

The Reception Committee Was on Its Feet and Applauding When **Joe Torre** Returned to the Dugout Following a Home Run Against the Giants.

Torre's Bat Mark Soars as Waistline Shrinks

By NEAL RUSSO

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—The waitress was spiling about the wonders of the banana cream pie on the menu. A chow-hound of a reporter drooled. But the athlete across the table wasted no time in turning thumbs down on the dessert recommendation.

The decision was easy for **Joe Torre**. The more his stomach shrinks, the more inflated his batting average becomes. **Torre** figures he saw the light much sooner than other players with weight problems who were moving into their 30s. And why waste a chance to stay in the \$100,000-a-year neighborhood for perhaps several more years?

"After all the publicity, I'd be embarrassed if I put all that weight back on," **Torre** said as he polished off the steak that is a constant feature of his high-protein diet.

Besides, this diet thing has become such a big item that **Torre** likes the idea of helping others with weight problems. He got so many requests for diet advice that he had his protein diet mimeographed so he could mail it to the writing fans.

"Dr." **Torre** cautions those interested in his diet to do as he did—see his physician first, and he makes it clear, too, that he actually went on the diet completely only for 15 days in March, 1970.

Torre's protein diet calls for eight glasses of water a day, plenty of beef (especially steak), some cottage cheese, plenty of eggs so long as they are not fried, but no vegetables and no beer or other alcoholic beverages. Salad is okay if the dressing consists entirely of vinegar.

"I didn't have even so much as one Budweiser while I was on the strict diet," **Torre** said. "But a ballplayer like me can do this only in spring training. I like a beer during the season to release some of the tension, but an 0-for-4 day in a spring training game isn't aggravating."

He's Not Hungry Any More

Torre lost 12 pounds in those two weeks in March last year. He continued to lose a little at a time.

"You can go on this kind of diet only a short while at a time," **Torre** said. "The big thing is that my stomach shrank and I just haven't cared to eat so much anymore. I watch myself, though, because it feels so much better to play at 198 or 200 pounds than 225."

Torre finished the 1969 season at .228. Last year, he played at between .203 and .208.

"I don't get tired in the hot weather anymore because I'm a lot lighter," said the Cardinal captain, quick to note that half of his games are played in red-hot St. Louis.

Maturity, experience, confidence—all have played a big part in **Torre's** climb. So has being in the Cardinal organization.

He always has been a good hitter. But his career took a sharp turn upward shortly after he was traded by Atlanta to the Cardinals, just before the 1969 season.

In fact, the thick-browed **Torre** has gone from rough verbal exchanges with Braves' boss Paul Richards to the captaincy of the Cardinals. That's how highly the St. Louis brass regards him.

Slimmed-down **Torre**, looking svelte in the Cardinals' double-knit uniform, was batting a fat .364 when he was announced officially as the National League's starting third baseman for the All-Star Game. He had collected 118 hits, 14 home runs and 60 runs batted in. He had pushed his career batting

average above .300, after going into the campaign at .297.

Incidentally, if **Torre** stays torrid at bat, he could well move into the Top 10 among Cardinal hitters. In those listings, only the statistics while in a Cardinal uniform count. When the All-Star news came, **Torre** was batting .319 in 2½ seasons as a Redbird. Only six Cardinals had a higher composite average for the club.

Joe Beat Out Swifties in '70

Here are the Top 10: Rogers Hornsby, .359; Johnny Mize, .336; **Joe** Medwick, .335; Stan Musial, .331; Chick Hafey, .326; Jim Bottomley, .325; Frank Frisch, .312; George Watkins, .309; Rip Collins, .307 and **Joe** Cunningham, .304.

Because of **Torre's** lack of speed and the ability of Willie Davis and Ralph Garr to pick up leg hits, **Joe** wasn't thinking seriously of his chances at a batting title.

But, wait a minute. . . . Had everyone already forgotten about 1970? Slow as he was supposed to be, **Torre** happened to beat out everyone in the league—all those swifties—in the batting race, except Rico Carty. True, Carty batted a lofty .366 and **Torre** was at .325, but there isn't even a Carty to get in the way this year.

Besides, this year **Torre** was able to start out for the first time knowing he did not have to handle the strength-sapping job of catcher. **Torre** used to say catching helped him as a hitter because he'd be so tired late in a game he wouldn't be able to do such things as overswing.

However, now he's thoroughly convinced he's lots better off playing third base, which he does pretty well.

"It's mostly mental," **Torre** said. "I don't have to worry about how to pitch to certain batters the next inning or such things as whether our pitcher was losing his stuff. It was especially tough trying to concentrate at bat when we were in those 1-0 games."

To **Torre's** credit, even though he caught a lot in addition to playing first base and third base as a Cardinal, he had missed only six of his first 410 games with the club.

Torre Wants to Play Every Day

"Playing while feeling under par or hurt a bit is a state of mind you have to play through," **Torre** said. "The weight loss has helped me in that respect. You're paid good money to play, so you ought to try to play. Otherwise, you're letting down the rest of the club."

Torre, who has been more than adequate with the glove at third base after starring as a catcher and at first, had two 23-game stretches without an error and both strings ended on fluke plays. The first streak-ending miscue was on a bad-hop throw from the outfield and the second was a throwing error, after he caught his spikes in the turf.

Torre likes to talk about discipline, composure and concentration when he is asked how he has been managing to avoid long, killing slumps.

"You have to get mentally ready," he said. "You can't do like a lot of young players do when they slacken off after getting off to a good start."

"Those young players will change bats over and over and

change stances and move around in the batter's box. The thing to do is not panic when you're in a slump. Hank Aaron told me something: 'Every time at bat is a new day.'"

In other words, forget about yesterday, whether it was an 0-for-4 or a 3-for-5 day and look forward to the future.

Coach Ken Boyer has been around for some time, so he took in a lot of territory when he said, "For the first two months of this season, **Torre** was as good a hitter as anyone I've watched."

Torre hit safely in each of his first 22 games this season, and he hasn't had many dry spells since then. The way he was going, someone would have done well to make a documentary about him and call it "**Torre, Torre, Torre!**"

Such a film would need a supporting player named Frank **Torre**. **Torre's** big brother, who did a good job with the bat for the Braves, is in touch with him about three times a week.

"He reminds me on the phone not to go for home runs and he has other good advice for me," **Torre** said.

Speaking of Frank **Torre**, brother **Torre's** great hitting hasn't hurt the sale of Adirondack bats, which **Torre** uses. Frank is the major league representative for the lumber firm. **Torre** is using heavier bats, 36-ouncers, because the heavier the bat, the better the wood.

Speaking of relatives, **Torre** makes certain he takes care of all the requests for tickets, autographed baseballs and autographed pictures from his sister, Mother Superior Mary Marguerite.

Brother Gets Misfit Clothes

"I can't turn her down," he said, "because you can't be messing with The Man upstairs and aggravate Him."

One of the greatest beneficiaries of **Torre's** diet is older brother, Rocco.

"He got all my old clothes when they didn't fit me any more," **Torre** said.

As a master needler on the club, along with Bob Gibson, Dal Maxvill and Steve Carlton, **Torre** was not surprised when the tables were turned on him after he was named team captain.

Pitcher Jerry Reuss immediately cut out captain's bars from adhesive tape and stuck them on **Torre's** cap and shirt.

"Right after I was named captain, we were playing the Giants and I had gone to talk to Carlton on the mound," **Torre** related, "and the very next batter, Chris Speier, hits a home run. The next time I headed for the mound, Maxvill yelled to me to go back to third base."

Torre is regarded as one of the hardest hitters, when you talk about consistently hitting hard. Fellows like Frank Johnson of the Giants, Steve Blass of the Pirates, Jose Arcia of the Padres and Clay Kirby of the Padres will attest to that.

Torre banged baseballs off the knees of Johnson and Kirby. He hit a shot that battered Blass' pitching elbow and put him out of commission. And another **Torre** smash smacked short-stop Arcia in the face and sidelined him for two weeks.

Torre said that he's managed to get some leg hits, thanks to AstroTurf, noting that infielders are playing deeper for him.

"Leg hits?" one of the Padres queried. "**Torre** must mean those hits that smash off some infielder's or pitcher's legs."

Terrific **Torre** Tabbed as Sure-Fire Star

Experts Hail Kid Catcher as a 'Natural'

20-Year-Old Handles Post Like Vet Despite Just One Full Campaign in Minors

By BOB WOLF

MILWAUKEE, Wis.

When **Joe Torre** was a roly-poly youngster of 16, he used to work out with the Braves occasionally and dream of the time he would join his brother Frank in the major leagues. Now that he has made the Big Time at the tender age of 20, his one regret is that Frank isn't with him.

There may still be a **Torre** brother act for that matter, since Frank is still in the Braves' chain at Vancouver (Coast) and could be called up at any time. He spent four and a half years with the varsity before being sent to Louisville (American Association) in midseason last year.

Meanwhile, however, Frank's kid brother has jumped upon the big league scene with such a splash that baseball men are already touting him as one of the future greats of the game.

A greenhorn who never caught in his life until two years ago and never played professionally until last season, young Joe **has** performed like a veteran since being recalled from Louisville on May 20 to fill in for the sore-armed Del Crandall.

Broke In With Three Hits

At bat, Torre **has** taken picks on the best pitchers the opposition has to offer. He broke in by getting a homer, double and single in a double-header at Cincinnati, May 21. He hit his homer off Joey Jay, a Milwaukee alumnus who is one of the biggest winners in the National League.

Six days later, Joe **again** had a homer, double and single, this time against the Dodgers, and his home-run victim was the talented Don Drysdale. On Memorial Day at Philadelphia, he had four for six, including two for two off the sensational Art Mahaffey. In 31 games all told through June 22, he was batting .295 and had hit six home runs.

But Torre's hitting has been only part of the story. Everyone who has **watched** him perform behind the bat finds it hard to believe that he took up **catching** such a short time ago. He threw out five of the first six runners who tried to steal on him, and the other made it primarily because he had a big jump on the pitcher.

He caught pop fouls with amazing ease, he blocked the plate beautifully and he handled himself well in every other phase of catching as well.

Loaded With Ability

The only answer, of course, is that Torre **is** one of those naturals who come along all too seldom in baseball these days. He has so much innate ability that by applying himself conscientiously, he became a competent catcher almost overnight.

As good as the youngster is, **though**, he probably wouldn't be a major leaguer today if brother Frank hadn't advised him to take up catching. He had been a pitcher, first baseman and third baseman in high school at St. Francis Prep in Brooklyn.

Recalling his fortuitous switch of positions, **Joe** said, "Frank was always after me to become a catcher. He saw my build and figured I'd be better off catching. Speed had a lot to do with it—lack of speed I mean, since I wasn't fast. I liked to swing a bat, so that killed my pitching ideas, and it just looked better from every angle to become a catcher."

"I'd been playing for three sum-

Bat Sets Tepee Campfires Blazing



JOE TORRE . . . YOUNGSTER TAKES TO CATCHING LIKE DUCK TO WATER

'Playing With Braves Dream Come True to Joe,' Says Mom

PHILADELPHIA, Pa.—"It's like a dream come true for Joe **be-** cause he grew up with the ball club."

That's how Mrs. Margaret Torre **of** Brooklyn, mother of the ball-playing Torre **brothers**, Frank and Joe, **described** Joe's rapid climb to the major leagues.

"He worked out with the Braves so much that he was almost part of the club," Mrs. Torre said after seeing her younger son play for the first time in the majors here, May 30.

Mrs. Torre **then** added, "And Frank will be back one of these days, too. I know he will."

Frank Torre **was** a Braves' first baseman four and a half seasons before being sent to Louisville (American Association) last June. He is now with their Vancouver (Coast) affiliate.

WOLF.

mers with the Brooklyn Cadets in the New York Federation, and I'd known the manager a long time so I asked him if I could catch. Our catcher had gone into the service, so I took over and caught about 60 games that year."

It was with this meager experience as a catcher that Torre **accepted** a modest bonus, reportedly \$15,000, to sign with the Braves.

"The Giants and Cardinals were interested, too," **Torre** said, "but I didn't really consider them. I figured catchers were worth more than they were offering at the time."

"Before I became a catcher, the Cubs were the only club really interested in me. Sure, I worked out with the Braves a lot, but I weighed 240 then. I was Mr. Five by Five.

is a trim, finely conditioned athlete who is both rugged enough and quick enough to handle any situation that arises on the diamond.

Torre **hadn't** even finished his first day as a major league catcher before he proved he didn't scare. In the second game of the May 21 double-header at Cincinnati, Vada Pinson of the Reds charged toward the plate with the tying run in the ninth inning as Frank Robinson was being run down between first and second. The throw went to Torre, and Pinson hit him so hard that he knocked Joe **over**, but he hung onto the ball for the out that saved the game.

Unruffled by Dusters

Torre **has** been the same way with a bat in his hands. He has ducked brush-back pitches more than once and has dug right in for the next pitch.

In his three seasons of high school play, Torre **compiled** batting averages of .391, .514 and .460. He had power and everything else he needed to become a major leaguer—except a fielding position.

John (Honey) Russell, former Seton Hall basketball coach who scouts for the Braves in the Middle Atlantic area, watched the youngster regularly and reported that he was not a big league prospect. But it was the same Russell who lost little time in signing Torre after he'd turned to catching.

Without the winter instructional program in Florida, Torre never

Frosh Belter Raps Homers Off Hill Aces

Jolts Jay for Round-Tripper in Bow—Brother Frank's Advice Gave **Joe** Big Lift

would have reached the Big Time as fast as he did. Technically, it took him just one season at Eau Claire and 27 games at Louisville, but what doesn't show up in his record are the two winter seasons he spent in Florida.

Torre got his first taste of professional competition in the Florida circuit in 1959. He was sent there to polish his catching and, while doing that, he led the league in hitting with a .346 average. Because of his illness part of last winter, he fell below .300, but still picked up more valuable knowledge of the art of catching.

Northern Loop Batting King

At Eau Claire last season, **Torre** was without question the outstanding player in the Northern League. He hit .344 to win the batting championship, won a berth on the all-star team and was named the rookie of the year.

When the Northern League season ended, the **Braves** brought Torre **up** to the varsity for what was left of the National League campaign. He did no catching, but he pinch-hit twice and got one single.

Moreover, he made a tremendous impression on every Brave from Manager Chuck Dressen on down. Crandall, the No. 1 catcher in the business, called him "the best young catcher they've brought up to this club since I've been here."

But it wasn't until spring training this year that anyone realized how close Torre **was** to major league status. He batted 15 times and had nine hits, including four homers, and drove in 11 runs.

"We'll Send for Torre"

After that he was optioned to Louisville to play every day, but Dressen said, "We don't have to worry so much about a replacement for Crandall any more. If anything happens to him, we'll send for Torre."

Something did happen to Crandall, and when it became obvious that he would be out quite a while, Torre was recalled. At the time, Joe **was** hitting a cool .376 and had knocked in 24 runs in 27 games.

Ben Geraghty, the perennially successful manager of the Louisville club, put the final seal of approval on Torre **in** a telephone conversation with General Manager John McHale. "He's the best catcher in the American Association," Geraghty told McHale. "I'm sure he can help you."

It took Torre **just** one day to prove Geraghty was right.

Joe Wallops Four Base-Hits With His Family on Hand

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. — Joe Torre **went** brother Frank one better in the hit department when he played before his family for the first time in the major leagues, May 30.

With his mother, sister, uncle, aunt and girl friend, Joan Zock, in from-Brooklyn to watch him perform, **Joe** collected four hits in the Memorial Day double-header with the Phillies here.

Five years ago, Frank had three hits in a game against the Dodgers at old Ebbets Field in Brooklyn.

WOLF.

Scouts Snubbed Star Slugger Torre

Verdict: Too Heavy, Slow-- Now He's Whiz at Two Jobs

By BOB WOLF

MILWAUKEE, Wis.

When **Joe Torre** finished high school in Brooklyn five years ago, there was no great rush to get his name on a major league contract. In fact, there was no rush at all.

As the slugging young Brave so aptly phrased it recently, "No major league club was the slightest bit interested in my services."

Torre had wanted to be a major leaguer since boyhood. The fact that his brother Frank had made the Big Time as a first baseman with the Braves whetted his baseball appetite even more. He had ability, too, and Frank used to say, "He's a better ball player than I am."

But **Joe** lacked speed and big league scouts invariably shy away from infielders who can't run. He had played first base and third base in high school.

In addition to that drawback, young **Joe** tended to be a trifle overweight. When he was 15 years old, he weighed a bulky 240 pounds. Scouts kept bringing back the report: "Too heavy and too slow."

So **Torre** took a job at the American Stock Exchange and started playing sandlot ball in Brooklyn. It was then that brother Frank hit upon the idea that he try catching. As soon as he did, his whole future changed. By late that summer, the Braves had signed him. By late the following summer, he was in a major league uniform.

Scout Cited Lack of Speed

John Mullen, the Braves' farm director, still shakes his head in amazement when he recalls the unusual twist to the **Torre** story.

"We had been watching **Joe** for quite a while," Mullen said. "One day I called Honey Russell, our scout, and asked about him. Russell told me to forget about him. He couldn't see him making it as a first or third baseman because of his lack of speed."

"I didn't think any more about it until a couple of months later when Russell called me and said he wanted to give **Torre** a five-figure bonus. I asked him what in the world had happened to make him change his mind. He said **Joe** was catching now and looked great."

"Well, you just don't expect catchers to be able to run and, if our scout thought that much of his chances, it was fine with us. We gave him the bonus and told him to report the following spring."

"The funny thing about all this is that now **Joe** is playing first base as well as catching and I haven't heard one person say he is too slow to be a first baseman."

He's Puzzle to Pitchers

Certainly the pitchers around the National League can't figure out how to pitch to the righthanded-hitting star. He leads the Braves in every offensive department that means anything—runs scored, hits, total bases, doubles, home runs, runs batted in and batting average. At 23 (he will be 24 in July), he has clearly become one of the outstanding players in the game.

By combining versatility with ability to hit a baseball, **Torre** has posed a problem for the All-Star selectors. On the basis of performances to date, he is both the best catcher and the best first baseman in the league.

The players will do the voting this

Bragan Wouldn't Trade **Joe** For 'Anyone You Can Name'

MILWAUKEE, Wis. — In the opinion of Manager Bobby Bragan, **Joe Torre** of the Braves is the hottest property in baseball today.

"I'm not kidding," Bragan said. "I wouldn't trade **Torre** for Willie Mays or anybody else you can name. If I did trade him for Mays, I'd be giving away ten years."

Mays is 33, **Torre** 23.

Joe's Top Regret—Failure To Team Up With Brother

MILWAUKEE, Wis.—One of the big regrets of **Joe Torre's** major league career is that he and his brother, Frank, never got a chance to stage a brother act in a championship game.

Frank **Torre**, a first baseman who preceded **Joe** to the Braves and later played with the Phillies, is nine years older than **Joe**. The pair played together in one B team game in spring training in 1961, then Frank was sold to Vancouver (Coast). Then they opposed each other several times in the last two seasons while Frank was with the Phillies.

The brothers are together now, however, as partners in a New York sporting goods business. Frank, who retired from the game last winter, is minding the store.

month for the July 7 classic at Shea Stadium in New York. Under the election rules, a two-position man must be considered at the spot at which he has played the greater number of games. **Torre** has divided his time so evenly that his place on the ballot probably won't be determined until the voting deadline.

Passing the halfway mark in June, **Torre** had caught in 34 games and played first base in 26. In six of the games he played both positions, starting at first and finishing behind the plate. In one, he didn't start, but he finished at first. He had started 28 games as a catcher and 25 as a first baseman.

For which ever position **Torre** runs, however, it seems safe to say that he will win by a landslide. With such key men as Eddie Mathews, Henry Aaron and Felipe Alou off to slow starts, **Torre** just about carried the Braves' offense in the first seven weeks of the season.

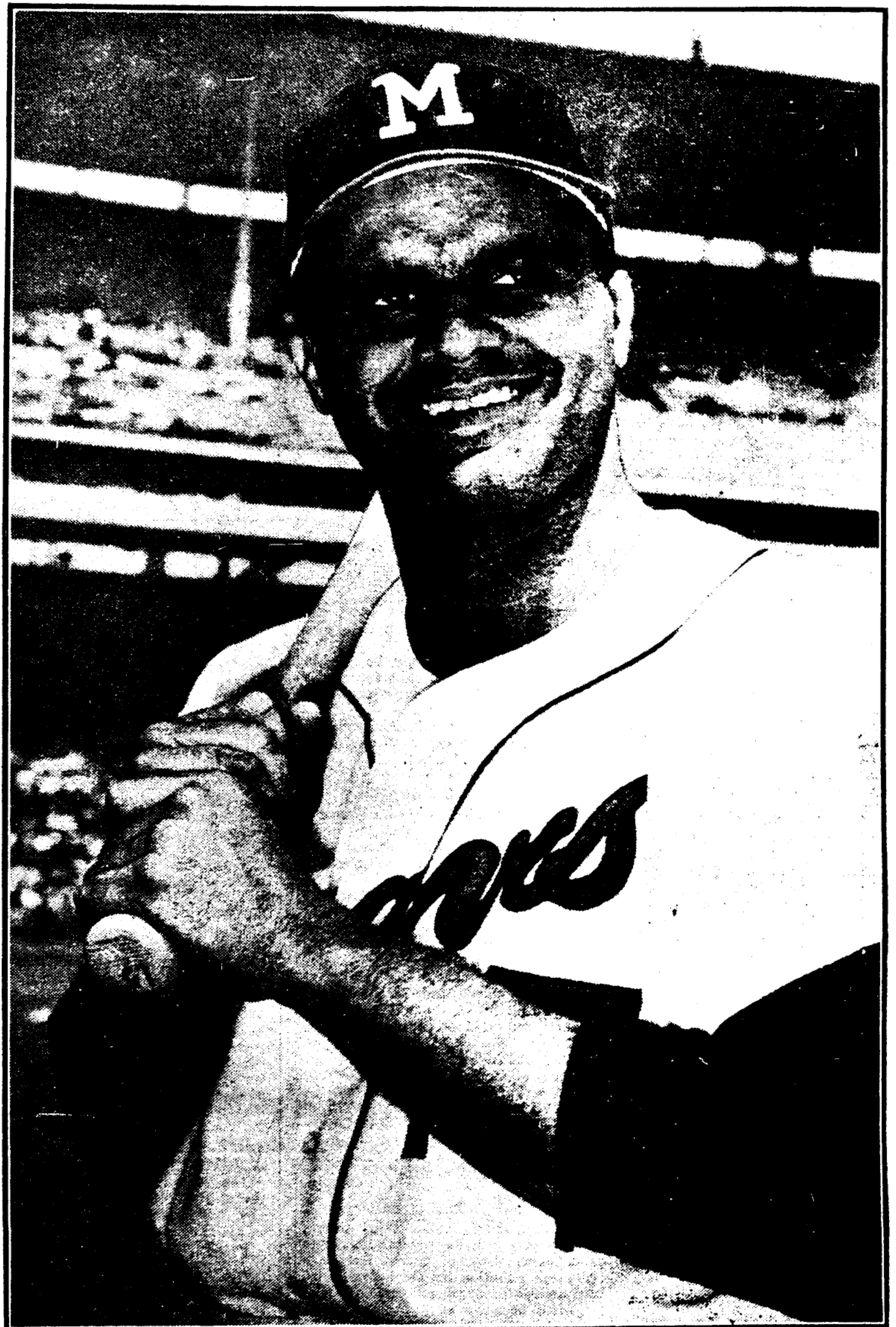
Triple-Crown Candidate

As a matter of fact, **Torre** took Aaron's place as the Brave most likely to make a bid for the elusive triple crown of hitting. Aaron has been chasing the honor almost as long as he has been in the league. Last year, he came within seven percentage points of catching up with it. But going into June, **Torre** had doubled Henry's totals of home runs and runs batted in and was 100 points ahead of him in hitting.

Once **Torre** reported for professional duty in 1960, he lost no time in making it clear that the Braves had a hot prospect on their hands. Breaking in at Eau Claire (Northern), he led the league with a .344 average, 16 homers and 74 RBIs.

The Braves called him up to the varsity in September that year and he had one hit in two pinch-hitting appearances. The following spring, he piled up nine hits in his first 15 swings in exhibition play, but with Del Crandall around, it was deemed advisable to give him the benefit of more every-day play in the minor leagues.

It was shortly after the 1961 sea-



JOE TORRE . . . Versatile on Defense, Power Man at Plate

son that Crandall went on the shelf with a mysterious arm ailment. The Braves hesitated to recall **Torre** from Louisville (American Association) for fear that he might not be quite ready, but finally they made the move on May 19. He was hitting .342 at the time, with 24 RBIs in 27 games.

From the Sunday at Cincinnati when **Torre** jumped into the lineup and had a field day in a doubleheader, the Braves had no further qualms.

Torre left no doubt that even without Crandall, the catching situation was in good hands. He hit .278 that year, .282 in 1962, when Crandall returned and shared the job with him, and .293 last season. **Joe** did so well in '63 that he shoved Crandall into the background and eventually into a trade to the Giants.

While **Torre** led all major league catchers in hitting last year and embellished his average with 14 home

runs and 71 runs batted in, his emergence as one of the game's leading sluggers has been somewhat sudden.

Helped by Steady Employment

What is the answer? **Torre** probably hit upon it when he said, "A couple of years ago, I was a defensive hitter—cautious and afraid of striking out. Now I'm attacking the ball. Batting fourth or fifth, I've got to hit the ball hard and get those key hits."

"I think the biggest thing I have going for me is that I'm playing every day."

There are those who feel that switching between catching and first base will hamper **Torre's** defensive play, but he doesn't agree.

"Naturally it's easier at first base," **Torre** said. "Catching is tough. It re-

quires more concentration because you're in the game much more than at first base. You have to get yourself 'up' to go behind the plate. After a few pitches, though, you get acclimated."

One of **Torre's** biggest boosters is 43-year-old Warren Spahn, who began pitching professionally the year **Torre** was born (1940).

"**Joe** has the potential to be one of the best," Spahn said. "He has no apparent weakness, he hits the ball hard and he has good power to all fields."

"He doesn't have to pull the ball to hit it out of the park and that's what makes him a good hitter."

"What impresses me most about him is that he is so well disciplined at the plate. He hits the ball where it is pitched instead of trying to pull everything."

Braves Boast Masked Marvel: Torre

Star Catcher Better Than Ever With Svelte Frame

By WAYNE MINSHEW

ATLANTA, Ga.

Everybody, it seems, is satisfied that the Braves' Joe Torre is just about the best there is at his particular trade, which is hitting and catching baseballs.

It isn't, of course, quite that simple. Torre is a major league catcher and, as such, he not only catches and hits, but also handles pitchers, throws out would-be base-stealers, sets up hitters and is the man-in-charge of everything that takes place near home plate. In addition, he grabs pop fouls, tags out full-speed, bound-to-score runners, shakes off busted fingers and renders tangible leadership.

Then there's offense. Torre hits for power and average, bunts and seldom strikes out. He does everything well, but run. There are people who'll tell you they time Big Joe with a calendar when he runs from home to first.

The Braves wouldn't trade him, however, if he ran the bases backward.

Joe Torre, they feel, is numero uno, tops, the best. Who's to argue?

And, as mentioned, everybody thinks so. Well, almost everybody. Torre apparently has his doubts, the way he keeps working to improve his talents.

Last season, for example, he did not have the best of years defensively. The year before, Torre was the winner of a Gold Glove.

Swifties Are Cautious

"He musta caught with it last season," said a cynic, and Torre is the last to say he had a good year with the glove. Still, nobody took any liberties with him. Not even Maury Wills or anybody else.

At any rate, to show you what kind of pride Joe Torre has, he lost weight over the winter and reported for the current season a trim, ready-to-go defensive catcher.

"I had to," he said. "The loss of weight gives me more agility back there, and I want to prove to people I'm not that bad a catcher. I don't want to be remembered as just a good-hitting catcher."

You can see the difference. Already this season, Torre must have thrown out a dozen batters by pouncing on bunts and topped pitches that rolled only a few feet in front of the plate.

"Joe is really moving around back there now," marveled Braves' pitcher Ken Johnson. "He has improved his defense though he was pretty good anyway."

Extra Pounds Cut Efficiency

Said Phillies' Manager Gene Mauch: "I don't think much of defense when I think of Joe Torre, considering the way he kills us with his bat, but the weight thing can be a big difference. I know when Clay Dalrymple, our catcher, puts on even five pounds, you can really see the difference in his defense."

Loss of weight is only part of the story. During spring training, Torre worked like a rookie, spending as much time with special catch-

Joe's Hard to Top When It Comes to Quick Quip

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—Joe Torre is as quick with a quip as he is with a bat.

When the Braves defeated the Dodgers, 7-1, here in an early-season contest in which Bob Bailey's homer accounted for the Dodger run, Torre was asked what would have happened if ex-Dodger great Sandy Koufax had been pitching.

"We would have lost, 1-0," cracked Torre, "and Bailey would have been a hero."

ing instructor Clint Courtney as he could in the batting cage.

"Joe is always working to improve," said Ken Silvestri, a Braves' coach and a former major league catcher himself. "He gets rid of the ball faster than anyone I have ever seen. He also has a strong arm."

"I saw guys like Jim Hegan and Bill Dickey, and they had strong arms and were always ready to throw, but neither of them got rid of the ball as fast as Torre."

Silvestri is a good man to ask about a player because he gives you both sides, good and bad. He's no politician.

Rises to Challenge

"The only thing I see wrong with Torre," Silvestri said, "is he sometimes gets lax when he thinks a runner won't try to steal. But let a guy like Wills get on and he's precision itself."

How about Torre's receiving, his handling of pitchers and his game-calling tactics?

It's better to go to a pitcher for that, said a young hurler who had to be guided at first.

"The first time I ever pitched in a big league game," said Braves' righthander Pat Jarvis, a rookie last season, "Joe saved me. I was so nervous you could see my knees shaking from the stands. He noticed this and came out and said, 'Relax, Pat, this game is just to introduce you to the biggies.' Then he slapped me on the pants, and I was all right."

"Of course, I went right along with Joe's signs, too. He's really smart when it comes to setting up



Joe Torre . . . On the Field, He Does Everything Well . . . Except Run.

hitters. For he has been around long enough to know them."

Not only Torre's own batterymates, but pitchers on opposing clubs notice his proficiencies behind the mask.

"He's the best I've seen in getting rid of the ball," said Dodger lefty Claude Osteen. "He proved that with Wills, and I think Maury will tell you that. The ball seems

to be gone as soon as it hits Torre's mitt."

"Joe knows what he's doing, too. A lot of guys shuffle around back there and go through the motions. But he's not just a guy who catches the ball and tosses it back to the pitcher. He does more than that; he makes them pitch. He's smart."

Niekro and His Knuckler

This season, Torre had trouble defensively, with Phil Niekro and his knuckler. Niekro throws one of the trickiest knucklers in the business, but the Braves solved their problem by acquiring catcher Bob Uecker, a whiz at knuckleball catching.

"When you catch Niekro," cracked Torre, a Catholic, "you use a big glove and a pair of rosary beads."

Torre gives the fluttering knuckler a battle, and isn't afraid to signal for it.

"No problem," said Niekro. "Joe has no qualms about calling for it often, and it doesn't matter

Torre Picks on Top Hill Artists as Homer Victims

ATLANTA, Ga.—When it comes to hitting home runs, the Braves' Joe Torre picks on the best.

He had poled four homers in the early part of the season, and they came off the Giants' Bob Bolin and Juan Marichal and the Phillies' Chris Short and Jim Bunning.

Those are four of the National League's top pitchers.

whether there are men on base."

Now a word from a base thief, the Dodgers' Willie Davis, who may be the fastest N. L. runner.

"I would have to rate Torre just about the best," said Davis. "He has a strong arm and really gets rid of the ball. You don't take liberties with him, I'll tell you that."

Those assorted, positive testi-

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Dodger Scout Nixed Roly-Poly Joe

ATLANTA, Ga.—One day, about nine years ago, Dodger scout Al Campanis received a telephone call.

"I've got a kid you should see," said the voice. "He's a pitcher, and he can play first base."

"Yeah?" said Campanis, who got Sandy Koufax on a similar tip. "Where's the game? I'll be there."

Campanis took in the game, and he was telling about that pitcher-first baseman recently in San Francisco, where he was going to watch the Giants and Braves play a series.

"I couldn't believe it," he said. "The kid weighed about 245, and the other club knocked him out

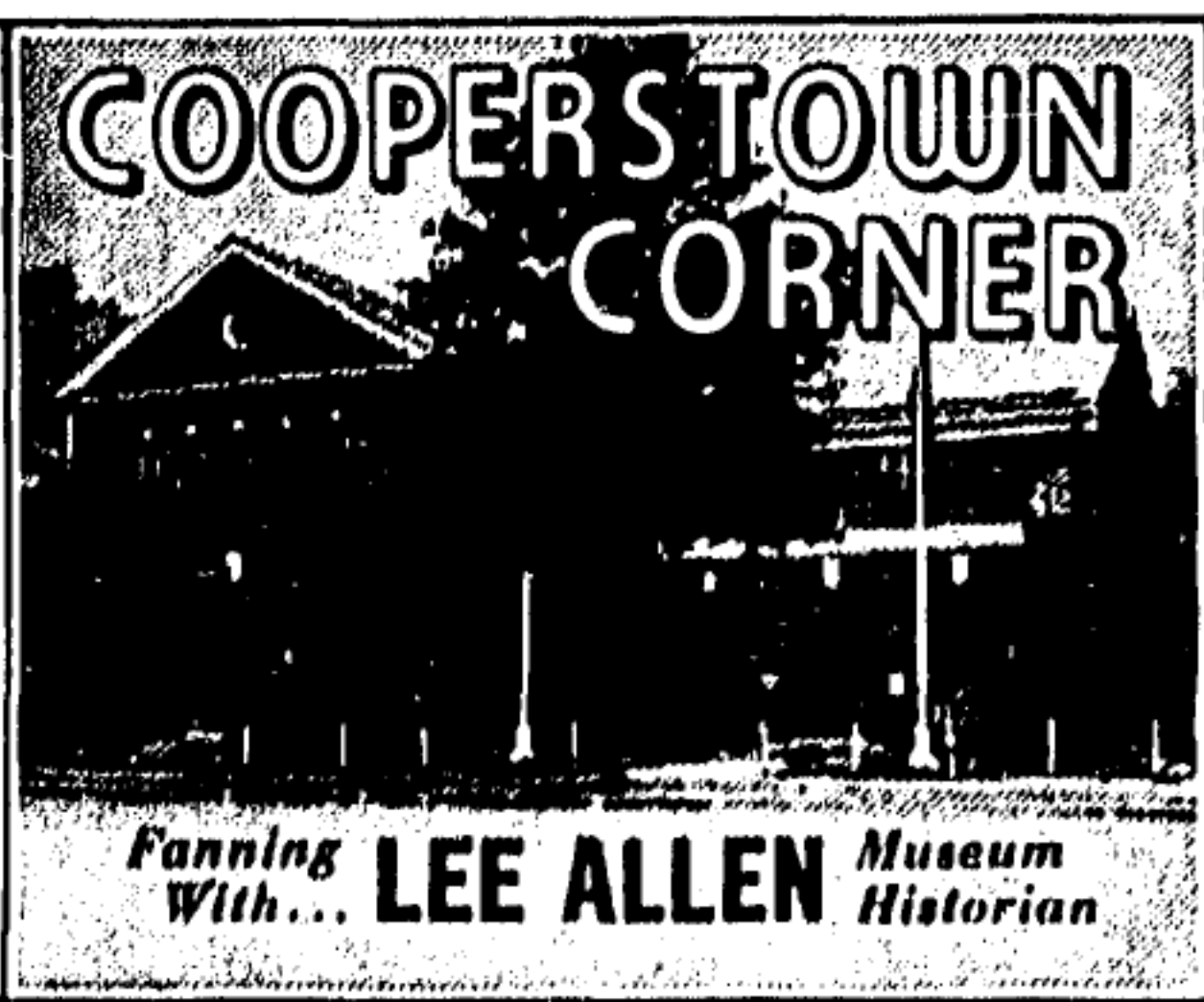
in the first inning. He went to first base and showed absolutely no coordination there."

Campanis grinned and said, "I turned the kid down flat."

The next time, the Dodgers' talent hunter (he's now their director of scouting) heard about the roly-poly kid, Braves' scout John (Honey) Russell had signed him.

"The only thing was," said Campanis, "the kid had lost about 40 pounds and was a catcher. His name was Joe Torre."

After signing such players as Koufax, Jackie Robinson and Tommy Davis, Campanis could afford to tell the story.



Alma Best Hitter Among Waners COOPERSTOWN, N. Y.

Seen in the crowd at the Hall of Fame game and a few quotables from the notables:

The speaker is Lloyd Waner, "Now, Paul and I weren't the best hitters in the family. Our sister, Alma, was the best. We really did used to soak corncocks in water on the farm at Harrah so they wouldn't travel so far, and Alma was the first one of us to hit one far enough to break a window in the barn." . . . Francis L. Dale, president of the Reds, likes his steaks medium-rare. . . . When a peal of thunder sounded at 5:30 p. m. the day before the game, Paul Kerr, president of the Hall of Fame, asked, "Is the field covered?" It was, and the groundskeepers did a great job following an all-night rain. . . . Tom Murphy, equipment manager of the Reds, up at 7 a. m. and worried because the team was short three dozen pairs of white sanitary sox. He was advised to call Jim Konstanty, former Philly ace now in the sporting goods business at nearby Oneonta. . . . Red Ruffing, in the lobby of the Otesaga Hotel, verified the fact that the late Art Shires touched him for a triple and three singles in Shires' first major league game. . . . Speaking of Shires, a letter from Lou Barbour, former traveling secretary of the White Sox, puts me straight on the alleged battle that involved Lena Blackburne. It took place in the Benjamin Franklin Hotel in Philadelphia and not in the White Sox clubhouse. . . . Add incidental intelligence supplied by Ford Frick, who said that 80 percent of the mint used in chewing gum is grown in Noble County, Ind. . . . The former commissioner also revealed that the first ball player he ever met was Albert P. Inks, a southpaw with various clubs from 1891 to 1896, who lived at Ligonier, Ind.



LOYD WANER

Shamsky Thrilled by Babe's Widow

More from Lloyd Waner, "The reason I never walked much was Paul told me that if a pitch was so close it could be called either a ball or strike, it was good enough to hit and that many of his hits were made off pitches of that kind." . . . Art Shamsky was thrilled when Ken Smith, Hall of Fame director, introduced him to Claire Ruth, widow of The Babe, and she said, "Oh, you're the fellow who hit four straight home runs for Cincinnati!" . . . Bob Engel, N. L. ump, showed plenty of spunk when he remained behind the plate after a pitched ball painfully injured his wrist. . . . Posies are due the Baltimore management for bringing along Frank Robinson, even though he could not, of course, play. When Frank strolled through the Otesaga lobby, a troupe of youngsters followed him as if he were the Pied Piper. . . . Incidentally, the Triple Crown award that Robinson won last year was just a phrase until Jerry Hoffberger, chairman of the Oriole board, created a handsome cup to commemorate the event. Hoffberger presented the cup to Paul Kerr for the National Baseball Museum, with others going to Robinson and to such previous winners as Mickey Mantle and Ted Williams. . . . Vada Pinson was happy to be informed that he soon will have played in more games in center field for the Reds than any previous performer in club history. The old record was held by Edd Roush. . . . Stu Miller drew most of the oohs and ahs from the crowd when his tantalizing off-speed stuff held the Reds to one hit in four innings. . . . But there was nothing wrong with Brooks Robinson, who in successive plays showed off his tremendous arm and his wide range, or Chico Ruiz, who made a great stop in the hole, fell down, recovered and nailed his man. . . . The scout who should be credited with finding Gary Nolan for the Reds is Reno DeBenedetti, who must have known something before that unrestricted draft. Nolan, by the way, has probably signed more autographs than any teen-aged player since Bob Feller.

Foxx' Death Tossed Pall Over Grove

John Steadman of the Baltimore News American, loading up his plate at the buffet luncheon that preceded the game and taking bows for the new hair-do of his lovely wife, Mary Lee. . . . Frank Boggs, writer for the Daily Oklahoman in Oklahoma City, came all the way from that place to cover Lloyd Waner, a tribute to the imagination of his boss, Charlie Bennett. . . . How many recall that Bob Howsam, general manager of the Reds, was Ralph Houk's boss for three years at Denver? Howsam was resplendent in a dark green jacket that was strictly major league. . . . Lefty Grove, saddened by the news that Jimmie Foxx had joined such of their old mates as Max Bishop, Mickey Cochrane, Al Simmons, Bing Miller and Joe Boley. . . . Jackie Robinson, earning more praise daily for the fine job in race relations he is doing for Governor Nelson Rockefeller. . . . There is not enough gold in Fort Knox to award the person who can tell me the identity of the only player in history who had a lifetime major league batting average of 1.000, a lifetime fielding record of 1.000 and a lifetime pitching record of 1.000. . . . Sorry, but anyone writing for the answer will not receive it. . . . Hall of Famer Sam Rice, although now 77, was prevented from attending for the second straight year because he was in a golf tournament. . . . Earl Lawson of the Cincinnati Post, Al Heim of the Cincinnati Enquirer and Si Burick of the Dayton News and the biographer of Walt Alston, made up the writing contingent with the Reds.

Bullpen Worries Run-Shy Braves

By WAYNE MINSHEW

ATLANTA, Ga.

Braves' Manager Billy Hitchcock read about Leo Durocher's promise to jump off Chicago's Wrigley Building if the Cubs win the pennant this season, shook his head and smiled.

"I wouldn't make those kinds of statements," said the Braves' field leader. "The way this game goes, he might have to make it good." Hitchcock means baseball is unpredictable, and he can cite his club as a leading example.

Before the season started, the Braves' manager was confident—make that positive—that his crew of sluggers would lead the world in scoring runs. His big job, so he thought, was to come up with some pitchers to stop the other clubs.

Now, as the season's dog days approach, the Braves are somewhere in the middle of the National League as far as scoring runs is concerned, but the starting pitchers have fared surprisingly well.

"Our problems, it appears," he said, "are getting a few runs for starters and getting our bullpen in order."

Big Innings Very Scarce

The Braves recently experienced a 17-game streak where six runs was their biggest explosion, and that only happened once. Before, that was a good inning. They told the pitchers, "Just hold the other club to three runs."

"We've just gotta keep swinging," said Hitchcock. "Only (Clete) Boyer and (Hank) Aaron have been hitting often, but we've had no consistency."

"Fortunately, somebody has given us a big hit at times when we needed it to keep us as close as we are."

"But (Rico) Carty and (Mack) Jones haven't been consistent, and neither has (Felipe) Alou, although he's showing some signs of coming around."

"Torre has hit, but he suffered a badly-sprained ankle in a game against the Phillies June 14, and was out of action for three weeks." Hitchcock paused a moment.

"Funny thing," he said, "at the start of the season, our least worry was scoring runs, and our main concern was pitching."

Bullpen Worries Billy

Pitching still concerns the Braves' skipper, of course, but only the bullpen. Hitchcock is well pleased with his starting four of Phil Niekro, Ken Johnson, Pat Jarvis and Denny Lemaster.

"If we can just get our bullpen tightened up and we can start scoring the way we should, we'll be all right," he said. "We're still in a good position in the standings . . . not in a bad spot at all."

At the time of Hitchcock's observations, the Braves were fourth and five games off the pace of the leading Cardinals.

He also expressed confidence that the bullpen would make some positive contributions between now and the end of the season.

Big man among the relievers

Rain Can't Prevent Braves From Topping Million Gate

ATLANTA, Ga.—Braves' fans, 35,243 strong, braved an all-day rain here July 29 to send the club soaring over the one-million attendance mark for the second straight year.

Interest didn't let up the next day either, when the season's largest Atlanta Stadium crowd, 47,154, showed up for a game with the Cardinals.

Unfortunately for the Braves, the torrid Cards spoiled both occasions with 6-0 and 7-5 victories.



Billy Hitchcock

seems to be 6-6 Cecil Upshaw, a bespectacled righthander who was called up by the Braves after he piled up an amazing 14 saves at Richmond (International) before the end of June.

"We feel he can help stabilize our bullpen," said Hitchcock, "and he has done a good job for us so far."

Upshaw, in his first three appearances, chalked up a save and a victory. His win came July 22 against the Cardinals when he worked the last 4½ innings of a 13-inning, 5-4 victory. It was his first major league triumph.

Side-Armer Has Good Sinker

The side-arm righthander throws a good sinker, what the players call a "running" curve and an almost submarine fast ball, the latter frequently used when Upshaw is 0-and-2 on righty hitters.

"It's the kind of pitch," said Aaron, "that your heart tells you to stay in the box on, but then your mind won't allow it."

With Upshaw in the Braves' bullpen are veteran Claude Raymond, lefty Ramon Hernandez, Jay Ritchie, Clay Carroll and Ed Rakow. What the Braves do from now on rests largely upon them.

Braves' Bunts: Pitcher Tony Cloninger was placed on the disabled list July 31, following his failure against the Cardinals the night before. . . . The thing that prompted the Braves to think about resting Cloninger for the rest of the season was a recurrence of an eye complication. However, doctors said recurrences are to be expected as part of his recovery.

The Braves defeated their Triple-A Richmond club, 7-6, July 24 in a game which saw regular batting practice pitcher Ron Herr register a save for starter Dick Kelley. Also, coach Ken Silvestri was used as a pinch-hitter and popped out. . . . Kelley used the exhibition to work on his breaking pitches at the request of Vice-President Paul Richards and Dick's wife (that's right, printer), Lois. "Both came up with the suggestion at about the same time," said Kelley, who has had his troubles getting batters out this season.

The Braves got their first look at 19-year-old Reds' pitcher Gary Nolan here July 26 and were impressed, despite the fact he lost a 1-0 duel to Pat Jarvis. . . . Raves are getting louder concerning Braves' farmhand Felix Millan, who's at Richmond and was recently named to the league's all-star team. "He's the best player in this league," said Richmond Manager Lum Harris. "He covers more ground than anyone I've seen in many a moon. He's gonna play up there, I'm sure."

Slugging Backstop Dented Distant Card Scoreboard

ATLANTA, Ga.—The first year the Cardinals played in their new stadium at St. Louis (1966), Joe Torre smacked two homers off the big left-center scoreboard in the same game, July 19.

That represents a poke of some 450 feet.

After the second one, Cardinal publicist Jim Toomey grabbed the press box microphone and quipped, "If he hits the scoreboard one more time, he gets to keep it."

TORRE

(Continued From Page 3)

monials for Torre coming from Mauch, Osteen, Silvestri, Johnson, Niekro, Jarvis and Davis are convincing enough that the big fellow is good, and probably better than the next guy where catching is concerned.

Imposing figures, such as a .315 batting average, 36 homers and 101 RBIs last season, should say enough about Torre's offense, but the modern-day baseball enthusiast, being what he is, wants opinions to go with his facts.

So, back to opposing pitcher Osteen.

"You can't pitch him any particular way," said Osteen. "I try to move the ball around, hit the spots. He can hurt you with the long ball in any direction."

Terror at Bat

And Mauch. "Like I said," declared the Phillies' skipper, "when I think of Torre, I think of offense. I have never had a catcher tear us up with the bat the way Torre does."

Mauch was talking before a Braves-Phillies twin-bill at Atlanta Stadium a few weeks ago. About an hour later, Torre bombed Mauch's ace, Jim Bunning, for a long home run with a man on. It tied the score at the time, 3-3, in a game the Phillies won, 6-4.

The Braves' catcher had also homered the previous night in a 3-2 Braves' victory and appeared ready to at least equal his career high 36 round-trippers of last year.

"That's right," said Torre. "I saw the first homer hit my bat, and it has been a while since that has happened. I thought I was coming around, but the next couple of times I reverted to my old form."

Torre's manager, Billy Hitchcock, predicts the big catcher will hit more career homers than any backstop in history, which would be Yogi Berra's 358.

No Scratch Hits

While managers, players and fans talk about Torre's homers, he's probably proudest of his high averages, especially his .315 of last year.

"When I hit .300, I HIT .300," he said. "There are no leg hits involved with me running."

But there's a side of Torre that hasn't been dealt with before.

Braves' third baseman Clete Boyer was talking about it.

"The thing that impresses me about Joe," said Boyer, "is he's a team man. He really wants to win, whether or not he does anything personally. And you'll notice he's a real popular guy, too. People just naturally like to be around him."

Then Boyer summed up Torre as well as anyone probably ever has.

"He was destined to be a star," said Boyer, and he let his voice dramatically trail off. ". . . Destined to be a star."