

# Merritt and Boswell Stake Strong Claims To Twin Mound Jobs

By MAX NICHOLS

ORLANDO, Fla.

Jim Merritt and Dave Boswell started at opposite ends of the country traveling different routes with different types of pitching equipment.

But both have reached the same destination this spring—the pitching staff of the **Twins**. And the **Twins** expect them to be traveling companions for quite a while. Both rookies have an assortment of pitching skills and both have baseball backgrounds.

"We are figuring on Merritt as a possible starter," said Sam Mele, the **Minnesota** manager. "Boswell probably will start out as a middle-inning reliever, but we probably will work him in as a starter now and then—in double-headers or something. They both are going to make this staff."

Merritt, 21-year-old lefthander from West Covina, Calif., has moved up the minor league ladder step-by-step. He carries the credentials of strike-out king of the International League. And he earned a 13-17 record for the last-place Atlanta club in 1964.

This 6-3, 175-pounder has developed in the areas of refined pitching, changing speeds and picking runners off base. He started as batboy for the Dodgers when he was 15 years old.

Boswell, on the other hand, is a 20-year-old righthander who throws everything hard. He leap-frogged up through the minors in one year—from Class A Bismarck to Class AA Charlotte to the **Twins**.

Boswell has higher expectations of Boswell than the **Twins** have.

"I'm Ready," Dave Says  
"I'm going for the first row," said Boswell, who must be protected or put up for waivers under the first-year bonus rule. "I think I am ready. I feel I can win as a starter. I will pitch anywhere they want me to, but I'm aiming for the starting staff."

Dave also is 6-3. But, at 185 pounds, he is not as lanky as Merritt. He throws a fast ball three different ways, a slider, a curve that he learned last year, a change of pace and even a forkball.

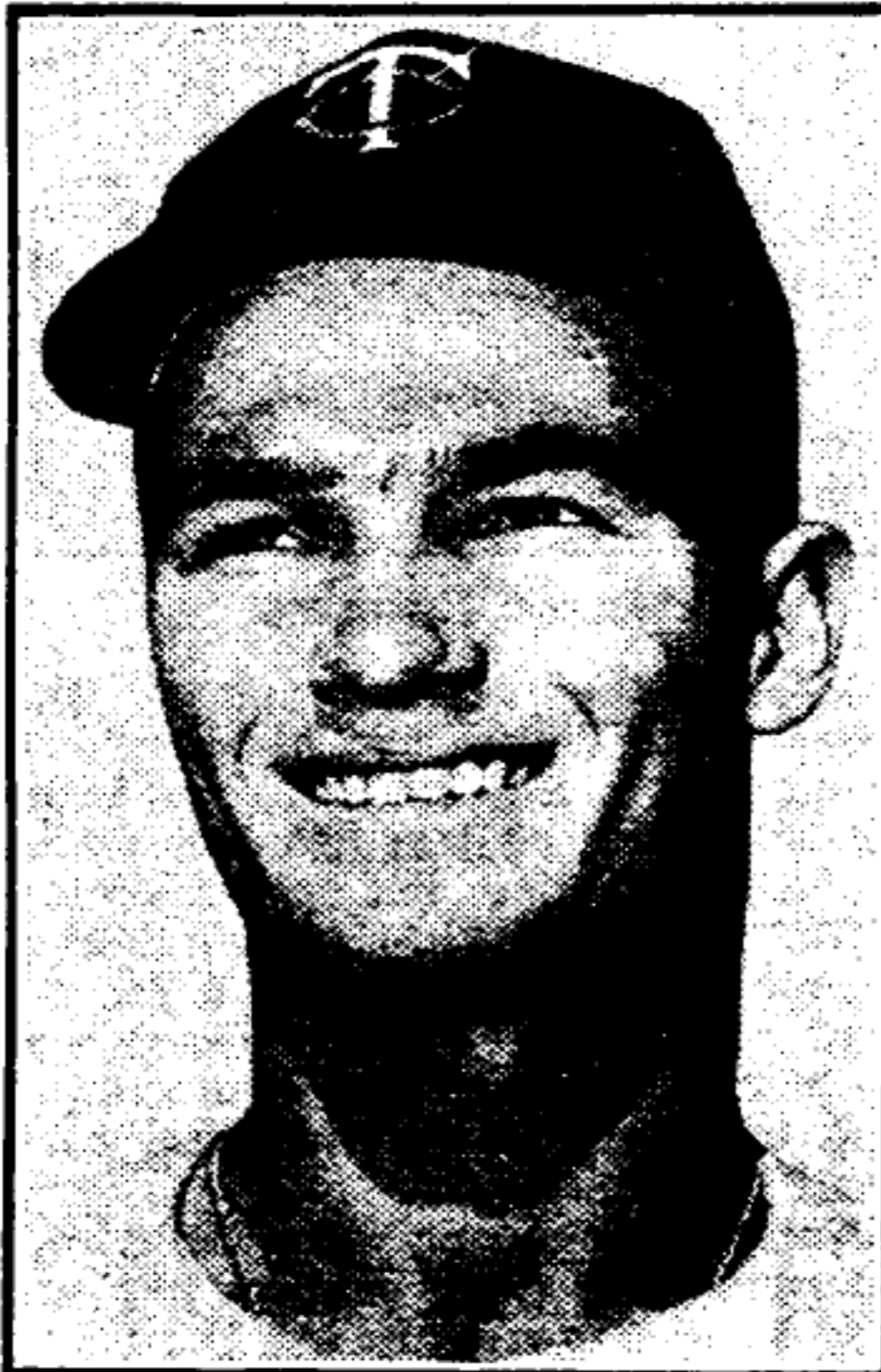
Boswell was taught the forkball by Jim Boswell, Dave's uncle, who was a member of the old Baltimore Orioles of the 1890s. But he has been concentrating on his other pitches this spring.

While Boswell goes for strikeouts with his fast stuff, Merritt learned first to change speeds on the curve. "My curve used to be my strikeout pitch," said Merritt. "Last year, I started using my fast ball more for that. It helped me to have both."

**Regular Starter in Minors**  
"I've been fortunate because I've gotten to pitch a lot. I was a regular starter the last three seasons in the minors. For two years, I pitched regularly in the Florida Instructional League. This has helped me develop my change of speeds."

**Twins' President Calvin Griffith** likes Merritt "because he knows so much about pitching at such an early age." Merritt says he always has approached pitching with the idea of setting up batters.

"No one person taught me," said Merritt. "I used to listen all I could when I worked for the Dodgers. And I always listen and watch whenever I am around baseball or baseball people. You pick up things here and



Dave Boswell

there, try them and use them if you can.

"One of the problems is to pick out what is good for you."

One of the things Merritt found was good for him was to learn an effective, quick pickoff throw to first base. He figured that, as a lefthanded pitcher, he should be good at this. So he practiced in front of mirrors over and over two and three years ago.

In the **Twins'** camp, he was known for his pickoff move a year ago. His problem this spring was to develop his move according to the requirements of major league umpires. An umpire called a balk on him in the **Twins'** first exhibition of the spring.

**Ump Explained Decision**  
"I didn't think I balked," said Merritt. "So a few days later, I asked the umpire why he called it so I could correct myself. He told me I crossed my right leg over my left when I reared back."

"If the umpires say that causes me to balk, then there is nothing for me to do but correct it."

About a week later, Merritt picked a Cardinal runner, Jerry Buchek, off first with the same umpire at first base. Two days after that, he picked another runner off. He didn't mind the change because he felt the secret is a quick throw more than a fake. Mele said the only problem he could discover with Merritt was in his use of his fast ball.

"Sometimes Jim throws his fast-ball only about three-quarter speed," said Mele. "He changes speeds on his other pitches very well. He has a good curve. But we want him to let that fast ball go."

Merritt started in O. B. in 1962 with a 19-12 record at Erie. He struck out 249 batters. In 1963, at Charlotte,

There are 170 years of Beam family history behind the good taste of Beam

Worthy of your Trust



66 PROOF KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY DISTILLED AND BOTTLED BY JAMES B. BEAM DISTILLING CO., CLEMONT, KY.

**BEAM**  
The World's Finest  
Bourbon since 1795

Merritt had a 9-12 mark. And last year, at Atlanta, he struck out 174 and cut his earned-run average to 2.75.

"It's hard to pitch for a last-place club," said Merritt. "But I never let myself believe I was going to lose. I have too much personal pride for that. I went out there thinking if I could hold a team to one or two runs, I had a chance to win. That was what I was always trying to do."

On June 4 last year, he blanked the Columbus Jets, 8-0, on a one-hitter.

**7-11 Log in Northern Loop**  
Boswell's experience was much shorter, but he also had to win in spite of playing for a losing club. He had a 7-11 record at Bismarck in the Northern League.

Dave stopped off at Charlotte for six starts and a 4-2 mark, then vaulted to **Minnesota**, where he finished with two more victories and no losses. The total was 13-13.

Only two years ago, this young righthander was pitching in amateur baseball in Baltimore. He had a slight strain in his arm in the spring of 1963 and was delayed in signing until the end of the season because of it.

"The papers and everyone had me believing I might get \$100,000," said Boswell. "With \$100,000 on my mind, I went out and threw as hard as I could too often. I had a bit of soreness and that scared the big money boys away."

Boswell signed in August of 1963 for a bonus, considerably less than \$100,000.

**No More Arm Worries**  
"The soreness was overrated," said Boswell. "I never have felt the slightest problem with my arm since that year."

Boswell had control of all of his pitches from the day he entered the camp of the **Twins'** Florida Instructional League team in 1963. The problem was to teach him when to use them and he feels he has learned a great deal of this with experience.

Felix Mantilla of Boston was the first major league batter he faced and Felix hit a homer off him. But since that day, he has shown Mele nothing but effectiveness. He defeated Kansas City and Los Angeles before the season ended.

## Hassle Settled; Twins' Fans Can Dine in Comfort

By DICK GORDON  
TWIN CITIES, Minn.

It may not have been as knotty a problem as "Who will play second?" for the **Minnesota** baseball club this season. But back on the **Twins'** home front, the settlement of that seemingly never-ending wrangle between the cities



Charlie Lavender

of Minneapolis and Bloomington as to which would pay what Metropolitan Stadium assessments is being hailed as just the shot in the arm lagging season ticket sales needed.

So now all the "home front" wants, what with the new fence walls moved back in left and center to set the stage for increased Metropolitan Stadium capacity, is a bit of cooperation from the weatherman so manuring the field for the April opener with New York's champion Yankees can begin in earnest.

For you late comers, the Bloomington-Minneapolis argument wound up in closing the Met's Stadium (bottle) Club from July 1 on—for the rest of the **Twins'** baseball schedule and all through the **Minnesota** Vikings' football campaign.

**850 Members in Club**  
While green grass—have you seen any?—and new home-run dimensions cannot be overlooked here, especially with the earliest-ever Met debut, the renaissance of the Stadium Club is still something in itself. This is a private bottle organization of some 850 members, mainly building bond holders, where both food and liquid refreshment can be enjoyed—before, after and even during Twin-Viking baseball and football games.

"I never realized how vital it was in the over-all picture," said Charlie Lavender, veteran **Twins'** ticket manager. "I just accepted it as a matter of course. But I know now of several instances where fans cancelled their season tickets because they thought the Stadium Club wasn't going to be in operation. One of them



## 'KNOTTY PROBLEMS OF BASEBALL'

The visiting team, trailing 2-1, had a runner on third with two out in the eighth inning. The runner decided to steal home. He got a good jump and seemed a cinch to score. However, the batter, seeing the runner, stepped back into the

catcher in trying to get out of the way, preventing the catcher from making a tag. Is there a penalty for this?

See Page 38, Column 3, for the correct answer to this "Knotty Problem."

## Twins Get Bid from Alaska—It's Warmer in Fairbanks

TWIN CITIES, Minn.—With icy weather prevailing here, the **Twins** received a telegram, March 26, inviting them to open the season in Fairbanks, Alaska, of all places. But, believe it or not, it was warmer there.

The telegram to President Cal Griffith of the **Twins** came from A. E. Hagberg, president of the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce. It said:

"Fairbanks enjoying spring baseball weather as final traces of winter snow disappears. Near 50-above temperatures during past week, plus spring appearance of our midnight sun, present inviting prospect for opening **Minnesota Twins** season in Fairbanks if mid-winter Alaskan weather prevails in Twin Cities. Please advise if we may assist you in making Fairbanks baseball facilities available for opening of season."

has come back already since everything was settled."

Season Twin sales are down a couple of hundred—from 3,600 in 1964 to 3,400—but it is figured the rejuvenation of the plush eating and quaffing establishment will be just what Dr. Lavender ordered.

Bloomington and Minneapolis completed their settlement shortly after midnight, March 16, at which time the former's city council significantly voted to approve the club's food, beer bottle and cigarette licenses, voided since last summer, when the club closed and the licenses expired.

The details of the midnight agreement are not of concern to baseball laymen. But, at the Orlando, Fla., training camp, they just hope that the keystone sack problem will be resolved until 1967.

**400,000 Ducats Sold**  
Meanwhile, there are these other encouraging factors:

Lavender says a total of 400,000 tickets for all games have been sold already and he hopes for 500,000.

Don Cassidy of the club's promotion staff reports the **Twins** will equal last year's group sale of more than 200,000 tickets to 2,530 organizations around the state.

The new fence walls—344 feet on the left field line instead of 330, 430 in center instead of 412, and 402 and 435 for the right and left-center—are up and could be readied for game use within a day's time, if need be.

The new left field grandstand seats, which will increase baseball capacity from 40,800 to 44,000, are going up ahead of construction schedule despite winter's overstay, so that the July 1 deadline, ahead of the first Met major league All-Star Game, is a cinch:

In the wake of the recent record cold and snow, the weatherman says, "Fair and warmer" for opening day. Messrs. Lavender and Cassidy hope the long-range forecast is accurate.



### For Tall or Big Men Only!

We specialize in large sizes only. Sleeves up to 38". Bodies cut 4" longer. Large selection of McGregor Jackets, Sweaters, Sport and Dress Shirts, Slacks, Robes, etc. All proportioned for big and tall men only. PLUS 70 SHOE STYLES 10-16 AAA-EFE. Sold by mail only. 100% guarantee. Send for FREE Color Catalog. King-Size, Inc., 2945 Forest St., Brockton, Mass.

### TOPPS BASEBALL CARDS

GET YOUR MISSING NUMBERS—only 3c ea.

50c Min. Order—Order by Number! Order each Series—88 cards \$2.25 Complete set — 7 series \$12.95 Send 25c for big illustrated catalog of all types of sports and Non-sports cards PLUS many baseball items.

THE CARD COLLECTORS' CO. Bx. 293, Dept. SN59, Franklin Sq., N.Y.

### FAN SCORE BOOKS

Pocket size permanent bound baseball diary for use at games and home viewing. Designed and copyrighted for the layman. Contains 40 scoring pages and simplified instructions. Mail \$1.00 and your name and address to—

FANSCORE  
Route 1  
Mary Esther, Florida 32569