

Mets' Hiller Heating Cold Bat--Now He's Killer-Diller at Dish

By BARNEY KREMENKO

NEW YORK, N. Y.

A sudden hitting outburst by Chuck Hiller as the Mets opened a home stand just prior to the All-Star Game provided the heroes of Shea Stadium with one of their most pleasant surprises of the season.

In six games after coming off a long trip, Hiller amassed 13 hits in 24 at-bats to lift his batting average from an anemic .188 to a presentable—as well as hopeful—.269.

It included a 4-for-4 effort in the second game of a June 28 double-header with the Braves, the first time in his major league career that the balding, 29-year-old athlete had performed that feat. In the opener that night, Hiller pounded out two hits and the six-hit total was another high for him. "I got six hits the same day once in the minors," Chuck recalled, "but never here."

Besides helping himself personally, Hiller did wonders for the Mets through that stretch as well. They won four of those six games and this circumstance hardly was a coincidence.

Most of the hits were timely and had some muscle behind them. Four were for extra bases—three doubles and a homer.

The homer was the second of the year for the ex-Giant, but his first as a Met, coming at the expense of the Cardinals' Bob Gibson, hardly ever a slouch, as any swinger will tell you.

Hiller gave much of the credit for his surge to Joe Christopher, his outfielding teammate.

"Joe pointed out to me that I had been sweeping my bat across



Chuck Hiller

the plate rather than whipping it," Chuck disclosed. "He suggested I swing faster."

"Before that, I had been hitting maybe one good ball a game. But after I took Joe's advice, it was like old times. I was slamming the ball all over the field—first to left-center, then to right, then in some other direction, all of them on the nose."

"I was just staying back and waiting, then lashing out. Funny thing, it was working."

Chuck was still looking to improve his fielding and here he was getting a helping hand from Don Heffner, the Mets' hard-working coach and former big league infielder.

Drilling on Grounders

"We've been spending a lot of time on grounders," Hiller reported to THE SPORTING NEWS.

"Don found I wasn't charging the ball."

"Moreover, too often I was taking the ball from the side rather than getting in front of it."

Chuck, believed, too, that playing every day was a key factor in his improvement.

"I played very little last year and again with the Giants this spring," he pointed out.

"That lack of action knocked off my timing. I was really rusty."

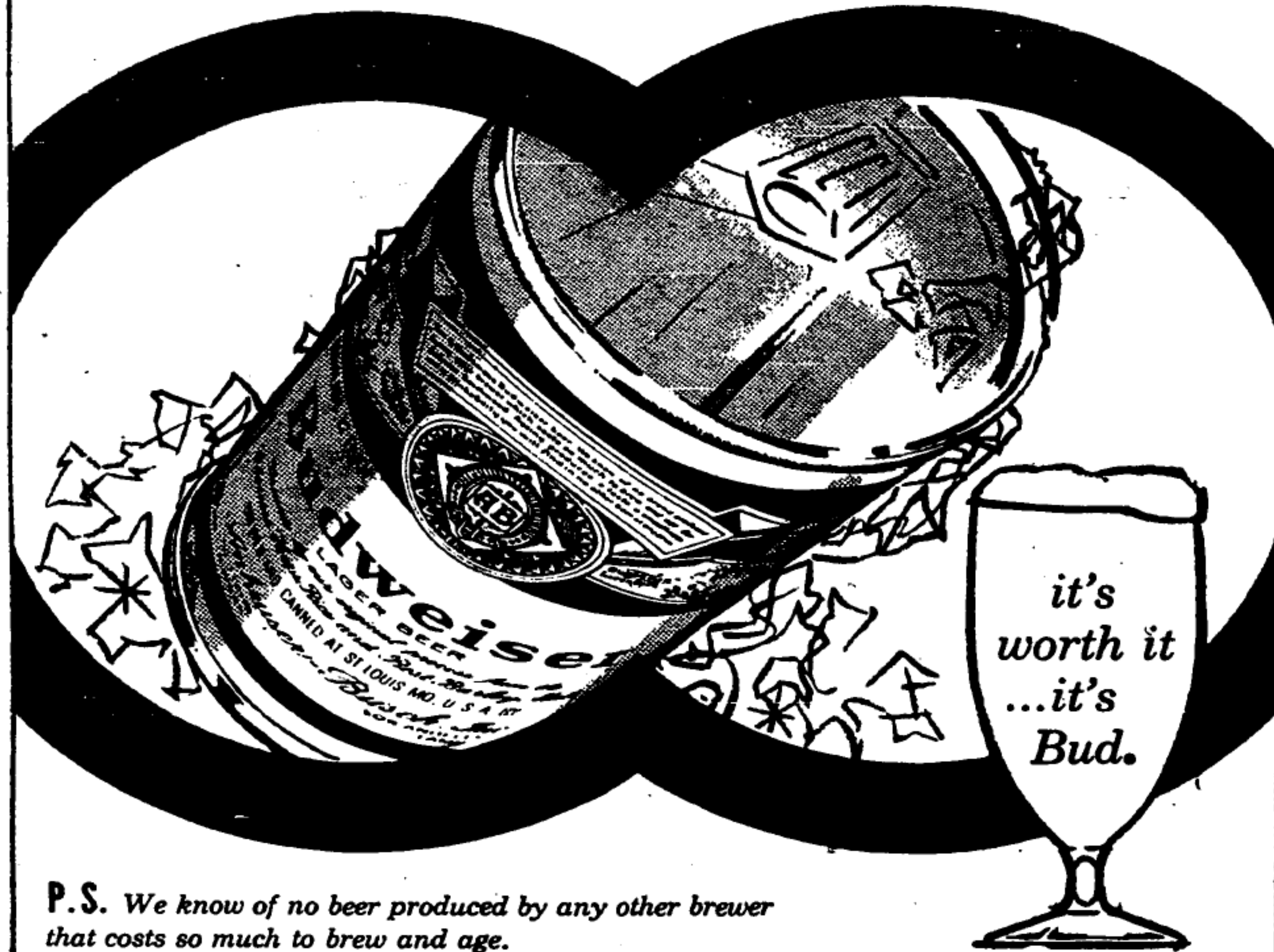
"You can't imagine what being in there all the time means to a ball player—in the field as well as at bat."

Hiller's hitting spree was timely for the Mets in another way. Third baseman Charley Smith, one of the club's dependables for the past couple of months, was spiked across the knee by Vada Pinson of the Reds in a tag play at the hot corner and shelved for a week.

Met Memos: The Mets are toying with the idea of converting outfielder Ron Swoboda into a catcher, with Yogi Berra doing the tutoring. . . . Mrs. Babe Ruth paid her first visit to Shea Stadium, June 29, for a Mets-Braves game. "You must remember I consider Yankee Stadium my home, but this park is beautiful," she observed. . . . Pitcher Les Rohr, the Mets' No. 1 draft pick, left on July 1 for the Williamsport farm club in the Eastern League after spending ten days under the wing of pitching coach Warren Spahn. . . . At the midway mark, the Mets were running some 60,000 ahead of their 1964 attendance pace. . . . Greg Spahn, who is the 16-year-old son of Warren, is planning to

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50 Ex-Dodgers and Giants' Stars to Attend Met Party

NEW YORK, N. Y. — All is in readiness for the annual Mets' Old-Timers' Day at Shea Stadium on Saturday, July 24. Some 50 former stars are expected to be on hand, with 35 acceptances already received.

The theme for '65 is a reunion of old Dodgers and Giants who led the league in various departments.

The ceremonies will precede a regularly - scheduled afternoon game between the Mets and Phillies.

Included in the old-timers' group will be five Hall of Famers—Frank Frisch, Carl Hubbell, Max Carey, Burleigh Grimes and Zach Wheat.

Among others scheduled to attend are Rube Marquard, Travis Jackson, Hugh Critz, Dick Bartell, Johnny Mize, Jo-Jo Moore, Bobby Thomson, Dave Bancroft, Harry Danning, Hal Schumacher, Sal Maglie, Wes Westrum, Casey Stengel.

Also Roy Campanella, Van Mungo, Pee Wee Reese, Lefty O'Doul, Carl Erskine, Ralph Branca, Augie Galan, Mickey Owen, Joe Medwick, Don Newcombe, Eddie Stanky and Babe Herman.

enter the University of Wisconsin after his graduation from high school in Hartshorne, Okla., next June. . . . Ron Hunt has started taking light workouts, although still getting some pain in his injured shoulder. The restless second baseman accepted a job with the North Hempstead (L. I.) Park and Recreation Department to while away the afternoons when the Mets are on the road or playing home night games. . . . The series with the Reds not only shelved Charley Smith, but also put outfielders Billy Cowan and Danny Napoleon on the bench. Cowan was hit on the arm by a Jim Duffalo pitch and the next day Jim Maloney struck Napoleon on the chest.

GRIFFITH

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the concessions, was traveling secretary and did public relations work.

Clark Griffith died on October 27, 1955, and Calvin was elected president five days later.

"We called a meeting of the whole family," said Calvin. "The club had a debt of \$100,000 and controlled about 100 players. We made Sherry farm director and Ossie Bluege (who had been farm director) our controller. He was an accountant and well trained for it."

"We decided to start building the club (which had finished last with a 53-101 record in 1955) by building a farm system. We raised the price of our tickets by 25 cents and paid off the debt in a few years while getting a little money to invest in young players."

Key Players Signed

In those last six years in Washington, the Griffith organization signed numerous players who make up the nucleus of the team that today is in the American League pennant race.

Jim Hall, Zoilo Versalles and Rich Rollins all were signed in those years. Camilo Pascual, Harmon Killebrew and Bob Allison had been signed before Clark died. And Earl Battey and Don Mincher were acquired by trade in 1960—just before the last season as Senators.

Griffith often quotes his uncle's homemade rules for living and doing business in baseball.

"Many is the time I sit here and ask at a moment of decision, 'What would you do, Unk?' He believed in moderation in living habits and he believed in rest. He always took a nap between 5:30 p. m. and 6:30 p. m. before a night game, and I do the same."

Calvin prefers to make trades in the spring rather than in the fall—after he has seen and scouted players in spring training. And this often has paid off.

The **Twins** poured out big bonuses for Bernie Allen, now in his fourth year with the **Twins**, and for Joe



CLARK GRIFFITH
... Founded Dynasty

Nossek, who started making his presence felt this season—about \$50,000 each. But the majority of the player-development money goes into a farm system and scouting staff.

Griffith feels he has a scouting staff capable of producing raw talent for the organization under the new draft rules. This includes 30 scouts. The farm system is paced by Denver, which is battling for the Eastern Division crown of the Pacific Coast League.

Million Fans Per Year

The **Twins** have drawn a million or more in each of the first four seasons—reaching a peak of 1,433,116 for the second-place team of 1962.

With Metropolitan Stadium expanded this year to seat 45,200, and with the **Twins** in the pennant race, another top-notch year can be expected.

More than 200,000 fans come in delegations each season.

The only thing now needed by the 1965 home of the All-Star Game is construction of permanent seating from third base down the left field line. Plans are in the making to build this in conjunction with an indoor winter sports house—possibly as a home for a National Hockey League team.

"I'm for anything that is good for the community," said Griffith. "We have moved to Minnesota to stay. If the community wants a National Hockey League team, it should have one."