

Pete's Repeater Pistol Off to Red-Hot Start

By EARL LAWSON

TAMPA, Fla. — It was at Fort Myers, Fla., and Pete Rose and Tony Perez, both late signers, were making their first appearances of the spring in the Grapefruit League.

Rose, as usual, was in the lead-off slot in the Reds' batting order.

"I had bet Pete a steak dinner he wouldn't get a hit his first time at bat," said Reds' Manager Sparky Anderson.

Bruce Dal Canton, an off-season acquisition from the Pirates, was the pitcher for the Royals.

Dal Canton's first three pitches to Rose were called balls.

Pete stepped out of the batter's box.

"The bet's off if I walk," yelled Rose to Anderson.

"You know Pete," said a grinning Anderson. "He never likes to lose. He was protecting his bet."

Dal Canton made his fourth pitch. Rose lined a shot to center field for a single.

"I want that steak dinner paid for from out of your pocket," the needling Rose told Sparky. "None of that expense account stuff."

Rose made one more trip to the plate before he was replaced in the lineup.

So what happened?
"Just a triple off the right field fence," said Sparky. "I'm telling you, the guy's an animal."

Extra Batting Drills

Perez, like Rose, made only two appearances at the plate in his first outing of the spring before being replaced. Tony rifled a single to center on his second at-bat.

After leaving the game, both Rose and Perez took some extra hitting on an adjoining diamond at the Royals' training camp.

"Pete was wearing one of those rubber suits under his uniform," said Sparky. "You should have seen the water pour out."

After the extra hitting, Rose shagged fly balls fungoed by Anderson.

"Then," said Sparky, "Pete wanted me to hit him ground balls. He wouldn't quit until he had fielded 10 in a row without a bobble. I'm telling you, the guy's an animal."

Last year, Rose played with his weight around the 200 mark.

"He wants to get down to around 195 this season," said Sparky.

Perez also wants to trim his weight a little.

"Tony did 40 sit-ups after he came out of the game that first day," said Sparky.

"That," continued Anderson, "is what makes this team so easy to manage. Rose and Perez are real stars in this game. No one can deny that. They do everything you ask of them and more."

Some Great Examples

It's the same with Johnny Bench, the loop's Most Valuable Player last year. Lee May falls into the same category. So do Bobby Tolan and the other veterans among the regulars.

"So when you've got your big men setting such fine examples, how can you have any trouble from the youngsters who come to camp?" asked Anderson.

Sparky's confident the Reds can repeat as National League champs this season. He's confident even though the Reds don't figure to open the season at full strength.

There's Tolan, who tore an Achilles tendon playing basketball last January 7.

But Tolan's recovery, so far, has been almost miraculous. He's already in camp taking regular batting practice.

"If there's no double play situation, I could even use Bobby as a pinch-hitter now, but, of course, I won't," said Sparky.

What Anderson was saying is that Bobby will be ready to return to the lineup a lot earlier than it was originally predicted.

Then, there's Dave Concepcion. Last spring at this time, Concepcion was the talk of the Reds' training camp.

Today, the 23-year-old Venezuelan has to be one of the most frustrated young men on the Reds' roster.

Concepcion got his chance to display his ability last spring when Tommy Helms, a holdout, was late in reporting. Veteran Woody Woodward, who had expected to be the Reds' regular shortstop, moved over to second to fill the gap until Helms reported.

Meanwhile, Anderson installed Concepcion at shortstop. The rookie, after performing in spectacular fashion during the 1970 exhibition season, was still there on opening day.

Hand in Cast

This year, Concepcion undoubtedly will be on the disabled list when the season opens. His troubles began in the second game of Grapefruit League play when he made a diving tag at third base to retire Rich McKinney, a White Sox rookie.

At first it was thought Concepcion merely sustained a sprained right thumb.

The next day, though, his right hand was in a cast which extended almost to the elbow.

A week later, the cast was removed and the thumb was re-examined.

"Dave has a torn ligament between the thumb and fore-finger," was the report from the Reds' front office. The right hand again was placed in a cast. This was March 15.

"The cast will be on Dave's hand for three weeks . . . possibly four," said a club spokesman.

The Reds have two other young shortstops in camp. Frank Duffy is one. Darrel Chaney is the other.

There are several clubs in the majors who'd like to get their hands on either one of them. One of the two will depart before the season starts.

Woodward Gets Job

This is because the Reds won't carry four shortstops. And, with Concepcion temporarily sidelined, Anderson already has made it clear Woodward, the veteran, will be the Reds' opening-day shortstop.

"Woody deserves the role," said Sparky. "Maybe he's not spectacular very often, but he's steady. You play him and he always gives you a good game."

Red Hots: Gary Nolan will be the Reds' opening-day pitcher April 5 against the Braves. Jim McGlothlin will pitch the second game of the season. . . . Veteran lefty Jim Merritt, a 20-game winner last year, has had his ups and downs this spring because of a recurrence of the elbow trouble which sidelined him late in the 1970 season. "Some way or other I will find a way to get out on the mound and I will win," said Merritt, confidently. . . . Pat Osburn, a 21-year-old lefty signed out of Florida State University, has been the Reds' most impressive rookie pitcher this spring and could wind up with a starting role even though he has had no pro experience. Osburn first excited the Reds' brass when he compiled a 6-0 won-and-lost mark and an 0.90 earned-run average in the Florida Instructional League last fall.

Greg Garrett, a 23-year-old lefty acquired from the Angels in the Jim Maloney deal, has been a big disappointment so far. He was racked for 10 runs and nine hits in one inning in his first appearance of the spring. That was against the Dodgers. The second time out he was tagged for a three-run homer



Pete Rose . . . Contributing Something Extra.

by the Cards' Ted Simmons before departing with a slightly sprained ankle after two innings. But, despite his poor start, Garrett insists he's going to make the club. With all the running he has done, Garrett has trimmed his weight from 220 to 208. "My legs are in the best shape they've ever been," he said. "Now all I have to do is get my arm into shape. I proved last year I can

pitch in the American League. And, I know I can pitch in the National League, too." . . . Pete Rose no longer wears a crew cut, but the Reds' two-time batting champ does not think it'll have any effect on his image. "Hustle always has been my trademark, not the crew cut," said Rose. "Anyway, how many fans see a ballplayer with his cap off?"

Dirty Al Ready for a Giant-Sized Burst

By PAT FRIZZELL

PHOENIX, Ariz.—While the Giants have experimented with various infield combinations in spring training, there never has been any serious question about third base.

Alan Gallagher, a native-born San Franciscan, owns that job.

"When Jim Ray Hart gets healthy," Gallagher said, "I'll have competition. And that's because he can hit 30 home runs."

But Hart, in Arizona recovering from a shoulder operation, is on the disabled list. He won't be able to throw much for some time.

Gallagher broke in impressively last season.

The colorful, hustling Santa Clara University alumnus hit sensationally for the first couple of months. Although his average tapered off to .266, he continued to be dangerous at bat.

In the field, "Dirty Al," nicknamed because his uniform frequently is soiled from headlong dives after balls, committed only six errors in 109 games. He made the Topps all-rookie team.

Eager to Improve

"I had a good rookie season," Gallagher said, "but I want to improve on it."

"I'm 10 pounds heavier now, up to 188, and I'm hitting more sharply, with more authority."

"If you can hit the ball like a shot, there's always a chance, providing it's not right at 'em."

"I'm not a home-run hitter, but with added strength, I'll hit a few if I just swing easily."

"I'd always thought it was unwise for a baseball player to lift weights," Gallagher said, "but I needed to get stronger, so I did some this past winter. It helped."

"I lacked real power last year. I feel now I could hit eight, nine or ten home runs."

He hit four in 1970.

Willie Mays has helped Gallagher at the plate this spring, as he has several other Giants.

"Willie told me to open my stance a little more," Al said. "I'm waiting on pitches better and sometimes pulling a little more to left field."

"But I'm also realizing my limitations. On a high fast ball, I'm not trying to power it, the way I did on occasion last year."

Tough Self-Critic

His hitting is important to Gallagher, as it is to any other player, but the 25-year-old third baseman's defense is more vital to the Giants.

"I really haven't been satisfied with my fielding this spring," complained Gallagher, a perfectionist.

"Maybe I expect too much. I'm trying to handle every chance cleanly, rather than knock the ball down and throw the runner out."

"After you make a good play and may have been a little lucky, you start asking yourself: 'Why can't I do that again? Wasn't I alert, or what?'"

Gallagher dropped a pop fly that cost the Giants an exhibition game with the Indians.

"The sun didn't bother me or anything," he admitted candidly. "I just missed the ball."

"But it takes a while to get over something like that."

Al had other players hit him a flock of pop flies day after day thereafter.

Gallagher likes Manager Charlie Fox' idea of having his third baseman play farther away from the line.

"In the past, I've always been a

line hugger," he said. "But now I've decided it's better this way."

"I still can go to the line from where I've been playing. You have to beware of bunts, of course."

"If the ball is hit sharply enough down the line, okay, it's gone. But balls went between Hal Lanier and me last year that I might be able to get to where I'm playing now."

"We have to tighten up our defense and make more double plays."

"I just hope we'll not have several damaging hits down the line so early in the season that people won't let us give this thing a fair chance."

Gallagher, who as a boy used to watch Brooks Robinson play third against the Tigers while on summer visits to relatives in Jackson, Mich., remembers every one of his six 1971 errors.

A Useless Throw

"They all were on throws," Al said. "For example, there was one in Atlanta that wasn't necessary at all. I threw the ball away when there wasn't any play."

"I don't want these things to happen. The game is 90 percent mental. I'm trying to think constructively."

Gallagher spent five years in the Giants' farm system before crashing the big club last year.

Always a hard thrower and somewhat disappointed at not advancing more rapidly, "Dirty Al" one day at Amarillo asked Manager Andy Gilbert if he could try pitching.

He beat San Antonio on two hits in a Texas League game.

"Another club wanted to draft me as a pitcher," Al recalled. "I really thought I'd be considered a pitcher when I went to spring training the

next year. But they put me back on third, and I've stayed there."

Hustle has been a major factor in Gallagher's success. It makes him popular with fans in his native city and the entire Bay area.

Fans Are Important

The Giants' third baseman simultaneously realizes the importance of player-fan relationship.

"The fans are doing us a favor in coming out to watch us," Gallagher said.

"I went to some 30 banquets and 80 other fan or ticket-type meetings for the Giants in the off-season."

Giant Jottings: Willie McCovey clouted one of the longest home runs ever seen at Phoenix Municipal Stadium March 19. The ball traveled some 500 feet, soaring far over the right-field fence. Stretch connected on a pitch by Catfish Hunter of the Athletics. . . . Rookie outfielder George Foster smashed out his fourth triple of the spring against Cleveland March 20. . . . Veteran Don McMahon had 1-0 records as both manager and pitcher after bossing a Giant B team to a 3-0 victory over the Milwaukee Brewers' B's. . . . Bob Heise, anxious for more work, got into the lineup against San Diego March 18 and immediately tripled and made two outstanding plays at third base. . . . The Giants negotiated six double plays in two days against Milwaukee and San Diego, with Hal Lanier figuring in all six. Lanier was at shortstop one day, second base the next. . . . Gaylord Perry can be found at the ball park earlier than other Giants many mornings—working out with his son, 3½, who already is a slugger.

PETE PEERLESS IN THE 1970s

Outshone Carew, Yaz, Palmer, et al

By HAL BODLEY

PHILADELPHIA—Pete Rose slid behind the wheel of the fire-engine red Porsche, turned the key and the turbo-charged engine leaped into action, coming to life with all the subtlety of a 747 preparing for takeoff.

The wheels squealed on the concrete as this marvelous machine made its way out of the catacombs of Veterans Stadium. It continued along Pattison Avenue for a spell, then onto Broad Street and finally the freedom of I-95 South.

This was a typical Pete Rose exit after a typical Pete Rose day at the office. He was about as inconspicuous as a brass band in a cemetery.

Once on I-95, the Porsche continued on a familiar course. Destination: Wilmington's Brandywine Raceway.

From the intensity of a major league baseball battle to the relaxation of picking winners at a harness racing casino, that's Pete Rose, the 38-year-old adolescent. His motor is always running, his enthusiasm always overflowing.

"Would you mind signing this?" a man asked between races.

"Why not?" Rose blurted. "I'm not ashamed of who I am."

This was a mere vignette from Rose's first summer with the Phillies, but it told a lot about the man who has just been named THE SPORTING NEWS Baseball Player of the Decade.

Rose's selection was made by the editorial staff of TSN. To win the award, Pete had to beat out such outstanding players as California's Rod Carew, Boston's Carl Yastrzemski, Pittsburgh's Willie Stargell, Baltimore's Jim Palmer, St. Louis' Lou Brock, and former Cincinnati teammate Johnny Bench.

Carew, for example, had a .343 batting average, by far the best of the decade. Stargell's 296 home runs were tops, while Bench was the lone player in the 10-year span to go over 1,000 runs batted in with 1,013. Brock had 551 stolen bases and Palmer was the winningest pitcher with 186 victories.

Rose, however, led in five categories. He recorded 2,045 hits during the decade—an average of more than 200 a year. He also played in the most games (3,044), had the most at-bats (6,523), the most runs (1,068) and the most doubles (394). He had six seasons of 200 or more hits, led the National League four times in hits and in 1979 broke Ty Cobb's record of nine 200-hit seasons. He had 258 more hits for the decade than Carew, 2,045 to 1,787.

His batting average for the decade was .314, fourth best. Previous winners of the distinguished award were Stan Musial, Ted Williams and Willie Mays.

"This is a great honor," Rose said with little-boy pride. "Anytime you win a baseball award—I don't care if it's Player of the Month or Player of the Week or Player of the Year—it gives you a lot of satisfaction. Becoming Player of the Decade is just a lot more icing on the cake simply because people respected me enough over the 10 years to pick me."

"All I've ever tried to do is be consistent. I hit over .300 every year but one (.284 in 1974) during that span and the year I didn't, I led the league in three or four categories."

"I've been lucky, too. I've been able to stay away from injuries that kept me out for any length of time. You just can't accumulate records, or you can't be Player of the Decade, if you don't play a lot. I averaged 160 games the past 10 years."

Pete Rose spent the better part of two days recently trying to put the decade into perspective. He struggled to list what he considered his 10 most memorable achievements during the period and looked ahead to the remaining three years on his contract with the Phillies—the highly publicized \$3,240,000 agreement he signed a year ago after playing out his option with his hometown Cincinnati Reds.

A sullen rain pelted the roof of the condominium he purchased near Cincinnati after Carolyn, his wife of 15 years, filed for divorce last September 11. It was long past Pete Rose's bedtime.

"I keep coming back to consistency," said the National League's Most Valuable Player of 1973. "That, and total dedication to my business, which is baseball, are the keys to my success."

This was a different side of Rose. Away from the spot-

light and in the quiet of his living room, he talked frequently of his dad, Harry Francis Rose, an outstanding semi-pro football player whom people around Cincinnati called Pete.

Rose obviously worshipped his macho father, a banker who died on December 8, 1970.

"My father was always pushing me," said Pete. "He was never satisfied with what I achieved. He is the reason I always give 110 percent. He is the reason I run as hard as I can to first base. He would never let me ease up. He once called me aside and said, 'Peter, you always have to give 110 percent. The guy you're playing against, see, may be giving 100 percent. So, if you're just giving 100 percent, too, no one will win.'"

"The entire time I played for Cincinnati, my father was in the clubhouse only once. That was a day when he posed for a picture with me for a magazine article. And the only time he would wait for me outside the clubhouse was when he wanted to have me meet someone—or chew me out."

"He was a great football player. He had poor eyes, the result of all the detail work he had to do at the bank, but he was excellent. He played until he was 42. He would have kept on playing had my mom not threatened to divorce him."

Pete's mother is now married to Robert Neoth, a close friend of her first husband, and lives near Tampa, Fla.

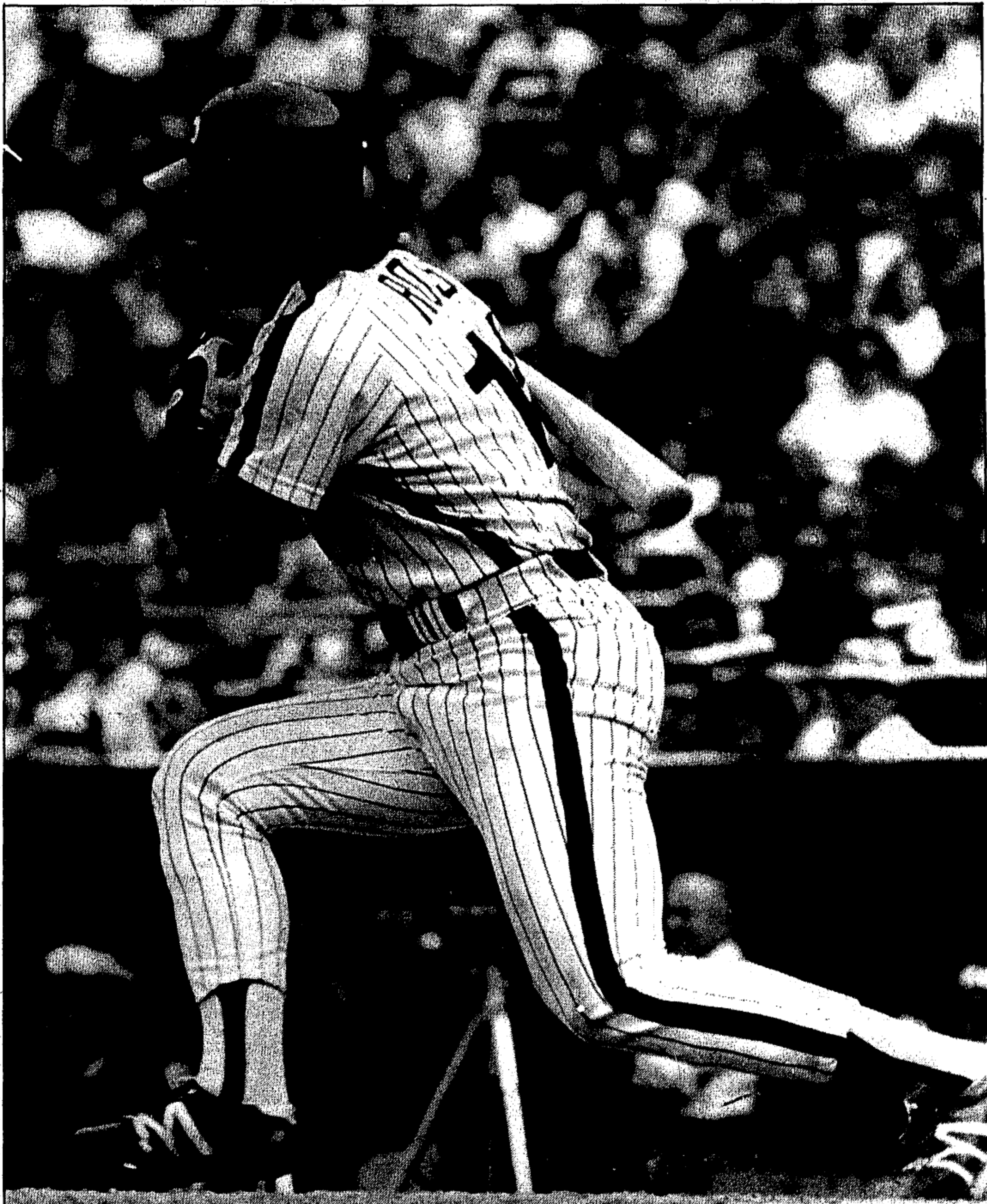
"This award is the type of thing Dad would be proud of," she said over the phone. "He always stressed consistency. I remember when Peter was a little boy. He would get four hits and come up to his father, obviously proud. His dad would only tell him that he could have done better. He would be sitting in the car and want to cry. Each night before Pete would go to sleep, his dad would make him swing a bat nearly 100 times, first from the right and then from the left side."

"Peter was not a good student. His marks were not high enough for him to graduate with his class at Western Hills High. They asked him to go to summer school. His father wouldn't have it. 'No,' he said. 'If you do that, you won't be able to devote the whole summer to baseball.' So, he made Peter repeat the whole 12th grade the next fall."

"I used to walk around the streets of Cincinnati," Pete recalled, "and people would come up to me and say, 'You'll never be half the athlete your father was.' It used to hurt, but it made me determined. Now, they come up to me and say, 'You're your father all over again.'"

"That's absolutely correct," said his mother, Laverne.

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Pete Rose . . . Joins Stan Musial, Ted Williams and Willie Mays

Pete Rose

(Continued From Page 3)

"He is just like his father—a carbon copy. We were always strict with him, but he was a good boy. Now, he's the greatest!"

Trying to select his 10 greatest accomplishments of the decade was no easy matter for Pete. First, there was a radio talk show that required his time.

There followed a drive to the Latonia race track, across the Ohio River in Kentucky. Pete arrived at the track in time to see the daily double numbers flashed on the tote board. No. 1 won the first race and No. 4 the second.

"Damn!" said Pete. "I would have had it. That's my number—14."

Rose enjoys adulations as much as most public figures. He is the media's darling and the fans' choice. In Japan recently, he took the country by storm. He was in constant demand for appearances, interviews and autograph sessions. Once again, baseball was reminded of Pete's fascinating blend of candor and craftiness. Some call it business acumen, although those in search of thorns call it greed. No matter, he is probably the No. 1-goodwill ambassador for the game.

"Let's just say I'm cooperative," said Rose, who at times is accused of being an intense, talkative, sharp-tongued, ambivalent man. "I try to get along with people. Even here in Cincinnati. I took a lot of heat from the fans for leaving the Reds. It's amazing the number of people who called me a traitor—they called my kids traitors in school. No one knew the situation or the circumstances. Here's a guy that slid on his belly for 16 years for them and played just as hard as he could for them and all of a sudden they (Reds) decided they didn't want him anymore and he's the villain. But how can one guy, even Pete Rose, take on an organization like the Cincinnati Reds? No way."

Rose, it can be said honestly, is an extraordinary man who often brings a fresh simplicity to the complexity of his profession. At times, he quickly changes the subject, or while talking about one thing obviously has another on his mind.

"I cannot list the 10 things in order," he said. "It would be difficult to rate them."

To Rose, he will remember the 1970s best for:

1. Winning the 1975 World Series over Boston and being named the Most Valuable Player.

"It was the biggest thrill I ever had. I'll never forget the feeling when Yastrzemski hit that fly ball to Cesar Geronimo for the final out. I knew Geronimo was going to catch it. Now, after playing in the 1970 and '72 Series, we were world champions. I thought that was the ultimate and getting MVP was icing on the cake. A lot of people think that was the greatest World Series ever played."

2. Becoming the No. 1 switch-hitter of all time.

"That is what I have worked hardest on. It is something I have to devote time to each day in batting practice. I think no matter what kind of an athlete you are, you try to excel in something. A home-run hitter hits home runs, a base stealer steals bases. If you're a pitcher, you try to win games. I try to excel from both sides of the plate."

3. Becoming the all-time No. 1 singles hitter in the National League. It happened last August 5 in Pittsburgh with a single off Bert Blyleven, single No. 2,427 for Rose, who passed Honus Wagner's 2,426.

"Any of the records I achieve give me a lot of self-satisfaction because of the names I pass. You know what I mean, guys like Wagner and Willie Mays and Cobb. It gives you a great feeling because you're up there with some elite people."

4. Getting 3,000 hits. It happened in the summer of 1978.

"That was a fun achievement because no one ever did it for Cincinnati. People don't understand this, but it gave me a big thrill because I got 3,000 faster than anyone else. I did it in 15 years, one month."

5. A 44-game hitting streak, between June 14 and July 31, 1978.

"It did a lot for baseball," said Rose. "I think that was one of my best years ever because I really faced some great pitchers. It was gratifying to me because of my age. When you're 37, a lot of people think you are slipping and going downhill. All of a sudden, just like this year, a long hitting streak comes along and people get excited."

6. Being named captain of the Cincinnati Reds.

"One of the first things Sparky Anderson did when he became manager of the Reds in 1970 was make me captain. That was quite an honor—that he had faith in me. The Reds had not had one for years."

7. Signing a contract with the Phillies to become the highest-paid team player in sports.

"There was a lot of pride involved in that. It called for \$910,000 the first year, \$810,000 the second year, \$710,000 the third year and \$810,000 the fourth. I had heard David Thompson got \$800,000 in basketball, so I asked Ruly Carpenter (Phils' owner) to add an extra \$10,000 so there would be no question about who is No. 1. But, in the fourth year, I have to play in at least 140 games or I'll get only \$545,000. See, I'm always backed up against the wall. I always have to prove something."

"Yes, it hurt to leave the Reds. On the other hand, it didn't hurt. I made \$365,000 in 1978. I felt I should be at the top of my profession. The Reds didn't think so. It hurt me because all my memories and mementos related to the Reds. But it didn't hurt because I just said to myself, 'How

in hell can I work for somebody that no longer wants me or respects me?' I'll never know why Dick Wagner (Reds' president) does not like me because I'm a gamer and he likes gamers. I did everything I could for the Reds for 16 years, but in the end they did not want me. I would have signed with them for a lot less than I got in Philly, but it didn't work out for me."

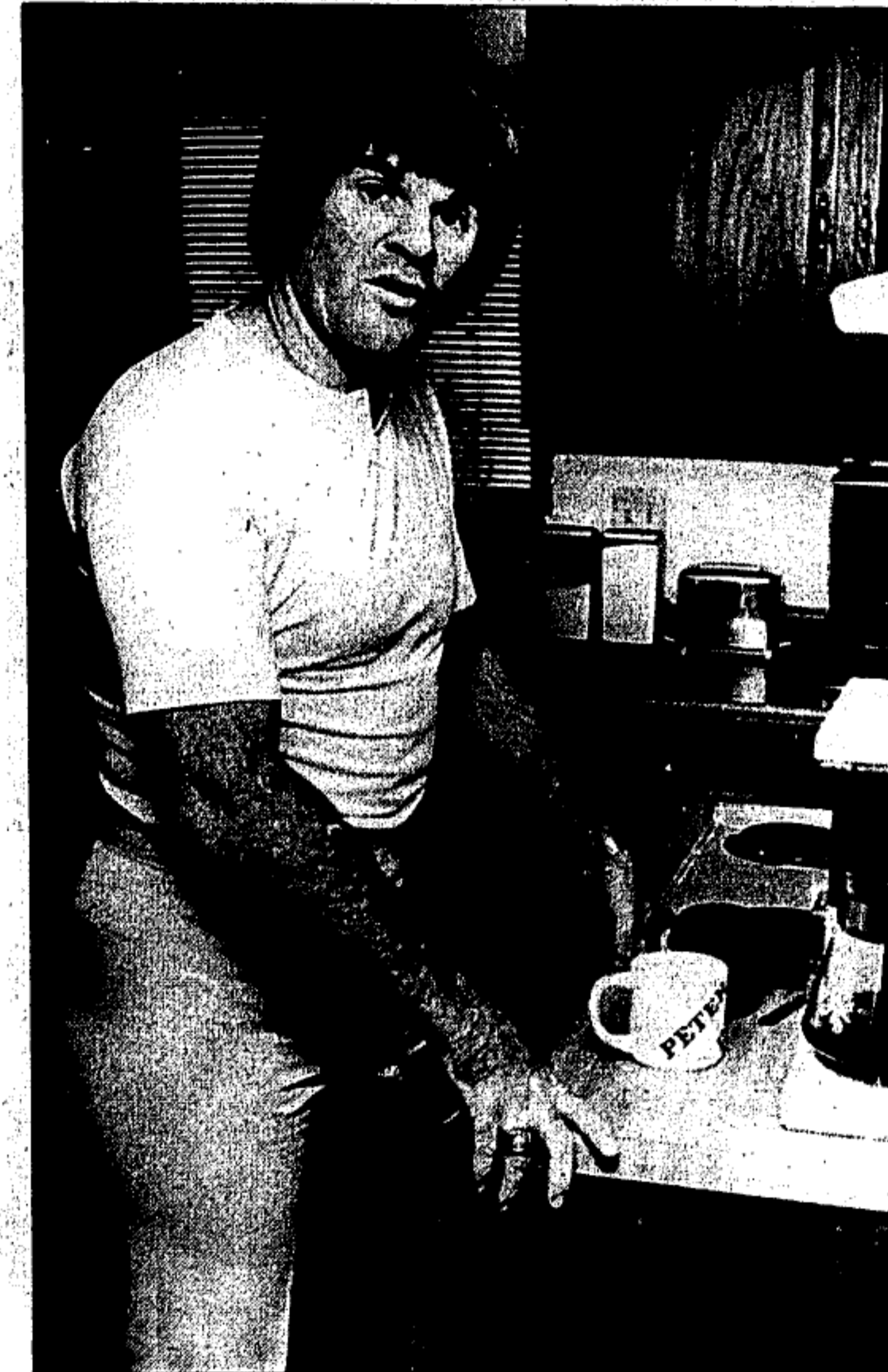
8. Being a member of the only team to sweep the playoffs and World Series.

"We did it in 1976 and people said we had one of the greatest teams ever. Again, we showed we were consistent."

9. Having an outstanding offensive year with the Phillies in 1979, hitting .331 to finish second in the National League.

"It was a tough year in a lot of ways, but I've never once felt I made the wrong decision choosing the Phillies. I had a lot of personal problems (the divorce proceedings and a paternity suit by a Florida woman), yet I hit .421 in September, got my 200 hits for the 10th time and had a 23-game hitting streak. On the negative side, this was the first time I ever was a member of a team that got a manager (Danny Ozark) fired."

When asked how he could play so well with all the problems, Rose said: "The divorce thing has been tough in that



Rose makes coffee in the kitchen, then checks the mail outside his condominium. "I don't fear age,"

I have not been able to see my children (Fawn 14 and Peter Edward II, 10) since September. I can't think of many fathers and sons who were closer than Petey and me. My little girl's a tremendous athlete, too, but baseball players seem to show more interest in their sons because they can take them into the clubhouse and on trips. Sometimes, little girls don't understand that.

"As for my problems, well, my philosophy is that if I have problems off the field, why kick that onto the Philadelphia fans? Why should I kick that onto my teammates? Or why should I kick that onto the men who cover the games? It's my fault, not theirs. Success eliminates a lot of problems. You understand what I mean? I mean if you're having problems somewhere and hitting .220, you've got a lot of problems, but if you're having a good year, it's easier to handle problems."

On the pending divorce, Rose said: "It's my fault. I read that 60 percent of the married couples are getting divorced. But when I read the papers, I am the only one in the world who is getting one. People have to realize that I'm a human being, my heart beats 72 times—or whatever it is—a minute. I'm no angel."

10. Playing a record fifth position on the National League All-Star team, a team he made for the 13th time in 1979.

"As a first baseman, I pushed Steve Garvey in the voting for the first time. It was kinda disappointing in that I led the voting up until the end."

Rose, who has 3,372 hits, anticipates most eagerly the day he eclipses Stan Musial's all-time National League record of 3,630.

"I don't think about it that much," said Pete. "It is something that should happen in time, so I don't fret about it."

Pete will be 39 next April 14, but that doesn't disturb him.

"I don't fear age," he said. "I only worry about losing my enthusiasm. I'm not worried about my legs going, about my arm going, about my eyes. It would kill me to play on a losing team. It would be impossible at my age, almost insane, to play the way I do for a last-place team."

"I take care of myself. I don't drink, I don't smoke. I love the races because they relax me. People, though, think that is bad. But I would rather spend a night at the races than in a bar."

On finances: "Yes, I know I make more money than the President of the United States. I don't see it. My advisors (headed by attorney Rueven J. Katz) handle my money, my investments. When I was at home, we were on a \$2,300-a-month budget and \$700 of that went toward the mortgage."

"Sparky Anderson probably said it best," commented Katz. "He said Pete Rose has more street sense than anyone he ever met. I have to agree. People think I merely pull the strings. That is wrong. Pete makes a lot of his own decisions. I merely help."

Wide awake, after an eggs-and-bacon breakfast, Pete Rose comes into full, fiery bloom. He does not merely live for life, he charges it.

"Look, I'm a baseball player, a sports nut," said the man who can move people and sell products, including baseball tickets. "Until I can find something that pays me as much money as baseball, I am not going to get a lot of side interests. I am not going to worry about something that pays me \$50,000 a year at the expense of something that pays as much as I make from baseball."

Pete paused a moment, sipping on a cup of coffee he had brewed. "When they finish the National Anthem, I still get chills—I have even learned the words."

says Pete, soon to be 39. "I only worry about losing my enthusiasm."

THE SULTAN OF STAT

Behind the Scenes With the Elias Sports Bureau, Keeper of Records

(The 1988 Elias Baseball Analyst, published by Collier Books, a division of Macmillan Publishing Company of New York, was to reach newsstands by late March—just in time for the opening of the 1988 season. This is the fourth edition of the Analyst, and the price remains \$12.95.

Aficionados of inside baseball have hailed the Analyst for its detailed statistical breakdowns—how a certain batter reacts to late-inning pressure, how he does on artificial turf and grass, which pitcher he loves to face, etc.

The statistics have been compiled by the ubiquitous Elias Sports Bureau, keeper of the records for the National League, the National Football League, the National Basketball Association and statistical consultant to Major League Baseball, ABC's Monday Night Football and Monday Night Baseball, USA Today and Sports Illustrated.

Listed as authors of the Analyst are Seymour Siwoff, owner and president of the Elias Sports Bureau, and Elias vice-presidents Steve Hirdt and Peter Hirdt.

The following behind-the-scenes look at some of the subtle humor involved with the Analyst was written by Steve Hirdt, but he insisted that the work at Elias is always a "we" situation because of the bureau's never-ending pursuit of the most complete statistics in sports.

With 1988 an election year, the words of political columnist/baseball fan George Will on the Analyst are appropriate. In a blurb on the back cover of the 1986 edition, the Washington pundit said: "Contains almost all the information citizens ought to be required to master before being allowed to vote."

NEW YORK—It hasn't been all decimal points, microchips, and batting averages in Late-Inning Pressure Situations.

Our Elias Baseball Analyst, now in its fourth annual edition, has provided us with a few laughs as well—at ourselves, at the statistics skeptics, and sometimes at the numbers themselves.

The book is a detailed breakdown of the performance of every major league player and team, complete with statistics that go beyond those normally seen in the Sunday newspapers. While there probably aren't too many of you who've broken into giggles over your morning coffee reading those imposing lists of numbers, statistics don't have to be dry and lifeless. They can be analytical, revealing, trivial, or humorous.

For instance, there was the time in 1985 that we went back through our computer files to find out which batters made most of their outs on ground balls as opposed to fly balls. (We know, Bo, some batters also strike out, but we were interested in the outs made on balls put into play.)

We often go off on statistical fishing expeditions like that one, with varying results. But actually, that

"No sports book has ever brought numbers into sharper, more illuminating focus. Each chapter is a treat and full of surprises."

—Al Michaels

THE 1988 ELIAS BASEBALL ANALYST

SEYMOUR SIWOFF, STEVE HIRDT & PETER HIRDT

study was the first step toward the discovery of a rather fascinating but little-known trend that we've written about for the past few years—namely, that fly-ball and ground-ball batters and pitchers follow similar tendencies to lefties and righthanders.

When the batter-pitcher matchup pits opposites against each other (a lefty vs. a righthander, or a flyballer vs. a groundballer), the batter has a theoretical advantage; when the matchup involves batters and pitchers of similar types (for example, lefty-against-lefty or groundballer-vs.-groundballer), it's advantage, pitcher.

We had the play-by-play of every major league game since 1975 in our computer files, diligently coded over the years by a staff of experienced researchers. Then the records had to be checked, stored, retrieved, edited, and sorted. Finally, in 1985, we wrote a new set of programs to determine which players

with at least 1,000 plate appearances over the previous 10 years had the highest and lowest ratios of ground outs to air outs.

Our work bore fruit in July of that year: the computer lists had Wally Backman's name atop the list of ground-ball hitters, and showed Gary Redus as the foremost fly-ball hitter.

As luck would have it, we were in Cincinnati the next week and found ourselves in a pregame chat with Pete Rose. We outlined our project to Pete, teasing him that we had invented a new category that even he didn't know about. And we asked him who, in his observation, was the top fly-ball hitter in the majors over the preceding 10 years.

"Is he a regular?" Pete asked. We told him about the 1,000-plate appearance minimum.

Rose's response was immediate. "Gary Redus."

For baseball statisticians, the

feeling was humbling. We imagined how Neil Armstrong might have felt, if upon descending into the lunar dust, he had found some old Coke cans lying around. Rose knew by observation what it had taken several man years of computer time to verify.

But sometimes the numbers give us—and our readers—the edge on even the most perceptive managers. Take opening day in 1986, when Baltimore trailed Cleveland, 6-4, batting with the bases loaded and two out in the bottom of the eighth. When Pat Corrales, then managing the Indians, called on righthander Ernie Camacho for relief, devotees of the Analyst—including a few in the Baltimore press box—expected the Orioles' Earl Weaver to counter with a pinch-hitter. After all, righthanded hitting Rick Dempsey was due up.

If Weaver wasn't convinced that the percentages dictated that a lefthanded pinch-hitter was called

for, the boys in the booth were roaring over this item from page 184 of their 1986 Analyst: "Attention, Earl: Since 1981, Dempsey is hitless in 16 at-bats with two out and the bases loaded; he has batted .067 (3-for-45) in such situations in the last 11 years."

We can only assume that Earl hadn't yet received his copy of the Analyst, because Dempsey popped out to kill the rally.

Although we weren't there, our flies on the wall of the O's locker room after the game tell us that neither Weaver nor Dempsey was too thrilled when apprised of our numbers. In fact, we've heard that Dempsey swore they were wrong. Sorry, Rick; we double-checked.

Later that season, shortly before Weaver's old protege, Jim Frey, was fired as manager of the Chicago Cubs, he railed against the use of what we refer to in our book as batter-pitcher matchups (how a particular batter has fared throughout his career against a particular pitcher).

Last season, when we suggested on WGN's pregame radio show that the Cubs' Jerry Mumphrey should start that day's game against St. Louis based in part on his success against Danny Cox, Frey, then a Cubs announcer, pooh-poohed the idea. But when Mumphrey lashed a two-out, pinch single off Cox in the ninth, Frey interrupted the call of the play with an astonished, "Hey! Elias!"

Of course, we're not always right. There have been times that our numbers have prompted us to make statements that, in retrospect, were more than a little humbling. For instance, we wrote last year that Cincinnati pitcher Guy Hoffman might reach Cooperstown if he did all his pitching at Wrigley Field. We based that whimsical conclusion on his career record of 7-0 in day games, as opposed to a 1-7 mark at night.

Last season, Hoffman was winless in four decisions in day games, but went 9-6 at night.

That wasn't half as bad as the Don Mattingly incident. We asked readers of the 1987 Analyst: "Who do you like in a bases-loaded situation, (Willie) Randolph or Mattingly? Randolph career: .361 (35 for 97), 10 extra-base hits; Mattingly: .255 (12 for 47), 1 XBH (a double)."

We never expected Mattingly himself to answer our question. It wasn't that he called us on the phone, mind you. All he did was set an all-time major league record with six grand-slam homers last season.

Sometimes the numbers are only incidental to the humor. For instance, we note in our 1988 edition that the Yankees haven't had much success trading for pitchers from the Chicago White Sox. After all, we point out, George and Gracie have won as many games for New York as did their less famous namesakes, Britt Burns and Neil Allen, after those two arrived in separate deals with the Sox last summer.

Say good night, Gracie.