

# 'We're Even With N. L. at Last!' Paul Claims

By RUSSELL SCHNEIDER



GABE PAUL . . . 'Interleague Play Is Coming'

CLEVELAND, O.

Turncoat that he is, Gabe Paul made an interesting prediction recently. One that should draw some rebuttals from a few of his former National League associates.

"I believe," the Indians' chief asserted in no uncertain terms, "that the American League has caught up with, and soon will surpass, the National League in talent—and probably will have an even more interesting pennant race this season."

Paul, for 25 years a National League club executive before coming to Cleveland in 1961, further stated that this development could be the first step toward interleague play, which he has favored for some time.

"It (interleague play) will come as soon as the National League owners realize it is to their advantage," Gabe said. "Until now, it hasn't been because everyone considered the American League to be inferior."

"Now that we've caught up, and when it's acknowledged to be true, the National League owners will change their attitude, mark my words," Paul promised.

## A. L. May Form Two Divisions

Before that happens, however, it's possible the American League will alter its traditional structure and split into two five-team divisions, Paul further predicted.

"Personally, I feel that's the best thing we could do and it also indicates the new, aggressive-type thinking that our people are now engaged in."

"By splitting into two divisions, the American League could increase its season attendance by at least a million people," Gabe said without qualification.

Paul credited his former boss at Cincinnati, Warren Giles, as the dominant force in establishing the National League's recent superiority, although he also insisted it's part of a natural cycle.

"Before Giles became president of the National League, nobody worried too much about one league being considered better than the other."

"The National League's approach to the All-Star Game,

for example, was just the way the American League has considered it lately—only another exhibition that didn't mean anything."

"But Giles stressed winning, even spring training exhibition games against American League teams. 'Beat 'em, beat 'em, beat 'em,' was his credo all the time, and it became a rallying cry throughout the National League," Gabe explained.

## N. L. Moved Fast in Signing Negroes

Perhaps even more important, however, was that the National leaguers, according to Paul, "practically pioneered" the signing of Negro players.

"Oh, Cleveland signed Larry Doby right after the Dodgers broke the color line with Jackie Robinson, but the National League got a tremendous jump. Now we've caught up with them and it's primarily due to aggressive, new ownership."

He cited Arthur Allyn of the White Sox and Gene Autry and Robert Reynolds of the Angels as two prime examples of new, alert ownership.

The Cleveland prexy also pointed out that the Twins are now in a better financial position to compete for young, free-agent talent.

"All this helped end the domination of the Yankees, too," Gabe pointed out. "That was bad for our league, but now it's over because the rest of us have built up to the Yankees."

## A. L. Improving in Publicity, Too

Another important factor is the new "stimulation" provided by American League President Joe Cronin.

"For years, the National League's superiority was simply a matter of great publicity. Now the American League has improved in that area, too."

"I think you'll find things will be different, starting with this year's All-Star Game," Paul repeated.

"We've caught 'em . . . you'll see. The American League is on the rise."

# Good Advice Finally Soaks In -- There's New Sting in Alvis' Bat

By RUSSELL SCHNEIDER  
CLEVELAND, O.

It's not that Max Alvis is hard-headed or anything like that.

It just took some time for certain things to penetrate.

At least that's the way the Indians' third baseman explains his running start in the American League this season.

"I'm just doing the things everybody has told me to do the last three years," Maxie explained his early success at the plate.

Through April 24, Alvis was one of the Tribe's leaders with a .406 average which included his first homer and six RBIs.

"I guess finally I've let some of the advice I've received sink in," he explained, not facetiously.

"All along, everyone has told me I should go with the pitches I get. Hit the ones that are away from me to right field, and jerk 'em when they try to jam me."

"Well, I did. Or at least I tried. But you know how it is," Max continued thoughtfully. "It's easy to say things and it's easy to try things, but they don't always work out that way."

## He Tried Hard Enough

"I mean, I knew it was good advice and I tried to do what they said."

"I'd tell myself to wait, wait, wait and go to right when they pitched away from me. But most of the time I still hit 'em to the short-stop anyway."

"Then this spring, I guess it finally sunk in. The ball started to go where I wanted it. Maybe it was just the experience I needed—or maybe my head is too dog-goned hard."

"But everything is fine now," Alvis beamed. "I hope it continues this way."

Max admits he went into this season feeling some pressure to live up to all the glowing predictions everyone connected with the Indians had made about him as far back as 1962.

That's when he came up to the varsity at the tail end of the season

## Rocky Tops A.L. Record For Errorless Picket Play

CLEVELAND, O.—Rocky Colavito broke an American League fielding record for outfielders on April 25 when he completed his 195th consecutive game without an error against the Athletics.

It broke the old mark set by Charlie Maxwell of the Detroit Tigers in 1958.

Next in line for the Indians' star right fielder is the modern major league record of 266 consecutive errorless games set by Don Demeter, with the Phillies and Tigers from 1963 through 1965.

after batting .319 in 154 games at Salt Lake City (Coast).

The following spring, Alvis was given the Tribe's third base job and proceeded to win Cleveland's "Man of the Year" award with a .274 performance, including 22 homers and 67 RBIs.

"He can become the best third baseman in the American League," Birdie Tebbetts announced in the spring of 1964.

Max got off to a good start, but was felled by an attack of spinal meningitis in late June. He was disabled for 30 days, but was back in the lineup in early August. The illness, however, left the former University of Texas halfback in a weakened condition and he finished the season with a .252 bat mark in 107 games.

## A Complete Recovery

Nobody was concerned the following spring because the doctors gave Alvis a clean bill of health and said he would not have any after-effects from the meningitis.

If any doubts remained when the 1965 campaign began, Alvis dispelled them immediately with a torrid start that saw him pump 15 homers while keeping an average around the .300 mark by the All-Star Game break.

Then something happened.

"I don't know what it was," Maxie

recalled. "I didn't make any changes, I felt fine both physically and mentally, and I wasn't hitting the ball bad. I just couldn't do anything right. Nothing fell in and it was a total mystery to me."

"One day I'd get a couple of hits and think everything was going to get better—then the next day I'd go back into the slump."

## Bat Mark Plunged to .247

When the season ended, Alvis was down at the .247 mark (and hit only six home runs after the All-Star Game), for his worst figure since entering Organized Baseball in 1959.

The skeptics immediately figured Maxie wasn't going to pan out after all. At least not to the degree Tebbetts—and so many others—had predicted four years earlier.

That's what Alvis meant when he admitted he felt some pressure—"call it anxiety"—when the Indians assembled for spring training.

"I still had confidence in myself, but yes, I did worry some. After all, I couldn't figure out what had gone wrong last season."

"Then, I guess it sunk in. I don't know. It's just like somebody telling you to do something and you agree with him, try it, but just can't. Then all of a sudden, you can."

"I can't explain it, can you?" the 28-year-old Texan asked.

## Put Everything Together

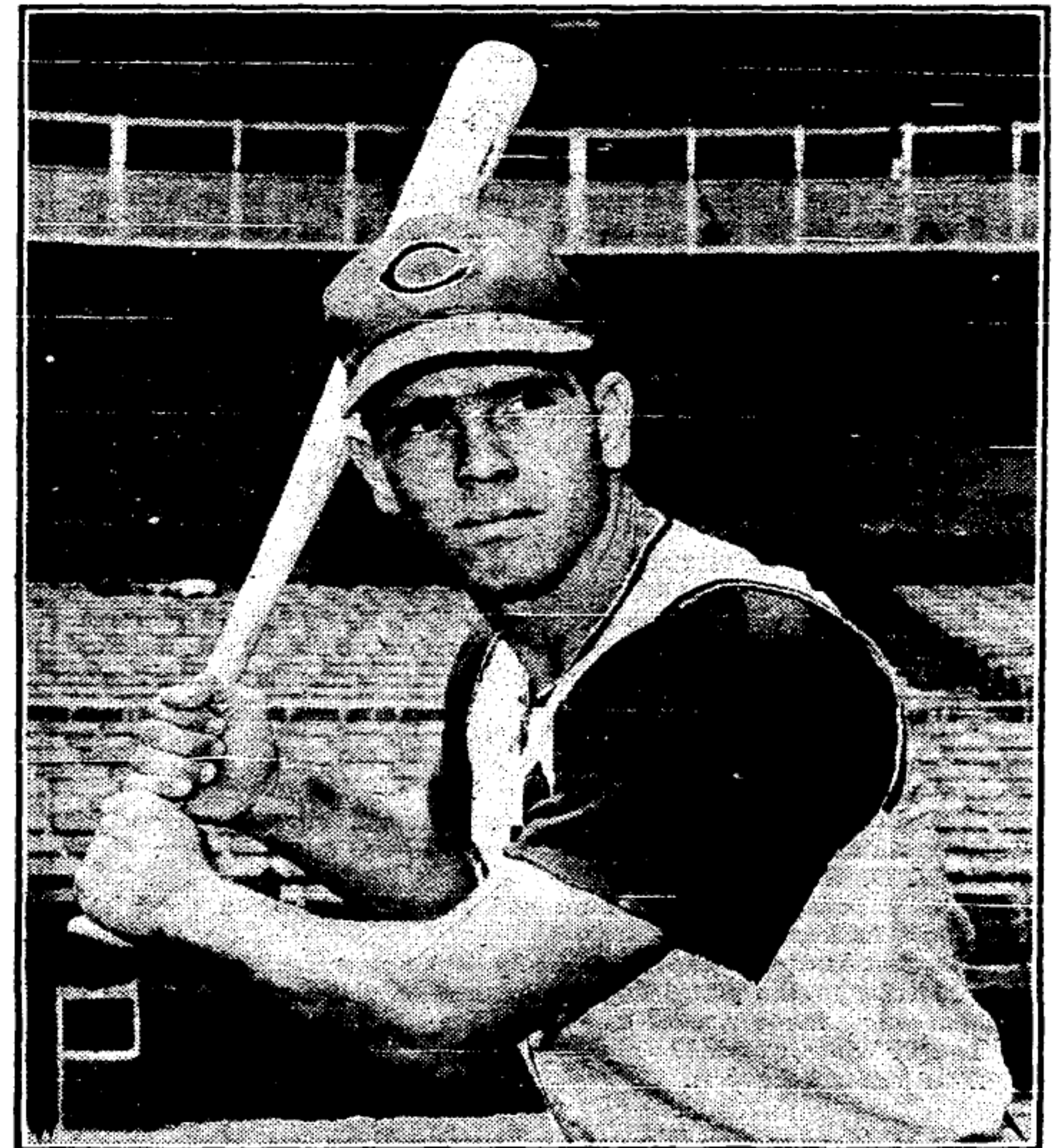
No—but maybe that's what Gabe Paul means when he uses his favorite cliché to describe the sudden emergence of a player. When, almost overnight, he is transformed from an average performer into a star.

"He rolled out of bed one morning and put everything together," is the way the Tribe's chief has explained the "development" of more than one player.

"Maybe that's it," Alvis chuckled at the suggestion. "I really don't know. I just hope it stays this way."

Those who know Maxie best, think it will.

When he was confined to a hospital with meningitis, it was written that "Alvis is a kid who never took a short step and never stopped



MAX ALVIS . . . Everything Fell Into Place

running." He still hasn't—and nobody expects he will.

**Tribe Tidbits:** Birdie Tebbetts, on introducing his Indians at a recent civic luncheon, said this: "I think it's significant that I don't have to tell you anything about these guys, which is our chief change. Now you know 'em all, and you didn't two or three years ago," meaning now the Indians are a contender for the first time since Birdie came aboard in 1963. . . . The Indians lost a 1-0 decision to their Pawtucket (Eastern) affiliate on April 22. . . . Birdie said afterwards, "Thanks for breaking our winning streak. Now all the pressure is off and we can go back to the American League." . . . Sam McDowell received the scare of his life recently when he slammed his car door against his valuable left arm. . . . He came

## Indians' Fast Start Ties 1944 Browns' A.L. Mark

CLEVELAND, O.—The Indians tied the 1944 Browns' American League record for consecutive victories at the start of the season when they posted No. 9, April 26, in a 4-0 victory over the Athletics.

The Tribe was out to break the A.L. mark and to tie the major league record of ten, held by the 1955 Dodgers and the 1962 Pirates, but they were rained out of the next game, April 27.

out of it with nothing more than a slight bruise, however, and the following night beat the Yankees, 3-1.