

A Trip to Barber Worked Miracle For Twins' Steve

By BOB FOWLER

ORLANDO, Fla.—Why are people sometimes judged by appearance only? Why is hair, for example, so important to some? It is, you know, especially in baseball.

It seems to be our most conservative sport. Baseball hasn't changed its rules in decades. It hasn't changed its customs, either . . . if it was good enough for Babe Ruth, son, do it.

Since the "All-America Boy" is an image with short hair, there is an absence of long hair in baseball. There are no mustaches like those of Ben Davidson and Derek Sanderson, there are no Afros.

Because of this aversion to hair, a promising prospect was rejected by every major league team two years ago. Now, he is a short-haired, "clean-cut" young man and apparently a future star pitcher with the Twins.

Of course, he still has the same strong right arm as when he was scorned by the 24 teams. He is the same intelligent, well-mannered person. He jokes about his plight in 1969. Can you blame him?

His name is Steve Barber and at age 23 he could be one of Minnesota's starting pitchers this year. He could be returned to the minors for another year of seasoning, too, but Manager Bill Rigney says he is so talented he'll be pitching for the Twins within two years.

Rigney kept him on the staff last year, although he had only two months of minor league experience. He had an 0-0 record in 18 relief appearances, then was returned to the minors in July.

Now, after pitching in the Venezuelan Winter League for even more experience, he is back with the Twins as a contender for Rigney's planned five-man rotation.

Two years ago, he thought he would become a school teacher.

As a pitcher for LaVerne (Calif.) College, Barber was named the Most Valuable Player in the NAIA tournament in St. Joseph, Mo., although his team failed to win the championship. In six days, he pitched in four games and was, well, the tournament standout.

His Hair Was Too Long

Yet no team drafted him because his hair extended below his cap, albeit not to his shoulders.

"My college coach didn't care about such things," Barber explained. "A lot of guys had long hair."

After graduation, Barber pondered his future as a hard-throwing school teacher and, with the urging of his coach, visited a barber. He was signed virtually as soon as he got out of the chair by Dick Wiencek, now the Angels' assistant to the general manager.

Now that he has been accepted, he is returning to some of his old habits and it's helping his pitching. No, he isn't letting his hair grow, but he's throwing his curve ball as he did in college.

"I switched to a complete overhanded curve and it hurt my control," Barber said. "Now, I've gone back to my old curve, using more of the wrist, and it has helped."

It helped the young man escape a hairy situation in spring training and enhance his starting possibilities.

In an exhibition against Atlanta, the Braves had runners at first and second with two out in the third inning of a scoreless tie. The batter was Hank Aaron.

Barber threw a curve. Aaron took it for strike one. Barber threw a slider. Aaron took it for strike two. Barber threw a fast ball. Aaron took it for strike three.

"I knew I couldn't throw him the same pitch twice," Steve said. "He's too great a hitter for that."

Steve Slated for Starter Role

Such an effort must have taken a lot out of the young pitcher for, in the next inning, the Braves scored twice and he was in the clubhouse by the fifth because he was tired.

Twins officials know he will grow stronger as the season progresses. They know, too, he will be a starting pitcher for this season, or next year.

They're elated, now, that Barber saw a barber two years ago, and has been back regularly since.

Twin Tales: Tony Oliva ended his holdout, the longest in Twins' history, March 17, signing a two-year contract for an estimated \$90,000 this season and at least \$100,000 next year. Calvin Griffith said Oliva wasn't the first player to receive a two-year pact, a fact never before revealed by the Twins. He said another player had signed for two years, but wouldn't name him. He said he was presently on the club and everyone figured, of course, it was Harmon Killebrew. . . . Bill Zepp, baseball's final holdout, apparently will be placed on the restricted list as voluntarily retired unless Griffith can make a trade with the Tigers. First, Griffith tried to obtain a starting pitcher from some other team. . . . Lou Pennick, a lefthander invited to camp when Pat House retired, pitched two scoreless innings in his spring debut against Atlanta. House, incidentally, forgot retirement and is now pitching in the team's minor league system again. . . . Killebrew struck out twice against knuckleballing Phil Niekro, his first whiffs in 19 at-bats this spring.

Rod Carew tore adhesions in his right knee while trying to beat out a bunt, but two days later said it was all right. . . . Dave Boswell made his debut with three innings against the Mets, who got two unearned runs, and Boswell and Rigney said they were impressed with the initial effort.

Luis Tiant couldn't pitch for three weeks after pulling a back muscle in his first exhibition game. . . . After his team lost to the Tokyo Giants, 6-3, Rigney told Japanese newsmen he liked their club's style of play. "They hit the ball to the opposite field well, they protect the plate with two strikes and the pitchers are always around the plate and never pitch from behind or walk very many." Later, someone suggested to the manager he was describing a "Bill Rigney team." "Listen," Rigney said, "there's nothing wrong with playing the game that way and we might have learned something from this game. I'd rather see a guy try to hit the ball to the opposite field with two strikes instead of trying to jerk one out of the park and grounding into a double play."



THE RED SOX INFILDER, termed by Carl Yastrzemski the best in his Boston career, consists of Rico Petrocelli, Luis Aparicio, Doug Griffin and George Scott.

Slugger Yaz Praises Red Sox Defense

By LARRY CLAFLIN

WINTER HAVEN, Fla. — You would think hitting was the only thing on Carl Yastrzemski's mind, considering the way he pounds a baseball. But such is far from the case. Yaz is talking defense as the Red Sox near the opening of the season.

"This is the best infield we have had on the Red Sox since I came to Boston," Yastrzemski is telling people these days. "We will be one of the best defensive teams in the league."

Boston teams always stress power. Fenway Park is built for hitters, especially righthanded sluggers, and the Red Sox have had more than their share of them. They still have some good hitters—notably Yastrzemski himself—but the emphasis is on defense this year.

The infield will have George Scott at first base, rookie Doug Griffin at second, veteran Luis Aparicio at short and Rico Petrocelli at third base.

Griffin Is Green

The key man is Griffin, who has practically no major league experience. Griffin played 18 games for the Angels late last season and then was traded to Boston in the Tony Conigliaro deal. However, he has the highest of recommendations.

"No second baseman we have had in my time with the Red Sox can go get the ball like Griffin," said Yastrzemski in admiration of the 23-year-old infielder's range.

Yastrzemski was visibly impressed with Griffin's quick reactions and his ability to turn the double play.

With Aparicio, Griffin will form what Red Sox watchers believe will

be one of the finest DP combinations in the league. A non-Red Sox expert who agrees with that estimation is White Sox Manager Chuck Tanner, who managed Griffin last season at Hawaii (Pacific Coast).

"Boston will have one of the best DP teams in the league," Tanner said in frank admiration of both Griffin and Aparicio.

When a Boston reporter observed to Tanner that Griffin was lucky to break in beside such a great shortstop as Aparicio, Tanner said:

"Sure, that is good for Griffin. But he needs no help. He can stand on his own two feet in this game."

Sharp Infield Defense

Scout Tom Ferrick of the Athletics, one of the most astute of the men who watch baseball, said of the Boston infield:

"Defense will be a big thing on this club. You have the kind of an infield that will excite the fans. All of them can get the ball and throw it."

Admittedly, the Red Sox sacrificed hitting to bolster their infield. They gave up Conigliaro, who hit 36 homers last year, and Mike Andrews, who had a bad year at the plate but still is regarded as a solid hitter.

Few, if any, modern Red Sox teams have concentrated so much on infield tightness. Ted Williams, who spent most of his life in the Boston organization, said he could not recall a Red Sox team which traded for defense at the expense of power.

Ted Rates Luis No. 1

Asked at Pompano Beach one afternoon how he rated Aparicio as a shortstop, Ted good-naturedly snapped at the reporter:

"You didn't spend \$6.95 for my book, did you? If you had, you would have known how I feel about Aparicio."

Pressed for an opinion which did not cost \$6.95, Ted said:

"Of all the shortstops I have seen in baseball, Aparicio is the best. There might have been teams on which you would have wanted more power at the position and then you might have gone for a Joe Cronin."

"But, for going and getting the ball and for doing it over a long period of time, Aparicio is on my all-star team."

Aparicio plans to cover the middle of the diamond at Fenway Park, despite the fact that most teams load up their lineups with righthanded pull-hitters in Boston.

Rico Looks Sharp

"Petrocelli goes to his left beautifully at third base," Yaz said in explaining the defensive setup. "Luis will guard the middle. With me in left field I doubt too many baserunners will attempt to score from second on those ground singles that go between Rico and Aparicio."

Much of Boston's hopes for 1971 depend on sound infield defense. Boston's shaky pitching staff could be considerably strengthened by good defense in the field. That is the plan for '71.

Bosox Bunts: Mike Nagy's wife gave birth to their first child, a daughter, in Boston March 15. The baby weighed seven pounds, eight ounces. Speaking of Nagy, Yaz thinks the young righthander will have a big year. . . . Mike Fiore continues to make a strong bid for a job with a lusty bat and some eye-opening plays at first base. . . . Don Pavletich's bid to open the season behind the plate has gained momentum.

Ray Culp will open the season at Fenway April 6 against the Yankees. Boston's infield, which was poor last summer, has been completely resodded. . . . Ken Tatum looked like a confused pitcher in his early spring training outings. Coach Harvey Had-dix has been working hard with him.

The Red Sox have switched hotels at two cities this year. They will stay at the Waldorf Astoria in New York and the Washington Hilton in the nation's capital. . . . Yastrzemski and Gary Peters have become fishing companions in the early morning. They often take out their boat at 6:30 on Winter Haven lakes.

Bosox TV Slate: 56 Games

WINTER HAVEN, Fla.—The Red Sox again will televise 56 regular-season games, including seven each against the Yankees, Tigers and world champion Orioles. The first telecast will be the season opener against the Yankees April 6.

Shrewd Deals Save Bosox From a Pitching Calamity

By LARRY CLAFLIN

BOSTON, Mass. — Sometimes, as one watches the Red Sox struggle to overcome the superiority of the Orioles and move back into pennant contention, the thought occurs that the Red Sox would be in desperate shape had they not done a lot of trading for pitchers in recent years.

Red Sox pitching hopes for 1971 are pinned primarily on Ray Culp, Sonny Siebert and Gary Peters. All of them came to Boston in trades engineered by General Manager Dick O'Connell.

Never, except possibly in the pennant year of 1946, have the Red Sox had strong pitching under the ownership of Tom Yawkey. And 1971 is no exception, although there are still hopes that this staff is better than most recent ones.

There has been a noticeable lack of pitchers developed in the Boston farm system over the years. Exceptions were such winners as Dave Ferriss, Tex Hughson, Mel Parnell and Dick Radatz. Jim Lonborg was a home-developed product, but his winning seasons were confined to one, in 1967, when he won the Cy Young Award with a 22-9 record.

When the Bosox won the pennant in 1946, they were led by Ferriss, Hughson and Mickey Harris. Joe Dobson was the No. 4 starter. Within

a short time, Ferriss, Hughson and Harris all were has-beens because of arm problems.

In the pennant year of 1967, the two best pitchers were Lonborg and Jose Santiago. Now both are at Louisville (International), trying to pitch their way back to the major leagues.

Thus, the pitching staffs of Yawkey's only pennant winners were both decimated by sore arms and injuries. And, until the current pitching improves dramatically, Yawkey is not likely to know soon the pleasure of another pennant.

Brett Has Trouble

This year's staff depends on good years by the three veteran starters, plus some help from home-grown products such as Mike Nagy and Ken Brett. Nagy pitched six shut-out innings in his first 1971 start before succumbing to the Senators. Brett has not been effective.

Culp came to Boston in a trade that can be regarded as one of the best in Red Sox history. Leo Du-rocher was not using Culp much and he traded him to the Red Sox for a minor league outfielder named Bill Schlessinger and a considerable amount of Yawkey's money.

That trade has paid off handsomely for the Red Sox. At this writing, Culp's Boston record is 52-28. He has been Boston's best pitcher for three years.

Siebert came to the Red Sox in the controversial Ken Harrelson deal. With him came Vicente Romo and Jose Azcue. Romo was traded this spring for catcher Duane Josephson, who now is the regular Sox receiver.

Siebert in Top Form

After a slow start last year, Siebert won 15 games. His first two starts this year were excellent, and he appears headed for one of his best seasons.

Peters came to Boston from Chicago before the 1970 season in the deal which sent infielder Syd O'Brien, pitcher Jerry Janeski and money to the White Sox for Peters and Don Pavletich, who is now the No. 2 Boston catcher and top righthanded pinch-hitter.

Peters was 16-11 for the Red Sox last year after a very bad beginning. He is being counted on for 15 wins this year.

The three veteran starters did their jobs last year. Among them they won 48 games while losing 33. What they need to put the Red Sox into pennant contention is help from the younger pitchers, but so far that help has not arrived.

The key to Red Sox chances is the work of such young pitchers as Nagy, Brett and Bill Lee. Despite its early troubles with control, the Boston bullpen should be good. It is the fourth and fifth starters, and the long relievers, who have the Boston front office worried.

Two Costly Losses

With each passing month it becomes more and more obvious how much the demise of Lonborg and Santiago wrecked what could have been an annual pennant contender in Boston. The club has not yet recovered from the loss of two pitchers whose combined record in the pennant year of 1967 was a gaudy 34-13.

Bosox Bunts: Bases on balls galore continued to ruin Red Sox chances of building up a modest winning streak. The bullpen's control was, in the word of Carl Yastrzemski, "disgraceful." . . . Yastrzemski hit his first home run of the year off Dennis McLain a few hours after visiting President Nixon at the White House. Yaz had a bad back at the time. . . . Yaz and Rico Petrocelli sat alone in the dugout in disgust after the Sox had blown a 5-0 lead in the seventh inning and lost to the Senators. A win would have meant a sweep of the three-game series. . . . If Lonborg or Santiago go well at Louisville, they probably will be brought to Boston to bolster the second-line pitching. Also, the Red Sox are keeping a watchful eye on the other teams in the hope of picking up righthanded pitching help. Lefthanded, too, for that matter. . . . Red Sox players complained bitterly about the shadows in Cleveland for day games in April. The fact that they lost three straight there to the Indians might have had something to do with their complaints. . . . Joe Lahoud had two straight singles as a pinch-hitter, one of them driving in two runs in a win at Washington.

Yaz Moves Up One Notch On Red Sox Hit Parade

BOSTON, Mass. — Outfielder Carl Yastrzemski's home run against the Senators in the Red Sox' 5-3 victory April 13 moved Yaz past Harry Hooper to third place on Boston's all-time hit list with a total of 1,708.

Yaz, in his 11th season, now trails only Hall-of-Famer Ted Williams (2,654) and Bobby Doerr (2,042) in the club's career hit parade.



Ray Culp

Yaz Has a Chat With President Nixon

By LARRY CLAFLIN

WASHINGTON, D. C. — President Richard Nixon has a new trophy for his California home and Carl Yastrzemski of the Red Sox has a new friend.

Last July, after getting four hits and winning the Commissioner's Trophy as the most valuable player in the All-Star Game at Cincinnati, Yastrzemski offered the trophy to President Nixon through a Presidential aide he met at the Cincinnati airport the day after the game.

While the Red Sox were in Cleveland recently, Yaz received a phone call from the White House inviting him for a visit. He presented the trophy to President Nixon and they chatted privately for 20 minutes.

"I'm sort of a nut on baseball," Yaz quoted the President as saying.

Nixon asked the Boston outfielder about his work on a Massachusetts drug program aimed at educating young people about the danger of drugs.

"He was sincerely interested in that program and asked me a lot of questions about it," Yastrzemski revealed.

The President gave Yastrzemski souvenirs for his

four children and a golf ball for himself with the Presidential seal on it.

"Have you given Vice-President Agnew any of these golf balls?" Yaz asked the President.

"No, he's too dangerous on a golf course," Yaz quoted President Nixon as replying.

Nixon Suggests Medic

Yaz was suffering from a strained back at the time of his White House visit, and President Nixon was aware of the injury. He recommended a New York doctor to the perennial All-Star. Yastrzemski said he planned to visit the doctor when the Red Sox are in New York to meet the Yankees.

Nixon asked Yastrzemski about trade rumors, offering the comment that Washington reliever Darrold Knowles could help Boston.

"So could Frank Howard," Yaz answered, and the President chuckled.

Yastrzemski has autographed pictures of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson in his den, and now he can add one of President Nixon to his collection.

AstroTurf Notes

Spell It Versatility

by DAN BISHOP



AstroTurf is for where the action is. From major league baseball and football to a field artillery show in the Cotton Bowl at Dallas and the Shrine Circus in St. Louis' Busch Memorial Stadium, there's evidence Monsanto's Mod-Sod is working overtime from coast to coast. Sparkling green AstroTurf, which requires a minimum of care and maintenance, provides the answer to stadium problems everywhere with its uniform, all-weather surface.

The swing is to AstroTurf, as evidenced by these glowing testimonials: In its first 3½ years of service, the AstroTurf surface at Seattle's Memorial Stadium was used over 900 times, reported Harvey Lanman, director of the city's high school athletic program. "Everybody wants to play on it, so we now play double and tripleheaders as a routine thing," Lanman declared. "We just don't worry about the weather any more." Lanman came up with some interesting figures to support his statement: Each season, Memorial Stadium is the scene of 69 high school, college and professional football games, plus practices . . . 116 soccer games . . . daily baseball practice through March, April and May . . . and summer softball league games.

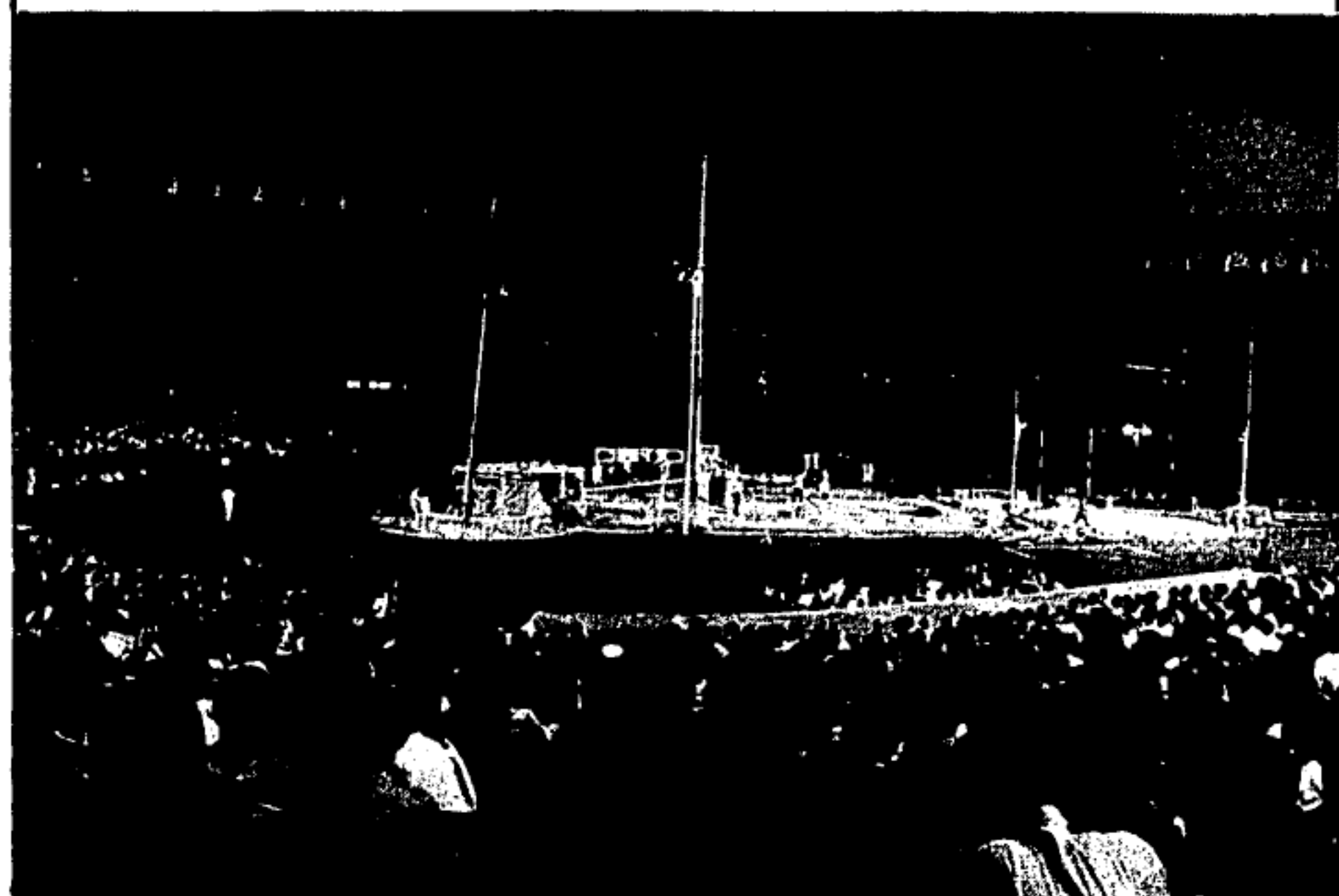
They're "tickled pink" with AstroTurf at West Virginia University. Installation of Monsanto's synthetic surface at Mountaineer Stadium has provided West Virginia U. with "a magnificent facility," said Athletic Director Robert (Red) Brown. "With AstroTurf we have transformed one stadium into six activity fields," Brown pointed out. Varsity football and soccer games, physical education classes, intramural contests, band practices and all types of informal recreation activity keep the field in service 12 hours a day. With the virtual elimination of maintenance, there is a substantial saving to the university, Brown added.

Busch Memorial Stadium in St. Louis, its schedule already dotted with pro baseball and football, college and high school football and pro soccer, proved the versatility of its AstroTurf surface once again by providing the setting for the annual Shrine Circus.

The AstroTurf at Franklin Field may be the busiest turf in Philadelphia. In addition to Penn's full schedule of varsity and freshman football games, the installation of lights made Franklin Field available for high school grid contests on Friday and Saturday nights. The field also is used for softball, rugby, lacrosse, field hockey and various intramural sports.

Nickerson Field at Boston University, which also is lighted, now is in use up to 18 hours a day, reported Dr. Robert Peck, BU athletic director. "Because of the premium on space in Boston, we had to put our field space to maximum use and AstroTurf has allowed us to use one field in place of three and cleared old areas for construction."

No one appreciates the AstroTurf at Indiana University Stadium more than Robert Brunner, superintendent of the Bloomington campus, and Red Grow, the IU equipment manager. "The work we have to do on the playing field is one-tenth of what it was before they installed AstroTurf," said Brunner, who also cited figures that it used to cost \$30,000 to re-sod the field every two or three years and at least \$25,000 a year to maintain it. Grow said it once took his staff two or three days to refurbish the equipment after playing on a muddy field.



The versatility of the AstroTurf stadium is reflected in this scene from the 1970 Shriners' Circus at Busch Memorial Stadium.

AstroTurf

SURFACES BY **Monsanto**

Yaz Points Torrid Bat Toward His 4th A. L. Swatting Title

By LARRY CLAFLIN

BOSTON, Mass.—Off to his best start in five years, Carl Yastrzemski appears destined to another season of either winning the American League batting title, as he has done three times, or coming very close, as he did last year.

April usually has not been a hot month for the Yastrzemski bat, but this April was different. Not since 1966 had he hit over .300 in April, but he was on a streak this year and, at one point, his average climbed to .354 after a sensational day against the Indians.

At one stage of his career, Yastrzemski was considered a good hitter who did not have enough home-run power to rank with the greats. All that has changed now as his home-run total has soared for the past four seasons.

Consider these figures in key departments for Yastrzemski for the four years 1967-70:

Years	Ave.	HR	RBI	R	BB
1967	.326*	44*	121*	112*	91
1968	.301*	23	74	90	119
1969	.255	40	111	96	101
1970	.329	40	102	125*	128
Totals	.302	147	408	423	439

* Led American League.

Now, off to an excellent start and seemingly in as good shape as he ever has been, Yastrzemski is capable of producing another banner year. He has excelled in the field and at bat since the Red Sox season began.

"It is impossible to predict what kind of a year you will have, but I feel great," Yastrzemski said.

Bad Pitches Sometimes Tempt Yaz

As usual, Yastrzemski's success at bat probably will depend on how many bad pitches he swings at. It is significant that of the four years detailed above, the one bad year he had from an average standpoint was 1969 when, it is commonly agreed around Fenway Park, he swung at too many pitches outside the strike zone.

Yastrzemski, however, is not of the Ted Williams theory that one should never swing at a bad pitch. Frequently he will take a full rip at a pitch that would be called a ball if he had taken it.

"The situation of the game dictates what I should do," he believes. "For example, if there are two out in the ninth and we are in a tie game, I look for any pitch I can hit out of the park. But, if I were leading off the inning, I would be more inclined to make the pitcher get the ball over the plate."

A few years ago, Yastrzemski was a respected hitter, but he was not particularly feared for his power. Now however, he probably is the most dangerous hitter in the league. Others such as Frank Howard and Harmon Killebrew hit more homers, but they do not hit for league-leading averages as Yaz does.

Last year, Yastrzemski played first base and played it well. Now he is back in left field where, it is agreed by most baseball people, he has no superior.

He has great hands, a strong and accurate arm and he charges grounders as well as any outfielder in the league.

On the very first play of the season, Yaz, back in left field, made one of his greatest plays on Yankee infielder Horace Clarke. A diving catch at the base of the left field stands robbed Clarke of a double and helped Ray Culp beat the Yankees in the opener.

Opening day against the Yankees seems to bring out the best in Yaz in the field. On opening day of the 1967 season, he made an incredible catch in Yankee Stadium to rob Tom Tresh of an extra-base hit and preserve, for a bit longer, a dramatic no-hit effort by rookie pitcher Billy Rohr. Elston Howard ended Rohr's no-hit bid by whacking a single with two down in the ninth inning.

Dark Made a Strategic Blunder

Despite the respect in which Yaz is held as a hitter, Cleveland Manager Alvin Dark risked pitching to him in Boston recently with the game at stake. Alvin regrets his decision fully.

Pitcher Vince Colbert threw one slider over the plate in the eighth inning with the score tied, 7-7. Yaz lined it into left field to bring in Joe Lahoud from second with the winning run.

Yaz had a 4-for-4 day, scored three runs and batted in three. It was, by the way, his first 4-for-4 since October 1, 1967. The Twins remember that day all too well. They wouldn't walk him, either, and the Red Sox won a pennant.

Bosox Bunts: After pitching strongly in his first start, Ray Culp was hit hard three times in a row, causing some concern around Fenway Park. . . . Look for Jim Lonborg to be recalled from Louisville if he pitches well a couple of more times. . . . Luis Aparicio was sidelined for several days with a bad back. He strained it in Winter Haven and aggravated the injury while swinging at a pitch after the season started. . . . Ken Tatum and Sparky Lyle pitched strongly out of the bullpen on successive plays, all of which was very encouraging to the Bosox brass. . . . Red Sox players will sign autographs in a booth under the stands before all Saturday afternoon games at Fenway this season. It is a new experiment in Boston. Also, Hub fans now can drive up to a window at the ball park and buy tickets in advance without the necessity of finding a legal parking spot or the risk of a policeman's tag for illegal parking.

Fastest Kayo for Ace Culp

BOSTON, Mass.—The Indians kayoed Boston pitcher Ray Culp after 2½ innings April 21 and thereby set sort of a precedent.

It was the earliest Culp has been knocked out in three years. In 99 starts for the Red Sox since he came to Boston from Philadelphia, Culp never has failed to last until at least the third inning. Only three times has he been knocked out as early as the third in those 99 shots.



Danny Murtaugh . . . You Can't Overstate the Value of an Airtight Defense.

Danny Delighted With Buc Glove Skills

By CHARLEY FEENEY

PITTSBURGH, Pa. — Hitting is supposed to be the Pirates' thing. They have a balanced lineup, with two potential 30 home-run guys and eight tough outs.

But it's defense which Danny Murtaugh often says will give his Bucs a big lift.

Murtaugh doesn't look for the super play . . . the spectacular play. "Let the opposition make the spectacular play," Murtaugh maintains.

"The big thing," said the Pirates' manager, "is to make all the plays you are supposed to make. That's what makes for a solid defense. That's what helps pitchers. We'll make our share of outstanding plays. Every club will make them." Murtaugh figures he has a fine gloveman at every position. His supporting players also don't hurt the defense when they play.

Perhaps, a year ago, some parts of the Buc defense would have been suspect. Bob Robertson, a home-run threat, hadn't proved he was such a solid first baseman.

"Nobody charges bunts better than Robby," Murtaugh said. "He isn't the type who settles for an out. He always is aiming to get the runner, to keep him out of scoring position, or stop him from reaching third base."

Artist at Scooping Ball

Robertson also has mastered the scoop—the pick-up of the in-the-dirt throw. He saves teammates errors and this never will show in the statistics.

Murtaugh points to Richie Hebner's improvement as a third baseman and skips his keystone men because Dave Cash, Bill Mazeroski, Gene Alley and Jackie Hernandez are known as glovemen.

"I think by July that Al Oliver will make all the right moves in center field," Murtaugh said. "He hasn't made any real bad moves, but let's remember he is still getting accustomed to the position. He is learning every time he plays in a different park."

Oliver was a first baseman and a left and right fielder in 1970. He became the heir-apparent to center

field when Matty Alou was traded to St. Louis in January.

Willie Stargell, whose hot April home-run and RBI bat kept the Buc attack going, is an underrated outfielder. He has an exceptionally fine arm and it shows. He led N.L. outfielders with 16 assists last year.

"We all know the job Clemente can do for us," Murtaugh said. "And, as I've been saying for some time, Manny Sanguillen is No. 2 to one man—Johnny Bench."

Murtaugh put in a plug for his super subs.

"I'm fortunate," he said, "I can use a Jose Pagan at third base, or a Milt May behind the plate, or Gene Clines or Vic Davalillo in the outfield and can expect a good job—not a fair job—but a good job, first class."

Defense Is Backbone

The bat remains the Bucs' chief weapon, Murtaugh will concede. But he pointed out that it's next to impossible to win without defense.

"Those great Yankee teams always had an excellent defense," Murtaugh said. "They made all the plays."

"Now look at Baltimore. They've got men at every position who know how to use the glove. It's the same way with Cincinnati. When you come right down to it,

if you have a leak here and a leak there in your defense, chances are, by August you will be chasing two or three clubs."

Pitt-Burgers: The names were different, but just like in 1970, the big Buc bats remained relatively quiet in the early weeks of the season. A year ago, Bob Robertson, Richie Hebner and Roberto Clemente were the only Bucs with respectable April averages. This time around, Willie Stargell and Dave Cash and Jackie Hernandez—with a first-week spurt—were the lone Bucs with solid averages. Hebner, who hit well in spring training, went more than 20 at-bats without a hit. "I'm not worried about the hitting," Murtaugh said. "It will come around." During the early weeks of the season, the Bucs were shut out twice (Tom Seaver and Phil Niekro) and Gary Gentry hurled a one-hitter at them. . . . Gene Alley, who broke his left hand in February, made his first start at short on April 18 in New York and slugged a homer.

Bombed by the slugging Stargell on the Pirates' first visit of the season to Shea Stadium, reliever Tug McGraw said the next time he got ahead of Stargell on the count he was going to knock him down. "If he hits me, I'm going to kill him," said Stargell, who saw no humor.

Stargell Equals Record With April HR Rampage

PITTSBURGH, Pa. — Willie Stargell's greatest April ever didn't have him thinking of home-run records.

"The record are the last thing in my mind now," Stargell said. "There is a long season ahead. I'm just happy to be swinging so good, so early." As of April 25, Stargell had hit 10 homers, tying him with Frank Robinson (1969) and Tony Perez (1970) for the major league record.

On April 21 at Three Rivers Stadium, Stargell belted three homers in one game for the second time this season and both clusters came against the Braves. He had done it in Atlanta April 10.

This gave Willie a career total of four three-homer games. Ralph Kiner and Ernie Banks also have hit three homers in a game four times.