

SUCCESSFUL CHAPMAN COACH

Deese Looks North to Alaska for Better Baseball Opportunity

BY AL CARR

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VILLA PARK — Paul Deese was heading for Alaska the next day. The family was leaving its Villa Park home. Deese was quitting his baseball coaching job at Chapman College.

In his seven years as baseball coach, Deese had accomplished nearly the impossible. He had made college baseball an important sport in Orange County.

This day he was feeling poorly, not because of his departure. He was feeling poorly because he, his wife Shirley and two of their three children were sick with stomach flu. They were to drive to Seattle the next day.

In front of Deese is Anchorage, Alaska, and what he believes is the opportunity to build a semipro baseball team into a AAA franchise and member of the Pacific Coast League.

Anchorage has an estimated population of 45,000 January 1, 1970. It is but a few hours flight from the Pacific Northwest and from Hawaii.

Front Office

Anchorage gives him the opportunity to demonstrate he is capable in the front office and the field. He'll be general manager and field manager and one of nine equal partners in the Anchorage Glacier Pilots.

Deese has a lot of stories to tell about his coaching days at Chapman.

"Barney Scholl was the most outstanding player I ever coached. He played left field and could dominate a game with his bat and glove.

"What about John Young?"

"John did it for one year. Barney did it for two years," Deese said of Young, a 6-3, 215-pound freshman who had played for Chapman only one year (1968) and then signed with the Detroit Tigers.

"If Young had stayed with us longer, we would have had turnaway crowds at every one of our games. He would have done more for college baseball than anyone I know.

"He was the most sensational player I ever saw. He was as big as Willie McCovey and had the speed and potential greatness of Willie Mays.

"He was so fast, a bunt to the pitcher was a single. A walk was an automatic double. He was a sensation on offense and wild on defense, the way he would circle under a fly ball."

Young, then a freshman from Mt. Carmel High, helped Chapman win the 1968 NCAA, College Division, title and was selected on the all-tournament team.

Last season, he was most valuable player as leading hitter in the Florida State



Paul Deese

League and this year joins the Tiger AAA farm in Toledo.

Scholl, employed by the Orange County Probation Department, played in 1966 and 1967, hit .434 and .350, was first team All-American, College Division, both years and in the World Baseball Tournament was selected All-World.

They were the two greatest on Deese's 14-man All-Chapman team covering his seven years with the Panthers. Among others are Bob Zamora, the shortstop who graduated magna cum laude in languages and is now in the San Diego system; outfielder Tony Spano, most valuable player in the 1968 NCAA Tournament, and Mike Weathers, a fine defensive second baseman last year and who hit well in the clutch.

Deese was back to reminiscing.

"In going through my stuff," he said, "I came across the high school transcript of Bert Blyleven. We didn't recruit him strongly. He wasn't that good in high school.

"But some big league scouts were high on him. They liked his arm motion. His ball occasionally did things. They felt he'd be a good one when he became consistent."

Blyleven became a major league starter for Minnesota after one year in the minors.

"I'm going to save that transcript as a souvenir," Deese said.

Career Highlights

Deese was asked about the highlights of his career at Chapman.

His teams had won the NCAA title, he was named NCAA, College Division, Coach of the Year in 1965, Chapman had been to the NCAA Regional Tournament in each of his seven years.

"The series with USC was definitely a highlight," Deese said. That series made college baseball important in Orange County. We drew 2,500 to a game at La Palma Stadium last spring.

"We beat USC twice last spring and won four of the last six games with USC,

but lost eight before that."

Behind him, Deese leaves a group of frosh stars at Chapman—Manny Estrada, CIF Player of the Year as a junior at Bishop Amat; Bob Blackledge of Foothill High, and Tom Lederer, 10-0 for Lakewood's CIF championship team.

According to Deese, the Pilots are a 2-year-old team and corporation. Deese was hired as field manager for the summer team 2 years ago and assembled a group of collegians which won the National Baseball Congress title the first year and were runner-up last season.

"We drew an average of 3,000 fans a game for 35 home games each year," said Deese. "The owners are businessmen in Anchorage. They wanted the club to grow, but were busy in business.

"I used to want to be a manager in organized baseball. Now I want to be in baseball and be a father to my three children. The only way I can do both is to be in the front office."