

sports

How can UNC baseball be left out

The state of shock that ripped through Chapel Hill last Monday night was not caused by the great eruption of Mount St. Helens in Washington. The local explosion came from Mt. NCAA and it completely devastated the UNC baseball team. The bad news that spewed from the organization's mouth told the team it had not been invited by the NCAA selection committee to compete in the 34 team national tourney. And after waiting over two weeks for an at-large bid, Coach Mike Roberts and his squad saw their 1980 season end in a cloud of ashes.

Most observers were surprised that Carolina was not picked for one of the 13 at-large bids, and the committee's decision not to include the Heels in the battle for the national crown lacks any substantiation.

This year's team ranks as the most successful ever at Carolina, setting new school marks with 39 wins and a hefty .316 team batting average. UNC won the ACC regular season title as they roared through the conference with an 11-1 mark, losing out to Clemson in the conference tournament.

All season long the Heels were ranked in

the top 20 and even with 17 losses, Roberts felt the difficult schedule would be a good argument for the team's record. But apparently the NCAA committee did not see things in the same light.

john fish

The exclusion of Carolina also seems to be a statement, not favorable, on ACC baseball. Clemson is the only ACC team in the tourney because of an automatic berth assured them by winning the conference tournament. Eight conference runner-ups from across the nation were picked, but not from the ACC.

Another decision made by the selection committee seems even more puzzling in view of the Heel's situation. East Carolina University accepted the last invitation to the tourney Tuesday. The Pirates played only 32 Division I opponents while UNC won 33 games against Division I opponents. So if scheduling was the Heels'

downfall, what happened with ECU?

Somewhere along the line, politics had to be involved. During the past two weeks, Roberts commented several times on the disorganization of the selection committee. He called several people, including the regional representative, Sam Esposito of N. C. State, asking why Carolina was not extended a bid earlier, and he was very open with his opinions on how the selection process was being handled. Everyone knows that people don't like being told what a poor job they are doing and Roberts' comments probably hurt the chances of the team being chosen. He should have let the record speak for itself but some of his comments were still correct.

The selection committee extended the first group of bids one week late due to inept organization while the club sat around the Hill. Finally, Roberts sent the team home last week and told them to come back Tuesday ready to practice.

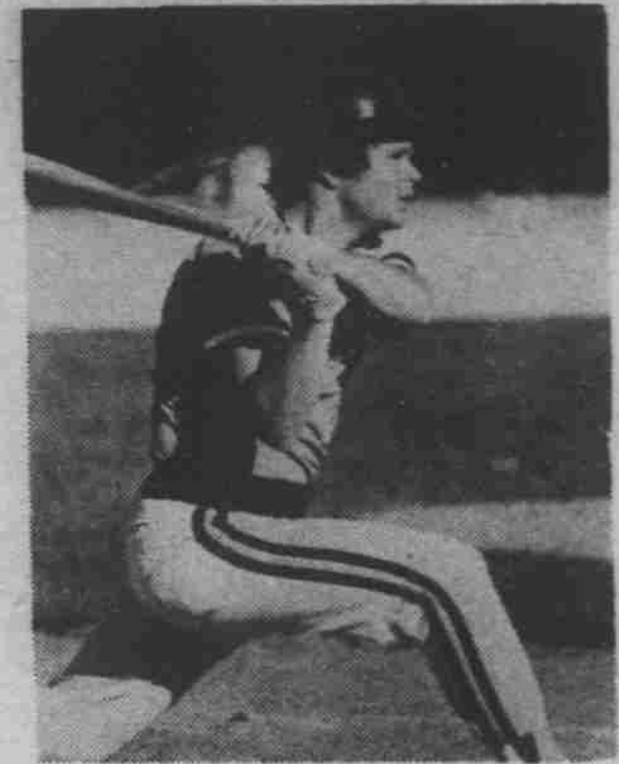
All of this confusion has of course ruined the first three weeks of the team's summer. It would have been worth it had a bid been extended, but now....

So now Roberts will have to be content with recruiting another talented group of freshmen and keeping the program at the high level of success it has attained.

The people who deserve the most sympathy are the group of seniors who abruptly and prematurely ended their careers at Carolina.

Lloyd Brewer, Mile Brewer, P.J. Gay, David Kirk and Jim Rouse have been the nucleus of the program's great success over the past four years. Once considered a respectable program, it is now viewed as an outstanding one.

The series of events which have transpired for this group of seniors just



Brewer

doesn't seem fair. Two years ago they had completed a good season but lost in the first round of the ACC tourney and expected nothing. But the team was given an NCAA bid and finished third in the country. This year they expected the most and didn't even get the chance to attain it.

"It kind of shocked me at first," all-conference choice Lloyd Brewer said.

Maybe freshman rightfielder Shawn Dean summed the situation up best shortly after he heard the bad news.

"I can't believe it," Dean said. "But the people I really feel for are the seniors—Lloyd, P.J., Rouse—all of them. We had such a great year. I mean we'll get other chances but this was it for them."

Even though it was a quick exit for the seniors, their accomplishments will always be remembered by Carolina baseball fans. And so will the biggest shaft UNC sports has seen in a very long time.

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