

Sam Combats **Twins'** Injuries With Masterful Juggling Job

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

It was only a year ago that everything Sam Mele seemed to turn out wrong. His **Twins** couldn't win for losing. They were in sixth place, digging a large hole for themselves in the American League second division.

Now, with the pennant getting bigger and bigger on the **Minnesota** horizon, the **Twins** can hardly lose for winning.

Every time the **Twins** have an injury, Sam pulls a string. And every time the **Twins'** manager manages, their lead over the American League gets bigger. In a season that started with Mele's job the subject of numerous rumors, this 43-year-old pilot has become the leading candidate for Manager of the Year in the junior league.

The man who never lost his composure during the collapse of last year, never berated his players, has been equally poised through the tense moments this year. And while the **Twins** held their lead entering September, there were numerous pressure-packed hours.

"Give Players the Credit"

"I don't know how many games it will take to win it," said Mele. "I'm only concerned with the next game. I know these guys have all done their jobs. They deserve the credit. Every man on this club has helped."

Every man has had a chance to help the **Twins** this season—largely because injuries have forced Mele to make use of every player often. And partly, at least, because Sam started using more than just his regular lineup before the injuries started. As far back as May, Mele was using Sandy Valdespino in left field and Don Mincher at first base in double-headers.

The **Twins** have even had two substitute managers—Billy Martin for part of a game and Hal Naragon for six games when Mele was suspended for being too aggressive with umpire Bill Valentine.

And even Mele's suspension may have helped the **Twins**. They won four of six games while he was out and then fought off the challenge of Baltimore, in second place at that time. They beat the Orioles

Injury to Killebrew Sending Twin HR Total to New Low

TWIN CITIES, Minn. — With Harmon Killebrew on the bench, the **Twins** were heading for their lowest home-run production since the club was moved from Washington to **Minnesota**.

And with 30 games to play, they had a commanding lead over the American League.

At that point, the **Twins** had 133 home runs in 132 games. That's well below the pace needed to match the 221 hit last year and 225 in 1963. The lowest home-run point hit by the **Twins** was 1961, their first year in **Minnesota**, with 167 for a 162-game season.

Killebrew was injured on August 2 with 22 home runs registered. In mid-August, the **Twins** went into a hitting slump in which they managed only ten home runs in 21 games.

five times in eight dramatic games within ten days, winning all but one by one run or in the ninth inning.

By late August, the **Twins** were winning with their two best hitters—Harmon Killebrew and Tony Oliva—plus their ace pitcher, Camilo Pascual, out with injuries. And such minor league graduates as Jim Merritt and Andy Kosco were playing the starring roles.

Used Coaches' Ideas

It started in spring training with the most radically-changed spring training camp since Mele became manager in June of 1961. Mele set out to put an aggressive spark into the **Twins** and to rebuild his pitching staff. He took the best ideas he could get from his new coaches—Billy Martin, Johnny Sain and Jim Lemon—and he put them to use.

"I thought about our problems all winter," said Mele. "We couldn't seem to get anywhere with just our power alone. We had good speed, so I decided to make good use of it. I had Martin work all spring to improve our base-running. I wanted aggressive base-running."

There were rumors that Martin was hired by Calvin Griffith to be the next manager if the **Twins**

should falter again. Mele's salary had been cut by Griffith after he finished third in 1963. And Griffith had criticized the **Twins** last year for playing below their ability.

But Mele had chosen Martin from a list of possible coaches. And he and Martin made jokes of the rumor talk.

"We were out fishing," said Mele, "and I fell out of the boat. I started to wonder when Martin began rowing away from me. I asked him to throw me something and he threw me the anchor."

When the season opened, the **Twins** started running. They stole two bases in their first game, an extra-inning, 5-4 victory over the defending champion Yankees. And the **Twins** started something they had never done—using the hit-and-run with power hitters at bat.

Sam Has Big Shoulders

"I let them hit-and-run on their own last year," said Mele. "They didn't use it enough. They said when they didn't pull it off, they were criticized. So I told them I would put the sign on. If it didn't work, send the critics to me."

With Zoilo Versalles, Jim Hall, Bob Allison and Tony Oliva running with such as Earl Battey, Harmon Killebrew and Rich Rollins hitting, the **Twins** started to move. Though their home runs were more than 50 short of last year, they were scoring as often and scoring much better in late innings.

They won 31 of their first 49 games—decided by one run or in their final turn at bat. And almost every player improved his batting average with runners on second and third bases—ready to be scored.

Bob Allison was batting .440 in these situations. Earl Battey was batting .403, Killebrew .373, Hall .308.

While this was going on, Mele put to use Sain's ideas on running the pitching staff. The **Twins** switched from a five-man starter system with four days of rest to a four-man rotation. They started with a nucleus of Pascual, Jim Grant and Jim Kaat, with others battling for the No. 4 position.

By August, Jim Perry and rookie lefthander Jim Merritt had worked into the rotation. The **Twins** had lost Pascual and rookie Dave Boswell to the disabled list and had increased rather than slowed down in their winning pace.

Bull Pen Picks Up Load

The bull pen, with Mele using a sort of rotation, carried the load when it was dumped on them. Mele had righthanders Al Worthington and Johnny Klippstein, lefthanders Dick Stigman, Billy Pleis and Jerry Fosnow. He brought up Garry Roggenburk to replace Fosnow and Garry immediately began to help.

By August, Worthington had ten victories, more than any reliever since the **Twins** started playing in **Minnesota** in 1961, plus 12 saves. Klippstein had six victories, his best since 1962. In one four-game weekend series against Detroit, the relievers pitched 25 of 37 innings and won three of the four games.

Mele had his battle with Valentine on July 18 in the first game of a double-header with Los Angeles. American League President Joe Cronin was present. He said Mele looked like he was going to swing at Valentine. Mele was fined \$500.

The **Twins** were leading by three and one-half games at that time. By the end of the Baltimore series, they had a six-game bulge. In the final game of that Baltimore series, the **Twins** suffered their toughest blow—Killebrew's left elbow was dislocated in a collision with Russ Snyder.

He was out through August and not expected back until after Labor Day. Mele pulled the right strings again and the **Twins** won seven of their next eight. By August 27, their



SAM MELE . . . He's Pulling the Right Strings

lead has been stretched to nine games—two days after Oliva was sidelined with a jammed finger.

"Don Mincher came through very well at first base for us," said Mele. "He played well at first base and he has been hitting lefthanders as well as righthanders. Sandy Valdespino and Joe Nosske have helped in the outfield. When we brought up Andy Kosco, he helped, too."

Zoilo Whiz at Short

"I didn't know where we would be without the play of Zoilo Versalles at shortstop. He has been tremendous." It was Mele who fined Versalles \$300 in Florida and the **Twins** leaped out of the doldrums the next day.

With Oliva out, Earl Battey was moved all the way up to No. 3 in the batting order, the highest he ever had batted. He responded with a run batted in. Jim Grant, winning his seventeenth victory of the year, drove in four runs for himself in his fourth shutout, a 7-0 victory over Cleveland.

"I've got Grant on my list of pinch-hitters on my lineup card," said Mele. "I knew he was a good hitter before we got him from Cleveland last year."

At one point, Mele was down to

Mele's Men Blast Yanks, Cop 13 of 18 From N. Y.

TWIN CITIES, Minn. — Winning 13 of 18 games, the **Twins** defeated the Yankees this year more times than any club since Detroit in 1959.

The **Twins** defeated New York seven of nine at Minnesota's Metropolitan Stadium. And they won six of nine at New York.

Going into the final round of games this year, the **Twins** were ahead of every club but Cleveland, which defeated the **Twins** 11 of 18 games. Cleveland beat the **Twins** in four series.

four pinch-hitters with batting averages of .217 or less. He sent up Jerry Kindall and Kindall slugged a tying homer in the ninth inning.

"There are a lot of things behind it," said Sam. "Fundamentally, we have been better. Our outfielders have not missed the cutoff man often all year. We have run the infield plays—rundowns and such—well all year. These are things we worked to correct in spring training. Last year they killed us."

Camilo, Killer Might Help in Stretch Run

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

Hopes have increased in **Minnesota** that Camilo Pascual and Harmon Killebrew will return to action some time in September for the stretch run of the American League pennant race.

Pascual was so happy with the progress of his injured back muscles that he was walking around with a boyish grin on his face after a week of throwing. Killebrew, who suffered a dislocated elbow, was almost able to straighten his arm the last week of August and could bend it more than 90 degrees.

Camilo, who won eight games as the **Twins'** ace pitcher before his June 24 injury, was to be eligible to leave the disabled list on August 31. He was playing golf and taking batting practice to exercise the muscle below his right shoulder, which was repaired in surgery.

Camilo Throws—Feels No Soreness

"I have felt so good I'm afraid to say anything," said Pascual. "I have thrown several times. Of course, I have not thrown hard. There is no soreness—none at all."

"I don't feel anything when I swing a golf club, swing a bat or when I throw. When I was trying to pitch before my operation, it hurt as much to swing the bat as it did to throw."

Manager Sam Mele said it would be up to Camilo when he would try to pitch again—if at all this year.

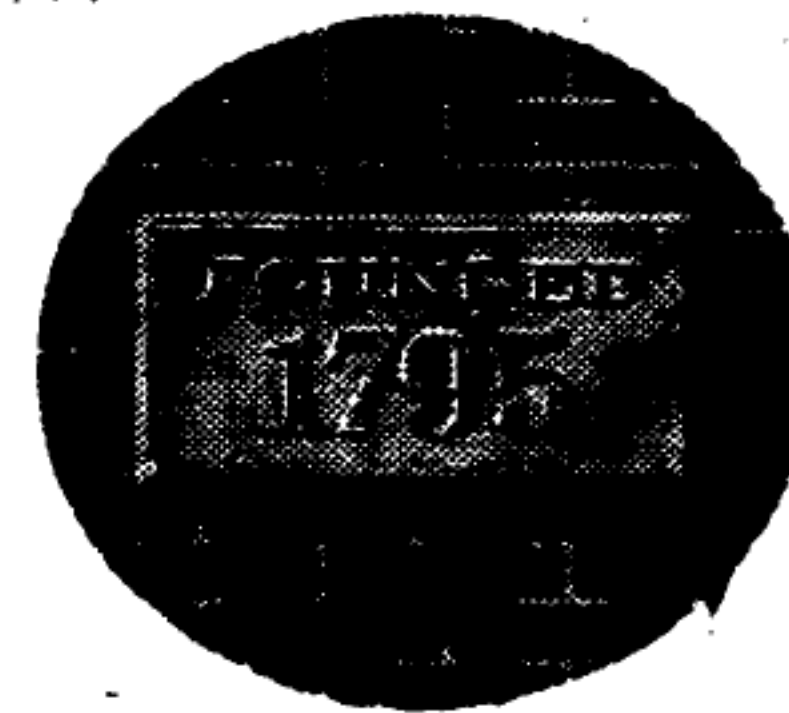
"He will pitch only if he says he is ready," said Mele.

"Even if it means the American League pennant, he won't ask him to pitch if it would mean risking injury."

Twins' President Calvin Griffith agreed. But Pascual said he hoped maybe he could pitch by the last two weeks of the season.

Killebrew, meanwhile, has been taking treatments on his left arm, which was injured on August 2. He was not on the disabled list.

Are there any more 170-year-olds like Beam?



This year Beam Distilling is celebrating its 170th Birthday. And the fifth and sixth generation members of the Beam family are still making light, smooth Jim Beam Bourbon . . . The World's Finest Bourbon Since 1795. Do you know of any other companies where one family has made the same product, to the same exacting standards, for as long? Drop us a line—we'd like to hear about them.

BEAM'S 170th BIRTHDAY

66 PROOF KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY. DISTILLED AND BOTTLED BY THE JAMES B. BEAM DISTILLING CO., CLEMONT, BEAM, KY.

