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Focus: Texas A&M Baseball



Battalion file photo by S. Weaver

Dan Robinson (l) and Trey Witte collide with each other in a March 17 game against Missouri. Robinson missed six weeks.

Getting back into the Swing of Things



Photo by Eric H. Roalson

Robinson takes batting practice Tuesday at Olsen Field with his protective helmet. Doctors cleared Robinson to return to play last week, and he was used in last weekend's Houston series.

By RICHARD TIJERINA Of The Battalion Staff

Dan Robinson remembers the chills from last Saturday. After being out for five weeks with a fractured jaw, the Texas A&M junior outfielder got his first taste of action since his March 17 baseball accident at Olsen Field.

The game was on the line. The Cougars already had won the opening game of the weekend series Friday night 1-0. Now they were up 4-3 in the first game of

Saturday's doubleheader. The Aggies had only two outs left, and with Houston ace Ben Weber on the mound, Coach Mark Johnson inserted Robinson into the game as a pinch hitter.

Robinson's head was filled with visions of game-tying home runs — the perfect ending to his comeback. But Weber walked him on five pitches, many of them well out of the strike zone. "I was dreaming a little bit," Robinson said. "There was always hope. You've got to hope or you're never going to succeed.

The great feeling was when I walked up to the plate, and everybody in the stadium was standing up and just going crazy." Johnson admits he inserted the rusty Robinson into the lineup because he hoped for a big hit. When Robinson was injured, the junior rightfielder led the Aggies in home runs, runs batted in, stolen bases and walks. He was second in team batting average.

But that was more than a month ago, the day that Robinson will always say he wishes he could remember, but can't.

Dan Robinson doesn't even remember the play. On that sunny March day, Missouri leftfielder Darnel Hawkins hit a bloop single into shallow right field. Robinson, playing right field, and second baseman Trey Witte both chased it. Neither called each other off the play.

Robinson dove for it and collided with Witte. The result was tragic: a massive concussion and fractured jaw. His upper jaw was broken across his face into pieces, along with both cheek bones and his lower left jaw.

"Nobody called for it," Witte said after the game. "It was one of those balls that was right in between, and everybody was going all out for it. I thought I had hit him in the shoulder, but I didn't realize that I had hit him in the face until I got up and saw the blood everywhere."

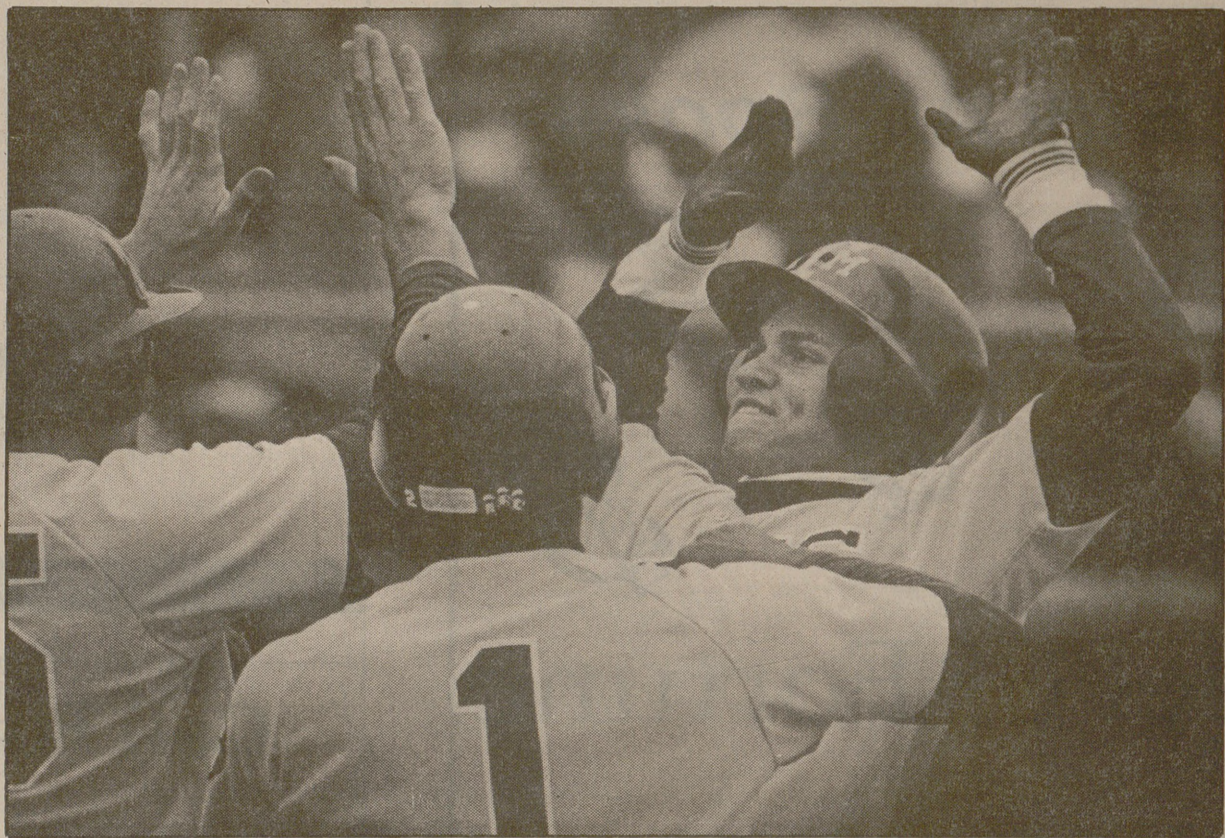
Robinson lay unconscious on the grass at Olsen Field for 10 minutes, as teammates and trainers attended to him. He was removed in a wheelchair, and taken straight to the hospital.

The Aggies, down 6-4 after the accident, rallied in the bottom of the eighth inning to win the game 9-6 on Blake Pyle's three-run home run. A&M went on to sweep the three-game series, and Pyle said the team rallied around the injured Robinson after he left the game.

"We were pretty worried about him, but we had to go out and finish the game," Pyle said after the game. "We were down, because he was hurt pretty badly. He'll need a lot of prayers."

Robinson woke up Monday afternoon, with Johnson at his side. Robinson still thought he was at Olsen Field. He remembered the play before his collision with Witte, but nothing after it.

"I don't even remember it," he said. "Nothing. I lost the ball in



Battalion file photo by P. Ebenhack

Robinson is congratulated after he hit a grand slam home run in A&M's season opening series.

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