

Dad Delivers a Lecture When Cesar Strikes Out

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.—When Cesar Tovar strikes out, he knows he's going to get a letter from his No. 1 fan, his father.

"My father always finds out in Caracas, Venezuela, when I strike out," said Tovar. "The papers back home print what I do every time I go to the plate. I hate to strike out."

It's an asset to the **Twins** that Tovar's father, Frank Perez Tovar, taught his son so well. Cesar has started the season as the No. 1 leadoff hitter in

the American League. Tovar led the league in runs scored with 22 through the first month of the season, while hitting between .290 and .310.

"My father doesn't care what else I do—just no strikeouts," Tovar said.

Tovar does plenty else. While getting on first base 48 times in his first 115 total appearances for a .417 on-base percentage, Little Cesar has played six different positions for the **Twins**—all three outfield positions, plus third base, second base and shortstop.

"My father was a second baseman," said Tovar proudly. "He played a m a t e u r baseball with Chico Carrasquel in Venezuela. He is strong, bigger than me."

"When he quit playing, he gave me his glove. I used it for a long time."

It looked as if Tovar would follow his dad's footsteps around second base, until rookie Rod Carew came along. Tovar played second base from June until the end of last season for **Minnesota** and worked hard at it this spring.

"He became the best second baseman in the league, and now he has to play everywhere else," said Billy Martin, **Twins** coach.

So the **Twins**, who have been looking for a second baseman since they moved to **Minnesota** in 1961, now have two. And one of them is playing all over the field while remaining effective as a leadoff hitter.

The Most Versatile

Tovar not only set a club record by playing six positions, but he did it in only 26 **Twin** games. And he made only one error in those first 26 games—during his one night at shortstop.

And he still managed to keep his mind on his father's words at the plate, whiffing only six times in his first 109 times at bat. Last year, he struck out only 50 times in 537 at-bats.

"It doesn't bother me to change positions," said Tovar. "I have always done that. I played six positions at Dallas in 1963. I've never played first base, caught or pitched."

"I practice all over the field every day anyway."

Tovar first moved to center field when Carew took over second base in the season opener. He moved back to second while Carew was injured for a few games, then to left field for three putouts when Bob Allison was switched to right field late in a game.

With Tony Oliva injured, Tovar had to put in four games out in right field. And somewhere in there he mixed in part of a game at shortstop, while Zoilo Versalles was out briefly with an injury.

Oliva in Right Field

With Rich Rollins injured and Ron Clark having some hitting problems, Manager Sam Mele wanted to get Ted Uhlaender's left-handed power into the lineup. So Ted played center field and Oliva returned from his injury to right field.

Then Tovar was switched to third base, a position he had not played since the first two games of 1965, when he dropped a pop fly on an extremely embarrassing play.

In his first game at third base this year, he handled two plays flawlessly during a 1-0, pressure-packed victory at Chicago that broke a losing streak.

"I don't mind playing third," said Tovar. "I practice there every day."

And he remembers well that dropped fly. It allowed New York to tie the score in the ninth inning of the 1965 opening-day game. Later, he singled in the winning run—in the eleventh inning.

That was Tovar's debut in the major leagues.

"I was nervous," he said. "But I also forgot to play the wind. It



CESAR TOVAR . . . Versatile and Valuable.

Tony Now Bats Cleanup—Killer Hits in No. 3 Slot

TWIN CITIES, Minn.—After batting third since he first entered the **Minnesota** lineup as a rookie in 1964, Tony Oliva has switched to the fourth (cleanup) position.

"I wanted to move Harmon Killebrew up to third, ahead of Tony, so that Killebrew might get more good pitches to hit," said Manager Sam Mele. "Killebrew has been getting nothing to hit all year."

"And Oliva can hit bad pitches and hit them hard."

At the time the switch was made, Killebrew had walked 18 times in 102 appearances at the plate and had been walked ten times out of 35 appearances with runners on second or third base.

was windy that day, and I didn't play it."

The **Twins** had traded pitcher Gerry Arrigo to Cincinnati for Tovar. Both went back to the minors in 1965. But Tovar returned last year to help **Minnesota** finish in second place.

This spring, he's done more than most players are asked to do in a career in trying to help the **Twins** shake their early-season slump. He's a tough little player, rarely missing a game, despite his 155 pounds.

It takes an extreme amount of practice to stay prepared for so many positions. Tovar has to spend hours every week in pre-game practice, taking ground balls and fly balls all over the field, keeping his arm ready for the many different types of throws.

Hard-Working Youngster

Tovar's father works in construction. And Cesar had to work hard as a boy. He shined shoes for a while as a lad and once earned enough to buy a glove.

"I made \$10 or \$12 a day sometimes," he said. "People would come and ask for me, because I did a good job."

"I don't shine my own shoes now. I have someone in Minneapolis who shines them. I go to the same fellow all the time, because he does a good job."

It's just like the **Twins** going to Tovar every time they need someone to switch positions. He does a good job.

Twin Tracks: The **Twins** were involved in a play at Chicago that reminded them of the 1965 World Series. This time, Ken Berry was called out for interference when Pete Ward reached second base safely on a steal. Umpire Bill Kinnamon ruled that Berry "stuck his shoulder into the catcher's path" when catcher Earl Bat-

Wynn's Cure Fails to Help Baffled Kaat

TWIN CITIES, Minn.—Jim Kaat's trip to the bull pen was hardly a roaring success.

The **Twins** lefty, a 25-game winner last year, was relegated to the fire brigade after his May 17 loss to the White Sox in the hope that he could straighten out whatever is wrong with him.

He went through pitching coach Early Wynn's "wringing cure," which consists of throwing until "he's worn out." Then he was to return to his natural way of throwing.

But this obviously didn't help. On May 22, the baffled Kaat started against the White Sox here and was massaged for six hits and four runs in two and one-third innings. He didn't figure in the decision, because the **Twins** outlasted Chicago, 8-7.

Something Is Wrong

With only one victory to show in his first six decisions, Kaat himself realized something was amiss.

"No starter likes to go to the bull pen," said Kaat. "But I've no complaints. I've been given a good chance to get going."

"I've been getting my pitches over the plate. My ball is moving better and my arm is all right. My problem is the batters are just getting good swings and hitting me, so something must be missing. I'm confident I'll come out of it."

Wynn observed that Kaat "hasn't been right all spring. He's just not hitting the spots he wants to hit."

tey was trying to throw to second base. Joe Nosssek was called out for interference for the **Twins** in the 1965 World Series. Berry was ruled out with Ward returning to first base.

Zoilo Versalles delivered his second winning hit of the season and his sixteenth hit in 29 chances with runners in scoring position, when he doubled home the only run in Dean Chance's 1-0 victory at Chicago. . . . Harmon Killebrew slugged his fifth home run at Chicago. He didn't hit his fifth before Memorial Day last year.

Meek Dean Makes The Angels Squirm

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.

Dean Chance soft-soaped the Angels with his mouth and strong-armed them with his righthanded pitching in his first visit to Anaheim, billed as a revenge spectacle.

"It sure was a pleasure to come back here like this," said Chance. "Actually, the Angels could have scored a few more runs off me. Cesar Tovar made a couple of great catches that helped plenty."

That's mighty humble talk for the former Cy Young Award winner, once called "Mr. I Am" by Los Angeles Times columnist Jim Murray. Chance refused to take advantage of an opportunity to rub it in.

His 7-2 victory over the Angels was his seventh against only one loss—matching his career record for victories in the first half of a season. He extended his shutout string to 26 consecutive innings before allowing the Angels two runs in the ninth.

He was asked if he can win 25 games, and again he answered with almost unbelievable humility.

"Well, I hope I can win a few more," he said, "as long as I don't have to face too many hitters as tough as Rick Reichardt."

Everything went according to Chance's plan. He took the trip to Anaheim after defeating the league-leading White Sox, 1-0—the twelfth 1-0 victory in his career. He had won six straight.

Don Mincher said this spring that the **Twins** made a bum trade, giving up too much for Chance (the **Twins** had traded Mincher, Jim Hall and Pete Cimino).

Jim Piersall said this spring that the Angels would be better off without Chance.

Phone Calls From L. A. Deluged Dean

And catcher Bob Rodgers compounded the verbal battle by saying Chance was the "dumbest pitcher I ever caught." Chance started getting calls from Los Angeles writers and broadcasters before he ever left Chicago.

He rehearsed his lines and memorized his statistics. "The only guy out of the whole mess that bothered me was Piersall," said Chance.

"He was just out for publicity for the Angels and for himself at my expense. I still consider Rodgers a friend of mine—a neighbor from Ohio."

"And I hope Mincher, Hall and Cimino have good years. The trade is as big a break for them as it has been for me."

Chance made it plain he would answer his critics with pitching. But even there he played the humble bit.

"I'm not going to make the mistake of trying too hard," he said. "I want to beat the Angels just as I want to beat all of the other teams."

The two Angel runs were scored on Reichardt's two-run homer. And Reichardt is the best friend Chance still has among the Angels.

"My buddy loused up the shutout," said Chance. But it was obvious he wasn't exactly crushed. He held Mincher to a single and Hall to 0-for-4. Cimino gave up a run in relief.

Chance now is tied with Stan Coveleski for eighth place in career 1-0 victories at 12. Walter Johnson won 38 and Grover Alexander won 17.

First Legion Section Next Week

The first of four special American Legion baseball sections will appear in next week's issue of THE SPORTING NEWS.

The section will include announcement of the American Legion Graduate of the Year, information on the program's rules revisions and preview of Oakland's Captain Bill Erwin Post No. 337's chances of repeating as world champions for the second time in history. Feature articles on interesting Legion personalities will be included also.

Other Legion sections will appear in the issues of July 22, September 2 and September 16.