

White Comeback May Hinge on Allen Showing

By ALLEN LEWIS

PHILADELPHIA, Pa.

The next chapter in the Bill White story has yet to be written. The Phillies' first baseman, who reached the top of his profession when he helped the Cardinals win the world championship in 1964, went through his most difficult season last year when a serious injury made him a part-time player unable to call on all his former skills.

But this is next year and White is working toward a comeback that everyone in baseball is hoping will be a complete success.

At this time, however, it isn't known whether such a thing is possible, nor is it known in what uniform such an event might take place. A great deal of the comeback from the Achilles tendon severed in December, 1966, while playing paddleball in a St. Louis gym, depends on Bill himself. But the uniform he will wear while attempting it may depend on another player: Richie Allen.

Allen, too, is attempting a comeback in 1968, for the third baseman and slugger of the Phillies cut his hand severely late last season and had to sit out the final six weeks of the season. His cuts were so severe, affecting his wrist, fingers and grip in his right hand, it was not known for some months whether Allen would be able to play baseball again.

Hand May Stay Weak

At this point, it appears that he will be able to play, although he may never have complete strength in his right hand, the strength which has enabled him to hit some of the longest balls in baseball history.

Even more doubtful is whether Allen will be able to throw the ball across the diamond with enough accuracy to enable him to continue as a third baseman.

If he cannot play third but is still able to swing a bat in a manner that can help a club which needs all the punch it can muster, there are two avenues open to Manager Gene Mauch.

First, Mauch can return Allen to left field, a position he played in his final years in the minors. A position, it might be added, he played none too well and without enthusiasm. Richie, who started out as a shortstop, has always preferred being where the action is.

Second, Mauch can move Allen to first base, a spot that would give Richie enough action, but minimize his fielding and throwing deficiencies.

If that happens, however, White then becomes expendable, and the Phillies would undoubtedly attempt to trade the veteran for either a third baseman or an outfielder or even a pitcher.

Bill Is a Realist

White, who reached the ripe athletic age of 34 on January 28, has enough to worry about without concerning himself about being traded. Still, he's realistic enough to know it could happen to him for the third time in his career.

There were times last season when Bill undoubtedly gave thought to retirement as an active player. He has a radio-TV position awaiting him that not only interests him, but would pay fairly well, although not in the manner he has grown used to in recent years.

Unless something happens to change his mind, however, White has decided to play at least one more year, and has been working toward that end since the season ended. He's encouraged by the progress he has made.

After a recent visit to Cardinal trainer Bob Bauman, White said: "He checked the ankle, and told me the circulation is completely



Bill White

restored except in the immediate area of the scar—and that's considered normal.

"Earlier in the winter," White said, "I saw Dr. (Stan) London, who performed the operation. He was well pleased. He suggested I start playing paddleball again. I told him, 'You're kidding!'"

"He wasn't kidding. His handball partner did the same thing

I did. Dr. London operated on him and they're playing in the Nationals together again.

"It's not a mental block about paddleball," White added. "I just don't want to take that chance."

Works Out in Gym

Instead, White works out regularly in a gym playing basketball and running on the hard floor. He also straps weights to his right foot and does prescribed exercises to strengthen the muscles and ligaments in the ankle and leg.

"I'm making cutting moves real well," he said. "I think my lateral moves are back to normal. But running on a hard floor is not the same as making those moves on a soft infield. That will be the big test. Right now, my lateral movement is 100 percent."

White has lived with this injury for more than a year, but he's beginning to forget.

"The one big thing I'm pleased about is that I've stopped thinking about the ankle. Unless somebody brings it up, I'm not aware of it. I sure hope it stays that way."

That's not too likely in view of how much depends on White's recovery.

Phillie Fodder: Pitcher Larry Jackson and catcher Mike Ryan became the third and fourth members of the Phillies to sign their

Fairly Answer To a Bad Year: 'Just Forget It'

By BOB HUNTER

LOS ANGELES, Calif.

It's almost that time again and, while the weather undoubtedly will be warm in Vero Beach, the thought of spring training must make Ron Fairly shudder.

Last spring he hit .222, which is a bad dream whether you read it forward or backward, then went on to his one bad season, winding up with a .220 average. But still the Dodgers' All-America boy insists he has the answer.

"How can I combat what happened to me last year?" he pondered. "That's easy, I'm going to forget it."

"I think it's common for players to have that one bad season."

"If they can disregard it and bounce back, the whole thing will be absorbed in the long-range picture."

"There's one thing about a year like that. It surely humbles you. I used to think golf was the humbling game, but I know better now."

"Just when you think you have everything in the game of baseball beaten down, a year like this comes along, then you know better."

The redhead has had more than his share of injuries during his career.

No Injuries in '67

In 1966, he missed almost a month with bruised ribs after a second base collision with Ron Hunt, then with the Mets. But injuries played no part in his dismal decline of 1967.

Ron participated in 153 games, tops for a Dodger, went to bat 486 times and saw considerable action against both right and left-handed pitching.

"It was almost like a plague last season," recounted Fairly. "Most of the regulars had bad seasons at the plate."

"We started badly, and from there things got worse. The incentive to fight back just wasn't there."

"Finally, we got to feeling sorry



Ron Fairly

for ourselves, the worst thing that can happen to a club."

Despite the off year, Fairly was not among the early-bird Dodgers who started pre-spring workouts at the Stadium at the end of January.

"Six weeks in Florida is long enough for me," he said. "As a matter of fact, that even wearies me some."

Ron Welcomes News

However, the news that Walter Alston planned two-a-day workouts, including one at Dodgertown when the team is playing an exhibition elsewhere, was welcomed by Fairly.

"There's nothing I dislike more than to make a spring trip, get half a dozen swings in the cage, then sit on the bench while the Skipper takes a look at the kids."

"I have nothing against the rookies, mind you, but I like to see as much pitching as possible in the spring. That's what training is for."

Vice-President Buzzie Bavasi recently gave Fairly a vote of confidence when he listed him as a possible super-star, along with Al Ferrara, Bill Singer, Alan Foster and Jim Lefebvre.

"We're in much the same position now as when we moved to

Buccos Bombed Quaker Hurlers at a .302 Tempo

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. — A Phillies' all-opponent team, selected on the basis of average, would be dominated by the Pirates, who batted .302 as a team against them, 34 points higher than any other club in 1967 against the Quakers.

The outfield would have Willie Stargell (.375), Matty Alou (.388) and Roberto Clemente (.394). Gene Alley (.377) would be the shortstop. The Cards' Tim McCarver (.378) would be the catcher, and the rest of the infield would have the Braves' Felipe Alou (.320) at first base, the Cubs' Glenn Beckert (.344) at second and the Astros' Bob Aspromonte (.321) at third.

The Cubs' Ferguson Jenkins, the Reds' Milt Pappas and the Cards' Bob Gibson were the top pitchers, all with 3-0 records against the Phillies.

1968 contracts. . . . The Phillies will invite two or three farm system catchers to train with the parent club at Clearwater, beginning February 22. The roster currently contains only Ryan and Clay Dalrymple as receivers. . . .

Seven Dodgers Open Early Drills

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—The Dodgers opened pre-spring training workouts at Dodger Stadium January 22 to give players in this area an early opportunity to get into shape before reporting for drills at Vero Beach February 24. Among the players taking part in the first session were Willie Davis, Ron Fairly, Al Ferrara, Jim Lefebvre, Nate Oliver, Claude Osteen and Jim Campanis.

Los Angeles from Brooklyn," pointed out Bavasi. "Our superstars were nearing the end of the line. So in 1959 we developed some new ones and won the world championship."

Bavasi referred to Don Drysdale and Sandy Koufax. Then about midway in the '59 season, Maury Wills was brought up from Spokane and contributed powerfully to the pennant push.

With the deal that sent John Roseboro to Minnesota, Fairly becomes the second-oldest member of the club in point of service, second only to Drysdale.

.300 Hitter Only Once

Only once has Fairly topped the .300 mark, hitting .322 in 1961.

Fairly always has been a streak player and, obviously, that's what Bavasi is counting on from the redhead.

In the pennant drive of '66, for instance, Fairly knocked in 22 runs in September when the Dodgers stormed from third to first.

There have been numerous occasions when he has been the club's hottest hitter, and when he ties

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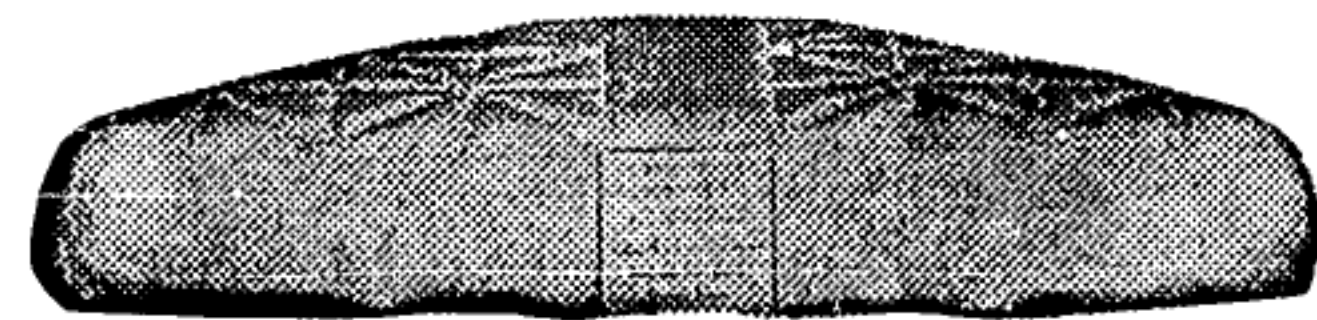
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The Phillies have made only one change in road hotels for the coming season. In Chicago, where the Edgewater Beach closed its doors, the Phillies will move to the LaSalle.

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