

Griffith, Ermer talking again— at Tacoma

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Tacoma, Wash.

The situation and the conversation were intriguing. There was Cal Griffith, sitting amiably across the table at lunch from Cal Ermer, the man he fired as manager of the Twins in 1968.

Ermer now is managing at Tacoma, where the Twins held an inter-family exhibition with their top farm club Thursday on a damp, chilly night.

Ermer, once he had completed an exchange of pleasantries with Griffith, was asked to name the best player on his roster, which appears to be stocked with good talent. Tacoma is leading the Pacific Coast League by 2½ games.

"Craig Kusick is the best major league prospect on the club," Ermer said. "In my opinion he will be an outstanding big leager. He hits with tremendous power, and he's come a long way as a first baseman. If the Twins are thinking of Kusick as their first baseman of the future, that position will be in good hands for a long time."



Craig Kusick

Griffith confirmed that the Twins are looking to Kusick as their next first baseman, although the incumbent, Harmon Killebrew, suddenly is hitting the ball like a young man again and looking nothing like a candidate for imminent retirement. Kusick, however, is definitely the prize bull in the Twins farm system, and whether he takes over at first base for them in 1975 or 1976, it is just a matter of time.

He is big (6-foot-3, 232 pounds) and strong, yet he is surprisingly nimble around first base. Last year he was named the Twins' top farmhand after batting .305 in 144 games at Tacoma, hitting 27 home runs and driving in 104. The Twins didn't think he was quite ready this past spring, so they sent him back to Tacoma. At the moment Kusick is hitting .390, with 7 home runs and 30 runs batted in.

"He's got a better interpretation of the strike zone than most hitters," Ermer observed. "I've seen him drive a couple of shots out of the park this year that looked like they were hit by Frank Howard, but he doesn't swing

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