

'Happiest Day' for Bunning, His Family

By ALLEN LEWIS

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. — "I've pitched 22 years in baseball, six in the minor leagues and 16 in the major leagues, and the happiest six years I've had have been in Philadelphia."

Those words were part of Jim Bunning's "thank-you" speech at the conclusion of Jim Bunning Night before 30,240 at Veterans Stadium in late July.

The 39-year-old righthander, usually cool, calm and collected, had to pause once in his remarks to compose himself after he and his family were showered with gifts from his two major league teams—the Tigers and Phillies—from his teammates, his ex-manager Gene Mauch and the fans.

Bunning is, of course, in the twilight of a great career. Almost certainly, he is now in his final two months as an active pitcher. Now only a part-time starter and a part-time relief pitcher, Jim has struggled most of this season. On the night he was honored, he had a 5-12 record, a 5.60 earned-run average and one save.

Although he didn't come right out and say this was his final season, Jim hinted at it during his remarks. He said his only regret was that "I wasn't able to help the Phillies win a pennant. I think you're very close," he added, "and it could happen shortly."

It was an emotional evening for Jim, his family and many of the

fans to whom the pitcher provided so much pleasure over the past eight seasons, two of which were spent in other uniforms before his return after the 1968 campaign.

It began with Richie Ashburn reading off a list of Jim's accomplishments as a pitcher—his victory total of 224 and his feat of being only one of two pitchers (Cy Young was the other) to win 100 or more games in each major league.

There were the two no-hitters, including the first perfect game in the National League in more than 84 years, and the strikeout feats.

Bunning is one of only two pitchers to strike out 1,000 or more batters in each major league, and probably the accomplishment he treasures above all others, his standing as the No. 2 strikeout pitcher of all time, second only to the great Walter Johnson.

Cheers for Jim

When Ashburn introduced Bunning and Jim ran onto the diamond, the fans stood and applauded for several minutes. At the end of the ovation, a Volkswagen Microbus and trailer, loaded with gifts, rolled up to home plate.

Then, one by one, Jim's immediate family emerged from the Microbus (a gift from the Phillies) as each was introduced. His wife, Mary, was first and she threw her arms around her tall husband in a touching scene. Then followed the couple's nine children, ranging in age from Barbara, 18, to their second pair of twins, David and Amy, 5. Jim's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Bunning, and brothers Robert and Louis, Jr., also were introduced.

It was a big night for the Bunnings, and one Jim long will remember fondly. His future at this point is undecided, but there is a good possibility he will work for

the Phillies next year, possibly as a minor league manager, a task he indicated during spring training he would be willing to undertake to find out "if I have the patience to manage."

Active in Players' Behalf

Bunning will, of course, be remembered in baseball for more than just his pitching feats. He will be remembered by those who were privileged to play with him or to be associated with him as a dedicated, determined, enthusiastic, disciplined and skillful pitcher who extracted the very most from the talent he possessed.

Bunning will be remembered for his services to baseball off the field, too.

Despite contributions from many others, Jim had been a dominant figure in the affairs of the Major League Players Association.

Handyman Pfeil Gives Phils Lift Behind Bat

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. — No matter how long Bobby Pfeil plays baseball, he'll always remember July 27. The Phillies' utility infielder-outfielder was pressed into service as a catcher because of injuries to the club's regular receivers, Tim McCarver and Mike Ryan.

Pfeil, who caught six games last season in the minors and four innings in two games this season, not only caught both ends of a doubleheader against the Astros in capable fashion, but also hit two homers to lead the Phillies to an 8-3 win in the first game. They were the first homers of Pfeil's big league career.

"Sometimes," he said, "I think I made more off-field (contributions) than on. I don't really mean that, because it has actually been a group effort."

"I do think I know as much about the pension plan as any owner, and I don't mean that as a knock at any owner."

Reminiscing about his career as a pitcher, Bunning recalled his first big league win, a 4-1 verdict over the Senators; his All-Star Game exploits, including the fact that he was the starting pitcher for the A. L. in 1957, the first year he was a regular starter for the Tigers.

Perfecto No. 1 Thrill

"The perfect game against the Mets was the most exciting single game," Bunning said, adding that he knew he was going to get the perfect game when John Stephenson came up to pinch-hit as the 27th batter.

"I knew I could strike him out," he said.

"I can remember making some bad pitches and getting away with them," Jim said. "I threw two high sliders to the first hitter, but (Jim) Hickman fouled them both back."

Bunning laughs when he talks about the rest of that historic day, June 21, 1964.

"I made \$1,500 for taking a bow on Ed Sullivan's show but couldn't get into a New York restaurant to eat dinner. We (wife, daughter Barbara, teammate Danny Cater and wife) ended up in a Howard Johnson's on the Jersey Turnpike. That was quite a day."

And Jim Bunning Night was quite a night for quite a man!

Phillie Fodder: Willie Montanez already has broken the club rookie record for homers by a lefthanded batter and has a shot at Rich Allen's rookie record for hitters of



Jim Bunning

any type. Allen hit 29 in 1964 and Montanez hit his 21st July 27. . . . Deron Johnson hit his 24th on the same day and that left him only three behind his season total for 1970, with a chance to better his major league high of 32, set in 1965 with the Reds. . . . The Phillies have played the two longest games in the National League this season, losing in 15 innings to the Mets June 19 and to the Astros in 15 on July 26.

The Phillies went over the million mark in attendance July 27, earliest in their history, and only the seventh time in club annals. With 31 home games remaining, the Phils had a chance to break their all-time record of 1,425,891 (set in 1964) and seemed certain to surpass their second high of 1,217,035 in 1950. . . . The Phils announced August 2 that Manager Frank Lucchesi will be retained for 1972 at an undisclosed increase in salary. He signed a two-year contract in 1970.

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Hustling Lefebvre Worth Weight in Gold to L.A.

By BOB HUNTER

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—The last time Jim Lefebvre faced knuckler Phil Niekro, he came away shaking his head. He's had plenty of company.

Frenchy failed to nudge the ball out of the infield, although he did bat in the only Dodger run of a 5-1 loss to Atlanta July 25 with a ground ball to the second baseman.

The veteran, although it does seem odd to refer to Jim that way when he was only a bat boy just a few years ago, has done a remarkable job of filling in.

Filling in, of course, isn't an exact description, either, because Lefebvre is as valuable and dedicated a player as Walter Alston has.

As an example of Lefebvre's approach to baseball, one of his recent statements is worthy of print: "Some people like fancy homes, some like yachts. Some like the French Riviera for a vacation."

"Me? If I had a million dollars, I'd hire a batting practice pitcher who would throw to me all day long."

No Knucklers, Thank You

It was just after he'd faced Niekro, so he added: "And the first time he threw a knuckler, I'd fire him on the spot."

Lefebvre says he considers being a utility player a more difficult assignment than playing every day.

"A utility player has to work harder than a regular, and I'll tell you why. He has to maintain good physical condition, and also be alert mentally while sitting on the bench waiting for the skipper to point his finger and say, 'You.'"

Lefebvre is having his best season

since he was Rookie of the Year, and while he doesn't consider himself a regular, Alston says Frenchy is one of the club's great assets.

"You've got to hand it to Frenchy," said the manager the other day, "the way he keeps himself ready."

"When he didn't play, he didn't grouse about it. He's a great guy to have on the field, but also a great guy to have on the bench, an asset often overlooked. He has to keep himself in shape physically, as well as on the alert mentally."

"Frenchy is our best bench jock-

ey. He keeps the dugout alive. If you didn't know who it was making all the noise, you'd swear it was some rookie trying to make the club."

"No one, but no one, puts in longer hours than Lefebvre."

As late as June, when the Giants swooned early, then recovered rapidly, Lefebvre was hitting .333 after a stretch of 13 games, in which he batted safely in 11.

That was a .400 streak, and during the rampage he knocked a three-run homer and batted in four runs against the Cardinals on June 24.

Weisman States Case for Sam

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Weisman explained McDowell's position.

"This (the ruling by Kuhn) was a breach of contract with respect to the repudiation of the agreement entered into by Sam and the ball club. The commissioner is an agent for major league clubs and the Indians in specific," said Weisman.

"I don't think the commissioner is the final arbiter as a matter of law. In my view, the court must adjudicate and, under the circumstances we're dealing with here, the courts are the one to make the final decision, not the commissioner."

Weisman revealed the contents of a letter to the Indians (with a copy to Kuhn) dated July 30, in which McDowell requested his free-agent status.

The attorney, who is, incidentally, the 44-year-old son of a one-time

trainer of the Indians, Max (Lefty) Weisman, said, "Sam formerly resided in the contract and told the Indians: 'I will perform no further service to your corporation.'"

"Please remove my name from your reserve list and make it clear that I am a free agent."

Up to Kuhn, Tribe

"I make this request in order that I not be deprived of future employment elsewhere."

The next step, said Weisman, depends upon the action taken by the Indians and/or Kuhn.

"We'll have to see first if there is a blocking from further employment, or if they will accord with our request," he said. "If they do not (accord) within a reasonable period, we'll have to make our decision."

A "reasonable period," Weisman said, "would be a week or so."

It is believed Sam's basic salary is \$72,000. His record was 10-10.

A look at his July log showed he hit in 10 of 11 games until sidelined with his recent stomach ailment.

On July 24, Jimmy matched Hank Aaron's homer to send the contest into extra innings. The Dodgers eventually managed a 2-1 victory in 13 innings.

Way Past Former HR High

Despite his limited play, he could finish with more homers than he hit in the last three seasons combined. In those seasons he hit five, four and four.

Going back to the record book, he hit eight four years ago, so he could beat his total for four seasons, which would be 21. Through July 29, Frenchy had hit 10 round-trippers.

Line Drives: Steve Garvey was reactivated at the start of the Pittsburgh series in Los Angeles, with Bobby Darwin returning to Spokane (Pacific Coast). . . . Tom Lasorda will replace Maury Wills, who has a big entertainment contract in Las Vegas, as manager of the Hermosillo club this winter. . . . After Jim Brewer shut out the Braves for 5½ innings and struck out nine for his fifth win July 24, Manager Alston called it "perhaps the best relief job I've ever seen." . . .

Rookie Bill Buckner made the same statement, and when informed his boss already had offered the observation, Billy Buckshot added: "But I'm including basketball, football, everything." . . . Bill Sudakis worked out while the team was on the road, ready to return to catching duty momentarily. . . . Jim Lefebvre's new T-shirts are imprinted: "Dodgers—Soon to Be No. 1." . . . New housing is under construction for the Dodgers at Vero Beach.