

Scheschuk ready for pro game

BY DOUG SHILLING
The Battalion

John Scheschuk's road to becoming a baseball player at Texas A&M started in a very strange place — in front of a television. That road has now taken him from a standout career as a first baseman at Texas A&M to a seventeenth-round draft pick of the San Diego Padres.

The summer after he turned three, he was sitting in front of the television with his mother studying watching a Houston Astros game. As he sat there, John pointed at the TV and told his mother, "I want to know how to do that."

She asked him to go and point at the television to show her what exactly it was he wanted to know how to do.

When he pointed at the pitcher, Mrs. Scheschuk did the only thing she knew to do — she went and got John's glove and took him out in the front yard and started trying to teach him how to throw and how to pitch. Throughout the process, there was only one thing that tripped up Mrs. Scheschuk and her son.

"I'm right-handed and John's left-handed, so it was hilarious," Mrs. Scheschuk said. "I was trying to figure out how to do it left-handed so I could show him. We had a lot of laughs over it, but that's where he started."

When John's father passed away a few months before, his mother became the influential figure in his life. Throughout the years, she was always at the forefront in John's life both athletically and personally.

"Me and my mother are very close," Scheschuk said. "I just grew up with her my whole life. She's always been there for me. She supported me in my athletics and especially baseball all the time. She's been a great influence on my life."



SALLIE TURNER/THE BATTALION

A&M senior first baseman **John Scheschuk**, who finished the 1999 season with a .336 batting average and 16 home runs to place second in both for the Aggies, was drafted by San Diego.

When John was in high school, he certainly gave his mother many things to support. Not only was he a standout as a pitcher and first baseman at Pasadena's Dobie High School, where he was named All-Greater Houston Player of the Year in 1995, he was also starting quarterback on the football team and a starter on the basketball team.

Despite his success in other sports, John knew early on in high school that baseball would be his sport of the future.

"I'd probably say I knew sometime during my freshman and sophomore years," John said. "It was just the one that was coming most naturally to me."

When the time came around for John to decide on a college, it was a potentially rough decision. Since his mother, father and brother attended the University of Texas, there might have been pressure on him to follow in their footsteps. However, for John, it came down to just two schools — Rice and A&M. Once he made his trip to College Station though, his mind was made up.

"It wasn't a hard decision for me," he said. "When I came on my recruiting trip, it wasn't even close just because of the atmosphere and the great college town. It really made up my mind for me when I got there."

Mrs. Scheschuk said that even though John did not follow in her footsteps to being a Longhorn, she knew that he made the right choice.

"He got up there and just fell in love with it," Mrs. Scheschuk said. "We both had a feeling when we left there that A&M was the right choice to make."

Once he got to A&M, John's career really did not get a chance to take off.

During his freshman and sophomore years, he played sparingly as he was behind senior first basemen on the depth chart both years. Although he did not get to play as much, John said he does not regret his time on the bench.

"I wouldn't trade the way it happened," he said, "because I did get in there and get some experience, and I think that helped me down the road."

When he finally did start during his junior year, he did not disappoint. John finished second on the team with a .336 batting average and second in home runs with 16 including an A&M school record with home runs in five straight games. One of his home runs came in the Regional Championship against Mississippi State University, a game the Aggies lost.

SEE **SCHESCHUK** ON PAGE 4.

Schumacher pursues big-league aspirations

BY RUTH STEPHENS
The Battalion

Senior catcher Shawn Schumacher, who led the Texas A&M Baseball Team with a .374 batting average this season, left College Station Tuesday in pursuit of a professional baseball career with the St. Louis Cardinals.

Schumacher will join the Cardinals' developmental-league team in Augusta, N.J.

Schumacher said professional baseball has been a goal of his for a long time.

"It's something I've worked for all of my life," he said.

St. Louis is not the first team to draft Schumacher. The Pittsburgh Pirates drafted him after his second year at Panola Junior College in Carthage, Texas, but Schumacher decided to pass on the offer in order to play Division I baseball.

Schumacher spent his junior year at the University of Texas, where he was moved from catcher to first base.

Schumacher said profession-

al scouts warned him his baseball future was as a catcher, not as a first baseman, so he decided to move to a program where he would have an opportunity to catch.

"Coach [Mark] Johnson offered me the opportunity to play at A&M," Schumacher said. "He gave me no guarantees, though. I had to win the catcher's spot."

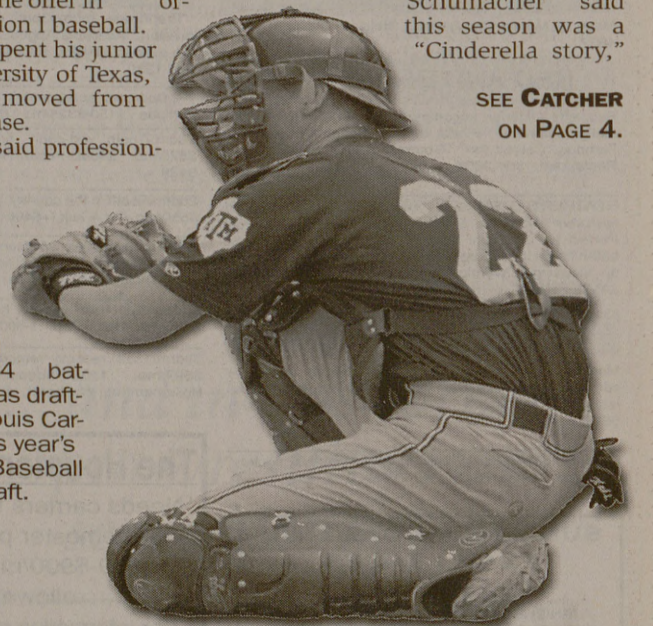
Schumacher said his catching skills were rusty after a year at first base, but the A&M coaches came early and stayed late to help him improve his defensive skills.

James Schumacher, Shawn's father, credits the coaches for his son's success.

"The coaches were a real plus for Shawn," he said. "I can't emphasize enough their positive influence. They helped him get over the edge."

Schumacher said this season was a "Cinderella story,"

SEE **CATCHER**
ON PAGE 4.



SALLIE TURNER/THE BATTALION

Senior catcher **Shawn Schumacher**, who led the Texas A&M Baseball Team with a .374 batting average, was drafted by the St. Louis Cardinals in this year's Major League Baseball college draft.

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