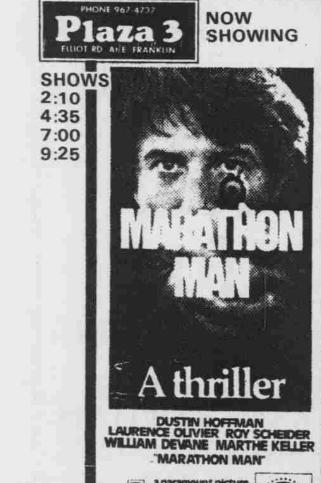
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The Series

A lifelong Yankee fan recalls a world championship experience

by Tom Zuber **DTH Contributor**

Editor's note: Tom Zuber, a junior Chemistry major from Chapel Hill, spent 17 years in Parkridge, N.J. During that time, he became an avid New York Yankee baseball fan. Last week, Zuber returned to New York City to watch the final two games of the 1976 World Series.

With two on and a full count on Mantle, the Yankees were down to their final out of the World Series. This was the ultimate in sports confrontations; an entire season would be decided by this one pitch.

The pitcher wound up slowly, and then fired a fastball toward the plate. He lifted his head just enough to watch me smash the wiffleball over the hedge and into a neighbor's yard...

As a child growing up outside New York City, I watched the Yankees excel in many such encounters. They often played against the likes of my four brothers in wiffleball games, or the neighborhood kids in stickball challenges. As Whitey Ford or Mel Stottlemyre, I pitched to thousands of opposing foes with a tennis ball against the gym wall.

Back in those days, the Yankees were the kingpins of baseball. They were the champs—the players I idolized in my dreams and in the games I played.

I was born a New York Yankee fan. But something happened to the Yankees in 1964. The Yankee dynasty came to an abrupt end. I still recall the St. Louis Cardinals' Ken Boyer reaching into the third base stands and retiring the Yankees for that final out in the '64 Series. After that, the Yankees lost Richardson, Maris, Kubek and Ford. Mantle stayed on, but even he couldn't prevent the plummet to the American

When they slid to the bottom, I slid with them. I kept faithful when they relied on the power of a Ron Woods or a Horace Clarke, or the pitching prowess of a Dooley Womack. Those were rough times for the die-hard Yankee fan.

But the frustration ended in 1976. Trades drastically altered the structure of the team. They acquired a new manager and moved to a beautifully refurbished stadium. The new Yankees went on to take their division and the American League Championship. With the World Series returning to New York after a twelve-year absence, a New Jerseyiteturned-Tar Heel decided to return, also.

I can get excited about going to New York for any reason, but this was a very special event. The Yankees were playing the World Champion Cincinnati Reds.

The Reds are an exceptional team, strong in every aspect of the game. I didn't expect that the Yankees would win the Series, but I knew they were capable of such a feat. I was sure they would make it exciting.

Varsity

MAJOR

STUDIO

8:00 PM

PREVIEW

TOMORROW

Maryland

Wake Forest

- East Carolina

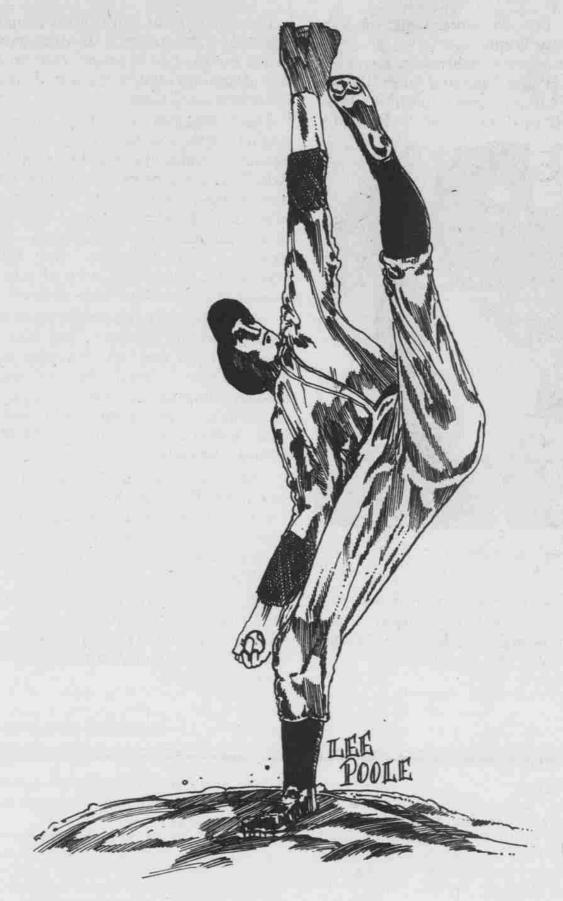
So. California

- Colorado

Florida

L.S.U.

- South Carolina



Upon arrival in New York, I realized that a large part of my World Series experience would first involve getting to the stadium,

and second, finding a ticket to get inside. The first problem involved that old New York nemesis -traffic. It's a known fact that New York City traffic is as unpredictable as the rain in Chapel Hill. From my home in New Jersey, getting to Yankee Stadium can be a pleasant fortyminute drive or a grueling four-hour extravaganza. The third and fourth games of the Series exemplified this problem.

For game three, traffic breezed right into the stadium. The next night, however, it was different. Approaching the Bronx, I noticed

Tie Breakers

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that the major expressway serving the stadium was backed up for miles. So I decided to try a different access route. Unfortunately, so did several thousand other people. I soon found myself in a single lane

of standstill traffic. It came to me that my chances of finding tickets were almost nil if I got there in the fourth inning, so I realized that desperate action was in order.

I decided to try and cut to the front this line of automobiles. Ordinarily, this would be a problem-free solution, but New York drivers don't like people cutting in front of lines, unless you can prove you are crazy or else threaten them with bodily

lights, put the accelerator to the floor passed hundreds of cars as I traveled in a non-existent left lane. Sure enough, the first car took the bait. He let me back in line.

The problem of obtaining tickets was resolved by buying from the scalpers. Now for those who have never dealt with this lower form of existence, a scalper is someone who buys a ticket and then sells it at a higher price. This illegal practice can be quite profitable.

The original cost of Series tickets were \$10 and \$15. In the past, scalped tickets had gone for \$100 or more. When I first arrived at the stadium, prices were hovering around \$50 a ticket. The key in forcing a scalper to lower his price, however, is patience. Usually, the closer the sale is made to game time, the lower the price of the ticket.

As it turned out, buying scalped tickets for the 1976 Series was anticlimactic. Those of us making the purchases had several factors in our favor. First, the Yankees were down 2-0 when the Series came to New York. That, and the cold weather, caused some people to stay home and watch the games on television. Also, the arrest of several scalpers by plain-clothes policemen influenced their associates to lower their prices and unload their tickets. Thus, prices came tumbling down from \$50 a ticket to \$10 and \$15. So finally, ticket in hand, I was inside Yankee Stadium.

Walking into the refurbished stadium, my thoughts floated back to the old structure. A lot had changed. But although I loved the old stadium, the refurbished one had many advantages. The lighting, parking facilities, exit ramps, and scoreboard were all much improved. Gone were the support poles that often obstructed one's view. The refurbished

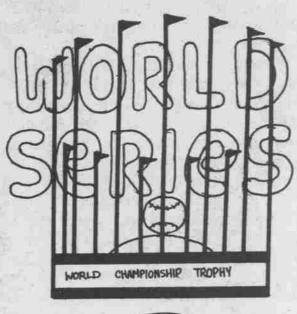
Stadium was, indeed, beautiful. Yet I couldn't help but feel that many of the old features would be missed. The white facade of the upper deck, the left-center field graveyard, the low, close fences and the centerfield monuments (now in the bullpen) were all part of what made the 'House that Ruth Built' the greatest ballpark in the world. I still wonder whether the \$100 million of renovation, coming at a time of near-financial disaster, was worth it.

I immediately noticed that the new stadium had no place to hang the championship banners as the old structure did. Nevertheless, the reminders of the Yankee heritage still existed. The scoreboard flashed pictures of previous Yankee greats, leaving older fans reminiscing.

Joe "Mr. Coffee" DiMaggio and the old voice of the Yankees, Mel Allen, were on hand to throw out the first balls. One elderly gentleman sported a World Series jacket-a transparent coat displaying Series ticket stubs from some of the Yankee's 29 previous

The Stadium lights glistened down on the patched field where only a week earlier a

I tried the former. I turned off the car thousand riotous fans celebrated the Yankee's 30th pennant. Homemade signs lined the upper decks, while the familiar red, white and blue semi-circular banners draped the fences and dugout roofs. I screamed along with the other fans, for the scene was set for great baseball.





But the 1976 World Series was different. The Reds swept the Yanks in four straight games. Unfortunately, the Yankees were not even close in three of them. They hadn't come to play. This was not the same Yankee

club that won 97 regular season games. It's easy to see why the Yankees lost. In the two games they played in New York, the Yankees hit, pitched and fielded poorly. The sparks to the Yankee running game, Mickey Rivers and Willie Randolph, both batted under .100 for the Series. Defensively, the Yanks let pop flies drop, threw wildly and sometimes to the wrong base. Offensively, they provided one of the poorest batting

exhibitions in recent World Series history. I came to the World Series to be entertained. Instead, I left disgusted with a poor exhibition of baseball. Cincinnati didn't play well, either. The Reds made their share of mistakes, but they didn't need to display their talents. The Yankees just didn't

In retrospect, I had a pleasant time the few days I spent in New York. The color of the trees along the Palisades and New Jersey parkways was as spectacular as the view from the World Trade Center. Manhattan was as much fun as ever. With all the excitement in the city, I wonder why I shivered inside Yankee Stadium for two uneventful evenings.

I guess the answer to that, however, is the same motivating force for any fan who attends a sporting event. I went to see my team play. Above that, I went to be entertained by the best of baseball.

Although disappointed, I realize that the Yankees have another shot next year. And if they get to the World Series again, I know where I'll spend a few more chilly October nights. Even though this was the first World Series I'd attended, I know from others of the exciting play of past classics. And now I know the thrill of just being there.

Hockey faces Wake

In spite of her team's three straight losses, UNC Field Hockey Coach Dolly Hunter remained confident about the Tar Heels' chances against Wake Forest when they travel to Winston-Salem today.

"We should have the advantage against Wake Forest," Hunter said. "All the schools we know that have played them have beaten them."

The Deacons are having an off year," Hunter said. "They've been very strong in the past, but this year they just haven't been doing too well."

The Tar Heels have plenty to lose but little to gain in today's game. A win would leave them with an unimpressive 5-3 season, though it could boost their momentum for next week's Deep South Tournament, while a loss would drop the once 4-0 team to a .500 regular season mark.

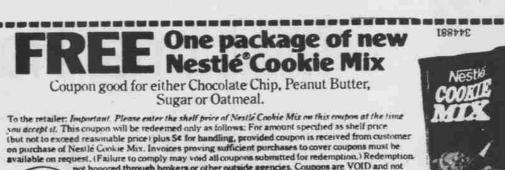
—Isabel Worthy

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2. List the total points you think will be scored in each "tie breaker." 3. Entries must be brought to participating McDonald's by close of business on the Friday prior to the Saturday game date. 4. Winners will be determined based on the total correct selections and

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4. All entries must be put in the collection box at participating McDonald's by close of business on the Friday night prior to the Saturday game date. Only one entry per person per week will be allowed.
Persons making multiple entries will be disqualified.
No duplications of this form will be accepted. Entry forms can be obtained on request from participating

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instructions on how to claim their prizes. 11. Odds on winning will vary depending on the number 420 W. Franklin Street University Mall

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