

Hub Fans Find New Hero: Rookie Scott

5-Whiff Tilt Fails to Dim Kid's Luster

By LARRY CLAFLIN

BOSTON, Mass.

When a rookie strikes out five times in one game, you'd expect his teammates to pat him on the back in sympathy or offer some other form of consolation. Yet, when George Scott of the Red Sox whiffed five times in one game at Cleveland, several of his teammates said the same surprising thing:

"That might have been a good thing for George."

Hearing remarks like that, an outsider might think George was disliked, but such is far from the truth. His mates feel a bad day might bring him back to earth.

"Every rookie goes through a day like that," said outfielder Lenny Green as he took the dejected Scott to dinner shortly after the rookie infielder's disastrous afternoon ended.

"I had those days. Only the greatest of hitters escape them," Green added. "But it won't hurt George. He has the talent to be a great ball player. In one way, it was good that George had an awful day like he had. He was ripping the ball all spring and I guess he might have figured the game was easy. It isn't that easy, believe me. This brought him back to earth a little bit and settled him down at the plate. A little humility never hurt anyone."

He Made One Error, Too

The five strikeouts were accompanied with an error which helped the Red Sox lose the game to the Indians, but despite those mistakes by Scott, everyone in the Boston organization is convinced he is one of the future stars of the American League. But, where he will play remains to be seen.

Last year, Scott played mostly at third base for the pennant-winning club at Pittsfield of the Eastern League. Last autumn, the Red Sox had him at both third and first base in the Florida Instructional League. This spring, he played both positions, but finally won the third base job away from Joe Foy, Minor League Player of the Year in 1965.

When the season opened with Scott at third, Boston fans already were eager to get a look at the phenom with the big bat. His first play in the field was a bunt by Baltimore's speedy Luis Aparicio with a man on third and two out. Scott fielded it perfectly on the run and made a strong throw to first base to nail Aparicio. The fans loved it and they loved him even more when he tripled later to set up the tying run in a game the Red Sox eventually lost.

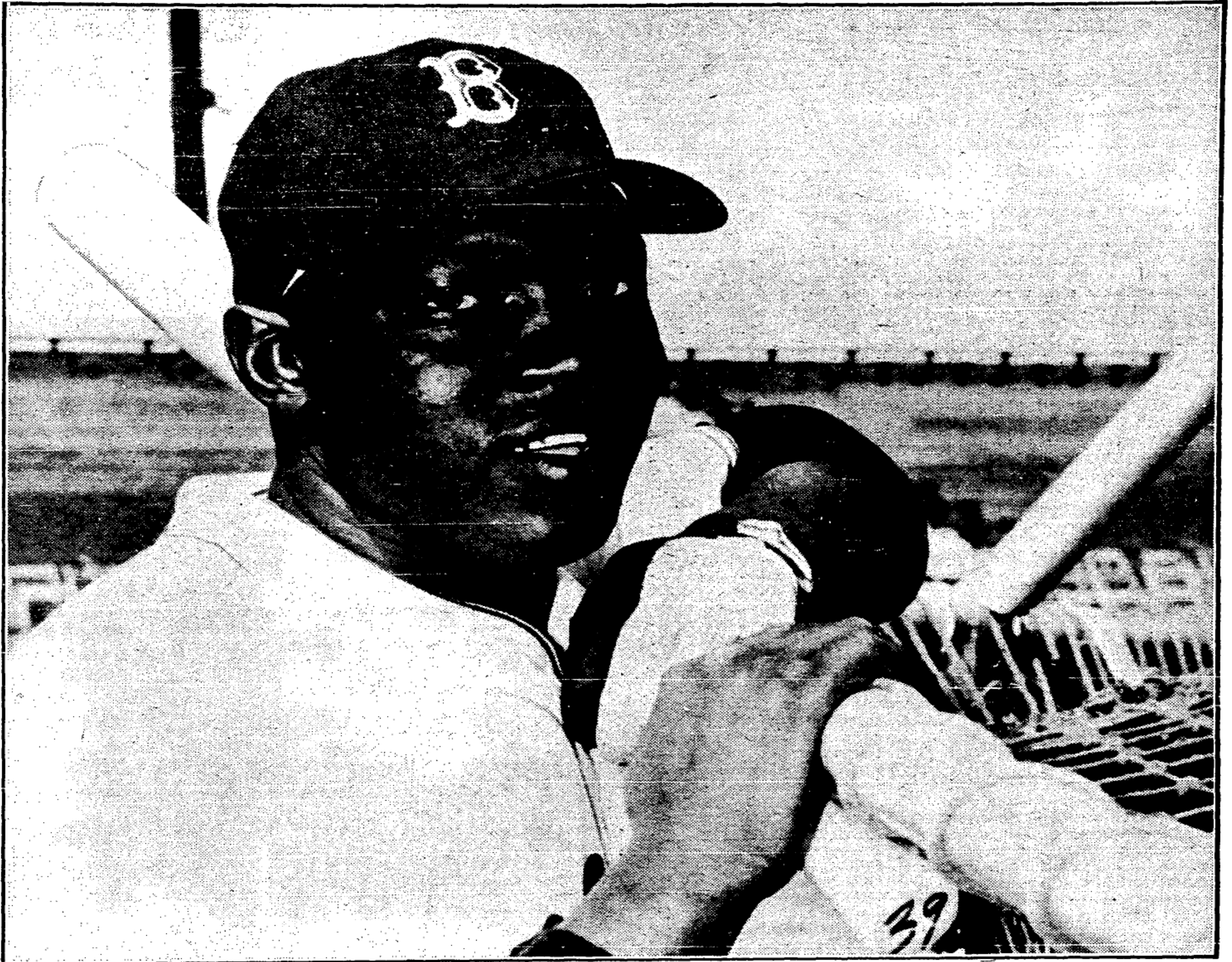
Kasko Takes Over Third

After four games of the season, however, Red Sox Manager Billy Herman decided he needed the steady influence of veteran Eddie Kasko in the lineup, so he put Kasko at third, benched Tony Horton and switched Scott to the first base spot.

"First base may be his best position," Herman mused. "We will have to wait before we know."

Scott has surprising speed and agility for a man of 220 pounds. He moves quickly in the field, runs fairly well and slides hard. Said rookie Red Sox pitcher Bill Rohr in Winter Haven this spring:

"George did what every kid who comes up to a major league camp dreams of doing—he walked in and



GEORGE SCOTT . . . A Bad Day at Plate Could Pave Way for Glittering Career

took the place by storm. He woke up the whole team."

Not only does Scott show great potential as a player, but he is also quite a personality on and off the field. For his first trip with the club, he decked himself out in an outfit—including an ascot in place of necktie—that had the whole team kidding him. Just about every color in the rainbow was represented in George's wardrobe.

The trip was only of three days' duration, yet Scott carried a wardrobe bag with him which contained several changes of clothing. Only two weeks before, Herman and traveling secretary Tom Dowd had posted an order on the bulletin board in Winter Haven to the effect that no wardrobe bags were to be carried on planes.

What About That Notice?

"Didn't you read that notice?" Herman asked, probably putting an end to Scott's attempt at becoming the best-dressed rookie in the league.

Two years ago, the most prominent part of Scott's wardrobe was a giant cast on his left leg, the result of a torn cartilage in his knee which required surgery in Boston. It was feared his career might end almost before it started, but he recovered nicely and apparently has no trouble with the knee now.

As an illustration of how much Scott loves to play baseball, another Scott, named Ed and no relation to George, tells a story about George while he was wearing the cast. Ed Scott is the scout who signed George, and also signed Henry Aaron for the old Indianapolis Clowns before the Braves bought him.

"George went home from Boston

Tuesday Is George's Day To Blast Moe's Servings

BOSTON, Mass.—Tuesday seems to be the day Boston rookie George Scott triples off Baltimore pitcher Moe Drabowsky.

In an exhibition game at Miami on April 5, Scott was decked by Drabowsky and then tripled on the next pitch. A week later, in the opening of the season, Scott got his first major league hit—a triple off Drabowsky.

after the operation and Neil Mahoney (director of Red Sox farm system) called me in Mobile and asked me to drive over and see the boy," Ed Scott recalled.

George lives in Greenville, Miss., and the scout drove there, expecting to see George resting in a rocking chair on his front porch.

"George is down at the playground," his mother told the scout. "Probably watching the kids play baseball," Ed mused as he headed for the playground.

To Ed's amazement, when he got to the playground, there was George taking batting practice on one leg.

"He was steadying himself as best he could on the cast, and taking his rips," the scout recalled. "I told him he was crazy. He might have twisted himself and wrecked his career by hurting the knee again. But that's the kind of boy he is. He loves to play baseball every minute of the day."

Eddie Popowski, who managed Scott, the most valuable player last year in the Eastern League, recalls a game when Scott was tossed out

by the umpire. While Scott was on his way to the shower room, Popowski took up the argument. In a few minutes, he, too, was ejected and headed for the showers.

"When I got to the dressing room, George was sitting on a table, crying with his head in his hands," Popowski said. "I told him not to worry about it that much, and if he got fined, I'd pay it for him."

Scott looked up and said to Popowski:

"It isn't that, Skipper. I'm crying because I should be out there hitting instead of sitting in here."

Popowski, who has seen more of Scott than anyone else in the Boston organization, believes his pupil will become an excellent hitter, but he cautions that Scott must not try to pull every pitch into Fenway Park's famous left field wall.

Hits in Any Direction

"He will pull the slow stuff," Popowski said. "But when George tries to pull everything, he's in trouble. He doesn't have to, either, because he's so strong he can hit the ball out in any direction."

Scott's main trouble at the plate seems to be inside pitches, but many Red Sox observers feel pitchers will be very reluctant to pitch him tight in Fenway Park, when it is so easy to hit an inside pitch for a home run.

"Ted Williams suggested I swing a little heavier bat during spring training to cut down my swing a little bit," Scott said. "That is supposed to help me with inside pitches."

Mel Parnell, now a Red Sox radio-TV announcer, recalls that when

Scott a Curious Kid, Asks About Opponent Hurlers

BOSTON, Mass. — Curiosity might have killed the cat, but it's going to make George Scott a better player.

"He's just like Ted Williams was," said Pete Runnels, a Red Sox coach. "He's curious about every pitcher he faces."

he managed in the Boston farm system several years ago, pitchers were afraid to throw batting practice to Scott.

"He hit so many balls back through the box that the pitchers didn't want any part of him," Parnell said.

A tremendous spring training won Scott the opening day assignment in an upset, but many feared his number was up after his five-strikeout performance against the Indians.

Said Herman:

"George will have days like that. Maybe not five strikeouts, but pitchers will fool him. You have to expect it. But, he battles back, and you have to like that."

Indeed, Scott did make a comeback before the Cleveland series ended. He struck out his first time the next day, but singled and walked later in the game. In the third game of the series, he had two line hits. He came back further with a homer on Patriots' Day.

In Boston, success-starved fans have taken the giant infielder to their bosoms already.

George could be the biggest drawing card in Boston in many years and the Red Sox certainly need one.