

Double Duty

Porter looking for success on Kyle Field to carry over to Olsen

By JASON LINCOLN
The Battalion

While Texas A&M baseball coach Mark Johnson had his hands full with off-season training, he was missing a key leader — junior third baseman Greg Porter.

Porter's hands were still busy because he was in the middle of a season with the Aggie football team. He grabbed 21 catches for 236 yards, fourth best on the A&M roster.

It was a breakout season for Porter in his sophomore season on the gridiron. He did not catch a single pass in the 1999 regular season. "Definitely having a good football season keeps me going high," Porter said. "I'm feeling pretty good coming into baseball season. Hopefully, I'll have a breakout year in baseball, too."

His impact on the diamond was more immediate. Porter enters Olsen Field today with two seasons of experience and one of the most dangerous swings in the Aggie lineup.

In his inaugural season in 1999, Porter made 31 starts as the Aggies designated hitter while batting .328.

That season Porter hit seven home runs and had 40 hits, including 11 doubles, driving in 26 runs. All as a freshman.

Porter made his debut in Kyle Field four months later.

When he returned to Olsen for the 2000 season, it was as a third baseman.

Porter's output from the plate dropped. He hit .286 last season in 42 starts. He also failed to clear the fence the entire season, posting just

five doubles and 11 RBIs.

"Last year he was a little more quiet than he is now," said A&M first baseman Travis Wong, who was just a freshman last season. "With guys like (Sean) Heaney and (Daylan) Holt, he was in the shadows a little bit. This year I think he might step forward and become one of our leaders."

"Definitely having a good football season keeps me going high. I'm feeling pretty good coming into baseball season. Hopefully I'll have a breakout year in baseball, too."

— Greg Porter
Aggies third baseman

Porter is just one of a handful of upperclassmen on the roster who have starting experience, and the Aggies are looking for him to lead the young lineup.

"He's stepping into a leadership role now," A&M baseball coach Mark Johnson said. "On the football side it's seniors, but in baseball we depend on juniors to lead because we typically don't have a lot of seniors. He got it going over there (with football.) Hopefully he can

have the same impact over here."

As the Aggies square off against Arkansas State, it will be the first team they have seen since May.

Porter saw 12 during the fall. Even if it was on a different field, with different rules and different challenges the competition was still the same.

That competition has readied the 6-foot-4, 230-pound wide receiver/third baseman for the needs of Aggie baseball.

But during Porter's absence from Olsen Field this fall, another competition was brewing — one for his job as the Aggies' starter.

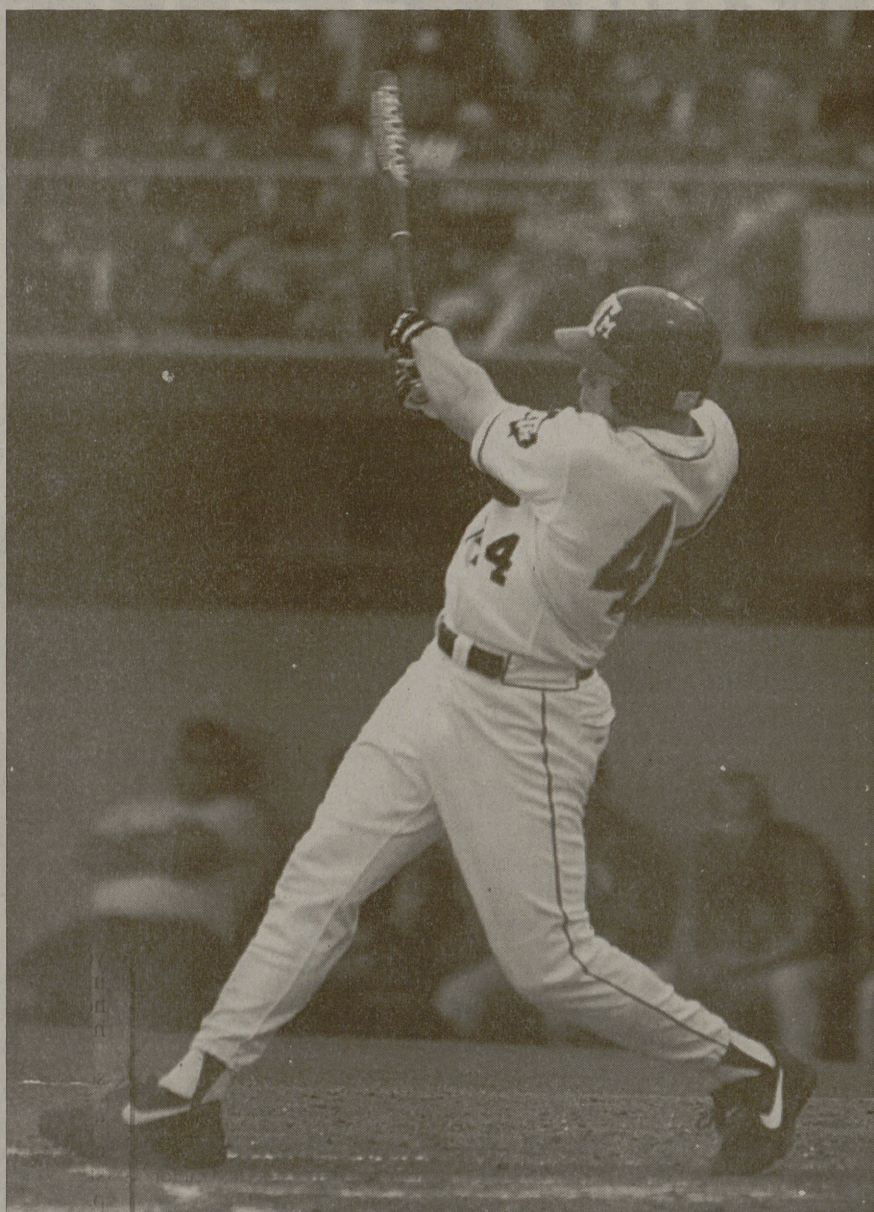
Sophomore transfer Kevin Theiss from San Jacinto Junior College had an impressive fall, earning consideration for the starting job at third base.

"It just feels good to be back out on the diamond," Porter said. "I knew there was going to be some competition coming into the season and I don't mind that at all. Actually I prefer it. It just makes everyone play better."

Since Porter has returned, the competition for the job has been neck-and-neck, so close that 72 hours prior to first pitch, Johnson did not know who his starter would be.

"It's forced him to work a little bit harder, concentrate more during practice and show that he deserves that spot and that he's the best out there," Wong said. "He's been doing well."

Only this season will tell whether Porter's breakout season on the Kyle Field turf will translate to success inside the walls of Olsen.



A&M junior-third baseman Greg Porter looks to recreate his success as a wide receiver on the football field on the baseball field.

CHAD ADAMS/THE BATTALION

Deiningger living up to expectations Sophomore pitcher looks to improve on stellar freshman year

By BRIAN RUFF
The Battalion

When sophomore pitcher Todd Deiningger stepped on the rubber in his first collegiate start on Feb. 5, 2000, against Oregon State, the right-handed pitcher might have been expected to lose his composure and pitch around the opposing team's hitters.

The Joliet, Ill., native did anything but buckle under the pressure, as Deiningger went straight after the Oregon State hitters and fooled Oregon State lead-off hitter Eric Stark, who was caught looking.

"It was a great feeling to be that pumped up and get that first start," Deiningger said.

The right-hander would add six more strikeouts in the game, despite working only five-and-two-thirds innings. Deiningger recorded the win and set the tone for the rest of his freshman season.

"[Deiningger] threw well for his first collegiate outing," said A&M baseball coach Mark Johnson after the freshman's first start. "He went to the mound with confidence and competed by coming right at the

hitters and throwing strikes."

Deiningger recorded a team-high 82 strikeouts during the 2000 season.

The sophomore is no stranger to pressure. Deiningger pitched on the USA junior national team that won the gold medal at the 1999 International Baseball Association Junior World Championships in Taiwan.

"It was a great experience playing for our country," Deiningger said.

The Americans faced off against Chinese Taipei in the championship game, in front of 25,000 fans. Deiningger got the start in a most unfriendly pitching environment.

"They had big huge drums on top of the dugout [and they were] just beating them," Deiningger said. "It was the loudest place I've ever played at."

Deiningger, who was team captain of the baseball team during his senior season at Township High School, also led the team to the conference championship and participated in the East-West All-Star Game, as well as being named the Illinois Gatorade Player of the Year in 1999.

His trials on the diamond most likely do

not compare to the decision he made after his senior season, when Deiningger was drafted in the fifth round of the 1999 amateur draft by the Chicago Cubs, his favorite professional team.

"There was really no choice," Deiningger said. "I didn't really think about going to the Cubs because I wanted to come here and get better, and my mom really liked it here."

"[Khalid] Ballouli and Deiningger were both starters for us last year, and that is a big plus to bring those guys back," Johnson said. "Todd really had some good outings, and he has a really high ceiling and the potential to dominate."

Johnson also said the sophomore has improved his curve ball from last season and still has the velocity up around 90 mph.

"[Todd] is better than he was last year without question," Johnson said. "Coach Lawler has really done a dynamite job on him."

Deiningger will be the middle man in Johnson's rotation this season, starting the second game of this weekend's series against Arkansas State.

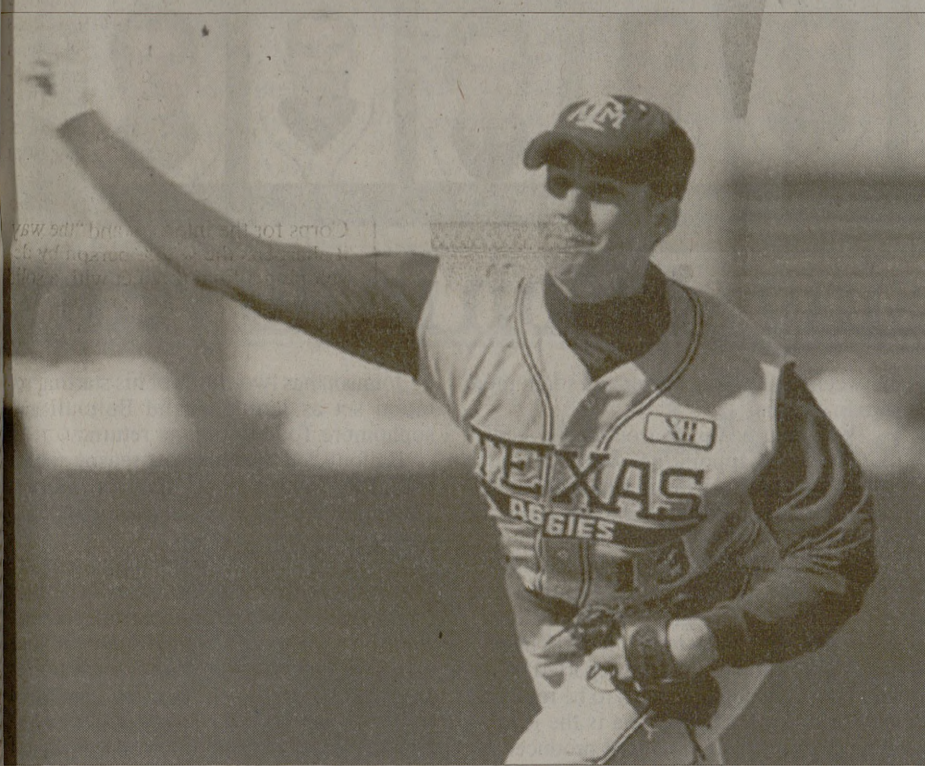


PHOTO COURTESY OF TEXAS A&M SPORTS INFORMATION
A&M sophomore pitcher Todd Deiningger will be looked upon to be an anchor of the pitching staff for the Aggies. Deiningger led the team in wins and strikeouts last season.

FROSTERS

No.	Name	Pos.	B/T	Ht.	Wt.	Cl-Exp.	Hometown (High School/College)
3	Matt Alexander	INF	S/R	5-10	165	Fr-HS	Fort Worth, Texas (Arlington Heights)
29	Khalid Ballouli	RHP	R/R	6-3	195	Jr-2L	Austin, Texas (High)
13	Todd Deiningger	RHP	R/R	6-3	195	So-1L	Joliet, Ill. (Central)
30	Zach Dixon	LHP	L/L	6-2	195	So-1L	Houston, Texas (Clear Lake)
22	David Evans	OF	R/R	6-0	185	So-1L	Buda, Texas (Hays Consolidated)
4	Matt Farnum	RHP	R/R	6-1	185	Fr-HS	Littleton, Colo. (Dakota Ridge)
14	Brian Finch	RHP/OF	R/R	6-4	180	Fr-HS	West Columbia, Texas (Columbia)
28	Jeff Freeman	INF	L/R	6-2	215	Sr-1L	Gladewater, Texas (High/Cowley Cty. CC)
32	Chris French	LHP	L/L	6-3	190	Fr-HS	Arlington, Texas (Martin)
5	Ty Garner	INF	R/R	5-10	180	Jr-1L	Kingwood, Texas (High)
10	Jason Gremminger	C	R/R	5-11	185	Sr-1L	Rowlett, Texas (Trinity Christian/MCC)
11	Joe Hart	RHP	R/R	6-1	180	Jr-TR	Plano, Texas (Dallas Jesuit/Navarro JC)
20	Ben Himes	OF	L/R	6-5	220	So-TR	Austin, Texas (Westlake/Virginia)
24	Brent Howell	C	R/R	6-0	185	Jr-1L	Boerne, Texas (High)
9	Eddie Lang	OF	S/L	5-6	160	Jr-TR	Houston, Texas (Lamar/Navarro JC)
16	Rusty Meyer	C	R/R	6-0	185	Fr-RS	Blue Springs, Mo. (High)
35	Aaron Mitchell	RHP	R/R	6-3	185	So-TR	Southlake, Texas (Carroll/Dallas Baptist)
18	Justin Moore	RHP/INF	R/R	6-3	195	Fr-RS	Katy, Texas (Taylor)
37	Kyle Parcus	LHP	L/L	6-3	180	Fr-HS	Rosebud, Texas (Rosebud-Lott)
6	Tim Petru	INF	R/R	6-0	185	So-TR	Houston, Texas (Westbury/Navarro JC)
36	Dwayne Pollok	RHP	R/R	6-2	185	So-SQ	San Antonio, Texas (East Central)
12	Stevan Ponder	LHP/OF	S/L	6-0	195	So-1L	Austin, Texas (Westlake)
44	Greg Porter	INF	L/R	6-5	230	Jr-2L	Keller, Texas (High)
34	Robert Ramsey	RHP	R/R	6-2	195	Fr-HS	Austin, Texas (Bowie)
2	Eric Reed	OF	L/L	5-10	175	So-1L	Monticello, Ark. (High)
1	Chris Rued	RHP/INF	R/R	5-11	185	Sr-3L	Kerrville, Texas (Tivy)
8	Erik Schindewolf	INF	L/R	5-10	170	Fr-HS	Spring, Texas (Klein Oak)
21	Carlos Sepulveda	OF	R/L	6-1	200	Jr-1L	Lake Jackson, Texas (Brazoswood)
38	Brian Shallock	LHP	L/L	6-3	190	Fr-HS	McKinney, Texas (High)
27	Neal Stephenson	OF	L/R	6-1	200	Jr-2L	Houston, Texas (Spring Woods)
23	Brian Strelitz	RHP	R/R	6-0	190	Jr-1L	Temple City, Calif. (High/UCLA)
17	Kevin Theiss	INF	R/R	6-2	200	So-TR	Spring, Texas (Klein Oak/San Jacinto JC)
15	Ryan Wardinsky	INF	S/R	6-1	180	Jr-1L	Kalispell, Mont. (Flathead/Walla Walla CC)
39	Ryan Warpinski	RHP	R/R	6-3	200	Fr-RS	Maribel, Wis. (Denmark)
33	Travis Wong	INF	R/R	6-5	225	So-1L	Boise, Idaho (Timberline)

SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Site	Time
Feb. 9-11	ARKANSAS STATE COLLEGE STATION		3 p.m., 2 p.m., 2 p.m.
Feb. 13	\$ vs. Southwest Texas State Round Rock, Texas		5 p.m.
Feb. 16-18	at Arizona Tucson, Ariz.		4 p.m., 2 p.m., 2 p.m.
Feb. 20	at Sam Houston State Huntsville, Texas		2 p.m.
Feb. 23	* at Baylor Waco, Texas		7 p.m.
Feb. 24-25	* BAYLOR COLLEGE STATION		7 p.m., 2 p.m.
Feb. 27	at Houston Houston, Texas		7 p.m.
March 2-5	% AGGIE CONTINENTAL EXPRESS BASEBALL CLASSIC (Indiana State, Penn State, Texas A&M, UNLV)		
March 2	% Indiana State vs. UNLV College Station		1 p.m.
March 2	% A&M vs. PENN STATE COLLEGE STATION		7 p.m.
March 3	% Penn State vs. UNLV College Station		10 a.m.
March 3	% Penn State vs. Indiana State College Station		1 p.m.
March 3	% A&M vs. INDIANA STATE COLLEGE STATION		5 p.m.
March 3	% UNLV vs. UNLV COLLEGE STATION		8 p.m.
March 4	% UNLV vs. Penn State College Station		1 p.m.
March 4	% A&M vs. INDIANA STATE COLLEGE STATION		7 p.m.
March 5	% Indiana State vs. Penn State College Station		10 a.m.
March 5	% UNLV vs. Indiana State College Station		1 p.m.
March 5	% A&M vs. UNLV COLLEGE STATION		5 p.m.
March 5	% A&M vs. PENN STATE COLLEGE STATION		8 p.m.
March 9	* at Oklahoma Norman, Okla.		3 p.m.
March 10	* at Oklahoma Norman, Okla.		2 p.m.
March 11	* at Oklahoma Norman, Okla.		1 p.m.
March 13	LAMAR COLLEGE STATION		7 p.m.
March 14	* at Texas-Arlington Arlington, Texas		2 p.m.
March 16-18	* IOWA STATE COLLEGE STATION		7 p.m., 7 p.m., 1 p.m.
March 20	SAM HOUSTON STATE COLLEGE STATION		7 p.m.
March 23-25	* at Kansas State Manhattan, Kan.		7 p.m., 2 p.m., 1 p.m.
March 27	TEXAS-SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE STATION		7 p.m.
March 30-31	TEXAS-PAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STATION		7 p.m., 7 p.m.
April 1	TEXAS-PAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STATION		1 p.m.
April 3	at Rice Houston, Texas		7 p.m.
April 6-8	* KANSAS COLLEGE STATION		7 p.m., 7 p.m., 1 p.m.
April 10	HOUSTON COLLEGE STATION		7 p.m.
April 13	* at Texas Tech Lubbock, Texas		7 p.m., 2 p.m., 1 p.m.
April 17	SAM HOUSTON STATE COLLEGE STATION		7 p.m.
April 20-22	* OKLAHOMA STATE COLLEGE STATION		7 p.m., 2 p.m., 2 p.m.
April 24	SOUTHWEST TEXAS STATE COLLEGE STATION		7 p.m.
April 27-29	* NEBRASKA COLLEGE STATION		7 p.m., 7 p.m., 1 p.m.
May 4	* TEXAS COLLEGE STATION		7 p.m.
May 5-6	* at Texas Austin, Texas		6:30 p.m., 1 p.m.
May 10-12	* at Missouri Columbia, Mo.		7 p.m., 7 p.m., 2 p.m.
May 16-20	Big 12 Tournament, Oklahoma City, Okla.		

* Big 12 Conference game.
\$ at Dell Diamond, Round Rock, Texas.
% Aggie Continental Express Baseball Classic, College Station.
Home games in CAPS, played at C.E. "Pat" Olsen Field.
All times Central, dates and times subject to change without notice.

Photos and graphics by:
Ruben DeLuna,
Selso Garcia,
Chad Adams and
Cody Wages