

Carter Winning Universal Acclaim For Canadian Progress Program

By IAN MacDONALD

MONTREAL—Gary Carter stands out as something special on an Expos team that has an interesting blend of unlimited potential and experienced winners.

For three years, Carter has been among that unlimited potential group, but there is a growing belief that, as the Expos become factors in the National League East, he has arrived.

"Right now," said Manager Dick Williams, "Carter is the best catcher in baseball."

"I don't want to jinx the man, but my coaches and I are certain that he is the best catcher that we have seen this season. Carter definitely has arrived."

There is one weakness to that unbridled appraisal. The Expos haven't played the Reds this season, so Williams and his coaches haven't seen a fella named Johnny Bench lately.

"BENCH HAS BEEN the best for a long period," Williams said. "But John and Gary are at different stages in their careers. Bench is still great, but he is slowing a bit. Gary is getting stronger and quicker and better."

The most remarkable improvements in Carter over the past 1½ years have been in his defensive play and his all-round maturity. An All-America type from his high school days in Fullerton, Calif., the "Kid" has been the best at every level. Now he appears about to enjoy that stature in the big leagues.

Carter has had alternately hot and cold seasons with the bat, but has improved steadily defensively since he was given the No. 1 job on a regular basis at the start of the '77 season. Make that since he won the top job during a head-to-head battle with Barry Foote in the spring of '77.

Between the '77 and '78 seasons, Williams hired an old friend, Norm Sherry, as a coach and made it quite clear that Sherry's top priority would be to work with Carter.

It is quite revealing to hear baseball people, managers and coaches, talk about the great improvement in Carter's play since the special tutoring began.

SAN DIEGO Manager Roger Craig suggested that Carter is "probably the most complete catcher around today. Sherry has done a giant job with him."

Pittsburgh Manager Chuck Tanner has said on a number of occasions that after Bench, Carter is the best catcher in the league. He was asked what Carter would have to do to draw higher compliments.

"What do you want?" Tanner asked incredulously. "You put him alongside Bench, say he's the best after Bench. That's the best there is."

"Carter has improved every year. He is the most improved catcher in the three years that I've been in the league. He's a hard worker."

"But nobody can tell me that anybody is a better defensive catcher than Bench."

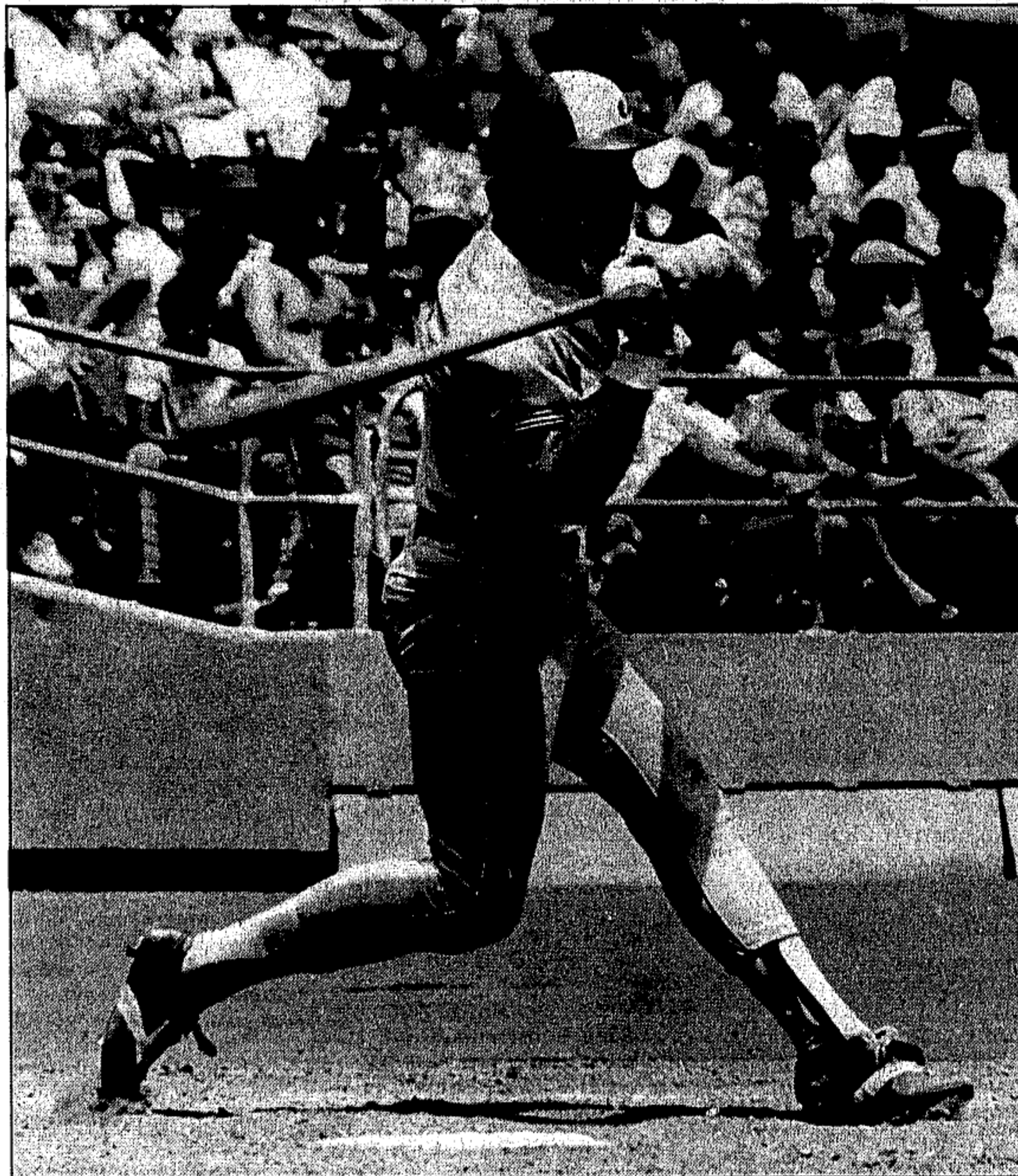
Carter won't, that's for sure.

"OF COURSE, I have my personal pride," said the 25-year-old Carter, who is in his fifth full major league season. "I'm pleased and proud to be compared with Bench and Pete Rose. I want to go out and do all those things on my own. I want someday for people to be compared with Gary Carter."

"You'll never catch me saying that I'm better than Bench. I want the Expos to win and I want to become the best in the league."

"I don't think," Williams suggested, "that people who don't see Carter on a regular basis realize how good he is defensively. He's been up there in the batting and the runs batted in and the homers, but people just don't realize he has also become one very fine catcher."

Williams runs down the categories in which catchers are judged—blocking errant pitches, calling the game, blocking the



Gary Carter . . . Feet On the Ground With Talent to Burn

plate, releasing the ball quickly and accurately from any position—and Dick said, "He does them all."

"HE'S DOING everything that a good catcher does and he's doing it consistently."

Carter doesn't see all the emphasis on the improvements that he has made as a catcher. He feels that this should be accepted as natural progression.

"Don't forget," Carter said, "that in my first full season, in '75, I was playing in the outfield as well. I had played just six games as a catcher in high school and had never played in the outfield."

"All the time that I was in the Expos' organization, I was a catcher. Now, I was in the big leagues and trying to learn outfield play."

Carter feels that stretch slowed his progress and that, once given the fulltime job, the improvement was natural.

Then what part has Sherry had in this development?

SAID CARTER, "Norm has helped a great deal in several respects. He notices things that I'm doing and tells me about them. He suggested that I turn my glove and he discusses certain calls that I might make in a game. He sometimes makes suggestions about how I can position myself in certain situations."

"He doesn't say, 'Hey, this is the way.' But he helps a lot by reminding me of things."

Carter talks about his work as two jobs. "I really feel that I've improved and that I've divided the two jobs. Catching is one job and hitting is another. I think maybe I've concentrated more than I ever thought I would on catching because I want to be the best back there."

"Mostly, though, it's the experience. This is my fourth year in a row as primarily a major league catcher and I will get better just because of the experience. I had caught seriously for only 2½ years before I was in the majors. There is a lot to learn."

"Anyway, when an athlete thinks that he has nothing new to learn, then he's going the other way in his career."

Carter is going up. He's into the second year of a five-year contract calling for something like \$1.5 million and, in the current value of talents, the Expos may want to renegotiate so as not to be embarrassed.

Pressed on his lofty appraisal of Carter, Williams said, "Let's put it this way. There isn't a catcher in baseball that I would even think of trading him for."

Really, that's pretty much the esteem with which the Expos have held Carter since scout Bob Zuk signed him in June '72. He reached the Expos in September '74 and, after hitting .407 in nine games, has been a fixture ever since.

CARTER WAS an outstanding scholar-athlete at Sunny Hills High School in Fullerton. He was captain of the school's baseball, basketball and football teams for two years.

In signing with the Expos, Carter turned down countless college offers, including a full scholarship at UCLA. Actually, a career in sports was always on his mind.

Even if Williams' evaluation of his prized talent is a bit elevated, there is little doubt that Carter will reach those heights very soon. Along the way to that lofty level, the talkative, gung-ho athlete has attracted other "tags."

Carter charges to first on a walk as

though he had been shot out of a cannon. He dives head first—often when there isn't even a play. He has a penchant for being in the right place when the cameras are clicking.

Those are some of the reasons that he has earned the "hot dog" tag, though there isn't too much of that when Carter is hitting well over .300 as he did through the first quarter of this season.

THEN CARTER is active in the Baseball Chapel program, leading weekly services along with shortstop Chris Speier.

Carter, absolutely devoted to his wife, high school sweetheart Sandy, and one-year-old Christina, can explain those "sides" to his life.

"I've always been that way," he said of the all-out approach to everything he does on the diamond. "Then, when I ran across

Carter charges to first on a walk as though he had been shot out of a cannon. He dives head first even when there isn't a play. He has a penchant for being in the right place when the cameras are clicking.

Mel Didier with the Cocoa Beach rookie league team in my first year as a pro, he told us that's the way he wanted us to act.

"He made us run to first base and run to our positions. As a matter of fact, if we didn't, we had to run after the games."

"I WAS determined to get to the big leagues in three years. If it took hustle to get there, then that's what I was going to do. I've just never changed."

About his religious association, Carter said, "We always went to church together as a family when I was young. Then my mother died when I was 12 years old. I couldn't understand."

"Going to church didn't seem the same after that because somebody wasn't with us and I couldn't understand. At this stage in my life, I devoted myself almost completely to sports. And everytime I succeeded and did something well, I felt that I was doing it for my mother."

"I never really went away from church, but it wasn't the same. Then in '73, I went to my first major league spring training camp and my roommate was John Boccabella."

"John was a catcher, too. He'd had major league experience and he taught me a lot. But the thing that stands out most about him, that has affected me more than anything else I've learned in baseball, was that John was a Christian. And he wasn't afraid to tell me about it."

"THROUGH JOHN, I learned what it really meant to be a Christian. I feel that the Man Upstairs has given me a lot and for that I'm very thankful. Hopefully, I can be in a position that kids might look up to me and see that all of them can find a direction in life."

Carter doesn't push his beliefs.

"I'm not real religious," Carter said. "Shoot, I have cocktails and I have fun. I don't downgrade anyone for what they do or how they act."

"Gary accepts suggestions and advice," Sherry said. "He doesn't just do what you suggest a couple of times and then go back to what he was doing. He remembers and he gets better."

Perhaps Carter's greatest understatement of all was when he said, "I think Dick Williams has confidence in me."

Just the greatest!

Orioles' Alexander Solves Own Dilemma on Mound

By JIM HENNEMAN

BALTIMORE—After almost five months of struggling along as a spot performer, Doyle Alexander finally has emerged from the shadows of the bullpen.

And, judging from the results, the Oriole righthander definitely has established the fact that he will be a starting pitcher—some-where—next season.

It has been a foregone conclusion since the 1975 season opened that Alexander, who was used as a fifth starter and long reliever, would be included in an off-season trade this winter. There appeared little hope that he could crack the Orioles' rotation, and with youngsters like Paul Mitchell, Mike Flanagan and Mike Willis working their way up through the minor league system, Alexander was clearly expendable.

SO MUCH SO, in fact, that the slender sinkerball artist had held out hopes he would be traded before the June 15 deadline. It didn't materialize, primarily because there wasn't an overwhelming amount of interest on the part of the 11 other teams in the American League.

That all has changed now. After recording his first shutout since 1972, a four-hitter against Detroit,

Alexander had won five of his last six decisions, four of them as a starter. In the process, he lowered his earned-run average to 2.93, second-ranked on a staff that was first in the league, thanks mainly to Jim Palmer.

Alexander's turnabout (he was 3-7 before the spell started) was so dramatic that he had worked his way up to the No. 3 position on the staff. Suddenly the guy who couldn't find a place in a four-man rotation was right in the middle of things as Manager Earl Weaver was mapping plans to go with only three starters down the stretch.

Alexander's only loss over this stretch was a 2-1 decision to Cleveland, when Rico Carty beat him with an eighth-inning homer. He had lost a couple of games in extra innings as a reliever earlier in the year on home runs, and had earned himself something of a reputation as a server of gopher balls.

IT PROBABLY comes as a shock to most observers, even those closest to the Orioles, but Alexander has given up fewer home runs per innings pitched (seven in 129 innings) than any member of the staff, including Palmer.

Because he hasn't pitched enough innings to qualify, Alexan-

der isn't listed, but his ERA would be good enough to rank in the top 10—no small feat for someone who has pitched on an irregular basis most of the year.

Not to be overlooked, either, is the fact that Alexander has performed at his best down the stretch, when the Orioles sorely needed someone to pick up the slack due to Ross Grimsley's disappointing season and the sudden ineffectiveness of Mike Cuellar, who experienced some shoulder problems.

Alexander has made no secret of his wish to be traded if he wasn't used as a starter, and he has had a few hassles over the subject with both Weaver and General Manager Frank Cashen. Weaver initially tried to convince Alexander that he could best be utilized out of the bullpen working the "short relief" role.

BUT THE righthander wanted no part of it. "If I was older," he said at the time, "I could understand it. But I'm still young enough to have a career as a starter and that's what I think I'm best suited for."

Alexander just has turned 25 and he has almost five years in the major leagues, giving him a desir-

able combination of youth and experience.

Even though his record was a not-too-inspiring 8-8, Alexander has laid the groundwork for a regular starting job in 1976.

And it wouldn't be totally surprising if, after looking around, the Orioles decided that he should take his turn every fourth day in Baltimore.

Even if they go through with plans to trade him, the Orioles have to be pleased, knowing that the market value has risen considerably.

Bird Seed: Palmer lost his second 2-0 decision in three starts when he was outdueled by Luis Tiant September 16. Home runs by Rico Petrocelli and Carlton Fisk left the Orioles all but dead in the American League's East Division race. . . . Ken Singleton, the club's most consistent hitter all year, tied a club record by drawing his 109th walk in Detroit September 14th. The switch-hitting outfielder leads the league in walks, but is only four ahead of teammate Bobby Grich. . . . The Orioles lead the American League in pitching and fielding, but are ninth in runs scored—and second in leaving runners on base. . . . The club needed



Doyle Alexander

to average about 7,500 fans for each of the last six home dates to reach the million mark.

Expos Carter, Parrish Stage Own Rookie Race

By BOB DUNN

MONTREAL—While it certainly isn't a comparison of the Fred Lynn-Jim Rice magnitude, the Expos have a rookie race of their own.

The names, alphabetically, are **Gary Carter** and Larry Parrish.

Both are considered contenders for National League Rookie of the Year honors, but the first title to be established is Expos' rookie of the year. The most popular opinion is both of them, and all of a sudden everybody's a fence-sitter.

In the league race, they run as an Expo entry against San Francisco's John Montefusco and Philadelphia's Tom Underwood. At home, they are almost statistically inseparable.

FOR EXAMPLE, with 11 games to play, they looked like this:
Average—Parrish .276, **Carter** .271.

Home runs—**Carter** 16, Parrish 9.
Extra-base hits—Parrish 42, **Carter** 34.

Runs—**Carter** 50, Parrish 46.
Runs batted in—**Carter** 63, Parrish 62.

Doubles—Parrish 29, **Carter** 17.
Triples—Parrish 4, **Carter** 1.
Winning RBIs—**Carter** 11, Parrish 7.

Winning runs scored—Carter 6,

Parrish 3.

Walks—**Carter** 67, Parrish 24.
Strikeouts—Parrish 65, **Carter** 76.

On-base average—**Carter** .366, Parrish .316.

Percentage of games in which player hit safely—Parrish 64.9, **Carter** 61.6.

Highest average (after 100th at-bat of season)—**Carter** .303, Parrish .300.

Lowest average (after 100th at-bat)—Parrish .261, **Carter** .241.

RBI ratio—**Carter**, one every 7.3 at-bats; Parrish, one every 7.9.

Average with runners in scoring position—Parrish .262, **Carter** .242.

Average with runners in scoring position, two out—Parrish .280, **Carter** .183.

With one out—**Carter** .340, Parrish .267.

With none out—Parrish .190, **Carter** .167.

IT'S THE first time the Expos have had two strong candidates for rookie recognition.

"If you'd have told me at the start of the season that Larry Parrish would do what he's done, or that **Gary Carter** would do what he's done, or Pepe Mangual, or Pete Mackanin," said Manager Gene Mauch, "I'd have been

thrilled to death."

It is Mauch's endorsement of Phase Two, the youth movement that the Expos have suffered through in 1975. While he mentions all his young players, as is his style, the first two on any objective lips are always **Carter** and Parrish, or vice-versa.

When it comes to a vote between the two, on whatever scale, **Carter** often is given two big advantages. One is that he has been better than Parrish defensively, while having fewer chances. **Carter** has made nine errors, four catching and five in the outfield, and was ranked in the lower half of both league categories the last time THE SPORTING NEWS published defensive statistics.

Parrish, meanwhile, has made a club-record 35 errors at third base, a total that is misleading because he usually makes all the tough plays and boots the ball on easier chances, yet a total that has made the year a disappointment for him defensively. He was last among N. L. third basemen.

THE OTHER advantage **Carter** has is that he has been mentioned as a possible league Rookie of the Year before opening day and, subsequently, was more apt to be writ-

ten up in newspapers around the league. While Parrish is not the type to spend much time discussing rookie award possibilities, **Carter** is.

After hitting his 16th homer, and first in more than a month, in St. Louis one night, **Carter** talked about the partially torn ligament in his left knee. "If it was midseason, I probably would try and wait until it's completely healed. But there are only a few games left, and there are some things on the line, too. . . . the rookie thing—it's just there. Also the opportunity to catch."

The advantage that Parrish has is that he has been the more consistent player. For the last two months, his average stayed between .270 and .290. While **Carter** has had three nights of four RBIs, Parrish has had one.

Usually, in Parrish's case, it's somebody else who says more than yes and no about questions that pertain to his status as an outstanding rookie.

"Isn't it about time," asked catcher Barry Foote, one night in August, "that somebody mentioned Larry Parrish as a possible rookie winner?"

Since then, many have. And

since then, Parrish and **Carter** have been co-contenders.

Exposures: When lefty Dan Warthen beat the Cardinals, 6-3, for his eighth victory, it was his first complete-game win of the year, yet Warthen has averaged better than seven innings over 16 starts. . . . Foote was scheduled to have surgery on the torn cartilage in his knee, September 22 in Goldsboro, N. C. . . . Outfielder Mangual was only three strikeouts away from Bob Bailey's club record of 112. . . . Righthander Don DeMola's longest relief stint of the season ended unhappily when he walked batters back-to-back to force in the winning run in the 18th inning of a 4-3 loss to the Mets. The 18th was DeMola's sixth inning of relief, and the five others were scoreless.

Shortstop Tim Foli was suspended for three games and fined \$250 after continuing an argument with the umpiring crew at Pittsburgh in the runway to the dressing rooms following the game. Foli had been ejected by second-base ump Paul Runge for arguing a call in the sixth inning. . . . Mauch missed two games in the Pittsburgh series with heavy chest congestion and sat in the dugout in street clothes for the third game.

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Expos' New Power Plant--Backstop **Carter**

By IAN MacDONALD

MONTREAL—It would be a gross understatement to say that the Expos' **Gary Carter** is off to a fast start in power production.

The 23-year-old Californian, who has been destined for greatness ever since his star-studded, 11-letter career at Sunny Hills (Calif.) High School, had hit seven home runs by May 1. Last year, he hit six all season.

Five of those seven came in two games. While **Gary** undoubtedly will remember longest his April 20 salvo when he belted three at the Olympic Stadium in Montreal, his present tutor saw something special about the May afternoon when he hit two at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles.

The slender crowd of 12,067 paid at the Olympic Stadium gave **Gary** a standing ovation as he placed three well-hit shots over the fence in left and left-center field. Even with numerous members of his own and wife Sandy's families on hand in Dodger Stadium, the noise from the 35,353 was hardly deafening.

IF EXPOS' hitting coach Mickey Vernon wasn't openly cheering when **Carter** hit his second homer, merely ninth-inning glossing to a 6-2 victory, he certainly was pleased.

Here were the circumstances: word had spread that **Carter** was swinging for the fences after his Expos' record outburst on April 20. Indeed, the young man fell victim to something which plagues many hitters after such an outburst. He was guilty of over-swinging and went 0-for-14.

NOW IN Los Angeles, **Carter** was snapping out of these woes. He doubled on his last trip during the first game of a weekend series. He singled three times in the second game. Then he homered against Don Sutton in his second appearance on Sunday, April 29.

The next time up, Elias Sosa decked **Carter** with a head-high inside pitch. **Carter** then popped up.

In the ninth, Mike Garman dropped **Carter** again. This time, **Gary** stayed right in there and whacked the next pitch into the bleachers—just foul. One pitch later, he found the range and that was the stroke that tickled Vernon.

"**Carter** didn't make a fuss about being knocked down," pointed out Vernon, two-time American League batting champion. "He stayed right in there and attended to his business. That he hit the home run was fine, but that he didn't lose his composure was even more important."

"THAT'S THE sign of a mature hitter. Word like that gets around. Soon other teams figure there's no sense in throwing at him if it isn't going to rattle him."

The way Vernon sees it, the fact that **Carter** stayed cool under the head-hunting pressure of those Dodger pitchers May 1 will prove very important for the young man this season and maybe throughout his career.

Carter can't be blamed, though, for thinking fondly of that afternoon when he took Pirates' lefthander Jim Rooker downtown three times. What happened, in fact, was that **Carter** almost entered baseball's record books when he narrowly missed out on a chance to

join the 10 major leaguers who have hit four home runs in one game.

Actually, the ball he hit on his fourth at-bat didn't get past Bucs' third baseman Phil Garner, but to hear those closest to the action tell it, that ball was tagged well.

THE STANDING ovation which greeted his third blast became a deafening roar as the

vibrant **Carter** galloped around the bases, leaping every third stride or so, clapping his hands, waving his helmet to the fans and just plain enjoying himself every second amid the thunderous applause given him.

As his teammates greeted and pummeled him in front of the Expos' dugout, **Carter** stepped back waving his helmet again and again with the fans responding.

The crowd quieted, but now **Carter** was out of the dugout again waving, gesticulating and smiling broadly.

This appeared to be a little much for many fans, since the Expos were losing the game, 8-4, after this seventh-inning clout. But nobody seriously denied the flamboyant **Carter** his moments in the sun. Later, **Carter** revealed that he stepped out the last time at the request of photographers.

"I'm very thrilled about it," **Carter** was to say later. "It makes me thankful for a lot of things. It's probably not going to come back for a long time."

"I'M GOING to dwell on it. It's always great to have a game like this. It seems like a dream come true. But then—it's a dream just being here."

On his last trip to the plate, Pirates' Manager Chuck Tanner switched from lefty reliever Grant Jackson to sidarm righty Kent Tekulve. The pitching change afforded the fans the opportunity to give **Carter** two more standing ovations.

"To hear those fans cheering me was just great," **Carter** said. "You can't believe what a tremendous lift it is to a fellow to hear the fans cheer for him like that. If fans would treat players like that regularly when they went to the plate, you'd find a lot of guys hitting .500."

The Pirates led, 8-6, after Tony Perez' two-run homer. **Carter** represented the tying run, since Larry Parrish was on with a single. **Carter** responded by lining the ball wickedly to third base.

"HE REALLY hit that one on the schnozzola," was the way Expos' Manager Dick Williams described the fourth try. "If he gets that ball up a little, it's outta here."

"There were no cheap

ones," was the way Tanner saw it. "They were all cannons."

"On the one he hit at third in the eighth inning, I don't know how Garner made the play. There aren't many third basemen who are going to come up with the ball. If he had been able to get it up in the air, he would have had four."

Garner thought that **Carter's** fourth stroke, the one on which he made the catch, was the hardest hit of the day. "I was lucky to make the grab."

ONE MAN WHO didn't deny **Carter** his "hamming it up" for the fans and photographers was fellow Californian Ellis Valentine who, like **Gary**, was off to a surprising start so far as power is concerned.

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Twins May Deal to Cut Free-Agent Toll

By BOB FOWLER

TWIN CITIES—It happened to the Twins a year ago. Then it happened again last October.

And it's happening again. The names have changed, but the issues are the same... namely to allow players to become free agents, or to deal them before the June 15 deadline.

Last year, the names were Bert Blyleven, Bill Campbell and Steve Braun.

This season they are Lyman Bostock, Larry Hisle and Dave Goltz, Tom Burgmeier, Ron Schueler and Jerry Terrell.

PERHAPS YOU'LL recall a year ago when Blyleven was unsigned and vowing to become a free agent at season's end. But Calvin Griffith on June 1 traded him to Texas for shortstop Roy Smalley, third baseman Mike Cubble, pitchers Bill Singer and Jim Gideon and \$250,000.

When the season ended, Braun also was without a contract and was a free agent. But he signed a unique deal, including a clause that would guarantee his exposure for all five rounds of the expansion draft.

He was claimed by Seattle while Steve Brye, who signed a similar contract, was unclaimed. Eventually, he was sold to Milwaukee.

Campbell also became a free agent and signed a million-dollar contract with Boston.

NOW GRIFFITH, i.e. Minnesota, is back to square one.

Bostock and Hisle, two of the top hitters, are unsigned and will become free agents at season's end. You can say the same for pitchers Goltz, Burgmeier and Schueler and utilityman Terrell.

Griffith and Manager Gene Mauch, then, must decide before June 15 which players they want to sign and which players they believe they can sign before the campaign ends.

They also must determine which players, if any, they should trade a la Blyleven in 1976.

Of the six, it appears the Twins will have the most difficulty signing Bostock. Indeed, Griffith admits having made trade offers involving the center fielder.

"BUT IT'S embarrassing to tell what players are being offered in return," he said.

Perhaps. But that doesn't alter

the Twins' situation.

Minnesota officials can't expect to lose six players as free agents at the end of this season, get no players in return, and expect to remain a viable franchise.

"I think we'll sign four and probably five of those players before they become free agents," one club official said. "We're not that far apart with them in our continuing negotiations."

But that isn't the case with Bostock.

AS A ROOKIE in 1975, he proved to be an excellent defensive outfielder and an above-average hitter, posting a .282 average in 98 games with 29 RBIs.

Last year, he hit .323 with four homers and 60 RBIs.

And before this season began, he sought a multi-year contract for a substantial amount of money.

No one will say what salary figure Bostock is seeking, but rumors range up to \$1 million spread over a four-year span.

Whatever, Twins' officials say they are far apart in their salary negotiations and aren't optimistic about signing Bostock.

"I guess the best thing for us to

do is play him the entire season, hope we win a pennant and wish him well after that," Griffith said.

Bostock's agent, Abdul Jilil, agrees the Twins aren't close to signing their center fielder.

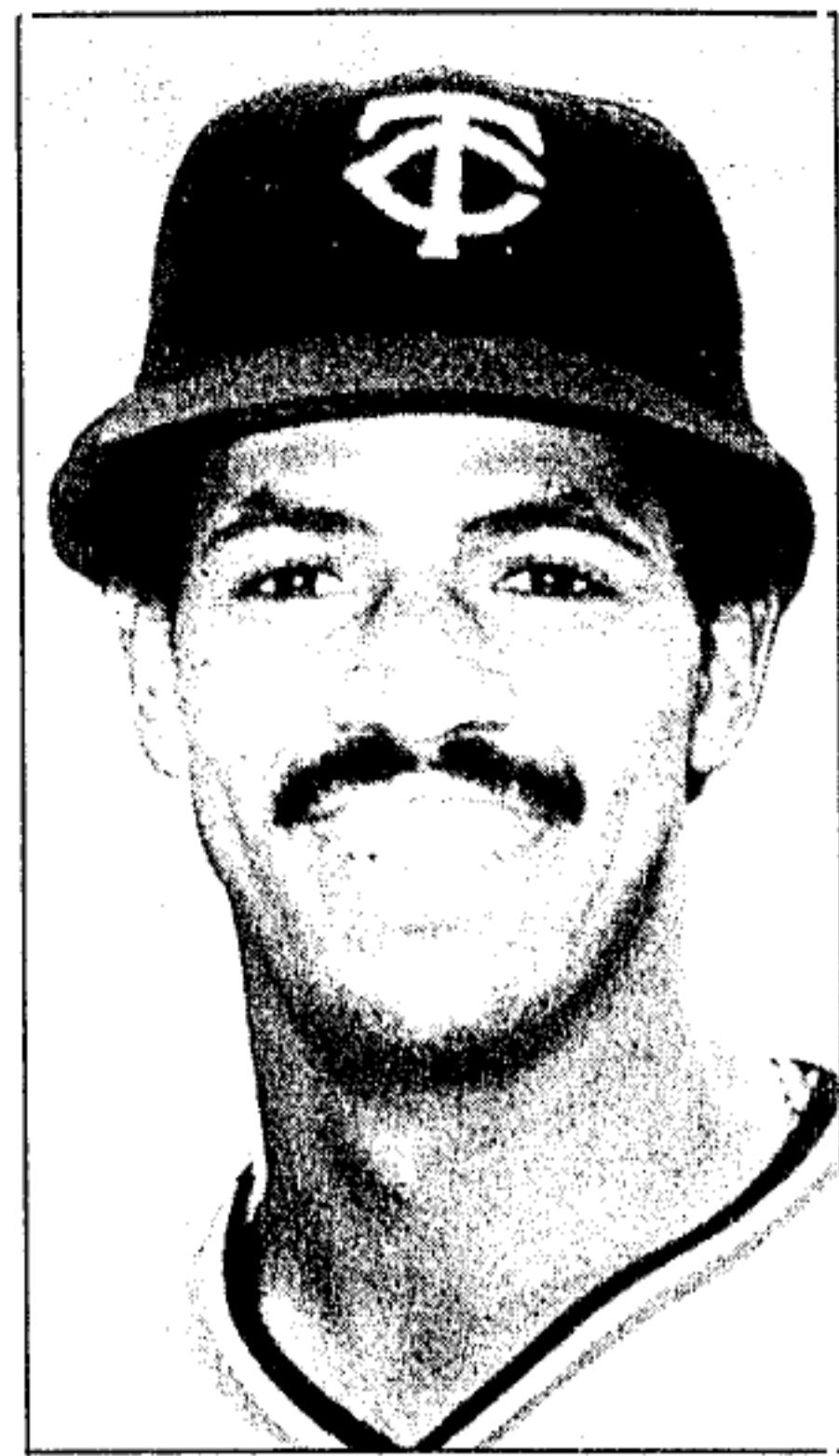
"IF THEY submit another offer, we'll be happy to discuss it," he said. "But, based on their most recent offer, I'd say that Lyman will become a free agent who will test his value in the open market. Unless, of course, he is traded and that team comes up with a new offer."

When this season started, Twins' officials said they didn't believe Bostock was worth the money he was asking. They said he had played only for two years and hadn't proved himself.

But each day this season, Bostock proves that he is an outstanding player.

After 24 games, he had a .313 batting average. In addition, he ranked second in homers on the club with three and second in RBIs with 17.

WHICH PLAYER did Mauch usually have hitting behind Rod Carew in the No. 4, or cleanup, position? Lyman Bostock.



Lyman Bostock

Thus, if Griffith doesn't trade Bostock as he did Blyleven, or sign him, it appears he'll lose more than a player.

He'll lose a 26-year-old potential All-Star. Maybe a super star.

For sure he'll be losing a valuable member of his team and a gate attraction.

Astro Belter Cedeno Battling to End Worst Slump

By HARRY SHATTUCK

HOUSTON—Cesar Cedeno, asked if he was experiencing the worst slump of his major league career, quickly responded: "slump? I'm not in any slump."

Then the Astros' All-Star center fielder was silent for a few seconds, began to smile and said, "Well, I guess I am in a slump. What was I, 0-for-April?"

Not quite. Six-for-April to be exact. Six hits in 48 at-bats, a .125 average. Three singles, three doubles. Two runs batted in.

"I CAN'T EVEN hit the ball good in batting practice," Cedeno admitted as May began. "I'm just not swinging good at all. I don't even feel right."

"I've never had this kind of start before. But I've never had this kind of injury before, either. I only played about four games in spring training. Missing all that time hurt."

Cedeno tore finger ligaments ducking a pitch thrown by a machine at Cocoa, Fla. He wasn't with the Astros the last two weeks of the exhibition season and he missed the first six regular-season games.

"My hand still is too stiff in the

EXPOS

(Continued From Page 14)

"Hey, it's a thrill when you hit a ball like he did four times that day," Valentine said. "He really mashed that last one. That's what excitement is all about—hitting the ball like that. You better be happy when you do that because that's the fun of playing the game."

Expos: The Expos made four errors and permitted five unearned runs when they lost the second game at Los Angeles and blew their chance of winning the series. . . . Valentine missed a few games with a bruised knee and it was during this period that 32-year-old Del Unser got a chance to play and drove in four runs, three with a game-winning homer.

cold weather," Cedeno said. And everywhere the Astros traveled it was cold.

CEDENO WAS working hard, running laps before games and taking batting practice after games.

And Cedeno was not letting his hitting woes affect his superb defense.

"Hitting and fielding are two entirely different parts of the game," Cedeno said. "Maybe some players let their defense go bad if they don't hit. I won't go the whole year swinging like this."

There is little chance in that. Cedeno's seven-year major league average is .294.

He has been so good for so long that Manager Bill Virdon, realizing Cedeno's value, never once benched his center fielder, not even during the darkest days of his slump.

"HAVING MISSED all that time, he needs to play," said Virdon, who kept Cedeno in the No. 3 lineup spot except for a couple of times when he made him a leadoff hitter.

Rookie infielder Julio Gonzalez and catcher Joe Ferguson were the only Astro starters delivering regularly at the plate. Gonzalez had five straight multi-hit games to raise his average above .350. Ferguson was driving in the game-winning run in about half of Houston's victories.

Cliff Johnson was producing, too, with four homers, seven RBIs and a .326 average in April. But Virdon was starting Johnson only about half the time in left field.

Willie Crawford, Johnson's alternate, and first baseman Bob Watson, Houston's best clutch hitter for years, both were batting under .250. Jose Cruz was below .270. And the other regulars, short-

stop Roger Metzger and third baseman Enos Cabell, were out with injuries (their replacements went 0-for-25 at one stretch).

ALL THIS contributed to four shutouts in Houston's first 22 games. It led Virdon to call an hour-long post-game batting practice after a whitewash at Chicago.

Virdon said the session was not required. But only three or four regulars (the men who were hitting) bypassed it.

Cedeno had requested extra hitting in an effort to find the missing groove.

"I've been swinging at bad pitches, and I just haven't been making good contact," Cedeno said.

"The biggest factor is his anxiety," hitting instructor Deacon Jones said. "He is swinging at bad pitches, especially when he is ahead on the count. And he's letting his body get in the way of his

swinging. His hands are lagging.

"THE BIGGEST problem for most hitters in a slump is that they want to come out of it with four or five hits in one game, so they press and the situation gets worse. The best way is to do it gradually, to try to make contact. Patience, that's the key.

"Even the greatest players lose their confidence at times," Jones said. "Cesar won't admit it; he won't show it. He has a lot of pride. But consider what he's going through. He is a good hitter and this probably is his worst slump. That would bother anybody."

But Cedeno, like the other slumping Astros, kept plugging away. He didn't get a hit May 1 at Pittsburgh but he drove in two of his team's three runs on a sacrifice fly and an infield grounder.

Then the next day he had his (Continued on Page 20, Column 3)

Torrid Bat Stamps Fisk as Bosox Comeback King

By LARRY WHITESIDE

BOSTON—Carlton Fisk broke into a smile when a writer called him a bona fide POW. Player of the Week was what the writer had in mind.

"Prisoner of War is what it should say," countered Fisk. "I have one good week and think I'm coming along. Then I play a game and commit three errors. It's crazy."

Well, it may sound that way to the Red Sox catcher, who in his way is a perfectionist. But not to Manager Don Zimmer, who quickly excused the night that Fisk picked up three errors, including two on rarely called catcher interference.

IN ONE WEEK, Fisk put on the kind of offensive display that before the Yankees' Thurman Munson came along made Fisk automatic All-Star material. In seven games, he batted .531 (17-for-32) with four home runs and 11 runs batted in. And his homers were

not Fenway Park cheapies.

One, in Milwaukee, tied a game the Red Sox won. The next one was a three-run shot that beat Oakland. The next night he followed with a two-run blast off Vida Blue and a three-run shot later in the game to assure the victory.

Yes, Fisk is looking more and more like his old self. Even better, if you can believe the people who watch him every day. At this writing, he was third in the American League in slugging (.629) and batting a robust .386.

"RIGHT NOW," said Zimmer, "he's swinging as good a bat as anyone in our league. And I don't think you could ask more of any catcher defensively."

Fisk has his own reasons for success, which deal directly with the fact that he has a healthy pair of legs for the first time in a couple of years, and that he is seeing the ball better.

"I'm more relaxed," said Fisk, "than I was at this time last year. And for the first time in two years, my left knee, the one which was

operated on in 1975, is strong and I'm doing things in what I consider the correct way.

"Everybody knows that last year there were so many extra things going on. The contracts, etc. It was hard to keep your mind on your job. But the big thing, especially defensively, was that my knee wasn't strong, and it didn't allow me to throw properly or even swing the bat the way I wanted.

"NOW THAT it's healthy, I can make strong throws. I can plant myself and release the ball properly instead of winging it. I don't think a day went by last season when there wasn't some pain present. It's not there this year."

Somehow, this translates into better hitting for Fisk, too.

"Well, let's say that I'm no longer flying out at pitches," he said. "I'm waiting and being more patient. Before, my best shots were line-drive fouls.

"Another thing now is that I'm seeing the ball better. It doesn't even have to be a strike now. If you can see it, and get a good swing,

you'll get your share of hits."

PART OF HIS success, said Fisk, will depend upon his surrounding cast, which he likes very much.

"We no longer depend upon just one or two guys," said Fisk. "We have seven or eight people capable of hitting the ball out of the park. They're more relaxed this year, too, and I think it'll show once we get rolling."

Sox Yarns: Bill Lee finally worked his way back into the starting rotation, but at the expense of Rick Wise. . . . Rick Burleson ran off a 13-game hitting streak, longest in the American League, and was hitting a solid .352.

Rick Miller was hit by a pitch and wound up on the 15-day disabled list, which worked out just about right since Fred Lynn, the man he replaced in center field, was just about to come back after recovering from torn ligaments in his left ankle that had sidelined him all season. . . . Fergie Jenkins, 1-4 at this time a year ago, was off to a 4-1 start.

international league

BATTING and PITCHING RECORDS

Compiled by Ed Williams

Club	G.	AB.	R.	H.	HR.	RBI.	Pct.
Rochester	104	3352	491	872	64	445	.260
Memphis	111	3478	491	893	78	454	.257
Toledo	114	3582	451	906	65	413	.253
Pawtucket	112	3526	430	866	89	388	.246
Richmond	107	3320	473	810	78	423	.244
Charleston	110	3449	413	836	79	377	.242
Syracuse	113	3544	441	838	63	392	.236
Tidewater	111	3464	363	803	48	322	.232

Player-Club	AB.	H.	HR.	RBI.	Pct.
Cox, Memphis, 2b	19	8	0	6	.421
Rice, Paw, of	395	135	25	91	.342
Down, Mem, 1b-of	196	64	8	41	.327
Andrews, Roch, 2b	377	121	1	41	.321
Coletta, Tol-Paw, of	156	48	3	15	.308
Shopay, Roch, of	255	78	6	29	.306
Nordbrook, Roch, ss	232	70	0	26	.302
Lynn, Paw, of	322	97	16	58	.301
Dillard, Paw, ss	206	62	0	10	.301
Stillman, Roch, of	266	79	5	37	.297
Jerry Martin, Tol, of	389	115	6	53	.296
Mangual, Mem, of	358	103	13	46	.288
Staiger, Roch, 3b	357	102	2	33	.286
Watts, Roch-Rich, of	168	48	4	33	.286
Joe Martin, Rich, c	7	2	0	1	.286
Motton, Roch, of	197	56	8	40	.284
Santana, Tol, 3b	218	62	4	25	.284
Essian, Tol, 1b-c	166	47	5	23	.283
Flowers, Char, of	416	117	5	30	.281
J. Stearns, Tol, c	167	47	2	18	.281
Nordhagen, Rich, of	264	74	12	58	.280
Gallagher, Roch, 1b-of	156	43	2	24	.276
Beall, Rich, 1b	339	93	6	43	.274
Jackson, Rich, 3b	238	65	0	20	.273
Scanlon, Mem, 3b	232	63	12	47	.272
Carter, Mem, c	363	98	18	70	.270
Croswell, Tide, ss	270	73	1	24	.270
Fiore, Koch, 1b	260	70	13	52	.269
Campanis, Char, 1b	348	93	15	60	.267
DeCinces, Roch, 3b	92	84	7	50	.267
Krizmanich, Syr, of	29	25	1	9	.266
Puig, Tide, 2b	46	30	2	11	.265
Blanks, Rich, ss	104	96	11	39	.262
Monzon, Mem, ss	72	62	2	17	.262
Ott, Char, of	91	82	10	39	.261
Garcia, Tol, of	81	57	3	10	.260
C. Brown, Mem, of	90	63	4	28	.256
Deidel, Syr, c	72	63	2	38	.256
Silicato, Tol, 3b-2b	99	83	3	25	.255
Anderson, Tide, 2b	41	37	2	9	.255
Whitfield, Syr, of	110	99	16	53	.254
Mashore, Mem, of	95	75	12	46	.254
Bennett, Syr, 1b	70	52	1	19	.254
Foreman, Rich, of	96	83	7	54	.253
LaRussa, Char, 2b	106	89	7	28	.252
Gilbreath, Rich, 2b	107	87	3	29	.250
O. Brown, Rich, of	87	49	2	17	.249
Fuller, Rich, of	89	65	8	38	.248
Kazmarek, Tide, of	58	34	5	23	.248
Coleman, Paw, util	99	78	9	37	.247
Stanley, Syr, ss	49	38	1	18	.247
Prince, Syr, inf	64	52	2	28	.245
Boisclair, Tide, of	87	58	3	26	.243
Kenney, Syr, 3b-of	96	71	0	11	.240
Hampton, Tide, c	89	66	5	24	.240
Matchick, Char, 3b	74	48	1	22	.240
Cummings, Paw, of	72	53	0	6	.239
Erickson, Paw, c	85	60	4	22	.238
Jorg, Toledo, 1b	103	79	6	40	.237
Hallums, Tide, 1b	86	68	1	21	.236
Reinbach, Roch, of	23	17	1	11	.236
L. Howard, Rich, c	95	56	9	44	.235
Augustine, Char, 3b	60	46	6	23	.235
Gallagher, Rich, 3b	82	52	4	29	.234
Bailor, Roch, ss	66	54	1	19	.234
R. Clark, Tol, ss	93	64	5	33	.233
Didier, Paw, c	60	35	2	10	.233
Sanders, Syr, 1b	50	37	2	27	.233
Wissel, Tol, of	77	49	5	32	.232
Kelly, Mem, 3b-2b	88	49	1	18	.231
Stitzel, Toledo, 3b	4	3	0	0	.231
Navarrette, Mem, 2b	95	59	0	17	.230
Bladt, Syr, of	103	79	7	31	.226
Koegel, Char, c	81	61	14	36	.223
White, Mem, of	51	24	2	9	.222
Goggin, Paw, 2b	107	86	14	48	.221
Torchia, Paw, of	40	16	1	8	.219
Hutto, Roch, c	86	64	12	38	.215
Kennedy, Paw, 3b	37	25	3	12	.214
Frazier, Syr, 2b	98	68	1	33	.211
Ayala, Tide, of	79	59	9	30	.210
Koritko, Paw, 3b	72	34	4	8	.207
Rogodzinski, Tol, of	53	39	7	24	.207
Thomas, Char, of	32	23	2	16	.207
Hovley, Roch, of	49	26	3	18	.203
B. Stearns, Syr, c	64	35	2	14	.201
Klobas, Tol, 2b	57	31	1	17	.201
Gonzalez, Syr, 3b	8	5	0	2	.200
Hernandez, Char, ss	92	54	4	25	.197
Lyttle, Tide, of	61	35	1	13	.197
McDonald, Tide, 1b	52	27	5	29	.194
Nolan, Tide, c	37	18	3	8	.191
Bushman, Char, of	60	25	0	7	.189
Schneck, Tide, of	9	5	0	0	.185
Hickey, Roch, c	39	19	1	12	.181
Humphrey, Mem, c	16	8	0	3	.163

Pitcher-Club	G.	W.	L.	IP.	SO.	ERA.
Minshall, Char	5	1	0	9	11	0.00
McDonald, Tide	2	0	0	3	1	0.00
Scott, Roch	42	6	2	69	43	1.17
Tekulve, Char	28	3	1	42	22	1.51
Willis, Roch	15	9	1	105	53	2.06
Gebhard, Mem	36	6	5	74	73	2.08
Lang, Memphis	11	5	4	69	44	2.10
Culver, Toledo	7	3	2	53	59	2.36
Jimenez, Char	22	5	7	118	56	2.45
Snook, Syracuse	17	6	4	75	55	2.52
Newhauser, Paw	17	1	3	28	32	2.60
Miller, Roch	22	11	2	148	100	2.74
Wallace, Tol	38	3	4	49	28	2.74
Gura, Syracuse	6	6	7	111	92	2.75
Newson, Rich	11	2	0	16	10	2.76
Swan, Tidewater	3	1	0	19	10	2.84
Snyder, Roch	15	6	3	56	30	2.89
Jaster, Rich	8	0	0	9	3	2.89
Cram, Tidewater	36	4	6	71	54	2.90
Easterly, Rich	20	6	5	99	60	2.91
Sawyer, Syr	20	8	5	137	112	2.95
Krueger, Paw	31	5	5	112	83	2.97
Brandon, Toledo	37	7	9	79	69	3.09
Kirkpatrick, Roch	19	7	7	107	59	3.10
Lersch, Rich	28	10	4	121	73	3.19
McGregor, Syr	22	12	6	160	98	3.27
Christenson, Tol	25	10	9	162	131	3.28
Clemons, Paw	35	5	3	48	32	3.40
McKee, Char	19	9	10	126	67	3.44
Sadowski, Char	21	3	9	70	68	3.45
T. Moore, Tide	21	4	11	127	114	3.48
Manderbach, Tide	29	3	5	85	47	3.49
Evenhuis, Syr	26	3	0	51	39	3.51
LeFevre, Mem	26	3	3	68	52	3.57
Gowell, Syr	22	7	5	106	77	3.58
Pole, Paw	10	2	6	52	48	3.61
Sterling, Tide	22	9	9	148	61	3.66
Webb, Tide	22	8	7	130	109	3.67
Warthen, Mem	8	4	0	49	41	3.67
Zachary, Tol	21	8	8	120	92	3.68
Torrealba, Rich	36	2	7	80	67	3.71
Martinez, Syr	36	7	5	64	70	3.78
Enyart, Mem	37	5	3	50	55	3.81
Thomason, Tol	24	5	12	142	91	3.86
Simpson, Char	20	8	7	123	78	3.87
Sekel, Roch	21	2	4	40	37	4.02
Caskey, Mem	23	10	8	127	90	4.04
Closter, Rich	25	4	10	113	85	4.06
Kouns, Paw	20	8	7	129	55	4.13
Wegener, Tide	24	3	3	69	46	4.19
Abraham, Mem	21	5	3	90	72	4.30
Burton, Paw	19	4	11	109	109	4.31
Kirby, Tide	28	2	2	54	44	4.64
Bair, Char	20	5	12	136	89	4.05
Stewart, Tide	15	2	4	47	31	4.79
Timmerman, Tol	12	1	3	43	19	4.98
McCall, Roch	7	2	2	38	25	5.02
Cheadle, Rich	18	2	8	79	51	5.22
Bomback, Paw	24	10	10	142	89	5.25
Hambright, Syr	25	1	5	41	25	5.27
Diorio, Toledo	15	1	0	29	11	5.28
Sbragia, Paw	42	2	4	65	48	5.40
Babcock, Roch	1	0	1	2	2	5.40
Gill, Memphis	10	1	0	10	6	5.59
Neibauer, Rich	32	6	3	75	32	5.64
McQueen, Rich	6	0	0	8	4	7.88
Blass, Char	16	2	7	61	26	9.30

Christenson Aids Hens In First Relief Effort

TOLEDO—After 24 appearances as a starting pitcher, righthander Larry Christenson of Toledo made his first relief role a success August 8 when he pitched three scoreless innings in a 6-5, 13-inning victory over Memphis.

Christenson was the 17th player used by Toledo Manager Jim Bunning, who turned to his starter because of a player shortage due to injuries and illness.

Two days earlier, Christenson had gone nine innings in a 7-4 loss to Charleston, and when summoned by Bunning he admitted: "I didn't know if he wanted me to pinch run or what."

"But when I got into the game I felt great because it was cool and I always feel strong later in the evening," added the 20-year-old Christenson.

After walking losing pitcher Bob Gebhard to start the 11th inning, Christenson, who had a 1-4 record with Philadelphia in 1973, retired the next nine batters. He struck out four and did not allow a hit to gain his 10th victory against nine losses.

The Mud Hens won the game on a two-out single by Tom Silicato in the 13th. Christenson was called up by the Phils August 19.



Larry Christenson

20-Year-Old Carter Sparks Memphis as Backstop Belter

By BILL E. BURK

MEMPHIS—Gary Carter knows his major drawback in baseball is Gary Carter. It's a fault he is working on and as soon as he conquers it, look out big leagues.

The 20-year-old rookie catcher for the Memphis Blues wants to be in the bigs by the time he turns 21 on April 8, 1975. As a result, he sometimes puts pressure on himself and his batting average suffers.

"I want to play well because the only place to play is in the big leagues," said Carter, who by August 11 was leading the Blues with 18 home runs and 70 runs batted in.

Carter's batting average, however, is not a steady figure. He went on one recent tear and pushed it up to .295, but as the season entered its last full month, the youngster from Fullerton, Calif., was hitting .261.

"GENE MAUCH (Montreal manager) told me in spring training if I can do the job catching, the hitting will take care of itself," said Carter.

Injuries Ruin Soph Season for Expos' Carter

By BOB DUNN

MONTREAL—Since Gary Carter's first season, and maybe before that, it has been clear that the Expos' mental giants consider him their most untouchable player. Now, with his second season painful history, Carter is a candidate for being the Expos' least indestructible player. He seems like he'd break a leg crossing his knees.

The cliché is "injury prone."

The situation with Carter has reached the point where the Expos would like to make him bionic. It may be the only way he can be saved from himself.

In two seasons at the big league level, or parts of two seasons, Carter has become known for his aggressive nature . . . Pete Rose of the Expos . . . runs out his walks . . . will go through a brick wall if he's asked to, etc. Nice description, except when he tries it.

CARTER tried the brick-wall routine in the spring, at Winter Haven, running down a fly ball. The result was a faceful of stitches and a nasty scar.

His intrepid nature seemed to be working, at times too well. Then Carter collided with Pepe Mangual, then the Expos' center fielder. The damage that time was a broken thumb and the sentence was 40 games, no labor.

With his unhappy season coming to a close, Carter suffered another 40-game injury, except there were only 15 to play. He broke the other hand, the right one (fifth metacarpal bone), during a rundown between third and home.

"This has been some season, hasn't it?" he said.

Carter broke his hand after tagging Sam Mejias of St. Louis as Mejias attempted to score the Cardinals' sixth run of the ninth inning September 19 at Jarry Park. Since it was also the first out of the inning, Carter's frustration only added to his aggression as he lunged over Mejias and landed on his right hand. Carter finished the game before leaving to have X-rays taken.

IN HIS rookie year with the Expos, Carter landed on top of the right-field fence and cracked two ribs in May. He tore knee ligaments in September.

It used to be that the Expos could be held partly responsible for Carter's injuries because they insisted on playing him out of position. But the broken hand against the Cardinals and the torn knee ligaments one year earlier both were the result of plays at home plate, while Carter was behind the bat for the Expos.

"He won't be playing any more in the outfield," Manager Charlie Fox had said just before the injury.

That used to concern Carter, because he greatly prefers catching. Now all that concerns him is playing.

After his broken thumb in June, Carter rushed back into the lineup, because that's the way he is and because his batting average was an abysmal .200. When he returned, Carter played with a bruised left thumb that never did heal properly. He wasn't able to do much about his average or the Expos' overall performance.

"I NEED A winter of rest," he said.

When his season ended, Carter was hitting .219, or 51 points off his rookie year. His RBI

total was down by 30, to 38, and his homers dropped from 17 to six. In fairness, so did his at-bats, from 503 to 311.

His case history notwithstanding, Carter again is expected to be the least available, and most talked about Expo during winter trade talks that will be different in many ways.

On the other hand, the Expos probably will end the annual Carter-Barry Foote duel for the No. 1 catcher's job. Foote is completing his second straight poor season at the plate and wants out.

Since Carter's much-heralded arrival at the start of 1975, Foote hasn't been the hitter he was in his rookie year, when he batted .262.

IN SUPPORT of the view that the Expos will deal Foote was the presence of scouts said to be watching him during the team's final visit to Pittsburgh. The Pirates, too, were interested, although they'd much prefer trying to make a deal for Carter.

But the Giants and Astros were both reportedly tailing Foote, which explained why he played all three games in Pittsburgh.

"I don't understand it," Carter said initially. "I talked to Charlie the other day and he said I was going to be the No. 1 catcher the rest of the way, but play only one game of doubleheaders."

Later, Carter offered a correction.

"I misunderstood," he said. "Charlie told me we were both No. 1."

That's been the Expos' party line for two years, but next season they're pretty certain to make Carter No. 1. For as long as he's healthy.

Exposures: Carter, asked why he wasn't playing in Pittsburgh, was quoted in Montreal Matin as saying: "Ask John McHale." McHale let it be known he didn't appreciate the remark. . . . Canadian righthander Larry Landreth made his major league debut by pitching six shutout innings against the Cubs, but the next week, making a specially-planned start on national TV, Landreth was knocked out in the second inning by the Mets. . . . Rookie outfielder Andre Dawson, who jumped from Double A to Triple A to the majors in three months, was 11-for-35 with the Expos and drove in five runs. Fox made him the No. 3 hitter and the No. 1 center fielder.

Woodie Fryman's 1-0 shutout of the Cardinals was his 13th win of the season, more than he's had in any season except 1972, when he won four at Philadelphia and 10 at De-

troit. . . . Fryman's job was followed two days later by a two-hit shutout from lefty Dan Warthen, making his first start since June 26. . . . "He's all right," said Fryman, who takes all young southpaws under his wing. "They know how to handle him now. You just have to talk to him when he gets in trouble." Both hits off Warthen were singles, and both by Lee Mazzilli, the Mets' rookie outfielder. . . . Ellis Valentine and Earl Williams hit back-to-back homers on the night that Warthen beat the Mets. It was the first such feat by Expos' players all season. The next night, both Valentine and Williams homered again, but this time they connected four innings apart. . . . When Warthen lost to the Phils, 4-1, September 26, it was the clincher for the Quakertowners' East Division pennant. Jim Lonborg was the winner.

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Newport

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'Bench-Type' Carter Picked Top N. L. Rookie

By BOB DUNN

MONTREAL—When Gary Carter was short-haired, naive, barely shaving and playing rookie league baseball, somebody noticed he resembled Pete Rose at times. A year or so later, something was said about Johnny Bench.

The comparisons survived Carter's climb from rookie league to major league. Today, he not only lives with them, he lives by them. Pete Rose and Johnny Bench are not only his heroes from adolescence, they are his standards in adulthood. They are what he hopes to be.

So when Gary Carter, the Expos' freshman outfielder-catcher, was named by THE SPORTING NEWS as the National League Rookie Player of the Year in a poll of players, it's one more piece of plaster in the mold. In 1963, Pete Rose was accorded the same honor. In 1968, it was Bench.

THE DAY THE season ended for the Expos, Carter was standing in Wrigley Field, Chicago, talking about the kind of year he had. The kind of year he had was .270, 17 home runs, 68 runs batted in. It was comparable with the kind of rookie years Rose and Bench had had, and it was more home runs than Bench had hit, 15, in '68.

"I'm proud of that," Carter said. "I wouldn't mind staying ahead."

The first time Carter saw Rose and Bench, in the flesh, was in an exhibition game at Daytona Beach last spring. In the first inning, Rose singled and Bench hit a two-run homer. In the bottom of the inning, Carter—suitably psyched—hit a three-run homer.

They had to notice.

"I like his cockiness," Rose said, during the season. "It's not the kind of cockiness like 'I'm Gary Carter of the Montreal Expos.' I call it confidence."

Bench, too, took a special interest.

"HE BUSTS HIS tail," said the National League's All-Star catcher. "He wants to win. He's aggressive. And he loves to play. I guess I like Gary because he reminds me a

lot of myself, with his desire and because he has been catching. He's the type of person I can right away warm up to, and there are very few."

By the All-Star Game, in which Carter was his league's only rookie and the Expos' only player, Rose and Bench had become somewhat closer to The Kid, as he's often called.

"Bench was so talkative and he just took me under his wing," said the extroverted Californian. "Same with Rose. He said, 'Meet me in the coffee shop and we'll talk a little bit about the game.' He bought me a fruit plate! It was just a great feeling for me to know that here's some real super stars taking care of a 21-year-old rookie."

By now the reasons for the comparisons are pretty obvious. Carter hustles like Rose, most of the time, to the point where he runs out walks, slides into first base, slides head first much of the time and gives it the extra-curricular effort whenever possible.

HE IS "another Bench" merely by being a talented catcher coming out of Triple A with tools that are at least similar.

"He's better than Bench at balls in the dirt," analyzed former Expos' Manager Gene Mauch. "In fact, he might be as good as anybody. He's a good thrower, and he may become as good, but he'll never have the velocity because there's only one Johnny Bench arm. And I don't know for sure that he'll ever have the pulling power Bench has on a major league fast ball. He may, but that's asking a lot."

It was Mauch who pointed out, at spring training, the similarity between the respective Triple-A statistics of Bench and Carter. With 100 more at-bats, Carter hit nine points higher, the same number of homers and drove in 15 more runs. "And I only bring out Johnny Bench because they're both catchers and because of what Bench did at comparatively the same age and with comparatively the same kind

of body."

Then, through a season in which Carter was more right fielder than catcher, he fell short of Bench in average and RBIs, and had two more homers. In this comparison, Bench had 60 more at-bats.

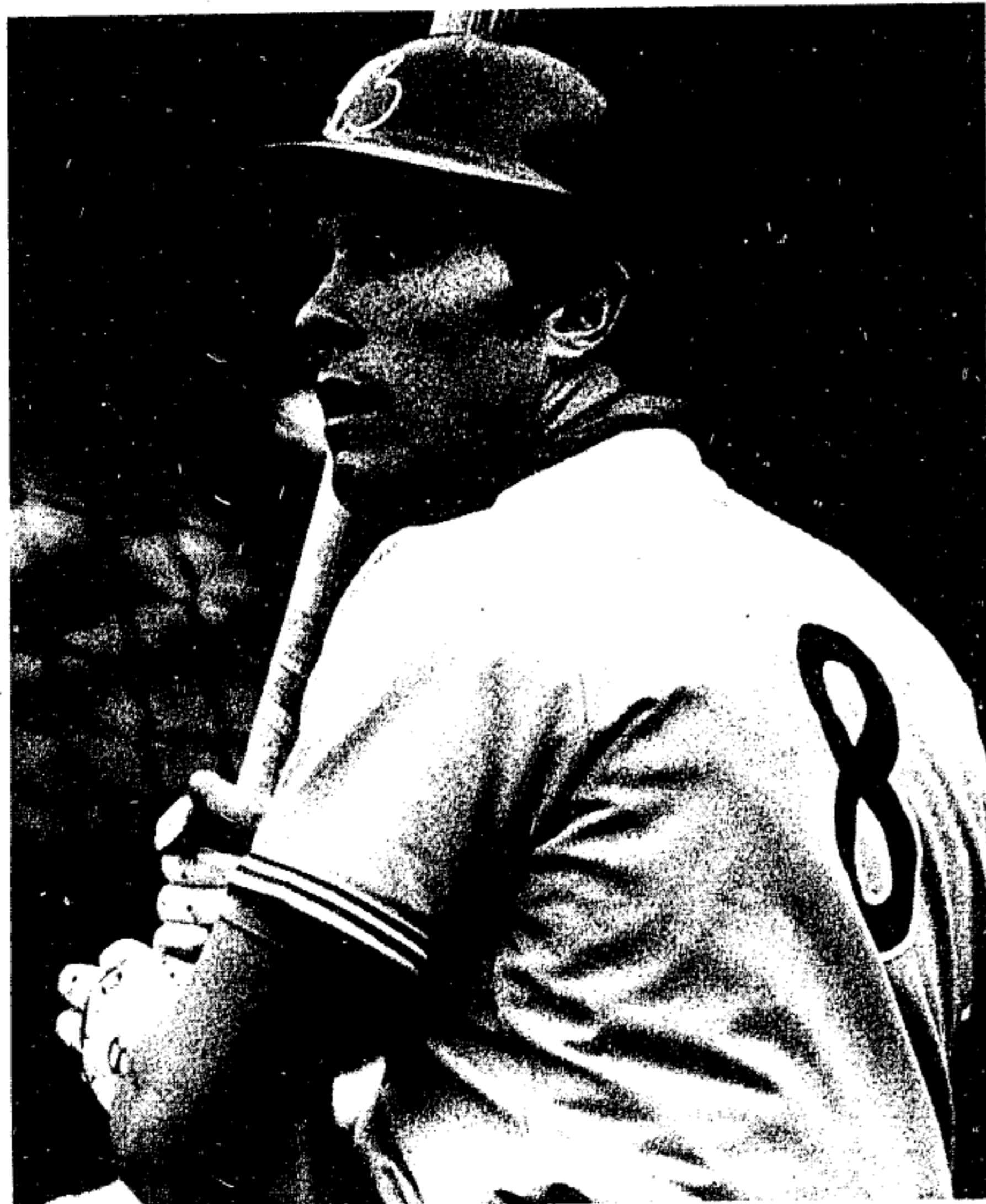
CARTER DID a couple of things most players don't do in their maiden season. He hung himself on the right-field fence at Jarry

Park in April, cracking two ribs and losing probably a few more homers and RBIs. He sat out a week, but it was three before he could swing the bat well again.

"When you have something to run into, or leap up on and not get hurt, then it's a different story," he said. "But the Jarry Park fence is just a dangerous fence because it's so low that if you jump up, you're

going to land right on your side, as I did."

Then, early in September, Carter partially tore a ligament in his left knee when Philadelphia's Tony Taylor crashed into him at home plate. This time he missed 10 days and it would've been more if catcher Barry Foote hadn't discovered torn knee cartilage that side- (Continued on Page 18, Column 2)



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Montreal Headlines Feature Carter's Waistline

By BOB DUNN

DAYTONA BEACH—As often as the people of Montreal were being told that the local teachers were on strike, and that there still was trouble in Beirut, they were being told that **Gary Carter** was overweight.

The day's statistics back home included not only how many schools were closed, or how many Lebanese were dying, but how many pounds the Expos' highly touted slugger was weighing.

Carter was overweight . . . five pounds, eight pounds, 11 pounds. The playing weight predetermined for him by Manager Karl Kuehl was 205 pounds. **Carter** was getting off the scales at 210 to 216, depending on who was reading them.

"I don't feel like I'm overweight," he said. "I'm about 210. They want me at 205. I can get there all right; I just have to shut off all food entirely."

CARTER claims his playing weight of last season, 205, was an estimate; that no accurate records were kept and that it's natural he should weigh a few pounds more because he's still growing.

"I feel quicker," he said. "I feel stronger. I know I've grown some. I played for Manager Kuehl at around 205 in '74, but I was 20 years old then. They're blowing it all out of proportion. There's no point to the whole thing. It's no big deal."

It has been a big enough deal, on the other hand, to warrant a mention in the newspapers on each of the first six days of spring training.

A sampling:

"**FAR** overweight, **Carter** has been told he will not catch an inning until he gets within five pounds of 205 . . .

" . . . trying to run off his excess waistline.

" . . . working off the spare tire he added over the winter.

"**Gary Carter**, his belly as big as his head . . .

Kuehl took no detours in expressing his displeasure with the Expos' brightest prospect in conversations the manager had with reporters.

"I'm very disappointed in **Carter**," the rookie manager said. "If spring training had opened on time, there is no way that **Gary** would have been close to the weight that we wanted."

Carter reportedly checked in, a month before his 22nd birthday, at 220 pounds. He immediately began using his bicycle for transportation, he soon was running at least a mile a day and he regularly was seen ducking into the sauna in an additional effort to shed some suet.

THE INCIDENT, or situation, quickly made **Carter** an outsider in the catching derby, if he wasn't one already. Kuehl hasn't come right out and said so, but it was patently obvious that Barry Foote was going to be behind the plate on opening day, barring complications.

Carter's position was somewhat transient. "I would like to catch more—I even said that last year," he added. "But nothing's been said. It's up in the air again. Karl indicated I would be catching a little more. As long as I'm playing, it doesn't really matter. I don't want to sit on the bench."

Should the Expos ever decide to sit their 21-year-old .270 long-ball hitter on the bench, they're either the best team Montreal's ever seen, or they're foolish. So far, they have shown no concrete evidence that they're either.

CARTER HAS BEEN worked, during City Island Park practices at Daytona Beach, in left field for the most part. He played in right field throughout the better part of his rookie season, but that position is reserved for Ellis Valentine, the Expos' top rookie this year.

"I might possibly play some at third base, or even some at first base," he suggested. "I played some first base for Karl in the minor leagues, although he says I'm brutal at it."

Carter is, his weight notwithstanding, a different player than the exciting 20-year-old who was the Expos' player of the camp last spring, and who went on to be the club's player of the year, not to mention runner-up to San Francisco's John Montefusco as the National League's No. 1 rookie.

"I **FEEL** a lot of confidence this time," said **Carter**, who was in Daytona nine days before camp officially opened. "I know what kind of competition I'm up against, not within the team, but with the other players. I know what the pitchers are going to be throwing and, of course, they know what pitches I'm susceptible to, as well."

Then, there was the question that was never raised.

"Don't say anything about the sophomore jinx," he insisted. "It's completely and entirely out of my mind. I don't want to have anything to do with it. I don't believe it's there."

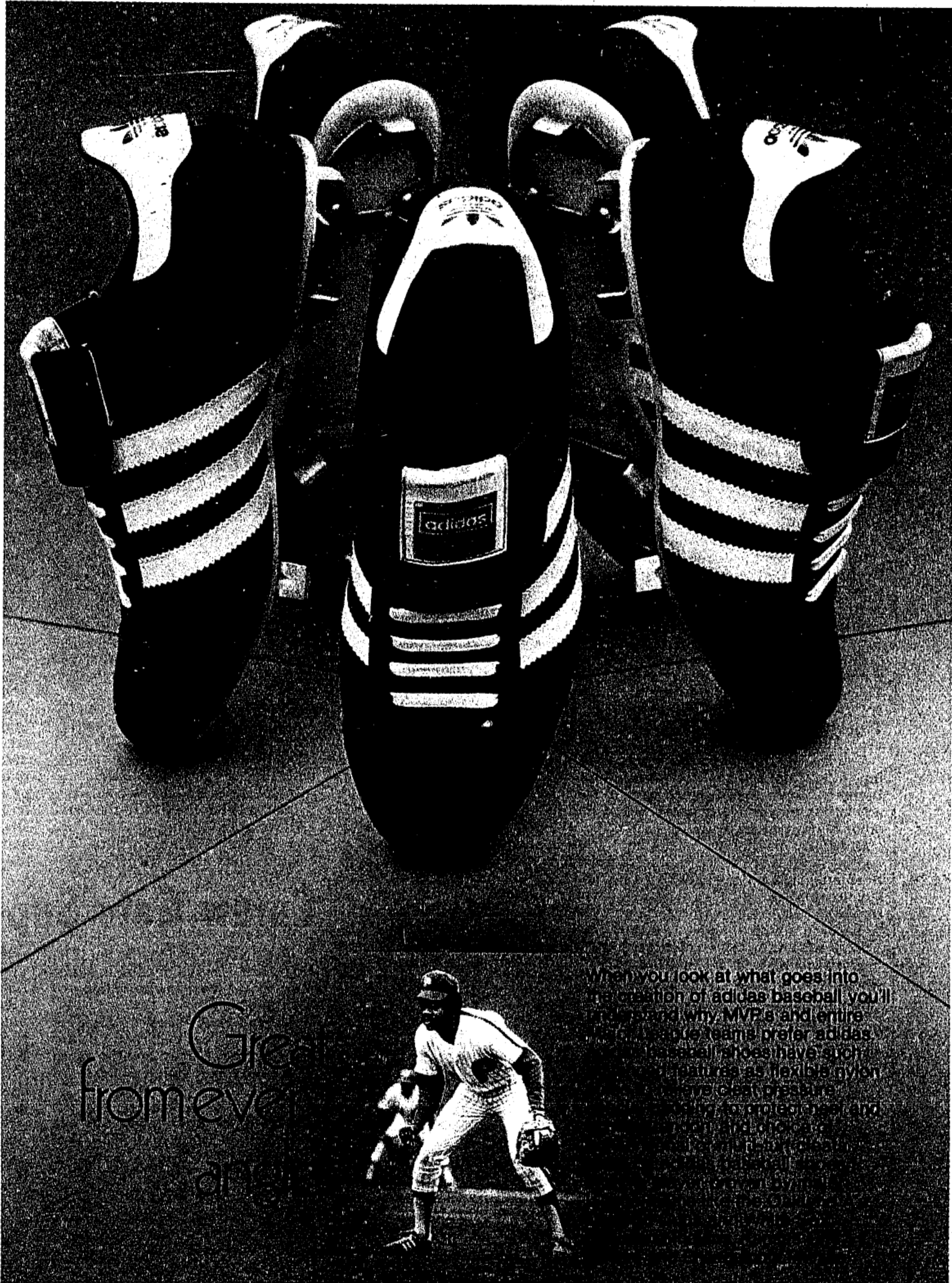
Carter is, and likely will continue to be, assaulted with sophomore-jinx insinuations for the very obvious reason that he is a sophomore coming off a good rookie season. The fact that Foote, with whom **Carter** often is compared, slumped badly in his second year only encourages the kind of talk **Carter** despises.

That talk will cease, of course, once **Carter** plays the way the '75 model did.

Exposures: Righthander Chuck Taylor, a two-year Expo invited to this year's camp as a non-roster player, was shelled in the first Grapefruit League game, a 13-4 loss to the Dodgers. . . . Foote and shortstop Tim Foli, of all people, hit home runs for the Expos. . . . Relief specialist Dale Murray blanked the Dodgers for three innings. . . . Lefthander Woodie Fryman will pitch the season's second game, against the Mets, following Steve Rogers. . . . Veteran Nate Colbert, who had a few big hits and not many little ones for last year's team, is hoping he can make the squad as an outfielder,

since he can't expect to play every day as a first baseman. . . . Kuehl is considering leaving righthander Clay Kirby and southpaw Dan Warthen behind when the Expos go north, since illness and injury have put them behind the other pitchers.

Dennis Blair, at times erratic last season, went three innings of an intra-squad game and allowed only one walk. . . . Third baseman Larry Parrish required several trips to the barbership before his hair met with the Expos' continuing rigid standards. . . . Second baseman Pete Mackanin banged the knee which underwent surgery in the winter during sliding practice and, while there was some immediate concern, reported nothing more severe than a bruise. . . . Heavy rainfall in Montreal washed away much of the snow in Jarry Park.



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