

Kid Logan Crowds Kerr for Shortstop Berth With Braves

Buddy, 'Lousiest Hitting Regular' in Majors Last Year, Improves Plate Work in Effort to Win Job

By BOB AJEMIAN

KANSAS CITY, Mo.



Buddy Kerr

Buddy Kerr was fighting for his baseball life as the Braves moved toward the start of the 1951 season. A 24-year-old rookie, Johnny Logan, was crowding him into a corner for the best scramble in the Boston camp this spring.

Manager Billy Southworth, meanwhile, was sitting back with a smile while the pair went at it. Logan, a spirited shortstop up from the Milwaukee farm, turned in a great performance through spring training. He showed a nifty fielding talent, good instinct at the plate.

"Logan will make Kerr a better ball player," says Southworth, satisfied at least to find some depth in the vital shortstop berth.

Kerr was everybody's target the past winter. The 28-year-old infielder had a miserable year at bat in 1950. Most of the time he was around the .200 mark. Through the month of September he perked up. He finished the season batting .227. "He's the lousiest hitting regular in the major leagues," was the stock comment of Kerr's critics.

Kerr heard the same sting the final half of last season. He heard it all winter. He heard it when he reported in Florida and collided with the kid named Logan. The fight for steady work had begun.

From the start, Logan made it obvious there was to be a battle. The Milwaukee graduate was flashy around the shortstop lot. He was quick and dependable on ground balls. At the plate, he proved dangerous.

The first reports out of the Bradenton camp revolved around Logan. Boston papers were heavy with his bid to oust Kerr.

"The best rookie shortstop the Braves have owned since Eddie Miller," was the label Logan carried.

By the records, Kerr is shaky. Still, this corner refuses to count him out. Kerr is a winning ball player. To those who watched him gobble up the final grounder of Vern Bickford's 1950 no-hit, no-run game, sprint to second, relay to first for the game-ending double-play, Kerr is not to be pushed aside lightly. He won't step out without a fight.

He still is a grand fielder. His challenge lies at the plate. In spring training Kerr met it. He ended the Grapefruit season with a .333 batting mark, runner-up to Roy Hartsfield (.344) for the highest spring average in the Tribe camp. Logan finished with a .265 average.

Meanwhile Billy Grins

Southworth is delighted over the shortstop development. Kerr played 155 games last season. He was dead-tired at the end. Many of the hot games at the end of August came with difficulty.

With Logan around, Kerr will get some needed rest. He'll be a better player for it, and Southworth knows it. If Kerr does stumble again this year at bat, Logan will be stuffed into the spot immediately.

One of the interesting angles to the shortstop situation is the background of Logan and Hartsfield, the Braves' second baseman. This pair led the American Association in double plays in 1949 for the Brewers. Now Logan is scrapping to join his minor league partner again.

The Braves, in the meantime, were journeying around by plane and train in two squads on their extensive barnstorming tour.

Cuts in the personnel of the Boston group were being made on the northward trip. Pitcher Murray Wall, Catcher Paul Burris and Infielder Jack Weisenburger were assigned to Milwaukee, with Pitchers Charlie Gorin and Ernie Johnson also expected to join the Brewers. Infielder Jack Dittmer, First Baseman Hank Ertman and Catcher Walt Linden were sent to Atlanta while Catcher Pierce McWhorter was expected to be sent to Denver, where he spent the latter part of 1950.

Tribe Will Return to Bradenton

Braves Buzzings: Lou Perini, Braves' president, has announced the club will return to Bradenton next season for the fifth consecutive spring. Perini listed seven exhibition games lined up for next year, two with the Cardinals, the others with Cincinnati, Red Sox, Detroit, Phillies and Yankees. . . . Not one of the ten Grapefruit games was rained out in Bradenton this spring. Attendance was well ahead of last year's figures. A year ago the Braves drew 11,707 for ten games. This year the count picked up by 3,318. The Tribe drew 15,025.

Jim Wilson and Max Surkont, obtained from the Coast last year, have come up with arm trouble. Neither has rounded into form well at spring training. Wilson can't seem to account for the ache he carries in his shoulder. . . . Sid Gordon hit a 400-foot homer over the left field fence in Clearwater, his second of the Florida stretch. . . . Del Crandall, who entered the Army, March 26, was married March 15. One Boston writer cracked: "Nothing like having two bosses."

Cardinals to Be Stronger on Hill This Year... Period

In Other Spots, Club Has More Worries Than Any Redbird Entry in Years

By RED BYRD

HOUSTON, Tex.



Solly Hemus

Cardinal pitching is likely to be better this season than it was in 1950, with some promising young strong-armed hurlers crowding the old-timers on the staff, but Marty Marion has so many problems and so many positions are still uncertain that only a full-fledged optimist could see pennant possibilities in the 1951 Redbirds.

Marion hasn't solved his outfield problem, and he admits that he would like to find somebody to play center field who could wield a bat in the best Cardinal outfielding tradition, and run and throw like a Terry Moore. But pending such a development, Stan Musial has been returned to center. Marty announced early that Stan was the best he had for the spot, except for Chuck Diering, a weak hitter. Then, after a couple of weeks, Marty announced that he was shifting Stan to left field. He tried Eldon (Rip) Repulski, a rookie, in center, but the young man showed he needed experience, especially as a batter, and so Musial was restored to center.

Bill Howerton is still the No. 3 man,

Saigh Says Marion Won't Be Able to Play Until June

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—On his return home from the Cardinals' training camp at St. Petersburg, Fla., April 2, President Fred Saigh expressed belief that Solly Hemus, not Marty Marion, will be the Cardinals' shortstop in 1951.

"It will be at least June before Marion is ready to play," the Redbird boss said. "In the meantime, if Hemus continues to perform as he has been playing in Florida, he will do. In fact, if Solly can hold up, I'd rather see him remain as our first-string shortstop and Marion as our non-playing manager."

Regarding his celebrated holdout, Pitcher Howard Pollet, Saigh said: "Twice I sent Pollet transportation money to come to Florida to see me about his 1951 contract, and he refused. I believe Howard should listen to reason. He insists he will not take a cut from last year's salary, but I feel he should hear our arguments along that line and maybe he would agree with us. On the other hand, maybe he has good arguments for wanting the same salary as he got in 1950—but he's not going to convince me by staying at his home in Houston."

But he can't play center. And so, unless there is a change—and there have been many changes of heart so far—the starting outfield for the Redbirds will be Enos Slaughter in right, Musial in center and Howerton in left. Steve Bilko and Nippy Jones, or vice versa if you prefer, are still alternating at first base, which means there is no No. 1 standout for the

Stan Goes Back to Center; Hemus Tabbed as Top Candidate at Shortstop

first base position. At second base, everything is serene and settled, but there's not much settled as you move on around the inner line of defense. At shortstop the top man at the moment is little Solly Hemus. Solly is a gamecock. He asked for a shot at the shortstop job, and did so well that he now must be rated the best man the Redbirds have at that position.

"Solly makes me believe I'll have to be a utility man," Marion said after one game in which the Little Bulldog did especially well. "And maybe that's fine. I know I can spell him now and then at short, and I know I can play third base. And I probably could spell Schoendienst at second now and then."

But the fact remains that Hemus has never played a season or, for that matter, a goodly part of a season, even in the minors, at shortstop, and that's a rough spot. However, Solly says he has no worries about being able to stay strong through the strain. "My only worry is whether I'll get worse and worse," he said. And observers say that in the minors he always had as much pepper and fight the last day of the season as on opening day.

Richmond Fades, Tommy at Third

Over at third base, Marion tried to find a better man than Tommy Glaviano, whose erratic arm caused some concern last year. But Don Richmond, from Rochester, faded after a fine start and at last reckoning was not being considered seriously as a rival of Glaviano for the job.

There hasn't been a Cardinal club, since the pre-pennant days, with as many worries as this one, old-timers agree. There were a few teams that didn't prosper, and there were years when a shortstop or a second baseman was sought. But there always were hitters and stout pitchers. And, until recently, Cardinal outfielders ranked with the best in the business.

About the only problem that seems to confront Marion in the pitching department is the one he'll face when he has to make a decision on whom to keep and whom to let go. There are strong-armed young men knocking at the door and experienced old men near the exit age. And with a club that can't be rated as a pennant contender except by the most cock-eyed optimists, now would seem to be a good time to cut off the dead wood, or the dying wood, and give some of the youngsters a chance to learn big league baseball in the big league.

Tom Poholsky, who pitched the Cardinals' first complete game of the spring exhibition schedule, beating the Giants, 2 to 1, on five hits and an unearned run, is plainly the prize of the rookie crop. He won 18 and lost six at Rochester last year, and is sure to be a regular starter from the first 1951 bell. Beating the Giants, he made only one bad pitch, a high curve that hung for Larry Jansen, who hit it for a triple.

Wants Ten Pitchers, Has 11

Other promising new men are Kurt Krieger, another big righthander; Wilmer Mizell, slightly green but well-equipped lefthander, and Joe Presko, a smallish righthander with that old "sneaky" fast ball. Then there's Bob Habenicht, considered as a bullpen prospect. Add to that group Ted Wilks, Al Brazle, Harry Brecheen, Max Lanier, George Munger and Gerald Staley and you're above the total of ten that Marion wants to have on the staff after cutting down time.

Krieger, Lanier and Presko were treated roughly in the final game of the series with the Giants, April 1, but Marion wasn't concerned about that.

"They just didn't have anything today," Marty explained. "Any pitcher will have days like that."

Fred Saigh, Cardinal owner, departed after the April 1 game, flying to St. Louis. Asked how he viewed the squad during the training season, he said, "I believe this is the best we ever had since I've been around." He added that "if we could get a good center fielder, one who could hit, I believe we could go all the way."

When the statement was repeated to Marion and Marty was asked who that center fielder might be, he cracked, "I wish you'd tell me."

Cardinal catching is likely to be satisfactory. Joe Garagiola has been the most consistent hitter in camp and seems to have recovered completely from that shoulder injury he suffered last June.

Sawyer Jolts Complacent Phils -- 'Can't Win on Your Clippings'

Eddie Points Out How Tardy Thinking and Failure to Hustle Can Cost Games

By STAN BAUMGARTNER
NEW ORLEANS, La.



Ken Heintzelman

Eddie Sawyer "laid the law down" to his men a few days ago. In one of his infrequent conferences, the skipper of the Phillies told his men to shake themselves out of their mental lethargy.

Calling them together in one big meeting, he warned that pennants are not won on past records, newspaper clippings or pats on the back by hero worshippers.

"You aren't champions in 1951," he declared.

"Games are won on the diamond by wide-awake, hustling men who take advantage of every mistake by the opposition and make as few as possible themselves."

The pilot, who has a remarkable memory, then briefed the entire spring season, pointing out how the Phils had given the opposing clubs from one to three runs every game by either tardy thinking or lack of hustle. He recalled how Mike Goliat had handed the Tigers three runs in a game lost at Lakeland when he failed to make a sure double play in the belief there were two out instead of one. He called Del Ennis' attention to a slowness of action on a fly ball that cost two runs. He pointed out various other mistakes.

"I don't worry about errors," he said. "They are all part of the game, but I don't excuse mental lapses or lack of spirit."

There is no doubt that some of the players have taken the spring training in stride, and complacency is the Phillies' only pitfall in their bid for a second flag.

The team, however, wound up the spring training season in Florida at the top of the heap, and showed increased punch in its attack and the best pitching of any club.

In the last few weeks, it was the so-

'Watch Associates,' Carpenter Warns

CLEARWATER, Fla.—In a short, but direct, two-fisted talk to his team in a closed session last week, Robert R. M. Carpenter, Jr., president of the Phillies, warned his players against any association with gamblers or unsavory characters during the coming season.

Explaining to his men that many of the college basketball players recently charged with gambling owed their unfortunate predicament solely to the type of men they associated or became acquainted with, Carpenter laid down this guideline toward the social relationships of his players.

"Do not sit down with, walk with or eat with any person you

would not be proud to invite to your home to meet your wife and children," admonished the club president.

"You have the Phillies and the fans, as well as yourself, to think of. You are the guideposts for the youth of this country; you cannot afford to let them down."

"I have no fear of anyone on my club deliberately doing anything, but your influence makes you vulnerable. Govern yourself with care and discretion."

The club president laid down no absolute rules of conduct as to associations, acquaintances or actions on or off the field. His warning was general but clear.

called reserves and those who had been classified as "doubtful" who blossomed into full flower.

Bill Nicholson, Ed Pellagrini, Ken Heintzelman, Jocko Thompson, Del Wilber and Jimmy Bloodworth all played major roles in the triumphs. Nicholson's return to top form has been one of the spectacular developments in Florida. The big fellow has been playing better than he ever did. His hitting has been splendid. In the final game against Washington, he drove two homers over the 350-foot right field fence like bullets. And he is the best all-round outfielder on the club.

Pellagrini filled in for both Gran Hamner and Goliat at shortstop and

Ken Johnson Strikes Oil; He Talks of Retirement

NEW ORLEANS, La.—Southpaw Ken Johnson of the Phillies is now an oil tycoon. A few days ago a well in which he was interested in Kansas hit oil. Another well is being drilled near it and Johnson figures his income per month will reach \$750 with any luck. One well is in a field not prospected and he expects it to give 60 barrels per day (at \$2.75 per barrel).

"When my income reaches \$1,000 a month, I am going to retire from baseball," he said.

The Phillies hope it doesn't reach that mark this year . . . because he has begun to strike oil on the pitching mound.