

Riddle of Agee: Can He Swing Big-Time Bat?

By JERRY HOLTZMAN

SARASOTA, Fla.

The big question in the White Sox camp is how good is Tommie Agee? Is he going to be another Willie Mays, as his manner often suggests? Or is he simply another good-field, good-run outfielder who won't be able to hit major league pitching?

No one here, not even Manager Eddie Stanky, can answer those questions. After a month of spring training, Agee rates an E for excellence. He's been the club's leading power hitter (four homers and 11 RBIs), has caught everything hit his way and has been a sensation while running the bases.

This isn't the first time Agee has made the big spring training splash. He was quite impressive with the White Sox last spring, so impressive, in fact, that Al Lopez, then the Sox manager, tabbed him "as one of the most exciting players" he had seen.

But bad luck seems to dog Agee. Several days before the White Sox' 1965 American League opener, Agee slid into the plate in an exhibition game at Charlotte, N. C., and broke a bone in his right hand. He didn't make it to Chicago until September, after he had spent the full season at Indianapolis (Coast), where he had an undistinguished season.

He hit only .226 at Indianapolis, which would hardly suggest a ticket to the big leagues.

But Agee insists that the .226 average isn't a true barometer. Said Agee: "After my hand was broken, I was weak. Consequently, I couldn't really swing the bat."

Hands Are Vulnerable

It wasn't the first time Agee had broken his hand.

He broke both hands in 1963—first the right and then the left.

He was with Charleston (Eastern) in the summer of 1963 and was then the property of the Indians. A free-for-all broke out in a game at Binghamton and Agee, racing into the action, punched a Binghamton player on the side of the head.

Or at least he tried to. The result was a broken right hand.

Said Agee, recalling the incident: "I hope the people don't think I'm a bad guy, but I had to help." That winter, Agee was playing in

Stanky Winner as Skipper, But Fizzle as a Fisherman

SARASOTA, Fla.—Eddie Stanky has been having a sensational spring as the new manager of the White Sox. The Hose won 15 of their first 17 games and already had winning streaks of six and nine games.

But Stanky was finally shut out on March 25, an open date in the club's exhibition schedule.

He went fishing in Sarasota Bay for three hours and didn't even catch a minnow.

Puerto Rico. An inside fast ball, thrown by Julio Navarro, hit him on the left hand, breaking it across the knuckles.

Agee is fully recovered now, even from a blow he suffered this last winter in Venezuela, when he was hit in the head by a whisky bottle.

Agee was playing with the Magallanes club in the Venezuelan Winter League and let a grounder go through his legs for an error.

"Those fans are very enthusiastic," Agee said. "I was up against the fence when the ball went through my legs. The next thing I knew my head was spinning."

A fan, rooting for the Magallanes club, was so disgusted with Agee's error that he threw a whisky bottle at him.

"I can still feel the spot where the bottle hit me," said Agee as



PETE WARD . . . Working at First and Third Base and in Outfield

Ward Moonlights at 3 Positions

By JEROME HOLTZMAN

SARASOTA, Fla.

Veteran third baseman Pete Ward is on the double shift here in the White Sox spring training camp. He's both an outfielder—and infielder.

Pete works out at third base daily and fields grounders hit to him by coach Tony Cuccinello. When he's finished, he hustles out to join the outfield corps and spends another hour racing for fly balls hit by coach Kerby Farrell. Pete also dabbles at first base. No one, not even Ward, seems to know where he'll wind up on opening day.

"I don't care," said Ward, "just so long as I'm in there."

Ward has been the club's regular third baseman for the last three years and has a lifetime BA of .274. He hit .295 as a rookie, .282 in 1964 and last season slumped to .247.

Ward admits that he's no longer a master of his own fate.

"I suppose it all depends on what they do with Al," he said, referring to Al Weis, the club's veteran utility

infielder. If Weis opens at second base, then Don Buford, the club's regular second baseman, will move to third and this would push Ward into left field. Ward insists he has no preference.

'It's Up to Manager'

It's not a matter of where I can do the best job," he said, "but where I'll best fit in. This is up to the manager."

Though the Sox have been having a great spring—15 victories in their first 18 games—Ward hasn't exactly been tearing down the fences.

It took him ten games, for example, before he was able to drive in a run and he has yet to hit a spring training homer.

But Ward says he isn't worried. "I hit eight homers in spring training last year," he explained, "but it didn't do me any good."

He had only ten homers during the regular season.

National Baseball Congress Sets Up Sites and Dates for State Tourneys

WICHITA, Kan.—The first of the National Baseball Congress state tournaments this year will start on July 1 and the last one on August 4, it was disclosed in the 1966 edition of the Official Baseball Annual, the NBC yearbook.

State tourneys in Ohio, Vermont, Utah and Nevada will open on July 1, while Michigan will be the last event to get under way, August 4.

Most of the state champions will be required to engage in a bi-state qualifying series with an adjoining winner for the regional title to reduce the starting field to 32 teams for the national tournament at Wichita starting August 12.

Sites and dates of tournaments in 33 states have already been selected. The setups in the remainder of the 50 states will be announced before June 1, Congress President Ray Dumont said.

Following are the sites and starting dates of state tournaments already established:

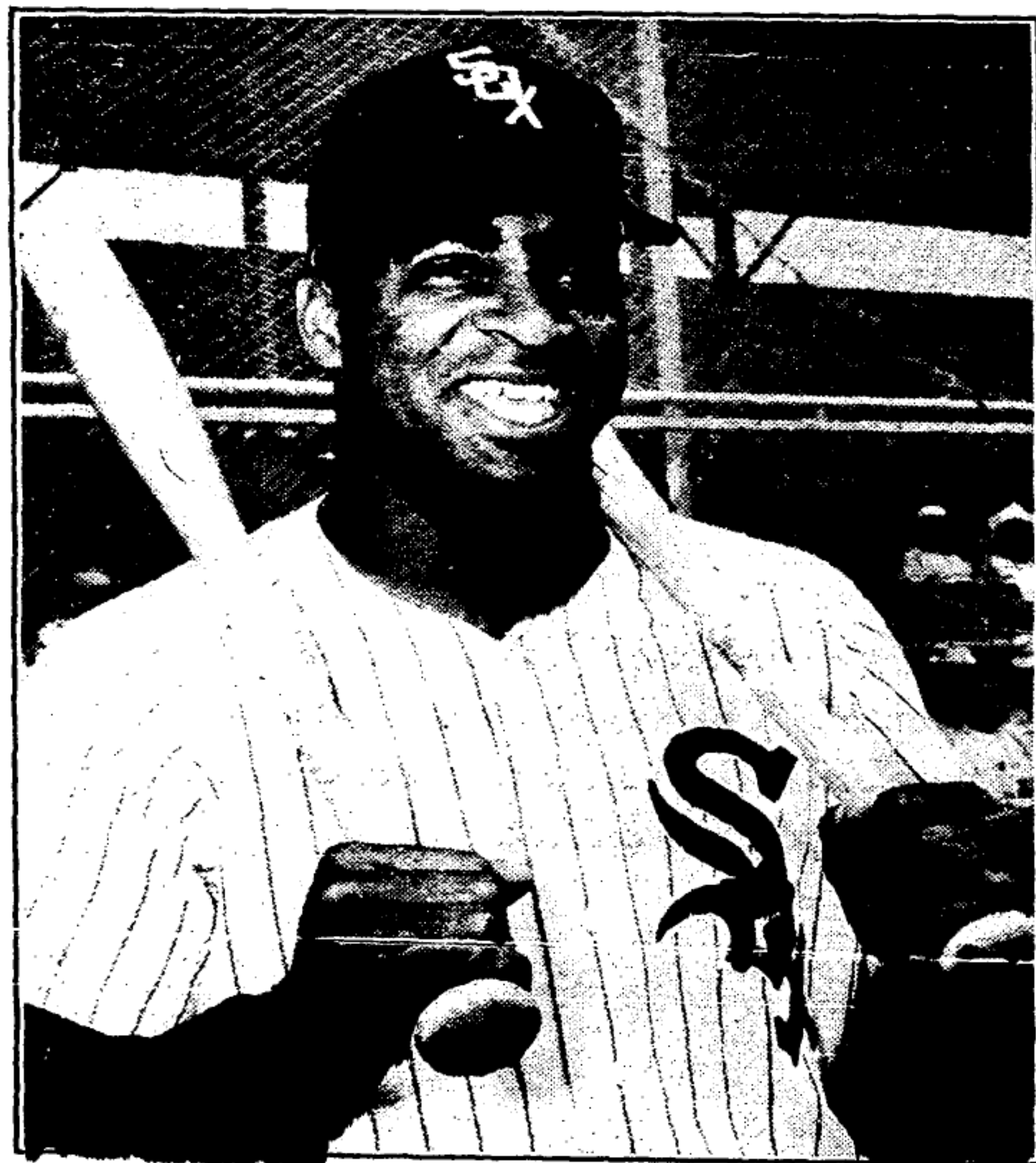
EAST: Trenton, N. J., July 2; Lynbrook, N. Y., July 9; Cranston, R. I., July 11; Putney, Vt., July 1, and Accomac, Va., July 25.

MIDWEST: Elgin, Ill., July 16; Kokomo, Ind., July 22; Ames, Ia., July 22; Wichita, Kan., July 8; Grand Rapids, Mich., August 4; Sedalia, Mo., July 19; North Platte, Neb., July 16; Mansfield, O., July 1, and Madison, Wis., July 28.

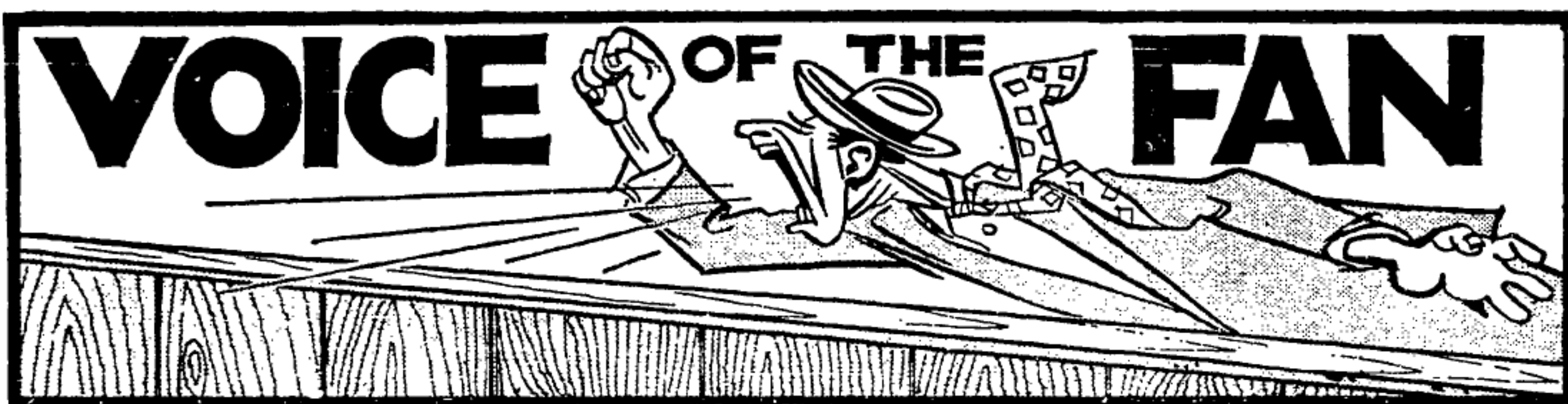
SOUTH: Talladega, Ala., July 24; Monette, Ark., July 22; Ocala, Fla., July 15; Marietta, Ga., July 15; Ponchatoula, La., July 15; West Point, Miss., July 21; Roxboro, N. C., July 13; Greeneville, Tenn., July 15, and Lubbock, Tex., July 28.

WEST: Fairbanks, Alaska, July 30; Mesa, Ariz., July 29; Eureka, Calif., July 29; Hugo, Colo., July 22; Honolulu, Hawaii, July 15; Albuquerque, N. M., July 28; Salt Lake City, Utah, July 1, and Bellingham, Wash., August 1.

Two state tournaments have been franchised in both Oklahoma and Nevada with the two winners meeting in a three-game series to decide the official title. The Eastern Oklahoma state meet is scheduled at Perry, starting July 15, and the Western division at Cleo Springs, starting July 22. In Nevada, the Northern event will take place at Yerington and the Southern tourney at Las Vegas, both starting July 1.



TOMMIE AGEE . . . Exciting Player, But Can He Hit?



ARE NBA AND NHL GREEDY?

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

It is obvious that the goal of the National Basketball Association and the National Hockey League is first to make money and second to give the fans a good show. It should be exactly the opposite.

The NBA plays an 80-game schedule to eliminate three teams from its playoffs. These playoffs extend the season by at least four games for a first-place team and possibly 19 games for a second or third-place club. If the two division leaders have not proved themselves in 80 games, they certainly will not do so in 84, 88 or 99.

In hockey, the teams play 70 games to eliminate two teams from the Stanley Cup playoffs. Come on, NBA and NHL owners, give us a sport and take your eyes off the cash register. STEPHEN E. BALDA
Clintonville, Wis.

SOME EXCESS BAGGAGE

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

Why have divisional playoffs in pro basketball? With this system, the entire NBA schedule is played to determine losers. A club finishing third playing .500-or-under ball can win the division title in the playoffs.

If certain teams have assured themselves a playoff berth, players have a tendency not to give 100 per cent. Thus the fans are deprived of seeing the brand of ball they should see. The playoff system also prolongs the season. The division winners of the regular season should play for the title, with no playoffs. DAVE HORGER
East Liverpool, O.

GI STARS IN EUROPE

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

Uncle Sam's boys are thrilling our European friends with top-drawer baseball competition. Two players with the VII Corps Jayhawks of Stuttgart, Germany, set the pace in every offensive category.

Left fielder Joe Williams won the triple crown, batting .452, hitting 19 homers and driving in 58 runs. Center fielder Leroy Porter led in hits, 81, doubles, 26, triples, 11; runs, 54, and stolen bases, 34.

Such players as these are helping us demonstrate good sportsmanship and democracy to our allies overseas. My two-year Air Force tour in Germany was well spent watching our relationships become stronger. M. SGT. JOE TRAPNELLI
Savannah, Ga.

BOUQUET FROM PARIS

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

THE SPORTING NEWS richly deserves the success it has enjoyed in its 80-year history. Your friends on this side of the Atlantic wish you many more successful years selling the greatest sport of them all. H. DALE-FRENCH
Paris, France.

A RIDICULOUS PRACTICE

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

It would seem utterly ridiculous to put a Carol Burnett, a Danny Thomas or a Sammy Davis super spectacular on TV at 1 or 2 p. m. So why does baseball persist in putting on the greatest spectacle of all, the World Series, at such an hour?

Midweek World Series games should be played at night, so all fans could see them. The fans' wishes in this matter have been disregarded long enough. The owners are eager enough to stage their regu-

Rebuttal to Robinson Piece Wins April Letter Honors

The columnist who criticizes can expect some of his own medicine. At least that's true if his critical comment appears in THE SPORTING NEWS. Murray Robinson of the New York Journal American wrote a piece castigating Sandy Koufax and Don Drysdale during their holdout siege.

The piece was reprinted in the April 2 issue of THE SPORTING NEWS. Reader response was heavy. Perhaps 60 per cent of the letters supported Don and Sandy.

One of the strongest rebuttals was written by Jay Joseph of Syracuse University, Syracuse, N. Y., whose letter appeared in the April 16 issue. His letter was selected as the best to appear in Voice of the Fan last month, and he will receive a year's free subscription to THE SPORTING NEWS.

lar-season games at night because it means more money. The Series is a sellout anyhow, so apparently the magnates don't care about pleasing the fans. GEORGE CHRISTOFF
Rochester, N. Y.

LEO'S FAULTY MEMORY

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

It was most interesting to read in your April 9 issue of Leo Durocher comparing his 1966 Cubs with his 1951 and 1954 Giants. He said he thought his Cub personnel was better than that on his two Giant pennant winners.

I am writing only from memory, and I feel Leo spoke from memory in this story, but in mentioning names from his '51 Giants he omitted Larry Jansen, who after all did win 23 games. He also failed to mention Bobby Thomson, the '51 third baseman who hit the famous homer in the playoff for the pennant.

I believe the '51 and '54 Giants would today be pennant winners under Leo. JOHN CONNOR
Albert Lea, Minn.

A SOUTHERNER SPEAKS

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

My father and I traveled 311 miles to Atlanta to watch a Braves-Yankees exhibition game. I noticed cars in the parking lot from South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Florida and Virginia.

This is what the Braves' officials were figuring on—support from all over the Southeast. While legal decisions are still being mulled over and more injunctions ordered, I would like to extend my greetings along with those of many other fans in the South: Welcome to the South, Braves! HENRY S. ROSE, Jr.
Florence, S. C.

CELTIC FANS UNDER FIRE

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

For years I have been watching NBA basketball on TV, which often has featured the Boston Celtics. In most of these games, the Boston fans have created some incident. One week they threw lighted cigars on the playing floor, also eggs and light bulbs.

Boston fans have shown visiting teams that Boston is a bush-league town. Boston may be first in the standings year after year, but it is certainly last in good sportsmanship. LOU SMITH
Hazleton, Pa.

TWO-LOOP TWIN-BILLS

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

Something must be done to increase the popularity of baseball. We feel that double-headers which feature both leagues would help.

We are not suggesting interleague play, but a double-bill featuring two American League teams playing each other and two National League clubs clashing. This would enable fans in all major league cities to see all the stars and top teams.

MICHAEL A. SUCKLE,
JOHN E. MAITZ,
GENE HUMILOVICH
Penn State University,
State College, Pa.

A SOLDIER'S THANKS

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

Recently I sent you money for a subscription to THE SPORTING NEWS to be sent to some unit of our armed forces in Viet Nam. A few days ago, I had a letter from Capt. John M. Vranish of an engineering battalion in Viet Nam, thanking me for the subscription. He enclosed one of the unit's shoulder patches.

His action shows a lot of courtesy. Those men have a lot of things to do and his taking the time to thank me made me appreciate it doubly. I thought you'd like to know that THE SPORTING NEWS is very welcome to our troops. MICHAEL N. VERES
Gilbertsville, N. Y.

COMPUTER BREAKDOWN?

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

Using statistics from a computer and scoring observations of knowledgeable baseball men, Bob Sudyk in your April 16 issue called Brooks Robinson "a mere low-pressure operator." In Baltimore, Brooks Robinson is known as Mr. Clutch.

In the 1966 season opener, the player your story tabbed a "below-average performer when the heat was on," singled with two out in the ninth and the bases loaded to tie the game. What does your computer say about that? JOHN BALL
Baltimore, Md.

MACAULEY'S MEMORIES

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

I noticed the Flashback Quiz in your April 30 issue and was flattered to note I was the subject. In a way, it shocks one to realize people are "flashing back" into the past for these memories because we then remember our age. But it's nice to be remembered.

Incidentally, I took the test myself and flunked! ED MACAULEY
Sports Director, KTVI,
St. Louis, Mo.

SCHULTZ OFF BASE?

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

Cardinal coach Joe Schultz was quoted in your April 2 issue as saying that Julian Javier is "probably the best second baseman in . . . all of baseball."

Has Joe heard of Bobby Knoop, Dick Green, Bill Mazerowski and Bobby Richardson? Javier couldn't carry their spikes. JEFF LANGUE
Pittsburgh, Pa.

AIRCASTER'S SALUTE

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

You might like to know that on my nightly Sportsline program on KTLN, THE SPORTING NEWS is without question the most frequently plugged sports publication. As an AFL city, we especially appreciate your coverage of pro football. It's the best available. BOB MARTIN
Sports Director, KTLN Radio,
Denver, Colo.

Agee-Whiz Player; That's Tommie, Sox Swiftly and Slugger

By JEROME HOLTZMAN
CHICAGO, Ill.

No one ever won a rookie of the year award during the first two weeks of the season, but if you're going to start keeping tabs on such things, it might be wise to put down the name of Tommie Agee.

Agee, 23, is the regular center fielder with the White Sox and has been quite sensational thus far. He's an exciting player, somewhat in the Willie Mays mold, and already has made considerable contributions in reviving the old go-go spirit.

After a fortnight of play, Agee led the club in home runs and stolen bases, an old Mays combination. He had three homers and five stolen bases, and of even more consequence, Tommie was scoring about half the White Sox runs.

Through games of April 21, the White Sox had totaled 25 runs and Agee had carried 12 of them across, the best of all possible indications of Agee's over-all team value.

"I'd have to say Agee's an exceptionally exciting type of ball player," declared Eddie Stanky, the White Sox manager.

Sensation in Anaheim

Indeed, Agee is just that and had perhaps his most exciting night in Organized Baseball against the Angels on April 21 in the Angels' new Anaheim Stadium.

The White Sox won this game, 8-6. Agee led the way by scoring five runs. The only time he didn't reach base was in his sixth and final plate appearance, when George Brunet struck him out.

Prior to this, Agee knocked out two hits—a single and a homer, drew two walks, was hit on the hand by a pitch and stole a base. And Agee did all of this while batting in the club's leadoff spot.

Stanky, who had an 11-year major league playing career, called Agee's performance one of the best he had ever seen.

"I don't think he (Agee) realizes just what he did," Stanky said. "Scoring five runs as the leadoff hitter is something that doesn't happen very often."

He's on Base Often

Following the Angel series, Agee's batting average was an unsensational .280, with seven hits in 25 official trips. But Agee had a remarkable .484 "reach" percentage and, even more outstanding, had scored 12 of the first 16 times he had reach base.

Included in this was a string of nine consecutive runs. That is, Agee had one stretch of nine "reaches" in which he scored. This string was broken on April 23 in Kansas City, when Agee was stranded at second base after doubling to left-center with two out.

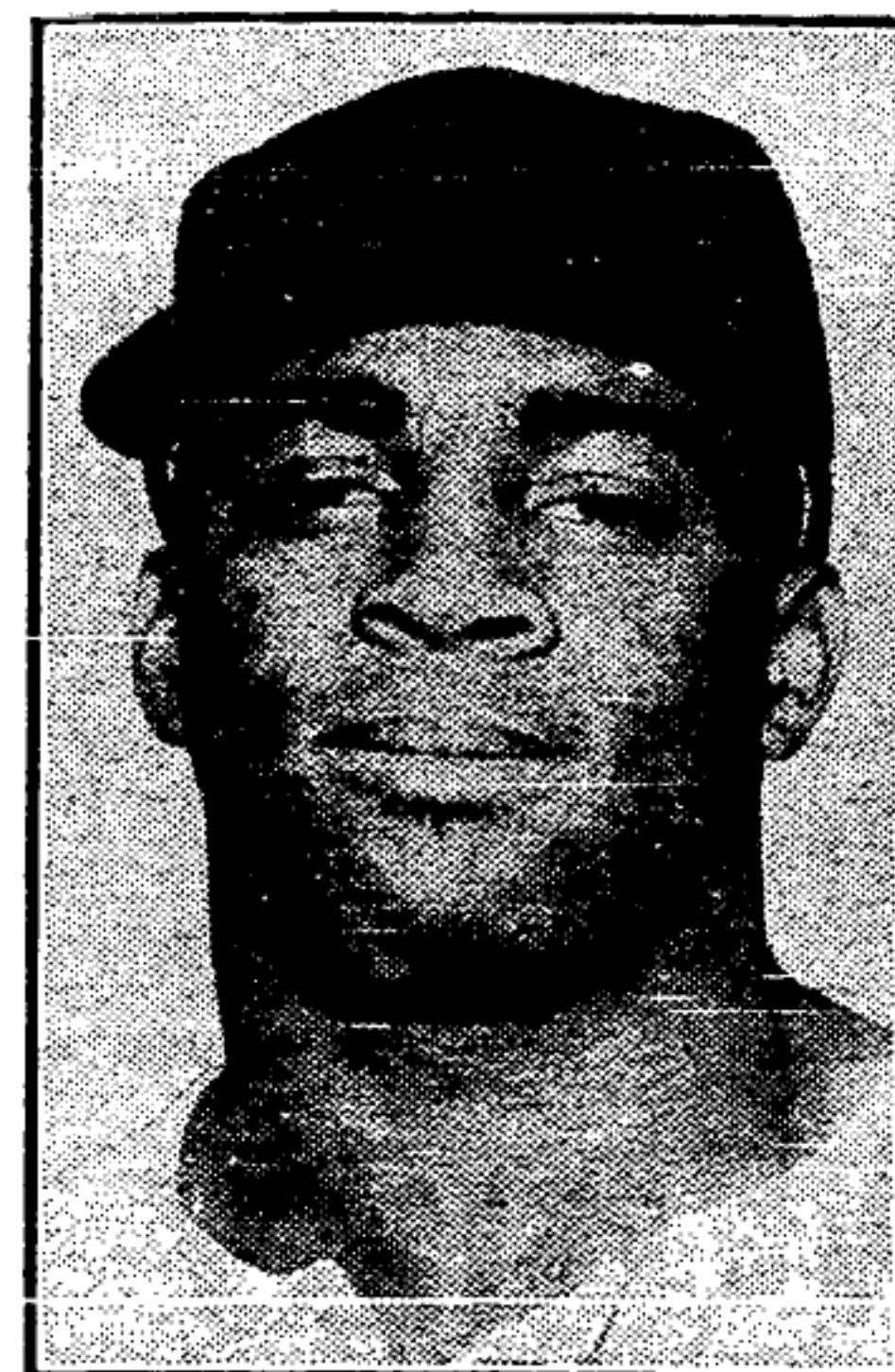
Agee's speed and long-ball power already have added considerably to the White Sox attack. With Agee leading the way on the bases, the Sox had a total of 15 stolen bases

Power Hitter Elia Makes His Bow as Pinch-Runner

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Short-stop Lee Elia, a righthanded power hitter who led the White Sox organization in home runs last year when he slugged 29 at Indianapolis (Coast), finally made his major league debut here on April 23.

And how was Elia used in his first major league game?

As a pinch-runner, of course! Elia was delighted, nonetheless. He has spent seven years in the minor leagues.



Tommie Agee

after the first two weeks of play, which is almost one-third as many as they had during the entire 1965 campaign.

Moreover, Agee's home-run slugging has also helped to change the White Sox image. The White Sox scored a total of 24 runs, or an average of six a game, in the six contests they played from April 17 through April 24.

General Manager Ed Short contends that Agee's mere presence in the lineup has helped the club's other hitters, especially Floyd Robinson, who is the No. 3 batter.

Shakeup on Infield

The Sox have also benefited somewhat in the power department since Manager Stanky returned to the Al Lopez infield. This is the infield which has Pete Ward at third base and Don Buford at second.

Stanky, in an effort to tighten the defense and at the same time cure his left field problem, opened the season with Ward in left field, Buford at third and the veteran Al Weis at second.

Stanky stayed with this lineup for only the first six games. On April 21, when Weis was batting .125, Stanky benched the slender second baseman and brought Ward back to his old third base position and returned Buford to second base.

When Stanky made this change, he indicated that it was only temporary and that Weis was merely being given a few days of rest. Chances are that Weis will be given another shot—and soon. In the meantime, Weis has been relegated to Stanky's late-inning defensive platoon.

Sox Yarns: Tony Cuccinello, the veteran third base coach, left the club for a few days and went to Peekskill, N. Y. to attend the funeral of his sister, Mrs. Josephine Verderosa. While Cooch was gone, Don Gutteridge coached at third base and Kerby Farrell took over Gutteridge's spot in the first-base coaching box. . . . Outfielder Floyd Robinson has been a virtual terror at the plate. Robby hit safely in the club's first 11 games and seemed to be getting more solid base knocks than ever before. . . . Bill Voss, 20-year-old rookie outfielder, has been optioned to Indianapolis (Coast) on 24-hour recall. Everyone was impressed with Voss' skills and the chances are that he'll be a Comiskey fixture in another year or two, at the most. He's a lefthanded hitter of the Johnny Callison mold. . . . The flu bug has been running through the club. It hit Manager Eddie Stanky on the club's first western trip.

Agee Hitting No. 3? Gil Admits It's a Possibility

By JACK LANG

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — During one recent stretch, Tommie Agee, instead of batting in his accustomed leadoff spot, was inserted into the No. 3 position in the Mets' batting order. Immediately there was speculation Gil Hodges had it in mind as a permanent move.

Gil quietly discounted any significance to the switch and then admitted in the next breath he was intrigued by the possibility.

"If you recall," said the Mets'

manager, "when Agee first came over here from Chicago, I said I thought the ideal spot for him in the batting order would be third."

Agee, he pointed out, has the power to drive in runs and the speed to avoid double plays.

But, for almost his entire three years with the Mets, Agee has been in the leadoff spot.

"When he first came here, he was down lower and he wasn't doing so well," Gil recalled. "I moved him

up to No. 1 because there was less pressure on him there."

He Gets on Base

Except for the fact that he doesn't walk much, Agee has been a fine leadoff man for the Mets.

Last year, for instance, Tommie was on base more often than any other Met with a career high of 182 hits and 55 walks.

"Tommie can give you a run real quick and put you ahead," said Hodges, referring to Agee's several lead-

off homers. "That shocks the pitcher a little."

But Tommie is also the Mets' leading home-run hitter and name another club that has its No. 1 homer man leading off!

Gil has trouble dismissing that thought as he toys with his lineup these days.

"There is no significance to any of the moves I am making now," Hodges said as the Mets completed the first third of their exhibition sched-

ule. "I'm just trying to give everybody a chance . . . just to look at everybody."

Agee happened to pop up as the No. 3 hitter "by accident," as Hodges described it, during a game in Vero Beach.

The Mets had taken only 20 players on the trip and Agee just looked like the best bet.

Tommie got a hit that day. The next time he played, he was No. 3 again and this time he tripled to drive in a run. Then came his third game in the No. 3 slot and the first time up against the Phils, Agee connected for a two-run homer.

Agee at the time was leading the Mets in RBIs. It seemed a shame to waste him in the No. 1 spot.

Capable in No. 3 Slot

"I'm sure Tommie could bat No. 3 if I wanted it that way," Hodges admitted.

"But a lot depends on how Bud Harrelson and Ken Boswell do," the manager pointed out. "Agee gets on in the leadoff spot. If Harrelson can, too, then maybe we'll try it."

Harrelson, batting second a good deal of last season, drew 95 walks. That was almost twice as many as Agee drew leading off. He also had 137 hits and was on base only five fewer times than Agee. You can't ask for much more than that.

The question arose as to what Hodges would do with Cleon Jones, his regular No. 3 hitter, and Donn Clendenon, the No. 4 hitter and the club's top RBI man.

"I'll worry about that when I come to it," said Hodges with a pleasant smile.

Met Musings: Art Shamsky was felled again with the same sciatica trouble he had three years ago when the Mets had to leave him in Florida for more training. Art even opened with the Triple-A farm that year. The first baseman-outfielder was felled during a recent workout and sent back to his hotel. He was out of uniform for several days . . . Agee admitted he was fined \$500 for reporting five pounds overweight. . . . Tim Lincecum, having trouble getting going this year, was sidelined with a Charley horse in his left leg that caused him to miss three games. . . . Donn Clendenon left the club for two days to return to Atlanta, where he hoped to straighten out income tax difficulties. . . . Dean Chance has a struggle almost every time out, but he gets the job done. . . . Most-talked-about rookie in camp is Charley Williams, righthanded pitcher from Great Neck, N. Y. Even the other clubs are beginning to talk about him. . . . Gary Gentry's new change-up also has 'em talking. . . . Ron Taylor is making a strong bid to regain his bullpen job. He pitched scoreless ball his first three times out.



THE NATIONAL LEAGUE umpiring staff, during its meeting at the International Inn at Tampa March 11, included, seated, from left: Tom Gorman; Fred Fleig, National League secretary; Charles S. 'Chub' Feeney, league president; Al Barlick and Augie Donatelli. Second row: Ed Sudol, John

Kibler, Ken Burkhart, Paul Pryor, Harry Wendelstedt, Lee Weyer, Tony Venzon, Nick Colosi, Dave Davidson. Third row: Andy Olsen, Shag Crawford, Ed Vargo, Dick Stello, Dick Tremblay, Jerry Dale, Bill Williams, Frank Dezelan and John McSherry.

N. L. Umps Will Ease Up on Hotheads

By JACK LANG

TAMPA, Fla. — Stricter enforcement of the fraternization rule, but a little more leniency and understanding with explosive players, were two of the major points agreed upon by National League President Charles S. Feeney and a group of his umpires at a luncheon meeting at the Tampa International Inn here March 11.

Every N. L. umpire stationed in Florida, as well as three who are being considered for promotion to the staff, were present at the meeting conducted by Feeney and his chief aide, Fred Fleig.

"The fines will be a little stiffer if the players do not abide by our rule against fraternization on the field," Feeney said following the session that lasted several hours.

A Warning First

Umpires will be in the stands in major league parks before the game keeping an eye on the players during batting and pre-game practice. They will be warned and if they don't adhere to the warning, stiff fines will follow.

But the men in blue have been asked by Feeney to be a little more understanding with players who lose their cool in the heat of battle.

Heretofore, the throwing of any piece of equipment . . . a bat, a helmet, etc. . . . resulted in automatic ejection for the guilty party and, in most cases, a fine.

The umpires always have believed that such acts were designed to "show them up."

Henceforth, a player throwing equipment will be warned and automatically fined (a sum reported to

be \$100), but will be allowed to remain in the game.

Repeated abuse, of course, will not be tolerated and any flagrant disregard of the umpires' authority will result in ejection.

Feeney believes that the fans who pay their way into the park are paying to see the players perform and that any automatic ejection deprives them of this privilege.

He has asked the umpires to be a little more understanding and they have agreed.

Clubs Can't Pay

Fleig stated that all fines are payable by personal checks from the players. Checks from clubs which try to absorb the fines for their players will be returned.

Golf gloves, which have become more and more common with players in recent years, also came under discussion.

It was agreed by Feeney, Fleig and the umpires that golf gloves may not be worn by pitchers under their regular glove. The reasons for this ruling, Fleig pointed out, is that balls are rubbed up with dirt by umpires prior to the game to remove the gloss. But pitchers who take their glove off and rub up the balls wearing a kidskin golf glove may restore the shine or doctor it in some other way.

Other players will be permitted to wear golf gloves under their regular gloves in the field, but will not be able to rub up balls between pitches when wearing one.

As previously announced, Feeney said he would not ban the use of the new colored baseball gloves intro-

duced this year. But pitchers and all other players must use the same colored glove they start with throughout the game.

Two rules changes also were discussed, one concerning interference with a catcher by an umpire and the other regarding the balk rule.

On the interference call, which is covered in Rule 5:09b, if an umpire inadvertently interferes with a catcher who is in the process of throwing out a runner, the rule states that the interference shall be disregarded if the runner is thrown out. Under the old rule, the ball was ruled dead and players returned to their bases.

On balks, the old rule stated that the ball was dead if a pitcher threw wild to a base while committing a balk. Under the new rule, players may advance at their own risk on such wild throws.

Umps Play Cops

On the always controversial issue of the spitball, a lengthy discussion resulted in the detective work again being placed in the hands of the umpires.

The umpires agreed unanimously that a half-dozen to a dozen pitchers in the league throw the illegal pitch periodically and a little bit more than that throw it regularly. But again it is up to the umpire to prove it and, so far, no one has deemed to go that far.

The result of the meeting was that the usual warning will follow when an umpire suspects the spitter, but if an obvious case occurs, the ejection will be automatic.

In addition to all Florida-based umpires being present for the meeting, the umpires up on a look-see who were invited were Dick Trem-

blay, John McSherry and Jerry Dale.

Florida games involving N. L. teams March 11 were umpired by members of the umpire development school at St. Petersburg.

It was announced officially at the meeting that umpire Frank Secory had retired.

Compare Notes With A. L.

Fleig said after the meeting that he will meet with Dick Butler, his counterpart in the American League, to review the N. L. actions.

The umpires in the N. L. reaffirmed their stand that they prefer to remain a separate body under league jurisdiction and have no desire to align with the A. L. umpires and become one group under Commissioner Bowie Kuhn's supervision.

The A. L. umpires feel the same way.

Astros Turn Back Mets, 4-3, Continue Mastery

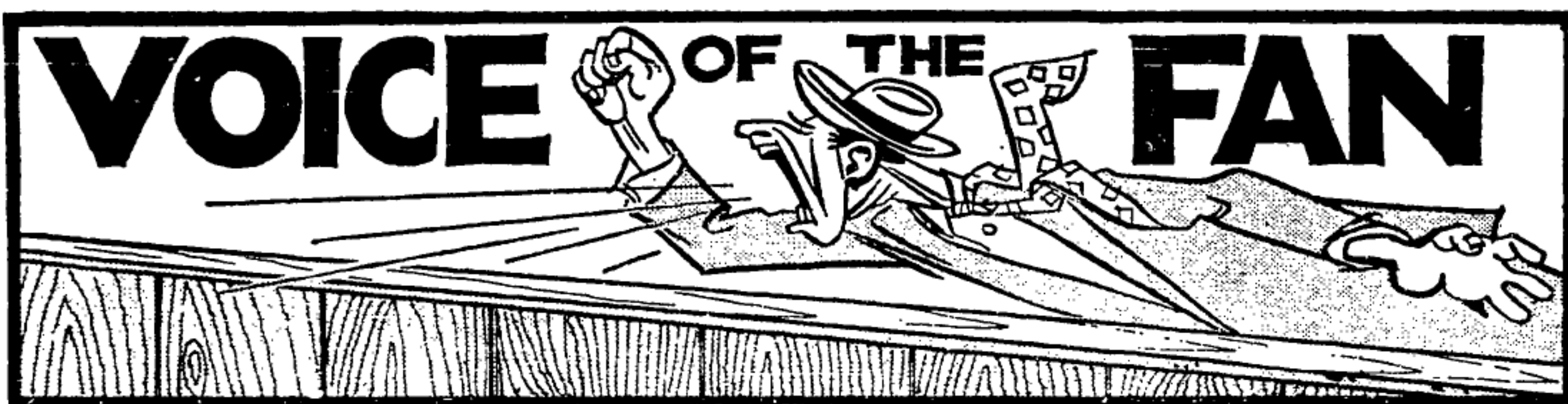
ST. PETERSBURG, Fla.—The Mets played their annual exhibition game against the Astros March 10 with almost predictable results.

Houston, which joined the National League with the Mets in 1962, scored two runs in the first inning off lefthander Jerry Koosman, added two in the seventh against righthander Dean Chance and came off with a 4-3 victory.

The Astros hold a 93-55 advantage over New York in games won and lost in the last nine seasons.



Tommie Agee



ARE NBA AND NHL GREEDY?

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

It is obvious that the goal of the National Basketball Association and the National Hockey League is first to make money and second to give the fans a good show. It should be exactly the opposite.

The NBA plays an 80-game schedule to eliminate three teams from its playoffs. These playoffs extend the season by at least four games for a first-place team and possibly 19 games for a second or third-place club. If the two division leaders have not proved themselves in 80 games, they certainly will not do so in 84, 88 or 99.

In hockey, the teams play 70 games to eliminate two teams from the Stanley Cup playoffs. Come on, NBA and NHL owners, give us a sport and take your eyes off the cash register. STEPHEN E. BALDA
Clintonville, Wis.

SOME EXCESS BAGGAGE

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

Why have divisional playoffs in pro basketball? With this system, the entire NBA schedule is played to determine losers. A club finishing third playing .500-or-under ball can win the division title in the playoffs.

If certain teams have assured themselves a playoff berth, players have a tendency not to give 100 per cent. Thus the fans are deprived of seeing the brand of ball they should see. The playoff system also prolongs the season. The division winners of the regular season should play for the title, with no playoffs. DAVE HORGER
East Liverpool, O.

GI STARS IN EUROPE

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

Uncle Sam's boys are thrilling our European friends with top-drawer baseball competition. Two players with the VII Corps Jayhawks of Stuttgart, Germany, set the pace in every offensive category.

Left fielder Joe Williams won the triple crown, batting .452, hitting 19 homers and driving in 58 runs. Center fielder Leroy Porter led in hits, 81, doubles, 26, triples, 11; runs, 54, and stolen bases, 34.

Such players as these are helping us demonstrate good sportsmanship and democracy to our allies overseas. My two-year Air Force tour in Germany was well spent watching our relationships become stronger. M. SGT. JOE TRAPNELLI
Savannah, Ga.

BOUQUET FROM PARIS

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

THE SPORTING NEWS richly deserves the success it has enjoyed in its 80-year history. Your friends on this side of the Atlantic wish you many more successful years selling the greatest sport of them all. H. DALE-FRENCH
Paris, France.

A RIDICULOUS PRACTICE

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

It would seem utterly ridiculous to put a Carol Burnett, a Danny Thomas or a Sammy Davis super spectacular on TV at 1 or 2 p. m. So why does baseball persist in putting on the greatest spectacle of all, the World Series, at such an hour?

Midweek World Series games should be played at night, so all fans could see them. The fans' wishes in this matter have been disregarded long enough. The owners are eager enough to stage their regu-

Rebuttal to Robinson Piece Wins April Letter Honors

The columnist who criticizes can expect some of his own medicine. At least that's true if his critical comment appears in THE SPORTING NEWS. Murray Robinson of the New York Journal American wrote a piece castigating Sandy Koufax and Don Drysdale during their holdout siege.

The piece was reprinted in the April 2 issue of THE SPORTING NEWS. Reader response was heavy. Perhaps 60 per cent of the letters supported Don and Sandy.

One of the strongest rebuttals was written by Jay Joseph of Syracuse University, Syracuse, N. Y., whose letter appeared in the April 16 issue. His letter was selected as the best to appear in Voice of the Fan last month, and he will receive a year's free subscription to THE SPORTING NEWS.

lar-season games at night because it means more money. The Series is a sellout anyhow, so apparently the magnates don't care about pleasing the fans. GEORGE CHRISTOFF
Rochester, N. Y.

LEO'S FAULTY MEMORY

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

It was most interesting to read in your April 9 issue of Leo Durocher comparing his 1966 Cubs with his 1951 and 1954 Giants. He said he thought his Cub personnel was better than that on his two Giant pennant winners.

I am writing only from memory, and I feel Leo spoke from memory in this story, but in mentioning names from his '51 Giants he omitted Larry Jansen, who after all did win 23 games. He also failed to mention Bobby Thomson, the '51 third baseman who hit the famous homer in the playoff for the pennant.

I believe the '51 and '54 Giants would today be pennant winners under Leo. JOHN CONNOR
Albert Lea, Minn.

A SOUTHERNER SPEAKS

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

My father and I traveled 311 miles to Atlanta to watch a Braves-Yankees exhibition game. I noticed cars in the parking lot from South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Florida and Virginia.

This is what the Braves' officials were figuring on—support from all over the Southeast. While legal decisions are still being mulled over and more injunctions ordered, I would like to extend my greetings along with those of many other fans in the South: Welcome to the South, Braves! HENRY S. ROSE, Jr.
Florence, S. C.

CELTIC FANS UNDER FIRE

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

For years I have been watching NBA basketball on TV, which often has featured the Boston Celtics. In most of these games, the Boston fans have created some incident. One week they threw lighted cigars on the playing floor, also eggs and light bulbs.

Boston fans have shown visiting teams that Boston is a bush-league town. Boston may be first in the standings year after year, but it is certainly last in good sportsmanship. LOU SMITH
Hazleton, Pa.

TWO-LOOP TWIN-BILLS

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

Something must be done to increase the popularity of baseball. We feel that double-headers which feature both leagues would help.

We are not suggesting interleague play, but a double-bill featuring two American League teams playing each other and two National League clubs clashing. This would enable fans in all major league cities to see all the stars and top teams.

MICHAEL A. SUCKLE,
JOHN E. MAITZ,
GENE HUMILOVICH
Penn State University,
State College, Pa.

A SOLDIER'S THANKS

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

Recently I sent you money for a subscription to THE SPORTING NEWS to be sent to some unit of our armed forces in Viet Nam. A few days ago, I had a letter from Capt. John M. Vranish of an engineering battalion in Viet Nam, thanking me for the subscription. He enclosed one of the unit's shoulder patches.

His action shows a lot of courtesy. Those men have a lot of things to do and his taking the time to thank me made me appreciate it doubly. I thought you'd like to know that THE SPORTING NEWS is very welcome to our troops. MICHAEL N. VERES
Gilbertsville, N. Y.

COMPUTER BREAKDOWN?

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

Using statistics from a computer and scoring observations of knowledgeable baseball men, Bob Sudyk in your April 16 issue called Brooks Robinson "a mere low-pressure operator." In Baltimore, Brooks Robinson is known as Mr. Clutch.

In the 1966 season opener, the player your story tabbed a "below-average performer when the heat was on," singled with two out in the ninth and the bases loaded to tie the game. What does your computer say about that? JOHN BALL
Baltimore, Md.

MACAULEY'S MEMORIES

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

I noticed the Flashback Quiz in your April 30 issue and was flattered to note I was the subject. In a way, it shocks one to realize people are "flashing back" into the past for these memories because we then remember our age. But it's nice to be remembered.

Incidentally, I took the test myself and flunked! ED MACAULEY
Sports Director, KTVI,
St. Louis, Mo.

SCHULTZ OFF BASE?

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

Cardinal coach Joe Schultz was quoted in your April 2 issue as saying that Julian Javier is "probably the best second baseman in . . . all of baseball."

Has Joe heard of Bobby Knoop, Dick Green, Bill Mazerowski and Bobby Richardson? Javier couldn't carry their spikes. JEFF LANGUE
Pittsburgh, Pa.

AIRCASTER'S SALUTE

Editor of THE SPORTING NEWS:

You might like to know that on my nightly Sportsline program on KTLN, THE SPORTING NEWS is without question the most frequently plugged sports publication. As an AFL city, we especially appreciate your coverage of pro football. It's the best available. BOB MARTIN
Sports Director, KTLN Radio,
Denver, Colo.

Agee-Whiz Player; That's Tommie, Sox Swiftly and Slugger

By JEROME HOLTZMAN

CHICAGO, Ill.

No one ever won a rookie of the year award during the first two weeks of the season, but if you're going to start keeping tabs on such things, it might be wise to put down the name of Tommie Agee.

Agee, 23, is the regular center fielder with the White Sox and has been quite sensational thus far. He's an exciting player, somewhat in the Willie Mays mold, and already has made considerable contributions in reviving the old go-go spirit.

After a fortnight of play, Agee led the club in home runs and stolen bases, an old Mays combination. He had three homers and five stolen bases, and of even more consequence, Tommie was scoring about half the White Sox runs.

Through games of April 21, the White Sox had totaled 25 runs and Agee had carried 12 of them across, the best of all possible indications of Agee's over-all team value.

"I'd have to say Agee's an exceptionally exciting type of ball player," declared Eddie Stanky, the White Sox manager.

Sensation in Anaheim

Indeed, Agee is just that and had perhaps his most exciting night in Organized Baseball against the Angels on April 21 in the Angels' new Anaheim Stadium.

The White Sox won this game, 8-6. Agee led the way by scoring five runs. The only time he didn't reach base was in his sixth and final plate appearance, when George Brunet struck him out.

Prior to this, Agee knocked out two hits—a single and a homer, drew two walks, was hit on the hand by a pitch and stole a base. And Agee did all of this while batting in the club's leadoff spot.

Stanky, who had an 11-year major league playing career, called Agee's performance one of the best he had ever seen.

"I don't think he (Agee) realizes just what he did," Stanky said. "Scoring five runs as the leadoff hitter is something that doesn't happen very often."

He's on Base Often

Following the Angel series, Agee's batting average was an unsensational .280, with seven hits in 25 official trips. But Agee had a remarkable .484 "reach" percentage and, even more outstanding, had scored 12 of the first 16 times he had reach base.

Included in this was a string of nine consecutive runs. That is, Agee had one stretch of nine "reaches" in which he scored. This string was broken on April 23 in Kansas City, when Agee was stranded at second base after doubling to left-center with two out.

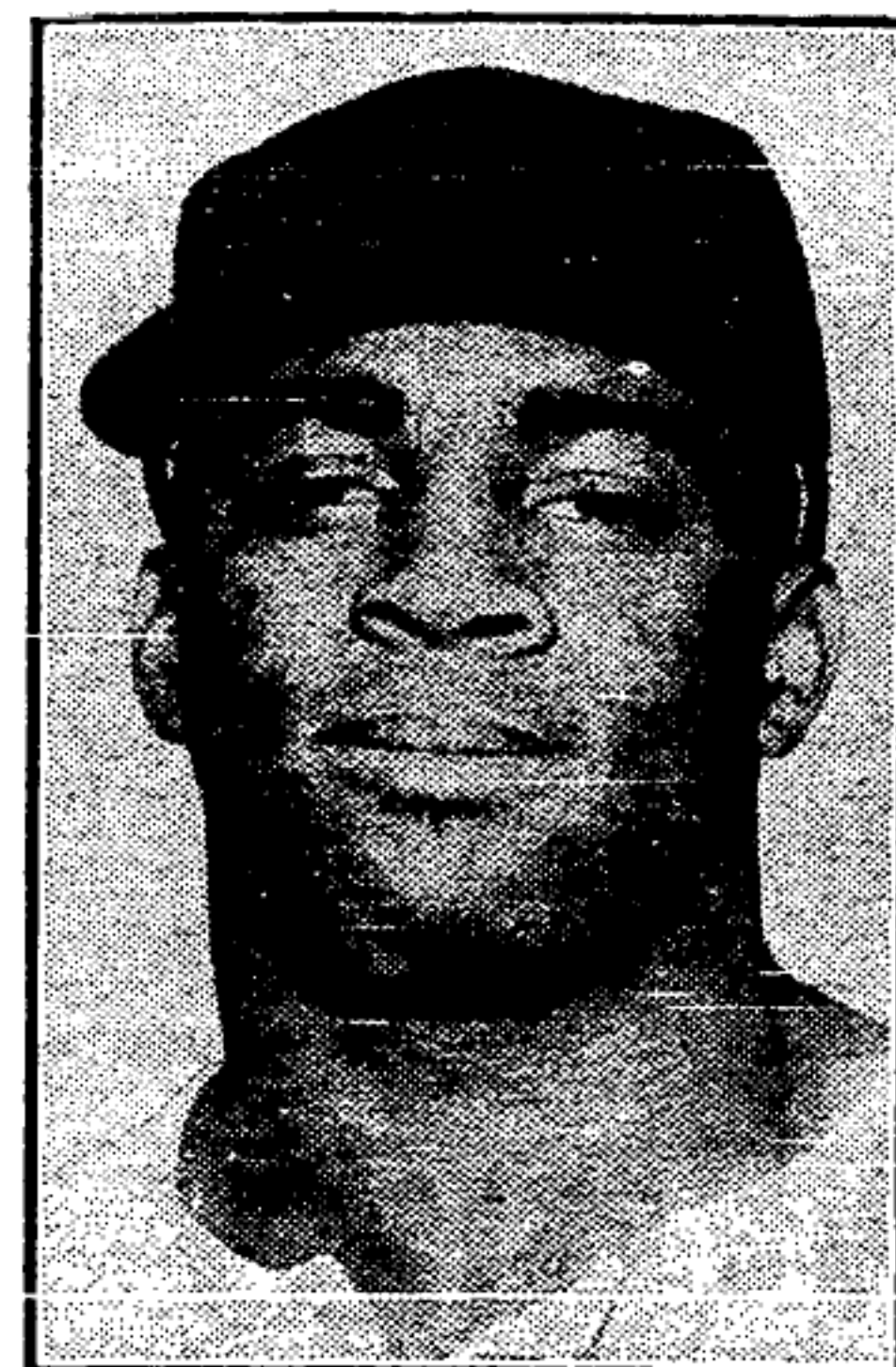
Agee's speed and long-ball power already have added considerably to the White Sox attack. With Agee leading the way on the bases, the Sox had a total of 15 stolen bases

Power Hitter Elia Makes His Bow as Pinch-Runner

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Short-stop Lee Elia, a righthanded power hitter who led the White Sox organization in home runs last year when he slugged 29 at Indianapolis (Coast), finally made his major league debut here on April 23.

And how was Elia used in his first major league game?

As a pinch-runner, of course! Elia was delighted, nonetheless. He has spent seven years in the minor leagues.



Tommie Agee

after the first two weeks of play, which is almost one-third as many as they had during the entire 1965 campaign.

Moreover, Agee's home-run slugging has also helped to change the White Sox image. The White Sox scored a total of 24 runs, or an average of six a game, in the six contests they played from April 17 through April 24.

General Manager Ed Short contends that Agee's mere presence in the lineup has helped the club's other hitters, especially Floyd Robinson, who is the No. 3 batter.

Shakeup on Infield

The Sox have also benefited somewhat in the power department since Manager Stanky returned to the Al Lopez infield. This is the infield which has Pete Ward at third base and Don Buford at second.

Stanky, in an effort to tighten the defense and at the same time cure his left field problem, opened the season with Ward in left field, Buford at third and the veteran Al Weis at second.

Stanky stayed with this lineup for only the first six games. On April 21, when Weis was batting .125, Stanky benched the slender second baseman and brought Ward back to his old third base position and returned Buford to second base.

When Stanky made this change, he indicated that it was only temporary and that Weis was merely being given a few days of rest. Chances are that Weis will be given another shot—and soon. In the meantime, Weis has been relegated to Stanky's late-inning defensive platoon.

Sox Yarns: Tony Cuccinello, the veteran third base coach, left the club for a few days and went to Peekskill, N. Y. to attend the funeral of his sister, Mrs. Josephine Verderosa. While Cooch was gone, Don Gutteridge coached at third base and Kerby Farrell took over Gutteridge's spot in the first-base coaching box. . . . Outfielder Floyd Robinson has been a virtual terror at the plate. Robby hit safely in the club's first 11 games and seemed to be getting more solid base knocks than ever before. . . . Bill Voss, 20-year-old rookie outfielder, has been optioned to Indianapolis (Coast) on 24-hour recall. Everyone was impressed with Voss' skills and the chances are that he'll be a Comiskey fixture in another year or two, at the most. He's a lefthanded hitter of the Johnny Callison mold. . . . The flu bug has been running through the club. It hit Manager Eddie Stanky on the club's first western trip.

Riddle of Agee: Can He Swing Big-Time Bat?

By JERRY HOLTZMAN

SARASOTA, Fla.

The big question in the White Sox camp is how good is Tommie Agee? Is he going to be another Willie Mays, as his manner often suggests? Or is he simply another good-field, good-run outfielder who won't be able to hit major league pitching?

No one here, not even Manager Eddie Stanky, can answer those questions. After a month of spring training, Agee rates an E for excellence. He's been the club's leading power hitter (four homers and 11 RBIs), has caught everything hit his way and has been a sensation while running the bases.

This isn't the first time Agee has made the big spring training splash. He was quite impressive with the White Sox last spring, so impressive, in fact, that Al Lopez, then the Sox manager, tabbed him "as one of the most exciting players" he had seen.

But bad luck seems to dog Agee. Several days before the White Sox' 1965 American League opener, Agee slid into the plate in an exhibition game at Charlotte, N. C., and broke a bone in his right hand. He didn't make it to Chicago until September, after he had spent the full season at Indianapolis (Coast), where he had an undistinguished season.

He hit only .226 at Indianapolis, which would hardly suggest a ticket to the big leagues.

But Agee insists that the .226 average isn't a true barometer. Said Agee: "After my hand was broken, I was weak. Consequently, I couldn't really swing the bat."

Hands Are Vulnerable

It wasn't the first time Agee had broken his hand.

He broke both hands in 1963—first the right and then the left.

He was with Charleston (Eastern) in the summer of 1963 and was then the property of the Indians. A free-for-all broke out in a game at Binghamton and Agee, racing into the action, punched a Binghamton player on the side of the head.

Or at least he tried to. The result was a broken right hand.

Said Agee, recalling the incident: "I hope the people don't think I'm a bad guy, but I had to help." That winter, Agee was playing in

Stanky Winner as Skipper, But Fizzle as a Fisherman

SARASOTA, Fla.—Eddie Stanky has been having a sensational spring as the new manager of the White Sox. The Hose won 15 of their first 17 games and already had winning streaks of six and nine games.

But Stanky was finally shut out on March 25, an open date in the club's exhibition schedule.

He went fishing in Sarasota Bay for three hours and didn't even catch a minnow.

Puerto Rico. An inside fast ball, thrown by Julio Navarro, hit him on the left hand, breaking it across the knuckles.

Agee is fully recovered now, even from a blow he suffered this last winter in Venezuela, when he was hit in the head by a whisky bottle.

Agee was playing with the Magallanes club in the Venezuelan Winter League and let a grounder go through his legs for an error.

"Those fans are very enthusiastic," Agee said. "I was up against the fence when the ball went through my legs. The next thing I knew my head was spinning."

A fan, rooting for the Magallanes club, was so disgusted with Agee's error that he threw a whisky bottle at him.

"I can still feel the spot where the bottle hit me," said Agee as



PETE WARD . . . Working at First and Third Base and in Outfield

Ward Moonlights at 3 Positions

By JEROME HOLTZMAN

SARASOTA, Fla.

Veteran third baseman Pete Ward is on the double shift here in the White Sox spring training camp. He's both an outfielder—and infielder.

Pete works out at third base daily and fields grounders hit to him by coach Tony Cuccinello. When he's finished, he hustles out to join the outfield corps and spends another hour racing for fly balls hit by coach Kerby Farrell. Pete also dabbles at first base. No one, not even Ward, seems to know where he'll wind up on opening day.

"I don't care," said Ward, "just so long as I'm in there."

Ward has been the club's regular third baseman for the last three years and has a lifetime BA of .274. He hit .295 as a rookie, .282 in 1964 and last season slumped to .247.

Ward admits that he's no longer a master of his own fate.

"I suppose it all depends on what they do with Al," he said, referring to Al Weis, the club's veteran utility

infielder. If Weis opens at second base, then Don Buford, the club's regular second baseman, will move to third and this would push Ward into left field. Ward insists he has no preference.

'It's Up to Manager'

It's not a matter of where I can do the best job," he said, "but where I'll best fit in. This is up to the manager."

Though the Sox have been having a great spring—15 victories in their first 18 games—Ward hasn't exactly been tearing down the fences.

It took him ten games, for example, before he was able to drive in a run and he has yet to hit a spring training homer.

But Ward says he isn't worried. "I hit eight homers in spring training last year," he explained, "but it didn't do me any good."

He had only ten homers during the regular season.

National Baseball Congress Sets Up Sites and Dates for State Tourneys

WICHITA, Kan.—The first of the National Baseball Congress state tournaments this year will start on July 1 and the last one on August 4, it was disclosed in the 1966 edition of the Official Baseball Annual, the NBC yearbook.

State tourneys in Ohio, Vermont, Utah and Nevada will open on July 1, while Michigan will be the last event to get under way, August 4.

Most of the state champions will be required to engage in a bi-state qualifying series with an adjoining winner for the regional title to reduce the starting field to 32 teams for the national tournament at Wichita starting August 12.

Sites and dates of tournaments in 33 states have already been selected. The setups in the remainder of the 50 states will be announced before June 1, Congress President Ray Dumont said.

Following are the sites and starting dates of state tournaments already established:

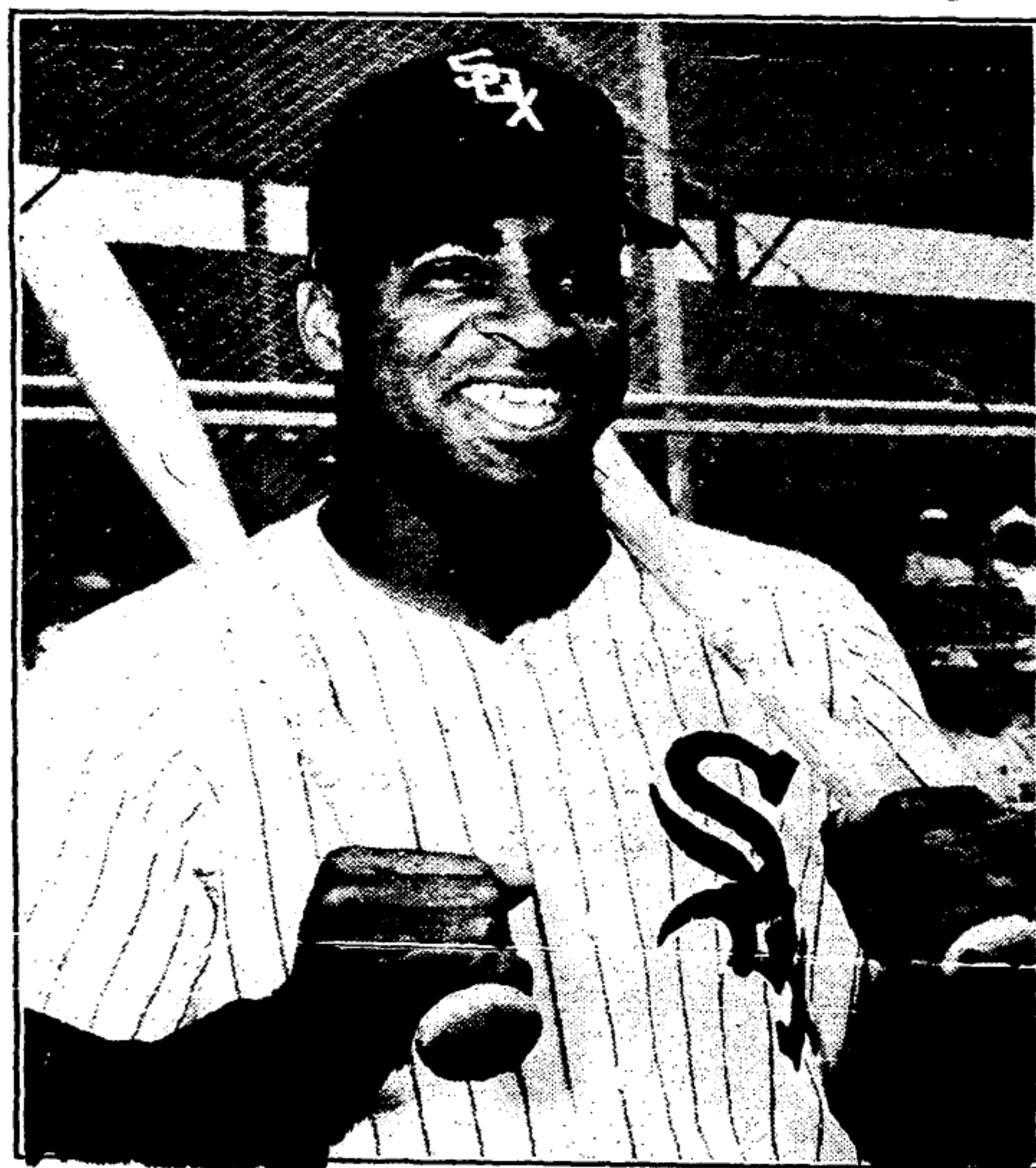
EAST: Trenton, N. J., July 2; Lynbrook, N. Y., July 9; Cranston, R. I., July 11; Putney, Vt., July 1, and Accomac, Va., July 25.

MIDWEST: Elgin, Ill., July 16; Kokomo, Ind., July 22; Ames, Ia., July 22; Wichita, Kan., July 8; Grand Rapids, Mich., August 4; Sedalia, Mo., July 19; North Platte, Neb., July 16; Mansfield, O., July 1, and Madison, Wis., July 28.

SOUTH: Talladega, Ala., July 24; Monette, Ark., July 22; Ocala, Fla., July 15; Marietta, Ga., July 15; Ponchatoula, La., July 15; West Point, Miss., July 21; Roxboro, N. C., July 13; Greeneville, Tenn., July 15, and Lubbock, Tex., July 28.

WEST: Fairbanks, Alaska, July 30; Mesa, Ariz., July 29; Eureka, Calif., July 29; Hugo, Colo., July 22; Honolulu, Hawaii, July 15; Albuquerque, N. M., July 28; Salt Lake City, Utah, July 1, and Bellingham, Wash., August 1.

Two state tournaments have been franchised in both Oklahoma and Nevada with the two winners meeting in a three-game series to decide the official title. The Eastern Oklahoma state meet is scheduled at Perry, starting July 15, and the Western division at Cleo Springs, starting July 22. In Nevada, the Northern event will take place at Yerington and the Southern tourney at Las Vegas, both starting July 1.



TOMMIE AGEE . . . Exciting Player, But Can He Hit?