

Every-Day Action, Heavier Bat Act as Tonic on Kranepool

By BARNEY KREMENKO
NEW YORK, N. Y.

With Ed Kranepool, action speaks louder than words.

Told that he would be the everyday first baseman after Dick Stuart was put on the disabled list, April 21, with a torn rib muscle, the young Mets' belter said:

"I've heard that before. Yet somehow or other, I manage to wind up as a platoon man. I want to see it happen, that I actually play every day, before I'm convinced."

Kranepool then cited a couple of instances.

"Last fall, they announced that I would be the first baseman against all pitching, lefthanded or righthanded," he reminded.

"Then, when they were going to trade for Stuart, I was told that I might play the outfield, but it also would be on an everyday basis.

Benched Against Lefties

"But you saw what happened. When the season started, I was a platooning man in the outfield. They kept me out against lefthanded pitching. Yet, in spring training, I faced a lefthander seven times and got four hits."

Actually, when Wes Westrum announced that Kranepool would play first base regularly with the injury to Stuart, the Mets' manager did add that the righthanded-swinging Jim Hickman, who had been the starting center fielder, would resume practicing at first base—just in case.

Hickman had platooned at first



Ed Kranepool

base with Kranepool through the latter part of the 1965 season.

However, Eddie was permitted to go through an entire four-game series with the Braves in Atlanta after his return to first base and did rather well, despite a stuttering start.

In the opening game of the series, the 21-year-old husky went 0-for-4. But, the next afternoon, he belted two homers off a pair of righthanders, Hank Fischer and Chi Chi Olivo.

Then, in the windup double-header, Kranepool singled in each game, the hits coming off lefthanders. Billy O'Dell was the first victim, and Denny Lemaster the second.

"Many players have to play every day to keep their eye sharp," Kranepool pointed out. "That's not the whole story with me. There's another thing that's very important to me. I have to feel that the ball club has confidence in me.

Platooning Hurts Confidence

"It's not easy to feel that way when you're constantly taken out of the lineup, whether for platoon purposes or whatever.

"You can't show me any top player in the game's history who didn't play every day. I wouldn't say that taking me out discourages me or gets me disinterested. But it sure takes away some of the spirit that you need to be at your best."

The salvo off Fischer and Olivo marked the third time in Big Ed's career that he has connected for two homers in a game. He did it for the first time on August 14, 1964, at Shea Stadium off Rick Wise of the Phillies.

Then on April 24, 1965, he victimized Jack Sanford of the Giants in Candlestick Park, San Francisco. His latest double socker came on April 23.

Kranepool revealed that, on the advice of coach Yogi Berra, he is

Leave It to Mets to Get Trapped in Strange DP

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Strange things have happened to the Mets in their brief National League history, but none more so than the double play that began when Braves' southpaw Wade Blasingame picked Cleon Jones off first in the opening game of a double-header on April 24 in Atlanta.

Jim Hickman was on second at the time. When Hickman spotted Jones caught in a rundown, he wandered off second and soon found himself trapped.

After the Braves tagged Hickman out, they took a look at Jones and there he was, standing between first and second. So they quickly turned their attention on him and he, too, was tagged.

The play went 1-3-6-3-4-6-3, or pitcher Blasingame to first baseman Lee Thomas to shortstop Denis Menke to Thomas to second baseman Woody Woodward to Menke to Thomas.

using a much heavier bat this year. "I've gone from 31 ounces to 35 ounces," the young athlete said. "Yogi believes that, in the first place, you put more wood on the ball.

"Then, because the bat is heavier, there's less chance of over-swinging. You snap the bat, instead, and that's enough to give the ball a good ride."

Kranepool is happy with the change and has no intention of going back to the lighter club.

"I used the 35-ouncer all through spring training and got accustomed to it," he emphasized. "I find it very comfortable. Not only does it keep you from over-swinging, but also from over-striding."

Fischer Two-Time Victim

His homer off Fischer in Atlanta was the second such blow Eddie had made off the Braves' pitcher this year.

A week earlier, he slammed one with a man on in Shea Stadium to bring the Mets their first victory of the season.

Met Memos: The Marines came to the rescue of the Mets as southpaw Tug McGraw, fresh from a six-month hitch with the Leathernecks, beat the Braves to snap the club's five-game losing streak in the nightcap of the April 24 double-header at Atlanta. McGraw, who was late reporting for spring training, isn't in top shape yet and was removed after seven innings when fatigue hit him. . . . On their recent visit to Chicago, the Mets stayed at the Bismark Hotel for the first time. Previously, the club had spent two years at the Hilton and then two years in the Edgewater Beach. . . . Bob Lennon, once an outfielder in the Giant organization, visited two former teammates, Wes Westrum and Eddie Bressoud, at Shea Stadium during the Mets' first home stand. Lennon, who slammed 64 homers in a season in the minors, lives in Huntington, L. I., and is a steelworker. . . . Mayor Ivan Allen of Atlanta, a key figure in the building of the \$18,000,000 park in that city, visited the press box to meet the New York scribes on the Mets' first trip to Dixie.

Reds Shake Heads In Awe at Amazing Catches by Harper

By EARL LAWSON
CINCINNATI, O.

Tommy Harper was 18 years old the first time he put on a Cincinnati uniform.

That was the summer of 1959 and Bobby Mattick, then a Red scout, had brought Tommy around to old Seals Stadium in San Francisco to work out with the Reds.

Young Harper, more than a little awe-struck, didn't hit a ball out of the infield when he took his swings in the batting cage.

Two years later—1961—this same Harper was burning up the Three I League at Topeka.

Tommy Helms, the Reds' rookie second baseman, remembered him then.

"Harp was too good for that league," recalled Helms, who was shortstop on the same Topeka club.

Harper, then a second baseman, batted .324, led the loop in triples with 11 and swiped 31 bases.

Dave Bristol, now a Red coach, was the Topeka manager.

Bristol's Glowing Forecast

In the fall of 1961, Bristol was in Cincinnati for the World Series between the Reds and the Yankees.

"How good is this Harper kid?" someone had asked him.

"I honestly believe he can make the Reds next spring," was Bristol's answer.

Harper remembers those early days of the 1962 season.

"I was all right," he said, laughing, "until they started throwing me all of those real good curves."

After six games, Harper was shipped to the San Diego club in the Pacific Coast League, then a Red farm club. You knew, though, he would come back. And he did—after rapping Coast league pitching at a .333 clip in 1962.

As a rookie outfielder with the Reds in 1963, Harper batted a respectable .260.

Big things were expected of him in 1964, but the anticipated improvement never materialized. He batted a disappointing .243.

127 Whiffs in '65

In 1965, he fanned 127 times, but he rapped out 28 doubles, three triples and 18 home runs. And, despite a .257 average, he drove home 64 runs hitting in the leadoff slot.

When the 1966 season opened, Harper was in center field. Vada Pinson had moved to right field and Deron Johnson was in left.

In Philadelphia's Connie Mack Stadium during the first week of the season, Harper raced into right-center field, left his feet with a head-long dive and speared Johnny Callison's long drive with one hand.

You watched Harper make the catch and remembered a day a few years back when he was patrolling right field in Chicago.

There was a fly ball to right field



Tommy Harper

and Harper had backed to the wall at the crack of the bat. Much to his embarrassment, the ball dropped safely to the ground in shallow right field.

"What did that guy yell at you to make you want to climb the wall after him?" Avery Robbins, then the Reds' traveling secretary, later kiddingly remarked to Harper.

Today, Harper will tell you he feels much more at home in center field. You have to believe him.

During the Reds' first trip into Pittsburgh this season, Harper raced into deepest center field at Forbes Field to make a one-handed, back-to-the-stands catch of a drive hit by Pirate hurler Steve Blass.

"It was unbelievable. That's the only way I can describe that catch," raved Cincinnati Manager Don Heckner.

Better Than Mays' Grab

Heffner called it an even better catch than the one Willie Mays made on Cleveland's Vic Wertz in the Polo Grounds during the World Series of 1954.

"It was the first time I ever went after a fly ball and really didn't think I had a chance to catch it," said Harper in describing the bit of larceny he committed at Blass' expense.

It was another Harper catch this season which enabled the Reds to snap a six-game losing streak. This was Sunday, April 24, at Crosley Field.

With Johnson sidelined with an upset stomach, Pinson returned to center field, Mel Queen went to right field and Harper to left.

Two runners were on base, two were out, and the Reds led, 3-1, in the top of the fifth inning when Darold Knowles, the Phillie pitcher, hit a looping liner to left field.

Harper, coming in fast, made another head-long dive and managed to spear the ball with one hand, just off the grass top.

The Reds wound up 3-2 winners when rain ended play in the bottom of the sixth inning.

Red Hots: Red catcher John Edwards' first two hits this season were homers. "It's ridiculous," cracked the Red catcher. . . . The relief pitching of Don Nottebart has been a happy surprise. The former Astro righthander, claimed in the draft last winter, yielded only two runs in his first three outings, while pitching seven and two-thirds innings. . . . Don Pavletich is ready to play again after nursing a bruised left heel. . . . Jim Maloney, who blanked the Phillies in his first outing this season, fanned 23 batters in the first 16 innings he pitched before getting a pain in his elbow. . . . Rain caused postponement of four of the Reds' first six scheduled home games. . . . Milt Pappas was impressive in his debut with the Reds, even though he wound up a loser. Pitching for the first time in two weeks, Pappas limited the Pirates to two runs and five hits in six innings, fanning seven and walking only one.



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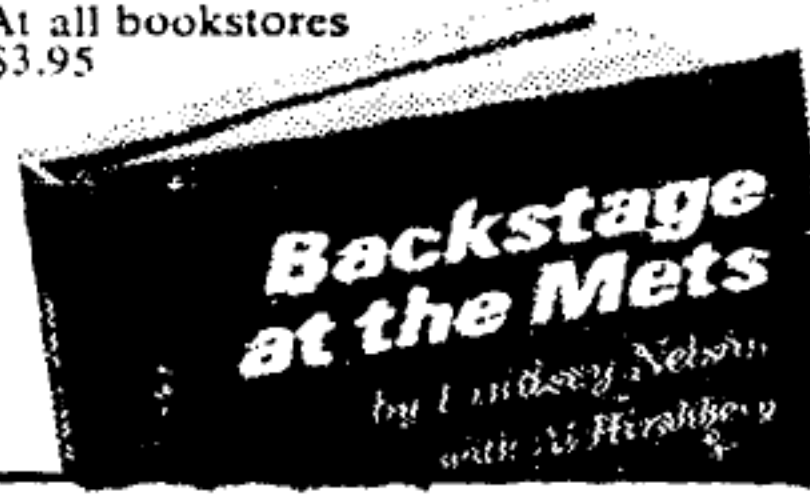
Casey Stengel never created more legends than when he managed the Mets. No team has ever been written about, laughed about, talked about, more than the fabulous men of Shea Stadium.

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Kase, N.Y. Sports Editor, Retires

NEW YORK, N. Y.

The retirement of Max Kase, sports editor of the Journal-American for 27 years, was announced with the final publication of that paper on April 24.

Kase, a native New Yorker, started his career with the International News Service, a Hearst organization, in 1917. In 1924, he served for one year as sports editor of the Havana (Cuba) Telegram. In 1926, he joined the Journal and, except for one year as sports editor of the Boston American, remained in New York.

Kase moved from the Journal to the merged Journal-American in June, 1937, and on October 27, 1938, was named sports editor, retaining the post to that newspaper's end.

In 1952, Kase was given a Pulitzer citation for his ex-

posure of the college basketball scandals of the previous year.

In 1941, he originated the Hearst Sandlot Program for youngsters.

From this program, some 50 young players went to the majors, including Whitey Ford and Al Kaline.

Writers' Future in Doubt

With the Journal-American, World-Telegram and Herald-Tribune merging from three newspapers into two, under a single, new corporation, practically all of the sports writers involved were up in the air concerning their future status.

When publication of the three original papers terminated, the scribes had not yet been officially notified as to whether they were in or out.