

Tom McCarthy talks his way to the top

In 1969, the New York Mets completed an improbable dream season by winning their first World Series title. Just seven years after losing a record-setting 120 games in their inaugural season of 1962, the Metropolitans of New York reached the pinnacle of the baseball world. Their slogan throughout that magical playoff run was, "Ya Gotta Believe."

Tom McCarthy '90 was one year old when the Mets claimed that championship. He quickly became a fan when his father, who worked for AT&T, purchased season tickets to games at Shea Stadium. Just a kid seated in the seventh row above the Mets' dugout, McCarthy fantasized about being in one of two places when he grew up. He dreamed of being down on the field swinging a bat for the Mets, or stationed slightly higher above the field, looking down at the diamond and calling the game from the press box.

The Mets made believers of their fans in 1969, and McCarthy is now a firm believer that Shea Stadium is his personal field of dreams. This spring, McCarthy is enjoying his first season as the Mets' radio broadcaster, calling play-by-play of games for WFAN 660.

"This is my dream job," said McCarthy, who will partner with both Howie Rose and Ed Coleman during the regular season and post-game shows. "I vividly remember listening to the great Bob Murphy calling Mets games on the radio when I was a kid. I never imagined I would be in this position and realize something I dreamed about growing up."

It's hard to imagine McCarthy spending any time daydreaming. He's been too busy working. Recognizing the

fact that he had no contacts starting out in the industry, McCarthy traveled the old-school path. He stuck his nose to the grindstone and worked his way to the top.

After graduating from Brick Memorial High School, McCarthy followed in the footsteps of his older brother, Raymond '88, and enrolled at Trenton State College. (His younger brother, Kevin '93, also graduated from the College.)

While taking a full communication studies course load, McCarthy got a part-time job at the *Hopewell Valley News* as a sports writer. He also worked at *The Times* of Trenton, answering phones before earning writing assignments for the sports department. His first story, he remembers, was a baseball game between the Pennington and Lawrenceville Prep schools. Writing stories, "gave me a rush," he said, and it wasn't long before McCarthy had a clear focus on his career path.

He continued to work at *The Times* and took an internship at New Jersey Network. The busy work schedule while attending classes did not bother McCarthy, nor did it stand in the way of him enjoying the college experience.

"You can juggle much more than you think you can," he said. "There are a lot of hours in the day. There was so much available as far as opportunities to learn and gain valuable work experience that I didn't want to pass anything up. Besides, I was working in sports, which I loved."

After graduating, McCarthy flew out of the batter's box and blazed a trail that only a formal resume can distinctly recount. He continued at *The Times* and began his broadcasting career at WTTM 920 AM, calling football games for the Lions of then Trenton State.

McCarthy left *The Times* when he was hired as director of public and media relations for the Trenton Thunder.



Tom McCarthy '90

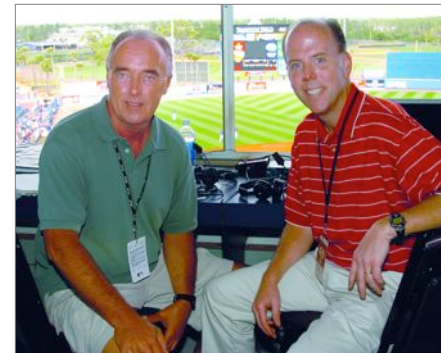
He was promoted to assistant general manager in 1996 and also worked as one of the team's broadcasters on radio and television on CN8. During the fall and winter months, McCarthy called play-by-play for Princeton University football and basketball and Rutgers University football, and now serves as broadcaster for St. Joseph's University men's and women's basketball teams. He also found time to author a book, *Baseball in Trenton* (Arcadia Publishing, 2003), which commemorates the history of baseball in New Jersey's capital city.

In 1999, McCarthy left the Thunder to pursue a full-time career in broadcasting. He first hosted a weekday afternoon drive-time show on ESPN Radio and has spent the last five seasons calling play-by-play for the Philadelphia Phillies and hosting the Phillies' pre- and post-game shows. Philadelphia was a good match for a professional driven by a blue-collar work ethic.

"I loved my time in Philadelphia," McCarthy said. "The organization was great, and the fans are very passionate. You can't be over-friendly towards the players on the radio. You have to be honest and objective or the fans will call you on it."

The Mets job, however, was his crown jewel. When veteran broadcaster Gary Cohen vacated his radio position for television, McCarthy sent his demo CD to WFAN in New York. After hearing McCarthy and reviewing his résumé, the interview process amounted to little more than working out an agreement.

McCarthy's voice is deep with character and he speaks with a rhythm that sustains attention and exudes presence. His knowledge of the sport,



Ed Coleman and Tom McCarthy in press box.

meticulous preparation, and friendly personality provide a perfect blend for radio broadcasting. It's not difficult to understand why this TCNJ grad will be calling games in the biggest sports market in the world.

A typical day for McCarthy begins at his Allentown, NJ, residence with his wife, Meg, TCNJ Class of 1990, whom he describes as "the brains of the operation." He'll help get his four young ones—Patrick, 11, Tommy, 8, Maggie, 6, and Kerri Ann, 3—ready for school. He'll then read every newspaper and Web site

article he can find on the Mets, their players, and the opposing team they're facing. After preparing notes, he'll drive to New York and report to Shea Stadium around three for a night game. Players and coaches begin to arrive shortly after, and McCarthy engages them in conversations that lead to insightful broadcasting.

The pre-game broadcast is followed by the game itself and the post-game show. McCarthy then will drive home at close to midnight while listening to a tape of himself calling the night's game, to critique his performance.

"The biggest thing is you have to be prepared," said McCarthy. "I try to use my personality to my advantage to talk with as many people as possible and gather as much information as I can."

"There has to be balance in your broadcast. You want to give the listeners information, but just enough so they're still able to form their own opinion. You want to be descriptive, but not overwhelming. I know as a listener myself that a broadcaster can make a good point, but then belabor that point. You have to find that happy medium, and I'm always looking for better ways, better words, better pacing to become a better broadcaster."

Tom McCarthy began dreaming during visits to Shea Stadium as a child and now he calls that stadium home. Hard work got him there. That, and a belief in the creed of those 1969 Miracle Mets: "Ya Gotta Believe."

Mark Gola, an author of sports instructional books and former college baseball coach, lives in Robbinsville.

Sports highlights

Men's swimming and diving

TCNJ senior men's swimming team member Steve Swenson became the first Lion individual NCAA Division III champion since 1994 when he won the 100-meter breaststroke in 56.25, setting a new school record. In addition, he placed 15th in the 200 breaststroke with a time of 2:07.02, which also earned him All-America status. The senior capped his standout career earning All-American honors 15 times.

The Lions competed in the Minnesota championships, where freshman diver Greg Lloyd finished sixth with a score of 444.55 to earn his first career All-American award. He had been in 13th place in three-meter diving after the first of three rounds. Lloyd's accomplishment is even more significant, as this is his first year as a competitive diver.

Women's swimming and diving

Three members of TCNJ's women's swimming and diving team competed at the 2006 NCAA Division III Women's Swimming and Diving Championships this winter. The Lions finished tied for 33rd place.

Sophomore Ava Kiss repeated as an All-American in the 100 butterfly, taking fourth in the event. She broke her own school record in the trials at 57.18 and posted a time of 56.78 in the finals. She finished in ninth place in the same event in 2005.

Sophomore diver Lee Swanson finished in 13th place in the three-meter event with a score of 379.10 to take home All-America honorable mention honors.

Wrestling

TCNJ's senior wrestling team co-captain, **Brian Dempsey**, capped his standout career by placing third at the 2006 NCAA Division III Wrestling Championships held in the Student Recreation Center on TCNJ's campus.

The Lions finished the tournament in 19th place, the 33rd consecutive year the Lions have placed in the top 25.

Dempsey ended his career on a winning note, scoring an 11-4 decision over sixth-seeded Nate Hansen of Luther College, making him the school's first three-time All-American since **Anthony Conte** (1999-2001). In each of his three trips to the prestigious event, Dempsey improved his finish, taking eighth in 2004 and fifth in 2005. The Lion senior finished the season with a mark of 35-5 and went 113-37 during his career.

Both Dempsey and senior **Lenny Goduto** were named to the 2006 National Wrestling Coaches Association Division III Scholar-Athlete Team. The honor recognizes student-athletes who have competed in at least 60 percent of the team's matches and have achieved a 3.0 cumulative grade point average or higher. Goduto was tapped as an alternate to compete in the 2006 NCAA Division III Wrestling Championships. He went 18-4 for the year at 165 pounds and is now 19-6 for his career.



Brian Dempsey, TCNJ's All-American at 125 pounds.



TCNJ's recreation center during the 2006 NCAA Wrestling Championship

One of the College's all-time best grapplers, **Glen Sandull '94**, joined the National Wrestling Coaches Association Division III Hall of Fame on March 2 in ceremonies held in conjunction with the 2006 NCAA Division III Wrestling Championships. A two-time NCAA Division III champion heavyweight for the Lions, Sandull was also a two-time Metropolitan Conference champion as well as a two-year team captain for the Lions.



Glen Sandull '94, former assistant coach Bob Glaberman (left), and head coach David Icenhower Sr. (right).

Men's indoor track and field

The Lions' men's indoor track and field team finished in 13th place in the race for the 2006 NCAA Division III Indoor Track and Field Championships at St. Olaf College.

Senior **Jeff Zodda** won the NCAA title in the 800 meters after setting a Tostrud Center record in the event with a time of 1:52.53. The award marks the sixth All-America citation for Zodda, who also helped TCNJ take home ninth in the distance medley relay in 10:14.15. Senior **Brian Donovan** finished in sixth place nationally in the 5,000-meter run with an impressive performance of 14:44.45. The All-America award for Donovan is the first of his career.



All-Americans from Wrestling All-America parade.

Women's indoor track and field

TCNJ's women's indoor track and field team finished in 10th place at the 2006 NCAA Division III Indoor Track and Field Championships at St. Olaf College.

Along the way, the Lion women finished as the NCAA Division III runners-up in the 4 x 400 relay after posting a time of 3:51.30. The Lions were edged at the finish line by Lincoln University (3:51.08) and were unable to defend the crown they won a year ago.

Senior **Brittney Boyd** also competed for the Lions in the long jump and in the 400-meter run. On the final day, she finished third in the 400 meters with a time of 56.68. She posted a Tostrud Center record in the trials, only to have it broken in the finals by the 2006 champion, Rachel Anderson of Illinois Wesleyan (56.35). Boyd is now an 18-time All-American in track and field.

In the 800-meter run, junior **Angela Tecco** finished sixth to earn All-America honors with a time of 2:14.93. She is now a six-time All-American as a Lion.

Men's basketball

TCNJ's men's basketball team had two players named to the 2005-2006 New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) Men's Basketball All-Star Team, while head coach **John Castaldo** was tapped as the John K. Adams Coach of the Year after guiding the Lions to a 17-9 overall record and a fourth seed in the 2006 NJAC Championships after an 11-7 conference mark.

TCNJ seniors **Scott Findlay** and **Matt Diamond** were both named to the All-Conference Team. Findlay earned a spot on the first team and Diamond was named to the honorable mention squad. Findlay was also named to the 2005-2006 National Association of Basketball Coaches Division III All-America Third Team after earning a spot on the 2006 NABC All-Region First Team.

Findlay, the Lions' leading scorer this past season, finished with a team-high 512 points and a 19.7 points-per-game average, which was third best in the NJAC and ranked 48th in Division III. Findlay was the NJAC Rookie of the Year in 2001-2002 and wrapped up his fine

career as the College's second all-time leading scorer at 1,668 points, behind TCNJ's **Greg Grant** (2,611 points, 1986-1989). Over the course of his career, Findlay scored in double figures in 88 of his 107 games played. He added 948 career rebounds and once again finished the season as the NJAC's leading rebounder in 2005-2006.

Women's basketball

TCNJ's women's basketball team won the NJAC championship, earning a bid to the 2006 NCAA Division III Championships. However, the Lions fell to the University of Mary Washington in the opening round of the tournament and had their season come to an end after a 19-9 campaign.

TCNJ senior forward **Erin Frank** earned a spot on the 2005-2006 NJAC All-Star Team for her play this past year, while senior guard **Alexa Shields** was tapped for the NJAC All-Star Second Team, also earning the MVP honors at the 2006 NJAC-Skyline Senior All-Star Game. Shields capped her standout career with 906 points and is third on TCNJ's all-time assists list with 309. Senior guard **Tiara Simpkins** left her mark on the defensive end of the floor, finishing her career seventh in steals with 155.

Head coach **Dawn Henderson** finished the season just one win shy of her 300th career victory.

Men's baseball

TCNJ's baseball team opened the 2006 season with a 15-0 streak, giving 25-year veteran head coach **Rick Dell** his 650th career win. Dell recorded the victory on March 28, when the Lions defeated Gwynedd-Mercy, 11-1. In that same contest, the Lions broke the College's single-season triples record, which had stood at 22 since 2000.



Rick Dell

Women's softball

TCNJ's softball team helped head coach **Sally Miller** record her 300th career win this spring, defeating Muhlenberg College on March 29.



Steve Smith

Sally Miller

Women's lacrosse

TCNJ's head women's lacrosse coach joined an exclusive club when her team defeated Colorado College on April 20. Now in her 20th year as head coach at TCNJ, **Sharon Pfluger** won her 300th career game with the women's lacrosse team. She is now 300-23-1 and is only the third women's collegiate lacrosse coach ever to reach the 300-win plateau.



Sharon Pfluger

Frank Harris calls it a day

After 25 years of service, one of the College's most capable and dependable staff members, Assistant Athletic Director and Director of Athletic Facilities **Frank Harris**, retired in early spring.

It was Harris who, in a sense, made the trains run on time when it came to TCNJ's entire athletic program and many of the events that took place at its various facilities. Whether it involved buildings, fields, or new construction, it was Harris' skill at planning ahead that helped establish the College's reputation for a first-class athletic program.

A 1979 graduate of the College, Harris came to TCNJ in 1980 and has served in numerous roles in the department of athletics. Over the years, he helped host NCAA Division III National Championships, countless New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association championship events, the New Jersey Special Olympics, and

"Frank will be truly missed...but the mark that he made on the athletic department will never be forgotten."

coordinated use of athletic facilities by dozens of other outside groups.

Director of Athletics Kevin McHugh said of him: "Frank Harris has provided well over two decades of outstanding service to the College. His tireless efforts on



Frank Harris '79

behalf of the intercollegiate sports program as well as the intramural, club sports, and summer camps programs, along with an incredible number of special events, have been key to the unparalleled success enjoyed by TCNJ athletics."

The first recipient of the Special Achievement Award from the New Jersey Special Olympics organization, Harris was recently recognized by the NJSIAA with a Merit Award.

Community and Major Events Coordinator Janis Blayne-Paul said of Harris, "Never has there been a more dependable and caring person, who always had my back when the going got tough and it mattered the most. I can never thank Frank enough for all he has taught me."

McHugh added, "Frank will be truly missed...but the mark that he made on the athletic department will never be forgotten."