



Jack Morris ... Already fed up.

Raps Against Hurlers Disturb Tigers' Morris

By TOM GAGE

LAKELAND, Fla.—One day of spring training and Jack Morris already was fed up.

"I'm tired of hearing how bad this pitching staff is supposed to be," said the Detroit righthander. "I heard all winter that we're what's wrong with this team. Well, I don't think that is completely true. There is a lot of talent here and this might be the year to show it."

It sounds like the 1980 echo of Jack Morris, who got mad and stayed mad, breaking a bat rack in Detroit and telling reporters to "take a hike" in Oakland. But it isn't. Morris has promised to stay cool this season, but, more important, he feels he owes it to his team.

Morris had a 16-15 record with a 4.18 earned-run average last season, after Manager Sparky Anderson went out on a limb and called him the best righthanded pitcher in the American League.

Anderson knew he was taking a chance with such a comment a year ago, but he was confident of Morris' future after Jack's 17-7, 3.28 ERA performance in 1979.

"I've seen a lot of good pitchers go through what Jack did after his good season," said Anderson. "They think it's all going to come easy now, but it doesn't. Nothing does. Then they get frustrated and mad. I've seen it before."

Morris won't deny he was frustrated and angry, although he insists he put the emotions to good use.

"I can't say it was a bad year," he says. "More like a growing year. I learned that I have to take things easier. I can't let the bad times get to me."

"They're going to happen and there is nothing I can do about it. But once you are done with a game, win or lose, you are done."

"One thing I'm not going to let happen is outside interference."

"I don't want something that's written or said to bother us as a team. That's why I am fed up with all the stuff that's been going on about how much pressure there is on the pitching staff. If we can just come together and get some confidence, we'll do all right."

From a personal standpoint, Morris is not about to project himself as a 20-game winner, even though Anderson said the Tigers are in desperate need of a pitcher in that range.

"Nobody will complain about not having a 20-game winner if we all win 19," Morris said. "I'm not saying all the starters are going to win that many, but there'll be a lot of improvement in each one."

Morris, Dan Schatzeder, Milt Wilcox and Dan Petry shape up as the Tigers' starters. Dave Rozema is ticketed for the bullpen. Mark Fidrych for uncertainty and there are a few other proven candidates for the fifth starting spot.

"A lot is going to depend on me," said pitching coach Roger Craig.

"Some of the starters must learn an extra pitch, including Jack," added Craig. "He's got a good, fast slider but he needs to learn another pitch—a curve or a modified slider. We'll be working on that this spring."

Tiger Tales: Rozema turned his diet into dollars on the first day of training. Facing a \$100-per-pound fine if he came in overweight, Rozema won back the \$200 he lost on the scales last year by coming in four pounds under the designated 205. "I told him last fall I'd pay him back if he could do it," said Anderson, "and I'm going to do it." Rozema said he would use part of the winnings to buy a steak dinner.

Duffy Dyer missed the beginning of training because of a death in his family. Second baseman Lou Whitaker reported with the pitchers and catchers and was sporting a new look. Whitaker shaved his head three weeks before reporting. Craig observed his 50th birthday on February 17. Craig is back in his old uniform number 38 after a year in No. 52. Part of the reason for Bruce Robbins' 6.58 ERA last season was his poor vision. "I could hardly see the signs," said the lefthander, who showed up in Lakeland wearing glasses.

'Good Guy' Manning Protests \$500 Fine; A Banquet AWOL

By BOB SUDYK

TUCSON, Ariz.—The Cleveland Indians' main force had hardly bedded down for camp when center fielder Rick Manning began spring training the way he ended last season—in controversy.

Manning's "Frank Gibbons Good Guy" award, presented by the Cleveland baseball writers, was less than 24 hours old when the Tribe's front office hit him with a \$500 fine for not being present in Cleveland to accept it.

While some 1,200 persons attended the annual banquet to honor the area's sports heroes, including Mike Hargrove as man of the year in baseball and Manning as the most cooperative player, the 26-year-old center fielder was conspicuous by his absence.

He left town early to get in shape here, trying to demonstrate his resolve to have a good season by reporting and working out in advance, not to mention trying to forget 1980.

Manning has become baseball's version of Sad Sack, the comic World War II-vintage private who did everything wrong, no matter how hard he tried to do everything right.

"I was here early to get going for a good year," said Manning. "I didn't want to be at a dinner reminding myself of last year."

Manning suffered through his worst season in 1980, batting .234, knocking in 52 runs, with three homers and 12 stolen bases in 140 games.

Manning has filed a grievance with the Major League Players Association, contesting the fine. The players are required only to appear at an opening-day luncheon and picture day at the stadium. Manning has been cooperative in the past.

His grievance is based on principle, since he earns \$295,000 a season.

Manning is accustomed to the front office needle. Last year he came to camp above the expected weight, thinking that he might be a stronger hitter with extra pounds. Indians President Gabe Paul publicly hammered him for coming to camp out of shape.

"I thought it was for the good of the club," Manning said then.

Manning's agent, Ed Keating, believes Manning is being harassed. He said, "If it were \$100 or \$200, we would have paid and kept quiet. But this is out of line. Rick wanted to put last year out of his mind and start fresh. The media has been rough on him. This is the second year in a row he has been knocked before the first game of the season."

Paul criticized Manning last year for his weight. This winter he has said, "We can't go with a .234 hitter in center field," and suggested that Miguel Dilone or Von Hayes out of Class A or Alan Bannister might be in line to take Manning's job.

Manning has worked hard this winter to sharpen his physique and lower his weight. He promised a 185 weigh-in.

Paul said, "We've tried everything with Rick. We tried putting our arms around him in an understanding way. We tried kissing his rear. Now we're going to pat him on the rear again, this time with a hot poker. What else is left to do?"

It was almost a note of despair.

Paul expressed hope that Manning would hit .280 or more and repeated that he won't sit still for a .234 hitter in center field.

"Some people are talking like a .234 hitter is the greatest thing since inside plumbing," said Paul. "Manning has to go to spring training to work hard and earn himself a job."

When it was suggested that this push will put Manning under pressure, Paul said, "We are under more pressure than Rick if we play him when he isn't producing."

Paul resents what happened last spring when Manning told the club he was in great shape and ready to play. "He showed up with a huge rear end," said Paul. "Rick talks a good game. He has to play a good game. He faces some competition this spring. It may be the greatest thing for him."

Paul listed the competitors for center field this way: Dilone, the American League's third highest hitter in 1980 at .341 with a club-record 61 stolen bases; Bannister, .324 with the Tribe in 80 games; Hayes, a swift power hitter who hits for average, and Larry Littleton, voted the best defensive center fielder in the minors at Tacoma (Pacific Coast).

Manning laughed. "Gabe's not gonna beat me down. He's trying to embarrass me into becoming a better player. He should relax. I'm gonna be his center fielder. And he'll be happy."

Smoke Signals: Paul underwent successful prostate surgery at Lutheran Medical Center and was recuperating here as spring training began. Paul had two telephones at his bedside in case a trade began to brew.

Jerry Dybzinski signed a one-year contract, estimated at \$50,000. The utility infielder batted .234 in his rookie year.

On Toby Harrah trade rumors, Paul said, "We won't consider trading Toby unless we get an overwhelming offer like the one we got when we traded for Bert Blyleven. We don't have enough hard-nosed, play-every-day guys like Toby."

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