

Graham's Corner

By Frank Graham

Of the New York Journal-American

A Big League Manager
In a Minor League Town

But It Would Be Hard
To Get Him Away

THE NAME OF LEFTY O'DOUL

NEW YORK, N. Y.

Managerial changes in the major leagues, fairly numerous this year, are not yet done with. Speculation concerning the new pilots for 1947 was reduced by the retention of Steve O'Neill by the Tigers and the signing of Muddy Ruel by the Browns, but a few spots are still open.

Who is going to manage the Yankees, for instance? Leo Durocher? If so, who will take his place in Brooklyn? What about the job in Pittsburgh? Billy Herman? The report gains strength. But what, then, of Frank Frisch? Who is going to take Bill McKechnie's place? And, if the Cardinals do not win the pennant, will Sam Breadon try again with Eddie Dyer? And will some club sign Joe McCarthy?

In all the talk of who's going to succeed whom, a name keeps bobbing up here and there: the name of Lefty O'Doul. The magnetic Lefty, out of San Francisco, and as typical of San Francisco as the hand-painted cable cars that rock over Nob Hill, without doubt is not only the best, but the most colorful manager in the minor leagues and, by any baseball standard you can set, belongs in the majors because at heart and in manner he is a big leaguer, on and off the field.



LEFTY O'DOUL
... Men in Green Suit

Lefty—or Frank, to give him his square name—is an imaginative manager and his team, the Seals, plays exciting ball. The baseball writers in San Francisco are so used to his style of play that when he pulls a ball game out with an unorthodox maneuver they do not even comment on it and he doesn't get a line in the paper by use of strategy that not even a Durocher would dream of. It's all strictly legitimate stuff, I might add. No fighting with the umpires or making an attempt to rouse the ire of the opposing team. It's stuff like—well, like this:

'I Never Play to Tie—I Play to Win'

Sacramento, playing the Seals in San Francisco, scored three runs in the first inning. The Seals scored one run in their half. Sacramento failed to score in the second inning. The Seals, going to bat in the second, got two men on with none out, the first man up poking a single to left and the second drawing a pass. I don't have to ask you what the average manager, major or minor, would do in a spot like that—trailing by two runs, men on first and second and none out. Sacrifice, of course.

But not Lefty O'Doul. He signed to the next batter to hit on the first pitch. The Sacramento pitcher, looking for a sacrifice, threw a high fast ball, hardest to bunt—and the hitter smacked it for a single, driving in one run and, on the throw to the plate, the man who had been on first went to third and the hitter to second. The next batter slammed the first pitch for a double and now the Seals were in front—and the Sacramento pitcher was out.

And, after the game, Lefty said:
"Why should I have sacrificed? In the first place, that's what Sacramento was looking for. And in the second place, I never play for a tie. I play to win."
He plays to win—and he develops ball players who come up to the big league—and tell you, quite frankly, even after they have been up here for a

Winning a Habit With Lefty

During Lefty O'Doul's 12-year tutelage, the San Francisco Seals have won two Pacific Coast League championships, three Governors' Cup play-offs and finished out of the first division only four times. Frisco clubs performed at a .528 pace in that span, winning 1,110 games while losing 992 in regular-season play. After being runner-up to Los Angeles in the first-half season of 1935, his debut year, O'Doul's Seals won the second-half race and beat the Angels in the playoff, four games to two.

A seventh-place finish followed in 1936, but the Man-in-the-Green-Suit brought his club home second in 1937, then fourth in 1938 and again second in 1939. In each of these three seasons the Seals were eliminated in the playoffs. San Francisco dipped to seventh again in 1940, then rose to fifth for two successive years. After finishing second in 1943, third in 1944 and fourth in 1945, and winning the playoff title all three years, the Seals copped their second pennant under O'Doul the past season.

few years, that the best manager they ever have had or ever expect to have is Lefty O'Doul.

Lefty has had offers to come back to the majors as a manager—he was with the Yankees, the Red Sox, the Giants, the Dodgers and the Phillies as a player. Maybe, somewhere in the back of his head, is a yen to return. But if it's there he has never given in to it, although the chances are that in more than one town in the majors, he could write his own ticket.

The reasons why he is content to stay in San Francisco are several. He has a lovely home there, on Pacific Heights, two minutes by car from the center of the town. He has a bar on Powell street and another on Nob Hill. He's the best known guy in the town, more than welcome wherever he goes. Those should be sufficient reasons—and yet there is another.

A Fellow Named Charlie Graham

This is his relation with Charlie Graham, the owner of the club. Charlie calls him Frank. Frank calls Charlie Mr. Graham. Charlie is a big, rugged, weather-beaten man in his early seventies who, a long time ago, was a ball player himself.

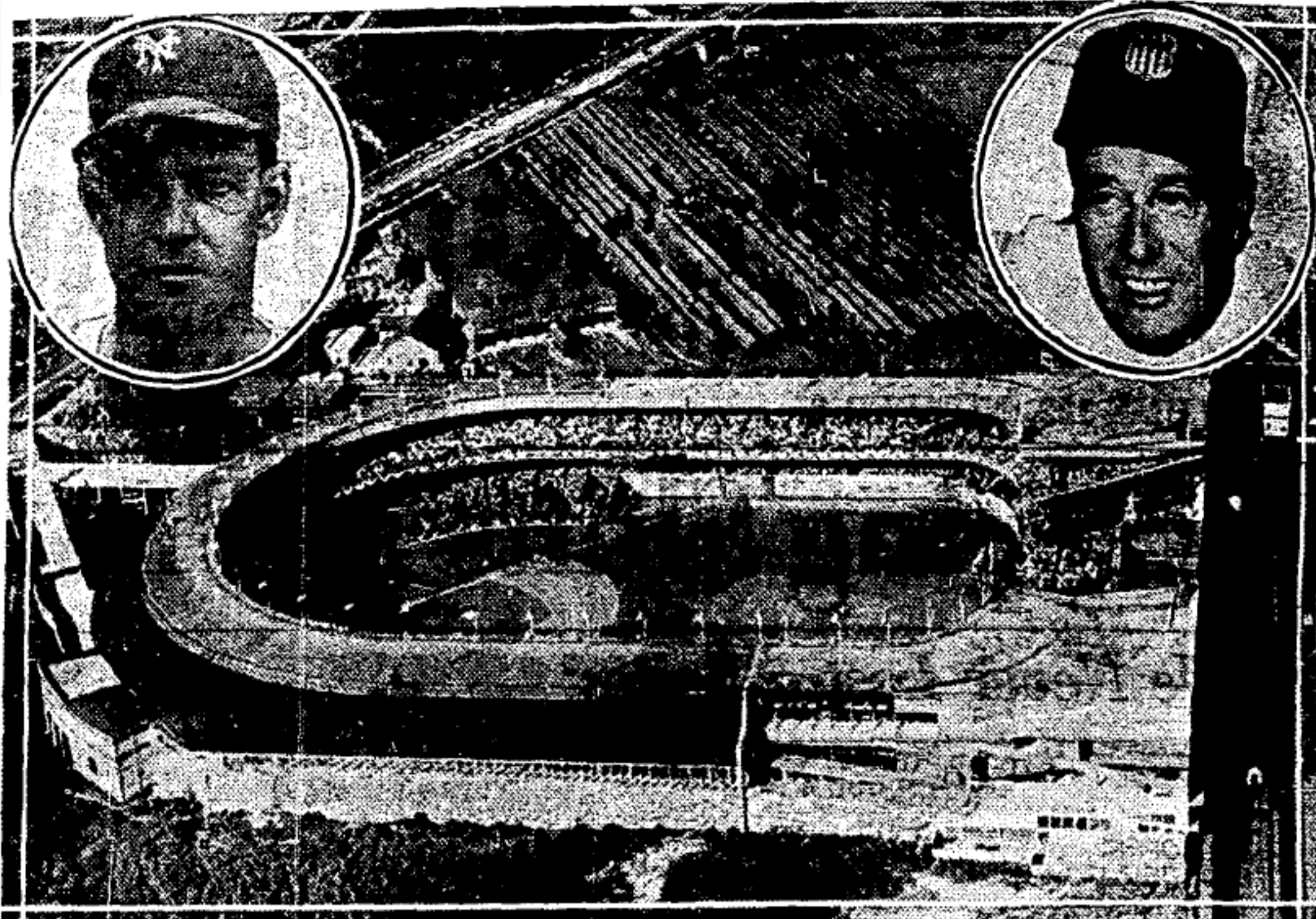
"I was born in Santa Clara," he says, "and went to college there. I caught for the college team and, after I was graduated, I bushed around here for a while. I played on semi-pro teams and on the San Francisco team. I played with Tacoma when it was in this league and with Sacramento. I was up with the Red Sox for a couple of years and then I came back to California and bought into the Sacramento club and, in 1918, I bought this club."

He has signed, developed and sold to the majors countless ball players. . . . O'Doul . . . the three DiMaggios . . . Willie Kamm . . . Jimmy O'Connell . . . Frankie Crosetti . . . Lefty Gomez . . . Only one of the great players to come off the San Francisco sandlots in the last 20 years or so escaped him: Tony Lazzeri.

"Tony," he explains, "was playing on a team here for a fellow who was a friend of Duffy Lewis when Duffy was managing Salt Lake, so that's where Tony went. I wish I could have had him. I was very fond of him."

Charlie Graham says that any time Lefty O'Doul wants to go to the majors he is free to do so—and if he doesn't like it up there, he can come back. And when you see Lefty and Charlie—or Mr. Graham—together, you know how hard it would be for any big league club to lure Lefty away.

Pictured in Polo Grounds Speculation



ALTHOUGH MEL OTT'S five-year contract as manager runs to 1950, there is speculation that he may decide to move into the front office of the Giants, with Lefty O'Doul (inset, right), manager of the San Francisco Seals, succeeding him as pilot of the Polo Grounds club.

Pilots Parading in Double Time

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

O'Doul, now manager of the San Francisco club.

O'Doul's qualifications need no amplification. He is one of the most popular figures in the game. He had a big following as a Giant, a larger one as a Dodger. Everybody knew The Man in the Green Suit.

O'Doul is not only a colorful figure, but a fine leader, a sound baseball man, and a great teacher of young players.

Discussing Lefty the other day, Umpire Babe Pinelli, who was in the Coast League when Frank was pitching there for San Francisco, before reporting to the Yankees in 1919, said, "I think O'Doul is the most able teacher of hitting that baseball has seen."

If Stoneham and Ott got together and decided on a change, they could do no better than bring in O'Doul.

Of course, it would have to be a pretty good contract to lure Frank away from a well-paying setup in San Francisco. Frank is said to have a \$20,000 job with the ball club, and as good an income from his cafe business.

No Winter Demands on Time
Coming to the Giants would not necessitate dropping his extra-baseball activities. Ott has not been spending his winters here. He lives in New Orleans.

The ideal situation was that which we had when John J. McGraw ran the Giants. He lived right around here and was available every day of the year.

Over in Brooklyn, Leo Durocher's friends say he is ready to ask Branch Rickey for a five-year contract, at the current rates. Leo collected \$65,000 this year, under a contract calling for \$5,000 bonuses for 100,000 units of paid attendance over 600,000 and up to a million.

Leo is satisfied—and how—with this financial arrangement. But he lacks security. He has had no contracts with Rickey, and now, with the Yankee job open—and available to Leo—Durocher would like to have greater protection against a possible brainstorm among the Rickey associates.

Frankie Frisch is finished at Pittsburgh and his friends here would like to see him established in the radio business again, right at the Polo Grounds, where McGraw for some years groomed him for the succession to the manager-ship. Frisch did a grand job broadcasting in Boston, before he returned to manage the Pirates.

There is definite information that Frank McKinney has engaged Billy Herman to run the Corsairs for two years.

Herman is said to have asked Augie Galan to be his assistant. Billy also is reported to be eager to start a deal to bring Dixie Walker to Pittsburgh.

The Detroit situation was stabilized with the signing of Steve O'Neill for another year. Rumbblings about a change are said to have brought an inquiry from Steve as to where he stood and George Trautman replied with the new contract.

It is quite significant that the signing

McCarthy Likely Choice for Red Sox If Cronin Shifts to Administrative Side

Summarizing the managerial picture in the majors, this general set-up is found:

NATIONAL LEAGUE

ST. LOUIS—Eddie Dyer will stay. They say he would be a lot happier if left altogether on his own.

BROOKLYN—Leo Durocher wants long contract, could go to Yankees. If he moves, Clay Hopper, Montreal manager, would step up. Do not place too much reliance on McCarthy rumor here.

CHICAGO—Charlie Grimm will go on running the Cubs.
BOSTON—Billy Southworth strongly entrenched, with two more years under present contract.

PHILADELPHIA—Ben Chapman recently signed a new agreement and is in strong.

PITTSBURGH—Billy Herman is the new manager.

CINCINNATI—Terry Moore is reported to be Warren Giles' choice to succeed Bill McKechnie—if he can get Terry from Cards.

NEW YORK—Ott may decide to go into front office, with Frank O'Doul moving in from San Francisco.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

BOSTON—Joe Cronin may shift to administrative work, with Joe McCarthy taking over as manager of the Red Sox.

DETROIT—Steve O'Neill just has signed for 1947.

NEW YORK—Yankees looking around. Durocher, if he wants to move.

CLEVELAND—Lou Boudreau is all set for 1947.

ST. LOUIS—Muddy Ruel just has signed for two years.

WASHINGTON—Ossie Bluege will continue as manager. He has a holdover contract.

CHICAGO—Ted Lyons will remain manager.

PHILADELPHIA—Connie Mack.

DANIEL.

of O'Neill for 1947 came right on top of Joe McCarthy's announcement that he was hale and hearty again and open for offers.

McCarthy certainly is no underminer. But he would have been delighted to take the Detroit post if Trautman and Walter O. Briggs, Sr., had decided on a change.

Detroit is closed to Marse Joe with O'Neill signed and so is Cleveland, where Lou Boudreau is going to stay as manager and shortstop.

McCarthy may bob up as manager of the Red Sox. Here we have a pic-

Ott's Predecessors Won 13 Pennants in 37 Years

During Mel Ott's five-year tenure as manager, the Giants have had a single first-division finish, representing one of the most futile periods in the history of the once great New York club.

In the 27 years and portion of another that John McGraw piloted the club, the Giants finished in first place ten times; second, 11; third, four, and fourth, twice. He managed two eighth-place clubs and one which finished fifth. The Giants were in seventh place when he gave up the reins early in 1932.

McGraw's successor, Bill Terry, won three titles in ten years, finished second once; third, twice; fifth, twice, and sixth, twice.

Ott's managerial record follows:

Year	Position	W.	L.	Pct.
1942—Third		85	67	.559
1943—Eighth		55	98	.359
1944—Fifth		67	87	.435
1945—Fifth		78	74	.513
1946—Eighth*		58	92	.391

*Through games of September 25.

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