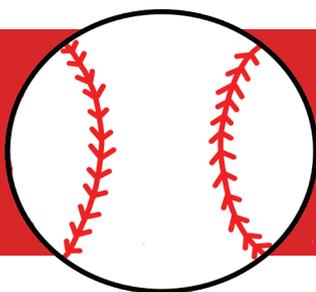




ART BY ANGELA XU



# 50 YEARS IN

## Legendary Baseball Coach Marc Johnson Announces Retirement

### QUINN RUDNICK

Junior Editor-in-Chief & Sports Editor

**M**arc Johnson has been coaching Creek baseball since 1973.

Over his 50 years of coaching, he has accumulated eight state titles, six runner-ups, 846 wins, and 32 Centennial League championships. But at 78, Johnson has made the call to retire.

“I didn’t want to leave the cupboard bare,” Johnson said. “I knew I had a really strong junior and senior class coming back, so I thought this was the right time, because we’re going to be a very talented team this year.”

Moving forward, Johnson is planning to spend more time with baseball, through spending more time with his family in Arizona.

“It’s time to turn the reins over, and I’ve got a couple of grandsons playing at Chandler High School in Arizona, and I’m going to go watch them play,” Johnson said. “If I can’t handle not coaching, I’ll volunteer to be a bench coach for somebody.”

Johnson and his teams have a stagger-

ing record, and have held the most wins for any high school in Colorado since beating Grandview 6-5 on May 12, 2021, bringing the team to 808 overall wins. Over his career, Johnson has coached 53 players who would go on to be drafted by the MLB, and seven of which would officially play in the major leagues.

But state records, wins, and the major leagues aren’t all that matter to Johnson. His real goal with his team is to help his players develop into kind, well-rounded adults.

“Something I’ve learned from Coach J is to always be positive,” senior varsity catcher Brayden Yasuzawa said. “He posts his positive thoughts of the day, which are a helpful reminder to be a nice and caring human and athlete.”

Even with his time at Creek coming to a close, Johnson wants to continue mak-

ing an impact on the school and its students. During his retirement announcement speech, he encouraged his players to always be good people.

“A better you makes a better we,” he said. “And a better we makes a better team. These things are more important than wins and losses.”

One of the things that Johnson focuses on is his players’ mental health, whether or not it has anything to do with baseball.

“He looks out for us. Whatever we need he lets us know he’s there to help, [like] reaching out to college

coaches, talking to a teacher, or mental health issues,” senior varsity player Eddie Esquivel said. “J’s door is always open.”

In order to work towards having stronger team game play, Johnson focuses on players’ game play mentality the most, instead of purely physical talent.

“Coach J helps keep the team mentally

“He tells us to get 1% better every day, not only in the game but as a person. It has taught me to keep pushing forward in all aspects of my life.”

*Senior Eddie Esquivel*



# THE MAKING

on track and helps us focus on the plan for the game,” Yasuzawa said. “Before games he gives a debrief of the other team and tells us what to expect throughout the game. We’ve been the underdog and top dog so he has to make sure we stay ready for anything.”

Johnson’s dedication to the team goes beyond Creek as well. One of his goals is also to help the community around the school, through volunteering, cleaning, and much more.

“He has helped create many volunteer opportunities such as the Thanksgiving food drive, volunteer coaching during hitting camps, and maintaining the beautiful field we play on,” Yasuzawa said.

This year, most players hope that Johnson’s final season can come with a state title as well.

“I’m so blessed and honored to be part of coach J’s last season,” Esquivel said. “I expect the team will rally together, and with a little luck, send him out with a state win.”

As of November, there is no word of who will replace Johnson after his retirement, but the team is hopeful that their final season with him will not be any different, if not better.

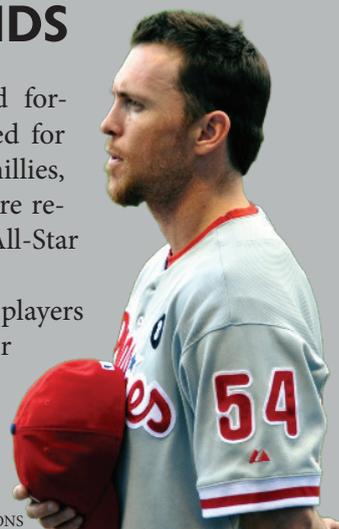
“Coach will make sure our heads stay down and grind throughout the season until the final game,” Yasuzawa said. “I’m excited to be a part of his last year of coaching and thankful to be able to know Coach Johnson not only as a coach but also as a caring human being.”

**Marc Johnson, through coaching for 50 years, began the careers of nearly 200 D1 athletes, including six baseball players who would go on to play in the Major Leagues.**

## BASEBALL LEGENDS

Johnson coached well-renowned former pitcher Brad Lidge, who played for the Houston Astros, Philadelphia Phillies, and the Washington Nationals before retiring in 2008. Lidge is a two-time All-Star and World Series Champion.

Johnson also coached five other players who would go onto play in the major leagues: John Burke, Darnell McDonald, Griffin Jax, Bill Wilkerson, and David Ardasma.



CREATIVE COMMONS

## 160 D1 PLAYERS

Johnson has had 160 players sign with Division I schools to play baseball, four of whom signed this year.

Seniors Cameron Larson, Brayden Yasuzawa, Paul Hughes, and Eddie Esquivel committed to Wofford College, Villanova University, Miami University (Ohio), and the University of San Francisco respectively.



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