

Throneberry Eases Bosox' Yen for Ted

Faye, Filling Left Field Spot,
Regarded by Higgins as
'No. 1 Surprise of Spring'

By HY HURWITZ

BOSTON, Mass.

As Manager Mike Higgins of the Red Sox prepared to make his major league debut as a pilot, he felt somewhat comfortable about his left field situation.

This spot had been one of Mike's question marks. It could have been erased in one instant by a telephone call from Ted Williams notifying General Manager Joe Cronin that Ted had settled his personal affairs and was ready to end his "retirement."



RED SOX

When the Red Sox broke camp on April 1, Higgins was a bit disappointed that he didn't get to see Ted in Sarasota, as he had expected.

"We'll have to go along on the assumption that Williams won't be with us," Higgins declared at his final Florida press conference. "Like you fellows, I really expected to see Ted down here. But now I don't know what he's going to do. Unfortunately, he doesn't seem to know, either, and I can no longer count on him for the first month of the season, anyway."

Compensating for Ted's failure to start conditioning in Florida was the excellent play of Outfielder Faye Throneberry.

"Throneberry's performance," said Higgins, "has been the most pleasant development of our spring training. He has taken well to his switch from right field to left field. He has looked good at bat. I'd have to rate him as the No. 1 surprise of the spring."

Faye Looks Better Than in '52
"When we started training, I had no idea what Throneberry could do. He just came back to the team after two years of Army service. It has been hard to gauge what players will do when they come back from the service. In most cases thus far, it has taken players a full season to regain their touch. Williams, of course, was an exception."

During the first 20 exhibition games of the Hose, Throneberry appeared to be better than he was in 1952. Higgins had Faye for a brief period in Louisville that season in between Throneberry's two hitches with the Red Sox. "He has definitely improved," Higgins observed.

In those 20 contests, Throneberry made the most hits on the club and led the team in RBIs. In the first game of the trip north, against the Phillies, Faye lined a sixth-inning single to center off Robin Roberts to set the stage for a two-run, tie-breaking rally which gave the Red Sox a 4 to 2 triumph.

Williams had been the team's chief run producer over a long period of years. If Faye can continue this role as he did in the exhibitions, it will ease Higgins' worries.

Counted on Ted for 100 Games

Actually, Mike had counted on playing Ted in just 100 games this year. "And there's still time for him to get into shape to play those 100 games," Higgins said, "if he can straighten out his affairs. Like everyone else, I sure hope he does."

Ted was slated to play only one game in double-headers, to be rested when a day game followed a night game and to be out of the lineup in bad weather.

There is no doubt that Higgins felt sure Ted would be in spring training and with the team from the start of the season. Mike even went so far as to say that, in double-headers, Williams was slated to face the best pitcher the opposition planned to throw against the Red Sox.

"If we were playing two with Cleveland," Higgins disclosed, "and the Indians were going to pitch Bob Lemon and say Art Houtteman against us, I would use Williams in the game that Lemon would pitch."

But Throneberry's surprising showing has balanced the situation to some extent. Faye was in competition with Karl Olson, Sam Mele and Gene Stephens for the post in left field. He has outdistanced the field in the battle

Yost Eyes 1,000-Game Goal; Richie Would Go On and On

But Gehrig's Mark Will Never Be Broken, Iron Men Agree



EDDIE YOST . . . Wants 187 More



RICHIE ASHBURN . . . For "Years and Years"

By ART MORROW

CLEARWATER, Fla.

The iron men of the major leagues look like ordinary mortals, neither standing six feet, each weighing about 175; not like supermen at all. Off the diamond they might be taken for salesmen or school teachers—which, in point of fact, they are.

But blond Richie Ashburn, the perennial center fielder, has figured in 730 consecutive games for the Phillies, and brown-haired Eddie Yost, the Tennyson's brook of third basemen, in 813 straight for the Washington Senators. No other player extant can match these records.

How much can a ball player endure? How long do Ashburn and Yost expect to continue?

"My goal is 1,000 in a row," says Yost.

"I hope to go on for years and years," says Ashburn. "Not because of any streak or record, but just because I want to go on playing. You play so much of this game, and then you're not happy doing anything else."

But neither entertains any illusions about breaking the late Lou Gehrig's phenomenal record of 2,130 games in succession, a streak that ran from June 1, 1925, until April 30, 1939. "I don't think anyone ever will match that," Ashburn commented. "I'll consider myself mighty lucky if I make 1,000," Yost added.

Remote as it may seem, the possibility that either may surpass the immortal Yankee first baseman's criterion nevertheless does exist, and before the impending campaign is two-thirds over, Ashburn will have cracked the National League record established in the Thirties by Pittsburgh's Gus Suhr.

Oddly enough, if the wheel of fortune had spun only a little longer, Ashburn and Yost today probably would have been teammates. Fate must have meant Richie for Philadelphia, because the first baseball contract he signed—with the Cleveland Indians—was voided due to his age and Eddie Krajnik was the first to reach him a year later when he graduated from American Legion Junior baseball.

Not long before that the Phillies had set not one, but two scouts on the trail of Yost.

Played Under Assumed Name

Chuck Ward, who was one of them, recalled the incident only the other day.

"I spotted Yost playing shortstop for an independent team in East Orange, N. J.," the former infielder related. "I liked his looks so much that I came back and watched him for several Saturday afternoons. But he was playing for a team managed by Nig Niebergall, a Red Sox scout, and I knew I had to play it cozy."

"Learning that he was a student at New York University, I went there to talk to him—only I couldn't find any record of him—not under the name he used in East Orange. I deduced that he'd been using another handle in order to protect his college eligibility and remembered that someone in the stands had said he lived in Long Island."

"It wasn't much to go on, but I got hold of Joe Labate, our Brooklyn scout—and you know Joe. I guess everyone in Brooklyn knows Joe. When I told him my problem, he said it would be easy."

"I know a lot of detectives," he said,

Hit on the Head With Brick, But Richie Continued in Game

PHILADELPHIA, Pa.—Frank Wiechec, Phillies' trainer, is proud that he's played a small part in Richie Ashburn's 730-game streak. Wiechec's treatment and taping kept Ashburn going for four days last June after the outfielder's ankle was severely sprained in Chicago. "The ankle was so bad Richie shouldn't have been walking," Wiechec said. "But he managed to limp through a few innings of each game until the ankle was in pretty good shape."

"That record means a lot to Richie. I think it would take a broken leg to stop him from playing. Heck, a Brooklyn fan couldn't stop Richie when he hit him in the head with a brick."

Wiechec referred to a game at Ebbets Field. Ashburn was going deep for a fly ball when a fan in the bleachers tossed a brick at him. The brick hit Ashburn on the side of the face. His eyeglasses were shattered and he was cut badly around the eyes. But he caught the ball and remained in the game.

steering me into a taproom. 'We'll let skein with any idea it would stretch them find your man.'

"Well, Joe got on the 'phone and called his friends, and we settled down in that saloon. The detectives finally came in with a report: They found out who Yost was and where he lived all right—but Labate and I were in that taproom until closing. It was 5 in the morning before I got home."

Ward reported on Yost to Joe Reardon, then the Phillies' farm director, and the two took off for Brooklyn with a \$3,500 bank roll burning their pockets. But they were too late.

"I'd turned down a Class D contract Paul Krichell offered me in the Yankee chain the year before, figuring that I'd be better attending New York University," Yost himself took up the tale. "But when Washington gave me a major league contract, I grabbed it."

"The very day I left to join the club, my mother told me later, a couple of scouts arrived at the house. They wanted to sign me for the Phillies, they said, and they were ready to give me quite a little money."

"No doubt they would have got me if they'd arrived only a little earlier. I signed with Washington for nothing." If a pal of Yost's named Julie Lavan had not known Joe Cambria's brother, the Senators might never have heard of the durable third baseman, and the Phillies now would have had two individual streaks under way.

Neither Ashburn nor Yost started his

Eddie Not First to Save Streak by Brief Stints

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Eddie Yost admitted that his conscience was troubled when he made token appearances in the lineup during the final 13 games last season to keep his endurance streak alive after he was hit in the head by a pitched ball tossed by Boston's Russ Kemmerer on September 17.

Yost, however, was not the first player to make brief appearances in games to keep streaks alive.

Lou Gehrig, for instance, was forced to make several one-inning appearances to keep his record streak of 2,130 games alive.

At Detroit in 1934, after he had played 1,425 games in a row, Gehrig had such a painful attack of lumbago that he could not get out of bed without assistance. Lou quit after one play in the last half of the first inning.

On another occasion, the Yankee Iron Man's streak was saved after he had been summoned to appear in court following an automobile accident. The Yankees advanced the starting time of the game so Gehrig could play before going to court.

Everett Scott, whose record of 1,307 games was broken by Gehrig, had narrow escapes. One day, because of a boil near his eye, he did not even go to Fenway Park. The game was postponed because of rain.

Another day, a wreck delayed him getting from his home in Auburn, Ind., to Chicago for a double-header. He had to race the 60 miles by taxi, and arrived only in time to play the last inning of the first game.

Laughing at a pitcher who had been hit on the shins by a line drive in batting practice at Philadelphia, Scott was hit on the head by a ball thrown by Waite Hoyt, who was warming up on the sidelines. Scott was unconscious for ten minutes, but the Red Sox shortstop played the game.

Gus Suhr, holder of the National League mark of 822 consecutive games, ended his streak when his mother died. Scott ended his in 1925 when Yankee pitchers complained that his legs were as dead as a pair of stilts.

Pee Wee Wanninger, who replaced Scott that day, was the same player for whom Gehrig pinch hit when he began an endurance record which was to span 14 seasons.

appreciation of his consecutive-games string, and now he knows all about it. "I feel fine," he answered the inevitable question.

Richie, fastest of the Ashburns, also is ready, with no trace of the pulled thigh muscle that almost put him on the sidelines last summer.

"It happened in Chicago," Richie related, "and then we went to Milwaukee. I thought I could go right on playing, and Steve O'Neill sympathized with me."

"We had two games in Milwaukee, and he let me start them both. I found out right away I couldn't run with that leg, but Steve let me go to bat in each of the games, and that kept the streak alive."

Started String in 1950

"I hadn't thought much about it before then. I think I played in all our games in 1949, but in 1950 I was pulled out for three days because of a batting slump. When I got back in, that's when it started."

"Fortunately, the schedule was with me last year. We finished with a day game in Milwaukee, then came home and had a day off. A night game followed, so I had practically three days to rest up, and by then I was able to move around well enough to stay in there."

So many misfortunes can occur in addition to batting slumps that Ashburn, like Yost, fully realizes luck has to be on his side if he is to continue. But he's not laying his whole future in the laps of the baseball gods. In the off-season he's the star insurance salesman of Tilden, Neb.

Yost? He used his Washington salary to complete his studies at NYU—now holds his master's degree in physical education. Until last winter he taught school.

The iron men are equipped to carry on after their muscles have turned to mush.