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Harridge Lends First Aid to Pitchers

LOOPING THE LOOPS

Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

By J. G. T. SPINK

The "Big Itch"—Billy Cox ST. LOUIS, Mo.

The personable young clerk behind the desk at the Hotel Chase in St. Louis pointed his way down the rooming list of the Brooklyn Dodgers, reading out loud: "Reese — Furillo — Snider — Hodges — Roe — Branca — Pafko." Then he looked at the quiet fellow standing in front of him.

"What did you say your name was? I don't happen to see it on the list."

The lad smiled good naturedly. "Oh, that's all right. I'm just the forgotten man on this ball club. My name's Billy Cox."

Cox has been the forgotten man on the Brooklyn club not only to room clerks but also to radio men, TV casters and newspapermen ever since he came to Flatbush. Autograph seekers sweep by him to grab Jackie Robinson or Preacher Roe or Duke Snider.

But to seven other managers in the league and 175 out of the 200 players he is the Big Itch. He takes base hits from them, throws them out on bunts they beat out against most every other third baseman in the circuit. He snatches sizzling grounders to the right and to the left. At bat he is always rapping one for extra bases with someone on the sacks. "Just a Big Itch," is what one of the Phillies called him.

Andy, Billy Just Guys to Boss

It's strange, but Andy Seminick and Cox are stars to many fans, yet not to their own managers. It is a sort of baseball twist to the saying, "A man is never a hero in his own home town."

Every year when Seminick reported at the Phils' training camp, either Ben Chapman (then manager) or Eddie Sawyer would say:

"What we need is a catcher." During the entire training season someone else would do the catching. Seminick was often on the bench when the season opened, but after ten days Andy invariably was in the game. It was not until he joined Cincinnati this spring that he was given the title of No. 1 catcher.

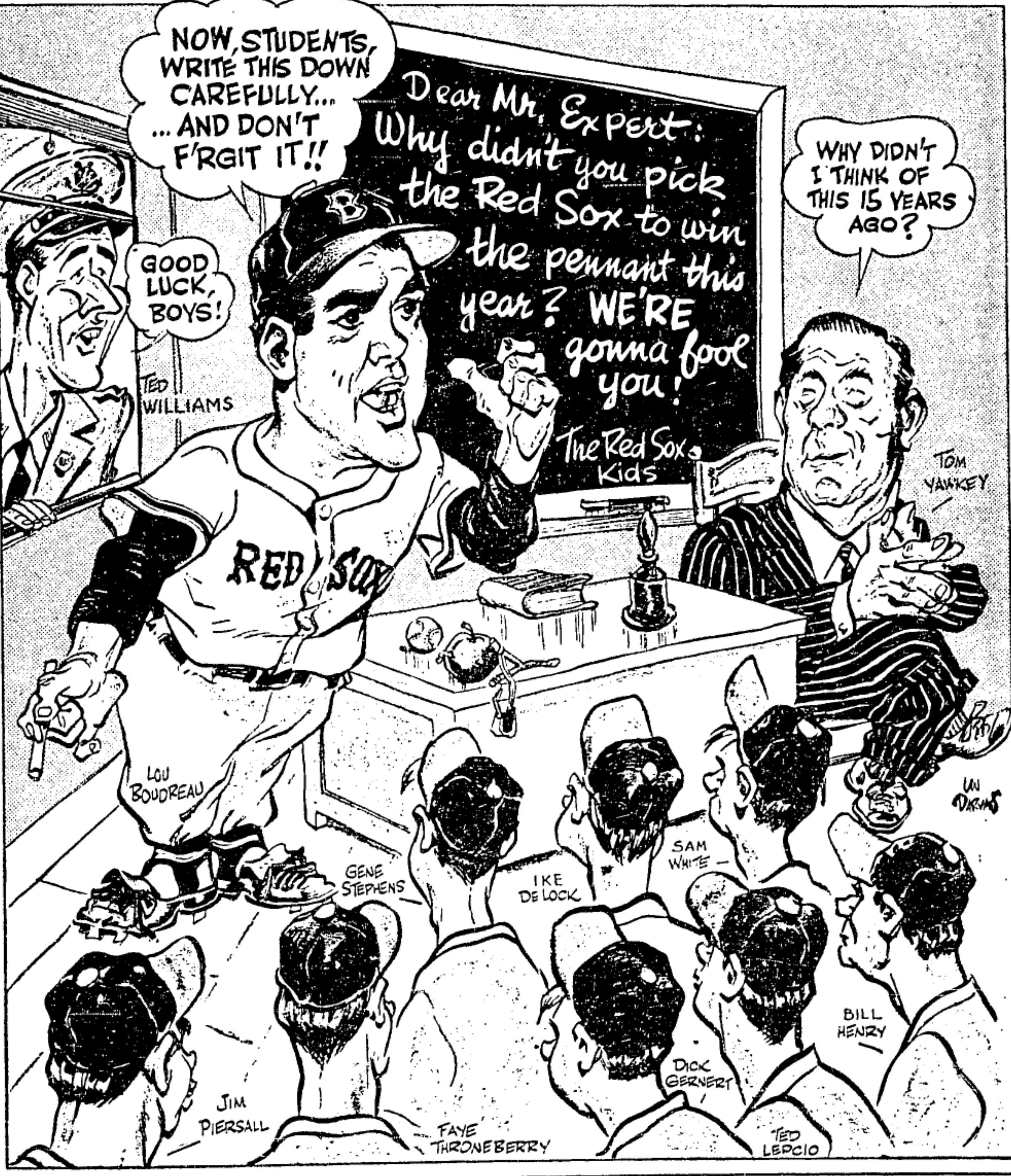
Cox' case is similar. Starting with Leo Durocher, Burt Shotton and now Charley Dressen, they have raised the same old cry, "We need a third baseman." Spider Jorgensen, Rocky Bridges, Bobby Morgan were all groomed for his job.

"One year," said Billy, "there were 11 third basemen in the Brooklyn camp all sure they would play the hot corner instead of Billy Cox."

Such treatment would have dulled the spirits of many players. Only a strong heart survives continual hammering. Seminick and Cox under such a test proved that they have what it takes.

"Didn't you get disgusted many

Lou's Lulus .. By Darvas



'No 1-Man Team in History'--Ted

By GEORGE C. CARENS

BOSTON, Mass.—In what might be termed a farewell address to the Red Sox troops, Ted Williams, on leaving the club, declared he was confident they would win a first-division berth without assistance from him. "There never was a one-man team in history," said the temperamental slugger, who was inducted into the Marines, May 2. "No ball club ever had an indispensable player."

"I have a feeling the Red Sox are going to surprise a lot of people before the race is run, and I can see them finishing as high as first place. Certainly no worse than fourth spot, and that's allowing time for the youngsters to add polish."

In a reminiscent mood a few days before his departure for the Willow Grove (Pa.) Naval Air Station, Williams said, "I wouldn't change one little thing in my whole major league career" if he had to do it all over again. "Well maybe one—if I remembered a promise I made to Tom Yawkey," Williams added. "I'd avoid insulting the fans."

"Baseball has been wonderful to me," Williams went on. "I was fortunate to get away to a good start and I can't recall what I'd peg as turning points. I wouldn't say I really ever had a bad year, especially when I consider my lifetime batting average of .346 and that I performed a modern miracle in exceeding .400 once (406 in 1941)."

"Mr. Yawkey, Joe Cronin and Eddie Collins . . .

every manager I ever worked under . . . I have the highest respect for the men who have helped me up the ladder . . . especially Freddy Corcoran, without whose advice I probably wouldn't have worked so hard to get into condition to play these few pre-season games. That's one thing that has been most helpful—Corcoran's advice on business matters. I owe him a lot."

"It was a break for me in the first place to land with the Red Sox. "I was lucky to have had such a considerate manager as Frank Shellentack at San Diego. Donie Bush was patient during my year at Minneapolis and so were Cronin, Joe McCarthy, Steve O'Neill and Lou Boudreau in my seasons here."

His most heartwarming moment, he said, was the 1950 ovation at Fenway Park when he got back in the lineup after his broken elbow had partially mended.

"If I had to sing a swan song, I'd say the happy memories will never disappear, whatever the future holds," Ted said. "I've never tried to hurt anyone, never criticized any player, and tried to help young players. It would be nice to wake up some morning and find the world is at peace, but in the meantime the deadline is getting closer and I'll be ready to go."

Ted has been taking his lumps like a man, and I'll predict he never will stage a sit-down strike when he resumes his flying career.

Orders Umps Keep Balls in Play Longer

Other A. L. Rules to Assure Complete Games and Fair Decisions, Speed Up Play

By DAN DANIEL NEW YORK, N. Y.

Close students of the game see the promise of some aid to American League pitchers in the latest regulations issued by President Will Harridge. He has warned the umpires not to be so quick to throw out balls.



William Harridge

He says: "Our regulations provide that umpires will keep baseballs in the game as long as the cover is uninjured. No ball shall be thrown out of the game unless the cover is scuffed, and it is unfit for play."

"Aside from the expense involved, it is very annoying to the patrons to see the game continually held up by the request of a pitcher or a batter, that the umpire inspect the ball."

"No umpire should, upon his own initiative, call for a ball, after it has been fielded, for the purpose of inspecting it. This only leads to more invitations from the players."

Urges Speed-Up of Play

"If you are asked for a new ball, and, in your judgment, the old one is all right, continue it in play. You will find, by the use of a little discretion, that you will not only save a great many balls but you will speed up and improve the playing of the game from a spectator's standpoint."

The league head also points out that a new pitcher may have only eight warmup pitches, and asks the umpires to cut down on these.

Ten recent special bulletins from Harridge's offices testify to the unusually complex and complicated nature of major league regulations in this era of night competition and local curfew laws.

Apart from everything else, these bulletins offer tremendous testimony to the fact that the major leagues of today are most meticulous in their precautions to guarantee the fans a complete game, and a fair decision.

For the first time in its history, the American League has provided for what is known as the "suspended game" rule. This regulation, in effect several years in the National League, was adopted by the junior circuit last December in compliance with the request of the player representatives that the two leagues be in agreement on such matters.

The "suspended game" rule sent out by Harridge says, "In case nine innings of a scheduled game, after it has become a legal game, are not completed because of a curfew established by law, or because of suspension to enable a team to catch a train, or in the case of a night game, because of the failure of lights or power, such

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LOOPING THE LOOPS

By J. G. TAYLOR SPINK

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times?" we asked the Dodger third sacker.

Cox shook his head. "No, it had the direct opposite effect on me. I got mad, made up my mind that no one would beat me out of the job. I practiced harder and harder. Because I wasn't playing I came out earlier, got in more hitting, took more fielding practice, tried to make plays in different ways. It paid off in the end, made me a better player and really protected my job. The managers did me a favor by worrying me about the position."

There was, however, another and a big reason why the various pilots searched for someone to take the third base job from Cox. Billy was stricken with malaria in the service and for almost five years after his discharge he was subject to an upset stomach.

He said that many times he was forced to leave the dugout and go to the clubhouse because he was too weak to play. Back in 1948 and 1949 he averaged less than 100 games a year.

Health Much Improved

"I don't know where I picked it up, but it sure gave me a fit," said Cox. "Only within the last year have I felt entirely well." For several years Cox had a brownish, sickly color. Now that has entirely disappeared. He has a fine appetite, eats anything he wants and the war memories are behind him.

Cox was in service for four years, 1942-1945 inclusive, spending more than two years overseas. He was in the signal corps, saw action in Africa, Sicily, Italy, France and Germany. He followed General Patton through Sicily, France and Germany.

Fortunately, he was not wounded. "But I did have my helmet blown off by a bomb explosion," he said. "We were stringing communications near what had been an ammunition spot. The ammunition had been moved but

Cure for Slump

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—Billy Cox uses a Carl Furillo model bat with a lot of barrel-hitting space. "But when I get in a slump I grab a broom stick and start hitting tennis balls again," said Billy.

the enemy was not aware of it and they laid a barrage on the position. Snipers behind the lines were our biggest worry. My buddy captured one just as he was about to fire on me."

The malaria, however, did more lasting damage to Cox than a bullet might have caused. Yet if he had not been ill, he might still have been with Pittsburgh instead of Brooklyn and fighting for last place, instead of first.

Cox broke into Organized Ball in 1940 with the Harrisburg (Inter-State) Senators, just a few skips down the Juniata and Susquehanna rivers from his Newport (Pa.) home. Because of his slight build, Billy did not attract attention immediately. But when he began to swing a bat and scoop up grounders with his large—"ham steak"—hands he became a sensation. His first season, 1940, he batted .268. In 1941 he led the circuit in almost everything. He made 180 hits, including 42 doubles, 15 triples and six homers, and batted .363 and was sold to Pittsburgh for \$20,000.

Brief Bow With Bucs

Billy got into ten games for the Bucs at the close of the season and was called into service the following spring.

In 1946 he was back with the Bucs and he batted .290. The following season (with Greenberg Gardens coming into existence) he surprised with 15 homers, but his average fell to .274 as the malaria germ began to take effect.

Pittsburgh decided he was a risk and traded him to the Dodgers with Preacher Roe and Gene Mauch for Fred (Dixie) Walker, Vic Lombardi and Hal Gregg.

The bug got in its damaging work the following season and Cox played only 88 games, hit .249 and then dropped to .234 in 1949. Spider Jorgensen supplanting him at third. In '50 he began to feel better and reached his peak in 1951 when he hit .279, drove in 51 runs and hit nine homers. Yet this

Slow Bounding Grounders Give Cox Hardest Chances

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—Slow bounding balls give Billy Cox his hardest chances. "I hate to see one come my way," declared Billy. "Slow grounders take such funny hops. When a ball is hit on the nose you put down your glove and you do or you don't." Del Ennis, Bobby Thomson, Walker Cooper, Wally Westlake, Sid Gordon and Ralph Kiner hit the hardest drives to third base, according to Cox. "Some of them almost carry me into left field. I feel like putting ballast in my shoes," he observed.

Richie Ashburn is the best bunter and fastest man going to first base in Cox's opinion. "I play him on the grass and dare him to hit one by me. He's a fine hitter. Stan Musial is also fast, but we don't worry about him bunting. We figure if we can hold him to a safe bunt we have scored a big victory," he said.

spring he was on the bench when spring training games got under way in Florida.

"Sitting on the bench is like being stabbed with a knife," said Cox.

"Ever since I have been old enough to get around I have played ball. My daddy was a semi-pro player around home, so was my brother, and I guess I naturally fell into it. We had a group of kids in Newport who played morning, noon and even night. Many days I went without lunch or dinner.

"We played baseball with broomsticks and a tennis ball. If we couldn't find a tennis ball we used corn cobs. We played in fields that would make a stone pile look like the Polo Grounds.

"Did you ever try to hit a curving tennis ball with a broomstick?" asked Cox. "Try it some day—see what it does to your wrists. It gives you great co-ordination of eye and hands."

Team Had One Bat

Billy says that it wasn't until he went to high school that they had a regular bat and baseball. "We used one bat an entire year," he said. "It was nailed, taped, glued and cemented until it seemed to weigh a ton, but it held together. When the cover on the baseball started to rip, we either sewed it together or wound tape around it.

"Finally we graduated to a regular diamond. Then we challenged other neighborhood club and we beat h-1 out of them. We had some good boys on that team. Two of them tried Organized Ball, one with Sunbury and the other with Harrisburg, but they didn't like it and got other jobs."

At high school Cox played third, short and second base. He also played basketball and in 1939 the Newport Buffaloes—as the high school five was called—won their divisional championship and went to the State playoffs at the Palestra in Philadelphia. "We got licked the first night," said Billy.

Billy says that he gave football a fling—for one game. He played "safety man" in a J. V. game against a neighboring town. "When they told me that football might hurt my baseball chances, I turned in my uniform that night."

It was on his journeys back and forth to high school that he unwittingly developed the spring in his legs that enable him to get the fine jump that he makes on all grounders.

He says there was a small creek on the way to school, about ten feet wide. Cox and his companions used to practice jumping it. "I guess I really hopped into the big leagues on jumping over that creek," said Billy proudly.

"Now I have only one more ambition. I want to be a .300 hitter and I want the Dodgers to win the pennant and the world's championship this year. Then I know I won't be a forgotten man," he added, with a grin.

Father of Three

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—When Billy Cox played at Harrisburg, the fans gave him a day—and presented him with a car. It was in Harrisburg that he also met the now Mrs. Cox. They have three children, two girls and a boy: Cynthia, 3½; Shawn, 1½ and Billy, Jr., seven months. They are building a home in Newport, Pa.

Always an Adventure to Travel With Dodgers

Bus Crash, Park Blackout Start Bums' Western Trip

By ROSCOE MCGOWEN



Cal Abrams

ST. LOUIS, Mo. Traveling with the Dodgers always has been an adventure. All through the years, beginning with the hilarious regime of the late Uncle Wilbert Robinson there have been high and low comedy, tragedy and near tragedy—bizarre happenings by the bale.

It is doubtful, however, that anything in the past topped the opening game in St. Louis on this first western trip of the Brooks.

First their bus was wrecked en route from Union Station to the Chase Hotel on the evening preceding the first game when a car driven by a 22-year-old St. Louis resident, Charles Hamilton, crashed into it at the intersection of Twentieth and Olive.

No players appeared to have been hurt, although later Cal Abrams, Clarence (Bud) Podbielan and George Shuba collected \$25 each from the bus company. Abrams had no visible injury, but said he was "shaken up". Podbielan and Shuba had a slight cut or scratch or two—and 25 bucks is 25 bucks.

This should have been enough for one visit, but not for the Dodgers. They got in the middle of everything and the following night they ran into a blackout at Sportsman's Park because two electricians wouldn't cross a suddenly organized picket line.

Nobody else could turn on the lights, President Fred Saigh couldn't get in touch with any union officials to straighten out the matter, and as late as 8:20, Fred said it looked like no game could be played.

Meanwhile the irrepressible Dodgers, starved for exercise because they had been rained out in the East for five straight days, entertained themselves and partially pacified the 20,384 fans, who were growing angry, by staging a phantom infield drill.

There was just about enough light from the press box to make them visible to the spectators, who enjoyed the thing hugely.

Coach Cookie Lavagetto, an old hand at this sort of thing, handled the bat to hit the non-existent ball to the infielders, who made all sorts of brilliant stops and throws, as well as comic errors.

Dick Williams, the rookie outfielder, worked at first base and put on a great show of picking bad throws out of the dirt, leaping high for others and chasing still others back to the stands and into them.

Lavagetto made the drill complete in every way, including the final hitting of high fouls to Rube Walker, who did a fairly good comic job of staggering beneath the imaginary ball.

Union Induced to Call Off Pickets While this was going on Saigh finally had been called into a conference with representatives of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders Union. At eight minutes after 9 o'clock, the trouble had been dissolved, chiefly by Myles Dyer, director of public safety of the City of St. Louis.

Dyer told Saigh and Howard McVey, president of the Bartenders Union, that he would permit an announcement calling off the game inasmuch as there were no lights in the park.

In the interest of public safety, McVey acceded to Dyer's request to call off the pickets, the lights were turned on at 9:14 and the game got started an hour and five minutes late. Who won? Preacher Roe and the Dodgers—the eighth straight time the Preacher had beaten the Redbirds.

The Dodgers had worked out in the morning at 9:30 by arrangement between Dessen and the Cardinal management.

"They were like young colts out there," chuckled Charley afterward. "They hadn't seen any sunshine for a week and hadn't been able to do more than throw a ball a little while in the rain back home. Haven't seen a bunch of guys so eager to get out and play ball in a long time."

When Train Hit Gas Truck Dipping into the Dodgers' past, a few of the many comic and tragic events may be touched on lightly.

There was that night during the war years, I think in 1945, when their night train to Chicago hit a gasoline truck at Manhattan, Ill., about 6 o'clock in the morning. Most of the players, who occupied a parlor car in the rear of the train—no sleepers were available then—were asleep.

In a split second's time the car was moving through a wall of flame, which shattered the outer windows and cracked the inner glass almost instantly. Only the fact that the engineer, who died at the throttle, did not apply the brakes enough to halt the train in the midst of the flames saved the entire Dodger group.

There was the Len Koencke tragedy when Casey Stengel managed the Brooks in 1935. Koencke, sent away to a minor league club, chartered a private plane, went berserk and was killed in the air by one of the pilots, who crushed his skull with a fire extinguisher in order to save his own life and that of his partner. Len was trying to crash the plane, the pilot testified later.

Around 1930 Uncle Robby balled up his lineup in St. Louis on a day when Frank York, Dodger president and enemy of Robby, watched in the stands. Robby had Ernie Lombardi and Al

20,384 Fans Wait for Hour as Picket Line Delays Arcs

ST. LOUIS, Mo.

The fact that the St. Louis director of public safety is a baseball fan prevented cancellation of a night game between the Cardinals and Brooklyn here, April 29, and averted possible physical danger to 20,384 spectators sitting in darkness-shrouded Sportsman's Park.

Establishment of a picket line by union bartenders, protesting employment of non-organized concessions-stand employes, caused ball park electricians to refuse to take their posts. And when Owner Fred Saigh of the Cardinals was unable to locate officials of the picketing union, darkness fell on an angry crowd, which began milling around, some demanding refunds and others throwing bottles and various missiles.

Several minutes past game time, Myles P. Dyer, the public safety director who was on hand to watch the first Cardinal-Dodger game of the season, corralled Frank W. Jacobs, Sr., International vice-president of the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and visited the Cardinals' office, where Saigh and his entire organization, besieged by St. Louis and New York reporters, still was trying to find Howard McVey, business agent of the bartenders' union. McVey had been unavailable since his registered letter to Saigh, informing the baseball executive of intentions to picket, had been received at 2:30 that afternoon.

One of Jacobs' electricians passed along the word that McVey and his associates were out in Dodier street, which fronts the ball park. Dyer, Jacobs and Saigh dashed into the crowded street, trailed by newspapermen, and found McVey, who refused to talk with reporters present. The group then headed for the sideroom of a tavern at the southeast corner of Grand and Dodier and, with interested onlookers watching through a plate-glass window, conferred for more than 20 minutes. The onlookers included Fred Fleig, assistant secretary-treasurer of the National League, who expressed sympathy for the beleaguered Saigh.

At 9:08, or 38 minutes past game-time, Saigh emerged with Dyer and announced that, thanks to the intervention of the city official, McVey had agreed to withdraw the picket line so that electricians could pass through "in the interests of public safety."

The game began 65 minutes late and ended at 12:30 (Central Daylight Saving Time) with Brooklyn and Preacher Roe winning, 4 to 1, and negotiations were begun the next day between union officers and the independent contractors who operate the concessions stands under consentment from the Cardinals. A contract was signed on May 2.

Saigh, whose ticket manager had been forced to give "only about a dozen refunds" during the delay, explained, with a sigh of relief as the lights went on, "the rest of our ball park employes are union members and we certainly have no objections to the concessions people joining, too."

BRÖEG.

Lopez as his catchers. He put one on the lineup card and sent the other one into the game, with 'he usual resultant confusion.

He did a similar thing in Boston on a particularly hilarious Saturday afternoon when Babe Herman quit the game because Robby had bawled him out for missing a fly ball. That was the day that young Al Cohen made two hits, the first one batting out of turn, the second in the proper spot. Al had replaced the plodding Ike Boone, who had batted for the pitcher and thought he was replacing the Babe in right field. Then Cohen replaced Boone and first batted in Herman's place.

"Do both them hits count?" was young Cohen's only question to Robby.

The Dodgers were the team that was at Pittsburgh the night the players were balloting in the clubhouse on whether to take the field at all and play. That was the first threatened baseball players' strike. The next one had the Dodgers in the middle, too. That was in 1947, Jackie Robinson's first year as the first Negro in the major leagues.

The Cardinals were alleged to have planned to strike when the Dodgers came to St. Louis, but the story was broken by Stan Woodward, then sports editor of the New York Herald Tribune, whose information came in a roundabout way from the late Dr. Bob Hyland. The publicity killed the strike, if one actually had been planned.

Larry MacPhail fired Leo Durocher on the evening of the day the Dodgers clinched their first pennant in 21 years because The Lip ordered the train from Boston not to stop at the 125th Street station.

MacPhail, at the station with a horde

Rufer With Four Clubs Within Period of Hour

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Infielder Rudy Rufer found himself with four clubs, all in the space of an hour, April 28, but only his contract was involved in the shuffle, as he made only one shift. Recalled by the Giants from Oakland (Pacific Coast), he was sold to the Reds and almost immediately optioned to Tulsa (Texas). Changes in his status required him only to move from Oakland to Tulsa.

Rufer was brought back by the Giants from their Minneapolis (American Association) farm club last September, and was optioned to Oakland on March 24. He was originally drafted from Utica (Eastern) by the Millers in 1946 and after a season with Jersey City (International) in 1949, spent 1950 with the Giants. Before he was optioned to Minneapolis for 1951.

of local cameramen and writers, stood helplessly on the platform as the train whizzed by. That was in 1941, of whizzed by, and when MacPhail finally course, and when MacPhail finally caught up with his happy pilot at the Hotel New Yorker, with Leo expecting congratulations, Larry placed at him and barked:

"You're fired!"

It didn't stick, needless to say. But there is much more of the same. But these few illustrations should give you an enough to the well-known cliché that "everything happens to the Dodgers."