

# The Daily Tar Heel

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## FOCUSED ON THE CURE

Catcher, brain cancer survivor leading fundraising initiative

BY LAUREN RATCLIFFE  
STAFF WRITER

Behind his catcher's mask, Chase Jones has two scars. One is above his right eye near his hairline. The other, which dents into his head, is covered by his hair.

The scars remind Jones, the bullpen catcher for the UNC baseball team, of his battle with brain cancer in 2006 that kept him from both the dugout and the classroom.

"I started getting headaches, and within 24 hours I went from studying for econ to having a brain tumor," he said.

A biopsy confirming cancer was followed by six months of chemotherapy. As he recovered, he was finally able to return to his family on the field.

"I was able to rejoin the team," he said. "I was using the team as a way to escape and a way to get better both physically and mentally."

Now, Jones is using the sport to help others get well by combining two of his passions: baseball and raising awareness for childhood cancer.

**Cutting hair for cancer**

### How to Donate

To make a donation to BaseBald for the Cure:

▶ call the North Carolina Medical Foundation at 1-800-962-2543 or 919-966-5905.

▶ mail a check to:

UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center

Campus Box 7295

Chapel Hill, N.C. 27599-7295

▶ make a personal gift online through the Medical Foundation of North Carolina Web site: [bit.ly/ajyqwm](http://bit.ly/ajyqwm)



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Jones, a senior in Kenan-Flagler, says that baseball was a way for him to recover both physically and mentally.

If UNC's BaseBald for the Cure fundraiser is successful, Jones' scars won't be hidden for long.

As part of the team's initiative to benefit the fight against pediatric cancer, one player will have his head shaved on the Boshamer Stadium field for each \$100 raised after the April 11 game against N.C. State.

With 35 players on the roster, the goal is set for \$3,500, but if

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**BASEBALD**

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more money is raised, the coaching staff will participate, Jones said.

"Our goal is to raise money, but it's more so to raise awareness," he said.

The fundraiser will be similar to a 2007 event in which players shaved their heads and donated money in honor of former assistant coach Chad Holbrook's son, who was battling cancer at the time.

"It's something that has really hit home for the baseball team in general with Chase being a part of it," said senior shortstop Ryan Graepel. "He was diagnosed with brain cancer his freshman year — that was really hard for us as a team."

**Making a difference**

Debbie Dibbert, the director of external affairs for the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, said the fundraiser will bring in much-needed money.

Donations will go to help support services of the pediatric outpatient program of the N.C. Cancer Hospital, such as aid to families of children being treated and aid to researchers working on clinical trials, she said.

"The hospital just opened in August," Dibbert said. "The demand for support services has gone up 30 percent."

The money's destination has special meaning for Jones.

"That's where I was treated, and that's where my doctors are," Jones said. "It's going for children with cancer. It's for the kids."

Jones said he looks forward to the event because of its outward expression of cancer support.

*"It taught me that life isn't about you. It's about what you can do for others."*

**CHASE JONES, BULLPEN CATCHER**

"Seeing everyone come in with long hair and leaving with the same length, you get some players who look in the mirror and are upset to see their hair gone," Jones said. "Baseball's not the end all to be all. Maybe by people on campus seeing us, they'll think the same thing."

Other players on the team said they are glad to be participating but have mixed feelings about losing their hair.

"It'll probably be a solid month, month and a half before I start looking normal again," Graepel said, laughing.

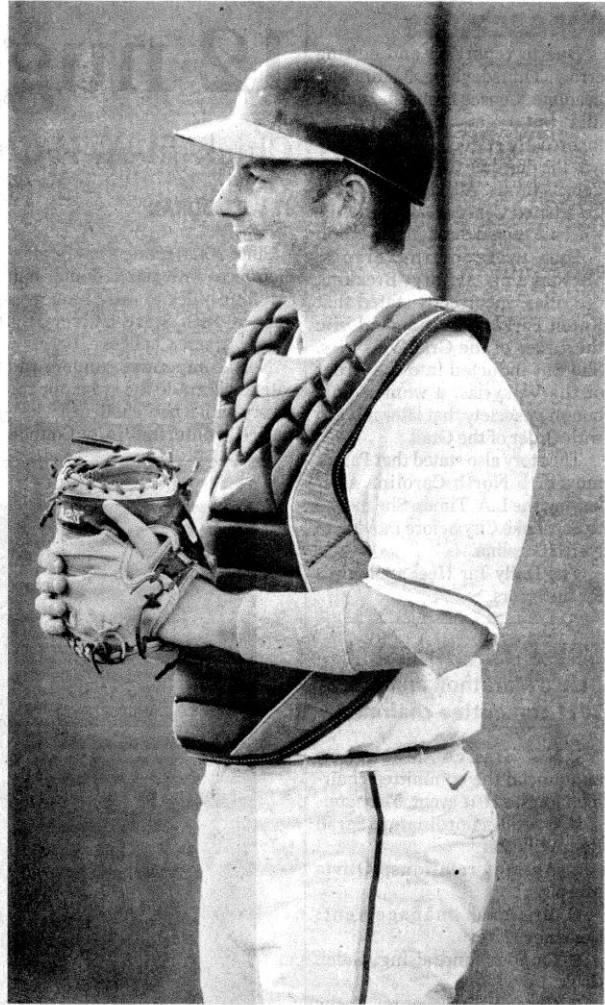
Pitcher Colin Bates said he doesn't mind cutting his hair, which he already keeps short.

"I'm looking forward to seeing the guys who I don't know what the shape of their head looks like," Bates said. "They've got long hair, so it could be funny to see."

While his teammates look forward to seeing the shapes of their teammates' heads, Jones is mindful of the lessons he has already learned.

"It taught me that life isn't about you," he said. "It's about what you can do for others. To put me on the lowest of lows and then putting me back to this place is an amazing thing."

Contact the University Editor at [udesk@unc.edu](mailto:udesk@unc.edu).



DTH/PHONG DINH

For each \$100 raised in the BaseBald for the Cure fundraiser, one team member will shave his head after the team's April 11 home game.