

# Homer-Spree Don a Home-Made Hitter

## Dad Passed Along Tips From Waner

Developed Wrist Strength by Holding Willow Across Shoulder, Down Back

By **BOB BROEG**  
ST. LOUIS, Mo.

The five record-tying home runs handsome **Don Mueller** hammered in two important games against Brooklyn at New York's Polo Grounds, September 1 and 2, brought a broad smile to a jut-jawed, middle-aged man who had planned hopefully for his off-spring to be a better ball player than his father.

Walter **Mueller**, who played the outfield for Pittsburgh five years in the early '20s, knew long before his 24-year-old son blasted his way into prominence with three homers against the Dodgers one day and two the next that the right fielder of the Giants was a better hitter than he previously had shown.

The senior **Mueller**, a St. Louis cartage company official, knew because he had seen his boy sprout batting ability before his eyes—and under as careful a bit of coaching as an ex-major leaguer ever had hopefully given a son.

A son's share of the credit for the young outfielder's success must be given to his father, who planned from the time he placed a bat on his second son's left shoulder at the age of three to see Don's name in a major league lineup.

### Dad Cracked the Whip

"When I think of the percentage against a boy's chances of getting to the majors, I shudder and wonder why I ever was so stubborn," Walter explained one day here as **Don** smiled and said: "Dad cracked the whip, all right. I always liked to go fishing on Sundays. I remember, but to him Sunday meant just two things—church and baseball."

As an outdoorsman living 12 miles from the city limits, Walter **Mueller** frequently took **Don** and older brother Leroy on fishing and hunting trips, but never when there was a chance to play baseball. And because he feared an injury might ruin their chances of a professional career, he ruled out football, basketball and soccer for his youngsters.

"I know what an injury can do," explained the father. "I hurt a knee playing in the old Bi-State League at Freeport, Ill., in 1915 after Branch Rickety had signed me for the Browns, and it took me five years to get over it."

A World War I soldier, Walter rested that troublesome knee after his discharge and then needed only one year in the Western League before reporting to Pittsburgh in 1922. For five seasons then, with the exception of 1925, he was an extra outfielder behind Max Carey, Carson Bigbee and Clyde Barnhart, hitting over .300 in '23.

To help with the booming business of a brick-hauling company he and an older brother had formed five years earlier, the senior **Mueller** stayed out of baseball in 1925 and observed ruefully, "That's the year the Pirates won a pennant."

Walter, called Heinie at Pittsburgh,

### No Team at Home School, Mueller Transferred Sons

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—Walter **Mueller** was so eager to give his sons a chance to play baseball that because the Pattonville (Mo.) Township High School had no team, he transferred them to a St. Louis institution.

"That same year, though, CBC (Christian Brothers College) High gave up baseball temporarily, but it was a good school and my wife and I decided to leave the boys there," he said, adding with a smile:

"They weren't good students. Too much baseball on their minds. Wonder where they got that?"

## He Raised His Boy to Be a Ball Player



**DON MUELLER**, new sensation of the Giants, and his proud dad, Walter.

## Belted 'One for Kid' to Tie Mark

NEW YORK, N. Y.—**Don Mueller**, outfielder of the Giants, "hit one for the kid" to tie a major league home run record, September 2.

Just before strolling to the plate in the eighth inning of the Sunday game with the Dodgers, **Mueller** was informed by a teammate, Monte Irvin, that his wife had given birth to a son in a St. Louis hospital. Thrilled by the news, **Don** promptly unloaded the home run, his fifth in two days, tying the record shared previously by Adrian Anson, Cubs, 1884; Ty Cobb, Tigers, 1925; Tony Lazzeri, Yankees, 1936, and Ralph Kiner, Pirates, who achieved the feat twice, both times in 1947.

**Mueller** rapped three home runs on the previous day to account for five runs in the Giants' 8 to 1

victory over the Dodgers and his two round-trippers, September 2, also accounted for five tallies in the 11 to 2 rout of the Flatbush crew.

In the September 1 game, **Mueller** walloped his first barrier blow in the opening inning, clouting his second in the third frame, with Eddie Stanky aboard, and hit No. 3 in the seventh, again scoring Stanky ahead of him.

The following day, **Don** socked his four-masters in the sixth, with two mates on base, and repeated in the eighth, with Stanky on the runways.

The quintette of home runs gave **Mueller**, who hit only seven in his best previous season in the big leagues, a total of 15 for the year.

though he was not related to colorful Clarence (Heinie) **Mueller**, who was a contemporary, did not rejoin Pittsburgh until late in the '26 season and then was sent to Indianapolis that fall in payment for Pitcher Carmen Hill.

A sprained ankle at Indianapolis hastened Walter's decision to return to the cartage company, a business that has had both good and bad times in its 30 years.

For ten years he played week-end semi-pro ball and by the time he hung up his glove at 41, older son Leroy was the batboy and **Don** an interested hanger-on. And he didn't finish until one Sunday he played third base and Leroy wound up the game in right field.

"I'd always had a crazy notion I wanted to keep going until I played either with or against my sons," **Mueller** explained.

### Fever Stopped Brother Leroy

Two and a half years older than **Don**, Leroy was regarded as a better prospect by the time the war came along, but the young shortstop, who could "throw like Marion," put in three years in the South Pacific. And when he came back with jungle fever, he never was the same as a ball player.

Leroy signed with the Red Sox, but was kicking around in baseball when his father made him quit and go into the cartage business last year. "At 25 or 26 a boy has no business in Class C," Walter told him.

The older son profited when **Don** signed, though, because of their father's strong belief that brothers should share one another's good fortune. When the younger son was just past 13, **Mueller** made the two teenagers promise that if either or both received a bonus, the money would have to be divided.

Leroy, therefore, received half of the \$6,000 the Giants paid **Don** seven years ago, and the **Mueller** brothers since have bought two county acres from which the young major leaguer,

winning an axe through fall and winter, cleared timber and brush for an artificial lake and homesites. **Don** married his high school sweetheart,

Genevieve Babor, in June, 1949, and the couple recently had their first child, a son. A righthanded hitter himself, Wal-

## Five Boundary Belts in Two Days



**DON MUELLER**, sitting on a stool in the locker room, September 2, proudly displaying one of the cigars which he passed out after the game, in which he clouted two homers, the second after being informed Mrs. **Mueller** had presented him with a son. The Louisville Slugger bats represent the five homers he hit in two days against the Dodgers.

## Turned Lad Into Portside Bat-Swinger

Pop's Own Experience Had Taught Him the Value of Saving One Step to First

ter had been thrown out by a half-step so often that he made righthanded-throwing **Don** hit lefthanded at an age so early that the kid doesn't remember. And as an exercise to strengthen wrists, the father encouraged the son to lay the bat across his shoulder and down his back as a preliminary gesture at the plate. The motion required to bring the bat off the shoulder and into hitting position helped develop strong wrists.

"I learned that one from Paul Waner, who was breaking in at Pittsburgh about the time I quit," Walter said. "It helps assure a level cut at the ball. I urged hunting in pepper games, too, because to bunt properly a hitter has to hold his bat level, and that helps him to swing on an even plane."

### He Uses Dad's Old Choke Grip

Now a trim, six-foot, 180-pound athlete, **Don** was a skinny kid just 13 when he began to play ball with companions five to seven years older, and, in his father's opinion, he actually was helped by the unfair competition. Because older pitchers threw so hard, immature young **Mueller** couldn't pull the ball and, using Walter's old choke grip, he learned early to punch outside pitches into left field.

When **Don** batted better than .600 in each of two years he played for an American Legion Junior team still coached by his father, eight major league clubs sought his services. The Cubs offered \$2,000 more than the Giants, but in the late summer of 1944 they had no place to put a 17-year-old eager to get a start before he reached military age.

Young **Mueller** signed with the Giants and finished the '44 season at Jersey City. He spent more than a year in the Merchant Marine and then batted .359 in 28 games with the International League club in 1946.

Shipped to Jacksonville of the Sally League in '47 as a converted first baseman who needed to improve his fielding, he hit Class A pitching for .348. Back at Jersey City three years ago he averaged .328 and, called up by the Giants in September, he hit .358 in 36 National League games.

Riding the New York bench in 1949, **Don** appeared mainly as a pinch-hitter in 51 games, batting only .232, before finishing with Minneapolis in the American Association, where he regained familiar figures (.311). Because of the St. Louis boy, the Giants confidently traded away Willard Marshall and Sid Gordon. Last year **Mueller** hit .291 for 132 games.

Playing his father's old position, **Don** appears to be one second-generation major leaguer who is better than his dad, who's now a happy man who planned it all the way it has happened.

### Dad Favored the Red Sox, They Were Not Interested

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—Because of a friendship with Joe Cronin that began when the Boston general manager was a rookie shortstop with Pittsburgh and Walter **Mueller**, a Pirate outfielder, the father hoped the Red Sox would sign his younger son, **Don**, as they had his older brother, Leroy.

"We weren't just looking for all we could get because **Don** eventually signed for \$2,000 less with the Giants than the Cubs offered," the senior **Mueller** said. "I liked Joe very much and even though there were offers from the Cardinals, Pirates, Reds, Browns, Indians and Yankees, I would have given Cronin the break."

But a Boston scout who must be red-faced now didn't think **Don Mueller** had major league possibilities.

# Don Lengthens Average on Short Hits

## Mueller of Giants Moves Up After Dropping Homer Swing

### Never Certain of Job Until Passing .300

#### Son of Former Big Timer Follows Pitch With Quick Shift of His Shoulders

By JOE KING  
— NEW YORK, N. Y.

Home run? Don't mention it to **Don Mueller**, hit-'em-where-they-ain't right fielder of the New York Giants. By rejecting his unwanted role as a pseudo slugger, and turning to old-fashioned batting craftsmanship, **Mueller** made himself more valuable to his team, clinched a job which was threatened perennially, and gained a chance to be the first Giant to win a hitting championship since Bill Terry in 1930.

Credit **Mueller** for the switch. He made his own decision. In fact, it was not easy. As he sums up four previous years as chief Giant right fielder: "All the way I had that fence psychology going against me." He referred to the homer illusion which sometimes sweeps the Giants' organization from top to bottom, because of the short foul lines in the park, even though the great hitter of the club, Terry, was not fooled by fences.

**Mueller** did not hit a homer this season until July 11, when he made it the climax of a feat of hitting virtuosity, as he achieved the cycle against four different Pittsburgh pitchers. He whacked a double to left off Vern Law, a triple to right center off Bob Friend, and a single to center off Jake Thies. Then, with the crowd demanding a homer, **Don** made it into the right field seats off Paul LaPalme.

#### Going for the Long Ball

Of course, he tried to hit the homer that time, and he has on other occasions, too many occasions for him. After the Giants lost a bitter 12-inning, 1 to 0 decision to Harry Perkowski in Cincinnati, July 19, I charged **Mueller** with going for the homer two or three times. He admitted to two attempts, which he regretted.

How many times all season had he shot for those fooling fences? He replied: "Too many. I guess about 40 times, and I wish I had the chances back again. I only kid myself when I try for a homer because I know I am not a homer hitter. That's been proved. But when you get up in a close game, a tie or one behind, with nobody on base and one or two out, well, you figure the only hit which will help is the homer."

"When I think it over, I know that 'homer or nothing' theory is wrong for me, except in the most desperate spots. My chance to hit a homer is very poor, and my chance to hit a single is good. If I hit a single I save a chance for Monty Irvin or Willie Mays, who do have the power, and who have a better possibility of making two runs than I have of making one."

Scoring makes the wins, and **Mueller**, by getting on base instead of attempting to break the seats, will tally far more runs than in any of the past four years. From 1950 through 1953, **Don** scored between 56 and 61 runs. This year he went beyond that figure be-

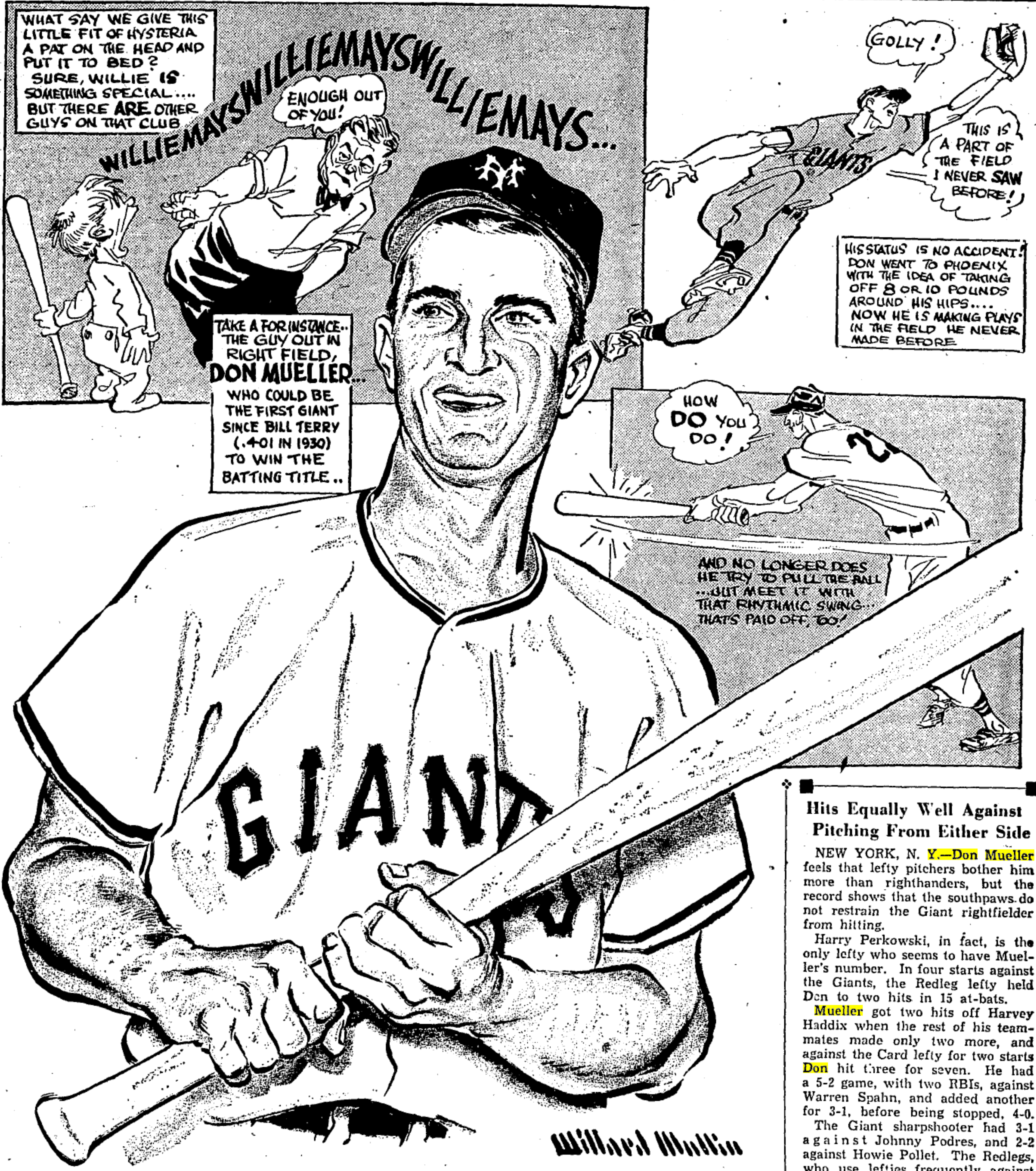
#### Record Homer Bats Retired by Don as Son's Souvenirs

NEW YORK, N. Y.—**Don Mueller**'s most productive period as a major league slugger was on September 1-2, 1951, when he poled five homers in two days against the Dodgers.

After clouting three round-trippers on September 1, **Don** shipped his bat to St. Louis so it could be kept as a souvenir for his new-born son. On the second date, **Don** belted two more out of the park with a different bat and because the five homers in two games tied a major record, **Mueller** also packed the second shillelagh and sent it home for his souvenir shelf.

### The Face Is Familiar

By Mullin



WHAT SAY WE GIVE THIS LITTLE FIT OF HYSTERIA A PAT ON THE HEAD AND PUT IT TO BED? SURE, WILLIE IS SOMETHING SPECIAL... BUT THERE ARE OTHER GUYS ON THAT CLUB

WILLIEMAYSWILLIEMAYS... ENOUGH OUT OF YOU! WILLIEMAYS...

TAKE A FOR INSTANCE... THE GUY OUT IN RIGHT FIELD, DON MUELLER... WHO COULD BE THE FIRST GIANT SINCE BILL TERRY (.401 IN 1930) TO WIN THE BATTING TITLE...

GOLLY! THIS IS A PART OF THE FIELD I NEVER SAW BEFORE!

HIS STATUS IS NO ACCIDENT! DON WENT TO PHOENIX WITH THE IDEA OF TAKING OFF 8 OR 10 POUNDS AROUND HIS HIPS... NOW HE IS MAKING PLAYS IN THE FIELD HE NEVER MADE BEFORE.

HOW DO YOU DO!

AND NO LONGER DOES HE TRY TO PULL THE BALL... BUT MEET IT WITH THAT RHYTHMIC SWING... THAT'S PAID OFF, GO!

fore the 100th game, and he could reach the century total. As of August 18, he had scored 67 runs.

**Don** is drawing more fan mail than ever before, since he became established in the top five batsmen. "Many inquire why I do not hit homers, and some advise me to go for homers, although they are all kind about it. In the Polo Grounds, though, some of the fans used to get on me pretty good to get the homer."

He grinned and quipped: "Well, I showed 'em. I got one. Then I didn't get my second until July 30, but my third was a pip, when I hit for a grand slam in the game with the Pirates on August 20."

**Mueller** made his decision to go all-out for hits instead of homers when he reported at camp at Phoenix.

Here is how he put it: "I have been told to try for homers ever since I came up here. But in my best year (1951) I hit only 16, and had to get five, if I recall correctly, in one week, to reach that figure. And then I hit only 275."

"The way I see it I can do more good for the team and myself by going for hits. There are a lot of players who can make ten to 20 homers a season, but only a few who can hit over .300, and I think I can if I go back to batting the way I was brought up, to meet the ball, and not

#### And Next Will Be Son Mark, Maybe Lefty, Maybe Righty

NEW YORK, N. Y.—**Don Mueller** laughingly confesses to a difficult family problem, regarding his son, Mark, who will be three years old in September.

The Giant right fielder dolefully remarks:

"I don't know what will become of him as a ball player. He is trying to bat cross-handed now, and he hasn't quite made up his mind which hand he will use to throw, and I can't guess."

If young Mark finds out how to bat and throw, and gets to be a star, he will be the third generation of his family to make the big leagues. **Don**'s dad played with the Pirates.

try to murder it. A single will score a run, too, with more chance of making it, and a fellow who gets on base scores more often, too."

**Mueller** explained he had sat down with himself in July a year ago and decided he was wasting his time as a fence-buster. In a closing rush he pushed his average up to .333 for the season. In the winter he dieted to lose five pounds, mainly about the

hips, where he had a tendency to put on weight.

"If I am not going to slug," he reasoned, "the weight will hurt me, instead of helping. I figure slimming down will help me as a base-runner and fielder, and may help, too, at hitting."

**Mueller** dieted "hard" because he likes the gravy and potatoes, but took off five pounds, and got down to 177. After the first two months of the season he found he could eat what he wanted and hold to that weight. The tendency is to lose weight in the second half of the season, when the steady grind begins to wear down the regular, and he generally does not worry about eats.

Despite his resolution, **Don** had the usual "fight" for his job. Every year one or two phee-noms show up who are ticketed to succeed the right fielder, and this season was not an exception. But the battle was short-lived when "Dead-Eye-Dick" began moving.

**Mueller** was benched after he hit one-for-seven in the first two games. In the third game the Giants were shut out and **Don** got another chance. He went out again after two-for-eight in two more tries. Then he pinch-hit a single in game No. 6 to key an

#### Hits Equally Well Against Pitching From Either Side

NEW YORK, N. Y.—**Don Mueller** feels that lefty pitchers bother him more than righthanders, but the record shows that the southpaws do not restrain the Giant rightfielder from hitting.

Harry Perkowski, in fact, is the only lefty who seems to have **Mueller**'s number. In four starts against the Giants, the Redleg lefty held **Don** to two hits in 15 at-bats.

**Mueller** got two hits off Harvey Haddix when the rest of his teammates made only two more, and against the Card lefty for two starts **Don** hit three for seven. He had a 5-2 game, with two RBIs, against Warren Spahn, and added another for 3-1, before being stopped, 4-0.

The Giant sharpshooter had 3-1 against Johnny Podres, and 2-2 against Howie Pollet. The Redlegs, who use lefties frequently against New York, couldn't stop **Mueller** with Joe Nuxhall, who was hit for five safeties in seven tries, and Fred Baczewski, who was tapped for seven hits in 13 tries. **Mueller** had 4-2 and 2-2 days against Curt Simmons.

He has been stopped now and then by lefties, but no more often than by righthanders, and he figures up to his averages no matter which hand the pitcher employs.

eighth-inning winning rally and started in No. 7 and has been there since.

He didn't give Leo Durocher a second guess as he reeled off a 15-game hitting streak into May, to soar up among the leading hitters to stay. The streak was typical of **Don**'s hitting. As he averaged .426 for the 15 games, he made ten hits to center, seven to left, only five to his "power" in right, and four in the infield.

That kind of "seeing-eye" batsmanship means the defense has to play **Mueller** "honest." They can't over-shift on him as they do for some of the sluggers. He isn't typed, and if the opening is given him in left, or over the middle, the pitch is likely to be propelled towards that gap. He

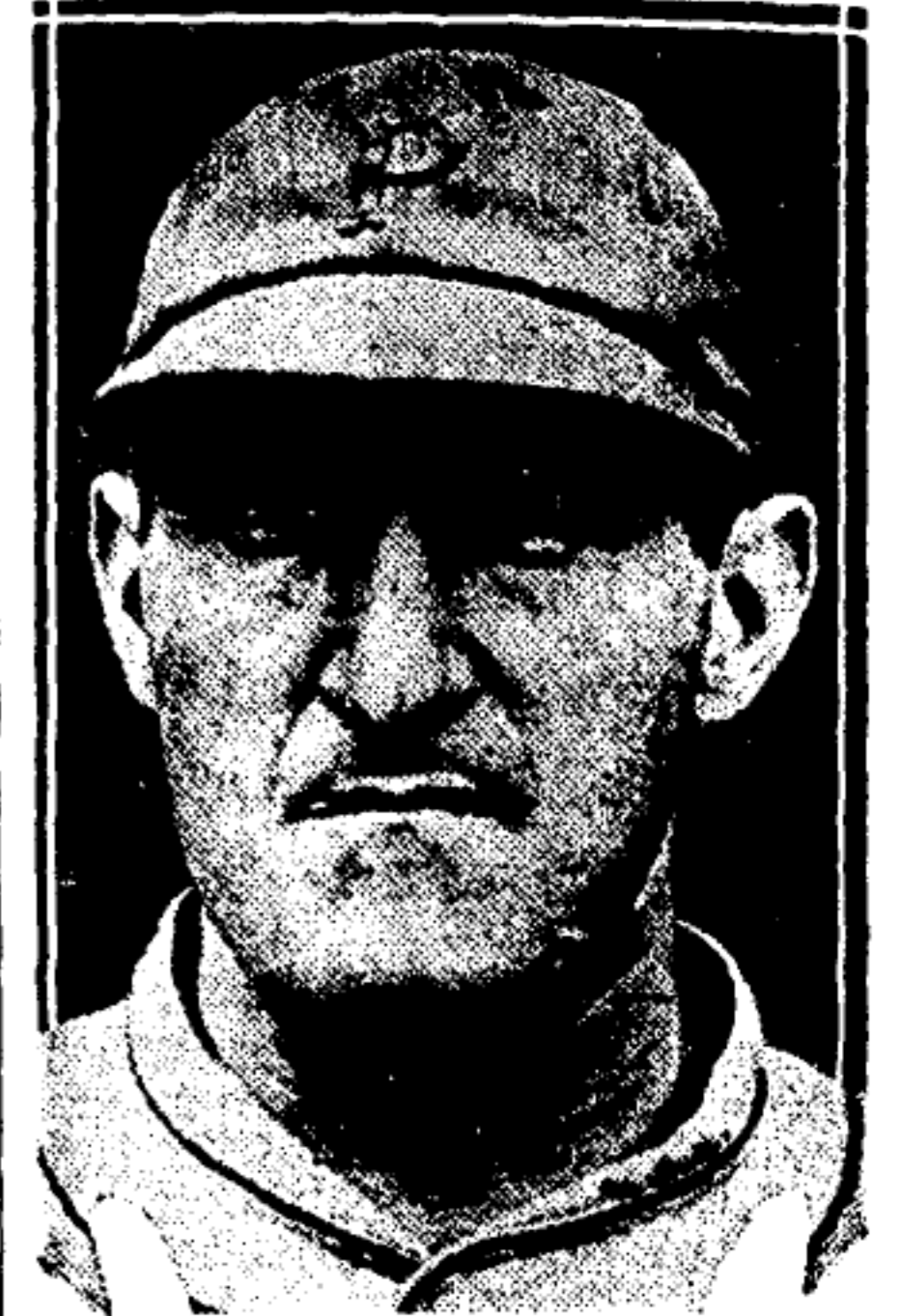
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# Rickey Just Plans to 'Ease Up', Will Stay on With Bucs After '55

# Place-Hitter Mueller Shifts Shoulders, Instead of Feet

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

## Don's Dad



**WALTER MUELLER — Don's dad**—played with the Pirates in 1922, '23, '24 and '26.

veloped his polished craftsmanship with the bat. Who helped him? Nobody. It's a natural.

"I have been conscious of left field, and of trying to place the ball, ever since I started playing ball as a kid," he recalls. "I got a chance to play ball with bigger and older boys at Creve Coeur, near St. Louis, when I was about 12," he continues. "I did not have the power to match those big fellows and began to fool around with the bat. I realize I couldn't over-power pitching by fellows three-four-five years older than I, and just naturally, I guess, began to meet the ball and hope for the best. I can't remember when I didn't choke the bat and go to left field."

Don's father, who was an outfielder for a while with Pittsburgh, was a place-hitter, too, but he stopped playing before the youngster was old enough to copy his style.

## Polo Grounds the Clincher

However, Dad approved of Don's technique, and advised him to sign with the Giants because of his place-hitting, when eight clubs made offers to the sharp-shooting youngster in 1944.

"Dad used to like the Polo Grounds, because the outfielders there couldn't play the lines too closely, and had to bunch in the center, and he figured it was a good spot for me." Mel Ott, as manager, was another lure drawing Don to the Polo Grounds, but he missed playing for him, because Durocher had taken over when Mueller first wore Giant livery in 1948.

Don was signed for the Jersey City farm in August of 1944, got in a few games there, and went back to school in St. Louis after the baseball season. In 1945 he went to spring training with Jersey City at Lakewood, N. J., and had only a few times at bat until he was called into the Merchant Marine in June. In 1946 he spent a month's leave at Jersey City.

## "Got Fence-Busting Fever"

In his first full year, 1947, he hit well at Jacksonville. "But I got that fence-busting fever," he recalls, "and lost about 20 points in a week before I went back to my natural style."

He got to Jersey City for the '47 playoffs and stayed there in '48, with an end-of-the-season spell with the Giants. In 1949 he played at Minneapolis before being summoned to the Giants as a pinch-hitter.

Mueller's record is a striking example of the difference between controlled batsmanship and homer-nutty swinging.

From 1946 through 1949, his minor league averages were .359, .348, .328, .311, and in his brief 81-gt-bats trial with the Giants as a place-hitter in '48, he had .358.

Then, as a Giant, from 1949, the "fence psychology" murdered his average. From '49 through '52 it ran .232, .291, .275, .281. When he made his crucial decision to forget the demand for homers and resume his natural style last July, he went up to .333.

Mueller is a striking case history for kids who are over-glamorized by the homer, and who come into baseball swinging for the fences and dreaming of breaking Ruth's record, even though they may weigh 162 wringing wet.

## More Cash Put Into Club, Prexy Galbreath Reveals

### Rickey Also Increases His Investment



John Galbreath

PITTSBURGH, Pa.—John Galbreath, Pirate president, said the two principal stockholders and Branch Rickey had poured more money into the operation of the Pirates on August 17, while discussing the future of the Top Branch as general manager.

"Within the last 24 hours, Tom Johnson and his family, along with myself, my son, Dan, and daughter, Joan Galbreath Phillips, have put more money into the operation," said Galbreath.

"Rickey has also made another investment, prorated with his holdings.

"There is no secret that we have been putting up cash to carry this program, and we will continue to do so, to see it through.

"I personally have never taken a dime from the club, either from our early profits, or for any expense. This city and its people have been good to me, and I want to see them win.

"It's been a helluva worry, but I'm not going to quit now.

"As far as Rickey retiring, I thought that was plain when we announced the length of his contract back in 1950.

"But after November of next year, he can continue for five years in an advisory capacity. We all know how inactive he can be.

"No one has even thought of his successor, if that day does come."

Galbreath did not disclose the amount of the new investment, but it was reported that an additional \$250,000 went into the operation.

## Asserts Decision to Retire as G. M. Was Made in '50 When He Joined the Club

By JACK HERNON  
PITTSBURGH, Pa.

Branch Rickey didn't consider it as startling news when stories were written that he would retire as general manager of the Pirates in November, 1955.

"This decision was made four years ago when I came to Pittsburgh," he said. "My contract expires at that time, and it was my decision in 1950 to retire after next season.

"I hope to continue with the club in some other capacity.

"I want to be here when the Pittsburgh club wins the pennant and plays in a World's Series."

Rickey, who is 72 years old, said that nothing which has happened in the or-



Branch Rickey

ganization had anything to do with his retirement, nor has public criticism.

"I shall continue to work for the Pittsburgh club, and without salary, after the 1955 season, if so permitted," he said. "If I stay here, and I hope to do so at least until a World's Series is played with Pittsburgh as a contestant, I will confine most of my work to player personnel.

"The long hours are getting a little rough on me. I'm not getting any younger, but my health is fine.

"Perhaps Mr. Johnson and Mr. Galbreath will be satisfied with the organization as it is set up, with a few changes in detail.

"I have pushed a lot of work along to Branch, Jr., and Harold Roettger.

## Would Stay as Adviser

"No longer is everything concerning the organization funnelled directly through me. Naturally, they consult me on things they plan to do, especially when it concerns the Pittsburgh club.

"I would like to continue in the capacity of adviser, on major matters especially, after my contract expires. But this is entirely up to the owners.

"I am only a stockholder and a member of the board of directors. They will make the decision when the time comes."

Rickey came to the Pirates after leaving Brooklyn, in November of 1950, when he signed a five-year contract, reportedly at \$100,000 per year.

The contract had an option clause that Rickey could continue at the expiration of five years, in an advisory capacity to a new general manager, if one were named.

Rickey contends that everyone knew he would retire after the five-year period. But it wasn't until a series written by Joe Bradis, Associated Press sports writer in Pittsburgh, that it was put in print he would retire in 1955.

The Twig went a little further into his dad's plans, saying:

"Dad works awfully hard at his job, generally from 12 to 14 hours a day. Another year or two at this pace, plus all the worries he has had, might be damaging to his health.

"He realizes this and it's about time he slowed up. He believes the club is on its ways now and would like to delegate some of the more arduous duties to someone else.

"Dad, more and more, has been giving some of his work to Harold (Roettger) and me.

"He has been a little glum at times in the face of his critics in Pittsburgh, but he's used to that, and gets over it in a hurry.

"Dad feels much better about the future because of the successful minor league clubs this year. We never had this to buoy our hopes in the three previous years we've been in Pittsburgh."

## Bucs Stir Up Hottest Blaze in Five Years

### Rickey Had Predicted Loop Wouldn't Realize Pirates Were Around 'Til August

By JACK HERNON  
NEW YORK, N. Y.



Preston Ward

The Pirates were showing a bit of enthusiasm over their future after continuing their winning ways for another week ending in Philadelphia, August 15.

That week-end was the most profitable in quite some time. They won four straight from the Phils and gained a tie in the fifth one, which will be completed on September 21, their next visit to the city which proved its name—Brotherly Love—to the Bucs.

The rapping they did against the Phil pitchers—and there were 18 called on during five games—brought the Pirates back home, for a mid-week series with the Dodgers, holding a string of eight for ten and 12 for 17.

There hadn't been anything to match that since 1949 in Pittsburgh, when the Pirates ran up an eight-game streak and took 17 of 23 games at one stretch in July.

Max Surkont, the big righthander who hadn't assisted greatly in the run of good fortune, made one pointed comment.

"Maybe the Old Man was right," he said. "When I talked with him last January, he told me this team might go until August before the rest of the league knew they were around.

"Mr. Rickey said we wouldn't go anywhere, but someone would remember the Pirates. Maybe the youngsters are just starting to come around."

A Bit of Experience Helps

That could be, but a couple of "oldsters" had lent quite a big helping hand in the streak—Sid Gordon and Preston Ward. The latter especially was belting the ball.

Sure, he was playing only against righthanded pitching, but they knew he was around.

Ward played in 11 of the 17 games mentioned and had a nifty .410 average for that period with 16 for 39. He drove in 12 runs and his hits included two in each of the extra-base categories.

A lack of outfielders compelled Man-

## Crosby Reassures Rickey of 'Wholehearted Support'

PITTSBURGH, Pa.—Bing Crosby, reportedly on the "outs" with Pirate General Manager Branch Rickey, indicated just the opposite in a telegram to Rickey from Hayden Lake, Ida., August 15.

Crosby, one of the owners in the Pirates, was reported to have said he would not put any more money into the Pittsburgh operation with Rickey at the helm.

Questioned about Crosby's investments, Pirate President John Galbreath said the Crooner had not been asked for, nor had he given, any more money since his original purchase of stock in 1947, along with Frank McKinney, Tom Johnson and Galbreath.

Crosby's wire to Rickey said:

"It's doubtless unnecessary for me to tell you this but the completely false newspaper stories of recent date compel me to reaffirm my wholehearted support of you and your policies. I have never at any time made any comment to anyone about the operation of the club under your guidance. Even if I had a critical opinion, which I definitely do not, I would have told you and not someone else. I regret your decision to retire as disclosed in the papers, especially now that your efforts are beginning to be fruitful. But if you do I want you to know that you do so with my warmest regards and respect."

ager Fred Haney to give the first base job to the youngster, Bob Skinner, and this brought the move of Ward back to the outfield post some time ago.

Gordon, who reached his thirty-sixth milestone on August 13 and celebrated with a three-run homer that night in his first trip to the plate against Robin Roberts, sounded off quite a bit during the successful run of business. Old Sid had a .303 mark during the full stretch, with 14 RBIs and three homers.

This pair, of course, gave a big lift to the burden carried mostly by Frank Thomas.

Proof of the added assistance lies in the fact that, with Ward batting in front of Thomas, and Gordon in back of Frank, the opposition wasn't getting frisky with "strategy."

It showed up in the number of times Thomas went to the plate during the stretch. He was up there 69 times, which would indicate that with Gordon's bat in the fifth notch, and a bit hot, too, Thomas was being pitched to with extreme care not to walk him, because Gordon would be up next.

Thomas, riding along with the ten top hitters in the league, rattled along at a .333 gait, despite one stretch when he had nothing for 15 official trips. He rapped four homers and drove in 15 runs. The outfielder was swinging at a better than 50 per cent extra-base clip, having eight doubles, two triples and the four home runs among his hits.

# Mueller Beefs Up His Batting Figure by Paring Pounds

Don Also By-Passes Homer Glamor to Concentrate on Steady Drumfire of Hits

By JOE KING

NEW YORK, N. Y.



Bob Hofman

A streamlined Don Mueller, hitting with the precision of a Wee Willie Keeler, was the talk of the team as the Giants escaped from the perilous West to embrace the comforts of home.

Mueller sparkled on the tour with batting marksman-ship which may give him the chance to be the first Giant to lead the league since Bill Terry in 1930.

The right fielder's climbing average is not due to chance, but to design and diet. Last season, when a closing spurt put Mueller at .333, he resolved that he did not have the power to help the team with homers, and that a steady .300 hitter would be of more value than a .275 chap who hit the seats occasionally.

If he did not worry about homers, then he did not have to tote extra weight in hopes of added power, was Mueller's reasoning. Slimming down might aid his fielding as well as his base-running, and possibly would not cut down his extra-base production, either.

Therefore, Don adopted a diet to lose about six pounds around the hips, to pare him down to 177, a weight he has held after daily battles at the chow table.

The change seems to be noticeable. Observers believe Mueller is more nimble in the field, and faster to first without that awkward poundage about the middle.

## Increases Doubles, Triples

And no one could reasonably ask more of him at bat. Don pelted steadily over .350, once reaching up to .378, and while he did not hit a homer, he did lead the squad in extra-base hits with six doubles and two triples for the first 18 games. Also, he drove in nine runs, second only to deadly Monty Irvin.

The right fielder beat out three infield hits in a week's time, indicating he might have speeded up a half-step or so to first, and he sprayed hits to all sectors, so that no defense could overshift against him. His place-hitting gives Mueller an equal chance anywhere on the field.

In Milwaukee, Don hit two singles to center and beat a rap to the second baseman. In another game in Chicago he walloped two-baggers to center and to right and a single to center. In St. Louis he had a five-for-five game with a triple to left-center, a double to left, and singles to center, left and right-center.

Mueller is paying off for the Giants on a long session of deep thinking back home in St. Louis in the winter. As he explained it, he got out the record, and made a self-appraisal.

## Homers Hurt Average

In his best homer year, 1951, he hit 16, but averaged only .275. Five of his homers came in two successive games against the Dodgers, to tie the record which Stan Musial equaled May 2.

In 1952, Mueller had 12 homers and .281. Last season, when he finally decided he was hurting team run production by futile attempts to pull the ball with power, he made only six homers, but batted .333.

Therefore, Mueller figured it this way: "In my best season, even with a lucky streak of five homers in two days, I hit only 16. There are lots of players who can hit 19-15 homers, but few who can top .300. Certainly it would be better for the team if I hit the way I knew best, and stopped trying to do something which hardly can pay off. I am going to have a much better chance to score a run with a single or double than I would trying to put power on the ball which I do not have."

"I was brought up to meet the ball. All my minor league teaching was that way. Why not go back to that, and take the homers as they come?"

Years ago, a craftsman such as Mueller would be copied by all the kids. But nowadays the young fellows come up swinging constantly for homers. And,

## Dieting Don



Don Mueller

If a rookie is alive and breathing and weighs 165 soaking wet, he automatically visions himself a homer slugger.

Many teams would do a lot better if they got the kids on the Mueller style. At 27, he finally has reached his peak because he was able to ignore the glamour of the occasional homer, and figure out how he would help most.

As Mueller waxed strong at bat, other Giants weren't doing so well. Irvin, although his average had a fight to reach .275, was producing the runs. But Al Dark, Willie Mays, Hank Thompson, Whitey Lockman, Dave Williams and Wes Westrum were struggling to reach .250, in a mass slump.

## Lone Big Rally Against Cards

Only in an eight-run inning in St. Louis, sparked by Bob Hofman's three-run homer, Mueller's triple and Thompson's double, had the Giants made a big rally all season. Their runs have come singly or in pairs, the hard way, and pitching was their chief hope.

Even the pitching, or the plans for same by Leo Durocher, manager, went snafu in St. Louis. Durocher had held out Johnny Antonelli a week for the Cardinals, presumably on the lefty-versus-lefty theory, to stop Musial.

Musial slammed two homers (of five in a double-header) off Antonelli, who was far from sharp after his long lay-off, and Don Liddle, another lefty, lasted only three innings in the nightcap, which was, however, won by the Giants on their eight-run inning.

It is clear the Giants will have to make their bid on pitching, which seems competent if it is only organized by Durocher soon.

Giant Glints: Quick-thinking by Herman Franks, coach, probably saved Wes Westrum from Ump Barlick's ire in St. Louis. Barlick chased complaining Westrum to the bench, apparently intent on giving him the thumb. Franks butted in and was tossed out by Barlick. "I figured it was better me than him." ... The Giants must catch up with two tough rookies. Bob Skinner of the Pirates had a four-for-four day against them, including a double and triple. Tom Alston of the Cards made them wince with seven-for-ten and seven RBIs in a three-game series. ... Secretary Ed Brannick stilled player repugnance for a night getaway in St. Louis by having a diner on the train. ... The Giants finally regained the homer touch, with seven for ten runs in five western games, but the opposition in same period whacked 11 for 18 runs. ... Al Dark twisted his ankle in the first inning against the Cardinals, May 3, but finished the game. Treatment by Trainer Doc Bowman the next day enabled Dark to remain in the lineup.

## Durocher Debates

--Bunt or Swing?

By JOE KING

NEW YORK, N. Y.

Leo Durocher is having quite a wobble making up his mind whether the bunt belongs in today's baseball, and is causing a debate with his repugnance toward the bastinado.

The Giants' manager snubbed the bunt as a last resort in two defeats on the western swing, and ignored it in another spot in an extra-inning game which eventually was won.

In Milwaukee, the Giants trailed, 3 to 2, in the ninth, when Hank Thompson walked to lead off. Now, what do you do? Bunt, to put that run you have to have on second base? Or

# Oriole Hurlers Flap Wings-- But All Hitters Can Do Is Flop

Nine Defeats in First 14 Games, Five by One Run; Dykes Off Coaching Line

By HUGH TRADER, JR.

BALTIMORE, Md.

After using eight different lineup combinations in a futile effort to inject some life into the Oriole batting attack, Manager Jimmie Dykes took his most "drastic" measure during the third week of the season. He benched himself as third base coach.

"I wasn't doing anything out there, anyway," said Dykes, sarcastically. "We seldom got a base-runner that far, and I was getting lonesome. Every face I looked at close up was hostile, the opposing third baseman's and the third base umpire's."

"For a little while, I'll try Tom Oliver out there. He licks me at hearts. Let's see if he can lick this batting slump."

Dykes had reason to be bitterly disappointed. His Orioles, who had slugged the ball at a team average of .287 during spring training, were patting the ball at .209 after the first 14 games of the season.

"Maybe it was the thin air out in Arizona," said Dykes. "Maybe it gave some life to the balls we were hitting during the spring."

"It sure fooled me. I thought we could hit. I don't know what to do—I can't go up there and swing that bat for them."

Although obtaining the tightest pitching in the league, the Orioles had lost nine of their first 14 games and were in seventh place. Five of their defeats were either by 1 to 0, 2 to 1 or 3 to 2.

## All Types of Platooning

Dykes had tried half-platooning, full-platooning and no platooning. His most novel attempt to break the drought occurred in Philadelphia on May Day when he sent nine right-handed hitters against Lefty Alex Kellner. It was to no avail, the Orioles losing, 2 to 1, in ten innings.

One of the most disappointing Orioles was First Baseman Eddie Waitkus, obtained from the Phillies in March with the reputation of being a slap hitter, but one who could maintain a .290 average.

The lefthanded swinging Waitkus was locked in a horrible slump. In one eight-game stretch, he made only two hits in 28 trips to the plate, and on May 1, with Kellner pitching, Waitkus was benched. Eddie was batting .180. Don Lenhardt, who hadn't played first base since 1952, was given a clawed mitt and told to take over.

Some of the others who placed a tremendous burden on a brave and willing pitching staff by their failure to hit were Second Baseman Bobby Young, batting .213; Shortstop Billy Hunter, .130; Center Fielder Chuck Diering, .091; Left Fielder Sam Mele, .143; Pinch-Hitter Dick Kokos, .250; Center Fielder Gil Coan, .257, and Right Fielder Vic Wertz, .257.

The club's general slump was rub-

bing off even on Third Baseman Vern Stephens, who made a sparkling start. In one week, Stevie's average slipped 57 points to a still respectable .327. Catcher Clint Courtney was at .323. The Orioles had only 30 runs in two weeks.

"The worst thing about this is our guys aren't hitting the ball hard," Dykes said. "Usually, when a team is in a slump, the boys are hitting the ball solidly, but directly at the fielders. On our club, the only ones meeting the ball well are Mele and Courtney, sometimes."

There's no question the Orioles are anxious to deal for a power hitter, but to succeed they'd have to give up a front-line hurler and Dykes declares, "I'll never let Bob Turley go, for any player, at any time, and I want to keep Don Larsen, who also has top potentialities. So that usually shuts off a deal."

## Pitching Strong Point

On the brighter side of the picture was the way the pitching was holding up. Joining the Big Four starters (Duane Pillette, Turley, Larsen and Joe Coleman) on the impressive list was Lou Kretlow. The tall righthander from Edmond, Okla., always promising but perennially a bust, looked great in his first two starts.

Against the White Sox on April 24, he had a three-hitter going into the eighth. However, when he served up a home run ball to Chico Carrasquel and a walk to Nellie Fox in the eighth, Kretlow was yanked by Dykes to protect a 3 to 2 lead. In the ninth, Reliever Howard Fox gave up two runs and the Orioles lost.

On May 1 in Philadelphia, Kretlow

## Double Switch Beats Stanky; Taylor Big, Hofman Terrific

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Tom Sheehan's listeners thought the Giant scout was exaggerating when he praised Bill Taylor in spring training by saying the huge rookie would intimidate pitchers just by walking up to that plate. Mebbe so, and mebbe not.

But sure enough, Taylor's appearance as a pinch-hitter in St. Louis seemed to frighten Ed Stanky, at least. When Taylor came up, Stanky popped up on the scene to relieve Righthander Joe Presko with Lefthander Royce Lint, to face Southpaw Taylor.

Taylor, having done his job by frightening the foe, then sat down and Bob Hofman, righthanded hitter, took his place and walloped a clinching three-run homer.

the best way to go about it. Oh, sure, the other side after a sacrifice can pass the next man to set up an inning-ending double play. But until

the lead man reaches second, he is vulnerable to the double play and is not in optimistic position to score against good pitching.

Then there is the old axiom of playing for two runs on the road, and for one with the bunt at home, if one run means a tie or a lead. But that hardly applies to the last chance, when lack of a run will end the game in defeat.

Durocher always has been daring in trying for the big inning, relying on hit-and-run rather than a give-up bunt to advance runners. But his consistent failure to bunt in desperate circumstances raised eyebrows.

Ironically, the Giants seem to have hired Mel Ott ten years too soon. With a heavy-footed club which set the all-time homer record of 227, Ott would settle for a bunt when he needed a big inning as a safeguard against his wretched pitching.

With the present Giants, Ott's technique would fit just right. The squad does have good pitching to protect a run in most cases and does not have the overwhelming power to crash through defenses at will. An Ott bunt now and then might help.

# 'Giants Win... and the Place Is Going Crazy'

## Russ Hodges' Broadcast Captures Excitement of Thomson's Homer

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The explosive excitement of Bobby Thomson's homer, which won the National League pennant for the Giants, was captured by Russ Hodges, Giants' play-by-play announcer, in his broadcast of the game. The following narration of the dramatic climax was taken from a recording of the broadcast by Hodges, named by The Sporting News as the No. 1 National League announcer of 1950 and the senior major's outstanding television announcer of 1951. The account starts with one out in the ninth inning for the Giants, Alvin Dark on third base, Don Mueller on first, and Whitey Lockman at bat.

there. He represents the tying run and the Dodgers' lead now is 4 to 2. Don Mueller might have hurt himself sliding into third. Whitey Lockman doubled into the left field corner and Bobby Thomson will be the Giant batter. Don jamed his ankle sliding into third and Doc Bowman is out there. Whitey doubled over third base. Chuck Dressen walks out slowly. Whitey Lockman, with time out, goes over to look at Don Mueller, the boy that the Giants and Giant fans liken to Mandrake.

Bobby Thomson, with the score 4 to 2, will be batting with runners at second and third, and Lockman, at second, one of the fastest of the Giants, represents the tying run. I've never seen anything like this one in a long, long time. It's something like a hundred years, and I've been around for only 99.

**Mueller Carried Off Field**  
Mueller seems to have hurt himself and Doc Bowman is working on him. Are they going to bring the stretcher out? Yes; they are. They're going to have to take Mueller out of the game. Dr. Anthony Palermo, the Giants' physician, goes down to look Mueller over, along with Doc Bowman. Mueller seems to be suffering quite a bit. It's really a tough break to have this happen in the last inning.

Well, it might not be the last inning. If the Giants tie it up, we'll certainly go on into ten. But it's the last ball game of the year. Don is going to be removed from the field on a stretcher.

The Dodgers have another conference out there. Chuck Dressen is making up his mind whether to bring in Powerhouse Ralph Branca, Carl Erskine or Clem Labine. And he is going to make the pitching change. Don Mueller is

### 'Don't Go Away'



Russ Hodges

being carried off the field and he will get a tremendous ovation from this big crowd at the Polo Grounds. And Ralph Branca will come in. They're going to put Clint Hartung in to run for Mueller. Hank Schenz returns to the bench, and Ralph Branca makes the long walk from the bull pen.

Don Newcombe has come up with a tremendous effort. The Giants have the tying runs at second and third as they have come up with three hits in this inning. Alvin Dark beat out a hit off the glove of Gil Hodges. Don Mueller singled Dark to third. Monte Irvin popped to first. Whitey Lockman got his

second hit of the day—a line drive double to the left field corner.

Then Newcombe leaves the game. As he leads by a score of 4 to 2, he cannot become the losing pitcher, although the tying runs are his responsibility. And big Ralph Branca is in to pitch for Brooklyn.

Newcombe worked a total of 8½ innings and has given up a total of seven Giant hits. Newcombe, in his time out there, struck out two men and walked two.

Clint Hartung is at third base, Whitey Lockman is at second, the Dodgers lead, 4 to 2, and Ralph Branca, who has won 13 ball games, is on the hill—13 and 11. He's given up 18 home runs. Bobby Thomson against the Brooklyn club has hit a lot of the long ones this year. He's had seven homers.

So don't go away. Light up that Chesterfield, stay right with us and we'll see how Ralph Branca will fare against Bobby Thomson and then Willie Mays to follow.

Jim Hearn goes into the bull pen. Jack Lohrke runs down to the bull pen to warm up, indicative of the fact that if the Giants tie it and go into the top of the tenth inning, they'll put Bobby Thomson into the outfield and Lohrke will play third base. Jim Hearn warming up in the bull pen. He has not appeared in relief this year. Clem Labine throws in the bull pen, along with Carl Erskine.

Bobby Thomson is on the biggest spot of his entire baseball career. He'll be up there against Ralph Branca swinging. A home run would win it and win the championship. A single to the outfield would more than likely tie up the ball game and keep the inning going.

So Leo Durocher runs over and talks to Bobby. The Dodgers' lead is 4 to 2. Willie Mays walks slowly out of the dugout to be the next Giant hitter. Branca's on the spot—he knows it. The big boy from Mt.

Vernon, N. Y., with a slight cold, wipes the perspiration from his brow and the Dodgers play their infield deep. There's no double play possibility on a ground ball. Billy Cox is deep.

Bobby Thomson has two out of three. Jim Hearn in the Giants' bull pen. Bobby Thomson up there swinging. He's had two out of three—a single and a double—and Billy Cox is playing him right on the third base line. One out and the last of the ninth.

### 'It's Gonna Be, I Believe...'

Branca pitches and Bobby Thomson takes a strike called on the inside corner. Bobby's hitting at .292. He's had a single and a double and he drove in the Giants' first run with a long fly to center. Brooklyn leads, 4 to 2. Hartung down the line at third, not taking any chances. Lockman without too big a lead at second, but he will be running like the wind, if Thomson hits one.

Branca throws. There's a long fly—it's gonna be... I believe... the Giants win the pennant! The Giants win the pennant! The Giants win the pennant!

Bobby hit into the lower deck of the left field stands. The Giants win the pennant and they're going crazy, they're going crazy. I don't believe it, I don't believe it, I will not believe it.

Bobby Thomson hit a line drive into the lower deck of the left field stands and the place is going crazy. The Giants—Horace Stoneham's got a winner. The Giants win it by a score of 5 to 4. And they're picking up Bobby Thomson and carrying him off the field. And the Dodgers cooled off—and if you want to put a little frosting on the cake—Bobby Thomson drove in three runs for a total of 100.

## Season's High and Low Spots

### Traders Missed on Fain, But He Didn't Miss Bag

By BOB BURNES

Of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat ST. LOUIS, Mo.



Ferris Fain

**Worst Trading Guess—**Tigers, Yankees, maybe some others who had a chance to get Ferris Fain of the Athletics last winter. A's had Lou Limmer, home run hitting first sacker, coming up from St. Paul, offered the expendable Fain as trading bait. Other teams rejected offers, saying: "A's demands are too high; they must think Fain is a great ball player." Known previously for his fielding, Fain went out and won the league batting championship.

**Silliest Accident—**Same guy, Fain. Disgusted when he popped out in a game at Chicago, Fain aimed a kick at the first base bag when he took his position, broke a couple of bones in his foot. Out over a month, he barely got in enough games and times at bat to claim the hitting championship.

**Most Embarrassed Players—**Tie between Whitey Lockman of Giants and Willie Jones of Phils, both of whom were victims of baseball's old gimmick, the hidden ball trick. Perpetrators were Connie Ryan of the Reds (against Lockman) and Earl Torgeson of Braves (against Jones).

**Worst Start—**By New York Giants, who won one, lost one, won another, then lost 11 in a row.

**... And Best Finish—**Same club, which won 16 in a row in August and 23 of its last 47 to come from 13½ games back to pull out National League pennant.

**Top Quick-Change Artist—**Bobby Thomson of Giants, who moved from goal to hero with one swish of bat.

## 'Nothing Like It in 40 Years'—Salsinger

H. G. Salsinger, Detroit News: "It was the third and final game of the National League playoff, at the Polo Grounds in New York, on the sunny and balmy afternoon of October 3.

"The Giants had won the first game, 3 to 1, and the Dodgers the second, 10 to 0, and now in the third game the Dodgers were leading, 4 to 1, going into the home half of the ninth inning. Brooklyn was beginning to, celebrate another pennant victory.

"Don Newcombe, the Dodgers' giant righthander, had held the Giants to four hits and one scratch run in eight innings and he looked big and strong enough to handcuff them one more inning, protecting his three-run lead.

"Alvin Dark opened the home ninth with an infield single. Don Mueller singled cleanly to right, sending Dark to third. Monte Irvin, the Giants' strong man, went out to Gil Hodges unassisted at first base. Whitey Lockman followed with a double to left, a hit that scored Dark from third and moved Mueller ahead two bases, but Don was injured sliding into third and Clint Hartung ran for him.

"The Dodgers were still two runs ahead, but the Giants had a runner on third and the tying run on second, so Charlie Dressen removed Newcombe and substituted Ralph Branca, who had started and lost the first game of the playoff when Bobby Thomson, the Giants' third baseman, hit a home run with a runner on base.

"In came Branca, one of the game's unluckiest pitchers, and the first man who faced him was this same Thomson. Branca threw a called strike. He tried another. This time Thomson swung and the ball landed in the lower deck of the left field pavilion. Three runs scored on the hit and the Giants were champions of the National League.

"It was a minute or more before the crowd realized that one hit had turned defeat into victory, one pitched ball had lost a pennant and the same pitched ball had won one. Then, as the reporters are fond of saying, pandemonium broke loose.

"I have watched major league baseball for more than 40 years but never a more dramatic game than this one."

### Stiles Saw His Pets, Rams, Win Title on 50th Birthday

Maxwell Stiles, Los Angeles Mirror: "There's no thrill in sports quite the equal of having a man or a team for whom you root, with whom you live and whom you count among your closest friends, win the highest honors within reach. I live and travel with and root for the Los Angeles Rams, for they are my job from early July until mid-December of each year.

"On December 23 I was able to celebrate my fiftieth birthday by watching the Rams defeat the mighty Cleveland Browns for the football championship of the world. That was my sports thrill of the year.

"No team ever before had beaten the Browns in an important game when the blue chips were down. Jumbo Joe Stydahar's team was the first to do that. It was, indeed, a Merry Christmas for Joe and his men, and a happy birthday for one whose golden years ended on a golden moment."

Johnny Tobin of Browns was walking to the mound trailing a long rope back of him. ("To ring a bell to let this guy know he's done," was Tobin's answer.) First game of Sunday double-header,

### Thomson's Blow Frosting on Cake for Russ Hodges

"Looking back on my most thrilling baseball season, I'll have to go along with Bobby Thomson's million-dollar homer as the frosting on the cake," says Russ Hodges, broadcaster of Giants' games. "But there were so many big moments crowded into the last two months of the campaign that I'm just like a kid on Christmas morning—just too darn many surprises. THE SPORTING NEWS' TV award came along to make me delirious with pride and joy—right at the time the Giants were on their 16-game streak that startled the entire baseball world. Then I wound up as one of the announcers at the World's Series. But I must admit that when Bobby the Hawk exploded, all my baseball dreams came true."

apparently being through because of illness and injury.

**Biggest Disappointments—**Two husky first basemen, Walt Dropo of Red Sox, Ted Kluszewski of Reds, neither of whom approximated 1950 work in 1951. In teams, the Red Sox, as usual, and the Phils, who never threatened to repeat.

**Best Manager—**Leo Durocher, easily, with low bows to Casey Stengel, Paul Richards and Jimmie Dykes for fine work.

**Most Improved Player—**Solly Hemus of Cards, who hated to see the season end; Nelson Fox of White Sox.

**Most Distressed—**Chuck Dressen of Dodgers, who called his team "the greatest" in June, still doesn't know what happened.

**Best and Briefest Description of Year—**By Martin Haley of Globe-Democrat staff who, after Steve Bilko, Don Bollweg, Glenn Nelson and Nippy Jones had failed with Cardinals, summed up the whole thing in one word: "Stan Musial made his ANNUAL return to first base last night."

**Year's Best Explanation—**By Glenn Nelson, formerly of the Cardinals, while with the Pirates. Attempted to steal home one night with Pirates several runs behind in late inning. Pressed for an explanation by harassed manager, Bill Meyer, Nelson simply said: "That's why they call me 'Rocky,' I guess."

