

Orioles' Alexander Solves Own Dilemma on Mound

By JIM HENNEMAN

BALTIMORE—After almost five months of struggling along as a spot performer, Doyle Alexander finally has emerged from the shadows of the bullpen.

And, judging from the results, the Oriole righthander definitely has established the fact that he will be a starting pitcher—some-where—next season.

It has been a foregone conclusion since the 1975 season opened that Alexander, who was used as a fifth starter and long reliever, would be included in an off-season trade this winter. There appeared little hope that he could crack the Orioles' rotation, and with youngsters like Paul Mitchell, Mike Flanagan and Mike Willis working their way up through the minor league system, Alexander was clearly expendable.

SO MUCH SO, in fact, that the slender sinkerball artist had held out hopes he would be traded before the June 15 deadline. It didn't materialize, primarily because there wasn't an overwhelming amount of interest on the part of the 11 other teams in the American League.

That all has changed now. After recording his first shutout since 1972, a four-hitter against Detroit,

Alexander had won five of his last six decisions, four of them as a starter. In the process, he lowered his earned-run average to 2.93, second-ranked on a staff that was first in the league, thanks mainly to Jim Palmer.

Alexander's turnabout (he was 3-7 before the spell started) was so dramatic that he had worked his way up to the No. 3 position on the staff. Suddenly the guy who couldn't find a place in a four-man rotation was right in the middle of things as Manager Earl Weaver was mapping plans to go with only three starters down the stretch.

Alexander's only loss over this stretch was a 2-1 decision to Cleveland, when Rico Carty beat him with an eighth-inning homer. He had lost a couple of games in extra innings as a reliever earlier in the year on home runs, and had earned himself something of a reputation as a server of gopher balls.

IT PROBABLY comes as a shock to most observers, even those closest to the Orioles, but Alexander has given up fewer home runs per innings pitched (seven in 129 innings) than any member of the staff, including Palmer.

Because he hasn't pitched enough innings to qualify, Alexan-

der isn't listed, but his ERA would be good enough to rank in the top 10—no small feat for someone who has pitched on an irregular basis most of the year.

Not to be overlooked, either, is the fact that Alexander has performed at his best down the stretch, when the Orioles sorely needed someone to pick up the slack due to Ross Grimsley's disappointing season and the sudden ineffectiveness of Mike Cuellar, who experienced some shoulder problems.

Alexander has made no secret of his wish to be traded if he wasn't used as a starter, and he has had a few hassles over the subject with both Weaver and General Manager Frank Cashen. Weaver initially tried to convince Alexander that he could best be utilized out of the bullpen working the "short relief" role.

BUT THE righthander wanted no part of it. "If I was older," he said at the time, "I could understand it. But I'm still young enough to have a career as a starter and that's what I think I'm best suited for."

Alexander just has turned 25 and he has almost five years in the major leagues, giving him a desir-

able combination of youth and experience.

Even though his record was a not-too-inspiring 8-8, Alexander has laid the groundwork for a regular starting job in 1976.

And it wouldn't be totally surprising if, after looking around, the Orioles decided that he should take his turn every fourth day in Baltimore.

Even if they go through with plans to trade him, the Orioles have to be pleased, knowing that the market value has risen considerably.

Bird Seed: Palmer lost his second 2-0 decision in three starts when he was outdueled by Luis Tiant September 16. Home runs by Rico Petrocelli and Carlton Fisk left the Orioles all but dead in the American League's East Division race. . . . Ken Singleton, the club's most consistent hitter all year, tied a club record by drawing his 109th walk in Detroit September 14th. The switch-hitting outfielder leads the league in walks, but is only four ahead of teammate Bobby Grich. . . . The Orioles lead the American League in pitching and fielding, but are ninth in runs scored—and second in leaving runners on base. . . . The club needed



Doyle Alexander

to average about 7,500 fans for each of the last six home dates to reach the million mark.

Expos Carter, Parrish Stage Own Rookie Race

By BOB DUNN

MONTREAL—While it certainly isn't a comparison of the Fred Lynn-Jim Rice magnitude, the Expos have a rookie race of their own.

The names, alphabetically, are Gary Carter and Larry Parrish.

Both are considered contenders for National League Rookie of the Year honors, but the first title to be established is Expos' rookie of the year. The most popular opinion is both of them, and all of a sudden everybody's a fence-sitter.

In the league race, they run as an Expo entry against San Francisco's John Montefusco and Philadelphia's Tom Underwood. At home, they are almost statistically inseparable.

FOR EXAMPLE, with 11 games to play, they looked like this:

Average—Parrish .276, Carter .271.
Home runs—Carter 16, Parrish 9.
Extra-base hits—Parrish 42, Carter 34.
Runs—Carter 50, Parrish 46.
Runs batted in—Carter 63, Parrish 62.
Doubles—Parrish 29, Carter 17.
Triples—Parrish 4, Carter 1.
Winning RBIs—Carter 11, Parrish 7.
Winning runs scored—Carter 6,

Parrish 3.

Walks—Carter 67, Parrish 24.
Strikeouts—Parrish 65, Carter 76.

On-base average—Carter .366, Parrish .316.

Percentage of games in which player hit safely—Parrish 64.9, Carter 61.6.

Highest average (after 100th at-bat of season)—Carter .303, Parrish .300.

Lowest average (after 100th at-bat)—Parrish .261, Carter .241.

RBI ratio—Carter, one every 7.3 at-bats; Parrish, one every 7.9.

Average with runners in scoring position—Parrish .262, Carter .242.

Average with runners in scoring position, two out—Parrish .280, Carter .183.

With one out—Carter .340, Parrish .267.

With none out—Parrish .190, Carter .167.

IT'S THE first time the Expos have had two strong candidates for rookie recognition.

"If you'd have told me at the start of the season that Larry Parrish would do what he's done, or that Gary Carter would do what he's done, or Pepe Mangual, or Pete Mackanin," said Manager Gene Mauch, "I'd have been

thrilled to death."

It is Mauch's endorsement of Phase Two, the youth movement that the Expos have suffered through in 1975. While he mentions all his young players, as is his style, the first two on any objective lips are always Carter and Parrish, or vice-versa.

When it comes to a vote between the two, on whatever scale, Carter often is given two big advantages. One is that he has been better than Parrish defensively, while having fewer chances. Carter has made nine errors, four catching and five in the outfield, and was ranked in the lower half of both league categories the last time THE SPORTING NEWS published defensive statistics.

Parrish, meanwhile, has made a club-record 35 errors at third base, a total that is misleading because he usually makes all the tough plays and boots the ball on easier chances, yet a total that has made the year a disappointment for him defensively. He was last among N. L. third basemen.

THE OTHER advantage Carter has is that he has been mentioned as a possible league Rookie of the Year before opening day and, subsequently, was more apt to be writ-

ten up in newspapers around the league. While Parrish is not the type to spend much time discussing rookie award possibilities, Carter is.

After hitting his 16th homer, and first in more than a month, in St. Louis one night, Carter talked about the partially torn ligament in his left knee. "If it was midseason, I probably would try and wait until it's completely healed. But there are only a few games left, and there are some things on the line, too. . . . the rookie thing—it's just there. Also the opportunity to catch."

The advantage that Parrish has is that he has been the more consistent player. For the last two months, his average stayed between .270 and .290. While Carter has had three nights of four RBIs, Parrish has had one.

Usually, in Parrish's case, it's somebody else who says more than yes and no about questions that pertain to his status as an outstanding rookie.

"Isn't it about time," asked catcher Barry Foote, one night in August, "that somebody mentioned Larry Parrish as a possible rookie winner?"

Since then, many have. And

since then, Parrish and Carter have been co-contenders.

Exposures: When lefty Dan Warthen beat the Cardinals, 6-3, for his eighth victory, it was his first complete-game win of the year, yet Warthen has averaged better than seven innings over 16 starts. . . . Foote was scheduled to have surgery on the torn cartilage in his knee, September 22 in Goldsboro, N. C. . . . Outfielder Mangual was only three strikeouts away from Bob Bailey's club record of 112. . . . Righthander Don DeMola's longest relief stint of the season ended unhappily when he walked batters back-to-back to force in the winning run in the 18th inning of a 4-3 loss to the Mets. The 18th was DeMola's sixth inning of relief, and the five others were scoreless.

Shortstop Tim Foli was suspended for three games and fined \$250 after continuing an argument with the umpiring crew at Pittsburgh in the runway to the dressing rooms following the game. Foli had been ejected by second-base ump Paul Runge for arguing a call in the sixth inning. . . . Mauch missed two games in the Pittsburgh series with heavy chest congestion and sat in the dugout in street clothes for the third game.

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Heavier Bat, Light Banter Made Parrish Powderkeg

By IAN MacDONALD

MONTREAL—For Larry Parrish, it was the kind of day that ballplayers might dream about, but don't dare figure that it will happen to them.

The Expos had been going badly and Parrish was, in fact, being made one of the scapegoats.

The 23-year-old third baseman had been benched as the Expos were going about losing 15 of 17 starts, but Manager Dick Williams put him back into the lineup in the hope of adding some punch.

What a hunch! Parrish contributed two singles and three consecutive home runs as the Expos stunned the Cardinals with an eight-run first inning on the way to a 14-4 victory.

THE FIVE-FOR-FIVE performance equaled the best ever for an Expo player. Rusty Staub and Willie Davis each had five hits in one game for the Expos previously.

The five runs scored by Parrish was a team record and the five runs batted in for a game was just a couple shy of the best in the team's annals.

"It's just a wonderful feeling," the modest Parrish said afterwards. "You just don't believe something like this is going to happen."

Parrish didn't think that he was doing anything different with his swing, though he did say that on the advice of hitting instructor Mickey Vernon he had gone to a heavier bat.

Parrish used the 36-inch, 35-ounce bats that belonged to slugger Earl Williams before he

was let go in the spring.

And Parrish revealed, too, that Tony Perez, famed for his "needing" and fun-loving banter when he was the key RBI man with the champion Reds' teams, had something to do with his hit splurge.

"WELL, YOU know," Parrish said, "after you get three hits, you kinda say, 'Hey this is a good day.' You tend to get placid."

"Just before I went to bat the fourth time, though, Perez yelled, 'C'mon man, what you did today? Three hits? That's nothing, man. Now you gotta get four.'"

"This kind of talk makes you stay loose and think about what you are doing. Then the next time at bat he was really all over me. He said, 'What's four hits, man? That's all you got today? Go get another one, man.'"

"It's unbelievable, really. Naturally I've never hit three home runs in a game before. Never."

Not even in the minor leagues? "WELL, MAYBE back in the swamplands back home," said the Florida native who was not drafted. He was spotted while playing the outfield and hitting a ton at Seminole Junior College in Sanford, Fla. "We used to play in the cow pastures and I guess I hit a few out there."

The Expos left St. Louis and played the Mets in New York the next day, Memorial Day afternoon, and Parrish continued where he had left off. He singled on his first two trips and the seven consecutive hits set an Expos' team record.

Parrish was hit by a pitch

thrown by Nino Espinosa on his next at-bat and, since he had walked the day before his five-for-five show, that made it nine times reaching base consecutively and that was a team record as well.

Parrish exhibits a lot of poise as he takes the ups and downs of major league life in stride.

IN 1975, PARRISH was given the Expos' third base job despite the fact that he had never played any Triple-A ball. Parrish was called up from Quebec City because of his range and arm.

To the surprise of everybody, Parrish contributed a .274 bat and led the Expos in hits with 146 and doubles with 32. However, he committed 35 errors.

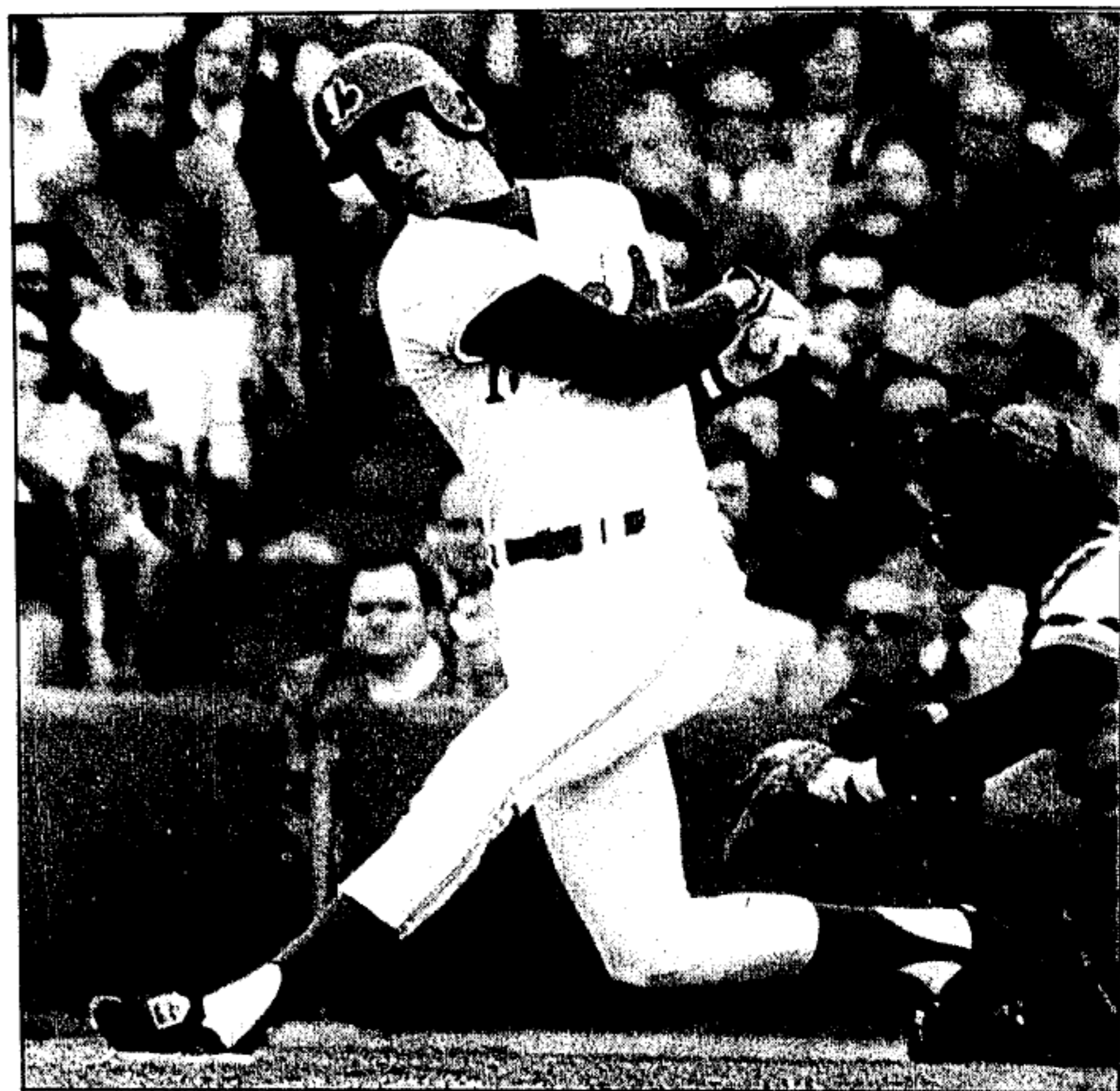
Then last season the average dropped 42 points even though he led the team in runs scored with 65, triples five, homers 11 and RBIs 61. He also made 25 errors.

When Dick Williams became manager, he made it abundantly clear that the third-base job was open. With Dave Cash acquired to play second base, Pete Mackanin and Wayne Garrett, who had divided that job, were free to fight with Parrish for the third-base position.

Parrish won hands down with a solid spring and a good start. Williams had Parrish batting fifth behind Perez, but a few weeks into the season Larry started dropping off.

Eventually, he was moved down to eighth in the batting order and then his fielding tailed off. Finally he was benched.

Parrish kept his head up through all the trials. Even when he had the electrifying day at St. Louis, he



Larry Parrish . . . Bombs Away in St. Louis

was not doing cartwheels or patting himself on the back, either.

Expos: On Parrish's big day, he singled home two runs in the eight-run first inning, Dan Warthen went the route. But normally, only if Steve Rogers is pitching, will an Expos' starter go the distance. When Rogers beat the Mets, 5-1, on a four-hitter Memorial Day, he won his sixth game against four defeats. Yet, at the time, the 27-year-old righthanded ace was leading the league in complete games—seven, innings pitched—99 and strikeouts—73. Also, he was second to the Pirates' John Candelaria at the time with an earned-run average of 2.09. . . . When they lost those 15 of 17 games, the Expos were two

games below the pace of the team which lost 107 games last year. . . . Stan Bahnsen won his first start as an Expo after being acquired from the Athletics, even though he went only five innings.

One year after he had signed with the organization, Parrish won the MVP award in the Class-A Florida State League in 1973. He became the first organization player to win MVP honors. . . . Parrish was the second Expos' player to hit three consecutive home runs in a game this season. Catcher Gary Carter performed the feat at Olympic Stadium on April 20 against the Pirates. Parrish hit his first two homers off John Urrea, the last off Butch Metzger.

Teddy Bears Watching as Dodger Infield Backup

By GORDON VERRELL

LOS ANGELES—Each night before the game, while the other Dodgers place their valuables in a locker for safekeeping, Teddy Martinez rolls his money into a wad, places it in a sock and then stuffs it into his back pocket.

"It's a superstition," said the smiling Dominican. "No, it's not that I don't trust people. I trust everybody—when I have my money in my pocket."

For most of the season, Martinez has been sitting on his money, on the bench. But he's been making the most of his part-time role, getting a start here and there at shortstop, for Bill Russell, and at second base, for Dave Lopes.

In his first start, on May 17, he collected three hits, including a triple and a double, and he was hitting .321 at the close of May, during which time he made five starts.

"I JUST TRY to stay ready," said Martinez, a 29-year-old utilityman the Dodgers acquired during the winter, drafting him off Cincinnati's Triple-A roster.

"Manny Mota has helped me a lot, with my hitting and my mental approach to the game. . . . you know, sitting around, but still being ready when the time comes to play. I take a lot of extra hitting, do my running and stay in shape."

Martinez played parts of four seasons with the Mets, was with the Cardinals and A's in 1975 and went to Indianapolis (American Association), the Reds' No. 1 farm

club, last year. He says a broken wrist, suffered in the spring of 1975, is healed completely.

He played winter ball in the Dominican Republic for the Licey club, formerly managed by Tom Lasorda, the Dodgers' manager.

"He's a valuable guy to have," said Lasorda. "He can play just about anywhere on the infield, he keeps in shape and I know he can hit. With Teddy, we can rest Russell or Lopes from time to time and still be protected."

RUSSELL SUFFERED through a slump the latter part of May, his average dropping from .305 to .262, when he managed only 10 hits in 61 at-bats. He was rested after spraining his ankle on May 29 in a game against the Reds.

While Russell was having his troubles, left fielder Dusty Baker continued his surge at the plate, jumping his average to .323 on May 30 after hitting his 10th homer and hitting safely in his fourth straight game, eight out of nine and 13-of-15. He added two hits May 31 and went up to .329.

Baker's hitting wasn't enough to prevent the Dodgers from losing their fourth straight game, their longest losing streak of the year. Previously, they'd lost two games in succession on two occasions. They lost the last two games of a three-game series with the Reds on May 28-29, marking the first series they'd lost, then the first two games of a three-game set in Houston.

"Everybody is getting 'up' for

us," explained Lopes. "We got all the attention, all the publicity those first four or five weeks. So everyone wants to knock us off."

EVEN WITH the four-game skid, the Dodgers still held a 9½ game lead on Cincinnati in the National League West.

"Anytime you can lose four in a row, including two to a team like Cincinnati, and still lead by 9½ games, it's gratifying," said Lasorda.

What was not particularly gratifying was the performances against the Reds of the Dodgers' two top pitchers, Don Sutton and Rick Rhoden.

Both were knocked out early by the Reds. Sutton was nailed for six runs the first three innings May 28

in a 6-3 loss and the next day Rhoden was victimized by a Johnny Bench grand-slam in the first inning and had given up six runs the first two innings. The Reds won that game, 8-1.

On May 30 in Houston, a game the Astros won, 5-3, Doug Rau was tagged for four runs in the second inning on a series of Dodger misplays.

"We can't be giving up seven outs in one inning and expect not to give up runs," said Rau, who suffered his first loss after five straight wins.

Dodger Dope: The three-game series with the Reds attracted 158,580, the second-ranked gate for a three-game series in Dodger Stadium history. The Dodgers and Gi-

ants played to 162,122 in 1966. . . . The Dodgers have had six 50,000-plus crowds this season. . . . The Dodgers' first four games against the Astros resulted in two one-run decisions and two two-run games. Last season, the Dodgers and Astros played 10 one-run games and two two-run decisions. . . . Ed Goodson was 1-for-12 as a pinch-hitter through May. Last year, he tied a Los Angeles record with 15 pinch-hits. . . . Boog Powell was the Dodgers' top pinch-hitter through May (4-for-14). . . . Stan Wall made seven straight appearances without giving up a run, totalling 10 innings. That streak came to an end on May 29 when he was tagged for home runs by George Foster and Joe Morgan.

Majors to Salute Jackie's '47 Debut

NEW YORK—Marking the 30th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's historic first season, the major leagues are planning to pay tribute to the late Brooklyn Dodgers' star, who reopened the majors to black ballplayers in 1947.

A week-long recognition was announced by Commissioner Bowie Kuhn for July 18-25. A number of clubs will participate with special ceremonies.

The high point in the commemoration of Robinson's entry into the major leagues—and the enormous impact that it had on American society—will take place during the All-Star Game festivities.

THE MID-SUMMER classic, which will be played at Yankee Stadium Tuesday night, July 19, will be dedicated to Robinson's memory.

"In the 30 years since Robinson entered the major leagues, many significant social and political inroads have been made by black Americans," Kuhn said. "It is a widely held view that Jackie's courage and contributions went beyond baseball and influenced many of these changes."

Robinson had an extraordinary career as a player. In 10 seasons, all with Brooklyn, he hit .300 or better six consecutive times, includ-

ing a league-leading .342 in 1949, when he was voted the Most Valuable Player in the National League. His lifetime average was .311.

FIVE YEARS after his retirement, the minimum wait, he was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1962.

After leaving baseball, Robinson was active in business and politics and worked for drug prevention programs and the improvement of human relations.

He died of a heart attack at the age of 53 in 1972, only a few days after he had been honored at the World Series in Cincinnati on the 25th anniversary of his arrival in the major leagues.