

The Tar Heel

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Tommy John to coach Tar Heel baseball team

By MIKE BERARDINO
Staff Writer

Major-league baseball's loss will be the college game's gain when long-time pitching great Tommy John becomes full-time pitching coach at UNC, upon the conclusion of the 1986 season.

John said he is definitely retiring after this season, his 23rd in the major leagues. The 43-year-old John, who has been on the New York Yankees' disabled list since June 9 with bursitis of the Achilles tendon, met the local press for about an hour July 24 at Boshamer Stadium.

"I really thought I would probably stay in professional baseball in some capacity (when I retired)," John said. "I've turned down quite a few offers this year, but I was really impressed with UNC's program and facilities."

Those job offers included similar coaching positions with the American League's Texas Rangers and the University of Southern California. John also said he passed up possible front-office jobs with the Oakland Athletics and the Yankees.

As for his playing status the rest of this season, John was sent a few days ago to the Class A Ft. Lauderdale Yankees for a 20-day rehabilitation program. John had compiled a 3-1 record in eight starts before the injury.

"We're very excited about Tommy accepting a position as pitching coach here," UNC head baseball coach Mike Roberts said. "It's been about an eight- or nine-month conversation. I think Tommy would be a great

addition to college baseball, no matter what program he was in. And I'm just thankful he's going to be a Tar Heel."

North Carolina played the past season without a pitching coach due to the departure of Howard McCullough last December. McCullough left UNC for a position as a regional scouting director for the Boston Red Sox. It was then that Roberts first mentioned to John the possibility of his coming to Chapel Hill on a permanent basis.

What would happen, John was asked, if he won 10 straight games after coming off the disabled list and got a "big, huge offer from (Yankee owner) George Steinbrenner" to pitch one more year?

"I would turn it down," John said. "When I told Mike I was coming, I told him 'My word is my word.' I'll definitely retire after this year."

John, a three-time 20-game winner who appeared in three World Series in the late 1970s and early '80s, said several factors led him to accept Roberts' offer.

One was the favorable impression of the Chapel Hill area John received while playing for the Yankees in exhibition games at UNC in 1979 and 1981.

Another consideration was his family; his wife Sally and four children, the oldest of whom is 11-year-old Tammy John.

"Sally and I asked ourselves where would we like to bring up four young children, and we liked the (Chapel Hill) area. Now if we could just find

a home to move into, everything would be fine," John said.

Another important factor was UNC's good academic reputation. John related a story of an unnamed pitcher with borderline grades, whom he called Roberts about a few years ago. The fact that the pitcher's grades made a difference to Roberts impressed John.

"Nowdays in college athletics, grades aren't that important to a lot of institutions," John said. "But (at UNC) it was."

John, who grew up in Terre Haute, Ind., and now lives in Los Angeles, said he relished the opportunity to work with young people. "I've been around a lot of coaches and managers. I think you gather a little bit of knowledge with everybody that you're around," John said. "... (Recently) I started getting the idea that I wanted to get into teaching baseball."

"Everybody wants a championship team. But to me, the big thing is when you see an 18-year old freshman come in and you see the development of the person. And you see the development of his baseball talents also. That's probably the biggest gratifying experience you could have as a coach."

John outlined his three rules of pitching thusly — pitch quickly, throw strikes and change speeds. It is a formula which has carried John to a major-league record of 262-208; 138 of those wins coming after his

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Limb amputation



Tar Heel/John deVillie

UNC tree surgeon William Hubbard saws apart a lightning-struck red oak that must be removed from near Alderman Dorm.

Heat wave poaches area fish; fishing good at University Lake

By SCOTT GREIG
City Editor

Fish gasping for breath? That's what it amounts to.

The severity of the warm weather plus the lack of fresh rainfall has left many North Carolina lakes with the serious problem of major gamefish species dying.

Fortunately, it hasn't yet reached that point in the Chapel Hill area.

"The weather hasn't hurt the fishing a great deal," said Robert Glosson, assistant warden at University Lake.

"About the only effect is that the fish are a bit sluggish and slow," he said. "If you're persistent, though, you can pull out a few fish here and there."

Glosson said the lake, which is also the major water supply for the Chapel Hill area, is not affected as severely as some of the other lakes

in North Carolina, because fresh water is continually being pumped into the lake from the Cane Creek Reservoir and the Old American Stone Rock Quarry.

"The water entering the lake from those two facilities is highly oxygenated, and it helps replenish what is lost due to the heat," Glosson said.

"The fishing would be better if there had been rainfall on a continual basis, but there's a decent amount of oxygen in the lake now and the fishing's been pretty stable."

For Lake Norman, in Huntersville, N.C., about 30 miles from Charlotte, the situation is growing worse with every passing day.

Biologists have determined that the striped bass that occupy the lake have little time left before they start dying of heat stress.

Dave A. Braatz, coordinator of an experimental project to save the

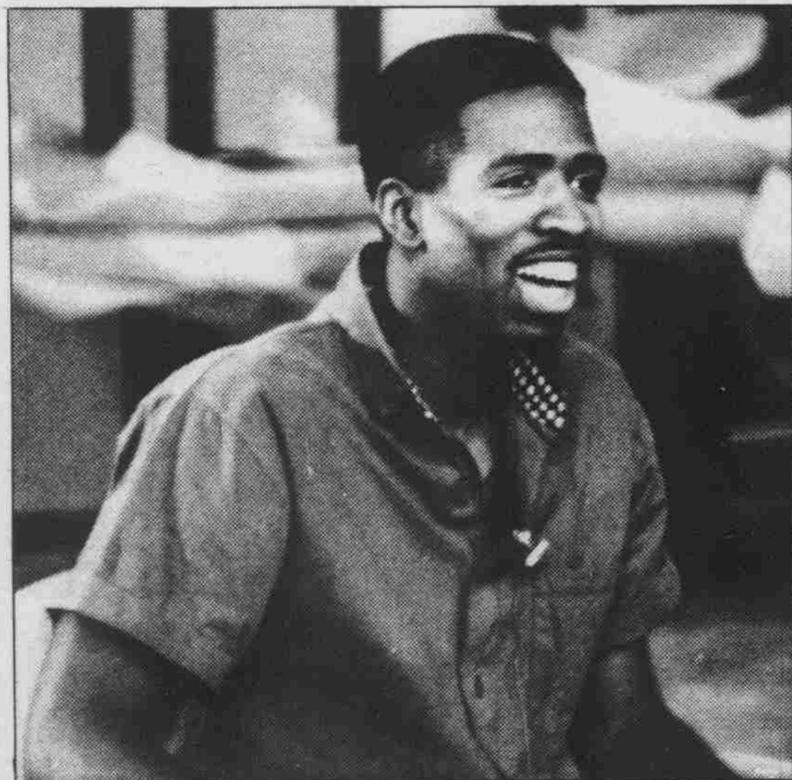
striped bass, told News and Observer reporter Diana Lynn that the surface of the lake is too hot for the fish and the bottom waters are too low in oxygen content. Braatz said suitable habitats for the fish are disappearing at an alarming rate.

The striped bass is a species of ocean fish that is able to survive in fresh water. It cannot thrive in water that has a temperature of over 78.8 degrees.

The most prevalent species of game fish in University and Jordan lakes is the largemouth bass. It is a more adaptable fish than the striped bass and does not require as much oxygen to live.

"There's no problem down here with the fishing," said Robert Farrell, owner of Farrell & Sons Grocery on Farrington Road.

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Tar Heel/David Foster

Kenny Smith shows his victor's grin. To read why, see story, p. 7.