

# Dad Groomed Fairly for Career in Big Time

## Ex-Coast Leaguer Had Son Playing Semi-Pro Ball at 11

### Endless Hours of Practicing Paid Off With Picture Swing

**Ron** Battled Back After Miserable Showing Last Spring, Finished Second to Moon on Dodgers With .322 Bat Mark

By BOB HUNTER

LOS ANGELES, Calif.

It was on July 29 of last season, the place was Pittsburgh, the score was tied and it was the last inning.

Ron Fairly was called off the bench to pinch-hit and shot a crisp single to right that not only drove in the winning run for a 5 to 4 victory, but slipped the Dodgers into first place.

It was the first time Fairly, a red-headed, clean-cut, lefthanded swinger, had been in a game in a week, when his two doubles had led his team to a thrilling 2 to 1 victory over the Cardinals.

The next morning Ron received a telephone call from his dad in Long Beach, and he started to explain his heroics to the senior Fairly, himself a pro for 13 years, mostly in the Coast league.

"I hit the ball good, Dad," explained the understandably excited youngster. "I waited for my pitch, and I hit it good."

The pause from the Long Beach end of the line puzzled Ron, then came the reply in the form of a question: "You hit it good, did you? And you scored Roseboro from second on a close play. Right?"

"Sure, that's right," answered Ron. "You were listening, weren't you?"

"Yes, and I heard them say you still were on first base after the play. Now, tell me what you were doing there. You had to know they'd make the play at the plate for the go-ahead run. You knew they'd never cut off the throw, still you stayed there."

Ron waited, and his dad shot him the final sentence:

"Remember, son, the Dodgers might have needed your run before it was over."

#### Tagged for '62 Stardom

That's the baseball heritage of Ron Fairly, the All-America boy tagged as one of the team's big stars for 1962.

They say, and truthfully, a father can't put his son in the major leagues, but he certainly can help.

You could tell that Ron was a ball player the first time he walked into Dodgertown, even before that when he starred for Rod Dedeaux' USC Trojans, and even as a gangling kid.

There are few ball players that have a pro trademark and actions from the first, or that have that all-important natural instinct.

Ron Fairly is one of those few.

His dad's 13-year career was just coming to a close when Ronald Ray arrived in their household, and as soon as the boy was able to toddle, their backyard baseball "games" began, even though he was only two years of age.

Through school, the sandlots, American Legion, college and into the National League, son and father marched side by side.

Ron was so far advanced he played semi-pro ball when he was only 11, and American Legion ball before he ever reached high school.

#### Ron a \$60,000 Bargain

Carl used motion pictures, still pictures and blackboards to make Ron a one-in-a-million find for the Dodgers at \$60,000.

He reported to them as an outfielder, but soon was working out with a first baseman's glove, and wound up 1961 as the regular at the gateway. He can do anything, and do it well, except show tremendous speed.

As the result of his father's endless hours of work and interest and patience, Fairly has one of baseball's picture swings, level and true, and with wonderful wrist work. He does need work on the change-up.

Perhaps one of his greatest assets is his eagerness and conduct. Manager Walt Alston often stated he wished he could transplant Fairly's desire to certain other players.

Last spring, he couldn't buy a baseball, and his name was mentioned in

#### 'Rich Ron' Took a Ribbing From Pals on Bonus Loot

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — Ron Fairly, like most bonus babies, has taken a considerable ribbing from teammates on the amount of money (\$60,000) he received for signing a Dodger contract.

"The needling never bothered me," said Ron, "because I knew the fellows were just kidding."

"I remember when I was playing for Des Moines, some of us were walking down the street after a game. One of the fellows spotted an armored car and shouted, 'Hey, look, here comes Fairly's pay.'"

"Another time when Frank Howard (a \$100,000 bonus boy) and I were just starting with the Dodgers, one of the old-timers quipped: 'What are you two guys going to do, buy the club?'"

Fairly said he appreciates the amount of money he received and realizes it's a substantial sum.

"That point was driven home to me," he said, "when my father told me that my bonus represented more money than he made during all of his 13 years in the minors."

most of the "deals" which, of course, failed to materialize. Quite probably he would have been returned to Spokane had not Outfielder Duke Snider suffered a broken elbow early in the season.

"I can think of some players who would have been ready to throw in the towel if they got off to the miserable start he did," offered Alston.

#### Flashes Accurate Wing

Fairly makes up for his lack of pure speed by getting the fleet jump that good players get, and he has a remarkably accurate and fairly strong throwing arm.

Oddly, if you'll check some of the reports on Fairly when he was starting in college, you'll find that some of the scouts "cooled" on him because "his throwing arm is far below major league standard."

Those scouts must be blushing every time they see him cut loose the ball these days.

The 24-year-old "natural" can do just about everything.

He played at four positions in 1961, in all three outfield spots and at first base. He hit .300 as a pinch-hitter, getting on base 12 times in 26 attempts for a .462 on-base average, and batted in seven runs coming off the bench.

His mark of .322 was second on the club only to Wally Moon's .328, and he compiled a .522 slugging average, second on the team only to Duke Snider's .562.

Fairly, of course, has had the best of advice and instruction, in addition to that of his father, not only from Dedeaux at USC, but as soon as he came out of college, when Fresco Thompson put the calipers on him in a game for the first time.

The Dodger vice-president im-

### Earns A-Plus Rating in Dodger Book

SCOUTING REPORT  
**Ron Fairly**  
BATS -- LEFT  
THROWS -- LEFT



diately noted Ron was committing himself a split second too soon at the plate, and suggested that his first move should be backward, not forward.

Pitchers were throwing him junk, and although Fairly is one of the most apt of any pupil, he had his troubles curbing his eagerness, and the change-of-pace pitch to him will receive unusual attention from Alston this spring.

#### Finished With Flourish

While he naturally has improved all along the line, his most rapid strides were noted in the last half of the 1961 season.

In his 52 games after the first All-Star game, he hit .350. In July, he batted .342; in August, the same, and in September, he hit .348, winding up as the star of the National League's second-place club.

One of the few bachelors on the Dodgers, the handsome Fairly really burned up the National League in the last 20 games of the season, knocking in 22 runs with a scorching .372 average.

He watches his weight meticulously, and is so self-disciplined that even a second ice cream cone in a week would be a serious breach for him.

### Shorty Shines at First Base

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—Ron Fairly could be the shortest first baseman in the majors in 1962.

He has shown remarkable skill playing there, although he's only 5-10½ and is an outfielder by trade.

Walter Alston, the quiet manager of the Dodgers, was not in the least shook up when writers and observers wanted to know if he wasn't amazed at the way the boy took to first base.

"Why shouldn't he?" replied Alston. "He's a natural ball player."

BOB HUNTER.

Ron does indulge in the ball player's favorite, the shrimp cocktail, now and then, but never permits himself to go in for doubles.

His regimentation helped him lead the club in batting on the road with a nice .331 average. At the Coliseum, he hit .315, the only Dodger to bat over .300 both at home and away.

Against righthanders, Fairly hit .346, tying him with Moon for the best mark against the orthodox servers.

He also shared another enviable mark with Moon, this one at the National League level. They compiled a .434 on-base average, the best in the entire circuit.

Fairly's log record shows he has

the best walk rate on the club for 1961.

Carl Fairly's son is as level-headed as his flat-top haircut, having no interest in sports cars, sailboats or surfing, although he was born practically on the sand at Long Beach.

Rock 'n' roll is not for him, and he's obliging when it comes to appearing at youth, school and church groups.

He has just one interest, one hobby, one vocation, one avocation . . . and one goal.

They are all spelled baseball for this budding Dodger star who, actually, never was a rookie, except for actual experience.

# Story-Book Hurling Adds Real-Life Tint to Dodger Flag Tale

Reliever Perranoski Matches Strides With Koufax;  
Podres Chalks Up Shutout in Return to Active Duty

By BOB HUNTER

LOS ANGELES, Calif.

If pitching is the name of the game, the Dodgers, as the season turns the corner into June, can put it up in bright lights on their huge message board.

Sandy Koufax gave 'em a flawless format when he tossed a no-hitter against the jumbo Giants to eliminate concern over his most recent injury, a soreness in his shoulder which cost him three starts.

Then, Johnny Podres, who also had been sidelined for a couple of weeks following a cortisone shot in his shoulder, shut out Pittsburgh for his second win of 1963.

He took up the slack for Bob Miller, a three-time winner who twisted his ankle.

Meanwhile, Don Drysdale notched victory No. 4, and after Koufax shut out the Mets on two singles, 1-0, on May 19, Lefty Ron Perranoski came on in relief in that second game to win in 13 innings, 4-2, on Frank Howard's seventh home run.

These were the sixth wins against one defeat for both Koufax and Perranoski, representing more than half the club's 23 victories at the time.

Perranoski worked seven innings in the marathon match with the Mets, the longest he had gone since he went eight against the Cubs two years ago.

The two slick southpaws, one a starter and the other the king of the bull pen who is a powerful candidate for THE SPORTING NEWS' coveted Firemen's Award, lowered their earned-run averages to 1.06 (Koufax), best in the majors, and 2.03 (Perranoski).

## Club Extends Win Streak

After Drysdale's victory over Casey Stengel's battling Mets on May 22, Walter Alston's team had won 13 of 15 since his famous speech when he chewed the players out for complaining about crowded conditions on the bus to Pittsburgh's airport.

On the home stand the Dodgers had won nine of ten against the Giants, Phils, Pirates and Mets, and had climbed from five games down to just one behind the big boppers from San Francisco.

While some of the hitters have no special love for spacious Dodger Stadium, it has been a cup of tea for some of the pitchers, notably Southpaw Koufax.

After he beat the Mets, May 19, for his fifth straight win, his home record was 4-0 and, in his 46 innings in O'Malley palace, he had surrendered just two earned runs.

Koufax, in defeating the Mets for the fourth straight time, stretched his

## 'Don't Give Up on Moose,' Ex-Boss Del Tells Dodgers

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — Some fans already have written off the Moose Skowron deal as one of baseball's winter boo-boos, but Del Webb, who knows more about the ex-Yankee than anyone around here, claims it ain't so.

"You wait and see, he'll be carrying the club in another month, like he did our team last year when Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris faltered," said the Yankee owner who traded Skowron to the Dodgers for Stan Williams.

"When Moose isn't hitting, he gets down on himself," Webb said. "He chases curve balls and they don't even have to be near the plate. Neither he, nor anyone else, knows what gets into him."

"But when he's hitting, you can't get him out and he comes out swinging."

"He carried us from his sixth place in the batting order last year, just when we needed it."

## Ron Adept on Links, Too; Wins Club Title With 81

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—Ron Fairly proved he is as skillful with woods and irons as he is with a glove and bat on May 20, when he won the Dodger golf tournament.

Ron shot an 81 at the Woodland C. C. to beat out Sandy Koufax and Ed Roebuck, who had 85s.

## FAIRLY

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

but, like hubby, has to admit "this is Ron's greatest year yet."

Ron, who received more for a bonus than his dad did in salary in 13 professional seasons, probably is the shortest first baseman in the majors at 5-10½.

"But he's becoming one of the best in the league," pointed out Alston, "although he's comparatively new at the position."

Alston agrees with Fairly that he's a better hitter when he doesn't keep one eye on the fences, although Ron had hit four homers by May 21, with his thriller coming in Philly with one on and two out in the ninth, and the Dodgers trailing, 2-1.

He skimmed one of Art Mahaffey's curves over the right field boards for the victory.

### Ron Waits for His Pitch

"But when he's hitting well," stated Alston, "he's not going for the fences, but just waiting and rapping the ball where it's pitched."

"When he swings that way, he's a mighty sound batter."

"Another thing about Fairly, you don't have to platoon him, as he hits right or lefthanders with equal vigor."

Fairly, a lefthanded swinger, has had to battle a weakness against off-speed pitches. When he was playing at Southern Cal for Rod Dedeaux, some scouts cooled on him because of his "poor" arm, which now is considered one of the best.

"He has good common sense and good baseball sense," went on the Dodger manager. "However, I hope he gets better control of his temper flareups. They don't help him, or any other player, especially when you are trying to bust out of a slump."

In this day of bonus legislation that has cut playing personnel of most clubs, especially the contenders, a versatile athlete like Fairly is at a premium.

Last season, the Dodgers' shining star, who was playing semi-pro ball at 11 and American Legion ball even before he reached high school, performed at four positions. He started 117 games at first base, six in right field, four in center and two in left.

Before Ron became a permanent Dodger, Jackie Robinson told friends that the club was foolish not to use Fairly every day, insisting, "I'd play him over Willie Davis."

### Eagle Eye at Plate

Fairly, next to Gilliam, probably has the best eye at the plate, seldom striking out in clutch situations. In fact, last season he had the best on-base average on the team, with a .379 percentage.

In 1961, he tied Wally Moon for the best on-base average in the league with a .434 log.

Last season, as he has been doing this year in leading the Dodgers from seventh place to the top of the deck, he batted .299 with men on base, as compared to .260 with the sacks empty.

"I think I'm over the toughest trials of my major league career," said Fairly. "And it wasn't the seasonal slumps or learning first base, or anything like that."

"It was the uncertainty of my future after each spring training." But now Fairly's success, coupled with the counseling of Gilliam, who is an old hand at being "unemployed," has taught Fairly that he's here to stay, even with the drought that sets in every spring.

There has to be room on the Dodgers for Ron just as for Junior.

They are two of the brightest stars in the team's climb from nowhere.



Ron Perranoski

scoreless innings against the New York club to 25.

Coupled with the story-book Dodger pitching was a pick-up in the hitting department, a spurt that actually started in Pittsburgh when Los Angeles lost three of the four games.

In the next 15 games, through the Met twin-bill, May 19, the team hit at a .300 average to raise the club mark from .223 to .251, with Ron Fairly, Jim Gilliam and John Roseboro providing the most consistent belting.

### Four Over .300 Mark

Fairly, Gilliam and Wally Moon were over the .300 level, and Lee Walls, the pinch-hitter de luxe, also boosted his figure above that level.

**Dodger Dope:** When the Phils left Los Angeles, they said good-bye to Art Mahaffey, temporarily, and their ace righthander worked out with the Dodgers while receiving treatment from the club physician, Dr. Robert Kerlan. . . . Asked how he felt after his 12-inning win over the Phils, May 15, Sandy Koufax said, "Great. The only thing that happened was to my socks," and he pointed to holes in the toes on either foot. "I guess they make these things to go only nine innings." . . . A writer asked Ron Fairly what he liked best, the outfield or first base. "I like to hit best," replied the versatile redhead. . . . Walt Alston was ejected one of the rare times, May 15, for protesting a strike call. . . . The Dodgers, as usual, are leading the majors in stolen bases with 32, and have been caught only ten times. . . . Danny Goodnan, the popular concessionaire, celebrated his birthday, May 17. . . . Shortly after Jeff Torborg took his last college examination at Rutgers University May 22, he was signed by the Dodgers' Alex Campanis, scouting director, and Rudy Ruffer, area scout, for \$100,000. . . . Torborg, a catcher, graduates June 5 and will be married June 6. He batted .537 for Rutgers this year.

# Hill Magic at Chavez Each Saturday Night

Hurlers Chalk Up 11 Sparklers on Same Night of Week,  
Including Trio of No-Hitters and One Two-Hit Special

By JAMES ENRIGHT

CHICAGO, Ill.

MEMO TO WALTER O'MALLEY, president of the Los Angeles Dodgers, master of Dodger Stadium and the Angels' landlord in Chavez Ravine:

What goes on the Saturday night shift in your favorite baseball palace?

Baseball generally is perplexed over the outstanding way pitchers flex their muscles and magic so effectively when they are exposed to the Saturday after-dark spotlight in O'Malleyville. Since May 5 a year ago, there have been 11 super-sparkling pitching performances on Saturday nights in the palace you built in the middle of the world's most famous ravine.

Are pitchers trying to prove the song is right? Saturday night is the loneliest night of the week—for hitters! What happens on this particular night to make pitchers strong and hitters weak?

I've heard said that nothing is impossible with the Irishman who grew like the tree in Brooklyn, and moved to Los Angeles to become a wealthier man as that city's No. 1 baseball baron.

Kiddingly, questions have been asked: Has Walter O'Malley ways and means of cutting down the voltage of the park's lighting system on Saturday night?

Is the batter's background different on Saturday than other nights of the week?

Has anybody checked to see if the outfield fences are on wheels and Saturday night is the only night when these wheels are mobile?

## Special Occasion for Sandy's Spectacular Stunts

You'll have to admit, Walter, with or without any comment from TV's Tom Duggan on the subject, it is a bit unusual for three no-hitters, one two-hitter, three three-hitters and four four-hitters to show in your park once the sun sets and you turn on the lights for the Saturday night patrons.

Here is a rundown on Saturday night shenanigans in Chavez Ravine:

### DODGERS

June 16, 1962—Dick Farrell pitches three-hitter to give Houston 4-1 win over Dodgers and Johnny Podres.

June 30, 1962—Sandy Koufax pitches no-hit, no-run game as Dodgers beat New York Mets, 5-0.

September 8, 1962—Pete Richert pitches four-hitter to give Dodgers 6-1 victory over Pittsburgh.

September 29, 1962—Ernie Broglio limits Dodgers to two hits in Cardinals' 2-0 victory.

April 27, 1963—Cardinals' blank Dodgers, 3-0, on Ray Washburn's three-hitter.

May 11, 1963—Sandy Koufax pitches second no-hit, no-run game of his career as Dodgers defeat Giants, 8-0.

### ANGELS

May 5, 1962—Bo Belinsky pitches no-hit, no-run game as Angels beat Baltimore, 2-0.

June 2, 1962—Ken McBride pitches four-hitter as Angels defeat Yankees and Whitey Ford, 6-1.

July 21, 1962—McBride blanks Cleveland on four hits as Angels win, 4-0.

August 11, 1962—Belinsky yields four hits in Angels' 3-0 victory over Minnesota Twins.

April 13, 1963—Angels beat White Sox, 1-0, in 15 innings as McBride pitches no-hitter for seven innings and two-hitter for 11 innings. Two other pitchers assist in three-hit total yield.

In my probe designed to try to find the reason for these extraordinary Saturday night performances, one baseball man blamed your chef in the well-appointed Stadium Club. Right off the bat, this might sound ridiculous, but bear the man out as I did when he said:

"O'Malley is one Irishman who enjoys German dishes and, due to this, the chef is permitted to take the Hasenpfeffer out of the baseballs and feature it on the stadium menu—Saturdays only."

## Angels 5-0 in Sparklers; Dodgers Break Even at 3-3

"In this manner, Walter weekly enjoys one of his favorite dishes and the pitchers are permitted to throw the rabbit-less baseballs to make sure there isn't any loss to the club and baseball operations."

Maybe this is a silly solution or theory, but who is to say the man's thinking is incorrect?

In the breakdown of these 11 super-dupers, I find the Dodgers were involved in six—winning three and losing as many. The Angels were the party of the first part in the five other sparklers by winning all of them.

When I asked Bill Rigney for his opinion in connection with this odd situation, the boss man of the Angels allowed:

"Frankly I don't know. To tell the truth, I didn't even realize all these things happened on Saturday nights. I'd like to tell you that's the way we planned it to help prime our Sunday gates, but that isn't so."

"And I don't think I tell my pitchers anything differently on Saturday nights that I don't tell them any other day or night. It's an interesting development and, by golly, I'm going to check it from now on. Then we can compare notes again at the end of the season."

It's an amazing story, Walter. If and when you find the answer, I'd like you to send me the information via Red Patterson, Tommy Seeberg or Irv Kaze, who is to the Angels what Patterson and Seeberg are to your beloved Dodgers.

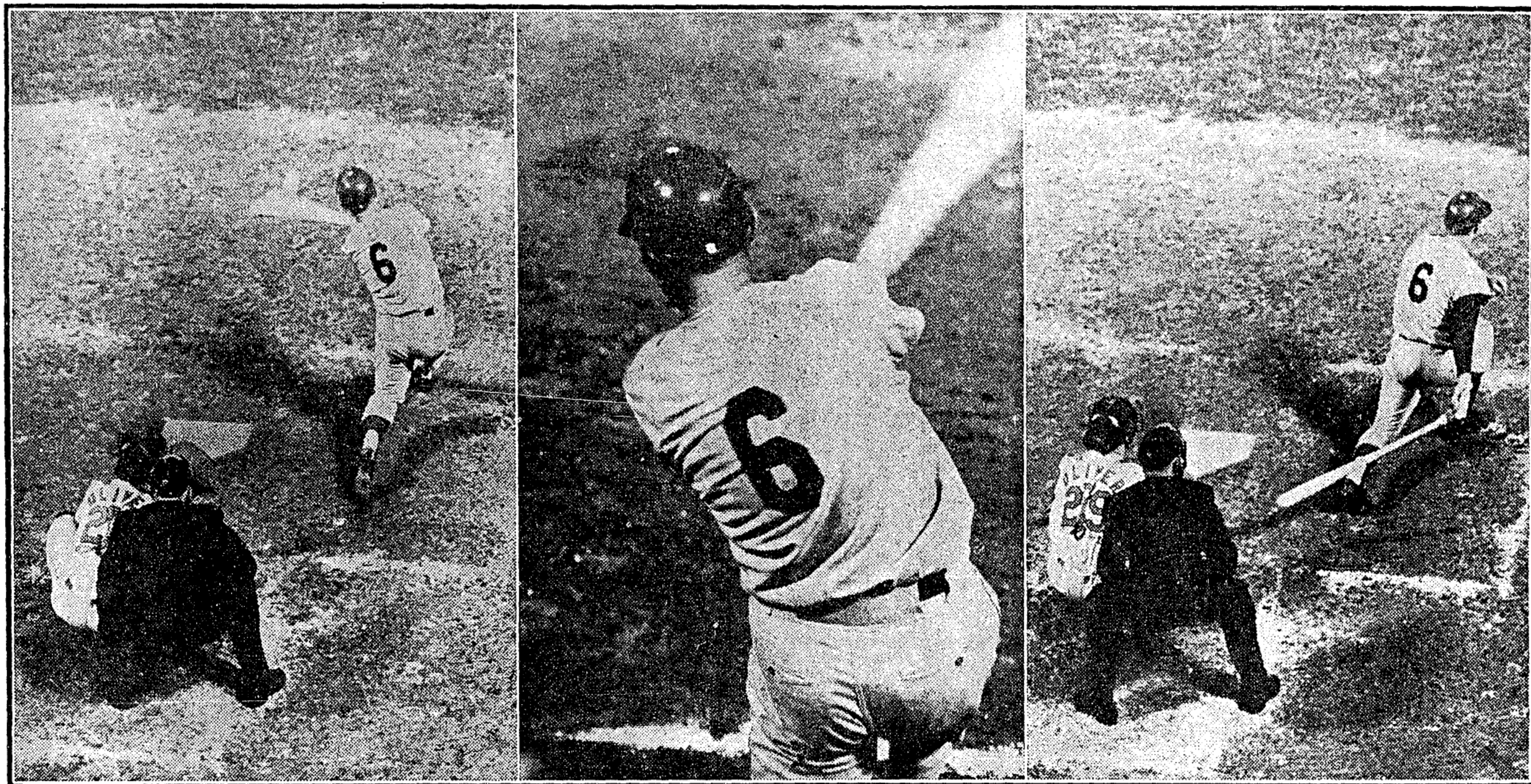
Especially if the thinking about the Hasenpfeffer is true, since it always has been one of my favorite dishes.

Also Phil Wrigley wouldn't mind removing it from the baseballs whenever the St. Louis Cardinals and Bill White show up at his park in Chicago. White only has a .355 lifetime batting average against the Cubs, but Bill hits like he "owns" them, more so than Mr. Wrigley.



Walter O'Malley

# Just Fairly Good? Ron New Swat Star



RON FAIRLY . . . HIS SMOOTH-AS-SILK SWING HELPED LIFT DODGERS OUT OF DOLDRUMS

—PHOTOS BY BOB KURT

## Boosts Plate Tempo After Spring Slump

'Forgotten Man' of Dodgers Sparks Club Climb While Playing 3 Different Posts

By BOB HUNTER  
LOS ANGELES, Calif.

Ron Fairly, the new bridegroom and the new Dodger batting star, does not possess a new format for success.

In fact, it's very similar to that of Jim Gilliam, the senior member of Walter Alston's 1963 cast.

Gilliam never has a job in the spring and his name is mentioned in a dozen deals that never materialize. But still he plays his 145 games and they're all in a Dodger uniform.

It's been that way for half a dozen seasons for Gilliam, and it's been that way every year for Fairly, too, since he became an established Dodger.

In the winter after the 1960 season, when Ron played 14 games for the Dodgers and hit .108, a possible deal with Washington failed because the Senators wanted Fairly instead of Don Demeter, who was offered.

### Feared for Spokane Shift

In 1961, he hit .322 and drove in 48 runs in 245 at-bats, but in the spring of 1962 he started so slowly that he was afraid his next stop would be Spokane. It quite possibly would have been had not Duke Snider suffered a broken elbow.

"I can think of some players who would have been ready to throw in the towel if they got off to the miserable start he did," observed Walt Alston.

But Fairly wound up with a .278 average in 460 at-bats after being caught, along with the rest of the club, in that last-month slump that cost the pennant.

This past spring, Fairly again was unable to buy a base-hit, but it didn't



RON AND THE FAIR SEX . . . SHE GETS AN ASSIST

seem to matter much in the Dodger scheme of things anyway, with Bill Skowron on the scene and Tommy Davis sent back to left field after a brief fling at third base.

And, with Nate Oliver doing everything they said he could, Gilliam was out of the picture as usual and, also as usual, he was joined on the bench by Fairly as Los Angeles' "forgotten men."

Of course, it was the same old story for both.

Gilliam said simply, as news of another "Gilliam deal" hit the wire,

"I'll play my next 145 games for the Dodgers."

However, to the 24-year-old Fairly, who had no place to play, it wasn't such an easy situation to handle. He spent numerous sleepless nights and inactive hours on the bench.

### Not Forgotten for Long

Soon, however, the two forgotten men were in there regularly, Gilliam at third base and second base, and Fairly at first base, left field and center field.

Not only were they playing, but

they were carrying the club as it won 11 of 13 after a sluggish start and extended its winning string to six, longest of the season.

Fairly was firmly entrenched in the National League's top ten, hitting in the important third hole, and playing three positions expertly while helping the Dodgers pare San Francisco's lead from five games to one game in little more than a week.

Gilliam, with a 15-game hitting binge that just wouldn't stop, raised his bat-

## Quits Trying for Homers--Raps Liners

Versatile Whiz Hits at .360 Pace, Knocks in 29 Runs in 31 Games as Regular

ting average from .167 to .311, while playing the two infield positions with all the expertness of his 34 years and agility that belied it.

Fairly, with a batting average that had soared well above the .340 level, has only one explanation for his ascendancy to Dodger stardom and he's not too sure about that one:

"If I'm doing anything differently, it's that I'm not trying to go for home runs. They're just falling in for me. I haven't trained a ny differently. Maybe it's the added experience."

### Davis Injury Opens Way

After his usual miserable spring, it took a week of play and an injury that hospitalized Tommy Davis to get Fairly a regular job each game, although he never did know, from game to game, whether it would be at first base or in the outfield.

After 31 games as a member of the starting cast, Fairly had batted .360 and knocked in 29 runs.

With runners on base, he hit for a remarkable .439 average as compared to .238 with the sacks empty.

"You've got to like Fairly's actions, both at the plate and in the field," said Alston, one of the redhead's many boosters. "He's a sound ball player, with the lack of running speed his only drawback."

Fairly, a handsome carrot top who looks more like the All-America boy than the original, might give some credit to matrimony, since he was married this past winter to Mary Sinclair of San Francisco in a surprise ceremony.

Mary always was a baseball fan

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4, COL. 3)

# Ron's Fair-Haired Boy With Dodgers; Labeled Mr. Clutch

By BOB HUNTER

LOS ANGELES, Calif.

Any number of players—all with justification—have been given various degrees of credit for the Dodger miracle of 1965.

A few, perhaps, like **Ron Fairly**, have been accorded short shrift for their contributions. At least, this is the impression one receives when noting all the off-season interest in the redhead by most of the 19 other clubs.

That he wasn't established as an outfield star before this is due to constant shifting of positions, according to club requirements and dictates.

Last season, **Fairly** played 148 games in the outfield and filled in at first base for 13 others.

The season before, **Ron** played 141 games at first base and not a single one in the outfield.

That was the year, of course, of the great experiment with Frank Howard in right field, when the Dodgers wound up in a dismal sixth-place tie. That winter, Howard was traded to Washington for Claude Osteen.

Starting his sixth full season next April, **Fairly** will show a log of 428 games as an outfielder, including center field, and 416 as a first baseman.

## A Consistent Clouter

In the last four campaigns, the All-America boy has been a graph of consistency, with his runs-batted-in chart showing 71, 77, 74 and 70. He's an excellent clutch hitter. In fact, he's called Mr. Clutch.

This is one of the solid men on whom Walter Alston and Buzie Bavasi will construct the fortunes of 1966 as they attempt to do the "impossible" in the National League—successfully defend a championship.

**Fairly** came to the club as a natural outfielder and played there for 71 games in 1961, while performing at first base in 23.

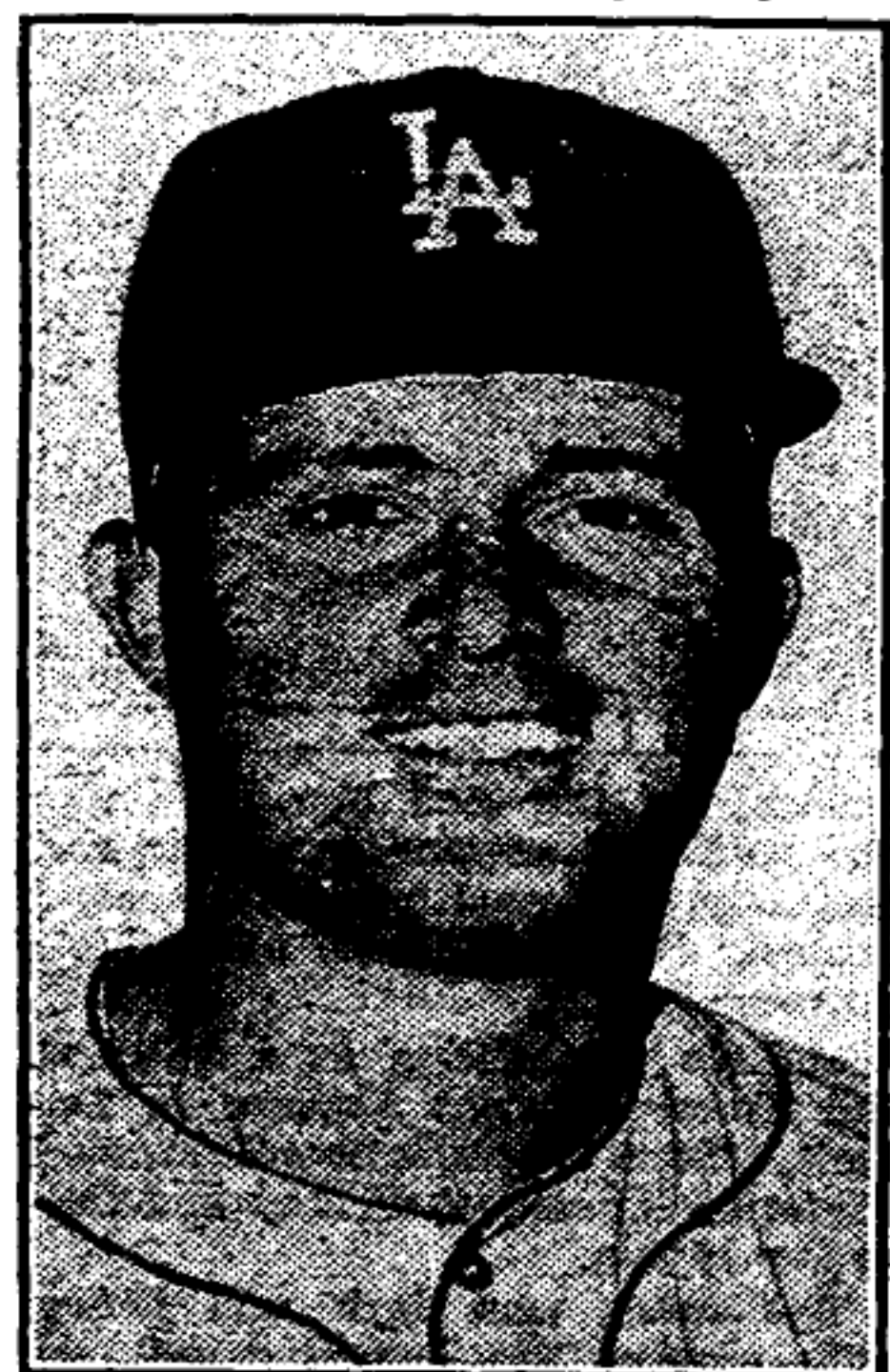
He had demonstrated a natural knack for the position almost from the moment he first reported to the big club at Vero Beach when Alston "suggested" he purchase a first baseman's glove.

In 1962, Gil Hodges and Norm Larker had faded from the limelight, and **Fairly** was in 120 games at first and 48 in the outfield, often appearing at both positions in the same game.

## Buasier Than Moose

Trying to add much-needed right-handed punch, Bavasi acquired Moose Skowron from the Yankees for the 1963 campaign, but **Fairly** played twice as many games at first (119) as the newcomer, appearing in only 45 in the outfield.

"I don't care where I play," **Ron** told THE SPORTING NEWS. "But I do think if I play in one spot, and only one, I will hit better. Playing the outfield exclusively, I'd prob-



Ron Fairly

## Dodgers, Angels to Launch Attendance Duel April 9-10

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—The Dodgers and Angels knock heads in their attendance duel for the first time, April 9-10, the weekend before the 1966 season opens.

While the Angels are dedicating their new Anaheim Stadium against the Giants, the Dodgers will be playing the Indians in a pair at Taj O'Malley.

Walter Alston then will send his world champions in defense of their title the following Tuesday when they host the Astros for three games. On the weekend, the Cubs come into town to complete the first '66 home-stand.

Ticket Chief Walter Nash announced that season ticket holders shortly will receive their renewal blanks for 1966.

ably hit better than if playing first base exclusively. But changing positions doesn't help your batting."

With Skowron gone in 1964, **Fairly** did not appear in the outfield, but was in 141 games at first. Last year, the year of the Great Miracle, **Ron** was in the outfield almost exclusively.

"I don't know how **Fairly** felt about making complete changes in the last two seasons," Manager Alston said. "But if he objected, I never heard about it."

"No move we made was more important to our success last season. Parker made it big at first base, which gave us outstanding defense there as well as right field, where **Fairly's** arm, as well as his fielding, was a key factor."

"In order to win, we had to keep the other team from scoring and that's why Parker and **Fairly** were such strong players."

## Hampered by Injury

"**Fairly** wound up as our leading RBI man, even though he had a one-month slump in that department. Actually, during that time, he had a badly injured thumb which kept him from gripping the bat."

The fact is, during this frustrating period, **Fairly** was swinging with one hand, but still his outfield work did not suffer.

Much of the acclaim went to Willie Davis and Lou Johnson for some of their catches, but **Ron** made his share of them, too.

The season of 1965 was satisfying, for a variety of reasons, to **Fairly** as it was to the others—including the World Series.

In two previous classics (1959 and 1963) with the Dodgers, **Ron** had come to bat only four times.

But, this past season, he made up for lost ground, getting a hit in his first at bat against Minnesota, a home run in the first game. He got hits in all seven games, tying Maury Wills with 11 safeties.

**Fairly** hit for a total of 20 bases, far ahead of anyone, and led them all with six RBIs.

**Fairly's** one of the reasons the Dodgers think they can break the National League hex and win back-to-back pennants.

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## McLAIN

(Continued From Page 3)

his glass, as if mesmerized by the fizz in his soda, and shook his head.

"I know what I've got," he said. "Last year, nobody knew who I was—or cared. Now I'm getting speaking engagements all over the country."

"I got an invitation from Lockport, N. Y. Get that—Lockport, N. Y. I'd never even heard of Lockport, N. Y. I had no idea where it was."

"But they ask me to speak and I go there and they give me the key to the city. How about that?"

As he spoke, McLain's face was as sober as the soda-pop he was drinking. "A lot of things are breaking for me," he said.

He waved around the darkened room.

## Realizing Two Ambitions

"I love being here, love playing for these people," he said. "The two things I've always wanted to do in life is play baseball and play the organ."

"Now I'm doing both . . . but I know why I'm here. I'm here because I won those 16 games last season. You've got to put out to stay up there and I intend to stay up there."

A month ago, shortly after the season ended, McLain got the surprise of his young life.

He bent over to tie his shoelace and felt some pressure against his belt buckle.

"I couldn't believe it," he said. That night he went right to work putting the tile in his basement.

"I got rid of that in a hurry—and it's not coming back," he said.

"What about getting fat up here?" I asked him. I was tapping the side of my head.

"Don't worry about that," said McLain. "I like being a ball player

## McLain Finds It Pays to Advertise

DETROIT, Mich.—Denny McLain found it pays to advertise.

Last spring, when the Tigers returned from camp, the young hurler inserted an ad in a Royal Oak (Mich.) newspaper offering to give organ lessons.

The ad read: "Organ lessons, 30 min. per day, at my convenience." He didn't list his name, giving only his phone number. He didn't want people coming around to talk baseball. The response to the-ad was gratifying. He received 35 replies.

and I like what it can do for me. But it's not going to change me.

"You can't play this game forever and, if my arm goes bad, I could be out looking for a job tomorrow," he said.

## Music to Fall Back On

He looked straight across the table.

"I'm thankful about one thing," he said. "I'm thankful I've got my music. Even if I never play another game of baseball, I think I could make a living with my music."

McLain admitted he ran with a "tough bunch" in his boyhood days in Chicago. He is thankful he didn't get into serious trouble.

"My dad talked me into taking organ lessons," said McLain. "It was more of a dare than anything. I didn't realize it then, but now I can see what he was doing."

"He wanted to get me in off the streets, to give me an interest. When I learned how to play, he used to say to me, 'Denny, this is something you'll always have. Nobody can take it from you.'"

"Now I could play 24 hours a day."

McLain originally was signed by the White Sox and created a stir when he pitched a no-hitter in his first game in professional ball at Harlan (Ky.) in 1962.

The White Sox got caught in the bind of the tricky first-year rule and lost McLain to the Tigers in the spring of '63 for \$8,000. The White Sox had a choice—they could keep

two of their three first-year players: Bruce Howard, Dave DeBusschere and McLain.

They went with Howard and DeBusschere. Howard hasn't clicked like McLain and DeBusschere, now the coach of the Detroit Pistons' pro basketball team, says he is through with baseball.

McLain had a 4-5 record with the Tigers in 1964 and everyone says he learned to be a pitcher last winter while winning 16 for Mayaguez in the Puerto Rican League.

## 100 Bottles a Week

He's an unusual lad in many ways and freely admitted to drinking a hundred bottles of pop a week. The Tigers were horrified when they learned of his habit and put a \$10 tariff on any bottle of pop he had in the clubhouse before a game.

Nobody knew about his musical talents, either, unless he let the word slip quite by accident late last season. The boy is pretty good. I listened to him play for two hours the night I interviewed him. He played easily, without effort, and seemed to enjoy every song.

"I still can't believe they're paying me," he said.

McLain smiled. "But do you want to know what a big man I am?" he said. "Take a look how they spelled my name on the sign outside."

Appearing Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Denny McLain of the Detroit Tigers.

# White Comeback May Hinge on Allen Showing

By ALLEN LEWIS

PHILADELPHIA, Pa.

The next chapter in the Bill White story has yet to be written. The Phillies' first baseman, who reached the top of his profession when he helped the Cardinals win the world championship in 1964, went through his most difficult season last year when a serious injury made him a part-time player unable to call on all his former skills.

But this is next year and White is working toward a comeback that everyone in baseball is hoping will be a complete success.

At this time, however, it isn't known whether such a thing is possible, nor is it known in what uniform such an event might take place. A great deal of the comeback from the Achilles tendon severed in December, 1966, while playing paddleball in a St. Louis gym, depends on Bill himself. But the uniform he will wear while attempting it may depend on another player: Richie Allen.

Allen, too, is attempting a comeback in 1968, for the third baseman and slugger of the Phillies cut his hand severely late last season and had to sit out the final six weeks of the season. His cuts were so severe, affecting his wrist, fingers and grip in his right hand, it was not known for some months whether Allen would be able to play baseball again.

## Hand May Stay Weak

At this point, it appears that he will be able to play, although he may never have complete strength in his right hand, the strength which has enabled him to hit some of the longest balls in baseball history.

Even more doubtful is whether Allen will be able to throw the ball across the diamond with enough accuracy to enable him to continue as a third baseman.

If he cannot play third but is still able to swing a bat in a manner that can help a club which needs all the punch it can muster, there are two avenues open to Manager Gene Mauch.

First, Mauch can return Allen to left field, a position he played in his final years in the minors. A position, it might be added, he played none too well and without enthusiasm. Richie, who started out as a shortstop, has always preferred being where the action is.

Second, Mauch can move Allen to first base, a spot that would give Richie enough action, but minimize his fielding and throwing deficiencies.

If that happens, however, White then becomes expendable, and the Phillies would undoubtedly attempt to trade the veteran for either a third baseman or an outfielder or even a pitcher.

## Bill Is a Realist

White, who reached the ripe athletic age of 34 on January 28, has enough to worry about without concerning himself about being traded. Still, he's realistic enough to know it could happen to him for the third time in his career.

There were times last season when Bill undoubtedly gave thought to retirement as an active player. He has a radio-TV position awaiting him that not only interests him, but would pay fairly well, although not in the manner he has grown used to in recent years.

Unless something happens to change his mind, however, White has decided to play at least one more year, and has been working toward that end since the season ended. He's encouraged by the progress he has made.

After a recent visit to Cardinal trainer Bob Bauman, White said: "He checked the ankle, and told me the circulation is completely



Bill White

restored except in the immediate area of the scar—and that's considered normal.

"Earlier in the winter," White said, "I saw Dr. (Stan) London, who performed the operation. He was well pleased. He suggested I start playing paddleball again. I told him, 'You're kidding!'"

"He wasn't kidding. His handball partner did the same thing

I did. Dr. London operated on him and they're playing in the Nationals together again.

"It's not a mental block about paddleball," White added. "I just don't want to take that chance."

## Works Out in Gym

Instead, White works out regularly in a gym playing basketball and running on the hard floor. He also straps weights to his right foot and does prescribed exercises to strengthen the muscles and ligaments in the ankle and leg.

"I'm making cutting moves real well," he said. "I think my lateral moves are back to normal. But running on a hard floor is not the same as making those moves on a soft infield. That will be the big test. Right now, my lateral movement is 100 percent."

White has lived with this injury for more than a year, but he's beginning to forget.

"The one big thing I'm pleased about is that I've stopped thinking about the ankle. Unless somebody brings it up, I'm not aware of it. I sure hope it stays that way."

That's not too likely in view of how much depends on White's recovery.

**Phillie Fodder:** Pitcher Larry Jackson and catcher Mike Ryan became the third and fourth members of the Phillies to sign their

## Fairly Answer To a Bad Year: 'Just Forget It'

By BOB HUNTER

LOS ANGELES, Calif.

It's almost that time again and, while the weather undoubtedly will be warm in Vero Beach, the thought of spring training must make Ron Fairly shudder.

Last spring he hit .222, which is a bad dream whether you read it forward or backward, then went on to his one bad season, winding up with a .220 average. But still the Dodgers' All-America boy insists he has the answer.

"How can I combat what happened to me last year?" he pondered. "That's easy, I'm going to forget it."

"I think it's common for players to have that one bad season."

"If they can disregard it and bounce back, the whole thing will be absorbed in the long-range picture."

"There's one thing about a year like that. It surely humbles you. I used to think golf was the humbling game, but I know better now."

"Just when you think you have everything in the game of baseball beaten down, a year like this comes along, then you know better."

The redhead has had more than his share of injuries during his career.

## No Injuries in '67

In 1966, he missed almost a month with bruised ribs after a second base collision with Ron Hunt, then with the Mets. But injuries played no part in his dismal decline of 1967.

Ron participated in 153 games, tops for a Dodger, went to bat 486 times and saw considerable action against both right and left-handed pitching.

"It was almost like a plague last season," recounted Fairly. "Most of the regulars had bad seasons at the plate."

"We started badly, and from there things got worse. The incentive to fight back just wasn't there."

"Finally, we got to feeling sorry



Ron Fairly

for ourselves, the worst thing that can happen to a club."

Despite the off year, Fairly was not among the early-bird Dodgers who started pre-spring workouts at the Stadium at the end of January.

"Six weeks in Florida is long enough for me," he said. "As a matter of fact, that even wearies me some."

## Ron Welcomes News

However, the news that Walter Alston planned two-a-day workouts, including one at Dodgertown when the team is playing an exhibition elsewhere, was welcomed by Fairly.

"There's nothing I dislike more than to make a spring trip, get half a dozen swings in the cage, then sit on the bench while the Skipper takes a look at the kids."

"I have nothing against the rookies, mind you, but I like to see as much pitching as possible in the spring. That's what training is for."

Vice-President Buzzie Bavasi recently gave Fairly a vote of confidence when he listed him as a possible super-star, along with Al Ferrara, Bill Singer, Alan Foster and Jim Lefebvre.

"We're in much the same position now as when we moved to

## Buccos Bombed Quaker Hurlers at a .302 Tempo

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. — A Phillies' all-opponent team, selected on the basis of average, would be dominated by the Pirates, who batted .302 as a team against them, 34 points higher than any other club in 1967 against the Quakers.

The outfield would have Willie Stargell (.375), Matty Alou (.388) and Roberto Clemente (.394). Gene Alley (.377) would be the shortstop. The Cards' Tim McCarver (.378) would be the catcher, and the rest of the infield would have the Braves' Felipe Alou (.320) at first base, the Cubs' Glenn Beckert (.344) at second and the Astros' Bob Aspromonte (.321) at third.

The Cubs' Ferguson Jenkins, the Reds' Milt Pappas and the Cards' Bob Gibson were the top pitchers, all with 3-0 records against the Phillies.

1968 contracts. . . . The Phillies will invite two or three farm system catchers to train with the parent club at Clearwater, beginning February 22. The roster currently contains only Ryan and Clay Dalrymple as receivers. . . .

## Seven Dodgers Open Early Drills

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—The Dodgers opened pre-spring training workouts at Dodger Stadium January 22 to give players in this area an early opportunity to get into shape before reporting for drills at Vero Beach February 24. Among the players taking part in the first session were Willie Davis, Ron Fairly, Al Ferrara, Jim Lefebvre, Nate Oliver, Claude Osteen and Jim Campanis.

Los Angeles from Brooklyn," pointed out Bavasi. "Our superstars were nearing the end of the line. So in 1959 we developed some new ones and won the world championship."

Bavasi referred to Don Drysdale and Sandy Koufax. Then about midway in the '59 season, Maury Wills was brought up from Spokane and contributed powerfully to the pennant push.

With the deal that sent John Roseboro to Minnesota, Fairly becomes the second-oldest member of the club in point of service, second only to Drysdale.

## .300 Hitter Only Once

Only once has Fairly topped the .300 mark, hitting .322 in 1961.

Fairly always has been a streak player and, obviously, that's what Bavasi is counting on from the redhead.

In the pennant drive of '66, for instance, Fairly knocked in 22 runs in September when the Dodgers stormed from third to first.

There have been numerous occasions when he has been the club's hottest hitter, and when he ties

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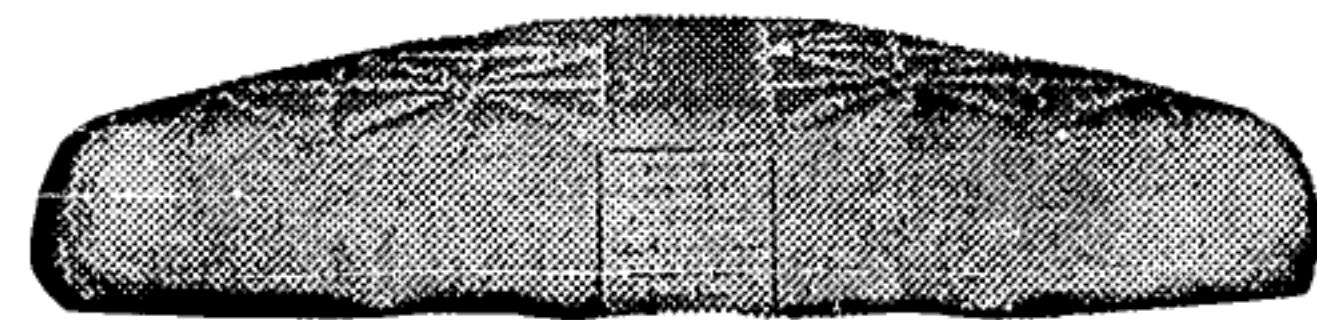
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The Phillies have made only one change in road hotels for the coming season. In Chicago, where the Edgewater Beach closed its doors, the Phillies will move to the LaSalle.

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# 'Fifth-Wheel' Menke Rolls As Astro Cog

By JOHN WILSON

HOUSTON, Tex.—When Denis Menke went to spring training this year, he was kind of a fifth wheel for the Astros' infield.

His No. 1 value was that he was the back-up man at shortstop in case the untried Hector Torres failed to come through. But he was also the extra man to support whatever position needed help.

Going into the final month of the season, the situation has changed considerably.

"He's just the MVP," said coach Buddy Hancken, meaning the most valuable Astro. And, indeed, if the writers' vote for that annual award were taken at the moment, Menke likely would be the winner.

For most of the season, the Astros' infield play has been the best the team has ever had. And the solid, versatile Menke is responsible, to a large extent.

Second baseman Joe Morgan was injured in the fourth game of the season. Julio Gotay replaced Morgan. But Menke soon took over and has done a commendable job. So good, in fact, that there is talk of moving Morgan to the outfield next year.

## Top Defensive Player

But besides Menke's play in the field, he ranks only behind Rusty Staub and Jim Wynn in RBIs. This was an unexpected bonus.

Menke's value has been accentuated by the ability to put him in the lineup at any spot needed.

"I think I started three games at third base," he said, running his mind back over the season. "And I started two at first base."

He also played shortstop 18 games when Felix Torres was having a few early problems or was sidelined with a pulled leg muscle.

But when Torres found himself finally, it left Menke to concentrate as a second baseman. He has exceeded expectations.

"The most I'd played second base was a couple of months one season when (Frank) Bolling was hurt with the Braves," Menke said.

"When the season started, I said I felt more natural at shortstop. That was because I had played there most. But now, I think I could do the job out there."

Was he just talking about infield positions. "No, the outfield, too," Menke said.

"He has done a terrific job for us," coach Mel McGaha commented.

## Confidence Comes Back

And another coach, Salty Parker, said, "He has reestablished himself. He got his own confidence back and he helped the kid." Torres, of course, is "the kid."

The reason there might have been a need for Menke to restore his own confidence was the business of his trade from Atlanta, and the reported reason for it.

Menke read that Atlanta's Paul Richards said the team had to have a shortstop if the Braves hoped to move up in the standings. Menke was playing short for the Braves. It was the bitterest thing Denis had been called on to swallow in baseball.

So he reported to spring training a week ahead of schedule and has never let up.

Menke doesn't know what the Astros' plans will be next spring. He hopes he doesn't start out again as their utilityman.

"I feel like I've played well enough to rate a job as a regular," he said.

As for second base, he said, "I



Denis Menke

would say it is the easiest of the infield jobs. You don't have the long throws and you don't have to charge as many balls. The only tough play is on the double play."

Menke has taken his share of spills at turning the double play. But he has escaped any kind of injury that would take him out of the lineup. And he has done an excellent job of relaying the ball to first base on the tough play.

Menke has been one of the big plus values for the Astros for the 1968 season.

**Astronotes:** Torres had an 0-for-19 string that dropped his batting average to .221 before he singled in the first inning of a game against the Dodgers. . . . Doug Rader remained at home to try to shake a bronchial infection as the Astros left on a 17-day trip. . . . In nine of Steve Shea's first 13 relief appearances, he got either a win, loss or save. . . . Denny Lemaster went 13 days between starts while getting over a sore shoulder. . . . John Buzhardt had not given up a home run in his first 71½ innings this year. . . . Larry Dierker, Pat House, Morgan and Torres all have birthdays in September.

# Buzzie Sees 'Another Alston' in Gomez

By PAUL COUR

SAN DIEGO, Calif.—Someone asked Buzzie Bavasi what endeared him about Walter Alston as the Dodger manager for 14 years.

Bavasi reflected a second, then replied with a faint smile, "Winning."

And Bavasi sees in Preston Gomez, his choice to manage San Diego's first major league baseball club, the makings of another Alston.

"Preston's a lot like Alston in many ways," said Bavasi, president and part-owner of the new National League expansion club. "He'll get things done in a quiet sort of way."

Gomez, a 45-year-old native of Cuba, was in his fourth year as Dodger coach under Alston when tapped by Bavasi, the ex-Dodger general manager. Gomez was given his release by the Dodgers to accept the San Diego post.

Alston, who won six pennants and four world titles with the Dodgers, is one of five managers Gomez singled out for admiration when asked if he'd pattern his managing after anyone.

"I'd say Walter Alston is No. 1 when it comes to handling men," said the nattily-dressed Gomez, who speaks with a strong Latin accent. "I admire Leo Durocher for his quick-mindedness, Harry Walker for his gambling on the field, Bob Skinner for the running game he advocates and Gene Mauch for his strategy."

## He's Willing to Gamble

Gomez left the impression, however, that he won't copy anyone, but will be his own manager.

He describes himself as a manager "who won't be afraid to gamble."

Speed is the necessary ingredient, obviously, said Gomez, for a gambling game.

"You can't gamble without it," he continued. "With our big park (San Diego Stadium), we're going to try to go for the running game. We should be able to pick up some pretty good players in the expansion draft. The main thing is to be strong up the middle (catching, second base, shortstop and center field)."

"We should wind up with some pretty good pitchers. I'll recommend we go for young players. In two or three years, we can build a pretty good ball club around those fellows. We may have eight or ten established players. From the 20 or so younger ones, we can build for the future. There were the Jim Fregosis and Dean Chances in the last expansion draft and there'll be some just like them in this one."

G. M. Eddie Leishman was in agreement with Bavasi that Gomez was the man the Padres wanted.

"We considered others, but Preston is the man we wanted most," said Leishman. "He's my kind of manager."

Gomez said he'll be a strict manager in the sense that he'll have rules and enforce them.

"A manager has to have the respect of his players and he, in turn, returns that respect," said Gomez. "You have to have rules, and it's no good if you don't get players to abide by them."

Gomez and Bavasi are realistic about the Padres' chances in their maiden season.

## Tough Row to Hoe

"There's no use kidding ourselves," said Bavasi. "We're going to have it tough for a couple of years. We're going to try not to take ourselves too seriously for a while."

"We're going to have some fun. The Mets had the right idea. They capitalized on their lack of success and were the brunt of a lot of jokes and people came out to see them get beat."

By an overwhelming mandate of the fans, San Diego will keep the nickname of Padres. A poll favored its retention by a vote of 4,940 to 177.

Gomez' hiring August 29 was the second major organizational move in three days by Bavasi.

Earlier, he selected a radio-television broadcasting team of Jerry Gross, Frank Sims and Duke Snider.

Snider, the former hero of Brooklyn, will be the color man. Gross and Sims, veterans of broadcasting, will handle the play-by-play. Gross was formerly on the announcing staff of the Cardinals and Sims broadcast for the Phillies.



Preston Gomez (left) and Eddie Leishman

# Fairly Speaks Louder With Bigger Stick

By BOB HUNTER

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — Traditionally, September is referred to in the clubhouses and around the batting cages as the month of the salary drive for the players.

This year, however, September has taken on added significance, with players in both leagues making their "protective" drives, battling to get their names on the 15-man untouchable list so they cannot be drafted by one of the new expansion teams.

One of these is **Ron Fairly**. Now the dean of the Dodgers, with the exception of Don Drysdale, who traveled with the franchise from Brooklyn, **Fairly** is making his usual late-season spurt to catch the eye of the "judges" like a race horse.

## September Streak Hitter

The way the club has fared this season, Ron's late spurt won't mean anything—except to him personally—but two years ago it meant a pennant for the Dodgers on the last day of the season.

He drove in 22 runs during September to cannonade the club to the National League championship. The All-America Boy had 31 hits in 78 at-bats for a .391 average, which included eight doubles and five homers.

Right now, **Fairly** is on a .385 binge, as he does what comes naturally to him each September.

While it's probable Vice-President Fresco Thompson and the brass already had placed **Fairly**

on their tentative 15-man protected list, the sizzling finish won't mar his chances of staying but, at the same time, it will highlight him to the expansion clubs.

**Fairly** is a hometown boy with a beautiful suburban mansion and deep-set family ties in Los Angeles.

In addition to owning an elegant home, **Ron** also owns a classic swing, one so classic and smooth that one wonders how he ever gets into a slump.

The fact, of course, is that **Fairly** is a streak hitter, and the consensus seems to be that he hits his low streaks because of impatience.

"I guess I just get so anxious. I fail to wait on pitches like I should when I'm going bad," analyzed the red-head, who is a slick-

## Ron Accepts Bad Years As Expected Experience

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—**Ron Fairly**, whose last two years have been below his career average of .265, although he led the Dodgers in runs batted in last season, takes a philosophical view.

"I guess it was just my turn to have lousy years. Anyone wearing a uniform is going to experience it."

"It's only the exceptional player who doesn't. No, I should say the lucky player."

er both at first base and in the outfield.

What brought him to life in mid-August, however, was a new 36-ounce, 36-inch bat given to him by Houston's Jim Wynn on August 19. That's the date, coincidentally, **Fairly** started his surge, a couple of weeks earlier than usual.

"I had been swinging bats which weighed from 32 to 34 ounces," explained the 30-year-old outfielder, "and I just don't think it was enough wood."

## Good Arm and Glove

**Fairly**, who has an outstanding arm to complement his defensive skills, is almost certain to surpass his watered-down 1967 average of .220.

When **Fairly's** bat is hot, he hits the lefthanded pitchers as well as the righties, and Walter Alston leaves him in there all the time. Adversely, when he's cold, they all get him out, although he has had stretches when he was murdering the ball, but the outfielders were catching his "homicides."

**Ron**, who hit .286 since the All-Star intermission, has added value to the Dodgers because of his ability to play two positions well. While he's a right fielder, his defense is so good that Alston has used him in center field in emergencies.

**Dodger Dope:** Drysdale took a

shot of cortisone in his right shoulder the first time in his career after pitching against the Giants August 24. Big D said the shoulder had been bothering him for about a month, and aside from missing his next turn, his immediate future with the Dodgers was uncertain.

After losing three in a row, although pitching well, Don Sutton defeated the Astros, 4-3, August 26. . . . The Dodgers lost eight in a row, matching their longest skid of the last two seasons, then ended it with a 5-4 win over the Giants August 25. . . . Attendance is only about 80,000 below last season. . . . Tom Haller continues to maintain his niche in the Top Ten with a .290 average.

Jim Lefebvre started his second game in left field against the Astros August 27. The switch-hitting infielder may be shifted to the outfield next season. . . . Paul Popovich's ninth-inning sacrifice fly beat Juan Marichal and the Giants, 5-4, August 25. . . . Wes Parker, sidelined with ulceritic tonsillitis for a couple of weeks, rejoined the team for its semi-final trip. . . . The Dodger Booster Club feted the players at their annual party August 31 at the Sheraton-Palace in San Francisco. . . . Al Ferrara will play in the Arizona Instructional League this winter to strengthen his broken ankle.

# Expos Boast Sizzling Bat—Fairly's

By IAN McDONALD

MONTREAL—Expo Manager Gene Mauch calls it "educated" or "disciplined" hitting.

Ron Fairly points to a break in weather conditions at Montreal and a flock of good pitches.

Opposition pitchers simply call it a nightmare.

The subject is the early-season hitting of Ron Fairly, the soon-to-be 35 Georgian, who makes California his home.

AT THE END of April, Fairly was leading the National League with a .429 average. Through the first 10 days of May, Fairly had leveled off at .386.

"Fairly can hit," Mauch said about the longtime Dodger Mr. Clutch. "Fairly simply is continuing the pace he set last year after the All-Star break when he was the most educated hitter in the National League.

"Fairly likes to pull the ball. The pitchers know that. Now Fairly goes with the pitches. If the balls are outside, Ron drives them to left. Then when the pitch comes in where he wants it, he'll pull."

MAUCH HAD MADE an interesting comment regarding Fairly's offensive contributions just before this season began. Fairly was the Expos' offensive leader last year with a .278 average, 17 home runs and 68 runs batted in.

"Fairly will not do that again," Mauch said bluntly.

The remark needs clarification. Mauch was not knocking the man he has moved from first base to left field. If Fairly gets to play often enough, he will produce those figures again—and again, and again. He always has.

Mauch was simply alluding to the fact that he hoped fellows such as Ken Singleton and Mike Jorgensen would top Fairly's fine figures in their second season of full-time play.

INSTEAD, FAIRLY is setting a pace which is difficult to match. Besides the torrid average, Fairly led the team in home runs through May 11 with five and runs batted in with 11. Since Fairly had started in only 18 games—he does not go against lefthanders this year—the

statistics are impressive.

"Yes, I'd like to say this is the best start I've ever had," the likeable 14-year N. L. veteran said. "I've had more RBIs through 20 games than this, but certainly the average and the home runs are the most I've had so early.

"The wind has been good to me at Jarry Park. Usually, when it's cold, the wind blows in at Jarry Park. This year, it's been blowing out earlier than it usually does.

"That's a big difference, really. Four of my five home runs have been hit at Jarry Park. Other years, three of those four would have been caught. They would not have cleared the fence."

"I've been lucky and getting good pitches. Several times Gene has given me the hit-and-run sign and I've been thrown a good pitch to hit. That's luck."

WHATEVER IT IS, the hitting of Fairly ignited his mates, who went on a tear which found them out-hitting the opposition in nine consecutive games. This is not an Expo format.



Ron Fairly

Singleton and Ron Woods, particularly, caught the hit bug from Fairly. Ron Hunt, contributing offensively as he did in '71, was well over .300, and leading the team with 24 runs scored.

Catcher John Boccabella, a career .220 major league hitter, was belting the ball at a .300 clip through the first four weeks of the schedule.

Fairly has been around too long to complain about his lot. An observer gets the impression that he would rather play the first base position he has handled so well over the years.

Mauch plays Jorgensen at first against righthanders and Hal Breeden against lefthanders.

ASKED IF HE thought he could hit .300 if Mauch continues to sit him out against lefthanders, Fairly said:

"I don't really think that will make any difference. Actually, I'm quite certain that before the year is out you will see me playing against some lefthanders."

Expos: Given the center field job after rookie Jorge Roque played there for three weeks, Woods responded with a tremendous power display. He was 2-for-2 with two runs scored in a win at Atlanta and then, as the team ran a winning streak to four with two victories over Cincinnati. In Montreal, he was the offensive star. Woods singled home the winning run in a 6-3 win and then drove home four with a three-run homer and a ninth-inning double in an 8-6 slugfest the next day. . . . Against the Reds' Don Gullett, Mauch led off his batting order with Hunt, Tom Foli, Woods and Breeden. Each man had three hits and scored two runs.

Pat Jarvis picked up his first win as an Expo in that 8-6 game and managed to wind up on the disabled list at the same time. And he pitched only one inning. Pitching to Dave Concepcion, Jarvis damaged a rib cartilage. . . . Clyde Mashore was recalled from Peninsula (International) and played left field in one of two games the Expos split with the Astros.



Wells Twombly

## Gallico Still Holds True

SAN FRANCISCO—There once was a young and exquisitely gifted sports columnist who decided, after much inner turmoil, to give up the job he loved so dearly and move toward other literary goals. It wasn't that he felt he was too intellectual for his subject matter. Quite the opposite, he had succeeded in bringing to his readers an awareness that there was a mystique to athletics that transcended sweating in public. He didn't want to rewrite the Bible. But he did want to try serious fiction.

His name was Paul Gallico and before he retreated from the newspaper business, he wrote a curiously beautiful and introspective book entitled, "A Farewell to Sports." Nearly four decades have passed since its publication, but much of it holds up splendidly. There is a chapter on baseball which lingers in the mind, surfacing from time to time.

It begins: "Baseball can be the most fascinating game in the world to watch and also the dullest, depending often upon circumstances—that is to say, the quality of the play, the caliber and situation of the competing teams, and also what you yourself bring to the park.

"Baseball talk is a great bore, baseball players are not exactly intellectual giants and baseball figures, box scores and averages even duller. But the things that take place on the field in a tight game played to the hilt by a couple of major league clubs can be completely captivating. If games as a whole bore you, you will never like baseball. But if you take pleasure in the story of conflict unfolding before your eyes . . . then baseball can be quite as fascinating as the theater."

It has been fashionable for many years to put the grand old game away as some sort of ancient curio about to be hauled off to the dump. Baseball has been denounced as a colossal bore and an entertainment fraud unparalleled since P. T. Barnum. Individual games are far too long. There is too much time between pitches, etc. Gallico answered all those charges in 1938.

"One team dresses in white, the other in gray," he wrote, "and the action is static rather than fluid, with sharp refreshing changes from tension and immobility to quick, brilliant bursts of motion. No game in the world is as tidy and dramatically neat as baseball, with cause and effect, crime and punishment, motive and result so cleanly defined. The consequences of a single error or failure pyramid as the game goes on."

It is possible that baseball is neither a dull game nor a dying art form. It was a different sort of America that worshipped the sport so blindly. Baseball is simply misunderstood now, its intrinsic harmony distorted by its critics, most of whom are willing citizens of a plastic society.

## The Age of Chipmunks Begin

There are two main reasons for baseball's harsh treatment. There grew up in the 1950s a whole new class of sportswriters. Most of them had been to college, some of them had even attended graduate school. They looked about them and saw the press boxes cluttered with writers from a different era. These veterans were quite literally idolaters. They mixed their pronouns, speaking of the ball club they covered as "us" and the newspapers who paid them as "they," as in the following sentence: "They just called me from the office and they want me to do a story on our pennant chances this year."

In a test of loyalties, the newspaper almost always lost, to the point where the senior baseball writer was nothing more than an extension of the club's publicity arm. So the new writers of the 1950s rebelled. They asked cocky, irreverent questions. When the manager got bombed in a bar and was escorted to the local drunk tank, they refused to cover up the story. Then they turned on the game itself, hacking away with pruning hooks.

Most of them stood around in the rear of the press box and chattered away, making derogatory comments about the way the game was progressing. One afternoon, Jimmy Cannon, the noted social critic, listened to their jabbering and gave them their names.

"You guys sound like a bunch of chipmunks," he said, not knowing that he had been the original chipmunk.

Nothing was sacred anymore. New York City was the center of this irreverent movement. Whatever happens in that town eventually spreads out through the rest of the nation. It was Stan Isaacs, columnist for Long Island Newsday, who set the tone for the whole movement. After a particularly strenuous World Series game, pitcher Jim Bouton was called away from a press interview to answer the telephone. His wife had called him and he was pleased because she had just had a baby.

"She was feeding the kid," Bouton said.

"Breast or bottle?" Isaacs asked.

Casey Stengel became a legend mostly because he knew how to con the press. But nobody else in the era grew to such massive stature. In another time, Bo Belinsky would have been too huge to handle. But the new journalists left him alone. He was interesting and fresh, but he was no genius. His adventures were nothing more than the bizarre behavior of a young man whose ability to pitch was not so great as his ability to astonish. He was treated with a candor that Dizzy Dean never knew.

## Folk Heroes Dashed by Reality

Readers who have been trained to believe that baseball was a noble sport, filled with dramatic moments and populated by glittering heroes and witty characters, suddenly discovered that an afternoon at the ball park was about as exciting as Saturday night in Petaluma. Shattering icons was the driving force of jock journalism in the 1950s and 1960s and the folk heroes of the game were portrayed as being so real they were downright repulsive.

There was another cause for baseball's drastic fall from grace. There was nothing literary about it.

Television betrayed baseball utterly, but not exactly on purpose. The camera isolated individuals, losing the great geometric scope of the game entirely. Pauses between pitches, when fathers told sons to watch for the squeeze bunt or the hit and run, became nothing more than dead air, filled by the blather of broadcasters. Professional football flourished because it was perfect for the new fan who looked to television to tell him what was good or bad. The boob tube told him that professional football was good because the lens zoomed right in on that big pile of flesh on the scrimmage line and then—zap—followed the receiver down field to catch the ball.

But baseball endures. The mood of the nation is changing once again. Student protest is back at the panty-raid level again. There's no all-out, undeclared foreign war to get agitated over. Soon somebody will discover the archaic grandeur that was baseball in the days before Pete Rozelle. Baseball dull? Only to dull people.

## Furman Bisher



(Continued From Page 5)

Eddie Mathews had an awful decision to make.

AT ANY RATE, spectators, the few who attended, and readers and people on the street were taking out the Braves' miserable getaway on their right fielder—who since has become a left fielder. "He's swinging for home runs or nothing," they snorted, and they wrote.

For several seasons, Aaron has been the target of abuse for those trying to place the blame for shabby team performance. His worst mistake was first base. He saw his error and corrected it without coaxing. But blame the man for the plight of the Braves? How do you blame a man whose average production over the last four years, including his worst, has been 40 home runs, 93 runs scored, 102 runs batted in and 297 total bases?

What Aaron suffers from is a team image that tarnishes his own. His misfortune is to play for a loser. Joy and adulation would be his were the Braves winners, for the growlers would have nothing to growl about and they would consider it a pleasure to go each night and watch their hero hit home runs as a side dish to the main course of

victory.

IN THIS RESPECT, Ruth had a great advantage over Aaron: He played fewer games and went to bat fewer times, but he did it for a team winning pennants. He was surrounded in the batting order by Lou Gehrig, Bob Meusel, Earle Coombs, Tom Lazzeri, Bill Dickey and a procession of power that gave the rival pitcher no chance to coast. But the old Yankees were no fraternity of all-for-one and one-for-allness. In his lifestyle, Ruth was highly vulnerable, but escaped because of a fawning press. For years he and Gehrig carried on a coldly sullen relationship. They never spoke. Winning glossed over all the imperfections.

What Aaron has not been able to overcome is a serious miscalculation in the Braves' administrative offices. He has been the victim of a terribly excessive publicity program, down to the bar of soap he bathes with.

In lieu of a winner, the management has overworked him as an attraction and stuffed him down throats rather than allowing the natural Aaron to develop his own idolization by physical effort. His own attractiveness as a person would come through far more ef-

fectively without the verbiage of a house shill.

A LATE DEVELOPMENT was a promise by Bill Bartholomay, chairman of the Braves' board, to "protect" Aaron against spectator abuse. Another example of administration gaucherie. The best way he could have been protected is to field a team that could emphasize performance and deemphasize dyspepsia.

There is no way the Braves can protect any player from the ill-bred, rawhiding fan except by closing the gates and playing in privacy. And the Braves already lead the National League in privacy this season.

It was to be assumed that the Braves were maintaining a house of order all this time, from parking lot to rest room, and from the beer and booze-gulping lout who offends his seated neighbors as well as paid employes in uniform.

Those dissenters who have reservations about Aaron's breaking Ruth's record may as well concede. He will make it. If it had been a borderline thing previously, he has only been given further inspiration by those who have railed out in protest that he should be so presumptuous. Hank will make it, and as he says in a manner untypical of him, "After that, to hell with 'em."

# Expos Raking in Chips As Fairly Beats Odds

By BOB DUNN

MONTREAL—To support his contention, Gene Mauch verbally notes the first time he saw Ron Fairly.

"He beat us in St. Paul, in 1958 or '59 with a single to center field, off Dean Stone . . . a lefty," recalled Mauch, who was manager at Minneapolis then and who is manager of the Expos now.

Mauch's contention is that Fairly, his lefthanded-hitting first-baseman, can indeed hit lefthanded pitching, which is a direct contradiction of the Gene Mauch School of Percentages. It's just that Mauch seldom gives Fairly the chance.

"Lefthanded pitchers are no mystery to Fairly," Mauch said. "He's just at the age where I figure it's better to rest him in certain spots."

COINCIDENTALLY, the spots occur when southpaws are pitching against the Expos.

"I don't platoon Fairly other than to rest him, to keep him strong," Mauch added. "And when Breeden (Hal Breeden, the righthanded-hitting first baseman) is swinging the bat like he was last year, and like I really believe Breeden will again, it's perfect."

Fairly doesn't necessarily agree.

"I want to play more," he said. "But there are a few guys who want to play more. I imagine Breeden wants to play more, and Mike Jorgensen and Ron Woods. My job is to do the best job I can whenever the manager puts me in."

"So what's happening? In the few times Fairly is getting to face southpaws, he's killing them."

THE LATEST kill was at the expense of San Diego's Dave Tomlin, brought in to face Fairly in the bottom of the ninth after the Expos had come from behind to tie the Padres, 8-8, before the Tomlin-Fairly match-up. Ken Singleton

had drawn a one-out walk and was the only base runner.

Tomlin threw his first two pitches for strikes. Fairly smacked his third one into the alley in left-center, scoring Singleton with the winning run.

His average against lefties, at that moment, was .500. He was 4-for-8. He had driven in six runs. Two of the hits were homers, one a grand slam. And two of them won games.

How does Fairly explain it? "It's just that I'm a damn good hitter," he said. "Any time I have faced them, I've done well."

THE GRAND SLAM was off Mike Paul, late of the Cubs, during the Expos' first week of play. The other homer was off Cincinnati's Mike McQueen and the fourth hit was a single off Philadelphia's Max Scarce during a two-run inning.

The business of being rested against southpaws has been going on so long now that the 35-year-old Fairly is beyond the point of trying to make a case for himself. He remains as confident that he can hit lefthanders as he does that he can hit righthanders and, through the first 10 weeks of play, his statistics were solidly backing him up.

Against righthanders, for instance, Fairly was hitting .256 for an overall average of .272. And, while eight official at-bats aren't sufficient to establish a standard, Fairly was driving in a run every 1.3 at-bats off lefties, and every 6.5 at-bats off righties. He hit a home run every four at-bats against southpaws, and ever 23.4 vs. righthanders.

HOWEVER, by doing it Mauch's way in 1973, Fairly did enjoy his finest season of 15 in the majors. A lifetime .264 hitter going into last season, Fairly finished the year at .298, missing .300 in his final plate appearance, when he flied out.

He hit 17 home runs, matching the personal high he established in 1972, when Mauch used him in the same manner.

Most of Fairly's career, the larger part of which he played with the Dodgers, he has been platooned to some degree. Only once, in 1965, did he have more than 500 official at-bats. For the record, he hit nine home runs that season, and .274.

"Almost any other organization," he says now, "and I'd have played everyday. We just had too much talent."

IN A WAY, it surprises Fairly—only slightly—that he's hitting lefties so well.



Ron Fairly

"You have to see the ball more than once a month to hit them well," he added.

Eight at-bats . . . 10 weeks . . . well, that's almost once a week!

"Gene is off the opinion that I'm getting older and I need to be rested. He is convinced of that and I'm not. I'm not a bit tired."

Fairly doesn't anticipate being among the Expos' team leaders in offensive statistics.

"Bob Bailey . . . Ken Singleton . . . Tim Foli . . . Willie Davis . . . they'll all have 150 more at-bats than me by the end of the season," Fairly said. "They should drive in more runs than me, and they should hit more home runs."

AT THE TIME Bailey, Singleton and Davis had more RBIs than Fairly's 24, but nobody had as many home runs as Fairly's seven.

And nobody had as many game-winning RBIs than Fairly's seven, which had him driving in the winning run in one of every four Expos' victories.

That part doesn't surprise anybody. Not any more. Fairly came to the Expos from Los Angeles, before mid-season of 1969, with a nickname, Mr. Clutch.

In five seasons at Montreal, he has done very little to cause his name to be changed.

Exposures: The Expos took two-out-of-three in successive series against Cincinnati, San Diego and Cincinnati to finish 10-11 in their second stretch of games against West Division clubs. In the first stretch, they were 2-9. . . . The Expos' road record was up to 17-18, which helped to erase the memory of a 1-6 West Coast trip. . . . Dennis Blair, the 20-year-old righthander the Expos promoted from Memphis May 24, was returned three weeks later with a 1-1 record and a 4.50 earned-run average. "He's going to pitch seven innings Sun-

day, seven innings Thursday, five innings the following Monday and be back here to pitch against the Cubs the following Friday," said Mauch. . . . Meanwhile, southpaw Terry Enyart joined the Expos from the Memphis Blues to give the Expos a lefthanded pitcher on their staff. Enyart's first outing, in relief, was unspectacular. He pitched one inning and gave up four runs (one earned).

Infielder Larry Lintz stole his club record-tying 16th base June 16, marking his return from a one-week layoff with a bruised knee, which he suffered when hit by a Larry Dierker pitch in Houston. . . . Shortstop Tim Foli had a nine-

game hitting streak going when rain forced him out of the same game. It rained from start to finish and when the wind was blowing out to left, Foli removed himself from the game because he couldn't keep his glasses dry. . . . Rookie righthanded relievers Don DeMola and John Montague recorded their first major league wins in successive games, DeMola pitching one inning unimpressively and Montague 4½ innings impressively. Four days later, Montague picked up his first save, preserving Mike Torrez' seventh victory in a game at Cincinnati. . . . Righthander Ernie McAnally pitched a two-hitter against the Reds, winning, 2-1, when second baseman Jim Cox led off the ninth inning with his second homer of the year.



Luis Tiant

## Showman Tiant Is Quite a Pitcher, Too

By PETER GAMMONS

BOSTON—It isn't that Luis Tiant hasn't been appreciated.

It has always been, "He's good, and he makes baseball so much fun." Which he does. This round and funny man with the Fu Manchu mustache and a rhumba motion which allows him to check out-of-town scores with every pitch, is a master showman. A man of dramatic timing (all the way to making batters wait a minute between some pitches). He even smokes cigars in the shower.

That's what one always hear about him. Either that or how he arrived in Boston via releases from Minnesota and Richmond. But finally, nearly two years after he recaptured his pitching magic, people in Boston are appreciating what a superb pitcher the man is.

AND IT CAME after five weeks of wondering whether he was headed downhill. Tiant began 1974 with a 2-5 record and an earned-run average of around 6.00. He wasn't throwing hard very often, and while he protested that warmth would bring control and control would bring victories, people frowned.

Eight starts later, he was 9-6, with a 3.09 ERA, and El Conquistador of the Olde Towne Team once again. He had gone nine or more innings in every one of those eight starts, during which he had a 1.25 earned-run average. Overall, he had pitched nine complete games

in a row.

In the eight-game stretch, he won his first six. There was a three-hit shutout over Chicago and a 10-inning, 3-2 win over Minnesota in which he had to strike out two men with the bases loaded in the ninth to lock it up. There was a brilliant, 4-1 (that run unearned) win over Vida Blue and Oakland on national television.

AND WHEN HE finally lost, it took 15 innings, Nolan Ryan striking out 19 in 13 innings and Denny Doyle's wrong-field double to do him in. And back came Tiant the next time to go 10 innings, and beat Blue again, 2-1, with Diego Segui finishing the 11th.

"I don't care if I never strike out another batter," said Tiant. "The idea is to get them out."

"Thus, Luis has started throwing like Mike Cuellar, rationing his fast ball for the opportune moments.

And Bostonians have gone past wishing him onto the All-Star team. They assume he'll be named. Some want to debate El Tiant vs. Gaylord Perry as the pitcher they'd most want to have. Rational or not, it is about time for Tiant.

THE QUESTION, as the Red Sox head into a very tough portion of their schedule, now is whether Tiant, Bill Lee and Dick Drago will get any help or whether the staff will melt from lack of depth. Rick

Wise's return still was uncertain (he had some more shoulder stiffness) and Reggie Cleveland was still throwing doughnuts toward the plate.

Rogelio Moret, who had made but one previous start (and that only when Wise began warming up and had to quit), started in Oakland and beat Ken Holtzman, 6-2, so maybe Tiant will get some help there.

Bosox Notes: Doug Griffin rejoined the club in Anaheim June 14, and by the time you read this, he hopes to be back playing. He had been out since being beamed April 30 by Ryan. . . . Cecil Cooper struck out six times in that marathon game against Ryan, then came back and went 4-for-4 the next night. . . . The Sox and Angels couldn't come together on a deal for Frank Robinson, but Robinson said he still hoped something could be worked out for him to get to Boston. He said if he didn't, he would probably retire after this season. . . . Danny (Why Me?) Cater got into the lineup against lefthanders and in one week had four very important hits. . . . In Griffin's absence, Rick Burleson played well at second. . . . When you're hot, you're hot dept.: Boston put out an infielder of Cater, Burleson, Mario Guerrero and Terry Hughes—and beat Holtzman in Oakland.

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# Mad Hungarian Excites Fans and Chills Hitters

By NEAL RUSSO

ST. LOUIS—Al (The Mad Hungarian) Hrabosky, once more displaying his class, warmth and gratefulness, told a reporter, "Fred Koenig is the only reason I'm with the Cardinals today. He put his job on the line when he kept boosting me."

Hrabosky, who has come to the forefront among major league relievers with his pitching self-psychoing rituals, recalls the year he spent at Arkansas (Texas) under Manager Koenig as the turning point in his career.

"I felt the Cardinal organization had forgotten about me. Fred did a great job of rekindling interest in me. Fred taught me the mental things necessary in pitching. He made me the relief pitcher I am today."

**THE MAD HUNGARIAN** added, "I felt then some people in the organization liked me, but not enough. Fred kept pushing me as a reliever. He's helped others, too. He taught Rich Folkers the screwball (even though Koenig was primarily a first baseman himself). Bake McBride was so fond of him that he declined at first to be promoted to Tulsa (American Association). Fred taught Bake how to play the outfield. And he helped Bob Forsch a lot, too."

Koenig, who spent two years as head of the farm system, now is manager of Sarasota (Gulf Coast), undoubtedly using his savvy to bring along other young players the way he did Hrabosky.

Hrabosky had been no stranger to adversity since his kid days.

He was cut from kids' leagues. He couldn't make the eighth or ninth grade teams. A hernia kept him from getting a shot in the 10th grade.

"I COULDN'T understand why I couldn't make the eighth grade team," Al said. "I was playing first base and hitting great. I felt I was the best player they had."

It was getting to the point where Hrabosky was playing baseball just to get in shape for football.

When Al was in the 11th grade, he couldn't have been blamed if he had forgotten about baseball altogether.

"I became the designated lucky third-base coach," he said. "I was on the bench and the coach sent me in to coach third base. We got five runs my first inning on the job, and I didn't play any more thereafter."

But persevering Hrabosky finally made it as a senior. He owes his break to one of the football coaches who took over as baseball coach.

"He didn't know much about pitching, but he knew I had the 'killer instinct' to play football and said from the start that I was his pitcher," Hrabosky related.

**OVERLOOKED IN** the draft, Al went to Fullerton Junior College and finally impressed the Cardinals to the extent that they signed him.

But even when Koenig finally convinced the Redbird brass to bring Al up the first time, he became merely the third lefthander in the bullpen.

"It was as if they said: 'We remember you, but what are you doing here?'" Hrabosky said.

The frustrations were to continue. Hrabosky kept having control problems in the minors. And he hardly had anyone's eyes popping in the first half of last season with the varsity.

Then The Mad Hungarian decided to do something about it.

"After struggling so much in the first half, I thought of psyching myself by walking behind the mound and talking to myself," he said. "Every athlete or businessman uses something to boost himself. My method was just wide open."

"I DISCOVERED that by stepping behind the mound, I would be distracting the hitter. He'd have to wait for me. If the batter stepped out of the box, I'd step off the rubber. And he'd still have to wait for me to pitch."

Hrabosky remembered starting to psych himself in the minors. He'd do it after taking a throw from the third baseman or between innings. "It wasn't very noticeable then," he said.

Well, the Mad Hungarian finally took off in the second half of the 1974 season.

That was after beginning the campaign by allowing 15 hits and nine earned runs in his first eight innings. He then went 12 $\frac{1}{2}$  innings without allowing a run, but skidded again as he gave up nine runs his next 14 innings.

**THEN CAME** the special psyching and glove pounding routines. From July 14 to September 19, in 41 $\frac{1}{2}$  innings covering 27 outings, he allowed just 15 hits and one earned run, struck out 44, won five games and saved six others.

From July 14 to August 5 (13 $\frac{1}{2}$  innings), Al yielded just seven hits and no runs. From July 14 to August 24 (25 $\frac{1}{2}$  innings) he allowed no earned runs. He closed out the season with seven straight victories as the Cardinals missed catching the Pirates by a mere 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  games. He set a club mark for appearances by a lefty with 65. Besides his 8-1 record and 2.97 earned-run average, Al collected nine saves and whiffed 82 men in 88 innings.

The Mad Hungarian kept pouring it on statistically this year. He clearly showed why he deserved a place on the N. L. All-Star team, an honor which he failed to achieve.

**BY LATE JULY**, Hrabosky owned an eight-game winning streak in a 9-2 season. His ERA was 1.45. He had won six and saved four of the Cardinals' last 14 triumphs. He and Mike Garman provided seven victories and nine saves in 18 Cardinal victories. Hrabosky was selected the National League's Pitcher of the Month for July.

In a string of 23 appearances covering 30 $\frac{1}{2}$  innings, he allowed just two earned runs and fanned 25 while winning seven games and saving eight. His ERA in that stretch was 0.58. He was leading the National League in saves with 14.

But he was growing arm-weary and had to be rested several days. Then, on August 3, he was the losing pitcher when he walked the only two men he faced and the Cardinals lost at Chicago, 6-3. The next day he saved a 5-4 win over the Pirates for John Curtis.

As if his extremely live fast ball (which he was using about 90 percent of the time) and his deceptive delivery weren't enough, Hrabosky was talking about a new pitch. He called it the Hungo, a nickname which Joe Torre had planted on him last season when he was a teammate.

**AL TOLD SUSPICIOUS** reporters that he just perfected the pitch. The Hungo, said Hrabosky, is thrown like a forkball (which already was part of his arsenal) except that the ball is wedged between the middle and ring fingers.

Spinning off the ring finger, the ball behaves like a screw-



Al Hrabosky . . . Hruins Hrallies

ball. Hrabosky said no twist of the wrist was necessary and thus there would be less wear and tear on the arm.

"I've stretched the fingers for about two years getting ready for this," Al said as reporters continued to raise their eyebrows.

Fellow reliever Tug McGraw of the Phillies hailed Hrabosky with this comment: "You know, you can learn how to throw a curve or a change-up or a screwball, but they can't teach you how to throw that smoke. I just wish they could teach me how to throw smoke like he does."

**MANAGER WALT ALSTON** passed up Al for his All-Star pitching staff. When the Cardinals' front office answered with a hastily arranged We Hlove Hrabosky Hbanner Hday, grateful Al said, "This is my All-Star Game, right here."

After beating the Dodgers that day (July 12), Hrabosky said, "Between the fans and my teammates, they made it the happiest day of my life."

Hrabosky beat the Dodgers again the next day and he trimmed them again the next shot he had at them in Los Angeles.

When Al scampered onto the field for the pregame warm-ups on his banner day, he tried to restrain himself but twice shot his left arm in the air to acknowledge the loud applause.

This is what some of the banners said:

"Alstonoutsy, We Want Hrabosky."

"**LOVE IS** Watching Hrabosky" (with likenesses of the newspaper cartoon that starts out with "Love Is. . .")

"Hrattle 'em Hrabosky."

"Hgee, Hgolly, Hgosh and Hgloryosky, How Could Alston Not Pick Hrabosky?"

"He Looks Mean, But Don't Treat Him Mean. Support Your Local Flame Thrower."

"Smog Is Not The Densest Thing in L. A."

Hrabosky wears a mean look and menacing Fu Manchu mustache to further intimidate opposing batters.

"Things changed when I was able to put my head together and channel my energy to work for me, not against me," said Al, who let his temper undo him too often in the minors. "I've tried to get myself into a Utopian feeling. A lot of pitchers go out there scared to death. That's great for the hitter. I want to turn it around by challenging every hitter."

**DARRELL EVANS** of the Braves tried to out-psych Hrabosky by stepping out of the batter's box. He tried three times this season. In each instance, Evans made the last out of the game.

Said teammate Ken Reitz, "Al has been the most exciting man in baseball. I used to be his roommate in the minors. He struggled with his control then. Up here, he finally got everything together and he's got those batters all screwed up."

Said buddy Garman: "We work hand in hand. Al has that great charisma. He psychs me up too. We talk all the time in the bullpen about certain hitters and certain game situations. We don't play word games in the pen. We're all business out there."

Hrabosky's meanness on the mound has been likened to that of such pitchers as Early Wynn, Don Drysdale and Allie Reynolds—all of whom were extremely successful.

Hrabosky's attractive wife, Dee, pointed to one of the biggest differences between a starting pitcher and a reliever. Al has been both.

"**AL DOESN'T** care to talk much during the day before a night game," Dee said. "He's a thinker. You have to dig things out of him. Oh, after the game, he's human—especially if he wins or at least does well."

And Dee remembered the days in the minors when Al started every fifth day.

"When he was a starter, we had four days of happiness—you didn't have to worry about him maybe having to pitch in relief any given night," she said. "But on the day he was to pitch, you had to lie low. Speak only a little. Prepare good food for him. Tell him how great he was."

"But when your husband's a relief pitcher, it's harder to plan things—like having people over for dinner."

# Card Businessman Fairly Refuses to Act His Age

By NEAL RUSSO

ST. LOUIS—It was another big night for **Ron Fairly**—he went 5-for-6 in a doubleheader with the Mets in which he had a big hand in winning the opener.

Now **Fairly** was up to .329 as a Cardinal, with a pile of key hits.

Would **Ron** be interested in joining Mickey Vernon, Ted Williams and Early Wynn as members of a most exclusive fraternity—players who performed in the major leagues in four different decades?

To achieve that goal, **Fairly**, who broke in with the Dodgers in 1958, would have to play a little more

than four more seasons—until 1980. He had just passed his 37th birthday.

**FAIRLY'S EYES** brightened when he heard the question.

"Yes, I'd like to play five more years, and I think I can do it," said **Ron**, who shook his head when he learned that rookie pitcher Harry Rasmussen was in the first grade when **Fairly** broke into the big leagues.

"I guess Hank Aaron and Frank Robinson are about the only guys still active since the year I broke in," **Fairly** said. "But age is not an

indicator of your real age. Some players are old at 30. I don't have a 37-year-old body."

And if **Fairly** keeps performing as he has so far this season, he just might be around in 1980.

Does **Fairly** still regard himself as an every-day player?

"Why not?" he said. "I'm as strong as I ever have been or ever will be. I can still play the game the way it's supposed to be played. My attitude and the way I play the game complements it."

**Fairly** was doing all this talking after helping do in Tom Seaver

with two key singles in a 5-3 Cardinal triumph. He added a home run off reliever Ken Sanders to give him three runs batted in for the game. As a sub in the second game of the twin bill, he delivered a pinch-double that brought the Birds within one run of the Mets at 7-6, in a game that was to end with an 11-6 Met win. And he added a single.

**BOB KENNEDY**, the Cardinals' player personnel director, called the acquisition of **Fairly** from the

Expos "one of Bing Devine's many good trades." To get the redhead, the Birds gave up only a onetime No. 1 draft choice, outfielder-first baseman Ed Kurpiel, and minor league infielder Billy Kinard.

Before long, the Expos were to dispatch Kurpiel to Detroit.

During the winter, **Fairly** said he expected to see much more action for the Cardinals than many experts thought he would or could.

Set aside early in the season so

(Continued on Page 5, Column 1)

# Vet Fairly Closing In on Big Numbers

By DICK MILLER

ANAHEIM—Looking back on 20 years in the big leagues, Ron Fairly is convinced he has retained the speed he took from the USC campus to the Dodgers.

"They say the legs are the first things to go," he said. "I've never been able to run fast enough to hurt myself. That's why they have called me The Mule. Sometimes mules last a long time."

The Angels' new first baseman has lasted long enough to approach numbers posted only by Hall of Famers, past and present.

"MY INDIVIDUAL numbers over the years aren't that outstanding," he admitted. "But if you put my funny little numbers together, they are starting to pile up."

"I need 138 hits for 2,000. If I don't get them this year (he had 128 last season at Toronto), I will next season. I've got 205 home runs."

"Last season, I became the 96th player to collect 1,000 runs batted in. I need 92 runs for 1,000."

"Think of the four categories. Ty Cobb didn't have 200 home runs and neither will Pete Rose."

Unlike Archie Moore, who would say only that he discovered the secret of eternal youth from an Australian aborigine, Fairly is willing to share the reason he is still playing in the big leagues while approaching his 40th birthday in July.

"ROY CAMPANELLA said it a long time ago. You have to have a lot of boy in you to play baseball. I have enough boy left in me to play another three years."

"You stay mentally young playing this game. Just because

I'm 39 doesn't mean I'm getting old."

Fairly has outlasted Sandy Koufax, Don Drysdale, Tommy Davis, Johnny Roseboro, Maury Wills and all his great Dodger teammates of the mid-'60s.

Articulate and gifted with the boyish good looks that television producers look for, Fairly has worked as a weekend sports commentator on NBC-TV and may follow Drysdale into broadcasting.

"There have been only three athletes who have gone on to be great in broadcasting," he said. "Don will be the fourth. Some of the jocks on television have been so bad they have hurt others."

"IN MY OPINION, Frank Gifford was the first to be really good. Pat Summerall is excellent. And Tom Brookshier is the third."

"In 10 years they are going to say Drysdale was a great pitcher and just as great a broadcaster. It's a tough bridge to cross for athletes."

"Don has come such a long way. I listened to him when I was with Montreal. He has come such a long way he is a different man."

With Dick Enberg departing the Angel broadcasting team for NBC following the '78 season, Drysdale will move up to the No. 1 Angel spot. Fairly may one day rejoin his ex-teammate in the booth.

Big D used to drive his teammates bananas in the bullpen at Ebbets Field by pretending to broadcast games.

"I've done the same thing in the dugout on days when I wasn't playing," said Fairly. "The guys make fun of you," he added.

FAIRLY AND KMPC'S Steve Bailey discussed radio work over breakfast the other day.

How bright is Fairly's future in broadcasting?

"He is the Leon Spinks of elocution," Bailey said with a straight face.

Fairly learned to respect the broadcasters when working as the weekend man for NBC in Los Angeles. "Radio and television have always interested me," he said. "I had never written a script or edited film before."

"I was the only one in sports on weekends. The first week the wire services were running late. Sometimes the words don't come out when you're working on a deadline."

"People don't know it takes four or five hours' preparation to do a five-minute segment. I was just getting an idea of how to do it when the regular guys came back from vacation."

"ROSS PORTER is absolutely excellent at putting together a script. Bryant Gumbel is a great guy and one of the best."

Facing a camera can be tougher than batting against Nolan Ryan, Fairly discovered.

"Having two or three million people watching didn't bother me," Fairly said. "I enjoyed that. The panic was getting the script organized on time and putting it on a special machine. One time the teleprompter was going too fast for me. The faster I read, the faster it would go."

"Another time the teleprompter was crooked. I couldn't read the first two words on the left hand side. Try reading a newspaper with the first two words blocked out all the way down the left side."

FAIRLY WAS surprised to learn that he and Willie McCovey of the

Giants would become the fifth and sixth players in major league history to play in four decades. "When I started out, I said I would love to play five years. When I got there, I wanted to play 10 years. Then 15."

Mickey Vernon (1939-60), Ted Williams (1939-60), Early Wynn (1939-1963) and Minnie Minoso (1949-64, 1976) are the four who have spanned four decades.

Like Gordie Howe, Fairly hit well enough last year to look like he would last to play with sons Steve, Mike and Pat. He batted .279 with 19 home runs and 64 RBIs in a Toronto lineup that had no hitters to protect him.

The RBI total was 10 more than he had with the Dodgers exactly a decade before when he led the club.

AT THE COST of a cocktail, this correspondent learned the secret of longevity from this grand old man of the game.

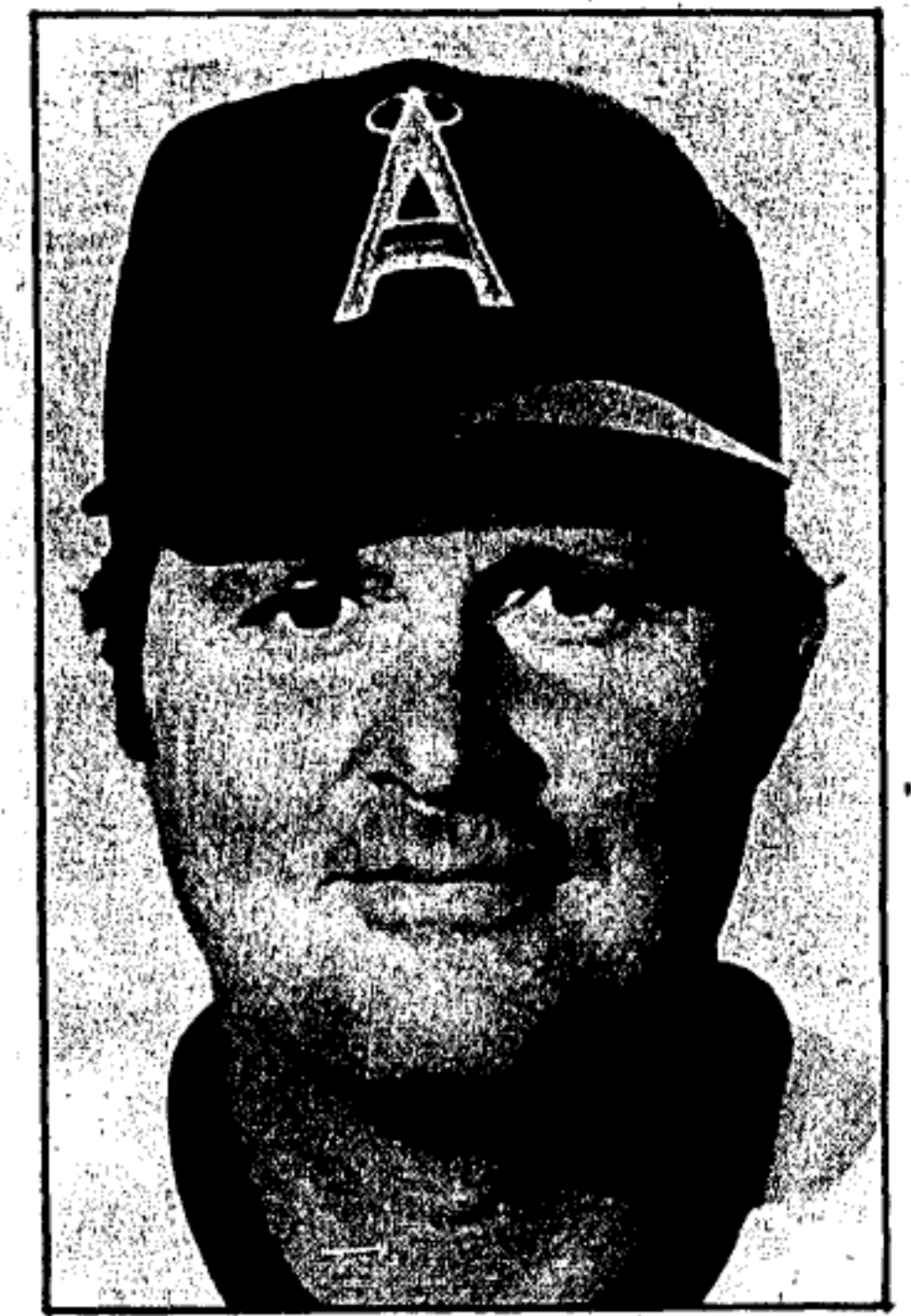
"I've never been great at one thing," the redhead confided. "I learned the basics of the game from my father. My fundamentals are still better than 85 percent of the players."

"The real secret is how much talent you have. I've seen players who were in the greatest shape possible. They lasted three years because they didn't have talent."

"Pitchers don't last long, with the exception of Early Wynn, because of what happens to their arms. Catchers take a beating. So it is the infielders and outfielders who last."

"I can truly say I haven't slowed down a step because I never had any speed, and how many players can say that?"

Angel Notebook: How does a



Ron Fairly

starting rotation of Frank Tanana, Nolan Ryan, Mike Torrez, Chris Knapp, Ken Brett and Don Aase sound? "I couldn't believe it when Harry Dalton didn't go after Mike Torrez," said agent Gary Walker. "He wanted to go to the Angels."

... Dave Garcia is philosophical over being Gene Autry's second choice as manager behind Gene Mauch. "Being runner-up in the Miss America contest isn't bad," said Garcia.

Pitcher Tom Griffin found an instant way to give up smoking. During a routine physical-examination X-ray, a spot on his lung was discovered. Further tests showed he was okay. ... Tanana won the opening-day pitching assignment with a 1.88 ERA. He thinks he will get better as the season progresses and his arm gets stronger. "I'm doing it now with a curve, a change-up and something I used to call my fast ball," he said.

# McCovey Ready as Giants' Challenger to Age

By NICK PETERS

SAN FRANCISCO—While many so-called baseball experts are surprised he is still able to swing a bat with authority, Willie McCovey sees no reason why he can't be even better in 1978 than he was during a Comeback of the Year campaign in 1977.

"Why not?" asked Willie Mac, playing down the significance of his 40 years. "Being in good shape at my age is no big deal. I feel fine. They say your legs are the first to go, but mine feel better now than they have in years."

"I paid the price by not burning the candle at both ends during my career and it's paying off now," he continued. "I've sacrificed for this moment, so I'm not surprised that I can still be very productive."

"IN FACT, I thought I could do better last year. Everyone made a big deal of my season at 39, but I wasn't totally happy. I was disappointed, for instance, that I didn't hit 30 home runs."

McCovey, entering his 20th major league season, did wallop 28 homers in 1977 to tie Lou Gehrig for 12th place on the all-time list at 493. He also became the National League's grand-slam leader with 18, five shy of Gehrig's record 23.

"My immediate goal," said Stretch, "is to hit homer No. 500. Then I'll try to catch Mel Ott (511) and Ernie Banks (512), but I'm not thinking much beyond that. I see no reason why I can't hit 28 homers again."

McCovey, the all-time homer king at Candlestick Park with 224

(Willie Mays is next at 208), also will reach another milestone if he connects for 19 home runs in 1978.

Mays hit 459 homers as a San Francisco Giant, 187 as a New York Giant and 14 as a New York Met for a total of 660. McCovey has 441 in an S.F. uniform and 52 as a Padre, so 19 more blasts would make him the greatest home-run hitter in San Francisco history.

"I DIDN'T realize that," McCovey admitted, "but it's very flattering because you know how much Mays has meant to me. He and Henry (Aaron) have been my heroes, so it's very gratifying to be up there on the homer lists."

McCovey would also like to become a part of a baseball trivia question: how many players in major league history have played

in four different decades?

Big Mac came up in 1959, so he could reach that goal by being active in 1980. He has agreed to play at least two more seasons, so he would probably try for a third.

"I'd like that," Willie said, "because it shows consistency. The home runs and RBIs (86) were very satisfying last year, but I got as big a kick by playing in 141 games and getting 478 at-bats."

"In fact, the incentive clauses in the contract I signed last year were based more on games and at-bats than homers and RBIs, so I was able to work up to a salary comparable with those I had previously during my career."

THERE WAS A snag in the 1978 contract and Stretch came to camp unsigned, but it wasn't over

money problems, Willie said.

"It was just some wording details that had to be worked out concerning my duties with the club once my career is over," he said.

McCovey was quick to defend the Giants' stance of remaining inactive on the free-agent market over the winter. Mario Guerrero (later traded) was signed as a utilityman, but he wasn't among the million-dollar items up for grabs.

"This is a good club," McCovey pointed out, "so I didn't feel they should panic and do like they did in the past by making a lot of changes. Some clubs spent a lot of money last year and fell flat."

"The Giants have always been able to count on a productive farm system, so I could never under-

stand why so many good ball-players would come up to the majors and then end up on some other club. It happened so many times in the past."

McCovey was referring to stars like Gaylord Perry, Bobby Bonds, Garry Maddox and Gary Matthews. But he made it clear there was no dissatisfaction over the recent blockbuster swap which brought Vida Blue to the Giants.

"I'VE ALWAYS felt the Giants' pitching was strong," he said, "but it's just taken a lot longer to come together than I expected. There are a lot of young arms here and Vida should be a big help. It's an outstanding staff already, but it'll be even better if Lynn McGlothen is healthy."

Stretch also was pleased with Bill Madlock's conversion to second base, an idea he suggested to enable Darrell Evans to play regularly.

"I didn't like some of the negative things I read over the winter about Bill's switch," McCovey noted. "The idea is to help the club, so people have to give him a chance."

"Phil Garner made the same move to help the A's a few years ago and turned into a fine second baseman. Some people say Madlock is too heavy for second, but Bill Mazerowski wasn't exactly thin and he was as good as I've seen."

McCovey had a relatively quiet off-season. As the man said, "I've never been impressed by the night life." It was true in his youth and it remains part of his life today.

That's why Willie McCovey, at age 40, has no intentions of giving in to time or to N.L. pitching.

# Injury-Plagued Bailor Sidelined Again

By NEIL MacCARTL

TORONTO—The kind of thing that spotlights the problems facing a second-year expansion club occurred to the Blue Jays on a sunny afternoon in Winter Haven, where they were playing the Red Sox at Chain of Lakes Stadium.

Leading off Boston's second inning, first baseman George Scott sliced a long drive to right field. The Jays' Bob Bailor went back after it, but it hit the wall. He twisted to change direction and fell to the ground.

"It caromed the wrong way and when I tried to change direction,

my knee caved in," Bailor explained.

WHILE HE WAS still lying on the ground, Manager Roy Hartsfield and General Manager Pat Gillick both admitted apprehension because it was the same right knee Bailor injured last August.

Moments later, Bailor got up and walked off the field. The preliminary diagnosis was that it had nothing to do with the previous injury. It was not considered serious, though he was going to miss the final week of spring training.

But a week later when a doctor examined the injured hinge, he still found fluid and for the second year in succession Bailor missed

opening day. Last year, it was because of a cut at the base of his right thumb.

BAILOR WAS depressed. He's been fighting to tear off "an injury prone" label.

Last year, he missed 39 games because of the cut thumb, a few more because he was kneed by second baseman Don Money of the Brewers while attempting to break up a double play, a few more with a pulled hamstring and four weeks because of the knee injury.

That happened in Anaheim in August. He stole third with no out after having hit his second single off lefty Frank Tanana. But (Continued on Page 26, Column 1)