

# Kline's Classy Rescue Jobs Help Twins Duck Disaster

By MAX NICHOLS

TWIN CITIES, Minn.—After 15 years in major league baseball, Ron Kline finally has an opportunity to pitch his way down to the wire with a pennant contender.

And after four months of an up-and-down season as a reliever for the **Twins**, this 35-year-old righthander has reached a performance peak once more in the neck-and-neck, four-club race of the American League.

"I have to say that's the most important game I

ever helped win," Kline said after saving a game that snapped a four-game losing streak for Minnesota. He had retired the last eight batters in helping Jim Perry defeat Detroit by one run.

Two days later, Kline pitched the final four innings to win an even more important game, an extra-inning victory that helped pull the **Twins** back into the league lead.

"This is only the second time I ever was in the pennant race," Kline said. "The last time was in 1961, when I pitched for Detroit."

"I snapped a six-game losing streak for the Tigers that year in early September. We had been in the race until that losing streak started in New York. By the time I won that game, we were out of it."

"But I think this club will stay in all the way."

## All in Day's Work

Kline has been through too many second-division Septembers and baseball heartbreaks to let too much excitement show through. He doesn't prance around the clubhouse after a big day. From his actions, slowly undressing with a deadpan face, it's hard to tell he even warmed up.

On the other hand, he hasn't let the difficult days get him down, either. And he's had to roll with a few punches, despite his 6-0 record with five saves going into September.

He pitched so often in useless causes, often in early innings despite his four-year Washington record as a late-inning finisher, that his arm was strained in June. But he refused to complain or alibi.

After recuperating with a string of 13 games in which he allowed only three earned runs, Kline ran across a few more tough days late in July. He was ordered by Manager Cal Ermer to lose 14 pounds or be fined. And he was on the receiving end of criticism by **Twins** President Calvin Griffith.

## Ron Called on Cal

"If Kline and Al Worthington had pitched the way they did last year," Griffith said, "we would be leading the American League by ten games."

Kline felt he had given his best in the chances he had. In his first 45 appearances, he entered 24 games in which the **Twins** were behind to stay. He had a 5-0 record with five saves, leaving only 11 other games in which he had a chance for a decision or a save.

"It's always been my theory," said Kline, "that when you throw bad pitches, it's your own fault. When they hit good pitches, it's time to worry."

He went in to see Griffith about the statement.

"I told him," Griffith said, "that no one could argue with his record of no losses. But I also told

## Killer Swipes Base for His First Steal in Five Years

TWIN CITIES, Minn.—Sluggish Harmon Killebrew recently stole his first base since 1962 for the **Twins**.

Baltimore catcher Andy Etchebarren threw into center field for an error.

The **Twins** first baseman went all the way to third and later scored. Manager Cal Ermer said Killebrew, never a fast runner, had the "steal sign" on the play.

"I had him running on a 3-and-2 count with Rich Rollins batting," Ermer said. "It worked out well." That was Harmon's seventh career stolen base. He's been a regular since 1959.

## Bubba Enjoying Heavenly Days In Angel Garb

By ROSS NEWHAN

ANAHEIM, Calif.

Earl Wilson dejectedly walked from the mound, hurled his glove into the dugout and stormed toward the Tigers' clubhouse.

Later, he would realize that it is no disgrace to be defeated by the American League's leading hitter.

Wilson was two outs from being the major leagues' first 19-game winner when he was deprived of a victory over the Angels by a guy hitting .338.

Frank Robinson? Carl Yastrzemski?

Of course not.

Wycliffe Nathaniel Morton belted the game-tying double and then slid around Bill Freehan to bring home the run which gave the faltering Angels a 3-2 victory over Detroit on August 30.

Bubba Morton will not win any batting titles because he normally swings only against lefthanders and he will fall far short of the required 502 appearances.

He was up there for the 136th time in the ninth inning and he was in the starting lineup because Jose Cardenal was disabled and there was concern for the health of Rick Reichardt's bat.

## Weariness in Ninth?

Wilson is a righthander. He might have been a tired righthander in the ninth inning, but a .338 average makes itself conspicuous no matter who is pitching.

"I'm in no position to make demands," said Morton, who is a soft-spoken 34-year old and very happy to sit on a major league bench or play on a major league field.

"I accept what the situation dictates," said Morton. "I'm paid to play. Sure, I'd like to play every day. Everyone would like to play every day."

"But, there were a lot of years when I didn't play at all."

The hit was sweet because he had ridden buses through the Detroit organization for eight years, and there had been no reward for the productive summers such as at Lancaster (.323) or Jamestown (.324) or Denver (.303).

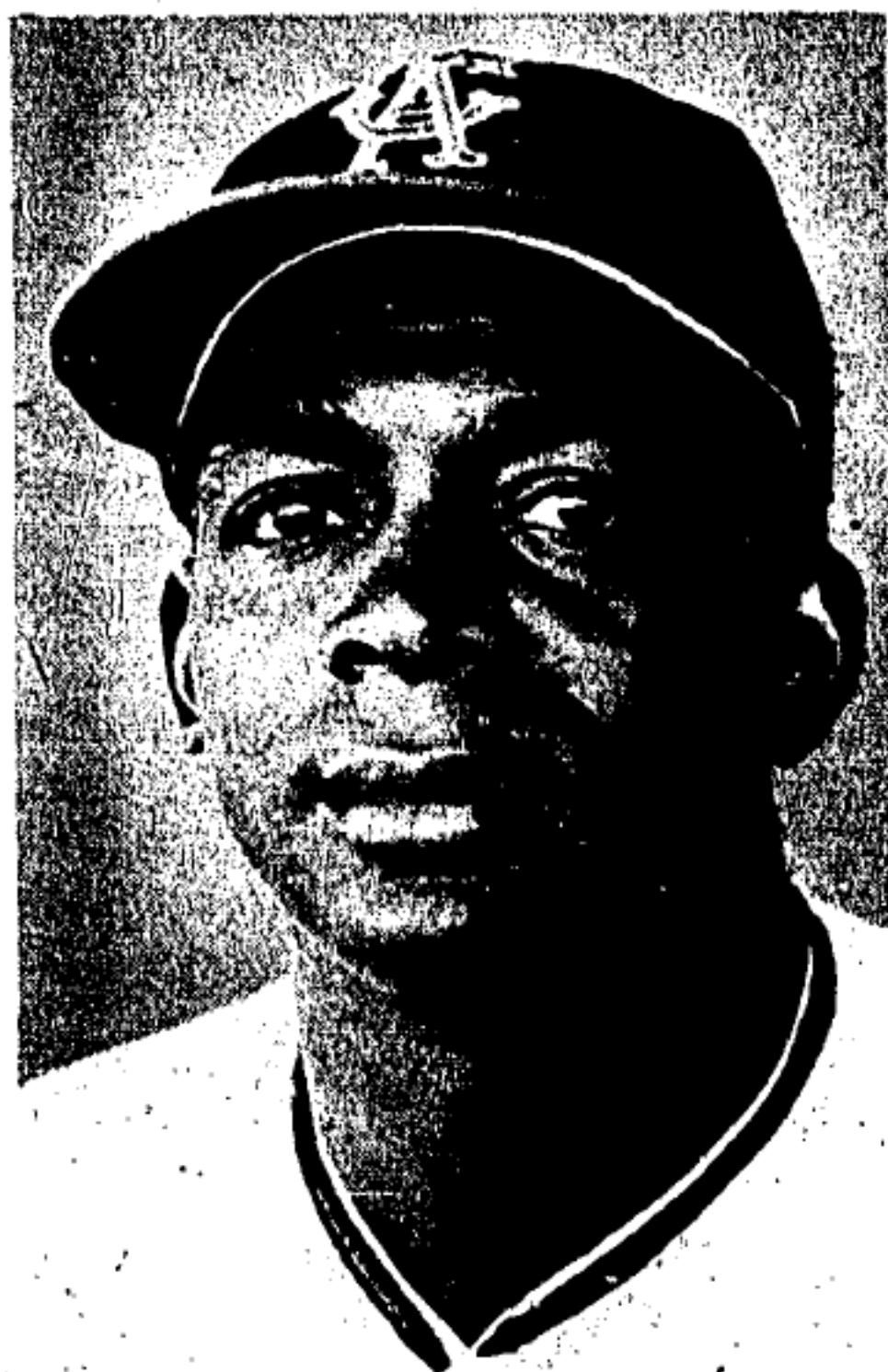
## .287 Hitter in '61

When he came to the Tigers, he was employed almost begrudgingly. He batted a solid .287 in 1961, but played only 77 games. The next season, it was 90 games and the one after that six.

He came to the Angels in a minor league transaction of the type which are made every day, and he helped bat Seattle to a Pacific Coast League pennant last year.

He was with the Angels when this season started, but was sent back to Seattle early. He was there 23 days and was batting .240 when rescued.

"I was hitting a deceptive .240,"



Bubba Morton

said Morton. "I was hitting well, but nothing was falling in."

"I've hit this well before, but never on a major league level."

The credit belongs to the player himself, a manager's dream who goes about his work quietly and proficiently.

But the manager's hand has also been evident. Much of Bill Rigney's magic in the seven years since the Angels were gathered from the grab bag is his innate ability to sense a player's limitations.

The player is asked to do only what is within his capabilities.

This is part of the reason Morton was batting .338 when he went to work against Wilson and why the manager slipped an arm around his shoulder and said, "Hit it to right."

The Angels had collected only three hits and Jimmie Hall was on first via a walk when Morton rammed a double into the right field pocket.

## Freehan Blocked Plate

Hall scored, tying the game, 2-2, and when Al Kaline misplayed the bounce, Morton was on third with one out.

The infield drew in and Moose Skowron grounded to the shortstop, Ray Oyler. The throw was up and Morton was under it.

"Freehan had the plate blocked," said Morton, "but he didn't have complete control of the ball. I slid past him and caught the plate with my hand."

"It's a slide I learned from Bernie DeViveiros, a scout with the Tigers. It stuck with me and I've used it often."

He had a lot of time to think over what the Tigers were teaching him, but putting it to application was something else.

You sense that Detroit erred.

"He's done everything I've asked him to do," said Rigney, head of the Anaheim Bureau of Reclamation.

Morton listens well and responds because he is extremely interested in communications. He spent two years at Howard University in Washington, D. C., and hopes to enter public relations or an allied field when his career is over.

## Vet Picket Hardy Joins Twins as a Pinch-Hitter

TWIN CITIES, Minn.—After spending all but 46 games of the last four seasons in the Pacific Coast League, Carroll Hardy has returned to the majors.

The 34-year-old outfielder was purchased by **Minnesota** from its Denver farm club. He was batting .294 for Denver and was to be used as a pinch-hitter in the September pennant race.

Hardy had been with Denver three seasons. He played part of 1964 with Houston, the rest with Oklahoma City. He was called up from Denver with former Twin pitcher Mel Nelson (10-3), infielder Frank Quilici and outfielder Pat Kelly.

Also called up for this season were catcher George Mitterwald and infielder Craig Nettles of Charlotte.



Ron Kline

pitch since I became manager of the **Twins** (in June)," said Ermer. "If he'll leave the slider alone and use that fastball—or spitter or whatever it is—the way he has done lately, he'll certainly help us."

Because of his many motions in his windup, Kline has often been the center of heated spitball conversations.

However, he hasn't been bothered with that much this year.

Twin Tracks: Al Worthington joined Ron Kline's August performances with four hits and one run allowed in 19 1/3 innings of relief. And the two of them couldn't have come along too soon. . . . Through the month of August, the **Twins** scored an average of only 3.1 runs per game. The **Twins** won 19 and lost 11 by the mini-margin of one run after Ermer became manager—scoring three runs or four in 14 of those victories. . . . Within one week, Tony Oliva nailed two runners at home plate with throws from right field. He cut down Baltimore's Curt Blefary with a no-hopper when Blefary tried to score on a fly ball.

Bob Allison missed more than a week because of a pulled hamstring muscle. But he came off the bench and pinch-hit a home run. In seven pinch-hit appearances, he singled, doubled, homered twice and walked twice. . . . Zollo Versalles hit his fifth homer late in August, after hitting seven in 1966 and 19 in 1965. . . . He was benched part of August for light hitting.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE

## BETWEEN A SOFTBALL

## PLAYER AND A BIG LEAGUE

## BASEBALL PLAYER?

WELL, IT'S NOT THEIR  
BATTING CAPS—THEY  
BOTH WEAR ABC'S.



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PIONEER MANUFACTURER OF PROTECTIVE BATTING CAPS