

N.L. PLAYER, PITCHER: Cubs Make a Sweep With Sandberg and Sutcliffe

By JOE GODDARD

CHICAGO—Sandberg and Sutcliffe. Sandberg and Sutcliffe. They're interchangeable. Mention both in Chicago and you've said it all.

Fans of the Chicago Cubs rejoiced this season as the pair helped lead baseball's oldest continuous franchise to its first title in 39 years.

A .265 hitter in his first two major-league seasons, Sandberg exploded in 1984 with these figures: a .314 batting average, a league-high 114 runs, 36 doubles, 19 triples, 19 home runs, 84 RBIs and 32 stolen bases, plus defensive domination at second base, with only six miscues and 62 straight errorless games.

Obtained from Cleveland just before the June 15 trade deadline, Sutcliffe reeled off a 16-1 record and tied a club mark for consecutive wins (14). He also became only the fourth pitcher in history to win 20 while pitching for teams in different leagues. He was 4-5 with the Indians.

For their individual efforts in a remarkable team turnaround (fifth place in 1983 to first in the National League East), THE SPORTING NEWS recognizes them as National League Player and Pitcher of the Year.

"In my heart, I know those two deserve everything they get," Manager Jim Frey said.

"When we had our talks in spring training, I felt Ryno was at the right age, had the right physique and the right amount of experience to start hitting for power.

"I've talked to a lot of players who couldn't make the adjust-

ment from being a contact hitter to driving the ball, but Ryno picked it up right away."

As for Sutcliffe, Frey said, "He's like the guy on a mission. He's out to prove something.

"You have to admire the way he goes about it. He has a 92 (miles an hour) fastball and all the other pitches, but I think the quality everyone talks about is his competitive nature. He wants to do well so badly. A lot of pitchers have good stuff, but he has that extra ingredient."

Unlike many pitchers, Sutcliffe enjoyed Wrigley Field, despite its pinched power-alley dimensions.

"I know what that park can do to ERAs, but earned-run average doesn't concern me anymore. I'll take a 10-9 win with the 1-0's, just so long as we win," said Sutcliffe.

Sutcliffe enjoyed Wrigley Field for another reason: "I like it 'cause I get to hit there, too. I'll take my RBI chances with Leon Durham, Jody Davis and the rest."

Rick led Cubs pitchers with a .250 average and six RBIs.

Sutcliffe figured he had only three bad outings:

A 7-1 loss to the Los Angeles Dodgers, the team that traded him after the 1981 season ("I was too excited. I had waited three years. I was so jacked up I didn't have anything on the ball"), a 13-11 victory at Cincinnati ("The guys gave me seven runs in the first inning and I didn't know what to do with it"), and the 6-3 loss to the Padres at San Diego in the fifth game of the playoffs ("It was my loss, no one else's").

His teammates easily forgave his few failings. "On this team,

I compare him to Lefty (Steve Carlton)," Larry Bowa said. "The feeling when you take the field is, if you get one or two runs, you've got a chance of winning. He always gave us that feeling."

One or two runs a game is about all Sutcliffe gave after the All-Star break. Before the playoff defeat, he was 12-0 with a 2.76 ERA. He allowed no more than two earned runs in 10 of 16 games.

Sandberg had few slumps in his surprising season. Except for the dying weeks, when he was trying to become the first player ever to collect 200 hits, 20 doubles, 20 triples, 20 homers and 20 stolen bases, he was a model of consistency.

He gained 200 hits one day before the final game of the season by ripping a double and three singles. A rained-out contest that wasn't made up and a strong wind blowing in during the last game may have prevented the player his teammates call "Kid Natural" from achieving one more triple and one more homer to reach 20 in each category.

"I'm happy. I have no regrets," Sandberg said.

The Philadelphia Phillies have regrets. Of the many trades they made with the Cubs to launch the Cubs' meteoric rise to the top, the only one President Bill Giles regrets is Sandberg's.

"The other trades, I'd do again, but not Sandberg," he said of passing Bowa, Gary Matthews, Bob Dernier and Keith Moreland on to the Cubs.

As Baltimore Orioles scout Jim Russo said, "If there is such a thing as a '10' among ball players, Sandberg is it."

A.L. PLAYER: Yankees' Don Mattingly Is Only Going to Get Better

By MOSS KLEIN

NEW YORK—When it came down to the last day of the season, the batting-title duel with teammate Dave Winfield riding on every at-bat, Don Mattingly simply added a fitting final chapter to his 1984 saga.

The New York Yankees first baseman collected four hits against the Detroit Tigers at Yankee Stadium, not only winning the American League batting title but earning additional respect from veteran observers.

"Getting four hits in that situation, that shows me some class there," said Detroit Manager Sparky Anderson. "I'd say that Mr. Mattingly is going to be heard from for a long time in this game. That kid is something special."

Something special is the way to describe Mattingly's 1984 season. In his first full year in the major leagues, he rose from a player without a regular position to THE SPORTING NEWS American League Player of the Year.

When the season began, Mattingly was regarded as the Yankees' swing man. Manager Yogi Berra, trying to find room in the lineup for his veterans, knew that Mattingly, who batted .283 as a part-timer with the Yankees in 1983, could play first base, left field and right field.

In the first four games of the season, Mattingly was a late-innings replacement for since-retired Lou Piniella in left field and had a total of four at-bats.

That arrangement quickly changed. Berra decided that the young man with the quick bat had to have a daily place in the lineup. Months later, the manager even honored Mattingly in

his unique style by making him the subject of the latest "Yogiism." When asked in mid-September if Mattingly had exceeded his expectations, Berra said: "Not only that, he's done better."

The newest Pride of the Yankees led the league with a .343 batting average, 207 hits and 44 doubles, hit 23 homers, drove in 110 runs, fifth in the league, and was second to Chicago's Harold Baines with a .537 slugging percentage.

Incidentally, on a roster packed with high-priced talent, Mattingly worked for relatively low wages. He earned \$130,000 in 1984. That figure consisted of \$80,000 in salary and a \$50,000 bonus for appearing in over 110 games.

Mattingly combined with Winfield (.340 average, 19 homers, 100 RBIs) to give the Yankees a memorable one-two punch. And their batting-title competition captured national attention. They occupied the top two spots beginning July 13 and in the final three weeks often exchanged the lead during games.

Mattingly made himself at home in the hallowed tradition of the Yankees' record books. He became the first Yankee to win a batting title since Mickey Mantle in 1956, had the most hits by a Yankee since Bobby Richardson's 209 in 1962, the most doubles since Red Rolfe's 46 in 1939.

And he became the first Yankee to bat .340 or higher, hit 20

or more homers, 40 or more doubles and drive in 100 or more runs in a season since Joe DiMaggio in 1941. Only two other Yankees reached those four levels in a season: Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig.

While his hitting attracted the most attention, Mattingly's defense at first base indicated there will be many Gold Gloves in his future. And his teammates spoke mostly about Mattingly's hustle, desire and heart.

"He's one of those few players you actually feel honored to be in the same locker room with," said catcher Rick Cerone.

"Sometimes it's hard to believe he's 23 years old and this is his first full season," said veteran Don Baylor, the Yankees' designated hitter.

Mattingly, the Yankees' 19th-round selection in the June, 1979 amateur draft, was discovered by Jax Robertson, now a scout for the Tigers. Robertson, who watched him play for Evansville Memorial High, took a liking to the 18-year-old Mattingly while other scouts dismissed him because of lack of speed.

"I had a real good gut feeling about his potential with the bat," said Robertson. "He's a bright guy, a competitor. There are guys who have had more potential and didn't make it. Don made himself a good player."

A.L. PITCHER: Tigers' Hernandez Was Nearly Perfect

By TOM GAGE

DETROIT—The day Willie Hernandez arrived in spring training with the Detroit Tigers, an exhibition game was in progress. The Tigers were playing St. Louis, and Cardinals Manager Whitey Herzog had already given his impression of the trade in which the Tigers got Hernandez from the Philadelphia Phillies.

"If Sparky doesn't win a pennant now," said Herzog, "they should fire him. That's what I think of Hernandez. I'm glad to see him out of the National League."

Herzog was kidding, and then again, he wasn't. He wasn't serious about Sparky Anderson being dismissed as manager if the Tigers didn't win, but he did treasure the talent of Hernandez. And so do the Tigers, now that they have a world championship under their belt and Hernandez has been named THE SPORTING NEWS American League Pitcher of the Year. He was selected for the award by TSN editors.

It didn't take long for the Tigers to know they had traded for someone special when they made the deal last March, in which they sent outfielder Glenn Wilson and catcher-first baseman John Wockenfuss to Philadelphia for Hernandez and first baseman Dave Bergman.

Bergman gave the Tigers needed depth, and the lefthanded Hernandez provided instant reliability in the Detroit bullpen.

"I knew he was going to be good," said Anderson. "I told everyone we had traded for a premier relief pitcher, but I didn't know he was going to be this good. You can't get better than perfect. I've never seen a pitcher with such a percentage of success. Without him, we wouldn't have done what we did."

Armed with a screwball that tails away from righthanded

hitters, negating the usual lefty-righty strategy that most managers employ with pitchers and hitters in the late innings, Hernandez posted a 9-3 record and a 1.92 earned-run average. More importantly, he had 32 saves in 33 save situations.

The only save he missed came September 28 in New York, 10 days after the Tigers had clinched the American League East Division title. Hernandez entered a game against the Yankees with a one-run lead, one out and runners on first and third. He retired both batters he faced, but one of the outs was a sacrifice fly that tied the score. The Tigers eventually won in 12 innings, but his streak of perfection was over.

"You still can't pitch any better than he did all season," said Tigers pitching coach Roger Craig. "I don't know when you'll see a pitcher put this kind of season together again."

Hernandez always had confidence in his talent, but the extent of his success this season astounded him. In his first seven seasons in the majors, Hernandez had recorded a total of 27 saves, with a high of 10 in 1982 for the Chicago Cubs.

"I never think about awards before," said the 28-year-old Puerto Rican. "Just to be considered, to have people talking about me like that, is a nice feeling. But I don't think it'll change me back home."

"I don't want people thinking I'm coming down from the sky. I must go back to Puerto Rico as me, Willie."

Hernandez set a Detroit club record with 80 appearances. If anything, he could have pitched more.

"The worst I felt all year is when I got too much rest," he said. "Three days of not pitching and I don't feel so good. I told the boss when I reported last March, 'I like to pitch, I like to win. I can rest in November.'"

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