

Mike Angione



The one word that best describes the pitching career of Mike Angione is *dominant*.

Indeed, the hard-throwing lefty was one of the best pitchers in Norwalk during the 1960s and early '70s. He gave an indication of things to come as far back as his days in the Cranbury League, the Pony League and the Colt League by pitching a number of no-hitters and making the all-star team at all three levels.

A lifelong Norwalker, Angione didn't pitch at any of the three local high schools in town at the time, but instead attended Cherry Lawn Prep, a private school in Darien, where he

continued to flourish and completely overmatch the competition.

In fact, from 1968-71, Angione hurled 11 no-hitters, including four perfect games, while recording over 400 strikeouts. He was so impressive the Yankees invited him to a tryout when he was only 16.

He also played football at Cherry Lawn, playing both ways and on special teams, and once scoring four touchdowns in a game against Daycroft, all in the first half.

During summers he pitched for the Norwalk American Legion, one season compiling a microscopic 1.10 ERA and tossing another no-hitter in a 1-0 win over New Canaan. With a fastball consistently reaching the mid-90s, he also threw no-hitters in the highly competitive Norwalk City Rec League and Stamford Twilight League.

Angione attracted interest from several Division I college programs, eventually accepting a scholarship offer from Iona University in New Rochelle. In the fall season of his freshman year, he no-hit St. John's while during his three-year career the Norwalk pitcher fashioned a 2.39 ERA, still among the Gaels' all-time best.

As a junior in 1974 he averaged 12 strikeouts per nine innings and fanned 70 batters in 50 innings. He also hit .364 one season and .340 for his three-year career.

It was right after his junior season that Angione was drafted by the Minnesota Twins organization in the 12th round of the 1974 Major League draft.

Herb Stein, the same scout who signed hall of famer Rod Carew, recommended Angione to the Twins and he made his professional debut in the Class A Midwest League. After a successful first season pitching for the Wisconsin Rapids, Angione moved up to Double A Orlando in the Southern League the following season. The Twins' brass saw him as part of their future.

But during spring training, he tore a tendon in his left shoulder, an injury that back then, without the medical technology available now, was usually considered career ending. The Twins gave Angione his release in 1975, ending his pro career at the age of 23.

While Angione never had surgery, he built the muscle around the tendon in his shoulder back up to the point where he could throw again, eventually reaching the mid-90s on the radar gun. He was even offered tryouts by the Yankees in 1978 and the Blue Jays in '79. Later, he threw batting practice for the Mets before games at Shea Stadium.

Not ready to give up baseball yet, Angione continued to pitch into his 30s and 40s for the Norwalk Pirates and the Stamford A's in Connecticut Senior (over-30) Men's Baseball League. At the age of 46, he decided he was finally done pitching.

But Mike Angione stayed close to baseball by coaching an AAU team in Fairfield and he is still involved with baseball as a pitching instructor.