

With Zoilo on Base, Look for Dust Cloud Around Home Plate

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

When Zoilo Versalles rounds first base, a routine single can suddenly become a dashing double.

When he is standing on first base and someone raps a double or even a long single, that's the time to watch for a cloud of dust at home plate. Don't bother watching third. That's a freeway exit for him, not an intersection.

And when the **Twins** shortstop does get stopped at third base, every ground ball becomes an adventure in speed, a race against the minds and throwing arms of American League infielders.

This 24-year-old Cuban, who often has faded in the heat of August, has long been noted for his spectacular plays at shortstop. This year, with the **Twins** barreling toward the American League pennant, Versalles has saved his best base-running for the last months of the season.

He has won games for the **Twins** with every one of the plays described. He can't remember ever being thrown out at second base reaching for a double. And he has continued to buzz around the infield though he played in all but one of the first 123 games of the **Twins**.

"When I put my foot on first base, I take a look," said Zoilo. "If the ball still is on the ground, I try for second base. They have to make a perfect play to get me. I know I haven't been thrown out this year, and I don't remember ever being thrown out on that play."

Sprint Sparks Surge

Versalles' most highly-publicized sprint for a double, and one of his most important, sparked a rally that broke up a 2-2 tie. It was on the **Twins** final visit to Yankee Stadium.

He led off the seventh inning with a drive to center and beat Tom Tresh's throw for a double.

"The outfield grass in Yankee Stadium is high," said Zoilo. "There is a good chance the ball won't roll fast. The outfield grass at our Metropolitan Stadium is high, too. That's one reason I run for doubles there."

"Tresh made a great play on that one. I just barely got there." By mid-August, he was among the American League leaders with 33 doubles.

Before that inning was over, the **Twins** had a 7-2 lead. And by the time the **Twins** left New York with two victories in three games, they were being compared to National



Zoilo Versalles

leaguers and even the old St. Louis Gashouse Gang of 1934 because of their aggressive running.

"The **Twins** remind the Yankees of themselves," wrote one New York writer.

Tony Oliva, Jim Hall and Bob Allison have been running bases the same way. In fact, Hall ran for a double and scored a run in a one-man decision over Cleveland four days later—another important win on the **Twins** road toward the pennant.

Four times this year, Versalles has scored from first base—three times on singles. He scored from first on drives hit toward Mickey Mantle in the Yankee left field three

Twin Cities Temperatures Rise --It's a Bad Case of Flag Fever

By DICK BROWN

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

Pennant and World Series fever is understandably rampant in Minnesota these days.

The **Twins**, the **Twins**, the **Twins**. . . . no one seems to talk about anything else.

Why not? No baseball pennant has flown in this area since the Minneapolis Millers won an American Association flag in 1955.

At the major league level hereabouts, there has been nothing like what may happen in October since the then-Minneapolis Lakers won their last National Basketball Association championship in 1954.

And, of course, if it does transpire, this will be the first American League title in the **Twins** five-year history.

Letters Are Pouring In

At the **Twins** office in Metropolitan Stadium, an average of 1,400 letters a week—200 a day—have been received for the past six weeks as fans hereabouts really became convinced their favorites were serious about nailing the old gonfalon to the mast. All of them dealt with the problem of World Series tickets—either wanting to buy them or requesting information as to how and when such ducats could be purchased.

Finally ticket manager Charlie Lavender had to hire a full-time employee just to handle that mail alone.

At the Vikings' nearby football office, pennant fever posed a question to which Minnesota's NFL



Calvin Griffith

fledglings received a couple of painful answers.

First, the Vikings were informed by **Twins** President Calvin Griffith that he would exercise his prerogative as outlined in his contract as primary Metropolitan Stadium tenant and not permit any football games to be played there as long as additional World Series baseball games were also in prospect.

Since the Series opens in the American League city this year, the weekend games will be in the National League park—thus no actual conflict in dates. But Griffith decided he didn't want to take any chances with football cleats tearing up the Met turf on Sunday, October 10, in case the Series returned for the sixth and seventh games.

The Vikings then requested permission of the University of Minnesota to use its football Memorial Stadium that day, and again were turned down. So now there is a strong possibility the game would be shifted to New York.

P. F. (pennant fever) has natur-

ally hit the area's motel-hotel business.

Bob Martel of United Press International says his wire service conducted a survey and that 85 per cent of the motels in the region of Bloomington, where Metropolitan Stadium is located, had bookings for early October. Wonder why?

One of the October tentative reservations at the Howard Johnson Motel was made by Sam Mele.

Minneapolis hotel men have met to lay the ground rules for handling World Series reservations.

Invitation From Mayor

Mayor George Vavoulis of St. Paul has already sent out an official invitation to all concerned parties to enjoy the Saintry City's hospitality when and if the World Series comes.

At the supermarkets, the department stores and the bars now, there is one subject, the **Twins**, and two questions: "Did they win last night? Can you get me World Series tickets?"

Marsh Ryman, University of Minnesota athletic director, pinpointed the situation aptly.

He was talking about what effect the **Twins** participation in the Series would have on the Gophers' Big Ten opener here with Indiana, October 9.

"With television and radio broadcasts of the Series, it can't help but hurt our Indiana crowd," said realist Ryman. "We're going to have thousands of hysterical baseball fans in this area. I'll be one of them."

Twins Cop Six, Split Nine, Lose Only One Double-Bill

TWIN CITIES, Minn. — With one more double-header scheduled this season, the **Twins** have the best record in twin-bills with-in memory of anyone in their organization.

In their first 16 double-headers, the **Twins** won six, split nine and lost only one. They swept three from Detroit, one from Los Angeles, one from New York and two from Boston.

The only team to sweep the **Twins** was Kansas City—early in the year. Last year, when the **Twins** finished sixth, they were 1-8-7 in twin-bills.

of the last three seasons. Last year, three weeks of strength-sapping heat started him into a slump as he played 112 straight games.

But, like his base-running, Zoilo seemed to have some of his best days at shortstop in August. In one game, he raced far to his right for one play and clear behind second base for two others.

In addition, he was leading the **Twins** in stolen bases with 16, tying his personal high. The **Twins** set a Minnesota record by August. They had 57, and their former record was 47—set in 1961.

Twin Tracks: Minnesota reached the million mark in road attendance for the first time, coming home from an August trip with 1,059,120. They drew 261,060 for the trip. The previous all-time record for the Griffith club was 1,055,171, set in 1948.

Harmon Killebrew was not expected to return from his elbow dislocation until after September 1. . . . The **Twins** hit only six home runs against 17 for opponents on their 14-game August trip, but split 7-7. . . . They also played five straight errorless games. . . . Sandy Valdespino and Andy Kosco became the fourteenth and fifteenth **Twins** to drove home tying or winning runs in late-inning decisions.

Twins Toast Grant, Kaat Hill Jobs

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

Jim (Mudcat) Grant and Jim Kaat became the first two Minnesota pitchers to go nine innings during a double-header in two years when they teamed up to sweep the Tigers at Detroit, August 19.

Grant's first-game, 8-3 victory was his sixteenth of the season—the most he has ever won in a major league season. Kaat's nightcap victory, 2-1, was his first complete game in 63 days as well as his twelfth win.

But more important, this twin-bill sweep meant the **Twins** would have their two top pitchers, outside of sidelined Camilo Pascual, going strong through the stretch run of the American League pennant race.

Grant had been pitching for a month on sore knees. And Kaat had pitched for two months with a strained arm. But both said they were at peak strength to help the **Twins** protect the eight-game lead they had built over the American League.

Best Season for Mudcat

"I'm going to keep the ball after that one," said Grant. "This is easily my best season. And winning No. 16 meant a lot." For one thing, it meant he was the winningest pitcher in the league.

Why was he having his best year? "Because I'm getting more runs to work with than I've ever had," he said. "These guys have really helped me. I've got to give them credit. It makes a difference working with a lead all the time."

Grant also has given Johnny Sain, **Twins** pitching coach, credit for helping him improve his curve.

Perhaps this is the reason, but Grant has blown only three leads the **Twins** have given him all season. This is a record much like Pascual used to have—before having to have an operation on a back muscle.

In his victories, the **Twins** have scored 111 runs—an average of 6.9 per game. They have scored four runs or more in all but three of his triumphs and never less than three.

Seven Wins in Eight Starts

After winning seven of eight games despite knees that had to be wrapped because of tendonitis, Jim had an earned-run average of 3.61 for that stretch. His season ERA after 16 victories was 3.63.

While Grant had ten more chances to win 20, Kaat was anxious to build up his record after a long mid-season.

Kaat's August 19 victory at Detroit was his first nine-inning job since a 3-1 victory at Chicago, June 17. He had pitched through July and early August with a strained forearm—missing only one turn.

He started 12 games with his arm below par, and the **Twins** won nine of them.

"I've still got a chance to build up a good record," said Kaat. "It's great to be able to go nine again." And before he left the park, he asked Manager Sam Mele to let him start again with two days' rest.

The double-header was the first time since July, 1963, that the **Twins** went through a double-header without using a relief pitcher. Kaat and Dick Stigman pitched that one—shutting out Cleveland, 9-0 and 5-0.