

Nats Nab McLain to Bolster Sagging Gate

By MERRELL WHITTLESEY

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Senators' Owner Robert Short, annoyed at the unanimous criticism of his four-for-four deal with the Tigers in which he gained Denny McLain, but parted with Aurelio Rodriguez et al, told all of his second guessers to sit tight.

"You haven't seen anything yet," Short said at World Series headquarters. Short said that Mike Epstein and a half-dozen others probably will be traded and that if he can improve his club by trading Frank Howard, Hondo will go.

"I had to do something, I'm going broke," Short pleaded, "I had to get a player who will put people in the stadium and McLain is the most colorful ballplayer in the game today. He will put people in my ball park."

Short has McLain, plus Don Wert, Elliott Maddox and Norm McRae and he no longer has Rodriguez, shortstop Ed Brinkman and pitchers Jim Hannan and Joe Coleman. He lost the left side of his infield, the two best arms side-by-side in the league, and two starting pitchers.

Rodriguez' Loss Hurts

Showman Short has wanted showman McLain for a year, but the shocker to the deal was that Short and a reluctant Ted Williams parted with Rodriguez, the Mexican whom they have been billing as "the third baseman of the next decade."

"Our third base worries are over for 10 years. We may have the best now, Brooks Robinson included, and we will have the best for 10 years," Williams said many, many times last summer, with Short echoing his manager's sentiments.

It is obvious that Short had to have McLain now more than a third baseman for 10 years. The



IN HAPPIER DAYS with the Tigers, Denny McLain posed with catcher Bill Freehan after one of McLain's 31 victories in 1968. McLain was traded to the Senators October 9.

Senators' owner tried every combination on the Tigers—even Howard—but Detroit would not make the deal without Rodriguez.

Short's boast is that he has a 31-game winner of three years ago, a Cy Young Award winner, and a player whose off-the-field life is filled with lawsuits, controversy, baseball suspensions, head-

lines, headlines and headlines.

McLain has been cleared of carrying a gun by Commissioner Bowie Kuhn, although he remains on probation. His bankruptcy suit is pending. Short may have to support him until spring training, although the trade may help Denny's bookings. He now has a new territory.

The Senators' owner bristles when it is suggested that McLain may be a 25-game loser instead of a winner with the supporting cast the Senators can provide at the present.

"Don't worry about our infield, don't worry about our ball club," Short said, hinting that it hardly will be recognizable as the cellar team of 1970 when it takes the field next spring.

Later, Short disclosed he had assigned a player to the Phillies for the right to negotiate with Curt Flood, who has sued baseball over the reserve clause and did not play last season.

As of the moment, the left side of the infield would have Jim Mason, Denver's shortstop last year, at that position. If he does not make it, Tim Cullen is the standby. Wert is a possibility at third or Maddox, although those who have seen a lot of Maddox say he belongs in the outfield.

Maddox Impressed Ted

Williams liked Maddox' bat in the few appearances he made against the Senators last season, and also saw something in McRae's arm that he liked. Ted is great on first impressions.

"I like that guy, see if you can get him for me," he told Short.

The money angle was raised many times. How much? Both Short and General Manager Jim Campbell of the Tigers swore that not a cent changed hands.

Somebody else said Short bought a vote to move. "I already had it," he snapped.

Williams was not present at the press conference announcing the trade. His message to Short was: "The price was too high."

Ted will not lose any sleep over getting along with McLain, and under Short and Williams, McLain probably will get more direction

than he did under the Tigers.

While the Senators have lost defense on the left side and pitching, they now have the best one-two righthanded punch in the American League in McLain and Dick Bosman, not necessarily in that order.

Short became a bit red-necked at the press conference where McLain's past was discussed. He thought it became a bit too personal and for a time he appeared concerned when the matter of civil suits was brought up for the gun carrying and plane flying incidents.

Short to Supply Buckets

But Short does not want his new pitcher to be a goody-goody. If Denny wants to pour water over the Knights of the Keyboard, Short said he would supply the buckets.

While Washington becomes a hopeless last placer with another good pitcher, the Tigers made a gigantic leap from a club that finished four under .500 to a contender.

Coleman said he was in ecstasy. Hannan said he was terribly happy to be going to a contender. Brinkman said he had mixed emotions, but it would be a thrill to play for a contender.

Coleman and Williams had their differences over the breaking ball. And Joe added that he has a little slump every year, but instead of letting him pitch out of it, Williams benched him.

Brinkman said he is sure he will be able to retain what Williams taught him about hitting, and he will be forever grateful.

Somebody suggested McLain already has won the Presidential opener pitching assignment on reputation. Short said no chance. "That's an automatic sellout. We'll pitch Denny the next game when we need people in the park."

Tigers' Stock Rises on 'Steal-of-Year' Nat Deal

By WATSON SPOELSTRA

DETROIT, Mich.—Ed Brinkman and Aurelio Rodriguez give the Tigers instant stability on the left side of the infield, just what Billy Martin wanted when he took the managing job.

"We went after infield defense and we got it," said Martin, reflecting on the four players headed for Tiger Stadium in the eight-man deal that sent Denny McLain to the Senators.

Billy appraised Joe Coleman as "a potential 20-game winner" and said Jim Hannan is certain to shore up the Detroit bullpen.

Jim Campbell, Detroit general manager, was called "Thief of the Year" by some baseball people for his end of the deal in which the Tigers gave up McLain, Don Wert, Elliott Maddox and Norm McRae to Washington.

Denies Cash Payment

"Let's wait and see how it works out," said Campbell, who made a strong denial of reports that Detroit had sweetened the pot with \$250,000.

"We didn't add one dime to the players involved," said Campbell, echoing what Washington Owner Bob Short said on his side.

Another report insisted Detroit promised its vote to Short in the event he wants to move his franchise from Washington.

"That's crazy," said Campbell. "It's also unfair to Bob Short."

Clearly, Campbell has jolted the American League East with two imaginative moves. First, he hired the battling Martin as manager on a two-year contract at \$60,000 a

season. Next, Campbell traded McLain in his own league, his own division, with the awareness that Denny will do everything in his power to hurt the Tigers in the future.

The trade was announced in Cincinnati on the eve of the World Series opener by none other than baseball's commissioner Bowie Kuhn.

Short and Campbell shook hands on the swap the previous Sunday while on the American League charter flight from Minneapolis to Baltimore.

Kuhn Meets McLain

The Tigers then asked Kuhn to lift McLain's third suspension of the year and this the commissioner did after a face-to-face secret meeting with McLain at the Newark airport.

Denny flew up from his home in Lakeland, Fla., to explain why he packed a gun on a Detroit trip last August that took the Tigers to New York, Boston, Milwaukee, Anaheim and Oakland.

While in Milwaukee, Denny drove to Chicago to have dinner with an unnamed Detroit player.

"When McLain took off his coat in a Chicago restaurant," Kuhn related, "he displayed he was carrying a gun in public without a license. He did not take the gun out of the holster."

The commissioner said he concluded this was "typical flamboyance for McLain to do a thing like carrying a gun."

"It really came down to the gun," Kuhn added. "I felt the

loss of \$11,000 in salary after September 9 to the end of the season was adequate punishment for McLain."

Kuhn said he checked with the Federal Aviation Authority and found out Denny did not pilot a commercial flight without a license.

Campbell seemed relieved at the go-ahead on the trade from the commissioner.

"We've had Denny for seven years," he said. "He's a great pitcher and we wish him well."

The big man in the deal for Detroit was Rodriguez, 22-year-old Mexican third baseman. When Short tried to withdraw him, the Tigers said it would be no deal. Campbell said the 28-year-old Brinkman would be Detroit's best shortstop in a long time.

Praise From B. Robby

"He'll field better than Harvey Kuenn and hit better than Ray Oyler," said Campbell, rather convincingly.

At the World Series, Brooks Robinson said: "Brinkman and Rodriguez catch the ball as good as it is caught in our league. Rodriguez is starting to get stronger at the plate. The pitchers don't knock the bat out of his hands any more."

This is what Brooks added: "Coleman might win as many games for Detroit as McLain wins for Washington."

Campbell said McLain's age and stature made it the biggest deal ever negotiated by the Tigers.

Meanwhile, Martin said he in-

tends to carry three catchers next year instead of two. This is good news for Bill Freehan, who is making a strong recovery from spinal surgery.

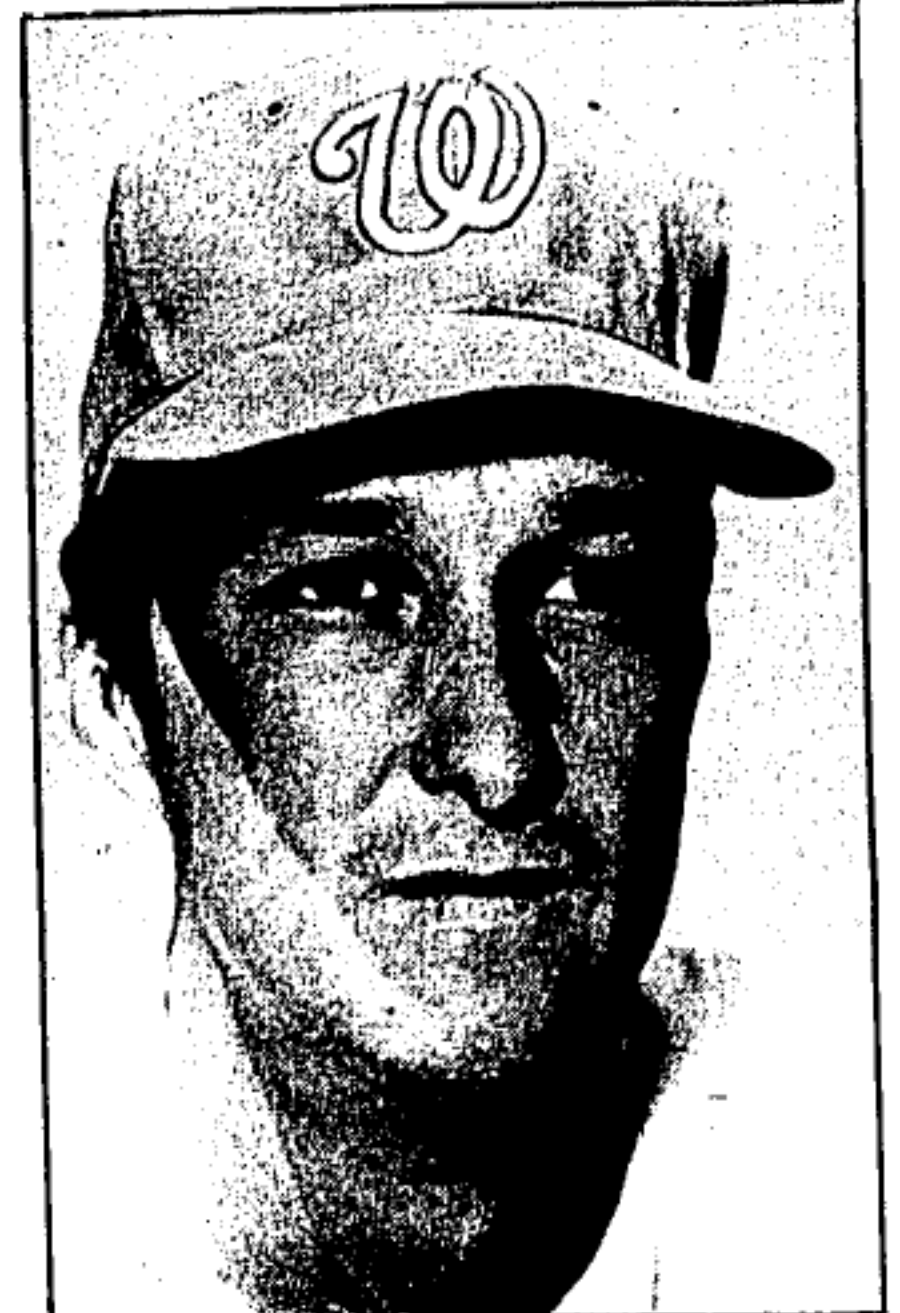
Freehan had a bone graft on the fifth vertebra on September 2 and, within three weeks, he was in the park walking with a heavy staff. Within five weeks, the cast was removed and Freehan was fitted with a brace. "The pain and numbness are gone," the catcher said.

Tiger Tales: Mickey Stanley has some potential as a base runner. Stanley tried to steal only 11

times last season and he made it all but once. . . . Detroit slipped to a 12-year low when Jim Northrup was the only Tiger to hit 20 home runs. Jim stopped at 24, one under his personal high. The Tigers had four in the 20 class four years in a row. . . . Joe Niekro showed he had the right touch by dropping down 15 bunts for team leadership, beating out Cesar Gutierrez by one. . . . Detroit had four rainouts, two at home and two on the road, but the Tigers didn't miss a game after May 18 for a stretch of more than four months.



Aurelio Rodriguez



Ed Brinkman