

Carew Displaying Top Go-Go Style As Twin Swinger

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

It was the last week of March. The **Twins** were in West Palm Beach, Fla. And Rod Carew had just taken a called third strike for the fourth time in two games.

"I'm just not swinging," he said. "I've never had this trouble in my life."

Right then it appeared that Carew would flub a wonderful opportunity to land a regular job in major league baseball. Everything but his ticket was ready for his trip to Denver.

One month later, he was standing at home plate in the ninth inning of a 2-2 battle with Baltimore. This was for real—no exhibition. The **Twins** had the bases loaded and a chance to beat the world champs for the first time this year.

Stu Miller, a mystery to most of the veterans of the A. L., was the pitcher. But Carew went to bat loaded with confidence.

"When Earl Battey was batting ahead of me with two men on, I wanted him just to get on base and give me a chance to drive in the run," said Carew. "I had hit the ball good the inning before with a runner on third base, but right at the pitcher.

"I wanted another shot at it."

So Carew lined a game-winning single into center field. It was the first pitch. He was swinging.

Advice From Bench

"They were yelling at me from the bench not to get too anxious," said Carew. "But I had faced Miller in our first exhibition, March 10, in Miami. I knew how he threw those slow, floating pitches. I singled off him there, too—to center, almost just like this one."

What happened between that discouraging day in West Palm Beach and that successful day in Minnesota is the story of a 21-year-old second baseman who faced the age-old baseball problem of loss of confidence squarely and turned the tide of the battle.

"They're waiting for me to lose my confidence," he said. "I had that trouble in the minors. But I

Griffith, Schell to Back Four Soccer Exhibitions

TWIN CITIES, Minn.—**Twins** President Calvin Griffith may be an addition to the ranks of baseball owners now sponsoring professional soccer teams.

Griffith and Herb Schell of St. Paul have joined in partnership to sponsor four exhibition soccer games at Metropolitan Stadium this summer. Griffith says flatly he's experimenting to see if Twin Cities fans want pro soccer.

"If they do, the **Twins** corporation and Mr. Schell will try to acquire a club in the United States Soccer Association," said Griffith.

A group of **Minnesota** soccer All-Stars will play the Wisconsin All-Stars of Milwaukee on May 20 and July 8, a pro team from Hamburg, Germany, May 27, and Detroit, August 19.

don't think it will happen now."

Carew was giving up on the curve ball when he was taking those called third strikes in West Palm Beach, especially lefthanders' curves since he bats lefthanded. If the curve bothered him then, what will happen in June?

Twins President Calvin Griffith had the strong opinion that Carew



RESPLENDENT in their pin-striped ushers' trousers and Twin caps and windbreakers, umpires Hank Soar, Al Salerno, Jim Odom and Ed Runge (left to right), review Metro-

politan Stadium ground rules with Managers Sam Mele, **Twins** (left), and Mayo Smith, Tigers. The ump's trunks had failed to arrive in the Twin Cities from Boston by game time.

could hit the curve if he could just get enough confidence to start swinging at it. So Griffith persuaded Manager Sam Mele to start Carew on opening day at Baltimore at second base.

"We'll find out early if he can make it," said Griffith. "If he can't, we'll send him to Denver early—before the May 10 cutdown. If he can do it, we've got a terrific ball player."

Rod Covers Ground

Carew has all the physical abilities. He covers more ground flawlessly than any second baseman the **Twins** ever had. He can make all the plays. He can run well and is a potential base stealer. And he has hit well in the minors.

But the big problem is that Carew never has played higher than the Class A Carolina League. He batted .292 for Wilson there last season and stole 28 bases.

"I think Carew can go as far as he will make himself go," said

Griffith. "He has the ability to be the All-Star second baseman of the American League.

"He gives us a lefthanded bat in the lineup with Oliva. And he gives us a chance to improve our hitting in center field by moving Cesar Tovar there from second base."

He's a Good Listener

By the end of April, the **Twins** were talking more about Carew's mental capabilities than they were about his physical assets.

"He listens," said shortstop Zoilo Versalles. And perhaps those two words describe this young infielder best.

In fact, he listens in two languages. Carew is an American who spent most of his schoolboy days in Panama. His parents now live in New York City. But he studied Spanish in the American colony school in Panama and spoke it well there.

So the Latin Twins talk to him

in Spanish, and the Americans in English. Sometimes he gets bilingual advice at the same time during the game—with the pitcher winding up.

"Once Cesar Tovar yelled, 'Mira el toque,' from center field while Harmon Killebrew was telling me to be 'heads up' from first base," said Carew. "Tovar was telling me to watch for the bunt.

"I expect both. So I've been able to handle it."

Credit to Teammates

Carew gives the credit for his early success to all the **Twins** around him.

"They've all tried to help me," he said. "Tovar, Versalles and Killebrew all help me with playing the hitters. Coach Jim Lemon has worked with me on my hitting, and coach Billy Martin really helped me a lot with my fielding.

"And Manager Mele also has

(Continued on Page 12, Column 5)

Sandlot Pals Tovar and Gil Meet Again--In Majors

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

After a friendship that started in Caracas, Venezuela, when they were 15 years old, Cesar Tovar of the **Twins** and Gus Gil of the Indians finally have met as major leaguers for the first time.

The road up was a struggle of more than ten years for each.

"We started playing together in sandlot baseball at 15," said Gil. "We lived about a half hour apart.

"My father had plenty of money, but Cesar always was poor.

"Cesar told me he had to shine shoes to help out at home."

It figures that Gil received a \$2,000 bonus while Tovar received nothing when they signed for the first time with the Cincinnati organization. Gabe Paul, then Cincy general manager, signed them himself.

Teammates in Minors

For three years, they played together in minor league baseball—at Geneva (NYP) in 1959, at Missoula (Northern) in 1960 and at San Diego (Pacific Coast) in 1964.

Gil was present when Cesar stole 88 bases for Geneva.

They played shortstop and second base together often, but each also played other positions. They became such good friends that Cesar named one of his three-year-old twin sons Gustavo—after Tovar.

"Cesar always played the game hard," said Gil. "When we were boys on a vacant lot, he would slide hard. In sandlot ball, in winter baseball, all

the time he played hard. He deserves to make it in the major leagues.

"He was always able to play anywhere."

Little Cesar, as the 5-9 Venezuelan is becoming known in **Minnesota**, will soon become Big Cesar, when his six-year-old son, Cesar, Jr., comes to **Minnesota** in May.

For the first time in his career, Tovar can afford to bring his wife and three sons from Venezuela to the United States. The twin brother of Little Gus is named Edgar.

Cesar Landed Pay Hike

"I've been with my family only five-and-a-half months a year for eight years," said Cesar. "That was during winter ball. But no more. The **Twins** gave me a good raise. We are getting a better house in Venezuela, and we will get an apartment in **Minnesota**."

Tovar has other major league plans, too.

"I'm going to hit .300 this year," he said. "I have more confidence now. It makes a big difference to be in my second season. I know the pitchers better. I'll be all right."

While Tovar made it to the American League last year, Gil had to stay with Buffalo (International) in Cincinnati's farm system, still stymied by the wealth of infield talent owned by the Reds. Then he was purchased by Paul, now general manager at Cleveland.

"I like them both, and I have since the day I signed them," Paul said a year ago.

"Cesar became the best second baseman in the American League during spring training," said coach Billy Martin. "Now he's in center field. And he's our best leadoff man."



Gus Gil



Cesar Tovar