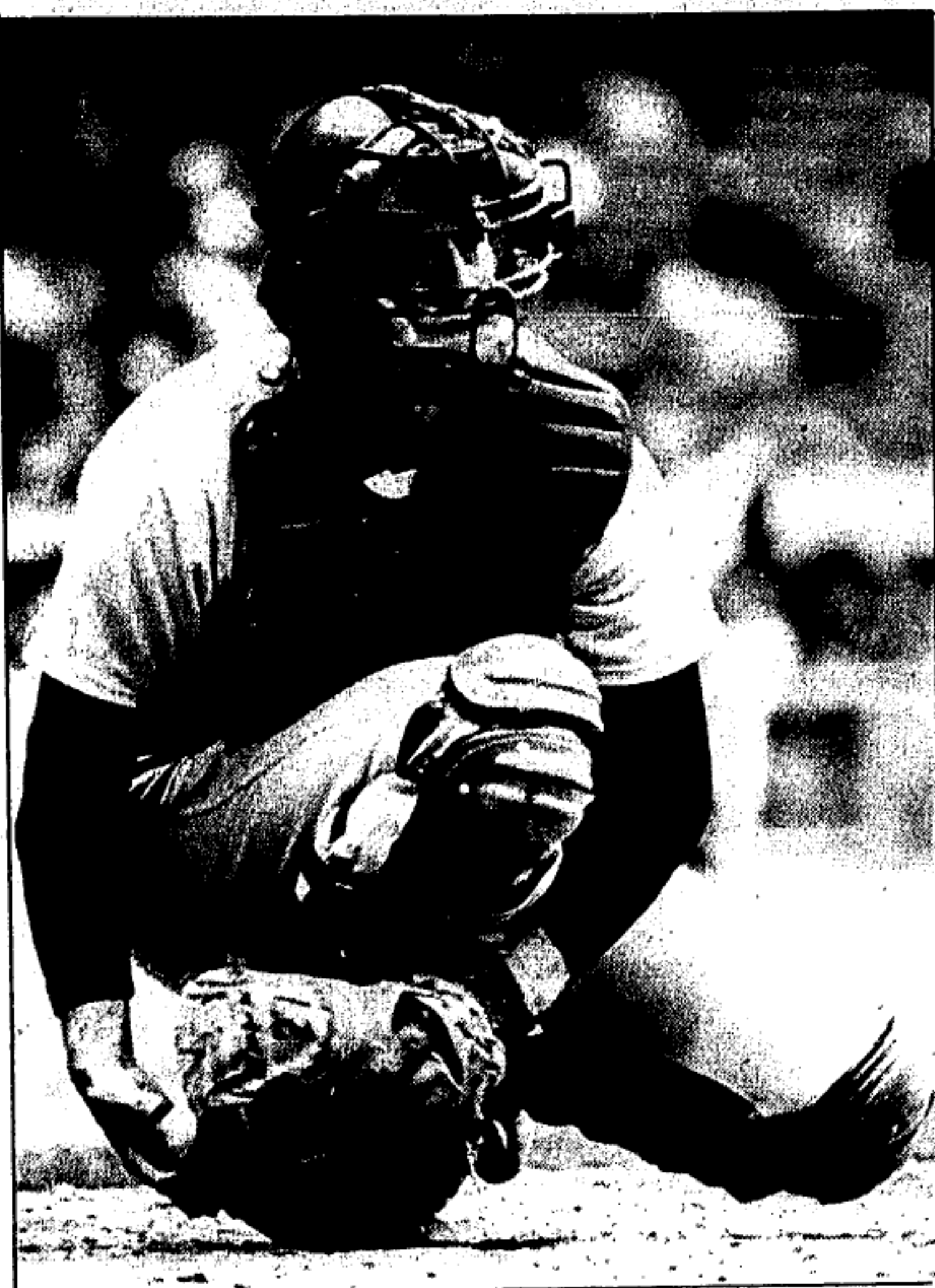


Proper Bostonians Spell Success F-I-S-K



Carlton Fisk . . . Shunning the Tape . . .

By BILL LISTON

BOSTON—Red Sox catcher Carlton Fisk is a man for all seasons and for all reasons. The 30-year-old New Hampshire product not only is the man who makes the Red Sox machine run, but he's also a con-man, a tyrant, the team's resident psychologist and even a pro football quarterback, if you will.

And, for the past month, Fisk has been an outpatient from the Red Sox team infirmary, playing with a broken rib incurred when he dove four rows deep into the box seats attempting to catch a foul ball.

Fisk, who is batting close to .300 with close to 20 home runs and 75 RBIs, doesn't down play the trouble his aching rib is giving him. There are times when it feels like someone stuck a knife in his side. And yet he insists on staying in the lineup because he feels it's his responsibility.

"Sure it hurts when I try to do certain things," the ever-articulate Fisk said. "It bothers my throwing to a certain extent and it's tough for me to get into certain positions behind the plate.

"It's also bothered my hitting to a certain degree because, in favoring the rib, I've been taking my head off the ball a lot and it's been costing me some hits.

"WE TRIED TAPING the area where the injury is," he added. "But the tape wouldn't stay on and taping seems to restrict my movement too much."

Red Sox Manager Don Zimmer has nothing but respect for the job Fisk has done for the front-running Red Sox as they try to clinch the East Division title in the American League. Zimmer knows that without Fisk's presence, the Red Sox might just as well be another struggling ball club.

"There just aren't enough words to total up what Fisk has done for us," said Zimmer. "He's come through with all kinds of clutch hits, thrown well and handled the pitchers with unbelievable effectiveness.

"His father was in my office a couple of days ago and I told him, 'Mr. Fisk, you have some kind of a son to be proud of.' And I meant it."

Fisk sat in the dugout and discussed his job the other night. He didn't quite agree that his job was completely analogous to that of a football quarterback. But there are some similarities that are unique to both jobs, he allowed.

"I think my job might be—just might be—more difficult than that of a football quarterback," Fisk said. "Quarterbacks have set plays. Most everything they do comes right out of a playbook.

"BUT MY JOB HAS to be more creative," he went on. "Maybe creative isn't the right word. Maybe spontaneous is a better word.

"There are some times when quarterbacks have to improvise. But a catcher in baseball has to do it all the time.

"I've never played football, so I have no right to say this because pro football quarterbacks also have to improvise like running audibles when certain defenses suddenly arise, things like that.

"But in my situation, I always have to have a personal feeling for the way the game is going."

Fisk calls all the pitches for Red Sox hurlers. This isn't unusual, perhaps, but there are many major league manag-

ers who won't let their catchers do this, preferring rather to call the pitches from the dugout.

"Some managers do that," Fisk agreed. "But it takes away any feeling of confidence a catcher has to have. If the manager calls the pitches all the time, you're not in the game. You don't have the right feel for the game.

"Most of the time, a manager can't tell from the dugout how a man is pitching," Fisk added. "He can tell if a guy is getting hit all over the ball park, naturally. But he can't judge a pitcher's feeling or thinking in certain situations. No. I wouldn't like that."

ONE OF THE MOST familiar sights during a Red Sox ball game is Fisk straightening up, flipping his mask on top of his head and ambling toward the mound for a talk with his pitcher. There are times when Fisk obviously is having just a sympathetic, quiet chat.

And there are other times when Pudge is verbally unhappy.

Fisk was asked if there were certain pitchers he treats different ways in order to get the maximum effort from them.

"There's no question about it," Pudge replied. "Some pitchers respond to a verbal butt-kicking out there. Whereas, with other pitchers, you have to go out there and pat them on the back a little bit.

"However, a catcher has to know how to handle his pitchers," Fisk went on. "You have to know how a particular pitcher performs best mechanically. Some pitchers have to keep their delivery way up top. Some have to be told to use their legs more.

"Also there are some pitchers who have to be reminded of the situation that they're in. They're aware, but not completely. You've got to make them grab the situation.

"Some pitchers out there with men on first and second with nobody out are thinking, 'If this guy hits one out, I'm in real trouble.' What they should be thinking is, 'I'm going to go right after this batter, make him hit my pitch, make him hit a ground ball and get out of this.'"

"SO THERE ARE times with some guys, I have to go out there to the mound and say, 'Look, the game is on the line. Let's go! Kick yourself in the butt and let's go.'"

"Other times you go out and tell the guy he's throwing the ball well. You use a sweet-talk approach with that guy. 'Just take a deep breath and get this guy to hit a ground ball and everything will be all right.'"

"I don't think the pitchers ever will complain about me making too many trips to the mound," said Fisk. "I think sometimes the infielders and outfielders might feel that some of the trips aren't necessary. But the reason I go out there is to remind pitchers of certain situations, just to try

"Some pitchers respond to a verbal butt-kicking."

— Carlton Fisk

to get them going. You can see them rushing a little bit, getting lazy with their arms or their legs and they have to be reminded of it.

"If you don't tell a pitcher about things like these little things, he'll snowball and the next thing he'll know, he's out of there."

There are some Red Sox starters like Mike Torrez and, at times, Luis Tiant, who need the rough approach by Fisk. There are others, like Bill Lee, who would be happy if Fisk never showed up for a visit to what Lee calls "my turf."

"Torrez likes me to give him a verbal kick in the tail when I spot something he's doing wrong," Fisk pointed out. "Luis (Tiant) also liked the same treatment sometimes. Sometimes not. I've got to know the people I'm dealing with and their makeups."

ZIMMER, WHO PLAYED on the old Brooklyn Dodgers with Hall of Fame catcher Roy Campanella, has the greatest respect for the job Fisk does and how he does it.

"I think Fisk has a real good rapport with the pitchers," said Zimmer. "He knows how to settle things down out there when it's needed.

"I don't tell him how to run a game. I can't call pitches and I never will so long as I manage. But there are times when I'll go out there with Pudge and the pitcher and say something like this: 'Look, I want you to pitch four fast balls tight on this guy and he just might go after one and pop it up.' But to me that's not calling pitches.

"If I would call pitches, then what I'm doing is calling the catcher a dummy. And Fisk certainly is far from that.

"I agree with the idea that a catcher is more like the quarterback on a football team," Zimmer went on. "The catcher has to be alert to guys stealing bases. He's got to do a lot of thinking when he's got an open base, he's got to call all bunt situations. He's got to be quick, react quick. He's involved in the game on every pitch.

"Fisk does all these things well. He runs a good game. And I'll tell you this: the man (Fisk) is in the same class with Johnny Bench as far as having great hands. When he gets his hands on a ball, it's an out. He makes tag plays.

He's got great hands, a good arm.

"HE'S AN EXCEPTIONALLY good base runner for a catcher," Zimmer added. "Usually, when a catcher gets on base, he clogs them up. Fisk is not one of them. He can steal a base once in a while. He can go from first to third on any hit—the average base runner can go to third on. He can score from second on a single.

"The man is a complete player," said Zimmer.

Zimmer also likes the way Fisk uses his discretion in the handling of his pitchers.

"Sure, he gives pitchers hell once in a while," said Zimmer. "But that all goes with knowing your people.

"It's the same as me managing. I can jump a player's butt—but only the ones I know I can do it on. But the ones I got to back off on, then I'd better know that, too. Same with Fisk and his pitchers."

There isn't any doubt that Fisk is the Red Sox' team leader on the field—the head honcho, if you will. However, Fisk's day doesn't end with the final out—even though he says he doesn't take last night's game home with him to his lovely wife, Linda, and three children.

"I felt emotionally drained after the recent stretch when we played the Yankees, Baltimore, Baltimore, Yankees over that 14-game stretch," Fisk admitted, "because most of those games were tight and they meant a lot. It was our season right there.

"But I don't take last night's game home with me. But I do think of what's going to happen the next day. I have to think of the next day where infielders and outfielders don't.

"WHAT MAKES MY JOB a little tougher is that I really can never get the game out of my mind. The one that we've just finished is out of my mind. But there's always the one coming up tomorrow and the pitcher I've got to handle tomorrow.

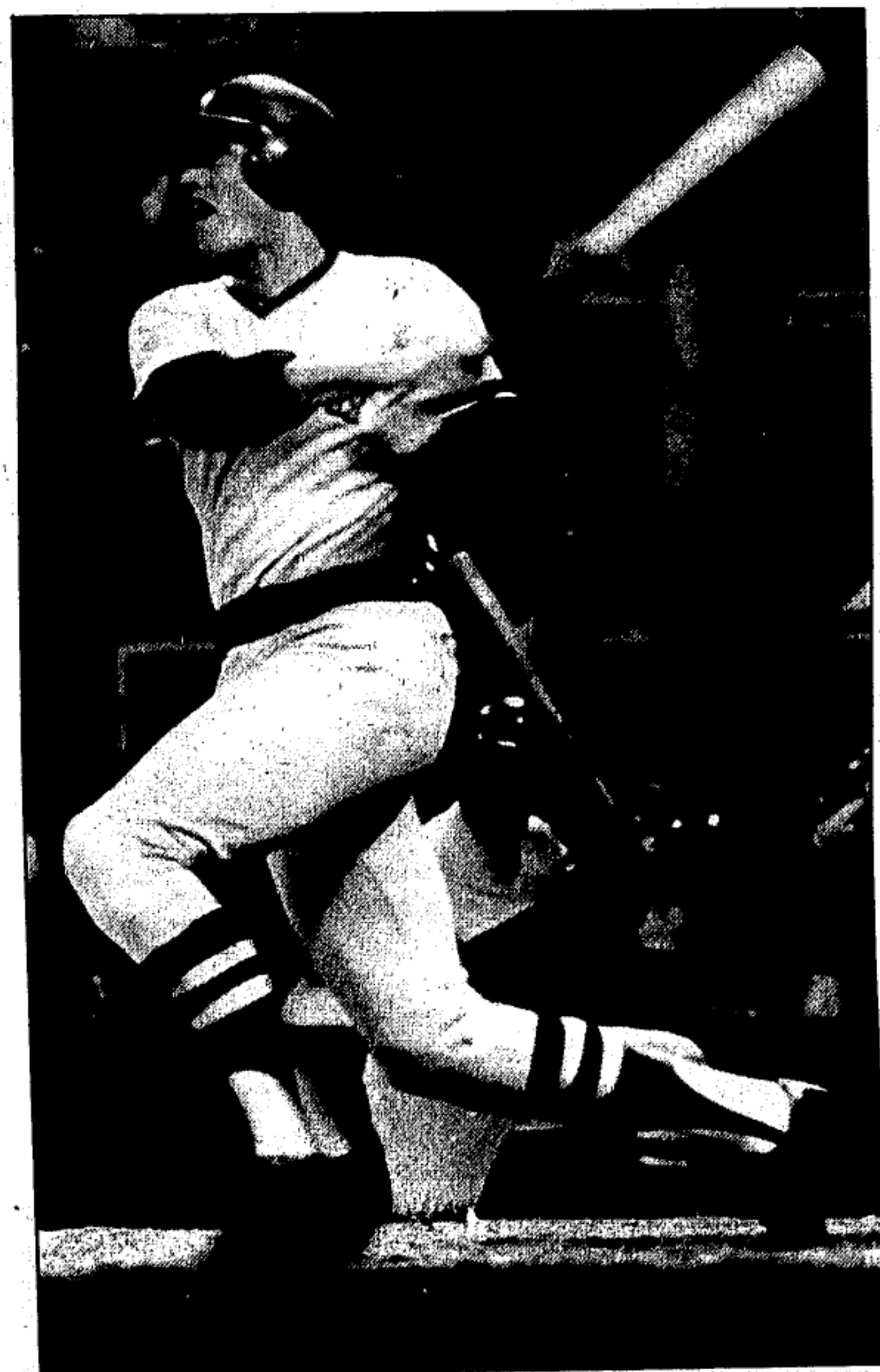
"I might not be thinking seriously of it, but I lay awake at night sometimes just thinking about how we'll want to pitch certain guys and whether we ought to consider pitching that guy differently tomorrow."

Fisk admitted he doesn't know everything about his pitchers.

"I learn something about our pitchers every game I work," said Fisk. "This year, for example, I've learned that Mike Torrez actually likes to be verbally kicked in the butt. You learn that pitchers really need to be prodded or shaken up in different situations. So you have learned something about him you might not have known."

So, citizens, one thing should be perfectly clear: there's much more to Carlton Ernest (Pudge) Fisk's job than merely catching the ball; the Fisk with the mask on the top of his head is just as valuable to the Red Sox as the Fisk behind the plate or in the batter's box.

Simply, Fisk has a very complex job and he does it extremely well.



But Close to .300 Anyway

FISK TAKES RISK AND WINS

Catcher's Arm Is Holding Up

By PETER GAMMONS

BOSTON—The season was 30 hours old and the Red Sox already had lost twice and been outscored, 27-6. **Carlton Fisk** ate dinner in Milwaukee's Pfister Hotel. Over and over he kept insisting, "Somebody's got to go down—the Brewers can't be allowed to hang out over the plate like that."

People around him told him how sorry they were that he couldn't catch the next afternoon.

His manager, Don Zimmer, had said that **Fisk** wouldn't catch until at least April 25, maybe later if it didn't get warmer. Neither Zimmer, **Fisk** nor anyone else knew whether Fisk's elbow would cave in again, perhaps sending him home to New Hampshire for good.

He hadn't caught in spring training. His last appearance behind the plate had been in mid-August, 1979, when the elbow gave out for the fourth time. Since no one had come up with any definitive diagnosis, there was a sense of doom surrounding the injury and Fisk's future.

Fisk sat there over dinner and kept talking about all those Milwaukee homers to center and the opposite field. Finally he said, "To hell with it! I'm playing. I can't stand watching it."

It was 40 degrees and windy the next afternoon, but he played. The first Brewers batter was drilled. The Red Sox won, 4-1.

Seven weeks into the season, Boston's biggest spring question mark has been its best and most consistent player. **Fisk** was batting .301 and was among the American League leaders in slugging. But more important—especially in his mind—he has caught and thrown "as well as I've seen him," according to Zimmer.

In their first 43 games, the Red Sox were 1-11 when he didn't catch, 20-11 when he did. His throws had nailed such base-stealing artists as Texas' Mickey Rivers, Cleveland's Miguel Dilone and Detroit's Kirk Gibson. Opposing clubs abruptly discovered they no longer could continue their brazen running of last season, when they stole 116 bases in 156 tries against Boston.

"Maybe some people had forgotten how good **Fisk** is," Zimmer said, "but I never had. I always knew how much we missed him in every phase of the game."

All winter and spring, the Red Sox talked of finding another catcher. They tried to get Bill Fahey from San Diego, Jeff Newman or Jim Essian from Oakland, Barry Foote from the Chicago Cubs. They just had no idea on **Fisk**. He'd had intermittent elbow problems beginning in 1975, when he was coming back from knee surgery and his arm was broken by a pitch in spring training.

Then down the stretch in 1978—when he was in the process of catching 309 games in two seasons—he suffered cracked ribs, kept playing and in the Great Fold saw his elbow grind to a halt.

The problem was that no one could diagnose the problem, so no one had any programs. He couldn't throw in spring training, 1979, and while he withdrew, people made comments.

Even General Manager Haywood Sullivan said, "His contract may be bothering him more than his elbow."

That was a reference to **Fisk** wondering why Jim Rice's contract was, in effect, renegotiated and others weren't. Sullivan later apologized.

Fisk kept trying last year, but he kept blowing out. While doctors had no specific reason, some elements of the media ranted that he was jaking it.

Then in September, after countless X-rays of the elbow, Boston team physician Dr. Arthur Pappas found a fragment of bone that had broken off and lodged in the joint.

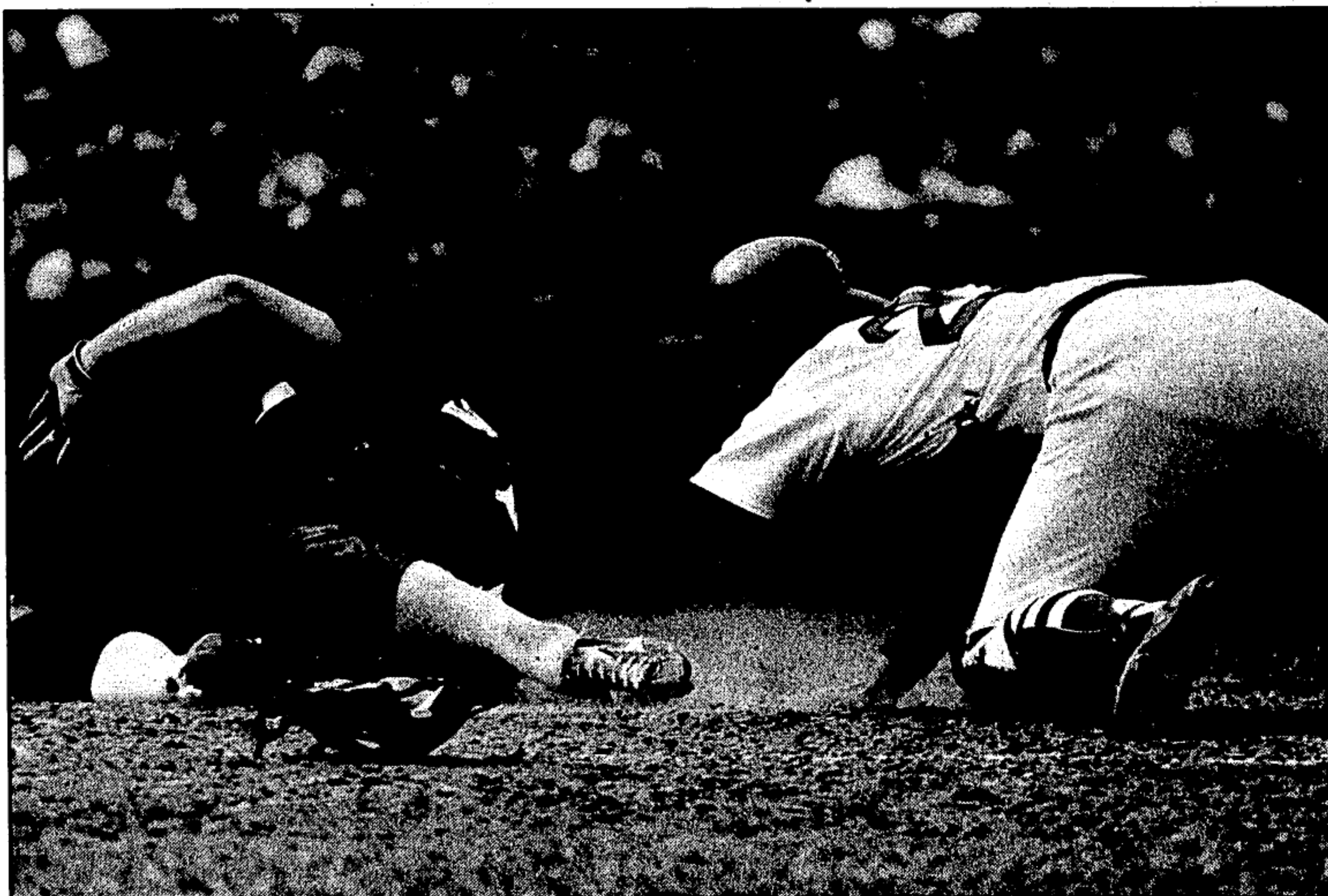
This spring, after a winter of rest and four hours a day of working workouts, Dr. Pappas took the same X-rays and found the fragment had disappeared.

"Sometimes the body will just absorb things like that," said Dr. Pappas.

The players' walkout the last week of spring training cost **Fisk** his chance to catch in exhibitions. The physical and psychological process of coming back had led him toward catching that last week. So he served as designated hitter a few times and caught six innings of an intrasquad game. When they set it up so Glenn Hoffman could run on him, Tom Burgmeier picked him off.

"Considering that, I've done a lot more than I thought I could," said **Fisk**. "Gradually I could feel I was throwing better and better, and the elbow hasn't bothered me at all."

Partly, he credits that to his winter diligence. Partly, he credits it to a tip he received from Texas Manager Pat Corrales, who this spring relayed through a writer the tip for **Fisk**. Corrales suggested drawing the ball out of his glove down and back, as opposed to up and back, which



Carlton Fisk . . . 'Defense is the most important element.'

cuts down the range of motion in the elbow and puts the strain on the shoulder.

"I don't know what would have happened if I'd continued to throw the way I'd always thrown," said **Fisk**. "It's taken a great deal of the trauma, stress and strain off the elbow. My shoulder gets stiff, but I've never had an injury to my shoulder."

"I feel more comfortable now than I did at any time last year, and the doubts and fears that go with not knowing whether your next throw is your last one have disappeared."

"I think they finally went one day (May 12) when we were playing Minnesota. Glenn Adams was running, and (Steve) Renko threw a changeup down and away."

"Everything came together—watching the ball and catching it and getting it out of the glove and throwing it. That was the psychological barrier that finally was broken. From then on, I haven't thought about what would happen if I had to let it go."

So **Carlton Fisk**, who at 32 had worried for more than 20 months that he might be finished, returned to his place among the best catchers in the game. Beginning in 1972, when he was Rookie of the Year and placed fourth in the Most Valuable Player voting, Fisk's problems have been injuries.

In 1974, it was the shredded knee from a June 28 collision in Cleveland, an injury doctors said was worse than the knee injury that ended the pro football career of Gale Sayers. In 1975, **Fisk** suffered the broken arm.

Then after 1977—when he hit .315 with 106 runs scored and 102 RBIs—it was the elbow. When he has been healthy, he has been a .284 career hitter, a six-time All-Star.

"There just isn't any catcher in the American League who can do as many things as he can," said Zimmer. "He hits for average, he hits for power, he hits good pitchers, he is perhaps the best baserunner on the club, he throws well, he has the great hands and agility behind the plate, he runs the pitching staff and he's aggressive."

That aggressive nature, which runs contrary to the gait which makes every one of his at-bats seem like an hour-long special, used to get him into fights. It used to cause him to race down the first base line on every grounder (so he lost an average of 25 pounds a season) and used to cause him to always block the plate, which is how he wrecked his knee. Now he has learned to temper his aggressiveness.

But the athletic part of it is not the only factor that makes **Fisk** what he is. The athletic part was there when he signed in 1967. He was New Hampshire's greatest white leaper on the basketball court. He was a 6-2, 210-pound shortstop-pitcher with the hands of a Mark Belanger.

Another key factor is the mental part of catching. Fisk's thought process is geared to pitching. If he is the offensive hero, he is a thoughtful but routine interview. If the pitcher pitches well, he bubbles over. That would warm the heart of Paul Richards, who believes in putting pitchers and catchers together and keeping the earned-run average of receivers.

"In every sport it's the same—defense is the most important element," said **Fisk**. "I have no more of a thrill in

baseball than working well with a pitcher, which, for instance, is happening right now with (Chuck) Rainey.

"My most important role is not to hit, but to know my own pitchers and opposing hitters. Some people may not think the relationship between catcher and pitcher is that important, but I do."

Fisk credits all his catching attributes to Darrell Johnson, who turned around Fisk's minor league career at Louisville (then in the International League) in 1971.

"I always worked hard, but I never knew what I was doing," **Fisk** recalled. "He taught me pitches, pitchers, sequences and the difference between being a catcher and someone who goes behind the plate to catch and throw."

New York Yankees super scout Clyde King not only maintains that **Fisk** is the best in the game, but says, "no one works each particular pitcher better than **Carlton**."

Fisk's own pitchers agree. Bob Stanley pleaded with Zimmer to let **Fisk** catch when Zimmer planned to give his catcher his weekly day off.

"Pudge screams at me, curses me, embarrasses me . . . but he gets out of me what I can do," said Stanley. "He's this team's leader. Pure and simple."

"Pudge is always two or three pitches ahead," said Burgmeier, the Red Sox' ace reliever. "He may call for an inside fastball, knowing that if you miss, he will come back with the changeup. He knows when a hitter tries to hit differently in Fenway Park. He picks up things pitchers can't, like a change in a guy's stance. He's a firm believer in not trying to get guys out before you're supposed to get him out."

"There are very good defensive catchers around like (Jim) Sundberg and (Butch) Wynegar, but when you put everything together—throwing, blocking balls, catching, hitting, running—there is no one who can even come close to him."

Fisk's basic philosophy is from the Sandy Koufax ("show me a pitcher who won't pitch inside and I'll show you a loser") and Catfish Hunter school of pitching. Pitch inside. Knock guys off the plate. It gets **Fisk** knocked down, too.

"I get decked twice a game on general principles," he said, "but that's the pitcher's job." Toronto's Jesse Jefferson knocked him down four times recently.

"If you let a hitter control the plate, you have an ineffective pitcher," said **Fisk**. "The plate gets small if you let a hitter hang out over it. But get him off it and the plate gets bigger and bigger, because in the hitter's mind, the plate moves as much as the strike zone. If the pitchers don't want the responsibility of guys getting ticked off because we move them off the plate, then I'll take it."

Fisk has never cared whether anyone liked him. He yells at infielders who fall asleep. He rolls his mask back atop his head, strolls to the mound and curses pitchers. "This is a business, not a tea party," he says.

That's what forced him to tell Zimmer he couldn't wait to play any longer back on April 12. That decision may have kept the first seven weeks of the 1980 season from being a complete disaster in Boston.

Kid Forster Earning Keep While Learning in Bullpen

By EDGAR MUNZEL

CHICAGO, Ill.—"That young fellow threw better than anybody I've seen all year," said Warren Spahn, the former great southpaw hurler of the Braves who now is the Cleveland pitching coach.

"He broke off two curves on Ron Lolich in the ninth inning that were almost unbelievable," said plate umpire Jerry Neudecker.

The young man in question? Terry Forster, the 20-year-old southpaw reliever of the White Sox. The glowing statements by Spahn and Neudecker were made following Terry's relief performance against the Indians in Cleveland July 11.

Forster that night hurled the final 2 2/3 innings against the Indians. He allowed only one hit and fanned

three in protecting a 4-3 White Sox edge to make another young rescuer, Rich Gossage, the winner.

Terry, of course, was credited with a save, his 12th with the season only half over. Since the youngster also had one win, it means that he was involved in 13 of the 44 White Sox victories at that point.

"I'd like to make a starter out of him and I'm sure that eventually we will," said White Sox Manager Chuck Tanner. "But right now he's just too valuable to us in the bullpen.

In Class With Lyle

"I know Sparky Lyle has done a tremendous bullpen job for the Yankees (17 saves at that juncture). But Forster is just as valuable to us. Without Forster's relief work, we wouldn't be up there challenging the A's in the Western Division."

At the midway point of the season, Forster, a 6-3, 205-pound southpaw, had appeared in 30 of 78 White Sox games. His brilliance was reflected not only in his earned-run average of 1.83 but in the fact he had struck out 52 in 44 innings.

And this young man is in only his third year of pro ball. He was plucked right out of high school by the White Sox in June, 1970, as their No. 2 draft choice.

For the remainder of 1970 Forster was with Appleton in the Midwest League and compiled a 6-1 record and an ERA of 1.33. The following spring he was so impressive at the Sarasota camp that the White Sox moved him to their roster and then right on into the bullpen, despite his lack of experience.

This reverses the policy of years ago when the ideal relief hurler was believed to be the veteran who couldn't go the distance any more but because of long experience and shrewdness still had enough to outfox the hitters for a few innings.

Kids Get Their Chance

Big league managers no longer hesitate using strong-armed youngsters in the bullpen if they have the ability to get the ball over. Forster not only is one of the best of these youthful firemen but he also is an outstanding example that a young hurler can be developed in the majors, if properly handled.

"Johnny Sain, our pitching coach, deserves all the credit for that," said Tanner. "Johnny worked with Terry every day, improving his stuff, sharpening his control and also teaching him the finer points of pitching."

Sox Yarns: Dick Allen has been bothered by a severely bruised big toe on his right foot. "I hurt it originally when Mike Andrews accidentally stepped on it as we were coming out of the dugout to go onto the field," said the star slugger. Then he aggravated the injury in a collision with Ron Lolich on an into-

the-runner throw in Cleveland. . . . Tanner's mother came over from New Castle, Pa., to watch the White Sox in their final game in Cleveland July 12. . . . "You'd better win or your father will have a heart attack," Chuck's mom warned him. Chuck's dad stayed home and it was just as well, because the cardiac risk would have been even worse had he seen the game. It was a 5-4 squeaker the Sox won in the ninth. . . . For the first half of the season the White Sox had a horrible 13-23 road record. They were 21-11 in one-run decisions.

deals of the week

MAJOR LEAGUES

Braves—Assigned infielder Rod Gilbreath to Savannah.

Brewers—Optioned pitcher Ray Newman to Evansville; acquired pitcher Archie Reynolds from same club.

Cardinals—Acquired pitcher Don Durham from Tulsa.

Cubs—Signed first baseman-outfielder Tommy Davis as free agent.

Expos—Asked waivers on infielder Bobby Wine for purpose of giving him unconditional release.

Indians—Assigned pitcher Steve Minger to Portland.

Mets—Optioned pitcher Buzz Capra to Tidewater; acquired outfielder Dave Schneck from Memphis.

Phillies—Acquired pitcher Mac Scarce from Reading.

Pirates—Recalled catcher Charlie Sands and first baseman-outfielder Richie Zisk from Charleston.

Rangers—Recalled pitcher Jan Dukes from Denver.

Tigers—Optioned pitcher Joe Niekro and assigned pitcher Les Cain to Toledo; acquired pitcher Fred Holdsworth from same club.

Twins—Acquired pitcher Dave Goltz from Tacoma.

White Sox—Assigned infielders Hugh Yancy and Jorge Orta to Knoxville; recalled first baseman Tony Muser from Tucson.

CLASS AAA

Charleston—Acquired pitcher Kent Tekulve from Sherbrooke.

Denver—Acquired pitcher Steve Foucault from Burlington.

Evansville—Acquired pitcher Gary Cavallo from San Antonio.

Indianapolis—Placed infielder Gary Sprague on voluntary retired list; signed shortstop Buddy Young as a free agent.

Oklahoma City—Acquired pitcher Blake Green from Cocoa.

Omaha—Assigned pitcher Bill Butler to Portland.

Portland—Assigned outfielder Jim Clark to Omaha.

Syracuse—Acquired infielder-outfielder Ed Pacheco from West Haven.

Toledo—Optioned pitcher Les Cain to Phoenix.

Tucson—Acquired first baseman Sam Ewing from Knoxville.

CLASS AA

Midland—Sent pitcher Tom Liscano to Bradenton and pitcher Len York to Quincy.

San Antonio—Returned catcher Dennis Parks to Cardinals, who assigned him to Arkansas; acquired catchers Jerry Mantle and Bill Collins and outfielder Kent Jacobson from Newark.



Mexsana Medicated Powder
absorbs sticky perspiration
80 times faster
than talcum powder



Mexsana's exclusive formula creates an immediate feeling of coolness. Then keeps skin cool, dry all day—free from odor, heat rash and chafing.

Bosox Find a Mitt Pearl In Youngster Pudge Fisk

By LARRY CLAFLIN

BOSTON, Mass.—Carlton (Pudge) Fisk, the 24-year-old catcher from New Hampshire, continues to be the baseball story of the year in Boston. He is a prime reason the Red Sox have become contenders in the American League East, a division in which no team seems to want the pennant badly enough to seize it.

Fisk is one of the most talked-about players in the American League. He has hit with surprising authority and has caught every day for the improved Bostonians.

"Fisk is the best catcher in our league," said Red Sox utilityman Phil Gagliano. A lot of people agree.

Despite the fact that his name was not on the All-Star ballot, Fisk drew a heavy vote. Each vote from his constituency had to be written in by his fans.

Fisk has done some of his best hitting against the Angels. Both Angel Pilot Del Rice and coach John Roseboro have been raving about him.

"He does everything well," said Rice, who spent his playing days as a catcher, many of them watching Del Crandall.

Consistent at Plate

Fisk moved into the top 10 A. L. hitters in July and has remained there with consistently good hitting. Most surprising was the number of extra-base hits he delivered.

Fisk leads the Red Sox in homers and has been among the league leaders in doubles and triples. At this writing, his slugging percentage was a remarkable .628. In 1967, when Carl Yastrzemski tore apart the league, his slugging percentage was .622.

"I've never had a streak like this before," Fisk admitted when his average climbed to .312 after a three-hit, two-walk night in Oakland. Fisk's hitting helped the Red Sox sweep a three-game series from the A's.

There is little in Fisk's minor league record to indicate he would hit in the majors. He hit well his first year in pro ball, but he had two bad years in succession in the Eastern League, a performance he blames partially on bad lights.

Hurt in Plate Collision

Last year at Louisville (American Association) he improved with a .263 mark, but a problem with his right shoulder after a collision at home plate limited him to 94 games.

During the winter, Fisk was one of three candidates for the Boston catching job. The others were Duane Josephson and Bob Montgomery. In fact, it was freely predicted in the Boston press that the Red Sox would trade for a catcher.

In spring training, Manager Eddie Kasko gave the three catchers about equal opportunity. Josephson opened the season, but was hurt in the second game. Montgomery played for a couple of games and then Fisk got his chance. Now Fisk has no contenders. He catches nearly every game and is rested only in the second game of doubleheaders.

Jack Burns, the St. Louis Browns' and Detroit Tigers' first baseman

of the 1930s, was the scout who signed Fisk off the New Hampshire campus. Fisk was noted more for his basketball talent than his baseball ability at that time.

Fisk stands 6-2, not tall for a basketball player.

Brother Signed With Orioles

Fisk's father works in a machine shop in Springfield, Vt., just across the Connecticut River from the family home in Charlestown, N. H. Carlton's brother, Calvin, was signed by the Orioles as a catcher. However, military duty set back the elder Fisk and he gave up a pro career.

Outside pitches used to get Fisk out. He has worked hard on that weakness, and now he goes with the outside pitch very well. That probably is the main reason for his improvement as a hitter.

Another reason for his improvement is his confidence. Fisk always had that. Ask Dick Williams.

When Williams was still managing the Red Sox, Fisk came to spring training as a kid with a future, but with no chance to make the club that year. One afternoon in Winter Haven, Williams called all his catchers together and started a contest to see which catcher could survive the longest without dropping a foul pop.

The Lone Survivor

Williams kept hitting the foul flies with a fungo bat, and eventually only Fisk had not dropped one. Then Williams called Fisk over and said: "Now I'll keep hitting four fungoes until you drop one."

"Fine with me, Mr. Williams," Fisk answered. "But you might be here all day."


Williams was impressed.

Bosox Bunts: Luis Aparicio rejoined the Red Sox after spending two weeks at home in Venezuela while his fractured finger healed. . . . Carl Yastrzemski ran up an eight-game hitting streak until forced out of action with muscle spasms in his back. . . . The acid test for Boston pennant hopes was to come just before the All-Star break when they meet the A's six times in four days at Fenway Park. In Oakland this season, the Red Sox took five out of six. . . . With all of his veteran outfielders injured at one time or another, Kasko was getting good use out of rookies Ben Oglivie and Rick Miller. Both came through with clutch hits.




Carlton Fisk

ALL NEW!



BASEBALL Caps'n Bats Kit



mini SPORT

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

\$1.50 per kit

Includes 6 AL or NL caps, team insignia, 6 bats and big league bleacher display, all in scale model size.

A must for every baseball fan or collector! Colorful bleacher display diorama and playing field snaps together in seconds. Team insignia affixes to caps. Caps and bats are molded; bleachers and diamond base are heavy pressed-board composition.

Your choice of 4 kits:

KIT 111—A.L. Eastern: Det., Cleve., N.Y., Dallas, Milw., Balt., Bost. **KIT 112—A.L. Western:** Oakland, K.C., Texas Rangers, Chi., Minn., Calif. **KIT 113—N.L. Eastern:** St. Louis, Chi., Phila., Pitts., N.Y., Montreal. **KIT 114—N.L. Western:** Cinn., Atlanta, L.A., Houston, San Fran., San Diego.

ORDER TODAY! \$1.50 per kit Postpaid

TDR Sports Enterprises 194
P.O. Box 67, Chatham, New Jersey 07928

Please rush to me Baseball Caps 'n Bats #111 #112 #113 #114 @ \$1.50 per kit. (Circle kits desired.) Enclosed is \$

Name _____
Street & No. _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
(Please print)

Everybody loves a winner.

Jim Beam



86 PROOF KENTUCKY STRAIGHT
BOURBON WHISKEY DISTILLED
AND BOTTLED BY THE
JAMES B. BEAM DISTILLING CO.,
CLERMONT, BEAM, KENTUCKY

Without **Fisk**, Red Sox Could Be Dead Sox

By PETER GAMMONS

BOSTON—The difference was all too striking. With Carlton **Fisk** out of the lineup, the Red Sox were feeble. When **Fisk** was catching, they were the class of the American League East.

Now what will happen to the Red Sox with **Fisk** out for at least two months following surgery to repair torn ligaments in his left knee?

He underwent the operation at Hahneman Hospital in Boston June 30, two days after being injured in a collision at home plate with Leron Lee of the Indians in Cleveland.

The play developed with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning in a 1-1 tie. Lee was on first when George Hendrick hit a line drive to the base of the wall in left-center. As it originally developed, it appeared that the play at the plate was very close, but shortstop Mario Guerrero held the ball, then threw high, forcing **Fisk** to be extended when Lee crashed in.

The run, incidentally, gave Gaylord Perry his 14th straight victory.

It's a tribute to **Fisk** that Boston fans have come to dub him the Red Sox' Dave Cowens, likening the young catcher to the kingpin of the NBA champion Boston Celtics.

Fisk's fulfillment of the promise he showed as a 1972 rookie has not been easy. Last March 17, he took a foul tip in the groin at St. Petersburg, Fla. He didn't return to action behind the plate until April 28 in Kansas City, with the Red Sox a game under .500.

FOR THE following week, the Red Sox continued losing as **Fisk** slowly regained top form. On May 5, when **Fisk** started pounding the ball, the Red Sox had a 10-15 record and **Fisk** owned a .158 batting average.

For the next six weeks, **Fisk** hit .340 and smacked 10 homers, powering the Red Sox to a 30-13 clip which vaulted them to the top in the A. L. East.

For four or five weeks after his injury, **Fisk** had stomach

cramps, was nauseous and had stamina problems. Doctors told him he would have to live with these ailments most of the year. Meanwhile, he got hit hard in the same spot five times by foul tips.

"IT'S RIDICULOUS," the 26-year-old catcher kept saying. "I've never been hit there more than twice in a year in all my life. Now this. It seems like I'm getting hit every day."

But it didn't affect his aggressiveness, which is his dominant characteristic. His first game was April 26 in K. C. as a designated hitter. In his first at-bat, he singled and scored—diving across the plate on his stomach. In his first two games catching, he had three collisions blocking the plate.

But the collisions and 1973 fights with the Yankees' Thurmon Munson and California's Alan Gallagher made **Fisk** sit back and wonder where he was going.

FOR A YEAR and a half, he was New England's darling. He had come out of the woods of Charlestown, N. H., and in Northern New England every little town has a thousand watt station blaring Red Sox baseball. He was a catcher, something the Red Sox had not developed in 20 years. And he was a good catcher.

In '72 he hit .293 with 22 homers and nine triples. He was the team MVP. And last year, in mid-June, he was hitting over .300. Then all sorts of things happened.

He started losing weight and got down well below 200 pounds. He had injuries. He started swinging at bad pitches. And suddenly he was one of the most unpopular players in the league.

"Tell him," said Frank Robinson after those two had a little jam, "that people don't like him in this league. He's got a lot to learn."

PART OF IT was his peculiar strutting style of running. "If you could only teach him to run differently," said Milwaukee Manager Del Crandall, "people wouldn't dislike him." But there were other things, including his much-publicized criticisms of Reggie Smith and Carl Yastrzemski.

Said **Fisk**, "I let myself overreact to too many things. I tried to take the winter completely away from baseball and look at things," said **Fisk**. "I tried to evaluate what it would take for me to really do the job. The first thing was to try to get my weight up, which I believe I need for my best performance. Right now I'm about 217 (25 pounds heavier than September '73).

"Then I decided to go about the game a little differently, to eliminate some of the wasted energy. All my life I had run on and off the field and sprinted down to back up first base, but it seemed superfluous. I kept maybe three balls in two years from going into the dugout.

"I THOUGHT about a lot of things. I decided to stop trying to be so conscious of being the leader. To stop worrying so much about what others do and just worry about my own job. I decided I should do less arguing with umpires. I realized it hurt the pitchers, both because I guess umpires naturally take it the wrong way and it breaks the concentration of the pitchers themselves.

"I guess," **Fisk** continued. "I just wanted to sit back and look at myself. I guess I have to be more guarded in what I say and to whom. I've always been confused by the way fans react. They criticize athletes for never saying anything, then when they do, like I did about Reggie, they chastise you.

"I guess it's part of maturing."

In the Boston media, people trip over each other to be the first to post a star over a new player's locker, and **Fisk** was a local kid and very good in that rookie year. Thus it was that people lost perspective on **Fisk**.

HE IS NOW only in his third big league year. Johnny Bench has had a dip or two.

"Look at Munson," said **Fisk**. "He hit a slump (.251) his second year, too, and he's one of the best players in baseball now."

And **Fisk** now appears to have matured into one of the quality players in the game. "When he hits like he is hitting now," said a veteran A's player, "he is the single most dominant player in the league."

Most of all, he represents the brash attitude of this Red Sox team. Which really isn't an accident, for after a minor league career dotted with .227s and .242s, it was under Darrell Johnson at Louisville (American Association) in 1971 that he matured into a major leaguer.

Without him, the Red Sox are just another team.



Fisk . . . Out Two Months, At Least



CARLTON FISK cries out in pain after being bowled over by Leron Lee in a collision at home plate.

Forget Relief Posies, Drago Prefers to Start

By PETER GAMMONS

BOSTON—It is a compliment Dick Drago would prefer to have put back in a drawer.

It seems everyone keeps hoping Rick Wise, Reggie Cleveland and Rogelio Moret will get themselves straightened away in the starting rotation. So Drago can go back to the bullpen.

Drago, it is reasoned, has been so outstanding in the bullpen and Diego Segui and Bob Veale have no real help in that department. Dick is more valuable there because few pitchers can be short relievers.

Except for the first month of his rookie (1969) season in Kansas City, Drago never had been a reliever. But with several others in front of him in the starting line in Boston, that's where he began the season. In his first appearance, April 11 against Baltimore, he entered the game in the 11th with two on, one out, and got Bobby Grich to rap a perfect double-play ball which the Red Sox infielder bungled to lose the game.

BUT AFTER THAT, Manager Darrell Johnson started using him with confidence. And each time out he seemed to throw harder—much harder than the times the Red Sox had seen him last year with the Royals.

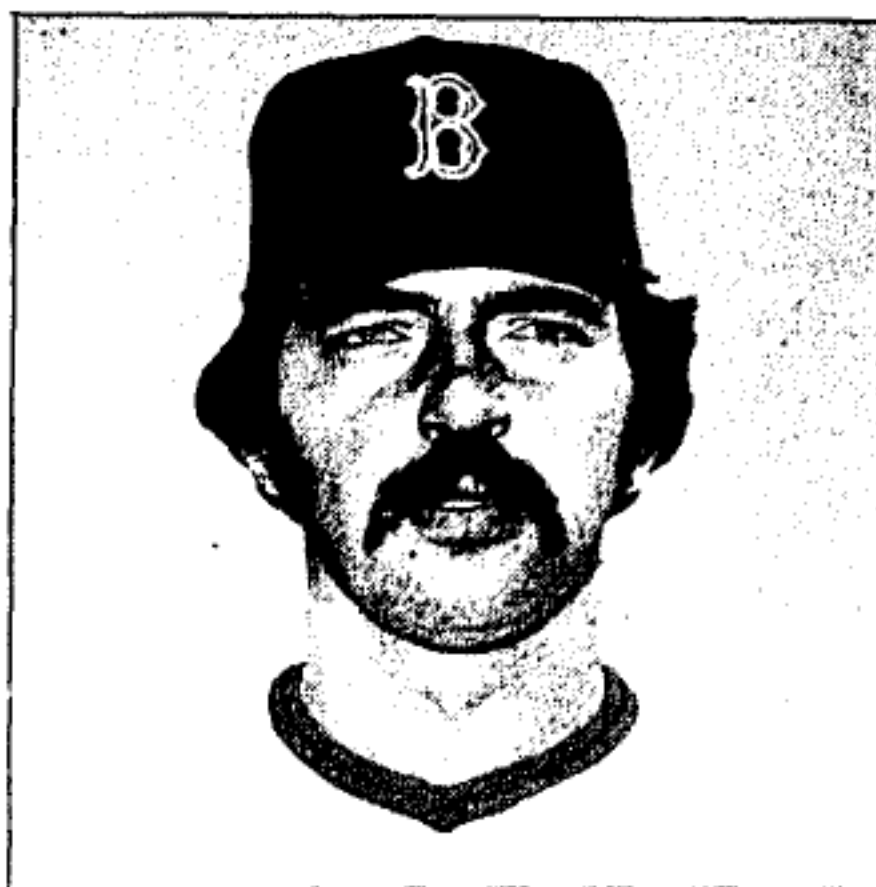
"It's a combination of many things," said the 28-year-old right-hander. "I had pretty much quit on myself over there. But then I've learned a lot, too.

"I think maybe I'm throwing harder because I'm not worrying so much about walking people, something I used to be dead afraid of. Watching Luis Tiant, I've learned an awful lot about taking the edge off the hitter. Now I come from side-arm a lot more, start batters off with the forkball—just to help my standard pitches."

AND IT HAS worked. As a reliever, he has two wins and two official saves, but would have had four others under the old save rule. He has done a superb job in middle relief and, as he'd like people to realize, as a starter.

Both losing starts could have been victories. On April 23, after not working more than four innings for a month, he went into the ninth inning against the Royals with a 2-2 tie. He lost on a combination of bleeders and defensive conspiracies.

On June 17, in Oakland, he lost, 3-2, in the ninth inning when Carlton **Fisk** tried to pick Jesus Alou off



Dick Drago

first base and threw the ball into right field. In other words, in his eight starts, the Red Sox were ahead or in the game going into the ninth. In fact, he had not had a poor appearance in the first three months.

"I REALIZE when people say I'm needed in the bullpen, they mean it as a compliment," said Drago. "But then again I keep hearing that only Tiant and Bill (Lee) have been effective starters. I'm pitching close to '71." Then he was 17-11 and one of the best pitchers in the league.

"But I really don't care what they ask me to do," Drago said. "That's the way it is when you're playing on a winning team."

In late June, Johnson had temporarily sent Cleveland to the bullpen and kept Drago starting. But if and when Reggie ever gets himself straightened away, it may be that with a schedule that allows no off-days except for the All-Star Game

between June 20 and August 15, Drago's best place might well be the bullpen.

"That's a nice position to be in," said Brewer Manager Del Crandall. "I know this. Two pitchers have kept the Sox in it—Tiant and Drago."

Bosox Notebook: Cleveland was bucking for the Debbie Drake award, having dropped from 218 to 203 in two weeks. He had a couple of bets he could get to 198 by July 4. . . . Moret, who was 13-2 last year, got himself into the rotation by beating Oakland, 6-1, and working four strong innings in relief of Cleveland, who got hit by a line drive in the fifth in an 8-3 victory over the Indians. . . . Instead of the usual procedure in a fathers-sons game, the Red Sox bowed to the female liberationists in the Athens of America by allowing daughters to join in. And, instead of a game, they just had contests for individual skills.

Pittsburgh GM Brown Leaves December Deal Door Half Ajar

By CHARLEY FEENEY

PITTSBURGH, Pa.—Some Joe Brown quotes: "It just might be that we won't make a deal at all."

"We have no plans to make a trade for a shortstop."

"We're not in desperate need of a lefthanded starting pitcher."

Some more Joe Brown quotes:

"If the right offer comes along, we will trade."

"We're not interested in a shortstop, but . . ."

"If we can get a lefthanded pitcher in the right deal, we might go for it."

Brown, general manager of the Pirates, opens and closes and re-opens the door on any trade possibilities.

In one breath, he gives the impression that the Pirates, three-times National League East Division champs, may stand pat in 1973.

Then he says: "I spoke to two clubs on the phone about trade possibilities."

Always Ready to Deal

Who made the phone calls?

"I did," Brown said.

Let's face it. Joe is a wheeler-dealer. He always is open to a deal. There are some rival managers who say that Brown drives a hard bargain.

"I don't think I'm tough to deal with," Brown said. "Ask Cedric Tallis in Kansas City. He dealt with me and I made his club a contender in 1971."

Brown sent shortstop Freddie Patek, catcher Jerry May and pitcher Bruce Dal Canton to K. C. for pitcher Bob Johnson, shortstop Jackie Hernandez and minor



Joe Brown

league catcher Jimmy Campanis. That deal was completed at the winter baseball meeting at Los Angeles in December, 1970.

A few hours before the trade, Brown said that he felt there was little chance that it would be completed. He was not telling an untruth.

Tallis had indicated to Brown that he would not give up Johnson as the pitcher in the deal.

When they broke off talks earlier in the day, Brown felt that Tallis would continue to say that Johnson was unavailable.

The K. C. brass held a meeting and decided Brown's three-man package was worth giving up Johnson, who had been an out-

standing relief pitcher for the Royals in 1970.

It says here that the chances of the Pirates swinging a deal during December are 50-50. The 1973 Pirates could use a utility infielder mainly because Chuck Goggin, up from Charleston, can't play shortstop.

Goggin, however, can play second and third and he can catch. He has a good chance of sticking with the club, unless the Pirates land a type like Terry Harmon (Phillies).

Brown points out that the Pirates' staff allowed the fewest runs in the National League in 1972. He says he is not in desperate need for a pitcher, and he is right. But let the right offer come along and Brown will deal.

He is the type who may stand pat or swing two, possibly three, trades.

Pittburgers: Brown says that Gene Alley, who is 32, will have a more positive approach to the game next season. The G. M. feels that Alley did not reveal how much his left knee hurt him during the last weeks of the season. Alley, who was considering retirement a year ago, underwent knee surgery a few weeks ago. . . . The Pirates were fortunate to keep Joe Morgan in their organization. He was axed as one of their coaches at the end of last season and when he could not land another big league coaching job, he agreed to return to manage Charleston. Morgan is a knowledgeable baseball man who someday might become a big league manager. He played briefly in the big leagues with several clubs. He was a lefthanded-hitting utility infielder.

Cut Whiffs, One of Three Fisk Aims

By LARRY CLAFLIN

BOSTON, Mass.—Carlton Fisk wasn't surprised that he won the American League Rookie of the Year honors. He's only surprised that he's a bona-fide major leaguer.

Fisk, who is courageous and loyal enough to continue living in the New Hampshire winter weather, admitted he sort of expected to win the rookie award. He won it unanimously in the Baseball Writers Association poll of 24 A. L. writers. Fisk is the only American Leaguer ever to win the rookie award unanimously.

"I can't say I'm overwhelmed or surprised," Fisk admitted with his usual honesty. "After all, I've been reading stories about the rookie award for months."

"I will say, though, that I am flattered and thrilled that I won it unanimously. I didn't expect that."

No Real Competition

There really never was any doubt about Fisk. He had no real competitors, especially after he was named to the A. L. All-Star team and played in the game. In fact, he had a base-hit in that game.

"I think I'd have to say that was the biggest thrill yet for me," he said. "Being on that All-Star team was something I never expected. And getting into the game was just that much extra. Just to be there was honor enough, but when you get to catch a few innings, it's really too much."

Fisk has a ton of banquet invitations for the winter and is trying to limit them without limiting his income too severely. He is aware of the danger of wearing himself out by constant winter travel.

Fisk has yet to talk contract with the Red Sox. That should be an interesting conversation. How-

ever, he is not likely to have any difficulty. Few players do with the Red Sox, especially players with the credentials of a Fisk.

Asked how he felt he could improve himself in 1973, Fisk replied he would like to throw better, strike out less and have a better understanding with the Red Sox pitchers.

"I threw well late in the season, but I had some trouble earlier. I want to work on that. I want to be consistent."

"I struck out 83 times, which is too many. I'm going to concentrate on cutting down that figure. And I want a better rapport with all our pitchers so we think alike when they're pitching to me."

The rapport with pitchers probably will come in time when Fisk is more mature and knows the league better. However, he is no shrinking violet and undoubtedly will start taking charge of situations next year, now that he has such a fine rookie season under his belt.

Like all catchers, Fisk admires Johnny Bench of the Reds boundlessly.

"What a hitter," said Fisk. "To

have that power and be so great behind the plate with that amazing arm of his! Well, I just can't imagine anyone being any better than Bench."

Bench is the best in the business at catching low pitches with one hand, and Fisk emulates him. Fisk believes that is the coming thing for catchers.

"It makes sense if you can handle the ball with one hand," he said. "You get throws away quicker that way. I like to catch low balls with one hand. More and more catchers are doing it. The mitts we use nowadays help."

Memories Still Vivid

Fisk is a determined young man despite the fact that he is a bit surprised so much has happened to him since last winter.

"It doesn't really seem that long ago since I was playing baseball on cow pastures and sandlots," he said. "All those memories are very vivid to me. It hasn't been very long since I was riding a bus around the minor leagues."

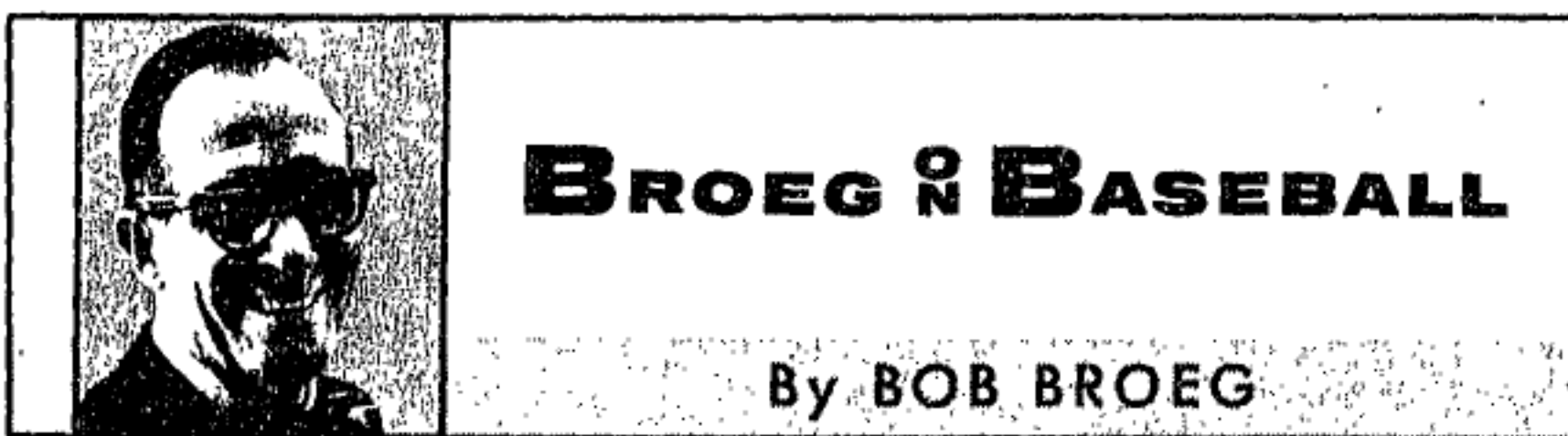
Fisk, who is outspoken when the occasion demands, always has been in excellent condition. He plans to remain that way.

If you live where Fisk does, you have to stay in shape. Shoveling snow is no way to get fat.

Bosox Bunts: The last Red Sox player to win the rookie award was pitcher Don Schwall in 1961. . . . Frank Robinson, who is managing Red Sox shortstop Juan Beniquez in Puerto Rico, reports Beniquez' fielding is still erratic. The Red Sox might make an outfielder out of Beniquez because he has a good bat and can run. . . . A possibility as the new player representative of the Red Sox is reserve catcher Bob Montgomery, who seems like the type who would do a good job in that difficult role.



Carlton Fisk



BROEG & BASEBALL

By BOB BROEG

Dressen and Hurley Some Combo

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—Listening to them separately, I always thought it would be a delight to get Charley Dressen and Jack Hurley together for a conversation. Chances are that the chesty little baseball manager and the self-assured, skinny fight manager would have agreed on at least one point—women.

As Roger Kahn described in graphic detail in "Boys of Summer," his then-and-now look at Brooklyn's talented Dodgers of 20 years ago, the veteran manager, Dressen, had definite ideas he hammered home to the young reporter about the sex lives and habits of athletes, particularly pitchers.

Dressen, happily married for years to a devoted wife, probably knew a heckuva lot more about the excellent chili he turned out as a self-anointed, self-appointed chef than he did about women.

Chesty Cholly was an authority on many things and as positive in his opinions as Hurley, who died the other day, alone in the Seattle hotel room from which, incredibly, he'd promoted—quite successfully—a heavyweight title bout between Floyd Patterson and the thing Jack despised most next to a woman. That is, an amateur, namely Pete Rademacher, the former Olympic champion.

Dressen, who died of a cardiac arrest in a Detroit hospital after a kidney infection in August, 1966, had suffered two previous heart attacks, but he still was outspoken that last spring in Florida when he managed the Tigers.

He scorned the slider as he did the broads who, he felt, preyed on his pitchers. "A nickel curve," Chesty Cholly spat, as if he'd just found his own chili even too hot for his taste.

Old-Timers' Curves Were Sharp

"Dazzy Vance, Jughandle Johnny Morrison, Vic Aldridge, Bill Hallahan, Flint Rhem, guys like them, had a curve that went like this," Dressen said, his right hand plunging directly to the floor of the visitors' clubhouse at St. Petersburg's Al Lang Field.

"We called it a 'drop' then," he went on, "and even the great hitters had a helluva time trying to center in on the ball to lift it."

"I discount even some of the strikeouts of a great pitcher like Sandy Koufax, who has got a helluva fine curve, because hitters now swing from their ankles even when they've got two strikes. We used to choke up and try just to get a piece of the ball with two strikes, but kids are hard-headed today."

Dressen didn't exactly wear the ball out as a peppery, seven-season third baseman, but then George Halas' first quarterback when the Chicago Bears were known as the Staley Starchwork Terriers of Decatur, Ill., never was a shrinking violet.

Neither, by any stretch of the imagination, was the 75-year-old Hurley, who as a fight manager was almost as certain of himself as Dressen, of whom it once was said—and beautifully by Los Angeles sportswriter Morton Moss—that he was going so good that he'd probably finish five games ahead of the club he was managing at the time.

When one of Hurley's fighters complained one time that Jack proposed to cut the boxer's purse in half, the manager scowled and snapped, "For 50 percent, son, you're getting ME."

A living legend who looked as bad as he said he felt, Hurley was physically opposite to Dressen, but wherever strong-willed sports characters get together after the last out and final bell, chances are that the thin, white-haired geezer with the perpetual prison pallor is holding his own orally with bouncing bantam Dressen, a free wheeling conversationalist.

By comparison with Hurley, Cholly was actually jolly. Jack wore a constantly pinched look and a mouth turned down at the corners so that, if he'd clenched a cigar between his gold filled teeth, he'd have reminded you of an old film favorite, the dour, deadpanned comic, the late Ned Sparks.

Hurley's pet peeves, not necessarily in order, were (1) boxing commissions, (2) ring judges and (3) women.

Women Called 'Creatures'

Women, more accurately wives, or, as Hurley called them, "creatures" beat more good boxers than booze, the old fight manager would insist.

"Look," he told his last hopeful, Boone Kirkman, a handsome white heavyweight hope who had far greater trouble with his clavicle than his love life, "marriage is too expensive. It's for women and kids."

By far the best fighter Hurley ever handled was Billy Petrolle, who came from Hurley's hometown, Fargo, N. D., and was a durable lightweight who hung up his gloves at 29 in 1934 with an excellent Depression grubstake, \$200,000. The Fargo Express moved to Duluth, Minn., and lived happily with two stores in which he sold religious objects.

Although as straight as George Washington's wig with a dollar, Honest John Hurley pulled some fast ones, such as when he promoted that Patterson-Rademacher mismatch from his hotel room in 1957. Before Patterson stiffened Rademacher in the sixth round, the Olympic champion did deck the roundheeled champion briefly.

"Just think," said Hurley, wistfully, "an amateur did this for me. It just goes to show that there's some good in everybody."

Maybe even in an occasional slider, Dressen might admit some good, but never in a boxing commission or ring judges, to hear Hurley tell it.

The last time I saw the guy who enjoyed poor health, he was doing what he always did—out-eat a heavyweight—by putting his feet under a table every three hours (1) for companionship and (2) because he'd lost two-thirds of his stomach to surgery 35 years ago.

"Too many judges never fought," said the man who was in the fight game from the time he was 18 years old, "and even the good ones find their view blocked half the time by the backside of one boxer or the other. I'd prefer the old way when one man, a competent referee, would judge the fight."

His face gloomier than a professional pallbearer's, Hurley grumbled over the trend toward continuing a knockdown after the bell, which happily wasn't so in the recent seven-knockdown bout between Muhammad Ali and Bob Foster.

"It's wrong to keep on counting under the bell, wrong under the 80-year-old Marquis of Queensberry rules," said Jack Hurley, unhappy as usual. "When a three-minute round ends, it ends, and the fighter belongs to us, the fight managers and trainers. We've got a minute to get him ready for the next round."

Or, as Charley Dressen told his troubled troops one time, "Hold 'em and I'll think of something."

Twins May Deal to Cut Free-Agent Toll

By BOB FOWLER

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

And it's happening again.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Perhaps. But that doesn't alter

the Twins' situation.

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

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

But that isn't the case with Bostock.

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

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

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

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

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

"I guess the best thing for us to

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

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

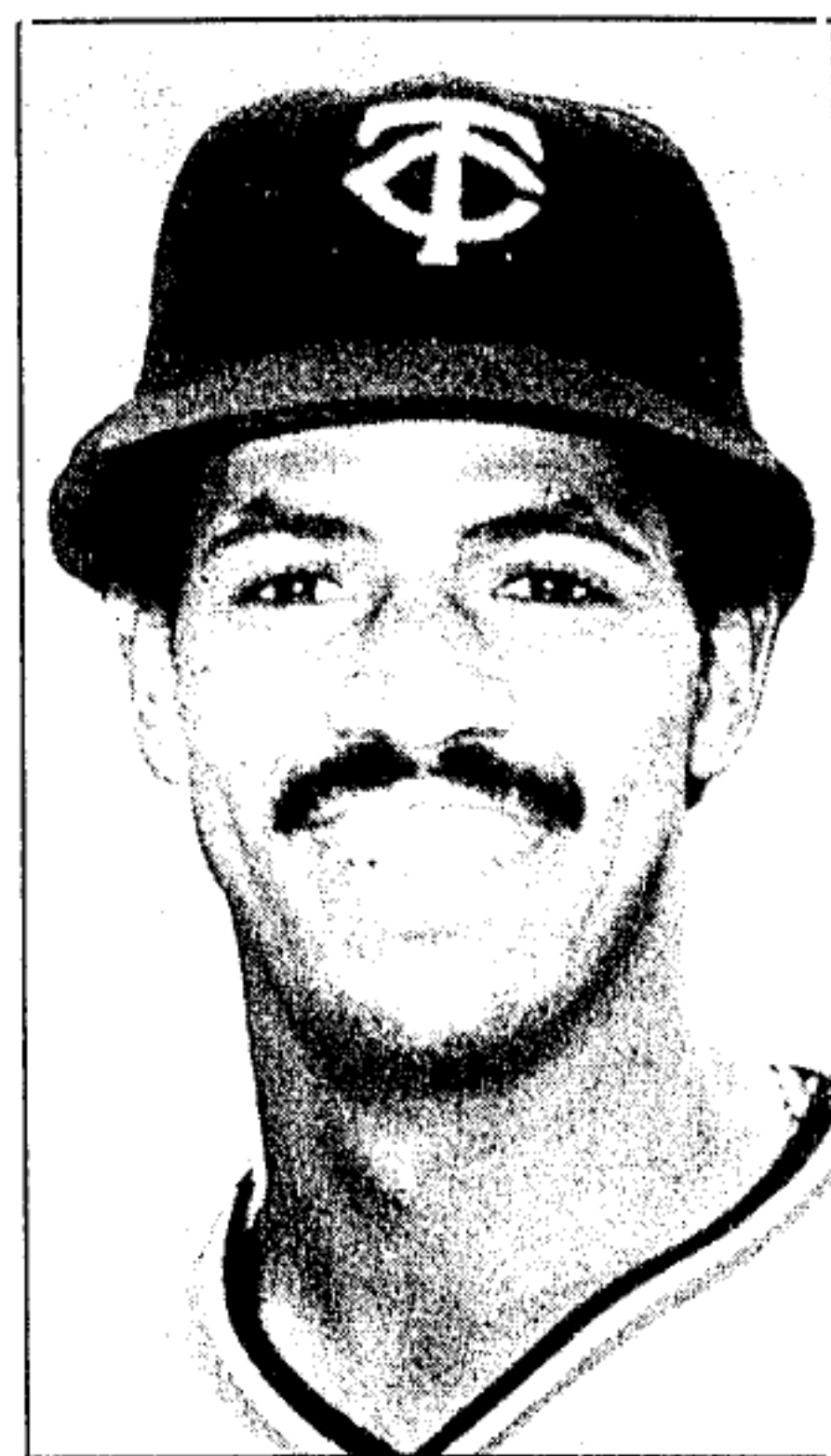
"IF THEY submit another offer, we'll be happy to discuss it," he said. "But, based on their most recent offer, I'd say that Lyman will become a free agent who will test his value in the open market. Unless, of course, he is traded and that team comes up with a new offer."

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

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

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

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



Lyman Bostock

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

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

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

Astro Belter Cedenno Battling to End Worst Slump

By HARRY SHATTUCK

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

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

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

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

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

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

"My hand still is too stiff in the

EXPOS

(Continued From Page 14)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

swinging. His hands are lagging.

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

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

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

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

Torrid Bat Stamps Fisk as Bosox Comeback King

By LARRY WHITESIDE

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

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

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

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

not Fenway Park cheapies.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

you'll get your share of hits."

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

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

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

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

easiest people to get along with. In this tradition, Witt can be crude, rude and aloof.

On pitching days, he can be impossible to deal with. Even following his games, it takes a long time for his shell to crack. While this demeanor can madden the press, teammates love Witt's mix of intensity and concentration.

Witt served a trying apprenticeship for his current role. He was rushed to the majors in 1981, when he was 21, and reeled through three seasons with a mediocre 23-29 record and plenty of doubts. Since 1984, when he became the Angels' mainstay, he has won 64 games.

"He has learned himself," said Boone, who has nurtured Witt's development. "He always had great stuff, but there'd be times he'd take no-hit stuff through half the game, then come out for the fifth inning looking like he'd never thrown a baseball before. His mechanics would fall apart.

"Now, it usually takes him only one bad pitch before he makes corrections."

Witt's ability to lead a staff was cemented in 1986, when the 18-game winner completed 14 starts and lasted into the seventh inning in 18 others.

Only if Witt returns to that pinnacle will the Angels return to theirs.

TOM SINGER

CHICAGO WHITE SOX



Carlton Fisk

Take Carlton Fisk out of the Chicago White Sox lineup and all that's left is a hitter who doesn't catch very well and a catcher who doesn't hit.

Without Fisk, the Sox would have to fall back on the amiable, but unreliable Mark Salas, who had seven passed balls in his final 15 games with the New York Yankees, and Ron Karkovice, whose .071 batting average last season was lower than Fisk's jersey number of 72.

Hitting and average-to-good defensive skills are not the only reasons Fisk is so valuable to the Sox. This is a rebuilding year, and the 40-year-old Fisk has promised to help.

"We had a long talk before we signed him," General Manager Larry Himes said. "He can play an important role for us. I wanted a commitment from Pudge that he'll provide leadership with our pitchers, that he'll work carefully with them—help them out as well as help us out.

"It's important that he does this. He said he would, that he was looking forward to it. We hope so."

The projected starting rotation

of Dave LaPoint, Rick Horton, Jack McDowell, Joel Davis and Melido Perez went into the season with an average age of 24.8 years. McDowell and Perez are only 22, Joel Davis is 23 and reliever John Davis is 24.

The Sox also have high hopes for Adam Peterson, 22, and Steve Rosenberg, Ken Patterson, Greg Hibbard and Grady Hall—all of whom are 23. In addition, John Pawlowski

is 24 and Tony Blasucci is 26. The only pitcher over 30 is lefthanded reliever Ray Searage, 32.

Fisk is no relic at 40. The square-jawed New Englander stays in condition year-round with an exercise program and by dieting. Never mind that he moves slowly behind the plate. He's just that way.

In 1986 and '87, Fisk had to ride to the rescue after the Sox tried young catchers Joel Skinner and

Karkovice, and both failed. Last season, after replacing Karkovice, Fisk hit .309 in July and .339 in August. He finished the season in a three-way tie for second place in the A.L. with 17 game-winning RBIs.

Of Fisk's 304 career home runs, 284 have come when he was catching. He trails only Johnny Bench (325) and Yogi Berra (313) in homers by a catcher. If the Sox

hadn't fooled around with him in left field the last two seasons, Fisk believes he'd be about even with Berra.

"Yes, I'm bitter. You bet I am!" Fisk said. "All of this should never have happened."

With Fisk now a part of the rebuilding of the Sox, it's unlikely that he'll be moved from behind the plate again.

JOE GODDARD

