

Bold Buccos Aim for Best Spot in Sun in 20 Years

Win 16 of 18 in Pirates' Finest Home Stand in History; Rookies Witt and Raydon Bolstering Big Three on Mound

By LES BIEDERMAN

IN THE WEST WITH THE PIRATES



Bob Friend

The Pittsburgh fans who generously supported the Pirates in their lean years are rallying round the flag as the Buccos make their boldest bid for fame since 1938—the year they lost the pennant in the final week of the season to the Cubs.

The Pirates finished their finest home stand in history when they mopped up the Braves twice in two games, August 11 and 12, at Forbes Field before the two largest crowds of the campaign, right after they swept a four-game set from the Reds.

Bob Friend collected his fifteenth victory when he beat the champions, 6 to 4, August 11, before a standing-room throng of 38,938 and the next night Rookie George Witt pitched a magnificent two-hit, 10 to 0 shutout in a game that found the Bucs

hitting their biggest run total of the year—eight runs in the eighth inning. This time 36,867 fans, with many standing behind the grandstand, whooping it up frantically.

The twin victories pushed the Pirate winning streak to six games and 17 in the last 22 starts, including three losses in Milwaukee. But the Bucs ended their home stand with a glittering 16 decisions in 18 games, best in modern history for a Pittsburgh team.

The Pirates, who zoomed into second place by a full length over the Giants as a result of their fine home stand, extended their winning streak to seven—longest for a Pittsburgh team in nine years—when they won a series-opener at Philadelphia, August 13.

Even with this momentum, the Pirates were attempting to take things in stride.

Friend, the player representative of the Pirates and the oldest player from standpoint of continuous service with the team, tried his best to tone down talk of a pennant.

"We're good and we know it," Friend said, "but we still have a long way to go. What we want to do is put some daylight between second place and the other six teams, then we'll concentrate on catching the Braves.

"New Experience for Us"

"Sure, we have a chance, a golden opportunity, but we must avoid pressing. We have to play our games from day to day. We've been in the second division for years and this is a new experience for us. On the other hand, the Braves have been through this before.

"What would we need to win? Merely to keep going."

Danny Murtaugh is doing his best to mask his enthusiasm and admits he never expected to see the Pirates as high as they are right now.

"These kids surprise me every day," Murtaugh conceded, "and I hope they have more surprises before we finish. I knew we were good, but they're giving it that little bit extra and it's paying off.

"This is a rich and wonderful experience for the Pirates. This is the first time in years they have other teams shooting at them. It used to be we were always shooting at seven other teams."

The Pirates have proved tremendous at Forbes Field with a 35-22 record, including their best 16 out of 18 that also brought six shutouts. As they took off on a 16-day, 19-game trip, August 13, they owned a 23-30 record on the road but felt they were now rolling in high gear.

Chief Strength in Pitching

The strength of the Pirates almost all season has been in the pitching department. Bob Friend, Ron Kline and Vern Law have carried the burden as the Big Three but, since Rookies Witt and Curt Raydon have developed rapidly and successfully, the Big Three has been able to take advantage of an extra day's rest.

Witt's 10 to 0 battle over the Braves was his fourth straight win and his second straight shutout. In fact, when he closed up shop after two-hitting the champions, August 12, the 24-year-old redheaded righthander owned a string of 23 consecutive scoreless innings, including five innings of a suspended contest with the Cardinals.

Until Hank Aaron doubled off the right field wall with two out in the ninth inning, August 12, Witt had held the Braves to a second-inning double by Frank Torre, a short fly ball that Bob Skinner lost in the twilight.

Another strong factor for the Pirates in this mad rush was the unbelievable work being done by Roy Face, Bob

Fireman Face 'Keeps Own Hours' in Pirate Bull Pen

PITTSBURGH, Pa.—Ryne Duren of the Yankees is the most publicized relief pitcher in baseball but the Pirates' Roy Face is regarded as the most underrated, yet he does a tremendous job in the National League.

Face "keeps his own hours" in the bull pen because he's never on call until the late innings. On the road he usually goes to the bull pen before the game because of the distant location from the bench and the clubhouse. But at Forbes Field it's different.

"I seldom show up in our right field bull pen at home until about the fifth inning," Face relates. "I know they won't call on me until about the seventh inning. I run with the pitchers each day to keep my legs in shape but don't do too much of it. I loosen up fooling around first base during batting practice." BIEDERMAN.

Porterfield, Don Gross, Bob Smith and Ron Blackburn in the bull pen. Face alone was credited with 18 saves in the first 112 games. The pitching bogged down temporarily in Philadelphia, August 13, when the Phillies collected a dozen hits against Raydon and four successors, but the batters came through with three homers, a pair of doubles and three triples to win a 10 to 9 decision. The Phils' run total was the highest the Pirate staff had allowed this season.

76,000 for Two Games

The two night games with the Braves that closed out the Forbes Field home stand drew a remarkable 76,000 and both nights the crowds came early and stayed right to the finish. The 18 games at Forbes Field drew 364,000 and attendance for the year for 59 games is 983,000, a jump of almost 300,000 over a year ago.

Pirate Scoreboard: Frank Thomas' two-run homer, August 12, off Bob Rush that broke a scoreless tie in the sixth inning, was the first for the Pirate slugger against the Braves since July of 1956. . . . In their first 15 games, the Braves have clipped Pittsburgh pitching for 18 homers (ten at Milwaukee) and the Bucs have responded with just three (two at Milwaukee). . . . The Pirates won five of their last six games from the Braves when they prevented any homers. . . . Johnny Logan gave Dick Groat a busy night, August 12, when he kept dropping bits of paper at shortstop, knowing the Buc captain is tidy and would pick everything up. He did, and came to the dugout each inning with his pockets full of paper. . . . Friend is warning everybody that the Pirates and the Giants are going to be the threats of the future to the Braves, adding both teams have good young players. . . . Danny Kravitz stepped in when Hank Foiles and Bill Hall were hurt and caught every one of the six straight wins. . . . Although the Pirates refuse to "talk pennant," 21-year-old Second Baseman Bill Mazeroski has quietly changed the date of his wedding to Miss Milene Nicholson to avoid a conflict with the World's Series. Early in August, Mazeroski announced the wedding would take place October 4, but after the Pirates beat the Braves twice in two nights, he moved it back one week to October 11.

Frank Bolling Bidding for Billing as 'Player of Year' for Detroit

Steady Second Sacker Improves in Fielding and as Hitter

By WATSON SPOELSTRA

DETROIT, Mich.

When complete returns are in, Frank Bolling quite likely will seal his unofficial status as "player of the year" in Detroit.

It is possible, of course, that Harvey Kuenn will make a challenge right down to the wire for the American League batting championship.

Al Kaline could muscle in on this prize, too, although the graceful right fielder has heard unwarranted boos from the folks at Briggs Stadium.

Jim Bunning has ended a downswing following his no-hit performance at Boston. It took the slim righthander three weeks and a day to win a game. "It was about time," grumbled Bunning after his fourth start produced a 3 to 2 victory over Kansas City on August 11.

Frank Lary has improved on last year's performance. Billy Hoelt has made a stout comeback. Still Detroit will have no 20-game winner for the first time in three seasons. This will not go down as a pitcher's year in Detroit.

Through all the ups and downs, Frank Bolling has been the most consistent player. His fielding is even better than it was in 1957 when he was regarded as a foremost craftsman in the American League. Bolling's hitting is vastly improved.



Frank Bolling

Lifts Mark Above .270 on Home Stand

The 27-year-old second baseman from Mobile, Ala., pushed his average above .270 at the close of a long and moderately successful home stand. He had played more innings than anyone else on the team. He was topped in hits merely by Kuenn. Bolling's RBI count was outstripped only by Kaline.

"I knew Bolling was an underrated player when I took this club," said Bill Norman. "While watching him every day, I am amazed by what he can do with the glove and the bat."

Bolling has developed stamina in his fourth full year in Detroit uniform. In 1957 he was dropped out of the lineup several times to "rest him up."

"It is my hunch that Bolling looks stronger because he is a better hitter this year," said General Manager John Mahle. "The records prove that. He is harder to fool. That must mean he has a better line on the pitchers."

The Mahle theory is supported by Bolling's tabulation of strikeouts and walks. In 1957 the margin went to strikeouts. This year he walks more often than he whiffs.

Regardless of how the Tigers fare in September, there are likely to be many changes in 1959 at Briggs Stadium. Bolling is one player who can count on job security. He is bracketed with Kuenn, Kaline and Billy Martin as virtually indispensable players.

Bunning Victim of Buildup Pressure

Just as frustration was gripping Bunning in the aftermath of his July 20 no-hitter, he chalked up a stimulating victory. He had Kansas City shut out until two were out in the ninth. Then Bunning's old batterymate, Frank House, hit the ball into the right field stands with a man on base.

This shook up Bunning and Hank Aguirre was called in to retire the last batter in a 3 to 2 victory.

Bunning said he couldn't figure out why it was so long between victories. "My arm felt good and I thought I had good stuff," he said.

Pitching Coach Willis Hudlin said Bunning was a victim of a buildup of pressure.

"A no-hit pitcher doesn't realize it," said Hudlin. "But it is there. The best thing a pitcher can do is forget about those big days and pitch like a hungry rookie. The more you forget, the better off you'll be. A 20-game

Martin Shelved by Collision With Chisox' Battey at Plate

DETROIT, Mich.—Billy Martin says, honest, he wasn't trying to steal home. Nevertheless, he barged into Catcher Earl Battey of the White Sox on August 10. Martin severely bruised his ribs and was removed from the Detroit lineup indefinitely.

"I was just trying to bluff Bob Shaw," Martin explained. "Then I saw I couldn't get back. So I went in. It wasn't a very smart move."

Martin found that Battey, waiting with the ball, was as solid as a fence post set in concrete.

Martin was taken to Harper Hospital, where the X-rays disclosed no fracture. Battey left with the White Sox after the game. But the Chicago catcher dispatched this telegram to Martin:

"Sorry you were hurt in the play at the plate yesterday step all I could do was grab and tag stop my best wishes for your quick recovery stop regards Earl Battey."

Reno Bertoia was assigned to third base as Martin's replacement. SPOELSTRA.

winner can't look back a year. He has to pitch as though it never happened."

Norman said he never lost confidence in Bunning. He envisioned an important role for the towering Kentuckian down to the end in the season.

"There's a lot riding on every game," said Norman. "It looks like we will finish second or sixth, depending on how a few games go between now and the end of the season. We'll string along with our best pitching. That means Lary and Bunning on top, followed by Hoelt and Foytack. We'll have Moford and Susce for spot assignments."

Booing of Kaline Called 'Unfair'

The booing of Kaline is reported because it is very rare. On August 10, Jim Landis looped the ball into right field where Kaline couldn't corral it near the line. Because the ball took a trick hop, the official scorer awarded Landis a triple. Some of the customers got the impression that Kaline played the ball nonchalantly. Hence the boos.

"Kaline gave it a good try, like he always does," said Norman. "The booing was unfair. Here's a boy who always plays hard. He runs into walls for me, bounces off and keeps on playing."

Tiger Tales: With Cooter Veal at shortstop, the Tigers won nine of 12 games. Veal continued to make superb defensive plays and surprised nearly everyone with timely hits. "He'll keep making those plays and more," said Willis Hudlin. "With Veal on the job, we don't have those four and five-out innings." . . . Detroit has been reaching into Minnesota for talent. George Thomas of the University of Minnesota signed as a \$25,000 bonus player in 1957 and now Terry Bartholome, 19, has signed from the same school. Bartholome is an outfielder. . . . Before departing for Idaho Falls, Ida., on a scouting mission for the Tigers, Jack Tighe witnessed an accident in which a man was hurled through the glass roof of a foreign small car right into the front yard of the Tighe home at Spring Lake, Mich. . . . Bill Norman is practically a cinch to receive a 1959 contract. His bosses at Briggs Stadium regard Norman as a "real pro." . . . The August 10 double-header with the White Sox consumed seven hours and seven minutes, including two rain lapses. Reno Bertoia executed a perfect bunt on the squeeze play to score Frank Bolling in the twelfth inning to win the second game. The following day Bertoia made a spectacular stop at third base to throw out Hector Lopez. . . . Frank Lary has eyes on finishing with 16 victories and he has a good chance to make it.

TOPPING

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a big mistake for the Giants and Dodgers to quit New York, and for the National League to leave itself unrepresented here.

The Yankees are willing to let the National League come into the Stadium if the City of New York will help the club improve its parking situation.

The Yankees ask no money of the City of New York. They are willing to pay for whatever they get.

Ridicules Flushing Meadow Site

They want the city to turn over certain facilities, with the club replacing these facilities in no worse locations.

Dan went on to ridicule the notion that a stadium could be built on Flushing Meadow, not more than 15 minutes by car from the Yankee arena, for the housing of a new National League club.

"The Yankees are not opposed to the return of the National League, but they don't like to have people move in and stick a gun at their backs," Topping said.

"If the National League wants to return, I believe that something could be worked out for sharing use of the Yankee Stadium. But we are not going to be forced into anything."

Del Webb, 50-50 partner with Topping in the Yankees, told the 132 diners that he shared Dan's views on that subject. Topping, Webb and George M. Weiss all hailed the tremendous success

Terry Sounds Blunt Warning to Majors on Minors' Plight

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Bill Terry, World's Series manager, 400 hitter and Hall of Famer, interjected a solemn note into the Yankee party honoring returning diamond greats following Old-Timers' Day at Yankee Stadium, August 9, when he warned about the urgency for action in the minor leagues.

Terry, a successful businessman, spoke as former president of the South Atlantic League and now president of the Jacksonville club in that loop.

"We have a bad situation," offered Terry, describing the minor league picture, "and it has to be rectified if you're going to keep getting players from the minors. Up to now I don't know of any other way you can get major league players. If there is, I'll be glad to hear about it."

"Nearly everyone in the minors," continued Terry, "is losing money and we have to get down to earth on this and talk man-to-man. It's going to have to be done sooner or later. I'm talking about the men in baseball who put up the money, not anyone else."

Terry is one of the largest auto dealers in the South. No one is ever going to have to run a benefit for Bill Terry, though. Take Casey Stengel's word for that. He was managing opposite Terry in the National League for a while and still marvels at Bill's business sense.

"He was making a fortune during the depression," said Stengel. "while everyone else was going broke. Most people were satisfied with their baseball salaries, but Terry was raking it in with the Piggly-Wiggly stores and getting \$15,000 a year from Standard Oil of Indiana to run some kind of an instruction course for them. There's a guy you gotta listen to when he talks." HAROLD ROSENTHAL.

ing it mandatory for each club to have an annual Old-Timers' Day. Will Harridge praised the New York club for its Old-Timers' successes and added that it might be a good idea for his league to make such events obligatory.