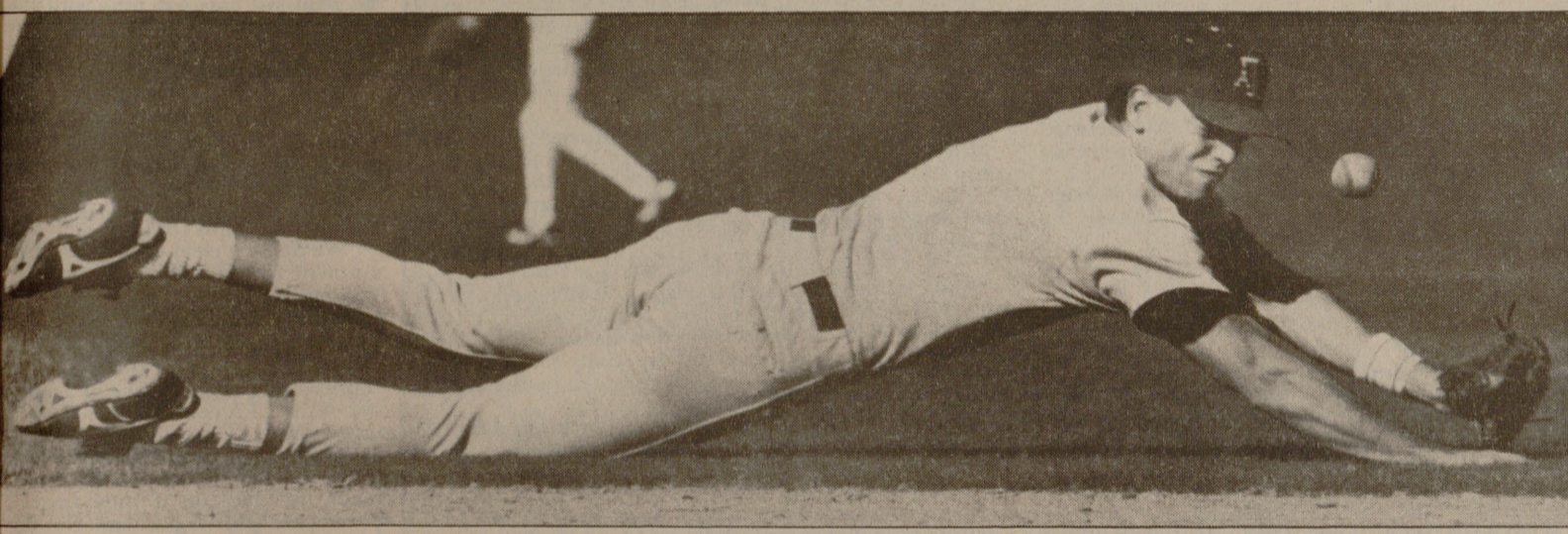


Photo by Jay Janner

Aggies' second baseman Trey Witte hopes to find a starting job at second base this year. He played in 40 games in '89.

By JAY PEDEN
Of The Battalion Staff

Trey Witte is living a dream — right here at Texas A&M.

"I always wanted to come here," the Aggies' second baseman said. "Whenever they started talking to me about baseball, it was kind of a dream come true. I was just lucky enough that they were also interested in me, since they had a great baseball program."

Witte, a sophomore, made the all-state team after his senior year at Jersey Village High School, but he said his greatest athletic moment came during his junior year.

"Probably my biggest thrill from high school was playing in a playoff

game up here at A&M when I hit a home run against Humble High School," Witte said.

That remains the only home run he has hit in Olsen Field.

Last year, Witte batted .321, but he hit no homers. That stands in stark contrast to the 34 home runs that Terry Taylor, his predecessor at second base, had over the last two seasons.

Will Witte hit as many home runs as Taylor?

"No promises there," Witte said, "but I'll try to do my part."

Terry Taylor is in the California Angels' farm system. He can't turn Aggie double plays anymore, but Trey Witte can.

"Last year, I got to play a lot, but I

think what hurt me is I wasn't really consistent," said Witte. "I'd hit a good hot streak and then I'd drop off. I think, being that they're expecting me to play every day, I need to be a lot more consistent and be more productive."

Last season, Witte frequently was the designated hitter. Playing regularly in the field will improve his game, he said.

"I'd never DHed before," Witte said. "I think you're more into the game when you play, because when you DH you have to go sit on the bench until you get up to bat again. Whereas when you play in the field you're into the game all the time."

Witte said he realizes that this year's team will not be as powerful

offensively as last year's, but it will have its strengths.

"I think the worst thing people can do is compare us to last year's team, because we're not at all like last year's team," Witte said.

"I think our strength is really going to be our pitching, because we have more pitchers back than position players. It might take us a while to get together with a whole new team, but we're going to put our runs on the board and our pitching is going to keep us in the ballgame. I think we've got as good a shot as anybody."

And if 1990's version ends up as good as 1989's version, it will indeed be a dream come true.

Last Year

(Continued from page 8)

shortstop Chuck Knoblauch said. "We thought we could pull it out (against LSU) on the last at bat again. Everybody held together mentally."

"It just didn't happen."

Third baseman John Byington, who had provided the big bat in the late innings during the year when the Aggies needed him most, said even though A&M lost, it still was the better team.

"You win 90 percent of your games, but don't win the one you need to go to Omaha," Byington said after the game. "I think we're the better club (than LSU, 53-15 overall in 1989), but you've got to give them credit. I guess it just wasn't meant to be."

But from the way the season went before that last game, it seemed the Aggies were destined to win the national championship. They had a strong pitching staff, great hitters throughout the starting lineup, a strong desire to win and were well disciplined by Johnson.

They also didn't know how to die.

"Last year's A&M team was a great all-around club," Johnson said. "It was a group of players who had a great courage to believe they could win."

But last year's magical year is over. Johnson now is focusing on this season, and he'll have to guide a young Aggie baseball team in 1990. It's unfair to compare this group to last year's squad, but at least Johnson knows he's starting on even terms as he begins the new season filled with questions.

0-0.

Marshall

(Continued from page 9)

did something bad. My whole high school team was intense."

Certainly, there's nothing wrong with being hyped for a game. But the problem is avoiding burnout during the 60-game season.

"This summer, I worked on trying to get used to the longer season and improving my mental attitude," Marshall said.

Marshall said one of his problems he had in his first year at A&M was trying to adjust to the improved quality of play.

"The level of competition was hard to adjust to," he said. "The hits don't come as easily. Every pitcher you face is somebody's high school ace."

"It proved to me that if I worked

hard, I could get somewhere," Marshall said.

Working hard, Marshall does have a player he looks up to, but ironically it's not a shortstop. He said he wants to be a player like the New York Yankees' first baseman Don Mattingly — a hard worker who made it.

"He's fun to watch and he's got all the tools: a sweet swing, wins Gold Gloves, and you can't ask for more out of a first baseman," Marshall said.

"I like the role models in big league ball who set a good example."

As the Aggies' shortstop in 1990, Marshall will have to lead by example. And though filling Knoblauch's shoes may be a tall order, it's a challenge Jason Marshall looks forward to.

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