

# Baseball's success is all in the family

## UNC counts on Estroff, strong bullpen, but starting hurlers must come through

By Neil Amato  
Assistant Sports Editor

"This team has got a lot of growing up to do. It has a lot of growing up to do in the aspect that this year it's a new family. New families have to get to know each other, have to care about each other and have to respect one another. In all of that, you grow up together. The first third of the season we're really working toward becoming a close-knit unit and learning how to care for each other on and off the field. After we do that, we can begin to mature as a team."

—UNC baseball coach Mike Roberts.  
Roberts' family philosophy may be paramount this season as UNC heads into the 1991 campaign "relatively" strong in every phase of the game except starting pitching.

Starting hurlers Michael Hoog (9-3, 3.72 earned run average) and Jim Dougherty (12-2, 1.71 ERA) and a strong bullpen propelled last year's bunch to a school-record 51 victories in 65 games, the Atlantic Coast Conference title, and a No. 1 seed in the Northeast Regional of the College World Series.

Although the primo pen of Brad Woodall, Rich Fernandez and Paul Shuey return as favorite sons, Dougherty and Hoog are ancestors. Juniors Frank Maney and Derek Manning, who were a combined 7-4 with a 3.67 ERA, are the only two starters with experience.

Roberts, in his 14th year, said that the pair were the clear-cut leaders for starts, but that he would definitely look at others to fill in the gaps. Freshman Jay MacMillan is probably next in line for a starting spot. The southpaw from Richmond, Va., has already proven his worth, pitching five shutout innings to pick up a victory in his first collegiate game versus Campbell Feb. 19.

Roberts said a good starting corps should mean a successful season.

"Every team that expects to win a championship and compete in a regional must have solid starting pitching," Roberts said. "Before we can go to



Mike Roberts

(postseason play), we've got to develop that first. If we do, we know we have an opportunity to be there because we're solid in all the other areas."

For now, the rest of the rotation is up in the air. The remainder of the lineup, however, seems set in stone.

Senior Steve Estroff, the 1990 ACC Tournament MVP, will start at first base. The burly Atlanta native hit .389 last season with 15 home runs and 73 runs batted in, stats good enough to garner him a spot on Baseball America's "Dream Team."

The second-base slot was left vacant by the graduation of Dave Arendas. It will be filled by redshirt senior Darren Villani, who last season played right field and third. Villani, who hit .313 with nine dingers and 24 stolen bases, could be erratic in the infield. Redshirt junior Cy Richardson, who played in 16 games, will also see time at second.

Ron Maurer, a first-team All-ACC selection at shortstop, has graduated. His shoes will be filled by freshman sensation Keith Grunewald, a second-round draft pick of the Detroit Tigers.

### Baseball

Head Coach: Mike Roberts (North Carolina 1972)

Career Record: 493-235-3 (14th year)

Record at School: same

Assistant Coaches: Mark Halvorsen, Bobby Gilmore

1990 Record: 51-14, 17-4 ACC (first), third in NCAA regional

Starters Returning/Lost: 5/4

Top Returnees: Rich Fernandez (Sr.), Frank Maney (Jr.), Derek Manning (Jr.), Paul Shuey (So.), Brad Woodall (Sr.), Donnie Leshnock (So.), Chris Cox (So.), Steve Estroff (Sr.), Chad Holbrook (So.), Mark Kingston (Jr.), Darren Villani (Sr.), Matt Wooten (Sr.), Rich Griffith (Sr.)

Top Newcomers: Keith Grunewald (Atlanta), Jay McMillan (Richmond, Va.)

Facility: Cary C. Boshamer Stadium (3,000)

Scouts obviously think Grunewald, also from Atlanta, has the ability to play in the bigs. He hit .459 as a switch-hitter in high school and was selected by Baseball America as one of the top five players who did not sign a pro contract.

Despite Grunewald's accolades, Roberts said the youngster still had much to learn.

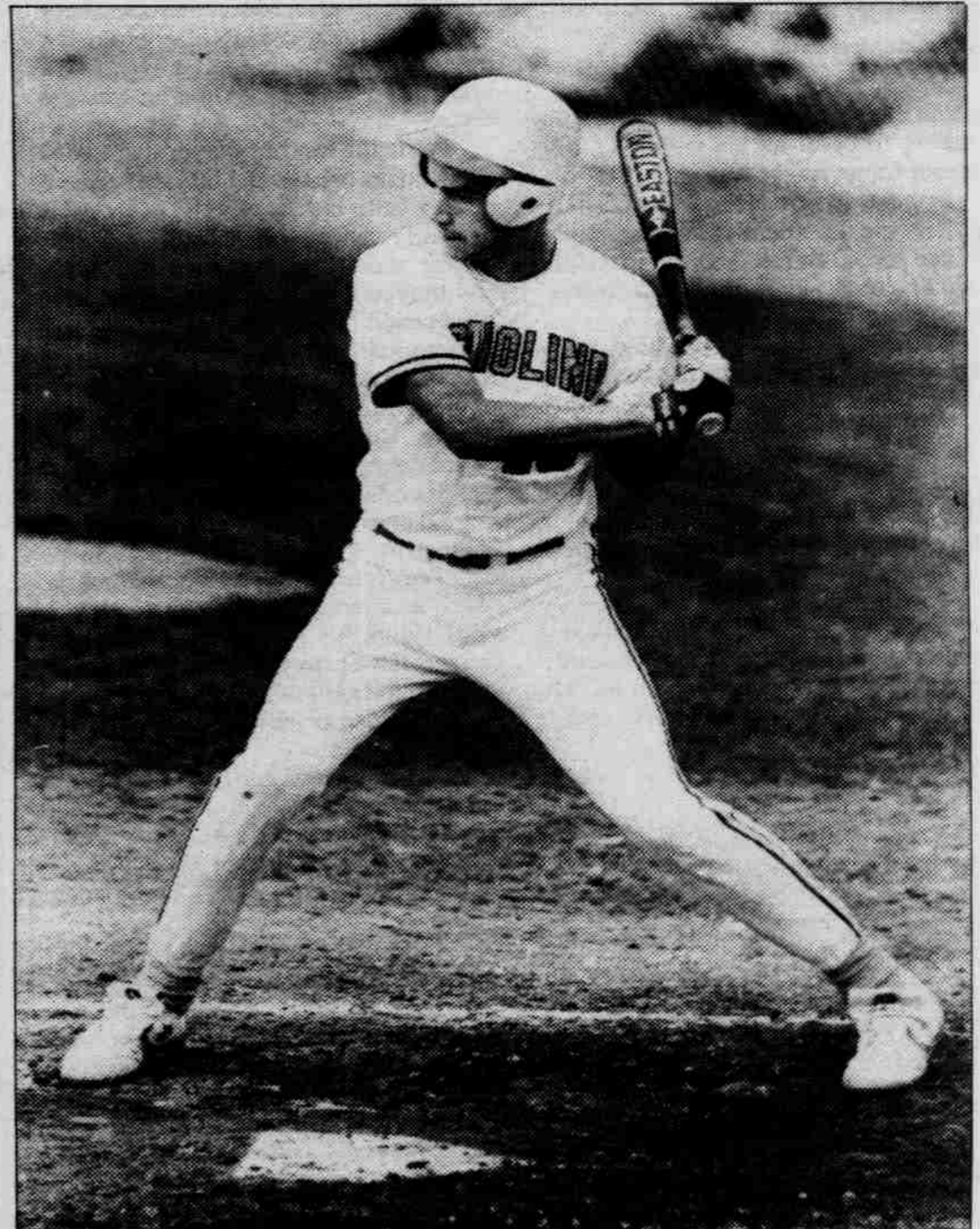
"He's a very talented young man," Roberts said. "I treat all freshmen the same way — they need to work on everything; you're average until proven different. Right now, he's average but blessed with the ability to go way beyond that. Right now, I just want him to relax and realize that there are a lot of experienced players to help him out."

At third base, sophomore Chris Cox started only 19 games last season because of a broken thumb. The Winston-Salem native hit .247 in his first year.

Sophomore Donnie Leshnock (.283, 19 RBI) should shoulder most of the load at catcher, with senior Rich Griffith filling in occasionally. Leshnock is blessed with a gun, but he misfired often last season. Despite his rifle, he threw out only 12 of 50 runners (24 percent) attempting to steal.

"Donnie Leshnock has one of the premier arms in the country," Estroff said. "I haven't seen an arm like that for a long time."

The outfield could be a question be-



DTH/Grant Halverson

Sophomore catcher Donnie Leshnock hit .283 with 19 RBI in 41 starts as a freshman

cause UNC's only returnee is the versatile Woodall, who will play right field. Senior Matt Wooten, a self-proclaimed defensive specialist, gets the nod in center, while sophomore Chad Holbrook, who started 46 of 65 games at designated hitter, will play left and probably bat in the leadoff spot.

Junior Mark Kingston (.241, 22 RBI in 35 games) will take over the designated hitter duties. The Dumfries, Va., product, who now resides in Durham,

will be counted on for some punch in the five spot when pitchers work around cleanup hitter Estroff.

In fact, Estroff, whose slow development was similar to Kingston's, said the DH's time to shine had arrived.

"He hasn't lived up to the expectations and pressures that people put on him coming out of high school," Estroff said. "But now he's matured, and I see great things for him. His swing is great from both sides. He just needs to get some confidence going."

Confidence is an item the North Carolina bullpen should have oodles of. UNC's three top firemen — Fernandez, Shuey and Woodall — combined for a

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