

Hot Corner

Transfer Craig Kuzmic has added much-needed firepower to Texas A&M lineup

By **ROBERT HOLLIER**
Staff writer

Some players are offense-minded and put up the eye-popping numbers that impress fans and players alike, while more defensively-minded players make the outstanding glove plays in the field.

However, Texas A&M junior third baseman Craig Kuzmic has done both for his team this year.

Originally from California, Kuzmic is a transfer from Cypress Junior College in California where he was a triple-crown winner, the JUCO Player of the Year and helped lead his team to a state championship.

"That was definitely my most memorable moment in my career," Kuzmic said. "I want to win another conference title and go to the College World Series with this team, too."

As a catcher for Cypress, Kuzmic came to A&M as a back-up catcher, but was moved to third base because of his talent hitting the ball and his ability to make plays in the field.

"When we recruited him, I really anticipated a lot from him," Coach Mark Johnson said. "His potential is so good. He hits the ball well and he has a real good arm. He was perfect for the hot corner."

Kuzmic said even though he came to A&M as a catcher, he enjoys playing third base because of all the interesting plays that come his way.

"You really have to concentrate and anticipate the ball because it comes at you so quick," Kuzmic said. "The ball gets there so fast and you have to react."

Kuzmic also said he chose to come to A&M because of the tremendous program Johnson and the rest of the coaches have put together.

"The facilities here are outstanding," Kuzmic said. "The field is one of the best in the

country and the fans here are great. They really support the team."

As the starting third baseman, Kuzmic has certainly done his share in helping his team to a 29-11 record and a No. 13 national ranking in the latest polls.

In 38 games this year, Kuzmic has posted a .270 batting average in 141 at bats and has a .525 slugging percentage, which is second on the team.

Kuzmic has also hit eight home runs, which is also second behind John



Scheschuk's nine homers, and he has driven in 30 runs.

He is also second on the team in runs scored with 32, behind Jason Tyner's 42.

His numbers in Big 12 Conference play are just as impressive.

He is currently sporting a .279 batting average in Big 12 play, and he leads the team with six home runs and 19 RBI.

"I've always felt my strengths were offensive," Kuzmic said. "Right now, my strengths are a little of both (of-

fensive and defensive), but I would like to be hitting around .360, though."

Johnson said that Kuzmic's ability to provide offensive power in the lineup was one of

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Mark Johnson
Baseball Coach

the main reasons he won the job at third.

"We recruited him as an offensive player," Johnson said. "He's showed a lot of maturity and a lot of confidence when he's in there. He hasn't shown any anxiety and has fit in and adjusted very well."

Kuzmic said he owes most of his success to his older brother John. John played for Pepperdine when he was in college.

"He (John) has been my greatest influence," Kuzmic said. "He's been through it once before and he can tell me what to do and what not to do in certain situations."

After he graduates from A&M, Kuzmic hopes to one day play baseball professionally and would like to play for a new ball club like the expansion Devil Rays of Arizona Diamondbacks.

"I really hope I get drafted by one of the expansion teams," he said, "but it doesn't really matter which one."

If Kuzmic continues to put up blistering offensive numbers this season, the majors will provide a friendly home to his dreams.

The Battalion's
NBA ATTITUDE TEST

In light of recent player revolts at the University of Texas and other examples of blatant disrespect of authority in basketball, *The Battalion* would like to test the knowledge of those readers who think they are ready to jump to the NBA realm of basketball bad attitude.

NBA Attitude Test

1. If you are suspended from your college basketball team for academic reasons like Luke Axtell at Texas, you should:

- a) Work harder to improve your grades and be reinstated on the team.
- b) Declare yourself eligible for the NBA Draft and languish in the CBA for three years before being called up, most likely by the Houston Rockets.
- c) Threaten to transfer until your current coach announces his resignation.

2. If you are tired of P.J. Carlesimo yelling at you for not shooting free throws correctly in practice like Latrell Sprewell, you should:

- a) Run over and choke your coach after threatening to kill him while teammates continue to practice free throws.
- b) Call Allen Iverson and get some tips on the latest comrow hair styling.
- c) Ask your agent about that trade that was supposed to happen with San Antonio.

3. If you dislike a coach's coaching style, as Orlando Hardaway did, you should:

- a) Claim your calling card, get injured and sit out another game in a season.
- b) Grab Lil' Penny and give him a little one-on-one with Banks providing the defense.
- c) Give the manager the ultimatum: Either you or me.

4. If Doug Collins' sure style of coaching has your skin like it did to you, you should:

- a) Give the manager the ultimatum: Either you or me.
- b) Shoot yet another commercial.
- c) Shoot yet another commercial.

5. If management re-signs Phil Jackson and Michael Jordan, don't want to play for anyone else, you should:

- a) Threaten to retire, Mike, what left do you have to prove?
- b) Put in another 55 minutes on the Knicks in the next game.
- c) Take off the mask and let the world see you were really God's gift to humankind, just toying with the humans.

Scoring Guide
5-4 — Ready for the NBA
3-2 — Need to get a little more you're ready.
1-0 — Thought about it

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