



The kid you always hoped your daughter would marry, Dale

Murphy, with his 2-year-old son Chad, wife Nancy and infant son Travis at home in Atlanta.

Complete Player: Dale Murphy

Hit, Field or Run, Murf Gets It Done

• **Murphy the Fielder:** He has played all three outfield positions this season: left field when Brett Butler was in center, center when Butler went to the bench and later to the minor leagues, right when Claudell Washington was out of the lineup. **Murphy** has the arm for right, the quick jump and long strides for center. In three years as an outfielder, he has misjudged no more than a half-dozen balls.

• **Murphy the Baserunner:** This may be **Murphy's** least recognized skill, but he's as proficient in this phase of the game as in the others. By Labor Day, he had 17 stolen bases in 25 attempts. Moreover, he makes a habit of going from first to third on singles, on a team that sometimes confuses recklessness with aggressiveness on the bases, he has perhaps the best judgment of anyone.

"What's really special about him," Aaron says, "is that he knows how to run the bases. He gets up his speed, and he knows what his capabilities are. If he tries for a base, you know he's going to make it."

The most complete player in the league? **Murphy's** name persistently is mentioned with two others: Montreal's Dawson and Philadelphia's Schmidt. And this season, clearly, **Murphy** is having the best overall season of the three.

Most Valuable Player? The campaign has started. Atlanta Manager Joe Torre gives this campaign speech: "Aside from being prejudiced because he's one of my players, I don't think anyone could argue with the choice of Murf as MVP."

Phil Niekro, a teammate, adds his endorsement: "If you want my vote for MVP right now, it's **Murphy**, no question about it. If he keeps going, there is no way anyone can think differently."

Washington, another teammate, says: "He is having an MVP-type season. We are riding on the Murf. Last year, he just sort of waved through the ball. I had the feeling he was hurt last year. Maybe his hand, maybe his back, something. But I never knew that, because Murf doesn't talk that much. (**Murphy** won't acknowledge any injury as part of his problem last season.)

Amidst the accomplishments and the accolades, **Murphy** remains disarmingly modest. You must heed the words of others. **Murphy** speaks softly, humbly.

"I've been humbled by this game too many times to get overly excited," he says. "You can't get on a roller coaster. But I've been with the Braves four years, and it's time I start doing what people have been saying I'm capable of doing."

"I really don't pay that much attention to personal stats. Naturally, I want to have a good year, but it won't mean much if we don't win the pennant."

As for the differences between the 1981 **Murphy** and the 1982 **Murphy**, as for his sudden propensity for hitting to all fields, he says: "I can't really explain what I'm doing up there. I try. I really do, but it just doesn't seem like you can ever put what goes on in your mind in the batter's box into words."

"Confidence, I guess, is the name of the game. Last year, I didn't really do anything, and it's hard to stay confident when you're not doing anything. I never had doubts about my ability to play the game. I was just not happy, just disappointed, about the season I had. If you are out there doubting yourself, you won't be successful."

Off the field, **Murphy** can only be described as the kid you'd always hoped your daughter would marry. His vocabulary goes to no extremes beyond "gee whiz" and "oh, golly." He doesn't drink or smoke. He often apologizes to reporters for not being "more colorful" in postgame interviews. A National League All-Star outfielder in 1980 and 1982, he always has been an all-star human being. His sincerity cannot be questioned.

"It's nice to be called the All-American boy, but guys have all kinds of images," **Murphy** says. "I just try to live life the way that is right. I feel everybody has faults, though, and the name of the game is to improve yourself."

Faults? **Dale Murphy?** Name one.

"Well, I tend to eat too much," he says. "I don't talk about them (his faults), but we all have things to work on."

Synopsis: A smooth, quiet, graceful, power-hitting outfielder. However premature, however unfair, there is the inevitable comparison.

"Well," said Joe Torre, manager of the Braves, "you saw Henry Aaron play in Atlanta. He never got the credit he deserved as an outfielder because he did everything so effortlessly. **Murphy** plays the game the same way. He never makes a mental mistake."

"I don't think he is going to be a superstar. I think he is right now."



A popular man with Atlanta autograph-seekers, **Murphy** has learned to be more patient at bat and,

By TIM TUCKER

ATLANTA—In this era of designated hitters and other one-dimensional players, he is among the proud minority: The complete player.

Introductions, please.

Henry Aaron: "I'd say he is probably the best all-round player in either league, probably the most valuable commodity in baseball right now."

Lee Elia: "He is the best player I've seen this year."

Frank LaCorte: "He'd probably lead us right into the World Series... if we had him."

Home run king Aaron, Chicago Cubs manager Elia and Houston Astros relief pitcher LaCorte—not to mention the rest of baseball—are talking about 26-year-old Dale Bryan **Murphy** of the Atlanta Braves. There is so much to say about him.

You can talk about **Murphy** the hitter, the National League leader in home runs and runs batted in most of the season. You can talk about **Murphy** the fielder, so polished he has been used in all three outfield positions this season. You can talk about **Murphy** the baserunner, perhaps the Braves' best.

You can talk about his power to the opposite field, about his hitting 12 of his first 28 home runs this year to right. You can talk about his bad experience as a catcher and a first baseman and his discovery as an outfielder. You can talk about Hall of Famer Luke Appling's prediction that, some year, he will hit 70 home runs.

And you can talk about **Murphy** the person, the deeply religious Mormon.

Where to begin?

Woodrow Wilson High School, Portland, Ore. When the Braves selected **Murphy** in the first round of the 1974 amateur draft, scouts hailed him as the finest catching prospect in America. He spent the first four years of his pro career catching in places like Kingsport, Greenwood, Savannah and Richmond and parts of two seasons in Atlanta.

Finally, though, the Braves tired of **Murphy's** rifle arm shooting bullets into center field instead of to second base. After knee surgery in May, 1979, **Murphy** became a first baseman in name only. He developed a bizarre mental block when throwing and was in an absolute panic when a ball was hit to him in a crucial situation.



after early disappointments catching and at first, has put his strong arm to good use in the outfield.



"About that time," admits **Murphy**, now in his fifth big league season, "I really felt a little scared that there wasn't a position I could master."

Spring training, 1980, West Palm Beach, Fla. Playing left field in the first inning of the Braves' first exhibition game, **Murphy** drifted back for a fly ball, made a smooth catch and threw a strike to the plate. He had found a position he could master.

"By the end of spring training that first year," Bobby Cox, then the Braves' manager, said much later, "**Murphy** had become an adequate outfielder. And within a few months, he had become one of the best in the game."

• **Murphy the Hitter:** Hitting to all fields and demonstrating improved selectivity at the plate, **Murphy** has kept his average between .290 and .320 most of the season. Through September 12, **Murphy** had a National League-leading 106 RBIs (no one else had reached 100 RBIs) and his total of 35 homers was one behind New York's Dave Kingman for the N.L. lead.

This is not the same hitter who struggled so clumsily through the strike-shortened 1981 season (.247, 13 homers, 50 RBIs); this is an even better hitter than the one who batted .281 with 33 homers and 89 RBIs in 1980. He has backed off the plate slightly, increasing his ability to hit inside pitches. He has learned to resist the low-and-away breaking balls. He's gone into a deeper crouch. He's learned to wait.

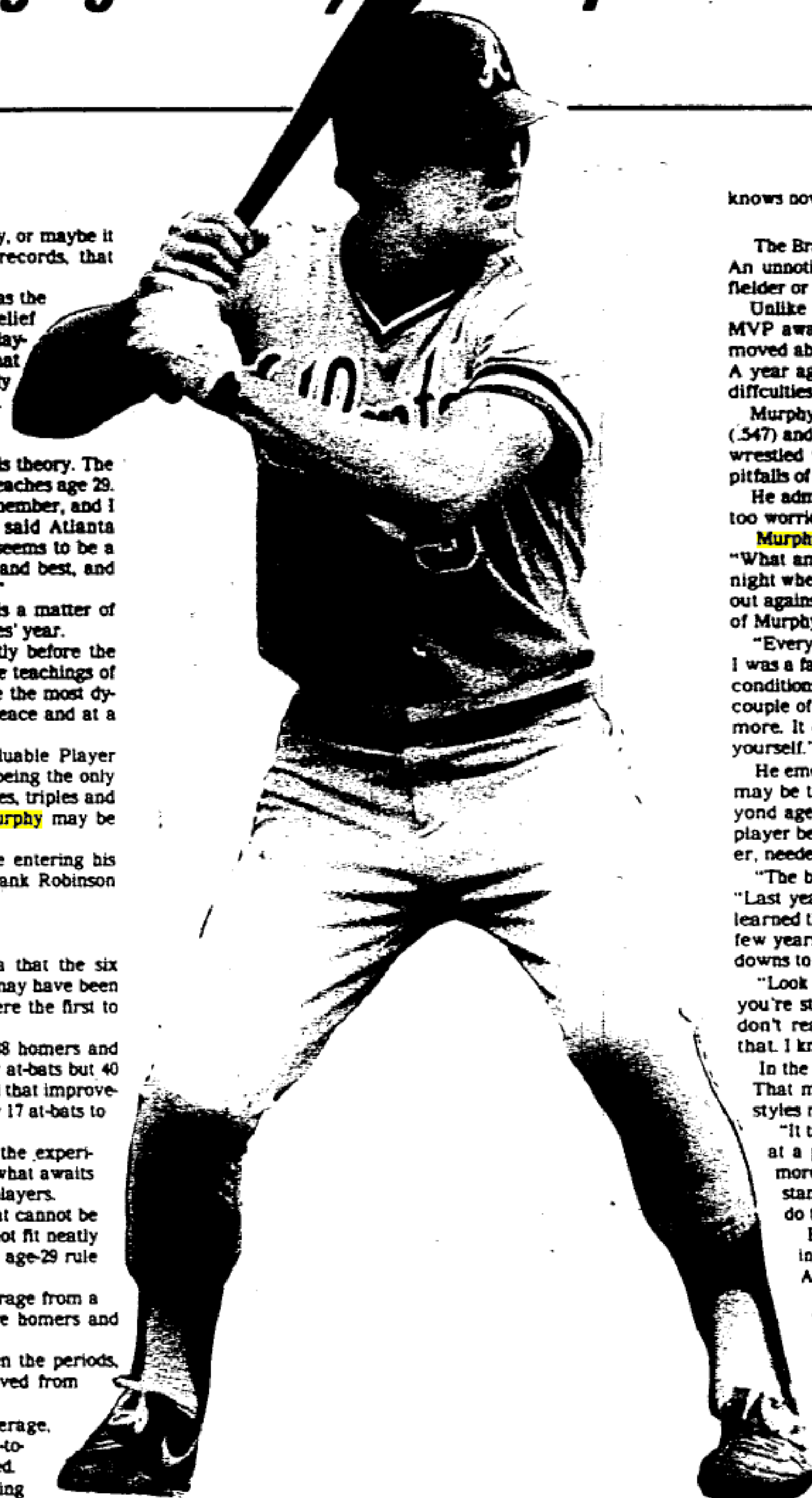
Montreal coach Billy DeMars, a big league batting instructor for 14 years, says: "Right now, **Murphy** is swinging the way you'd want every batter to swing. He's swinging perfect, hitting the ball everywhere: to left, to center and to right. Not too many people have the strength to hit the ball out anywhere, the way **Murphy** does."

It must be pointed out that **Murphy** has not escaped a slump this season. From late July to mid-August, the Braves lost 19 of 21 and tumbled from first place in the National League West. It was no coincidence that during the Braves' skid, **Murphy's** batting average fell from .308 to .284.

But from August 19 through September 12, the Braves won 17 of 24 and regained first place. It was no coincidence, either, that **Murphy's** revival occurred at the same time. In those 24 games, he had 24 RBIs, hit safely in 20 of the 24 games and logged an 11-game hitting streak. He batted .330 in that 24-game span and lifted his average to .292.

DALE MURPHY

After a peaceful spring, this Braves' star is slugging his way to a productive peak.



By GERRY FRALEY

ATLANTA—Branch Rickey hatched this theory, or maybe it was Connie Mack. Given their performance records, that makes it worth exploring.

Mack and Rickey based personnel decisions—as the Los Angeles Dodgers still do today—on the belief there are three stages to a player's career. The player begins by serving an apprenticeship, and that leads into a six-year span during which he fully realizes his talent and accomplishes the most. The famine starts with the end of the six-year feast.

Rickey specified only one landmark point in his theory. The player's best times begin, Rickey said, when he reaches age 29.

"There's been that theory as long as I can remember, and I certainly wouldn't think you can dispute it," said Atlanta Braves General Manager John Mullen. "There seems to be a certain stage when a player is at his strongest and best, and that usually seems to be when they are about 29."

Mullen willingly backs Rickey's teachings. It is a matter of self-fulfilling prophecy that could make the Braves' year.

Dale Murphy reached his 29th birthday shortly before the season began. The word of Mack and Rickey, the teachings of history and his own comfort suggest this may be the most dynamic season yet for Murphy. He is happy, at peace and at a physical peak.

After consecutive National League Most Valuable Player awards and the noteworthy accomplishment of being the only player in the game to rank in the top 10 in doubles, triples and homers last year despite all his frustrations, Murphy may be ready to move to a higher plane.

"It's very possible that Dale Murphy could be entering his best years," former San Francisco manager Frank Robinson said this spring.

The prime of Dale Murphy dawns.

When Mack or Rickey struck upon this idea that the six finest years of a player's career begin at 29, he may have been thinking of Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. They were the first to provide significant evidence in its support.

In the seasons before turning 29, Ruth had 238 homers and 760 runs batted in. In his prime, he had 78 fewer at-bats but 40 more homers and 32 more RBIs. Gehrig matched that improvement, going from an average of one homer every 17 at-bats to one every 15.2 during his prime-time seasons.

Changes in the game must be factored into the experience of Ruth and Gehrig. To better understand what awaits Murphy, consider the advances of more recent players.

There also have been changes in the game that cannot be factored into the analysis, and most players do not fit neatly into this equation. What is significant is that the age-29 rule fits nearly all of the game's recent titans:

- Roberto Clemente increased his batting average from a pre-29 level of .303 to .330 while hitting 19 more homers and driving in only 11 fewer runs in 1,256 at-bats.

- Reggie Jackson's average also rose between the periods, from .265 to .281. More significantly, he improved from one homer every 17.1 at-bats to one every 16.

- Mickey Mantle could not maintain his average, dropping from .311 to .296. But his homer (16.7-to-13.2) and RBI (5.7-to-5) ratios noticeably improved.

- Pete Rose averaged .308 and won one batting title before reaching 29. In the next six years, he averaged .311, won two batting titles and began a march that ended with him named the player of the decade for the 1970s.

- Frank Robinson's numbers do not reflect how his career changed. In 1966, the Cincinnati Reds thought a 30-year-old Robinson was spent, and traded him to Baltimore for Milt Pappas. Robinson won the A.L. MVP award his first year with the Orioles, and they finished first in six of the next nine years.

- Because the course of Mike Schmidt's career so closely mirrors that of Murphy, his experience is particularly telling. He has one year remaining in his prime time, but he already has given evidence to support this theory. In the first phase of his career, Schmidt had 190 homers. He has equaled that total during this stage in 694 fewer at-bats. His ratio of RBIs per

at-bat is also much better: 5.7-to-4.8.

Schmidt also won two MVP awards after turning 29. His performance has given the most dramatic display of how the game's elite find their level at this time.

"I think my peak years came when I reached 28 or 29," said Henry Aaron, the Braves' director of player development who won three home-run titles and also had better power totals during what proved to be an offensively deficient era.

"They should be the peak years. My knowledge of baseball, the things I knew best, had improved then. It depends on the player, but in Murphy's case I would say (these should be the peak years)," Aaron said. "It's because he's kept himself in such great condition. He's like a Cadillac. He's streamlined. He

knows now what he can and can't do and what it takes."

The Braves' training camp was noteworthy in several areas. An unnoticed item that may mean as much as finding a left fielder or a catcher was the peaceful spring of Dale Murphy.

Unlike 1984, when he carried the burden of back-to-back MVP awards and was surrounded by a frantic mob, Murphy moved about calmly. He headed into the regular season fresh. A year ago, he already was frazzled and hardly ready for the difficulties that awaited him.

Murphy led the league in homers (36), slugging percentage (.547) and total bases (332)—but he was never comfortable. He wrestled with expectations, his frustrations and the inherent pitfalls of the game.

He admits it was his most frustrating season because "I was too worried, and you can't do anything when you're worried."

Murphy recalls going home, staring at walls and wondering, "What am I doing to myself?" He painfully recalls the August night when he batted about a plastic water cooler after striking out against Los Angeles' Ken Howell. It was the fiercest display of Murphy's temper most observers could remember.

"Every time I got out there, if I didn't do something fantastic, I was a failure," Murphy said. "It's too hard to play under those conditions. It was frustrating, and I hadn't been frustrated for a couple of years. I learned that I need to control myself a little more. It doesn't make life enjoyable if you're impatient with yourself."

He emerged from that crucible a far wiser performer, which may be the secret to why so many performances improve beyond age 29. Murphy already had made himself into a better player before last year. The education of Dale Murphy, however, needed last year to be more complete.

"The biggest thing to me is the attitude now," Murphy said. "Last year was a good learning experience for me because I learned the value of having a good 162-game attitude. It takes a few years to acquire that. You have to go through the ups and downs to learn that."

"Look at Brad (Komminsk). He's 24. When you're that age, you're still trying to find out what you're able to do, and you don't really know. You experiment a lot. I've been through that. I know now what I need to do, what I can do."

In the past two years, Murphy has used the same model bat. That may seem meaningless, but previously he changed bat styles regularly.

"It takes a few years to figure this game out," he said. "I'm at a point where I don't do too much experimenting anymore. I've been through that. Now, I know my swing, my stance, my approach to the game. It takes a few years to do that."

History favors Murphy this season. Despite tendinitis in his right elbow, he is at a physical peak with what Aaron called "the body of a 20-year-old."

The most directly influential item, however, is the return of Bob Horner to the Braves' lineup.

A cursory review hints that Murphy already has overcome any phobias about playing without Horner in the lineup. Murphy pulled away from the MVP field in '83 with a strong September, a month during which Horner was sidelined. Horner played only 32 games last year and was again unable to protect Murphy in the lineup, but Dale produced noteworthy statistics anyway.

"Having a guy like him has to help anybody," Murphy said. "I have to say he helps, but it's hard to tell how much. I don't always know if they're pitching around me because I'm a free swinger. I definitely think we need him. He's a key ingredient we all need, not just me. Having him in the lineup is a comforting thought."

It also will aid Murphy significantly. He may not be able to gauge his hitting with and without Horner in the lineup, but it is evident to others.

"I definitely think he tried to do too much when Horner wasn't there," said Robinson, the Giants' manager from 1981-84. "We knew that without Horner to worry about, we could pitch Murphy differently. We only had to worry about him each

(Continued on Page 22, Column 1)

Negotiating Tool?

Fehr Says Players' Strike Authorization Vote Will Move Owners to Talks

By MURRAY CHASS

NEW YORK—Sometime in late May or early June, Donald Fehr, the acting executive director of the Major League Players Association, will make his second 1985 tour of major league teams. He will meet with the players, most likely two teams at a time, and he will discuss with them the results of the association's study of the detailed financial information it has requested from the owners. Fehr also will take a strike-authorization vote.

"I expect the results of that vote to be a foregone conclusion," Fehr said. "We will then come back to the table and the circumstances will have changed."

The players' union chief alluded to earlier comments he had made about what the players perceive as the owners' reluctance to negotiate seriously without a deadline staring at them from across the table.

"There has been nothing but delay since the beginning of negotiations," Fehr said. "This is essentially the same kind of negotiating process we've been involved in in all past negotiations. Nothing happens from their side because they're unwilling or unable to do it until some sort of deadline is set."

Fehr did not say the strike vote would include a deadline. More likely, that will be left to the players' executive board to decide. However, given the board's ability to take such action on short notice, the players hope the owners will act with greater speed in their approach to negotiations.

Lee MacPhail, the owners' chief negotiator, said he would prefer that the players not take a strike vote. But, he added, "We understand the significance of it."

The players have been careful to avoid strike talk since the negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement began, but the prevailing belief is that if they were to strike, their action would come some time in September, when a strike would threaten the postseason games that provide lucrative television revenue for the owners.

There will, however, be lots of talk before that stage is reached, if it is reached. Most of the talk apparently will be about the clubs' finances. At a negotiating session April 17, the first full-committee meeting since the series of spring-training sessions in Florida, Arizona and California, the players asked for the clubs' financial information.

At the same time, they said talks possibly could be suspended until some time in June, explaining it would take that long for



the association to study the data and discuss it with the players. The players' representatives, though, held out the possibility that talks could resume during the study period if the owners changed their approach to the talks, and MacPhail later indicated that such a change would be forthcoming.

The players' negotiators gave the owners' representatives a "fairly comprehensive, although not totally complete, list of the financial information we want," Fehr explained that the study of the data, by the accounting firms the association has hired, would take a month to six weeks. After they review the results of the study, he added, they will decide how many clubs they want to audit on an individual basis, anywhere from one to 26.

"We'll consult with the professional people," Fehr explained, "and find out what else we have to do in a reasonable and efficient fashion to get a complete picture of everything and make sure we understand everything. If that takes auditing every one, that's what we'll do. If they say do four or six or 10, that's what we'll do."

Meanwhile, the status of the negotiating sessions will depend on other developments.

"If the owners want to change their tune," Fehr added, "and they want to begin to present proposals and they want to begin telling us this is what we really think is wrong and these are the ideas we have to resolve it, we'll go back and listen to them and see what that produces. But so far they have been unwilling to do that. We're not going to engage in more nonsense between now and when we have finished meeting with the players."

In response to Fehr's remarks, MacPhail said, "I don't see any reason why we couldn't start talking about why we think we have these problems and what we might be able to do about them. We'd be prepared to do that."

The owners introduced their so-called financial problems into the negotiations in February and have since given the players financial data on industry revenue and operating expenses. However, the players asked in mid-April for comprehensive club information.

MacPhail said the request involved 28 detailed items, including "individual club audited financial statements, club licensing agreements, television contracts, radio contracts, details of club ownership, concession agreements, parking agreements, nonplayer compensation, stadium leases, minor league financial obligations and franchise sales."

MacPhail said the owners were "anxious to cooperate by giving them information as promptly as possible." However, he added that the owners wouldn't necessarily give the players everything they asked for. "There may be some information we feel isn't appropriate. We'll give them everything within reason they asked for."

The Fight

(Continued From Page 2)

knocked out Roberto Duran in two rounds and Fred Hutchinsons in three in his previous two bouts. But if they thought they were going to exploit the disparity in styles, they were wrong.

"His track record is that he's a quick starter," Hagler said. "He likes to establish his game plan early in the fight. I couldn't let him do that."

So Hagler warmed up longer than usual in the dressing room and, once the bell sounded, charged at Hearn's in violation of the wisdom he had acquired in 13 years as a professional boxer. "We knew Marvin was going to get hit," said Goody Petronelli, who manages and trains Hagler along with his brother, Pat. "But we also knew his chin."

And Hagler did get hit—and hit hard. A couple of times in the first round, he was stopped in his tracks by Hearn's right

hand. But he never appeared startled, and the champion never took a backward step.

"There was a lot of risk involved," Hagler said the morning after the fight. "But I felt I could take anything he had. Like I said before the fight, he would have to hit me with the ring post to knock me out."

Still, Hearn managed to open a cut over Hagler's right eye in the first round, and he gave no ground until the final 10 seconds, when a straight right hand by the champion sent him reeling backward. Hagler had accomplished what he had set out to do, take command. "I hated to hear that bell ring," he said. "I didn't want to give him the time to rest and get himself together."

Hagler's tactics did not change in the second round. But Hearn tried to dance out of harm's way, to use his three-inch

advantage in reach. He was successful only sporadically. Hagler fairly leaped at him, backing him into the ropes and throwing hooks with both hands. "His corner people were telling him to box," Hagler said, "but I couldn't let him do that."

Hearn managed to open another cut on Hagler's forehead, and blood streamed down the champion's face. Early in the third round, Steele looked at a fresh flow of blood from that spot and led Hagler to the ring apron to be examined by Dr. Donald Romeo.

"He asked me if I could see," Hagler said. "I said, 'Yeah, I can see.' But I realized right there I had to work quicker. I'm not afraid of blood. In fact, it turns me on, turns me into that bull."

That bull soon finished Hearn with a lunging right to the side of the head, followed by two lesser shots as Hearn stood glassy-eyed and unsteady.

Afterward, Hearn said he didn't plan to slug it out with Hagler. "I had to because Marvin was running right at me," said Hearn, who weighed 159½, half a pound more than Hagler. "I had to protect myself."

And Hagler felt he had to protect himself from the uncertainty of a decision in Las Vegas. His first bid for a world title ended in a controversial draw against Vito Antuofermo here in 1979. Four years later, he scored a narrow 15-round decision over Duran here and discovered afterward, to his surprise, that he had been trailing on the judges' cards through 13 rounds. Even in mauling Hearn, there was the potential for dismay. Although judges Herb Santos and Harry Gibbs gave the first two rounds to Hagler, judge Dick Young inexplicably had Hearn leading, 20-18, entering the third round.

"I'm tired of these crazy decisions," Hagler said. "I wanted to open Vegas wide open. How sweet it is!"

Indeed, Hagler had realized all his goals. He had improved his record to 61-2-2, retained his title and, more significantly, demolished a celebrated opponent. Hearn's only previous defeat in 42 bouts had been to Sugar Ray Leonard, and that fight had lasted 14 rounds. Perhaps now Hagler will inherit the mantle of greatness the public had bestowed on Leonard.

"This is the feeling I wanted a long time ago," Hagler said. "I wanted to gain the respect of the media and the public, to have the eyes of the world on Marvellous Marvin Hagler. I feel this way about myself. I feel I am at the top of my game. I don't see any other fighter out there so established, with so many tools and with the character. I looked at myself, and I said, 'Marvin, it's you. You're boxing right now.'"

Dale Murphy

(Continued From Page 3)

time around, and that helped. Having Horner for a full year has to make him even better."

What does Murphy envision from this season? After hitting five homers and driving in 14 runs in the first seven games, could he hit 50 homers, drive in 140 runs and enter another dimension of success?

"I have some experience, and I should be able to draw on that and be more productive," Murphy said. "I should be able to produce more consistently at this stage of my career. I should be able to help out on a more consistent basis. I shouldn't be so up and down."

Those steep rises and falls—Murphy went from being benched because of his troubles in July last year to probably the league's most dominant player in the final six weeks—are what he must eliminate to grab this moment. Aaron says Murphy "can't be much better as a complete player."

But Aaron adds that Murphy could "be a better hitter by avoiding those slumps he has."

Certain slumps are inevitable. Murphy's long swing leads to strikeouts (134 last year) and vanishes at times for days. Manager Eddie Haas suggested a subtle change this spring, however, that may help.

In the past three years, Murphy took former manager Joe Torre's suggestion of hitting to right field to an extreme. Haas

steered Murphy back to pulling the ball more, with the thought that his overpowering strength still will allow him to hit homers to right field.

"He's hitting the ball hard, and when a big man hits the ball hard, something's going to happen," Haas said.

The benefits of this approach showed in the first week. In his first 27 at-bats, Murphy had five homers—four to left field—and only two strikeouts. His start was spellbinding.

"He's the greatest hitter I've ever seen," said teammate Ken Oberkfell.

"He looks as good as anybody's ever looked," said San Diego's Jerry Royster, a teammate for the previous seven years. "He looks so confident. It's hard to believe he could ever do anything wrong with the way he's going."

"I'd give back half my salary to be hitting in front of him," Padres catcher Terry Kennedy said.

"You don't challenge him," Cincinnati pitcher Mario Soto said. "Even if he's 0-for-20, you don't challenge him."

Eventually, Murphy's current streak will die, although no one could suggest when. When it does, Murphy still will go about his prime task.

"I've had a couple good years, but a lot of players have a couple good years," Murphy said. "My goal is to have a good career, and I haven't gotten there yet."

He has come to the brink. It is prime time for Dale Murphy.

N.L. WEST

Murphy Powers Braves' Climb

ATLANTA—Last year, Dale Murphy was among the National League leaders in only one category: strikeouts. Otherwise, he had to look far down the statistics to find his name.

Now, the name jumps out among the leaders in runs batted in, home runs, slugging percentage, runs scored, doubles, and walks.



Murphy, the Atlanta Braves' consummate outfielder, was among the top five in the National League in all those categories after 25 games—first in RBIs (26), tied for second in home runs (8), second in slugging percentage (.646), tied for fourth in runs scored (18), tied for fifth in doubles (6) and tied for second in walks (16).

"I look at the stats once in a while, just to see where things stand," Murphy admitted, almost sheepishly. "But it's not something I do every day."

"It's so early," he pointed out. "It's not really something that gets me excited."

His start, though, has excited the Braves, who watched Murphy struggle aimlessly through last season. Could this year's Dale Murphy be the same Dale Murphy who fought so clumsily at the plate last season?

Consider: In just 25 games this season, Murphy drove in more than half as many runs as he did all of last season (50). He was over halfway to his 1981 home run total (13). He was halfway to last season's total in doubles (12) and almost halfway to his 1981 output in runs scored (43). He already had matched last year's total of game-winning RBIs (three). He also was far ahead of his '81 pace in walks (44 last season).

But perhaps the most impressive statistics on Murphy were these: He reached base in 24 of the Braves' first 25 games and was hitting .500 (13-for-26) with runners in scoring position.

Teammate Claudell Washington digested all these stats, including a batting average that hovered between .280 and .300, and said: "Murphy is having an MVP-type season."

An explanation, obviously, is demanded. How has the Murphy of 1981 evolved into the Murphy of 1982, who looks even better than the Murphy of 1980 (.281, 33 homers, 89 RBIs)?

"I can't tell any difference," said Murphy, never overly analytical, "except that I'm getting more hits."

There is a difference, though. To most observers, it is apparent.

Last season, Murphy at times seemed obsessed with pulling the ball, other times obsessed with hitting to right field. The word was confused. Now, he is hitting the ball where it is pitched, using all fields. His fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth home runs of the season went to left, right, center and right, respectively.

Manager Joe Torre said: "The one thing we told him this spring was that pitchers couldn't get him out consistently if he hit to all fields."

At times last season, Murphy also took one or two strikes, then swung at anything—often a low-and-away breaking ball that nobody could hit. This year, he is taking fewer strikes and resisting the garbage that manhandled him last year.

"Oh, yeah, I see the difference," said Washington. "Last year, Murphy took a lot of pitches, and when he swung, it wasn't an aggressive swing. He just sort of waved through the ball. I thought he was hurt last year. Maybe his hand, maybe his back, something. But I never knew that, because Murphy doesn't talk that much. (Murphy can't explain last season, but says there were no secret injuries.)"

"This is the type of year I predicted he would have last season," Washington added. "If he'd done this last year, we'd have been doing this (winning) then, too."

If Murphy keeps this up, a solid case can be made for him as the league's best all-around outfielder, with the possible exception of Andre Dawson. It is Murphy, the offensive player, not Murphy the defensive player, now on trial.

For the past two seasons, Murphy has proved he can play defense with the best outfielders in the league. And for all of his offensive heroics this season, he stood out just as much in the field, taking away singles with diving catches, home runs with leaping catches, sacrifice flies with accurate and authoritative throws. He has played all three outfield positions this season, but left field now is his regular spot.

Question from an out-of-town reporter to Torre: "Is Murphy one of the best players in the game?" Torre's reply: "He's going in that direction. He's only 26, and he shouldn't be in his prime until he's 29 or 30."

"He's hitting to all fields; he can hit the ball over any fence; he has a good body for an athlete in that he doesn't carry extra weight; he has better than average speed; he's a good defensive player; he has a great arm." That just about covers it.

Wigwam Wisp: Shortstop Rafael Ramirez had 13 hits in the Braves' first eight games and nine hits in the next 17 contests. Over one stretch, he was 9-for-58 (.155) after starting out 13-for-32 (.419). But Ramirez continued to play well in the field. . . .

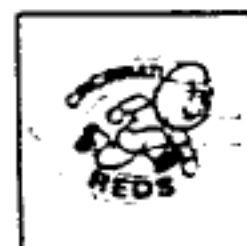


Eddie Milner . . . An eye-opener.

Murphy's eighth home run was the 100th of his career. . . . Phil Niekro got his first win on May 3, the Braves' 18th victory of the season. Most fans found it incredible that the Braves got off to such fast a start without their longtime ace, but Niekro said: "One pitcher doesn't win games for you. Nine or 10 do. These guys can play."

Torre was giving increased playing time to catcher Biff Porcoba. Bruce Benedict was in a 2-for-27 slump. . . . Joe Cowley, after allowing just six runs over 20 innings in his first four starts, was pounded for eight runs in 3½ innings by Pittsburgh.

TIM TUCKER



Spray Hitter Milner Reds' New Regular

CINCINNATI—Davey Concepcion watched Eddie Milner play winter ball in Venezuela each of the last two years. The Cincinnati Reds' shortstop was impressed with what he saw of the 26-year-old rookie outfielder.

Young Milner opened Concepcion's eyes last winter when he batted .305 and swiped 35 bases in 40 attempts. So when Concepcion arrived in the Reds' camp this spring, he had some advice for Manager John McNamara.

"Keep an eye on Milner," Concepcion told McNamara. "He can be a very exciting player."

Concepcion figured that with Dave Collins gone, Milner would be ideal in the leadoff spot.

"Milner will have to win the job," McNamara replied.

It wasn't until April 20, the opener of a three-game series in Atlanta, that Milner replaced Ronnie Oester as the leadoff hitter. He's been there ever since.

McNamara says Milner will remain in the leadoff slot so long as he produces.

Milner interprets that to mean the rest of the season. He doesn't think his success is beginner's luck.

"I've always been a confident hitter," said Milner, who batted .287 and stole 26 bases for Indianapolis (American Association) last year.

Milner rapped four hits in his debut in the leadoff spot. He had his second four-hit game when the Reds toppled St. Louis, 5-1, in the first game of a May 2 doubleheader at Riverfront Stadium.

After collecting a single, double and a triple his first three at-bats, he didn't have to be reminded he had a crack at the cycle when he stepped to the plate for his final appearance.

"But," said Milner, "the Cards had changed pitchers since I last batted. I saw that left-hander (Dave LaPoint) out there and I decided to try to go up the middle with a pitch."

Milner did just that, settling for a single to center instead of a homer.

Ted Kluszewski, the Reds' batting instructor, convinced Milner a couple of years ago that there aren't many 5-11, 170-pound home run hitters. That's when Milner began spraying pitches to all fields instead of trying to pull them to right.

Right now Milner's concentrating on improving his stroke. Once he's confident he has it down pat, he plans to work on his bunting.

"I get a good jump out of the batter's box. I've got good speed. Why not capitalize on it?" Milner said.

"I batted third at Indianapolis so I didn't have too many opportunities to bunt," said Milner. "My job as leadoff hitter is to get on base as often as possible. Eventually, I'd like to have enough confidence in my bunting to drop one down at least once every game."

When Milner went to spring training, he knew that his op-

tions had expired. And he felt he had nothing more to prove in Triple-A ball. He figured if the Reds couldn't use him, some other major league club could.

"I wanted to stay with the Reds, though," he said. Milner has been with the Reds since signing as the club's 21st choice in the June, 1976, amateur draft. And, as he pointed out, "Cincinnati is close to my home in Columbus."

When Milner opened the season with the Reds, he anticipated playing only in late innings. His big chance came when Clint Hurdle went to the bench with a .172 batting average.

Defensively, Milner feels at home in any outfield position. He played all three of them May 1 against the Cards, winding up in center field.

"I can't recall ever doing that before," the young outfielder remarked.

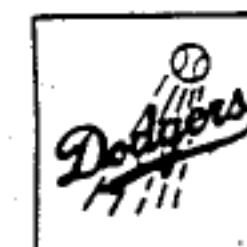
Milner also has a good arm. He displayed that when he charged Terry Puhl's single to right May 4 against Houston and threw out Kiko Garcia, attempting to score from second.

Red Hot: Mario Soto, who didn't get much hitting support in his first five starts, picked up his first victory when the Reds thumped the Cards, 10-1. Soto helped his cause by collecting two hits. But he made the mistake of a trying to bunt for a third hit with the Reds holding a big lead in his last at-bat. When the next pitch whizzed near Soto's head, he headed toward the mound as the benches emptied. "I just wanted three hits. I wasn't trying to embarrass anyone," said Soto. . . . Frank Pastore upped his record to 3-1 with an 8-2 victory over the Cards April 30. . . . Charlie Leibrandt picked up his first victory as the Reds beat the Cards, 5-1, in the first game of the May 2 doubleheader. . . . Joe Price, substituting for an ailing Bruce Berenyi, started the second game and yielded only one first-inning run while striking out eight before tiring after six innings. It was the longest the relief pitcher had worked since 1980. "No, I don't plan to use Price as a starter," said McNamara. "He's too valuable in the bullpen."

"The master is back," commented pitching coach Bill Fischer after Tom Seaver teamed with Tom Hume to notch his first victory of the season May 4 against the Astros at Riverfront Stadium. Seaver was set back by a muscle pull and a respiratory infection. "He just needed time to fine-tune his control and location," said McNamara. "That was vintage Seaver." Seaver blanked the Astros with two hits through six innings. He retired after he was nicked for a run in the seventh.

The weather was warming up and so was Cesar Cedeno's bat. His three hits May 4 boosted his average to .288. "I was never worried," said Cedeno. "I know I'm not a .250 hitter. If baseball was always played in cold weather, I wouldn't be in the game. When the temperature is below 60, I'm dying."

EARL LAWSON



Young Relievers Failing Dodgers

LOS ANGELES—Terry Forster is the grand old man of the Los Angeles Dodgers' bullpen, though at age 30, he hardly looks the part.

Still, he's five years older than any of the Dodgers' other relievers. What's more, he recorded every one of his first 100 saves in the majors before three of his four bullpen mates ever set foot on a big league diamond.

All of which may explain a little about some of the Dodgers' bullpen problems the first month of the season.

Manager Tom Lasorda says again and again, "They're young, but we have confidence in them. They've got good arms. They can throw. They're just going through a rough period."

Rough hardly says it. During one dreadful stretch, the bullpen managed to blow a lead five times in five appearances, permitting the staggering sum of 17 earned runs in 10½ innings.

(Continued on Page 18, Column 1)

**THE OFFICIAL
MAJOR LEAGUE
BASEBALL CAP
NOW ONLY . . .**

\$11.95

Add \$1.00
for postage
and handling

Tough, handsome,
authentic in every detail. Has the
finest insignia embroidery.
Join the pros. Order today.

HOW TO ORDER—
All clubs available, sizes 6½-7¾.
Allow 4 to 5 weeks delivery.

ROMAN PRO CAP CO.
Dept. SN, 443 Summer St., Brockton, Mass. 02402
Collector's cap series now available.
DEALER INQUIRIES WELCOME

MVP Murphy Stays Humble

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla.—Incredible. Dale Murphy is still the same.

The first Atlanta Braves player to sign autographs at spring training? Dale Murphy.

The only Brave to pay his way back to Atlanta for a Georgia Hall of Fame banquet? Dale Murphy.



The most humble, unpretentious Brave? Still Dale Murphy.

Now the National League's Most Valuable Player and the fourth highest paid player in baseball history, Murphy brings to this spring-training camp the same enthusiasm and innocence he brought to his first camp in 1973,

when he was a 19-year-old minor league catcher instead of an All-Star center fielder.

This is vintage Murphy:

• Although coming off a phenomenally productive 1982 season, Murphy reported to camp five days early "because I have so much room for improvement . . . and it always takes me an extra week to get my swing back."

• He flew to Atlanta between the first and second workouts to attend the Hall of Fame banquet "because it's an honor that they want me there."

• As he stepped into the batting cage for his first swing of the opening workout, Murphy spotted a reporter, grinned and asked, "What's up with Herschel?" He was referring to Herschel Walker, the University of Georgia running back who dominates headlines in the state.

Somewhat, a Most Valuable Player award and the accompanying hoopla should change a person, shouldn't it?

"I don't feel like a different person or a different player," Murphy said. "I just feel like the same old guy coming to spring training."

"I think something like being Most Valuable Player of the National League doesn't sink in until you're not playing. Other guys had MVP years, but they weren't on teams that got the recognition we did. It's kind of a hard feeling to describe. It's a great honor, but it's hard to look at yourself and say, 'I'm the most valuable player.' I can't do that."

The winter after an MVP summer, Murphy said, "was pretty much like most off-seasons."

He got no calls about commercial endorsements and solicited none. "Nothing has come up," he said, "and I haven't looked for anything like that, really. If it happens, it would be a nice thing, a compliment, great. But I'm not disappointed it hasn't happened."

He attended more banquets than usual, but as always, only those that did not interfere with family life. "We had our third boy in December, so with two kids and (wife) Nancy pregnant, I cut off a lot of stuff," he said. "I had a lot of opportunities to go places right after last season, but I mostly stayed home until our son was born. In January and February, I attended a few banquets. I wanted to do that. When people want to honor you, you want to accommodate them if you possibly can."

Even when he went to Piedmont Hospital with Nancy for the delivery of their third child, he was treated as a familiar face, not an MVP-type celebrity. "Oh, they're getting used to us coming there," Murphy said. "It's our third son in three years, so it's no big deal at the hospital. They just see us and say, 'Here come the Murphys again . . . must be having another baby.'"

Murphy, his wife and three sons are now in West Palm Beach. He arrived just as early this year as last, when he was coming off a .247, 13-homer, 50-RBI disaster of a season.

"I'll probably come down here early every year until my kids are in school and can't come with me," he said.

"I feel like every spring is starting over. We started last year optimistically, and I think this year we're optimistic again. We realize we can play well. The thing to remember is that we need to improve and we can improve."

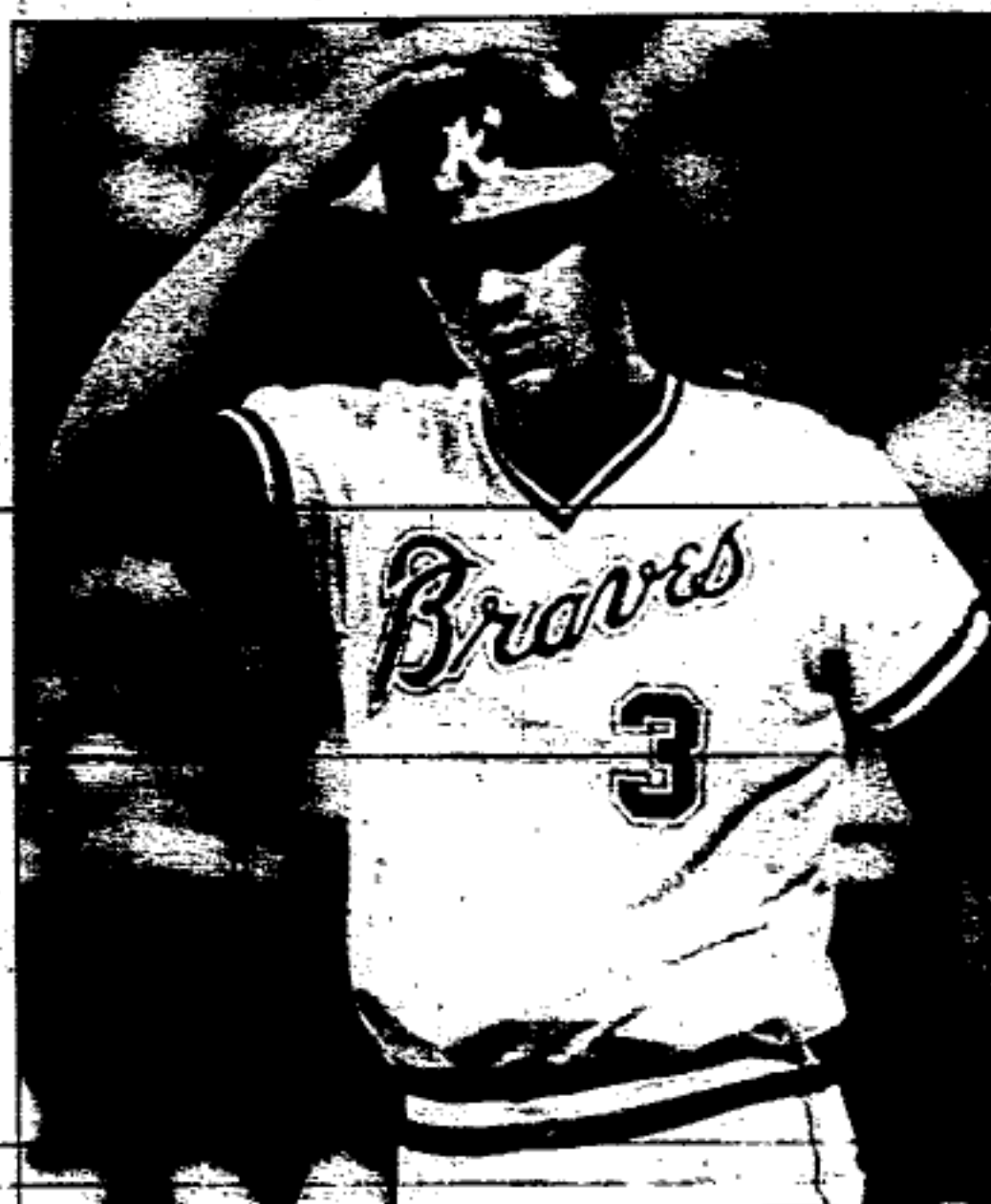
How can Dale Murphy improve on a season that produced a .281 batting average, 36 home runs, 109 RBIs, 23 stolen bases and a Gold Glove in center field?

"Consistency is the thing with me," Murphy answered quickly. "When I look at the last month of last season, well, that was an inconsistent time for me. My average dropped way off, I could improve on that. How many times did I strike out last season (134)? I'd like to cut down on that. And I know it's going to be another close race."

Already, Murphy is excited. "As excited," he said, "as when I came down here as a rookie and stayed in the batting cage so long I got real bad blisters on my hands."

Wigwag Wisp: Pitcher Tommy Boggs, sidelined most of last season with a slight tear of the rotator cuff in his right shoulder, says he experienced no pain during the winter. "I just want to take it kind of slow and a couple of weeks before the season, I'll be able to say if my arm is sound," he said. . . . Bob Horner weighed in at 216 pounds after his first workout of spring training. . . . Pitchers Rick Mahler, Rick Camp and Tommy Boggs lost almost 50 pounds among them over the winter.

TIM TUCKER



Dale Murphy . . . A humble hero.



Scioscia Sent Back To Basic Training

VERO BEACH, Fla.—The first day in camp, Mike Scioscia caught 62 pitches in a row before dropping one. The next day, he caught 88.

"When he gets to 100," said Los Angeles Dodgers Manager Tom Lasorda, "I'm buyin' him a gold watch."

It's doubtful that Scioscia ever will see the watch—not that he won't catch 100 pitches. It's just that when it comes to paying off bets, Lasorda is the original artful Dodger. The Dodgers plan to reestablish Scioscia as the catcher he was two years ago and they're doing it one step at a time, beginning at square one: catching the ball.

"Mike developed some bad habits last year, so we're going back to the basics," explained Lasorda. "He was in the wrong position to catch the ball, so he had trouble throwing out runners, and he had too many passed balls."

Says Vice-President Al Campanis: "We were disappointed more with his receiving than we were his hitting (Scioscia hit only .219 in 1982 after hitting .276 the year before). He's an excellent signal-caller, he's excellent at tagging runners, but we've got him on a program so he can improve all areas of catching."

Scioscia will catch 100 pitches every day of spring training, practice his glove work and his release throwing the ball. He'll also work with weights, jump rope and spend 15 minutes each day on a punching bag.

A punching bag?

"It's to improve my hand speed," Scioscia said of the drill concocted by trainer Bill Buhler. "I had a bone bruise on my concatted hand last year, I was catching the ball all wrong and it led to so many bad habits."

The Dodgers weren't convinced that Scioscia could overcome these bad habits, so, over the winter, they made a pitch for another catcher. They tried to pry loose Tony Pena from Pittsburgh. Then they went for Texas' Jim Sundberg during the winter meetings, a deal that was completed, then aborted when the Dodgers and Sundberg couldn't get together on a new contract.

That deal still is simmering, but Scioscia isn't concerning himself with rumors.

"I can't worry about it because there's nothing I can do about it anyway," he says. "I know I can do the job, I just had an off year. I know this, I'm not going to be a backup . . . if they get Sundberg I'm not going to want to sit around three or four years until he retires. I want to play."

During the winter, Scioscia talked with his manager at Albuquerque (Pacific Coast), former major league catcher Del Crandall, and he's getting daily coaching from former Dodger great Roy Campanella.

"Crandall helped me, and Campy is, too, with my footwork and getting rid of the ball," Scioscia said.

And scout Ralph Avila—under the watchful eye of Lasorda, of course—mans the pitching machine each day when Scioscia takes his 100 serves.

"Get his confidence up," Lasorda whispered to Avila, "but when he gets up to 60 or 70, you better load one up . . . or you'll be buying that watch."

Dodger Dope: The Dodgers and Atlanta launched their rival-

ry earlier than usual this year when the Dodgers complained that several Braves' regulars took part in spring drills at a time when only pitchers and catchers were supposed to be in camp. "We just wanted to clarify the rules," said Executive Vice-President Fred Claire, denying that the Dodgers blew the whistle on the Braves. "We had some of our players ask if they could come in early and we told them no." Said Atlanta Assistant Vice-President Pat Nugent: "The call (to the National League office) came from Vero Beach, so it was either the Dodgers or the New Orleans Saints. . . . Reliever Tom Niedenfuer, on the loss (via free agency) of Terry Forster: "With Terry gone, I'll have to work harder this year. We'll miss Terry. He was our only real veteran in the bullpen and he taught us a great deal."

Steve Sax, one of four Dodgers still unsigned when camp opened (Niedenfuer, Mike Marshall and Ron Roenicke were the others), arrived on schedule February 22. Sax, last year's N.L. Rookie of the Year, had hinted he might hold out. Reportedly, he was asking for \$250,000; the Dodgers, it is believed, were offering \$100,000.

GORDON VERRELL



Richard Confident He'll Return In '83

COCOA, Fla.—From the moment he embarked on his courageous comeback effort after almost dying of a stroke, J. R. Richard earned the respect of his peers. But the prevailing view was, "What a great thing he's trying, but how sad. He'll never make it."

The respect continues, 2½ years later. Now, however, there are whispers of, "Could it happen? Could he actually make it back to the major leagues this year?"

Whispers because such a short time ago it seemed impossible that the Houston Astros pitcher would ever walk or talk normally, much less contend for a job on Houston's 1983 roster. Whispers because nobody would dare ask more from a man who already has traveled such a long road back. Whispers because no one—not teammates, management or media—wants to put more pressure on the 6-8 righthander than J. R. has chosen to place on himself.

But here he is, spring training, 1983, in remarkably improved physical condition, throwing harder, throwing straighter and saying, "I believe I can make this club. I'm planning to make this team."

Pause now for a word of caution to Richard's many admirers. Astros officials are not counting on J. R. to be on their opening-day roster. "He still has a long way to go," Manager Bob Lillis says. But it's significant that he hasn't been discounted either.

"It may be unlikely he would start the season with us, but not impossible," Lillis says.

The club plans to give him the opportunity he has pleaded for during the previous two springs and summers, when his heart was ready, but his arm wasn't.

"J. R. will follow the exact same routine this spring as all the other pitchers, except that he'll take extra hand-eye coordination exercises," Lillis says. "We plan to start him in some intrasquad games, and we plan to pitch him in exhibition games. He's worked hard and he deserves that chance."

For those who haven't followed closely Richard's progress, 1981—the year after the stroke—was primarily a time of J. R. relearning the basics. He spent that season on the disabled list, except for September, when he was added to the Astros' roster but didn't pitch.

Then, in 1982, he agreed to pitch in the minor leagues—a difficult concession for a man so proud—but after some success at the Class A level, he was totally ineffective for Class AAA Tucson (Pacific Coast). Again, in September, he joined the Astros but with disastrous results.

Richard wanted desperately to pitch last summer, to take the critical step back. "But he was so wild it got to the point we couldn't even pitch him in batting practice unless we could find enough volunteers to hit," Lillis recalls.

Instead of giving in to the disappointment, however, as some felt he did the previous winter, Richard worked even harder during the off-season. "I didn't even go fishing and hunting," he said. "Of course, bad weather may have had more to do with that than baseball."

Under Lillis' guidance, Richard threw regularly throughout January in Houston. Most pitchers require all six weeks of spring training to reach a competitive level in April. But Richard reported to Cocoa, by Lillis' account, "with better arm strength, better range of motion and better control than he had in September. I'm impressed."

Richard credits losing weight (about 15 pounds to 241) with helping him find his old form. More, though, he credits being at peace with himself, with "being reborn during the winter. I always thought I was a Christian. But all I was was religious. Now, I've given my life completely to Christ. I can accept whatever He wants me to do and whatever happens in my career."

Richard says the stroke and its aftermath have helped make him a stronger person. He hopes others can benefit by his story and is excited about a proposed movie based on his life.

(Continued on Page 31, Column 1)

N.L. West

(Continued From Page 24)

after winning his first two starts for the Dodgers, had two losses and a no-decision in his next three, giving up 15 runs and 18 hits in 12 2/3 innings. . . . The Dodgers and Braves drew 144,945 for their three games at Dodger Stadium September 9-11; That lifted the Dodgers' season attendance to 3.25 million. With six home dates remaining, the Dodgers' season gate projected to just a little less than 3.5 million, which would leave them about 100,000 short of last year's all-time record of 3,608,881. . . . The Dodgers are 7-44 in games they trailed entering the seventh. . . . The September 11 game was the longest nine-inning game in the N.L. this year, 3 hours, 48 minutes.

GORDON VERRELL



With Horner Out, Murphy Red-Hot

ATLANTA—Case closed. Dale Murphy can hit with Bob Horner out of the lineup.

Late last season, when Horner was out of the Atlanta Braves' lineup and Murphy was not productive, the theory grew that Murphy needed Horner batting behind him to be effective. But in the month after Horner's 1983 season ended with a broken right wrist, Murphy demonstrated that he can produce without the presence of his power-hitting counterpart.

The numbers: From August 15, the night of Horner's injury, until September 15, Murphy hit .366 (37-for-101), with seven home runs and 26 RBIs in 27 games. He had more hits in 27 games after Horner left the lineup than he had in the last 43 games Horner played.

Each day, Murphy seemed to get hotter. Over one 10-game stretch, he was 21-for-42, with 14 RBIs. Over one eight-game stretch, he had five three-hit games. Over a seven-game stretch, he belted six homers. All without Horner.

One could go on. If Murphy finishes September as he started it, he has a strong change to win his second Most Valuable Player award in two years.

This is the same Dale Murphy who, in 50 games from June 19 through August 10, hit only five home runs and drove in only 23 runs. Hot. Cold. Hot. Cold.

"I'm still striving for consistency," Murphy says. "That's what I want to be. Consistent."

In mid-September, Murphy was on the verge of becoming the first Brave since Hank Aaron in 1953 to join baseball's exclusive 30-30 club. Only three players in National League history have hit 30 home runs and stolen 30 bases in one season—Willie Mays twice, Aaron once and Bobby Bonds twice. Murphy had 32 home runs and 27 thefts with 18 games remaining.

Murphy also appeared near certain to win a second consecutive Gold Glove for his play in center field.

With his strong performance since Horner left the lineup, Murphy surely has refuted the theory that pitchers can negate his impact if they don't have to worry about Horner hitting behind him. It is possible, therefore, that Murphy's late-season slump last year was totally unrelated to Horner's absence.

There is another possibility, too: Perhaps this is a more mature Murphy, a Murphy more able to mentally handle the loss of Horner.

"I think what Dale tried to do last year was carry too much of the burden," says Horner. "He tried to put the whole club on his back and carry it across the finish line. I think he realizes that no one person can do that. He is now playing more within himself."

"Last year, Dale saw that we could still win, even though he slumped," says Jerry Royster. "He realizes now that he can relax, that there are other guys—myself, Claudell Washington, Chris Chambliss, Rafael Ramirez—who can get the job done."

Murphy: "I've tried not to put any extra burden on myself since Bob got hurt. I tried to do the same thing last year."

"I'd sure like to have Bob in the lineup, and I'm sure it helps me to have him batting behind me. But to say I slumped late last season just because Bob was hurt, that would just be a big excuse. I never really believed that. Unfortunately, I have slumps when Bob's in the lineup, too."

Wigwag Wispas: The Braves lost two of three games in Los Angeles September 9-11, giving them 10 losses in 15 games against the Dodgers this season. Upset after the September 11 loss, in which the Dodgers scored four in the ninth to win, 7-6, Braves Manager Joe Torre refused to talk to reporters. The next day, he apologized. "Talking to the press is part of my job, and I want to apologize for not doing my job," Torre said. The Braves lost pitcher Rick Camp for the season with an arm injury on September 13. A nerve disorder was causing numbness in Camp's right hand and shoulder. Doctors told him not to throw a baseball again until spring training. "We're told that he should be fine with rest," said General Manager John Mullen. The Braves had been using Camp mostly as a middle reliever.

Reliever Terry Forster's availability was limited down the stretch by a pulled left hamstring. . . . Royster returned to the active roster after three weeks on the disabled list with torn ligaments in his right ankle. . . . When the Braves fell four games behind the Dodgers on September 12, Owner Ted Turner phoned both Mullen and Torre in Cincinnati. Why? "To find out what in the world is going on," Turner said. "We still have time to win it, but this is scary. Who would have ever thought our bullpen would be giving us trouble?"

TIM TUCKER



Hammaker's Crown Could Be Dubious

SAN FRANCISCO—It is highly unlikely that an earned-run average champion ever went more than two months without a victory, but San Francisco Giants lefthander Atlee Hammaker could gain that distinction this year.

Hammaker, the National League ERA leader since April 17, has been winless since posting a 4-2 victory over the Cubs on July 10. That was his first start after the All-Star Game humiliation, which he insists didn't affect his confidence.

The fact he's 1-5 with a 3.38 ERA since the All-Star Game after going 9-4 with a 1.70 ERA before it can be attributed to tendinitis in his shoulder, an ailment that sidelined him for exactly one month beginning July 21.

Hammaker is 0-4 since returning from the disabled list, but he at least silenced the skeptics on September 11 by strongly demonstrating there's nothing wrong with his arm.

Hooked up in a duel with Nolan Ryan of the Astros at Candlestick Park, Hammaker didn't get a decision while beating the strikeout master at his game.

Hammaker struck out 14 batters in 7 2/3 innings, as compared to 11 for Ryan, who was beaten when the Giants erupted for three runs in the bottom of the ninth.

The significance of Hammaker's performance is that the previous 1983 strikeout high for a National League pitcher was 13 by Pirate rookie Jose DeLeon.

It was the highest whiff total for the club since John Montefusco notched 14 in 1975. It missed by one the San Francisco record of 15 set by Gaylord Perry in 1966 and was only two shy of Christy Mathewson's club-record 16 in 1904.

"Atlee's breaking ball was the difference against the Astros," Manager Frank Robinson said. "This was a game he needed. He showed us and himself that he can still pitch like he did early in the season. This was the old Atlee."

Hammaker, who retained the league ERA lead with a 2.25 mark following his strikeout spree, admitted he had been reluctant to throw the slider after coming off the disabled list, because it placed more strain on his shoulder.

"I hadn't been pitching well lately, so I figured I had nothing to lose against the Astros," said Hammaker, 10-9 following five straight defeats. "I set up all my strikeouts with breaking pitches. I felt like my old self."

"My shoulder is a little stiffer because of all the breaking pitches, but it's not bad. The only cure is complete rest, and I'll have all winter for that. I feel I'll be as good as new next year."

"The 14 strikeouts at least showed me I have my stuff back," Hammaker added. "But I still can't pick up a win, and that's what it's all about. I know I'm having some tough luck, but that's no consolation."

Giants: With Greg Minton posting 19 saves and Gary Lavelle adding 17 through mid-September, the club had a chance for the first 20-20 bullpen in N.L. history. . . . Dave Bergman's

two-run single against Ryan was his fifth successful pinch-hit in his last six attempts, lifting his average in that department to .385 (10-for-26).

Through the September 13 game at San Diego, opponents had successfully stolen 23 straight bases against the Giants, not counting a pair of runners-caught on pickoffs. . . . Rookie center fielder Dan Gladden has been even more impressive than Chris Smith and is regarded a better all-around prospect because he can hit, throw, run and field. . . . Tests were negative on pitcher Mike Krukow after he got a scare when he had to leave a game complaining of dizziness and blurred vision. "It was scary because I lost 80 percent of my vision for about two hours," Krukow said. "One of my grandfathers died of a brain tumor at 44, so I didn't want to take any chances. I was told my problem was a type of migraine."

NICK PETERS

A FIRST TIME OFFER



RICH GOSSAGE
1978 Fireman
of the Year

This superbly designed jewelry will provide you with a long lasting memento, and makes a great gift idea for all avid baseball fans.

Be the first to wear a 14KT yellow gold pendant, tie-tac, or stickpin of your favorite major league baseball team.



AVAILABLE IN LARGE OR SMALL SIZE FOR ANY OF YOUR FAVORITE TEAMS. THE CLUB INDIANA DEPICTED ARE THE TRADEMARKS OF THE RESPECTIVE CLUBS.



PRICE SCALE: With gold at \$400-450 per oz.
Large Pendant \$149.95 Stickpin \$109.95
Small Pendant \$109.95 Tie Tac \$109.95
PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE. 30 DAY MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE—SEE STORE DELIVERY.



Mail or Phone
ML LOGOS

82 Bowery, New York, N.Y. 10013
Tel. (212) 966-6983 or 226-7911

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Team Logo _____

Subtotal	\$ _____	Number of pieces:	
Tax (8 1/2% N.Y. only)	\$ _____	Large Pendant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postage & Handling	\$ 5.75	Small Pendant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total	\$ _____	Stick Pin	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Tie Tac	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Total Pieces	<input type="checkbox"/>

CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS ONLY!

Subscribe to BaseBall america

for the most complete coverage of minor league and college baseball anywhere.

- Comprehensive college baseball coverage
- Extensive minor league coverage
- Unprecedented draft coverage
- And much, much more



— 18 Times A Year —

Baseball America • P.O. Box 2089 • Durham, NC 27702

☐ Yes, I want the most complete coverage of minor league and college baseball available! Enter a new one-year subscription (18 issues) in my name to Baseball America for just \$22.50. I have enclosed my check or money order.

☐ I prefer a two-year subscription (36 issues) at \$39.00.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Canadian subscribers add \$3 postage per subscription. First class and foreign rates available upon request.

SN1

'We'll Play Again,' Murphy Tells Curious Atlanta Fans

By TIM TUCKER

ATLANTA—The questioners were curious, not hostile. Restless, not mutinous:

"When are you guys gonna be on TV again?" "I don't know," Dale Murphy told his 12-year-old questioner, "but hopefully it won't be long."

"What's the deal? Will you guys play again?"

"Oh, yeah, we'll play again," Murphy told the mother of two autograph-seeking youngsters. "No problem there. It's just a matter of time."

"I don't guess there'll be an autograph day at the stadium this year, huh?"

"Oh, yeah, we'll be back in time to have one," Murphy assured the man who wanted a picture for his grandson.

Dale Murphy, the Atlanta Braves' center fielder signed autographs, shook hands and attempted to answer questions at a suburban Atlanta shopping mall in the midst of the strike by major league players. But he could not give a definitive answer to the foremost question on everyone's mind.

When will striking major league players return?

"I wish I did know the answer," said Murphy, the Braves' assistant player representative. "It looks like they (negotiators) are far apart, doesn't it? It's going to be pretty hard to reach an agreement on compensation for free agents."

"The players have always said there shouldn't be compensation. It's going to be tough to find a form of compensation that doesn't hurt the players."

Murphy signed about 500 autographs for children and adults, most of whom expressed anxiety for baseball. The appearance was scheduled before the strike began, and Murphy admitted wondering whether he should go through with it.

"The response has been good," he said, "but I'm sure I could get in a hostile situation if I went to the wrong place."

While Murphy believes strongly in the principle the players are fighting for, he also admits to an uneasy feeling about being on strike.

"It's very strange having summer nights off," he said. "When I got home (the day the strike began), Nancy (his wife) and I looked at each other and said, 'This is really weird.'"

Murphy is working out with teammate and friend Luis Gomez, but he admits, "Whatever you do is inadequate to stay in shape to face major league pitching."

As Murphy was signing autographs in the shopping mall, a former minor league teammate approached him and offered to throw batting practice several times a week. Murphy greeted Kevin Meistickle, with whom he played at Greenwood (Western Carolinas) in 1975, and said, "I might take you up on that."

Meanwhile, Murphy's 10-month-old son, Chad, played with a couple of baseball cards.

"I enjoy spending time with my family and doing things around the house—that's great," Murphy said. "But I miss going to the park every afternoon."

Wigwam Wisps: One week into the strike, Bob Horner said his injured left ankle had healed and he'd be ready to play when the season resumes. . . . An Atlanta attorney publicly suggested that five injured Braves should qualify for workman's compensation benefits during the strike. The Braves said their insurance carrier was studying the matter.

Owner Ted Turner was staying quieter than usual, but he did say, "Now it's down to a battle of wills. In the final analysis, if the owners hang tough, they'll outlast the players. The players don't have the millions to wait around with." Turner asked, "What would happen tomorrow if they put all 650 major league players and Marvin Miller on a ship and they ran into another ship and sank? The world could get along without all of them. It got along without John F. Kennedy didn't it?"

Dale Murphy... Strange feelings.

Cubs Plan to Open Coffers And Join Free-Agent Fray

By JOE GODDARD

CHICAGO—A few years ago, the Chicago Cubs had this motto: "Go for it!" Never mind that they went from second place to fifth. At the end of this season, they'll have another motto: "Go for 'em!"

Although General Manager Herman Franks has no assurances he'll be around long with the sale of the franchise to the Chicago Tribune Co., he'll apparently be around long enough to select free agents in the sixth annual November re-entry draft, then actually try to sign them. With big

bucks, no less.

"Whatever happens," Franks said of his future, "we've got to get into this free-agent thing heavily."

That'll be a switch. In the past, the Cubs got into it lightly. They selected few and signed only one—Dave Kingman (1977).

Franks was assured by William Wrigley, whose sale of the club was pending, that money would be available for not only the re-entry draft, but to satisfy productive Cubs so they won't want to play elsewhere.

Franks already knows what he wants from the draft: young athletes. That means Reggie Jackson is out as help for the outfield, Jerry Grote as help behind the plate and Fergie Jenkins as help on the mound.

To prepare himself, Franks had his assistant, John Cox, prepare a list of potential free agents.

Franks also was prepared to handle criticism for trading Rick Reuschel to the Yankees a few hours before the players' strike. To fans and the media who felt he should have received more than righthanded pitcher Doug Bird, a player to be named later (presumably infielder Pat Tabler) and \$400,000, Franks said phooey.

"We had Rick for what—two, three more years? I'm talking about good years. We're looking farther down the road," Franks said.

"Money wasn't the object; it was getting some players. Everyone had a shot at him. When we were ready to make the deal, we called everyone back and said, 'This is your last chance.' No one could match what we got from New York."

The White Sox indicated they had prepared a better package, but Franks said phooey to that, too. "First of all, they never mentioned money, not one dollar," he said.

They did give us a list of guys who had cleared waivers; but when I asked 'em which ones we couldn't have, they took away Greg Luzinski, Ron LeFlore, Jim Morrison, Bill Almon and Mike Squires. That left me with nothing.

"Oh, they did want to give me Marc Hill for Bill Caudill," he said. "What about (Jim) Essian?" They said, "he's our backup catcher," so I said, "Good. Keep him! We'll keep Caudill."

Cubbyholer: The weekly newspaper Crains Chicago Business reported that an appraisal firm showed the Cubs were worth more than the \$20.5 million the Tribune Co. will pay owner William Wrigley. The franchise alone, according to American Appraisal Co. of Milwaukee, is worth as much as \$6 million, according to Vice-President Michael Magna, while Wrigley Field is valued at \$5 to \$8 million, and the players another \$8 to \$10 million on the baseball market. Magna said the team figures to have an additional \$2-to-\$3-million in related assets, bringing the total to \$25 million. General Manager Herman Franks said Wrigley was not out to make as much money as he could. "People should give Mr. Wrigley credit," Franks said. "He didn't open up bids like the New York Mets did. He wasn't looking for a profit. He was looking to keep the team in Chicago, and he succeeded."

Padres See Good, Evil in Strike

By PHIL COLLIER

SAN DIEGO—According to Ballard Smith, major league baseball's first mid-season strike will not endanger the future of the San Diego Padres.

"This doesn't affect our commitment to building a winner here," the club president said. "The strike came just as our team was starting to jell. We were getting ready for our longest home stay of the year (17 days out of 20). People were starting to identify with our new, young players."

"We felt we were making a lot of progress. I hope, when this is over, that there will be some carry-over effect, that it won't be like starting the season all over again."

The Padres, with 17 newcomers on their 25-man roster, lost 20 of their first 29 games, of which 20 were on the road. After May 9, however, Manager Frank Howard's young and relatively inexperienced team had played at a 14-15 clip and was on a three-game winning streak when the work stoppage occurred.

Six of their next 10 games were to have been against the National League's weakest team, the Chicago Cubs. The cancellation of those games could have a marked effect on the Padres' chances of avoiding their second last-place finish in a row.

The strike will have a negative effect on a number of the Padres' individual accomplishments.

For instance, Gold Glove shortstop Ozzie Smith was setting a pace that would have given him 666 assists over a 162-game schedule. Now it seems unlikely he will match the all-time major league record he set for shortstops last year with 621 assists.

Lefthander Gary Lucas had amassed 10 saves in 56 games, had a 3-5 record, a 2.44 earned-run average and had had a hand in 13 of the club's 23 victories.

However, Lucas also had pitched in 29 of the Padres' 56 games and, at that rate, would have made \$4 season appearances. Because of that, it's possible he could profit from at least a brief layoff.

Terry Kennedy, a first-year regular behind the plate, was reaching the peak of his game when play was halted. The lefthanded hitter was averaging .308, and had made dramatic defensive progress, throwing out seven of the last

nine runners who attempted to steal. He nailed Omar Moreno of Pittsburgh twice in a row.

Second baseman Juan Bonilla was establishing himself as a candidate for Rookie of the Year after batting .284 in 46 games.

Bonilla also had performed spectacularly afield, teaming with Smith to form what some consider the N.L.'s best double-play combination.

Third baseman Luis Salazar had been a smoking gun, batting at a .377 clip (23-for-61) to boost his season average to .294.

Montreal Manager Dick Williams had been saying Salazar had made the best plays he had seen any N.L. third baseman make this season.

Center fielder Ruppert Jones won the last game before the strike, 3-2, with a three-run homer at Pittsburgh. Jones batted .321 (27-for-84) in 20 games raising his season average to .242.

Left fielder Gene Richards, rebounding from another of his customary slow starts, had batted .328 in 35 games, lifting his average to .266.

Rookie lefthander Dan Boone, had allowed only four runs on 16 hits in 13 relief appearances, a span of 22 1/3 innings.

Righthander Steve Murphy (4-7) had won three decisions in a row.

Padre Pickups: More than 2,000 fans were in the stadium parking lot on June 18 as broadcasters Jerry Coleman, Dave Campbell and Ted Leitner continued radio station KFMB's "fantasy baseball" series. In this make-believe contest, Jerry Turner hit a three-run pinch homer in the ninth inning to give the Padres their 10th straight victory, 4-2, over Pittsburgh. The fans were treated to free hot dogs, beer and soft drinks and some were given "Marvin Miller Strike Mugs." . . . Ozzie Smith and Juan Eichelberger have been working out at San Diego State during the strike. Gary Lucas and Terry Kennedy live in the same neighborhood and have been working out together. However, some of the Padres still haven't picked up shoes and gloves from the clubhouse, causing concern over what kind of shape they'll be in once the strike is over.

BASEBALL'S BEST HITTERS

When They Step Up To the Plate, Pitchers Cringe; They Are—The Most FEARED

By PAUL ATTNER
National Correspondent

WASHINGTON—Every bona fide baseball fan has fantasized about the situation: bases loaded, two out, bottom of the ninth, game on the line, crowd roaring, dugouts full of chatter.

Joe Fan, of course, is on the mound, his fastball kicking in at 95 mph plus. He paws the dirt in front of the rubber, turns his back to the plate, takes a deep breath and faces the next batter.

Of course, that batter is none other than Joe Dangerous, the most revered hitter in the bigs. Muscles bulging, confident smile on his face, he strides to the plate, then slowly works his way into the batter's box. Finally ready, he looks toward the mound.

So it's come down to this: fastball vs. power, great pitcher vs. great slugger. Who could ask for anything more?

The real fan can only dream about this confrontation. But major league pitchers must learn to win enough of these duels or they'll find themselves watching from the stands.

What batters would these pitchers least want to face? What hitters do pitchers fear the most? What sluggers would they rather avoid in the most pressurized situations?

To find out, major league correspondents of THE SPORTING NEWS polled pitchers in both leagues. The pitchers were asked, simply, to identify what batter they feared the most in their league. The answers turned out to be both predictable and surprising.

In the American League, the overwhelming winner was dangerous Eddie Murray of the Baltimore Orioles. Of the 96 pitchers voting, Murray received 21.5 votes, far outdistancing Kansas City's George Brett, who received 7.5 votes. Wade Boggs of Boston, the 1983 batting champion, was third with six and Lou Whitaker of Detroit and seven-time batting champion Rod Carew of California tied for fourth with five each.

In the National League, where 100 votes were collected, two-time Most Valuable Player Dale Murphy of Atlanta nosed out Keith Hernandez of the New York Mets, 20 to 14. Jack Clark of St. Louis was third with 6.5 votes while Mike Schmidt of Philadelphia and Jose Cruz of Houston finished tied for fourth with four votes each.

Not even in contention were A.L. power men such as Boston's Jim Rice, the Yankees' Don Baylor and Oakland's Dave Kingman. Although the Toronto Blue Jays have had the best record in the majors for most of the season, only one Toronto player, Willie Upshaw, received a vote—and he got just one.

Likewise, Gary Carter, Pete Rose, Andre Dawson, Bob Horner, Leon Durham and Ryne Sandberg (last year's MVP) were N.L. also-rans.

And where was Reggie Jackson, who has hit 513 homers, placing him 10th on the career homer list? Jax didn't land a vote.

Schmidt and Jackson undoubtedly would have ranked higher had the poll been taken three or four years ago. Schmidt, who has won or shared seven N.L. home run championships and went into the 1985 season with 425 homers in his career, has struggled this year. Jackson fell off in 1983 and '84.

It is intriguing how some pitchers defined "feared hitter." They decided to vote for the batter who gives them the most trouble, which obviously is one way to create fear. If a batter is wearing you out, hitting 400 lifetime against you, how can Eddie Murray be any more trouble?

Thus there were votes for some unexpected players. Von Hayes of Philadelphia, Danny Heep and Mookie Wilson of the Mets, Bobby Brown and Terry Kennedy of San Diego, Jeff Leonard of San Francisco, Willie Randolph of the Yankees, Jim Dwyer and Gary Roenicke of Baltimore, Gary Gaetti of Minnesota and Tom Brookens of Detroit.

Still, the pitchers decided mostly to go with power hitters, although Hernandez upheld the contact batters' case with his strong showing in the National League. Indeed, Murphy expressed surprise that he actually led the voting, considering that he strikes out so much and Hernandez makes contact more consistently.

"He's a great clutch hitter," Murphy said of Hernandez. "Guys who hit homers aren't always great clutch hitters. I don't think my name comes up very often when you are talking about clutch hitters. With my strikeouts, I could be a lot better in those situations; I know I could."



Of course, Murphy hits homers, gobs of them (36 in each of the last three seasons), but he hardly is a one-dimensional batter. Over those same three years, he has averaged .281, .302 and .290 and has driven in 330 runs. This spring, he started off by trying to pull the ball more than he had recently, and the result was one of the best Aprils in baseball history: a .380 average, eight doubles, nine homers and 29 runs batted in, which tied the major league record for RBIs in the first month of the season.

In his first nine seasons, Hernandez had only 105 home runs, but he knows the strike zone better than Murphy and he is less likely to overswing. That's reflected both in his RBI totals—he

has batted in at least 91 runs in five seasons—and his .300 career average.

National League pitchers obviously hadn't forgotten 1984, when Hernandez was second behind Gary Mathews with 17 game-winning RBIs, third in on-base percentage (.409), and first (with Cruz) in driving in runners in scoring position (38 percent). He hit .326 with men on base, .331 with men in scoring position, .357 with men in scoring position and two out and .358 with men on base and two out. In other words, it's far wiser to face Hernandez with the bases empty.

Bruce Sutter, the stellar relief pitcher who moved from St. Louis, where he once was a teammate of Hernandez, to Atlanta, where Murphy reigns, looks at the two batters this way:

"They are different kinds of hitters. Keith will hit for a higher average and have more doubles. Murphy will hit the ball more over the fence while Keith will hit the ball over when you really need it. When you have a late-inning lead, a lot of times it's not a homer that beats you, it's a double."

Despite his success, Murphy remains puzzled by his ability to produce when needed. He once said, "I can't really explain what I'm doing up there. I try, I really do, but it just doesn't seem like you can ever put what goes on in your mind up there, in the batter's box, into words."

Of course, Murphy also began his baseball career by collecting just one hit during his initial Little League season. Talk about coming a long way!

Yet he admits experience has helped him cope with the most crucial moments. "It's a little harder to think clearer in those situations until you have done it for a while. A lot of times, you still don't," he said. "I don't know if I have learned how to handle them but my best thinking is to go up there and be aggressive."

"If it's a pressure situation, a pitcher doesn't want to get behind you, so you have to be aggressive or you are in trouble. I try to think about being aggressive and hitting to right field, because that reminds me to hit the ball (instead of overswinging or pulling)."

If pitchers only knew he was thinking so hard...

Although Murphy appears to make hitting look easy, he once was a fairly predictable out. Prior to 1981, he batted a mere .223 when the game was on the line. Since 1982, that average stands at .321, including a .391 mark last year when he was second behind Clark in the N.L. in producing runs in the clutch.

Some of Murphy's improvement comes from a better knowledge of the strike zone. Observers swear he even looks better now striking out. When things get tight, he says he can't be negative.

"One of the problems is that you go up there worrying about swinging at a bad pitch, but you don't want to be timid in that situation," he said. So he lets the strikeouts fall where they may.

"Murphy is so tough because he can do so many different things with different pitches," said San Francisco's Bill Laskey, against whom Murphy has batted .524, with five homers. "He has no real weakness. He'll chase some bad pitches if you get ahead of him and he'll get into a slump because he is streaky, but his slumps don't seem to last that long."

The only pitcher Murphy has hit better than Laskey is Houston's Bob Knepper, who has been touched for six career homers by the Atlanta center fielder.

"To me," said Knepper, "two things make him an outstanding hitter. First, he has great coverage of the plate. As big a man as he is, you'd think he'd have places where he wouldn't be able to reach a pitch. There isn't. You can't pitch him in any one place and expect to get him out."

"Second, in my experience, he never misses one of my 'mistake' pitches. If I make my pitch, I think I can get him out. But if I make a mistake, it's a big mistake. Last year, I struck him out twice with sliders inside. The third time, I was going to fool him with a change-up. He fooled me with a ball in the seats. With most hitters, you hope for a line drive right at somebody. With Murphy, when I make a mistake, it's gone."

Murphy's improvement as a hitter is what impresses the Chicago Cubs' Rick Sutcliffe.

"I had a pretty good understanding with him when I was in L.A.," said Sutcliffe, who broke into the majors with the Dodgers. "He wasn't the same hitter then that he is now. He had a lot of holes when I left. He lays off those pitches now, and those he doesn't lay off, he fights off and fouls back. He gets a piece of a bad one and waits for one he likes."

Sutcliffe, who also has pitched for Cleveland, has had the misfortune of facing both Murphy and Murray. Speaking about Murray, he said: "He's the kind who seems to hit more than once an inning because he's always comin' up with men on base. Sometimes you wonder if there's not two of him. I had some success with him because I tried to keep him from beating me. If he did, so be it, but he didn't do it often because I wouldn't let him. I took my chances with the fifth-place hitter."

Tom Seaver of the Chicago White Sox likewise has faced

The Stress Test

How did the major leagues' two most feared hitters, Dale Murphy and Eddie Murray, compare in pressure situations in 1984?

According to statistics compiled by the Elias Sports Bureau, this is how they fared in these pressure moments, which Elias defines as "all appearances in the seventh inning or later, with the batter's team tied or trailing by a margin of three runs or less (or four runs if the bases are loaded)."

	Murphy	Murray
Overall Late-Inning Pressure	.391	.325
Leading Off	.474	.261
Bases Empty	.431	.217
Runners On	.333	.459
Runners In Scoring Position	.292	.529

This is how they fared in other game situations during 1984:

	Murphy	Murray
Runners On	.285	.323
Runners In Scoring Position	.252	.310
Runners on, Two Out	.291	.281
Runners In Scoring Position, Two Out	.293	.242

PLAYERS RECEIVING ONE VOTE—Kevin McNamee, San Diego Padres; Keith Marchand, Chicago Cubs; Pat Bradley, San Francisco Giants; Terry Kennedy, San Diego Padres; Mike Marshall, Los Angeles Dodgers; Gary Carter, New York Mets; Gary Matthews, Chicago Cubs; Van Linger, Philadelphia Phillies; Jim Leonard, San Francisco Giants; Ray Knight, New York Mets; Tim Lincecum, Montreal Expos; Danny Hoop, New York Mets; Mookie Wilson, New York Mets; Ryan Sandberg, Chicago Cubs; Bobby Bruns, San Diego Padres; Greg Nettles, San Diego Padres; Luan Platterham, Chicago Cubs; Terry Francisco, Montreal Expos.



2

Keith Hernandez



2

George Brett

PLAYERS RECEIVING 1986-87 All-Star Game MVP Award: Dennis Rodman, Detroit Pistons; George Foster, San Francisco Giants; Fred Lynn, Boston Red Sox; Keith Hernandez, New York Yankees; Dale Belfrage, Chicago White Sox; Tim Lincecum, Seattle Mariners; Dwight Gooden, New York Yankees; Dave Cooper, Milwaukee Brewers.

PLAYERS RECEIVING ONE VOTE—Don Garci, Milwaukee Brewers; Tom Brookens, Detroit Tigers; Chet Lemon, Detroit Tigers; Gary Gattis, Milwaukee Twins; Jim Gantner, Milwaukee Brewers; Dave Kingman, Oakland A's; Robin Yount, Milwaukee Brewers; Charlie Moore, Milwaukee Brewers; Doug DeCinces, California Angels; Gary Roenicke, Baltimore Orioles; Jim Dwyer, Baltimore Orioles; Dan Jendryak, New York Yankees; Willie Randolph, New York Yankees; Carlton Fisk, Chicago White Sox; Willie Upshaw, Toronto Blue Jays; Mike Easler, Boston Red Sox.

Frank Tanana of Texas, who has given up four homers and 13 RBIs to Murray, believes that in game-winning situations, "Eddie is undoubtedly the guy you don't want to face. Some people seem to thrive on those situations and it just elevates their ability. Eddie seems to have the innate ability, when the game is on the line, to perform at his peak," Tanana said. "It's a rare ability. Don Baylor is somewhat like that, too. George Brett has that ability. But Eddie, by far, just seems to get better

CAUGHT ON THE FLY

By STAN ISLE, Senior Editor

Bambi Steals Scene From Weaver

The public address system at Baltimore's Memorial Stadium offered John Sebastian's "Welcome Back," and fans responded with a thunderous ovation as Earl Weaver, on his return as manager of the Orioles, strolled toward home plate with the lineup card. Brewers Manager George Bamberger, an old friend of Weaver's from his days as Weaver's pitching coach, was not to be totally overshadowed as he approached the plate. With the cheers for Weaver mounting, Bamberger doffed his cap in mock acknowledgment of the ovation. "I thought about tipping my hat at home plate," Bamberger said pockishly. "Then I said, 'This is a good time. I'll do it now.'" Weaver later chuckled about the incident. "Bamberger is great," said the Earl of Baltimore. Bamberger noted that Weaver is being paid a reported \$300,000 in his second term as Baltimore manager. "I said that you were worth a million, and I understand you're getting just half of that," said Bamberger. "Is this a cheap outfit you're working for, or what?" ... Orioles shortstop Cal Ripken Jr. said he thought his father, Baltimore coach Cal Ripken Sr., deserved a chance to manage the club on a full-time basis. Young Ripken had contributed a pair of run-scoring doubles to help the Orioles beat the Brewers, 8-3, the night his father served as acting manager. "Earl is a fan favorite, and I enjoyed playing under him when he was here," said the American League's Most Valuable Player of 1983. "I had no say in the matter, but I think he (Cal Sr.) deserves an opportunity. He has paid his dues." ... Broadcaster Jim Palmer, who won three Cy Young Awards with the Orioles, indicated he might make a pitch for the job when Weaver completes his second term. "If this were three years down the road, I would have called (Orioles Owner) Edward Bennett Williams and asked to be considered," said Palmer. Palmer has no formal experience as a manager, but Baltimore sportswriters remember him as Weaver's "strategy consultant" during his days as a player.

Cardinals Impress Sutcliffe

Cubs righthander Rick Sutcliffe, after seeing the Cardinals sweep a three-game series at Wrigley Field June 14-16, concluded that the Mets were no longer the team for Chicago to beat in the National League East. "Maybe in spring training it was the Mets, but now I'd say our biggest competition is the Cardinals and the Expos," the 1984 N.L. Cy Young Award winner told the Chicago Sun-Times on the eve of the first Cubs-Mets meeting of the season. ... The Indians were charged with 64 errors in their first 51 games, but Municipal Stadium

groundskeeper Dave Frey refused to accept the blame. "I'll put our outfield up against anyone's," said Frey. "And I'll say this: I don't think the infield has won or lost a game for anyone." In the 51-game span, 24 at home and 27 on the road, Cleveland infielders committed 39 errors. Of the total, 24 misplays came at home, 15 on the road. Frey said his research showed that only four of the errors at Municipal Stadium could be attributed to the field. ... The attorney for one of the seven men indicted in Pittsburgh in a federal probe of drug trafficking involving major league players said he plans to call players to testify at his client's trial. "This involves ball players. This whole thing is about ball players," said Adam Renfro Jr., who represents Curtis Strong, a Philadelphia caterer charged by a grand jury with 16 counts of cocaine distribution. Renfro also said prosecutors were shielding players in the probe "because no one wants to destroy apple pie, hot dogs or baseball."

Blue Jays Have Identity Problem

The Blue Jays led the A.L. East in mid-June and were more than 100,000 ahead of their 1984 attendance pace at Exhibition Stadium, but they seemed to have an identity problem on the road. Toronto attracted an average of 16,997 paying spectators in the first one-third of its road schedule—the poorest road attendance record in the major leagues. In comparison, the Indians, with the worst record in the majors, drew an average of 20,994 in their first 24 road games. The Rangers, last in the A.L. West, attracted an average of 20,762 away from home. "The Blue Jays haven't been discovered yet as being as formidable a club as they are," said Indians President Peter Bavasi, formerly Toronto's chief executive officer. "They proved they were an outstanding club last year, but they had to live in the shadow of the Tigers." ... A poll conducted by the Seattle Times indicated that a majority of King County residents support a proposal to give the financially troubled Mariners free rent in the Kingdom, but they draw the line on granting the A.L. team exemption from the city admissions tax. Sixty-two percent of the respondents favor three years of free rent, as proposed by King County Executive Randy Revelle. The Mariners have been paying approximately \$250,000 a year to lease the Kingdom. Only 32 percent favored an exemption on Seattle's admissions tax. The tax on Mariners tickets amounted to \$228,000 last year.

Trucks Blasts Players' Union

Former major leaguer Virgil Trucks believes the Major League Players Association would be making a grave mistake if its members boycott the All-Star Game as threatened.

Trucks, who pitched two no-hitters for the Tigers in 1952, has little sympathy for the players' union. "I think if I was an owner and they struck, they would sit there until they starved to death," said Trucks, 66. "I'd make them realize they were striking for petty stuff." Trucks and another ex-major leaguer, Ben Chapman, are unhappy because the players are reluctant to share with retired players equal benefits from the pension plan, which was started in 1946. "The younger players don't want to give us nothing," said Trucks, claiming the difference in pension benefits for old-timers and current players can be as much as \$3,000 a month. "They're all for themselves and nobody else." ... Manager Jim Frey says his Cubs, who have prospered at Wrigley Field, where the grass gets a little shaggy at times, are going to have to stop griping about playing on artificial turf. "There's no need in trying to make excuses about the (synthetic) turf. The turf is here to stay, and we've got to live with it," Frey said after Chicago split a four-game series against the Expos at Olympic Stadium that sent them into a mid-June swoon. ... Bob Wirtz, who resigned as director of information in the commissioner's office to start a Norwalk, Conn., consulting firm, has been retained by the Denver Baseball Commission, which is seeking a major league franchise for the Mile High City.

Passed Balls Plague Slaughter

Rangers catchers led the A.L. in passed balls with 33 in 1984, so Texas acquired Don Slaught from the Royals, hopeful of remedying the problem. "I heard about it. I heard what happened here before," said Slaught, aware that catching knuckleballer Charlie Hough would make his duties more difficult. So Slaught had seven passed balls in Hough's first eight starts, but he was not charged with a passed ball with another pitcher on the mound until June 3. Through 50 games, Slaught had been charged with 11 passed balls, nine more than he had in any of three seasons with Kansas City. "Yeah, they're starting to bother me," said Slaught. The catcher complained that the official scorer did not give him the benefit of the doubt on two of the last three.

Veteran lefthander Tommy John, released by the Angels, complained about a lack of communication with Manager Gene Mauch and pitching coach Marcel Lachemann. "I seldom knew when I was going to pitch," said John. "I had to read it in the paper once when I wasn't. I don't like to use the word 'communication,' but I didn't get much from either Gene or Lach. I pitched the best I could in a role that was never defined. I told them I can pitch a little every day out of the bullpen or I can throw 125 pitches every five days."

Hitters

(Continued From Page 3)

and better."

Lefthander Tommy John, who started this season with California but has been released, remembered when he was pitching for the Yankees. "I had a 5-3 lead at Yankee Stadium and Eddie came up with two on and two out. Dick Howser came to take me out and bring in Ron Davis. I told Dick, 'I'd rather face him. The way the wind's blowing makes the park bigger (with Murray batting righthanded). I'm tired, but I think I can get him out.' Ron came in, and Eddie hit his first pitch off the wall in right-center. Dick and I looked at each other and just laughed."

That's probably why John said that "in a tough situation, I'd rather walk him, depending on who bats after him. Even with the bases loaded, walking in a run might be better than letting him hit."

Murray, frustrated in his early years by those walks, has learned to accept them better. "There are times when they just aren't going to pitch to you, so you have to go up and expect a walk," he said. "Before, you would be swinging at one of their pitches, being overeager. It might even be a strike, but not all strikes are good pitches to hit."

"The great spot is when you can go up there and you can disrespect one of their pitches, like their fastball. So you go up looking for off-speed stuff because you are thinking they can't throw the ball by you. Therefore, that's when a pitcher is really in for a struggle, when you can take one of his pitches and say, 'The heck with it.'"

"But even if he has your number, there is nothing negative in your head going up to the plate. You are always positive. You are going over what pitch you can hit well. There are a lot of pitchers who won't adjust, who are really stubborn. But there are times I can adjust in between strikes, because there are guys who throw over the top that I don't see well from certain stances. If I don't adjust between pitches, I'm sort of wasting a whole at-bat."

That's the more mature Murray talking. When he first came up, he thought there was a point "where you could outthink yourself and think too much. I used to be one of the guys who would see the ball, react to it and hit it. If the guy had four pitches, you were capable of hitting all four because I thought I was quick enough to react to any pitch he could throw. Now, you get smarter; it all comes along with being more selective and patient. And, yeah, more mature."

John Butcher of the Minnesota Twins knows one way to handle Murray, who draws raves from pitchers for the speed of his swing and the way he sees the ball during one of his streaks.

"When you're a pitcher, you hope the Orioles are on the schedule before Murray gets hot," said Butcher. "When he's hot, there's not much you can do with him. Sometimes, it seems the best thing to do with him is throw the ball right over the middle of the plate. When he's hot, he hits the inside pitch in the seats and the outside pitch is a line drive back to the mound. When you throw the ball over the middle of the plate, at least the line drives don't come right back at you."

Or you can be like Dennis Eckersley, the former Red Sox pitcher now with the Cubs. He changed leagues to get away from Murray.

"I'll bet he misses me, but I sure don't miss him," said Eckersley. "He must have taken me deep six or seven times. He hit the longest home run I've ever seen. It went 25 rows beyond the bullpen in Fenway. It was off Luis Tiant, thank goodness. I wouldn't want that hanging over me. Ah, better make that 20 rows. I wouldn't want anyone to think I was exaggerating."

But what if you are forced to go after Murray? You might

suffer the fate of Detroit's Milt Wilcox, the pitcher who has been hit hardest by Murray. Wilcox has given up six homers and 18 RBIs, Murray's bests against an individual pitcher.

"He's one of the few hitters who can be a free swinger, yet selective," said Wilcox. "Umpires don't call a lot of strikes on him, so you have to make your pitches good. A lot of the great hitters are like that. They know the strike zone and umpires know they know it. I saw it in Yaz (Carl Yastrzemski) and you can see it in Murray now. Basically, you are forced to throw him good pitches. Then it's up to him to hit them a mile, which he always seems to do."

Former Orioles teammate Lee May, now the Kansas City hitting coach, put it this way: "Eddie's like clockwork. When he's hitting well, he has no holes. He's the best right now. The only guy you can put close to him is this guy in Atlanta—Dale Murphy. But he strikes out a lot. Eddie doesn't."

Still, May isn't volunteering to pitch against either man. He's not that foolish.

The Sporting News SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

YES! Sign me up for 52 weeks of THE SPORTING NEWS at the low basic rate of \$51.50 (that's just 99¢ a week).

- ☐ Bill me later.
☐ Payment enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Canadian subscriptions add \$18.75 for postage. Other foreign rates on request.

Return to: **The Sporting News**
100 Stadium Drive
Marion, OH 43305 DEACO-8

MOVING?

Change of Address Form

Fill out this form completely and attach your old mailing label as indicated below.

- 1. IMPORTANT** — Attach old mailing label here. (If label is not available, print your name and address in the box.)

Note: Please allow 6-8 weeks for the change to be processed.

- 2. Print new address here:**

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. _____

City/State/Zip _____

- 3. Mail this form to:** **The Sporting News**
100 Stadium Drive, Marion, OH 43305