

## Bernazard's Bat OK'd in Probe

CLEVELAND—This has been a bizarre season for Tony Bernazard, and it's only June.

In spring training, Bernazard was forced to fight for his starting job after the Cleveland Indians' front office decided that collegian Cory Snyder, who had never played a day in the minor leagues, should be given a chance to become the regular at second base.



Only Snyder's inexperience kept Bernazard in the lineup. In addition to trying to cope with a new position, Snyder was unable to adjust immediately to big-league pitching. But Bernazard didn't help himself by hitting .164 in Arizona.

Once the real season began, Bernazard became a big gun in the Tribe attack. But on May 8, Bernazard was banished to the bench despite hitting .317 and leading the team with three home runs. Julio Franco moved from short to second, and newly acquired Johnnie LeMaster was installed at short.

Indians President Peter Bavasi halted that experiment eight games later, when it became clear an improved defense could not compensate for LeMaster's weaknesses at the plate. Bernazard returned to second and Franco to short.

But normalcy remained only a rumor to Bernazard, because on May 22 he became embroiled in a new controversy involving a bat he had borrowed from Franco. Upon driving a two-run double to the center-field wall in Cleveland, Bernazard was accused of using an illegal bat. Milwaukee Brewers Manager George Bamberger played the game under protest.

The protest was dropped when Milwaukee rallied for a 6-5 victory, but the allegations against Bernazard lingered until American League President Bobby Brown could determine whether the bat had been tampered with. Two days later, Brown ordered the bat to be split open. Nothing was discovered inside except wood.

"The only thing they found in that bat were a lot of hits," Bernazard said with a grin, then got serious. "I didn't like it one bit. They were messing around with my image. I'm a clean guy, and I set a good example for my three kids. And after spending all those hours in the weight room, do you think I would waste my time with a corked bat?"

Bamberger and Milwaukee catcher Charlie Moore admitted that their charges were based mostly on gossip among other players.

"I have no idea whether the bat is or isn't legal," Bamberger said after the game. "The only thing is that we've heard stories about the ball jumping off Bernazard's bat and landing in the center-field seats when guys like Jim Rice can't do it. But I really have no idea. Maybe I'm not giving him enough credit. I do know that there are a lot of corked bats around the league."

Said Moore, "We heard rumors about him and guys from other teams, so we picked a situation where he drove in two runs. The bat didn't look corked to me, though, and I've seen corked bats. But if he was using one, then we caught him. I told the ump to have it checked because we had nothing to lose."

Since the bat belonged to Franco, he was irate to be accused indirectly of wrongdoing.

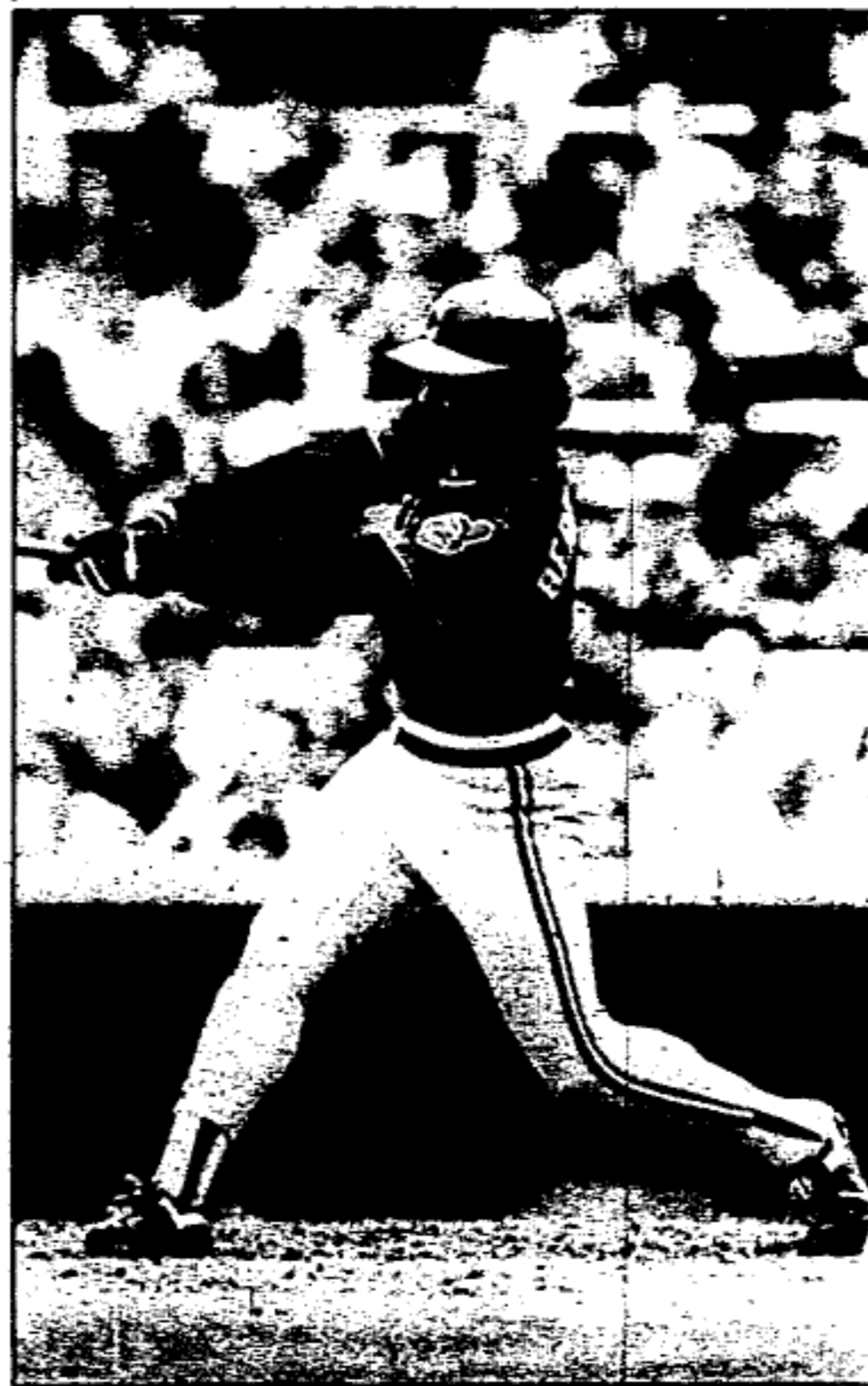
"If I get hold of the bat, I will break it open for them so they can see it," he said. "There is no cork in that bat."

Tribe Manager Pat Corrales also showed his displeasure at being forced to defend his players against allegations of cheating. With a stony glare, he said, "Nobody on this club uses a trick bat."

Through all of his travails, Bernazard was hitting .288 while driving in 14 runs, scoring 16 and hitting four homers to share the team lead with Brook Jacoby.

**Smoke Signals:** In a 25-game span, Jacoby hit .354 with three homers and 16 runs batted in, raising his average from .190 to .288. . . . When Bert Blyleven posted the 49th shutout of his career, an 8-0 decision over Milwaukee May 27, it tied him for 20th on the all-time list with Luis Tiant, Don Drysdale, Ferguson Jenkins and Early Wynn. . . . Vern Ruhle continued to miss starts because of nagging injuries. No sooner had he returned to the rotation after recuperating from a pinched nerve in his neck than he was sidelined with a rib injury. . . . In a 21-game span through May 24, Cleveland relievers posted a 2.11 earned-run average in 68½ innings, yet gained just one save to go with a 2-3 record.

SHELDON OCKER



Though Tony Bernazard was forced to fight for a starting job and then was involved in a controversy over an alleged illegal bat, he has managed to keep his cool at the plate, hitting .288.

from now, I'll look back and say, '1984 was a great season.' But for now, I'm putting last year out of my mind and concentrating on this year. I don't want to become known as a one-year star who never again matched the one great season. I want to have another great year and another after that. Until I do it for a few years, then I can't say I'm a proven star."

Last year, Mattingly was named THE SPORTING NEWS American League Player of the Year. He won the batting title with a .343 mark, hit 23 homers, drove in 110 runs and led the league with 207 hits and 44 doubles. After a slow start this season, caused primarily by a knee injury that sidelined him for most of spring training, Mattingly was trying to prove he wasn't a one-season flash.

In his first 39 games, before being sidelined for two games because of a pulled groin, Mattingly was batting .319 with 38 runs batted in, the most in the major leagues. He was batting .417 with runners in scoring position, was leading the league with 14 doubles and was among the league leaders in hits, extra-base hits and total bases.

"I don't set any statistical goals," he said. "My only goal is consistency. It took me awhile to get going this year because of all the time I missed in spring training. I really didn't feel comfortable at the plate for the first three or four weeks. But now I'm hitting the ball hard, driving the ball, and as long as I'm doing that, the numbers will come."

Last year, Mattingly said his batting average didn't surprise him nearly as much as his 23 homers. He was a .332 hitter in five minor-league seasons but never hit more than 12 homers in a season. Now, he said, "I feel I'll hit in the 25-homer range. But the RBI total is the most important number to me."

Mattingly's performance last season obviously attracted the attention of A.L. pitchers, but he said he wasn't being pitched any differently this year.

"Maybe in certain situations, when first base is open, the pitchers aren't giving me anything too good to hit," Mattingly said. "But, basically, I'm getting the same pitches. With our lineup, they can't afford to walk me because then (Dave) Winfield and (Don) Baylor are coming up."

Mattingly's hitting moved into high gear after Billy Martin replaced Yogi Berra as manager 16 games into the season. In Martin's first 23 games, Mattingly hit .347 with five homers and 31 RBIs. That came as no surprise to Martin.

"Don't forget I'm the guy who started playing him," said Martin, who spotted Mattingly's talent when he was the manager in 1983 and Mattingly was a rookie. "I played him and benched Steve Kemp, and everybody was criticizing me. Kemp was an established hitter with a big contract. But I never cared how much a guy was making. I saw Mattingly hit, and I knew I had to have him in the lineup."

Mattingly hit .283 in 91 games as a rookie before surging to the top last year. He's determined to stay at the top and feels

that 1984 will turn out to be only the first in a long line of impressive seasons.

**Yankee Doodles:** Ron Guldry's first eight decisions included a 1-2 record at Yankee Stadium and a 4-1 record on the road. Last year, he had an 8-2 record at home and a 2-0 mark on the road. During Martin's four terms as manager, Guldry has a 67-22 record, a .733 winning percentage. Under other managers, his record is 70-43, a .619 percentage. "He's had his best years under me, and I've had my best years with him," said Martin. . . . The homer Dave Righetti gave up to Oakland's Dwayne Murphy on May 27 was the first round-tripper allowed by the lefty reliever in 33 innings this season.

When Martin called on Bob Shirley to pitch the ninth inning against Oakland on May 26, with the Yankees leading, 13-1, it marked Shirley's first appearance since April 30. "I wasn't getting discouraged," said Shirley, who retired the side in the ninth on eight pitches as he increased his workload under Martin to two innings in 24 games. "But I think what got me in the game was something that started about nine months ago—Rich Bordin's wife expecting a baby." Bordin had been excused by Martin so he could go to San Francisco, where his wife was about to give birth to their first child. . . . Martin had allowed catcher Butch Wynegar to miss a game against California one week earlier after his wife gave birth to a boy in New Jersey. "We're going to have to do something about this," said Martin jokingly after Bordin left. "We'll have to put in a rule that players' wives can only have babies in the off-season."

Through 41 games, the Yanks had a 16-5 record when Dale Berra was the starting third baseman and a 5-15 mark when Mike Pagliarulo started at third. . . . Willie Randolph's homer against Oakland's Bill Krueger on May 26 was his first in 471 at-bats. His last had been a game-winning blast against Boston's Bob Stanley at Fenway Park on June 14, 1984. "Every once in a while, I can hit one," said Randolph, who has 30 homers in his 10-year career. "I really got a charge out of this one. For me, it was a perfect swing." . . . Rookie Rex Hudler played five innings at first base May 27, the first time he had played the position since Little League. "I had a great time," said Hudler, who played second, shortstop and third in seven minor-league seasons. "I was a little nervous in the first inning, but then I got the hang of it. Whenever they hit a grounder, I just kept thinking, 'OK, now get to the bag and catch the throw.'"

MOSS KLEIN



## Lemon's Sour Streak Finally May Be Over

DETROIT—The Detroit Tigers thought enough of Chet Lemon to make sure he'll be around until 1992, which is how long his contract runs. But Lemon, the Tigers, the popcorn vendors and just about everyone else had begun to wonder if it would take that long for him to hit his first 1985 home run.

That's an exaggeration, of course, but it took Lemon until May 25 to find the seats for the first time this year—a drought of alarming length both to him and the Tigers. Lemon connected for a two-run shot in Seattle, a home run that proved to be the difference in a 3-2 victory—the third consecutive one-run triumph by Detroit as it salvaged its longest trip of the season with a 6-6 mark.

As he watched the ball land in the left-field seats of the Kingdome, Lemon muttered to himself, "It's about time."

Lemon didn't ogle the home run. He didn't stand and admire the feat, but he did take his time sauntering down to first base—not in any way showing up rookie pitcher Karl Best, but using whatever time might be available to savor the moment.

After all, the wait can seem like forever.

"You bet it can," said Lemon, who didn't hold back any of the relief he was feeling. "That home run felt so good. It was all I could do to contain the joy I felt."

With the Tigers' offense sputtering for much of the season, Lemon knew that much of the disappointment involved him. He had no home runs and only 12 runs batted in, far below the 10 homers and 36 RBIs he had by the end of May a year ago.

"They expect me to drive the ball. I know that," he said. "They expect me to hit at least 20 home runs a year, and I expect that, too. But I was hitting so much to right field early in the year that I got complacent about pulling the ball. I enjoyed hitting to right, but enough was enough. That was a long dry spell for me. It was a combination of not getting good pitches to hit and not hitting the good pitches I was getting. Look at it from the pitcher's point of view. Why give a guy a good pitch to hit when he's swinging at everything anyway?"

"So I had to pause and say, 'thank you,' for letting me get that first one out of the way."

If Manager Sparky Anderson knows Lemon, and he believes he does, then one homer quickly could lead to more. "He's streaky that way," said Anderson, "but I know how much better he's got to be feeling. I think Chet was thinking about not having a home run yet. That's a lot of games without one."

"We're getting a lot of hits," Anderson added. "Batting average isn't the problem, but we're not producing anything. Our pitchers can't work from a lead, and that changes the entire

(Continued on Page 18, Column 1)



## Mattingly Proving 1984 Wasn't a Fluke

NEW YORK—Don Baylor walked past Don Mattingly's locker after a game at Yankee Stadium recently, shook his head and said: "The kid's at it again."

"What I did last year was great," said Mattingly, the New York Yankees' first baseman. "But last year is history. Years