

SCHNEIDER AROUND

By RUSSELL SCHNEIDER



For Dennis Eckersley, the difference between his anticipated biggest thrill and what would have been his biggest disappointment was a scant six inches, Monday.

The rookie pitcher, an unexpected survivor of spring training, was hit on the right forearm by a liner off the bat of Charlie Spikes as the Indians took a final tune-up for today's season opener in the Stadium.

Eckersley was pitching batting practice to Spikes. "Charlie swung and there came the ball," related the 20-year-old right-hander. "It was right there. I threw up my arm to protect my face."

The ball thudded against the fleshy part of Eckersley's forearm, about six inches from the wrist, which would have been more seriously damaged, as would the youngster's features if it had hit him in the face.

"Boy, was I lucky!," he said, soaking the arm in ice. He was. "It'll probably be a little sore, but I don't think it will affect my pitching," added Eckersley, who never dreamed he'd be in Cleveland today.

"I thought if I was lucky I'd make the Oklahoma City staff. Sure, Opening Day with the Indians will be my biggest thrill, at least until I know I'm going to pitch for the first time.

"Last winter I looked at the Indians' roster and figured they'd have to do something with the pitching staff for me to make it. There didn't seem to be any room for me, which is why my thoughts were just to do as well as I could to make it to Oklahoma City."

Eckersley, one of two rookies (Jim Kern is the other) with the Tribe, was 14-3 at San Antonio in 1974. He was the Texas League's right-handed pitcher of the year.

Thrilled, too, will be Dennis's wife Denise. "She's been cheering for me for a long time," he said. "She was the head cheerleader at our high school (in Fremont, Calif.) and she has never stopped cheering."

The Eckersleys will celebrate their second wedding anniversary Friday, although Dennis will be in Milwaukee and Denise will be in Cleveland. "But that's okay," he said. "We'll celebrate a day early. The important thing is that I'm here, with the Indians."

And when did he learn he'd made the club? "With a couple of days left in spring training, Frank (Robinson) told me," he said. "I knew I made it when he asked me, 'Do you have some warm clothes?' I said, 'Why?' He said, 'Because it gets cold in Cleveland early in the season.'"

And he's right. But I'm not complaining. I'm too happy to be here."

Rachel Robinson, widow of the late Jackie Robinson and an old friend of Indians' manager Frank Robinson and his wife, will throw out the traditional first pitch to Mayor Ralph J. Perk at today's 2 p.m. opener. . . Commissioner Bowie Kuhn and American League president Lee MacPhail will be on hand. . . Jim (Mudcat) Grant will sing the National Anthem, played by the marching bands from Lincoln-West, Collinwood and Mentor high schools. . . Tribe pennants will be given to buyers of box, reserved and general admission tickets.

Gaylord Perry, getting his third consecutive Opening Day assignment, will pitch four of the Indians' first seven games because of open dates Wednesday and Thursday, and next Monday through Thursday. . . Gaylord's wife Blanche, up from their home in Williamston, N.C., will watch her husband for the first time in an opener. . . Jim Perry will start in Milwaukee, Friday, Gaylord goes again Saturday, and Fritz Peterson gets Sunday's assignment against the Brewers.

Gaylord, incidentally, has shaved off the moustache he'd cultivated the last two weeks. "Blanche didn't like it," he explained. Two other Tribe pitchers are growing moustaches — Dick Bosman and Dave LaRoche. . . Bosman, the Indians' player rep, met with club officials and solved the parking problem. The Tribesmen have been granted parking privileges between Gates A and D at the Stadium, adjacent to the Shoreway ramp. Still under consideration is their request for blue uniform shirts. . . and Oscar Gamble had his Afro trimmed again. . . but not much.

Robby embarks

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of baseball, except I've always wanted to go places. . . like to the Kentucky Derby and the Indianapolis 500 race. Things like that. I want to have time to do those things, and to enjoy my family."

He was asked, "Have you told Phil Seghi (the Indians' general manager) about your planned retirement after five years?"

Before he could answer, the telephone rang.

Robinson picked it up and said, "I didn't mean it Phil. I really didn't."

Naturally, Robinson was questioned about his publicized squabble with ace pitcher Gaylord Perry on the first day of spring training.

He responded, not unpleasantly, by tossing a towel in the air.

Then, still not unpleasantly, "Can't you guys let anything just fade away?" No.

"I just didn't think he was putting out 100 percent effort. I talked to him and I felt there was a change after that."

Are their differences now healed and forgotten?

"I can't look inside Gaylord's head, but as far as I'm concerned, it's all over. At least, as soon as you guys finish writing about it, it'll be all over," said the manager.

Is there a personality clash between the two men?

"Not on my part, I'm sure of that," answered Robinson. "As I said, I can't look inside Gaylord's head, but I don't think there is on his part, either."

The most demanding of his duties, Robinson said, "Are all the interviews, everywhere we go," and the toughest task he's had to perform to date "was the first time I had to cut any players from the squad."

Robinson cool for Tribe opener

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pulled muscle in his left rib cage suffered in Tucson a week ago.

Other than the replacement of Duffy by Ed Crosby, Robinson made only one slight alteration in the batting order, advancing himself to the second position and dropping George Hendrick to third.

Gaylord Perry (21-13 in 1974) will pitch for the Indians against the Yankees' Doc Medich (19-15).

A year ago in New York, Gaylord lost to the Yankees' Mel Stottlemyre, 6-1, but then the Indians' ace went into win 15 in a row before losing to the Oakland A's, July 8.

Gaylord was only 1-3 against the Yankees in 1974, but his lifetime record against them is 9 victories - 6 defeats.

Medich, a 26-year-old right-hander who has two full seasons in the big leagues, was 0-2 vs. the Indians last season and it's 2-2 lifetime.

52,526 see Reds win

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in 1973 when 52,315 showed up to see Hank Aaron close in on Babe Ruth's home run record.

Pinch hitter Foster came through with two out, beating out a slow roller to third baseman Ron Cey as Geronimo sped home.

Dave Concepcion had opened the 14th with a single off Cey's glove and moved to second on a passed ball. After Geronimo walked, both runners advanced on a sacrifice. But Concepcion was cut down on Darrel Chaney's bouncer to the mound as Geronimo raced to third. Then Foster came through with the winning hit.

Don Sutton started for the Dodgers facing Don Gullett of the Reds. Both sur-

The Indians' batting order will be:

Oscar Gamble lf, Robinson dh, Hendrick cf, Charlie Spikes rf, Boog Powell lb, John Ellis c, Buddy Bell 3b, Jack Brohamer 2b, and Crosby ss.

New York manager Bill Virdon, whose team didn't arrive in Cleveland until last night, choosing instead to spend the day practicing in Tampa, Fla., wants to wait until this morning before releasing his lineup.

New York writers traveling with the club expect the lineup to be: Alex Johnson lf, Lou Piniella rf, Bobby Bonds cf, Ron Blomberg dh, Graig Nettles 3b, Thurman Munson c, Chris Chambliss lb, Jim Mason ss, and Sandy Alomar 2b.

Last season, when they finished fourth in the American League East with a 77-85 record, the Indians won seven and lost 11 games with the Yankees, who were second with an 89-73 mark.

Four former Indians are in the New York starting lineup — Johnson, Piniella, Nettles and Chambliss — while Tribesmen Spikes and Ellis are ex-Yankees.

rendered five hits and one run before leaving with the game tied at 1-1, Sutton after seven innings and Gullett in the 10th.

Bullpen ace Mike Marshall, last year's Cy Young Award winner, relieved Sutton at the start of the eighth. Gullett retired 11 straight batters before walking Bill Russell with one out in the 10th. After Marshall sacrificed, Lopes was purposely walked and then Clay Carroll came on to retire pinch hitter Manny Mota and preserve the deadlock.

The Dodgers took a 1-0 lead in the fourth when Gullett issued consecutive walks to Jimmy Wynn and Joe Ferguson. Steve Garvey, the National League's most valuable player in 1974, delivered a single to give Sutton a 1-0 cushion.

The Reds tied it at 1-1 in the sixth on Concepcion's single after consecutive singles by Rose and Morgan.

Reds win opener

LOS ANGELES	CINCINNATI
Loose 2b 5 0 2 0	Rose lf 5 1 2 0
Euckner lf 4 0 0 0	Morgan 2b 5 0 2 0
AlMota ph 1 0 0 0	Bench c 5 0 2 0
Paciorek lf 1 0 0 0	TPerez 1b 4 0 0 0
Wynn cf 5 1 1 0	Cnacion ss 6 0 2 1
Hough p 6 0 0 0	Geronimo cf 3 1 0 0
Ferguson rf 5 0 1 0	Griffey rf 5 0 1 0
Garvey 1b 6 0 2 1	Vukovich 3b 3 1 0 0
Cey 3b 6 0 1 0	Chaney 2b 3 0 0 0
Yeager c 6 0 0 0	Groster ph 1 0 1 1
Russell ss 5 0 0 0	Gullett p 3 1 0 0
Sutton p 2 0 0 0	CCarroll p 0 0 0 0
Marshall p 0 0 0 0	Crowley ph 1 0 0 0
Crawford rf 1 0 0 0	Borbon p 0 0 0 0
	RHummel ph 0 0 0 0
	Borbon p 0 0 0 0
Total 47 1 8 1	Total 48 2 9 2

Two out when winning run scored.
Dodgers 000 100 000 00-1
Reds 000 000 000 01-2
DP—Cincinnati 2.
LOB—Los Angeles 10, Cincinnati 11, 28.
E—Concepcion, Garvey, SB—Morgan 2, S—Marshall, Riettenand, Griffey.
IP HR ER BB SO
Sutton 7 5 1 1 1 5
Marshall 7 5 1 1 1 5
Hough (L-0-1) 1 2 3 2 1 1 1 1
Gullett 9 2 3 5 1 1 5 4
C. Carroll 2 3 0 0 0 0 0 0
Borbon 1 2 3 0 0 0 0 0
Darcy (W,1-0) 1 2 3 0 0 0 0 1
WP—Sutton, PB—Yeager, T—3:22, A—52:52.

Rookies' bats beat Cardinals

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Tony Scott's two-run double in the eighth inning and fellow rookie Gary Carter's three-run homer in the ninth sparked the Montreal Expos to an 8-4 triumph over Bob Gibson and the St. Louis Cardinals Monday night in the opening game for both clubs.

Gibson, breezing after a rough first inning, notched his 12th strikeout by fanning Pete Mackanin for the second out in the eighth before the Expos rallied.

MONTREAL	ST LOUIS
Scott lf 4 1 1 2	Brook lf 5 1 1 0
Foll ss 3 2 2 0	Sizemore 2b 5 1 3 0
McGinnis cf 4 1 2 1	McBride cf 5 1 2 1
Jorgensen 1b 4 0 0 0	RSmith rf 3 1 2 1
Foote c 5 1 0 0	TSimms c 4 0 0 0
Carter rf 2 1 3 4	KHrdz 1b 4 0 0 0
Parrish 3b 4 1 1 0	Brinkman ss 3 0 0 0
Mackanin 2b 4 1 1 1	Beltz 2b 4 0 1 0
McNally p 2 0 0 0	Dwyer ph 1 0 0 0
Blittner ph 1 0 1 0	Sosa c 0 0 0 0
White dr 0 1 0 0	Gibson p 2 0 0 0
Murray p 0 0 0 0	Fairly ph 1 0 0 0
	Tyson ss 0 0 0 0
Total 38 8 11 7	Total 37 4 9 2

M. May awarded first on catcher's interference.
Atlanta 000 200 000-2
St. Louis 000 000 000-4
E—Evans, Correll, LOB—Atlanta 4, Houston 11, 28—C. Johnson, Corleno, HR, J. Cruz (1), SB—Cedeno, Cabell, J. Cruz, SF—C. Johnson.
IP H R ER BB SO
P. Nietro (L-0-1) 4 23 9 5 0 0 4
Harrison 1 1 3 1 0 0 0 2
Dierker (W,1-0) 6 4 2 2 1 7
HBP—By Dierker (Garr), PB—Correll, T—2:08, A—31:76.

Astros rip Braves

HOUSTON (AP) — Jose Cruz took advantage of an interference call against Atlanta catcher Vic Correll with a tie-breaking three-run homer, capping a five-run fifth-inning rally that powered the Houston Astros to a 6-2 victory over the Braves Monday night in the two clubs' opening game.

Cesar Cedeno's two-out infield single drove in the first of five unearned runs off Phil Nietro in the fifth before Milt May apparently flied out to end the inning. But plate umpire Doug Harvey ruled that Correll's glove had interfered with May's bat.

ATLANTA	HOUSTON
Garr lf 3 0 0 0	Cabell lf 0 0 0 0
WPerez 2b 3 0 0 0	BAAndrews 2b 5 0 2 0
Evans 3b 4 1 1 0	Cedeno cf 4 2 2 1
Lum 1b 4 0 1 1	Alkins c 4 1 3 0
Baker rf 4 0 1 1	CJhmsn 1b 4 1 1 2
Office cf 4 0 0 0	JCruz rf 4 1 3 3
Correll c 2 0 0 0	DoFader 3b 4 0 0 0
Blanks ss 3 0 0 0	Meitroer 2b 3 0 0 0
P. Nietro p 2 0 0 0	Dierker p 4 0 0 0
Harrison p 0 0 0 0	Harrison p 1 0 0 0
Teredino ph 1 0 0 0	Gentry p 0 0 0 0
Total 31 2 4 2	Total 37 6 14 6

M. May awarded first on catcher's interference.
Atlanta 000 200 000-2
Houston 000 000 000-4
E—Evans, Correll, LOB—Atlanta 4, Houston 11, 28—C. Johnson, Corleno, HR, J. Cruz (1), SB—Cedeno, Cabell, J. Cruz, SF—C. Johnson.
IP H R ER BB SO
P. Nietro (L-0-1) 4 23 9 5 0 0 4
Harrison 1 1 3 1 0 0 0 2
Dierker (W,1-0) 6 4 2 2 1 7
HBP—By Dierker (Garr), PB—Correll, T—2:08, A—31:76.

Just as the Indians are starting the season with three players on the disabled list (pitchers Steve Kline and Fred Beene, and second baseman Angel Hermoso) New York suffered several injuries during spring training.

Kline is recuperating from a Jan. 10 elbow operation, Beene strained a muscle in his back last Friday, and Hermoso hurt his right knee as he did in Venezuela during the winter season.

Sidelined among the Yankees are Roy White and Elliott Maddox, both nursing hand injuries, and pitcher Dick Tidrow, who broke a finger a week or so ago.

The starting lineups for the two clubs on April 6, 1974, in New York were drastically different.

The Indians started John Lowenstein lf, Gamble dh, Hendrick cf, Ellis c, Spikes rf, Chambliss lb, Bell 3b, Duffy ss, and Hermoso 2b.

The Yankees opened with White lf, Mike Hegan lb, Munson c, Bobby Murcer cf, Blomberg rf, Nettles 3b, Bill Sudakis dh, Gene Michael 2b, and Mason ss.

The reason Robinson advanced himself to the second spot in the order, dropping Hendrick to third, is that "I think George feels more comfortable batting third, and we also can do more things for the club letting him hit third."

As for Crosby playing in place of Duffy, Robinson indicated his confidence in the backup shortstop.

British soccer
By The Associated Press
Monday's Results
English League
Division Three
Tranmere 0, Charlton 1
Wrexham 1, Bournemouth 1, tie
Division Four
Brentford 3, Stockport 0
Hartlepool 1, Cambridge 1, tie
Scottish League
Division Two
Montrose 2, Hamilton 1

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