

Yanks' White Confounds Prophets

By JIM OGLE

NEW YORK, N. Y.—It is rather ironic that Roy White, who is in his third season as the Yankees' top performer, avidly reads all the biographies he can get his hands on.

"I enjoy reading how various people overcame handicaps and lived successful lives," White explained. The irony comes in the fact that White has overcome many handicaps to become successful in his chosen field.

"My family had things a little rough while I was growing up," Roy said. "But I guess I was lucky. Many of the kids I grew up with never got anywhere except into trouble, but here I am, practically sitting on top of the world."

"I have fulfilled my dream of playing in the big leagues, I am making a good salary, have a wonderful wife and little girl and I'm enjoying it all. Sure, there were times when I wondered if I ever would make it, but the dream always was there."

White started in the Yankee organization back in 1962, but no one expected him to develop into one of the key men of the Yanks . . . not up to the day he suddenly grabbed the brass ring and wound up running the merry-go-round.

Despite having been the All-Star second baseman in the Southern League in 1965, Roy never was figured as an infielder by the Yanks. Yet, until the spring of 1968, he was neither infielder nor outfielder . . . certainly not a key man in the rebuilding plans then under way.

Tutored by Woodling

Assigned permanently to the outfield in the spring of 1968, Roy went to work with a sense of relief. He spent many hours with ex-Yankee Gene Woodling, to improve his outfielding.

"Gene helped me a lot," Roy said. "He explained that he had the same problem I had, with only an average arm. Gene taught me to compensate by charging the ball, getting to it fast and convincing the runners not to gamble."

"Knowing I was going to be an outfielder only also helped. I didn't have to worry about the infield any more or even switching back and forth, but could concentrate on one thing. The only trouble was, I figured to be the fifth or sixth outfielder when the season opened."

White, who has had a few good breaks in his life, was on the bench when the season opened. Tommy Tresh was in left, Joe Pepitone in center with Bill Robinson and Steve Whitaker being platooned in right. That alignment didn't last long and, when the break-up came, White was ready.

Pepitone suffered an arm injury, then neither Robinson nor Whitaker hit a lick. The Yanks opened a trip at Anaheim and White was given a chance to start in right field. Roy broke in with three hits . . . and hasn't been out of the lineup since, except when military duties (now ended) kept him away.

"I'll always remember that night," Roy said. "That was the real beginning of my career. I was hoping the three hits would keep me in the game so, when I saw my name in the lineup every day, I began to get confidence."

Fought Back From Polio

White got a break earlier in life, too. Perhaps the most important break he ever got . . . he beat polio.

"I guess I was five or six," Roy recalled. "I came home from school complaining of fever and a headache. My grandmother happened to be there, and when I showed no interest in the comic books she had brought me, she knew something was wrong. I had a stiff neck and my legs felt funny, so Grandma called the doctor."

"They took me to the hospital in an ambulance and I was there for over three months. I guess we detected it early, because it never crippled me. I just remember lying in bed all that time, but I was lucky my grandmother was visiting us and acted so fast."

Roy grew up in Compton, Calif., where he attended high school and Compton Junior College and, at the same time, grew up loving to play baseball. He played Little League, American Legion and any other kind of baseball he could find, and proved successful in all divisions of play.

"I really became a switch-hitter by hitting rocks as a kid," White recalled. "When



Out of His Yankee Uniform, Roy White Enjoys a Relaxing Moment With His Wife, Linda, and Daughter, Loreena.

there was no one around to play with, I would get a stick and throw rocks in the air and hit them. All the time, I'd be playing mental games. I would make believe I was Frank Robinson, then Stan Musial and would hit right or lefthanded, depending on who I was imitating.

"It was really weird when I got up to the Yankees and began playing with and against the guys I used to imitate in those games. I've never told any of them, however. Imagine, I used to imitate Mickey Mantle and wound up as his teammate."

A Game of Sock Ball

"When I first joined the Yankees, Mickey didn't have much to say," Roy said. "After I got to know him, he turned out to be a great guy with a wonderful sense of humor."

"When there were no games, the kids used to gather either in my backyard or that of another kid. That's where we invented sock ball. We would get an old sock, wrap it into a ball and tape it. We did that to keep the ball in the yard. My yard was small, so we made believe it was Ebbets Field. The other kid's yard was bigger, so it was Yankee Stadium."

Roy's signing with the Yankees was a rather unusual thing, too. The late Tufie Hashem signed about six kids in a group, which didn't make the Yankee officials too happy. Ron Woods, now a Yankee, was scouted by Tufie, too, but escaped his dragnet because Pittsburgh offered him more money.

"I don't even know who the other kids were," White said. "I don't think any of them made it, though I didn't excite anyone by hitting .204 at Greensboro. I later moved to Fort Lauderdale and things got a little better."

"I never really had an idol as a kid, but Ted Williams was one of my favorite players. I got my first chance to meet him in 1966 when he happened to be at Fenway Park. I'll never forget that day."

'Always Be Aggressive'

"I introduced myself to Ted and he said: 'I watched you hit. You have a good swing and wait for the ball. Always be aggressive and wait for a good pitch to hit.' Then I went 0-for-4 that day."

The unusual has been usual in White's major league career. He reported at the end of the 1965 season as the All-Star Southern League second baseman, but was told to play the outfield.

"Bobby Murcer came up at the same time," Roy explained, "and Manager Johnny Keane didn't want to play rookies at both short and second. They wanted to see me hit, so they sent me to the outfield where I played for the first time since my Little League days."

"The following spring I won a job as an outfielder and got my first big thrill in

baseball. I won the Dawson Award as the best rookie in camp, but then people started to tell me it was a jinx, so I worried about it. Soon, I had something to worry about."

Back to the Bench

"I got off to a good start but, unfortunately, hit several homers. I began to swing for the seats, which is not my style, and before long I stopped hitting. I wound up on the bench and never won my regular job back again. I got shipped to Spokane the following spring."

"I got caught in the Yanks' need for a shortstop," White said. "They acquired John Kennedy from the Dodgers, but optioning me to Spokane was part of the deal. It made me wonder what would happen if I didn't hit out there. Fortunately, I was leading the league when they recalled me."

"I had been playing third base at Spokane and doing well, but I started pressing when I joined the Yanks. Mickey (Mantle) was playing first base and, not wanting to hurt him, I started aiming the ball. I was a real mess and was soon back in the outfield."

"I don't know what might have happened if I had stayed at second. I could make all the plays, had good range, did a good job on double plays but Bobby Richardson was still around. I don't think I really have had a good year yet, but I'm still hoping."

White has been a modest hero since he became a regular back in 1968. He has been the team's offensive leader ever since, despite the presence of Mantle, Pepitone, Tresh, Murcer and others who figured to be the leaders.

Red-Hot Batting Streak

In June of this year, White was on the hottest streak of his career and he began to get a lot of publicity. Roy took it all in stride and, in the deep voice that belies his size, gave his philosophy about hitting.

"I'm enjoying this streak a lot and would be lying if I said I wasn't," Roy said. "But I'm not really hitting the ball that good. I am in a streak in which everything is going my way. But it could stop tomorrow and I won't get a hit for a week. I don't fool myself, because I don't think I'm a .360 hitter. I'd be tickled to finish at .300."

"Yes, I feel the same way when I'm going badly. I know it can't last forever. Tomorrow I may get four hits. I don't get too excited when I'm going good, nor do I get too down when I'm in a slump."

White proved to be a prophet, for things turned around a few days later.

"These past seven weeks have been a big disappointment," Roy admitted. "I never have had this long a slump before, but I feel a hot streak coming on. I desperately want to finish over .300 this year,

since I have been pretty fortunate in attaining my goals."

White's goals have been hitting a homer left and righthanded in the same game, playing in an All-Star Game, hitting .300 and playing in the World Series.

Roy was named to the 1969 American League All-Star squad and appeared as a pinch-hitter. He made it two straight this year. Roy didn't get into this year's game because he was injured when hit in the right forearm by a ball in batting practice.

Awed by All-Stars

Taking the field in Washington for the 1969 game, White seemed awed by it all. "What am I doing here with all these great players?" he asked. He was underestimating himself. He belonged there and wasn't in on a rain check.

White hit left and righthanded homers a la Mantle on May 7 in Oakland and each came with two men on base. It was one of Roy's biggest nights and he enjoyed it.

Off the field, even in the clubhouse, Roy usually has his nose stuck in a book. He probably leads the club in reading . . . just as he does in so many other things.

"I always liked to read science fiction and biology," White said. "I once wanted to be a doctor, but found out it takes eight years in school. I don't think I would have the stomach to be a doctor, however, for I don't like to see people when they are unhappy."

Roy Has No Regrets

"It was my big dream, at one time, and I read a lot of medical books. But I never have regretted switching to baseball."

White and his family live in West Paterson, N. J., and he has worked during the off season for the Yankees the past couple of years. Last year he also worked for CBS in radio spot sales and did an excellent job. He is one of the most popular Yankees on the banquet circuit.

Roy is a most even-tempered guy, only getting angry when someone says he looks more like a jockey than a ballplayer. The Yankee left fielder is small, but built solidly and shows a lot of endurance.

Built for speed as a leadoff man or No. 2 hitter, White has had to adjust to the role of a No. 3 or No. 4 hitter to provide the sock in a rather anemic batting order the past three years. He has done everything asked of him and has done it well . . . switched from infield to outfield, plugging the always-tough hole in left field at Yankee Stadium and taking over as the big hitter when he prefers to bunt, draw walks and steal bases.

It is unlikely that Roy is much acquainted with Horatio Alger, but the gentleman in pinstriped flannels could qualify as the hero in an Alger story.

White New Whizzer in Yank Garden

DiMag, Mantle Place Stamp Of Approval on Swift Picket

By TIL FERDENZI

NEW YORK, N. Y.

Roy White, an intriguing switch-hitter, did not wake up one morning with a burning desire to become a big league ball player.

"It never occurred to me that I'd ever do anything else for a living," the Yankee rookie said.

In White's case, this is understandable. Little boys growing up with nary a worry about their ability to get a full quota of base-hits grow up thinking playing baseball for a living beats working for a living. And in this rookie's case, getting the bat on the ball was never one of life's major problems. Or, for that matter, even a little bit of a problem.

"I don't mean to sound cocky," the soft-spoken outfielder said, "but as far back as I can remember, I managed to get my share of base-hits."

This may be hard to believe for thousands upon thousands of kids from Boston to Anaheim who nurture frustrations at an early age because of a lack of ability to hit the ball.

"It never really occurred to me when I was a kid playing in Little League, or anywhere else, that hitting ought to be a problem," the rookie said.

All of which helps make **White** the kind of farm-grown rookie the Yankee front office is proud to have on the varsity payroll.

In the words of Manager Ralph Houk, "If **White** can't hit big league pitching, then who can?"

Houk, of course, admits to a bit of prejudice on the subject of his switch-hitting prize.

"This boy," Houk added, "has hit just about everywhere he's played."

The records make out a strong case for this statement, and so does **White**.

Roy Recalls Doubts

"I'll admit," he said, "I had some doubts that first year the Yankees sent me out. This was strange to me, because I always had had lots of luck hitting the ball."

"But that first year out of high school, they sent me to Greensboro instead of starting me at the bottom of the ladder with Ft. Lauderdale in the Florida State League."

"Well, I got to Greensboro and I didn't do too well. I hit around .204 for the first month and then they sent me to Lauderdale. I didn't do much better there at the beginning, either, but just when I was beginning to get a little confused, the base-hits started to fall in for me and I made a good spurt. When the season ended, I had lifted my average up to .286."

White, who played his four seasons in the minor leagues as a second baseman, admittedly needs lots of work to smooth off the rough edges in left field. But the endorsement in his behalf as a hitter are most legitimate.

Joe DiMaggio, a fellow who ought to know something on the subject of putting the bat on the ball, left the Yankee training camp with a positive

Reds Wore Flashy Togs—Almost Turned Roy's Head

NEW YORK, N. Y.—**Roy White** almost decided to sign with the Cincinnati Reds instead of the New York Yankees. The factor that nearly turned the rookie's head toward the Reds was a matter of haberdashery.

"I sure liked those Cincinnati uniforms," **White** said.

outlook on **White's** future as a hitter.

Actually, **White** has had some early difficulty coping with major league pitching, but the kid is not overawed by what he has seen. As at Ft. Lauderdale, the hits should start dropping in for him.

Certainly, DiMaggio and Mantle both can't be wrong in their confidence that the youngster will hit in the Big-Time. "I like that nice, smooth batting stroke he's got," DiMaggio commented.

White is not built along the lines of the typical slugging outfielder. He stands a modest 5-11 and weighs 166 pounds. But he has the power to hit home runs, particularly when swinging lefthanded. He had 19 home runs for Columbus in the Southern League last summer when the Yankees brought him up to the varsity in early September. He spent the rest of the season playing right field and batting a tidy .333.

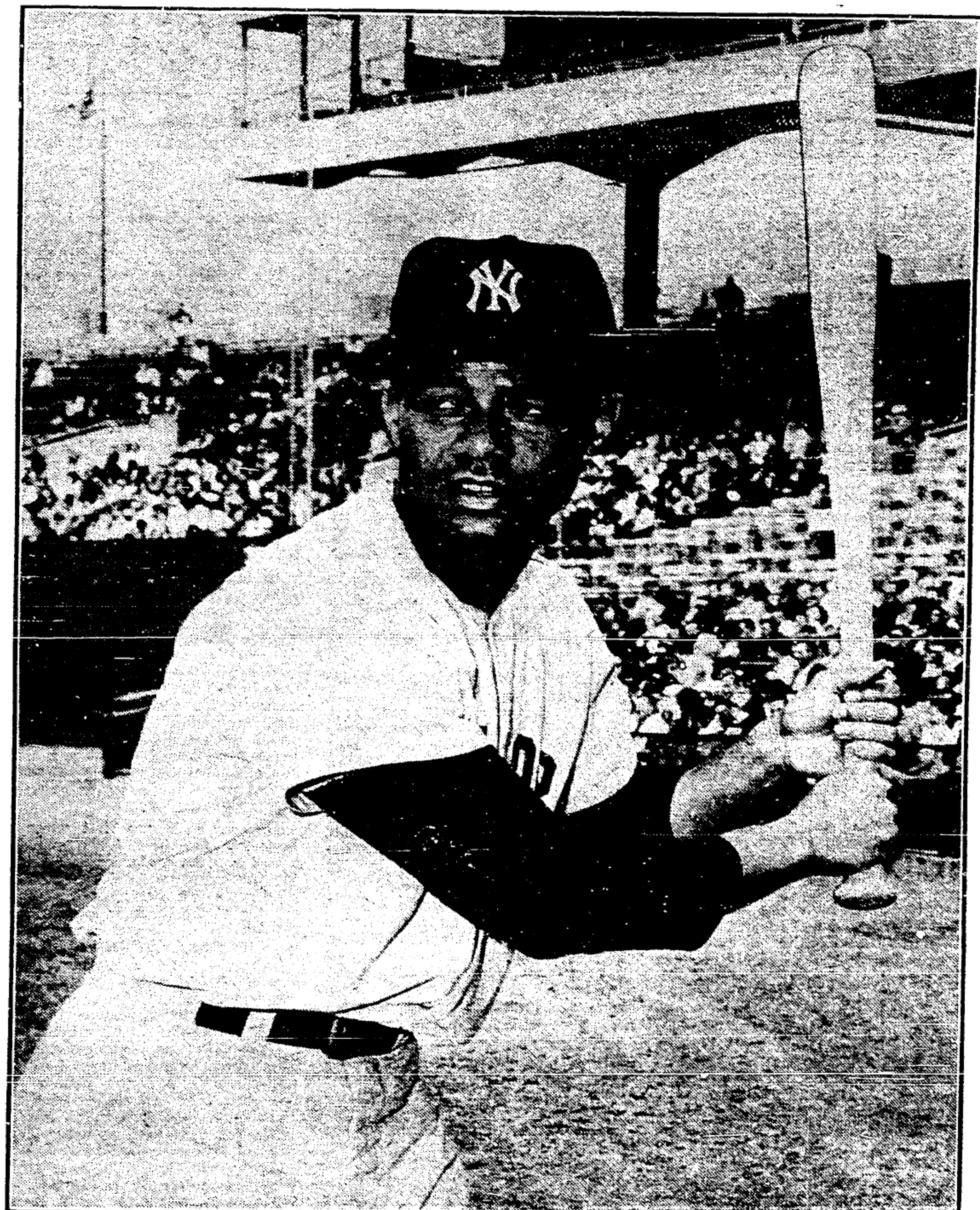
He's No. 1 Yank Swiftly

White, easily the fastest runner on the club, seems tailor-made to swing as a leadoff batter, even though his disposition for connecting with the long ball recently has had him taking his cuts in the No. 7 slot.

Before Johnny Keane was fired, the then-manager praised **White's** batting eye and said, "He has all the ingredients of an exceptional leadoff man."

Houk, the present boss in the dugout, also realizes the tremendous leadoff capabilities of the young outfielder. Foremost among these is the fact that **White** knows the strike zone and seldom swings at pitches which don't get a piece of the plate.

If **White** can fill the bill at the top of the batting order, he would



ROY WHITE... His Choice Assets Are a Good Bat and Speedy Legs

fill a longtime need for the Yankees, a team which has not had a solid leadoff man in recent years. In fact, there are many who will tell you the Yankees haven't had a top-flight, full-time leadoff man since Earl Combs was on the payroll, and that was not the day before yesterday. Phil Rizzuto was an excellent leadoff batter, but he hit in many spots under the Casey Stengel shake-well system.

White readily admits he has more long-ball power swinging lefthanded, but he is a switch-hitter... period.

Watched Games on TV

"Like most kids," he said, "I spent lots of time watching the games on TV. We didn't have the Dodgers or Angels out on the Coast then, and we'd see the big league games on the game-of-the-week network."

After an afternoon of watching the big leaguers on the magic lantern, **White** would chase himself out to the backyard of his Compton, Calif., home and start batting stones.

He'd throw one into the air and swish it with his bat.

"One time," he recalled, "I'd be Stan Musial and I'd be playing in Busch Stadium, so being Musial, I'd be hitting lefthanded."

"The next time I'd be Joe DiMaggio, or Mickey Mantle batting right-

handed. Again I'd imagine men on base and I'd toss a stone up again and hit it.

"And that's how I became a switch-hitter."

White, who was signed to a modest bonus—somewhere under \$10,000—after he graduated from Centennial High School in Compton, did not even know the Yankees were interested in him.

"The Reds, the Angels, Mets and Astros were after me to sign," he said. "Then, after a game I had played in the Connie Mack League, this Yankee scout—a fellow named Tuffie Hashem—asked me if I'd be interested in playing ball for the Yankees."

"A few days later, I was home helping my mother wash the dishes and there was Hashem ringing the

Roy Inherited Speed From His Mom

NEW YORK, N. Y.—**Roy White** has a younger brother and an older sister back home in Compton, Calif., but he described himself as "the only athletically-inclined member of the family."

However, the Yankee outfielder quickly amended that statement. "I guess I get my athletic ability from my mother," he said. "When she was a young girl growing up in San Diego, she ran the dashes in track and I think she played a little baseball, too."

doorbell. He had a contract. A few hours later, I signed it."

White was asked why the Dodgers never made him an offer.

"For a very good reason," he said. "They were interested in Jim Lefebvre at that time."

Aided by Expert Tutors

White knows he's got a long way to go before he becomes the kind of outfielder he figures he ought to be.

"But I'm getting lots of help," he said. "Mantle, Maris—just everybody is helping me. And down in Florida, DiMaggio spent a lot of time with me. If I don't make it, it won't be because I didn't get the right kind of attention."

The betting is that **White** will make it. And his biggest assets are a good bat and good legs.



YANK EX-MANAGER JOHNNY KEANE AND ROY WHITE

Worry-Free **White** Wiends Wicked Warclub for Yanks

By JIM OGLE

NEW YORK, N. Y.—One of the few early-season bright spots for the Yankees has been **Roy White's** lively bat and speed. He was on the bench when the season started, but there is every indication the versatile young man will collect no more splinters.

Is **White** ready to prove he is a major league hitter and a full-time player? That is the most interesting question around the Yank encampment these days, primarily because no one else on the club, except Mickey Mantle, is hitting his weight.

Roy, who was leading the Pacific Coast League with .343 at Spokane when the Yanks recalled him last July, has settled into a definite position for the first time in his major league career, and that could make a difference.

"Look, I'm making no predictions and setting no goals beyond staying in the lineup," **Roy** said. "This is my third chance to hold a job, but it is the first time that I haven't had some mental problems to go with it. I think I'm ready to prove that I can do a good job as a major league hitter, but I'm not popping off.

No Experience in Garden

"In 1966, I came into the Yankee camp as an infielder, but suddenly found myself in the outfield. I didn't care where I played, but it was only natural that I would worry about myself as an outfielder, since I had no experience.

"It was on-the-job training," **White** said, "but it was a mental hazard. I was well aware of my lack of training in the outfield and worried about making mistakes. In addition, my arm wasn't too strong at that point of my career and that was an added worry."

The late Johnny Keane was managing the Yanks in 1966 and moved **White** to the outfield for two reasons. **Roy** had a spectacular spring with the bat, winning the James P. Dawson award as the outstanding rookie, but Bobby Richardson had second base nailed down and that had been Roy's position in the minors.

White was handed the left field job, a tough spot at the stadium, but ran into his problems at bat. **Roy**, a spray hitter, really had too good a start because he hit five or six homers early in the year. He became overly ambitious,

changed his natural style and soon couldn't buy a hit.

"It was a subconscious thing," **Roy** said. "I knew I wasn't a home-run hitter, but because of those early homers and the short right field in the stadium, I started trying to pull the ball. I'm naturally a hitter who goes with the pitch, so when I started trying to pull, I got out of stride.

"I finally got wise to myself, but I was on the bench by that time. I think I might have gotten straightened out had I continued playing, but I didn't, and wound up with a bad year, although I began to hit again late in the season."

Tough Hitter in PCL

In the spring of '67, **White** didn't even return to New York with the Yankees. Desperate for a shortstop, the Yanks got John Kennedy in a deal with the Dodgers and, as part of the deal, **White** was optioned to Spokane and immediately started spraying base-hits around the PCL.

"I rejoined the Yankees in Cleveland," **Roy** recalled. "I got off to a good start, but went 0-for-8 in an extra-inning game with Minnesota. I hit the ball solidly, but always right at somebody. The next day, I was 0-for-5 and I was in a slump overnight.

"I ran into one of those periods when I couldn't get a ball to fall safe. At the same time, I had a mental problem again, worrying about my defensive play at third base.

"I knew I wasn't a good third baseman and it worried me, which affected my hitting.

"I was really happy this spring when Ralph (Houk) told me to forget all about the infield and concentrate on the outfield. I took stock of myself, remembered all the things Joe DiMaggio, Tom Tresh, Mickey Mantle and others had told me about playing the out-

field. I also had some help from Gene Woodling this spring.

"With no infield to worry about," **Roy** said, "I spent a lot of time this spring trying to improve myself in the outfield. I worked a lot at charging the ball, cutting off balls in the hole and getting my throws away faster. I think all the work has paid off and I feel I can stop worrying about my outfielding."

Houk remarked often this spring that **White** was the most improved player in camp. He made great use of his speed to cover the outfield, making plays he never had made before and showing much more sureness in covering his position.

Roy was on the bench when the season started, but the injury to Joe Pepitone and Steve Whitaker's slow start opened a job in the outfield. **White** took over April 18 at Anaheim and delivered three hits and has been the regular right fielder ever since.

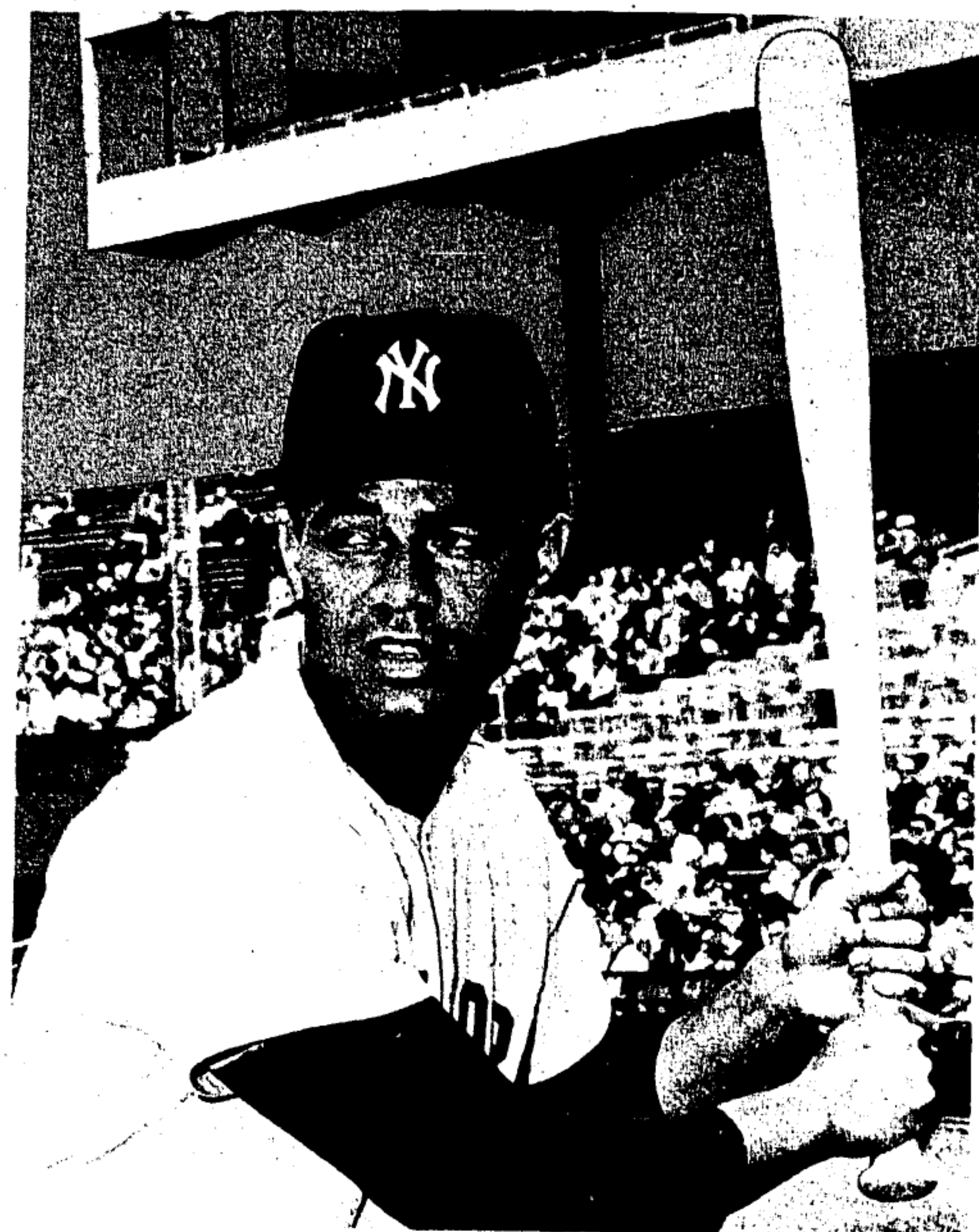
Speed No. 1 Quality

While most of the Yankees were struggling to stay over .200, **White** was among the league's top five hitters and quickly took over the team lead in hits and was among the top RBI men. As May Day arrived, **White** was the only Yankee outfielder with any job security.

One of **White's** big assets is his speed, which makes him a fine base-runner and base stealer. In a dozen games as a regular, **White** stole seven bases to put him among the league leaders in that offensive category.

"I think I can be a contender for the base-stealing title," **Roy** said, "but I'm not thinking about that. My main thought right now is to keep hitting and stay in the lineup. For the first time as a Yankee, I have confidence I can do it.

"I feel I can hit around .290 or .300 and, if I do, I should be able



Roy White . . . Third Time Is the Charm.

to steal quite a few bases. Sure, I would like to have a shot at the base-stealing title, but don't forget I have to hit to get on base and have a chance to steal. Being able to steal means nothing if you don't hit."

White, who is only 24, is one of the few Yankee farm products of recent years to move up and give indications of being a real major leaguer.

His fielding has been first rate, including robbing Dick McAuliffe of a homer with a fine catch that had him tumbling into the seats after grabbing the ball.

"It's a long way to October," **Roy** said, "but this time I feel I'll still be in the lineup when we get there. I feel a lot more con-

fidence this time around and this is the year I should prove something."

Yankee Doodles: Dooley Womack, last year's ace reliever, was off to a bad start with three losses in five appearances. He gave up only six homers all last season, but had been tagged for three in nine innings to date. . . . Joe Pepitone was eligible to come off the disabled list on May 6 and figured to return to action within a week. . . . After 18 games, the Yankees still hadn't hit in double figures in any game and ten times had been held to five or fewer hits. . . . Charlie Smith made the trip to Baltimore and Chicago with the club as he continued getting ready for a return to the active list.

Braves Yelp Behind Tito's Tomahawk

By WAYNE MINSHEW

ATLANTA, Ga. — Manager Luman Harris still gets a chuckle out of the story.

"One of my coaches came up to me the other day, and he said, 'Luman, if you keep playing the scrubini, you're going to ruin our bench.'"

A scrubini, according to baseball terminology, is a reserve, a substitute, a scrub. Take your pick. But every time Harris inserts one into the lineup, things happen.

The latest scrubini star on the Braves is veteran Tito Francona, the quiet journeyman player who is seeing service with his seventh major league club.

Francona Hot at Dish

After Tito failed as a pinch-hitter five successive times, Harris decided in a recent series against the Giants and Dodgers to insert Francona into the starting lineup.

Against the Giants, in his 1968 starting debut, Tito merely went 4-for-4 against possibly the best pitcher in baseball, Juan Marichal, drove in two runs with three singles and a homer and stole two bases. The Braves won the game, 7-2.

That was April 29. Two days later, at Los Angeles, Francona was in the lineup again and was up to his old tricks. This time he

managed "only" three hits in four trips, but drove in three runs in a 7-3 victory. Then, on May 4, Tito drove in three runs with a double in the ninth inning to beat the Astros, 5-2.

What did the silent one have to say about his exploits?

"It sure beats pinch-hitting," said Tito.

Tito Can Play in Garden

When Francona started, he played first base in place of slumping Deron Johnson, but he can also play in the outfield.

Which brings up another aspect of the Braves' scrubinis. They just might be the most versatile in the major leagues.

For example, Tommie Aaron has already played first base and left field this season and has been among the league's top ten hitters most of the year.

In the series against the Dodgers, Aaron turned more than a few heads with his stellar play at first base in a 17-inning game May 2. He handled 13 chances in the last nine innings of the game, several in spectacular style.

Said Harris: "You won't see first base played too much better than he played it in that game."

Then there is Marty Martinez, who can play at third, shortstop and second as well as most defensively. Marty added a new dimension May 1 when he debuted as a

starting catcher against the Dodgers.

Harris decided to use Martinez against the Dodgers "because they like to run and I don't think they will on Marty."

They didn't. They didn't even make a bluff in two games. There was a reason.

"You should have seen those Dodgers watching Marty throw during infield practice," said Harris. "He popped their eyes with that gun he has for an arm."

Martinez caught a winner in his

Braves Drag Feet in Dome After Arriving at 8 A. M.

HOUSTON, Tex. — Why should a series-ending game be played in the daylight hours? The Braves can tell you why.

After playing 17 innings under the lights and losing, 2-1, to the Dodgers at Los Angeles, May 2, they were on an airplane most of the night and did not arrive here to begin a series with the Astros until around 8 a. m. the next day.

All the Braves quickly retired to their rooms, but fans at the Astrodome watched a lot of tired athletes attempt to play baseball the night of May 3, losing, 5-3.

debut, helping Pat Jarvis through a 7-3 victory.

"I didn't have to shake him off at all," said Jarvis. "Marty called a fine game and he caught well."

Actually, it was not Martinez' first action as a catcher. He was behind the plate in the late innings of three games last season, but never when it meant something.

Moving on down the Braves' bench you find Mike Lum, a gifted defensive outfielder who is a pinch-hitter de luxe.

Then there is Woody Woodward, another defensive dandy. Woody can play three positions, third, shortstop and second in major league fashion.

"I have to like our bench," said Harris. "But I thought all along that it was going to be stronger than last year's."

Score one for the Braves' scrubinis. . . . Now if the regulars can get going, the Braves could make things interesting.

Tepee Topics: The Braves have recalled rookie lefthanded pitcher Skip Guinn for bullpen duty. . . . Hank Aaron's 0-for-6 in the 17-inning, 2-1 loss to the Dodgers May 2 ended a nine-game hitting streak for the Braves' super-star during which time he was 18-for-36. . . . When the Braves tallied seven times against the Giants in a 7-2 win April 29, it marked their most productive output of the season.

Yank Hero **White** Swings Super-Heated Bat

By JIM OGLE

NEW YORK, N. Y.—In the midst of the hottest streak of his career, Roy **White** retains his cool and his sense of humor.

"Sure, I'm enjoying this a lot," **White** admitted, "but it doesn't make me forget the bad years. I know how easy things can turn, how soon the line drives can be right at someone and you're in a slump."

White has been the Yankees' brightest star for three years, and he is one of the leading lights in New York's surge into second place in the American East. In the

first half of June, **White** was super hot, reaching his glowing peak in Kansas City and Chicago.

Roy had eight hits in 10 tries in one stretch against the Royals and was 14 for 21 during the five games in Kaycee and Chicago. The Yanks won four of the five and, of course, **White** was involved in most of the big runs.

Through the first half of June, **White** had 25 hits in 56 trips to the plate for a .446 average. He was among the leaders in most offensive departments, showing the way in total hits with 86 at mid-month.

"I never had a streak like I did in Kansas City in my life," **Roy** said, "not even in the Little League. I was once 8-for-11 in a series at Boston, but even that wasn't as good as this. I would be lying if I said I wasn't enjoying it, but I'm naturally a pessimist and I know how quickly things can change."

"When anyone gets into a streak like this, there are reasons and I can think of several. In the first place, I think my change to contact lenses has helped me. There are some pitches I can see better and my depth perception is improved."

"Don't forget, we have a better club this year and that is a big help," **White** continued. "I'm surrounded by better hitters and, as a result, I'm seeing better pitches. Last year, they used to pitch around me, but not any more."

Experience Is Priceless

"This is my fifth year in the league and experience is beginning to pay off. I know a lot of the pitchers, have a pretty good idea of how they work and all my mental notes are beginning to pay off. I'm getting a big kick out of my three-hit days because I know I have to have them for a high batting average."

White has quietly built up some goals and dreams. One by one, he seems to be checking them off. Earlier in the year, he passed a milestone when he hit homers left-handed and right-handed in the same game at Oakland, a la Mickey Mantle.

"That had to be one of my greatest thrills," **Roy** said. "I still don't believe it, yet I can't forget it."

There's a funny story connected with that feat in Oakland. It concerns Harry Caray, who had spent most of his career broadcasting Cardinal games.

When **White** came to bat in the first inning with two on and one out, Caray was telling his audience: "It seems strange to see the Yankees with a cleanup hitter who

chokes up on—opps, there it goes, folks!"

That was **Roy's** first homer of the game. Then he hit the other in the eighth, also with two on.

Caray won't make the mistake of underestimating the Yanks' cleanup hitter again, even if he does choke up six or seven inches on the bat.

Close, But No Cigar

White also had a yen to enjoy a four-hit night, but has been frustrated in this goal. Five times this year **White** had enjoyed three-hit games, but couldn't get the fourth. Several times he had been thwarted by sensational defensive plays.

Now, in Kansas City, he got a sixth chance and it was on his mind.

"When I went up trying to get a fourth hit this time," **Roy** said, "I decided to pick up a bat which felt uncomfortable to me. Using my usual bat hadn't worked, so I decided to swing left-handed with my righthanded bat, which has a big barrel."

"Incidentally, it is a Danny Cater model. I had tried it in the spring and liked it as a righthanded hitter. Left-handed, however, it has always felt awkward, and it did this time. I managed to swing down on a pitch, chop it to short-stop and beat it out. It wasn't much of a hit, but it made me happy."

The Needle for **Roy**

When the 12-inning game ended in a Yankee victory, **Roy's** mates were giving him the needle with: "You still haven't had a four-hit game."

Roy, of course, couldn't have cared less. His FIFTH hit had keyed a five-run 12th in which the Yanks won.

"I never had even dared dream of a five-hit night," **Roy** said. "I always was concentrating on four, which was tough enough. I like that five, however."

White, who is only 26, joined

the Yankee organization as an infielder in 1962. Always a good **hitter**, but a poor infielder, he was sent to the outfield late in '65.

In addition to his hitting, **Roy** also has developed into a fine outfielder and lacks only one asset to be outstanding . . . he has only an adequate arm.

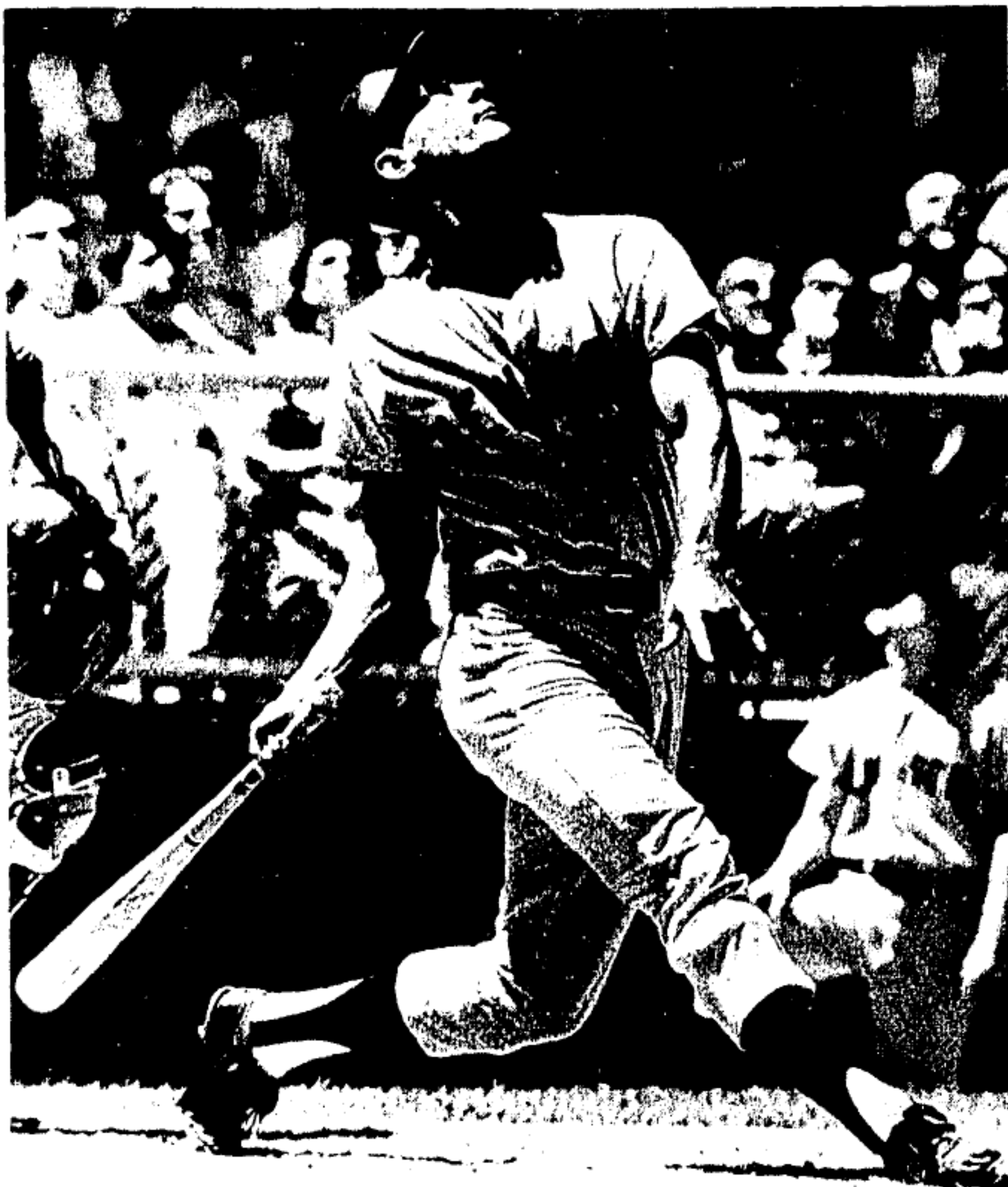
"**Roy's** the best left fielder we have had in a long time," Yankee Manager Ralph Houk said. "He sure closed up that left-center alley in Yankee Stadium."

White, who also leads the club in stolen bases, has all the assets of a leadoff man or a No. 2 hitter. He draws a lot of walks, has speed and hits behind the runner, but he's batted third or fourth for the Yankees most of the time.

He Likes the Pressure

"You know, I'm beginning to enjoy hitting No. 4," **White** said. "I didn't like it, but now I do. I'm enjoying the pressure, but I think it's because we're winning and every game means so much. It's fun to play ball on a winner."

Yankee Doodles: Several Yankees were hit by heavy colds on their recent trip, including Houk, Steve Hamilton, Frank Tepedino and Bobby Murcer. . . . One of the recent high spots has been Mel Stottlemyre's return to form with three straight complete-game victories, all long overdue. . . . Houk's instructions to Gary Waslewski June 18 at Boston was simply, the pitcher recalled, "Go out and beat them." That's all. So Gary beat his old teammates, 3-2, though he couldn't remember when he last beat anyone. "I know it was last year and I know it was in relief. But who was it?" the hurler asked. . . . Murcer incidentally has been pushing his batting average up to respectable figures. . . . Jerry Kenney has been hitting in tough luck, with his best shots right at someone. . . . Old-Timers Day on August 8 figures to pack Yankee Stadium.



Roy White . . . 'I'm Naturally a Pessimist.'

Glove Wizard Michael in Aparicio's Class at Short

By JIM OGLE

NEW YORK, N. Y.—They're still wondering how long Gene Michael will stick in the majors, but the question has a much different connotation now. Until Gene took over as Yankee shortstop a year ago, the expectation was it wouldn't be long. Now they're figuring it will be quite a while.

With the Yankee farm system producing again (Frank Baker and Mike Guerrero), plus the fact Michael has passed his 32nd birthday, it figures that the agile infielder soon will be facing a fight for his job—his regular job, that is.

By the same token, Baker and Guerrero are going to face a tough battle, especially if Phil Rizzuto is any judge of a shortstop.

"Gene is second only to Luis Aparicio as a defensive shortstop," the all-time Yankee shortstop insisted. "If you include offense, then you may have to adjust the rating. Figuring just defense, however, only Luis tops Gene."

"Luis is a bit better going to his left than Gene, but Michael is great in all other departments. I rate Gene a notch ahead of Mark Belanger because I feel Michael is more rugged and a bit smarter, which is important."

Mr. Big of Yank Infield

There are many who rate Michael as the key man of the Yankee infield, which has developed into a fine defensive unit.

Gene's mates call him Stick because of his build, but many opponents refer to him as Slick for the bag of tricks he unfolds.

Joe Keough of Kansas City was the latest victim of Gene's hidden-ball stunt recently. Michael had previously pulled it on Zoilo Versalles and Tom Matchik. He does it with a sheepish grin.

"I'd never do it just to embarrass a guy," Michael said. "If it might help win a game, then I'll try it. I guess all's fair in love or war."

Michael has a ready explanation for the brilliant ball he has been playing recently, although he is disappointed with his hitting.

"I'm relaxed, happy and getting a big kick out of play-

ing with this team," Gene said. "I told everyone this spring that we'd surprise a lot of people. Now we are doing it. This is a good club and it's getting better. It's fun to be playing."

"I'll make my share of errors, but my errors will be in ratio to total chances. I mean, I'll have more assists and putouts than the guys who have fewer errors than I do."

There's no indication of anyone being able to take Michael's job in the immediate future, but one day it will happen. When it does, however, Gene probably will start a new—and lengthy—career as an all-round utility infielder.

Before taking over at short as a regular, Gene did a little filling in around the infield. If it becomes his job, then he'll get better, since he'll work at it more. His lean build will help him stretch out his career. He doesn't figure to put on weight or slow down.

"I'll hit better before the year is out," Gene said. "I'm not letting it worry me and mess up my fielding. I'm past that stage of getting uptight and tense about anything. We have enough bats now to carry a guy like me, but I'll do my share."

P. S.—The same night Gene said that, he hit his first homer and had two other hits.



Gene Michael About to Backhand Hot Smash That Has Escaped Outstretched Glove of Jerry Kenney.

Stott Links Bat Revival to Camp Boycott, Lower Hill

By JIM OGLE

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Mel Stottlemire, Yankee pitching ace, is the type of guy who'll give an honest opinion whether it follows the party line or not. Mel has become the first player to admit that the spring boycott proved detrimental to the pitching fraternity.

"Don't let anybody tell you the week we (the pitchers) missed in spring training hasn't hurt," Stottlemire said. "We usually were a week or ten days ahead of the regulars, but this year we all reported at the same time. The pitchers never have been ahead of the hitters this year and that is why the hitting and scoring are up."

"As the result of reporting late, every pitcher missed at least one turn, some two, and they are paying for it now. I think they'll see the pitching getting better as the season goes on but, for the first six weeks or so, we lost that edge we usually had on the hitters."

"At the same time," said Stott, "I might as well admit that I might have been wrong when I thought the

lower mound wouldn't make any difference. I am now convinced that it has had the desired affect of taking something away from the pitchers. I am not only speaking of myself, but I have noticed one strong tendency.

Curveball Hurler Hurt

"I am convinced the lower mound has hurt the breaking pitch," Mel said. "I haven't had a good breaking ball even in spring training. I have watched a lot of pitchers and most of them are having trouble with their breaking pitches."

"Stan (Bahnsen) won't say too much about it because he isn't looking to alibi, but that has been his problem. It wasn't until his sixth start that his breaking stuff was any good to him at all. It looks like the lower mound will be quite a factor. I know I have to adjust or do something to get my breaking stuff back."

"This has been a great lesson to me," Mel said with

a grin. "I'll never give an opinion about anything again until I have had a chance to try it out. I thought sure the lower mound would help me since I am a sinker-ball pitcher, but it hasn't. Even when I won those five in a row, I pitched only one really good game."

"Lindy McDaniel figured the lower mound would help him, too, but it hasn't. He hasn't been able to get consistency as yet and it is his breaking pitch that is giving him trouble."

"I have one more theory as to why there is more hitting and scoring this year, but it has nothing to do with pitching. I think all the publicity about pitchers last year, plus raps at the hitters, has had quite an effect. It made the hitters mad and started them thinking."

"The hitters seem to be bearing down a lot more this year," Mel said. "They appear to have a lot more determination. I guess they are all out to prove the pitchers haven't taken over the game after all."

Yanks' White Flits Coast-to-Coast Answering Army Calls

By JIM OGLE

NEW YORK, N. Y.—Roy White is one of the slickest of the Yankees' swifties, but the distances Roy swipes on American League catchers are nothing compared with the miles he travels to make the officers of his New York Reserve unit happy.

"I've made many a coast-to-coast trip to attend my reserve meetings," Roy admitted, "and it gets a little rugged after a while. The time changes keep my body turning somersaults as it tries to catch up with the clock."

Any time Roy is missing, one immediately suspects he is at another meeting, since he is one player whose outfit has many weekend get-togethers. Oddly enough, practically every time the Yankees are in California, White has to make a special trip to New York.

"I had to miss a game in New York, then make the trip from California this time because of the luck of the draw," Roy explained. "One of our Sunday meetings was canceled, which meant we had to attend two Wednesday meetings to make up for it."

Took Part in Parade

"The basic reason for the change was the Armed Forces Day parade, which my section was picked to march in along with one other. Bud Harrelson of the Mets is also in my unit, but his section doesn't have to parade. He missed a Sunday double-header, but didn't have the evening meetings, which were to practice marching."

Roy's latest coast-to-coast commuting occurred after the Yankees left New York on Monday, May 5, for California. They played the Angels Tuesday night with White in the lineup. Roy then flew back to New York early the next morning

to attend a meeting that night, then rejoin the club in Oakland late May 8, which was an off day.

"The five to six hours I have to spend in the plane are the toughest part of the whole deal," White admitted. "Next to that is the constant time changes and the loss of sleep. It always takes me a couple of days to adjust and get back in the groove."

Crossword Puzzle Fan

"Traveling with the whole group helps time pass pretty quickly, but traveling alone is tough. I try doing crossword puzzles, read some and try to get a little shut eye. Unfortunately, I'm not the type who can sleep on planes or buses and things. Then the payoff is usually I catch the same movie on every plane."

"My wife doesn't mind my coming home for a meeting, but the rest of my family is disappointed," Roy said. "Naturally, I come from California and have a lot of relatives who like to see the games in Anaheim. My mother-in-law, Malvina Hester, is a real fan and sees all the California games."

White's military commitments dictate more than just his movements during the baseball season. Since he is in a New York unit, White has made his home in New Jersey full time.

"I'll live in the East at least until I finish my reserve service," Roy said. "I don't mind it, since there are many opportunities for off-season work and a chance to pick up money for personal appearances. If I were living in California, I doubt if there would be many requests for me to make appearances."

White twice had to make a coast trip last season to attend meetings

and, on one occasion, made four coast-to-coast flights in a period of six days. Last year, he would leave the game in the seventh inning to catch a midnight flight. This year, he's gambling on a morning flight getting him to the Armory on time.

White, who is a most conscientious young man, never takes advantage of the situation. He expends every effort to get to every ball game following a meeting, even if he arrives in the ninth inning. This leads to some good-natured joshing from his mates.

"There have been times when I came right from a meeting wearing my khakis," Roy said. "The guys like to kid me and, naturally, spend a lot of time saluting me. That happened the day we were playing Baltimore at home. I got to the park in the first inning, then batted in the second."

No Batting Drill

"It was a strange feeling and I felt slightly over-matched going up to hit that first time. I had had no batting practice, of course, and no time even to loosen up, except for swinging the lead bat. Naturally, it makes me feel good that Ralph (Houk) rates me highly enough to get me in the lineup as soon as I get back."

"I spent enough time on the bench for a couple of years, so I'm ready to play any time he asks me. It is a tremendous lift to me to have some security and a steady job," said Roy. "I may not be ready to play getting back from a meeting, but it's nice to know they want me."

Roy made three weekend trips to Fort Lauderdale from Fort Dix in New Jersey during spring training. White didn't get his discharge until March 21, which was practically the end of spring training.

"I figure I'll probably miss about 30 games this year because of military commitments. Most of them will come starting on June 28, when I go for my two-week duty at Camp Drum. Bud Harrelson and Don Shaw of Montreal will be there at the same time, so we'll probably do some throwing."

White is one of the Yanks' most adept base-runners, but says Dick Simpson is faster than he is.

"I feel I am a better base-stealer this year because of the little time we had to talk to George Case in the spring," Roy said. "In a few minutes, he did a lot to make me think stealing and concentrate on watching the pitchers. I wish he could spend a couple of weeks in camp next year."

Yankee Doodles: Jerry Kenney ran into his first major slump when

he went 22 times without a hit, then broke it with a triple. He came back with two hits the next day. . . . Bobby Murcer has been bothered by a jammed thumb, which has affected his throwing. The rookie third baseman has made ten errors, most of them on bad throws. . . . Len Boehmer played three games at first base while Joe Pepitone was nursing his injured elbow. Len never had started a game at first, but gave a good account of himself. The popular Boehmer was still looking for his

first major league hit after 20 tries.

Mel Stottlemire had one of his rare no-decision starts against Baltimore. . . . Cap Day at Yankee Stadium drew 29,059, which wasn't bad for a Saturday afternoon. . . . Bill Cowan and Bobby Cox made their first starts of the year against Dave McNally. Cowan made a spectacular catch to rob Brooks Robinson of a homer. . . . After making 51 appearances without yielding a homer, Steve Hamilton was tapped for three in as many innings.

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ROY WHITE (left) joins Fritz Peterson (center) and Bobby Murcer in celebrating the Yankees' 2-1 victory over the Angels in which Peterson scattered five hits, May 6.