

learn to pitch, you can hit," he remembers telling him. Working closely with pitchers in particular, Coach Woolfolk remembers telling John Stanley, "You know you had the worst delivery I've ever seen for a kid with a strong arm." I took him in the gym and put a piece of tape down like a T. And you're supposed to go straight down the line. Your feet are supposed to end up straight down the line, with the toe to the catcher. And I got him to do that. And I don't think he'd ever won a ball game in his high school career, and he ended up winning five and we went to the regions the first year." Another player needed work on hitting. Woolfolk would make him hit 100 Wiffle balls righty and another hundred lefty before practice even started.



Photo by Phil Audibert  
Lindsay Woolfolk can be found most summer days in the shade of a massive mulberry tree with his old black lab, Allie. Wracked by rheumatoid arthritis, he credits acupuncture treatments for being able to get around today.

That's the hard work and discipline talking.

He even sees a horrifying lack of fundamentals on the Major League level, he says. "Yeah I watch Major League Baseball, but I get upset with the pitchers. And I've never seen so many hit at the ball in the dirt so much." He prefers college baseball because, "It's purer baseball. I know they make a lot of mistakes, but I can handle mistakes if they hustle." Regarding UVA's recent trip to Omaha, he says, "This College World

Series shows that there's a lot of camaraderie and playing for each other and all that."

That's the togetherness talking.

Coach Woolfolk pushes up from the chair under the Mulberry tree. Having successfully undergone heart valve repair surgery three years ago, his body is now wracked by rheumatoid arthritis. It is painful to watch him walk. Still every day he laboriously slides into his pickup truck, crosses the road from his home to the barn area and feeds his pet hogs and checks on his cattle. "Everyday I come down here, it means I have to get up and do something. If I didn't, I'd just sit down," he says wearily.

Nine years ago, Woolfolk left the OCHS program under less than ideal circumstances. "They pushed me out," he says bluntly. "They wanted me to retire and I wouldn't retire. We'll put it that way." He still harbors some resentment, although a recent ceremony where 70 or more of his former players honored him at Porterfield Park just prior to the Hornets clinching the district title did much to smooth over those "bad vibes." It was the first time he'd been back to the ball park he'd called home since 2001. "I have fond memories with those kids I had," he says gratefully.

"When you coach, they either are going to like you or not like you and when you coach you're going to make enemies and you're going to make friends," he reasons. If he has any regrets, it's the fact that coaching kept him away from his wife of 35 years and his two children. "If you're dedicated to be a coach and you want to be a coach and you're out there to help the kids and not to help yourself, your family suffers. Until the last four or five years, my kids, I didn't hardly know who they were...People don't understand, you spend so much time with somebody else's kids and most of the time they don't appreciate it."



Photo by John Strader  
Lindsay Woolfolk coached Orange County High School baseball for 28 years. In May, more than 70 of Woolfolk's former players gathered before the Hornets' Jefferson District-clinching win over rival Louisa to honor the longtime coach. Current OCHS varsity coach Jesse Lohr was a shortstop on Woolfolk's 1992 team that advanced to the state tournament. Here, the former coach is pictured with his wife Robin, daughter Ashley and son Lindsay, III.

But perhaps the root of the problem nine years ago was "a different philosophy on coaching and how you go about handling the team." In other words, to play for Coach Woolfolk you had to demonstrate hard work, discipline and togetherness. Otherwise you couldn't be

to do. I don't care about winning a trophy. It means zero to me."

Coach Woolfolk's was a loftier goal: to ace the final exam in the school of "hard work, discipline and togetherness."



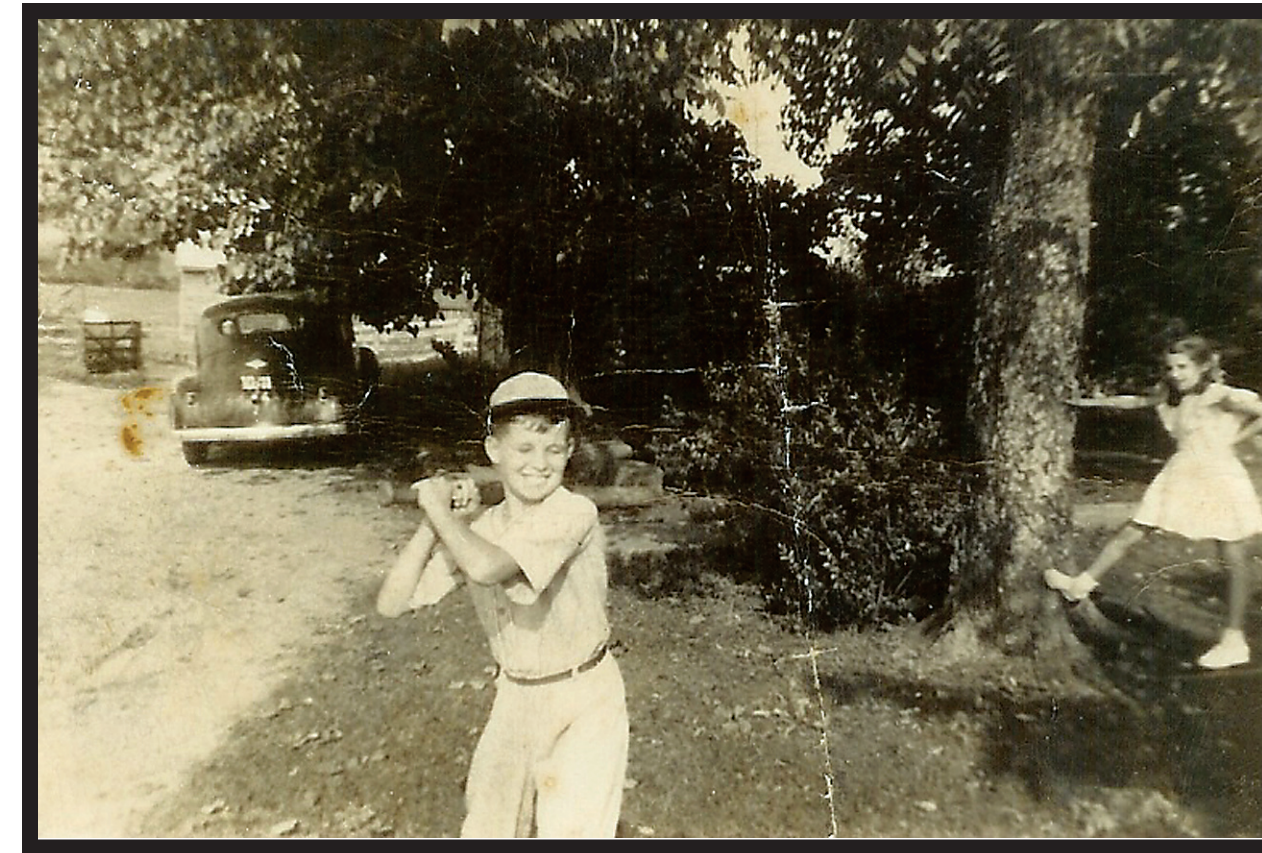
Photo by Phil Audibert  
Lindsay Woolfolk proudly wears the name of his alma mater, Bridgewater College. He says the small school in the valley helped teach him to be not just a winning player but an effective coach.

on the team.

Coach Woolfolk did not look upon baseball as an organized recess on a playground; it was just as much a part of the high school curriculum as math or science or English. An aspiring teacher since he was a child, his classroom was the ball diamond. "We were hired to coach you and to teach you baseball," he explains his philosophy. "Whether you learn it or not...depends on whether you buy into our program and what we want

# Hard work, discipline, togetherness

"Think of it as a failure sport." Longtime Orange County High School baseball (and football) coach, Lindsay Woolfolk delivers this shocker while seated underneath the biggest Mulberry tree you ever saw. It is one of those blessedly cool and dry summer days that we've been experiencing lately. A gentle breeze flutters the spade-shaped leaves. Allie, a grizzled black lab, nuzzles his hand.



Lindsay Woolfolk swings a bat as his sister, Helen looks on impatiently. Brother and sister were both outstanding competitive athletes.

Contributed photo

Despite crippling arthritis, Lindsay Woolfolk makes the effort every day to check his cattle and feed his pet hogs on his family farm near Lahore.

Photo by Phil Audibert





He reflects on the question 'what is the allure of baseball?' and responds with several rhetorical ones. "Think about it. Every 10 times you go to the plate, you get three hits. You go do another job and you fail seven times, you're not going to be there very long, are you? How about a quarterback who throws 10 passes but doesn't complete but three? People would be on him big time." He purses his lips. "Think about it as a failure sport, and," he leans forward, "I think it's an accomplishment that you can overcome and you can beat it because it will beat you."

To someone who has never thought about baseball in quite these terms, this comes as something of a revelation. "It's a great game and people love to play it," he continues, "but a lot of people can't play it because they can't fight that. I've had kids literally crying because they strike out. Well," he reasons, "you've got another chance. I just think it's this idea of trying to overcome obstacles and everything..." He lets the sentence dangle, and then adds as an afterthought, "It's a fun sport to go out and be with your friends and all that, but it's tough."

Lindsay Woolfolk may have figured out how to beat it...by being tougher. And the way to become tougher is through hard work, discipline, and togetherness. Those words appear in quotes in a 1980 publication entitled "Who's Who in American High School Coaches." There he is, Lindsay Woolfolk, born in Orange County in 1936. He is described as having a coaching philosophy that "believes in hard work, discipline, togetherness."

And that's why in this "failure" sport, Lindsay Woolfolk was named the seventh-winningest coach in the state with an overall career record (in all sports that he coached) of 342 wins to 267 losses, including regional and district championships.

Football, he says, teaches you to dole out and take hits, but "baseball is like life." He elaborates. "A lot of people don't want to play it because if you're playing shortstop and the ball is hit to you and you fumble it, you can't blame anybody else. You can't blame other people. In football, you can play tackle or guard or center or something and you can make a mistake and most people don't recognize it. Basketball, you rely on your buddies to cover up for you and all that. In baseball nobody can cover up for you. You're hung out to dry. You go to the plate and miss three in a row, you take your bat and go sit down."

Speaking of sitting down, Lindsay Woolfolk is seated not 15 yards away from the house where he was deliv-



Contributed photo

In addition to baseball, Lindsay Woolfolk was an outstanding football player at OCHS. One year, he was a four-letter man, his other sports being basketball and track.

ered "in the front room," by midwife Estelle White 72 years ago. His great grandfather was killed in the Civil War. He says that Ruth Lewis of Freetown held him as a baby down by his Uncle Marshall Jackson's store. He produces a photo of him swinging a bat at age, what, seven or eight, something like that. There's a 1941 Plymouth in the background and a little girl dressed in white, leaning up against a tree. Her body language fairly screams, 'I can do anything better than you can.' It's his sister, Helen, and he credits her for some of that toughness. He remembers his father "would hit fly balls and throw the ball with us out here in the field." He gestures across the dirt road that bisects the 190-acre family farm down near Lahore.

He recalls how his Dad nailed an old Texaco sign to a barn or light pole, attached a hoop to it, and "We'd play basketball there rain, hail, snow, shine. Very few days we didn't go down there and shoot basketball." He smiles fondly at the memory of it. "We'd play one on one, getting mad at each other. She was a good athlete." Helen held the OCHS girls' basketball scoring record for years.

But baseball was Lindsay's real love. A diehard Yankee fan since childhood, he remembers listening to games on the radio with his dad or under the covers, volume turned down low, when he was supposed to be asleep upstairs in bed. Those were carefree days, riding to Unionville with his schoolteacher mom, playing sports, helping his dad milk cows. All he wanted to be in life was an ag teacher, "since I was a small kid."

After completing ninth grade at Unionville, Lindsay Woolfolk attended Orange County High School when it was up on Bellview Avenue where the senior apartments are today. It was the early 1950s. The soon-to-be-legendary Paul Sizemore had just come to Orange to coach. He took one look at the 6'3" 200-pound Woolfolk and recruited him on the spot. But a sinus infection sidelined him for a whole season, prompting Sizemore to issue a challenge that went something to the effect, "I thought you were a football player, not a sissy."

Lindsay Woolfolk remembers it well. "He was a hard man...a hard, hard man," he shudders. Still, Lindsay rose to the bait. "When it comes next year, I'm going to show you I can play," he retorted. He smiles, satisfied. "He even put me with his toughest kids, so I proved him wrong." Little did he know that he would wind up working as Sizemore's assistant 15 years later.

"When I was going to high school, I'd go down and milk every morning half the cows and he'd (his father) milk the other half. I'd come home from football practice; that was the hardest part. We used to practice two times a day, none of this pitty-patty stuff. He'd leave me cows and I'd go down and milk them."

One year, Lindsay Woolfolk lettered in four sports, including track where he held the 880 record for years and years. Looking back on those hard-work times, Lindsay says "It helped me, because it teaches discipline. That's what coaching's all about too, keeping law and order...they say they should have fun, and yeah, you can have fun but you also have some rules."

During the summers, Lindsay Woolfolk played in leagues wherever he could. Back in those days, "Every little nook and crook had a baseball team. All communities had a baseball team." When he was still in his mid-



Review file photo

At the OCHS 1987 athletic awards banquet, Lindsay Woolfolk accepts the American Legion Award from Tom Mallory for the varsity baseball team's undefeated regular season.

teens, he played first base for Judge Bob Grady's team of "old guys" in Orange. "They sort of took me under their wing, and I started playing ball with them. And until I went to college, I played with them." He remembers cut pine trees still smoldering in centerfield when Porterfield Park arose like a Phoenix from the ashes of the town dump.

Time to think about college, but Woolfolk was having trouble with his grades. "English was my bugaboo," he smiles. There was talk of scholarship money to attend and play for Virginia Tech. He considered going to Fork Union Military Academy. But, "All of it fell through because I didn't think I could do the military, the football

and do the class work; it was just too much."

He went to Bridgewater College over in the valley instead. And it turned out to be a good decision, because "It gave me a chance to play three sports," including the opportunity to play on the college's winningest team ever. Besides, he took classes in things like coaching methods and theory. "They did a good job. Bridgewater gave me a good education. I don't regret going to school there," he says proudly sporting his alma mater's hat and T-shirt.

One day Lindsay Woolfolk spied an ad that said Lancaster County was looking for a head football, basketball, and baseball coach all rolled into one. He applied for the job. Lancaster is located all the way down at the end of the Northern Neck, completely isolated from everyone and everything. "I never had seen the place. I didn't know anybody. I didn't even know the prin-

They worked on the fish boat. And they worked crabbing and oystering and all that. They were big kids, but they didn't want to come practice, and boy that really burnt me up." He remembers one kid had just come back from reform school. "You had to be harder with them. I grabbed many a kid, shook him real good. Then they knew where you were coming from." Woolfolk stayed in Lancaster three years. "The first year I was down there, I won the district in football."

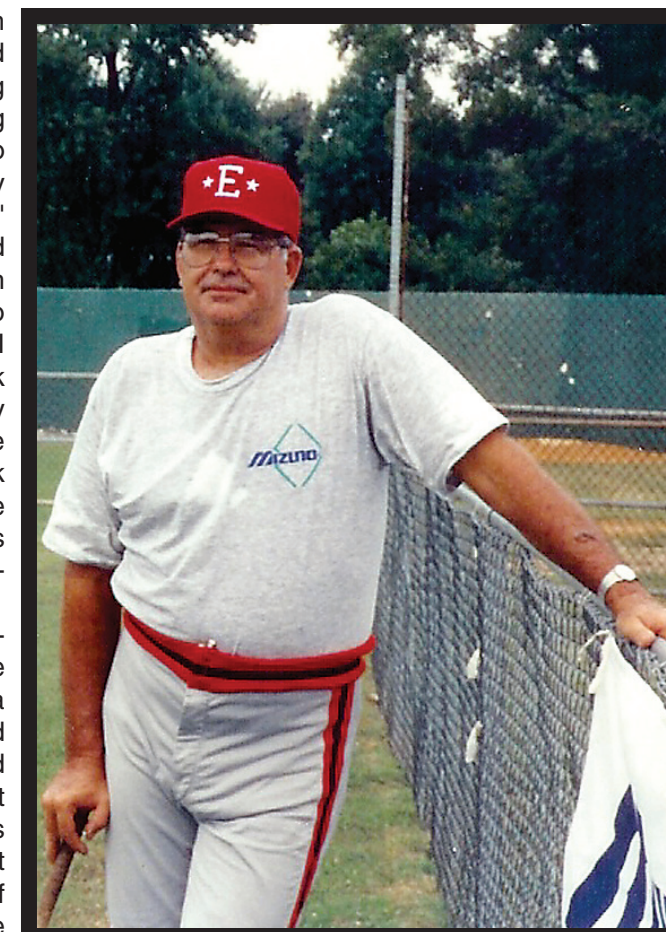
Which is pretty remarkable considering that he had never worked under a coaching mentor. "So I had to sit down and read and read and read and look at pictures and go to clinics and everything to find out what you do on a lot of stuff, because I didn't have anybody to go to." In those days you didn't have special teams; you barely had substitutions! In football, you played both ways.

"I put in this offense that I knew from when I played for Sizemore and the defense and some of the offense that I used at Bridgewater, that's what I used." He adds that Sizemore was way ahead of his time. "He had a good football mind."

Next stop: Louisa County, which put him much closer to home. He took over as head baseball coach and driver's ed teacher. He signed the contract, "And had the first winning season Louisa ever had." His JV football teams went undefeated for three years. "I coached the first black athlete at Louisa. He was a basketball player. He was a good kid," continues Woolfolk who was no stranger to those tense early years of integration in sports, having played side by side with two black athletes at Bridgewater. "I didn't have any problem because I played with them back in the '50s."

Woolfolk was eventually named head football coach at Louisa, but his luck ran out. "I couldn't get anything out of them," he laments. "Sizemore, after three years, he wanted to know if I wanted to come to Orange and be his assistant. And I said, 'Yeah, I gotta get out of this place.'" But, even though he had 10 years experience coaching football, it was hard to do his thing under Sizemore. "I didn't do a whole lot because he wouldn't let anybody coach," rues Woolfolk. "I was a scout."

He was also a sixth grade science teacher at Prospect Heights. He quickly earned a reputation as a disciplinarian from his students and players. Kids, acting up in class, would ask him why he was so grumpy. He'd reply, "I go to my farm and I feed my cattle before I come to school. When I come in here I don't expect some kid



Contributed photo

This photo was taken during a break in an all star game that Lindsay Woolfolk coached.

to act like a donkey. I already dealt with my donkeys down on the farm."

He peers over his glasses and arches his eyebrows in query. "Here you're supposed to be acting as an adult. Yeah I get upset because you have no manners, no grace. You don't come in here except to disrupt school. They perceived me as negative. I just think that to live in today's world, you have to be a hard person and you have to look out for yourself, because nobody else is going to look out for you."

Three years after coming to Orange, Woolfolk was named head baseball coach, a position he held for 28 years. Of course the standout 1987 and 1992 teams come to mind first. The former went 19-1, winning the district and coming in second in the regionals.

"That was a good ball club," says Lindsay proudly. The 1992 team was 22-1, taking third place in the state

championship in Harrisonburg. Woolfolk rattles off the names of some of his best players. (To avoid the inadvertent omission of a few, let's just say they are too numerous to list.) Today's Hornets district champion coach, Jesse Lohr, played shortstop for Woolfolk on that 1992 championship team.

"All sports, it's a whole lot of luck," says Woolfolk. But then he infers it takes a lot of hard work, discipline and togetherness too. "I'm a dinosaur," he admits. "Sizemore and the coaches I had over the years instilled in me you come to practice, you try to do the best you can, and if you're not good enough, I can handle that. But don't play people who don't come practice who are better than somebody else, because I'm a firm believer that you go to a job every day, and if you don't, you don't get paid."

And he was, and still is, a stickler for fundamentals. "I see guys playing ball today...they're terrible; their fundamentals are terrible. They throw off the wrong foot." Woolfolk admits he's not a big fan of Little League baseball because kids learn bad habits there, habits that he had to break when they came to high school. "I think the backbone of a lot of my success was that I coached the senior Babe Ruth in the summer time. So, the word got around if you wanted to play ball in the spring, you had to play in the summer." And there, he would work on those fundamentals. "Work with fielding the ball right, throwing the ball right, and then at the end, pick up teams and let them play," he suggests. "It's tough to break a kid of a bad habit."

He remembers one player who "had as good an arm as any kid I ever saw, but he threw the ball with three fingers." Besides, the boy only wanted to hit. "When you