

In Cub Book, Lip Is Cinch As Top Pilot

By EDGAR MUNZEL
CHICAGO, Ill.

Even though Red Schoendienst, who led the Cardinals to the pennant, is one of Illinois' native sons, there will be thousands of Chicago fans deeply disappointed if Leo Durocher of the Cubs' isn't named Manager of the Year in the National League.

No matter where the votes eventually go, Durocher backers have a case that can't easily be argued away. The Durocher candidacy is nearly as solid, in fact, as that of Dick Williams of Boston in the American League.

Williams moved a ball club from ninth last year to a pennant. Durocher had a team that was dead last in 1966 and sent it climbing into third place. In fact, he had the Cubs in a first-place tie with St. Louis as late as July 24.

Durocher's backers aren't just from among the fans, but also from his own professional ranks. And two of the most vocal are Manager Eddie Stanky of the White Sox and Manager Bill Rigney of the Angels, a couple of Leo's products who manage in the Durocher image.

They not only think he should win the balloting for N. L. Manager of the Year, but that he should take it by a landslide.

Quick Rebuilding Job

"There just couldn't possibly be any other Manager of the Year," said Stanky. "I've never seen anybody do as fantastic a rebuilding job in just two years as Leo has."

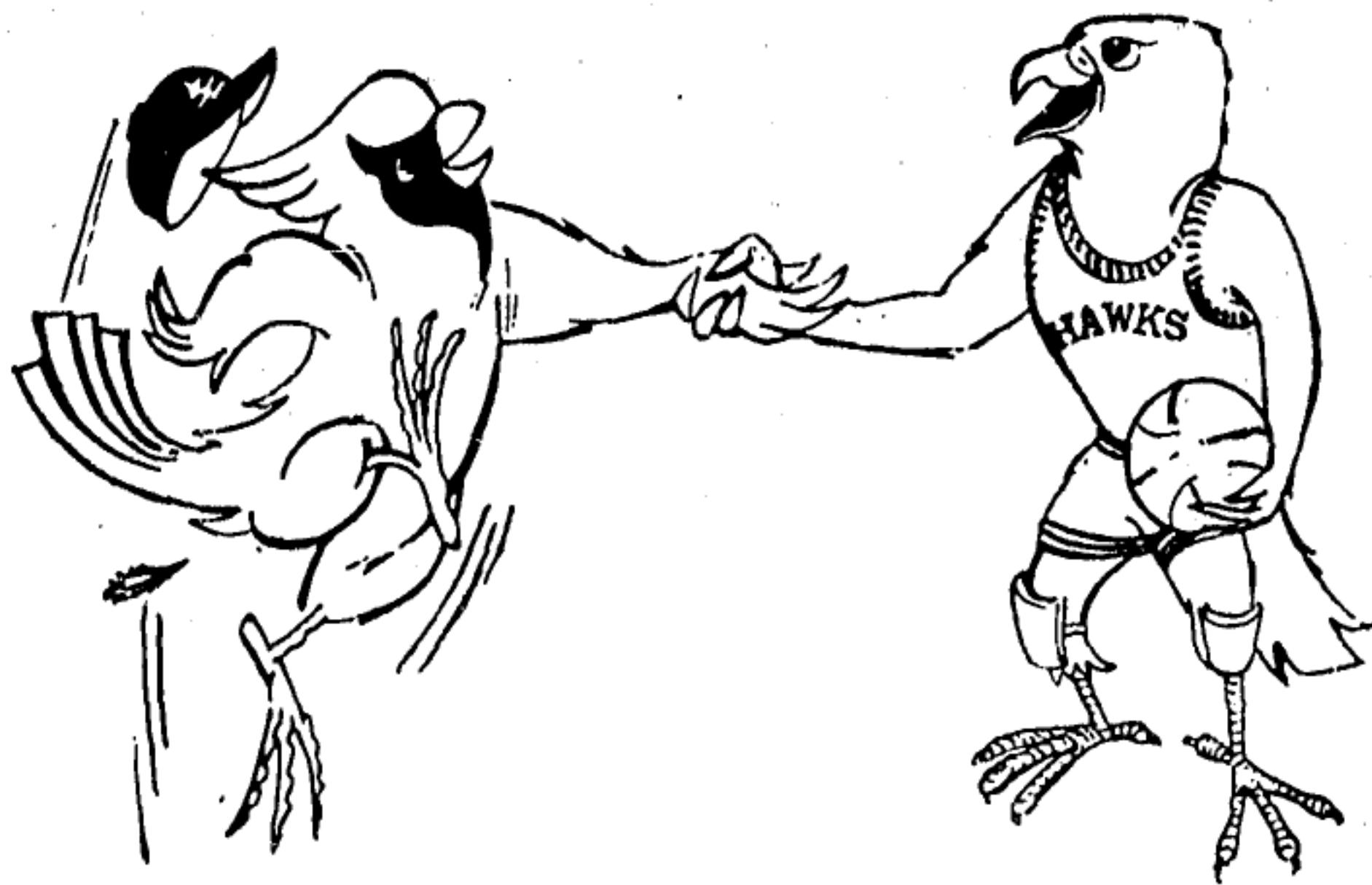
"And don't forget he had to rebuild them in spirit as well as physical talent. This was a ball club that had been down a long time."

As a matter of fact, the Cubs this year finished in the first division for the first time in 21 years, or when they were third in 1946. And they rolled up their best won-and-lost record in 22 years.

They concluded the campaign at Cincinnati by beating the Reds two-out-of-three in a head-and-head battle for third money.

When Durocher took over the Cubs in the winter of 1965-66, he had a very weak pitching staff, no catcher, no center fielder or right fielder, a second baseman who had just completed his rookie season and a shortstop who had played

Bird Talk:



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only three months and couldn't hit a lick.

The only seasoned big leaguers he had were Billy Williams, Ron Santo and Ernie Banks. So Durocher, aided by Vice-President John Holland, went on the prowl in the big league trade marts as well as in the Wrigley farm system.

The Cubs traded reliever Lindy McDaniel to the Giants and got their catcher, Randy Hundley, and a pitcher, Bill Hands. They sent aging starters Larry Jackson and Bob Buhl to the Phillies and got their center fielder, Adolfo Phillips, and another young pitcher, Ferguson Jenkins.

Jenkins Became Starter

In the spring of 1966, Durocher carefully screened his farmhand pitching talent and liked Ken Holtzman. Ken was 11-16 in 1966 and along a bout August Durocher sprung Jenkins out of the bullpen and turned him into a starter.

The slab corps now has a nucleus and, with the shrewd Joe Becker as pitching coach, a few more promising youngsters were added last spring.—Rich Nye and



Leo Durocher

Joe Nickro, two youngsters landed in the free-agent draft of June, 1965.

Now Leo had a staff because Nye and Nickro were sensational as first-year men, both hitting double win figures. Holtzman won nine without a defeat even though he was in military service most of the time and Fergie racked up 20 in only his second season.

And the bullpen got new young blood with the addition of Chuck Hartenstein and Bill Stoneman.

Meanwhile Hundley became a standout catcher with a punch, Kessinger developed into one of the better shortstops in the league and Phillips was becoming less erratic defensively.

Bruin Briefs: The Cubs missed the million mark in attendance because of miserable weather the final week, the last contest with the Cardinals being wiped out entirely. . . . The Cubs drew 977,226. . . . Last time they drew a million was 1952. . . . But despite the disappointment it was quite a jump from last year's 635,891. . . . The Cubs saved their biggest inning for the third-place clincher against the Reds September 30 when they sent eight runs clattering over the plate. . . . The Cubs liked bargain bills. . . . They swept six, split 11 and lost both ends twice.

Twins' Attempt To Blank Mele Strikes a Snag

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

Sam Mele, given the back of the hand by some members of the Twins when they voted on World Series shares, won't be disinherited after all.

If Commissioner William Eckert doesn't order the Twins to give the former manager a slice of the melon, then 11 players and one coach will give Mele a share out of their own pockets.

Mele, who led the Twins to the pennant in 1965, was fired last June 9.

When the players voted, Mele was given nothing after several alternatives were mentioned.

Trio Backing Mele

Dean Chance, Al Worthington and Earl Battey argued in Mele's behalf. They then decided to make up the share among them and were joined by Dave Boswell, Rod Carew, Jim (Mudcat) Grant, Harmon Killebrew, Tony Oliva, Cesar Tovar, Sandy Valdespino, Zoilo Versalles and coach Billy Martin.

It is not without precedent to have a commissioner order players to give a manager a share after they had voted originally to ignore him.

In 1948, the Braves attempted to cut off Billy Southworth, who had piloted the club all season, but Happy Chandler intervened. He decreed a full share for Southworth.

And last year the Braves attempted to ignore Bobby Bragan, who had been their manager for 111 games, being replaced by Billy Hitchcock on August 9.

Eckert, using the Southworth case as a precedent, ordered a partial share for Bragan.

Queried about the action of the Twins players, Mele said: "I don't care about the money. I am embarrassed. I lost my respect for some of those fellows, but I am deeply grateful to the people who supported me."



Sam Mele

TWINS

(Continued From Page 9)

off Gary Bell was No. 380 of his career for Killebrew, who this year rose from 20th to 14th in the all-time ranks.

Rod Carew bolstered his bid for rookie-of-the-year honors by finishing with a .292 average, although he went hitless his last 12 trips.

En route home, Club President Cal Griffith was brimming. Not with joy nor enthusiasm, but unspilt tears of wait-until-next-year disappointment.

It wasn't a happy departure from Boston.

Still, it wasn't entirely appropriate that two mounted policemen had their horses facing away from the Twins' bus when it left Fenway Park.

After all, the Twins were far from the tail end.

Twin Tales: One day after the season ended Jim Kaat received a heat treatment from trainer Doc Lentz and the next day more treatment on the ultra-sonic machine. . . . Cal Ermer finished with a 66-46 record after replacing Sam Mele on June 9. . . . The Twins held or shared first place all but three days in September; October was one day too long. . . . Al Worthington planned to continue college classes in Birmingham three days after the season ended; he'll receive his bachelor's degree in social studies this December. . . . Rich Reese finished with a pinch-hitting mark of .317 (13-for-41).



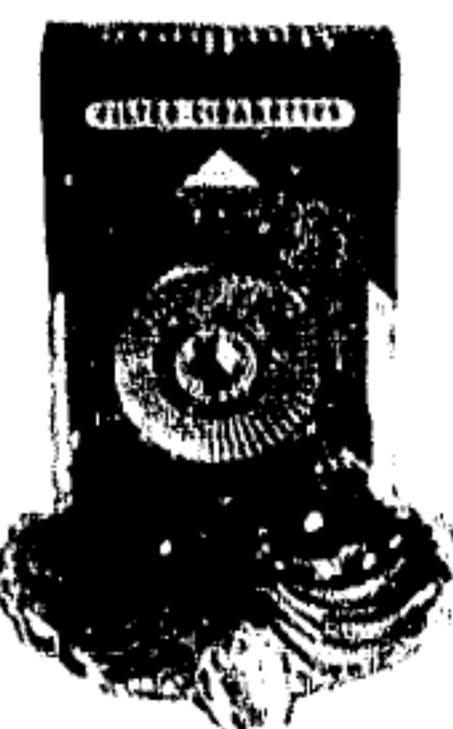
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