

RUPE

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Rupe did not just bounce back. He returned to form and added a third pitch to his arsenal. He was A&M's opening-day starter and combined with two other pitchers - Shane King and Chris Scarcella - to no-hit South-west Texas State. Rupe leads the staff in strikeouts with a career-best 100 and has the lowest earned run average among the Aggies' starters. He now has 256 strikeouts in four seasons

at A&M, placing him third on the schools' all-time list.

Just as important as his contributions from the mound has been the wisdom he has passed down to other pitchers. Ten of A&M's 15 hurlers are either freshmen or sophomores and the advice Rupe gives them does not go unnoticed.

"His presence out there is almost like having another coach out there sometimes," Pitching Coach Jim Lawler said. "He understands how to prepare for a game. He knows that if his fast ball's not working one night he can still win. He's learned how to beat people without velocity."

Learning how to win is something the young team has done well this season. Rupe said he hopes the success continues.

"I want to win the Big 12," he said. "I want to walk out of here with a ring. That's my whole goal right now."

A&M's last conference title came in 1993, the season before Rupe arrived at A&M. The five-year conference title drought is the longest since Coach Mark Johnson took over in 1985.

"I think all the players are self serving," Johnson said. "They want a ring for themselves, but I think it would be really special for

everyone if Ryan got a ring."

After all, leaving with a ring and a few records would be quite an accomplishment for a guy who many expected to bypass college all together. Through all of his trials and tribulations, Rupe has learned so much more than he ever dreamed he could have.

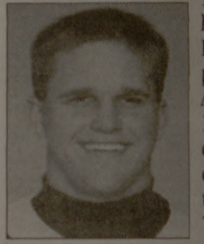
"He's really a guy who could have shut it down," Johnson said. "The doctors really questioned whether or not he could throw again, but he persisted and continued through it. Crisis is always a learning experience and he's really matured with all he's been through."

HARSCH

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Mmm, Mmm, Good
With three games against the Aggies remaining, several Aggies have already written their names in the record books with outstanding performances over the course of the Big 12 season.

John Scheschuk has broken Bynington's RBI mark of 35 set



Scheschuk

1989 by driving home 39 runs. He is close to passing Chris Alexander's 1995 South-west Texas State conference campaign total bases mark of 70, but teammate Craig Kuzmich has

beaten him to it by piling up 71. Both Scheschuk and Kuzmich have 11 home runs on the conference year, which better the blasts John Curl hit in 1995.

Leftfielder Steven Tyner now stands alone in the category of most doubles in a league season as his 13 two-baggers put him in five Aggies who are tied with the

And some guy named Tyner established new marks for a conference season with 32 runs scored, 18 steals and 54 hits. Jason Tyner's steal mark breaks his record of that was set last season.

A Deluxe Apartment in the A&M's recent run of success which has seen the Aggies take four straight and nine of their eleven, has done more than put the team into contention for the Big 12 title this weekend. It's gotten them credit in the polls as well.

A&M is ranked 10th in the Baseball America poll, a jump up from 12th a week ago and their highest ranking of the year in any poll.

Baseball America has five of six Big 12 South teams ranked, A&M leading the way. Baylor stands at 16th, followed by Oklahoma State at 17th, Texas Tech at 21st and Oklahoma at 22nd.

The only omission? Texas, which has a 9-14 Big 12 record and a 21-28-1 overall mark. That came against Stanford, currently ranked 1st nationally, as the Aggies had to leave to catch a flight back to California with the season tied at the end of the sixth inning.

— Travis Harsch is a freelance journalism writer.

TYNER

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This past summer, Tyner and low Aggie Casey Fossum traveled around the world with the U.S. Baseball team. Tyner led the team hitting with a .434 average.

Sophomore left fielder Steve Tyner



Tyner

It said that Tyner is the type of guy he wants as a teammate. "He is a type of player who goes out and gives it all," Tyner said. "He wants to be as much as we are of us. He knows

his role on the team and he is committed with his role. He comes out here to be successful and to help the team and his mates benefit from his play.

Johnson said that Tyner is a fast balls to hit because Tyner is usually on base and is such a threat to steal," Johnson said. "He creates havoc for other teams."

Because of his success on the field, some expect Tyner to be a high-round draft choice in the coming draft.

"I expect to be drafted in the first three rounds, but you never know," Tyner said. "The draft is very unpredictable."

Presently, Tyner is enjoying the attention he is receiving from pro scouts.

"Right now I'm just kind of riding the wave," Tyner said. "During Christmas I received Christmas cards from major league teams just enjoying it."

Tyner said that he will decide whether to turn pro or return to college when the time is appropriate. Right now he has his mind on other things.

"I began playing organized baseball when I was five, and I loved it from the beginning," Tyner said. "I have always been a dream of playing pro ball, but right now I am enjoying this team. My main goal is to win the Big 12 and get the opportunity to play in the Big 12. Hopefully we will host a regional game because this is the greatest place to play in all of college baseball."

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