

Dream Comes True for Kubek as Yankee

He Always Hoped to Be in Stadium

Tony, 20, Displays Ability at Two Garden Positions, Shortstop or Third Base

By HAROLD ROSENTHAL
NEW YORK, N. Y.

As the pennant race gathers August momentum for the second-half dash to the wire, **Tony Kubek** emerges not only as the Yankees' top candidate for rookie-of-the-year honors, but as a key man in the club's bid for yet another American League flag.

The gangling Milwaukee youth with a crew cut, who won himself a spot in the Yankee lineup before he was old enough to vote, has demonstrated the versatility which Casey Stengel searches for so diligently and encounters so infrequently. He has "flexibility," a word which tingles Casey's ear.

Here's how good "flexible" Anthony Christopher **Kubek, Jr.**, really is. Last year, he won American Association all-star honors at Denver as a shortstop. Last spring, his first start in Yankee garb was in left field, in the first week of the campaign. Since then, for a variety of reasons, ranging from injuries to strategy to shake-'em-up a bit, **Tony** has appeared at shortstop, center field and third base.

It has bewildered the young man, he hasn't shown it, either in his comportment in the field or his deportment at the plate, where he is up there among the Yankees' .300 hitters.

Yank Product All the Way

Fans have seen enough, however, to know that here is the Yankees' biggest bid for individual rookie honors since Bob Grim won the accolade in 1954 with a 20-victory campaign. They have seen enough, too, to be acutely aware of the terrifying proficiency of the Yankee farm system, for **Kubek** is a Yankee product all the way. To play with the Yankees—that has been Kubek's ambition as long as he can remember. And right now he's fulfilling it in a manner highly satisfactory to everyone—Stengel, the front office, the scouting department.

"Even when I was a batboy for my father's industrial league team back in Milwaukee," recalled **Kubek**, "the Yankees were my goal. No, it wasn't any hero worship of any particular player. I just felt that this was the greatest team and the team I wanted to play for some day if I was good enough."

The "good enough" stage of his career followed seasons at Owensboro, in the Class D Kitty League in 1954, Quincy in the Class B, Three-I loop in 1955, and Denver in 1956. Everywhere he went, he hit at a powerful clip and left nothing to be desired in fielding his position. Yankee spring "schools" at St. Petersburg, Stengel's pet plan for rapid advancement, added several layers of polish to **Tony**. This spring he was ready.

Won Writers' Watch

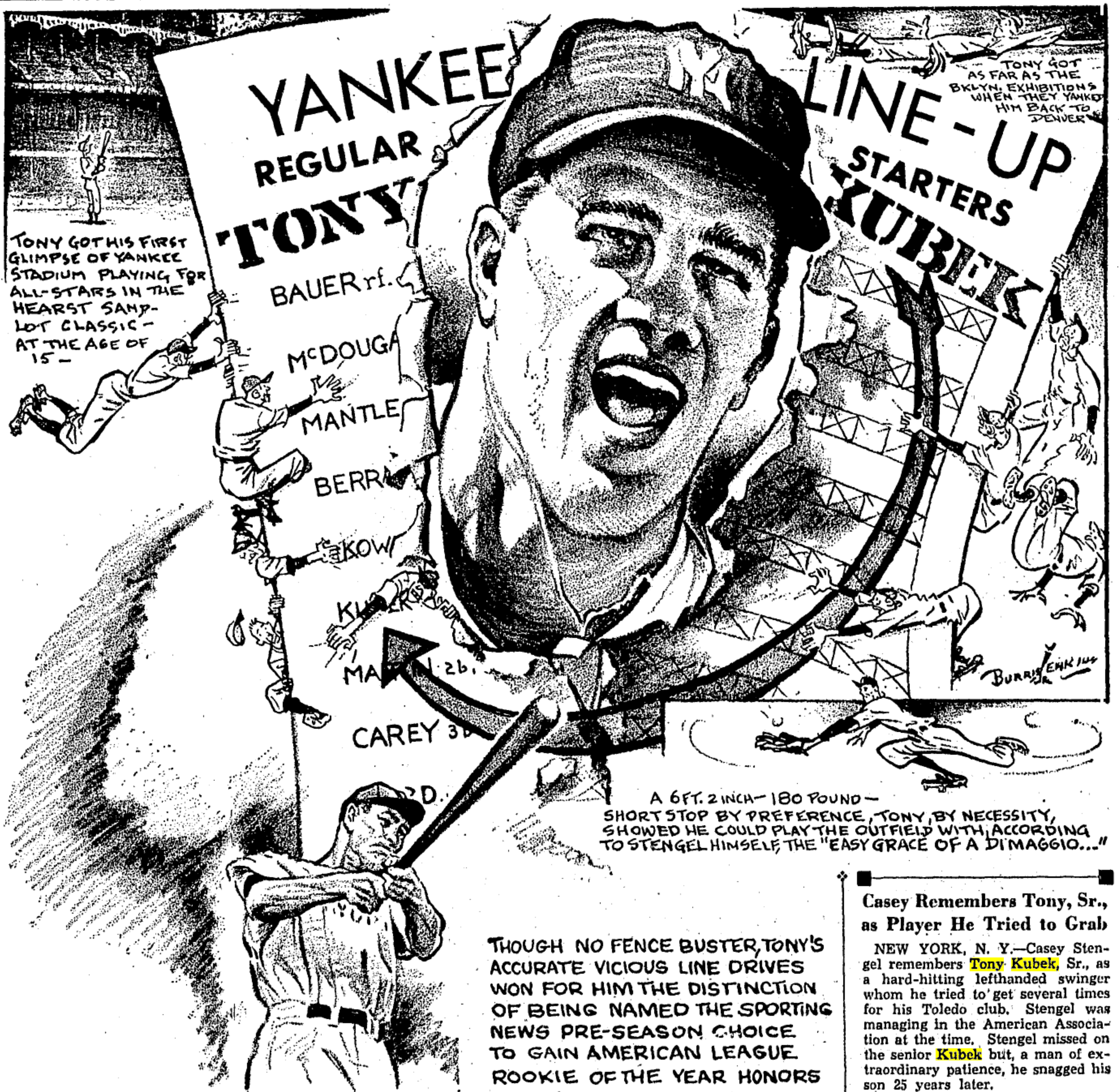
The writers covering the camp thought so, too. Each year a watch is presented to the rookie player they figure will make the deepest impression in the forthcoming campaign. **Kubek** sports that watch.

Tony broke into the lineup in the sixth game of the campaign, was tried in the leadoff role in the twelfth. On the Yankees' big swing through the West in July, he played third base, then moved over to short for a while when Gil McDougald was moved to second to replace Bobby Richardson. When Richardson returned, **Kubek** moved to third without the slightest trace of trouble.

Kubek's story is that of a boy with an intensive baseball background, plus the perspicacity of another of the Yankee scouts, Lou Maguolo. **Kubek** comes from a baseball family—his father, **Tony, Sr.**, played for three years with the Milwaukee Brewers in the American Association; two uncles also played in the top minors.

Maguolo, who ranges out of St. Louis,

Filling the Bill With Big Club



THOUGH NO FENCE BUSTER, TONY'S ACCURATE VICIOUS LINE DRIVES WON FOR HIM THE DISTINCTION OF BEING NAMED THE SPORTING NEWS PRE-SEASON CHOICE TO GAIN AMERICAN LEAGUE ROOKIE OF THE YEAR HONORS

All-Round Athlete, Starring in Basketball, Football, Track

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Too often a ball player is a man of limited athletic skills with just a knack of throwing, or hitting, or a sense of anticipation. In **Tony Kubek**, however, the Yankees have acquired a top-notch athlete who excelled in football and basketball. He also ran the high hurdles, and jumped five-eight in high school. He turned down scholarship offers from the University of Wisconsin and Marquette University.

picked up **Kubek** from the Milwaukee sandlots (he played no high school baseball because his school had dropped the sport after his freshman year). **Kubek** signed for a modest bonus and a Class C contract.

"There were quite a few clubs interested in me," declared **Kubek**, "but the only one I was really interested in was the New York Yankees. Money never occurred to me. I wanted to play, so I wasn't interested in any kind of money that would make me a bonus player."

"I worked out with Milwaukee," he recalled, "but I was never serious with them. It was just to get some tickets to get into the games."

Milwaukee is strong baseball country, with an intensive program that carries a boy up from 11 years through American Legion ball. **Kubek** took all the steps—the Stars of Yesterday (sponsored by the since departed Milwaukee Brewers), the Cadet League, American Legion ball. **Kubek** recalls having shoveled snow off the fields many times so he could play.

He recalls, too, that baseball was always the focal point around which his

family revolved. His father had been a left-handed-hitting outfielder with the Brewers who gave up playing during the depression because there wasn't enough money in it to support a growing family. His two uncles, John Olen and Roman Olen, had played for Buffalo and White Sox farms, respectively. When his father, now a postal employee in Milwaukee, took to managing industrial teams, it was only natural that young **Tony** got top preference as batboy.

Dad Never Steered Him

"I've heard about fathers who have tried to tell their sons what to do and where to play, especially if they've played themselves, but my father never tried to steer me to any position. He let me play wherever I wanted to. When I became a shortstop it was all right with him."

Young **Tony**, a big gangling kid who gave promise of eventually becoming a 200-pounder, topping six-three, first caught the eye of the scouts in 1952 when he came to New York as a contestant in the Hearst U. S. All-Stars vs. All-New York annual game. The New Yorkers won in 13 innings. **Kubek** got his first look at the Yankees in action (in a game against the White Sox), and the scouts got their first look at young **Tony**.

They started checking into Milwaukee after that to watch his play, but Maguolo had the inside track. Shortly after **Tony** had graduated from Bay View High, Maguolo was at the modest two-family frame house at 2528 South Fifth Place in Milwaukee's South Side area armed with a contract. **Kubek** signed.

In doing so he cancelled out a possible college career, rejecting scholarship offers for both basketball and football. "Had I decided to play football (he

Maguolo's Second Straight 'Rookie of Training Camp'

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Lou Maguolo, the scout who signed **Tony Kubek**, set some kind of a record when young **Tony** was voted the outstanding rookie award in the Yankee spring training camp in April.

A year earlier another Maguolo find, Norm Siebern, also a left-handed-hitting outfielder, had been voted the same award, also in unanimous fashion.

was a high school end), I'd probably have gone to Notre Dame."

Instead he went to Owensboro where Marv Crater was managing that Yankee farm and hit .344. The following year, after a session at the St. Pete rookie school, he was moved up a couple of notches to B ball at Quincy. His batting eye held up, and under Vern Hoscheit he batted .335. Another instructional school, and this time he went to Denver, where he brought a lot of sunshine into Ralph Houk's second year of managing by hitting .334 and being one of four Denver infielders to win all-league honors.

At Denver he earned the nickname "Rope" after the ball players' descriptive "Frozen ropes," a term used to describe line drives. The nickname hasn't followed him to the majors.

At Denver he also was the victim of a freak accident that hampered him the second half of the season. He suffered a hairline fracture in his right ankle around midseason and played in a limping fashion the rest of the way.

It wasn't until mid-winter and only

Casey Remembers Tony, Sr., as Player He Tried to Grab

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Casey Stengel remembers **Tony Kubek, Sr.**, as a hard-hitting left-handed swinger whom he tried to get several times for his Toledo club. Stengel was managing in the American Association at the time. Stengel missed on the senior **Kubek** but, a man of extraordinary patience, he snagged his son 25 years later.

after repeated examinations that a team of medicos at the Mayo Clinic determined that he had suffered a break which was almost healed by the time they got to it. The ankle does not bother him now.

Kubek went to his third straight instructional school, a record, and remained after the student body had dispersed except for half a dozen players. And, of the group not on the roster advised to stick around, only **Kubek** was on deck when the Yankees broke camp at St. Pete early in April and headed north.

Makes All the Plays

Tony can make the plays, even though there are fielders more graceful than he. And if there are more graceful arms, there aren't many more powerful. **Tony's** peg, fired like some kid throwing a rock, gets there in plenty of time.

And the young man continues to demonstrate a potential which, to coin a phrase, has scarcely begun to be scratched. During the Yankees' last home stand, they beat the Tigers in the ninth with a squeeze. The runner was Jerry Coleman, the hitter was **Tony Kubek**.

Why was this so unusual? Well, it was probably the tenth time **Kubek** had bunted in his short major league career.

Maybe this is on-the-job training in which Stengel revels. But then again maybe it isn't. Maybe **Tony Kubek** is able to do instinctively what it takes other players years to learn. And maybe the Yankees have a 20-year-old, who is going to be a tremendous help to the New York cause for many more years to come.



THE "PHENOM" WHO IS TO LEAD THEM TO GLORY IS NOT NEW TO THE GIANTS (REMEMBER HARTUNG?) BUT SHORTSTOP ANDRE RODGERS, FROM THE BAHAMAS, IS THE FIRST CRICKET PLAYER TO BE CAST IN THAT ROLE....

Giants Jolly Surprised by Skill Flashed by Bahaman Rodgers

Hubbell Suspected Joke When Cricketer Came to Farm Camp

By JOE KING

NEW YORK, N. Y. A tremendously powerful arm. He has had his difficulties at bat from time to time, as would any rookie, but he hit well in exhibitions, and showed extraordinary power. This brand new star did not cost the Giants a penny. Jack Schwarz, farm secretary, relates that a Britisher in Nassau wrote to him to suggest that Rodgers might merit a trial with the Giants, because he was the finest player in the Bahamas.

Raw Recruit at Melbourne

Schwarz replied that the Giants would consider Rodgers as a prospect if he cared to pay his way to Melbourne, Fla., where Carl Hubbell directed the minor league camp.

"Rodgers certainly has been a fortunate find," recalls Schwarz, "but he surely did not impress as such when he reached Melbourne. In fact, Hubbell even at first thought someone might have played a practical joke, because Rodgers did not know how to play the game. His nearest approach had been softball and cricket, which is the national British game."

"Hubbell didn't have the heart to send Rodgers away, and permitted him to work out. Pretty soon the boy began to attract attention, because he was a cat for a big fellow, could move and learned fast. The managers became more and more enthusiastic, and three Class D teams wanted Rodgers at the end of camp, in preference to some of the American boys who had been scouted and invited."

The youngster hit .286 in his first season, at Olean, N. Y. In 1955 he blazed in Class C at St. Cloud, Minn., with

Rodgers' career presents a fascinating story. Prior to the spring of 1954, this subject of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, had never played our National Game, but only cricket and softball. Nevertheless, in three seasons in the minors Andre displayed such a natural bent for baseball that he was able to claim the shortstop position as an unheralded rookie who was not even on the major roster. Rodgers was moved up from the Minneapolis squad, April 2.

Oddly, the Giants did not need a shortstop. They had for that position the talented Daryl Spencer, who had led the league in fielding percentage for a limited number of games in 1956. There was, however, the necessity of reinforcing the team with the finest prospects on the farm, after Jackie Brandt and Bill White, regulars, and Willie Kirkland, No. 1 chain product, went into service. Instead of sending Rodgers to the Minneapolis camp, which had been intended, the Giant front office brought him to Phoenix for a thorough tryout.

In winning the job from Spencer, Rodgers has been a morale-booster for his teammates. They regard the surprising phenom as the chap who can give them a big lift.

In the exhibitions, Rodgers answered all fielding questions as to his ability. He is a sure fielder and has a

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Kubek Fills Big Order in Switch to Yank Garden

Ex-Shortstop, 21, Displays Fine Arm, Runs Well and Hits All Types of Hurling

By DAN DANIEL
NEW YORK, N. Y.

Who is Anthony Kubek, Jr., and why is he THE SPORTING NEWS' choice as the outstanding rookie of the American League?

First, let us summarize Tony's achievements in the camp of the Yankees, and note wherein he qualified for the freshman prize, and the second annual James P. Dawson Award for the No. 1 rookie of the New York camp.

Kubek was not new to the Bomber camp this spring. He had been there in 1956, and had created quite a stir, especially when Casey Stengel ignored the young man's normal position at short, and sent him into left field.

Tony had not liked being shifted. He felt that working in a new location, out of the infield, where he always had operated, threw on him fresh trials and problems. But Casey motioned to left, and Kubek went there.

It did not take Tony long to develop skills which made him look like an experienced flycatcher.

There was some chance that Tony would stick even then. But Norman Siebern, winner of the 1956 rookie prize, had made an amazing showing in left, and Tony was not needed. So back he went, to Denver, where he was the standout shortstop of the league.

Spelled McDougald at Short

During the winter, it was reported that the Yankees would not bring Kubek back before 1958. George M. Weiss was said to oppose risking another Siebern debacle.

However, Tony did appear for the acceleration school, and recently Weiss denied that there ever had been any difference of opinion or Kubek between himself and Stengel.

After having done a notable job in the advance school, Kubek moved right into the camp of the Yankees, still the official property of the Denver club.

In the opening exhibition, with the Cardinals, Tony relieved Gil McDougald at short. The following afternoon, Kubek played the whole game in the infield. In the third contest, Tony replaced Enos Slaughter in left in the fourth inning, but the next day Tony was right back again at short.

That ended experimentation with the youngster in the infield, and was followed by his appearance in left and center field.

Kubek, a lefthanded batter, looked good against all styles of pitching. He is no power hitter, but rapped singles and now and then a two-bagger.

Tony ran well, he showed a fine arm, he moved from first to third when the opportunities offered.

His Father an Ex-Pro

It was Kubek all the way among the rookies of the Yankees, and it wasn't long before the writers covering the New York camp discovered that Tony's superlatives made him stand out over freshmen of other clubs, as well. He was the most remarkable new player among the 12 clubs training in Florida.

True, Tony got a chance beyond that offered to any other plebe. But if he got the opportunities, he proved equal to them.

Kubek has a baseball background. His dad, Tony, Sr., was an outfielder with Milwaukee in the American Association.

Tony, Jr., is 20. He was born on October 12, 1936, at Milwaukee, Polish on his father's side, German on the maternal side. Bay View High, which Tony attended, had no ball team, so he played sandlot ball.

After graduation from Bay View in June, 1953, he worked out with the Braves. But he did not want to play in Milwaukee. He was a Yankee fan.

Kubek got no fancy bonus for signing with the New York farm system. He was sent to Owensboro (Kitty) in 1954, and hit .344.

In 1955, he was with Quincy, in the Three-I League, where he batted .334. Late in the season he was tried out by Denver, and hit .296 in seven games. Denver liked Tony, and got him back

Has Yankee Look



TONY KUBEK, sensational rookie, cocks wrists.



... Crack—Base Hit



... The Follow Through



... Off and Running

for 1956. He batted .331, with 85 runs driven in and six home runs.

In June, 1956, Kubek suffered a foot injury which baffled Denver specialists. He was told he had a bone spur. Because the injury handicapped him too severely at short, Kubek was shifted to right field for the playoffs. Those four games constitute his official record as an outfielder.

In New York in the fall, Dr. Sidney Gaynor discovered that Kubek had been playing with a fracture of the right ankle. That has healed, Anthony Kubek, Jr., is ready for the Yankees.

"A Yankee-type player" is part of the Casey accolade.

