

New Stadium Should Build Up Royal Muscle, Says Mayberry

By JOE MCGUFF

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—The goodwill tour, which is a well-established part of the local baseball scene, can bring out the best or the worst in players. The bouncing bus rides, the fried chicken dinners and the endless series of press conferences can be agonizing for an athlete if he is inclined to look on the worst side of things.

It is typical of John Mayberry that he took part in the Royals' goodwill tour this year with the same sort of common sense that enabled him to endure his ups-and-downs with the Houston organization and his slow start last season with the Royals.

"The bus rides aren't doing much for me," Big John commented somewhere between Joplin and Topeka, "but I like the tour. Baseball is a great game and I like to talk about it. The people want to know what I think about things and I want to know what they think."

"You get to know the other players better on the tour, too. We've had a lot of laughs."

IT IS A combination of ability and attitude that strengthens the impression that John Mayberry is on his way to becoming a super star. His great ability is reflected in both his offensive and defensive statistics. He batted .298 last season, hit 25 home runs and drove in

100 runs. He led American League first basemen in five of seven defensive categories.

Last year was Mayberry's first full season in the majors and now



John Mayberry

there is the sophomore jinx to worry about, but so far there is nothing to suggest that Mayberry will fall victim to complacency, an inflated ego or other problems related to this common baseball malady.

Mayberry, who will celebrate his 23rd birthday shortly before reporting for spring training, is well aware that the pitchers will have a better book on him this season, but it is not a problem that has kept him awake at night.

"Yeah, the pitchers are developing patterns against me," Mayberry said, "but I can do the same with them."

With Hal McRae hitting behind me, I'll get some better pitches to hit—I think.

"I THINK everything is going to be better for us. When we move into the new stadium, we'll know we have the best facilities in the world. It should give us a new approach. We should really want to play."

"I saw McRae and Wayne Simpson in the minors and in the National League. McRae can hit and Simpson is a young pitcher with a lot of ability. Richie Scheinblum and Roger Nelson had great years for us, but I think these two new guys will help us more. And Jack McKeon is a heckuva manager in my opinion."

"He knows the game and he knows how to get the best out of his players."

He has rules and he'll expect us to follow 'em. But he treats the players like men—and that's all we should want."

MAYBERRY WILL report for spring training with a more relaxed and confident attitude than he had a year ago, although he plans to work as hard as ever.

"When I came to spring training last year, I had nothing," Mayberry observed.

"I hadn't played that much in Houston and I didn't have any statistics—nothing."

"When I left for spring training, I didn't know what to expect. So all I could do was get ready to play. This spring I can go down with a more positive attitude. I won't be any more determined because I was determined last spring, but I know more about what I have to do."

Royals' Roundup: The Royals have had a showing of their new uniforms for the 1973 season. The traditional white uniform will be worn at home, but the road grays have been replaced by a Columbia blue uniform. The Royals have gone to pullover tops with a V-neck. The pants are form-fitting and elasticized at the waist.

McKeon, known for his inventive quotes, sounds like any other manager when he talks about his plans for spring training. "We're going to work on fundamentals because I feel they have a carryover effect for the season," he said. "The way you practice down there, that's the way you'll play. More games are won and lost because of fundamentals than because of hitting and pitching. My plans are to make this the best mentally prepared team in the history of the Royals."

Speaking of 1973 contracts, General Manager Cedric Tallis said, "We're getting our contracts back in a hurry. Unfortunately, no one is signing them." . . . The Royals report that their season ticket sale has topped 6,000 and they are hoping to reach 7,000 before it ends in March. Tickets for the opening game in the Royals' new stadium will not go on sale until the season ticket campaign has ended. Arrangements for the sale of All-Star Game tickets will not be announced until after the opening of the season.



Beans Reardon Makes Himself Heard

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—The sandpaper pipes of John (Beans) Reardon, the ex-umpire who hit a higher note than Yma Sumac and much more profanely, were at their shrill best in a recent reminiscence with old friends.

Reardon, the former boilermaker's apprentice who struck it rich as a beer distributor after he turned in that battered old mask 23 years ago, was here to be honored by the St. Louis baseball writers.

"I've been honored before," said the 75-year-old Reardon, characteristically out of the corner of his mouth. "At Houston, when they gave me the Bill Klem Award, I told 'em, 'Klem hated me and I hated him.'"

Diplomatic, he ain't, but honest he is. Honest and tough-talking, but also a sentimental Irishman who was one helluva fine umpire in the National League between 1926 and 1950. Klem, long-time No. 1 among the N. L.'s men in blue, probably didn't like Beans because Reardon was hard-headed, too, and insisted on wearing an inflated outside chest protector rather than the inside kind traditional with Klem.

The N. L. president, Ford Frick, who became commissioner shortly after Reardon quit because a top umpire's salary of \$11,500 wasn't nearly so lucrative as hustling Budweiser, used to fuss with Beans about his profanity, but he recognized Reardon's worth as an arbiter.

A young player shortly out of college complained to Frick that he'd been cussed by an umpire. Frick knew at once the perpetrator, but he wondered what the veteran official had called the young player.

The player repeated the obscenity. "Why," said Frick, relieved, "that was practically a compliment, merely Beans' way of saying hello."

Reardon, by his own estimate, didn't throw out more than a player a year, on the average, because he'd rather exchange sulphuric insults than pull his rank. Not only extremely capable, Beans had the novel notion that the fans paid to see the players, not the umpires.

Reardon's four-letter forensics were never more eloquent than when he and Frank Frisch were raising their penetrating pipes in cheek-to-jowl arguments which were classical.

One day Frisch overstepped the bounds for even broadminded Beans, who promptly announced that it would cost the Cardinals' playing manager 50 bucks. Back at the Coronado Hotel, Frisch phoned and invited Reardon to join him and coach Mike Gonzalez in the bar.

"It not only cost him the \$50 and five rounds of beer," said Reardon, chuckling at his own chutzpah, "but I borrowed his car for the evening and then told him to phone the garage and tell 'em to fill 'er up."

When Hack Wilson Threw His Bat

Reardon, son of a Taunton (Mass.) saloonkeeper and practically a life-long resident of Long Beach, Calif., said he'd read recently in THE SPORTING NEWS that Frisch had attributed one of his remarks to Klem.

"I wish the damn Dutchman would get things straight," beamed Beans, explaining that when Rogers Hornsby was managing the Cubs, he'd seen The Rajah infuriate slugger Hack Wilson by giving Wilson the "take" sign in a game at the Polo Grounds in New York. Hack saw red and not only took that pitch, but another for a called third strike, then growled at Reardon. The plate umpire knew that, when teed off, Hack had a habit of flipping his bat in the air.

"Don't throw that bat on me, Hack," Reardon warned. Wilson flung the bat high in the sky. "If," said Reardon, delivering the line that has become a classic, "if that bat comes down, Hack, you're outta the game."

Reardon was involved in one of baseball's most delightful moments, the day at Brooklyn's Ebbets Field when Babe Herman tripled into a double play.

The daffiness Dodgers of Uncle Wilbert Robinson had the bases loaded with one out—Hank DeBerry on third, Dazzy Vance on second, Chick Fewster on first—when "Turkey Neck," as the irreverent Reardon called the lanky Herman, lifted a long drive which grazed the high, sloping fence in right center. Let Beans take it from there:

"DeBerry scored and Vance should have easily, but for some reason he stopped halfway home and started back to third. Herman, after sliding into second, saw the ball go through and headed to third. Fewster, reaching third to find Vance on the bag, started back to second and then re-traced himself to third.

"When I got there, with three men on third, they were tagging everybody in sight and I said, 'Damn it, wait a minute until I sort this out.' Fewster, you're out, it's Vance's base. Turkey Neck, you're out for passing Fewster on the baseline. Okay, fellas, side's out. Let's play ball."

Supreme Court Justice's Advantage

Fewster, a Dodger outfielder, figured in the closest Reardon ever came to breaking a promise made to John Heydler, then National League president, after Beans had been hired on veteran Hank O'Day's recommendation.

On Reardon's first trip into New York, Heydler told him he had a good minor league reputation as an umpire, but a bad one for fighting. The league president wanted his promise not to fight.

"I can't do that, Mr. Heydler," Beans protested, "because when you broke in at 130 pounds as I did, you've got to be ready to fight."

Heydler pondered and said, "All right, young man, then promise me you won't throw the first punch."

But on a day at Pittsburgh when Beans just had dodged pop bottles and was rednecked, Fewster said the wrong thing. Reardon, who'd learned a few things about boxing from George Black on the West Coast, spun his man around and drew back his arm, only to have it grabbed by Rabbit Maranville.

"Thanks, Rab," said Reardon, aware that he might have punched himself right out of the majors.

Late in Beans' umpiring career, Bob Hannegan, then co-owner of the Cardinals, had Chief Justice Fred Vinson, a former minor leaguer, as a box-seat guest and wanted the umpire to meet the jurist.

The last out was a foul fly close to the box. Reardon rushed over, made the call and stuck out his hand to the Chief Justice, reminding Vinson that an angry Jimmy Wilson once had accused umpires of having more authority than the Supreme Court.

"That's right, Mr. Justice," crowed Reardon, cockily. "because it takes nine of you on the bench to make a decision, but I make my own."

Vinson nodded, pleasantly, but then delivered the perfect squelch. "True, Mr. Reardon, but remember that I can sit in this box and boo you," said Vinson, smiling. "Just try to come into my court and boo me."

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