

# Mauler Manuel a Twin Camp Sensation

By ARNO GOETHEL

ORLANDO, Fla. — It happened every time a new club invaded Tinker Field to play the Twins.

Wags in the press box inevitably wound up swapping puns about the big, tousle-haired rookie in right field for Billy Martin's forces.

The big guy doubled and tripled in one game. He won the next with a one-out single in the tenth inning. The next day he doubled twice in two trips. After a hitless game, he came back with a double and triple in three at-bats. Then 2-for-2, both singles. As a designated pinch-hitter, he went 0-for-4 — and the Twins' seven-game winning streak was snagged. He rebounded the next day with a two-run homer and pair of singles.

## Twins' Rookie Manuel, Like Babe, Called Shot

ORLANDO, Fla. — Shades of Babe Ruth! Chuck Manuel, the Twins' torrid-swinging rookie outfielder, called his shot before he lambasted a home run against Kansas City March 21.

Before he went to the plate, Manuel told teammates:

"I'm going to put one up there by that telephone booth."

He gestured toward the second deck of the adjacent Tangerine Bowl, 450 feet away.

Manuel missed the telephone booth, but he came close. And the homer definitely was a long-distance liner.

"This is what they call Manuel operation," said one self-styled wit. "No," corrected another, "it's Manuel labor."

The object of their jaded witticisms is a big, bashful mountaineer with a reputation for silence.

Reporters immediately likened him to Theodore Roosevelt, who spoke softly but carried a big stick.

## Willing to Talk

Charles F. Manuel, Jr., fills the bill, but he'll talk, too, especially when the conversation is baseball.

A native of North Fork, W. Va., and now an off-season resident of Buena Vista, Va., Manuel was the early sensation of the Twins' exhibition schedule. He kept his average hovering around .500 and his slugging percentage zoomed over .800.

More impressive was his ability to hit to all fields.

"The last couple of years," said 25-year-old Manuel, "I've hit the ball and let it go where it wants. Before that, I was a pull-hitter."

For six years, Manuel (6-3, 180 pounds) has been bobbing through the Twins' organization — Wyltheville (.358) in 1963; Orlando (.265) in 1964; Wilson (.204) and Orlando (.225) in 1965; Wilson (.231) in 1966; Wisconsin Rapids (.313) in 1967, and Charlotte (.283) last year.

Manuel reflects upon the rigors of travel in the Southern League for his final average of 1968.

"I was hitting .300 until the last week and a half. We had those



Chuck Manuel

long trips. I got weak at the end and hit a slump.

"The bus ride to Evansville is a 15-hour job. It's eight and ten hours to Birmingham and Montgomery. And only the pitchers get to sleep lengthwise on the back seat."

When Manuel launched his torrid attack, Martin said: "If he keeps swinging like that, he'll swing himself right into a job."

Manuel kept it up, so Martin boosted him to his top 25 roster.

As a right fielder, Manuel isn't naive. He knows the Twins have

a right fielder who has won two batting championships in five years and who is regarded as one of the most dangerous hitters in all baseball.

All Manuel has to do to win a regular job is beat out Tony Oliva. That's all.

"He's a pretty tough fella to replace," admitted Charlie with a big grin. "All the outfielders are good on this team."

## Right Field Best Spot

"I played left until late 1964, but I've been in right ever since. I played some center in Wisconsin Rapids in 1967, but I'm not a center fielder."

Over his last four years, Manuel has been charged with 14 errors. "Most of those," he explained, "were on ground balls and bad throws."

Actually, challenging Oliva for a job shouldn't faze Manuel.

During a high school double-header, he rapped three triples, two doubles and three singles, walked twice, scored twice, drove in seven runs—and in the first game was the winning pitcher.

Twin Tales: Cesar Tovar must have had a gun against Cal Griffith's head. The versatile Venezuelan was the last to sign, agreeing to a \$13,000 boost to \$30,000. It was the largest raise dished out by Griffith following last year's fall to seventh. . . . Everything was coming in streaks for the Twins. They lost their first three exhibitions, won the next five and had the next two rained out. . . . To take it easy on his coaches' arms, Martin got Griffith's okay to keep

## Cal Changes His Mind, May Install Tartan Turf

ORLANDO, Fla. — President Cal Griffith of the Twins admitted he has changed his mind about artificial turf. Minnesota Mining might spread a Tartan Turf carpet on Metropolitan Stadium in time for the 1970 season.

Griffith previously voiced sentiments against the artificial turf, but after a conference with a 3M official and executives of the Met Area Stadium Commission, said:

"Let's say we like the idea. But there are a lot of things we must find out first. There's the matter of drainage, for one thing, and the effect Tartan has on a ground ball.

"They're putting Tartan on a field in Portland, Ore., this spring and we're going to take a look at it in May to get some idea of what we could expect."

Griffith said installation of Tartan Turf at the Met would represent an investment "of \$500,000 or maybe a little better."

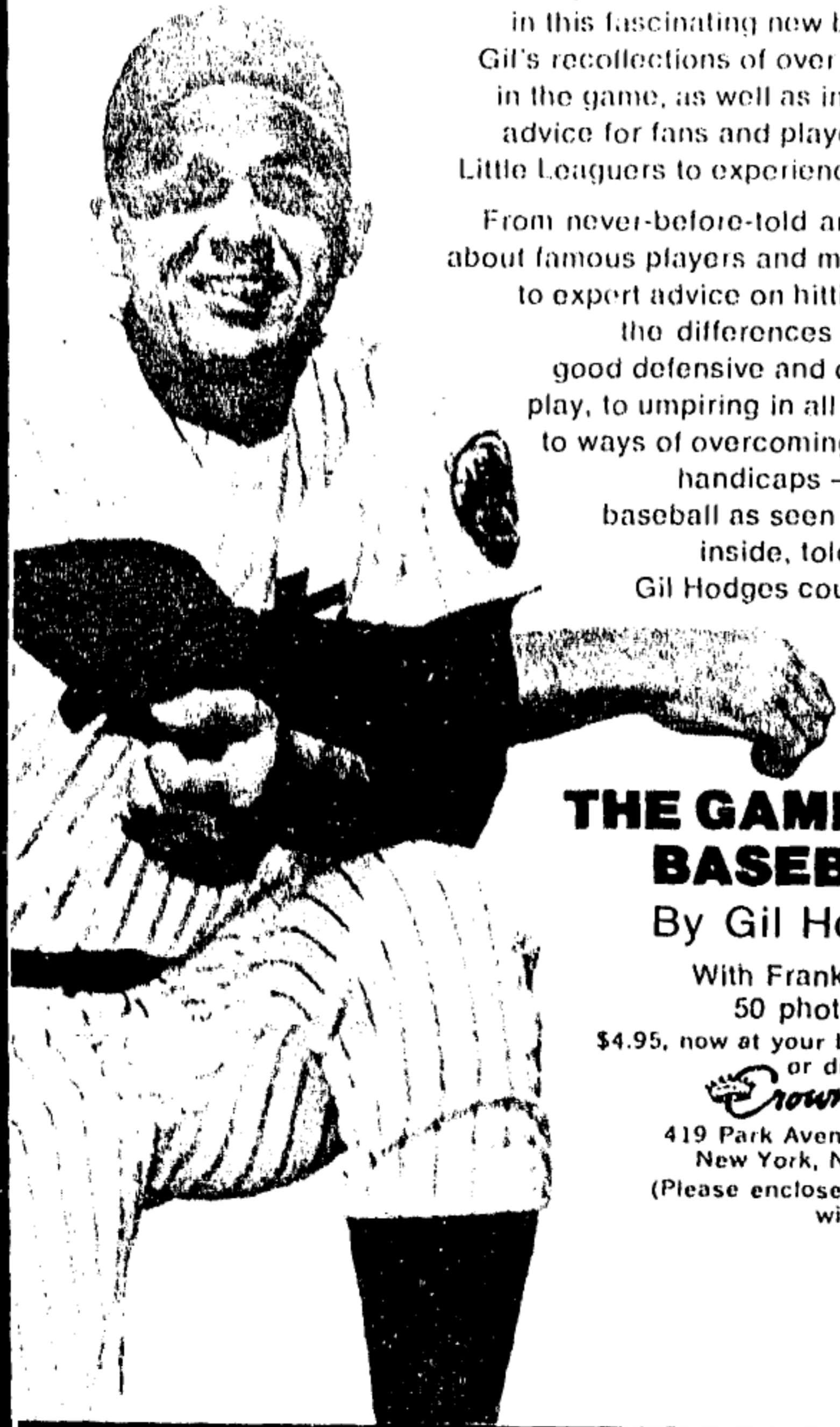
five minor league pitchers in camp longer than usual. . . . Tony Oliva chopped a foul tip off his right foot and had the toe lanced. . . . Rick Renick shed the walking cast from his right leg three weeks after suffering a fractured ankle. . . . Bob Willis, general manager of the Orlando (Florida State) Twins and a 1968 Executive of the Year as selected by THE SPORTING NEWS, was guest of honor at his birthday party March 16.

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# A's Discover They Are Rich in Relief

By RON BERGMAN

MESA, Ariz.—There was plenty on his mind as Hank Bauer prepared to break camp in Mesa. As manager of the Athletics, he's paid to assume the worries that go with the job.

But on one score, at least, he's feeling more assured. The A's apparently have come up with a combination to replace relievers Diego Segui and Jack Aker, lost, as Bauer must be tired of reading by now, to Seattle in the expansion draft.

This season the A's will call upon Lew Krausse, Paul Lindblad and Ed Sprague as rally stoppers. If exhibition performances mean anything, then Hank can start worrying about something else.

None of the three was knocked about in the Cactus League. As an example, Sprague was touched for a home run by the Pilots' Mike Hegan in his first relief outing of the spring, but allowed no other runs in his first nine innings spread over five games.

## Krausse Racked Up Saves

Krausse, of course, is a known commodity. He was taken out of the five-man starting rotation last July 27 by Bob Kennedy, then the A's manager, and responded with four quick saves.

Southpaw Lindblad had a 2.41 earned-run average last season, but suffered from arm trouble late in the year. A winter league season proved to him that his arm is sound again.

Based strictly on observation, it appeared as if Lindblad looked more effective for some reason this spring than he did last season.

"His breaking ball is better," explained catcher Dave Duncan. "His trouble, when he had any, was that he couldn't get his breaking ball over. He had to use his fast ball all the time. You can't do that."

It's interesting to note that Krausse went to the bullpen last year because Sprague was being used less and less. As a consequence, Ed's control suffered.

"I was in 35 games in the first half of the season," said Sprague, "and 12 the second half. That hurt my control."

"How can you go in every seven days and do your job?"

## Drafted From Cards

The A's had to keep Sprague on the 25-man roster last year because he was drafted out of the Cardinal organization. He had only one and one-half seasons of professional baseball behind him. Once the season was over, some felt the A's would send him down to their Triple-A club this year for more experience. Then came the expansion draft, which increased Ed's determination to stay in the majors.

"I feel better now," Sprague said in Mesa. "I threw 115 innings of winter ball in Arcibo."

During this period, Sprague experimented with an overhand delivery to lefthanded batters. He throws sidearm to righthanders who have a tendency to want to bail out when the 6-foot-5 Sprague comes in from third base.

After consulting with A's pitch-

ing coach Bill (Chief) Posedel, Sprague worked on the overhand delivery to lefthanders in Puerto Rico. Sidearm isn't natural to him, anyway. When he went to spring training with St. Louis in 1967 he was throwing from all over the place. "They told me to throw one way only. I looked around and didn't see anyone else throwing sidearm, so I started to throw sidearm," Ed recalled.

This spring Krausse inadvertently helped Sprague, who was worried about his curve ball coming in too high.

## Lew Fires Sharp Curve

"I was landing stiff-legged on my left leg," Sprague said. "I watched Krausse because he has a good curve and I noticed that he was bending his leg a lot more. I tried and it helped me keep the ball down."

The 22-year-old Sprague had more reasons than the usual ones for wanting to stay with Oakland this year. He lives only ten minutes away in Hayward.

A's Acorns: Veteran relief pitcher Bob Duliba, who started his professional career in 1952, needs only 23 days to qualify for the major league pension and might be brought back from Des Moines to the A's at the end of the season as a coach to get him up to the four years. . . . 19-year-old southpaw Vida Blue was kept around a little longer in the big camp after an impressive outing against Cleveland but was knocked around the next time by the Cubs. . . . Catchers Dave Duncan and Jim Pagliaroni were hitting the ball well in six Arizona games. . . . Southpaw Gil Blanco had soreness in his pitching shoulder. . . . To shore up lefthanded help in the bullpen, the A's bought Jim Roland from the Twins and sent southpaw Bob Meyer to Des Moines of the new American Association.



Ed Sprague