

= Mike Capel =

Michael Lee Capel (born October 13 , 1961) is a former Major League Baseball (MLB) right @-@ handed pitcher who played for the Chicago Cubs , Milwaukee Brewers , and Houston Astros . In 49 career games , Capel pitched 62 @.@ 1 innings , struck out 43 batters , and had a career win ? loss record of 3 ? 4 with a 4 @.@ 62 earned run average (ERA) . While he played in MLB , Capel stood at 6 feet 1 inch (185 cm) and weighed 175 pounds (79 kg) . A starting pitcher in college and parts of his minor league baseball career , he converted to relief pitching while in Chicago 's minor league system .

The Philadelphia Phillies chose Capel in the 24th round of the 1980 MLB draft , but Capel did not sign with the team : instead , he opted to attend the University of Texas . Capel played on the 1982 USA College All @-@ Star Team , which competed in the Amateur World Series in Seoul and placed third . The next year , Capel and the Texas Longhorns won the College World Series . After he was drafted by the Cubs , Capel left Texas and signed to play professional baseball ; he played in six seasons of minor league baseball before he made his MLB debut in 1988 . Capel spent the entire 1989 season in Triple @-@ A , one level below the majors , but the Cubs released him at the end of the year . He agreed to terms with the Brewers and played in MLB after an injury opened a spot on Milwaukee 's roster , but was again released at the end of the season . A free agent , the Astros signed Capel , and over the course of the season he pitched in 25 games for the team . He spent the final part of his career in the Astros farm system , and after he made the 1992 Triple @-@ A All @-@ Star team , Capel played his last season in 1993 . After retirement , Capel worked as the general manager of a car dealership in Houston , Texas .

= = Early life = =

Capel was born on October 13 , 1961 , in Marshall , Texas , and attended Spring High School in Harris County . As a child , he enjoyed watching the Astros play on weekends . During his senior year in 1979 , the Spring Lions won the AAAA conference state championship , and Capel was named to the All @-@ State team , composed of the best high school players in the state . He set several pitching records at Spring High School . Future teammate Calvin Schiraldi called Capel a " hard thrower when he came out of high school " and " the top guy out of the state in 1980 " ; Roger Clemens said he was " probably the best pitcher in the state at that time " . The Philadelphia Phillies drafted Capel with the 605th overall pick in the 1980 MLB Draft , but instead of signing with the Phillies , he chose to attend the University of Texas .

= = Collegiate career = =

Capel enrolled at the University of Texas in 1981 , but did not play baseball , as stretched ligaments in his elbow forced him to miss his freshman season . Capel pitched sidearmed for the remainder of his collegiate career to compensate for a loss in the velocity of his fastball . In 1982 , he was named to the All @-@ Southwest Conference team and pitched to a 9 ? 0 win ? loss record with a 3 @.@ 68 ERA , as the Longhorns finished 59 ? 6 . His 1982 winning percentage of 1 @.@ 000 ties him with 10 others for the best single @-@ season winning percentage in Longhorns history (with a minimum of nine decisions) . At the 1982 College World Series , Texas defeated the Oklahoma State Cowboys and the Stanford Cardinal , but losses to the Miami Hurricanes and the Wichita State Shockers eliminated them from play per the tournament 's double @-@ elimination format . Capel played on the United States team in the 1982 Amateur World Series overseen by the International Baseball Federation . Starting against Australia , he pitched a 14 ? 4 complete game victory , as the match ended after seven innings per the championship 's ten @-@ run rule . The United States eventually placed third in the competition .

The 1983 Longhorns finished with a 61 ? 14 record and were ranked as the number one team in the nation by Collegiate Baseball Magazine . That season , the Texas team featured four future MLB pitchers : Capel , Clemens , Bruce Ruffin , and Schiraldi . In the 1983 College World Series , Capel

allowed four hits in a complete game against the Michigan Wolverines as the Longhorns advanced to the World Series finals . Facing the Alabama Crimson Tide , the Longhorns made Clemens their starting pitcher and won 4 ? 3 . The championship was the fourth World Series title in University of Texas history , and their first since 1975 . Capel finished the season with a 13 ? 1 record and a 2 @. @ 98 ERA . His career winning percentage (.957) ties him with Rick Burley for the fifth @- @ best in Texas Longhorns history . In June , before the College World Series , he was drafted by the Cubs with the 320th overall pick in the 1983 MLB draft .

= = Professional career = =

= = = Chicago Cubs = = =

After he signed a professional contract with the Cubs , Capel no longer threw sidearmed . Capel began professional baseball with the Class A Quad Cities Cubs , but was promoted to the Double @- @ A Midland Cubs shortly into the season . Over 11 games , he finished with a 4 ? 3 record and a 3 @. @ 51 ERA . In 1984 , Capel split playing time between the Class A @- @ Advanced Lodi Crushers and Midland ; he led Midland in losses (10) and wild pitches (11) and had the second @- @ worst ERA (6 @. @ 31) on the team . With Midland , Capel started 11 games out of the 16 in which he appeared . On his 0 ? 7 record for the Crushers , Tom Alexander of the Lodi News @- @ Sentinel wrote that Capel 's luck " has been all bad when it comes to wins " . Both Lodi and Midland finished their seasons with losing records .

From 1985 ? 86 , he played for the Double @- @ A Pittsfield Cubs of the Eastern League . In 1986 , Capel only pitched in relief , had a career @- @ best 1 @. @ 87 ERA over 62 @. @ 2 innings pitched , and led his team with 13 saves . After he was promoted to the Triple @- @ A Iowa Cubs , Capel split time between starting and relieving roles in 1987 . At 7 ? 10 , Capel tied for Iowa 's lead in wins and losses , and led the team in strikeouts , with 75 ; his 7 wins became a career high , and his loss total matched a career high set in Midland three years earlier . After the season , Ray Sons of the Chicago Sun @- @ Times said Capel " may be ready for middle relief in Chicago " , and Dave van Dyck listed him as a prospect for the 1988 season . During winter , Capel , Greg Maddux , Manny Trillo , Damon Berryhill , and several other Cubs played for teams in the Caribbean . Capel played for the Águilas del Zulia of Venezuela and led the team with five saves .

Capel played in spring training ball as he tried to make Chicago 's opening day roster . After the Cubs acquired Mike Bielecki from the Pittsburgh Pirates on March 31 , 1988 , they assigned Capel to Triple @- @ A despite a Sun @- @ Times prediction that he would be on the MLB roster . Prior to the acquisition , when Al Nipper was supposed to become the Cubs ' fifth starter , Capel was to take his spot in the bullpen . The Cubs recalled Capel and Mark Grace to the majors on May 3 , while Drew Hall and Rolando Roomes were optioned to Iowa ; at the time , he had a 1 @. @ 54 ERA and two saves in Triple @- @ A ball . On May 7 , Capel made his MLB debut : he pitched the final 1 @. @ 2 innings of a game against the San Francisco Giants , allowing no runs and no hits but issuing a walk in a 2 ? 1 Cubs loss . His first career win came the following day against the Giants , although he blew a save by giving up a two @- @ run home run to Bob Brenly and lost a 5 ? 4 lead . The Cubs ultimately won 13 ? 7 . Capel continued to pitch for the club until June 30 , when the Cubs optioned him to Iowa to open a roster spot for Rich " Goose " Gossage to come off the 15 @- @ day disabled list (DL) .

He returned to the MLB club on August 8 to replace Schiraldi , but was demoted on August 13 before making an appearance , as Chicago activated Les Lancaster from the DL . Capel rejoined the club on August 31 , and pitched in five more games before the season 's end . Over his first MLB season , Capel pitched in 20 games and allowed 16 earned runs over 29 @. @ 1 innings for a 4 @. @ 91 ERA . He pitched the entire 1989 season for Iowa , appearing in 64 games for the team . On October 15 , Capel was granted free agency by the Cubs ; he signed with the Brewers two months later .

== Milwaukee Brewers ==

Capel competed against 22 other pitchers for an MLB roster spot in the Brewers ' spring training camp . The Brewers optioned Capel to their Triple @-@ A affiliate , the Denver Zephyrs , on April 5 , before the start of Milwaukee 's 1990 season . On May 17 , Denver placed Capel on the DL with a strained Achilles tendon , which opened a roster spot on the Zephyrs and allowed the Brewers to send Jaime Navarro back to Denver . When the Brewers needed a replacement for the injured Bill Wegman , Capel was called up to the major leagues . For his Brewers debut , Capel faced five batters and allowed four runs (two charged to Capel) against the Baltimore Orioles . His strikeout of Billy Ripken was the only MLB out Capel recorded in 1990 . On June 8 , he made his second and final outing with the Brewers and allowed four runs (three charged to Capel) against the Toronto Blue Jays ; combined , batters hit .857 against Capel as he finished the season with a 135 @.@ 00 ERA . When Greg Vaughn , returning from a turf toe injury and a sprained left ankle , was activated from the DL on June 11 , Capel was sent to Triple @-@ A. He finished the season with Denver where he had a 4 ? 3 record with a 4 @.@ 26 ERA . On October 4 , the Brewers granted Capel free agency ; he signed with the Astros on January 5 , 1991 .

== Houston Astros ==

Capel began his 1991 season with the Triple @-@ A Tucson Toros ; the Astros added Capel to their MLB roster on June 7 . Two days later , against the New York Mets , Capel allowed the game @-@ winning home run to Howard Johnson in the top of the 11th inning . Against the Mets on June 14 , Capel , starting pitcher Pete Harnisch , and closer Jim Clancy combined for a four @-@ hitter . His final MLB appearance came on August 14 against the San Diego Padres , when he pitched one inning in relief of Jim Corsi in a 4 ? 1 loss . Capel said that pitching for Houston was " the high point of my career " . Over 25 games pitched , Capel finished the season with a 1 ? 3 record and a 3 @.@ 03 ERA .

To reduce their roster to 35 players , the Astros assigned Capel and seven others to the Toros prior to the 1992 MLB season . Capel was selected to the Triple @-@ A All @-@ Star Game to replace Tim Scott , whom the Padres promoted to MLB . He told Javier Morales of the Arizona Daily Star that " this is one of the greatest thrills of my career " , and he hoped it showed the Astros that he could pitch in MLB . Doug Jones worked as Houston 's closer in 1992 , however , and Capel never played for the MLB club . For the Toros , Capel had a 6 ? 6 record and a 2 @.@ 19 ERA with a team @-@ leading 18 saves . The following season , the Montreal Expos invited Capel to their spring camp as a non @-@ roster invitee . Capel elected to remain with the Astros organization where he allowed 26 earned runs in 32 @.@ 2 innings and pitched the entire season in Triple @-@ A. The Toros , managed by Rick Sweet , finished first in the Pacific Coast League (PCL) South Division with an 83 ? 60 record and made the playoffs . Unlike the 1993 MLB playoffs , in which four teams competed , only two teams could make the PCL playoffs . In the championship series , the Toros faced the Portland Beavers , champions of the North Division and holders of a PCL @-@ best 87 ? 56 record . In a best @-@ of @-@ seven series , the Toros defeated the Beavers four games to two . After the season , the Astros did not re @-@ sign Capel . While playing in MLB , Capel stood at 6 feet 1 inch (185 cm) and weighed 175 pounds (79 kg) .

== Personal life ==

In February 1986 , Capel pitched in the University of Texas Alumni v. Varsity game , which ended in a 14 ? 14 tie . Capel started to use dipping tobacco in 1976 and in March 1988 had a non @-@ cancerous lesion removed from his lip ; he tried to quit the product in March 1988 . Capel met his wife , Elizabeth , at Roger Clemens ' wedding . Outside of baseball , he is a " close " friend of Clemens , and during Clemens ' 2012 perjury trial , Capel testified on his work ethic and character . In 2012 , Capel worked as the general manager of a car dealership in Houston .