

Post Pounds Way Into Select Swat Circles

'Has to Fight Klu and Bell for Publicity'

Club Almost Sold Outfielder to Dodgers Last Winter --and to Phils Last Spring

By EARL LAWSON
CINCINNATI, O.

If there were such an award as "sophomore of the year," Cincinnati Redleg Manager Birdie Tebbetts' candidate would be his slugging 26-year-old right fielder **Wally Post**.

"All a guy hears," says Tebbetts, "is Ernie Banks of the Chicago Cubs. Sure he is a good one. But he's the only player on the Cubs who's powdering the ball."

"Check the statistics," challenges Tebbetts. "Post is out-hitting Banks in average, has about as many RBIs, and almost as many homers. The only reason you don't hear more about him is because he has to compete for publicity with Ted Kluszewski and Gus Bell."

The Redlegs, as a team, had their troubles on their third eastern swing of the season—losing 11 of 14 engagements—but Post had a good trip.

During the 15-game span, the husky farm boy from St. Henry, O., cracked

Wally Broke In as Pitcher; Had 17-7 Mark for Muncie

CINCINNATI, O.—**Wally Post** broke into Organized Ball as a pitcher with Middletown of the old Ohio State League in 1946.

That year he appeared in only two games, but the following season, with Muncie of the same league, he notched 17 wins against seven losses.

This earned him a promotion to the Redlegs' Columbia (Sally) farm where Goe Walker, the manager, saw even greater potentialities in Post's bat and converted him to the outfield.

out 23 hits in 61 trips to the plate to move further up among the National League's top ten hitters.

Among those 23 hits were six home runs, boosting his season total to 25, seven more than his entire output for the 1954 campaign. This, with little more than a third of the season left.

Actually, there are those who will argue that Post not only isn't the National League's standout sophomore, but that he isn't even a sophomore.

Three Previous Trials

Post's detractors are quick to cite the husky outfielder's lifetime record which shows that he flunked three previous trials with the Redlegs before sticking last year.

However, this same record shows that Post participated in only 15 games as a Redleg in 1951, only 19 in 1952, and only 11 in 1953. They hardly comprise what could be called a "fair" trial.

In the spring of 1952 Post, after hitting .308 the previous year at Buffalo and being hailed as the outstanding young outfielder in the International League, was rated a cinch to nail down the Redlegs' regular center field berth.

There were three good reasons for Post's flop in spring training and his poor showing at Milwaukee after he was farmed out to the then American Association club:

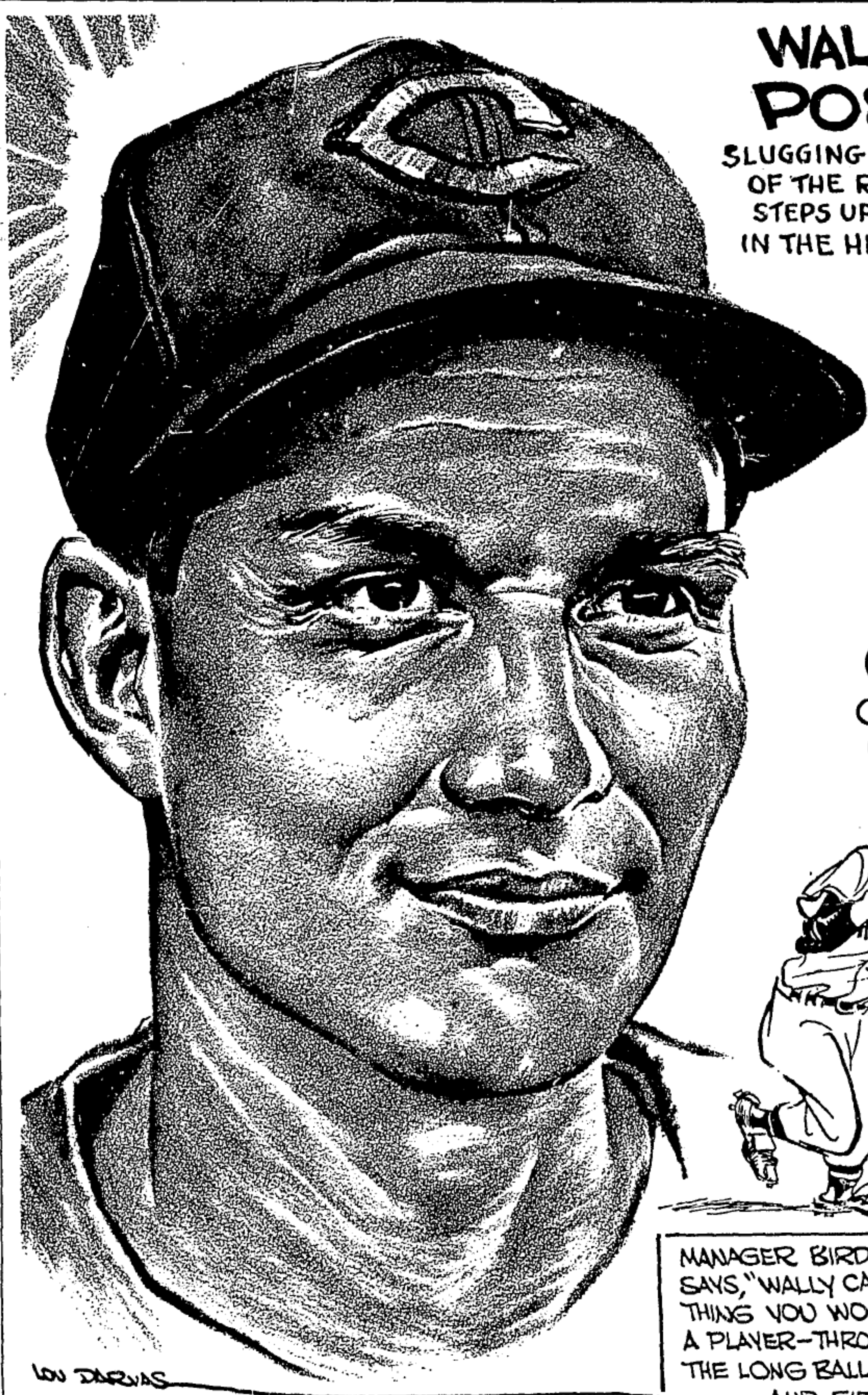
- (1) An ankle injury suffered during the winter baseball season constantly plagued him during spring training.
- (2) His wife's illness that same spring.
- (3) Post's own illness, which resulted in his undergoing an appendectomy.

Recalling his previous failures with the Redlegs, Post says, "The major league is the only place to play. After a guy gets a taste of it and goes back to the minors, he just tries that much harder."

Post's biggest break of his career came in 1952, when he was farmed out to the Indianapolis club of the American Association. There, playing under his present manager, Birdie Tebbetts, he batted .283, drove home 120 runs and swatted 33 homers.

The following year, 1954, both Post and Tebbetts joined the Redlegs. It

Challenging League's Top Hitters



WALLY POST
SLUGGING OUTFIELDER OF THE REDLEGS STEPS UP HIS PACE IN THE HIT PARADE

WONDER IF HE CAN PITCH?



MANAGER BIRDIE TEBBETTS SAYS, "WALLY CAN DO EVERYTHING YOU WOULD WANT OF A PLAYER—THROW, RUN, HIT THE LONG BALL, STEAL A BASE AND FIELD."

wasn't until the tail end of the 1954 season that Tebbetts' patient handling of Wally was rewarded.

After hovering around the .200 mark throughout most of the season, Post went on a hitting spree during the late weeks of the campaign and wound up with a .255 average. Much more impressive than the average were the 83 runs he sent across the plate and the 18 home runs he hit.

Post passed his 1954 RBI total when he homered, August 7, in the opener of a twin-bill with the New York Giants. The homer, his twenty-ninth of the season, came with a runner aboard and boosted his RBI total to 84.

It also was his eighth homer off Giant pitcher. Four of them have been three-run blows, proof of their timeliness.

With lefthanded swingers Kluszewski, Bell and Smoky Burgess in the lineup, the Redlegs naturally look at a lot of lefthanded pitching. Ordinarily, one would expect this to prove beneficial to the righthanded swinging Post. Oddly enough, though, figures show that of

'Good Break' for Post When Birdie Was Named Red Pilot

CINCINNATI, O.—**Wally Post**, the Redlegs' slugging young right fielder, thinks that Birdie Tebbetts, the Redleg manager, is "the best."

"Birdie makes a player feel relaxed," says Post. "It was a good break for me when he was named manager of the Reds. I had had a good season under him at Indianapolis. I knew he had seen me when I was going good, so I didn't worry as much when I went into slumps last year as I probably would have if someone else was managing."

Post's 29 homers, 17 came off righthanders and only 12 off lefthanders.

Early this season Tebbetts was asked how he would describe Post.

"Well," replied the Redleg pilot, "I'll tell you. He's a good family man . . .

good to his wife and children. He's a good business man. In ten years I'll wager that he'll be able to buy and sell any player on the club. But," added Tebbetts, grinning, "he'll never make the Hall of Fame."

It was an appropriate description of the husky Ohio farm boy, the father of four children and a part-owner of a cannery that wholesales goods to retail grocery stores in Cincinnati and vicinity.

The cannery puts up about 144,000 can of tomatoes a year. Most of them are grown on a farm of Post's father-in-law.

During the summer months, though, one will find Post less concerned about the price of vegetables than his RBI and homer figures.

Tebbetts' appraisal of Post was made early this season when he was still a "hit and miss" guy at the plate, but always a threat.

Since then, Tebbetts' estimation of his slugging right fielder has jumped considerably. That's because Post has

Post Another Slugging Ex-Hurler

CINCINNATI, O.—**Wally Post** is one of many outstanding hitters who started in the game as pitchers. The list of ex-pitchers includes two of the top hitters in the major leagues today—Ted Williams of the Red Sox and Stan Musial of the Cardinals.

Williams was a pitcher on the San Diego lots, and reportedly a good one, but his batting was so impressive he never took the mound in O. B. except for a two-inning stint with the Red Sox in 1940.

Musial's first three years in the minors were spent as a lefthanded pitcher. However, when his arm gave

out, Stan turned to the outfield to become one of the all-time greats of the game. Musial had records of 6-6, 9-2 and 13-5 in the lower minors.

Babe Ruth gained stardom on the mound before he became the game's greatest slugger, winning 23 games twice for the Red Sox, and had a 92-44 record as a pitcher. George Sisler, one of the all-time first base greats, likewise broke in as a pitcher, with his feats including a couple of 1 to 0 decisions over Walter Johnson. Lefty O'Doul also turned to the outfield to become a slugging star after only fair success on the hill.

Wally's Long Wallops Are Talk of Loop

Many Believe He Can Drive Sphere Farther Than Any Other N. L. Righty Batter

emerged as the Redlegs' most consistent hitter—next, of course, to Ted Kluszewski.

"Post will continue to be a good hitter," says Tebbetts, "as long as he continues to swing at strikes. When he wasn't hitting, he was going after too many bad pitches."

Persons who see Post perform day in and day out are willing to wager that he can hit a ball further than any other righthander in the loop.

Already this season his homers have cleared the huge sign that adorns the top of the laundry building beyond the left field wall at Crosley Field, and the clock that sets atop the scoreboard in deepest left-center field.

Pittsburgh fans still talk about his two drives this season that went far over the left-center field wall at Forbes Field near the 406-foot mark.

And whether Post swatted a ball on the left field roof top at Ebbets Field during batting practice on the Redlegs' last trip into Brooklyn still is a

Cincy Brass Saw Red When Rog Optioned Post in '53

CINCINNATI, O.—It was obvious that the Redleg front office was displeased when Rogers Hornsby, then manager, optioned out **Wally Post** early in the 1953 season after the slugging youngster had enjoyed his best spring training as a Redleg.

Redleg General Manager Gabe Paul felt that all Post needed was one season of patient handling under his belt to acquire the feeling that he "belonged" in the majors.

And Wally's fine performance this year is proving that Gabe's confidence was not misplaced.

controversial subject around the Ebbets Field dugouts.

Tebbetts claims Post did because "I saw it." Post, himself, confirms Tebbetts' claim. So do other Redleg players.

The Dodger players, all of whom were in their clubhouse when the feat was reportedly accomplished, claim such a wallop is impossible.

"Impossible? Yeah," snorts Tebbetts, "unless the guy who did it was wearing a Brooklyn uniform. If it was one of their guys who did it, everything would be all right."

Boasts Shotgun Arm

It's safe to say that Tebbetts wouldn't be willing to trade Post for any other right fielder in the league.

"The kid can do everything you would want of a player—throw, run, hit the long ball, steal a base and field," says Tebbetts.

Post's arm rates with that of Carl Furillo, who is generally conceded as the National League's most accurate thrower among right fielders. In the minors, the Redleg outfielder led both the Texas League and International League in assists.

Both Tebbetts and General Manager Gabe Paul shudder when they think of how close they came to trading off Post last winter.

The strapping, young outfielder was all but sealed and delivered to Brooklyn after the close of the 1954 season in a deal that was to put a Redleg uniform on Junior Gilliam. At the last moment, the Dodgers backed out.

Again early this season the Phillies, according to a reliable source, were given their choice of either Jim Greengrass or Post in the deal that brought the Redlegs Smoky Burgess.

The Phillies selected Greengrass because he was an established performer. Post, after hitting only .255 his freshman year, had yet to prove himself.

That the Redlegs were lucky enough to retain Post is further proof that "some of the best deals are those that are never made."

Post Could Give Reds Three 100-RBI Flyhawks

Wally Exudes Confidence in Tampa Camp

Happy to Be Playing Again for Tebbetts; 'No Tension Under Birdie,' He Insists

By EARL LAWSON
EN ROUTE WITH REDLEGS

Up until last year, the Cincinnati Redlegs, professional baseball's oldest team, never possessed an outfielder who knocked in 100 or more runs in one season. And then along came Gus Bell and Jim Greengrass to accomplish the feat.

Bell, a problem child under Branch Rickey in Pittsburgh, responded to a change of scenery and treatment with a .300 batting average that included 30 home runs and 105 RBIs.

Greengrass, the husky young outfielder who came to the Redlegs from the New York Yankees as part of the deal that sent Pitcher Ewell Blackwell to the world champs, surprised his critics—and there were many—by bettering his Texas League average of .276 by nine points and sending home an even 100 runs.

This year it's not inconceivable that the Redlegs, long one of baseball's poor relations in the run-manufacturing business, could wind up with three outfielders boasting RBI totals of 100 or more.

Owns Strong Flipper

The third could very easily be **Wally Post**, the 24-year-old rookie outfielder who is big, fast, owns one of the game's strongest and most accurate throwing arms and a guy who can hit a ball as far as anyone.

The year 1954 looms as a mighty important one for the husky outfielder who swatted 33 homers and drove home 120 runs for Indianapolis of the American Association last year, while playing under present Redleg Manager Birdie Tebbetts.

Post figures that if he doesn't become a full-fledged major leaguer this year he never will. And since he has had three previous trials with the Redlegs and had been found wanting on each occasion, he just about has it figured right.

"I feel that confidence is 95 per cent of the battle," says Post, "and I've got the confidence now. Tebbetts has seen me on my good days and my bad ones. He knows what I can do."

In the case of Tebbetts and Post, it's somewhat like a mutual admiration society. Post rates the new Redleg pilot tops. Tebbetts believes the hard-hitting young outfielder can go a long way toward making his debut as Redleg manager a successful one.

"I'm not saying, as yet, that Post definitely will be my right fielder," says Tebbetts, "but that record of his last year sure can't be ignored. He was a great all-round player for me."

"There's a chance," Tebbetts added, "that I may use the platoon system in right field against certain types of pitching."

Averages Don't Tell Story

Someone, somewhat skeptically, mentioned Post's .289 batting average with Indianapolis last year, prompting Tebbetts to retort hastily, "I'm not a batting average guy myself. They can be awfully impressive sometimes, but on many occasions they don't tell the true story. Me, I'll take the guy who produces when it counts most." And one didn't have to be a mind reader to gather that Tebbetts, at the time, was referring specifically to Post.

Post, when Tebbetts becomes the subject of a conversation, will rave on and on. "He's a witty guy," says the Redleg rookie. "He keeps everyone on the team relaxed. You never feel a whole lot of pressure. When I was going bad, Tebbetts would just tell me to keep in there swinging and soon or later I would connect."

The young outfielder admits that his option to Indianapolis shortly after last season began came as a disappoint-

Keen Eye, True Swing, Strong Arm



ROOKIE MANAGER BIRDIE TEBBETTS LOOKS TO WALLY POST, THE REDLEGS' ROOKIE OUTFIELDER, TO FURNISH HIM WITH PLENTY OF MOXIE

INDIANAPOLIS RECORD

THE FORMER HURLER THROWS STRIKES TO THE PLATE FROM THE OUTFIELD

O' COURSE I GET A RUNNIN' START

LAW DARRAS

Greengrass, Bell Crashed Circle in '53

Cincinnati Outfielder May Be Top Tally-Producing Combination of Majors

Post nailed the Dodgers' Carl Furillo as he attempted to score from second on a line single to right by Don Newcombe. One day later the Philadelphia Athletics' Elmer Valo was out trying for second on a single to right.

After his fine season at Buffalo in 1951, Post was counted upon to fill center field for the Redlegs in 1952, but, unfortunately, it didn't pan out that way.

"You can't hold the 1952 season against the kid, though," said Tebbetts. "He had a lot of trouble—physical and mental. I've been told all about it."

During the winter of 1951 Post played in the Cuban League. He suffered an ankle injury but continued to play on the bum leg until Gabe Paul heard about it and told him to come home.

1952 Like a Bad Dream

Post's troubles started in the Cuban League, but didn't end there. During the spring of 1952 his wife became ill, his own appendix began to act up, and, too, there was the indication that his confidence had been shaken somewhat by his poor performance in the winter league.

Consequently, the youngster was sick both physically and mentally. He showed little of the brilliance that had caused major league scouts to place the "Can't Miss" tag on him. At the plate he struck out almost as often as he got solid wood on the ball.

Finally, the youngster, thoroughly disillusioned, was shipped to Milwaukee, then a Boston Braves' farm club in the American Association. On April 21 of 1952 he had his bad appendix yanked.

Now Post looks back upon the 1952 campaign as if it were a bad dream. At Milwaukee he did not receive much of a chance to play and if he had, in his mental state at the time, it's doubtful whether the results would have been any better. The Braves had their own players they wanted to see in action and as a result Wally appeared in only 51 games and batted a poor .242.

Back in 1946, Post, a native of St. Henry, O., a small town near Dayton, broke in as a pitcher with Middletown, in the Ohio State League. The following year, at Muncie, Ind., he compiled a 17 and 7 record, fanning 167 batters in 184 innings.

Shifted by Gee Walker

His fine season at Muncie won for him a promotion to the Redlegs' Columbia (S. C.) farm club in the Class A Sally League in 1948. It was at Columbia, where he compiled an eight and 11 record as a pitcher, that Gee Walker, the manager and an old Detroit and Cincinnati favorite, observed even greater potentialities in Post's bat than in his arm and converted the husky youngster into an outfielder.

After the 1949 season at Columbia, where he hit .253 and slammed 14 homers, Post was advanced to the Redlegs' Tulsa farm club in the Texas League. It was there that he blossomed into a fine prospect and where Walker's earlier decision to change him into an outfielder was fully justified. In 136 games that year, Post swatted 12 homers and batted .294.

Post's brother, Ed, a lefthanded pitcher, also played professional ball. He was in the Braves' farm system, but was forced to retire when his arm went bad.

Wally, married and the father of two daughters and a son, helps operate a cannery business at St. Henry, O., in the winter. His two brothers-in-law and a father-in-law, with whom he has formed a partnership, carry on in the summer while he plays ball—this summer with the Redlegs, he hopes. So do Tebbetts and Paul.

ment, especially since the spring of 1953 had been his best since he joined the Redlegs. Besides hitting close to .300 he had walloped nine homers in A and B games, gaining momentum as the club worked its way north.

"I guess it was all for the best, though," he said philosophically. "It looked as if Hornsby didn't plan to use me very much, so I would have been wasting my time. And, anyway, playing under Tebbetts last year was the luckiest break of my career."

Talking to Redleg General Manager Gabe Paul, one gathers the impression that he, too, was disappointed when Hornsby gave up so quickly on Post last spring. Paul offers the case of Frank Thomas, the slugging young outfielder of the Pittsburgh Pirates, as a parallel with that of Post.

"Early in the season," pointed out Paul, "Thomas was an All-America strikeout. However, the Pirates stuck with him and Thomas stuck in there at the plate swinging. Early in the season he was hitting very little over

.200. But he plugged away and wound up with 30 homers and 102 RBIs and a .255 average. That's showing a lot of improvement and it's a pretty darn good record."

Post says a batting tip from Buster Mills, a Redleg coach under Hornsby, helped his hitting last year. "Mills told me I should choke up on my bat a couple of inches," relates Post. "I did it and found that by doing so I could better control my bat without having to sacrifice any of my power."

There's no doubt but that the muscular youngster packs dynamite in his bat. His record for last year attests to that and, mind you, it was compiled in only 133 games, as he passed the first month of the season gathering splinters on the Redleg bench.

Playing under Tebbetts last year, Post finished second to George Wilson in the American Association home run parade.

"It could have been a tie," chuckled Post. "I hit one homer with the bases loaded, but lost it." And then he ex-

plained. "Dave Pope, who was on first base, thought the ball might not go out of the park and had held up. I rounded first and went right by him. They called me out for passing a runner on the bases," he said, grinning sheepishly.

Post's 33 homers shattered the previous Indianapolis high of 26. He also earned a position on the American Association All-Star team and ranked second in the balloting for the most valuable player award.

It marked Post's finest season in the minors since 1951, the year he batted .306 for Buffalo in the International League, made the All-Star team, swatted 21 homers and led the league's outfielders in total assists.

Twice during the first three spring exhibition games opposing players have learned that it doesn't pay off to tempt Post's accurate right arm.

In the Redlegs' second exhibition game of the Grapefruit League season,