

Twins Pinpoint Pitching and Bench as Weakest Areas

By BOB FOWLER

TWIN CITIES, Minn.—During the World Series, there were many discussions about trades and some talks resulted in deals. Minnesota officials talked and talked and, well, that was about it, except for a minor swap with the Cardinals involving four fringe players.

President Calvin Griffith and Manager Bill Rigney spoke with officials from San Francisco to Washington. They were looking for pitchers, a center fielder and reserves—three areas they must improve, if they are to challenge successfully the powers of the East like Baltimore, Detroit and New York.

After the Twins lost the American League pennant in three straight to Baltimore for a second time, Rigney talked about the 1971 edition and how he hoped it would be improved.

"We've got to build our pitching staff," he said.

The Twins could use a starter, especially a southpaw. They also could use another lefthander in the bullpen.

"We have to build our reserve strength, too," the manager said. "Our reserves have to be so good that, if a key player is injured, he won't be missed too much."

That was one of the team's woes in 1970. After Rod Carew was injured June 22, the Twins failed to win as often.

He was replaced by rookie Danny Thompson, who is a short-stop and played out of position. No one, of course, could make up for the loss of Carew's bat.

Allison Is Through

And if any other regular were to be injured, well, it's unlikely an adequate replacement would be found on the present 25-man roster.

Pinch-hitting was another weakness of the Twins. In addition, their top pinch-hitter, Bob Allison, has retired.

Next spring, the Twins' outfield situation may be very unsettled.

Cesar Tovar, the smallest Twin at 5-9 and 155, hit .300 for the first time in his career and was an outstanding leadoff batter with 54 RBIs and only 47 strikeouts in 650 at-bats.

However, he made 14 errors.

If a center fielder can't be obtained, Paul Ray Powell, who hit over .300 at Evansville (American Association), would be the probable No. 1 choice. If he couldn't impress, Jim Holt or Tony Oliva likely would be placed there.

Tovar would be moved to left, probably.

"We just have to find a way to defend center field better," Rigney said.

Another problem for the Twins in 1970 was catching. George Mitterwald was adequate on defense, but hit only .222. Paul Ratliff hit .268, but wasn't adequate defensively.

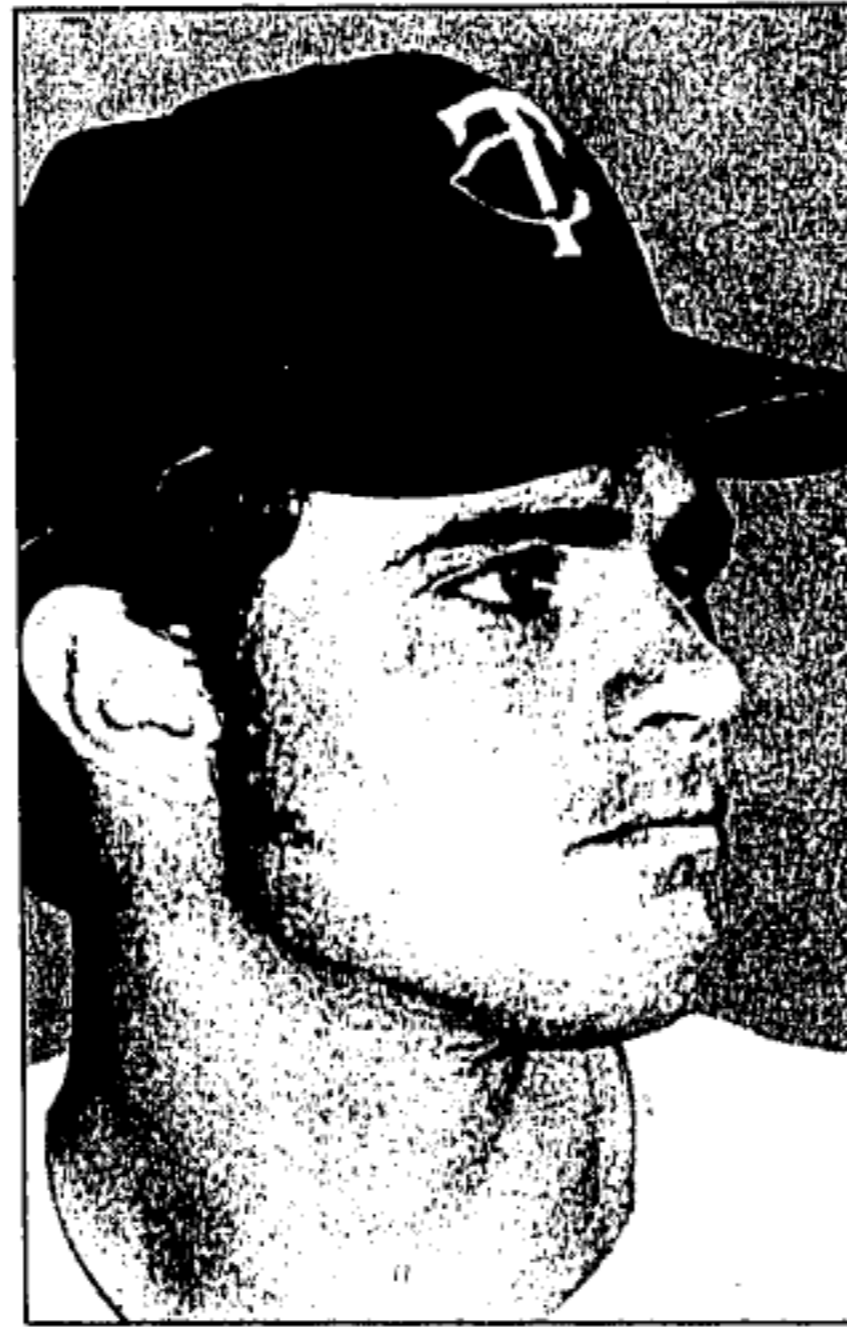
"I believe our catching will improve in 1971 because Mitterwald and Ratliff will be a year older," the manager added.

Rigney has had a season to look at his team and he knows now he needs more defense and better pitching to beat teams like Baltimore.

If trades aren't made, then minor leaguers will have to be promoted and adjustments made with players from this year's squad. And spring training will be a very crucial time.

"It's well and good to win the division championship," Rigney said. "But it's not enough unless you can win something else and go on to the World Series."

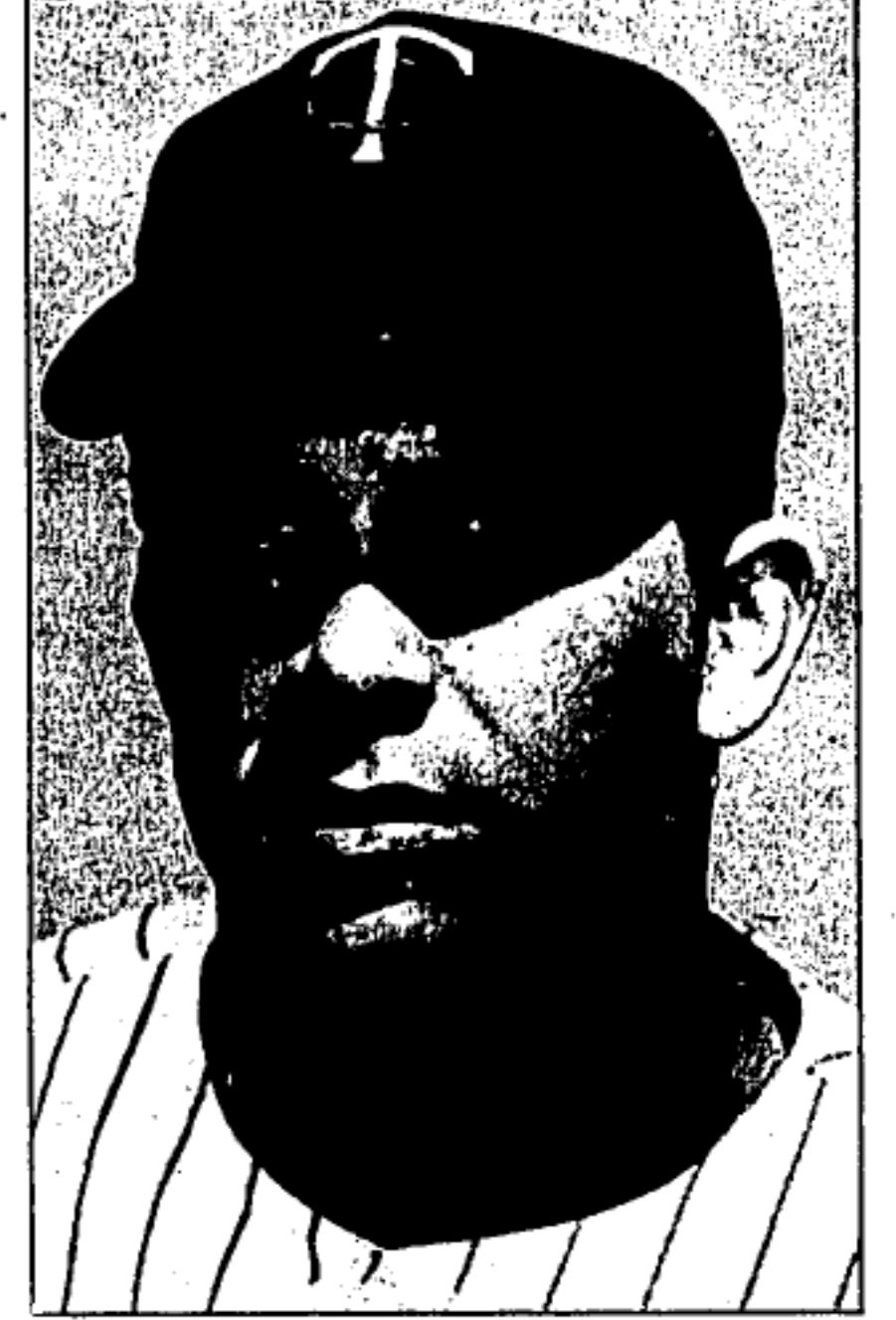
Twin Tales: Pitcher Dave Boswell, who won 20 games two seasons ago and three in 1970, has asked to be traded. Pitcher Dick Woodson said he wouldn't pitch for Minnesota in 1971 because he felt he didn't receive a chance last season. In 21 relief appearances



Paul Ratliff



Cesar Tovar



George Mitterwald

totaling 30½ innings, he gave up 29 hits and 19 walks and had a 3.77 ERA. . . . Rod Carew has joined the team's instructional league club in Florida and is playing at first base. Later, he will shift to center

field to extend fully his right knee. . . . Frank Quilici said he would like to remain with the Twins' organization as a player and declined an offer to coach for Billy Martin in Detroit. . . . Cesar To-

var, Jim Holt and Luis Tiant are playing winter ball in Venezuela. Tony Oliva will play for about a month this winter in Mexico. . . . Rich Reese will play some in the instructional league, too.

Mets Groan at Phillies' Price Tag on McCarver

By JACK LANG

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Reluctant as they are to break up what they feel is the nucleus of a great young pitching staff, the Mets are shopping around and offering Jim McAndrew, Nolan Ryan and Gary Gentry as trade bait. Their primary request at this time is a left-handed-hitting catcher and they're trying to acquire Tim McCarver from the Phillies.

Bob Scheffing and John Quinn of the Phillies got together several times during the World Series and tossed around quite a few names. What their talks boiled down to, basically, is that the Mets would like McCarver and infielder Tony Taylor, but do not relish giving up three players for two, at least not the three the Phils are asking for.

Phils Want Catcher

"They want one of the three pitchers and an outfielder, and they say they also need a catcher if they're going to give up McCarver," said the Mets' general manager.

"We'll give up a pitcher and an outfielder, but we don't want to have to give up the catcher, too," Scheffing added.

In 1969, when the Mets were riding high as champions of the universe, the New York pitching staff was considered the most desirable collection of young talent baseball had seen in a decade or more.

McAndrew, Ryan and Gentry were part of a prize package headed by Tom Seaver, Jerry Koosman and Tug McGraw. All were under age 26 and considered virtually untouchable as the Mets dreamed of a dynasty.

Phils Want Shamsky

Besides one of the three young pitchers, the Phils also want outfielder Art Shamsky and catcher Duffy Dyer. Ron Swoboda was offered in Shamsky's place, but the Phillies don't want him.

Frank Lucchesi, who attended the entire World Series and was in on the talks from the start, said the Mets were awaiting the decision by Manager Gil Hodges on which of the three pitchers he would be willing to let go. Hodges missed the early Series games and was not in on the original talks with the Phils.

Apparently Hodges will decide which of the three pitchers the club will let go, although all three have been mentioned in the talks.

The Mets feel they are giving up too much if they relinquish a starting pitcher, a .293 hitter like Shamsky and Dyer as well.

Shamsky, who owns a New York bistro along with Phil Linz, is disturbed at the trade talk.

He likes living in New York and feels he contributed substantially to the Mets' offense the past two years.

Plenty of Outfielders

Art is right, of course. He has been a valuable lefthanded hitter. But the Mets used him more often in the outfield and outfielders are one commodity they have in abundance.

Thus, Art is expendable.

That the Mets are willing to deal a pitcher after their disappointing finish is indication that Hodges and Scheffing both feel a little more punch is needed in the lineup.

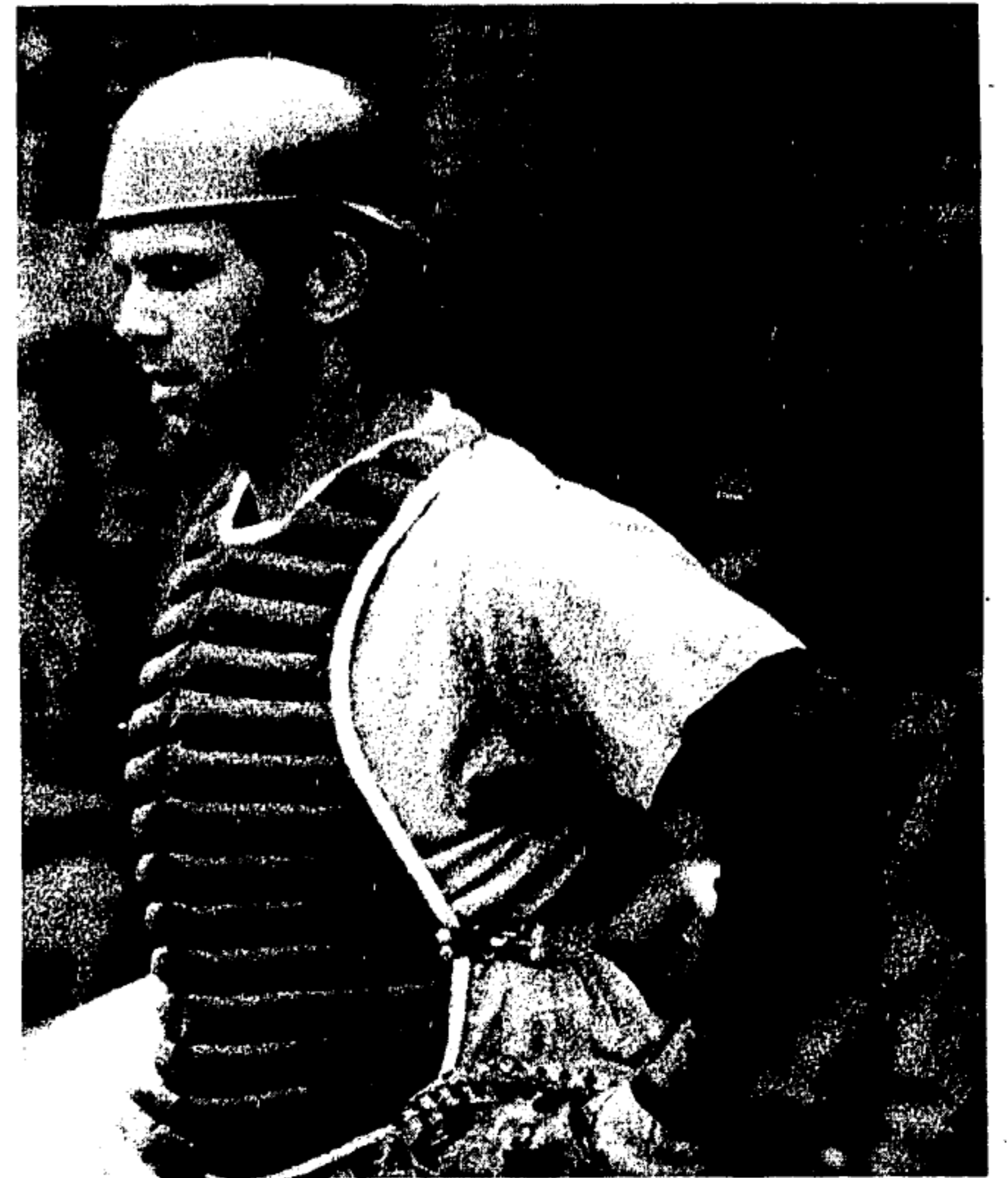
This was the greatest offensive team in Mets' history, but it wasn't offensive enough to overcome the shortcomings of the pitching staff.

The feeling is that McCarver would add considerable lefthanded offensive strength to a lineup that features the righthanded power of Tommie Agee, Cleon Jones and Donn Clendenon. There just wasn't enough lefthanded punch.

So the Mets continue to shop. McCarver might be the answer to their problems. Taylor would help as a utility man and pinch-hitter, but that's all the Mets would get if they give up the pitcher plus Dyer. They feel it's too much.

Met Musings: World Series headquarters at one time had a rumor of a straight swap of Clendenon for Orlando Cepeda of the Braves. It wasn't the kind of deal that made much sense except that Clendenon lives in Atlanta and has several business interests there. Another rumor had Al Weis going to Kansas City, but Scheffing said the Kaycee interest was not that strong.

On October 20 the Mets announced the sale of pitchers Les Rohr and Larry Bearnarth to the Brewers and outfielder Rod Gaspar to the Padres. The sale of Rohr was conditional, but the sale of Bearnarth was not.



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