

# Crippled Cubs Vault to Dizzy Height at Gate

## Draw Record Home Crowd of 45,505; Sox' Lineup Juggled by Dykes

By ED BURNS  
CHICAGO, ILL.

Stan Hack, on the sidelines with a bad cold, a sore toe and a 200 batting average, replaced at third base by Outfielder Peanuts Lowrey; Len Merullo supplanted at short by Coach Bill Jurges, an old vintage Cub; Second Baseman Don Johnson out with a torn finger, and Capt. Phil Cavarretta still playing in the outfield, instead of at first base, where he won the most valuable award last season.

These are just a few of the things that have been happening to the 1945 champions of the National League, events in a rapidly expanding sequence that has seen such 1945 stars as Andy Pafko and Bill Nicholson benched for varying lengths of time.

Then, too, there's Emil Kush, a relief pitcher, who wasn't with the Cubs last year, possessed of three victories, said three equalling the combined 1946 total of four 1945 World's Series starters, Hank Borowy, who won his loner on the Phillies on May 5; Claude Passeau, Ray Prim and Hank Wyse. Hi Bithorn, another gent expected to have a cluster of three or four wins by this time, has one. However, Hi won a measure of applause on May 3, when he relieved against the Giants with the Cubs leading, 1 to 0, the bases loaded and only one out in the ninth, and struck out two batsmen to win the game.

Despite all the accidents and fidgets that have so altered the defending National League champs, they still were able to attract 45,505, a record crowd



Hank Borowy

### Fans Get Break

The Chicago Cubs see to it that fans at Wrigley Field are not behind radio listeners in dope on the game they are watching. The big scoreboard keeps the spectators posted on the number of hits made by both the Cubs and their opponents as play progresses.

under the present architectural setup of Wrigley Field, to their double-header with the tail-end Phillies, May 5. There was elation when the Bruins took the first game, 13 to 1, Borowy's first of the year. But batting worries set in again when they dropped the second contest, 7 to 1.

### Keep on Leaders' Heels

And with all their batting woes, the Cubs were, on the night of May 5, only two games back of the leading Dodgers and Cardinals, an even 500 with nine games won and nine lost. Everybody is confident that Borowy, Passeau and Wyse are about ready to start clicking. They await only some added hitting from Nicholson, Pafko and Hack. Others, like Cavarretta and Eddie Waitkus, already are doing all right with the wood.

The White Sox last week were able to play only one game in Washington and one game in Philadelphia before making their first appearance in Yankee Stadium in a single game on May 2. They lost their first 1946 American League game to be played under the direction of Manager Jimmie Dykes, 3 to 2, to the Senators, after leading, 2 to 0 and 2 to 1. They came from behind to beat the A's, 8 to 5, and lost to the Yankees, 4 to 2, in another fielding and batting desertion in what was supposed to be support of Ted Lyons. Ted, however, went all the way for a remarkable record of 26 straight complete games, including three in 1941, 10 in 1942 and three so far in this, his first postwar season.

During the week, Dykes did a bit of lineup juggling in quest of power, but the only change that appeared to have gained results was the replacement of Hal Trosky by Murrell Jones.

Sox pitchers have turned in some good performances this year, but at the close of business on May 5, Eddie Lopat was the only Sox tosser who had won more than one game. He had taken two out of three.

If the Sox have been making any efforts to strengthen their club, the matter has been a carefully guarded secret.

# Big Headlines Elude Nick, But He Continues to Stick

## Self-Effacing Etten About to Start Fourth Season With Yanks

### Only Bomber First Sacker Since Gehrig to Hold Job Over Two Years

By TOM MEANY  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

Nick Etten, playing his fourth season at first base for the Yankees, doubtless will continue to attract about as much attention as the clock atop the scoreboard at Yankee Stadium. The only people in baseball who seem to know Nick is around, outside of his wife and immediate family, are the American League pitchers, who find themselves frequently tagged for run-scoring hits by Etten.

Etten is as self-effacing as a chameleon. Not one fan in a thousand, for instance, realizes that Nick is the only first baseman the Yankees have had since Lou Gehrig's day who was able to hold the job for two full seasons. Babe Dahlgren filled in for the balance of 1939 after Lou was fatally stricken and then was on his way after the 1940 season. Johnny Sturm went through the '41 season and then to the Army, while the Navy claimed Buddy Hassett after he had finished his 1942 diamond chores. Along came Nick, who now has completed three seasons at the post.

In hot stove sessions this winter, there was much speculation as to the future of Etten with the Yankees. The December meetings in Chicago brought rumors that bordered on the fantastic, such as one that Joe McCarthy was contemplating trading Phil Rizzuto to the Tigers for Hank Greenberg, with the intention of playing Hank at first base.

Nobody knows better than Etten that he was a wartime first baseman with the Yankees, a stopgap. Nick, however, had big league ability, war or no war, which is more than can be said for the majority of the fill-ins. And, on the records, he was the best first sacker the Yankees have had since Gehrig's day. During his three seasons with the club, Nick has averaged 100 runs batted in and close to 20 home runs a year. Neither Hassett nor Sturm, his immediate predecessors, wielded that kind of a stick.

Defensively, Etten is no gazelle. He is, however, a hustler in the field and was an amazingly improved first baseman last season. As a matter of fact, he led the American League first sackers in double plays.

This piece is by no means written with the idea of booming Etten for the Hall of Fame at Cooperstown when his playing days are over. It is merely an effort to give a pretty good hitter his due and attempt to probe into the mysteries of those ball players who manage to preserve their anonymity, even while they are playing daily in the big leagues.

### Self-Effacing Like Lou

Gehrig himself was one of those. Lou was taken for granted until his fatal illness overtook him. It may be argued that the Iron Horse was forced to play in the shadow of Babe Ruth, but even so Lou had a passion for remaining in the background. And the fates helped him out. When Gehrig belted four homers in one game in Philadelphia, in 1932, only secondary headlines blazoned the feat. Why? Well, it seems a character named John J. McGraw picked that very day to resign after managing the Giants for 30 years.

I was reminded of the way the headlines eluded Gehrig one day last season when Etten hit a first-inning, three-run homer against the Red Sox, for all the runs the Yanks made in the game and enough to win. No other New York team played that day, but Nick didn't get the headlines. The reason? Red Ruffing, making his second start since his return from the wars, went all the way for the Bombers to hang up his second win and his first complete game. The pitching performance of Ruffing, therefore, was rightly regarded as the more newsworthy performance.

When overseas during the winter of 1944-45 with Leo Durocher, Joe Medwick and Etten, I was surprised at the way the GIs took to Nick. And I was amazed at their lack of information on Nick's baseball career. More than once a soldier took me aside to ask where and how the Yanks obtained Etten. In men who had been overseas from 20 to 30 months, this was understandable enough, but the same conditions might

### Quiet Successor to Modest Lou



NICK ETTEN, HOLDOVER YANK FIRST SACKER

have prevailed at home. Nobody seems to remember that Etten led the American League in home runs in 1944 or in runs batted in last year.

Etten, of course, isn't the first ball player with this quality of self-effacement. Neither was Lou Gehrig. There have been ball players like Etten since the game was first played and there will be others as long as it is played. Remember George Burns with the Giants? He was a great outfielder at a time when the Giants were THE team in the metropolitan area, yet Polo Grounds fans accepted George as though he were one of the billboards on the fence.

There are ball players who blend into the background on every club, just as there are those who stick out like a sore thumb, no matter what club they're with. Bobo Newsom, for instance, probably has had as many lines of type devoted to him in THE SPORTING NEWS, year after year, as were accorded in 1945 to Dave Ferriss of the Red Sox, despite the fact that Ferriss, last season, had a somewhat better pitching record.

The real proof of a ball player is in the number of years he holds down a big league job regularly. In that respect, the 31-year-old Etten has not been a slouch.

### No Leniency for Jumpers, Commissioner Reasserts

DAYTON, O.—Reasserting that players who jump to the Mexican League must pay the penalty, Commissioner A. B. Chandler, in a speech before the Agonia Club of Dayton, April 29, said he wanted to promote baseball as much as possible throughout the world, but that "the people with whom we deal must have respect for our rules and contract agreements, as we have for theirs."

Referring to the jumpers, the commissioner declared: "They can't even appeal for reinstatement within five years, and I'm not saying I'd give them an okay to return after that. I'm sorry for them, but we had to set a deadline and assert the stand of Organized Ball in this matter, or else jumping might become commonplace."

Describing his powers, Chandler drew a laugh when he said: "When I make up my mind, that's it," emphasizing the statement with a sweep of his arms.

# Lippy Juggles Lineup to Jog Dodgers' Play

## Meanwhile, Rickey Swings Axe on Roster; Veteran Curt Davis Released

By HAROLD C. BURR  
IN THE WEST WITH DODGERS.

These are days of strife and uncertainty on the Dodgers. Manager Leo Durocher is now fighting his way through the hostile West, shaking up his club with kaleidoscopic suddenness, while back home in Brooklyn President Branch Rickey swings a bloody axe and condemns his rookies to the Mahatma's plantations. The surprise decapitation was the outright release of Curt Davis when the team reached Chicago to open its first 1946 invasion of the Bad Lands.



Curt Davis

Brooklyn lost its May Day game to the Cubs at Wrigley Field, 2 to 1, in 11 disappointing innings and The Lip proclaimed that Carl Furillo and Ed Stevens would ride the bench splinters the next afternoon. The valuable veteran, Augie Galan, was installed at first base, and young Gene Hermanski returned to the outfield.

Durocher shifted his grass patrolmen, installing the speedy Dick Whitman in center and moving Hermanski over to left field. He let Dixie Walker stay put.

The new set-up worked smoothly and the Dodgers evened the series with a 5 to 1 triumph behind Hal Gregg, who couldn't beat the Cubs in any of his three starts against 'em last year. Whitman, who had fallen away to a shoddy .192 in batting, pulled up his bobby sox and came through with five hits, one a double, batted in two tallies and stole a base. But with Bob Chipman, a left-hander, working the next day, Furillo

### Cookie Rejoins Dodgers

PITTSBURGH, Pa.—Cookie Lavagetto rejoined the Dodgers when the team reached St. Louis in its safari through the West, and is prepared to put up a battle to be the regular third baseman again. The veteran went to St. Louis for the removal of a calcium deposit in his throwing arm, but Dr. Robert F. Hyland, Cardinal club physician, found bone chips, instead, and removed five of the particles from the elbow.

was back in center, as Whitman has been weak against the southpaws. The Dodgers took the odd game of the set, 3 to 2, on Art Herring's gritty relief hurling and Herman's pinch single for the tying and winning runs in the eighth.

### Other Changes to Come

As soon as Billy Herman's sore leg muscle mends, there will be other changes. Pistol Pete Reiser likely will go to center and Herman will resume his third base rocking chair, leaving Ed Stanky, the midget of the midway, in the game. Stanky is an ideal leadoff man, working the pitchers for pass after pass by deliberately fouling off the good balls.

Davis came up to the Phillies 12 years ago, drafted from San Francisco. He went to the Cubs and Cardinals before Laughing Larry MacPhail brought him to Brooklyn with Joe Medwick for Ernie Koy, Sam Nahem, Bert Haas and \$100,000. Curt's best season was in 1939, when he won 22 games for the Cardinals. He pitched in the All-Star game at Boston and was beaten by the Yankees in the opening game of the 1941 World's Series by one run. He won 15 for the Dodgers in 1942.

Old Coonskin said goodbye to his teammates and caught a train for New York on Rickey's instructions. It's believed that a spot will be found for Davis in the Dodger organization, probably as a scout.

There was more house-cleaning to get the club down to the lawful 48 players, on the roster and on option, by May 1. Pitcher George Dockins, recently claimed from the Cards on waivers, was optioned to Fort Worth, without ever having pitched a ball in a Flatbush uniform. Outfielder Scot Davis, another refugee from the Redbirds on waivers, and Pitchers Ray Hathaway and Frank Laga were sold to Montreal. Glenn Moulder, pitcher, and Bud Kimball, infielder, went outright to Mobile and St. Paul, respectively.