

Royals Kick Up Their Heels Over Blue-Ribbon Kid Crop

By DEL BLACK

KANSAS CITY—Highlights for Kansas City in the Florida Instructional League centered around nine players and a second-place finish.

"We had a young club, which has been our direction down there every year," said John Schuerholz, the Royals' director of scouting and player personnel. "We were pleased with what we saw. The individual product is what counts. Second place was satisfying, but we didn't go into the season bent on a high finish in the standings. The White Sox won the title with an experienced bunch of players. We got out of the league what we expected, and that was player development."

Schuerholz was impressed with shortstop Buddy Biancalana, outfielder-third baseman Darryl Morley, catcher David Hogg, outfielder Mark Ryal, third baseman Frank McCann, and pitchers Mike Morley, Mike Jones, Rennie Martin and Craig Chamberlain.

Biancalana and Morley, both 18, were Kansas City's top two choices in the 1978 June draft.

"BIANCALANA developed his full ability as a defensive player," said Schuerholz. "He is maturing."

"Morley was signed as an outfielder and played there last summer. We had him at Sarasota in the rookie league and he hit .488. We promoted him to Fort Myers, where he had trouble with the breaking ball. But he made great strides in the instructional league by batting about .300. Toward the end of the season, we moved him to third base and he was impressive there."

Morley, at 5-9 and 190 pounds, ranks high in Schuerholz' talent evaluation.

"Morley is one of the three best hitters we've signed," said Schuerholz of the righthanded swinger. "The two others are George Brett and Clint Hurdle."

Morley and Jones, 19-year-old lefthanders, were the Nos. 1 and 2 picks in the 1977 draft and lived up to expectations in their initial two campaigns.

"Morley was in the instructional league to work on his fast ball and be more aggressive when he was ahead of hitters. I believe he accomplished both. Jones needed to get total command of his pitches and become mentally tougher. I believe he did."

Chamberlain, a righthander with college experience, was held out of the rookie league a season ago because of a foot injury. Schuerholz said he is satisfied that Chamberlain is healthy again.

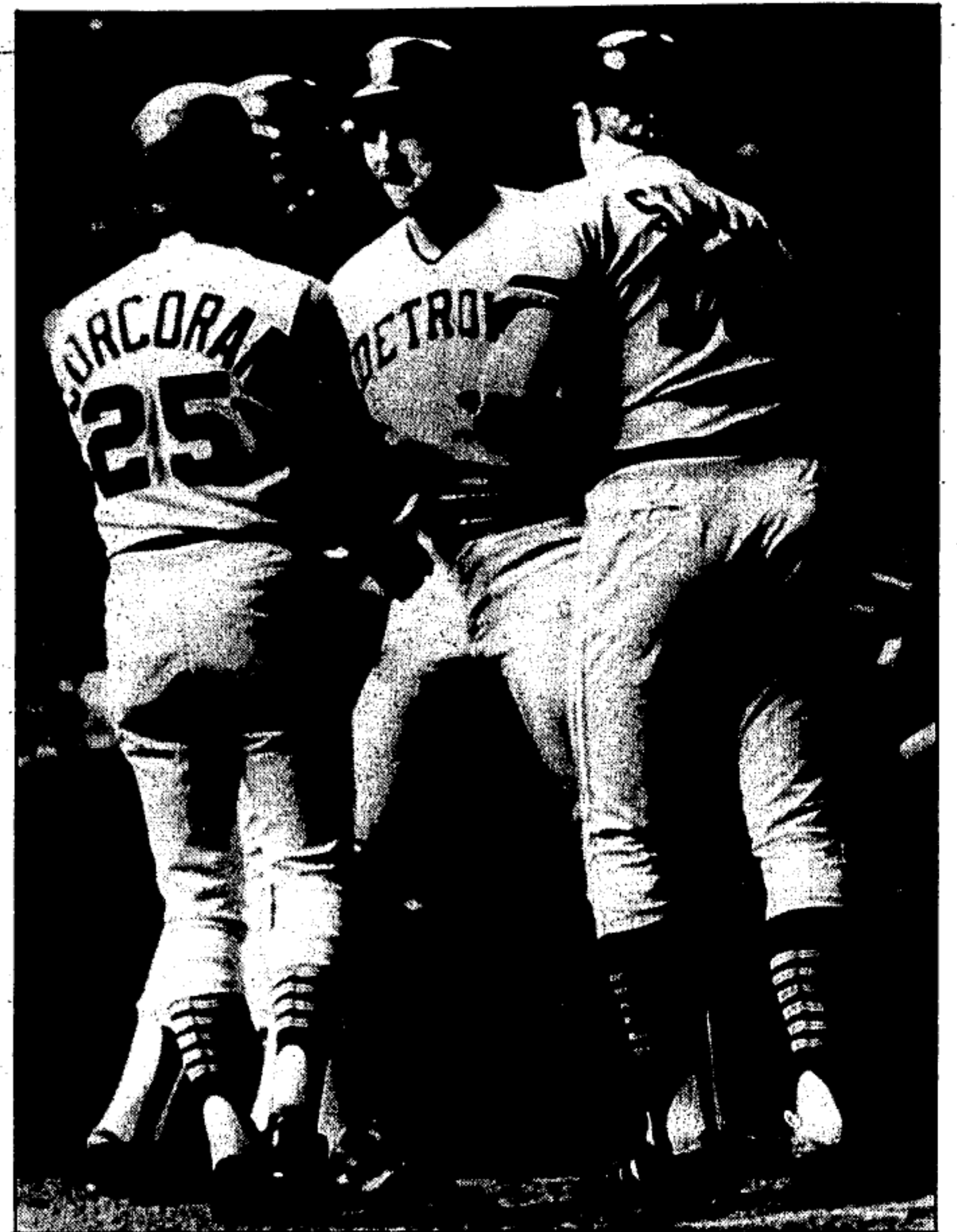
MARTIN, ALSO a righthander, was chosen the club's outstanding pitcher in the league.

"We know he can pitch," said Schuerholz. "He was good enough to finish up at Omaha (American Association), our Class AAA team, last season. That might have been pushing him a little, but he is coming along fast."

McCann was the team's outstanding player in the instructional league, ranking among the leaders in home runs, runs batted in and average.

Schuerholz said Hogg's hitting had been a concern until the instructional stint when he started swinging the bat with aggressiveness. Ryal, an 18-year-old lefthander, impressed the Royals as a potential complete player.

"There were other players who showed potential," added Schuerholz, "and will fit into our plans. Now we have to get them over the hump and up the ladder in our organization."



ONE OF LANCE PARRISH'S bright moments in a disappointing 1978 season occurred on August 21 when he clouted a grand-slam homer at Minnesota. Greeting the young catcher at home plate are (left to right)—Tim Corcoran, Rusty Staub and Ron LeFlore.

Jay B-Boys Rated A-Plus as Winners

By NEIL MacCARTL

TORONTO—Now that major league baseball is going to recognize game-winning runs batted in as an official statistic, it was revealing to thumb through last season's scorebook of Blue Jays' games.

Surprisingly, it was outfielders Rick Bosetti and Bob Bailor, who batted first and second in the batting order, who were the leaders with six apiece for a team that tallied only 59 victories.

Next in line were third baseman Roy Howell, first baseman John Mayberry and part-time outfielder Otto Velez (248 at-bats) each with five. Then came shortstop Luis Gomez and second baseman Dave McKay at four. No one else topped that figure.

No, veteran designated hitter Rico Carty, who played in 104 games for the Jays before his Au-

gust 15 trade to Oakland, was not eliminated. But Carty had only three game winners.

ACCORDING to the new rules, a game-winning hit is one that gives a team a lead it never relinquishes.

Certainly, for the Jays, the player who contributed the most visible game-winning blows was Bosetti.

Four times he had hits that produced the winning run either in the ninth inning or in extra innings.

He singled to beat the Red Sox in the 12th inning in May at Exhibition Stadium, and again in September, he singled to beat the Sox in the bottom of the ninth. He tripled in the ninth inning to break up a tie game in Yankee Stadium late in May, and he had a ninth-inning single to beat Kansas City in Royals Stadium in August.

This undoubtedly influenced voters for the Topps' rookie team because he was the leading vote-getter, even though reliever Victor

Cruz edged him out in the Jays' rookie voting conducted by members of the Toronto chapter of the BBWAA.

HOWEVER, he had little competition for an outfield spot on the rookie team because it was a poor crop this season whereas Cruz, since traded, had a spectacular half-season.

"I think I established myself as a major leaguer," said Bosetti. "Defensively, I think I can play with anybody, and if I hadn't gone 0-for-30 in September, my average (.259) would have been more respectable."

"I'm grateful to the Jays for giving me the chance to play every day. We've got a young team and I would like to be the type of player the younger guys come to for help. I know I appreciated older players such as Tim McCarver and Steve Carlton when I was with the Phillies' organization."

Kuiper's Reindeer Had a Gold Nose

By BOB SUDYK

CLEVELAND—It was both a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year package for Indians' second baseman Duane Kuiper who had signed a six-year contract extension through 1985 for \$1.3 million.

The deal, which goes into effect in 1980, almost doubles his salary, which last season was \$67,500 when he hit .283. His salary will increase to \$250,000 on the final year of the pact when Kuiper will be 35 years old.

Kuiper, a spectacular glove man, refused to give in to a knee injury he suffered in May. Doctors at first urged surgery, but Kuiper declined and miraculously the knee held up. X-rays taken at the end of last season indicated no permanent damage.

There is no no-trade clause in

the 28-year-old's contract. He reasoned, "No-trade clauses aren't good for the game. Besides, if they don't want you anymore in an organization, you are better off somewhere else."

Kuiper hopes to continue playing beyond 1985, but admits it is unlikely he would stay active as a designated hitter. His only major league home run was hit in 1977. He now has one for 2,031 at-bats.

"I SPOILED them," he commented. "Now they expect me to hit one out every year."

Kuiper hopes to stay in baseball when his playing days have ended. He has his sights set on managing. He said, joking, "Jeff (Torborg) had better be looking over his shoulder. I've told him I'll be ready to manage the Indians in 1986."

The trade of Buddy Bell to Texas

continues to flame high in the hot stove league. Kuiper, Bell's closest friend, said, "Toby Harrah will add a different dimension. The club's theory is going for speed and power. Toby will do fine. He won't replace Buddy in fan appeal."

"We won't know how good the trade will be until the middle of the season," Kuiper continued. "All I will say is it will be a good trade if Toby helps make us a contender."

Kuiper ranks fifth in pay among the Indians behind Bobby Bonds (four years ahead at \$400,000), Rick Manning (four years to go at \$297,000), Wayne Garland (eight years left at \$230,000) and Harrah (five years at \$230,000). Certainly a nice comfortable neighborhood.

Indian Items: Bonds still insists he isn't going to report to the Indians, who traded for the former

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Better Things Expected From Bengals' Lance-r

By JIM HAWKINS

DETROIT—No Tiger player was a bigger disappointment last season than rookie catcher Lance Parrish. And no one was more acutely aware of that fact than Parrish himself.

Nevertheless, whenever the Tigers think about the future, Parrish is invariably one of the first players who comes to mind.

Still only 22 years old, even though he has more than four full years of professional experience, there is plenty of time for the muscular catcher to live up to his abundant potential.

And the Tigers think new Manager Les Moss may be just the man to bring out the best in Parrish. After all, it was under Moss that he matured and blossomed in the minor leagues in 1976-77.

"I'm pretty much disappointed in what I did," admitted Parrish, who would just as soon forget last season. "And I'm sure the team is, too."

"I kept trying to make up for lost time and get it all back at once. I tried too hard and put too much pressure on myself."

As early as last January, it was obvious Parrish figured prominently in the Tigers' plans when they invited him to accompany such stars as Jason Thompson and Steve Kemp on the club's annual winter press tour around the state.

And when spring training began, he showed enough to convince Ralph Houk that he deserved to share the position behind the plate with the veteran incumbent, Milt May.

Platooning Destroyed Confidence

In retrospect, Parrish believes Houk's decision to platoon him may have been partly to blame for his problems.

"I'm not saying what Ralph did was wrong," said Parrish, who batted .219 even though, to his credit, he did hit 14 home runs. "But ever since I started playing baseball, this was the first year I was platooned. And it had an affect."

"I felt good in spring training. I had a lot of confidence going into the season. Then, all of a sudden, I lost it. When you're in and out all the time, it makes it hard to get any momentum going."

"I'd look good a couple of days and I'd start to get my confidence back. Then I'd have to sit down for a few days and it would leave me. Not playing every day, I just wasn't able to get going."

Tiger Tales: Ron LeFlore has qualified for the finals of the annual Superstars competition conducted by ABC-TV, although he slightly pulled a hamstring in the process. . . . George Kell and Al Kaline again will be the Tiger TV announcers next season. But Joe Pellegrino, third man in the booth last year, has been dropped. . . . The Tigers will host the Reds in their sandlot exhibition game April 23. The two teams will play a similar benefit in Cincinnati April 18. Last spring's game in Detroit raised nearly \$200,000 for amateur baseball in the area.