

**MITTERWALD WELL ARMED**

## Rookie Catching on Big in Big Leagues

By DAVE MONA  
Minneapolis Tribune Staff Writer

**OAKLAND, Calif.** — The lineup card was hard to believe.

Only 42 players in the history of baseball had hit more home runs than leadoff hitter Bob Allison.

Tony Oliva, batting second, had 109 times as many home runs as the clean-up hitter.

Harmon Killebrew, batting third, hit the first of his 389 major league home runs when the fourth hitter was in fifth grade in nearby Hayward, Calif.

But manager Billy Martin must have known what he was doing because George Mitterwald led off the second inning against California with a 400-foot home run to deep left center, his second in as many games.

"I feel," Martin said at the conclusion of the California Angels series Sunday, "that Mitterwald is going to develop into the kind of major league power hitter who can hit 20 to 25 home runs a year, maybe more."

At the end of one week of play, Martin rated Mitterwald's play as one of the two most pleasant features of a disappointing 1-4 record. The other was the play of shortstop Leo Cardenas.

Mitterwald came to spring training as the Twins' No. 2 catcher. The only other right-handed candidate, Jerry Zimmerman, was conditionally sold and later released before he even got to Orlando, Fla.

Mitterwald, relieved of the pressure of making the team, responded in mediocre fashion. It was obvious that some changes were needed in both his stance and grip.

But by the time the Twins broke camp, Mitterwald was hitting .286, 50 points above the team average.

Veteran John Roseboro caught the opening game in Kansas City, but the tendonitis in his right shoulder affected his throwing.

Mitterwald caught the second game in Kansas City and all three in Anaheim against the Angels. In the four games he hit a respectable .284.

Mitterwald's rookie status made him fair game for opposing baserunners.

Joe Keough, one of Kansas City's fastest runners, tried to steal second against Mitterwald in the 15th inning last Wednesday. A quick throw to Cardenas ended the inning.

In the eighth inning of the next game, California speedster Jay Johnstone stole second. Thinking he had Mitterwald shaken, Johnstone tried for third two pitches later. A throw to Frank

Quilici beat Johnstone by an embarrassing margin.

Still not believers, the Angels tried twice the next night. Bobby Knoop, not an outstanding baserunner, singled in the second inning and immediately tried to steal second. The throw beat him by so much that he came out of a slide early and tried to jump over Quilici's tag. Two innings later Knoop walked and lost by 10 feet in his race against a throw from Mitterwald to Cardenas.

That was the game in which Mitterwald hit his second home run, tying him with 11 other players for second place in the American League.

Before the game, Mitterwald had taken a bit of razzing from pitcher Jim Kaat.

"How can you be batting cleanup?" Kaat wondered aloud.

Returning to the dugout after his trip around the bases, Mitterwald sought out Kaat.

"You see, Jim," Mitterwald said. "Don't question the manager. Billy knew what he was doing."

**TWINS TOPICS:** Minnesota resumes action at 3:30 p.m. today against the Oakland Athletics . . . Kaat and Catfish Hunter will be the opposing pitchers. Hunter threw a perfect game against the Twins in Oakland last May 8. California will pitch either Andy Messersmith or Tom Murphy against Tom Hall in the Twins home opener Friday.



**GEORGE MITTERWALD**  
He taught baserunners

## Mitterwald 041569

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Sat, Feb 2, 2019