

Rash of Disabling Injuries Puts Expos' Bench to Test

By IAN MacDONALD

MONTREAL—Ellis Valentine was disabled with a fractured cheek, Larry Parrish was sidelined with a damaged wrist and the Montreal Expos were going to find out just how deep they are.

"We'll find out what our bench can do," sighed Manager Dick Williams. "You can't win these things with nine guys anyway. All 25 players have to contribute."

One of the major factors in the Expos' 95-65 record last season, second to the Pirates in the National League East, was their ability to stay away from injury. Shortstop Chris Speier was the only player disabled.

Valentine was beamed by Roy Thomas in St. Louis on May 30. After resting in St. Louis Jewish Hospital for the weekend, Valentine flew home with the team.

On June 2, Valentine underwent delicate surgery at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Montreal. Dr. Gaston Schwartz, a plastic surgeon, and Dr. Larry Coughlin operated to straighten out six fractures and a displacement. Ophthalmologist Dr. Robert Pearlman examined Valentine earlier and was on hand during surgery to make certain there was no damage.

Dr. Coughlin reported that the operation was successful but that Valentine must have a pin in his cheek for three weeks.

It appeared that the right fielder, who had settled into his cleanup role during May, would be out considerably longer than the 21 days for which he has been disabled.

The case of third baseman Parrish is not as clear. Parrish was hit on the right wrist by the San Francisco Giants' Ed Whitson May 3. The slugger did not swing a bat for five days and then returned to action.

During a nine-game trip, Parrish had an 0-for-13 stretch. Williams ordered Parrish to rest a couple of days.

On June 1, after an examination in Montreal, Parrish's wrist was put in a cast. Further examination was to be made.

"I was getting a few hits," Parrish said, "but I wasn't driving the ball. The wrist still hurts."

Ken Macha was playing third base for Parrish and Williams was using Rowland Office in right field against right-handers. He planned to use rookie Bob Pate, called up from Denver (American Association) after Valentine was disabled, against lefties. Few teams start southpaws against the Expos.

Pate, who has proven he can play at the Triple-A level, made an auspicious debut. In his first major league at-bat, he drew a bases loaded walk off Lynn McGlothen in the bottom of the 13th inning to give the Expos an 8-7 win over the Chicago Cubs.

Then on June 4, again as a pinch-hitter, Pate singled to start a three-run rally against Willie Hernandez and Dick Tidrow which clinched an 8-1 win over the Cubs.

Williams realized that he needed a lot of production from the regulars. Several of the everyday players appeared ready to carry the load.

Catcher Gary Carter hit seven home runs in nine games through June 4. Andre Dawson went on a seven-game hitting tear and raised his batting average from .231 to .294. Speier came off a four-week benching to collect 10 hits in 21 at-bats.

Leadoff man Ron LeFlore, after going 0-for-33 and 3-for-52, was showing signs of pulling the ball and hitting up the middle, "the way I'm supposed to do."

Expos: Ross Grimsley worked for the first time in 28

days on June 3. In four-plus innings, Jerry Martin tagged him for a three-run homer which was enough to carry the Cubs to a 5-2 victory. Afterward, Grimsley revealed that he and agent Jerry Kapstein had begged the Expos to trade him. "If they don't want to pitch me, then get me out of here," said the lefthander, who in 1978 became the Expos' only 20-game winner ever during the first year of his five-year free-agent contract.

Ol' Woodie Fryman continued his superb relief work and there seemed no stopping the 40-year-old Kentucky farmer. Certainly, the opposition hadn't found a way to score against him in his 12 appearances since May 1. . . . Stan Bahnsen, who was 3-0 and almost as sharp as Fryman, was bothered by a hamstring in early June. . . . Elias Sosa, who didn't give up a home run in his first 17 outings, was jolted by Cubs pinch-hitter Ken Henderson and Mike Vail in successive innings on June 1. That's the game the Expos eventually won in 13, with Fryman throwing four shutout frames for the victory.



Ellis Valentine . . . Six facial fractures.

Hubbard Lights Up Sky in Atlanta

By KEN PICKING

ATLANTA—Glenn Hubbard is no longer the wide-eyed, naive 20-year-old he was in 1978, when the Atlanta Braves told him he would be their second baseman for the next 15 years.

Although only two years older, by the calendar, Hubbard feels he has aged at least 10 years after swallowing his enormous pride and returning twice to the minors. He remains shy and unpretentious, but his cherubic face is now covered with a thick, bristly beard, and his approach to the game is more realistic.

"The 1978 season was a dream come true," said Hubbard, who was called up from Richmond (International) at the All-Star break and finished the season in fine style. "But in 1979, tragedy struck. You never can feel secure in this game unless you have a long-term, multimillion-dollar contract. You can't take anything for granted. After hearing all the things they said about me, I took it for granted that second base was my job forever."

Last summer Hubbard was beset by personal strife and problems in the field and at the plate. The Atlanta press guide called it "The Sophomore Jinx" as he finished with a .231 average (after hitting .258 in 1978) in 97 games. On July 31, Hubbard was optioned to Richmond, where he hit .336. When the major league rosters were expanded to 40 in September, Hubbard returned to Atlanta batting .400 in seven games.

In spring training Hubbard knew it would be tough regaining his position. Jerry Royster had signed a five-year, \$1.5 million contract that assured him first crack at second base. Hubbard accepted that but did expect to make the team as a utility infielder. When the Braves broke camp, however, Hubbard was shipped back to Richmond.

Then the situation changed dramatically. Royster committed 13 errors, six more than in all of 1979, and he averaged .223, with 25 strikeouts from the leadoff spot.

Hubbard was recalled May 31 and returned with a vengeance. In his first game at Los Angeles, he doubled twice, singled and scored two runs. After three games, he was 8-for-17 (.471) with a homer and two RBIs.

"I've always liked the fire in Hubbard," said Manager Bobby Cox. "He plays hungry, and that's what I wanted to put in our lineup at this point. I think he is more relaxed and sure of himself, and I've always loved Hubb's determination."

His frequent jumps between Richmond and Atlanta created a burden for Glenn, wife Lynn and son Jeremy. The day before spring training, Hubbard closed a deal for a home outside Atlanta. But the Hubbards never spent a night in their new residence. When he didn't make the Braves, Hubbard arranged for reliever Al Hrabosky to rent his house for the equivalent of apartment rent in Richmond.

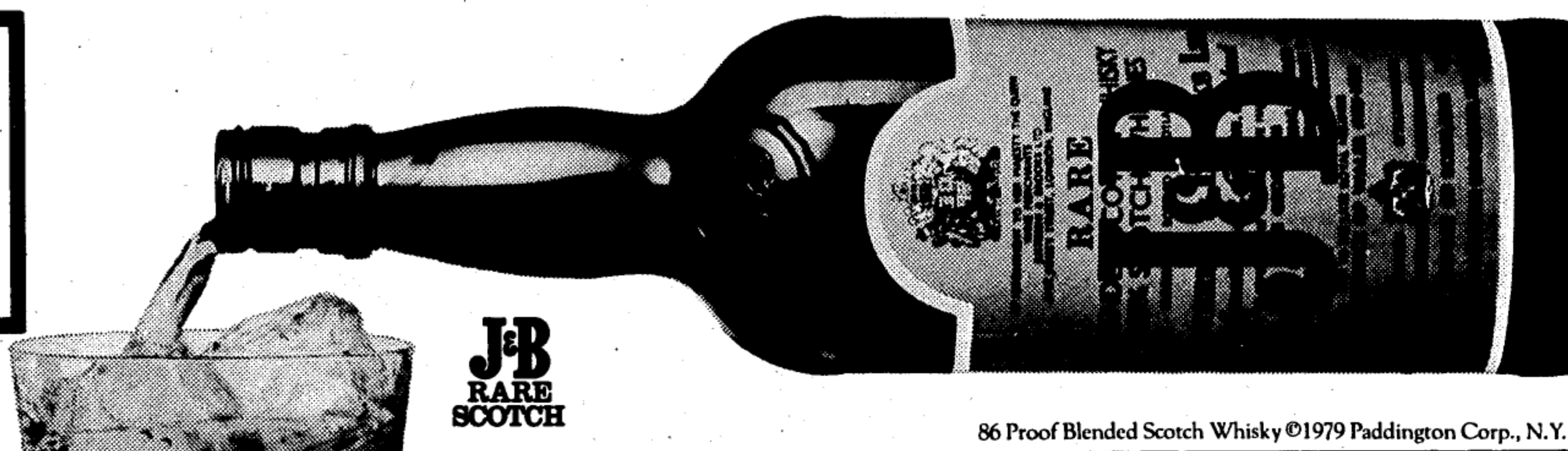
"We'll work it out somehow; I'm glad to be back and in this position," Hubbard said. "The Braves didn't put pressure on me the last time, I did it, and it hurt me a lot. I'm more confident this time. I won't worry about losing the job again, or Royster, or anything else. Nothing is going to stop me from concentrating on my job."

Wigwam Wisps: Royster announced, "I want out of here," when Cox handed Hubbard the second base job. "They have a pretty good investment in me for the next five years, I would think they'd want me to earn it by playing," Royster said. . . . Bob Horner returned after missing 14 games with a sprained back and hit two home runs at Los Angeles June 1. . . . Pitcher Preston Hanna accused a Montreal doctor and the Braves of giving him a cortisone shot he did not want for his injured foot and shoulder. Then Hanna retracted his statement, saying he was misquoted. "I never said the Braves give you drugs to play on, like the article said," Hanna insisted. "But they do give you drugs when you are injured. It's up to the individual, though."

The Braves finished 4-3 on a trip to Los Angeles and San Francisco and had won seven of their last 10. . . . Shortstop Luis Gomez committed only one error in 34 games. . . . Bullpen coach John Sullivan said that catcher Biff Pocoroba must break a life-long habit of throwing across his body. That's why he pitched batting practice while on the disabled list.

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