

# Riddle of Agee: Can He Swing Big-Time Bat?

By JERRY HOLTZMAN

SARASOTA, Fla.

The big question in the White Sox camp is how good is Tommie Agee? Is he going to be another Willie Mays, as his manner often suggests? Or is he simply another good-field, good-run outfielder who won't be able to hit major league pitching?

No one here, not even Manager Eddie Stanky, can answer those questions. After a month of spring training, Agee rates an E for excellence. He's been the club's leading power hitter (four homers and 11 RBIs), has caught everything hit his way and has been a sensation while running the bases.

This isn't the first time Agee has made the big spring training splash. He was quite impressive with the White Sox last spring, so impressive, in fact, that Al Lopez, then the Sox manager, tabbed him "as one of the most exciting players" he had seen.

But bad luck seems to dog Agee. Several days before the White Sox' 1965 American League opener, Agee slid into the plate in an exhibition game at Charlotte, N. C., and broke a bone in his right hand. He didn't make it to Chicago until September, after he had spent the full season at Indianapolis (Coast), where he had an undistinguished season.

He hit only .226 at Indianapolis, which would hardly suggest a ticket to the big leagues.

But Agee insists that the .226 average isn't a true barometer. Said Agee: "After my hand was broken, I was weak. Consequently, I couldn't really swing the bat."

## Hands Are Vulnerable

It wasn't the first time Agee had broken his hand.

He broke both hands in 1963—first the right and then the left.

He was with Charleston (Eastern) in the summer of 1963 and was then the property of the Indians. A free-for-all broke out in a game at Binghamton and Agee, racing into the action, punched a Binghamton player on the side of the head.

Or at least he tried to. The result was a broken right hand.

Said Agee, recalling the incident: "I hope the people don't think I'm a bad guy, but I had to help."

That winter, Agee was playing in

## Stanky Winner as Skipper, But Fizzle as a Fisherman

SARASOTA, Fla.—Eddie Stanky has been having a sensational spring as the new manager of the White Sox. The Hose won 15 of their first 17 games and already had winning streaks of six and nine games.

But Stanky was finally shut out on March 25, an open date in the club's exhibition schedule.

He went fishing in Sarasota Bay for three hours and didn't even catch a minnow.

Puerto Rico. An inside fast ball, thrown by Julio Navarro, hit him on the left hand, breaking it across the knuckles.

Agee is fully recovered now, even from a blow he suffered this last winter in Venezuela, when he was hit in the head by a whisky bottle.

Agee was playing with the Magallanes club in the Venezuelan Winter League and let a grounder go through his legs for an error.

"Those fans are very enthusiastic," Agee said. "I was up against the fence when the ball went through my legs. The next thing I knew my head was spinning."

A fan, rooting for the Magallanes club, was so disgusted with Agee's error that he threw a whisky bottle at him.

"I can still feel the spot where the bottle hit me," said Agee as



PETE WARD . . . Working at First and Third Base and in Outfield

# Ward Moonlights at 3 Positions

By JEROME HOLTZMAN

SARASOTA, Fla.

Veteran third baseman Pete Ward is on the double shift here in the White Sox spring training camp. He's both an outfielder—and infielder.

Pete works out at third base daily and fields grounders hit to him by coach Tony Cuccinello. When he's finished, he hustles out to join the outfield corps and spends another hour racing for fly balls hit by coach Kerby Farrell. Pete also dabbles at first base.

No one, not even Ward, seems to know where he'll wind up on opening day.

"I don't care," said Ward, "just so long as I'm in there."

Ward has been the club's regular third baseman for the last three years and has a lifetime BA of .274. He hit .295 as a rookie, .282 in 1964 and last season slumped to .247.

Ward admits that he's no longer a master of his own fate.

"I suppose it all depends on what they do with Al," he said, referring to Al Weis, the club's veteran utility

infielder. If Weis opens at second base, then Don Buford, the club's regular second baseman, will move to third and this would push Ward into left field. Ward insists he has no preference.

## 'It's Up to Manager'

It's not a matter of where I can do the best job," he said, "but where I'll best fit in. This is up to the manager."

Though the Sox have been having a great spring—15 victories in their first 18 games—Ward hasn't exactly been tearing down the fences.

It took him ten games, for example, before he was able to drive in a run and he has yet to hit a spring training homer.

But Ward says he isn't worried. "I hit eight homers in spring training last year," he explained, "but it didn't do me any good."

He had only ten homers during the regular season.

he sat in the shade of the White Sox dugout. "For a long time, I had a big lump."

Agee is from Mobile, Ala., which is also the home of Manager Eddie Stanky.

**Sox Yarns:** Relief pitcher Eddie Fisher is working again. The Fish, who set an American League record of 82 appearances last year, appeared in eight of the club's first 17 spring training games and in one stint worked four full innings. . . . Manager Eddie Stanky doesn't believe in having his pitchers go the full nine innings during the exhibition season. He's been having his starters build up gradually—and the result is that no one went more than five during the club's first 18 Grapefruit League games. . . . John Romano, the veteran catcher, is having a great spring, both at bat and behind the plate. . . . The Sox came within one out of a Grapefruit League no-hitter against the Mets on March 26. . . . Ron Swoboda, pinch-batter, ruined it with a single with two outs in the ninth off Bob Locker. Locker, incidentally, is the proud father of his second child, a boy, Shaun, who was born here at Memorial Hospital on March 23. . . . Danny Murphy, the one-time bonus boy (the Cubs signed him for a \$125,000 bonus as an outfielder), was the winning pitcher against Minnesota on March 24. . . .

The Sox have made another squad cut and have returned pitchers Murphy and Gerald Nyman, outfielder Buddy Bradford and infielder Don Littleton to their minor league camp for reassignment. Shipped to Indianapolis were infielder Jim Hicks, catcher Duane Josephson and pitcher Greg Bollo.

# National Baseball Congress Sets Up Sites and Dates for State Tourneys

WICHITA, Kan.—The first of the National Baseball Congress state tournaments this year will start on July 1 and the last one on August 4, it was disclosed in the 1966 edition of the Official Baseball Annual, the NBC yearbook.

State tourneys in Ohio, Vermont, Utah and Nevada will open on July 1, while Michigan will be the last event to get under way, August 4.

Most of the state champions will be required to engage in a bi-state qualifying series with an adjoining winner for the regional title to reduce the starting field to 32 teams for the national tournament at Wichita starting August 12.

Sites and dates of tournaments in 33 states have already been selected. The setups in the remainder of the 50 states will be announced before June 1, Congress President Ray Dumont said.

Following are the sites and starting dates of state tournaments already established:

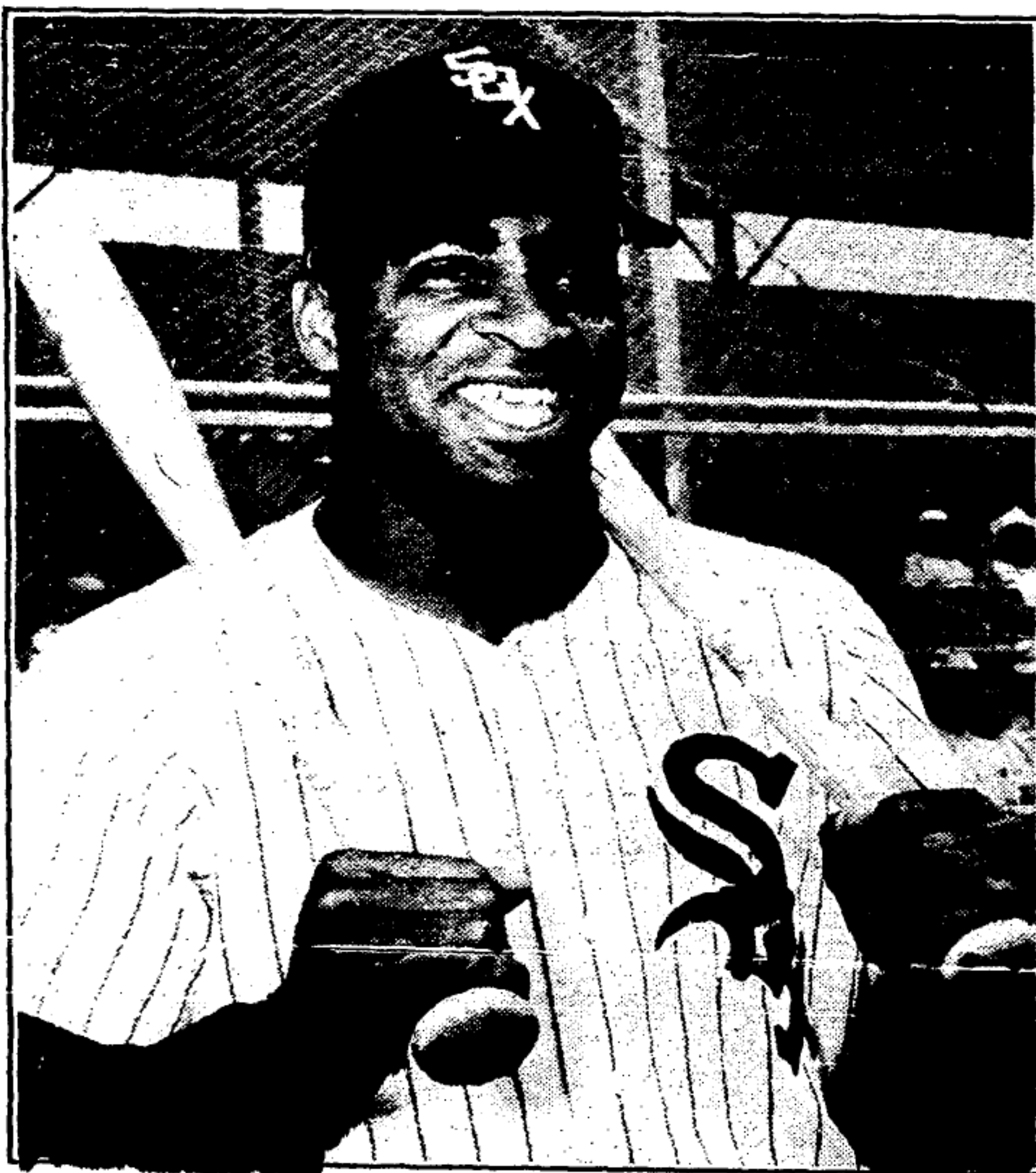
**EAST:** Trenton, N. J., July 2; Lynbrook, N. Y., July 9; Cranston, R. I., July 11; Putney, Vt., July 1, and Accomac, Va., July 25.

**MIDWEST:** Elgin, Ill., July 16; Kokomo, Ind., July 22; Ames, Ia., July 22; Wichita, Kan., July 8; Grand Rapids, Mich., August 4; Sedalia, Mo., July 19; North Platte, Neb., July 16; Mansfield, O., July 1, and Madison, Wis., July 28.

**SOUTH:** Talladega, Ala., July 24; Monette, Ark., July 22; Ocala, Fla., July 15; Marietta, Ga., July 15; Ponchatoula, La., July 15; West Point, Miss., July 21; Roxboro, N. C., July 13; Greeneville, Tenn., July 15, and Lubbock, Tex., July 28.

**WEST:** Fairbanks, Alaska, July 30; Mesa, Ariz., July 29; Eureka, Calif., July 29; Hugo, Colo., July 22; Honolulu, Hawaii, July 15; Albuquerque, N. M., July 28; Salt Lake City, Utah, July 1, and Bellingham, Wash., August 1.

Two state tournaments have been franchised in both Oklahoma and Nevada with the two winners meeting in a three-game series to decide the official title. The Eastern Oklahoma state meet is scheduled at Perry, starting July 15, and the Western division at Cleo Springs, starting July 22. In Nevada, the Northern event will take place at Yerington and the Southern tourney at Las Vegas, both starting July 1.



TOMMIE AGEE . . . Exciting Player, But Can He Hit?