

NEW TWINS BOSS



MANAGER CAL ERMER Shortly after appointment

Mele's Biggest Mistake--Two Year Contract

THE FIRST THING a baseball manager does after signing a contract is to write his obituary. Baseball furnishes stock forms for each.

More by being in the right place at the right time than by design, Sam Mele filled out both the first time June 23, 1961. He moved from coach to manager with the dismissal of Cookie Lavagetto. A stop-gap provision.

The last time he filled out forms was Oct. 16, 1965. These were last two years at a salary of \$48,000 a year. But now it took more time to write his obituary. Mele had just finished winning the American League pennant but losing the World Series.

It is apparent, however, after the late Friday managerial speech, with Sam Mele promising to be "firm but fair." Then Camilo Pascual shut out the New York Yankees 4-0.

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That feeling reached its zenith when Mele was being criticized in 1964 by Twins President Calvin Griffith.

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Long Ordeal Proved Ermer

By MAX NICHOLS

Minneapolis Star Staff Writer

Cal Ermer had never played baseball until he was 14 years old. And he only played one day in the major leagues in his life.

Before he became manager of the Twins Friday, he had spent only one year and three days in the majors in any capacity.

Yet he has been training himself for this opportunity

to manage the Twins since he was in high school. "My coach had me do things to help run the team," he said. "He brought things out in me."

And Calvin Griffith was so convinced of Ermer's leadership ability that two years ago he told Ermer in effect: "I could believe it had finally happened."

Leadership has been the dominant theme of Ermer's life. And there were no cushy jet flights, no hotel suites, no big salaries and no baseball pension to look forward to where he learned it.

He spent six years in the heat of the Southern Association as Chattanooga manager, two years riding up and down the mountains on buses with Charlotte and even four years as coach of a champion University of Baltimore soccer team to learn his methods of leadership.

"I first hired him in 1947 to manage the Charlotte club at 22 years old because I liked his conversation, the way he talked about what it takes to win," said Twins President Calvin Griffith.

And I started considering him for a major league job years ago."

"His clubs have always played aggressive baseball. That's why I liked him."

Ermer is known by the players who have been under him as a "friend," a "terrific hard worker" and an "instructor," but also as a "disciplinarian who speaks his mind to his players."

"He'll bowl you out privately, but never in front of the other players," said Jim Roland, Twins pitcher who played for Ermer at Denver two years ago. "He got on me twice, but good. And I respected him for it."

And Frank Quilici added that when Ermer takes a problem before the whole club, "he talks in general terms, saying how he wants a certain situation handled, never using names."

Both Ted Uhlender and Sandy Valdespino of the Twins were sent to Ermer at the low points of their baseball careers in 1966—after being sent down by the Twins. So was Quilici. All three responded to Ermer's methods with solid performances after bouncing out of depression.

"I looked upon him as a friend," said Uhlender. "You always knew where you stood with him. When I was sent down last year, he told me I would be in the lineup and not to worry about it—just play."

Valdespino said Ermer was brief but direct: "I've asked if I was ready to play," said Sandy. "I said I was. And I stayed in the lineup until I had a pulled muscle."

Ron Clark said Ermer is always "corrective" when he bawls out a player. "He tells you how you can improve, not just what you have done wrong," Clark said. "He demands hard-nosed baseball—all out 100 per cent play. And he'll battle for you all the way."

There is no hesitation in Ermer's actions. He paces more in the dugout than Sam Mele did, now and then reaching for a faithful chewing tobacco in difficult situations. He stands most of the time, clapping his hands when shouting encouragement.

When Bob Allison struck out with the bases loaded in the fifth inning, he limped himself to a scrapping of the floor with his feet, kind of a dead-end as if he was smoothing out dirt. But when he didn't like an umpire's decision, he was quick to show his opinion.

And when Ermer charged pitchers, he walked directly to the mound with an aggressive step and gestured with his left hand as if grabbing a rope to pull the pitcher in from the bullpen.

Allison and Harmon Killebrew remember him from their days at Chattanooga in the 1950s for his hard work with them.

"He must have hit me 100 grand balls," said Killebrew. "He came out mornings, any time to work with me," said Allison. "I don't know how many times he hit me."

Ermer turned his page.

WITH THE SLUGGERS...



ERMER (RIGHT) IN DUGOUT DURING MANAGERIAL DEBUT With Twins sluggers Harmon Killebrew (left) and Bob Allison

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SAM MELE

In June, 1961

SAM MELE

In June, 1967

AND A FIELDER



ERMER (LEFT), ZOILO VERSALLES Gloomy during first defeat

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