

Fall baseball for those who truly love sport

By JAMES SUROWIECKI
Staff Writer

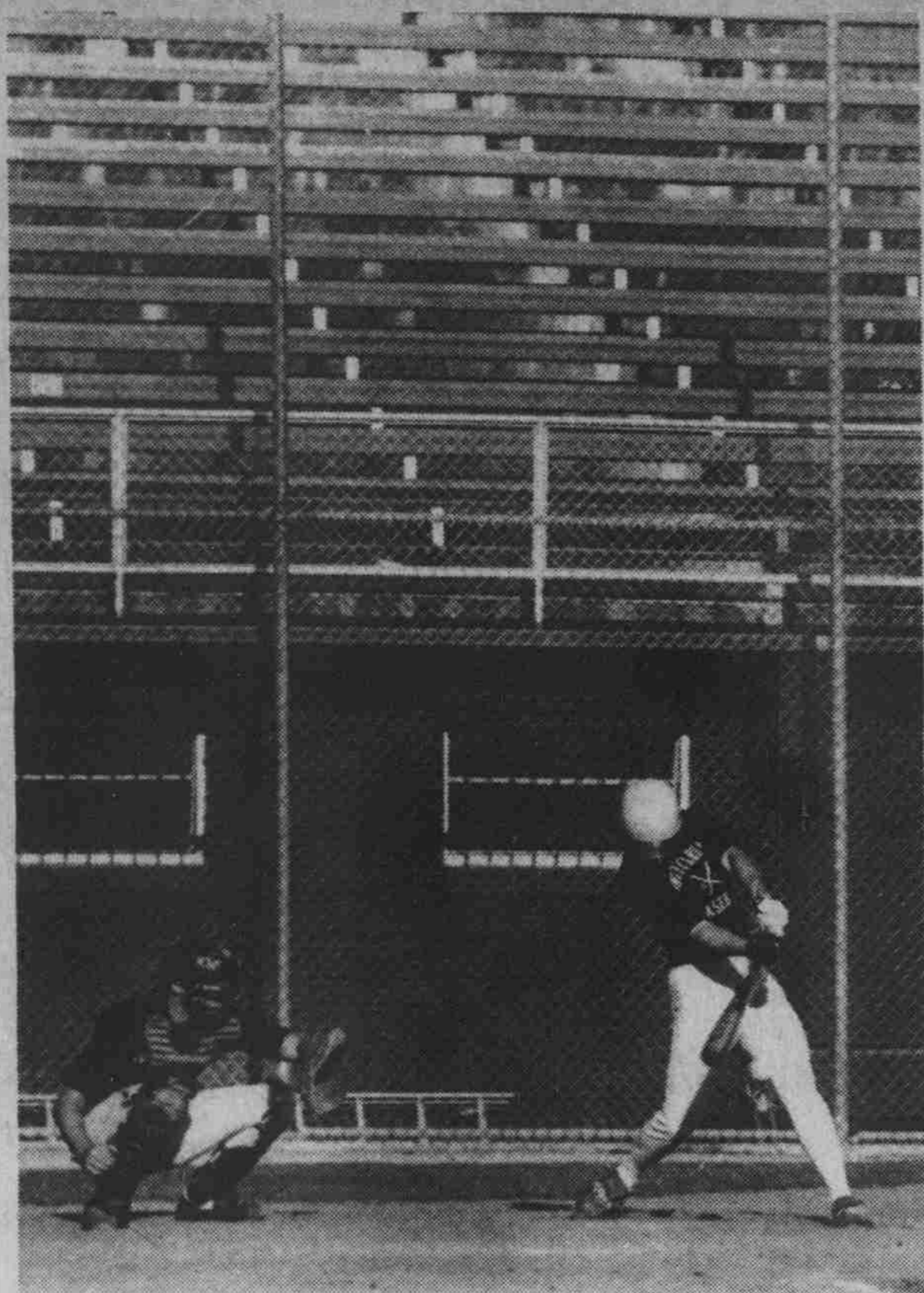
The sun has long since disappeared. The air is chill, and you can see your breath as the batter steps into the box. The score is 1-0, top of the ninth, a man on third, two out. The youngster Scott O'Neal is on the mound. He blows two fastballs by the hitter, and then on a 2-2 count fans him for the third out. There is no applause for O'Neal, only the congratulations of his teammates. It's 11:30 p.m. and everybody else has gone home.

The action above comes to you courtesy of UNC fall baseball, a uniquely enjoyable experience which few people are aware of and even fewer people watch. The crowd at Boshamer Stadium rarely surpasses fifteen in the fall, but the hardy band of fanatics who show up at the games are rewarded with the familiar sights and sounds of baseball, the images which are at once timeless and yet always new.

Jump ahead in time a bit. The batter is now slick shortstop and leadoff man Darrin Campbell, a freshman who has already made an immediate impression on the few people who have seen him play at Boshamer. On first base is Steve Mrowka, a junior transfer who has quickly established himself as a superb offensive player and on-base percentage man in the mold of a Tim Raines. Campbell slashes a groundball toward the shortstop, who flicks the ball to the second baseman, who steps on the bag and fires to first as Mrowka takes him out.

Campbell beats the throw, and as the ball deflects off the first baseman's glove he is up and scrambling for second. Somehow he makes it. Now perched on second, he dances away, daring the pitcher to pick him off. The next batter is the dangerous power hitter Devy Bell, who looks ready to challenge Scott Johnson for the team homerun title in the spring. On a pitch in on his hands, Bell hits a 400-foot shot that the centerfielder somehow tracks down. Campbell tags and scores from second on the sacrifice fly. When he gets back to the dugout, he is breathing very hard.

Second baseman Mike Jedziniak steps into the box. He slashes a ball into the gap and pulls into third. Triple.



DTH/Larry Childress

A traditional fall baseball sight: playing before empty seats

The next hitter is Alvin Taylor, a veteran of the Cape Cod League. Taylor loops a little line drive into the outfield which the left fielder traps, but Jedziniak doesn't tag and has to stay on third. Taylor gets himself picked off first, and Jedziniak breaks for home. He gets thrown out. Taylor, meanwhile, goes to second on the throw. At the plate, Jim Stone waits patiently and then lashes a single to center which scores Taylor. Fall baseball isn't always perfect, but it's usually interesting.

A couple innings later, Chris Lauria

moves onto the firing line after Paul Devlin slices a double into the corner which the left fielder kicks off the fence and back into his glove. The 2-2 pitch comes right down the pipe, and Lauria jumps on it. Shifting all his weight from his back foot to the front he crunches a titanic shot off the blue board in left-center. A loud thud rings out across the ballpark. "If you're talking about front-side hitters," coach Mike Roberts says to one of his players, "he's the closest thing we've got to B.J. (Surhoff)."

Tall, lanky righthander Bill Robinson is on the mound. After a couple of years of limited action, Robinson looks like he's ready to move into the starting rotation. Tonight, his fastball is moving and his curveball is breaking sharply. Robinson peers in at catcher Matt Merullo and nods his head.

He kicks his leg high in a motion strangely reminiscent of Dwight Gooden and fires a fastball on the

outside part of the plate. The batter swings late and chops one into the hole between short and third. Out of nowhere darts Campbell. He picks up the ball and in one smooth motion sends it rocketing toward first. One man gone.

There really is something special about fall baseball. Coach Roberts calls it a time when the team learns what it can do, when people can play themselves into the lineup and when a team chemistry begins to develop. "In the fall, the will to prepare to win is more important than the will to win," he says.

But fall baseball is more than just a time for learning. The best analogy that can be drawn is to spring training. That very special informal, loose atmosphere which pervades the Grapefruit League in March and early April fills Boshamer Stadium in September and October, and there's simply nothing like it.

Fall baseball, like spring training, is a time of eternal hope, of innumerable mistakes, of flashes in the pan, of instruction, and of sudden moments of glory. It's a time to look for the newcomers, like Campbell, who are going to be stars, and to look for the veterans like Devy Bell who are ready to explode into greatness. It's a time to spot faults and correct them. And ultimately, the true joy of the fall at Boshamer is that it's a time when all that matters is baseball.

Certainly the heat of pennant races and conference championships are exciting and add a lot to baseball. But in the fall, all the extraneous attachments are gone. The game is everything. When UNC takes on Campbell in a doubleheader, there is no NCAA bid or ACC title on the line. Yes, the players are playing to hone their skills, to get ready for the spring, to add another weapon to their arsenals.

But they're also playing for the sheer joy of playing baseball, for what W.P. Kinsella calls "the thrill of the grass". And in that sense, the baseball that's being played at Boshamer Stadium this fall is baseball as it should be. It's baseball being played because there's no sport like it. It's doubleheaders and one-run games before a small crowd, without tailgate parties or television cameras.

Remember Ernie Banks saying, "Hey, it's a beautiful day. Let's play two." Well, Ernie Banks would have felt right at home with fall baseball.

In N.L. Playoffs will it be the Dodger blue boys?

By MIKE BERARDINO
Staff Writer

"When you say you're a Cardinal, people tell you to work harder because the next step is Pope. But when you say you're a Dodger, everybody knows you're in the major leagues." —Tom Lasorda

Nearly ten years after dropping the above gem onto the notepads of America's sportswriters, Los Angeles manager Tom Lasorda leads his team into battle with the aforementioned St. Louis Cardinals to decide who rules the National League. The best-of-seven series, which opens tonight in Dodger Stadium (8:00 p.m., Ch. 28), promises to be a classic confrontation of Lasorda's sluggers against Whitey Herzog's speed demons.

Los Angeles rolled to a 95-67 record this season, five and a half games ahead of second-place Cincinnati, to notch their second NL West title in three years and earn a shot at the Cardinals. While St. Louis' 101-61 record (tops in the major leagues) speaks for itself, the Dodgers have considerable strengths of their own.

Let's start with their major league-leading pitching staff. The top four starters are Orel Hershiser (19-3, 2.03 ERA), Fernando Valenzuela (17-10,

2.45 ERA), and 14-game winners Bob Welch and Jerry Reuss. Should any of the starters fail to go the distance, bullpen ace Tom Niedenfuer is on call with his 19 saves.

Offensively, the Dodgers are paced by left fielder Pedro Guerrero, an MVP candidate who racked up some pretty impressive numbers on the year (33 HRs and a league-leading .422 on-base pct.) in the cleanup spot. The "Dominant Dominican" feasted on Cardinal pitching in 1985, going 14 for 29 against the Redbirds.

Not far behind Guerrero is underrated rightfielder Marshall, who cranked 28 homers while leading the team in RBI and batting average. Other offensive threats include first-sacker Greg Brock, catcher Mike Scioscia, centerfielder Ken Landreaux, third baseman Bill Madlock (a late-season acquisition from Pittsburgh), and the keystone combo of Sax at second and rookie Mariano Duncan at shortstop.

L.A. also has John Tudor's number. Although the Cardinals' ace is undoubtedly a hot pitcher, keep in mind that his only loss in that span was to the Dodgers. All told, Tudor was 1-2 against L.A., allowing an unspectacular 20 hits in 21 innings.

Or the red-hot Cards?

By JAMES SUROWIECKI
Staff Writer

When this season began, the St. Louis Cardinals looked to be going nowhere fast. *The Sporting News*, in fact, picked them last in the NL East. Six months later, thanks to the emergence of John Tudor and Tommy Herr and the additions of Vince Coleman and Jack Clark, the Cardinals have their second division title in four years under their belt and are preparing to run roughshod over the denizens of Chavez Ravine.

Although the Cardinals just squeaked past the Mets into the division title, they are a magnificent collection of up-and-coming stars and tested veterans who together play as well as any team in the major leagues. St. Louis is led offensively by NL batting champ Willie McGee, who finished the year at .353 and stole 56 bases, and second baseman Tommy Herr, who drove in 110 runs while compiling an on-base percentage of .379.

Complementing Herr and McGee

are Vince Coleman, who stole 110 bases to set a rookie record, in the leadoff spot, and Jack Clark hitting cleanup. Clark finished with 87 RBI and 83 walks despite missing 43 games and hit 22 roundtrippers while slugging .502 for the season.

Offensively, the Cardinals are a sleek, fast ballclub that knows how to get on base and knows how to score runs. On Astro-Turf they will roll over the Dodgers, and on grass they should be able to split, which is all they'll need to do to win.

As for the St. Louis mound corps, it's no easier to score runs off the Cardinals than it is to shut them out. The only thing that needs to be said about John Tudor's performance in 1985 is this: 21-8, 1.93, 14 complete games and 10 shutouts.

After Tudor, all the Dodgers have to deal with is Danny Cox (18-9, 2.88) and Joaquin Andujar (21-12, 3.29) in the starting rotation and the very effective bullpen of Jeff Lahti (1.84, 19 saves), Ken Dayley and Todd Worrell.

scoreboard

UPI Football Poll
first place votes in parentheses

1. Iowa(16)	4-0-0
2. Oklahoma(14)	2-0-0
3. Michigan(10)	4-0-0
4. Florida State(1)	4-0-0
5. Oklahoma State(1)	4-0-0
6. Penn State	4-0-0
7. Arkansas	4-0-0
8. Alabama	4-0-0
9. Nebraska	3-1-0
10. BYU	4-1-0
11. Auburn	3-1-0
12. Air Force	5-0-0
13. Tennessee	2-0-1
14. Texas	3-0-0
15. Ohio State	3-1-0
16. UCLA	3-1-1
17. Georgia	3-1-0
18. Baylor	4-1-0
19. LSU	2-1-0
20. Indiana	4-0-0

unc athlete of the week

The biggest sports story of this week was provided by a team who toils in the relative obscurity of the Astroturf Field. The UNC Field Hockey team made headlines this past Saturday by stunning top-ranked Old Dominion 3-1, with a courageous second-half comeback against a team that had won 40 straight matches. For its extra special effort, the field hockey team and its widely respected coach, Karen Shelton, have been awarded the *Athlete of the Week*.

Just as it seemed that ODU would sweep the crucial home-and-home series with the Tar Heels Saturday afternoon, North Carolina rallied for three goals in a ten-minute span in the second half to capture the upset and the No. 1 ranking in the nation. Nice going.



Karen Shelton

VARSITY KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN
26th CRAZY WEEK! THE GODS MUST BE CRAZY
4:15 8:10
"JAMES MASON IN HIS FINAL MOVIE, GOES OUT IN GLORIOUS STYLE. There's an outpouring of love from the audience to the man on the screen."
—Pauline Kael, THE NEW YORKER
The Shooting Party
"Extraordinary cast. Extraordinary film."
Agnes of God
gets a 10! —Gary Franklin, CBS-TV
JANE FONDA ANNE BANCROFT MEG TILLY
2:15, 4:15 7:30 AND 9:30

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ELLIOT ROAD at E. FRANKLIN 967-4737
\$250 TIL 6:00 PM EVERYDAY!
PETER OTOOLE CREATOR (R)
3:00 • 5:10 • 7:25 • 9:35
SUSAN SARANDON COMPROMISING POSITIONS (R)
3:30 • 5:30 • 7:30 • 9:30
Somewhere, somehow, someone's going to pay.
COMMANDO
DOLBY STEREO
3:20 • 5:20 • 7:20 • 9:20
SHOW TIMES FOR TODAY ONLY

PLITT THEATRES CAROLINA
BACK TO THE FUTURE
2:30 • 4:45 • 7:00 • 9:00
JAGGED EDGE
7:00 • 9:15
Carolina Classic HAMLET
3:00

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