

'My Guys,' Beams Lacy, Rejoining Dodgers

By GORDON VERRELL

LOS ANGELES—The fact Leondaus Lacy is back with the Dodgers after less than three months in Dixie is strange enough.

But the fact that in only his second game with the Dodgers he was in center field, subbing for Dusty Baker, the man he was traded for in the first place, now that is irony.

After some initial shock over the transactions of June 23, in which the Dodgers purchased the contracts of Lacy and relief pitcher Elias Sosa from Atlanta while the Braves claimed onetime Cy Young Award winner Mike Marshall on

waivers, Lacy said, "It's great to be back.

"These are the guys I want to play with . . . Buckner, Garvey, Cey, Lopes, all of 'em . . . I like 'em all. I just want to do whatever I can do to get us into first place."

IT WAS last winter when Lacy, Jimmy Wynn, Tom Paciorek and Jerry Royster were shipped off to Atlanta for Baker and Ed Goodson. Now Lacy is back with the club that drafted him in 1969.

"I never wanted to leave," Lacy said. "I've been playing with these guys since 1969. These are the guys

I want to win with. You develop feelings for the guys you come up with.

"It's funny. There was a game against the Dodgers when I was with the Braves and Ronny (Cey) gets hit by a pitch and it looks like he's hurt. So I start running in from my position, you know, to see how he is, and then I stopped and said to myself, 'Hey, he's on the other team. He's not my teammate anymore.'"

The first game Lacy played after returning to the Dodgers was at third base, in place of the injured

Cey. The next day, he was in center field.

"I don't care where I play, whether it's third base one day, center field the next, or left field or wherever," he said. "It doesn't matter. All I want to do is be with a winner."

WHEN LACY opened at third base against the Giants on June 26, it marked the first time he'd played there since his first year in professional baseball, in Ogden.

He later became a second baseman, but with the development of Dave Lopes, his playing time de-

creased. Then, last summer, primarily because of injuries, he wound up playing 43 games in the outfield and finished with a .314 batting average, ranking second on the club.

He went to the Arizona Instructional League over the winter to improve his outfield skills with the notion that he would be the Dodgers' center fielder. That idea was curtailed on November 17 when he was traded to the Braves.

He played only two games in center field for Atlanta, the rest (Continued on Page 18, Column 1)

Kingman's Zip-Lip Skit Draws Howls From Press Box

By JACK LANG

NEW YORK—Color Dave Kingman private. The Greta Garbo of the baseball world, he "wants to be alone."

The closer Sky King comes to approaching the home-run heroics of Babe Ruth, Roger Maris and even Hack Wilson, the more of a recluse he becomes.

Even regular writers traveling with the club have their problems. In lighter moments, the big guy will joke, make wisecracks, even try to be chummy.

But let him hit a home run and he goes into a shell. "I don't want to talk about my home runs," says the 6-6 giant as he heads off for the showers or the trainer's room to be by himself.

Joe Torre, whose locker is next to Kingman's at Shea Stadium, is often left to answer reporters' questions and explain the mystique that is Dave Arthur Kingman, age 26, and big news.

"DAVE IS different because he wants to do his job without the notoriety," said the understanding Torre. "He doesn't enjoy the limelight."

But it is difficult for Kingman to avoid it, try as he might. In every town the Mets visit, Sky King is the man sought by the columnists and hordes of young radio interviewers with their inevitable tape recorders. And they don't understand when Kingman studiously avoids them.

Oh, he is not discourteous. It's just that he shies away. He gets restless if he has to spend more than a few minutes discussing his feats. Eventually, he knows, the talk will lead to his home runs and that's when he clams up.

Magazine writers find Dave particularly difficult to interview and they have been following him around with more frequency as his home-run total climbs.

The magazine New Times recently had Lawrence Wright around Shea Stadium and with the Mets for more than a week. Wright finished his assignment shaking his head. He barely managed to get anything out of Kingman. Most of his comments came from other players . . . Torre, Willie Stargell, Steve Yeager. The magazine devoted four full pages of text to a feature on Kingman. There are no more than a half-dozen quotes from David himself. Not Wright's fault. It's just the way Kingman is.

ON A RECENT night when he hit his 26th home run in the Mets' 75th game, Kingman refused to answer questions about the mile-high drive over the 396-foot fence in left center.

When he finally did emerge from the showers 45 minutes after the game, Kingman dressed hurriedly and departed for the quiet of his huge suburban home in Cos Cob, Conn., where he lives a bachelor's life.

"If he ever gets close to Maris' record, he'll be insufferable," commented one young reporter.

No doubt about it. And the media better be prepared because Kingman will make news the rest of the season with his home runs.

Kingman home runs are not just the ordinary blasts over the wall or into the bleachers. They are happenings. When David connects, the immediate reaction of fans and press, alike is: how far will it go?

His home runs so far have become legends. Mickey Mantle said the one he saw in Fort Lauderdale last year was the longest he'd ever seen. They are still talking about the three he hit in Chicago earlier this year . . . one of which hit a roof of a house three houses up on the block across the street from Wrigley Field.

(Continued on Page 44, Column 5)

HOW TO EARN YOUR STRIPES

by Catfish Hunter

You only need one pitch Everybody says you need two, three, four pitches to be in the major leagues. That isn't so. One of the best pitchers I know throws nothing but fastballs. Changes speeds on it. A fast one, then a little off of it, fastball inside, then back away from you...and then he'll throw you a curve ball in the dirt. He keeps you off-stride, looking for that curve ball. But he's not going to throw it for you to hit it. He knows how to set a hitter up.

Now, me, I might mix 'em up and throw everything—fastball, breaking ball, change-up. Or just stay with one pitch because I've got it right on the corner, right within an inch of where I want it.

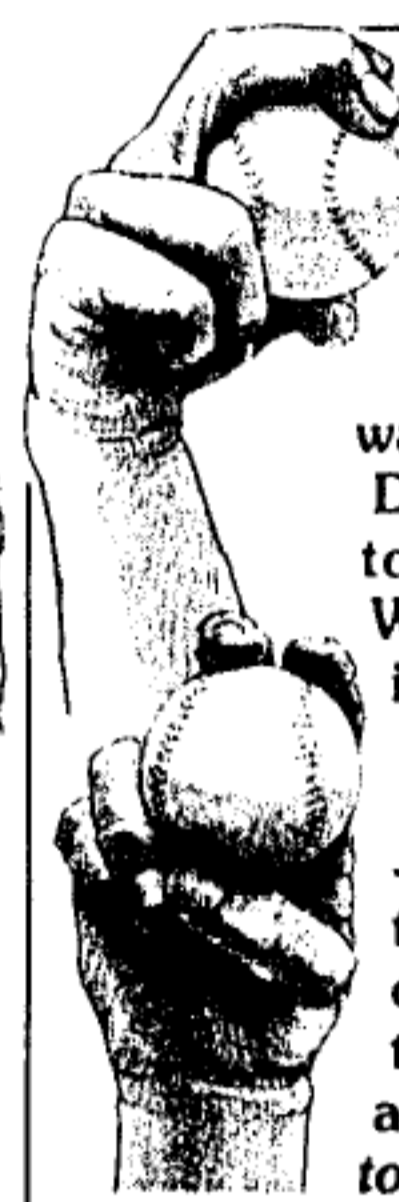
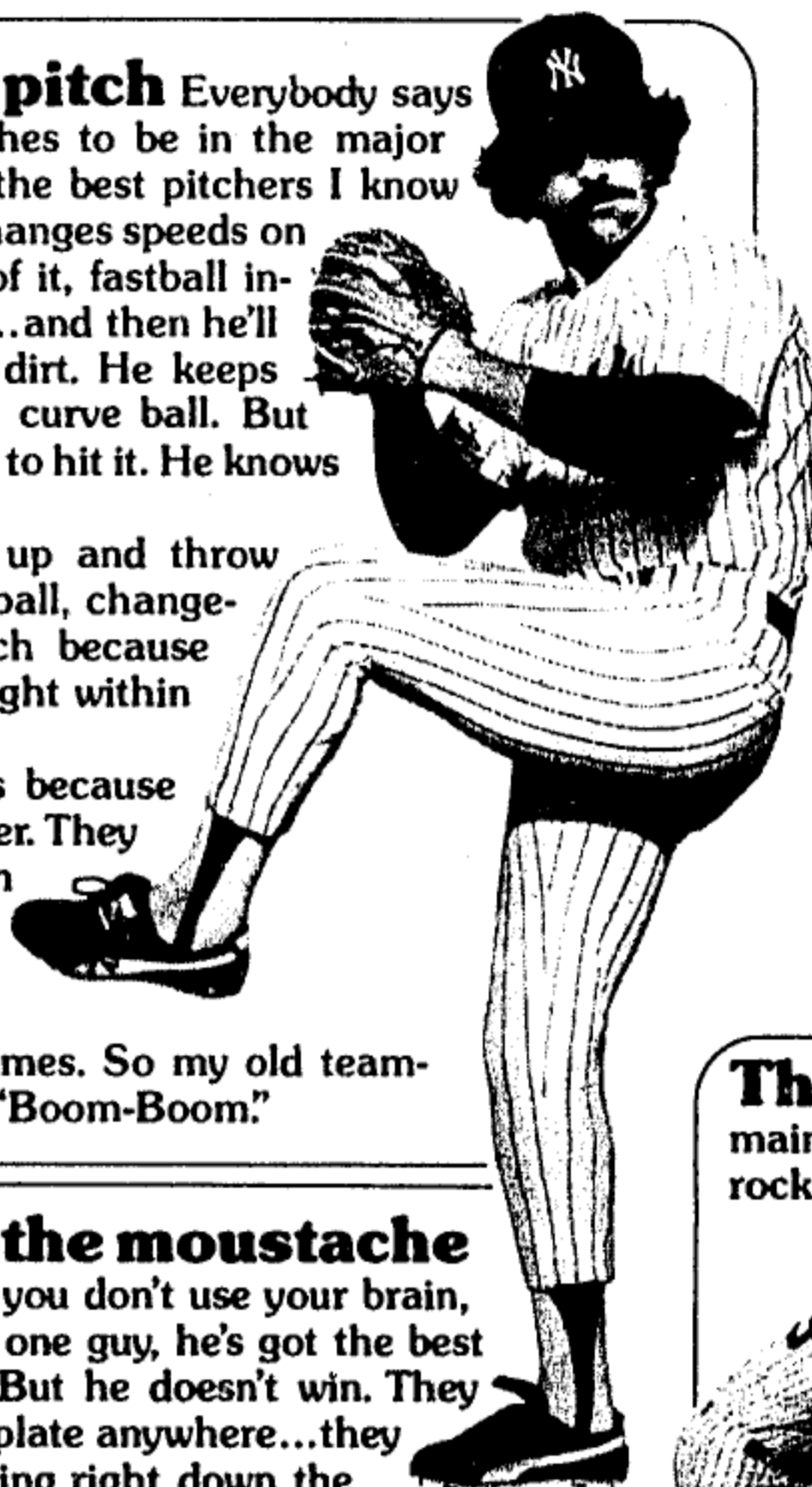
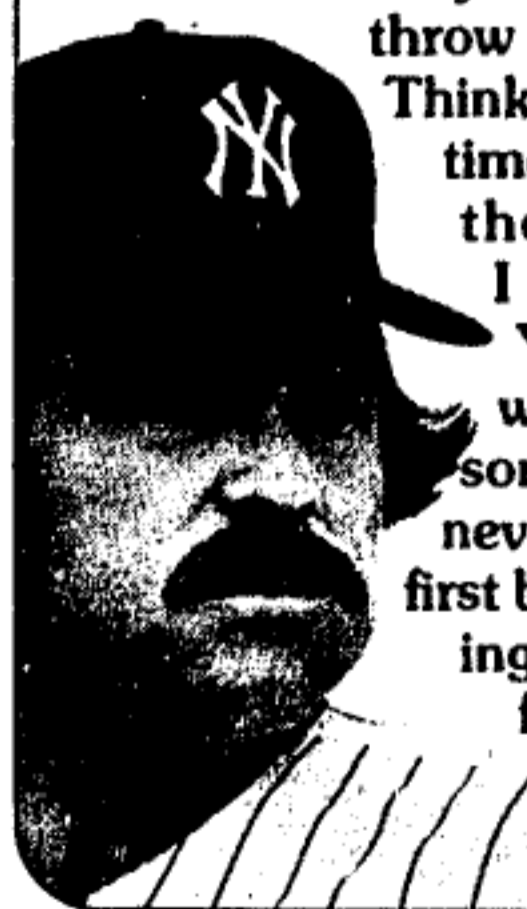
I give up a lot of home runs because batters know I'm a control pitcher. They know I'm not wild. They stand in there, and if you don't make the right pitch, they're gonna hit it. Ballparks shoot off fireworks after home runs most times. So my old teammates, they started calling me "Boom-Boom."

Between the hat & the moustache

You can have good stuff, but if you don't use your brain, you're not going to win. There's one guy, he's got the best stuff of any pitcher anywhere. But he doesn't win. They tell him, "Just get it across the plate anywhere...they can't hit it." You throw it breaking right down the middle and they're going to hit it! He's not thinking for himself.

I look to see how close the batter's standing to home plate...things like that. If he stands away from the plate, most times he doesn't like the ball inside. If he's standing back deep, he's trying to wait on a curve ball till after it breaks. And if he's standing up front, he wants to hit the curve ball before it breaks, so you throw him all fastballs.

Thinking pays off all the time. Like, if he hits the ball, where am I supposed to be? You've got to know when to back-up...some pitchers I know never think to cover first base! A good fielding pitcher can save five games for himself a year.



I tuck my thumb

I've only seen one other pitcher hold the ball like I do. See how my thumb's tucked under? That's the way I picked up throwing.

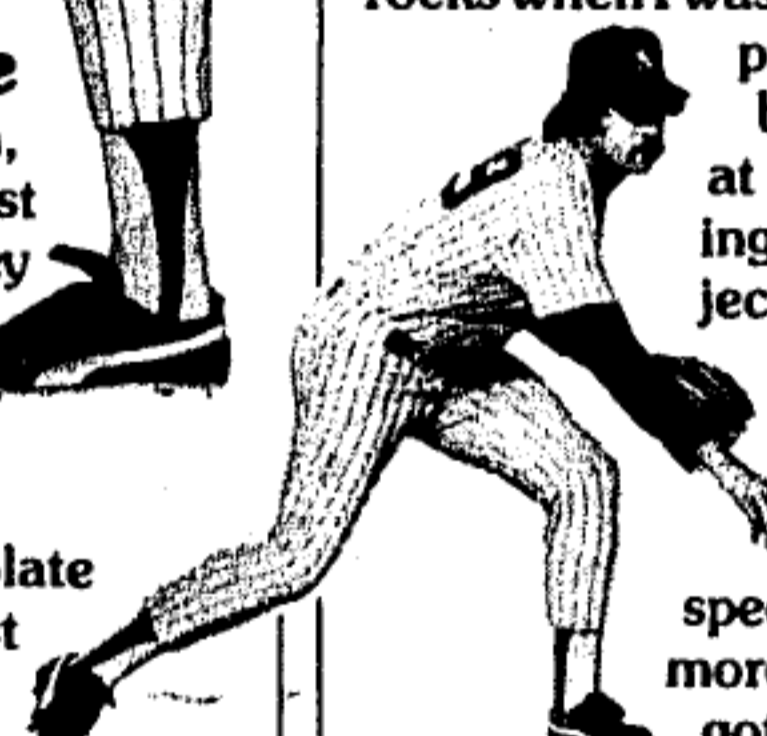
Don't know as I'd tell everyone to hold his thumb that way. What I do tell people, though, is how to handle a curve ball.

Most people, they throw it from out here to the side so they get a flat-breaking spinner that's easy to hit because it's curving on the same plane that the guy's swinging his bat. My advice is, always turn your wrist towards your body, like in the drawing. That way, your curve ball is going to break like it should...downwards.

The secret of pitching

I tell kids, the main thing to go for at first is accuracy. I'd pick up rocks when I was a kid and throw them at telephone poles. I'd throw corncobs at my brothers, and they were throwing at me. I wasn't just throwing at nothing; I was always throwing at an object, trying to hit it.

Once you've got your accuracy, don't throw the same speed all the time. That's the secret of pitching right there. Changing speeds. Take a little off here and a little more there...control, that's all you've got to have. It's not any good if your fastball and your curve ball's the same speed. A guy gets the time on it, he's going to hit it.



Don't cheat your feet People see the stripe on the side of my shoe, they ask me how come I wear Pumas. I tell them the truth: I think they're the best shoe that's made. I couldn't run on that synthetic turf till I got those Pumas with the little suction-cup things.

You've got Fran Tarkenton wearing Pumas, and Walt Frazier, Reggie Jackson, George McGinnis...you couldn't pay guys like us enough money to wear them if the shoes weren't real good.

Should you wear Pumas? Well, the way most people play, they can wear any old thing. But if you're good enough—if you've earned your stripes—what you wear on your feet is going to make a difference in how you play. Then you should wear Pumas.



PUMA

When you've earned your stripes.

Kong Kills Writers With Kindness

By JACK LANG

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla.—Dave Kingman, sounding like a magna cum laude graduate of Dale Carnegie's courses on "How to Win Friends and Influence People," greeted the New York press corps like long lost friends. Well, not exactly friends. More like enemies he's prepared to live with.

Kingman shocked his new bosses as well as his old friends in the typewriter jockey corps by not only holding a friendly press conference his first day back in a New York Mets uniform, but by also promising to get along with the scribes.

Not only that, when he walked into a crowded press room, he asked New York writers to raise their hands and then went about tossing them small boxes which included ballpoint pens with the engraving "3-4-81 D.K."

"It's just a little thought," Kingman said, "to let you be reminded of this day—that I'm trying. I'll try and get along with you if you try and get along with me. I'm starting over. I'll be happy to cooperate fully with the New York press in any way I can. I'll try again if you will."

But even as he spoke, Kingman got in a slight dig. "I'm going slowly," he gibed, "so you can get all this right."

Kingman did have one ground rule. "You can ask me any questions about baseball and I want you to report things exactly as you see them, good or bad. But my private life is my own. Stay out of my private life."

Kingman said he does not seek publicity but it comes to him anyway.

"I don't care to have my name in the headlines," he suggested. "But everybody knows my name because of the adverse publicity I've received."

When the incident involving the bucket of ice water he threw on a Chicago writer last year was breached, Kingman smiled.

"The publicity I got from that was unbelievable. I'll admit I'm an agitator. I love practical jokes. But in a fun way. Not in a vindictive way."

Chicago writers covering the White Sox in nearby Sarasota attended the press conference and Kingman was cordial to them. But he refused flatly to answer any questions about his two-year feud with the press corps in Chicago.

Kingman's arrival was greeted joyously by his new teammates. Said Lee Mazzilli: "I know one thing. We're going to score some runs."

Manager Joe Torre added, "Dave gives us the game-breaking power we've been lacking. This is the best offensive team we've had since I became the manager."

Said General Manager Frank Cashen: "I surveyed all the power hitters who might be available and Dave Kingman was my No. 1 priority. This deal has been on and off for six months."

It was amazing to see the confidence suddenly begun to



Dave Kingman took the happy approach as he arrived in the Mets St. Petersburg, Fla., camp and

shared a laugh with Manager Joe Torre (right) and GM Frank Cashen.

ooze from the Mets following the deal that sent popular, hard-working Steve Henderson to the Cubs for Kingman. Even the fact that Kingman might not be up to par physically and may force drastic revisions in Torre's lineup did not dampen the enthusiasm.

The feeling expressed by players and fans was that at long last, the club had done something constructive. Winter signings of free agents Dave Roberts, Rusty Staub and Mike Cuddage, plus deals that brought Bob Bailor and Randy Jones, were sort of ho-hummed in New York.

Now the Mets have reacquired a bat that might produce some vitally needed home runs. Said Cashen: "Our home run total two years ago was 74 and last year it was 61. I knew our primary need was power. I think we got it."

Said catcher John Stearns: "The important thing is to get Kingman and Staub to play a minimum of 120 games." Stearns, by the way, is still nursing a damaged right index finger and is worried about whether he'll be able to throw properly by the time the season arrives.

"If we could get Staub and Kingman 500 at-bats apiece, we could score runs," Mazzilli chipped in. "Hey, we've got three guys at the top of the lineup—Mookie Wilson, Frank Taveras and myself—who are capable of stealing 30, 40, 50 bases. Now we've got some guys to drive us in."

"Just having Dave in the No. 4 spot," said Torre, "is bound to help Mazzilli. He led the club with walks last year because they pitched him carefully. They won't be able to do that this year with Kingman behind him."

Kingman, who was as glad to get out of Chicago as the

Cubs apparently were delighted to be rid of him, advised Torre by phone even before his arrival that he may not be able to play the outfield.

Kingman injured his right shoulder on a play at home plate last May and played in only 81 games after spending a good part of the year on the disabled list.

"He says he has flexibility in the shoulder but has not exercised it," Torre reported. "I may have to play him at first base and move Rusty to the outfield. Probably left field. I'm thinking of Rusty in left, Mazzilli in center and Wilson in right. Joel Youngblood? I'll probably move him to third base."

Metscellaneous: No one was happier to see Kingman in a Mets uniform than Neil Allen, who developed a nasty habit of serving up home run balls to Dave. "My ERA has to drop by at least two points," the happy reliever chuckled. Kingman will wear No. 5 until Scott Holman, who now wears his old 26, is shipped out. Kingman indicates he'll change his lifestyle now that he's back in Gotham. He led a hermit existence in Connecticut in his first tour with the club. Now he says he is seeking a pad in swinging midtown Manhattan. Just call him Downtown Dave.

The Mets intend to give sinkerball pitcher Billy Smith a chance to be the No. 5 starter. He was drafted out of the Houston chain and has had a chance to pitch in the big leagues. Rookie catcher Lloyd McClendon was the first serious casualty. He suffered a fractured left arm when Rick Sweet accidentally hit him with a bat.

Yank Millionaires March In Like Lion, Lamb

By PHIL PEPE

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla.—The first coming of a New York Yankees millionaire was routine, matter-of-fact, quiet. The second coming of a Yankee millionaire was an explosion, a happening.

Dave Winfield reported for his first day as a Yankee on February 27, as scheduled. Reggie Jackson arrived four days later, two days later than expected, which didn't sit well with team Owner George Steinbrenner.

It was not a case of Reggie feeling he would be upstaged by Winfield, but he had told Steinbrenner he had some commitments and some personal things to take care of, and that he would be late. Steinbrenner said it was his understanding that being late meant not reporting with the rest of the squad on February 27.

Jackson said it was his understanding that since the Basic Agreement stipulates that no player can be forced to report later than March 1, then he would not need permission to come in after February 27. If Steinbrenner was giving him permission to be late, Jackson reasoned, it had to mean after March 1.

No way, said Steinbrenner, and he slapped Reggie with a fine of \$2,500 a day, his approximate daily pay based on a 200-day year. By the time Jackson reported two days late, the tab had gone to \$5,000.

A year ago, when he also reported two days late, Jackson was fined \$500 a day. He turned that into a positive action by matching his fine and donating the total of \$2,000 to New York City's high school athletic program.

This time, Reggie said, he would file a grievance if the fine sticks and Steinbrenner insisted that the fine would stick.

"I realize there's a little inflation," Jackson said, "but 500 percent?"

Jackson said he knew all along he would not be in camp

on March 1 and tried to make that clear to Steinbrenner, who would not listen. Reggie was quoted as saying Steinbrenner gave him "a hell of an inference that it would be okay to be late. But you know George, sometimes he gets to the point where it is no discussion at all, where you can't get a word in."

Steinbrenner insists there was never any inference. "That's a ploy on his part," the owner said. "Reggie is telling the truth when he says he couldn't get a word in. I was raking him over on that point. Time and time again I said March 1. When he talked about being late, I said 'Reggie, how could you even ask that?'"

By contrast to Jackson, Winfield came in like a lamb his first day as a Yankee. He moved in smoothly, blending unobtrusively with the rest of his new teammates, causing attention only because of his size (6-6, 220 pounds), his new wealth and his first day in pinstripes.

In his first day, he had trouble hitting the ball out of the batting cage, but pointed out, "There will be no cage when the season starts."


Winfield wore No. 31 and a size 7½ batting helmet that is the largest worn by a Yankee in years, but Winfield does not have a big head, even if he has more than his share of confidence in his ability.

It was inevitable that Winfield would be asked about his relationship with Jackson, who seems to need the spotlight, to thrive on attention and recognition. That's fine with big Dave.

"I didn't have a spotlight in San Diego," he said. "And I didn't come here to take the spotlight. If you do well, you want the spotlight. If you don't you don't want it."

Yankee Doodles: Rudy May became the first casualty of the spring when he underwent minor surgery for removal of substances from his urinary tract. He missed five days. The Yankees got all 40 roster players under contract by signing Greg Cochran and Juan Espino and invoking the

renewal clause in pitcher Chris Welsh's contract. Frito-Lay, the Yankees' radio sponsor, has initiated a program in which it will donate \$50 to the Sloan-Kettering cancer clinic for every run the team scores in 1981, with a minimum contribution of \$50,000. Last year, the Yankees scored 820 runs.



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