

# Twin Twinklers: Starter Chance, Reliever Ollom

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

Dean Chance has found a new lefthanded buddy in his new baseball home with the **Twins**. And he's experiencing something completely new as a pitcher—getting off to a winning start.

In the first month of the American League season, Chance had moved up to the ace's role on the **Twins'** staff. He was getting the choice role in the starting rotation because of his 4-1 start.

And such outstanding pitchers as Jim Kaat, a 25-game winner in 1966, and Jim Grant, 21-victory ace in 1965, were being worked around him.

And, all the while, he was exchanging mutual admiration remarks with rookie southpaw Jim Ollom, who has taken over where Bo Belinsky left off as Chance's sidekick.

"I feel better than I've felt since 1964," said Chance. "I've had the best stuff I've ever had in my life for this early in the season."

"Maybe it's because I feel we have a good shot at winning the American League pennant. We'll get rolling soon. With all the starting pitchers we have firing at their best, we'll run the other teams into the ground."

Chance pitched 43 $\frac{3}{4}$  innings and clicked off 39 strikeouts in his first six starts for **Minnesota**, winning four games and allowing only one run in seven innings of a victory won by a reliever at Detroit.

Because of this, Manager Sam Mele started pitching Chance every fourth day, while Kaat (1-3 at that time) missed a turn.

## Puny Support for Grant

"Chance is winning," said Mele. "It would have been any of the others if they had been winning." Both Kaat and Grant had pitched well. But Grant was 0-3 with only one run scored for him in 17 innings by the **Twins**.

After every game, Chance and Ollom tell each other how great they are. Ollom started out as a Twin reliever who won 20 games for Denver (Pacific Coast) last year, but he and Chance both expect him to become a winning starter, too, before this season is over.

"We just seem to hit it off," said Chance. "Maybe it's because he's full of confidence like myself—kind of cocky. I think he's a good young lefthander. He's going to be one of our very good pitchers."

The dialogue often runs something like this:

Chance: "I'm just great, that's all there is to it."

Ollom: "Well, I'm super-great."

## No Bright Lights

It sounds like Cassius Clay shadow-boxing with a mirror. Ollom, at a recent luncheon for the **Twins** in St. Paul, said:

"We've got great personnel, from Calvin Griffith (club president) all the way down to myself."

In their earlier years with the Angels, Belinsky was Chance's sidekick. Their escapades were widely publicized. But Ollom is married and settled down for his 21 years. So while these two have become road roommates, they are not likely to repeat the Chance-Belinsky routine.

And on the pitching mound, both are deadly serious. Ollom has set out to prove himself as a reliever and earn a job as a starter.

"Dean has helped me a lot, seriously," said Ollom. "I've got to realize my situation, that we have a lot of good starters on this club. I'm willing to relieve and prove I can pitch."

Chance, meanwhile, is deadly serious about regaining his 20-victory form, which won him the Cy Young Award in 1964. His victory record went down steadily—to 15

## Trainer Lentz Kept Busy With 4 Injured Regulars

TWIN CITIES, Minn. — Four injuries to **Minnesota** regulars at one time contributed heavily to the **Twins'** last-place start in the American League this year.

"I thought for a while I was back working for a football team again," said George Lentz, **Twins'** trainer. "I was working on one player in the clubhouse when I had to run out and take care of Rich Rollins, who had to be helped off the field."

Rollins was forced to walk on crutches after suffering a torn muscle between two bones just below his right knee. That happened while he was racing in to field a slow-hit ball at third base.

Former batting champion Tony Oliva was out more than a week with a torn muscle in his side. Catcher Earl Battey missed even more action with a torn rib cartilage. And rookie second baseman Rod Carew had to leave the lineup with a bruised bone in his hand.

The **Twins'** 5-10 record for April was the worst for the opening month since they started play in **Minnesota** in 1961.

in 1965 and 12 last season. But, at 25, he's still just approaching his prime.

"I'm convinced that the chance to train in Florida, rather than in California, got my arm in shape a lot quicker than in other years," he said.

"I feel that if I have a one-run lead in the eighth or ninth inning, that nobody is going to beat me. I can always reach back for something extra in late innings."

And Chance has convinced his **Minnesota** teammates. Harmon Killebrew, who slugged a two-run homer to help Chance win one game, said:

"Man, I like to play behind a pitcher like Chance. When he goes out there, he really takes charge."

After losing his first start to Baltimore, a club that had a 7-9 career record against him, Chance bounced back to beat the world champs the next week.

## Dean Guns for Orioles

"I would rather beat this Baltimore club than any in the league," Chance said. "With the situation the way it is right now—the Orioles being the club to beat—that's natural. And I've lost a lot of tough games to them."

He gave up three runs in his first inning against Washington, then held on to win, 7-3. And this, he felt, was an example of how it has helped him to be traded to **Minnesota** from California.

"When I was pitching for my old club (California), it was all over if you got behind, 3-0, in the first inning. But I feel this club (the



Jim Ollom (Left) and Dean Chance . . . Mutual Admiration Society

**Twins** can score," said Chance. "I was certain we would catch up."

My pitches were high in the first inning, but I started getting them down better."

Against New York, the **Twins** gave him the runs he had been talking about so long—right off the bat. They scored six in the first inning for him. It was a cold night so he worked only six innings.

Chance has a strong feeling about the quality of the pitchers he is teamed with—Grant, Kaat, Jim Perry, Dave Boswell, Jim Merritt and, of course, Ollom.

## Relievers Come Through

Relievers Ron Kline and Al Worthington—plus Merritt on several occasions this spring—give the starters confidence they can leave their victories in safe hands in late innings.

Kaat and Grant, however, have started with less luck than Chance. Grant pitched well without winning in his first three starts.

Kaat twice failed to win because of unearned runs scored against him.

**Twin Tracks:** Reserves Rich Reese, Walt Bond, Ron Clark and Sandy Valdespino helped the **Twins** bounce out of a three-game losing streak with two victories after a wave of injuries hit the club. . . .

Bond replaced injured right fielder Tony Oliva and hit two important singles at Washington, setting up the tying run and driving home the winner in one game. . . . Valdespino, battling to stay with the **Twins** past cutoff time, pinch-hit for a double and a home run in two successive tries, helping out in a comeback victory against New York with his homer to the opposite (left) field. . . . Reese, in his fifth pinch-hit time at bat, singled home the winning run with two out in the ninth inning. . . . Clark replaced Rich Rollins at third base and drove in three runs his first start there. . . . Griffith said he would like to see Reese get a shot at first base with Harmon Killebrew moving to third, but Manager Sam Mele delayed this while the **Twins** were winning with Clark at third.

## Dean Shows Staying Power

TWIN CITIES, Minn.—Dean Chance posted his fourth victory and third complete game in beating the Red Sox, 4-2, May 6. The righthander was the only pitcher to go the route for the **Twins** in the first 21 games.

## 'Can't Set Temperature Limit'

# Cal Fires Hot Blast At Freezing Yanks

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

**Twins'** President Calvin Griffith says baseball owners "would be fools" if they ever consented to setting a minimum temperature for games.

And he was plainly irked by criticism of his decision for the **Twins** and New York to play with the temperature below the freezing mark.

The mercury became a much-discussed issue in **Minnesota** when it went down to 29 degrees after a Twin-Yankee game started with the temperature at 32, a record low for Twin home games.

"This is ridiculous," said Steve Hamilton, Yankee pitcher and player representative. "There's got to be something done."

"We (the Yankees) are agreed there should be some arbitrary cutoff. We think 40 degrees might be a good starting point."

"I'll talk to other player representatives and make a recommendation before the All-Star Game to the rules committee. By next year, I think we'll have a rule on it."

A 13-4 Yankee loss on that record cold night didn't help. And a 4-3 loss the next night at 37 degrees didn't exactly bring out the humor in the situation.

Amazing crowds showed up for the games, which followed a postponement to a July 4 day-night double-header, a Griffith specialty. After that postponement, more than 6,500 fans (official attendance 8,171, including tickets sold but unused) showed up for the game played in 29-32 degree weather.

The next night, the official attendance was 6,545.

"We postponed the first game because of rain on that evening," said Griffith. "It was clear the next two nights."

## Temperature Only One Factor, Says Cal

"You can't set any temperature limit. Sometimes it's nicer at 40 degrees if the sun is shining and there's no wind than it is at 50 degrees with a raw wind and threatening rain."

The **Twins** have played in numerous cold weather games since the Minnesotans have been in the majors—not all at home. They played in the 30s at Detroit only ten days before the New York series here.

In 1965, the **Twins** won a double-header at Detroit in temperatures below 40 degrees.

The previous record for a Twin home game was set in 1962, when the **Twins** lost, 12-5, to the Angels. Rhyne Duren came in from the bull pen with a stocking cap on his head in that one. Dean Chance appeared as a reliever for the Angels, and he came back to beat New York for the **Twins** in the controversial game this year.

"It's even too cold to manage," said Yankee Manager Ralph Houk before the game. Coach Frank Crossetti said it would even have been too cold in the afternoon with the sun out. The game was played on May 2, the earliest a night game ever has been played in **Minnesota**.

"I've been in the majors 13 years, and I've never played when it was this cold," said Yankee catcher Elston Howard.

Yankee outfielder Tom Tresh suggested the schedule be cut to 144 games with a home-and-home series cut off—something Griffith has been suggesting for several years.



CALVIN GRIFFITH