

By STAN ISLE, Associate Editor

Cabell Shows Leadership

Manager Sparky Anderson, who saw his Tigers take off on a 19-7 spurt after installing Enos Cabell at first base, appreciates Cabell as a leader. "He yells at guys," said Anderson. "We have a gentle club, perhaps too gentle." ... Second baseman Tony Bernazard had no kind words for the White Sox after they traded him to the Mariners. "The White Sox have problems on the left side of their infield and they have problems in the outfield," said Bernazard. "Then they traded their one consistent player for the last 2½ years. The White Sox say they are contenders. All they do is say it." Bernazard, earning \$250,000, was traded for second baseman Julio Cruz, who is making \$485,000 and eligible for free agency this year. ... Owner Calvin Griffith figures the Twins are a real entertainment value despite being 9½ games behind the first-place Angels in the American League West. The Minnesota club reduced 4 seats in the outfield upper deck to \$3. "Now four of 'em (fans) can come for \$12," said Griffith, "and I don't think you can get any better entertainment in the Twin Cities for a family of four for \$12."

Injuries Take Heavy Toll

Red Sox General Manager Haywood Sullivan said he couldn't recall a season in which so many players were injured or on the disabled list in mid-June. Sullivan's remarks drew no rebuttal from A's Manager Steve Boros. The Oakland pilot announced his regular lineup in spring training, but because of injuries, was unable to use it the first 60 games. ... Former major leaguer Terry Whitfield drove in four runs with two hits, including his 22nd home run of the season, while leading the Seibu Lions to a 9-1 victory over the Kintetsu Buffaloes in the Japan League. ... Righthander Mike Torrez, 3-8 with the Mets at mid-June, blamed his ineffectiveness on New York's five-man rotation, something Don Zimmer and Ralph Houk heard when Torrez was with the Red Sox. ... Dodgers catcher Steve Yeager gunned down 47 percent of the runners who tried to steal on him in his first 54 games. ... Houston Jimenez, the 5-7 shortstop the Twins brought up from Toledo (International), is the smallest player Minnesota clubhouse man Ray Crump has outfitted in 23 years. Crump had to special order a 28-inch waist for the Mexican rookie. Crump says the smallest previous player was rail-thin pitcher Darrell Jackson, who had a 30-inch waist.

Wright and Staub Honored

Switch-hitting outfielder George Wright of the Rangers was voted Player of the Week in the American League while the National League recognized outfielder Rusty Staub of the Mets. Wright batted .480 (12-for-25) in the week ending June 19 with three doubles, two triples, two home runs and 25 total bases. He scored eight runs and drove in 12 runs. His slugging percentage was 1.000 and his on-base percentage .640. Staub was 7-for-8 during the week, hitting safely in six straight appearances as a pinch-hitter. ... There's concern in San Diego that the knee problem experienced by flashy shortstop Garry Templeton may be severe enough to threaten his career. ... Insiders say White Sox Manager Tony LaRussa's job is in jeopardy if the Sox are well below .500 at the All-Star break.

Cerone Enjoys Rare Opportunity

Rick Cerone, replaced as the Yankees' regular catcher by Butch Wynegar in May, responded to a rare start with two singles, a double and three runs batted in as the Yankees trimmed the Brewers, 7-2. "You read in the papers that you're going to be traded, but you can't sit on the bench and mope," said Cerone after playing for only the sixth time in 23 games.

"What you can do is turn all that energy into something constructive. You have to remember I've been through this before," said Cerone, recalling when he was on the trading block in 1980. ... Craig Amerkhanian, a 23-year-old lefthander selected by the A's in the 36th round of the draft, was a crew oarsman at the University of California in Berkeley, where Oakland Owner Roy Eisenhardt was once the crew coach. Amerkhanian has been working for the A's as director of youth programs, which makes him one of the first members of a front-office staff to be drafted. ... Giants Manager Frank Robinson believes his top accomplishment in three seasons has been helping improve the attitudes of his players. "When I came here," said Robinson, "the complaint was that the Giants were crybabies and losers, that they pointed fingers and formed cliques. We haven't done it overnight, but I guess it's 99 percent corrected. You have to make people respect you."

Stieb Hard to Impress

Blue Jays righthander Dave Stieb is a hard man to impress. Stieb described his 6-3 victory over the Angels, making him the first 10-game winner in the major leagues, as "just another win." Stieb had seven strikeouts, boosting his major league-leading total to 92, while pitching his seventh complete game. "I didn't set any dafes or goals," said Stieb. "Let's just say things are as they should be for me and the team. The strikeouts are coming because I'm making better pitches with two strikes on the batter. I think a lot of guys expect you to waste a pitch when you've got two strikes on them, but I go right after them." ... Chicago newsmen heard reports that White Sox broadcaster Ken Harrelson would have been hired as Red Sox manager if Buddy LeRoux had succeeded in overthrowing the palace guard. "There's no chance I'd take it now," said Harrelson. "I've already turned down three jobs in the big leagues. Don Drysdale (also a Chisox broadcaster) has turned down three. We're probably the only broadcasting team in baseball that's turned down six jobs."

Hernandez 'Not Herzog Type'

One source with the Cardinals, trying to explain the Keith Hernandez trade, suggested that the Gold Glove first baseman has never been Manager Whitey Herzog's type of player. "Whitey likes the George Brett, Pete Rose, roll-in-the-dirt type," the St. Louis source pointed out. "He has never considered Keith a great player, and they never got along that well. They sort of co-existed." ... A national television and radio network has been set up so fans in 48 states can enjoy the second Cracker Jack Old Timers Classic scheduled July 18 at RFK Stadium in Washington. ESPN will carry the telecast of the game. After taping the contest, ESPN will edit vintage clips of the stars in their heyday, then present the entire package to some 25 million subscribers on July 24. Four encore airings of the game will follow in the next two weeks. On game night, WMAL in Washington will serve as the flagship for a 48-state hookup with the ABC network that serves more than 150 stations "on line" with the ABC satellite. Old-time favorite Red Barber will do commentary alongside Orioles announcer Chuck Thompson.

Cubs Stage 'Baseball Follies'

Cubs baserunning in the fourth inning of a 10-1 rout of the Cardinals was right out of Baseball Follies. Larry Bowa led off with a single and reliever John Martin hit Steve Lake with a pitch. Then, with one out, Mel Hall sent a routine fly to Willie McGee in center field, but McGee dropped the ball. Hall, running all the way, was called out for passing Lake and Lake was retired in a rundown. Bowa scampered all the way home, sliding across the plate, but his run didn't count. Lake had been tagged out before Bowa reached home. ... Former major league catcher Barry Foote, his playing days ended by a chronic back problem, is scouting for the Yankees and hopes to launch a managerial career in the New York farm system next year. ... A's third baseman Dan Meyer went 0-for-37 as a replacement for injured Carney Lansford. "It's all Carney Lansford's fault," Meyer told teammates. "If he'd been playing, I never would have been out there."

Scott Wastes No Effort

Astros righthander Mike Scott threw only 81 pitches in a six-hit, 5-0 victory over the Braves in the Astrodome. "This definitely was his best effort," said Manager Bob Lillis of the pitcher Houston acquired from the Mets. ... Insiders say the Giants turned down a preseason deal with the Cubs for outfielder Jack Clark. Chicago supposedly offered first baseman Bill Buckner and outfielder Keith Moreland. ... Manager Whitey Herzog said the Cardinals were pleased with the player they will be getting in the Doug Bair deal with the Tigers, although technically, the player's identity doesn't have to be revealed until December 31. Speculation is that it might be lefthander Dave Rucker, now pitching at Evansville (American Association). ... Royals second baseman Frank White, who has experienced boos in Kansas City, was treated to a standing ovation in a 4-2 victory over the A's. White singled home U.L. Washington in the eighth inning, setting a Kansas City team record by driving in a run in his 10th consecutive game.

Campbell Working at Record Pace

At his present pace, Cubs reliever Bill Campbell will break the record shared by Ted Abernathy and Dick Tidrow of being summoned from the Chicago bullpen 84 times in one season.

'All-Star Gold' to Be Television Feature

CHICAGO—"All-Star Gold," which promises a backward glance at central characters in All-Star Game history, has been produced by WMAQ-TV, the NBC station in Chicago, for Major League Productions and has been syndicated nationally to 90 stations.

The 30-minute special, using actual newsreel tapes and interviews with past and present baseball luminaries, will be shown around the nation as a preliminary to the 50th anniversary All-Star Game July 6 at Comiskey Park.

Veteran broadcaster Mel Allen will recreate play by play on some of the most exciting sequences. Some of baseball's most memorable figures—Babe Ruth, Connie Mack, John McGraw, Jackie Robinson, Ted Williams, Rip Sewell, Johnny Bench and Pete Rose, among others—will be highlighted.

"All-Star Gold," produced by Chicago Emmy Award-winner David Finney, will feature such plays as Williams' three-run ninth-inning home run to give the American League a 7-5 victory in 1941, and Rose's violent collision with catcher Ray Fosse in the 12th inning of the National League's 5-4 victory in 1970.

Campbell appeared in 34 of the Cubs' first 60 games. ... Righthander Neil Allen, traded by the Mets to the Cardinals, brought his sense of humor to St. Louis. "First thing I saw in St. Louis was a kid with a banner that said 'Where's Hernandez?'" said Allen. ... Dodgers catcher Mike Scioscia, discussing the rehabilitation of his injured right shoulder, said he had no idea what the experience would be like. Said Scioscia: "Originally, it was supposed to be three weeks, then they said six, now it could be seven. I can only push it so fast because of the pain. Then I have to back off." Scioscia hoped to return to action the first week in July. ... Hits may not come easy for Astros catcher Luis Pujols, but he makes them count. Pujols had three game-winning RBIs in 48 at-bats.

Twins Take Bus Tour

The Twins were hardly expecting a tour of the Dallas-Fort Worth area when they landed in Texas and boarded a charter bus for the Arlington (Tex.) Hilton. The trip, normally requiring 15 minutes, took one hour and five minutes because the bus driver couldn't locate the hotel. After the bus passed Texas Stadium (the Dallas Cowboys' home in Irving) for the second time, the Minnesota players grew a little restless. "They got two of those in this town?" yelled Kent Hrbek after his second look at Texas Stadium. "Hey, Mike," Mickey Hatcher shouted to traveling secretary Mike Robertson, "do we get a meal on this trip?"

Moose Performs 'Magic'

Righthander Moose Haas of the Brewers, a self-styled magician, made a couple of baseballs disappear in the process of cooling off the Tigers, 10-3. "I can make a baseball disappear, but every pitcher does that," cracked Haas after serving up home runs to Chet Lemon and Johnny Grubb in the ninth inning. Haas said he turned to magic as a hobby three or four years ago "to relieve the tedium of being on the road." ... Rookie outfielder Andy Van Slyke, playing before friends and family from Utica, N.Y., belted his first major league homer in the fourth inning of the Cardinals' 6-0 victory over the Mets at Shea Stadium. ... Angels General Manager Buzze Bavasi had the luggage of Los Angeles Times writer Ross Newhan removed from the team's airport bus because of a story Newhan wrote after Bavasi's clubhouse exchange with California reliever Luis Sanchez. The argument followed an extra-inning loss. ... Cardinals reliever Bruce Sutter was credited with his 200th save in St. Louis' 3-1 victory over the Mets. That made Sutter the fourth pitcher in history to crash the 200 barrier. He trails Rollie Fingers, Hoyt Wilhelm and Sparky Lyle on the career save list.

Cowens Boo-Boo Costly

A baserunning boo-boo by Al Cowens proved costly to the Mariners in a 3-1 loss to the Royals. Richie Zisk had hit a home run leading off the second inning and Cowens followed with a liner to center field that skipped under the glove of Amos Otis and rolled to the wall at Royals Stadium. Cowens circled the bases and Seattle appeared to be holding a 2-0 lead. However, the Royals claimed Cowens missed tagging second base and umpire Tim Welke upheld the appeal. "That's the first time I've ever missed a base," said Cowens, a former Royal. "I thought I touched it, but I probably didn't." ... Dallas Green, general manager of the Cubs, insists the Cardinals were trying to package a deal involving outfielder Lonnie Smith one month before his drug problems surfaced. And Green, former farm director of the Phillies, told the Philadelphia Inquirer's Frank Dolson of prior problems with Smith when he was in the Philadelphia organization. "Once," said Green, "we nailed him with some marijuana in Oklahoma City. But from then on, he was fine. I'd ask him, 'You OK? Remember your wife. Remember your family.' He'd say, 'I'm OK. I'm OK.' And I believed him."



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Redbird Hernandez Finds His Perch

By NEAL RUSSO

ST. LOUIS—John Hernandez, a power-hitting first baseman in the late 1940s with the Houston Buffs, then the Cardinals' farm club in the Texas League, didn't quite make it to the majors. A big reason was a serious beaming in 1948 that affected his eyesight.

But John Hernandez has been wearing an extra twinkle in his eyes these days. At least his son, Keith, seems to be putting things together for what could be quite a major league career.

Keith, a highly regarded prospect after several big seasons at Tulsa (American Association), had another miserable start this year with the Cardinals ("I usually start off slowly"). He went to the bench early as the club floundered in general.

ABOUT MIDSEASON, with the Cardinals hopelessly out of the race, the big decision was made "to play the kids." The kids included Hernandez, who soon was making his excellent batting stroke count.

In a 23-game stretch from July 7

through August 10, the lefthanded swinger hit at a .342 clip to boost his season batting average from .187 to .253. In that 23-game span, he drove in 16 runs. And his play at first base was, as expected, excellent.

The youth movement continued with the August 9 callup of Garry Templeton, the Birds' hotshot shortstop prospect from Tulsa. Veteran shortstop Don Kessinger was moved to second base.

And with Bake McBride shelved for the season because of surgery on his left knee, rookie switch-hitter Jerry Mumphrey was tabbed to play center field regularly.

Hernandez, though cautious about getting too excited "with two months to go," said he felt confident he could continue to hit well. And he spread the credit for his midseason surge around.

"ALL THE COACHES worked with me extra," he said. "And Willie Crawford was a big inspiration. When he wasn't playing much the first month or so of the season, he worked that much harder. He got

to the park early and did a lot of extra running and hitting to be ready when the time came. I felt if that was good enough for a veteran like Crawford, I ought to do it, too."

And a lot of the credit was heaped by Keith on his father.

"I've had an advantage in having my dad as a personal instructor since I was a little kid," Keith said. "He helped me adjust to certain kinds of pitches and he helped me in other ways. I can't give out some of the secrets."

John Hernandez spent a week in St. Louis, and it was shortly after his return home to the San Francisco area that Keith began hitting with authority.

KEITH NOTED that his father, besides coming to St. Louis for a week or so each season, made all the Birds' games at the three stops in California—San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego.

"Dad was a righthanded power-hitter and he had a good chance to make it to the majors until he got beamed in 1948," Keith recalled.

"His eyes went bad, and they gave him the wrong lenses. He quit after the 1949 season. They weren't wearing protective helmets when he was playing."

Ironically, John Hernandez has been wearing special protective helmets for the last 25 years or so. He's been a fireman all those years.

COACH FRED Koenig on Hernandez' plate improvement, "It could be that he's just acclimating himself to this league. It takes longer with some prospects."

Hernandez, who is just 22, had reason to wonder about his future as a Cardinal when the Birds obtained Joe Ferguson at the trade deadline in June, installed him as the catcher and moved Ted Simmons to first base.

Keith led the American Association in batting with .351 (plus 63 runs batted in) in 1974. After a slow start with the varsity in 1975 (he was hitting .203 when he returned to Tulsa on June 5), Hernandez finished second in the A.A. batting race with .330. Then he showed



Keith Hernandez

promise with the varsity in September, batting .317 with eight RBIs on his return period of duty.

Redbird Chirps: Outfielder Charlie Chant was recalled from Tulsa where he was batting .281. Mike Easler was the power hero with the Oilers at the time, but his contract was "frozen." . . . Until August 9, Kessinger hadn't played second base since he starred at the U. of Mississippi. . . . Lou Brock had 35 steals this season and by August 10, was only 48 short of Ty Cobb's modern career total of 892.

Indians Unhappy Over Robby's Failure to Play

By RUSSELL SCHNEIDER

CLEVELAND—Though more than a month of the season remains, it's not too early to wonder about the future of managers of non-winning teams.

A sure way to irritate Phil Seghi, the normally placid general manager of the Indians, is to ask him if a decision has been reached about rehiring Frank Robinson.

"Oh, no!" Seghi will lament when the subject arises. "Don't tell me you guys are going to start that stuff already!"

"I HAVE NOTHING whatsoever to say about our manager or his future at the present time. My only concern right now is what's happening on the field. We still have a long time to go.

"Why the hell would you ask about next year's manager at this time?" asks Seghi, who often doesn't sound like the sports reporter he was before beginning a career in pro baseball.

Regardless of Seghi's contention, Robinson's future as manager of the Indians is the subject of debate among many Cleveland fans. Opinion seems divided as to whether he should be invited back for a third year.

Speculation among insiders is that there's almost no doubt Seghi and Indian Chief Ted Bonda will give Robinson another contract for at least 1977.

ROBINSON, who was baseball's first black manager in 1975 and piloted the Indians to a fourth-place finish and 79-80 record, doesn't mind admitting he wants to return.

"I'd like to be the manager of the Indians next season, but I'm not going to worry about it now," he replied to the obvious questions. "If they (Bonda and Seghi) would like to have me back, I'd like to be back. If they don't want me to be back, I'll draw unemployment," he said at a recent luncheon meeting of the Wahoo Club.

"Everything will be reviewed at the end of the season by Phil (Seghi) and me," said Bonda.

However, Bonda makes it clear he is "disappointed though I wouldn't say unhappy" about the

fact that Robinson has played so little this season. Through the Indians' first 109 games, Robinson batted only 54 times, batting .241 with 13 hits, three of which were homers, and eight RBIs.

"I'D LIKE to see Frank play more than he has because he's such a potent force, psychologically and physically, even though he doesn't agree," said Bonda.

Seghi won't be quoted on the matter, but it's known he also feels Robinson should play more.

Robinson is being paid \$200,000 this season—\$120,000 of it is as a player, which could represent another reason for Bonda's and Seghi's "disappointment."

It's probable that Robinson will be rehired as the Indians' manager for 1977, though unlikely he'll continue as a player, which will cut his

salary at least in half.

Asked at the Wahoo Club luncheon about continuing his playing career which spans 20 seasons, Robinson replied:

"I WOULD NOT want to play next year under the same conditions as I have this year. I would want to get myself into A-1 condition first. I haven't taken care of myself enough physically to play in the field this season.

"If I'm going to come back as a player-manager, I'm going to work out enough during the off-season so I can play defensively."

In the 29 games in which he's appeared this season, one was as the left fielder, another as the first baseman, and it was at that latter position that Robinson suffered another injury to his left shoulder.

He underwent an operation for a

torn tendon last October, but suffered an injury to the shoulder on July 31, in a collision at first base with Don Money of the Brewers. Thereafter, Robinson was on the bench more than two weeks.

"My shoulder hasn't been the same since (the collision with Money)," said Robinson.

Tribe Tidbits: At the Wahoo Club luncheon, Robinson was "scolded" by several fans and Bonda, who thought some of his earlier remarks sounded as though he had conceded the A. L. East title to the Yankees. "I'm a rookie at this type of thing," responded Robinson. "I've always tried to be honest. I guess it's not done too much in sports. My wife always says she's happy I have only one mouth. But when you're three games under .500 with six weeks to play and

you're not playing the type of baseball you're capable of playing, you have to be honest. We have a very remote chance of catching the Yankees. Why try to bull the public?"

Alan Ashby suffered a fractured right thumb on August 8 as he tagged out the Tigers' Alex Johnson at the plate in Detroit. Ashby was placed on the disabled list and Rick Cerone was recalled from Toledo (International). Ashby was batting .229 with four homers and 32 RBIs in 79 games. He also had five game-winning hits. Cerone, who was the Indians' No. 1 choice in the 1975 free-agent draft, was hitting .249 with 10 homers and 47 RBIs at Toledo.

Also limping were center fielder Rick Manning (bruised left hip and leg), and second baseman Duane Kuiper (bruised lower left leg). . . . Robinson was asked what it will take for the Indians to catch the Yankees. He replied, "We don't have the personnel to do it now. It will have to be done by trades, and we'll have to wait until the winter to make the moves necessary." What moves? "I've said before we need two good offensive players and another pitcher," replied Robinson.

Cerone and two other Tribe farmhands at Toledo, first baseman Joe Lis (.315, 25 homers, 90 RBIs) and pitcher Fred Beene (6-6, 3.56 earned-run average) were selected for the International League all-star team. . . . Indians' attendance was 746,001 for 45 dates, an increase of 7,481 over a corresponding period a year ago. Still, it will be difficult to reach the break-even point of 1.3-million. . . . Jackie Brown had failed in eight consecutive starts after winning seven of his first nine decisions. . . . The Indians should have known it was to be a bad weekend August 6-8. On their way from the airport in Detroit, their bus broke down and they had to take cabs to the hotel. Then they lost all four games to the Tigers. . . . Mildred Mansky Greenstein, a season ticket buyer for 37 years, was named baseball's one-billionth fan in Cleveland on August 3.

'Royals Will Choke,' Chortles Charlie

By RON BERGMAN

OAKLAND—Charlie Finley gazed on the wreckage and was moved to comment.

"It's a disaster," said the outspoken A's owner. "I don't even know if I want to go out and see them play."

His team had just blown five straight games in Minnesota to the Twins, extending a losing streak to six games. The A's needed the Mt. Palomar telescope to see the Royals up there in first place in American League West.

"When you're a fan, you can laugh at this," Finley continued. "But when you're an owner, all you can do is cry."

"THEY'VE BLOWN games right and left, games they had won, and should have won. It's really a miracle that we stayed as close as we did for so long."

"The way they played against Minnesota, losing all five games, was a disgrace. I can't believe it happened. . . .

"How do you answer to it? You

go down the line and look at the way some of these guys are hitting. Or, more to the point, the way they're not hitting. . . . That is pathetic. Not a single guy over .300. Really, it's unbelievable that we've won as many games this year as we have."

And so the A's went on to Chicago and limped home, losers of six out of eight during a road trip that brought back memories of Napoleon in Russia.

And there waiting for them at home was Frank Tanana of the Angels. In the top of the eighth, an Angels' runner took off for second with two outs. Pitchout. But the throw by the A's catcher skipped into center field. A walk followed. Then a single. On a night when the Royals won two, the A's lost one and dropped 12 games back in the American League West. It was a small example of what had been happening to the A's all season.

THEN SOMETHING else began to happen. The A's won the next day. And two on Sunday. And they won again when action resumed

Tuesday. And every day thereafter for the entire week until it was nine in a row, and counting.

In one week, the Royals' lead had shrunk from 12 games to seven over the second-place A's.

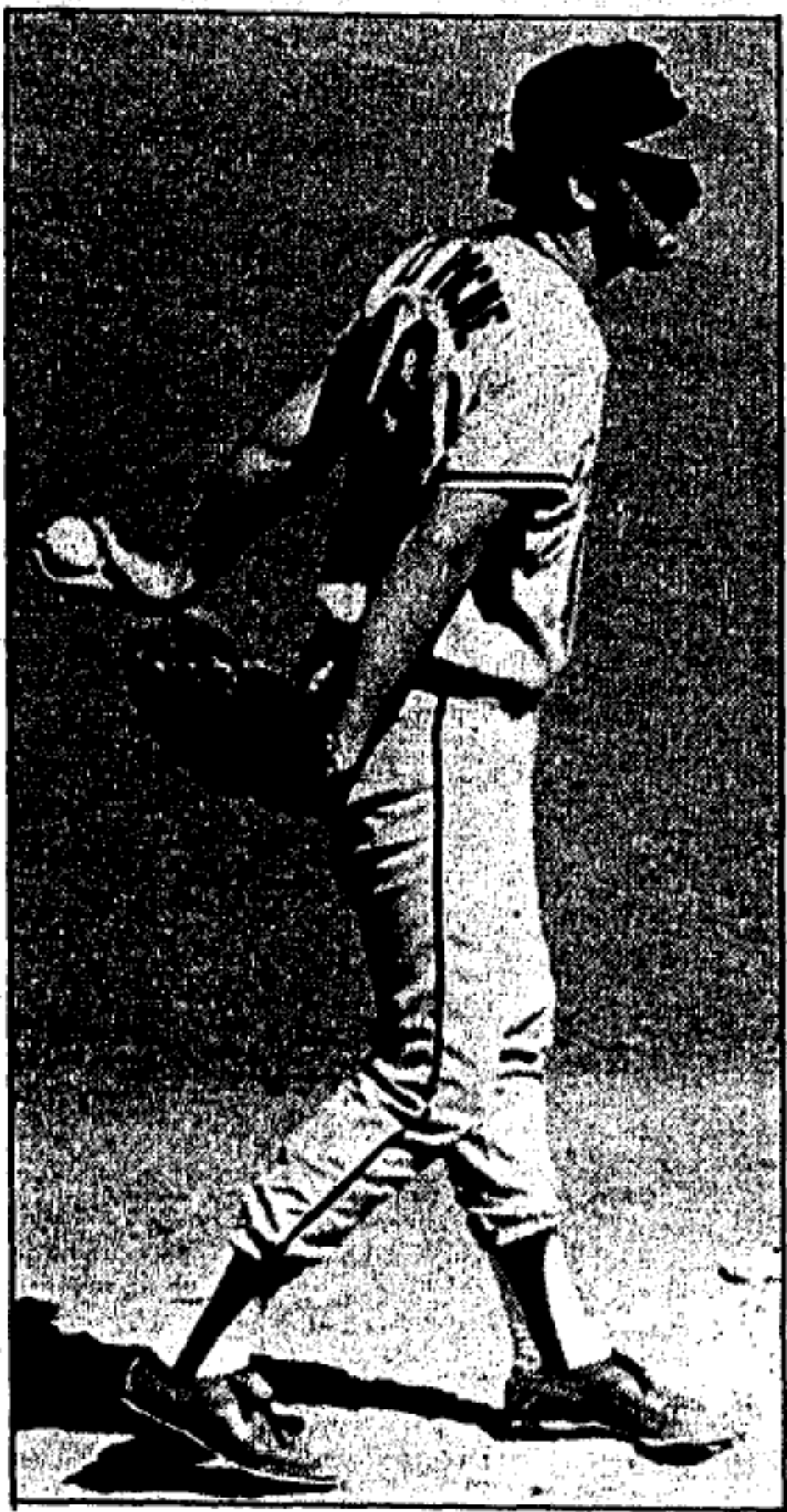
Finley turned up at the Oakland Coliseum on a Sunday afternoon following a brief rain. Under cloudy skies, the Red Sox knocked Mike Torrez around for four runs, and then took a 6-0 lead.

The skies began to clear. The A's came back for four runs. Center fielder Bill North dropped a fly ball for a two-base error and the score became, 7-4. Then, 7-6, after two more A's runs.

Now the sun was shining. North came up with two outs and none on base in the bottom of the ninth. The count went to no balls, two strikes. He doubled to left. Campy Campaneris singled for a tie. Don Baylor followed with a bloop double and the A's had their biggest win of the season.

It was Finley's turn to talk again.

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Dave LaRoche

'Vulture' Legend Lives in LaRoche

By DICK MILLER

ANAHEIM—Phil Regan lives. The Vulture has changed his name to Dave LaRoche and is picking other pitchers' carcasses clean.

It was Claude Osteen who nicknamed Regan "The Vulture" when Regan was working out of the Dodgers' bullpen in the mid '60s. One night in Pittsburgh, Osteen watched Don Drysdale pitch a great game, only to have Regan pick up the victory with a couple of easy outs.

"You're a vulture," Osteen told Regan. The name stuck.

"Hey, don't put me in that category," LaRoche pleaded. "Regan was a great relief pitcher and it's nice to be put in his category. But I work hard. I don't like the name and hope it doesn't stick.

"Can't I be just plain Roachie?"

A pool of the Angels' pitching staff probably would be in favor of calling LaRoche The Vulture. In one eight-day period from April 9 through April 16, the lefthanded vulture picked two saves away from Dyer Miller—a save is known as a "Vultch"—and victories away from Nolan Ryan and Don Aase.

The pair of victories and saves gave LaRoche four points and the early lead in the American League Fireman of the Year race.

"I'd rather have a save than a victory," said LaRoche. "My job is to save games for starting pitchers, so I get more of a kick out of a save than a win."

LaRoche's first victory of the season was accomplished in typical vulture fashion. Ryan pitched 10 shutout innings against Minnesota on April 13, striking out 12 and allowing only four hits.

The Vulture was credited with the victory when Joe Rudi hit an 11th-

inning home run and the Angels won, 1-0. LaRoche recorded three outs.

"That was no vultch," LaRoche protested. "The man (Ryan) begged out."

The Vulture was flapping his wings and scratching his beak at the time.

Until LaRoche was acquired from Cleveland last May, the Angels went through a five-year drouth in the bullpen, which became known as The Arson Squad for its ability to turn brush fires into roaring conflagrations.

There was quality in the bullpen in the early years of the franchise: King Arthur Fowler, Ryne Duren, Tom Morgan, Bob Lee, Minnie Rojas and, briefly, Ken Tatum.

After Lloyd Allen saved 15 games in 1971, the bullpen at the Big A became the hottest spot in Anaheim. One year (1973), the ace of the pen was Orlando Pena, who saved all of three games. Another year, 1976, the leader was Dick Drago with six. Allen fell off to five saves in 1972, but still was the leader.

When LaRoche arrived from Cleveland last May 11, the Angels' bullpen had a composite 0-6 record with five saves and an earned-run average of 3.90. With The Vulture present, the slate read 16-15 with an ERA of 3.33.

The totals of 16 victories and 26 saves were the club's best marks since 1971. LaRoche broke his own club record for southpaws with 13 saves. He had 17 overall and was picked on the American League All-Star team for the second time.

(Continued on Page 22, Column 1)

Cards' Hernandez Extra Rough on Lefties

By NEAL RUSSO

ST. LOUIS—The late Joe Medwick knew quite a bit about hitting. One example of that was his size-up of Keith Hernandez when the Cardinal first baseman was struggling somewhat as a hot prospect a few years ago.

Hernandez, a lefthanded swinger, was having problems handling southpaw pitching in the minors a few years ago. But Medwick, then a special batting instructor for Redbird farmhands, said, "Don't worry about the kid against lefthanders. A couple of years ago, I suggested Keith go to left field with lefties. He's been hanging in there against the lefthanders."

HANGING IN, INDEED. Just as Hernandez came out of the chute so fast in 1977, so he shot out in '78, and most of the damage he wrought came at the expense of southpaws. And he did it with power, too.

So, the handsome young man who once said in the minors, "Sometimes I can't hit a lefthander with a 10-foot pole," merely was picking up where he'd left off last season. Keith actually hit much better against lefties, .321 to .275 against righthanders in '77.

With the Cardinals traditionally being vulnerable to lefthanded pitching, Hernandez' ability to handle portsiders, along with the addition of righthanded-swinging Jerry Morales, gave the Redbirds strong hope of coping well with a diet of lefthanded pitching.

WITH HIS ABILITY TO handle all types of pitching, Hernandez landed at the top of the National League hitting list in the early going. And the 24-year-old with the picture swing that super scout Harry Walker said "you don't want to fool with" is confident he can keep hitting consistently.

The 1977 season was the convincer for Hernandez. It was the first for him in the big leagues in which he had a good start, a good middle and a good finish.

Last year, Hernandez batted .291. He hit 15 home runs, four triples and 41 doubles and drove in 91 runs. Three of his homers were grand-slams.

And just a few years ago, Hernandez had to be benched in the early going because he was batting only .148.

A STRONG SECOND HALF in 1976 turned the tide for Keith, who didn't get picked until the 40th round in the 1971 free-agent draft.

He was handed the first base job in 1975 after Joe Torre was traded to the Mets in the fall of '74. But in '75 he had to go through finishing school at Tulsa (American Association), where he batted .330.

His strong second half in '76 enabled him to finish at .289 as a Cardinal—and he was on his way.

Why the turnaround against lefthanders?

Hernandez put it simply: "I've been concentrating more when I face them."

When Keith went on his early spree this season, fellow coaches kidded Mo Mozzali, the Birds' batting tutor, "It took Keith's father to straighten him out at bat."

JOHN HERNANDEZ HAD come in from his San Francisco home to take in the Cardinals' first home stand of the season. Papa John long ago began teaching Keith what he knew about hitting.

That was a lot, for John Hernandez had been a good hitter, as well as an excellent first baseman, for the Cardinals' Houston farm club in the Texas League. Fading eyesight curtailed the elder Hernandez' career and he wound up as a fireman, a job he still holds.

John Hernandez makes certain he is available to detect any flaws in son Keith's hitting when the Redbirds play in San Francisco.

Despite Hernandez' hot start and help in the RBI department from Mike Tyson and Ted Simmons, the Cardinals' offense hit some early snags. One of the positions that was short on production was center field, manned by Tony Scott and Jerry Mumphrey. Both had been hampered by injuries.

SO MANAGER VERN RAPP tried to revitalize things a bit by moving Jerry Morales from right field to center, with Dane Iorg in left and Jim Dwyer in right in an April 18 game with the Mets. The center field jinx even rubbed off on Morales. He went 0-for-3. Iorg was 0-for-4, but Dwyer got a hit that figured in the run-scoring.

The pitching victim in that game was Eric Rasmussen, who should be used to the feeling now. A 3-2 loser that night, Rasmussen also could look back to his first start of the season. In that one, against the Phillies, the Cardinals were shut out.

Just go back to 1977. In Rasmussen's 17 losses, the Cardinals were shut out three times, scored only one run six times and tallied twice four times. And the most runs scored by the St. Louis club in a game Rasmussen lost was four.

Redbird Chirps: The Cardinals' first pinch-hit of the season was a big one, a three-run double by Roger Freed during Bob Forsch's no-hitter. . . . Why teams go into slumps dept.: three of the Cardinals' five losses on their first home stand were by one man, two by two. . . . Ticket director Mike Bertani and wife Sandy became parents of a daughter, Meghan, on April 17.

Injury to Matthews Accelerates Braves' Plunge

By WAYNE MINSHEW

ATLANTA—If indeed it is darkest before the dawn, the Braves are in for a helluva sunrise.

Just when it appeared things couldn't get worse for rookie Manager Bobby Cox' young team, sure enough they did. Just a half-dozen games into the season, the Braves' most productive player, outfielder Gary Matthews, suffered a separated shoulder while diving for a fly ball and was declared out of action for at least six weeks.

After all those dropped flies, the Braves finally catch one, and it is a disaster.

IN ADDITION to the injury to Matthews, Cox has to be hurting just by watching his young outfit. Errors of commission and omission, faulty pitching—some of it, possibly, out of frustration because of betrayal by the defense, and a general lack of hitting had the Braves in the National League West cellar.

At least Cox is in the dugout. If he were in the press boxes around the league, he'd hear such cracks

as, "Wonder how long this (Braves') act would last with Major Bowles."

Or: "They should let that team use four outfielders, just to even things up."

But it is the missing outfielder, Matthews, that is most disturbing.

It happened in Los Angeles April 14. The Dodgers' Dusty Baker lifted a fly ball to shallow right field. Matthews, who had made a sensational tumbling catch earlier in the game, ran in, dived, caught the ball and stayed down.

HE WAS HELPED off the field to be examined in the Braves' clubhouse by Dr. Frank Jobe, who diagnosed the injury as a shoulder separation.

"It's really a tough loss," said Cox. "Not only was he our most productive player, but he was one of the team leaders. We're going to miss him."

Matthews had a league-leading four homers, was batting .381 and had knocked in six runs.

"He got hurt hustling," said Cox. "That's the kind of player he is—all

out always—all the time."

Cox smiled.

"You know," he said, "Gary wanted to stay in the game."

Cox began using Brian Asselstine, a lefthanded batter, in Matthews' spot.

ASSELSTINE broke in with a bang, collecting three hits the following day.

Meanwhile, it appeared in the early going that the Braves, youngsters that they are, were pressing, prompting infielder Jerry Royster to offer a theory.

"We're not out here as a team going to win a pennant," said Royster. "What we have to do is try and improve. We've got to develop our kids into big league players. It's going to take two or three years, and we just have to think about improving ourselves now."

Royster seemed to be succeeding.

He was batting .385 as the season moved into its third week and was errorless at second base. Royster, only 25 himself, was one of the few

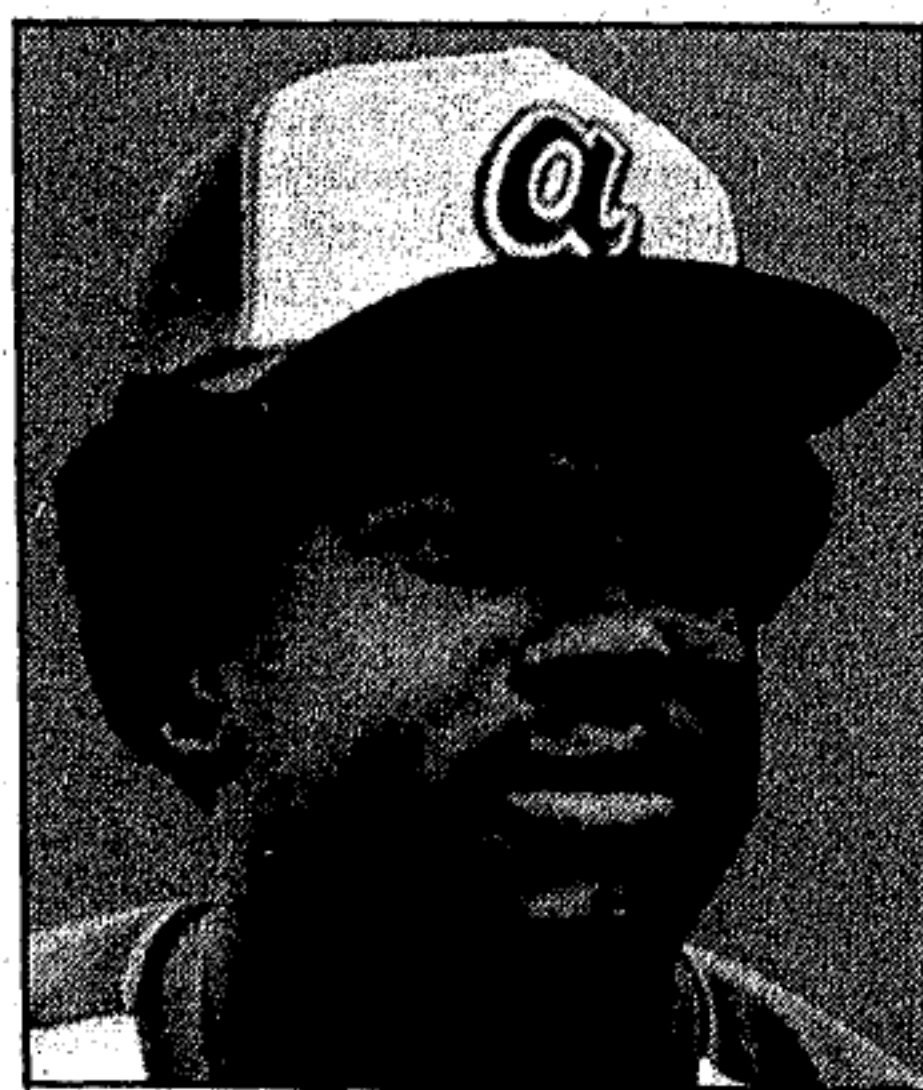
Braves performing in a positive, consistent manner.

Wigwam Wisps: Phil Niekro's suggested approach: "We have nothing to lose. We should play each play as if it's the last one we're ever going to make." . . . Rookie Dale Murphy was off to a

slow start and seeing red at times, according to Manager Cox. "He can get mad," said Cox, smiling. "Big Dale was treating some helmets pretty hard during one game." Murphy is an apparently easy-going fellow who usually doesn't say a lot.

Braves' handyman Darrell Chaney hit the first homer of his major league career batting righthanded April 10 against the Padres. "Wonders never cease," he said. . . . Catcher Biff Pocoroba was relegated to pinch-hitting duty early on the first West Coast trip because of a blister on the middle finger of his throwing hand.

Tommy Boggs, who came in the four-club, 11-player deal last winter, was impressive in his first couple of starts, although both were losses. He was angered by reports that a Dodger scouting report said he can't hold his stuff after five innings. . . . In their first seven games, the Braves hit into 12 double plays and a triple play.



Gary Matthews



THE WORLD CHAMPION REDS made a sizable haul of Gold Gloves before one of the early games of the season when four members were honored for being named to THE SPORTING NEWS N. L. All-Star Fielding

Team in 1976. Left to right are outfielder Cesar Geronimo, catcher Johnny Bench, H. W. (Mox) Moxley of the Rawlings Sporting Goods Co., second baseman Joe Morgan and shortstop Dave Concepcion.

Slumbering Hitters Give Reds an Early Nightmare

By EARL LAWSON

CINCINNATI—The devastating offense the Reds have had over the past seven years has compensated for more than one pitcher's mistake.

But there are those around the National League who are wondering just how long their hitters can shoulder most of the load.

"It's a real tribute to Sparky Anderson and Larry Shepard that the Reds' pitching staff has done as well as it has over the years," said Astro Manager Bill Virdon after the Astros had eked out a second straight 4-3 victory to extend the world champs' losing streak to four games.

"No one on the staff has had what I'd call real outstanding stuff," continued Virdon. "Don Gullett did, but he never pitched a lot of times because he was injured."

BOB WATSON, the Astros' slug-ging first baseman, agreed with Virdon.

"I've never been keen about their pitching," said Watson. "What Anderson does is throw a lot of bodies at you, hoping they'll keep the ball in the park. He's got four guys on the club who win Gold Gloves on THE SPORTING NEWS fielding team every year and he counts on them to chase down the balls that are hit."

The Reds opened the season by splitting four games with the Padres.

One of San Diego's victories went to Bob Shirley, a 22-year-old rookie lefty with less than one year of pro experience.

A few of the Reds, Joe Morgan in particular, wrote off Shirley's performance as one of those things.

THE ASTROS' Roger Metzger was impressed even though his appraisal of Shirley was made by perusing the box scores.

"The kid struck out 11 batters," pointed out Metzger, "and that's something. Sandy Koufax found it a little hard to do against a Cincin-

nati club even in his best years."

Jack Billingham, who shortly before the season started had resigned himself to the role of a long relief man, found himself on the mound as a starter in the second game of the season.

The 34-year-old righthander, getting relief help from Dale Murray, an off-season acquisition from Montreal, gained the victory.

"If Gary Nolan doesn't come up with a blister on his foot and Pat Zachry hadn't had that upset stomach," cracked Billingham, "then me and Santo (Alcala) would be sitting on the bench holding hands trying to keep warm."

ALCALA, WHOSE spot was in jeopardy when the spring training camp opened, drew the starting assignment against Shirley and failed to survive the third inning as the Reds took a 12-4 shellacking.

There's little doubt but that pitching concerns Anderson. And, naturally, he plays it down.

"Look, we've still got 156 games to play," he said after the Reds dropped their fourth game in six starts.

The last two of those four losses were by 4-3 scores to Houston and each time the Reds had a chance for victory in the ninth inning.

In the April 11 game, with one run in, two runners on base and two out, Ken Griffey flied to center to end the game.

The following night, the Reds entered the ninth trailing 4-1. They scored once and had runners on second and third when Cesar Geronimo lined a smash through the middle. The ball caromed off the webbing of pitcher Ken Forsch's glove into the hands of Roger Metzger, who threw to first for the put-out.

"IF I DON'T deflect that ball," said Forsch, "then it goes into center field along with my head and it's a tie game."

But Forsch had no sympathy for the Reds.

"I've been pitching in the majors for seven years and I've seen the Reds get many a chalk-line hit or a

hit on a pitch that jammed the batter," he said. "I'm just glad to see breaks going against them for a change. And I'm not trying to take anything away from them. They're a great team."

Virdon looks around the league and sees improvement in all clubs.

"Except the Reds," said the Astro manager, "and it's pretty hard for them to be any better than they were last year."

VIRDON ISN'T conceding the Reds another division title, however.

"But," he remarked, "if they don't win, they should come damn close."

Danny Driessen, the replacement for the popular Tony Perez at first base, was hitless in the four games the Reds played at Riverfront Stadium.

Once out of town, Driessen relaxed a little and singled his last two trips to the plate.

"I felt sorry for Danny," cracked Johnny Bench, "but he did take some heat off me."

The Reds won their first two games of the season with Bench sidelined with a strained knee and George Foster hitting in the fourth spot.

Once Foster was dropped to fifth and Bench moved into the cleanup slot, the Reds proceeded to lose four in a row. And Bench was 0-for-9 when he finally singled for his first hit.

Red Hots: Red President Bob Howsam, as is his usual custom, made the first trip with the club. . . . Commissioner Bowie Kuhn was in Cincinnati Easter Sunday to present the Reds with their championship rings. Saturday, April 9, was awards day. . . . Fred Fleig of the National League presented Joe Morgan with the league's Most Valuable Player plaque. Earl Lawson presented Morgan with THE SPORTING NEWS Player of the Year award. THE SPORTING NEWS Fireman of the Year award went to Rawly Eastwick and the publication's National League Player of the Year award went to Foster.

Hernandez' Loud Bat Fuels Cards' Torrid Getaway

By NEAL RUSSO

ST. LOUIS—One can hardly blame **Keith Hernandez** for speaking so cautiously despite a sizzling first week of the season.

"It's a long season—one day, or even one week, does not make a season," Hernandez kept saying to reporters and sportscasters as the Cardinals got off to a torrid 5-1 start, all on the road.

Hernandez had a hand in all the victories with an assortment of hits. These included three home runs, all off lefties by the southpaw swinger, and three doubles. After six games, he had driven in nine runs.

LAST YEAR, when **Keith** lost his starting job early, he didn't get his eighth RBI until July 17 and he didn't swat his third home run until August 31.

Before Hernandez came up to the varsity a few years ago, Bob Kennedy, then the player development director of the Cardinals, took a few looks at **Keith** and quickly called him the best prospect in years and a cinch to make the Hall of Fame.

It was more like the Hall of Shame for two seasons. The kid with the classic swing who had been burning up the Triple-A ranks fell on his face in the big leagues. It got so bad last year that there was strong talk that **Keith** might be traded for Willie Montanez, another Cardinal signee who got away.

THE TURNABOUT apparently came last July when, with the Cardinals quickly falling far behind the runaway Phillies, **Hernandez** was returned to the starting lineup. On July 7, he was batting .187, just about his playing weight. He batted .333 after the All-Star Game with 17 doubles, six homers and 41 runs batted in.

"The fact that the club went so bad could have been a blessing in disguise because it gave me a chance to get back in the lineup and enabled the club to call up Garry Templeton and provided him with two months of good experience," **Keith** said.

What had brought the big change in **Hernandez'** fortunes?

"The big difference is that I've been much more aggressive at bat," he said. "I think I broke the ice in the second half of last season. Last year I kept cheating myself at bat in the early part of the season. I was putting pressure on myself. I got down about as low as anyone can get. I even began to have doubts as to whether I could hit major league pitching."

AND THEN THERE was all the hard work.

"I learned a lot when I was riding the bench last year from Willie Crawford," **Keith** said. "He showed me how to get ready if, like he had done so much of his career, I had to sit out a lot of games."

Want more reasons?

Rigorous forearm and wrist exercises to strengthen himself during the off-season helped. Then there was the chance to play regularly: "I know now that if I go 0-for-4, I'll still be in the lineup," he said. The ability to handle left-handed pitching, partly by staying off the tantalizing but bad pitches, was a clincher.

And why did **Hernandez** get off

to such a good start against good lefthanded pitching?

"I don't know," said new Manager Vern Rapp, "but I do know that when I saw him in the minor leagues, he could hit any pitching well."

ANOTHER BIG plus for Hernandez: he's only 23. Want still another tremendous plus and inspiration? Try blonde fiancée Susan Broeker of Chesterfield, a St. Louis suburb.

As for the best all-road getaway for a Cardinal team in years, Hernandez pointed to a super cliché: team effort. And he was so right.

It seemed that everyone was chipping in as the Birds first mowed down the Pirates in three, nailing longtime nemesis Jim Rooker in the process, then taking two out of three from the Mets. Tom Seaver managed to cool off the Cardinals briefly.

Rooker last year became the first man since Vern Law in 1960 to post a 5-0 mark against the Cardinals. He was 13-5 against St. Louis until the Cardinals creamed him for seven runs in two innings on Easter Sunday.

LAST YEAR, the Birds amassed all of six runs against him in five games. Rooker's ERA against the Birds was 1.29.

Rookie righthanded reliever John Urrea was sensational in picking up three saves. In New York, the unawed, modest kid from California ran up a 3-0 count on the first man he faced (with two on in a 4-1 game), Felix Millan. Only Dave Cash was tougher to strike out in the National League last year.

Well, Urrea proceeded to whiff Millan for the third out, then breezed through the eighth and ninth.

The other first-year righthanded reliever, Johnny Sutton, also was impressive in his second outing.

TED SIMMONS was off to a booming start. So was Bake McBride, who quickly had two homers and five RBIs. Garry Templeton right away showed he can do it all at bat and in the field when all the games are important.

Lou Brock began laughing at the calendar early again, batting .368 in his first five games. Don Kessinger, who was called on early when Mike Tyson was shelved in the opener, got some key hits early.

Bob Forsch pitched extremely well in his first start and rather well in winning start No. 2. Al Hrabosky did okay in his first relief outing on opening day. Newcomer Buddy Schultz and Clay Carroll did their job out of the bullpen.

And how about Tony Scott? He had 2-for-4 in fill in roles, then blasted a triple in his first starting chance in the club's sixth game.

Redbird Chirps: Dave Rader had to leave the club April 10 because his wife, Betty, had fainted and suffered an aneurysm (blood clot) in the head. She was taken to Mercy Hospital in Bakersfield, Calif., where she regained consciousness and underwent tests. She had fallen to the floor of their home when she fainted. . . . Mike Anderson and Bake McBride executed perfect squeeze bunts in games against the Pirates in the Cardinals' first home stand.

Spare-Part Kirkpatrick Now Vital Buc Cog

By CHARLEY FEENEY

PITTSBURGH—The first thing Ed Kirkpatrick will admit is that he doesn't look like a ballplayer.

He is chunky. As a teen-ager in 1962, he was tagged with the nickname Spanky because he resembled the youngster featured in the Our Gang comedies.

He will be 30 years old on October 8 and he still is called Spanky because he still has a chubby face and a pleasant smile.

In five seasons with Kansas City, he played at least 113 games a season, yet when he was traded to the Pirates last December, he learned he was considered a utility player.

"IT'S JUST A phrase," he said. "I don't consider myself a utility player. How can anybody call me a utilityman when I've always played in more than 100 games in a season?"

He got the utility tag because he was a man for all positions with Kansas City. He caught. He played at first base and in the outfield.

During the first 70 games with the Pirates this year, Kirkpatrick truly was a utilityman. He didn't even get a chance to be a platoon player. The other Kaycee player who came to Pittsburgh in the swap for Nelson Briles was Kurt Bevacqua, a spare infielder. He was used even more sparingly by Danny Murtaugh and finally was shipped back to Kaycee, where he is appreciated more than in Pittsburgh.

KIRKPATRICK sat on the Pirates bench without complaint.

"I've never been a complainer and I don't plan to start now," he said.

In mid-July, the stocky lefthand-

ed hitter, who batted .263 with Kansas City last year, found himself an active Pirate.

He started to play at first and some in right and played in every game during the club's eight-game winning streak. That started the Pirates' drive to the top in the National League East.

Later, he became a platoon first baseman with Bob Robertson, who, despite a .230 average, was hitting a home run every 12 at-bats.

Kirkpatrick started 48 games and he failed to reach base in only eight of them. He is a unique Pirate as a batter. He is not a free swinger. He takes pitches. He drew 37 walks in 48 games and his on-base ratio was second only to Willie Stargell on the club.

KIRKPATRICK had the best

Buc record in getting bases on balls. He also drove in big runs.

With Robertson, he made first base a productive offensive spot. On defense, Kirkpatrick did the job, not in ordinary style, but very much above ordinary.

In one stretch, Spanky had a .409 on-base average. He hit over .340 for a long stretch.

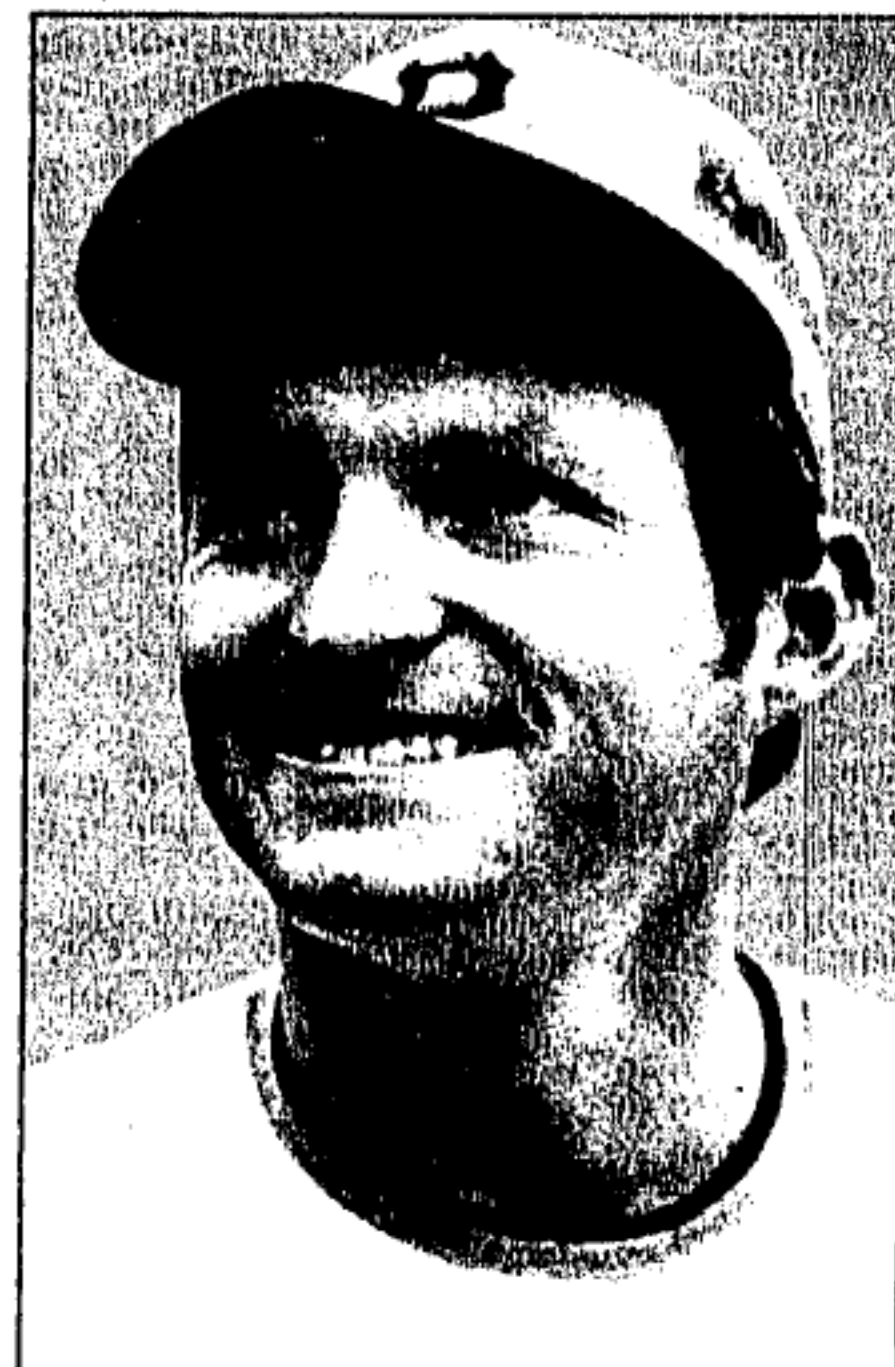
Perhaps Kirkpatrick never will lose the utility tag in Pittsburgh. It might stick just like the nickname Spanky.

He doesn't worry about it. For the first time in his 11-year career, he has a chance to play with a pennant winner. If the Pirates make it, Kirkpatrick won't be a player who just came along for the ride.

He has shown the National League that he is a plus-big leaguer. The American Leaguers knew it all the time.

Pittsburghers: The Pirates' starting pitchers, who led the league in complete games, will end the season with the most route jobs since the 1965 staff, which had 49. . . . Ken Brett is considered the best hitter among the Buc pitchers, but Jim Rooker passed him in the hit department when he banged out his 23rd September 3. On the same date, Rooker got two hits in one inning vs. the Phils. . . . Dock Ellis'

eight-game winning streak was ended by the Dodgers September 1. . . . The Pirates, who were 2-10 vs. the Dodgers last year, were 8-4 this season, beating them eight in a row after losing a three-game series in Los Angeles in June. . . . Rookie shortstop Frank Taveras and Mario Mendoza showed they can cut it in the big leagues.



Ed Kirkpatrick

It's Redbird Moving Time, With Brock Showing Way

By NEAL RUSSO

ST. LOUIS—Talk about bringing up the reserves! A crowd gathered in a hurry in the Cardinals' clubhouse as the Redbirds went into the stretch drive of the National League East chase.

It's usually the custom to add a few veterans for a club's final push, but the Cardinals even dropped one—Tim McCarver, a star of three St. Louis pennant winners who had been serving as the No. 1 pinch-hitter and occasional fill-in behind the plate and at first base this season.

As the Cardinals parted with McCarver, who was hitting only .217, they brought up such Tulsa (American Association) products as first baseman Keith Hernandez, catcher Marc Hill, catcher Rich Billings, veteran outfielder Richie Scheinblum and two young outfielders, Larry Herndon and Jerry Mumphrey, from Arkansas.

Following these transactions, on the night of September 4, after the close of a three-game sweep over the Expos, the Birds obtained infielder Ron Hunt on waivers from the Montreal club.

So, Redbird fans had plenty of fresh faces to look at while centering their attention on two major developments: Lou Brock's relentless charge toward a modern one-season stolen base record and the Cardinals' fight for the East title.

BROCK WAS ONE of the few bright lights on the Birds' disastrous (4-8) last invasion of the N. L. West cities, swiping 16 bases in 21 tries to give him 29 steals for August. In the finale at San Francisco on September 1, he stole four bases (his career top, which he had reached twice before) to come home with a total of 98—just six short of Maury Wills' mark. Lou had 103 by September 8.

Despite Brock's heroics, some consistent hitting from Bake McBride and two victories by Lynn McGlothen and a few other plusses, the Cardinals came home from their horrid trip 1½ games behind the Pirates. When the Birds departed on that journey, they held 2½-game margins over both the Bucs and the Phillies.

The Cardinals were hopeful of resuming their winning ways against their Eastern rivals after finishing with a sub-par 32-40

against the West.

McCarver had been used much less than last season when he batted .266 upon his return to the Cardinals. This season, he had only 106 official at-bats and 11 runs batted in, five of which came on sacrifice flies. He had one extra-base hit, a triple, among his 23 safeties. On the plus side, indicating that he still has a sharp eye at 32, were his 22 walks as against six whiffs.

Bob Kennedy, the Cardinals' player personnel director who accompanied the club on the entire 12-game western swing, said of young catcher Hill, "We figure that if he plays, he should hit .215 or so (a reference to McCarver's mark), and he's an outstanding receiver."

HILL, WHO HAD been up with the Redbirds briefly earlier this season, batted .275 for Tulsa. He hit 14 homers, one triple, 14 doubles and drove in 57 runs.

Hernandez, a lefthanded batter with a classic stroke, already is regarded as a solid major leaguer defensively at first base. Manager Red Schoendienst wasted no time putting him to work. When the late-August series opened at Candlestick Park, there was Hernandez making his major league debut about 12 miles from his hometown of Millbrae.

Schoendienst decided to start Hernandez even though a successful southpaw, Mike Caldwell, then 12-3, was pitching for the Giants and Red was aware that Keith probably would be extra nervous breaking into the biggies before his home folks.

Hernandez admitted he was jit-



Lou Brock

tery during the series, but he came out of it with 3-for-10, including a double, and coaxed three walks. He also whiffed three times.

HERNANDEZ GOT the chance early because Joe Torre came up with a sore hand from sliding back into second base in the preceding series with San Diego.

"It was a dream come true, breaking into the major leagues in your hometown," said Hernandez, who is only 20. He recalled the many long hours of practice under the guidance of his father, John, a fireman who used to play first base in the Cardinals' chain.

"I must have spent \$50 on the telephone calling my parents, relatives and friends from Oklahoma City when I found out I was going up," Hernandez said.

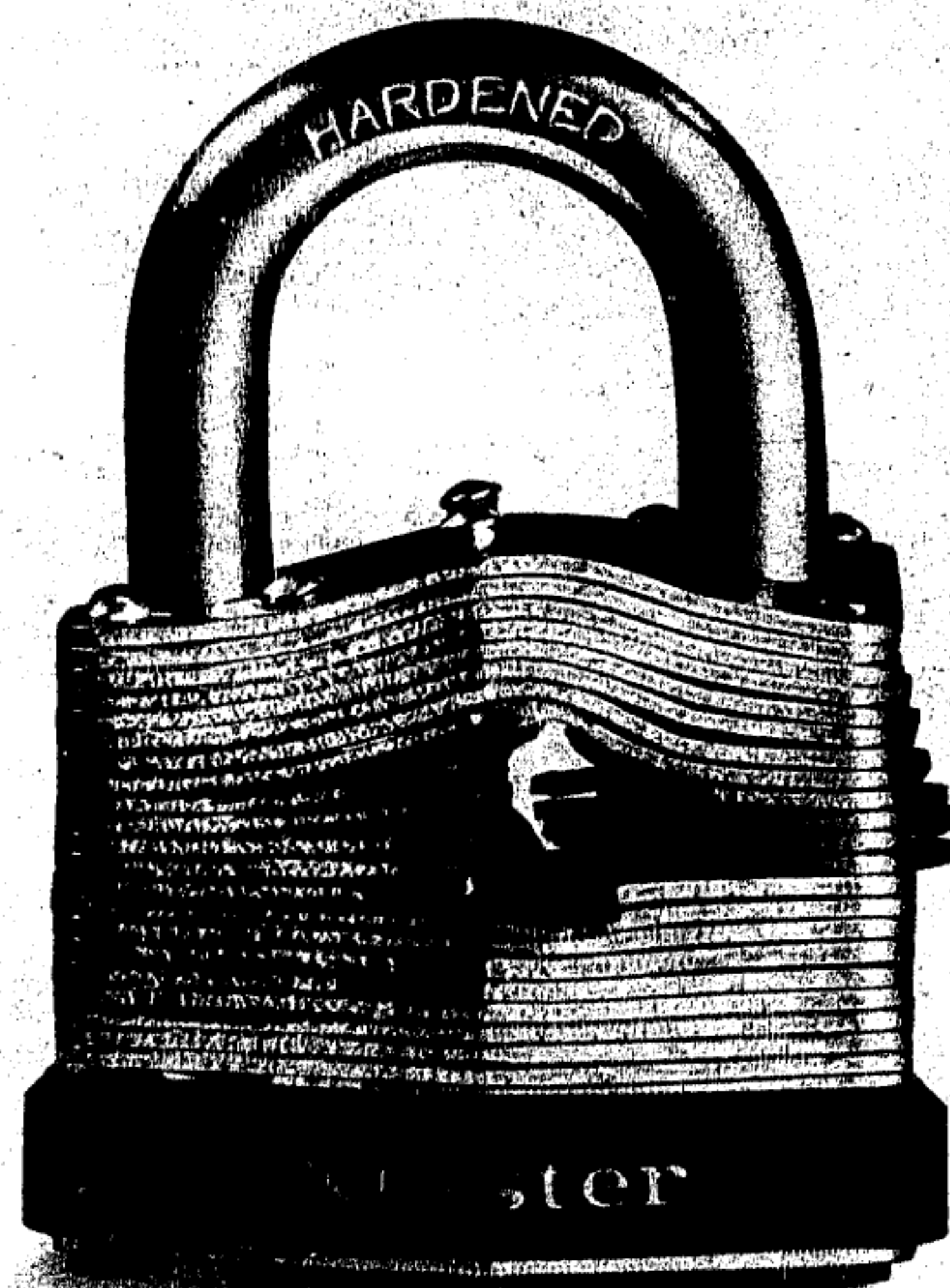
Although set back by a pre-season leg injury that required surgery, Hernandez came on strong at Tulsa. He hit .351 with 61 RBIs, 16 doubles, six triples and 14 homers in 353 official at-bats. He closed out his Tulsa season with a bang, going 3-for-3 against Charley Hudson, who happens to be a lefthander.

SCHEINBLUM and Billings had been picked up late in the season from other major league organizations. Scheinblum batted .265 for Tulsa, Billings .200. The Redbirds obviously were attracted by Scheinblum's lifetime .260 pinch-hitting average in the majors.

Speedsters Herndon and Mumphrey spent the season with Arkansas (Texas). Herndon led the Texas League in steals with 50 and batted .288. Mumphrey wound up with 40 thefts and a .291 mark.

Redbird Chirps: The Redbirds were understandably disappointed when they ran out of doubleheaders. Their sweep of the Expos-September 3 (in a makeup of a rainout the day before) gave them a 6-1-3 Mark in twinbills. Translated, that means 15 victories and five losses in 10 doubleheaders.

Oddity Dept.: The Cardinals' first one-hitter of the season was turned in by John Curtis in San Diego August 29 (Fred Kendall singled with two out in the eighth). Curtis had come from the Red Sox. The only Cardinals who hurled one-hitters last year were Rick Wise and Reggie Cleveland—and both landed with the Bosox.



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Cards' Statistics Show Lack Of Punch With Men on Base

By NEAL RUSSO

ST. LOUIS—The Cardinals' lack of consistency on offense, so often mentioned by Manager Vern Rapp in the past season, is underscored in two sets of special statistics.

Failure to get enough clutch hits, or even a fly ball in some situations, combined with too-often erratic pitching to keep the Redbirds from staying in contention longer than they did.

Certainly, there were other factors, such as faulty defense at times. But these stats are concerned with driving in runners from second or third base and advancing the runners in any way.

Bear with us, if you will, for a dissection of those statistics which shows just who among the Cardinal players delivered when the opportunities presented themselves in 1977.

In the clutch-hitting department, that is driving in runners from second and third base, **Keith Hernandez** and Ted Simmons ran 1-2, with the first sacker edging the catcher, .464 to .457.

THE CLUTCH percentage is arrived at by dividing the RBI total by the total of runners on second and third. A home run counts 1-for-1 if nobody is on base, 2-for-2 with one on, etc.

Any figure over .400 is considered excellent. Tony Scott, whose knee injury was to prove so costly, was most respectable at .394. But Garry Templeton was even better, finishing at .418. And Mike Tyson, though down in batting average, showed he often made his hits count with a .388 clutch percentage.

Mike Anderson was at .378 despite a low batting average. Lou Brock closed at .374. On the disappointing side were Heity Cruz and Ken Reitz, each with .341, and Jerry Mumphrey with .339. The Cardinals are hopeful that fast-improving Mumphrey will greatly exceed his 39-RBI total next season.

Of the reserves, Roger Freed was fantastic with a .512 mark on 21 RBIs in 41 chances. And Dave Rader did quite all right, too, with a .410 percentage on 16 RBIs in 39 opportunities. In limited play, Mike Phillips was at .375 and Don Kessinger far down at .206.

BY THE WAY, departed Bake McBride had a hefty mark of .476 as a Redbird with 20 RBIs in 42 chances.

And guess who was the very best at advancing the runners? None other than young Templeton with an unusually high percentage of .360. The slick shortstop pushed his mates along 277 bases in 769 chances.

An OABR (Opportunity to Advance Base Runner) is charged for each base the runners can advance. For instance, a triple with the bases full would mean six for six, six base runners advanced out of six chances. To arrive at the percentage, the base runners-advanced total is divided by the OABR total.

Anywhere near .300 is considered superior in this analysis of offense. Among the fulltime players, Simmons was second to Templeton with .310. Scott did rather well at .281. Brock was next with .275, followed closely by **Hernandez** at .274.

CONSIDERED below par were Mumphrey at .257, Reitz at .254, Tyson at .253, Cruz at .229, Anderson at .187, Rick Bosetti at .169 and Kessinger at .154.

As expected, Freed was the overall leader with .351, which is a superb figure. Dane Iorg was at .349, also excellent, and Rader finished with .277. Reacquired Jim Dwyer was at .265.

The Cardinals should have finished better than 27-28 against lefthanded pitching, considering their good batting average (.278) against southpaws. But too many of the hits were untimely, wasted in situations where there were no opportunities to drive in a runner or runners.

Among the switch-hitters, Templeton showed the least partiality, hitting .321 against lefties and .323 against righthanders for an overall figure of .322. Scott was at .311 against southpaws and .280 against righthanders. Simmons punished righthanders at a .325 clip and lefthanders at a .307 pace for an overall mark of .318.

MUMPHREY WAS .295 against righthanders but a more modest .271 against lefthanders, hence his post-season stint in the Florida Instructional League swinging from the right side.

Brock usually has done much better against southpaws than his .235 mark in 1977. **Hernandez** surprisingly finished with a .321 mark against southpaws even though he bats lefthanded. He was .291 overall.

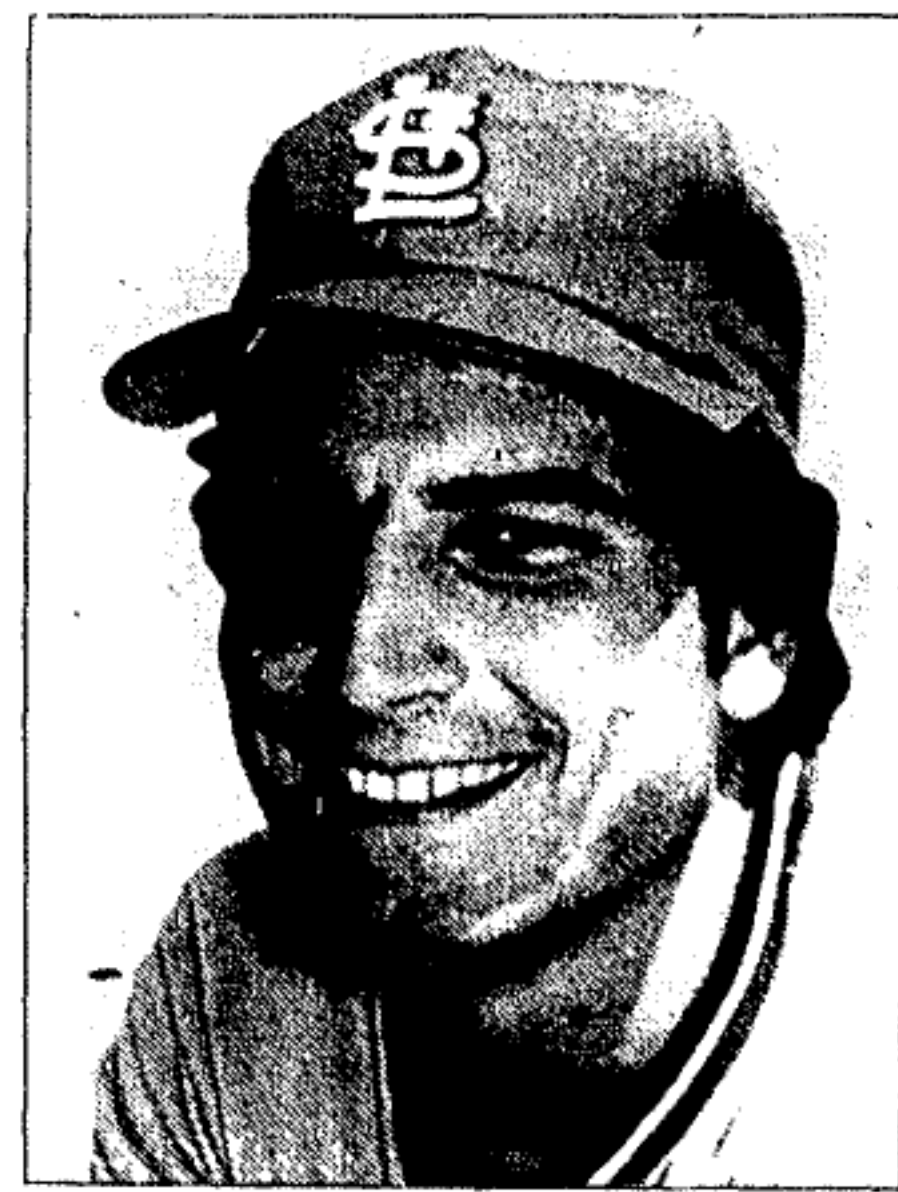
Righthanded hitters' figures against lefthanded hurling included Cruz at .284, Reitz at .278 and Tyson at .264. Righthanded swinger Freed wound up at .411 against the portsiders.

Redbird Chirps: The Cardinals announced price boosts for box seats and some loge reserved seats. Field, loge and terrace boxes are to go up 50 cents from

\$5.50 to \$6. Loge reserved for sections 232 through 268 will go from \$4 to \$4.50. All other reserved loge seats stay at \$4, as do terrace loge. General admission remains \$2.50 and bleachers \$2. . . . Rumors at World Series time had the Cardinals seeking the Pirates' Al Oliver and the Cubs' Jerry Morales in an effort to get that extra power-hitter they so sorely need. However, Oliver swings lefthanded and the Birds would prefer a righthanded hitter. Eric Rasmussen was believed to be part of the bait for Oliver, while Cruz and Rader were rumored to be available for the likes of Morales.




Ted Simmons




Keith Hernandez

bites man.



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FORD DIVISION 75 ANNIVERSARY



KEITH A FACELESS CARD

But He Likes It That Way

By RICK HUMMEL

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla.—Keith Hernandez was a natural choice to grace the cover of this spring training issue. Co-Most Valuable Player of the National League, batting champion, Gold Glove winner and baseball's newest big-money man. The only problem was that Hernandez was not scheduled to arrive in Florida until after this issue went to press.

THE SPORTING NEWS, however, arranged to fly Hernandez here for a quick photo session and all went well during the shooting. But, at night, the St. Louis Cardinals' first baseman who suddenly went from \$75,000 a year to \$760,000, was bored. A crowd streaming toward the nearby Bayfront Center attracted his attention so Hernandez, with nothing better to do, decided to follow the crowd. Hernandez wound up at a wrestling match between Harley Race and Manny Fernandez.

That occasion represented one of the few times recently that Hernandez has been idle. Through most of January and February, Hernandez hop-scotched across the country, crowds following him, to appear on the rubber chicken circuit. In mid-February, when Hernandez signed a five-year contract for \$3.8 million, attention escalated still more.

The 26-year-old Hernandez enjoys the recognition—to a degree. "I don't mind meeting people, talking to people," he said. "You have an obligation—if people want to talk to you. You should not be rude to people unless they are rude to you."

But it is a double-edged sword. Hernandez, concerned about maintaining a measure of anonymity, has decided he will not be part of any marketing campaign, even though he is very marketable now.

"I probably won't do any commercials," he said. "If you get on TV you lose your privacy. I wouldn't want to be Pete Rose or Steve Garvey, who are recognized everywhere they go. They don't have privacy."

He admits that his agent, Jack Childers, would like to see him involved in such items but Hernandez said, "I'm not sure I'm ready for that step. It scares me."

Hernandez has limited himself to one advertisement—a hot tub layout for a trade magazine. In uniform, he took 50 swings with his Louisville Slugger at a "Brand X" hot tub—trying to break it—and 50 swings at the sponsor's brand—trying to display its impregnability. What he had thought would be a two-hour session lasted six hours. But now he has a good deal on a hot tub.

Hernandez is much more inclined to the static advertisement of a magazine than animated television commercials. He does not particularly relish public speaking.

"If I do something (on TV), it won't be something where I come off looking like a fool," he said.

The furor that developed in St. Louis over his contract was a bit unsettling to Hernandez, who steadfastly declined to divulge any figures. Callers to a popular open-line radio show in St. Louis took up sides as to who was worth more to the Cardinals, Hernandez or shortstop Garry Templeton, and wondered if they shouldn't at least be paid the same.

"There are a lot of guys with big contracts," said Hernandez. "That's just sensationalism. I don't want my family bothered with it."

Childers, formerly Lou Brock's agent and a man who has negotiated talent contracts for such diverse entities and persons as the Green Hornet, James Bond 007, Dave Kingman and Al Hrabosky, negotiated a lifetime package for Hernandez. Parts of it, one source said, "would knock you off your chair."

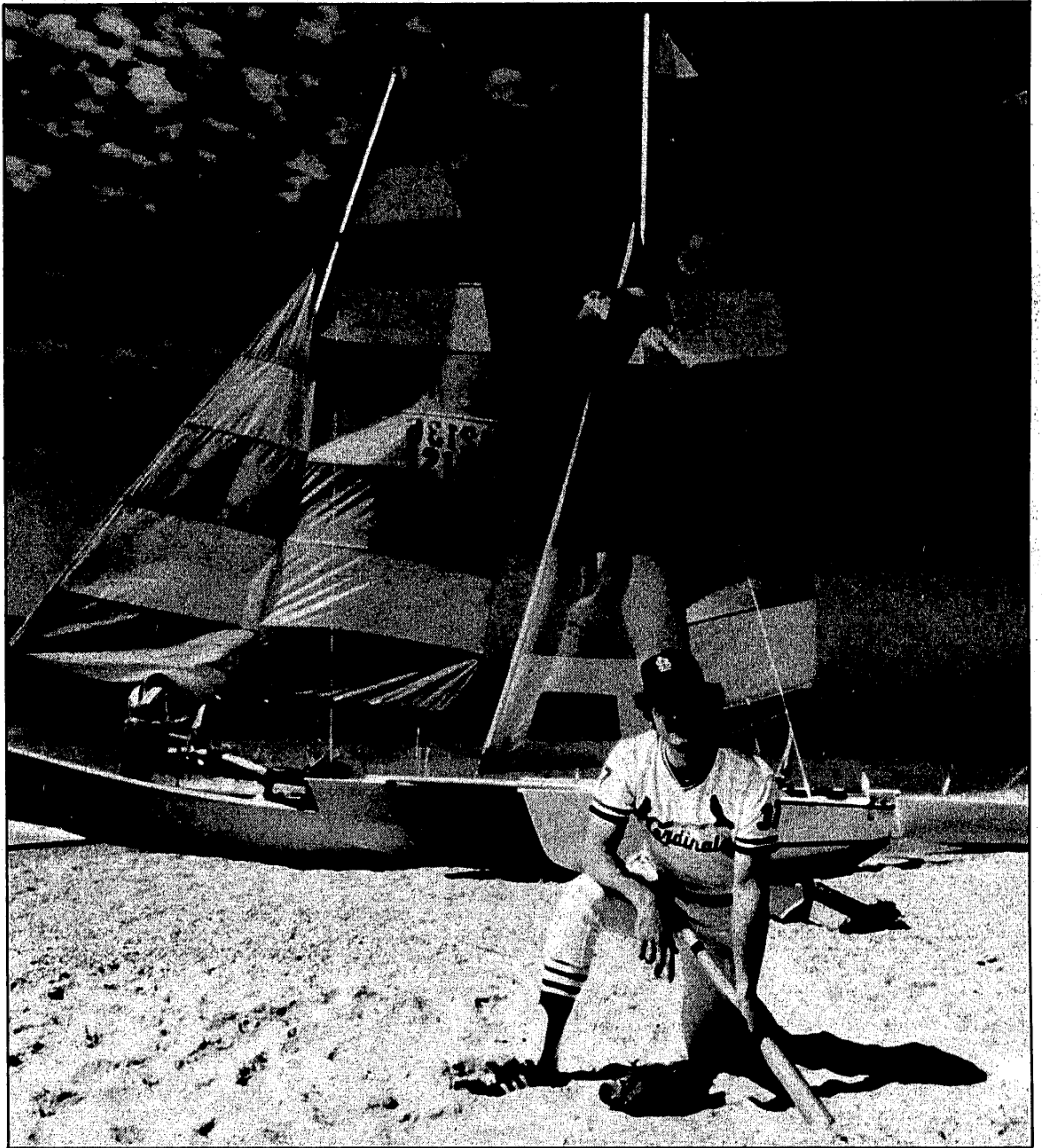
With perhaps one-third of the \$3.8 million deferred into an insurance annuity program, Hernandez, wife Sue, daughter Jessica and a child due in late spring will be collecting ample checks long after his playing days.

If the terms are on the same order as the Hrabosky contract, which is for \$2.2 million at face value but \$5.9 million over the life of the annuity compensation, then Hernandez' \$3.8 million would, in 30 to 40 years, equal nearly \$10 million.

Whatever the figures, they bring a gleam to the eye of a former Cardinal farmhand named John Hernandez. John Hernandez, Keith's father, was a promising first baseman in the Redbird system in the late 1940s, before his career was shortened by a head injury that caused double vision.

"It's something you never expect, the salaries going the way they have been," said the elder Hernandez, long-time batting adviser to his son. "But evidently the clubs are able to pay these amounts."

"An old friend of mine, who was a pitcher for the



Keith Hernandez . . . A low profile in the midst of fame and riches.

Dodgers, said a lot of people are wondering if a ballplayer is worth that kind of money. Well, the next day, I picked up a copy of People magazine and saw a cover story on Kenny Rogers that said he made \$13 million—in one year!"

John Hernandez' top salary was \$1,300 in 1948. But, said father, "Keith's 10 times the ball player I ever was."

John Hernandez, who will retire from the fire department shortly, lives in Millbrae, Calif., a San Francisco suburb. Though Keith often comes to him for advice, John prefers the background.

"I'd like to see all the games but it's not my right," said the elder Hernandez. "I don't want to interfere. A lot of fathers would say, 'See, this is my son,' and want to revel in it." John Hernandez will be a quiet reveler. "I'm proud even if he hadn't done anything," he said.

Hernandez, who likened himself to a "mystery man" on the road last season, because no one really knew who he was until they discovered he was going to win a batting title, is convinced he can maintain a low profile.

"This year will be the test," he said, "but you can keep it all in perspective. If you don't want your life to change, it won't."

With his current financial posture, did Hernandez consider himself now to be of super star status? "I know with the year I had, it puts me up there in that class," he said.

"But I don't think about it that much. The greatest thing that happened to me was that my peers—guys like Garry Maddox and Mike Schmidt—told me they respect my style of play. That means a lot more than anything else."

Hernandez admits he hasn't fully grasped what's happened to him in the last calendar year. How he's gone from attending no banquets to appearing at 12 or 13. How a glove manufacturer suddenly wants to put out a Keith Hernan-

dez model.

"Most Valuable Player never crossed my mind," he said. "A batting title never crossed my mind. I wanted to reach the major leagues but there were always doubts whether I was going to make it."

And now . . . how far?

"I can't predict the future," Hernandez said. "You know, is this the limit? I just know I'll always strive for better."

His mission in spring training is not to leave his game in the gym as he felt he did last spring. Hernandez batted .377 in spring training in 1979, then skidded to .213 after one month of the season.

"I don't want to waste my hits down here," he said. "If I get my stroke down, I'll ask Kenny (Manager Ken Boyer) to give me a couple of days off so I can just run in the outfield. The ideal situation is to get hot the last five days of spring."

His salary actually will be only \$400,000 or so a year, what with a signing bonus presumed to be about \$700,000 and the deferred payments.

"I'm not a spendthrift," Hernandez said. "But you make that kind of money and you're not going to the grave with it. I'm going to have a good time but I'm not going to go crazy."

"I want to get a swimming pool. And a hot tub. I might try to buy some land in California and Colorado and maybe build a place there later."

The bottom line is that everything is so new right now. "All of this attention can sweep you off your feet," he said. "At times I've caught myself. You can lose your head. It's tough to keep it in perspective."

Keith Hernandez vows that he will.

'Gotta Be Hernandez,' Chirps Pete of MVP

By RICK HUMMEL

ST. LOUIS—In a late-season conversation at the batting cage in Busch Stadium, Pete Rose sidled over to **Keith Hernandez** and talked about the National League's Most Valuable Player selection. "I picked you," said Rose. "You gotta get it."

Rose pointed toward **Hernandez** league-leading batting average (.344), his 100 RBIs and his Rawlings Gold Glove fielding talents. And the fact that the Cardinals improved their position by nearly 20 games this season might weigh heavily, too.

But **Hernandez** had his own ideas on who should be Most Valuable Player in the National League. "I think (Willie) Stargell will win it, especially if Pittsburgh wins it," said **Hernandez**.

Stargell finished ahead of **Hernandez** in only one category, home runs, but **Hernandez**, 25, noted that Stargell, 38, was the Pirates' leader, both on the field and in the clubhouse, and that maybe he should have won the MVP before this. Maybe in 1971, when Stargell hit 48 home runs and drove in 125 runs for the Pirates' world championship team. Or in 1973, when he hit 44 homers and drove in 119 runs.

For now, **Hernandez** is quite satisfied with the batting title he won. He became only the eighth Cardinal since 1900 to win a batting championship, following Jesse Burkett (1901), Rogers Hornsby (1920-25), Chick Hafey (1931), Joe Medwick (1937), John Mize (1939), Stan Musial (1943, 1946, 1948, 1950-52, 1957) and Joe Torre (1971).

His improvement from a .255 average in 1978 was the biggest jump for a batting titlist since Matty Alou of Pittsburgh won with .342 in 1966 after hitting .231 with San Francisco the year before.

Hernandez first had been fingered as a potential "phenom" in 1972 when a national publication quoted Harry Walker, then the Cardinals' batting instructor, as saying, "**Hernandez** has the type of swing you don't touch. You just put him out there and let him play. He looks like Musial, when he first came up, only he isn't quite as fast."

The difference in **Hernandez** this season wasn't only the points he made up in his batting average. It was a maturation from an often moody player to one who could accept good times and bad. Something Lou Brock had told him earlier in the season had apparently stayed with him. "He showed me how to handle the peaks and valleys," said **Hernandez**. "Just knowing that they're going to get you some days and you're going to get them some days."

But when the spectre of his first batting championship loomed and when Rose made a belated run at it, **Hernandez** admitted he found himself pressing.

"The last couple of weeks have gone by like two months for me," he said a few days before the end of the season. "I've found myself pressing up there, waiting for the perfect pitch, taking too many called third strikes."

Hernandez, however, survived the Rose challenge and never let his lead fall below 10 points in the closing days of the season.

Since he had only 11 home runs to go with some 105 RBIs, **Hernandez** also led the league in driving in runners other than himself. Since he had only six errors in about 1,400 chances, the likelihood of his winning another Gold Glove also were strong. But Most Valuable Player?

"Stargell wins it," said **Hernandez**.

Cardinals Notes: In his last week as a player, Brock became embroiled in a controversy with umpire Billy Williams. The night after Williams had ejected Brock from a game in Philadelphia, Williams called an impromptu press conference in which he claimed that Brock had said, "Hope you got your cookies off for last night—showing how you throw a nigger out of a game."

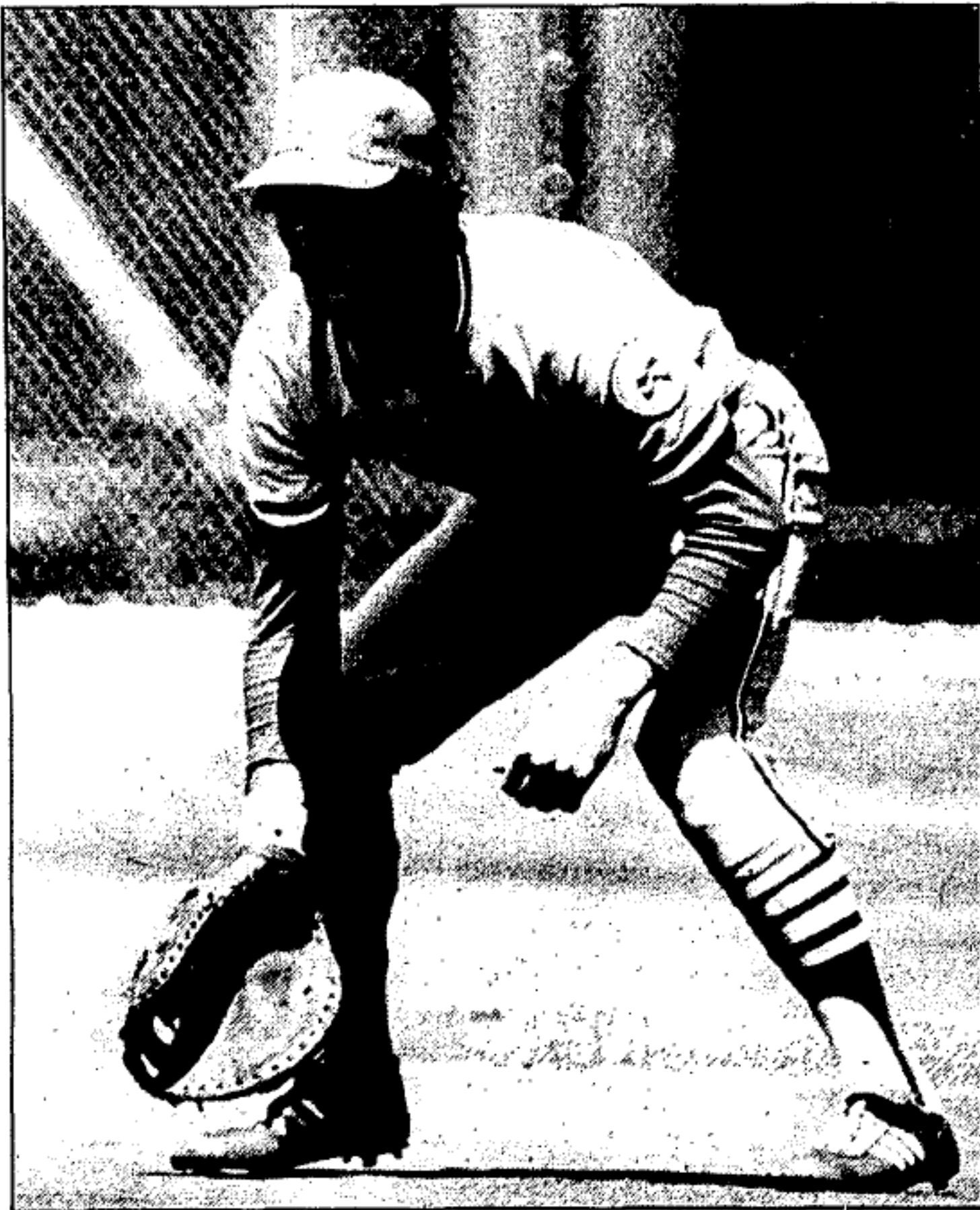
Brock didn't deny making the remark attributed to him. "Those were my exact words to him. I'm not a bit sorry for what was said. But Billy Williams was the one who initiated it. Billy has a short memory. A couple of weeks ago, he made a remark to one of my teammates about Rodney Scott of Montreal. He said he didn't like Scott because of his nigger attitude. I really took exception to that."

"When his words came back at him, he ran to the press," said Brock in disgust. "He should have kept it private."

Garry Templeton, who became the first player to get 100 hits both righthanded and lefthanded in the same season, apparently is being rebuffed in early contract talks for the future. His agent, Richie Bry, said, "The numbers were ridiculous," after his initial attempt to win a five-year contract for the young shortstop. "It seems the Cardinals are trying to win a battle of dollars and lose the war," said Bry.

Templeton said, "Hopefully, they'll give me a long-term contract and show me they want me around. I'm happy in St. Louis and want to play there. But if they play games with me, try to mess up my mind, I'm going to play out my option." That option wouldn't be Templeton's for three years, though.

George Hendrick, criticized much of the season for lack of clutch hitting, reeled off a 5-for-5 day against the Pirates late in the year and raised his average to the .300 level.



Keith Hernandez Own Ideas

Hartsfield Pays the Price

By NEIL MacCARL

TORONTO—The Blue Jays have been an enormous success at the box office, drawing more than four million fans in the first three seasons of their existence, but their performance on the field failed to match up to their gate pace.

Manager Roy Hartsfield finally paid the price. After the Blue Jays endured their third straight year with over 100 defeats, Hartsfield was fired after the season's finale with the Yankees September 30. The Blue Jays lost the game, 9-2, and wound up with a record of 53-109.

An announcement of Hartsfield's successor will be made after the World Series, the Blue Jays announced.

Hartsfield, the only manager the Blue Jays have had since entering the American League in 1977, has been offered another job in the Toronto organization.

"We are grateful to Roy Hartsfield for having established the foundation for the future," said Pat Gillick, the team's vice-president. "His was a most difficult task. We hope Roy will remain with the Blue Jays and assist us with the many challenges ahead."

Hartsfield, who played for the Boston Braves during a three-year career in the majors, had an outstanding record as a minor league manager, finishing first seven times. However, the Blue Jays finished last in the AL East in each of his three seasons at the helm.

The 54-year-old manager's departure had been widely predicted after the Jays showed few signs of improvement this year and clubhouse feuding erupted openly for the first time in the club's history.

Under President Peter Bavasi, the Jays scoffed at the expensive free-agent draft, concentrated on developing a minor league farm system and lured fans to the park in record numbers with a relentless series of promotions.

In August, when it became apparent the club again would show little improvement, the team image as a wholesome baseball product was marred by clubhouse feuds.

Relief pitcher Tom Buskey, one of the few Jays to post a respectable record, accused Hartsfield of being unable to handle his pitchers and suggested the manager be fired. Buskey also accused Bavasi of caring more about turning a profit than winning games.

Third baseman Roy Howell and pitcher Tom Underwood also joined the chorus of criticism. Hartsfield, who boasts that he has never publicly criticized his players, turned the other cheek and offered no comment. And he went out without criticism.

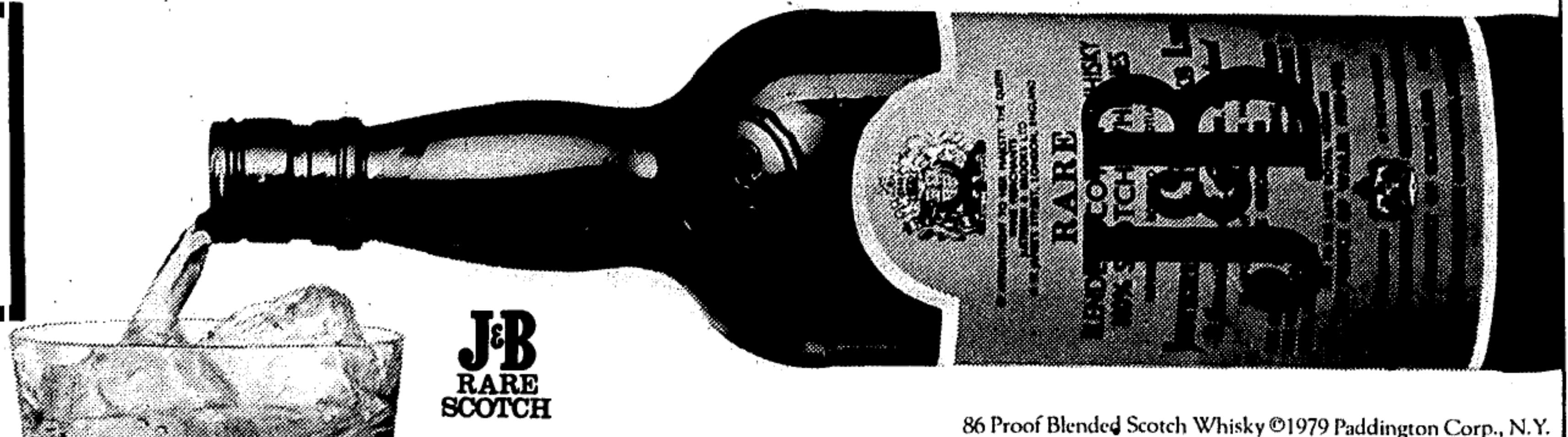
Blue Jays Notes: First baseman John Mayberry, struck on the hand by a pitch from Jim Kaat of the Yankees, already had a team record 74 RBIs, but he did not play in the last week of the season.

Shortstop Alfredo Griffin got two hits against the Yankees September 23 to set a team record with 166. . . . Infielder Pedro Hernandez, a rookie from the Dominican Republic who was called up from Kinston (Carolina) as a replacement for Danny Ainge, was hospitalized with viral pneumonia. . . . Coach Don Leppert rejoined the team for the final week after recovering from a viral infection.

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Hernandez Talking Big Bucks to Cards

BY RICK HUMMEL

ST. LOUIS—What price is a batting championship, a co-Most Valuable Player award and a Gold Glove?

For **Keith Hernandez**, the Cardinals' first baseman whose contract has expired, the price will come high. But how high?

How about \$4 million for five years? "For me to give up three of my option years, it's going to have to come right around that," said **Hernandez**. "I'm not going to give up something for nothing."

The problem General Manager John Claiborne faces is that when a new basic agreement is signed, the clause covering service before declaring free agency may be cut from six years to as few as four. So, if **Hernandez** should sign just a one-year contract instead of a long-term agreement, the Cardinals could lose him the next season.

"The fact that there isn't an agreement doesn't bother me," said Claiborne. "Sooner or later there will be but I have to go about my business the best I can."

Hernandez has received a one-year offer presumably in excess of \$250,000 and said the Cardinals' first "long-term" offer was "more than I thought it would be." That latter offer, **Hernandez** conceded, was more than \$2 million.

"They'd be reluctant to give me \$4 million," said

Hernandez. "And I don't think they will."

He said negotiations are proceeding smoothly but indicated that if his only choice was a one-year contract for 1980, it would be for \$500,000, or else he would file for arbitration.

Hernandez agent, Jack Childers of Chicago, said a \$4 million estimate for five years would be "within a million." Which way?

"We're not asking what Dave Parker is asking (estimated \$900,000 a year)," said Childers. "We're not asking that **Keith** be the highest-paid player in baseball."

"But if Nolan Ryan is paid \$4.5 million for four years, what is **Keith Hernandez** worth? If that's what the free-agent market brings . . . if **Keith** would go free-agent, he could be the highest-paid player in baseball."

Hernandez has limited his off-season personal appearances to a minimum, when he could have had hundreds.

He compressed them mostly within a two-week period when he was to be honored in St. Louis, Kansas City and New York, with a side appearance for a glove manufacturer in Chicago.

"I've turned down a few invitations," he said. "I just accepted those I had to. I don't care to get in front of audiences and speak."

It was mid-January and **Hernandez**, in his words, was "bored. I got excited with the (Bobby) Bonds deal. I'm ready to go to spring training."

He admitted that he hated to see pitcher John Denny go to Cleveland for Bonds, but said that "it was better for John, for personal reasons within the club. He was having problems with the wrong players on the club."

Denny and batterymate Ted Simmons were often at odds last season.

Jays Strike It Rich in Draft

By NEIL MacCARL

TORONTO—The Toronto Blue Jays had the first pick in the January 8 draft and they got the man they wanted, righthanded pitcher Colin McLaughlin, a 6-6, 205-pounder from the University of Connecticut.

McLaughlin, 20, and his father Jim, spent the week-end prior to the draft in Toronto and within a couple of hours of his selection, the Jays had signed him and introduced him at a press conference.

"What I was interested in mostly was in opportunity," said McLaughlin. "I think I got a lot better chance with the Jays than with the Baltimore Orioles, and it is nice to be close to home (Woodbury, Conn.) where my friends will have an opportunity to see me pitch in New York and Boston."

"He's primarily a fast-ball pitcher with above average velocity, and he has the basics of a good curve ball," said Bob Engle, the Jays' scouting supervisor for eastern United States.

Last season McLaughlin had a 12-2 record plus a 2.30 earned-run average for U-Conn and was named All-Yankee Conference, Yankee Conference Rookie of the Year and All-New England in leading his team to a berth in the College World Series.

"I have a tendency to be a little wild sometimes," admitted McLaughlin, who walked more than 50 in 111 innings but struck out 137.

McLaughlin likened his pitching style to that of J. R. Richard of the Houston Astros.

"We're both tall and throw overhand," he said.

"I'm not a trick pitcher. I just come right at you. My philosophy is 'take no prisoners. When I'm pitching, I'm out to kill you and if I don't like you, I might hit you.'"

McLaughlin signed with Kinston (Carolina) but has been invited to the Jays' training camp at Dunedin.

Blue Jays Notes: General Manager Pat Gillick spent two weeks watching winter baseball in Venezuela and the Dominican Republic. Gillick reported that veteran designated hitter Rico Carty is playing, "but is not hitting too well." Carty did not play winter ball last season and the Jays felt this might be a factor in his average declining from .284, with 31 homers and 99 RBIs, to .256, with 12 homers and 56 RBIs. Gillick said Carty was hitting .270 with one home run and 12 RBIs and has been hampered by a pulled leg muscle.

Also in the Dominican, Gillick reported that shortstop Alfredo Griffin was playing well. "He is bunting more than he did last season and he seems to have more confidence," he said. Griffin recently had a car door slammed on his throwing hand but the injury was not serious. . . . Newly acquired infielder Damaso Garcia is playing about two-thirds of the time, ahead of Rafael Landestoy of the Houston Astros.

Gillick also was impressed with the pitching of righthander Luis Leall, who likely will be at Syracuse (International) this season. He also tossed in a "name to remember—Octavio Fernandez, a 17-year-old shortstop." . . . Infielder Garth Iorg, recovered from a broken bone in his hand, is hitting .330 playing three infield positions and occasionally the outfield in Venezuela.

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REAL PRO

Stargell, Hernandez Share First MVP Tie

By JACK LANG

NEW YORK—Along with death and taxes, controversy surrounding any Most Valuable Player vote ranks on any list of sure things.

The balloting in this year's National League MVP poll was no different than several other years. Criticism of certain ballots surfaced within hours after the vote was announced.

But this year's selection had one added ingredient. It had dual winners for the first time in the 49-year history of the MVP. The 24-member committee of the Baseball Writers' Association of American was unable to decide between Willie Stargell of the Pirates and Keith Hernandez of the Cardinals and the balloting resulted in a tie.

Stargell and Hernandez collected 216 points apiece, despite the fact that the Big Daddy of the Bucs had 10 first-place votes and Hernandez only four.

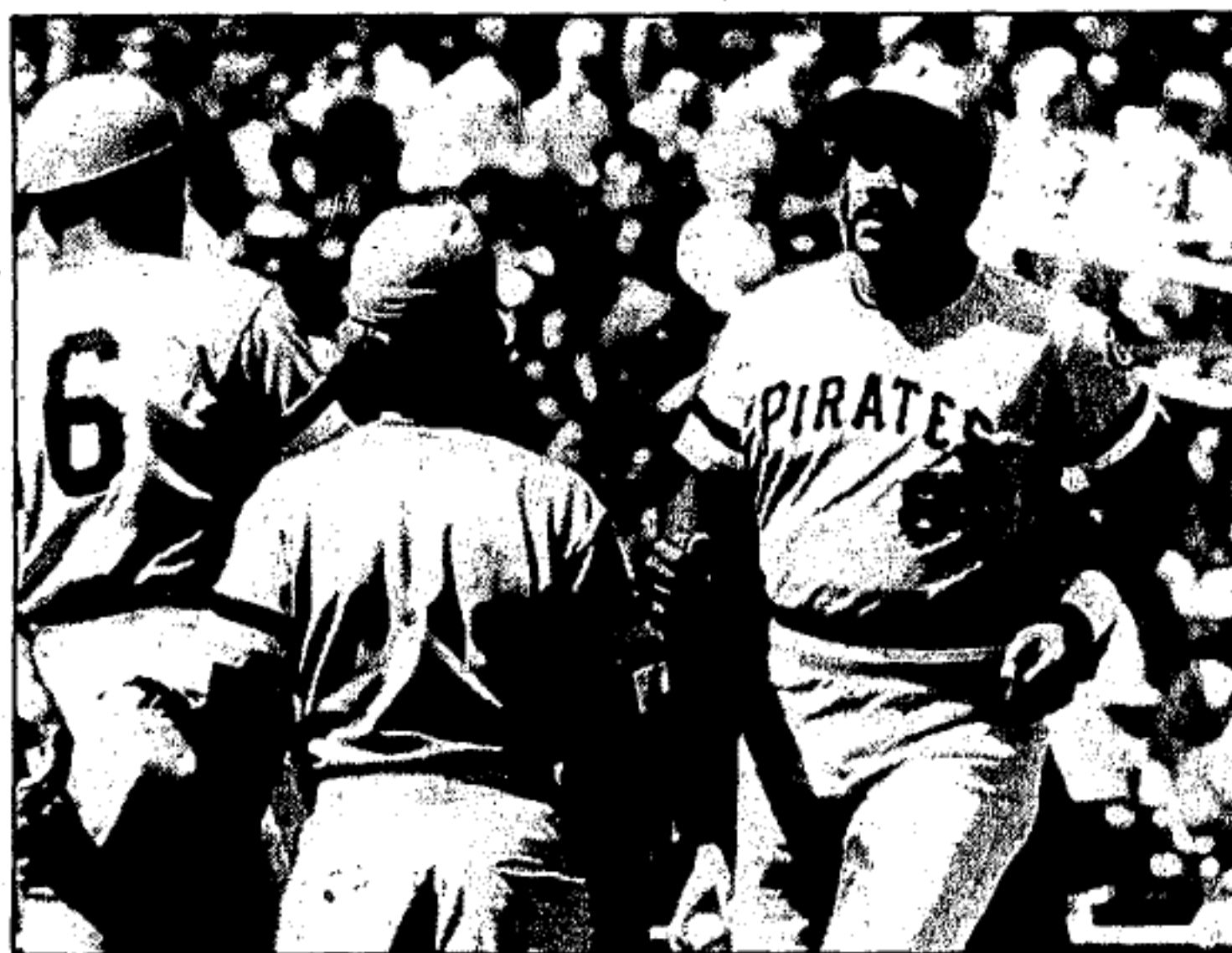


Keith Hernandez and Willie Stargell . . . It Was a Wild Vote.

More than a score of years ago—1938 to be exact—the BBWAA instituted a voting system designed to prevent ties. A 14-point value was assigned to first place, nine to second, eight to third, etc. The idea was to prevent someone with a mess of runner-up votes beating out someone who had more first-place votes. But the system is not infallible as the association learned this year. Certainly not when four voters leave one man off their ballot.

His absence from four ballots cost Stargell a singular victory. The four men who failed to name Stargell anywhere on their ballot that included 10 names were Mike Littwin of the Los Angeles Times; Harry Shattuck of the Houston Chronicle; Kenny Hand of the Houston Post and Tim Tucker of the Atlanta Journal.

All staunchly defended their choices. Ironically, none rated Hernandez first, but they did have the NL batting champ on their ballots. Hernandez was the lone player named on all 24 ballots.



Dave Winfield, the RBI champ, also was named first on four ballots.

Equally ironic was the fact that Charley Feeney of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and Dan Donovan of the Pittsburgh Press did not have Winfield on their ballots. Both gave Hernandez a high call.

It was a wild selection. Eight players received first-place votes. One of the eight was Bill Madlock, who did not receive another vote.

Neither Stargell nor Hernandez seemed to mind the fact that they will be the first players in 49 years to share the MVP. Each will receive his own plaque.

"I'm just happy for myself and happy for Hernandez," Stargell said. "I know what kind of player he is."

"The fact that it's a tie makes it better," Hernandez said. "I figured I'd finish second. Willie's a great man and it's an honor for me to have my name next to his."

1979 NL MVP Voting

Player	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts.
Stargell, W.	10	3	4	1		2					216
Hernandez, K.	4	8	7	2	3						216
Winfield, D.	4	3		2	6	1	2	2	1	1	155
Parrish, L.		3	5	4	2	1	2	1	2	1	128
Knight, R.	2	1	2			1	4	2	1		82
Niekro, J.	1	1	2	1/2	1	3	2	1		1	75 1/2
Sutter, B.		1	1		2	4	2	3	1	1	69
Tekulve, K.	1	1	1	2	1		1	3			64
Concepcion, D.		3				2	1			1	63
Parker, D.			1	3	3	4					56
Kingman, D.			3	1			1	1	6	7	56
Foster, G.			1	1	1	2			1	1	34
Schmidt, M.			1		1	1		3		4	32
Garvey, S.					1		2	3	3	1	30
Moreno, O.			2		1				1	2	23
Rose, P.			1				2		3	2	23
Carter, G.	1									1	15
Madlock, B.	1										14
Richard, J. R.					1			2			12
Niekro, P.			1/2			1		1			11 1/2
Sambito, J.						1	1				9
Seaver, T.								1	3	1	9
Bench, J.				1							7
Dawson, A.					1						6
Templeton, G.						1					5
Matthews, G.									2		4
Collins, D.								1			3
Horner, B.										1	1

Green Astro Notes Halt the Express

By KENNY HAND

HOUSTON—Nolan Ryan always has been in the Houston Astros' backyard, but it took 12 years and a new ownership to make him part of the family.

The 32-year-old native of Alvin, Tex., a Houston suburb 26 miles down the road, signed a three-year contract worth \$1 million a year on November 6. The contract, which provides for a fourth season in 1983 "at the option of the club," gives the Astros one of baseball's best starting staffs.

Ryan and James Rodney Richard led their respective leagues in strikeouts in 1979, Ryan carving his 223 total in his final year with the California Angels. Richard struck out 313, his second 300-plus strikeout season. In addition, the Astros can throw knuckleballer Joe Niekro, 21-11 last season, as part of any three-game series.

"Can you imagine this?" said Willie Stargell, the National League's co-MVP. "Hitting Niekro is like chasing a butterfly with the hiccups. Now they can sandwich him in there with Ryan and Richard. Man, for the first time the

commissioner of baseball should tie up the deal for the next five years. By then, I'll be out of baseball."

The Astros, along with Texas, Milwaukee and the New York Yankees, were the leading teams in the free-agent scramble for Ryan, who has indicated for several years that he wanted to pitch for Houston or a team close to his home.

"Houston did everything in its power to sign me," said Ryan after coming to terms. "They pursued this thing very aggressively."

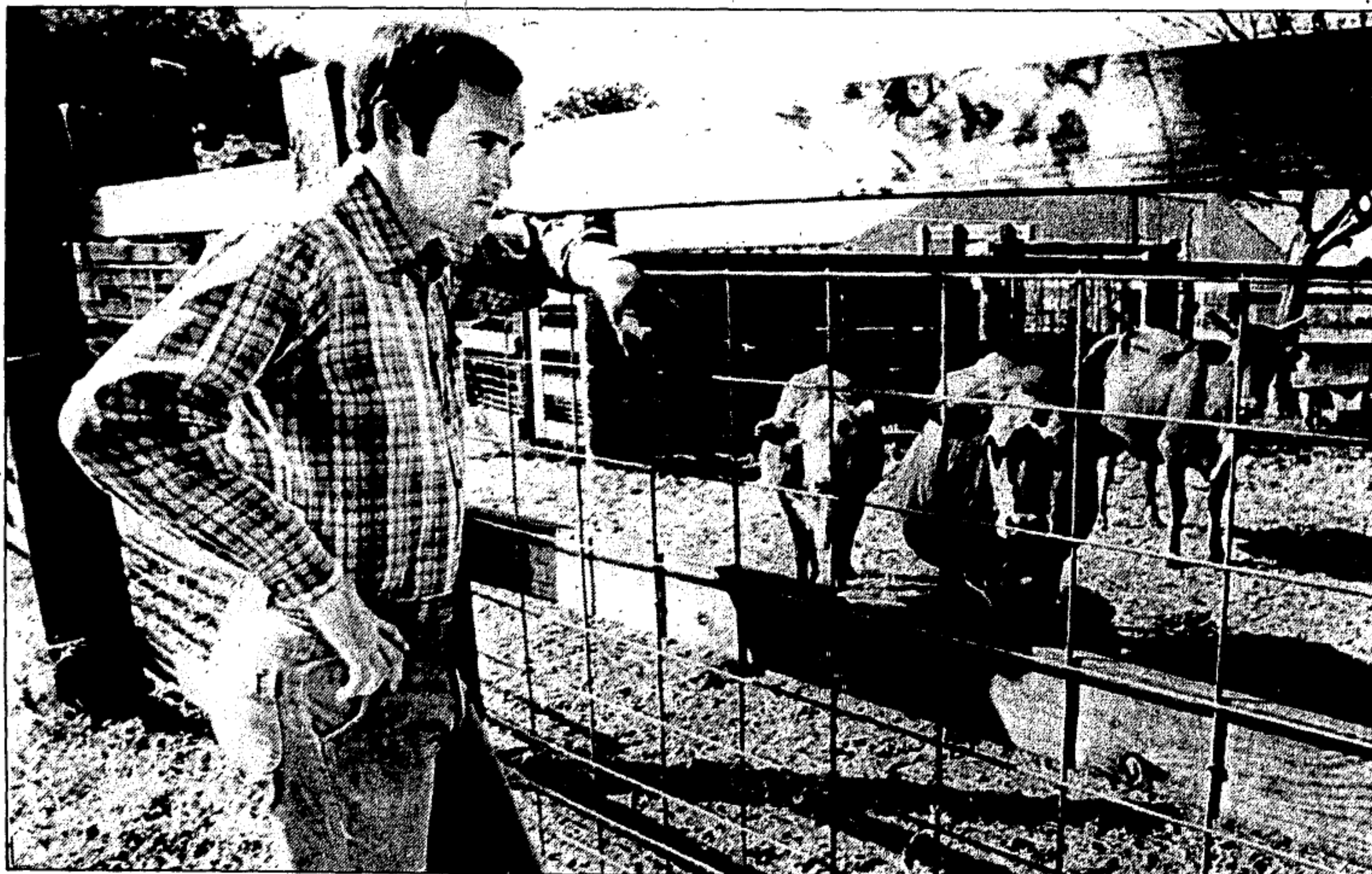
Ryan said his negotiating plan was to select one team and then listen to an offer, instead of becoming involved in a bidding war. It has been widely speculated that Ryan was considering only the two Texas teams and that Yankee Owner George Steinbrenner would have to offer a gigantic amount to lure Ryan back to New York, where he once pitched for the Mets.

But it was the Astros and new Owner John McMullen, a New York shipbuilder, who came through with the big money and McMullen has established a trend. Richard recently signed a four-year pact for \$3.2 million and outfielder Jose Cruz was retained for \$1.8 million over five years. "We want to keep our top players and make wise investments in the free-agent market," said McMullen, who bought the Astros and took control of the financially troubled Astrodome for \$19 million earlier this year.

"We feel Nolan Ryan is one of the best pitchers in the game. Can you see Nolan and J. R. in the same rotation with Niekro? We think we'll have a great pitching staff."

The Astros owned a sparkling 3.19 team ERA in 1979, but the overall performance diminished toward the end of the season. Houston's biggest need now is a power hitter with RBI potential, but there was none available in the free-agent pool, so the Astros chose Ryan and Mets' pitcher Skip Lockwood in addition to Pirates' infielder Rennie Stennett.

Astros Notes: General Manager Tal Smith was the guest of honor November 20 at the 20th annual Mr. Sportsman dinner, a major Houston charity event. Smith was honored for his part in building the Astros into a contender in 1979. . . . It's official: Bob Lillis, Deacon Jones and Mel Wright have been rehired as Astros' coaches for 1980. Don Leppert will join them. . . . Jesus Alou, a player-coach in 1979, wanted to play fulltime again, so he went through the reen-try draft, but nobody picked him.



Nolan Ryan waited at his Alvin, Tex., ranch while the free-agent wheels turned.

Rich Bird Hernandez

By RICK HUMMEL

ST. LOUIS—In one fell swoop of the pen, Keith Hernandez went from a \$75,000-a-year player to one making almost 10 times that much as the highest-paid player in St. Louis Cardinal history.

Hernandez, the National League's batting champion, co-winner of the Most Valuable Player Award and Gold Glove first baseman, signed a five-year contract estimated at \$3.8 million, including signing bonus and deferred payments. An informed source said, that the contract, which has no performance clauses, ranked only behind Nolan Ryan's \$1 million-a-year from the Houston Astros as far as "cash money" was concerned.

It was little wonder that Hernandez, 26, said, "I'm 100 percent totally satisfied with the package."

Hernandez, a four-year man in the major leagues, could have opted for free agency after the 1981 season under the terms of the recently expired Basic Agreement.

"There was always that possibility," he said, "but the bottom line was that I wanted to stay in St. Louis."

Hernandez not long ago purchased a new home with considerable acreage in St. Louis County.

The agreement among General Manager John Claiborne, Hernandez and Hernandez' agent, Jack Childers of Chicago, was reached after a non-stop 8½-hour negotiating session at Busch Stadium February 6.

Although his salary per season won't actually be that much because of the bonus and deferred payments, Hernandez' pay would average to \$760,000 per year. Previously, All-Star catcher Ted Simmons had been the highest paid Cardinal at a reported \$600,000 to \$650,000.

Hernandez had been seeking \$4 million for five years.

Ironically, the Cardinals could have had Hernandez for about \$185,000 for the 1980 season if the two sides could have agreed on a Childers proposal early in the 1979 season. Hernandez, then making \$75,000 in base pay (he got more eventually for performance goals reached), had sought a hike to \$125,000 for 1979 and, getting that, he reportedly would have agreed to \$185,000 for 1980.

But the Cardinals wanted no part of that and negotiations were concluded until after the season.

Hernandez realizes that he will be under closer scrutiny because of his contract.

"Maybe people will think that, because of the dollars, I should have the same kind of year I had last year," he said. "Well, I'll play to the best of my ability."

Hernandez said his goals for the season were to score 100 runs and drive in 100, as he did last year.

"If I hit .250 and score 100 and drive in 100, I'll be happy," he said.

Cardinals Notes: Claiborne said retired super star Lou Brock "in some manner" would be involved with the Cardinals in spring training. His capacity and availability were uncertain because Brock, who already has signed on as a sports programmer for a cable television concern, is negotiating some other business interests.

Hernandez' signing brought to 28 the number of Cardinals under contract with 11 still out. The day Hernandez signed, Garry Templeton's agent, Richie Bry, reported he had a productive meeting with Claiborne. Both one-year and long-term contracts were discussed. Bry said he was pleased that the Cardinals seemed to be adopting the approach of spending money on their own players as opposed to seeking out free agents.

Deal for A's Fading Fast

By TOM WEIR

OAKLAND—The breaking point. Marvin Davis apparently is near it. If he reaches it, baseball can kiss his \$400 million worth of ownership good-bye for another year, maybe forever.

That word doesn't come from the fuming oil magnet, who has kept most of his grumbling well concealed behind closed doors. But American League President Lee MacPhail said Davis, the would-be A's buyer, has had it with the political chaos that passes for sports management in Oakland.

You remember Oakland. It's the city second only to Tehran when it comes to holding hostages.

In this case, the prisoner is the A's franchise, which most key officials in Oakland say they are willing to part with, now. Yet for all the rhetoric and position-taking, the deal hasn't been made.

Part of the reason has to be that Davis has been more flexible than any rubber arm in baseball. There was the end-of-1979 deadline, presented by Davis via MacPhail. Then another at the end of January. Still another, this one announced forcefully by MacPhail for February 7, lasted all of 24 hours, only to be extended.

Yet Davis' \$12 million offer to buy the A's and baseball's \$4 million proposal to buy out the A's lease remain on the table.

As for the political about-faces, suffice it to say that if Charlie Finley could sell a season ticket for each one, he wouldn't be trying to get out.

Mayor Lionel Wilson started this soap opera by saying he wanted to let the team go, then said he wanted it to stay. Now he's back to the green light again: Wilson does not want to become known as the mayor who lost the Oakland Raiders. The \$4 million buyout has become crucial to financing \$8.5 million in stadium improvements aimed at keeping the Raiders from fleeing this madcap show for Los Angeles.

The mayor knows the Oakland treasury might not be able to support a full contingent of police if it has to pay for all the things Raiders Owner Al Davis wants.

Joining the mayor have been all but one of five Alameda County supervisors, the other political body besides the City Council that must approve letting the A's leave.

And the mayor, the supervisors and Coliseum officials all predict that the City Council will follow suit. That's a heady forecast, considering this is the same City Council that voted 9-0 in early December "to use its best efforts" to keep the A's.

But there is a more amazing aspect of this to weigh while waiting for the Raiders to end their tale of two cities.

Think back to when people first started asking why Oakland wouldn't give up the team that has been baseball's worst draw three years in a row.

The constant plea was that Charlie O. had done the city wrong, and that sooner or later baseball in Oakland would be rescued by a local owner.

So now, when the pieces seem in place to let the team go, what has happened?

You guessed it. Wayne Valley, a multi-millionaire in his own right, has said he wants to buy the team. So has Dave Schoenstadt, a Marin County land developer. And Coliseum President Jack Maltester said there is a third buyer in the wings, a midwestern party who wants to stay anonymous for now.

Valley, coincidentally, is a former managing partner of the Raiders who sold his stock only after a bitter court fight in which he failed to break a contract that gave Al Davis sole authority over the team.

Valley steadily has contended he has no interest in buying the A's just to foul up the financing for a lease package that is expected to increase Al Davis' annual profits by \$1.4 million. Yet, that contention has been questioned.

Maybe the Raiders should go to Los Angeles. The only proper place to end a story like this is in Hollywood.

A's Notes: Finley may not find it so difficult to operate again in Oakland, if he has to. At the winter baseball meetings, the American League approved a \$10,000 minimum payment per game to visiting teams. That figured to cost Finley about \$500,000 for home games while adding only \$75,000 to \$125,000 to his road receipts. Now MacPhail says the rule probably will be scratched. "There's a lot more sympathy for Charlie now," said MacPhail. "The owners don't feel that the failure to move the franchise is of his own choosing." . . . One supervisor wanted to make approving the lease proposal to the Raiders contingent on taking the A's money, but was voted down.

There still was no word on whether Jim Marshall will be rehired as manager, if the club stays. . . . Finley, if he does stay, will make life unbearable for the football team. A source close to the A's owner said he will claim a breach of his lease if the Coliseum tries to build luxury suites for the Raiders during the baseball season. Legal sources say Finley definitely will be able to do that.

A Strong Bat May Help Flannery

By PHIL COLLIER

SAN DIEGO—There won't be many openings for the minor leaguers the San Diego Padres will take to camp this spring, but the varsity may be forced to find a spot for Tim Flannery.

The 23-year-old lefthanded hitter's hopes of becoming the San Diego second baseman in 1980 were dashed last fall when the Padres made a trade with Montreal for veteran Dave Cash.

Flannery already had started thinking about playing third base when the Padres made the trade for a veteran at that position, Detroit's Aurelio Rodriguez.

Since then, however, new Manager Jerry Coleman had indicated he may want to platoon Rodriguez with Flannery. That's because Rodriguez, a Rawlings Gold Glove outfielder, has had problems in the past with top-flight right-hand pitching.

A year ago, the Padres envisioned Flannery as a spring training sleeper, though he wasn't on the major league roster. He didn't make the team then and he wasn't impressive in September, when he was called up for a brief inspection.

The rookie batted only .154 in 22 games, committing but one error. It wasn't until recently that the Padres discovered Flannery was playing in pain. He had injured his back in July, but didn't want it known.

"I wanted to keep playing," he said by phone recently from Anaheim, where he is living with his parents. "I'm

making no excuses for what happened to me late in the season.

"I was a little disappointed when they made the trade for Cash. I've been working out at third base, I've been taking batting practice since the first of the year and I've been lifting weights.

"I'm bigger and stronger than I was last year and my arm is stronger. I don't have a great arm at third base, but I'm learning to get rid of the ball in a hurry, the way Ozzie Smith does at shortstop."

Padres Notes: The Padres have invited 10 non-roster players to join them for spring training at Yuma on March 1. The 10 are pitchers Dennis Blair, Bill Armstrong, Andy Hawkins, George Stablein, Mark Thurmond and Steve Fireovid, plus catchers Doug Gwosdz, Bob Geren, Mark Parent and Craig Stimac. . . . Owner Ray Kroc, who had been in treatment for alcoholism and in two hospitals, returned home to La Jolla on February 4.

Veteran Craig Kusick, a first baseman-outfielder released recently by Minnesota, is expected to sign with the Padres' Hawaii (Pacific Coast) farm club. . . . The Padres are negotiating with another veteran free agent, right-hander Gary Nolan, who played for Cincinnati, the Angels and Milwaukee. . . . General Manager Fontaine and club President Ballard Smith flew to New York in early February to vote on the New York Mets' new ownership and to get a briefing on negotiations between the owners and the Major League Players Association.

Kaat, 41, Not Ready to Bed Down

By PHIL PEPE

NEW YORK—Reports of the demise of Jim Kaat have been grossly exaggerated . . . or at least are premature. There may be life in the old boy yet.

When the 1979 season ended, it looked like that would be the finale for Kitty Kat. He had done good work for the New York Yankees, with Billy Martin using him as a one or two-batter specialist.

Martin and Kaat went back a long way together, all the way to Minnesota in the 1960s, when Kaat was among the premier pitchers in the American League. Martin had great respect for Kaat's knowledge, experience and courage, and, as Yankee manager, spotted the veteran perfectly.

Kaat responded with a 2-3 record and a 3.85 ERA, his career victories soaring to 264. When the season ended, everything turned sour for Kaat.

He was 41. The Yankees had fired Martin, his benefactor. They had acquired lefthanders Tom Underwood and Rudy May. And they failed to offer Kaat a contract, making him a free agent. But there were no takers. Consequently, Jim is free to sign with any team, even the Yankees.

The Yankees invited Kaat to their early camp in Fort Lauderdale to pitch his way back on the staff.

"I got a commitment from Mr. Steinbrenner last fall," said Kaat. "That's why I didn't bargain with other clubs. I think I can still come in and face one or two batters—or take a turn in the starting rotation. I don't think either May or Underwood would want to be used like that."

With May, Underwood, Ron Guidry and Tommy John assured of spots on the staff, there is room for only one other lefthander. Don Gullett's hopes for a comeback may be too optimistic and he probably could not be ready until June or July. Another lefthander, Dave Righetti, is too hot a prospect to waste on the bench. If he can't win a starting job, the youngster may be sent out to pitch regularly, giving Kaat a chance to stick. Kaat's experience and ability to specialize puts him in a unique position.

Three other Yankee free agents have less of a chance to be back. There seems to be no room for Don Hood (4-1, 3.22 ERA), George Scott or Roy White, a Yankee throughout his 14-year major league career. The Yankees say they have not ruled out the possibility of offering a contract to White, 36.

'Grown-Up' Hernandez Leads Charging Cards

By RICK HUMMEL

ST. LOUIS—If Lonnie Smith, the Cardinals' leadoff man, is their catalyst and if Bruce Sutter, the reliever, is their savior, then Keith Hernandez, the first baseman, is their adhesion.

At 28, Hernandez has been with the Cardinals longer than any other regular player. He is the only National League player to hit .300 and finish among the top 10 hitters in each of the last three seasons. He has won the Gold Glove for four consecutive years and he averaged 160 games a season in the last three years that the major leaguers played full schedules.

In short, he probably is the Cardinals' indispensable regular. But it hasn't always been that easy. Hernandez has had to undergo several stages of maturation.

Consider the following headlines:

Spring, 1975—"Hernandez Ready for the Big Cheese."

Hernandez, a rookie, had said, "This is the big year for me. This is the starting point. This is for the big cheese."

June, 1975—"Hernandez Sent to Minors."

Feeling the pressure of his first major league season, Hernandez hit only .203 before being sent out.

1976—"Hernandez Is Hitting His Stride."

1978—"Hernandez (.255) Says 'I'm Embarrassed.'"

1979—"Hernandez Named Co-MVP."

1980—"Hernandez Becomes Highest-Paid Cardinal."

1980—"Hernandez and Fulgham Fight on Street Corner."

1980—"Would Cardinals Unload Hernandez for Sassy Attitude?"

1981—"Hernandez Rebounds From Dark Season."

1982—"Hernandez Sparks Cardinals to First Place."

His manager, Whitey Herzog, says, "I guess he's grown up more than anything. He's really in the game last year and this year."

In the first three weeks of this season, Hernandez helped spark the Cardinals to a 12-game winning streak and a healthy lead in the National League East. He hit .407 in the Cardinals' first 15 games, drove in 14 runs and, as usual, caught everything in his defensive area.

But Herzog traces the development of Hernandez as an overall talent from the day he blistered him in a clubhouse meeting in San Francisco for failure to break up a double play.

"I talked to him alone later on," said Herzog. "I told him, 'I'm not picking on you. I just want you to be the player you can be.'"

"At the time, he didn't understand me. I wanted some double plays broken up. I wanted guys running on 3-2 to break up things. There isn't any use running if you're going to run out to right field on the double play."

"From that day on, he's understood."

Hernandez agrees with Herzog's "growing up" theory. "I'd

A Tongue-Lashing by Pilot Herzog Sends Strong Hitter Into High Gear

have to say that's an accurate assessment," he said. "In the last couple of years, I've had a lot of serious problems. Personal problems (his marriage was on the rocks for a time).

"But I learned from that one season (1980) about what takes priority. I was starting to have a good time—that was the year we were out of it—instead of keeping baseball my No. 1 priority."

"The whole bad attitude that permeated that '80 team was a factor but I'm not putting the blame on anybody else. I've only got to answer for myself. You make your own bed and sleep in it."

On a trip after the 1980 season, Hernandez came to grips with his priorities regarding his family. "It's easy to correct when you want to," he said. "The question is how much do you want it? If you want it, you can go out and get it."

His personal life in order, Hernandez would like to fill a void in his professional life—a championship.

"I've sat home and watched the World Series and I've gotten kind of a twinge of jealousy. I'm getting tired of watching," said Hernandez. "It's our turn to get up there. This is the best club I've played on. It's the fastest club, it has the best pitching by far and it's the best defensive club by far."

Without dismissing the rest of the field, Hernandez sees the Cardinals and Montreal Expos fighting it out for the next several years in the National League East. That's the way it was last year when the Cardinals beat the Expos five times in seven games in the last two weeks of the season, yet finished a half-game behind them in the second season.

"It was frustrating to a degree," said Hernandez. "But we had our chance. There's no one to blame but ourselves. We couldn't beat the Mets and we couldn't beat the Cubs."

"But the most important thing about last year was we beat Montreal head-up. That's the first time we've beaten them when it counted. They know we aren't pushovers any more. They've steamrolled us and they know they've got to come and play us now. We know we can play with them and beat them."

Hernandez thinks, though, that the Expos have improved with the acquisition of Al Oliver.

"My favorite hitter," said Hernandez. "He hits like . . . I should say I hit like him. I used to take pictures of him with a Kodak camera when I was a rookie. He's just a line-drive hitter

to all fields with power."

Hernandez was off to the best start of his career this year. "I've never got off to an RBI start like this. (He had 105 RBIs in 1979, when he led the league with a .344 average and was co-MVP.) But what defines a start?"

Hernandez said he preferred to think in terms of 100 at-bat increments. "Obviously you try to get 30 hits or more every 100 at-bats," he said. "The more you get, it builds a cushion for the next 100."

The cushion for Hernandez came in handy because after his early spurt, he went six games in succession without a hit.

"Tip your hat to the pitchers," he said. "These guys are trying to make a living, too."

The mutual admiration between Herzog and Hernandez is something real now.

"He's the best first baseman I've ever seen at making plays to the bases," said Herzog. "Bunts, force plays, he gets rid of the ball so quick. That's why he takes all our relays from right field. He's so good at it."

Minutes later, Herzog was talking of Hernandez' offense. "What he really does well is the hit-and-run," said Herzog. "That sonofabuck is just a great hitter."

Hernandez constantly pesters Herzog to put him in the outfield, which he enjoys, and Herzog has responded a couple of times, playing righthanded-hitting Gene Tenace at first base. Hernandez has played in left and right field.

"I know he likes it out there, but I finally told him, 'We've got the best defensive infield in baseball. Let's leave it that way for a while,'" said Herzog.

Hernandez says Herzog did what he had to do to build a winner. "He had to make a complete turnaround here," Hernandez said. "I don't mean as far as trades, I mean instilling what it takes to win. That's why I think he wanted the general manager's job, so he could do what he wanted without any hassles."

Though he doesn't exert it much vocally, Hernandez is one of the leaders of the youthful Cardinals. "I perceive my job as a leader as setting the example on the field," he said.

"I'm not going to yell at anybody. The best example I can set is to play hard every day with aches and pains and play to win. That's a good enough example right there."



Keith Hernandez has carried his fascination with the Civil War beyond reading; collaborating with his father, John, to paint this picture of Confederate General Robert E. Lee conferring with General Stonewall Jackson. Keith's dad painted the faces and Keith did the rest.

As a History Buff,

By LOWELL REIDENBAUGH
Senior Editor

ST. LOUIS—On a recent late-night talk show several men gathered around microphones in a downtown St. Louis radio studio discussing the Civil War.

This was no spot for minor leaguers. These were seasoned, heavy-hitting professionals. While one of the group may have appeared out of his element, the show was only minutes old when it became apparent that the 28-year-old athletic type, mustachioed and handsome, was comfortable among his elders. He fielded the listeners' hardest smashes as though they were routine two-hoppers down the first-base line.

Keith Hernandez was at ease among those who have devoted years of study to the conflict of 1861-65. The War Between the States is a favorite hobby of the Cardinals' first baseman.

Hernandez is especially literate on the Army of Northern Virginia and Robert E. Lee, its rookie manager in the summer of 1862.

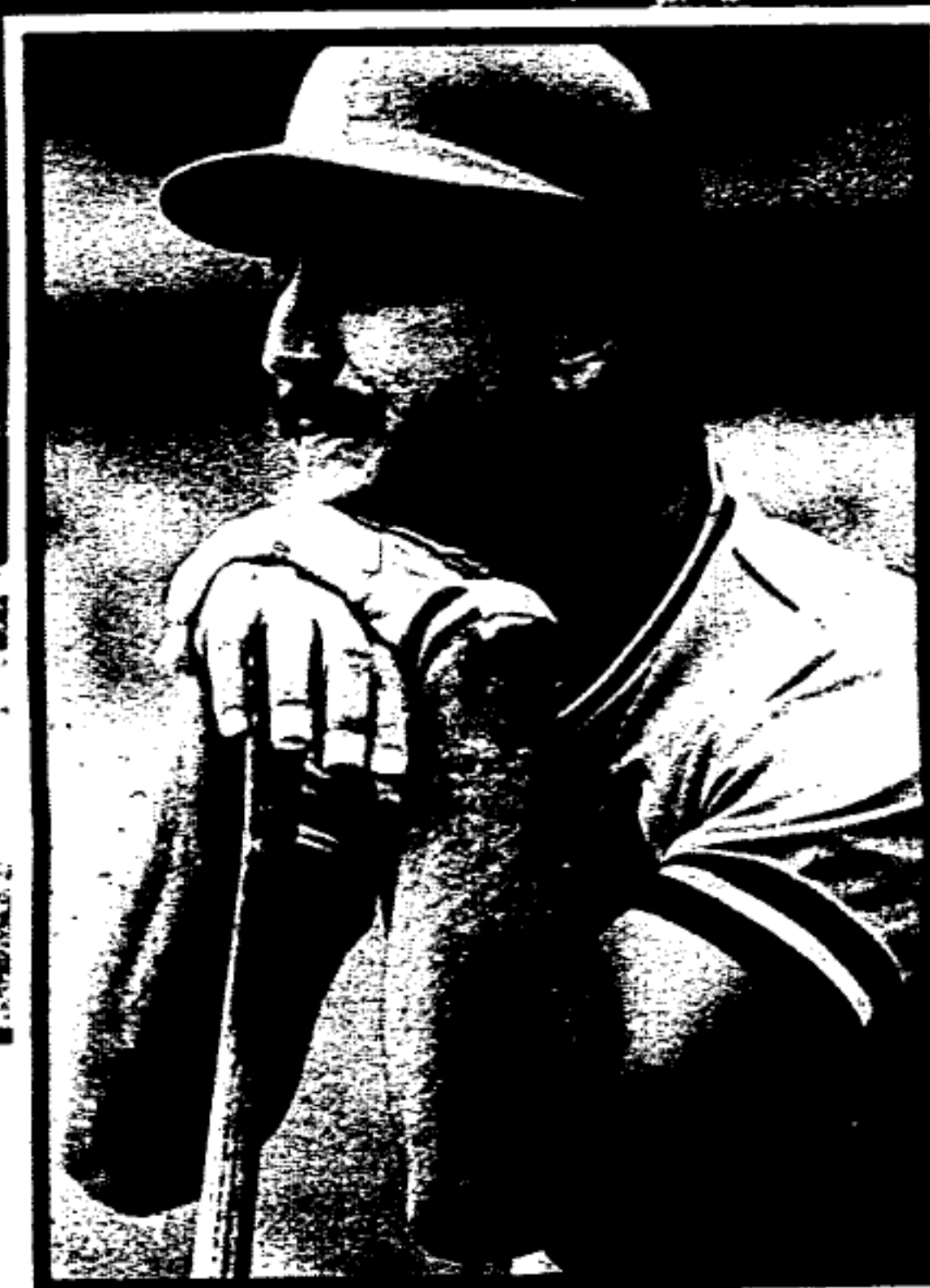
How a San Francisco native who signed a professional baseball contract right out of high school could have attained such expertise may have puzzled many.

"When I was 12," Hernandez explained, "my brother showed me the American Heritage pictorial history of the Civil War. History came easy to me and I was blessed with a retentive memory."

Later, Hernandez was introduced to the works of Douglas Southall Freeman, the noted Virginia historian whose prize-



For Keith Hernandez these days, contentment professionally includes his status as an established major league star—the glue that holds the Cardinals' lineup together. Contentment personally centers around his St. Louis home where he's joined by wife Sue and Melissa, youngest of the couple's two daughters.



Keith Goes to Bat for Robert E. Lee

winning works on "R. E. Lee" and "Lee's Lieutenants" found Keith a willing convert to the Confederate game plan as practiced by the Army of Northern Virginia.

In June, 1862, the Confederates appeared out of the championship race. The Yankees, under George B. McClellan, were at the gates of Richmond where Jefferson Davis, general manager of the home club, feared for the loss of his job. One more base-hit or an error, it seemed, would eliminate the ANV from the race.

But Davis, in an inspired move, appointed a new manager, Robert E. Lee, who had compiled a losing record in the minor leagues of western Virginia. Instantly, Lee shook up the bat rack and breathed new life into the faltering franchise.

The revitalization was, to Hernandez, like a .150 hitter clouting a game-winning grand-slam homer with two out in the ninth inning.

"If I had to pick a favorite campaign," says Keith, "it would be the Seven Days Battle around Richmond—Mechanicsville, Gaines Mill, Savage Station, Frayser's Farm and Malvern Hill. This was Lee's proving ground. Here, he weeded out his incompetent generals and established his pattern of success."

Lack of foot speed cost McClellan his job as field manager of the Yankees. The inability to read signs from General Manager A. Lincoln in Washington destroyed Little Mac's pennant-winning strategy. An established major leaguer like Hernandez understands that.

To replace McClellan, A. Lincoln appointed John Pope, who had won a measure of success in the western leagues. But

Pope, despite loud proclamations of how he had never seen anything but the backs of his enemies, held no terrors for Lee. Hernandez recognized that type of manager, too. "We whipped the Yankees at Cedar Mountain and Second Manassas," he notes.

In Washington, A. Lincoln renewed his frantic search for a winning manager, much like another Yankee chieftain, George Steinbrenner, would do a century later.

In desperation, the general manager from Illinois fell back on one of his discards, the sluggish McClellan.

Keith Hernandez has witnessed the same strategy in his own profession. Billy Martin, Bob Lemon and Gene Michael know the plot well.

The second time around was no better for McClellan. However, one of his underlings found a copy of Lee's game plan by which the Yankees stalemated the Confederates in Sharpsburg, Md.

In the press boxes and clubhouses of both teams, cries were heard: "Lee can't win on the road."

But, in Hernandez' book, the engagement at Sharpsburg on September 17, 1862, was not a total loss. His favorite Civil War personality, Major General Ambrose Powell Hill, enjoyed perhaps his finest day.

Little Powell came off the bench in the late afternoon and, by a forced 17-mile march from Harpers Ferry, arrived on the field as the Confederates were about to go down to defeat, and drove the Yankees back across Antietam Creek.

"I admire that fellow," declares Hernandez. "His flaming red

undershirt (it might have been cardinal red) and his funky jacket and his fight style... he was a great general."

Fredericksburg... Chancellorsville... Gettysburg... Keith Hernandez recites ANV battles in chronological order.

"Gettysburg," he muses. "If only Lee had had Stonewall Jackson there." Old Jack was Keith's type of player, fleet-of-foot, never failed to go from first to third on a single, could steal like Lonnie Smith.

"If Old Jack had been there," he resumes, "it would have been no more than a skirmish. The Yankees would never have been permitted to entrench on Cemetery Ridge. Jackson would have driven them, and Lee would have gone on to Baltimore just as he had planned."

Unfortunately for the Confederates, Jackson was two months in his grave when Lee struck out at Gettysburg.

Again the cries: "Lee can't win on the road."

The Wilderness... Spotsylvania... Cold Harbor... by the spring of 1864, A. Lincoln has gone one up on G. Steinbrenner. The Yankees now have a winning manager, U.S. Grant, a huge success in the western leagues. Grant was a heavy hitter who took no signs from the bench.

Within a year, the Yankees have overtaken the Confederates, wiped out their big lead and clinched the championship at Appomattox Court House.

"Don't you wonder," asks Keith Hernandez, "what would have happened if Grant had been given command two years earlier?"

He is not the first historian to ask the question.

BASEBALL

With Hernandez Gimpy, Mets Are Out of Step

NEW YORK—Whether the New York Mets can survive and prosper without **Keith Hernandez** will not be known until later in the season. But the early returns were not good.

The Mets lost **Hernandez** when he suffered what he called a cramp in his right leg June 6 at St. Louis. The injury was not supposed to be serious. A few days later, **Hernandez** was on the disabled list for the first time in his 14-year career.

Hernandez returned June 22, playing in a 3-0 victory over the second-place Pirates. The next day, as the Mets began a series in Chicago, **Hernandez** didn't make it through the first inning.

In his first at-bat against Greg Maddux, **Hernandez** hit what ap-

peared to be a double down the left-field line. He barely made it to first.

Hernandez was removed for a pinch-runner, and while the Mets were beginning a disastrous trip with a 4-1 loss to Maddux, the Mets' captain was being examined by the Cubs' physicians. **Hernandez** was examined again the next day, already aware that the news would be bad. A slight tear was found in his right hamstring. He returned to the disabled list and was given crutches to use for a few days.

During **Hernandez**'s first stay on the disabled list, the Mets were 6-7. After **Hernandez** returned to the disabled list, the Mets won their first game, then lost the final two in Chicago be-

fore going to Pittsburgh, where they were beaten in the opener of a three-game series, 2-1, making their record without **Hernandez** 7-10—or 7-11 if you count the game he left in the first inning.

Before the Mets won the last two games in Pittsburgh to build their lead to 5½ games over the Pirates, Manager Dave Johnson said, "**Keith** is an impact player, a superstar. You can't replace the intangibles he provides for a team. His loss makes things a little tougher for us. But I think we'll survive."

At first, Johnson decided to replace **Hernandez**'s offense, so, at least against righthanders, he used Lee Mazzilli at first base, Dave Magadan at third base and Howard Johnson at shortstop.

That put Kevin Elster, hitting .203 at the time, on the bench.

Against lefties, the manager planned to play Magadan at first, HoJo at third and Elster at short.

That plan lasted exactly three days. After the Mets' infield had a horrible day in a 6-3 loss to the Cubs June 26, Dave Johnson decided he had seen enough.

"If we're looking at 30 days without **Keith**, I think I'd better shelve the offensive platoon that isn't giving me more offense anyway," he said.

"I think we're looking at a month at least," **Hernandez** said. "From a dead stop, I can't drive off the right leg. And I'm not going to come back until I'm sure I can."

DAN CASTELLANO



Keith Hernandez

McGee in RBI Groove

ST. LOUIS—After floundering 2½ months when he batted with runners on base, Willie McGee had all cylinders functioning at the end of June.

Not only did the St. Louis Cardinals' center fielder hit .365 for the month, but he had 16 runs batted in, including eight in a six-game span late in the month. And he had stolen 25 bases in 28 attempts, easily the best percentage of his career.

"I feel good about it," said McGee. "That's what I'm paid to do."

McGee's RBI total was a respectable 33, but he had hit just one homer.

"I don't try to hit homers," McGee said. "Even the years I hit a few I didn't try."

McGee hit 11 homers when he drove in 105 runs last year and he had 10 in 1985, when he won the National League batting title and the Most Valuable Player award.

"I haven't seen that many change-ups and breaking balls up that I could hit for home runs," said McGee. "It's a credit to the pitchers and," he said, laughing, "a lack of power."

McGee raised his average from .296 on May 31 to .324 on June 28. He was the first National Leaguer to get 100 hits—in his first 74 games—and he was on pace to exceed his total of 216 hits in 1985.

Although he drove in more than 100 runs last year, McGee is more comfortable in the role of creating rallies rather than finishing them off.

He credits his baserunning improvement to some off-season work with Bart Williams, a track coach at Contra Costa College, a junior college in Pablo, Calif.

"I worked very hard last winter and it's paid off," said McGee. "This the best that I've ever run on the bases, especially the first



Willie McGee

couple of steps. I'm a little lighter, too. I used to come in at 185 and I'm probably at 178 now."

As for his improvement as a run deliverer, McGee said, "They (RBIs) come in bunches. If I can stay relaxed in those situations, I think the pressure will go off."

RICK HUMMEL

Ruffin Has Stuff in Pen

PHILADELPHIA—The qualities that led the Philadelphia Phillies to promote Bruce Ruffin from Double A to the major leagues in 1986 were the same qualities that prompted the club to move the 24-year-old lefthander from the rotation to the bullpen.

Ruffin, who was 4-6 with a 4.08 earned-run average in 14 starts, made his first major league relief appearance June 22 at Veterans Stadium. Three appearances later, he was 1-0 as a reliever with a save and a 1.80 ERA.

"I really like Ruffin in the bullpen," said Manager Lee Elia. "I just think he has the perfect makeup for it. It takes a certain kind of attitude to come into a tight situation, and he's cold. He's not intimidated by anything. And with his sinker-slider combination, he'll get a lot of ground balls. That can be big late in a game."

The Phils purchased Ruffin's contract from Reading (Eastern) on June 24, 1986, and gave him the spot in the starting rotation created when Steve Carlton was released.

Ruffin was 9-4 with a 2.48 ERA as a rookie. But he slipped to 11-

14 with a 4.35 ERA in his sophomore campaign. The idea that he might someday be used in relief was born in spring training.

Elia plans to use Ruffin in the late innings to set up Steve Bedrosian. According to pitching coach Claude Osteen, Ruffin showed better stuff coming out of the bullpen than he did as a starter.

"He's thrown harder than I've ever seen him throw," Osteen said. "As a reliever, he seems to come into the game and give you exactly what you want. And that's go right after the hitter."

"We've already put him in a couple of situations where his back was to the wall, and he came out firing. That's exactly what you want to see."

Although he relieved only three times in 30 minor league games, Ruffin, 24, said adjusting from starting to relieving was no big deal.

"My freshman year in college (Texas), there was never any question but that I was a reliever," he said. "I'm not happy about the move, but I'm not unhappy about it either. If this is the way I can help the club, then so be it."

BILL BROWN

Replay Leads Ump to 'Moral Issue'

PITTSBURGH—For the first time—and quite by accident—not-so-instant replay was used by umpires in a National League game between the Pittsburgh Pirates and New York Mets June 27 at Three Rivers Stadium.

It all started with a pitch by New York's Dwight Gooden that went behind Jose Lind's head and to the backstop, allowing Rafael Belliard to score from third on what was ruled a wild pitch.

Then the scoreboard showed a replay of what seemed to be anything but a controversial call—except in the replay the ball seemed to strike something and change directions.

For a moment, there was indecision everywhere. Lind didn't act as if he'd been hit by the pitch, and Mets catcher Gary Carter didn't chase it.

"What I saw was the ball go behind the hitter. I did not hear a sound," said plate umpire Paul Runge. "No one said anything. (Carter said he yelled that it was a foul ball.) The runner scored. I looked around and put my mask back on. The play was basically over."

But Runge began to doubt himself after taking a look at the scoreboard.

"I saw the replay on the screen. At that point, (Mets Manager) Davey Johnson had not come out. I saw the ball hit something," Runge said.

All of a sudden, Runge had a moral issue on his hands. He thought he had blown the call.

"I don't know if I did the right thing baseball-wise," Runge said. "But it became a moral issue. I don't know if I'll be reprimanded or not, but this winter I will know I got the call right."

Johnson saw the replay and appealed to Runge, who said he would check with the other umpires. All said they saw the ball deflect off something, but could not say they saw or heard it hit Lind's bat.

The meeting of umpires lasted five minutes. Runge finally sauntered over to the Pirates' dugout, where Manager Jim Leyland was sitting, calm on the exterior but seething within. He knew as soon as he saw Runge walking his way that the umpires were going to change their ruling and take

away the run.

Leyland argued that they could not change their call because of a replay, which has not been approved for use in baseball.

"We're not playing football. We don't need a team meeting to decide what's right or wrong," Leyland said. "Obviously, he was confused on the play. The umpires admitted they had not seen the ball hit the bat. They said it changed direction. Well, it could have hit Lind's helmet. It could have hit Carter's glove or the bat."

Leyland protested the game, but the protest was dropped when the Pirates won, 2-1.

Runge's concern that he might run into trouble was dismissed by N.L. President Bart Gamatti. "There are no grounds for reprimanding a guy for trying to do his job right," Gamatti said. "My God, I commend him for it."

A bigger question remained: Should baseball use replays to aid umpires?

"I think it takes away from the game. The people want the human element," Runge said.

Sutcliffe on the Block

CHICAGO—Just as in 1984, when he went 16-1 after being traded to the Chicago Cubs, Rick Sutcliffe may be traded to a pennant contender.

General Manager Jim Frey admits he has had inquiries about trading the 32-year-old righthander, who just missed winning his second National League Cy Young Award in 1987, and that several American League teams have shown interest.

"There have been three clubs that have said they want starting pitching," Frey said. "They name some young guy, and I say, 'I don't want to trade the young guys.' They say, 'How about Sutcliffe?' And I say, 'It would not be an easy call because of the way our ball club is.'"

"It would be a big deal, a major deal," said Frey, who said he had not talked to

with the three teams. "It's one of those things where curiosity gets the best of you. But no one has ever come back to me with any real idea of their sincerity."

If the Cubs remain close to the Mets and Pirates in the N.L. East race, Sutcliffe may be more valuable in Chicago than the young players he would bring in return. But Sutcliffe is available because of the development of such young pitchers as Greg Maddux, Jamie Moyer and Jeff Pico.

Although he has a no-trade provision in his contract, which lasts through 1989, Sutcliffe said he would not let that stop a trade.

"I'd rather not be traded, but if trading me would help the Chicago Cubs, I won't stand in the way," he said. "I'll do what's best for them. Truthfully, I can't see this club not being in it."

DAVE VAN DYCK

BASEBALL

Hernandez's 'Unique' Presence Inspires Mets

NEW YORK—Never let it be said that Keith Hernandez doesn't have a flair for the dramatic. Just ask the Pirates.

Hernandez, the New York Mets' All-Star first baseman and co-captain, spent six weeks on the disabled list watching his team go 19-18, stay in first place in the National League East but not pull away as they had expected to.

His long-awaited return came August 5 at Pittsburgh in the opener of a four-game series against the second-place Pirates, who began the day four games behind the Mets.

On his first at-bat against Bob Walk, Hernandez lined a double down the right-field line, setting up the Mets' first run. But he saved the real dramatics for a seventh-inning at-bat against Pirates reliever Dave Rucker.

With a runner on second and the score tied at 1-1, Hernandez hit a 3-and-0 pitch into the right-field seats, giving the Mets a 3-1 lead in a game they won, 3-2, and setting the stage for an exciting

series in which the Mets took the first three games before Pittsburgh salvaged the finale, 1-0.

The bottom line was that the Mets left Pittsburgh with a six-game lead over the Pirates and a great deal of confidence.

"What a way to come back," said Wally Backman. "Keith's presence is unique. Believe me, it was missed around here."

Said Manager Dave Johnson, "Keith came back, and I got an awful lot smarter. It was great to see. When he's on the field, there's more life to the team. His exuberance is infectious."

Added Darryl Strawberry, "We're a totally different team with Keith in there. He's the leader of this club."

Ron Darling may have appreciated Hernandez's return the most, since the home run gave Darling a victory.

"Any time you get a two-run home run in a 1-1 game, it's inspiring for a pitcher," Darling said. "It would have been great no matter who did it, but it was



Keith Hernandez

great because this was Keith's first game back. Keith is always prepared."

Hernandez heard all the things being said about him and tried to downplay his importance.

"If that's the way they feel, it's flattering," he said. "I've always played with intensity, and I show it. They see that. But we can't get carried away with one game. We have to keep it going."

That they did, winning the next night without Hernandez, who had some stiffness in his right leg. But he was back in the lineup the next day as the Mets made it three wins in a row.

"The most important thing is his presence," Strawberry said. "It's not easy to explain. It's a feeling. I feel so confident in the outfield when I see Keith go to the mound to talk to the pitcher."

"Without Keith, we probably would have won the division, but it would have been a struggle. With him, I honestly believe we have a chance to pull away."

DAN CASTELLANO

Reed's Debut a 'Dream Come True'

PITTSBURGH—Rick Reed, an unheralded rookie rushed to the majors, made a spectacular debut—pitching eight shutout innings against the Mets August 8 in the Pittsburgh Pirates' most crucial game of the season.

Reed, a 23-year-old righthander who started the season as a relief pitcher at Salem (Carolina), lived up to the comparisons made by Rocky Bridges, his manager at Buffalo (American Association), who said Reed "reminds you of Rick Reuschel."

Moving the ball in and out and up and down and relying on a deceptive change-up, Reed held the Mets to three hits and kept the Pirates from being swept in a four-game series at Three Rivers Stadium. His victory also moved the Bucs back into second place.



Rick Reed

Reed admitted he was nervous.

"I kept pinching myself. I had a lot of butterflies, but I was all right as soon as I threw my first pitch," said Reed, a 26th-round draft choice in 1986.

After posting an 8.36 earned-run average in relief at Salem, Reed became a starter. He was 6-2 as a starter at Salem, 1-0 at Harrisburg (Eastern) and 4-1 at Buffalo. "He's nothing pretty to look at, but he can pitch," Bridges said. "He's a John Kruk version of a pitcher."

Reed called his 1-0 victory over the Mets "a dream come true. I dreamed about pitching against the Mets. You see them on television. They are the best, and the only way you can get better is by playing the best."

BOB HERTZEL

Expos Anxious To Test Mets

MONTREAL—Montreal Expos Manager Buck Rodgers' mind is so programmed on catching the New York Mets in the National League East chase that he didn't stop to think when his club passed the Pirates August 7 and moved into second place for the first time since April 6.

In fact, Rodgers was unhappy after the Expos' 11-3 win at St. Louis, although the Mets' 6-5 victory over the Pirates the same day enabled Montreal to move into second place.

"Our objective for the month is to get within four games of the Mets," Rodgers said. "We want the Mets to lose. Our aim is to win or at least split every series we play for the rest of the season," said Rodgers, whose club had 10 games left with the Mets in the season's final seven weeks.

After the Expos won three of four games at St. Louis in a series that ended August 8, Cardinals Manager Whitey Herzog said, "I think the Expos have a chance. But they still have to beat the Mets head to head. I'm sure (Pirates Manager) Jim Leyland thinks his team is in the race, too. Yet they haven't shown they can beat New York."

Rodgers thinks the Expos can. "We're not intimidated by them, and they know it," Rodgers said. "We have a lot of guys who like playing them. I think we're as equal to the Mets as we've ever been since I've been here. Where they have the edge on us is in terms of experience."

"We're better than them speed-wise and defensively. In terms of starting pitching, we're 1-2 in the league, and that's all that has to be said about that. We have a deeper bullpen, but they might have an edge in that we don't have the hard thrower to match Randy Myers," Rodgers said.

IAN MACDONALD

Arm Woes Shelve Cox

ST. LOUIS—Just when the St. Louis Cardinals were about to have their pitching staff reunited, righthander Danny Cox went to the sideline.

Left-hander Greg Mathews was about to complete a 20-day rehabilitation assignment after shoulder surgery, and the Cardinals were to have their projected starting rotation for the first time this season upon his return.

But then Cox, who underwent arthroscopic surgery in May, experienced pain and stiffness in his right elbow and was expected to miss at least two starts and maybe more.

Cox had to leave a game against Montreal after only three innings August 6. Since he returned from the disabled list June 29, he had made eight starts, five of them losses.

"I'm not one to complain, but I just couldn't go," Cox said. "I guess I've finally come to the conclusion that I need some rest."

Cox said he probably came back too soon after the surgery.

"I think it's partially my fault," said Cox, 28. "I don't think it ever really healed. It isn't like they put a new (elbow) on me and I couldn't feel a thing."

Manager Whitey Herzog also suspected Cox returned too quickly. "He was throwing awfully hard when he came back," he said. "I was kind of amazed by how hard he was throwing."

"It's kind of frustrating," Cox said. "But you've got to look out for your future. If I can get this thing better, I know I've got a lot of victories ahead of me. I don't think missing a couple of games is going to determine my future in this game."

"It hurts not being able to play, and it bothers me. It makes me feel kind of useless. I consider myself a pretty strong person, but I don't have that strength in my arm that I'm accustomed to."

RICK HUMMEL



Danny Cox

NOTEBOOK

N.L. EAST

PIRATES



Pittsburgh Pirates outfielder Glenn Wilson underwent arthroscopic surgery to repair damaged cartilage in his right

knee August 7, two days after his knee apparently was injured when he was hit in the back by a pitch from Expos reliever Tim Burke. Outfielder Tommy Gregg was recalled from Buffalo (American Association) to take Wilson's spot on the roster. Gregg had been sent to Buffalo a day earlier and hadn't actually left Pittsburgh yet. "I'd already put in for a change of address, drawn my money out of the bank and had my phone disconnected," Gregg said. On August 10, Gregg again was shipped to Buffalo when John Cangelosi was recalled from the same club.

Reliever Jim Gott tied a major league record by committing three balks in one inning August 6 against the Mets. Two days later, Gott recorded his 18th save in a 1-0 victory over the Mets. ... After the Mets handed the Pirates a 6-2 defeat August 7—the Bucs' 12th loss in 17 games—Manager Jim Leyland said, "You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out what's wrong with us." The main problem was that Jose Lind was in a 2-for-22 slump, Mike LaValliere in a 4-for-41 tailspin and Rafael Belliard in a 5-for-54 nosedive.

The Pirates' 1-0 victory over the Mets August 8 was their fourth conquest of New York this year, and all the wins have been on Mondays. ... The four-game series with the Mets that ended August 8 attracted 171,435, a record for a four-game series at Three Rivers Stadium. ... After losing three of four to the Mets, Leyland said, "I don't think anyone should drape a flag on our coffin yet. This is a game of streaks. We could still get hot." ... Bobby Bonilla hit his first home run since July 15 and Sid Bream drove in four runs in the Pirates' 10-8 victory over Montreal August 9. ... The Pirates optioned infielder Denny Gonzalez to Buffalo and recalled infielder Al Pedrique.

METS



By winning three out of four games August 5-8 at Pittsburgh, the New York Mets built their edge in the season series with

the Pirates to 10-4. "(The Pirates) have to be frustrated, but I certainly wouldn't say they're out of it," said pitcher David Cone. Added Manager Dave Johnson: "There's no such thing as a knockout punch in August." ... The Mets won the third game of that series, 6-2, with Tim Teufel getting a two-run pinch-double and Kevin McReynolds and Gary Carter collecting run-scoring pinch-singles in a four-run ninth. "It's a nice feeling to look down on the bench in the ninth inning and see Kevin Mac and Gary available as pinch-hitters," Johnson said.

Through August 10, Carter had four hits in his last five at-bats as a pinch-hitter after enduring a slump

Cubs' Green: 'Told You So'

CHICAGO—For the first time in 39 years, there will be baseball in Wrigley Field in October.

In winning their first title since 1945, the Chicago Cubs dusted off the ivy, awoke the scoreboard operator and oiled the extra turnstiles in preparation for a meeting with the San Diego Padres in the National League Championship Series.



The Cubs' clinching of the East Division crown created the greatest athletic excitement in Chicago since the 1919 Black Sox. In fact, some called it the greatest Chicago sports story ever.

Bigger than Gabby Hartnett's 1936 Homer in the Gloamin' Yes, bigger.

The league's oldest continuously operated franchise drew the attention of Mr. and Mrs. America and all the ships at sea as momentum grew to the deciding moment. With WGN-TV's superstition bringing Cubbie baseball to anyone owning cable, the bandwagon filled with new as well as longtime, die-hard Cub fans.

The clinching ended Manager Jim Frey's nightmare about the 1969 Cubs, who lost 17 of their last 25 games to finish eight lengths behind the champion New York Mets.

"Since March, I've been asked on a daily—no, hourly—basis about the 1969 team," said Frey, in his first year as manager of the Cubs. "It got to the point where I lay awake at night thinking, 'What did I do to lose it?'"

"I couldn't have done much because I was in Knoxville in '69, scouting and trying to squeeze an extra buck out of my expense account—just like a sportswriter."

The division title was a tribute to rebuilding by General Manager Dallas Green, who did in less than three years what most people thought couldn't be done in the second half of the 20th century. After the title clinching, Green said what he had been rehearsing: "I told you so."

The Cubs won with a team that broke training camp with a 7-20 exhibition record, including 11 straight losses. Green traded for a center fielder and leadoff man (Bob Dernier) and a veteran team leader (Gary Matthews) just before the season opener, then made a deal in June for an ace starter (Rick Sutcliffe) when Scott Sanderson was hurt.

"I've never really felt I've been appreciated here," Green said. "From the very first, I was surprised at the resistance to change something that wasn't very successful."

There was no denying that, not even when Green's first two years weren't very successful: 73-89 and 71-91.

But this year's club reached 90 victories with two weeks to go and had designs on 100 before hitting the skids briefly.

"He still doesn't know this isn't Philadelphia," Matthews said of Green, who managed the Phillies' 1980 world champions after touching all the bases in the organization except G.M., then moving to the Cubs.

"No one wanted to come here, to play all day games and play for a bad team," Matthews continued. "Ask anyone and it was last on their list, absolutely last. Now, everything has changed."

Chairman Andy McKenna said, "Baseball had developed to the point we needed a solid business guy to work alongside the personnel development guy."

The personnel was all in place after the Sutcliffe trade with Cleveland on June 14. To get Sutcliffe, the Cubs gave up outfielder Mel Hall and outfield prospect Joe Carter. Suddenly, with Hall out of the picture, Keith Moreland became a regular outfielder and all the pieces were in place.

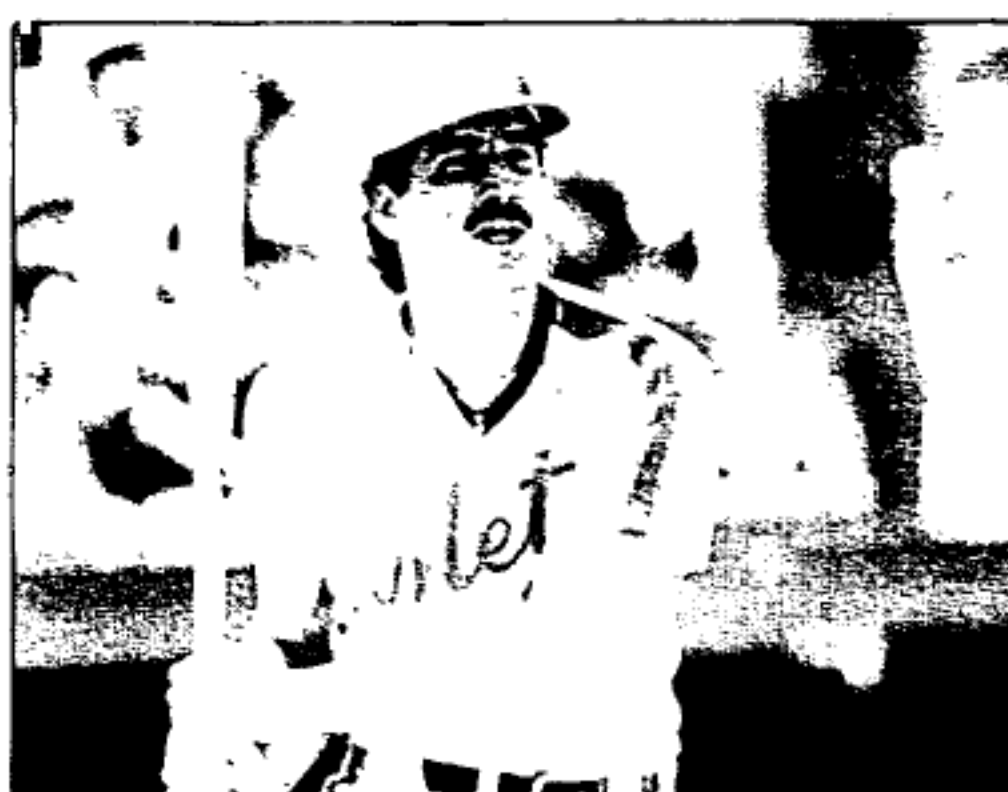
The Cubs led the league in runs and fewest errors most of the season. The pitching improved so dramatically that the rotation was called the most underrated in baseball.

But Green knew he had the right combination, and finally he could say "I told you so."

Cubbyhole: Dave Johnson, manager of the second-place New York Mets, thought the Cubs had a good chance of beating San Diego in the N.L. Championship Series, especially with the first two games of the playoffs at Wrigley Field. "Their club is really tough there, they've perfectly tailored it for the park," Johnson said. "They've lifted the grass blades since I played there (1978). They cut it at several different heights. The first two guys (Bob Dernier, Ryne Sandberg) do a great job of beating the ball into that grass, then they line up lumberjacks to hit it out of the yard." Mets slugger Darryl Strawberry was happy for Frey, who tutored him in batting and attitude the last two seasons as a Mets coach. "What's happening for Jim couldn't happen to a better man," Strawberry said. "For him to have those kind of players his first year is just outstanding."

The Cubs hoped Richie Hebner's shoulder would be strong enough for him to appear in the playoffs. "I've been on seven playoff teams in 16 years," Hebner said. "What I don't tell anyone is that I only got to the World Series once (Pirates, 1971). Maybe I shouldn't tell Frey that, huh?" he said. The Cubs honored the two-millionth fan of 1984, Vi Brown of Burlington, Wis. She received a trip for two to Europe, a TV and \$574.90, the equivalent of one-day's interest on \$2 million.

JOE GODDARD



Keith Hernandez: 'I meant to be positive.'



Will Criticism Inspire Strawberry?

NEW YORK—The big headlines in a Manhattan tabloid were an embarrassment to Keith Hernandez. For the first time all season, Hernandez had said about Darryl Strawberry what he and others on the New York Mets were thinking, and the story beneath the headline was handled delicately enough. But the bold headline "Keith Strawberry Quit On Mets," made Hernandez madder than Strawberry.

"What I said, I meant to be positive. I never intended it to be a rip at him," Hernandez said. "But it didn't come out that way, at least not in the headline."

Hernandez went to Strawberry and explained. Strawberry said he did not intend to read the story.

"I'm the only one who can talk to him the way I do," Hernandez said of the 1983 National League Rookie of the Year. "I try to talk to him like a father. Like a father, I don't always get through to him. But I have so much respect for his talent I continue. He can be like Mike Schmidt, who is the one player in my 10 years who can make the difference in a pennant race over the whole season. He can have a year like Willie Stargell and drive in 150 runs."

Hernandez's critique on Strawberry came in Philadelphia in late September, when the Mets were fighting desperately to remain in second place. Al Holland had decked Hernandez with an inside pitch, and Strawberry, the following batter, swatted a monstrous, three-run, ninth-inning homer that gave the Mets an 8-5 victory.

It was Strawberry's sixth home run in September and his 22nd of the season. It also gave him 20 runs batted in for September. Compare that with August, when he failed to hit a home run and drove in only seven runs. It was in August that the Mets went from 4½ games in front of the Cubs to also-rans.

"I feel I'm having a fair year," Strawberry said, "but I didn't help the club down the stretch. Keith Hernandez and Hubie Brooks carried the club all year. Me and George Foster had good years, but it's going to take more. I'll admit I got lackadaisical at times this year. I was pressured after being billed as a star, and I couldn't handle it. Right now, I'm getting ready for 1985, and I think I'll be able to handle it better."

"He quit on himself," Hernandez said in another area in the clubhouse. "I mean this in a positive way. I'm speaking about his overall season and how tough it is for him. Darryl gave in on tough situations. In August, I didn't think he was giving 100 percent. The second year is the toughest for every player. It was for me, and it is for every second-year player I've ever known. There were certain situations where I think Darryl gave up. He's got to toughen up. He couldn't handle things when they went bad. He just got down on himself—which can happen when you are as young as he is."

During the off-season Strawberry appeared on countless national magazine covers and as a guest on all the major morning TV shows. He was hounded for interviews all spring.

When the season started, he picked where he left off last year—batting .324 with five home runs in April. He hit three in the first six games to help the Mets to a rousing start.

But in May, Strawberry's average dipped to .253 and in June to .221. Following his appearance in the All-Star Game, Strawberry seemed to get his second wind, batting .271 in July. But the dog days of August were when the 22-year-old outfielder really went into a funk. He hit a mere 169 and did not hit a home run. He was fined and benched by Manager Dave Johnson for reporting late to work, and he seemed to go into a shell—both on and off the field.

"He's got to improve his work habits," said Hernandez. "He also cannot let what happens to him at the plate bother him in the field. He was taking lazy swings in batting practice. He wasn't concentrating. Darryl can also help us win games with his glove. He must retain his concentration in the field no matter how tough things may be at the plate."

Hernandez insisted that what he was saying was meant as

constructive criticism and that he was certain the young outfielder would understand.

"I think he listens to me," Hernandez said. "I hope he does because he can be a tremendous ball player. He has the potential to drive in 150 runs. But you know what potential means. It means you haven't done it yet."

Metscellaneous: Danny Heep was 1-for-27 as a pinch-hitter entering the final days of the season. The Mets must make several tough decisions this winter, including what to do with pinch-hitter Rusty Staub, 40. They also have five catchers and four shortstops. One of the biggest surprises of the season has been Kelvin Chapman, who wasn't even invited to spring training. Called up in May, Chapman has batted above .290 as the righthanded second baseman. "He's hit what he has against some of the toughest left-handers in the league," Johnson said.

When the Mets reached 83 victories just before the final home stand, it marked their highest victory total since Joe Frazier led them to an 86-76 record in 1976.

JACK LANG



Sutter Secret: He Got Squared Away

ST. LOUIS—Bruce Sutter knew that he still had it, but there were others who wondered after his 1983 season whether he and his split-fingered fastball were washed up.

"I knew that if I was healthy, I was going to be all right," said the St. Louis Cardinals' relief ace after he extended his National League record for saves to 42. "If I'd had any injuries, I would have been worried about it. But I've thrown that pitch too many times, too many years. I'm not all of a sudden not going to have it."

Sutter's earned-run average jumped to 4.23 last year and he had only 21 saves in 32 opportunities. Then enter Mike Roarke, Sutter's longtime tutor, as the Cardinals' pitching coach. In the past, going back to Sutter's days with the Chicago Cubs, whenever Sutter needed help, Roarke would take time off from his insurance business to attend to the problem. Now, he sees Sutter every day.

Last spring, Roarke discovered almost immediately what Sutter had been doing wrong. After he had come to a set position in his stretch, Sutter was not squaring himself with home plate on his delivery.

"I couldn't get my arm up," said Sutter, explaining why he had been throwing more "hangers."

Sutter had altered his stretch motion last year, coming to a more pronounced stop because umpires were calling balks more liberally. "I pitched seven years in the big leagues and I never stopped from the stretch," he said. "Last year, I would come to a complete stop and then I would come to the plate with my shoulder pointed right at it."

Occasionally, Sutter would try to compensate for his erratic location by trying to throw harder. "I threw hard, and the harder it went the other way," he said.

Enter Roarke, again. "Mike picked it up right away this spring. He had me point my shoulder to first base and when I came back to the plate, everything was on target," Sutter said.

Roarke can help correct Sutter merely by making a motion in the dugout with his hands or shaking his head. "If I throw a couple of pitches and it doesn't feel right, I'll just look over," said Sutter.

Although Sutter was reasonably confident he would return to form, he had little idea he would accomplish what he did. He eclipsed the old N.L. record of 37 saves, which he had shared with Clay Carroll and Rollie Fingers, on Labor Day.

"I figure I'm good for 25 to 35 saves every year," he said. "If I do that, I feel I've done my job. But to go over 40, you've got to have a lot of luck involved. I've got away with some hangers. The guys have made some great plays. The other guys in the bullpen have done a great job ahead of me."

"It's worked out almost ideally this year. I haven't pitched a lot of games in a row and I haven't gone a long time without pitching."

"I've been consistent all year. That's the most important thing about a short-relief pitcher. If you do the job 75 to 80 percent of the time, you've have a good year. I've been more than 75 to 80 percent this year."

With Sutter a free agent at the end of the season, the Cardinals—or somebody else—will pay for that consistency.

Redbird Chirps: Danny Cox pitched his first complete game and first shutout when he beat Montreal, 1-0, on a three-hitter, September 19. Of his nine victories, four had come against Pittsburgh. . . . Second baseman Tom Herr apparently was lost for the season after suffering torn muscles in his left side while swinging at a pitch. He joined George Hendrick on the shelf, Hendrick having gone home to California to rest after surgery in which a benign tumor was removed from his thyroid.

The Cardinals recalled pitchers Kevin Hagen, Ralph Citarella and Rick Ownbey from Louisville after that club won the American Association playoff title and they purchased 32-year-old reliever Andy Hassler from Louisville. Hassler once pitched for Whitey Herzog in Kansas City.

RICK HUMMEL

(Continued on Page 21, Column 1)

Huge Pressure on Rookie Strawberry

By BARRY JACOBS

NEW YORK—Darryl Strawberry was learning. He had just led the New York Mets to a 3-1 victory over Montreal, batting in three runs, including the first-inning game-winner on his first major league triple. But he also failed to run swiftly to first base on a seemingly routine fly to center in the sixth and thus couldn't advance further when Andre Dawson dropped the ball for an error. Strawberry eventually scored anyway, but his lack of hustle did not escape the eye of Manager Frank Howard.

After the game, Howard held a closed-door team meeting at which he upbraided certain young players, particularly Strawberry, for a lack of all-out effort.

"I'm glad he chewed me out like he did," Strawberry said of his manager, ordinarily a gentle soul. "He said that I have too much ability to be playing that way. I know I should've been on second base. It's a mistake that I don't usually make, and it was better that he told me in front of everyone."

Certainly, it was laudable to see Strawberry, one of the most touted rookies in years, so willingly accepting the burden of his failures. Somehow you knew he meant it when he said earnestly, "I'll never make that same mistake again."

Yet, beneath the calm, relaxed manner with which the 21-year-old appears to take everything in stride churn currents that may be working against him as he struggles to establish himself in the major leagues.

During spring training, when the Mets' announced intention was to keep him at Tidewater (International) most of the season, Strawberry admitted to trepidation about playing in New York.

"That's going to be really a tough adjustment for me going to a big city like that and performing in front of thousands of people," he said.

Since being called up in early May, with Met attendance and on-field fortunes lagging, the right fielder has indeed had adjustment problems.

Despite less than half as many plate appearances, he threatens to take the team's strikeout lead from Mookie Wilson, surpassing even such an inveterate whiff artist as Dave Kingman. And even though he had four game-winning hits in his first 20 contests, he continued to flail about below the .200 mark.

Yet Strawberry insists he is experiencing few doubts. Smooth and straightforward, he said simply, "Eventually, I will come out of my shell and start doing great things."

Maybe so. "If we miss on Darryl Strawberry, then, baby, we all better start looking for a career change," Howard said, puffing mightily on a rope-thick cigar.



Darryl Strawberry . . . Adjusting slowly.

But first, the kid should learn that he, too, is mortal. He was acclaimed as "the black Ted Williams" when he came out of Crenshaw High in Los Angeles and became the top pick in the 1980 amateur draft.

"Young players always have doubts about their abilities, especially when they start to struggle a little bit," said Howard. Sure enough, one Met coach confided that, even at the plate, Strawberry is distracted, torn by an internal debate and the reverberations of others' comments and expectations.

"He looks relaxed, but his mind is kind of pressured," observed teammate Jose Oquendo, brought up about the same time as Strawberry and already established at shortstop.

Oquendo, known for his glove, is batting better than anticipated, in part because he finds major league pitching "easier" than the more erratic version found in the minors.

In Strawberry's case, however, the pitching has proven tougher than expected after he batted .333 with three home runs and 13 RBIs in 16 games at Tidewater.

"With a hitter who's gotten all the publicity he has, and has done as well as he has, I'm sure the pitchers have plenty of information on him," said Met batting coach Jim Frey, who likens Strawberry to a young Willie Stargell.

Frey is trying to instill a more aggressive attitude in Strawberry, who often took the first pitch as a matter of course when he arrived in the majors. Frey also moved the young hitter closer to the plate after watching pitchers successfully pitch Strawberry low and away.

"The thing I want him to do is be natural, not start experimenting with a lot of things in his swing," said Frey. "If he goes about the job in the right way, there's no question he can be one of the big run producers in baseball."

Past performance clearly underscores the point. Last year, in gaining recognition as the Texas League's most valuable player, the 6-6, 190-pound Strawberry slugged 34 homers and drove in 97 runs. He also batted .283 and accumulated 100 walks and 45 stolen bases, impressive totals for a slugger. To make his prospects look even brighter, Strawberry proved a capable outfielder with a strong arm.

Those associated with the Mets say they await with certainty Strawberry's emergence from the slump that has marked the start of his major league career. "Give him time to grow," pleaded Howard, who sees touches of stars like Duke Snider, Al Kaline, Willie Mays and Mickey Mantle in his young charge.

Meanwhile, Strawberry must sort through the new and conflicting opinions and feelings that contend for his attention and, according to several of his coaches, sap his confidence. Confidence, said Frey, breeds aggressiveness at the plate, which in turn will enable Strawberry to regain the natural swing that is every bit as sweet as his name.

The message is apparently sinking in, though Strawberry remains as cool and smooth as ever on the outside.

"I've just got to stop listening to other stuff and go with the attitude of being more aggressive and going for my pitch," he said. "You can't wait for things to happen. You make things happen."

Even if you are Darryl Strawberry, the game will not wait for you forever. "The end result is production, numbers," said Howard, who hit 382 home runs, drove in 1119 runs and batted .273 during a 16-year major league career. "You've got to put the numbers on the board."

N.L. East

(Continued From Page 23)



Mets Salute Keith As Their Leader

NEW YORK—A leader at last. Not someone who will lead with his mouth, but someone who will lead by his performances on the field. Someone other players can look up to as an example of excellence. Someone who will do something when it

counts.

Keith Hernandez is all of these to the New York Mets. The Mets lacked a lot of things before their stunning deal for the St. Louis Cardinals' first baseman on June 15. They had no attack, their pitching was putrid, they had no first-string catcher and they had just experienced a change in leadership. They also were 14 games under .500 and had dug themselves in for a long summer's nap in the basement.

Suddenly, it was as if sunlight entered the cellar. A catcher (Junior Ortiz) was obtained from Pittsburgh, and finally, the blockbuster—Hernandez for two pitchers (Neil Allen and Rick Ownbey) who were not winning.

If nothing else, the arrival of Hernandez meant the end to Dave Kingman's career as a Met, or at least as an everyday player. Gone were those two and three strikeouts a game, gone were the long periods without a run batted in from the main man in the middle of the lineup.

Gone was Kong and his .200 average. Not gone was Kingman and his surly attitude, but one can't have everything, can one? The Mets were doing their best to dispose of Kingman, but found that an almost impossible chore.

But Hernandez was a different story. Suddenly the Mets took on a whole new complexion and if their record did not immediately improve, their attitude and their outlook did. Better days surely were just around the corner.

At long last, there was a professional hitter in their midst. A man with a lifetime .300 average (okay, so it was only .299). A man who consistently drives in runs without having to hit home runs to do it. A man who gives defensive stability to an infield that is gradually coming into its own.

In the second game of a doubleheader against his former St. Louis teammates, his debut night as a Met, Keith did indeed hit a first-inning home run. It stood up as the winning margin in a 6-4 Mets victory.

The next night, the Cards got even when Allen pitched eight scoreless innings against his former New York playmates.

But in the long run, Hernandez on a daily basis will provide the Mets with a far greater lift than either Allen or Ownbey could with their occasional appearances.

Hernandez attempted to downplay his importance with the Mets.

"I'm just one-twenty-fifth of this team," Hernandez said after his homer had helped subdue the Cardinals.

Others disagreed. They look up to Hernandez as a proven quality player of eight years who has been with a winner and who by his mere presence can instill some of that winning attitude in them.

"He's a bigger twenty-fifth who makes us 25 percent better," raved third baseman Hubie Brooks.

"He's underestimating his importance to us," said pitcher Ed Lynch. "He's more than just one-eighth of our offense."

Despite Kingman's 99 RBIs last season, the Mets had no real hit man until Hernandez arrived. Of the 23 runs David drove in this year, only three came on hits other than homers. Hernandez drives in 90 without hitting homers, which means his RBIs are strung out over a greater number of games and with greater frequency.

Hernandez is expected to have a steadying influence on a young and talented infield, while also providing production at the plate.

"The one thing we did not need when the Hernandez deal was offered to us was another first baseman," says General Manager Frank Cashen. "We already had Kingman, Mike Jorgensen, Rusty Staub and Danny Heep. But when you have a chance to pick up a quality player like Keith Hernandez, you don't hesitate to make the deal."


Quality. That's the word that describes Hernandez. It's an ingredient the Mets, with all their young talent, were lacking. Now suddenly they have it and the whole situation has brightened.

With a fine defensive catcher like Ortiz behind the plate, Hernandez, Brian Giles, Jose Oquendo and Brooks in the infield and George Foster, Mookie Wilson and Darryl Strawberry in the outfield, the Mets suddenly are a viable force in the National League East. Hernandez has made them so.

Metscellaneous: Rusty Staub became the first pinch-hitter to be named N.L. Player of the Week (June 13-19). In that week, he had four pinch-hits in as many trips and extended his pinch-hit streak to 6-for-6. The night he was named, he made it 7-for-7 and was one shy of the major league mark for consecutive pinch-hits, established by Dave Philley of Philadelphia in 1958. With his pinch-hits and occasional starts, the restaurateur/pinch-hitter deluxe was batting a cool .379.

Kingman, doing a slow burn over the loss of his job and apparent switch to another club, confronted Manager Frank Howard in the lobby of the Montreal Sheraton and voiced strong objection to the situation. The first baseman's conversation was heated and animated. But there was no shouting, shoving or pushing. Howard was upset by it and refused to comment. Kingman later had two other conversations with the manager about his situation. All Howard would say was, "I'm trying to be fair." Management has put Howard in an awkward position just by keeping Kingman around.


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Why Is Keith Hernandez Dressed Up Like a Met?

ST. LOUIS — On the first night that he faced his former Cardinal teammates, Keith Hernandez clearly was unnerved. He merely went 4-for-8, crashing a two-run homer and helping the New York Mets split a doubleheader.

TOM BARNIDGE

Managing Editor



Two nights later, still uncomfortable in an awkward situation, he collected only two hits and scored just two runs as the Mets swept a pair from the world champions of baseball.

When the Mets' latest acquisition finally settles down in his strange, new surroundings, fans are hopeful that he can do better than participate in three victories in three evenings.

Ah, but seriously, folks...

If you want to incur the wrath of baseball fans in St. Louis, merely mention the Hernandez-for-Nell Allen deal. If the trade's architect were any other than Whitey Herzog, Busch Stadium would have been pillaged and plundered by now.

See, Hernandez had won five Gold Gloves at first base. He'd bagged a batting crown, too. He'd shared an MVP trophy, donned a World Series ring and ruffled nary a feather while doing so.

For those who ask, "What's he done lately?" how lately do you mean? In the seventh game of the '82 World Series, he had two hits, scored once and drove in the eighth-inning tally that tied the score.

It's hard enough to find .300 hitters. Harder yet to find flawless gloves. Hernandez was both, with an agreeable disposition. He was a 29-year-old Clark Kent.

In exchange, came a guy with a 2-7 record and an overweight ERA; a guy who was a sometimes-starter, sometimes-reliever, whose curveball had been hovering like a blimp around home plate.

"We need pitchers," said Herzog, in explanation.

"You think the Mets don't?" came the response.

"We've got a lot of doubleheaders," Herzog went on.

"And you want a 2-7 pitcher to bail you out?"

Had Joe Blow or John Doe or George Schmoe made this trade, he would be hanging from the Gateway Arch by now. But the name was Herzog, and a good thing it was. The same Herzog who'd traded Ted Simmons, Garry Templeton and Leon Durham. The same Herzog who sent Pete Vuckovich and Rollie Fingers out of town. Mainly, it was the same Herzog who'd brought a world championship to St. Louis after the trading was done.

And so the converts stood by his side: Wait and see, Whitey knows what he's doing. The blindly faithful, true-blue Cardinal fans backed him: Whitey's never led us wrong.

With those groups firmly allied, this left the count only about 4-to-1 against the deal. Considering the side-by-side statistics in the trade, it was a groundswell of support.

The analysts have grown in numbers ever since the bombshell arrived. New theories have been forwarded by way of explanation. It was a personality rift, that's what it was, Herzog and Hernandez. ... It was something hidden, off the field, a

personal problem ... it was attitude, lack of aggressiveness, a complacency on Hernandez's part. ... it was the perfect time to dump the guy, Keith having passed his prime.

Well, none of these theories makes a lick of sense. Nor does the avowed need for pitching, of and by itself. If Allen does well the rest of the way, he might win 10 or 12 games for St. Louis. Hernandez will save three or four games with his glove; last year he had 21 game-winning RBIs.

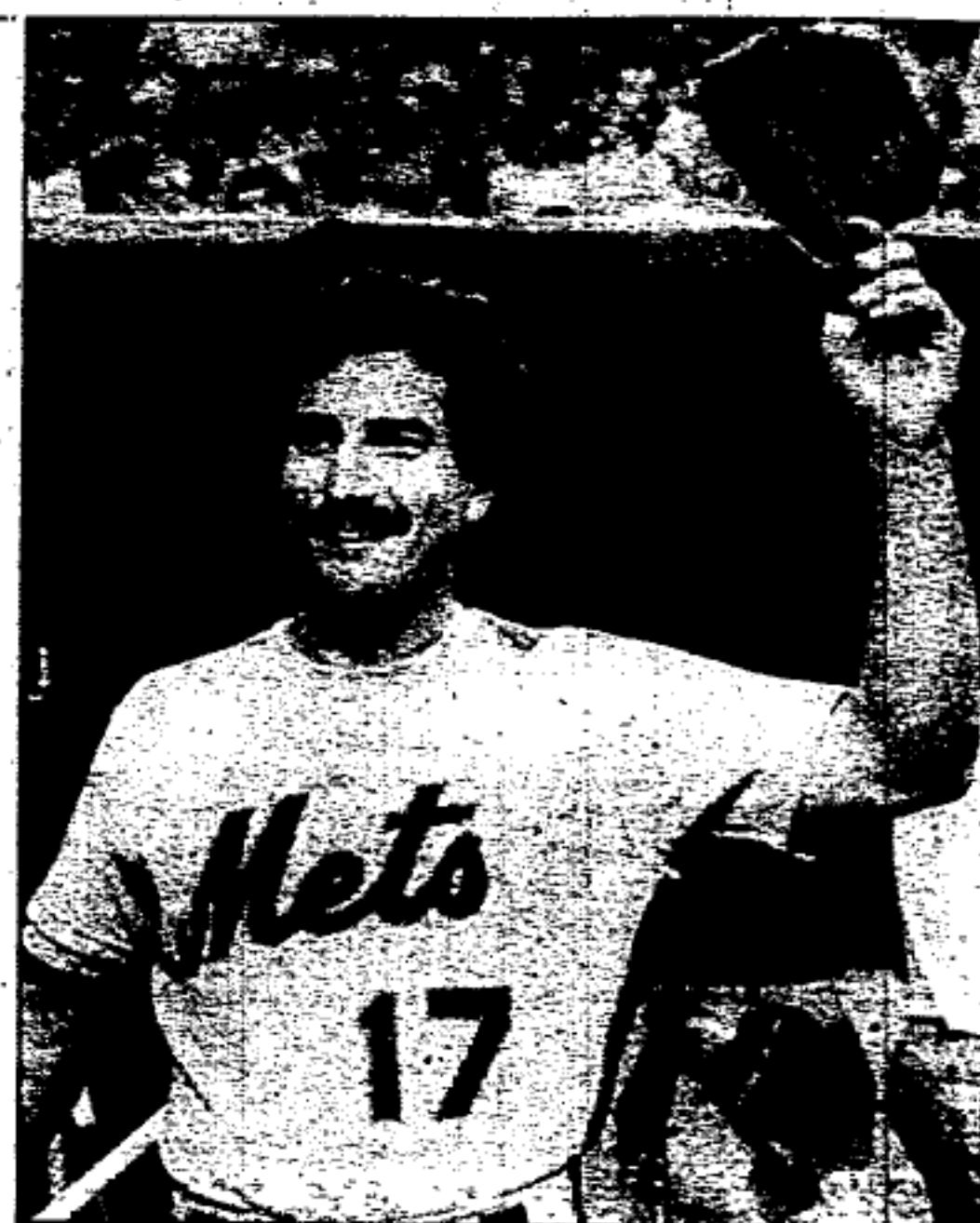
So, what's the reason behind the deal? Indeed, that's the question that can be found in every St. Louis tavern and heard on every radio talk show. Give us the reason for the Hernandez trade and win a trip for two to Jamaica.

Here's one reason that makes more than a little sense. M-O-N-E-Y. Baseball is a business, after all.

Hernandez is making \$700,000 per year, and when he was traded away, the club promoted Andy Van Slyke from the minors, who will make 1/20 of that salary. As soon as Allen joined the club, the Cardinals sent reliever Doug Bair to Detroit. Bair was making \$450,000. So, dumping Bair and Hernandez was dumping an expense of more than \$1 million a year.

There are always reasons for trades, but they are not always so secretive as many would like. Nor so simple as they seem. This was more than a trade for talent. It was a trade that made its biggest impact on the balance sheet.

Let us not forget, no matter how romantic we be: Baseball is a business first, then it is a game.



The Keith Hernandez trade made its biggest impact on the balance sheet.

Critics May Come and Go, But Wimbledon Remains

WIMBLEDON, England—In the general office of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, the situation was normal, all mixed up.

"It's a typical first day," a brisk, hearty woman conceded. "Nobody knows what they are doing."

That should have been expected. The Championships had only been held 105 times. One of these days, they'll have enough experience to know what to do.

Yes, the Championships. That is how they are identified in this land of understatement. No abrasive adjectives to sully the label, no exaggerated phrases to maim the simplicity.

Tradition reigns like some doddering monarch who refuses to abdicate. They play with white tennis balls, not yellow. They play in white tennis clothes, not colors.

"Did you ever see a person in a blue shirt sweat?" a club member asked in disgust.

Wimbledon, Borough of Merton, lies just south of the River Thames from London proper, past sooty factories and rows of dirty brick flats. Fifty weeks a year it is an unspectacular suburb where leaves grow and rain falls and the bells in the spire of St. Mary's church provide a harmonic accompaniment to a tranquil lifestyle.

But during the fortnight of the Championships, tranquillity is replaced by hysteria. On the club grounds, we are offered a splash of excitement, the oldest—and some would say the most prestigious—tournament in the world.

For more than a century, since the age of Queen Victoria, the Championships have been staged with that sense of history and ritual so uniquely British. The empire is gone, but Wimbledon survives.

Oh, they started some matches at 12:30 p.m. this year instead of the usual 2 o'clock. And potato chips, at 30 pence a bag, were sold as never before. But almost everything else is the same, and likely to remain so.

The dark green walls, the high iron gates, the brollies (umbrellas) and lollies (Popsicles) and fans queued for standing-room tickets—they're all very much a part of summer in England, elegantly, properly, unalterably.

How reassuring in these times of upheaval. Or could that be, how infuriating?

Not everybody worships Wimbledon or the Championships. "It's the worst run tournament on the worst possible surface," Harold Solomon reputedly told an official from the All England Club. "I'm finished. The next time you see me will be in heaven."

Solomon is an American, and whether or not he keeps his promise about a visit to the hereafter, his sentiments reflect an attitude not exactly unique among the entrants. They don't like grass courts, which are played only in England and Australia. And they don't like the supercilious people in command of the

ART SPANDER



Championships.

Yet, they can't resist the magic spell. They need Wimbledon more than Wimbledon needs them. To wit: When the stars boycotted the tournament in 1973 and the men's finals were between two little recognized players, Jan Kodes and Alex Metreveli, all previous attendance records were broken.

Sentiment persists, sweeping away all obstacles.

"An old glory hangs like a sunlit mist in this land where tennis was born," wrote Rex Bellamy, tennis specialist for the Times of London. Between outbursts, even John McEnroe tends to agree.

Wimbledon is different. Neatly printed at the bottom of a program page is this note: "Spectators are requested not to carry crockery and cutlery to the stands."

Not paper plates, crockery. Not plastic knives and forks, cutlery. Is this a sporting event or a garden party?

Truth tell, it's a bit of both. It's strawberries in Devonshire cream at 1 pound 45 (\$2.25), a dish which has come to symbolize the tournament. It's uniformed schoolgirls shrieking at handsome Mats Wilander. It's the hardy, almost masochistic spirit of Great Britain on display.

In the opening days of the 1983 event, the weather was, in a word, glorious. But in most of the past decade, late June has been a period of rain in England. There have been delays and postponements. There has, however, been no retreat.

During a match on Centre Court last year, showers intruded. Spectators not under cover of the slate roof began to scurry. From the umpire's chair came reassurance.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the official announced, "I've been told to say it's only passing. Please stay in your seats for the final stages of this match."

The spectators did. The Championships are special.



Harold Solomon says Wimbledon is "the worst run tournament on the worst possible surface."

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