

Bumps and Bruises Only Help Make Battey Better

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

When Earl Battey left Yankee Stadium for Lenox Hill Hospital in New York, Twin Manager Sam Meie thought he would be out four days.

The Twins' catcher had been hit by a foul tip on the right hand. X-rays had to be taken. When they proved negative, Twins trainer George Lentz packed the hand in ice.

"After packing it in ice that night, he came to the ball park at 2:30 p. m. the next day," said Lentz. "Then we treated the hand with heat. I said the night before he would be ready the next night. My work in treating football injuries has really helped me this year."

Meie was amazed.

"When I came to the park, Battey tells me he's ready to play," said Meie. "He's a real workhorse, that guy. He's been out ten times with injuries this year, and he's hitting better than he ever hit in his life."

Battey not only returned to the lineup, he rapped two doubles and continued hitting the next night as the Twins beat the Yankees two of three games. By the week's end his batting average was up to .314—second highest mark of the season for him.

He had hit safely in eight straight games.

The All-Star catcher of the American League has shown an ability to bounce back from injuries in other years. But he seldom has been able to perform so well in the field and hit so consistently under a steady tattoo of bumps and bruises.

"If Doc's tape and bailing wire hold out, I'll make it," said Battey. "The way I'm going I might hit .300 for the year if I can keep getting hurt."

Injured in Slide

On August 6, Battey suffered what he and Lentz were afraid might be his worst injury of the season. His right knee, which underwent surgery less than two years ago, was wrenched in a slide into second base.

"We can't be sure how bad it is," said Lentz that night. "But it's bad enough. It's at the point that another bad twist might put him out for the year."

Battey was out of the starting lineup the next day, though the knee was improved. But in the second inning alternate catcher Jerry Zimmerman suffered two smashed fingers.

The Twins already had slugger Harmon Killebrew out with a dislocated elbow. They were scrambling to protect their six-game lead over the American League.

Battey limped onto the field to play the last seven innings. And he wound up the game by driving in a run with a single.

"I couldn't think about the knee," said Battey. "But I couldn't afford to hurt it again either. After a few games it was strong again."

Every Twins regular has either been out of the lineup with an injury or played in spite of an injury this year. But Battey has been the champion. He missed 28 of the Twins' first 116 games because of mishaps to his hands, wrist, thigh, knee and shoulder.

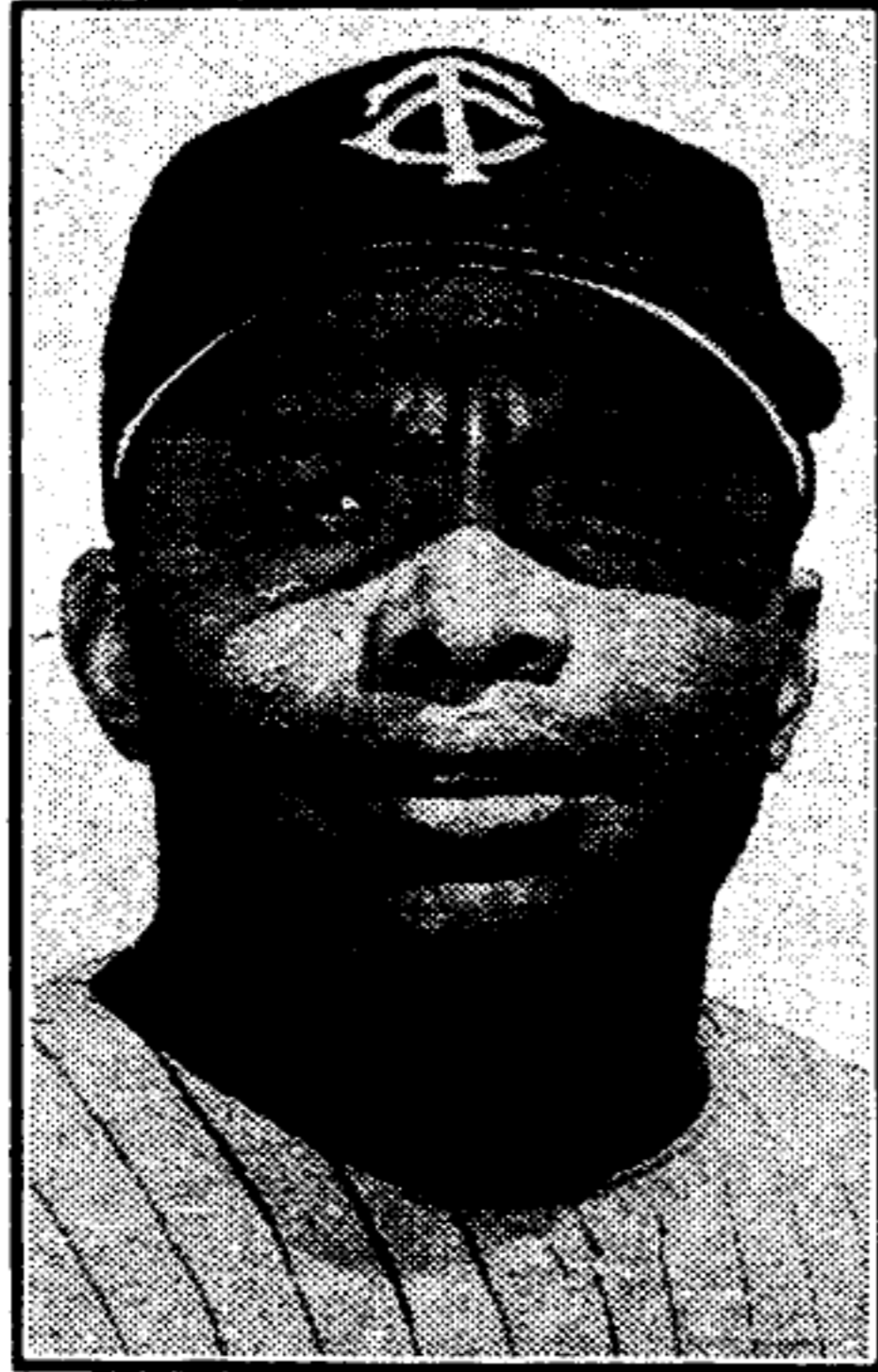
Average Over .300

Yet he has carried a batting average above .290 since suffering a dislocated finger July 2. And he has been above .300 most of the time, despite the lack of speed to run out infield hits.

It's been a strong average, too. He has batted .359 with runners on second and third bases.

But Battey's .300 has not been noticed so widely because his best days have been overshadowed. He has driven home tying and tie-breaking runs five times in late innings only to have the Twins lose. And he has collected big hits that were pushed into the background by feats of his teammates.

For instance, the Twins played second-place Baltimore eight times



Earl Battey

within ten days late in July and early in August. Battey delivered an eighth-inning, game-tying, two-run homer. But the Twins lost, 3-2, in the ninth.

Then he doubled home two eighth-inning runs to break a 4-4 tie, only to have the Twins lose in the ninth, 7-6.

Battey has knocked ten key hits in victories that featured thundering pokes and pitching performances by his teammates. Twice, however, he reached the headlines. Once he squeezed home the winning run in the ninth, and another time he drove home both runs in a 2-0 victory.

Unable to Swing Bat

There was a period after his dislocated finger, suffered June 22, that Battey could not actually swing his bat.

"I had to slap at the ball," said Earl. "I couldn't pull, because I couldn't grip the bat with my left hand. I had to go to right field." Meie says it's to Battey's credit and to the credit of Lentz that he has succeeded in spite of injuries.

Twins' Tracks: Jim Merritt and Andy Kosco continued the story of Denver graduates coming up to help the Twins. . . . Merritt, in his third start, went nine innings to beat New York at Yankee Stadium, his first complete game. Kosco, called up to provide some righthand batting power in the absence of Harmon Killebrew, slugged a home run at Cleveland off Sam McDowell in his second major league time at bat. . . . Pitcher Dwight Siebler was sent down to Denver when Kosco was called up. He had appeared in six games for the Twins. . . . Tony Oliva's batting average reached a season high of .310 when he singled and blasted his sixteenth home run at Cleveland. . . . Don Mincher ripped off a batting streak of seven straight games playing first base in the absence of Killebrew, including two doubles, a triple, two home runs and eight runs batted in. . . . Rich Rollins hit in nine straight and Zoilo Versalles in eight straight. Versalles homered in three consecutive games and in four of five games as he fought his way out of a long slump.

Twins Buoyed by Killebrew Progress Report on Elbow

TWIN CITIES, Minn. — Harmon Killebrew has started heavy therapy in trying to bring his left arm back to normal after an elbow dislocation.

Dr. Bill Proffitt, Twins physician, had Killebrew have the elbow X-rayed in Cleveland by Indians' Physician Dr. Vic Ippolito nearly two weeks after the injury.

The X-ray showed only a tiny bone chip and good progress in recovery.

The defending home-run champion was scheduled for ultrasonic treatments and diathermy. He also was to begin trying to bend and straighten the arm. Another week to two weeks of recovery appeared likely before he could return to the lineup.

Flag Pressure? 'It Won't Bother Us,' Twins Insist

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

As in all pennant races, time and the schedule were becoming important to the Twins as they tried to maintain their big early August lead in the heat of the American League's stretch run.

After a home stand against New York, Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago, the Twins have only three more series against first-division clubs starting September 6.

They play two games at Chicago in September, then home-and-home series against Baltimore.

And the players don't feel they will be affected by pennant-race pressure.

"We have too many veteran players on this club," said slugger Bob Allison.

"I don't think pressure will bother us."

The Twins have reacted well to late-inning pressure all season, winning 30 of 48 games decided in the final innings.

"But the pressure in a pennant race is different," said Billy Martin, Twins coach.

He went through it several times as a fiery second baseman with the Yankees.

Series Ticket Requests

"It starts when your friends and relatives start asking for World Series tickets," said Martin. "Actually, it affects them more than it affects the players anyway. I think this club will hold up well when it comes, and it will come."

In the final four weeks, the Twins play five games against Kansas City, three at Boston, six against Washington and three against Los Angeles in addition to Chicago and Baltimore.

"We haven't got it clinched yet," said Manager Sam Meie. "Kansas City has given us a tough time (the Twins won only seven of the first 13 against the A's)."

And Cleveland Manager Birdie Tebbetts, his Indians still in the race and holding a 7-5 edge over the Twins, warned:

"I only remember that Washington knocked the White Sox out of the race last year."

The Twins go into September 10-2 against Washington and 14-1 against Boston.

They also are 8-5 against both Chicago and Baltimore and 7-7 against Los Angeles.

Dodgers Teaching Rivals to Zip Lips, Stash Fold-Up Talk

By BOB HUNTER

LOS ANGELES, Calif.

Perhaps it was in salute to the new football season, but the Dodgers lost a game to Cincinnati by the score of 18-0 to close out a trip, August 8.

When they arrived home, the players read quotes from Dick Sisler saying the Dodgers would be the first team to fall from pennant contention, largely because Don Drysdale and Sandy Koufax were beginning to reflect the strain of pitching every fourth day, as well as the mental fatigue of carrying the club.

Talk of a fold was more amusing than irritating to the Dodgers, especially to Koufax and Drysdale. In the next two games at home they scored their twentieth and sixteenth victories. The Mets were the victims.

It was Drysdale who had started the 18-0 slugfest, yielding six runs in the two innings he worked.

"Other clubs have been saying all season we'd fold up," said Drysdale. "But this is the first time I've seen it in print. Maybe Sisler will have to eat those words."

Both Drysdale and Koufax denied emphatically they were running out of gas. With just two days' rest, instead of the usual three, Big D came back from his pasting in Cincinnati to shut out the Mets, 1-0, on a five-hitter.

After Claude Osteen scored his tenth victory, 3-1, over Pittsburgh, August 13, Koufax took on the Pirates and blanked them, 1-0, with just five hits.

"I don't see why the Dodgers, or Don or Sandy, should get any more tired than anyone else," commented Walter Alston. "The fact is they both thrive on an every-fourth-day routine, and dislike intensely to work with an extra day's rest which sometimes is necessary because of the schedule or a rainout."

"We would appear to have an edge in the schedule, too," pointed out Alston. "We have completed all our double-headers and have four days off in September."

When Koufax defeated the Mets for No. 20, August 10, he had an extra day, and admitted he was not as sharp as usual.

Sandy May Get Tired, But He's Feeling Great

"Sure, I got tired in the last couple of innings of that game," Sandy told THE SPORTING NEWS. "But I tired in some games earlier in the season, too. I certainly don't feel like I'm falling apart. In fact, I feel great."

The Dodgers were kidded about their 18-0 loss, accepting "compliments" on shutting out the Reds in two innings.

"If we miss the pennant by one game, that's one we can't second-guess for costing us the pennant," said Johnny Podres.

"Think how bad we would have felt if we had lost that game by one run rather than 18," cracked Ron Fairly. "Like 18-17."

While Sisler apparently read something into that monumental loss, the Dodgers refused to buy any part of it.

"Sisler said this spring we'd never make the first division because of internal problems," recalled Fairly. "He was wrong."

"Now he has us folding, and he's wrong again. I just hope he picks the American League to beat us in the World Series."

Coach Preston Gomez predicted Drysdale would take off on another of his winning streaks in the final two weeks, and that would do the job.

"When the other teams wake up, it'll be too late," prophesied Gomez. "They'll take a look October 3 and see that we're still in first place."

John Roseboro admitted that if he had Sisler's club, he'd be confident, too, but added: "Get them out of that ball park of theirs and they are just another team. The Reds are hurting for pitching, not us."

The Dodgers never have been more than one game removed from first place all season, and with two stoppers like Koufax and Drysdale, they have a Lloyd's of London policy against a losing streak.

When Koufax defeated the Pirates, 1-0, August 14, it not only was the fourth in a row for the league leaders, but was the first time in eight years the staff had strung together four complete games.

Will 90 Victories Be Enough For Pennant?

That victory put them 21 games above the .500 level, and if 90 wins are good enough to win the pennant, as many claim, it meant they could play 21-24 ball the remainder of the season and still finish first.

In the 45 remaining games, pitching coach Lefty Phillips had it worked out that the Big Three of Koufax, Drysdale and Osteen would pitch 34 times.

Line Drives: Sandy Koufax put on a big show for his 21st victory on August 14. . . . The Golden Arm started the winning rally in the tenth with a two-out walk. . . . Then the Dodgers won in their own inimitable fashion on another walk and an error. . . . Koufax was penciled in for 11 more starts for his crack at the 30-victory mark. . . . Maury Wills, with a badly bruised and swollen right leg, had to miss the August 14 game. . . . John Kennedy started his first game at short since coming from the Senators. . . . Don Drysdale and the Westwood Shrine Club, with Mike Shapiro acting as coordinating chairman, hosted 3500 kids, including several hundred from South of the Border, on August 16. . . . The underprivileged youngsters were given new shoes, dinner, and a package of goodies, and were entertained at the game by clowns and bands. . . . Jeff Torborg, who has been doing a big job behind the plate and at it against lefthanded pitching, lost 10 pounds and missed a couple of games in a bout with the flu. . . . After suffering all season against lefthanders, the Dodgers now have won seven of their last eight decisions vs. southpaws. . . . The Dodgers embarked on their longest trip of the year, August 19, looking forward especially to Houston and the red carpet treatment of clubhouse man Norm Gerdeman, whom they voted the "host with the most." . . . He puts on a feed that is unbelievable—and unmatchable. . . . Drysdale tagged Gerdeman "the National League's MVP." . . . Howie Reed defeated Cincinnati, August 7, then the next day received word his father had died, and flew to Kerens, Texas.



Walter Alston