

## Playing on Faith

Not every player on every intercollegiate team at MSU is recruited and given a scholarship. Shawn Johnson, for instance, played baseball as a freshman without any type of scholarship.

"The coach told me he wanted me to play, but he didn't have the money for a scholarship," said Shawn. "I decided to go ahead and give it a shot."

Shawn gave it some shot. As a freshman outfielder he hit .338 and was named to the All Ohio Valley Conference team. As a sophomore he was a member of the NCAA Mideast Regional All Tournament Team. His .325 batting average helped the Eagles to an OVC crown and a runnerup spot in the NCAA Mideast Regional.

Coach Steve Hamilton had watched Shawn play for years before he invited him to try college baseball.

"I watched him grow up," Hamilton said. "I used to watch him play on the American Legion team at Morehead City Park."

The patience Shawn displayed when he came to the team without a scholarship paid off. He was not a starter in 1982, his freshman year. In 1983 he became a starter and received a scholarship covering his residence hall expenses. Hamilton called him an "outstanding" outfielder, something the coach thought would happen all along.

"I was right," Hamilton said after the 1983 season. "Shawn has been a great help, particularly during the conference tournament games."

That's high praise for a player who joined the team on faith. □

