

# Cal Weary of Twin Beefs, Backs Mele's Crackdown on Versailles

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

President Calvin Griffith has gone one better than backing up Twins' Manager Sam Mele in fining Zoilo Versailles \$300 for his dugout popoff to the manager.

Griffith praised Mele for "shaking up" the club. Versailles' head-on collision with Mele in the visitors' dugout at St. Petersburg, Fla., was the third in a series of signs of disruptive problems on the **Twins** squad. Don Mincher is dissatisfied and Jim Grant accused the Minnesota organization of favoring stars.

Mele cracked down hard on Versailles, benched him and was supported "100 per cent" by Griffith.

"This club needs a shaking up," said Griffith. "It's flat. I hear some reports that spring training is for the birds. That thinking is for the birds. Spring training is needed to get players into shape. They should play as hard as they can even if games are exhibitions."

"If players don't get in the habit of winning, or trying hard to win, they can't just jump and get into the mood of winning when the season starts."

This was only the third major fine that Mele has dealt out since he became the **Twins** manager in June of 1961. He fined Billy Martin (then a second baseman, now a coach) \$100 that year and fined Rich Rollins last year. Otherwise, only small fines have been levied.

"I have felt that Sam has been a little too easy on the players at times," said Griffith. "Now he has shown the team that he can be rough."

## Players "Lifeless" on Field

Mele agreed with Griffith and press observers that the **Twins** had been "lifeless" on the field a week before the American League opener. Versailles not only talked his way into a fine and Mele's doghouse, but possibly into a trade.

"This doesn't mean that we are going to trade Versailles right off at this time," said Griffith. "But if players will not respect the manager's authority, then it's time to get new players. Something like this makes it tougher to make a trade."

Versailles had been making his annual spring training complaint about a "sore arm" and therefore had not played as much as Mele would have liked him to in exhibitions. But Zoilo's arm had nothing to do with the play that touched off his clash with Mele.

The manager figured Zoilo did not try hard enough to reach a grounder that scored two runs and erased a 1-0 **Twins** lead against the Mets. The Mets eventually won, 8-1.

With one out and Met runners on second and third in the fourth inning, Jim Hickman hit a grounder that went to the left of Versailles for a two-run single. Mele sent shortstop Bill Bethea to warm up and, four or five throws later, Bethea was ready. He replaced Versailles before the inning was over.

Coach Billy Martin gave Versailles "a verbal dressing down," then sent the shortstop to the outfield for wind sprints. Mele then called Versailles back to the dugout.

## Zoilo Ordered to Remain

"I told Versailles to stay on the bench, because he might learn something," said Mele. "I told him not to go into the clubhouse."

Versailles, instead of sitting down, answered back at Mele: "I do it for Billy (Martin)."

"You do it for me," replied Mele, "and that costs you \$100."

"Why not \$200?" asked Versailles. Mele made it \$200.

"Why not \$300?" asked Versailles. Mele agreed, then sent Zoilo into the clubhouse for a shower.

After the game, Mele still was angry.

"All I ask is that each player give me his best effort," Sam said. "No loafing. And in his case, I don't believe in any adjustment of the fine."

Versailles, after the game, said he "should have some respect" and complained that Mele yelled at him in the dugout. Zoilo argued that other players were not certain he could have reached Hickman's grounder.

"I'm not saying Versailles should have fielded the ball," said Mele. "I don't know that. All I ask is a better effort. He's done that too often. The

## Eight Rookies Likely To Dot Twin Roster

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

At least eight rookies were scheduled to back up the **Twins** regulars possibly through the first 30 days of the American League season.

The starting lineup of the **Twins** looks very much like the one that finished in a tie for sixth last year. The only exceptions were Jerry Kindall at second base and the switch of Harmon Killebrew to first base and Bob Allison to left field.

But three rookie pitchers, three rookie utility infielders and at least two rookie outfielders were waiting in the wings. A ninth rookie—outfielder Andy Kosco—was still being considered during the final week of spring training.

In addition to rookie Dave Boswell, who will be given a chance to work his way into the starting rotation, Manager Sam Mele helped fill out his bull pen with lefthanders Jerry Fosnow and Mel Nelson.

Technically, Fosnow may not be considered a rookie, because he was called up from Atlanta on June 29 last year. But he appeared in only seven games the rest of the season and on the basis of experience is a rookie in facing major league batters.

## Fosnow Impressive in Relief

Fosnow moved one of the leading pitchers during the first five weeks of the **Twins** exhibition games—allowing only one run in 12½ innings. Mele placed him in every kind of relief situation possible.

"I need a lefthander for late-inning relief," said Mele. "We've been trying to get Fosnow ready for that job."

Nelson, a 28-year-old veteran of ten years in the minors and one year with the Angels, also pitched strongly in relief. He was expected to be purchased from the Denver roster after a 9-12 record for the last-place Atlanta club in the International League in 1964.

John Sevcik, who like Boswell is a first-year player, will be kept all season as the third-string catcher. "I like Sevcik's actions behind the plate," said Mele. "I wouldn't be afraid to use him in a tight situation."

Cesar Tovar, rookie Venezuelan who can play every infield position but first base and every outfield position, was given a long chance to play second base before being kept as a utility infielder. Bill Bethea, who played at Charlotte last year,



Dave Boswell

was retained to "push" shortstop Zoilo Versailles.

Dick Reese, who batted .571 in the first five weeks of spring training, was kept for the trip north after learning to play in the outfield in addition to first base. He is considered an accomplished glove man at first base, but he is jumping all the way from Wilson and the Carolina League.

"Reese learned to play pretty well in the outfield and could be valuable as a utilityman," said Mele. "And I can use him for defense in late innings of close games at first base."

Sandy Valdespino and Joe Nossek, both were kept as utility outfielders. Mele was considering platooning Kosco with center fielder Jimmie Hall—Kosco playing against lefties.

## Hall Weak Against Southpaws

"I thought Hall would show more improvement this spring, at least in making contact with the ball against southpaws," said Mele. "He must learn to bunt them and cope with them in some manner or we might have to go to platooning him."

But both Mele and **Twins** President Calvin Griffith also would like to see Kosco play every day in the minors and develop. Nossek also is a righthanded batter who could be platooned with Hall.

Joining these rookies in utility roles were infielder-outfielder Frank Kostro, first baseman Don Mincher and catcher Jerry Zimmerman.

Mele was impressed with several other rookies who spent the spring in the **Twins** camp—especially infielders Jim Jenkins and Dennis Reeve and pitcher Jim Ollom.

"Jenkins got a lot of chances to play because of Versailles' sore arm and he played well every time," said Mele. "Reeve looks good, too. He's going to be a good hitter. Ollom has major league stuff right now. He just needs experience."

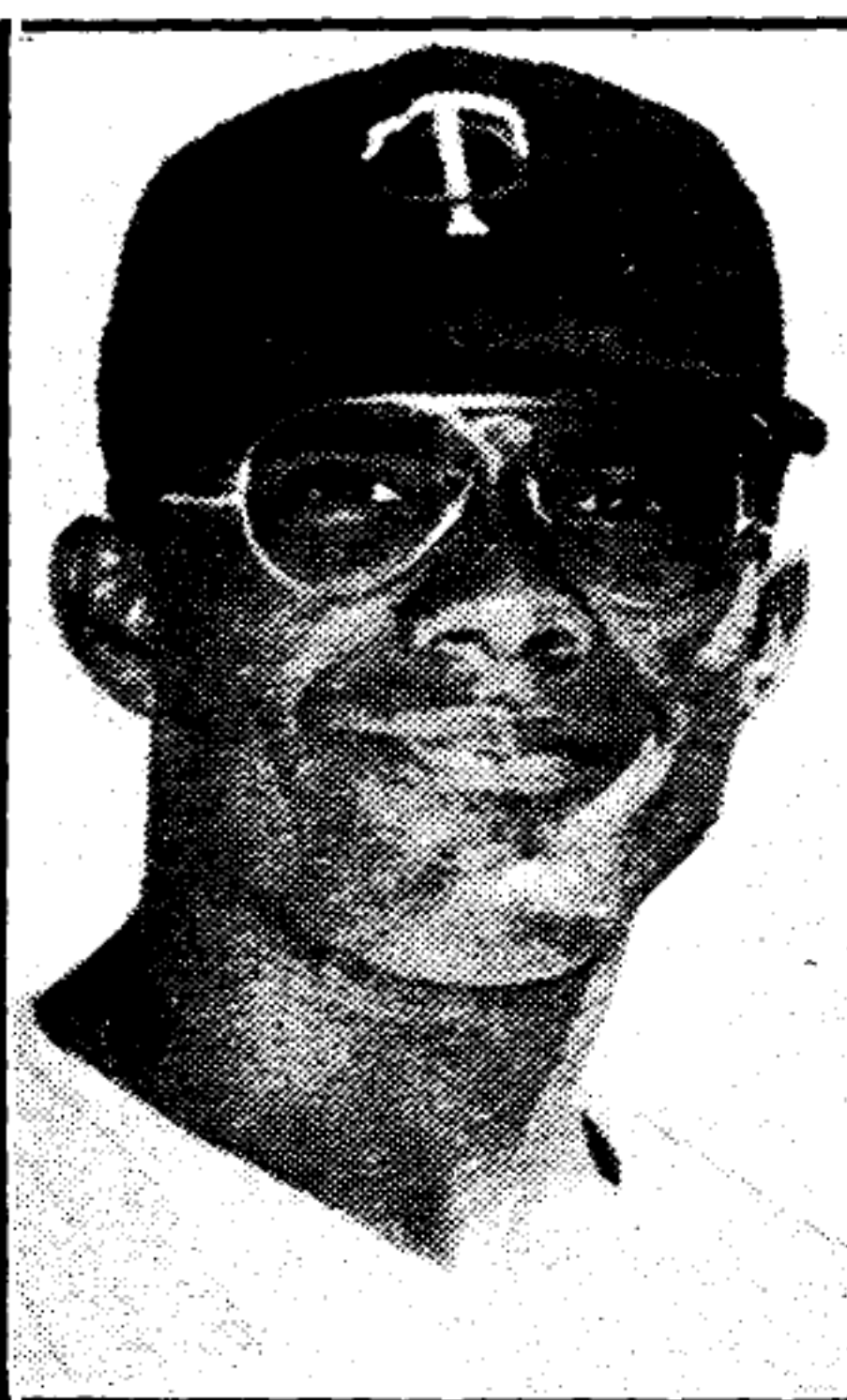
Other rookies who impressed Mele were pitcher Don Gregson and infielder Rodney Carew.



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Zoilo Versailles

others are going all out in spring games and I expect Versailles to do the same thing."

Griffith made it plain the \$300 would be deducted from Zoilo's pay. Versailles said he wanted to talk to Griffith "about three-four things." Griffith suggested they talk before opening day.

Martin was angry about Zoilo's reference to him, especially in light of recent rumors about him being after Mele's job. Mele and Martin both have denied, then even joked about these rumors, but there was no way to be funny about Zoilo's remarks.

## "Big Surprise" to Martin

"They are trying to make a Leo Durocher out of me," Martin said in reference to the rumors. "It was a big surprise to me when Zoilo said that. I don't know why my name was brought into it."

Mele dismisses the part about Martin with: "Don't forget I asked that Martin help us two years ago in spring training and I also picked him as coach. He has done the job I have asked him to do. He has worked very hard with all of the infielders."

Mincher has publicly stated that he does not feel he has played enough this spring to get ready for the season and said he would like to be traded. Griffith is considering a possible trade involving Mincher.

Grant told Hal Lebovitz of the

## 'Can't Beat Out Killebrew, So Trade Me,' Says Mincher

ORLANDO, Fla.—Don Mincher, reserve first baseman of the **Twins**, went on television just before the end of spring training and said he wanted to be traded.

"I wish they would trade me," Mincher said. "I'm no more ready to play now than I was the first day of spring training."

Mincher had played 37 innings and had three hits in exhibitions at that time. His statement did not worry Manager Sam Mele.

"I have to admire Mincher for going to bat for himself like that," said Mele. "But he has to realize that Harmon Killebrew is making a switch to first base and I have to get him ready."

Cleveland Plain Dealer that the **Twins** organization causes problems by giving the stars special treatment.

"I'm not trying to put the rap on Minnesota," said Grant, "and I'm not referring to Sam Mele. But the **Twins** organization is generally concerned about only a couple of players. The rest of us are just around."

## Players Don't Ask for It

"I'm sure the front office isn't aware of this special star treatment. The front office does it sub-consciously. The players don't ask for it, and they don't want it. They are wonderful guys and fine players, but they get it."

**Twins' Tracks:** The **Twins** cut down to 30 players with a week to go in spring training, pulling a surprise by shipping lefthanded pitcher Jim Merritt to Denver. Merritt was considered a possible **Twins** starter through most of spring training. "Merritt just hasn't looked that good," said Mele. "He has been a slow starter in the past. We want him to pitch often with Denver and get himself ready before we bring him up." Merritt was on the Denver roster and did not have to be optioned. Sore-arm pitchers Bill Dailey and Garry Roggenburk also were on the Denver roster and were sent to the Denver squad. . . . Others sent to the minors included pitchers Gary Dotter, Jim Ollom, Chuck Nieson and Dwight Siebler, catcher Ken Retzer and infielders Jim Jenkins, Ron Theobald and Jay Ward. . . . **Twins** President Calvin Griffith said Bernie Allen would be placed on the disabled list until his knee was ready.

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