

CHANGING

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carpets. LaRussa believes that playing on the grass in the Oakland Coliseum and other A.L. parks will keep Parker productive.

Asked if the short fences in some A.L. parks might play to Parker's

power, LaRussa said, "I think it's a definite factor. But, for me, I think it's more important that there is not that much turf. I want to keep him feeling good."

Parker, one of the hardest workers in the A's camp, is feeling good — about his health and about the A's chances to be contenders.

"I want to do whatever the ball

club needs," Parker said. "If they want me in left field, fine. If they want me to DH, fine."

But what Parker wants to do most for the A's is what he did so well in the National League:

"I want to contribute and do what they got me for," he said. "That's producing from the left side of the plate."

'New Atmosphere' of N.L. Won't Alter Gibson's Tigerish Approach to Game

By GORDON VERRELL

LOS ANGELES—The way Kirk Gibson sees it, helping the Los Angeles Dodgers return to baseball's elite represents a new challenge after eight seasons with the Detroit Tigers. But the jump from the American League to the National, well:

"I don't look at it as a National League-American League deal," said Gibson. "You still have to hit the ball, and catch it, and cross the plate to score a run. But it's def-

initely a new atmosphere. I'm going to have to do my homework."

Given a second shot at free agency in January when arbitrator Thomas Roberts gave him the option to leave the Tigers as part of the penalties imposed on the owners for restricting the movement of free agents after the 1985 season, Gibson negotiated a three-year, \$4.5 million contract that included a \$1 million signing bonus. His salary for 1988 is \$1.5 million, an outlay he feels his play will warrant.

"People will say I don't know the pitchers," Gibson said, "but they don't know me, either. If I was afraid of it, I wouldn't have changed."

"I have ability. I can't worry about the negatives. I'm sure I'll prove human, but in the long run I think I'll be a positive influence on this club."

The Dodgers, of course, think so, too, which is why they offered Pedro Guerrero for Gibson at the winter meetings and then opened the vault when he became available to all.

Please don't think Los Angeles is a one-man team, however. "By no means am I the savior of the Dodgers," Gibson said. "I just play my game."

Although that produced 108 homers over the last four seasons, most of the fans who responded to a February survey in the Detroit Free Press were not unhappy to see the slugger move west. Many, in fact, penned bitter goodbyes.

"I'm not boring," Gibson said. "Good or bad, (fans) will like to watch me."

"People say I look like a crazy man. That's part of my game. I want the other guy to think I'm nuts. When I get into competition, I want to win. I'm a very intense person when I'm on that field."

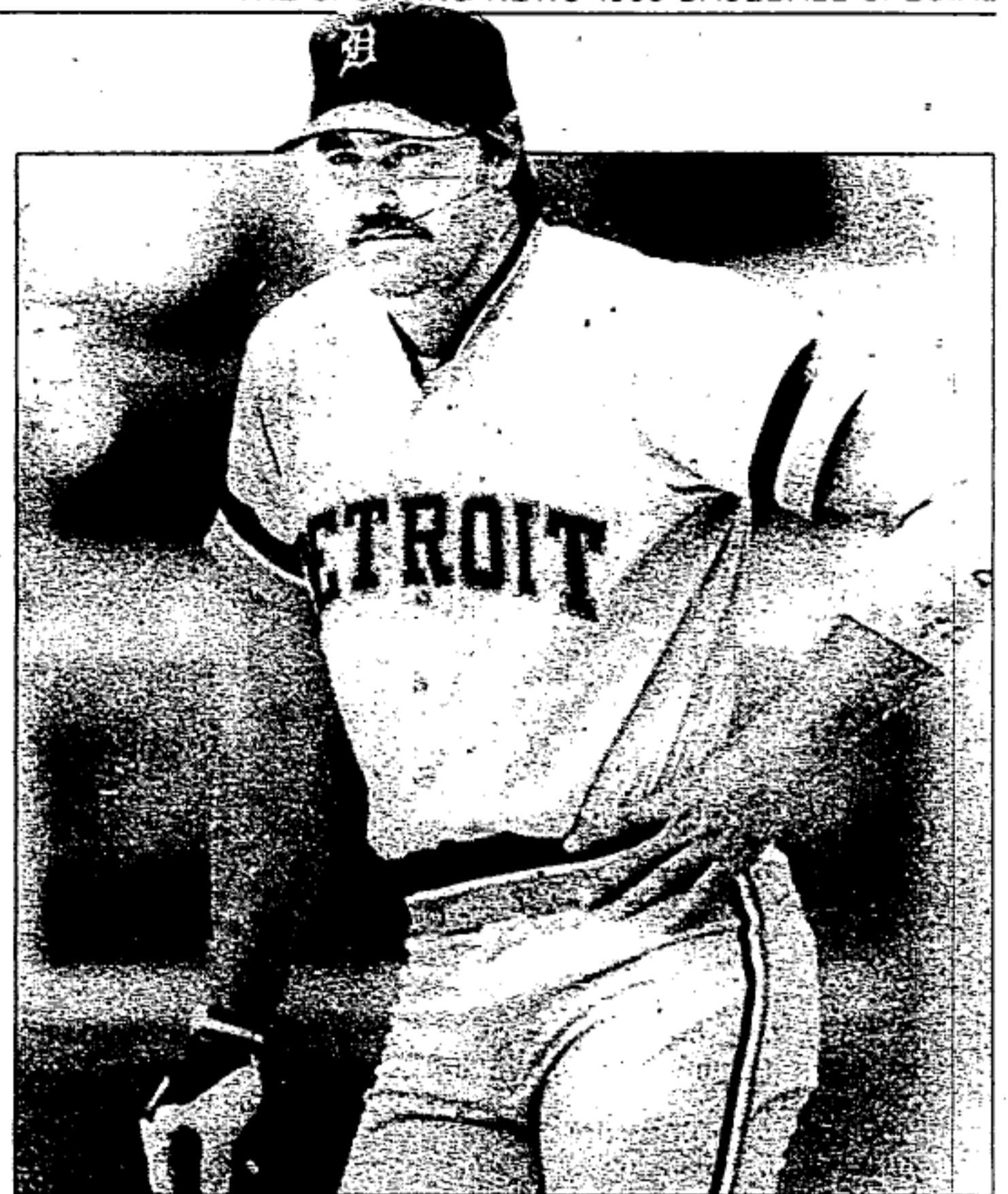
Gibson's new teammates learned that rather vividly March 3, the day of the Dodgers' exhibition opener in Vero Beach, Fla. Only minutes before the start of the game, Gibson, who had laughed off a practical joke that morning, stormed off the field and refused to play because of an embarrassing black stripe across his forehead, a product of the shoe polish that reliever Jesse Orosco had put inside his cap as a prank.

"I like to have a good time," Gibson said the next day, "but a good time to me is winning. I'm not here for comedy. I didn't think it was too funny. I'm fully aware this is the last thing they need around this clubhouse, but I have to stand up for what I believe. If (teammates) don't understand that, maybe I don't fit in."

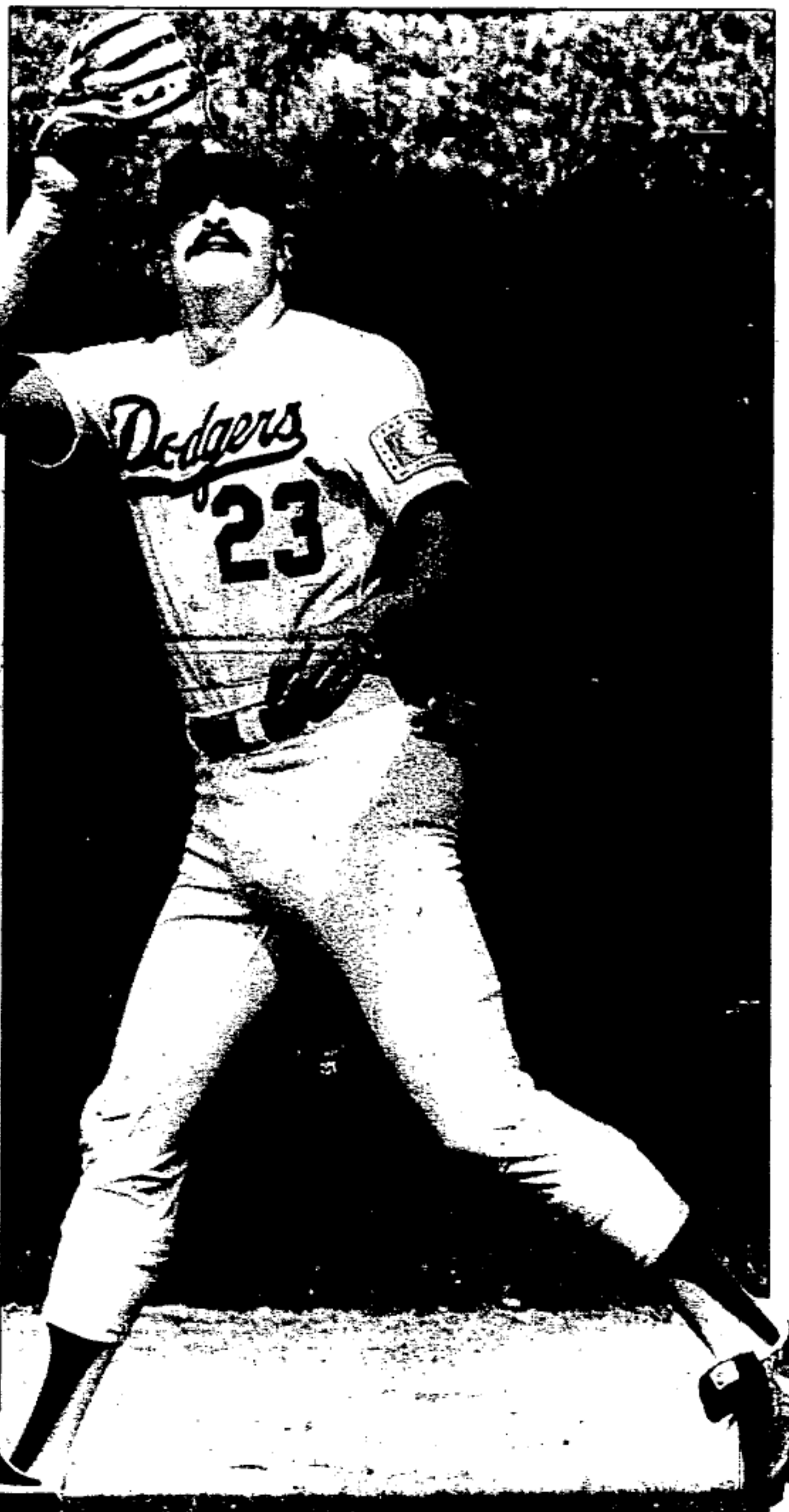
Gibson already knows that his new manager, Tom Lasorda, has a lot in common with his skipper at Detroit, Sparky Anderson.

"I know they both like to talk a lot," said Gibson. "They're both good for the game."

"Sparky—I love the guy. He's had so much influence on me. He taught me the game. I'll miss him; I'll miss Detroit. I'll be pulling for the Tigers. But I'm certainly schooled for Tommy."



Dodger fans will like to watch Kirk Gibson, who, good or bad, is never boring.



When Sluggers Switch Leagues

These have been the results during the past 10 years when well established players have switched leagues for the first times in their careers. The listing includes only players who had collected at least 200 hits in one of the leagues prior to moving. First-year performances in the new league are in bold face.

BILL BUCKNER

| Year | Club | G | HR | RBI | Avg. |
|------|----------------|-----|----|-----|------|
| 1982 | Chicago Cubs | 161 | 15 | 105 | .306 |
| 1983 | Chicago Cubs | 153 | 16 | 66 | .280 |
| 1984 | Chicago Cubs | 21 | 0 | 2 | .209 |
| 1984 | Boston Red Sox | 114 | 11 | 67 | .278 |

DOUG DINCINES

| Year | Club | G | HR | RBI | Avg. |
|------|---------------------|-----|----|-----|------|
| 1985 | California Angels | 120 | 20 | 78 | .244 |
| 1986 | California Angels | 140 | 28 | 96 | .256 |
| 1987 | California Angels | 133 | 16 | 63 | .234 |
| 1987 | St. Louis Cardinals | 4 | 0 | 1 | .222 |

DARRELL EVANS

| Year | Club | G | HR | RBI | Avg. |
|------|----------------------|-----|----|-----|------|
| 1982 | San Francisco Giants | 141 | 16 | 61 | .256 |
| 1983 | San Francisco Giants | 142 | 30 | 82 | .277 |
| 1984 | Detroit Tigers | 131 | 16 | 63 | .232 |

SIXTO LEZCANO

| Year | Club | G | HR | RBI | Avg. |
|-------|---------------------|-----|----|-----|------|
| 1979 | Milwaukee Brewers | 138 | 28 | 101 | .321 |
| 1980 | Milwaukee Brewers | 112 | 18 | 55 | .229 |
| 1981* | St. Louis Cardinals | 72 | 5 | 28 | .286 |

LANCE PARRISH

| Year | Club | G | HR | RBI | Avg. |
|------|-----------------------|-----|----|-----|------|
| 1985 | Detroit Tigers | 140 | 28 | 98 | .273 |
| 1986 | Detroit Tigers | 91 | 22 | 62 | .257 |
| 1987 | Philadelphia Phillies | 130 | 17 | 67 | .245 |

TED SIMMONS

| Year | Club | G | HR | RBI | Avg. |
|-------|---------------------|-----|----|-----|------|
| 1979 | St. Louis Cardinals | 123 | 26 | 87 | .283 |
| 1980 | St. Louis Cardinals | 145 | 21 | 98 | .303 |
| 1981* | Milwaukee Brewers | 100 | 14 | 61 | .216 |

BOB WATSON

| Year | Club | G | HR | RBI | Avg. |
|------|----------------|-----|----|-----|------|
| 1977 | Houston Astros | 151 | 22 | 110 | .289 |
| 1978 | Houston Astros | 139 | 14 | 79 | .289 |
| 1979 | Houston Astros | 49 | 3 | 18 | .239 |
| 1979 | Boston Red Sox | 84 | 13 | 53 | .337 |

DAVE WINFIELD

| Year | Club | G | HR | RBI | Avg. |
|-------|------------------|-----|----|-----|------|
| 1979 | San Diego Padres | 159 | 34 | 118 | .306 |
| 1980 | San Diego Padres | 182 | 20 | 87 | .276 |
| 1981* | San Diego Padres | 100 | 11 | 51 | .244 |

*Strike-shortened season