

Threads of Destiny Led Jack Lohrke to Giants

Warneke Predicts Rookie Will Play Out String, Wind Up as Regular Third Sacker

By AL LANEY
Of the New York Herald Tribune
PHOENIX, Ariz.

A lanky gent in khaki shirt and pants, a leathery complexion and a slow drawl, wandered into the New York Giants' training camp here and looked over the field where two-score athletes were limbering up. This was Lon Warneke, the old pitcher who was a pain in the neck to the Giants for many years and who now is an umpire in the Pacific Coast League.

"You fellows don't want to look so hard at that guy you'll get blinded," he said casually. "That guy," naturally, was Clint Hartung, who was again the center of attention. "Can't pick up a paper last six months without reading about him and that's all I know, but, I'm telling you, you better take your eyes off him and look at another rookie out there who is stepping plenty high. I know plenty about that one. That young feller out there now with red shirtsleeves takin' in grounders from Stonewall Jackson."

Warneke pointed to Jack Lohrke, a compact and very active figure beside third base. He became Giant property during the winter when the Boston Braves failed to take up an option on him. He played shortstop for San Diego most of last season, but is a third base candidate here.

May Bring Luck on Plays
"I saw that kid play," Warneke continued, "and I want to tell you he's one of the finest prospects I've ever seen. He was the best player in our league last year and I look for him to be a great third baseman in the National League. I mean what I say—great. Look at the way he plays that ball. He's got a fine arm, is fast and he knows what to do with that stick, too. He hits that curve ball, too, gets plenty of doubles and will make a good No. 2 hitter. I don't believe I

'He'll Make It'



Lon Warneke

could be wrong about that kid. If you got others trying out for third base you better make outfielders out of them. I think this boy's going to make it."

Warneke's remarks caused some of his hearers to realize for the first time that the Giants have some very promising rookies whose names are not Hartung and some of them, like Lohrke, are likely to attract a small amount of attention as time goes on. Lohrke goes by the nickname of Lucky because of the strange destiny that has led him to the Giant camp. The threads of this destiny are woven out of what is called chance and justify the nickname, which Lohrke would like very much to get rid of. It is a fascinating study for those interested in such matters.

Last June, following his return from service, Lohrke was playing third base for the Spokane club of the Western International League, and was in the bus which crashed on the way to Ellensburg, Wash., killing nine and injur-

ing all the other occupants. But, a few minutes before the crash, Lohrke had received word at a rest stop that he was to leave the team and report immediately to San Diego.

If San Diego had had even a passable shortstop, or if Lohrke had hit less than the 340 he did for Spokane, he never would have got that word. So all through last spring he was swinging for his life each time he went to bat. And just before he was discharged from the Army he was about to enter a plane, when an officer came along and "ranked" him out of his seat. The plane crashed into a mountain and all aboard were lost.

"I Got to Wear It"
To go back earlier still, he played for two months with the Twin Falls, Idaho, team before entering service and that is the only thing that made him eligible for the draft last year. Without those two months he probably never could have become Giant property. But that was not all. After being tentatively purchased by the Braves, they forgot about him, and when he became eligible for the draft, the Giants grabbed him. It seems that everything had to work together to make him a Giant.

Lohrke has a feeling for these events which have determined his career so far. He is the only player on the Giant squad who wears a red flannel shirt. Asked why, he said he "has" to wear it. Pressed for an explanation, he reluctantly revealed that it was a Spokane shirt which he took with him when he left the bus last June. He's worn it ever since, and will wear it as long as it lasts. "I wouldn't feel right without it," he said. "I got to wear it."

Lohrke is 22. On the field he seems a small man, but that is deceptive. He weighed in at 186 pounds the other morning, says he will still weigh 180 when he's done reducing, and he is just an inch under six feet.

Prospects for Polo Grounds



A PAIR of promising rookies—Outfielder Lloyd Gearhart (left) and Infielder Jack (Lucky) Lohrke—compare notes at the Giants' training base at Phoenix, Ariz. Gearhart was with Atlanta and Lohrke with San Diego last season.

Puddinhead Jones Put at Head of Blue Jays' Shortstop Class

\$16,000 Rookie Has Never Seen Big League Game; Stiff Drills for Phils

By STAN BAUMGARTNER
CLEARWATER, Fla.

Ben Chapman, hustling manager of the Phillies, is letting no moss grow under his feet. The Blue Jays had been in camp only a few days when Ben tentatively—notice we say tentatively—picked his five second-string hurlers.

He also—in his mind, at least—picked his first and second-string, and even third-string infielders, and he knows what help he needs behind the bat and in the outfield.

Most startling of all, perhaps, is his declaration that in the absence of the "proven" shortstop, which he hoped Bob Carpenter would buy for the Phils during the winter, Chapman will install Willie (Puddinhead) Jones of Laurel, S. C., as his No. 1 shortstop.

A Ruth-Marion-Wagner
Jones has never seen a major league game. The first contest he ever sees in the Big Test he will play in it, if Chapman's formula holds up. Jones is the guy whom the Phillies gave \$16,000 to sign, the lad who, with cotton still hanging from his hair, made a name for himself on the San Diego Marine team. They say he can hit 'em as far as Ruth, peg 'em like a Marion and scoop 'em up like a Wagner. That is what Johnny Nee, head scout of the Phils, told Chapman.

Ben had never seen Jones in action, but he is willing to take Nee's word for it the first few weeks in spring training.

As far as the pitchers are concerned, Ben doesn't take anyone's word. The first day in camp he went over the weaknesses of the hurling staff with the coaches and veteran receivers, Cy Perkins, Benny Culp, Benny Bengough and Rollie Hemsley, and said: "Now this guy needs a change of pace, this fellow a curve, this lad has to learn to keep his fast ball low, this fellow needs a kick in the pants occa-

No Phil Bar on Press

CLEARWATER, Fla.—Newsmen, radio men and photographers will be welcome in the Phillies' clubhouse at any time during spring training or in the regular season, club officials said here.

sionally, this guy ought to have a pat on the back."

Chapman then laid down a schedule for pitchers' practice. First, one lap around the track, then calisthenics, then forward passing (like a quarterback tossing 'em to the end on the run—for sprints), followed by fielding bunts and, finally, a pitchers' hitting practice. The first time at bat the hurler bunts four times, the next he bunts two and hits two, and if he comes up for the third time he can hit four. "My pitchers are going to be able to bunt or go back to the minors," said Chapman, heatedly.

Finish Workouts With Sprints

All except a few of the infielders and outfielders were in camp, and no one was slighted when the work was passed out. Only Frank McCormick, because of his sore back, was excused from calisthenics. And workouts were finished with 50-yard sprints.

Ben will put himself back on the active list. "We have only one right-handed-hitting outfielder, and looking over my available righthanded pinch-hitters, I feel that I can help the club by getting back in shape," he said.

The first-string infield will be Frank McCormick, first base; Emil Verban, second base; Puddinhead Jones, shortstop; Jim Tabor, third base. The second-string will be Lou Finney, first base; Skeeter Newsome, second; Ralph La Pointe, shortstop, and Ford Mullen, third. The third inner cordon will be Vance Dinges, first base; Garvin Hamner, second; Granville Hamner, shortstop, and either Roy Hughes or Ben Chapman, third.

Ron Northey will be welcomed into camp, when he comes, with no strikes against him. He will be told that if he hustles and plays like Chapman thinks he is capable of doing, he can have the right field job.

Chapman lined up his pitchers—again we say tentatively—as follows: First five, Charley Schanz, Dutch Leonard, Schoolboy Rowe, Tommy Hughes, who ended his holdout February 24, and Oscar Judd; second five, Blix Donnelly, Al Jurisich, Dick Mauney, Ken Raf-fensberger and Charley Stanceu.

Giants Living De Luxe Style in Auto Court

By KEN SMITH
PHOENIX, Ariz.

The Giants trained in seven other states and Cuba over the last 18 years, enjoying the balmy climates and life in the finest hotels, even John D. Rockefeller's mansion, but they never ran into anything quite like the Autopia camp here. Their 1947 spring home on the edge of the Arizona desert is truly Utopia for a large family of ball players thrown together 24 hours a day.

Tourist camps are usually regarded as little wayside shacks where autoists can pull in for the night, for a buck. But not the "tourist camp" the Giants occupy! There are 54 well-furnished two-room bungalows in Autopia, on a main highway three miles from the center of Phoenix. Each has a bath, hot running water, electricity, heaters for the cold mornings, maid service and a telephone. Outside the windows is green grass and a main lawn center, where the athletes bask in the afternoon sunshine. There is a table tennis table, horseshoe pitching court and a clubroom with card tables, radio, phonograph and soft drink cooler.

Dress as They Please
In the friendly office are the mail boxes and easy facilities for collecting laundry and cleaning. Nearby is a golf driving range, open air movie theater and drug store. Outside a bus runs to town every half hour. The entire view overlooks a range of copper and purple-colored mountains approached by sagebrush desert.

The restaurant is always open on the American plan and the food and service are good. A campaign for more variety is bringing results. A fellow dresses as he pleases. They come from Mustang, Okla., Forest Grove, Ore., Mexia, Tex., Hastings, Neb., Red Bluff, Calif., etc., for the

Early Settlers at Stoneham Camp



INSPIRED by the pioneer spirit of the Old West, and responding to a nudge from the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce, First Baseman Johnny Mize (left) and Pitcher Bill Voiselle appeared in broad-brimmed Western hats at a training session at the Giants' Arizona camp.

most part and are certainly more at home here than in some \$20-a-day ritzy hotel where the guests dress for dinner, and then act that way.

Matty Schwab, Jr., Polo Grounds horticulturist, transformed the desert ball field into an excellent playing grounds. The stands are modern and the locker room better than in many big league parks.

The entire layout is a "find" by President Horace Stoneham. It never rains, it is never humid, the air is grand and there is no wind. A fortnight jump to San Diego, Honolulu and San Francisco will prevent the players from becoming too much acclimated to one section.

There are so many players at every position that nobody has paid any at-

tention to Absentees Larry Jansen, Johnny Gee and Warren Sandel, or to the fact that Babe Young and Catcher Jim Gladd are unsigned. If a deal is made for a pitcher or outfielder, it will be only to provide a bit more experience to balance the rookies and the other clubs will have to come to the Giants. Ott has a second infield in Young, Witek, Rigney and either Lohrke, Thomson or Gordon, according to which ones win the varsity job. Mize, Cooper, Lombardi, Young, Gordon, Marshall, Graham and the rookies are slugging away merrily. The best of the new pitchers seems to be Bill Ayers, the Atlanta Cracker ace.

Carl Hubbell's tryout camp at Palatka, Fla., produced 30 prospects who were signed to contracts.

LOOPING THE LOOPS

By J. G. TAYLOR SPINK

Just a Country Kid--Name of Jones

CLEARWATER, Fla.

Every few years a big country boy eases into a big league camp, and, unsung and unannounced, steals the thunder and corners the show from the veterans. Sometimes the thunder melts away to a slight rumble, sometimes it becomes a tornado.

Back in 1907, a big, raw-boned, broad-shouldered giant came out of the Midwest, from the corn belt of Nebraska, recommended to



Walter Johnson Joe Jackson Jimmie Foxx Puddinhead Jones

Clark Griffith by an itinerant cigar salesman, and became the greatest pitcher in baseball—Walter Johnson.

At about the same time a tall, slim lad, who played the outfield in his bare feet in his native South Carolina, reported to the Athletics, became homesick, deserted the club, and returned two years later to become one of the greatest hitters baseball has ever known—Joe Jackson.

Some 18 years later, a barrel-chested, six-foot, 16-year-old farmer boy from Maryland reported to the Athletics at Fort Myers. The veterans on the club and the newspapermen snickered when they heard him declare—pointing to a tree 400 feet from the home plate—"I'll hit one over that."

He did. His name was James Emory Foxx—and before he wound up his career with the Phillies two years ago, after a long service with the Athletics and Red Sox, he was second only to Babe Ruth in hitting 'em out yonder.

Not so many days ago, another well-built, broad-shouldered lad stood at third base in the Clearwater park, the training camp of the Phillies, and said: "See that church out there (100 feet beyond the left field fence)? I hit one that far in Hartsville one day last summer."

There were no snickers, as there had been at Fort Myers that sunny day 22 years ago, when Jimmie Foxx reported. There was a feeling that this boy might have that certain something to set him apart from the usual rookie. The youngster is Puddinhead Jones, the fabulous lad to whom the Phillies gave \$16,000 as a bonus to sign a contract, despite the fact that he had never played a game in Organized Ball.

Markers for His Homers

Stories of Puddinhead's prowess at the bat are fantastic. They read like the legend of Beowulf. "He can hit 'em farther than Ruth, straighter than Musial and as often as Ted Williams," say some.

In each town in which he played last year in the Palmetto League, where he batted .503 in 60 games, the fans have marked the spots where Jones' homers landed. In Hartsville, there is a street 100 feet beyond the ball park. One of Puddinhead's drives cleared a church and smashed the windshield of a car parked nearby. At Kingstree, the marker is a tall, lone pine tree, 50 feet beyond the fence, where Jones' drive knocked off a huge bit of bark. At Bishopville, it is merely a mark on the left field fence. "He cleared this by 30 feet," said a fan.

It was the same story in Camden, Sumter, Darlington, Florence and his home town of Bennettsville.

"He could be elected governor of North Carolina if he wanted to run for the office," said Robert Carpenter, president of the Phillies, after a recent visit to the state. "A lot of those people down there never heard of Harry Truman, but they have all heard of Puddinhead Jones."

Ira Thomas, scout for the Athletics who tried to sign Jones and failed, says he can hit 'em as far as Ruth—well, maybe sometimes.

"I set out to watch him one day," relates Thomas. "We drove to the ball park and the fellow who had the car said, 'We'll park away far enough so that fellow Jones won't break my windshield.' We put the car in center field—must have been 450 feet from

Tabor Gives Puddinhead Inside Tip on Relaxation

CLEARWATER, Fla.—Jim Tabor, who is quite a ribber, met Puddinhead Jones as the rookie walked to the bench quite exhausted after a long drill at short.

"That ground gets bigger and bigger around short, doesn't it?" asked Tabor.

Jones nodded and remarked, "It sure has me down."

Tabor grinned. "You know how to overcome that?"

"No," replied Jones.

"Get your wife a good job and then you won't have to work," grinned Jim.

"Aw, shucks," said Jones.

home plate. Jones didn't hit the car—but he hit one clear OVER it."

In his first trip to the plate in Clearwater in the initial batting practice with the Phillies, Jones, like the mighty Casey, swung and missed. But the next time he hit the right field fence on the fly. Then he almost took off Ken Raffensberger's head with a line drive through the box.

A "Foot-in-Bucket" Hitter

Jones stands straight up at the plate and holds his hands separated an inch or more on the bat. He has an open stance, his left foot pulled back six inches from his right, with his feet 18 inches apart. It is a stance faintly reminiscent of the famous "foot in the bucket" of Al Simmons. Unlike Simmons, however, Puddinhead steps straight in when the ball is delivered. He then brings his bat down, holding it at least six inches from his body, and follows through with a real snap of the wrists.

Jones, who has the eyes of a cat, is an excellent shot—a fine hunter. He is a powerfully-built youngster, with broad shoulders. His hands are comparatively small, but knit to big strong wrists and burly forearms. He is freckle faced and round cheeked, with curly hair.

At shortstop, Jones moves about with the grace of a big cat. The first day of practice he was stiff and apparently clumsy. But in two days he was gliding over the infield, making ordinary chances seem easy. He has what the players call "good" hands, even if they are small.

Johnny Nee, former scout of the New York Yankees, who followed Jones for four weeks before signing him for the Phils, says he is the finest young player he has seen in the past 15 years. Jones made Nee give him his personal check for \$16,000 before he would attach his signature.

The youngster comes from Laurel Hill, N. C., a whistle stop of 500 population, six miles from Laurinburg. At Laurel Hill he played baseball, basketball, football, tennis and golf.

Just after he finished high school, Uncle Sam got into the big fracas with Germany and Japan and Jones went along—to San Diego, Calif. It was there he really budded into a ball player. He was the star of the San Diego team for three years—and in his last season batted .560.

When he was discharged from service, Jones returned home and started playing in the Palmetto League. It wasn't long before the scouts, who had been tipped off to him when he was serving in the Navy, caught up with

Cuban Kids Ask Pesos, Instead of Autographs



UMPIRE GEORGE MAGERKURTH SURROUNDED BY CUBAN YOUNGSTERS

By HAROLD BURR
Of the Brooklyn Eagle

HAVANA, Cuba

Young Cuba has taken charge of the Dodgers' arrival at, and departure from, Gran Stadium. It's much the same mob of small boys that worships the ball players at Ebbets Field, except that these Havana youngsters are more mercenary. They don't get underfoot seeking autographs. They frankly ask for money.

"Five cents?" questions the little brown and white urchin alike, looking wistfully, and not without hope, up into the eyes of the rich American baseball star.

It's about all the English the ragged little chaps know, as they reach grimy hands up through the bus windows or cluster around the open

door. They take refusals good-naturedly, grinning delightedly when the players kid them.

But they make up the handicaps of not knowing the language of the tall and famous visitors to their city through pantomime. One of 'em the other day made as if to run under a fly ball. Suddenly he staggered and clapped his hands to his head, a look of startled surprise mantling his features.

"Babe Herman!" murmured Arky Vaughan, instantly recognizing the imitation.

"How Max Lanier go here?" Stanky asked a muchacho who wore the dark blue cap of the recently crowned Almendares' champions of the Cuban National League, the former Cardinal ace winning the last two games of the season after one day's rest to clinch the title.

The young roofer made a triumphant zero sign with his thumb and forefinger, repeating the symbol nine times, and then swept his hand symbolically into space. It told the answer he wanted to put across—Lanier always pitched a shutout.

The kids swarm all over the bus while it's waiting to fill up for its return journey to the hotel, blowing the horn to hurry the laggards from the dressing room, pressing their dirty noses against the windshield, climbing up on the hood and feverishly trying to unscrew the radiator cap that might bring wealth in a junk shop.

They scatter like quail as the driver takes his seat, throws in his clutch and the bus starts to shiver and shake.

"Manana!" they yell in concert as the bus moves. "Adios, Amicos."

Dodger Stock Sale Disputed

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

Charles H. Ebbets, January 31, at the age of 89, Mrs. Booth has been living with a married son, Eugene Booth, a wounded war veteran.

Whether rightly or wrongly, Mrs. Booth feels bitter over the sale of the Ebbets half of the Brooklyn club to Branch Rickey and his associates at the price of \$800,000. Though hurt by the way the Rickey regime treated her mother, sister (Mrs. Mae Ebbets Cadore) and herself in regard to their old pass privileges, most of Mrs. Booth's resentment is directed against the executors of the Ebbets estate, George McLaughlin, president of the Brooklyn Trust Company; Joe Gilleaudeau, her brother-in-law, and Grace Slade, the second Mrs. Ebbets. Gilleaudeau is married to a younger Ebbets daughter, Genevieve, and there is friction between the sisters as a result of the sale.

Klein Speaks for McLaughlin

Mrs. Booth said that in June, 1945, McLaughlin went into Surrogate's Court and reported he had an offer of \$650,000, but, according to Mrs. Booth, there was no money in the treasury at that time. This deal was not made, but later the Ebbets interest was sold for \$800,000. "By that time," Mrs. Booth told Lieb, "the Brooklyn club had \$500,000 in the treasury, so the offer of \$800,000 actually was much less than the June offer of \$650,000."

"Since then," continued Mrs. Booth, "we have asked to examine the executors before the Surrogate of Kings County (Brooklyn). The Surrogate's Court has been so crowded it just hasn't come up."

On March 1, the day before Winchell invited THE SPORTING NEWS to "break" the story, four of the Brooklyn club's directors, Branch Rickey, Walter O'Malley, John L. Smith and Judge Harry Ughetta, left in the Dodgers' private plane for points south. Rickey flew to Pensacola, Fla., with the others and then went on to give a baseball talk at New Orleans. The rest proceeded to

Frick Keeps in Trim

NEW YORK, N. Y.—While Commissioner A. B. Chandler, President Will Harridge of the American League and the other officials of the game are basking in Florida's sun, Ford Frick, head of the National League, is keeping in trim in the North by curling. An ardent curler, Frick participated in a bonspiel in Boston recently.

Caracas, Venezuela, for the Dodger-Yankee series.

The Daily Mirror of March 4 reported that one club official, reached by phone, stated flatly that the directors had planned the trip for a few weeks, just to look over their valuable chattels. The Mirror said there was another report an "expected legal battle with the Ebbets heirs" sent the Dodger executives to South America for conferences.

Arthur Mann, former New York newspaperman and now assistant to Branch Rickey, was the only one left at the Dodger offices when Lieb called. Mann told Lieb the sale was consummated before he joined the Brooklyn organization, but added: "From what I have been told, there were so many heirs that the Surrogate had to act for what he considered was the best interests of all, and that the Rickey-O'Malley-Smith offer was an excellent price." Two calls at the Brooklyn Trust Company's offices failed to get an interview with McLaughlin. The president was either "out," or "tied up with important business."

The gist of Mrs. Booth's remarks were given to Harold Klein, the bank's vice-president, in charge of publicity and advertising. Klein, in turn, repeated the story to McLaughlin. Klein, a former Brooklyn Eagle man, gave out the following statement in behalf of McLaughlin and himself:

"The matter of the Ebbets estate now is before the Surrogate's Court of Kings County. We filed our accounting on January 2, 1946, and while it is before the judge, we can't prejudice our case by discussing it, or trying it, in the newspapers. This is an issue before a court which has full jurisdiction in the matter. If we have anything to say, we will say it in court."

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