

Gordon Plans Physical Test for U. S. Duty

Keller Goes Into Maritime Service; Yanks to Shift Lindell to Left, If---

By DAN DANIEL
NEW YORK, N. Y.

The new year came in for the World Champion Yankees with a fanfare. However, the blowing of bugles came from the direction of the U. S. Maritime Service. The USMS had acquired Charles Ernest Keller, and the Yankees had lost him for the duration of the war.

Along with Keller's acquisition of an ensign's commission in the Maritime Service came a rather solid hint that Joe Gordon was headed into a U. S. uniform, too—if he could make it.

President Ed Barrow said that his move in sending Scout Bill Essick from Los Angeles to Eugene, Ore., to interview the second baseman, had not brought anything very tangible.

After Gordon had announced his intention to go into service, and had notified Barrow and Joe McCarthy to count him out for 1944, Cousin Ed felt that Essick might get some real dope from the player.

However, it is a sure thing now that Gordon will go—if he can pass the physical checkup.

Gordon, said Barrow, had informed Essick that before talking any more on the subject of the service, he would undergo a thorough physical checkup.

Gordon has a trick hip and a bad back, and it is believed either would disqualify him from military service. However, the dope on the second sacker, soon will be complete. If the medics say he could pass an examination, he will offer himself for a commission. At least, that is the between-the-lines message read into the report of Essick's interview at Eugene.

With Keller gone, and Gordon likely to go, the 1944 outlook for the Yankees is not exactly tinged with a rosy hue and smeared with attar.

Keller's Enlistment No Surprise
Keller's passage into Uncle Sam's Navy blue did not come as a surprise. Barrow said he had known it was coming. Some time ago Keller's draft board at Frederick, Md., told him he could remain 2-B for another six months, and that if he left his job in the Eveready war plant, he would automatically become 1-A, and subject to immediate draft.

Keller was working hard in the plant, but it was right at home and he was back with his wife and kids for dinner every evening. However, Charlie decided that his 2-B situation was too tentative, and he jumped into the Maritime Service, which he joins on January 20, at St. Petersburg, Fla.

"I knew it was coming and I wish him good luck," said Joe McCarthy.

That means Johnny Lindell is the new left fielder of the Bombers—unless John gets a call, too.

Keller last season hit 31 homers, drove in 86 runs and did the best job of his career on defense. He was a team in himself.

With Charlie gone, and Lindell in left, Roy Weatherly is the incumbent in center, with Bud Metheny in right.

Russ Derry and Don Savage, coming from Newark, are in reserve. Derry's situation is uncertain, as last spring his draft board froze him to his farm. He was not allowed to report to the Bears until harvest.

Lindell and Metheny, freshman fly-chasers of last season, have interesting potentialities.

Lindell, who had failed as a pitcher, took to the outfield as if to the manor born. McCarthy was a bit disappointed in John's failure to achieve the .285 mark, but there isn't a man in the Yankee organization who does not believe Lindell will develop into one of the best hitters in the major leagues. Lindell can drive a ball about as far as anybody, but he hits straightaway and so is not likely to become a home run star.

Metheny, on the other hand, can pull that ball into right field, and could become a four-bagger specialist of some note. Bud's record for 1943 is not to be regarded as a true index to his skills.

Metheny reported in March with the word that he was likely to be called by the Army. Joe McCarthy, therefore, did not want to place too much stress on him, and established Lindell in right field.

However, with the season half over, and Metheny still around, Marse Joe began to pay more attention to the one-time William and Mary College hero. Given a chance to play every day, Bud made good. He has been turned down in the draft medically, and is 4-F.

Recrology

Louis R. (Steve) Evans, former major league outfielder and one of the game's greatest clowns, died at his home in Cleveland, O., December 28, after a long illness. A son, Louis R., Jr., a private in the Army, two brothers and two sisters survive. His wife preceded him in death.

Born in Cleveland, February 17, 1885, Evans, who played in the outfield and at first base and caught, broke in with Dayton in 1907. He was with the New York Giants in 1908, sent to Montreal and released to the St. Louis Cardinals, where he remained from 1909 to 1914. He made the 1914-15 world tour with the White Sox and Giants, as a member of the American League team. On his return home, he learned waivers had been obtained on him by the Cardinals and he jumped to the Brooklyn Feds, who traded him to the Baltimore Feds in June, 1915. On the disbandment of the Federal League, Evans signed with Toledo and retired from the game in 1918.

As followers of John McGraw know, he took his baseball straight and, though Evans diverted him for awhile on the Giants, Steve's antics proved too much for the New York pilot—one of the reasons he was shifted to the Cardinals. Evans refused to take McGraw's orders seriously.

Many were Evans' antics that brought numerous guffaws from teammates and fans, but Steve, himself, seldom smiled and that was the secret of his satire. He always picked the spots for his clowning and it is recalled he never pulled his stunts when a victory was at stake.

Steve once stole third with the base occupied—but the score was 14 to 1 in the Giants' favor. When he was called out, McGraw yelled: "You're fired!" Steve came back, contentedly: "Yeah. You think I could stand on second base with that stupid guy playing it?" He knew McGraw didn't think much of that particular second baseman. "You're justified," softly said the mollified McGraw.

In spring training with the Giants, Evans decided he was a first baseman, until one day a rookie made an amazing leap for a stop at first. Steve, who was on the bench, walked to the pitcher's box with his glove and threw the mitt over the grandstand. "What's that for?" demanded McGraw. "That means I'm going to play in the outfield," Evans answered. McGraw probably would have fired any other player on the spot, but he let Evans stay in the outfield.

Steve was the bane of umpires, who never knew what to expect from him. One day, he was warned by the man in blue that no more foolishness would be tolerated. In the next inning, Evans pulled an umbrella from his shirt, chased a fly ball with it open and caught the agate.

Later in the game, Steve pulled a real strip tease. Going after an easy fly, his cap fell off, then his shirt, then his pants. When he finally caught the ball, Steve turned a double somersault and came up wearing only his underwear.

Such tales are legend and old-timers

Ace Adams and Rucker Cheer Soldier Patients

THOMASVILLE, Ga.—Ace Adams and Johnny Rucker of the New York Giants are the proud possessors of hand-lettered parchment scrolls given them by the patients in Finney General Hospital here for visiting and entertaining them. The presentation was made by Col. Samuel M. Browne, commanding officer of the hospital, in behalf of the patients.

Adams, tops of relief pitchers of modern times, was accompanied by Mrs. Adams. Both Adams and Rucker had chow with the detachment personnel in their mess hall. They spoke before the patients participating in the rehabilitation program which makes them physically fit for their return to active duty. The players also spoke and answered questions about baseball before other patients in the Red Cross auditorium on the post, and visited bedridden patients in many of the wards. They autographed various articles, including the plaster casts of many of the patients.

The patients in Finney General Hospital, many of them wounded overseas veterans, have been enthusiastic about the visits of players, ever since Spud Chandler came here. All of the players donated their time and provided their own transportation.

Adams and Rucker were escorted by Pfc. Bud Eckert, former catcher for the St. Louis Browns, who is a member of the detachment and an instructor in the rehabilitation program, and Lieut. Cleveland,

Steve Evans' Fastest Dash—Race with Irishman, 75

Although many fans laughed at the antics of Steve Evans, fun-making outfielder, there was an elderly Irishman in Pittsburgh who wanted to choke him, relates Willis Johnson in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Whenever the Cardinals visited Pittsburgh, the Irishman, 75, always visited the railroad station to talk with Manager Roger Bresnahan when the team was leaving. On one occasion the entire Cardinal team was gathered around the elderly fan when the conductor yelled "Board!" All the players drifted away, except Steve, who remained behind, keeping an eye on the train.

Finally, as the train started to move, Evans suddenly grabbed the clay pipe out of the Irishman's mouth, tossed it on the concrete, and said, "You talk too much."

Then Steve ran for the slowly-moving train, with the old Irishman in hot pursuit, screaming, "I dare yez to come back!"

who were intimate with Evans can relate them by the hours. With it all, however, Steve was a skilled outfielder, although not a particularly strong batter. His best hitting year in the majors came in 1911, when he had an average of .291. He played through the 1913 season in the outfield with only two errors.

Mrs. Catherine Moriarty, 82-year-old mother of George Moriarty, former American League infielder, manager and umpire, died at her home in Chicago, December 28. Four other sons, Albert, John and William, deceased, and Joseph also played ball. Two daughters also survive.

George was with the Chicago Cubs, New York Yankees, Detroit Tigers and Chicago White Sox before going to Memphis in 1916. He became an American League umpire in 1918 and continued in the berth until 1927 and 1928, when he managed the Tigers. Following his resignation as manager at Detroit, he again took up umpiring and continued to call balls and strikes until 1940. Upon his retirement as an umpire, he joined the promotional bureau of the league. William was with Newport, San Francisco, Stockton, Columbus, Cincinnati, Louisville, Omaha, Trenton, York and Wausau, retiring from the latter club in 1914. The other sons played semi-pro ball.

Clarence Fuller, former amateur pitcher who hurled the Altes team of Detroit to two national titles, died in Detroit, Mich., December 27, following injuries received in an automobile accident Christmas eve. During 1938 and 1939, when his team won the national honors, Fuller did not lose a game. He was 37 years old.

Loren W. Park, former business manager of the Scranton Miners, died at Westport, Mass., December 26.

Binghamton Fans Speculate on Pilot

BINGHAMTON, N. Y.—Speculation as to the possible successor to Eddie Sawyer as manager of the Binghamton Eastern League Triplets immediately followed the news early this week that he had signed to pilot the Utica club next season.

Announcement of the change by Sawyer came as a complete surprise to the fans. Eddie had assumed a fall and winter position as football coach and gym teacher at Binghamton North High School last fall. He has made a host of friends here.

Some fans picked Shaky Kain, Norfolk's Piedmont League skipper, while others thought that Sol Mishkin, who finished up strong after taking over Wellsville during the Pony League season, might get the job here. Both are former Triplets, Kain a pitcher and Mishkin a first baseman.

Officials of the New York Yankees farm system gave no indication as to the possible choice as Sawyer's successor.

Corporal Jimmy Adlam, former Eastern League second base star, recently sent word back to Binghamton that he is on duty at a Texas Army air field. Jim volunteered for service at the close of the 1942 season.

Catcher Lou Bartola of the Binghamton club is employed in a war factory and continues to make his home in Binghamton with his wife and family. Pitcher Johnny Rager is working in a Binghamton furniture store during the winter.



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Work of Big Pitching Four Gives Braves Some Cheer for '44

By JACK MALANEY

BOSTON, Mass.



Al Javery

The Boston Braves of 1943 were not even as good a ball club as their finishing spot in the standing—sixth—indicated, but they were fortunate that there were at least two worse teams in the league. The Braves couldn't hit and some of the fielding was away off color, and so they wound up where they belonged, according to one way of looking at it. And yet, if the offensive and defensive play of the team could have in any manner matched the pitching of its Big Four, there might have been cheering, instead of jeering, at Braves Field last season.

Although the official averages do not always tell the real and complete story, they all too often mark down the bold fact that "class will out" and that you've got to be good to be up in the top brackets.

Fans of this section knew they couldn't expect much from the National League averages. They knew that Johnny McCarthy had played a fine first base and had hit well until he was put on the sidelines with a broken ankle with a couple of months to go. They knew that Butch Nieman and Chuck Workman had done some grand clutch hitting here and there in the season, but they knew better than to expect either to challenge Stan Musial or Bill Nicholson for honors when the figures were announced. They knew that Whitey Wietelmann played a most acceptable shortstop all year, but they also knew that Eddie Miller, former holder of that job here, would top Whitey in the records. They were aware that second and third base were not played too well for the Braves.

Pleasure in Pitching Figures

They knew, however, that if there was to be any pleasure in the reading of the averages, it would be in the pitching figures. They were correct. The Big Four, composed of Al Javery, Nate Andrews, Jim Tobin and Red Barrett, stood up well, especially as a group, in those averages. With support that left much to be desired, defensively and offensively, they could not be expected to have superlative earned-run averages. Under the conditions, they DID have good E.R.A. figures, much better than was believed they would.

Andrews was the most sinned-against pitcher in the group all year and yet he topped the Big Four in E.R.A. with a figure of 2.57, which placed him fifth among the pitchers of the league. His seasonal record was 14 and 20, which should have been the reverse. Nate lost at least six heart-breakers. He pitched 23 complete games of the 36 in which he took part, and in 284 innings hurled was charged with 81 earned runs.

Andrews was the first of the Boston pitchers found in the list. Last of the four in E.R.A. rating was Javery. Without taking a bit of credit from Andrews, this shows the peculiar slant the figures give. As grand a pitcher as Nate was, Javery was one of the best in the game last season. He had everything

Paul Wargo's 15- Outfield Chances Believed Record

When Toronto and Rochester of the International League battled for 19 innings, July 24 last, Paul Wargo, Red Wing right fielder, probably set an all-time record for activity in his position for a single game. Wargo had 14 putouts and one assist during the contest, seven of the chances being handled during the regulation nine innings and eight in overtime.

it takes, except a team which could support him in deserving style.

Jave pitched only 19 complete games of the 41 in which he took part, but he worked in more innings than anybody else, 303. That had something to do with the fact that more hits were made off him than any other pitcher and more earned runs were charged against him—108—giving him an E.R.A. of 3.21. However, we know seven National League managers, not including Casey Stengel, who would recommend a purchase price of five high figures if they could wean Jave away from the Braves despite his "lowly" E.R.A.

Tobin pitched 24 complete games and Rip Sewell, with 25, was the only one who topped him in this respect. The Braves' butterfly purveyor worked 250 innings in 38 games with 74 earned runs, giving him a mark of 2.66 and ninth place in that standing. Barrett had 14 complete games, pitched 255 innings, and allowed 90 earned runs for 3.18.

This Big Four pitched a total of 80 complete games and the team mark was 87. No other group of pitchers could compare with that record of workhorse achievement. Imagine their showing if they had had the Cardinals or Yankees supporting them!

Because of the work of that quartette, the Braves were fourth in team pitching. They were sixth in batting and seventh in fielding. That just about explains the Braves' situation in 1943.