

# UNC step to the majors for Pittaro

By JACKIE BLACKBURN

"Come on Drosch, come on now."

"Let's go Dave."

"Hey, what do you say Dave," UNC shortstop Chris Pittaro says to starting pitcher Dave Droschak during a game.

Pittaro can be heard in almost any inning chattering to pitchers, but his bat and glove speaks with greater force.

Through 30 games this season, the junior from Trenton, N.J. is batting .304 with 22 runs batted in, 3 home runs in the cleanup position and is 10 for 11 on basepaths.

"He has good power for a small build from both sides of the plate," assistant coach Howard McCullough said about the only switchhitter on the 1982 UNC squad. "It (switchhitting) is a tremendous plus for him, and for us too."

"He's outstanding defensively also; has an accurate arm. You've got to have a shortstop who can execute well defensively and we are fortunate to have one."

In the field, Pittaro is one of the better shortstops in the ACC. Last season he helped

set a new Carolina team record with 62 double plays. Pittaro makes the double play look easy with his quickness and excellent range.

But switching sides of the plate did not come as easy for Pittaro as switching left to right in the field.

"I'm a natural right-hand hitter and I've had to work at switch hitting," the 20-year-old said. "When I was thirteen my father asked me if I wanted to try it. I was pretty discouraged at first. In the long run it's better."

While attending Hamilton East High School in Trenton, he was named the most outstanding prep player in the area. And in 1977 he was also on the soccer team that was voted the best in America.

Baseball has been his favorite of the two sports all along.

"It's something I enjoy," he said. "It's not really a job though. If it was a job to me I wouldn't want to play."

Since playing varsity baseball for three years at Carolina, which enticed him away from ACC foes N.C. State and Clemson with a scholarship, Pittaro has played in 108 consecutive contests. The only game he missed

was the first game of his freshman year.

"Chris is a quiet leader," McCullough said. "He goes out there and performs, carries out his duties. That carries on to the younger ball players."

McCullough, in his first year coaching for the Tar Heels, said Pittaro has a good chance of playing professional baseball, which his shortstop would love to do.

"We feel he'll have an opportunity mainly because of the position he plays, being a switch hitter and his good speed," McCullough said.

A professional career would not only please Pittaro, but his father also, who played three years in the minor league system for the Washington Senators. He now works as the head baseball coach for Ryder College in

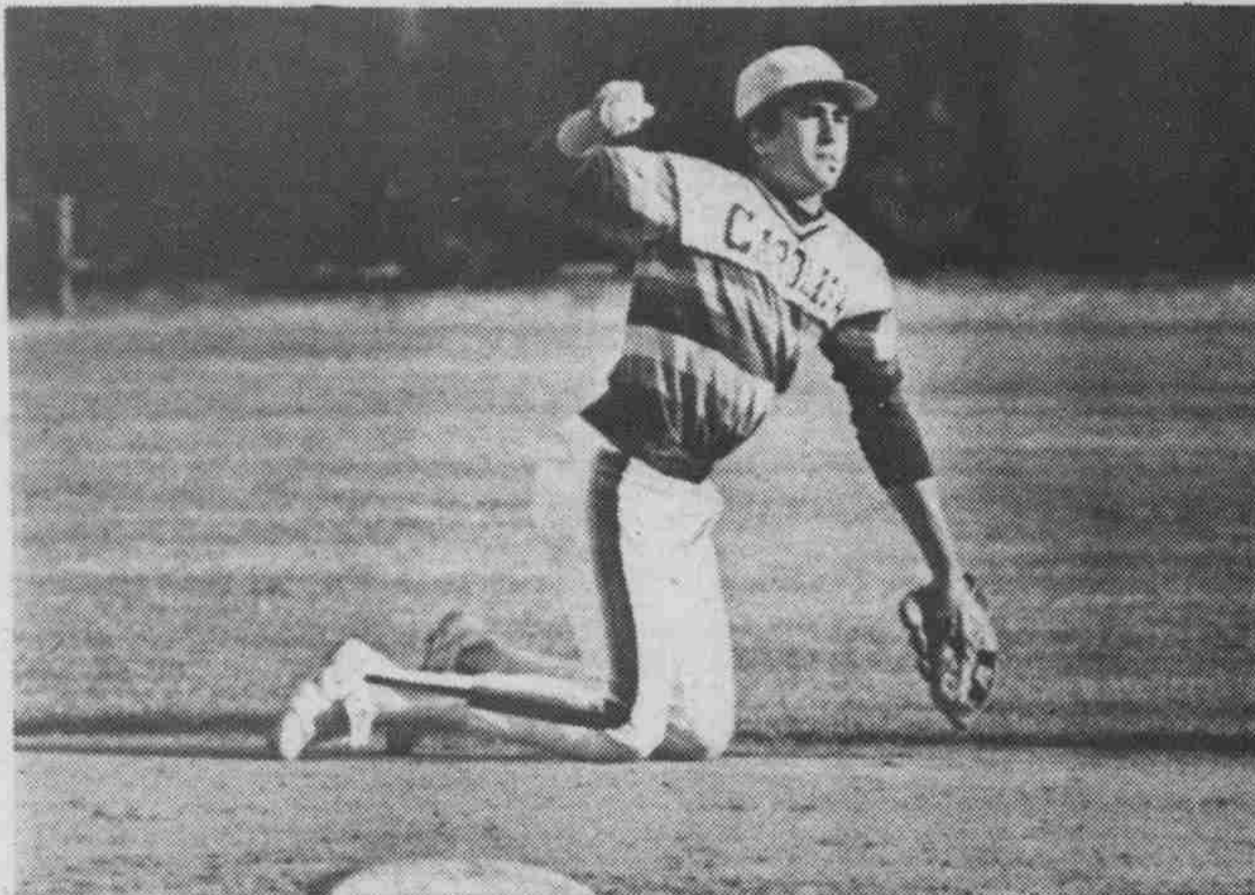
Trenton, a position he has held since 1971.

"He's always been there behind me," Pittaro said about his father. "I'm definitely looking to go pro; anywhere I can get a good shot."

Pittaro will have to wait until the June baseball draft before he can sign with any organization, but it won't be an easy decision, even if his Yankees extend an invitation.

"I'm really looking forward to what happens in June," the industrial relations major said. "Passing up my senior year is a pretty tough decision. It's something I've really got to wait and see. How much money they offer, that's a big factor."

Jackie Blackburn is the Assistant Sports Editor of *The Daily Tar Heel*.



Chris Pittaro, shortstop, saves a base hit to center for UNC.

DTH/file photo

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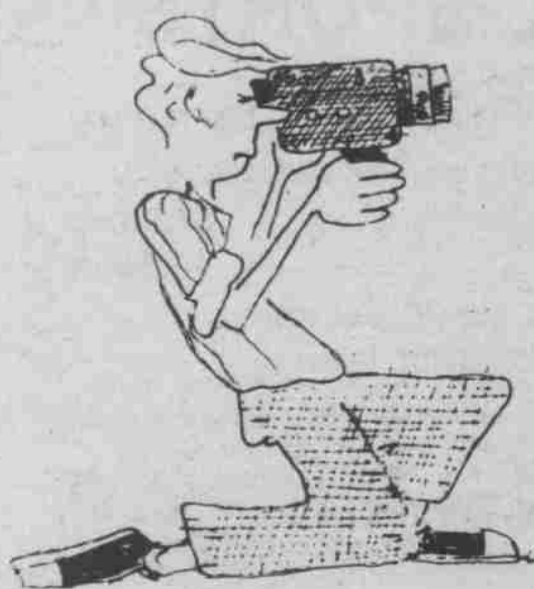
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