

# Sain System Just What Twin Hurlers Needed

## Vet Coach's Tips Trigger Fast Takeoff

By MAX NICHOLS  
TWIN CITIES, Minn.

High-flying Johnny Sain, long accustomed to high altitudes in baseball as well as in airplanes, has been one of the primary engineers in the soaring start of the Twins.

The former World Series star pitcher has jumped without parachute into the job of revitalizing the wings of the Minnesota pitching staff after a year out of baseball. But he still finds time to pursue his hobby of piloting his own plane.

"You don't see Johnny do all the work that he does," said Manager Sam Mele. "He doesn't make a lot out of it. He might talk to a pitcher over by his locker and then work with another one out in the bullpen. But he works hard and he has the pitchers believing in him."

Mele believed enough in his pitching coach to go along with numerous suggestions in planning the operation of his staff—switching from a five-day rotation to a four-day rotation of starters, plus using only his best starters around frequent off days in early weeks.

When Sain moves into anything, he goes into it wholeheartedly and thoroughly, as he once attacked batters with every type of curve, change of speed and change of motion he could command. He carries this same thoroughness into flying his Beechcraft Bonanza and operating his Chevrolet dealership in Walnut Ridge, Ark.

### Johnny Likes to Tinker

In fact, he never completely separates any of them.

"I've always been mechanically inclined," said Sain as he sat in a dugout and kept his eye on a batting practice pitcher. "My dad was a mechanic, operated his own garage in Arkansas. And I started working around the garage when I was just a boy."

"When I started learning to fly in the Navy, the mechanics were much easier than the bookwork. It was always hard for me to get something by just reading it out of a book."

"I think this is one reason I've always been interested in the mechanics of pitching, why I developed the spinner. When a ball did something, I've always wanted to know why, what makes it curve or dip or slide. I was talking to Warren Spahn this spring and we pretty well agreed we both were always



JOHNNY SAIN has some words of instruction for Twin hurlers (left to right)—Jim Perry, Al Worthington, Jim Grant, Dick Stigman, Gerry Fosnow, Camilo Pascual, Mel Nelson, Bill Pleis and John Klippstein.

### Yanks Said to Have Signed Petition for Return of Sain

TWIN CITIES, Minn. — It's been accurately reported that Yankee pitchers actually passed around and signed a petition to get Johnny Sain back as pitching coach last summer when the Yanks were having trouble.

Reliable sources have revealed Whitey Ford, who was pitching coach at the time, also signed the petition. It was meant as no slap at Ford but as an appeal for a measure of help for Yank pitchers.

trying to find out 'why' in our early days with the Boston Braves together."

Pitching, flying and mechanics all have been interwoven in Johnny's 48 years, but he never has done a half-hearted job of any of them. He

started flying in the Navy after his rookie year with the Braves in 1942.

"I started out learning to fly with Ted Williams, Johnny Pesky, Buddy Grempe and Joe Coleman," said Sain. "Williams was very much like myself in that he, too, had more trouble with the bookwork than he did with the mechanics of flying."

### Ted Learned to Fly Jets

"We studied a lot together at Amherst College in Massachusetts, then went to North Carolina University for pre-flight school. Ted became a wonderful flyer, as everyone knows, and he later adapted himself to the jets."

After the war, Sain dropped flying for 15 years and concentrated on pitching. He won 95 games in five years for Boston from 1946 through 1950, then became a bull-pen star for the Yankees.

"I was too busy in those years to fly," said Sain, "and it was too ex-

## John Picks Up Knowledge From Chats With Pitchers

TWIN CITIES, Minn.—Johnny Sain says Johnny Klippstein, Camilo Pascual and Jim Kaat have helped him this spring as much as he has helped any pitcher on the Minnesota roster.

"These fellows like to talk pitching," said Sain. "Kaat, for instance, wants to know why everything happens when he pitches. And he finds out why. Pascual throws a great curve, and he knows why it curves."

"By talking to these fellows, I pick up ideas that I can sometimes pass along to other pitchers."

pensive. I didn't start flying again until I could buy my own plane. A friend of mine gave me a ride in a plane in 1960 and I resumed flying through Jack Adams of Adams Aircraft near Memphis, Tenn."

Sain, typically, does more than just go up and down in an airplane. He investigates all the latest navigation methods and equipment. And

he is now interested in earning a rating that will allow him to fly by instruments under bad weather conditions.

"It's just like pitching," said Johnny. "You can be a pitcher and get by on whatever you can do on your natural ability. Or you can learn everything you can about pitching and the hitters and get the maximum amount out of your ability. You can fly airplanes. And you can learn everything you can to be a good flyer."

### First Lessons on Sandlots

Johnny did his best to learn in his years of pitching. And some of the methods and principles he follows now he learned as far back as his boyhood in sandlot baseball.

"When I was pitching in sandlot ball, I used to throw a curve with my thumb sticking out," said Sain. "A man who had never pitched a game pointed out to me that I could throw a curve better by gripping the ball with my thumb in on the ball."

"That taught me that you can pick up an idea anywhere. And I actually learn more from the pitchers as a coach than they do from me. You work with a pitcher and you pick up ideas. About all I do as a coach is pass along ideas that I have accumulated. If a pitcher can

(Continued on Page 10, Column 1)



JOHN SAIN has owned three planes, a Beechcraft Bonanza, a twin-engine TravelAir and another Bonanza, shown here. With Sain is Jack Adams, aircraft dealer near Memphis, from whom Sain has bought all his planes.