

Frankie Hayes, A's Self-Taught Catching Star, Once Was Called 'Worst Man on Fouls Ever to Wear Mask'

RUNNING FEATURES MARCH OF BOMBERS

GEORGE SELKIRK'S STEAL OF HOME HIGHLIGHTS TRIBE SERIES New York Fans Expect Bombers to Occupy First Place by July 4; They Also Look on Giants as Important

NEW YORK, N. Y.—With the Yankees closing in on the lead, the Giants within hailing distance of the top, this has been the capital of major league news, even if the Cardinals have fired Roy Blades. Private notices that Blades would be out in 36 hours came after the customers had slung bad fruit at the Gas House in that night defeat by Brooklyn. Well, with 107 pitchers in 38 games, Blades left something for the other pilots to shoot at.

The strong belief around here that on the night of July 4, the Yankees once more will be found in first place. Joe McCarthy, some time ago, set the date at June 20, but we are giving him a little grace. The Yankees are getting back in stride with their attack, and they are getting pitching which is not only robust, but of the nine-inning variety. Now, if Red Ruffing definitely will shake that jinx which has been hounding him since he lost the opener to Chubby Dean, the Bombers will sail right along in their 1939 splendor.

The star of the pitching situation continues to be Marvin Breuer, about whom The Sporting News tipped you off back in March. Too bad Breuer was not allowed to stay in for his fifth straight day the Yankees blasted Bob Feller, after the Cleveland star had won six straight. The Bombers' home run attack was stopped that afternoon, so for variety George Selkirk stole home. In the ninth, Gordon stole second and had third wiped, as well, when Dahlgren connected and sent Joe in.

The Yankee team is developing a high versatility. Not even the oldest inhabitants remember when they last stole home. But more ways than one are needed to win, and the Yankees have them. Selkirk, fighting Joe DiMaggio for the club batting lead, and taking the No. 1 niche in the Stadium home run rating, is the big story on the Yankees. The old boy is as fast as he ever was, and for daily dependability, hasn't a superior in the circuit. However, we'd like to cut in with something more than a plug for Babe Dahlgren. He's only 250, but drives in his share of the runs. He is playing the most amazing game at first base since the glorious first of George Sisler. In fact, the Old Guard insists New York hasn't seen his defense since Hal Chase. Day after day, Dahlgren makes plays reminiscent of Prince Hal in his marvel years, with the Yankees.

Extra! Dahlgren Makes An Error! In the final game of the series here with the White Sox, Dahlgren was charged with his first error in 42 games. This misplay came on a throw to the plate and Dahlgren was the goat of a situation born of Chandler's failure to cover the registry station. Had Chandler been where he should have been, Dahlgren's throw would have got his man—or that man never would have tried to score. This must mean Red Rolfe return to action after having missed a dozen games. Bill Knickerbocker proved a revelation while Rolfe was out with a cold, and hit .90. Red watched the averages and got off to a fine start. The next day he was topped, and then Feller gave him a very tough afternoon until, with two gone in the ninth, the third sacker belted the hit that beat the Indians. Incidentally, Feller, who used to be the fastest worker in the league, now is slow as a turtle. He has slowed down to the point where he is being accused of being a poseur, which he is not. Some critics also think he has developed a Walter Johnson complex. In any event, it would be a fine idea for Feller to stop waiting around and get out on the field. It's natural for the lad to seek so liberally. One Yankee who just cannot get going is the bat is Crosetti. He is subject to long streaks of failure. If Rolfe isn't hitting—and Red has had no run in 22 at bats—this winter flops in the No. 1 and No. 2 batting positions put a mill around the necks of the Bombers, which is very tough to lug around.

Took Up Backstopping at Suggestion of Mack and Learned Hard Way

Saw His First Major League Service at 18; Denied Raise, Instead of Sulking He Gives Everything He Has to Team

A SELF-MADE maskman is Frank Hayes, a 25-year-old athlete who seems destined to rank with Mickey Cochrane, Wally Schang, Cy Perkins, Jack Lapp, Ira Thomas and Ossie Schreckengost to mention a half-dozen outstanding backstops who were the big mitten for Connie Mack on his great teams of White Elephants. On the field, Frankie Hayes was pretty much "on his own" in the early days of his big league apprenticeship. He learned his job the hard way—the best way—the rigorous school of experience, so he can aptly be termed "self-made."

Jamesburg, N. J., was the home town of Frank Whitman Hayes, but it's now Freehold in the same state. His father was a ball player, and Dad Hayes organized and managed the town team. At the age of 16, Frankie was chasing flies in the outfield for the Jamesburg sandloters. That same spring he caught for the Pennington Seminary team. An umpire, Frankie Marshall, was calling 'em at Jamesburg on a June day in 1933 and he was impressed by the size and strength of the Hayes boy. After Frankie had pounded a ball a country mile for a home run, and had shown natural all-around ability as a diamond athlete, Ump Marshall said, "Boy, why don't you go over to Shibe Park in Philadelphia and see Connie Mack? He's always looking for kids like you, who can slug that apple over the fences."

Turned to Backstopping at Suggestion of Mack Hayes streaked like a Jesse Owens to visit Shibe Park and the umpire arranged for an interview with Manager Mack. Connie was impressed by the lad and told Frankie he believed he could arrange to have him signed by the Montreal club, and after a brief tryout there, Hayes would be brought in to the A's. The boy gladly accepted this proposition. Just as he was preparing to leave, Mack asked: "By the way, Frankie, what position do you prefer to play?" "I have been an outfielder for Jamesburg," the kid replied. "Well, I have an idea a lad of your size could become a good catcher," suggested Mack. "You can have your choice, however—outfielder or catcher. Which will it be?" "Why," stammered Hayes, surprised by the question, "I think I'd rather be a catcher." Frankie said later he would have agreed to take up pitching if Connie had offered that suggestion. "That's settled, then," Mack said. "You go up to Montreal and in a little while we'll bring you to the A's and see what we can do to make you a catcher."

Hayes was in Montreal less than a week and had not thrown a ball in the International League when he found himself back in Philadelphia with the Athletics and sitting in the dugout, watching Mickey Cochrane do a fine job of catching and hitting. The kid from Jersey took part in three games near the end of that season. The following year, 1934, found Mike Cochrane gone—he had been sold to Detroit and made manager there. Young Hayes at once made himself solid by hitting a homer in the city series with the Phillies. He and Charley Berry did most of the catching for the 49 games and Charley in '34, Madjeski, a third catcher, caught eight games and was traded to the White Sox. In August, in batting practice, the bat slipped from Hayes' hands and hit Berry in the leg, fracturing a bone. After this accident, Hayes did nearly all of the A's catching for the rest of the season.

Berry's Second Misfortune Gave Frank Trip to Orient THE misfortunes of Charley Berry continued to become the good fortunes of Frankie Hayes. An All-America baseball team traveled to Japan, following the big league season of 1934. Berry had been booked as a catcher for that team, managed by Connie Mack and Babe Ruth, but when Berry broke a leg, he was crossed from the list. However, he recovered from the injury sooner than expected, and was on a train headed for Vancouver, the sailing point, when he was stricken with appendicitis. Now he is hard work in the minors—and just back from the Orient, and the constant attention with such diamond greats as Mack, Ruth, Grove, Gehrig, Fox, McNair, Avon, and other big leaguers. Hayes, the 19-year-old kid from New Jersey needed no introduction. However, Frankie was not ready for big league backstopping, in the opinion of the trainer, who, incidentally, was quite a catcher in his day. He needed a year of hard work in the minors. Mack stepped in 1935 with Buffalo and Albany of the International League. In 1936, Hayes was recalled by Connie Mack and since then has been the Athletics' first-string catcher, with possibly ten more years of stardom ahead of him.

VERY WARM FOR MAY :: AND STAYS HOT FOR JUNE



FRANK HAYES A 'NATURAL' IN AN ADOPTED POSITION

field and I remember wondering whether I would ever be lucky enough to play in that Shibe Park outfield. It was just a dream, such as any 15-year-old boy would have, and I forgot about it the next day. "Two years later, when I was wearing a big league uniform with an 'A' on it and was down there in the dugout with those experienced players, I realized how little I knew about baseball, especially catching, a job that was new to me. They used to call me the worst man on foul flies that ever wore a mask. I guess I was the worst. "Lena Blackburne, the A's coach, took an interest in me and said if I was willing to do some hard work, he'd help me learn to catch foul flies."

Worked Morning After Morning Learning to Catch Foul Flies S O, in the mornings and before the game, Lena would stand at the home plate and bat high flies which I would chase and try to catch," continued Frankie. "At first, my average of 'gets' was frightfully low. But Lena kept hitting 'em for me by the hours. Yes, I mean that we worked on these high flies an hour at a time, day after day. Finally I got that instinct—that feeling—which sent me in the right direction at the crack of the bat. And today—well, I'll let you be the judge of my ability as a foul-fly hound."

(Note—Jimmy Isaminger, dean of Philadelphia baseball writers, who sent me the above story, says that all the best catching in the American League today.) While giving credit to Blackburne for teaching him to catch, Hayes says Coach Earle Mack, Charley Berry and Dave Keefe also helped him along the road. But the mechanics of the job—the receiving of pitchers, the catching of foul flies, the blocking of runners and "holding up the pitcher"—all these things Frankie picked up in the hard school of experience. He learned the right way to do a thing by doing it the wrong way, having his mistakes pointed out to him, and then doing it the right way.

Asked about blocking off runners at the plate, Hayes replied: "Oh, that just came natural to me. I'm pretty big, you know, tipping the scales at 195 pounds. I'm well-proportioned by the name of Hayes. If the batter's knock me out of there if I see there is a chance to tag 'em out." Hayes also credited any skill he may have at handling pitchers to experience. He says "A fellow has to keep his eyes and ears open and learn how and what he's doing. In all my years of baseball catching, I've seen a lot of things that I never heard of a major league player hitting two home runs in one game and yet seeing his percentage drop. I doubt whether it has been done before. Perhaps some player with a batting average above .400 has made two hits out of five times up, these hits being singles, doubles or triples, to see his average fall, but did you ever hear before of two homers in one game hurting a slugger's average? But Frank did not allow his efforts to stop. He has become a conceiver of the batting championship to affect his catching or his work as a team player.

May Double Homer Mark

TALLASSEE, Ala.—Although the Alabama State circuit's season is only about two months old, Gordon (Cotton) Goodell, slugging outfielder of Tallassee, already has established a new league home-run mark, pounding out his twenty-fourth, June 6, to better the previous mark by four.

Goodell opened last week with the record of 20 tied, made two June 2, followed up with another a few days later and then made it No. 24 before the week closed. The mark of 20 was jointly held by Jose Gonzalez, made in the league's first season, and Bruce Middlebrooks, Troy third baseman, last year.

If Goodell continues at anywhere near the pace he has set, he will more than double the home-run record of the circuit this season. Indeed, two managers of rival big league clubs expressed the opinion, in dugout interviews this spring, that Frankie was one big reason for any improvement in the A's.

Hayes' top-grade work this season is a real tribute to his love for the game and his inherent sportsmanship. Last winter, he engaged in a one-man sitdown strike. He sat at his home in New Jersey—and refused to sign contracts proffered him by Manager Mack. There was said to be a difference of about \$8,500 between the wages Hayes asked, and the wages Mack offered. Frankie was as stubborn as Mack on the subject of compromise.

DRASTIC SHAKE-UP NEAR FOR BASEMENT BEAVERS

Loss of 11 of 15 at Home Likely to See Kids Replacing High-Salaried Vets; Rudy Kallio Appointed Soot

PORTLAND, Ore.—The Portland Beavers have found their level for the season, if you can call a descending slope a level. The last hope of averting a cellar finish vanished in an Oakland blitzkrieg at Vaughn street that swept the Beavers for seven out of eight and dropped them below the 500 mark in a home stay during which they lost 11 out of 15 contests.

Even the Big Berthas of a lineup that always was admittedly slow, but which President E. J. Scheffer hoped might blast its way somewhere by dead hitting, ceased firing. The Beavers not only were outscored, but for the most part outhit in the disastrous home stay that virtually ended competition for the season.

When they return from a two-week trip to Hollywood and Oakland, there is every indication that lightning will strike the high-priced roster. Several members of the club, including the best paid, have slowed up so badly that President Scheffer figures there is no point in keeping them just to lose more games for the Beavers.

FAST-STEPPING SPORTS HIKE INTEREST IN TEXAS

Shreveport Soars in Race by Winning 10 of 15 Games on Road; Race Tightens as Leading Buffs Slow Up

DALLAS, Tex.—Shreveport, one of the pre-season favorites to win the Texas League pennant, but last in the standings up the last two weeks ago, furnished a share of the excitement in this section, along with the arrival of Dizzy Dean at Tulsa and Rogers Hornsby as manager of Oklahoma City. The Sports drove started May 23, or about the time Vernon (George) Washington and Guy Curtright, outfielders, were able to play regularly. On the morning of June 10, the Sports were in third place.

Concurrent with Shreveport's showing came the slowing up of the Houston Buffs, who had set a mad pace. Through the week-end, last-place Fort Worth was only four and a half games out of the first division. Thus, with race still three weeks from the halfway mark, any club has a chance to finish in the first division.

Shreveport's showing can be attributed neither to expert pitching nor to an unusual display of power at the plate. The Sports have been getting their hits, but mainly they have outgotten their foes. Back of the Sports is the inspirational leadership of Homer Peel, 37-year-old outfielder and former manager of the Fort Worth club. Homer not only has piloted his Sports up into the thick of the fight, but also is crowding Jack Bradsher of San Antonio for the batting lead with a mark around .550. He won the league's batting title several years ago.

TRENTON, N. J.—Batting champion in 1933, bust in '40, Thelma's tragic story of dynamite Dave Kelly, whom the Trenton Senators purchased from Sunbury last winter. After a month of the 1940 campaign, Kelly was batting only .205—18 hits in 88 times at bat—so Manager Goose Goslin released him outright. Gerry Hannahoe was obtained from Wilkes-Barre as Kelly's successor on first base. Last season, when the Inter-State was a four-class, Class C circuit, Kelly batted .404 for Sunbury to win the loop batting championship. This year, the circuit took over four more teams and a Class B rating and pitching improved so much that Kelly's average shrunk almost in half.

LAME ARM EXODUS COMPLETED ON CUBS

BRYANT FOLLOWS DEAN OFF CLUB, BUT NOT WITHOUT FIGHT

Wrigley to Pay Mrs. Clay \$50 Weekly While There Are Signs Pitcher's Wing Is Returning to Usefulness

CHICAGO, Ill.—The Cubs, famous for their skill to break a tie point by methods other than the winning of games, have had a busy week. Diz Dean, himself no backwoods yodel as a headline hunter, has finally gone away, maybe for good, and may not. Also gone away is Clay Bryant, like Dean a cripple of long standing. P. K. Wrigley, Cub owner, was behind the two moves, which, while not surprising, stirred up fan commotion and commotion of another sort because different treatments were applied to cases more or less parallel. Both are simply guys with bum arms.

Dean, carefully nursed for the more than two years since the Cubs bought him from the Cardinals at the exorbitant price of \$185,000 and three players, was sent under option to the Tulsa, Texas League club, the explanation being that he would attempt a comeback where the competition is less severe. Bryant was suspended indefinitely without any pay and told to come back when he could pitch, although Boss Wrigley did relent after several turbulent days and agree to pay \$50 per week for a month, not to Bryant but to Mrs. Bryant. The move in the Dean case has been viewed by outsiders from different angles. Diz is supposed to have made the suggestion, admitting he couldn't get by up here. He told the club officials that he wanted to develop a new sideman delivery and apparently they believed him because they must continue paying his \$10,000 salary. But a lot of skeptics think the club officials finally have appreciated that Diz is a back number, hence eased him out gently instead of with one big shove. Dean, by the way, won his first out with Tulsa.

One indication that club officials, instead of abandoning its so far futile experiment on the famous cripple, continued to believe there still is a chance, is that a sort of keeper or manager has been provided for Diz. Keeping him company in Tulsa is the other Texas League point is Dutch Ruetheer, former big league southpaw, and now a Cub scout. It will be Ruetheer's job to keep an eye on Dean's conduct and assist him in his professed aim to master the sideman delivery. Diz just about pitched that way ever since he came to the Cubs, and in more than two seasons didn't seem to learn anything beyond the fact that the batters couldn't be fooled. When the Cubs purchased Dean they said they made the move with their eyes open. They know his arm was bad, but were confident that proper treatment would take care of everything. It didn't. Diz was X-rayed until he was broiled. He was handled like a sacred cow. In 1938, he was used so infrequently that his arm was almost forgotten between starts. In 1939, he was handled the same way, but there was no improvement. Then this year he was told he had to pitch and he couldn't.

Five Stars, Four Kayeses for Dizzy During the winter, Diz had been because his \$20,000 salary had been cut in half. He wanted \$15,000, or he'd starve. Why, the arm was as good as in his palmy days. The club didn't go for his sales talk, and his holdout act finally ended in mid-March, when he was given a regular pitching turn shortly after the season opened. He started five times, was knocked out of four, so Manager Harnett put him back on the shelf. Last March, when the Cubs were in New York, Diz, piloted by Mrs. Dean, went down to Baltimore to see Dr. George Bennett at the Johns Hopkins clinic. The doctor said that Diz, because of his arm, which is burned out or something, could never pitch overhead, but that he might get by with a sideman act. So Diz, taking orders from Mrs. Dean, who appreciated the Cubs weren't going to carry her husband forever unless he produced, asked for the minor league expedition. Bryant was a star in 1938, pitching out of four weeks from the halfway mark, any club has a chance to finish in the first division.

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Inter-State Bat King of 1939 Dropped for Poor Stickwork

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A Major-League Smoke at a Minor League Price

If a dime could buy more... it would be a SENSATION. And that's exactly what it is! As you'll discover, when you try this thrifty, thrilling cigarette.