

Super Catcher Sundberg

Is Rangers' Mr. Clean, And a Wicked Hitter, Too

By RANDY GALLOWAY

ARLINGTON, Tex.—He's not yet a household name, unless of course, your household is situated in Texas or in Galesburg, Ill. But for now it seems only a matter of time, and a matter of circumstance, before all of the baseball world recognizes **Jim Sundberg** as baseball's best all-round catcher.

"Who, I ask, is better?" said Ranger Manager Bill Hunter, showing annoyance that someone might actually doubt him on this subject.

"I don't think we're going to get any argument that **Sundberg** is the best defensively," added Hunter, "and from July of last year through July of this year, he's been a .330 hitter."

Case closed?

NO, NOT YET. Recognition, fame and all the glitter that goes with it can come on an overnight basis. But the process didn't work that way for **Sundberg**. It astounds his le-

Sundberg. Hits poured from his bat. Over the last three months of 1977, he was a .341 hitter.

BUT WAS IT A FLUKE? Could he do it again? **Sundberg** answered those questions every single day in spring training this year. Of course, his answer was that he could do it again. Then he went out and did it. At least he has through the first half of the season, when his average stayed in the .315-.325 range.

Always the most popular Ranger among the fans, even in his low-average days, **Sundberg** is now being nominated for sainthood in Texas. So far, he's been given every honor the state can offer except for a ranch or the Pedernales River. And don't bet against that.

And like good ol' Lone Star Beer, **Sundberg** also is finally receiving the national acclaim that was never there before.

In the All-Star Game voting this year, he finished only 35,000 votes behind Fisk for the starting catcher job and in the process he swamped Munson and his New York back-

about being like them. Maybe I am, but again I'm just being **Jim Sundberg** and I sincerely hope I do have a clean, healthy reputation."

Mainly what **Sundberg** has is a reputation for defensive excellence. He was overlooked in Rawlings Gold Glove balloting in 1974 and 1975, his first two seasons in the majors, even though he deserved it. But he's won the Gold Glove the last two years and no doubt will win again this year.

BUT UNTIL LAST season, he was known as the guy with the Gold Glove and the tin bat.

"Funny thing about it," said **Sundberg**, "is that my biggest concern when I was in the minors was whether I was good enough defensively to make it in the majors. I never had a worry about being able to hit."

"In fact, I remember Sid Hudson (then the minor league pitching coach, now the Ranger pitching coach) was visiting us one day in Pittsfield and he told me the organization felt there was no question about my hitting, but that to make it to the majors, I'd have to work on my defense."

Sundberg's minor league stint was very brief. A native of Galesburg and the son of a postman there, he played for three years at the University of Iowa before signing with the Rangers. He was placed on the Double-A roster at Pittsfield (Eastern) immediately and played there in 1973. The next winter he was in the Florida Instructional League when Billy Martin, who had been hired as the Texas manager the previous September, replacing Whitey Herzog, got his first look at a Sunny **Jim**.

MARTIN CAME BACK to Texas and immediately crowded to the press that he had found a catcher. **Sundberg** was somewhat of a mystery man, but his name had surfaced during the 1973 World Series. Numerous clubs came to the Rangers at that time, wanting to make deals. And one name that was always used as a throw-in was **Jim Sundberg**.

It was the highest kind of praise. New to the organization, Martin remarked at the time, "I don't know who this **Sundberg** is, but as of right now, he's untouchable. Too many teams want that kid. I've got to look at him."

He looked and he liked.

Sundberg came to spring training in 1974 with a tremendous amount of pressure on his shoulders. He was an unknown rookie who the manager had been calling his starting catcher all winter.

Rich Billings, the only veteran catcher on the roster at the time, watched **Sundberg** the first day of spring training that year. Billings told the press afterward, "This kid has got it all defensively."

SUNDBERG HAD A standout rookie season under Martin. That year, 1974, was really the birth of major league baseball in North Texas. It was a dream year from every standpoint and Martin's word was gospel.

Known to be a demon on catchers due to his second-guessing pitches, Martin rode **Sundberg** extremely hard. But the kid held up.

Duke Sims, another veteran catcher and a Martin favorite in the past, had joined the Rangers during the 1974 season. At the end of that year, he made this comment:

"I saw the impossible happen this season. I saw a rookie catcher survive a whole season with Billy. I never thought that would happen."

Sundberg never cracked. And even after Martin was fired in midseason of 1975, the catcher never openly rapped Billy the Kid. He had plenty of opportunity because the press, knowing the situation, continually asked leading questions.

NOW ALL SUNDBERG says on the subject is, "It was tough then, but now it would be a different situation if I played for him. I'm more experienced and everybody says Billy has changed in this particular area."

What most people don't remember is that **Sundberg** had a good offensive year for a rookie. "So many people come up to me now and say I was so horrible my first three years with the club, then all of a sudden I got better," said **Sundberg**. "But that's wrong. They are looking at the press book and seeing where I hit .246 that rookie year. But up until the last month of the season, my average had been in the .280s and .290s all year."

But that slump in the last month of 1974 would dog **Sundberg** for the next 2½ seasons and ultimately lead to the reputation of good-field, no-hit. He had caught 155 games as

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Jim Sundberg Tags Out Butch Wynegar of the Twins in a Cloud of Dust at the Plate

gion of fans in Texas that he doesn't get what they consider to be deserved national recognition.

But that's the way it is, even though there have been drastic changes in this situation over the past year.

"I'm sure there are fans, good baseball fans, too, over in the National League who still never have heard of **Jim Sundberg**," said **Sundberg**.

"I used to wonder about that. Not worry about it, but wonder about the way the process works and how a Carlton Fisk and Thurman Munson and, of course, Johnny Bench, became so established as the best in the minds of the fans."

LATELY, SUNDBERG learned something he already knew—nothing brings national attention like a lofty batting average. Those who make up baseball's braintrust marvel and rave about defensive skills by a catcher. No other position is more appreciated by people within the game, which is why **Sundberg** has always had a strong cult following.

But to the fans, and to much of the media, the bottom line still reads:

Batting average.

And get this—a mere three seasons ago, **Sundberg's** bottom line read .199 for the season.

"I can still pick up a press guide or a 'Baseball Register,' see that .199 and immediately become embarrassed," said **Sundberg**. "Even one more percentage point to make it .200 wouldn't look nearly as bad. But .199. Oh gosh!"

In his first three major league seasons, **Sundberg** was a lifetime .225 hitter. Last season started the same way. Then suddenly it changed, like a heavy fog lifting. One day he was like always, groping around at the plate, hitting in the dark, it seemed.

Then the very next day was a bright new world for

Forget the fact that many felt on performance he deserved to be the starter. **Sundberg** was amazed and appreciative of the strong support he received.

SUCH A REACTION is in keeping with the **Sundberg** image.

Told that he was going to be the subject of a cover story in *THE SPORTING NEWS*, **Sundberg's** first reaction was to say, "That's a nice honor."

His second reaction was, "But I don't want it to be controversial."

Sundberg was serious, but the press that covers the Rangers on a daily basis found that to be a rather humorous line. This is his fifth major league season and controversies haven't exactly swirled around **Sundberg**.

As an indication of his lifestyle and image, his teammates jokingly refer to him as "Sonny Boone" as in Pat Boone, or "Sunny Garvey" as in Steve. And sometimes a voice from the back of the bus can be heard calling him the ultimate: "Steve Boone."

The 27-year-old **Sundberg** finds these references as amusing as everyone else, but he doesn't apologize for his image.

"**IF PEOPLE DO** think of me as being clean-cut, or wholesome, or whatever you want to call it, I like that," he said. "I like to think that I set a good example. I want parents to think that this guy is a good example for my kids, or for kids to think he's a good example for them. I hope that's what's happening."

"But whatever my image, I know it's me. I'm being myself. I don't know what Steve Garvey is like and I don't know what Pat Boone is like. But a lot of the guys kid me

Sundberg an Ex-Patsy at Bat

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a rookie, so the reasoning was that he had worn down in the final month, that he wasn't physically strong enough to catch that many games and still maintain a batting average.

"I firmly believed that," said Sundberg. **BECAUSE HE FIRMLY** believed it, it became a mental thing. He worried and fretted over it and started experimenting. Then the stroke was gone. Nothing worked. He couldn't hit any more. His confidence was shattered.

The average was .199 in 1975 and the next year it was down around .200 until a late flurry of hits brought it up to .228. The fact he hit .280 over the last two months of 1976 caused Sundberg's confidence to soar. But when his average lagged in the early part of 1977, Manager Frank Lucchesi again went to the pinch-hitter anytime Sundberg was up in key situations. His confidence was crushed again. He resented it.

"But looking back on it, I can't really blame Frank," he said. "He was trying to win games and he was under a lot of pressure himself."

Then Lucchesi was ousted and Hunter took over in late June. Hunter immediately acted like a manager who didn't know Sundberg had a tin bat. He kept him at the plate in any and all situations.

"I just can't explain in words what that meant to

me," said Sundberg. "It was the greatest boost in confidence I've ever experienced. My whole mental outlook changed. I used to go to the on-deck circle and actually dread going to the plate. I didn't want to see my average on the scoreboard, for one thing.

"Then Hunter left me in when there were situations where I knew I'd be pinch-hit for. Then a few hits came in key spots. And more hits followed. Then I started believing in myself again. I couldn't wait to hit. This confidence just built and built. It's to the point now where I'm sure I'm a .300 hitter. It's right here in my head. I'm a .300 hitter."

It's also right there on the scoreboard for all to see. And if indeed Sundberg follows last year's .291 average with a .300-plus showing this season, it seems certain that a true pattern has been established.

And if Jim Sundberg, with all his defensive talents, and his tremendous popularity with the fans, does become an established .300 hitter, it should lead to an interesting confrontation.

THIS ONE WON'T be on the diamond. It will be across a negotiating table with Ranger Owner Brad Corbett, the man who throws around his club's money like it was confetti. Three million for Richie Zisk? Over \$2 million for Bobby Bonds? Millions here, millions there and Sundberg makes only a "comfortable" \$150,000 on a contract that expires after next season.



Jim Sundberg and Richie Zisk

Corbett is at Sundberg's mercy. Whatever Sundberg wants, Corbett has to provide it. The precedent is already established. There have been suggestions that Sundberg should ask for downtown Dallas. If so, that's the day Corbett goes into the real estate business.

Twins Apply the Whitewash

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nesota's rise in the standings.

Goltz posted a 5-1 record, including a three-hit shutout July 9 in Oakland when he didn't allow a hit for 7 1/3 innings. That was the staff's sixth shutout, two more than it had all last year.

Two nights before, rookie lefthander Darrell Jackson had blanked the A's, 1-0, on three hits and, during the winning streak, the club received five complete games.

"If I don't start using Mike Marshall more often, he might get mad at me," Mauch said laughing.

OF COURSE, he was as impressed as others with the starters' performances.

"We're getting good pitching and the guys are starting to feel they have a chance to win every game," catcher Butch Wynegar said.

And first baseman Rod Carew, the club's only All-Star representative, added, "We know we can hit and score runs. We're winning because we're getting good pitching and defense."

There were other reasons for the Twins becoming contenders.

One was Mauch's faith in his players. He never ripped them publicly, even when it appeared he had no choice but to do that, and his faith has been rewarded.

For instance, of Norwood he said, "He's gone from I-hope-I-can to I-think-I-can to I-know-I-can. It's the same with Powell. I wasn't

going to quit on either one of them until they did—and they never did."

ANOTHER reason probably was the ending of Carew's contract negotiations with Calvin Griffith. The issue remained unresolved, but talks have concluded until season's end.

The decision to drop the contract discussions was made on June 14—and that was just about the time the Twins started to play with more consistency.

Can they continue?

"We're stronger than we've been at any time this year," Mauch said. "If we play as well as we can, there's no reason we can't contend."

Twin Tales: At the All-Star break, Carew needed only four more hits to total 2,000 for his career. He would become the 137th player in major league history to reach that milestone. . . . As the Twins took a two-night doubleheader from Oakland on July 7, Mauch reached a milestone, too. The second game was his 2,859th as a manager, putting him into 10th place on the managerial seniority list ahead of Clark Griffith. He would have to work about 30 more years, however to approach the leader, Connie Mack, who had 7,801. He recalled his first in 1960 with Philadelphia—Eddie Sawyer quit after the first game, Andy Cohen handled the club for the second and Mauch arrived for the third, Milwaukee whipping the Phillies, 13-2. "I sat in the clubhouse and thought, 'What have I gotten myself into here?'" he said.

In a letter to the editor of the Minneapolis Star, Fay Fishman of St. Louis Park complained about the Twins' first Halter Day promotion scheduled for July 23. She suggested using men as sex objects, too, and proposed a Loin Cloth Day. Club officials didn't say if they would add that to their list of give-away items. . . . Mike Marshall has filed a grievance because his contract has not been approved by Lee MacPhail. The contract includes a clause that says Marshall will become a free agent at the end of this season. Said Marshall: "If Mauch leaves the Twins, I want to be able to go with him. He makes it so much easier for me to pitch than most managers because he moves the defense for me according to the way I pitch each hitter."

Joe Falls



Campbell's True Love

SAN DIEGO—This may come as a surprise to some people . . . especially the ballplayers . . . but general managers are people, too.

They live and they breathe and they laugh and they cry. Sometimes they cry a lot. This is about one of them: Jim Campbell of the Tigers.

Jim has little else in life but his love for this baseball team. The Detroit Tigers are almost his entire existence. He is a little different than the others because he lives and dies a little more than they do.

Maybe you think this is okay or maybe you think it is a little sad. Either way, that's the way it is, and Jim Campbell wouldn't have it any other way.

FROM HIS FIRST waking moment in the morning, he is involved with this team, from reaching to the telephone to find out what's in the Detroit newspapers to answering the phone from one of his obscure scouts in the field.

The newspaper bit is funny. When he is on the road, he has three readers back in Detroit—his secretary, Alice Sloan, his business manager, Alex Callam, and his former publicity man, Doc Fenkell. Doc usually reads to him on Sundays because the others are off.

By eight o'clock in the morning, Campbell knows what is being said about his ball club, or even himself. He doesn't miss much, this man. It's not a case of vanity, either, because he never talks about what's in the paper. It is just one more point of information for him as he begins his day.

WHEN HE IS ON the road, Campbell doesn't go to the movies, and he doesn't watch television except for the national news. He used to play a little golf in spring training, but doesn't do that anymore. He won't go near a tennis court or a swimming pool. If he can find somebody around, he'll go to dinner every night and talk baseball. This is his life.

It is now eight o'clock in the morning at the Sheraton-Harbor Island Hotel in San Diego, site of the All-Star Game. Campbell is climbing out of bed.

He invites a newspaperman

(guess who?) to have breakfast with him.

"What do you want?" he barks over the phone.

"**COFFEE AND** juice will be fine."

"Okay, get over here by 8:30," he barks again. The man barks when he is doing something nice. It is his way to cover up his true feelings. He doesn't want anyone to think he is a softie.

Breakfast arrives at 8:30. He has ordered two grapefruit juices, two canteloupes, two orders of bacon and eggs and two orders of toast and coffee.

The phone rings before he can start eating. It's his farm director, Hoot Evers, calling from Detroit.

"How'd we do last night?" Campbell says into the phone.

A pause. "Oh. Did Kirk Gibson get any hits?" Another pause. "Oh. I'm sorry I asked." (Two of the three Tiger farm clubs lost and bonus baby Kirk Gibson made an error which cost the game at Lakeland.)

"Let's eat," says Campbell.

He does this when things aren't going well with his ball club. He eats too much and he eats too fast. By nine o'clock he is smoking his second cigar.

MY FIRST TRIP with Campbell was some 20 years ago when we toured his three minor league clubs at Knoxville, Jamestown and Syracuse.

At Jamestown, they had one ticket seller and two ticket takers at the front gate. This seemed a little odd and the question had to be asked: "How come you got one seller and two takers?"

The answer: "Somebody has to chase the foul balls when they're hit into the street."

At Syracuse, we walked into the ball park in the middle of the game and the moment the fans saw Campbell's bald head, they began booing. They booed so much, I stopped in my tracks and let him walk ahead of me. They were on him because he had just lifted three of the players off the Syracuse roster, including a muscular young outfielder named Willie Horton.

CAMPBELL DOESN'T travel with the Tigers as he did in the past. At one time he never missed

a game. He would sit there in the press box, not talking, not even moving, studying every pitch.

Now he is more selective. After the All-Star Game, he was scheduled to fly to Seattle because he had never seen a game in the Kingdome and then it was on to Lakeland.

He thinks it is important for the minor leaguers to see the boss show up once in a while.

"I think it helps," said Campbell. "I usually try to shake hands and talk to every player when I go into a town."

He particularly remembers another trip to Lakeland. He was standing in the corner of the clubhouse when a skinny-looking lad came up to him and said: "Mr. Campbell, sir. My name is Louis Whitaker and one day I will be playing for you in Detroit."

Campbell grinned as he pulled on his second cigar.

"Right then and there, I knew I would like this kid," he said.

CAMPBELL HAS lived through some of the most turbulent times in Detroit baseball history. He is very proud of the fact he has been the boss so long, for the past 17 years.

"I think I've been the general manager longer than anyone else," he'll say in an unguarded moment.

"What about Frank Navin?"

"Aw, he owned the club. I don't think that counts," Campbell will say with a small smile.

You suspect he had his wildest moments with Martin . . . like the night in Chicago when Martin came storming to his room and wanted Campbell to fire traveling secretary Vince Desmond right on the spot.

BILLY WAS feeling pretty good, as he often would at two o'clock in the morning, and Campbell said to him: "Okay, I'm getting Vince out of bed and I'm bringing him down here and YOU fire him!"

Martin looked at his boss and saw the fire in his eyes. "Aw, I'm only kidding," said Billy. "Why don't you go back to bed?"

Now Campbell was laughing.

"Could I write a book—or could I write a book?" he said.

He never will, of course. His love for this team runs too deeply.

CARDINALS

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er, now a Cardinal special scout, will take over as coach in the fall.

Some Redbirds spent part of the All-Star vacation fishing in the Lake of the Ozarks. Steve Swisher joined Mark Littell, a native Missourian, in hauling in quite a few big fish. . . . Boyer went to Little Rock in hope of watching his son, Dave, play for the Travelers, but the club was rained out. Ken hasn't had a chance to see Dave play since Dave became a pro four seasons ago. . . . Ted Simmons had a hitting streak snapped at 12 games. . . . While Hendrick was struggling, the man for whom he was traded, righthander Eric Rasmussen, reeled off five straight victories for the Padres.

Royals Remain on Roller-Coaster Pursuit of A's

By JOE MCGUFF

KANSAS CITY—The Royals, who at the outset of the season bravely announced their intentions of winning the American League West, seem to be trying to arrive at their destination by roller coaster. One week they are up, the next week they are down. Consistency is a quality that eludes them.

They started the season slowly, compiling an 8-14 record through



Jack McKeon

May 3. Suddenly, the Royals began to play like the team that challenged Oakland a year ago.

They won eight of their next eleven starts, nine of which came on the road. The Royals returned for a 13-game home stand, their longest of the year, and won eight times.

Seemingly the Royals and Oakland were moving to turn the A. L. West into a two-team race, but at this juncture, the Royals stopped moving. They went to Cleveland and Baltimore, where they lost four times in six starts. Before the next-to-last game of the trip, a disturbed Jack McKeon called his club together for a meeting.

"I TOLD 'EM we were too good a club to be playing like we have been playing," McKeon said. "I told 'em if we expected to catch Oakland, we had to shake ourselves."

"You're getting paid well, I told 'em. Now you're going to have to go out and earn it."

After McKeon's message, the Royals went out and defeated the Orioles, 8-0, but the next night they blew a 4-2 lead in the ninth inning and lost, 5-4.

At the time of McKeon's clubhouse meeting, the Royals ranked third in the league in team pitching and were tied for second in runs scored. Overall, their defense was improved over last year. Why, then, were the Royals hovering

around .500 and slipping farther behind Oakland?

No one seemed quite sure of the answer, including Cedric Tallis, the man whose trades have been largely responsible for the Royals' success.

"IT'S REALLY a hard thing to pin down," Tallis said. "Our pitching ranks third in the league statistically, but it has been spotty. Paul Splittorff is not performing like he did last year. Steve Busby has had some problems, but he's coming along. Losing Briles has hurt us, but it should give us a lift when he comes off the disabled list June 22."

"Bruce Dal Canton has been a pleasant surprise. Every time he pitches he gets better. Al Fitzmorris has been pitching well."

"Up to this point, Mayberry and Otis have not performed as well as we had expected, although this pertains more to Otis than to Mayberry."

"Some of our young players have done well. George Brett has been especially good defensively. Jim Wohlford has done even better than we had reason to expect. Al Cowens will be playing more for us. Rojas just gets better and better. Patek is fielding well. McRae has solved our designated-hitter problem."

"I THINK OUR club is a good club, but we seem to lack a killer instinct. We win the first two games of a series and then we

can't put the other club away in the third. The killer instinct is the trademark of a winning team. When Oakland gets you down, they mash you," Tallis noted. "So far, we haven't been able to do that."

"How many victories do you think it will take to win in our division? Let's say it's 94. Well, after our eastern trip, we were in a position where we needed to win 68 of our last 110 games to reach 94 victories. That means we've got to get with it in June if we're going to contend."

"I'M NOT entirely satisfied that every effort is being extended by all of our players," Tallis said. "Some of them seem to be letting down a little here and there. Players like Rojas and some others have given everything they have, but that's not true of everybody."

The Royals are approaching a critical juncture in their season. Starting June 20, they will play a series of 15 consecutive games against Oakland and Chicago. If they have not solved their problems of inconsistency by that time, they could quickly play themselves out of the race.

Royals' Roundup: Tallis said the Royals' chances of making a major trade in the near future are minimal. "About all you can get at this time of the year is someone who has failed somewhere else,"

Tallis said. . . . For the last three years, the Royals have made an outstanding football prospect their No. 1 choice in the free-agent draft. In 1972, they selected Jamie Quirk, who had a scholarship at Notre Dame. Last year, they took Lew Olsen, who had a scholarship at Stanford. James Wilson, their No. 1 choice last year, signed a letter of intent at Maryland.



Cedric Tallis

Sundberg Paying Off on Gamble by Martin

By RANDY GALLOWAY

ARLINGTON—It had to be termed a gamble, giving Jim Sundberg immediate major league exposure when you consider his limited professional background.

On the one hand, the Rangers had been in the position of force-feeding young players into the major leagues since the team moved to Texas three seasons ago. On the other, there was Billy Martin, the new manager, who went on record as one who would attempt to curtail that practice as much as possible.

But in the case of Sundberg, the 22-year-old catcher, Martin saw immediate major league potential and was saying as far back as last winter that the University of Iowa product was the answer to the Rangers' continuing question: "Who's going to catch?"

Two months into the regular season, Sundberg was living up to that prophecy. In the team's first 50 games, the Rangers were 18-10 when the rookie was behind the plate. His defensive work and his throwing arm backed up the impressive minor league scouting reports, and his bat was beginning to come to life.

"THERE'S NO DOUBT that the kid will hit," stated Martin. "All the tools are there. He got away slow at the plate because he hasn't had that much time to concentrate on his hitting. There's been so much for him to learn behind the plate, and so much for him to absorb, that he's had to concentrate on defense. But now that he's picking up the system, and getting a grasp of what we want, the hitting is coming."

"Frankly, I think we're going to have one of the best catchers in baseball for years to come. And the other teams in this league know this as well as I do. They respect that arm already. No team is going

to take any base-stealing liberties with him."

It's been a big jump for Sundberg, a native of Galesburg, Ill., who reported to spring training with the Rangers after only a year of professional experience, on the Double-A level at Pittsfield (Eastern).

"I WAS EXPECTING some hitting problems until I could adjust to major league pitching," said Sundberg, "but what really caught me by surprise was the adjustment I had to make defensively. I expected that catching up here would be about like Pittsfield, or even college. There's no way I thought it would be as complicated as it is."

"I'm expected to know everything about each hitter, every strength, every weakness. Billy tells me and I've got to remember it. Then there's watching Billy before calling every pitch in case he



Jim Sundberg

wants something special, or a play. Also I've got to remind the pitcher of every situation as a double check system. It all kind of ran together on me there for a while. When I was going to the plate, I still was thinking about defense."

For all of April and into May, Sundberg's average was in the low .200s. Then came a push that saw it reach .250 by early June with 10 runs batted in for 96 trips to the plate.

"IT'S NOTHING sensational yet, but he's showing an improvement," said Martin. "I didn't want to push him too much this early, so that's why I've platooned him against certain righthanders. But he's got the ability to play every day and hit well against all pitchers. It's just a matter of time and experience."

Martin announced last spring that if Sundberg could hit only .230 in his rookie season, his presence would be a plus factor because of his defensive abilities.

"If I hit anything below .250, I'm going to be disappointed," noted Sundberg. "I want to hit more, but I'm setting .250 as a minimum. I don't think that's asking too much for the first year. It'll be tough, but I think I'm starting to grasp the situation now. I just hope some home runs come. I consider myself somewhat of a power-hitter, at least I was in college. But I've been up 96 times in the majors and still don't have my first homer."

Ranger Ramblings: Club attendance records continue to fall at Arlington Stadium. Through 25 dates, some 400,028 fans had been in attendance, the best in the American League. An overflow crowd of 39,269 was on hand for Bat Night against Baltimore on June 1 and that's some 4,000 over capacity. It was estimated that at least 2,000 fans were turned away that night.

For the three-game weekend series with Baltimore, the total (78,705) was also a club record.

The ownership transfer of the Rangers became official on May 29 when American League owners approved the sale by Bob Short to

a Metroplex group headed by Brad Corbett of Fort Worth. Corbett said the price was \$9.5 million with Short retaining a seventh. There is speculation that Corbett will buy out Short's interest within 60 days.

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