

South African Earns Chance-- He'll Pitch for Twin Farm Club

By MAX NICHOLS

ORLANDO, Fla.

Dave Lowery has decided to give professional baseball in the United States a thorough try—though he found no pots of gold waiting for him in the spring camp of the **Twins**.

He's a 23-year-old righthanded pitcher from Johannesburg, South Africa. And he has signed a contract with the **Twins'** Orlando farm club of the Florida State League—hoping to prove he's a major league prospect.

"The **Twins** haven't had a fair look at me in competition," Lowery said. "And I haven't really had a fair look at baseball the way it is played here. I have only pitched a few Innings.

"We played only twice a week in South Africa. The catchers gave all the signals—for pickoffs as well as for pitches. Here there is a lot more to think about."

Wife Expecting Child

Lowery is no brash kid. He's a mature young man who is a buyer for Bristol-Myers in his home town of Johannesburg. He's 6-5 and weighs 208 pounds. And he has a wife, who is expecting a baby in May.

"I wasn't expecting a big bonus or anything like that," he said. "We have read about the \$100,000 bonuses that players get over here. But I was hoping for enough to own a car, live comfortably and maybe travel after this season is over."

The **Twins** offered him \$1,000 and round-trip transportation expenses for him and his family from South Africa. He was disappointed at first.

"I called home," he said. "My



Dave Lowery

wife and I talked about it. We at least will have a chance to see part of this country and I will be able to find out if I can win in competition over here. I don't mind struggling to make ends meet. But I would like to own a car."

Lowery realized how much he has to learn. He pitched at 6,000 feet above sea level in South Africa. Because of little resistance in the air, few curves were thrown there. Lowery had a big strikeout record there with his fast ball.

Fred Frey, a friend of **Twins'** pitching coach Johnny Sain, read about Lowery while touring there. He sent the clippings to Sain. Sain passed the clippings on to **Twins'** President Calvin Griffith, who invited Lowery to camp.

"He didn't know anything about spinning the ball," said Sain. "But he learns fast. He already is throwing a breaking ball. He handles himself on the mound like an athlete.

"There is no way you can predict

what he will do. But I think he is a prospect. He shouldn't have any control problem. He is around the plate all of the time."

Lowery said there is another fellow South African, Berry Versfeld, working out with the Pirates—"an outstanding cricket player—and a low-ball hitter in baseball."

Dave had to learn how to work a television set for the first time.

"The big difference between living here and at home is that we don't have so many gadgets," he said—"dishwashers, washing machines, that sort of thing.

"Our government doesn't allow television. We have servants to do most of the housework there, so there really isn't the need for all the appliances. Servants are very cheap there. A skilled laborer, such as a printer, would own a car and have a servant."

A Visit With Player

Lowery talked with fellow countryman Gary Player, professional golfer from South Africa, who was playing in Orlando at the Citrus Open. But Lowery will see America on a different scale than Player, who is reputed to be a millionaire now.

"Player is a great ambassador for our country," said Lowery. "Baseball and cricket are well covered in the papers at home. And I've received a good bit of publicity over coming here. But Player is in a class by himself."

And Manager Sam Mele learned that a newcomer such as Lowery takes a fresh look at everything. When the **Twins** managed only one hit off Baltimore pitching, Lowery asked:

"Who did all the hitting for the **Twins** last season?"