

# Letter From Ex-Dodger Deal Led Birds to Brooks

By JOHN STEADMAN

BALTIMORE, Md.—Just about the most important letter the Orioles ever received came from Lindsay Deal. It was dated February 13, 1955, addressed to Paul Richards and led to the signing of Brooks Robinson.

Lindsay Deal had played in the minor leagues with Richards and when he came across young Robinson, wrote a personal letter of recommendation.

Richards was then the manager-general manager of the Orioles. And Deal lived in the same neighborhood in Little Rock as the Robinson family. In fact, they attended the same church.

Here's the original letter, which we've had for 12 years, that directed the Orioles to finding and signing Robinson:

"Dear Paul:

"I am writing you in regard to a kid named Brooks Robinson. I think he measures up to having a chance in major league baseball. I think he is a natural third baseman, although he has been playing both second and third.

"He will be 18 years old May 18 and graduates from Little Rock Senior High School on May 27. He is six-foot, one-inch in height and weighs 175. His physique is outstanding for a boy this age. He bats right and throws right.

## Not Speedy, Not Slow

"He is no speed demon but neither is he a truck horse. I believe in a year or two he will be above average in speed. He hit well over .400 last year in American Legion Baseball, including all tournament games. At the tournament in Altus, Okla., he was awarded the trophy for being the outstanding player.

"Brooks has a lot of power, baseball savvy and is always cool when the chips are down. This boy is the best prospect I've seen since Billy Goodman came to Atlanta to play when I was playing there. This is the reason I am contacting you.

"I thought you might be interested in him and able to



Brooks Robinson . . . Something Special.

make as good an offer as anyone else. Otherwise, I would not have bothered you with it.

"This boy can go to most any university in the Southwest on a scholarship and will do so if he doesn't receive a contract in major league baseball. I know his parents well; in fact, we attend the same church.

"He has been bird-dogged by scouts for the past three years. Here are some of the scouts I know are definitely interested: Patterson of the Phillies; Camp and McHale

of Detroit; Donald of the Yankees; Jonnard of the Giants, now with Kansas City; Rice of the Red Sox; Hawn of the Cardinals, and a scout from the White Sox. I've forgotten his name but he lives in Oklahoma. You probably know who I am talking about.

"I am enclosing an article from The Arkansas Gazette written by a fellow who is not an authority on sports, but it will give you a comprehensive view about this kid. Hope this finds you and your family in good health. Best wishes for a successful season.

"Sincerely,

Lindsay Deal,  
2507 S. Cross Street,  
Little Rock, Ark."

Richards followed up Deal's letter by turning it over to the Orioles' farm system. Brooks was later scouted by the late Fred Hofmann, who supported Deal's testimony.

The actual signing in Little Rock was taken care of by Arthur Ehlers. "I flew Brooks back to Baltimore with me as soon as he signed his contract," recalled Ehlers. "I did not want to take a chance on anything happening."

And as Brooks Robinson was having a great World Series, Richards, now the general manager of the Atlanta Braves, and Ehlers, still an Oriole scout, were both looking on and, like everyone else, shaking their heads in admiration of the plays he was contributing.

Brooks Robinson is something special to the Orioles. He always has been. He had the distinction of being the first product of the Orioles' farm system to come to Baltimore and make the varsity after the franchise came here in 1954.

But had it not been for Lindsay Deal, who played only four games in the majors, with the Brooklyn Dodgers of 1939 and never got a hit, there is no telling where Brooks Robinson would be playing his baseball.

It was a fortunate thing for Baltimore that Paul Richards read his mail and had confidence in what his old minor league friend, Lindsay Deal, had written him.



## best of murray

By JIM MURRAY

© Los Angeles Times

### Big Red Machine a Lemon

BALTIMORE, Md. — Somebody call the Auto Club and tell them to come pick up this big Red Machine. It's blocking traffic in all four lanes. Never mind a tow truck. Just bring a hammer and a broom.

The wheels really flew off it, the motor fell out, the block cracked and the steering wheel locked. Turned out it didn't even have a one-week warranty.

Anyone could tell what was wrong with the Big Red Machine. It didn't have any brakes. It has to hit something to stop and it can go only in one direction.

A team that won 70 of its first 100 games and then could win only 32 of its next 62, it came into this thing like a punched-out fighter.

### Candidates for Clinic

The manager, Sparky Anderson, came into the last game with a pitching staff that should have been in the Mayo Clinic instead of a bullpen. What was left was a bunch of two-inning guys who couldn't get a good hitter out in the dark.

Six of them took the mound, but it would be incorrect to describe what they did as "toiled." They should have been arrested for loitering. They held Baltimore to 15 scattered hits. They were scattered all over the outfield, includ-

ing the seats. There were two home runs, two doubles, five walks. The mystery is, there were only nine runs.

The Reds came up with only three runs in the first inning, so you knew their backs were up against the wall. Their starting pitcher got clear to the middle of the second inning before they brought out the hook. And when I tell you he was better than anything that followed, you will understand that Baltimore should have hit from the batting cage. A cremation is more fun.

### Sabotage by Brooks

But if there's ever a call-back and they suspect industrial sabotage on the Big Red Machine, they might check a white male Caucasian American who was seen leaving the scene of the accident with a baseball in his glove. Brooks Robinson kept reaching in and removing vital parts of the Big Red Machine. He systematically dismantled it. Every time it seemed to spark up, he would reach down and take another coil out of it. You couldn't have shot a bullet down third base in this Series. At third, Brooks Robinson is the athletic equivalent of a 20-foot wall.

They gave him a car as the star of the Series—a big red one, naturally.

The final game was as long and

drab as the gray afternoon it was played on. It was so slow, Rembrandt could have painted it. You could have scored it with a quill—or a stylus. Five thousand people who had seats managed to miss the game. I guess they figured you don't sit in the rain to watch anything with as little suspense as a sunrise. The Reds were like a bunch of guys trapped in a sunk submarine from the start and tapping out "HELP" with only the fishes able to hear.

The Reds' best relief pitcher started out the day with a Series earned-run-average (runs yielded per 9-inning game) of 40.50, and he ruined it in this game. He went two-thirds of an inning and gave up four hits, three runs and then the ball. The Reds' best hitter ended up batting .055. He broke more rallies than the Chicago police.

### Best in the Business

The Baltimore Orioles are the best team in baseball. They have .322 hitters they platoon, to give you an idea. They've got people who can get you out with the glove or the curve.

But the guy who made the Baltimore Orioles the best team in the game is another Robinson. Frank Robinson is one of the 10 best who ever played this game. He kicks this team in the tail whenever it starts to tuck its head under its wing.

In a dressing room that was full of torrential champagne and shaving foam, I sat with the pinch-hitter, Curt Motton, a lively little man who keeps rallies going and knows more ways to get to first base than Eddie Stanky in his prime. Curt observed, "We are a super blanking ball club." "Yeah," someone said as a shower of wine hit him, "but Frank Robinson has been in World Series in two leagues and two cities and four of them altogether. As soon as he goes, maybe we can get this World Series back to America and out of this colonial museum. And then you won't sell any champagne in this town for 20 years."

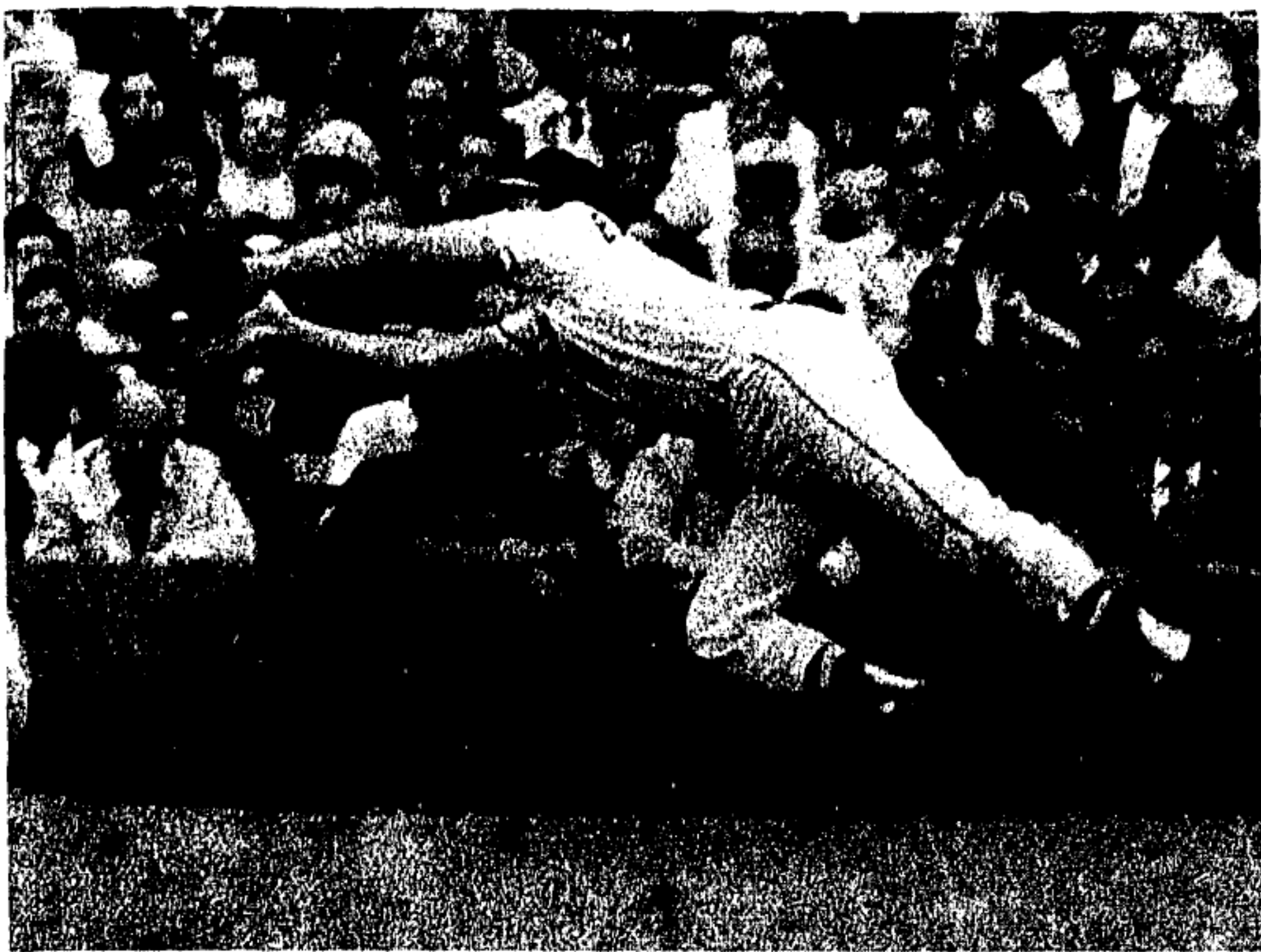


**SIGN OF THE TIMES**—Sports Editor John Steadman of the Baltimore News American and Lou Sleater (right), former major league pitcher, live on the same street in Towson, Md.—Brook Road. They decided the road should have an 's' added to it in honor of Brooks Robinson. So Brook Road is now Brooks Road. Steadman and Sleater, a former teammate of Robinson on the Orioles, say they're proud to be associated with the name change.



Sparky Anderson Removes Jim Merritt in Fifth Game.





**BROOKS ROBINSON** backhands a liner by Johnny Bench in the ninth inning of the final

World Series game and relaxes in his suburban Baltimore home with wife Connie, daughter

Diane, 2, and sons Chris, 7, Brooks Jr., 9, and Michael 6.

# \$100,000 Plateau Lies Just Ahead for Brooks

By PHIL JACKMAN

BALTIMORE, Md. — Brooks Robinson hadn't come to a complete stop after another diving, skidding super catch late in Game 5 of the World Series when a Hall of Fame representative was on hand asking for the man's glove for Cooperstown.

Wait a couple of years and he can get the whole business. But not before Brooks becomes a \$100,000 ballplayer, which figures to take place a couple of months from now.

If there was ever any doubt about this guy making the Shrine of Immortals five years after he hangs 'em up—and there had to be some question considering his career average (.274) at the end of the season—they were dispelled during the Series.

Television research estimates put the total viewing audience at something over 150 million during the Orioles' victory over the Cincinnati Reds in five games. It must have seemed to the Reds as though Brooks made a play for each of them.

In addition, he hit, setting a record for most total bases (17) in a five-game Series while tying a couple of others for total hits (9) and long hits (4).

## Seeing Is Believing

But it will be the plays they'll always remember and which will facilitate Brooks' passage to the Hall. For years, folks around the country had heard and read, but you know what Spiro Agnew says about newspapers, radio and television.

This time around, they got a chance to see. And there's no way they can forget (1) the lunging stop and throw from 25 feet behind third base and in foul ground he made in the first game. . . . (2) the diving, backhanded grab to start an impossible double play in game No. 2. . . . (3) the leaping end-of-the-webbing grab he made on Johnny Bench in game No. 3 . . . and on and on it goes.

Perhaps the frustration of trying to get one by him was summed up in Bench's actions when he made the first out in the ninth inning of the last game.

The stupendous Cincinnati catcher crunched a drive down the third-base line that hooked foul. He took two quick steps toward first base and, without even looking to third, peeled off for the Cincy dugout. He didn't have to hear the roar of the Baltimore crowd to know Brooks had made the grab. He knew.

"You know," Brooks was saying,

after it was all over, "you don't usually get a chance to make tough plays so many days in a row like that. There's gotta be a lot of luck involved because they are all a matter of about three inches one way or the other."

Even before turning in the performance which won him the MVP's car hands down, Brooks Robinson had tabbed 1970 as "my most satisfying year."

"It had to be because of my batting the last four years. After hitting .269 twice, .253 and .234, I began to have doubts about myself as a hitter. Was I really that far gone that I couldn't hit .280 anymore?"

## Beaned by Blass

"One thing that didn't help is getting hit on the head. I actually cried when (Steve) Blass got me during spring training last year. I began to think my reflexes must be gone. I can't get out of the way anymore."

"But then I looked at my reactions on defense, saw that nothing had changed there, so I figured I'd start hitting again any time."

CINCINNATI, O.—Sparky Anderson was magnificent.

Second guess him if you want, but don't knock him. He's a man, a good one. He proved it conclusively after the Orioles bombarded Red pitching for 15 hits to clinch their second world championship in five years with a 9-3 victory at Baltimore's Memorial Stadium.

The slugging Orioles slammed a record 10 home runs in the five-game Series, but Anderson refused to alibi even though the Reds' crippled pitching staff offered him one that was ready made.

"We lost our pitchers when we had a 10-game lead," said Sparky, "and we finished 13 in front. We felt we were strong enough to beat them, but we didn't. The year 1970 belongs to Baltimore."

## Modest to a Fault

The remark was typical of Anderson. After the Reds piled up 70 victories in their first 100 games this season, Sparky modestly disclaimed credit.

"Any college kid could manage this club," he remarked at the time.

After the Reds clinched the Na-

He was correct. He stayed right around the .285 mark all during the regular season and his 94 RBIs were his highest total since 1966, when he plated a century on the button.

## No Specific Goals

B. Robby set no goals unless you want to set up playing as many games as possible as an objective.

"A lot of guys," the third baseman pointed out, "look to get 160 hits, or something like that, and let it go at that. Maybe they let down a little if they make it. Maybe not, but I don't know."

"The only goal I can see worth setting, though, is playing in that last game, the 162nd one, as well as you play in the first one or in a World Series game."

"They (162 games) are there and you gotta play them. That's what being a \$100,000 ballplayer is all about."

It's also being set up as a paragon at the position and having generations of third basemen come and go with at least three rated the next Brooks Robinsons.

"It's a compliment," said B.

Robby, "but at the same time it gripes me. I guess that stuff has been going on for five years and I'm 33. That's how it goes in sports. You get to be 30 and they start writing you off."

"With me, they got started a little early. Maybe because of my head of hair," he quipped.

The great Series figures to do little to help Brooks, the homebody, this winter as he'll be banqueting from one coast to the other once the hot stove league season is under way.

## He's Seldom Home

As it was, Brooks was home an average of only two nights a week for dinner with wife Connie, his three boys and daughter Diane. So if you need a head table guest, be like the man from the Hall of Fame, request the pleasure of No. 5's glove at your shindig.

Mrs. Robinson will thank you and the only stipulation Brooks makes is you have the leather back to him in time for spring training next March.

"That glove," he said, "has another year in it. I just got it brok-

en in the way I really like it." The Cincinnati Reds know.

**Bird Banter:** Paul Blair joined B. Robinson in the record book as the author of nine hits in a five-game Series. . . . Ironically, the record for a four-game Series is 10 hits. . . . It was a controlled berserk Baltimore displayed upon clinching its second world title in five years. They didn't even raise the price of beer down on The Block, the customary gouge of \$1.75 remaining intact. They get a deuce for a coldie. . . . Twenty "celebrants" were arrested the night of the Series victory, beating by three the number locked up in 1966. . . . It was a fairly well known fact Andy Etchebarren caught a couple of Series games with a severely bruised wrist, but later it was learned he had cracked ribs, too, which doesn't make sense the way Elrod Hendricks was hitting both righties and lefties.

Oriole director of scouting Walter Shannon celebrated his ninth anniversary during the Series and he said to wife Tommye, "Just think, honey, we've been in the World Series one-third of the time." . . . Walter Youse and Jim Russo put the book together on the Reds' hitters and most of the chapters were readable, except the one on Lee May. . . . Back at the start of the season, Brooks Robinson put the following identification on his suitcase: "Brooks Robinson, Baltimore Orioles, 1970 world champions." . . . In the first 110 innings Tony Cloninger pitched this season, he gave up three home runs. He gave up 67 percent of that in five innings against Baltimore. . . . Billy Martin spent the week telling everybody his Tigers are going to knock off the Birds next year. "If I lose to Earl Weaver," he promised, "I'll shoot myself." . . . How can he? Denny took his gat to Washington. . . . Executive Vice-President Frank Cashen's mother died the eve of the first game in Baltimore. She was 81. . . . Jim Palmer was terrifically impressed with the National League style of umpiring: "They really stick their head in there when calling balls and strikes." . . . Cincinnati weather forecast prior to game No. 1: "A dreary weekend is expected." . . . The Red Machine lost two straight at home in Riverfront. . . . Since turning 40 September 27, Dick Hall has beaten Sam McDowell, won a playoff game and latched onto a World Series victory. He may never quit.

# Skipper Sparky Proud of Losing Reds

By EARL LAWSON

tional League pennant by taking the Pirates three in a row, Anderson again refused to take bows.

"Any one of the 23 other managers in the major leagues could have won with this club," said Sparky.

Anderson was proud, not ashamed, as he sat in his clubhouse office surrounded by newsmen after the fifth and final game of the Series.

## Why Be Ashamed?

"When you get into a World Series, you don't have to be ashamed," said Anderson. "And I told the same thing to those players out there in the clubhouse."

"The World Series," he continued, "is greater than anything I've ever imagined. I want to come back many times. Not for the money, but for what it is."

Anderson had made a hasty visit to the Oriole clubhouse after the final game to extend his congratulations to Baltimore Manager Earl Weaver.

"Now I know where I want to be the next time," said Sparky. "That look I saw on Earl's face. I hope that some day I have it, too."

Anderson had run his hands through the champagne soaked hair of Brooks Robinson, the Orioles' All-Star fielding third baseman who had tormented the Reds from beginning to end.

## Skill, Not Luck

"Those plays Robinson made during the Series weren't luck," Anderson told writers. "That was skill you saw out there at third base. Really I'm eager to see the World Series films so that I can fully appreciate the plays he made."

Anderson rambled on. "Ernie Banks," said the Red manager. "Here I am a bush leaguer all my life and I've got something he never has had. Now I understand why he fights so hard to get into a World Series."

Anderson recalled his days as a manager in the low minors.

"I remember the young players sent to me," said Sparky.

They all had one common fear. "They were afraid of failing,"

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# Reds Beaten, Robbed by Brooks the Bandit

By LOWELL REIDENBAUGH

Managing Editor

BALTIMORE, Md. — Willingly, they came bearing tribute to Caesar.

"He's unreal," cracked sports-caster Joe Garagiola.

"I don't believe it," added Dave Grote, longtime publicity director of the National League.

"Come back tomorrow," quipped Oriole Manager Earl Weaver, "and he'll do it again."

"He plays like his car just has been repossessed," said Cincinnati second baseman Tommy Helms, referring to the award made to the World Series hero by Sport Magazine.

"If we'd known he wanted a car so badly, we'd have chipped in and bought him one," said Red catcher Johnny Bench.

"The score in games," said Cincinnati Manager Sparky Anderson, "should be Brooks Robinson 3, Reds 0."

## Best in History?

"If there has been a better third baseman in the history of baseball," observed another slack-jawed admirer, "I can't imagine what he could do better than Brooks."

In Memorial Stadium, or wherever television viewers gathered around the globe, the awe and incredulity inspired by the Birds' third baseman knew no limits.

But as dazzling as Robinson was afield, there were other conversation pieces in the wake of the Orioles' 9-3 triumph in the third game of the World Series October 13.

Such items as:

1—Brooks' two doubles.

2—Dave Johnson's superb glove work at second base.

3—Two singles and a homer by



PITCHER DAVE McNALLY encounters a joyous reception at home plate after his grand-

slam homer gave the Orioles an 8-1 lead over the Reds in the third Series game.

Frank Robinson, who snapped an 0-for-9 slump.

4—A double and two singles by Paul Blair.

5—A grand-slam homer by Dave McNally, the first pitcher and 12th player to strike such a blow in Series competition.

Robinson's glove (Brooks', that is) smashed the vitals of the Big Red Machine on three separate occasions.

In the first inning, it appeared the Reds would jump into the lead for the third consecutive game.

A single by Pete Rose and a bunt single by Bobby Tolan set the stage for the Cincinnati power trust.

Tony Perez slapped a hopper toward third base. Brooks, leaping, grabbed the ball, stepped on third and fired to first for a double play.

An inning later, Robinson raced in for Helms' slow roller and nipped him with a hard throw.

## Piece de Resistance

But the piece de resistance was saved for the sixth. Bench drove a savage liner into the hole. There was no way anyone could prevent the ball from going into left field for a single. Nobody, that is, except the fellow the Reds refer to as "Hoover" (the vacuum cleaner).

Diving headlong, Brooks speared the ball, skidded to a halt and raised his glove to let the umpires know that seeing was believing.

Brooks drove in the Orioles' first two runs in the opening inning, lacing a bases-loaded double to score Don Buford and Frank Robinson.

Singles by Hal McRae and Dave Concepcion around an infield out plated the first Cincinnati run in the second inning. Frank Robinson's fifth homer in World Series play in the third and Buford's second, in the fifth, provided a 4-1 cushion for McNally.

When Blair singled with one out in the sixth, Anderson decided that starter Tony Cloninger had gone far enough. He switched to Wayne Granger, making his first Series appearance after 67 trips to the mound, and 35 saves, in the regular season.

The righthanded sinker artist was

tagged immediately for B. Robby's second double.

In some quarters, it was believed that McRae might have held Robby at first base had he thrown to second, instead of attempting to nail Blair at third.

## Not So, Says Sparky

"Not so," said Red Manager Anderson. "With first base open, we preferred to walk Johnson and pitch to the bottom two men in the lineup. It was better than pitching to Johnson with runners on first and third."

Things shaped up well for the Reds at this point when Andy Etchebarren struck out, leaving it all up to McNally.

The pitcher, a strikeout victim on his first two at-bats, but a homer hitter in the 1969 Series against the Mets, swung at two

sinkers, took two pitches outside, fouled off another.

"The next pitch was supposed to be a low sinker," reported Granger, "but as soon as I let it go, I knew it was a bad pitch."

McNally, a southpaw pitcher but a righthanded batter, drove the ball into the left field bleachers, a 360-foot clout, and suddenly the Birds were in front by 8-1.

"We knew McNally was dangerous," grimaced Granger. "Our scouting reports said he could hit a pitch up and across the middle. That was one place I didn't want to put it and that's right where it went."

To the best of Granger's recollection, it was the first grand-slam he ever had delivered.

Awaiting the 2-and-2 pitch, McNally remembered cautioning himself: "Just make contact."

Some place like the left field bleachers.

With an 8-1 lead, McNally permitted two runs in the seventh inning, Concepcion driving in Lee May with a sacrifice fly and Rose scoring Helms with a single.

The final Oriole run, also in the seventh, resulted from a walk to Boog Powell, hitless in three official trips, a single by Frank Robinson, on which he was thrown out at second, and Blair's double, all off Don Gullett.

## Not His Best Stuff

Reflecting on his pitching, but only after exhausting a more popular subject, his hitting, McNally conceded: "I didn't have real good stuff today, not as good as in the playoffs (in which he beat the Twins, 11-3)."

Of his 102 pitches, 65 were strikes. McNally threw only 22 curves, seven of them in the strike zone.

"I got one slow curve over. Bench took that for a called third strike."

Reminded that the Reds had beaten lefthanders 33 of 45 games in 1970, McNally replied logically:

"I can't do anything about that."

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## Bench Uses Uniform Shirt To Pull Off TV 'Blackout'

BALTIMORE, Md. — The Reds, particularly Johnny Bench, were not in a mood for pictures after their third straight loss to the Orioles.

Bench took off his uniform shirt and draped it over the lens of a portable television camera outside the Reds' clubhouse.

"I'm only trying to do my job," the cameraman protested.

"Yeah, I know," said Bench, keeping the shirt over the lens. "Why don't you go over to the other side and get your pictures? We've just lost our third game, you know."

The 22-year-old Cincinnati catcher, after he finally entered the clubhouse, said, "I just couldn't see the educational value of film like that."

## Robb(er)y

Cincinnati	AB.	R.	H.	PO.	A.	E.
Rose, rf	5	0	2	4	0	0
Tolan, cf	4	0	1	2	0	0
Perez, 3b	3	0	0	0	2	0
Bench, c	4	0	0	5	2	0
May, 1b	3	1	1	9	0	0
McRae, lf	4	1	2	1	1	0
Helms, 2b	4	1	1	3	1	0
Concepcion, ss	3	0	1	0	2	0
Cloninger, p	2	0	0	0	1	0
Granger, p	0	0	0	0	1	0
aWoodward	1	0	1	0	0	0
Gullett, p	0	0	0	0	0	0
bCline	1	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	34	3	9	24	9	0

Baltimore	AB.	R.	H.	PO.	A.	E.
Buford, lf	3	2	1	3	0	0
Belanger, ss	4	0	0	2	3	0
Powell, 1b	3	1	0	8	0	0
F. Robinson, rf	4	2	3	2	0	0
Blair, cf	3	1	3	0	0	0
B. Robinson, 3b	4	1	2	3	3	0
Johnson, 2b	2	1	0	4	2	0
Etchebarren, c	4	0	0	5	0	1
McNally, p	4	1	1	0	1	0
Totals	31	9	10	27	9	1

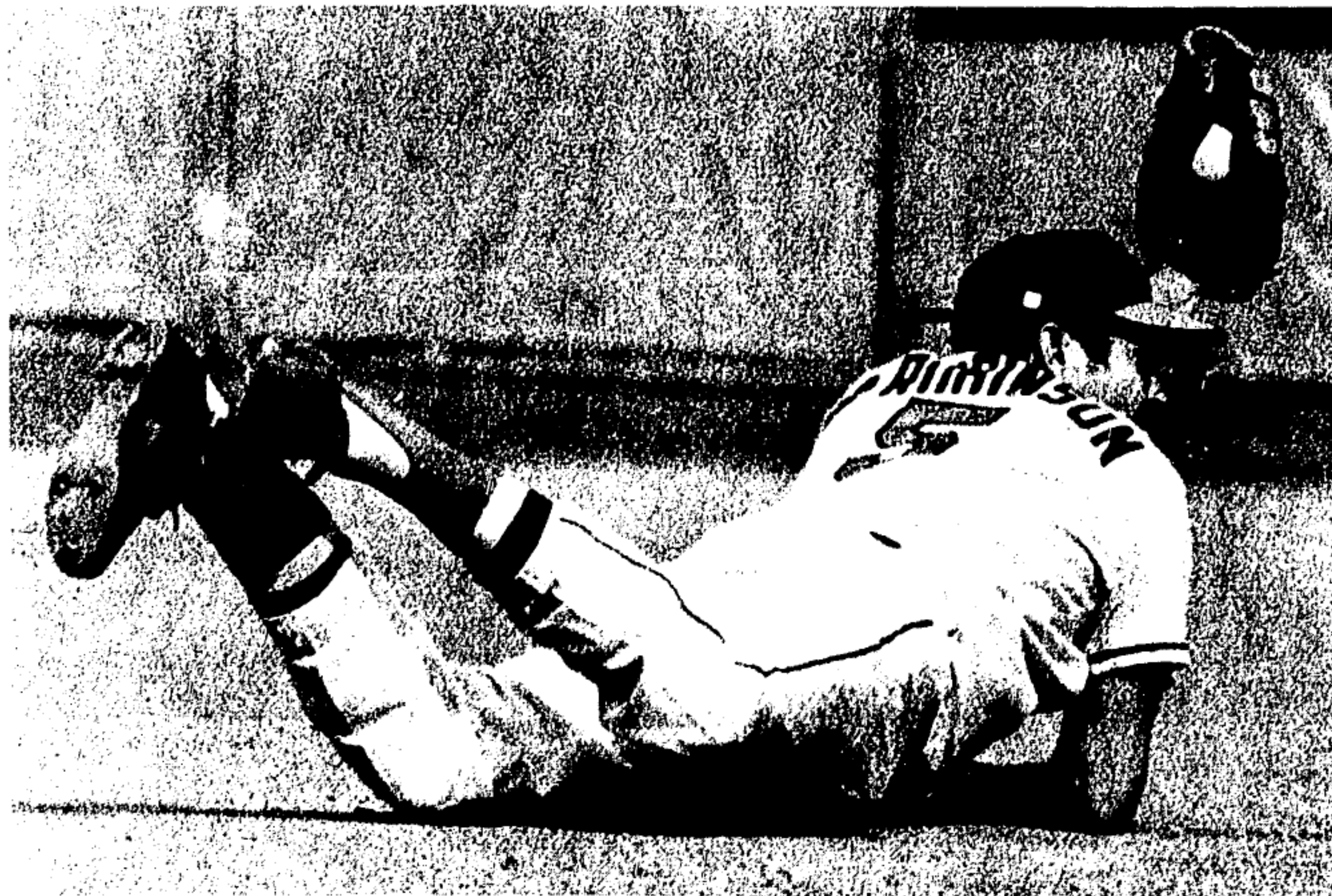
Cincinnati	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	—3
Baltimore	2	0	1	0	1	4	1	0x—9

Cincinnati	IP.	H.	R.	ER.
Cloninger (Loser)	5½	6	5	5
Granger	¾	2	3	3
Gullett	2	2	1	1

Baltimore	IP.	H.	R.	ER.
McNally (Winner)	9	9	3	3

Bases on balls—Off McNally 2 (Perez, May), off Cloninger 3 (Buford, Blair, Johnson), off Granger 1 (Johnson), off Gullett 1 (Powell). Struck out—By McNally 5 (May, Cloninger, McRae, Perez, Bench), by Cloninger 3 (McNally 2, Etchebarren), by Granger 1 (Etchebarren).

aSingled for Granger in seventh. bGrounded into force play for Gullett in ninth. Runs batted in—Rose, Concepcion 2, Buford, F. Robinson, Blair, B. Robinson 2, McNally 4. Two-base hits—B. Robinson 2, Blair. Home runs—F. Robinson, Buford, McNally. Sacrifice fly—Concepcion. Caught stealing—Blair, Johnson. Double plays—B. Robinson and Powell; Bench and Helms. Left on bases—Cincinnati 7, Baltimore 3. Umpires—Venzon (NL), plate, Stewart (AL) first base, Williams (NL) second base, Ashford (AL) third base, Burkhardt (NL) left field, Flaherty (AL) right field. Time—2:09. Attendance—51,773.



THE THIEF AT WORK. Baltimore third sacker Brooks Robinson makes another brilliant play, this time a diving catch of Red catch-

er Johnny Bench's line drive in the sixth inning to keep the Orioles on the victory trail in the third World Series game.



# Even October Hoopla Fails to Ripple Brooks

By JOHN STEADMAN

BALTIMORE, Md.—World Series mania, an epidemic that hits every year this time, offers a challenge to the true professional that is readily accepted. It has been known to "make or break" a baseball career.

The greatest one-man show in this annual spectacular was produced only a year ago by Brooks Robinson—the Mr. Impossible who surrounds third base for the Orioles with X-ray instincts and reflexes that come into play faster than a trapeze artist in a high-wire act.

There's no way a participant can be blasé or lethargic about a World Series. The lightning-like chance to do something extraordinary may present itself—as it did for Robinson in the 1970 World Series and he was there, prepared and poised, to grab the golden World Series ring.

"What happened to me, the mere chance, never may occur again," he said, reflecting on those momentous moments of a World Series that seemed to be Brooks Robinson vs. the Reds. "It was almost unreal that I had so many different kinds of plays to make and when I came up to hit, it was in important situations."

There's no way that Brooks Robinson has been able to discover the answer to "why me" as he was put in the full focus of the spotlight and performed with the perfection of a robot.

"You'll remember," he was quick to say, "how I made an error on the first play I had in the Series. It was the game in Cincinnati and I threw a ball high to Boog Powell at first base. There was no way to tell then how things were going to turn out."

It was Robinson, though, whose octopus-hands were reaching out to devour everything hit within the area of third base. The Reds would have applauded in professional appreciation had they not been so despondent over what was happening to them.

## Veteran of Three Series

Robinson has three World Series experiences behind him. He revels in the excitement of the occasion, delights in being part of the show and the incessant demands that are placed upon a player of his reputation.

"This is part of it and I accept it," he said with a satisfying reaction. This is the inherent Robinson manner.

"There's a lot of turmoil going on in the hotel lobbies, around the batting cage, in restaurants and just everywhere you go at World Series time. This kind of an atmosphere gets you ready and fully psyched to reach the maximum. At least, that's how I look at it."

Interruptions and inconveniences can play havoc with a routine. But again, Brooks says this is no major problem with getting ready to perform at your best. Sportswriters he hasn't seen since yesterday or maybe not since when he played in San Antonio are asking an endless line of what often become a repetitive list of questions.

Family and friends need tickets or help with hotel reservations or a table at his restaurant. B. Robinson has a tolerance for handling all problems like a Junior Chamber of Commerce hospitality committee man who just got his degree.

"The ticket requests are getting heavier every year," he continued. "I guess this is to be expected because the longer you're in baseball, the more individuals you meet and the more friends you make. But the Orioles are one of the most considerate teams in baseball."

"I've talked with players on other World Series teams and they don't get the number of tickets we get from our front office. But you do run out of tickets. So you wind up doing the best you can and hoping you don't disappoint too many people."

## It's Tough to Concentrate

With so much peripheral business going on, none of which is related to what he does on the field, how does Robinson ever get himself mentally prepared to play? How does he shove away the myriad of disconcerting deliberations that actually have nothing to do with what he's going to contribute in a game?

"You realize that every play in every inning of every game is different. And what is going to happen will happen. You just tell yourself that you hope you can help make some of the good things work out to benefit your team."

"The World Series, though, is not just another baseball game. Anything can happen in a short series of seven games. You go back to one key word. It's called momentum. And I guess there's no way to explain momentum or why you have it or why you don't."

Being exposed to previous World Series atmospheres and



Brooks Robinson . . . A Cool One.

pressures might sound like an advantage. But Brooks disagrees.

"I know the natural thing is to say that it helps to have been there before, but I can't honestly go for that," he said.

He then went on to point out that the Orioles won the first World Series they ever played in, the 1966 sweep over the Los Angeles Dodgers, and then the Mets, engaging in their initial World Series, defeated the Orioles in 1969.

The Orioles of 1970, because of what happened to them the year before, were a determined force against the Reds. They know the record books perpetuate the conquest, the Mets winning four games to one, but the Orioles believed, then and now, that they had superb talent, despite the fact they didn't win—which is what makes sports as unpredictable as romance.

Asked to describe the moods of the three World Series teams he has performed for, Brooks made these observations:

"In 1966, I didn't know what to expect or what it would be like. We won the pennant with a lot of games to spare, like nine on top, and the Dodgers didn't win until the final day. So you would think they would be more mentally prepared than we were."

"But we took them in four games. We got the jump and stayed right there. Frank Robinson hit that first-inning home run off Don Drysdale with Russ Snyder on base. Then I came up and hit one in the left field seats, too, and we were never behind in any of the four games."

"Against the Mets in 1969, we were all confident we were going to win. But the Mets changed that around. They got momentum going and played inspired baseball. It was right then that I found out anything can happen in a short series."

"As for last year, against the Reds, we were much more reserved as we approached the games. We had a score to settle for losing the year before. Even our wives and families seemed to realize why we so much wanted to get back in another World Series and win—not lose."

There's no way, Brooks conceded, you can measure mental attitude. It's not a tangible thing that you can go in the locker room and read or interpret. If you do, you're more apt to be kidding yourself.

"I don't think you could ever view a World Series as just another ball game. My heart beats faster than at any other time. And I know it's the same with all the other players. You just wonder how high you can get in an emotional way."

Before the games, Robinson reviews his own recollections of the players he's going out to face, remembering what their tendencies were on other occasions when he opposed them and dwelling on what the scouting reports contained in the way of more up-to-date information.

## MVP of 1970 Series

The World Series of 1970, however, will long be remembered as the time Brooks Robinson put on a one-man show with a gold glove and a silver bat. He was voted the Most Valuable Player in the Series, tied the record for most hits in a Series over five games with 9-for-21, including two doubles, two home runs and six RBIs.

In the field against the Reds, he was absorbing all kinds of hits and turning them into outs . . . like backhanding a stop on Lee May over the bag and throwing him out after his body momentum carried him into foul territory, diving into the hole to spear a Johnny Bench line drive and making sensational plays appear almost a Robinson routine in every game.

The reaction from a scant few might have been that Robinson was performing miracles in the World Series. But his work merely qualified as standard operating procedure for this highly consistent individual. He signed with Baltimore on June 1, 1955, and has now been in the American League for 15 years.

He always wanted baseball for a career and one of his most vivid remembrances goes back to his junior year in Little Rock Central High School.

"I remember going to the auditorium on my lunch break and watching the Cleveland Indians play the New York Giants on television. I never thought other kids would some day be watching me," said the man who has done it all.

The World Series has special meaning. Don't try to tell Brooks that it doesn't.

"What you do in the Series has more of an impact on the sports world than what you do at any other time. Winning the Hickok belt was a direct result of my play in the World Series."

## Brooks Is a Realist

But Brooks, like the professional he is, knows that game situations decide the role the performers ultimately are to play. This is a baseball basic and he's realistic enough to hold to this unwavering belief that "what's going to happen will happen."

Still, there's no way to disagree with that age-old precept that "opportunity waits on preparation." And there never has been a time when Brooks didn't have himself ready to play when the test was on.

"You know, in the World Series against the Mets in 1969, I hit the ball good a couple of times and with some breaks they could have gone for hits. But I got just one hit the entire World Series. I was 1-for-19."

In sleeping and eating, Brooks does the sensible thing. He says he manages to get to bed between 10 and 11 p. m. during the World Series and is up at 7:30 or 8 for a breakfast of steak and eggs.

He doesn't eat again until dinner that night with Connie, his wife, the children, his parents and in-laws. He visits his Gorsuch House Restaurant near Memorial Stadium, talks with guests and tries not to do anything that isn't part of his normal routine.

Now 34 years of age and with no sign that he's not the third baseman he always has been, Brooks is a master craftsman at his position. He's self-disciplined, but in a quiet way, yet ready to produce at maximum output without ever making it appear he is doing anything except what comes naturally.

He never has been the type who needed to give himself a pep talk. Yet he plays in every game with a zest and zeal that makes it appear it's the World Series.

This is the character of the man who never has become so sophisticated that he won't admit to "having his heart beat faster" at World Series time. There's much love and devotion for the game inside Brooks Robinson.

# O's Hill Aces Never Pampered by Bamberger

By PHIL JACKMAN

BALTIMORE, Md.—The club's assistant name-giver, Pat Dobson, calls him the Great Madula.

"Yeah," the frenetic righthander explained, "this winter he's gonna set up a place downtown . . . gonna read palms, tea leaves, do the card bit, the whole routine."

Oriole pitching coach George Bamberger was the subject of the barbs.

As the Birds hung around waiting for post-season play to commence, the boys decided to review Madula's predictions for the year.

It was back in February when Bamberger said Baltimore would have four 20-game winners. Sure enough, Dobson, Dave McNally, Jim Palmer and Mike Cuellar made it.

George went further. He looked at

last year's record total of 60 complete games and said this time we'll have 70. Actually, the Oriole staff topped that figure.

"That does it," George said. "The swami is not predicting any more. Somewhere along the line, somebody fouled up."

Drat it! Just when people were moving in to get a line on the play-

offs and World Series. To review, Bamberger moved up from the post of minor league pitching instructor in the Baltimore organization at the conclusion of the 1967 season.

It seems that after a decade of being the sore-arm capital of the universe, the Baltimore club finally

got the idea the problems might have something to do with the pitchers' daily regimen.

Harry (Cat) Brecheen had been the pitching coach and his approach was fatherly. "No one," Cat used

(Continued on Page 20, Column 1)



# Just Like Old Man River - - - Brooks Keeps Rolling Along

By LOU HATTER

BALTIMORE — Shortly before the advent of his 36th birthday May 18, **Brooks Robinson** attained another momentous milestone and was accorded a simple but eloquent tribute.

Both were monuments to the Oriole super star's durability and zest for the game. Both helped to dispel any vague notion that his matchless glove may be destined for the retirement rack anytime soon.

With scant fanfare here in game No. 22 of his 19th professional campaign, **Robinson** ripped hit No. 2,417 of his American League career—most ever by a full-time third baseman in baseball history.

CONCURRENT with that epic May 4 single during a two-hit, 1-0 Baltimore loss to California's Rudy May, Angels' Manager Bobby Winckles volunteered:

"I've always admired the way **Brooks** bounces around. I regard him as an excellent example of a player who keeps himself ready."

**Robinson** was grateful for the compliment. He was especially proud, though, to succeed Pie Traynor, whose 2,416 lifetime hits previously claimed the third base total hits pedestal when he retired in 1937 after 18 National League seasons.

"He was a very special kind of gentleman. We had many enjoyable chats," as **Brooks** recalled bygone visits with the Pirates' Hall of Famer, who died early last year at age 72. "He has been recognized as the greatest third baseman of them all. He also was a tremendous person."

THE WINKLES testimony was a reinforcing boost for **Robinson**. Now that he's in baseball's upper-30s bracket, Baltimore's good humor man contends with "old folks" barbs from his teammates and clubhouse hecklers. An occasional Bird watcher wonders seriously, too, how long **Brooks** can keep going on.

Thirteen consecutive Gold Glove awards by THE SPORTING NEWS for defensive excellence... 16 All-Star games in a row... a .272 career average... more home runs (245) than any American League third baseman, ever... glittering plays afield almost daily, year after year.

Isn't **Robinson**, a baseball pro since age 18, by now just a little weary of it all? And if, indeed, it does go on, comes the inevitable question:

What are his chances of joining the game's ultra-exclusive 3,000 Hit Club, in which only 13 players previously have been enrolled?

"I DON'T EVEN think about that now. To get there, I would have to be awfully lucky, health-wise," **Robinson** replied. "If I get 150 hits this season, I'll still need three more 150-hit years. It's strictly a long shot."

"How long you can keep playing is on a year-to-year basis after you reach 36. With most guys, one year they've still got it and, the next spring, they haven't got it anymore. Nobody knows the answer to that."

"That is why I really don't worry about 3,000 hits. The main thing is to stay healthy and have a pretty good season, year by year."

Earlier this spring, the indestructible veteran—now in his 16th campaign as a full-time Oriole—was aware of the view, frequently voiced by well-intending friends, that a man should quit while he is still on top.

"I THINK too much emphasis is placed on that," **Robinson** responded. "I believe it is up to every individual to make up his own mind when to hang 'em up. You have to know when you can no longer do a good job."

"At this stage in my career, I feel I have to prove myself all over again each season," he continued. "That happens to almost any athlete when he turns 30."

"Every year, someone wants to suggest that you're too old to cut it. So you have to go out and prove all over again that you can still do the job."

"I want to keep playing for as long as I enjoy it and can perform well. That's my only special goal now."

"I enjoy my work and, as far as the future is concerned, I want to be with the Orioles. Baltimore is a great place. My wife and our children like it, and the city and its people have been good to all of us."

THEN, AFTER a pause, **Brooks** flashed that engaging boyish grin and asserted:

"I'm gonna play until I'm 40! That will be my standard answer from now on."

"That's one-two-three-four-five-more years... counting this year," he concluded happily, tapping off the fingers on one hand.

At a still bouncy 36, the Orioles' irrepressible human vacuum



**Brooks Robinson... A Perfect 36.**

cleaner obviously is not yet over the hill.

The Bird Cage: **Robinson** was unaware that Traynor's lifetime hit mark for third basemen was within range until he was so advised by Fred Smith, a Detroit insurance salesman for the American Automobile Association. Smith, a distant cousin of **Brooks**' wife, Connie, flew here from the motor city to witness his hero's record-topping single. He flew home with the souvenir baseball as a gift from Baltimore's perennial All-Star... Historic hit No. 2,417 elevated **Robinson** to 54th place on the game's all-time list. He also passed Stuffy McInnis and Mickey Mantle this spring. With 125 more hits, **Brooks** could advance as high as the top 45 before next October,

skipping by such productive batsmen as Red Schoendienst, Lloyd Waner, Harry Hooper, Joe Medwick, Mickey Vernon and Heinie Manush.

After two 1973 encounters with California's Bill Singer, the Orioles sported six hits in 18 innings—four of them triples... Only one of them scored, however, as the Angels' righthander emerged with 1-0 and 3-1 verdicts... Following a five-game losing streak and eight defeats in nine contests, Jim Palmer becalmed the Angels, 5-0, on a five-hitter... Baltimore had plunged from first place to a virtual cellar tie in the American League East prior to that rescue job. Palmer halted Oriole skids of three or more games on seven occasions last year.

# Lopes' Thefts Stealing Victories for Dodgers

By BOB HUNTER

LOS ANGELES—It was unusual, indeed, to see Davey Lopes steal second with the Dodgers trailing by five runs in the fifth inning.

"I knew he could make it," said Manager Walter Alston later, giving the newest Rookie of the Year candidate a rare vote of confidence.

Indicating just how much confidence, the skipper then confided it was the first time in his 33 years of managing that he had given the steal sign with his team five runs down.

LOPES THEN scored the first Dodger run and, in the 10th inning, singled across the final tally in a 6-5 victory.

It was Davey's 10th steal in 10 tries in the majors, including four late last season. Two games later,

he had 13 thefts, and was yet to be caught.

While Captain Willie Davis had a few of the players chanting along with him in a Buddhist-like ritual, Lopes had the whole stands chanting "Go-go-go" in a Maury Wills-like ritual.

Like Wills, Davey arrived in the majors at the ripe old age of 26.

"But that's where any similarity ends," insisted the swift Portuguese second baseman.

"I NEVER COULD compare myself with Wills. I'm not even close. There never will be another Maury Wills."

No one has said there would, but until Bump Wills, Maury's son at Arizona State, or someone else does come along, Alston will make Lopes do.

"The number of bases Davey steals will depend on the amount of times he gets on base," analyzed Smokey. "We'll run him whenever it is within reason."

As the exciting new addition helped the surging Dodgers make it eight of 10 to hang within 5½ games of first place, Lopes was batting .349, which may not be a record, but as someone commented, "It's a darn good average."

DAVEY, WHO turned 27 in the midst of his heroics, stands 5-9 and weighs 170, another respect in which he resembles Wills, to whom he never has talked.

But he has listened to Maury in seminars at Vero Beach, Fla., the result being he takes his leadoff like his predecessor. And he also bats leadoff, like his predecessor.

"Wills is the only runner I've seen who accelerates as quickly as Lopes," declared Tom Lasorda, who managed Dave in the Pacific Coast League, where he stole 56 times last season.

Manny Mota, who often batted behind Wills and is doing the same with Lopes, declared the secret of the newcomer is that he takes the same big lead Maury did.

"IF I CAN GET back to first standing up," observed Davey, "I know I can take a bigger lead. When I make it diving back, that's what Wills calls the maximum lead. It is the key."

When the perfect thief stole his 13th major league base without being caught, it came with Alan Foster pitching and Ted Simmons catching for the Cardinals.

Six times the ex-Dodger threw to first. Six times Lopes leaped back head first, and six times umpire Art Williams palmed him safe.

The seventh throw went to Simmons, and again Lopes beat the throw, sliding in comfortably at second.

However, Lopes is familiar enough with the record book to know a base thief never has gone through his career without being caught.

"THEY THREW out Wills, they throw out Brock, and they'll throw me out," said the dark-visaged speedster.

"But I'll come right back, because speed is my ticket to the majors. I'll go just as far as it will carry me."

"I mentioned in the spring that if I get to play, I should steal 40 to 50 bases easily, and I still feel that way. It isn't cockiness, it's confidence."

Lopes never has been timed in the sprints, running just one race

at high school in Rhode Island, then calling it a career when his legs hurt him the next day.

However, Dave believes he'd be more effective at 60 yards than 100, because his secret is in his acceleration.

"ACTUALLY I started stealing bases in Little League," he related. "In high school, my games were baseball and basketball, then I followed my coach to Washburn University in Wichita."

The Giants drafted him after his junior year, but Dave declined to sign. He became a sixth-grade teacher with a degree in elementary education.

In 1968, he was the 26th draft choice of the Dodgers, and while their offer wasn't much better than that of the Giants, he decided to give baseball a fling, explaining:

"No one had confidence in me except myself."

Now a lot of people have, including Walter Alston.

**Dodger Dope:** Although Von Joshua was eligible to come off the disabled list, he remained there because the broken bone in his wrist still would not let him swing properly... Pete Richert and Ken McMullen, who had been out with foot and back injuries, were ready for duty... Vice-President Al Campanis represented the club at the funeral of 53-year-old Ray Perry, the club's central California scout... Al Downing pitched his sixth two-hitter in blanking the Cardinals, 3-0, May 6. It boosted his record to 3-1 and lowered his earned-run average to 2.29, making him an early season candidate for Comeback of the Year honors, an award he won in 1971 with 20 victories. Last year he fell off to a 9-9 record. It was Downing's sixth win over the Cards without a loss.

# 'Forgotten Man' Maddox Producing

By MERLE HERYFORD

ARLINGTON—The forgotten man in the old Denny McLain-for-half-a-team trade feels it's about time to assert himself.

For three years, Elliott Maddox sat quietly brooding as enough ink was spilled on Denny's exploits to fill a couple of editions of THE SPORTING NEWS.

"Either I wasn't mentioned or they referred to me as 'that guy they threw in on the deal,'" recalled Maddox. "I admit it rankled a little. I think I'm better than that. I think I always was. This year, finally, it looks as if I'm going to get the chance to prove it."

IN SPRING TRAINING, Maddox

predicted confidently: "I think I can hit about .280 this year." To which the Texas Ranger brass responded: "If he does, he'll be the best outfielder in the American League."

"I honestly don't think I'm overrating myself," Maddox insisted. "I'm not a power hitter, but I make contact. I strike out far less than I once did. I think .280 is realistic."

After the first month of the season, Maddox had 37 points to spare. He was hitting .317 and was second only to Alex Johnson. Although batting seventh or eighth in the order, he was among the RBI leaders and he had hit one home run.

Maddox' growing batting proficiency had been so gradual it was easy to overlook. The fact that he seldom played regularly made it more difficult for him and the people who tried to chart his progress.

ACTUALLY, SINCE June 1, 1971, he has hit .267. Although he spent half of last year on the bench while rookie Joe Lovitto operated in center, Maddox was ready when his chance came. In a 13-game stretch in August, he batted .327 and had raised his average 30 points when he broke his right hand while diving into first base at Yankee Stadium August 29.

"I was going real good," Maddox

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# Mason Claims Yank Shortstop Job

By PHIL PEPE

FORT LAUDERDALE—Spring training, 1975, didn't exactly start out with a flourish for Yankee shortstop Jim Mason. On the day he reported, he stepped into the batting cage and missed the first eight pitches thrown at him. Later in the spring, Mason dropped his baby daughter.

From that point on, things began to go downhill. Fortunately, the baby, Malinda, wasn't seriously hurt. Jim was. He managed to play in only 94 games, came to bat 223 times, had only 34 hits all season. His batting average dipped to .152 and by the end of the season, Billy Martin had replaced Bill Virdon as Yankee manager and Fred Stanley had replaced Jim Mason as Yankee shortstop.

"I COMPLETELY lost my confidence last year," Mason admitted. "I got to the point where I didn't want the ball to come at me. If it did, I knew I was going to mess it up. No excuses, I just had a bad season last year."

When the season ended, Jim

went to his home in Theodore, Ala., to sit and brood. He had a whole winter to feel sorry for himself, to worry and wonder about his future. It would have been like that, except the telephone call came.

The call was from Bobby Cox, the Yankees' Triple-A manager at Syracuse who was managing a team in the Venezuelan Winter League. Cox was in trouble. Two infielders had left the team. He needed help. He asked Mason if he would come to Venezuela to finish out the season, about two months' worth.

Mason jumped at the chance and it was the best thing he ever did. Not only did he stop worrying and feeling sorry for himself, but he also found out something about himself in Venezuela.

"I WENT DOWN because I wanted to find out if I still can play," Mason said. "I found out I still can play."

In two months, he batted .356, hit three home runs and played excel-

lently in the field, especially after a sore arm healed.

Cox concurred with Mason's self-evaluation.

"He did a terrific job for me," said the bright, young minor league skipper.

PLAYING IN Venezuela gave Mason a new outlook on things, a new goal for 1976.

"I'm not going to let things bother me this year as they used to," he said. "If I make an error, I'm going to forget about it and make sure I don't make another one."

Stanley is his close friend, but Mason has one mission this spring.

"I want to play shortstop," he said. "I didn't think I'd be back here this year after the way I played last year. I thought I might be thrown in some trade. But I'm here and now I want to play."

What about his buddy, Stanley?

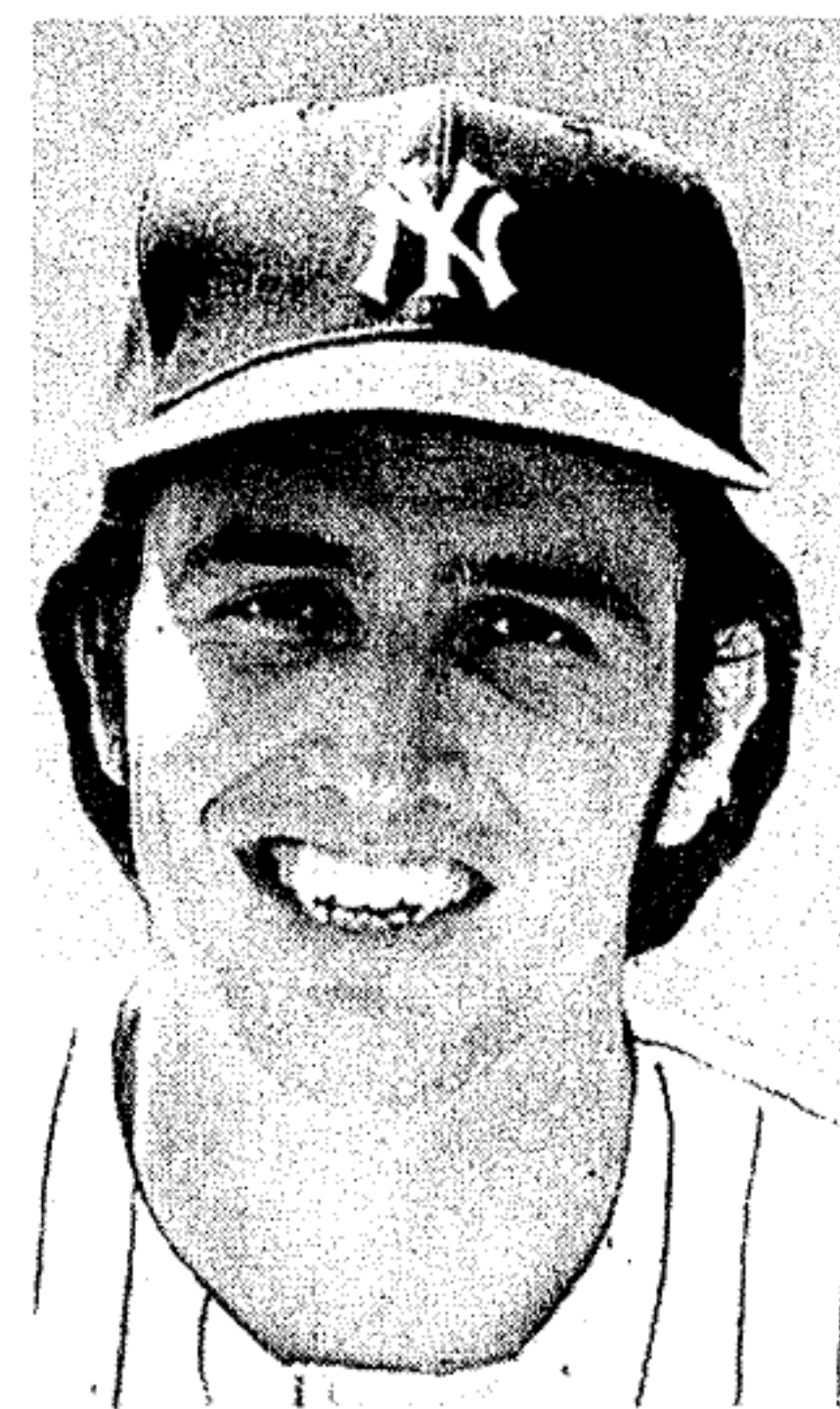
"I JUST want to play shortstop," Mason repeated.

He was reminded that he was traded away from Texas when

Billy Martin was there and replaced in New York when Billy Martin arrived. Did he think there was a connection?

"I don't know," Mason said. "I never had a cross word with the man. Maybe he just doesn't like my personality. I just hope if that's true, he doesn't let it interfere with how I play. If I deserve the job, I'm sure he'll give it to me. I just want to play shortstop."

Yankee Doodles: Yogi Berra sold his 17-room house in Montclair, N. J., and moved into a "smaller" 12-roomer in the same town. . . . Quick quote from Elliott Maddox: "If I bat second, Mickey Rivers will steal 100 bases." . . . The Yankees invoked the renewal clause with a full 20 percent cut for all nine players not signed by the March 10 deadline. . . . Martin said the delay in the opening of the camps hurt him more than most managers. "I have certain ideas about spring training that I've never had a chance to use here," he said. "There are things these



Jim Mason

people did wrong last year that I want to correct. Managers get hired or fired for what they do on the field. I've got only a one-year contract. Who do I blame if I get fired?"

# Trade Would Be No Disaster in Brooks' Book

By JIM HENNEMAN

MIAMI—Brooks Robinson in a uniform other than that of the Orioles?

It's a thought that makes some people shudder, including several club officials, and owner Jerry Hoffberger as well.

But the flawless third baseman admits it could happen, and he doesn't think the possibility should be classified as a potential disaster.

Because he hit .201 last year, and will be 39 years old in May, Robby is on the spot for the first time in 22 years. His job is in jeopardy, and nobody knows it better than the guy who is one of the best players ever to play his position.

"I had a long talk with Earl (Weaver) at the end of the last year," Brooks said candidly after spring training got underway, "and we agreed that I would play 30 or 40 games and, after that, if I wasn't hitting, and the club wasn't winning, then a change would have to be made. That's been explained to me and it's fair."

"ALL I WANT IS the opportunity to play every day. If I don't produce, the club doesn't have any obligation to me just because I've been around a long time."

From the day he broke into baseball two decades ago, all Brooks

Robinson wanted was a chance to play. His feelings haven't changed any more than he has.

But he knows that many people already have written him off. They're sounding taps and preparing the eulogy for one of the classiest persons who ever swung a bat.

However, Robinson thinks the notice of his demise is premature.

"I feel like I can play four or five more years," he tells people, knowing that most of them privately are convinced he's talking more with his heart than his head. "But what I think isn't important. I have to do it on the field."

ROBINSON'S statistics for the last two years defy description. In 1974, he drove in 59 runs, hit seven homers, struck out 47 times and batted .288.

Last year, only one of those figures changed drastically. He had 53 RBIs, just six shy of the previous year, despite 71 fewer at-bats, six home runs, struck out a mere 33 times (a drop of 14), but saw his average nosedive 57 points.

It is almost impossible to explain how an individual could reduce his strikeouts, drive in a comparable amount of runs, display similar power, and have his average virtually vanish. A decline that drastic, most critics will say, is an unmis-

takeable tip that a player is finished, and many are convinced it is only a matter of time before Robby himself recognizes that fact.

But Brooks won't surrender that easily. "If I hit .200 again, then I'll probably quit," he said frankly. "But I don't think that's going to happen."

IF IT DOES, it won't be because he neglected to prepare himself for what shapes up as the biggest challenge of his career. Never one to abuse himself, although he's often accused of having the worst body in sports, figuratively speaking, Brooks is trimmer than he has been in 10 years—10 pounds lighter, in fact.

"A lot of people told me last year that they thought I had gotten too heavy," admitted Brooks whose playing weight hasn't varied more than a pound or two in a decade.

When he weighed in prior to the first workout, the scale said 188. A year ago he was 198, and this reporter watched as Brooks took a pencil and wrote the figure on the wall. Above the number was a list that read like bowling scores—197, 198, 197, 196, 198, never varying by more than two units.

"What's that?" he was asked. "Those are my yearly weigh-in figures," he replied.

The numbers were as amazingly consistent as Brooks Robinson's fielding. They went back 10 years—and showed that Brooks had checked in at the same weight (198) in 1965 as he had in 1975.

"Somebody erased the numbers since last year," he joked.

YOU COULD almost tell from the gleam in his eye that Brooks Robinson was trying to figure out if he could start another 10-year list.

Talking to Robinson, you get the clear picture that they will have to turn him out to pasture before he hangs it up. It's not greed, though a six-figure salary is not to be dismissed lightly, because he is not a greedy man.

It's just that he has committed himself to walking away from baseball once his playing days are over, but he wants to continue as long as somebody thinks he can help. "I know a lot of people say athletes should quit while they are on top," he acknowledged, "but I

don't necessarily agree with that.

"If a man can contribute something, why shouldn't he continue if that's what he wants to do? I don't worry about averages or other statistics. I like to play the game and if I can stay and make a contribution, why should I worry about not being able to play as well as I did ten years ago? That's not what's important."

BROOKS ALWAYS HAS voiced this opinion, which leads naturally to the assumption that he could conceivably wind up his career somewhere other than Baltimore.

"Naturally, I'd like to retire in a Baltimore uniform," he admitted. "But if I can't make it here, and somebody else wants me, I'll go."

"I would never want to embarrass the club, and I wouldn't want

the Orioles to feel they had an obligation to me. They don't owe me anything and, if the time comes when they feel they would be better off with somebody else, well, that's a decision that we have to accept."

"When that time comes, then it would depend on whether I could help another team. If I felt that I could, and the club wanted me, then I wouldn't hesitate to go."

There are those who would consider it a sacrilege if the Orioles ever permitted Brooks Robinson to play in another uniform. He doesn't subscribe to that theory and doesn't think the Orioles should be restricted by such a feeling.

All he wants to do is play. And he doesn't want to burden anyone.



Wells Twombly

(Continued From Page 30)

circumstance because certain capitalists were willing to risk a fortune on their basically worthless hides.

"This cannot be tolerated any longer," said Ward. "It is not the club owners the people come to see, it is the players. Let us see what happens if the owners have no players."

So the brotherhood gathered on a prophetically stormy day in Manhattan and agreed to form the Players League. Roughly 100 workers of the world decided to break their chains. They would reject their contracts and go into business for themselves. Profits would be shared. If a man wanted different employment, he could leave when the season ended. It was Marxism on the meadows of America, and the press was aggressively opposed.

It was not unusual to read long, withering attacks on the morals of the players, who seemed to have no loyalty, no decency, no appreciation of their special status in so-

ciety. The brotherhood lasted two more years.

ITS LEAGUE grew weak under all the pressures that National League money could summon. Hired newsmen stood outside gates and counted the number of people actually going into the brotherhood's parks. They did not match claims being made by the players. The public was literally shamed into staying away, and the whole noble venture collapsed.

The reserve clause became a holy writ. It was given special sanctity in 1922 when Oliver Wendell Holmes, associate justice of the United States Supreme Court, said that it was the majority's opinion that their august body could not rule on the matter because baseball did not produce a product that crossed state lines.

There the question of the reserve clause seemed to lie for an embarrassingly long time. What makes the events of the past few months so painful to watch is that the two parties have had nearly 90 years to come up with a viable alternative.

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