

Tribe Tunes Up 'Flashiest Foursome'

Acrobatic Infield Amazes Camp Observers

Boudreau, Gordon Glitter as Keystone Combination

By ED McAULEY
Of the Cleveland News

TUCSON, Ariz.



Name the finest second base combination you've ever seen.
Jack Barry and Eddie Collins?
"Now," Tris Speaker will reply, "you're talking about great ball players. But did you notice how Joe Gordon simply popped the ball to Lou Boudreau to start a double play today . . .?"
Johnny Evers and Joe Tinker?
"You're getting back to my time now," Bill McKechnie will observe, "but when Boudreau goes to his left . . ."
Frank Crosetti and Tony Lazzeri?
"Nuts," will be the curt comment of Rogers Hornsby. "You could sit here all afternoon naming second-base combinations who were plenty good. Peckinpaugh and Harris. Lajoie and Turner. Jurgens and Herman. Marion and Schoendienst. Collins and Risberg. Pesky and Doerr. (The Rajah neglected to mention Hornsby and Thevenow.) But when you reached the end of the list, you still wouldn't have named the greatest of all time—unless you said Boudreau and Gordon."

By now you may have gathered that the veteran observers at the Cleveland Indians' training camp believe that the Tribe will have a sparkling duet in action in the middle of the infield during the coming American League season.

You may suspect that the viewpoint is biased, for all three of the gentlemen quoted are working for Bill Veeck—but those of us who are not on the dynamic president's payroll are no less impressed by what we see in the training drills day after day. Boudreau and Gordon make our eyes pop out.

Whole Infield Rates With Game's Finest

Hornsby has been widely quoted as calling Boudreau and Gordon the best second base combination in the history of the game. He might have gone a step further and designated the entire Cleveland infield as the national pastime's flashiest foursome.

With Eddie Robinson at first, Gordon at second, Boudreau at short and Ken Keltner at third, the Redskins put on a show which has the Arizona tourists goggle-eyed.

Robinson, the handsome young giant who was voted the International League's most valuable player last season, has lost every trace of the foot ailment which threatened for a time to end his career before it was well started.

Gordon . . . well, remember the prewar Gordon? You'll see him again when you watch the Indians play in 1947. The Flash reported weighing two pounds less than his normal avoirdupois during the playing season. He is happy to be with the Indians, happy to be away from the New York organization, happy to be teamed with Boudreau.

Boudreau is just Boudreau, which means—the All-Star selections to the contrary notwithstanding—that he's the best shortstop in the business at the present time.

Keltner, who spent most of the winter reading that he was on the trading block, is the ever-talented anchorman of the quartette. Watching him perform his fielding miracles here, you wonder why the Tribal brass hats ever considered swapping him for Stan Spence of the Senators or anyone else.

Kenny Welcomes Hot Corner Competition

Last spring, Ken was out of the Navy, out of condition, and bitterly unhappy about his contract terms. He finished with a batting average of .241, at least 40 points off his customary pace.

This spring, he is almost literally a new man. There isn't a more contented, friendlier athlete in camp than the big blond from Milwaukee.

At least five members of the squad are challenging for the first-string assignment at the hot corner. Ken, in spite of his great reputation as the American League's perennial All-Star third baseman, does not resent this. He welcomes the competition. He smiles—but he says: "Try to take this job away from me."

Speaker says that every member of the inner quartette is capable of batting over .300. Boudreau, Gordon and Keltner all have done so in the past. Robinson's average with Baltimore—and the form he has shown here—confirm the Grey Eagle's opinion.

No kidding, folks, this may sound like wishful thinking and unjustified optimism. If you are inclined to be cynical, stop some day in this land of sunshine and country of cactus.

It's quite a show the boys are putting on at Randolph Field. You'll have to pinch your sunburned arm to make sure that you're awake.

Cleveland's Crackerjack Cordon



CLEVELAND'S NEW INFIELD, left to right, Kenny Keltner, Lou Boudreau, Joe Gordon and Eddie Robinson.

Blue Jays Back Musial Over Williams

Rowe, Lone Dissenter, Says Ted Gives Pitchers Bigger Scare

By STAN BAUMGARTNER
CLEARWATER, Fla.

The red-hot controversy on the relative value of Stan Musial and Ted Williams, first sparked by Eddie Collins' statement that "Musial couldn't carry Williams' glove," and later fanned into a flame by THE SPORTING NEWS, kindled a blaze of its own at the Phillies' camp.

The players—and they should know better than the fans or sports writers—voted with one exception for Stan Musial.

Frank McCormick, big first baseman, struck the keynote of the Blue Jay sentiment when he said: "Any guy who says Stan Musial can't carry Ted Williams' glove is wrong. Williams can do one thing better—he can hit home runs. But defensively, as a base runner, as a team player and as a fellow, Musial has it all over Ted."

Dutch Leonard, former American League pitcher who has faced Williams many times and was teamed with Musial on Bob Feller's barnstorming tour last fall, is an equally strong booster for Musial.

"Why, there is no comparison," said

Ted 48 Hours Late at Sox Camp

SARASOTA, Fla.—Ted Williams was in a jovial mood when he reached camp here on the afternoon of March 5, more than 48 hours after he was due. The only fly in Thumping Theodore's ointment was the symposium in THE SPORTING NEWS occasioned by General Manager Eddie Collins' statement that "Stan Musial couldn't carry Williams' glove."

"After reading the writers' comparisons between myself and Stan, I came to the conclusion that Williams stinks," Ted said, adding, "but I've still got Collins on my side."

Ted declared he hadn't heard

from the Pásquels this year and that he didn't intend to write any more newspaper columns. The Hose slugger revealed that he fished daily in the Everglades for five weeks and shot a 67-inch snake from an auto.

Williams appears in the pink of physical condition and announced that he weighs 195 pounds. Instead of staging a one-man batting show as he did after his arrival in 1946, Ted contented himself by jogging around Payne Field and engaging in a "pepper" game with Hy Hurwitz of the Boston Globe, his former ghost writer.

Leonard. "Williams will hit one for you occasionally, but Musial is always playing for you. Gosh, that guy is a great fellow on a ball club. He hustled as if his life depended on it every moment of that tour. Can you imagine Williams doing the same thing?"

"Here is how I would rate the men I have seen playing: Until he got hurt, Joe DiMaggio was the greatest ball player I had ever seen. I would rank Musial next and Williams third."

"Stan Runs 'Em Out"

Little Blix Donnelly, who pitched for the Cards against Williams in training games with the Red Sox last spring, said anybody who would take Williams over Musial is "just plain nuts," adding: "Gosh, you got to play with a fellow like Musial to appreciate his worth. I have seen him hit a dozen blue darts (fast hitters) to the second baseman—grounders on which Ted Williams would drop his bat and run back to the bench—but Stan runs every one out as if his life depends on it. Sometimes the first baseman juggled the ball and Musial was safe. That's what wins games for a pitcher. The only thing Williams can do for you is hit the long ball and maybe he won't hit so many of them."

Schoolboy Rowe, who, like Leonard, has pitched in both the American and National leagues, was the only one who pulled a strong oar for Williams. "I just can't see how anyone would take Musial over Williams," he said. "A guy who hits that long ball for you can

win games and that's what counts. Musial drives in runs, but he hasn't that authority that Williams possesses. And he doesn't frighten pitchers like Williams does."

"Musial gets a lot of his hits by beating out infield grounders that don't amount to much in the run-making, but when Ted makes a hit it counts. Why, if Williams were as fast as Musial and didn't jog down to first on a lot of balls, Ted would hit over .400 every year."

"No, sir, I can't go along with the rest on Musial. But, listen, I wouldn't complain if the Phillies had either one. I'm not partial to Williams because he hits me. He doesn't. I always had the best of him. But I know what he did to others and how the pitchers in the American League shivered a little when he came to bat."

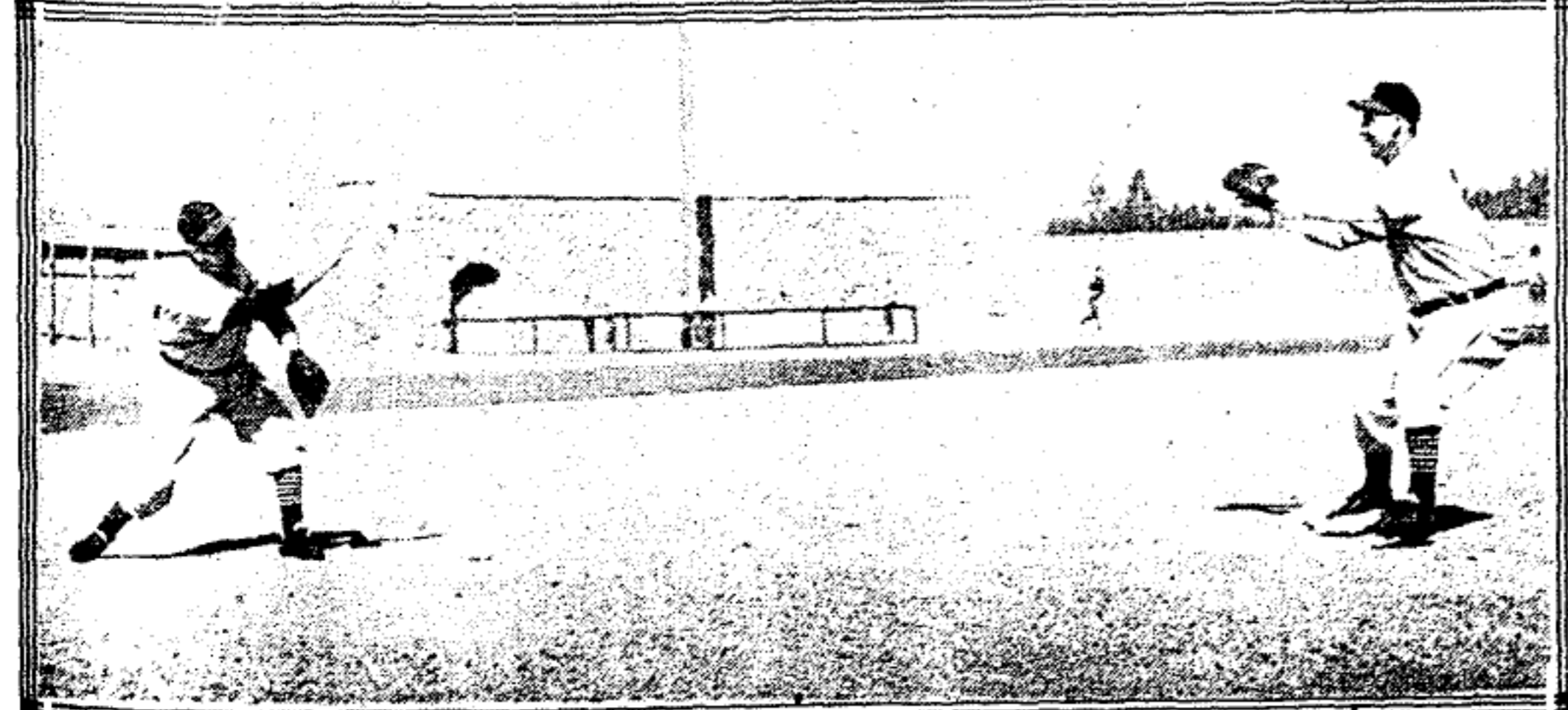
"I'll admit that he is a punk fielder—although he is getting better—and that he is not a team man that Musial is supposed to be. He plays for only one guy and that is Ted Williams. But I'd still take him to win ball games for me if I were pitching."

Dusty Cooke, once a great outfielder with the Yankees and Red Sox, and now the trainer of the Phillies, interrupted to say:

"You know the difference between Musial and Williams? It's the difference between Tom Yawkey and Sam Breadon."

"You got something there," said Rowe.

They Put Out a Pair With the Greatest of Ease



LOU BOUDREAU (LEFT) AND JOE GORDON IN A TWIN KILLING