

Senior Co-Captain returns Pyle gives Aggies leadership, good bat

By James Bruce
Of The Battalion Staff

Blake Pyle speaks softly but carries a hot bat.

The senior co-captain hit .279 last season and provided a crucial offensive spark on a Texas A&M baseball team that hit a combined .252.

But Pyle's bat always has been a clutch one.

For instance, when the Aggies needed a clutch hit to beat Arkansas and clinch a share of the 1989 Southwest Conference baseball title, they also needed a team leader to step forward. Pyle delivered that hit, giving the Aggies a 3-2 victory.

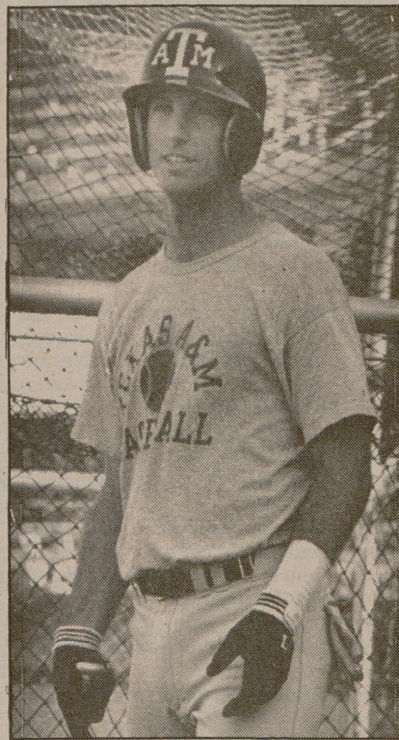
Two years later, Pyle still is delivering leadership for A&M.

Pyle, a catcher and a team captain for the second straight season, said, "I'm the type of player who tends to lead by example, not by words."

In the crucial game situations, the experienced players need to be strong because they have been in similar situations, while the younger players are still gaining experience, the Aggie catcher said.

"It is important for the team leaders to keep the guys positive because team losses and bad outings are learning experiences."

Pyle's leadership qualities extend far beyond the chalked lines of a baseball diamond. He leads by example in the class-



J. JANNER/The Battalion

Senior co-captain Blake Pyle looks to lead the Aggies to the SWC tournament this season.

room as well.

Pyle, a senior accounting major, was awarded his fifth Academic Achievement Award this fall. Pyle plans to graduate in May and has accepted a job with an accounting firm following graduation.

As someone who has been there before, Pyle assists the younger players in managing baseball and academics.

"I try to direct the younger guys when they ask about classes, class scheduling and job opportunities," he said.

Pyle said that academics were an important factor in decision to attend A&M.

"The baseball facilities are great and the academics are excellent, so when I got the opportunity to come to A&M there was really no choice," Pyle said.

Pyle has high hopes for the 1991 Aggie squad. The team has good cohesiveness and positive players, he said.

"This is the right kind of team to accomplish great things this season," Pyle said.

Pyle said he sees being selected team captain as a big honor. Veteran pitcher Steve Hughes is the other co-captain.

It is important for Pyle and Hughes to see that the players look up to them, Pyle said. The team showed it by voting them team captains.

Pyle also is active in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, which he describes as a positive experience.

"It is good for the athletes to go and build relationships with other athletes

who are going through some of the same experiences as you," Pyle said.

Pyle is a career .293 hitter, who batted .278 with one home run and 22 runs batted in last season.

He also stole 10 bases in 15 attempts last season, showing surprising speed from the catcher position.

He said he looks for any opportunity to help the team, and baserunning is one aspect of the game where an aggressive player comes in to play.

As a catcher, he is in control of handling pitchers out on the mound. Each pitcher has a different rhythm, Pyle said, and it is crucial to get the pitcher and catcher in accord.

"It is important to know which pitcher does what best to ensure that you get the right pitch for the situation," he said.

Pyle said that he feels this year's team has a great deal of offensive potential. The lineup from the top of the order to the bottom should be able to produce enough runs to win ballgames, he said.

Pyle's two main goals for the 1991 season are to win the conference championship and to make a first-time trip to the College World Series.

"Winning another conference championship would be a great end to my A&M baseball career," he said.

And if Pyle's bat stays hot, he indeed could lead the Aggies to the NCAA tournament this season.

Aggie Baseball Catching the Glory

TEXAS A&M BASEBALL PREVIEW 1991

- Preview of the 1991 season/ 2
- A look back at 1990/ 2
- Duo takes over for "D.D."/ 11
- Schedule and Starting Lineup/ 3
- Marshall bulks up for success/ 4
- Thomas wants repeat of 1990/ 4
- Rollen sets sights on future / 5
- Hard work pays off for Hughes/ 5
- Colby steps in at 1st/ 6
- Witte adapts to new role/ 7
- Pyle set for senior year/ 12
- Allen leads young staff/ 8
- Huckuntod leaps to Division-I/ 9
- Robinson ready to rebound / 10
- Williams anchors infield / 6

