

# Harmonious Harmon Adds Zip to Twins' Team Effort

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

Regardless of how the American League pennant race turns out, the Twins have earned a shot at the flag at least partly because of an unselfish attitude. The most obvious example is that of Harmon Killebrew, defending home-run champion. After moving from left field to first base this spring, Harmon has moved back and forth between first and third bases for a month and even has filled in back in left field.

There have been other cases, of course—Jim Grant and Jim Kaat volunteering to help out with relief pitching, Al Worthington pitching in spite of a pulled back muscle and Jerry Zimmerman catching a double-header in spite of a pulled back muscle.

Earl Battey, Zoilo Versalles and Tony Oliva have played in spite of repeated injuries — Versalles and Oliva playing well past the All-Star break without missing a game.

"I have never seen a better team effort on any team," said Johnny Sain, Twins' pitching coach who has been in four World Series as a player and three more as a coach.

He recalled the night he went around the Twins' dressing room looking for volunteers for the bullpen to help an over-worked relief staff.

"I got 100 per cent yesses," said Sain. "It was amazing."

Killebrew's case is one of the most interesting because of his stature as the No. 1 home-run slugger of baseball over the last three years and the top salary man among the Twins at \$50,000.

"You would think he's a rookie," said Manager Sam Mele. "He has played so well at third base that he's my third baseman now against righthanded pitching. It gives me a chance to get Don Mincher into the game at first base much more often."

## Killebrew Volunteers to Shift

Harmon said before the season started he would not mind moving to first base from the outfield if he could stay there all the time.

"It's the moving back and forth that bothers me," said Killebrew. And Mele acknowledged this.

"I told him I would leave him at first base," Sam said. "But he came to me and volunteered to play another position on occasions when I would like to get Mincher's bat into the lineup."

That was on June 11 at Detroit. Killebrew knows that Mincher likes the short porch in right field at Tiger Stadium. Harmon had played 47 games at first base at that point and was getting well acquainted with the position.

But the Twins were in first place and battling on the road against the contenders to stay there. Relief pitchers were carrying a heavy load, and Harmon knew Mele would like to have as much scoring potential as possible.

Mele didn't take him up on it at that point. But a few days later in Chicago, second baseman Jerry Kindall was injured. So Mele moved Rich Rollins from third base to second, Killebrew to third and inserted Mincher at first.

## Glove Switch Bothers Harmon

The Twins struggled through two weeks with this lineup against righthanders until Kindall returned. Since Rollins could not pull his batting average up above .240 consistently, Mele decided to leave Killebrew at third.

"That wasn't exactly what I had in mind," said Killebrew. "But we are winning, and that is the main thing. My arm has been much better this year."

"The biggest problem is in switching gloves. After playing first base and then moving to third, I find that I am trying to catch everything way out where a first base glove would handle it. There is nothing there on an infielder's glove."

Killebrew said the possibility of a pennant at the end of the road makes anything for the good of the club easier to do.

"It makes a difference," said Harmon. Of course, Harmon or any other player will play where the manager tells him. But he was talking about the elimination of any



**SAM MELE (14)**, incensed over Bill Valentine's decision at first base, strikes a fighter's pose in the sixth inning of the first game at Minnesota's Metropolitan Stadium, July 18. Attempting to break up the melee are Rich Rollins (wearing glasses), Twin third baseman, and pitcher Jim Kaat. The incident cost Mele a \$500 fine and five-day suspension.

## No Valentine for Mele—\$500 Fine, Five-Day Ban

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

They won't call Sam Mele a "nice guy" manager any more. And American League clubs no longer refer to his Twins as a powerful but uninteresting club.

Within four months, Mele has fined one of his star players (Zoilo Versalles) \$300, shouted bitter words at a rival manager (Birdie Tebbetts) and taken a five-day suspension plus a \$500 fine for attacking an umpire.

Within those same four months, his Twins have battled from behind to win 19 games, cracking four losing streaks with scratching and clawing in final innings for comeback victories. As coach Hal Naragon took over the reins for a five-day ride in Mele's place, the Twins were defending a three and one-half game lead over the rest of the league.

"I think the punishment was very steep and I intend to call Mr. Cronin (American League President Joe Cronin) about it," said Mele.

Mele lost his battle with Umpire Bill Valentine, but he feels he will win the American League war by standing up for his players, which is what he went out to do in the flareup that led to his punishment.

## Intends to 'Stand Up for Players'

"It's my job to stand up for my players," said Sam. "And I will every time. I don't go out there shouting at umpires unless I have a good reason and they know it. But they have to respect me, just as I have to respect them."

It all started in the fifth inning of the first game of a July 18 double-header with Los Angeles at Metropolitan Stadium before 29,000 fans.

With runners on first and second bases, Rich Rollins slid into second base and was called out on a force play by Umpire Bill McKinley. Rollins felt he was there long ahead of the ball and Mele came out to help him debate the matter with McKinley.

To start the sixth inning, Jose Cardenal was called safe at first base on an infield hit and Rollins rushed over from second base to dispute the call with Valentine. Valentine took his cap off in emphasis as he chased Rollins back to his position.

"I went out there to protect Rollins, not to dispute the call," said Mele. "It was a disputable call. Rollins had a right to argue."

## Mele Banished for Profanity

Moments later, Valentine took two straight giant steps and with a wide gesture signaled Mele out of the game. "He was thrown out for profanity," Valentine later said.

Somewhere in the commotion, Valentine shook his finger in the face of Mele. This infuriated Sam, who caught up with the umpire again. He was grabbed by Don Mincher and Jim Lemon, but the manager broke away and appeared to throw a lefthanded punch that missed—possibly brushing the umpire with his forearm.

"Nobody did any swinging," said Valentine. "Sam broke away from someone who grabbed him with a reflex action. It may have looked like he took a swing."

"I saw Mele in a John L. Sullivan pose," said Cronin, who was in the stadium. "The manager's job is to restrain his players, not incite them. Taking an attacking position like that certainly does not restrain them."

"I don't know if Mele hit Valentine or not. Valentine says he did not. I talked with the umpire afterward and had him put his report in writing."

Twins' President Calvin Griffith refused to comment on the firmness of the fine and suspension.

"There is nothing we can do about it," Griffith said. "The league feels that the authority of the umpires must be upheld. They have to be kings out there."



Harmon Killebrew

mental obstacle and therefore doing a better job. By the All-Star break, Harmon had played in 20 games at third, sometimes changing during a game.

Grant was explicit about the difference a shot at World Series money makes.

"I don't really like to relieve between starts," said Grant. "I don't think any starter does. It can throw your rhythm off. But when you have a chance for a championship season, you do anything they ask to help the club."

Grant pitched with two days' rest at a point in May when the Twins needed a starter and he beat Los Angeles. When the Twins had an exhausted bullpen from battling the contenders for a month late in June, Jim volunteered to relieve and helped save a win.

Another time, Grant started with only one day of rest.

## Stiff Arm Won't Stop Kaat

Kaat missed only one turn despite a case of tendonitis in his forearm—and the arm was not at full strength for about three weeks.

"It stiffens up between innings," said Kaat, "but I can't hurt it. And I am sure I can work it out."

He started five straight times and won two games without taking a loss. On July 15, he had a 10-3 lead against Kansas City after six innings, and the Twins had two double-headers coming up with Camilo Pascual and Dave Boswell out.

Mele asked Kaat if he would pass up the chance for an easy complete game and start again with two days' rest against Los Angeles—probably against Dean Chance.

"Kaat not only agreed," said Sain, "but he volunteered to finish that game and start with two days' rest. But Mele said since Kaat's arm was not completely well, he'd better not."

"That's the kind of effort we have been getting. When Sandy Valdespino barely missed catching the double that Kansas City beat us with (in the ninth inning with two outs), every player in the clubhouse was concerned about Sandy and how he felt. They all went over to tell him to forget it."

The Twins' bullpen pitched 25 of 37 innings in a four-game weekend series against Detroit and won three games. Worthington pitched in both ends of a double-header despite a pulled muscle. Klippstein pitched five days out of six.

Versalles played with two thigh

## Siebler, Quilici Don Twin Duds, Allen Joins Denver

TWIN CITIES, Minn. — With 20-year-old righthander Dave Boswell out for 30 days, the Twins have called on their farm department to plug two holes in their pennant ship.

Righthander Dwight Siebler, a 9-4 pitcher at Denver, was called up to replace Boswell. And, on the same day, the Twins called up infielder Frank Quilici to replace Bernie Allen and provide a much-needed versatility.

Manager Sam Mele suffered two stunning blows in one day, leading to one of the few personnel changes made by the Twins all season. Boswell was found to be suffering from infectious mononucleosis and the Twins lost their third straight to last-place Kansas City.

Siebler, a 27-year-old pitcher, was purchased from the Philadelphia organization in 1963 and had a 2-1 record at the end of that season with a 2.77 earned-run average. He was 7-12 last year with Atlanta and had a 1965 ERA of 3.47 with Denver.

Quilici, 26-year-old infielder, was batting .277 when he was called up. He had committed only two errors at second base. Quilici took spring training with the Twins, but saw little action in spring games.

Boswell was 6-4 with a 3.25 ERA when he had to go to St. Barnabas Hospital in Minneapolis. In his last start before the All-Star break, he beat the Yankees with his first complete game of the season.

bruises, a pulled groin muscle and an injured foot. Yet, he led the club in stolen bases with 11 by the third week in July.

Oliva played in spite of injuries to both knees. One leg continued to be swollen below the knee for more than a month. But, by mid-July, he had raised his batting average to .296 with a 14-game hitting streak, longest of the season for the Twins.

Oliva rapped 25 hits in 49 times at bat during that streak—a pace of .425. He was batting .268 when it started.

## Oliva Played Despite Illness

"I would rather play if I can," said Oliva. "At Kansas City one night, I felt sick. Sam said I could rest, but I said, 'Let me play a few innings and see.' By the fifth inning I felt better."

"If you stay out of the lineup, you lose your timing. It is better to play."

Battey had more disabling injuries than anyone. He had seven that took him out of the lineup. But he returned on July 2 to catch two straight weeks, including the All-Star game, despite a finger on his glove hand that was sore from dislocation.

Twins' Tracks: Dave Boswell missed a week because of a throat infection. . . . Jim Perry started two games despite sore side and groin muscles. . . . At one point, with Camilo Pascual injured, the Twins had only Jim Grant and the relief staff completely healthy among the pitchers. . . . Oliva finally discarded his knobless model bat. He switched back to the bat he used last year about the time his streak started.