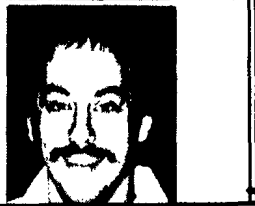


On The Sidelines

STEVE KMACK



Stepping Back

I stopped by the Elks Club last week and while sipping on a nice cold one had the pleasure to listen to two of Potsdam's most knowledgeable baseball men, Socs Merigis and Jack Phillips, discussing and arguing (in a friendly manner) the in's and out's of our nation's favorite pastime. I've always thought that I was pretty decent when it came to baseball trivia but after hearing these guys go at it for about an hour I quickly realized that, 1. I don't know as much as I thought, and 2. these gentlemen are top notch baseball people. "Socs", one of the better known Elks members (the one who puts it to you come initiation time!) is a graduate of Potsdam High. I've been told by many that he was an outstanding athlete excelling in basketball and baseball at Potsdam. Following graduation Socs was signed and entered into the ranks of pro baseball playing for many league clubs. Jack tells me that Mr Merigis was a tough-nosed ballplayer, possessing one of the most astute minds for the game that he's ever encountered. And indeed, when Jack Phillips talks baseball you pay heed, for his athletic background is a rich and rare one. A

graduate of Clarkson College, Jack was one of the very few who have ever had the distinction of playing major league baseball. His career spanned nearly nine years in which he played for the Yankees, Pittsburgh Pirates and Detroit Tigers. In addition, while playing in the minors in 1954, Jack was named MVP of the Pacific Coast League. When talking to Jack recently I asked him what were the major highlights during his playing day. After a short time two events came to mind.

In the early 50's while playing for the Pirates Jack stepped up to the plate in the bottom of the ninth, bases loaded and his team trailing, 6-3, against the St. Louis Cardinals and pitcher Harry Breezhan. He then proceeded to hit a shot over the wall for a grand slam and a Pirate victory.

The great Stan Musial was one of the outfielders who made a vain attempt for the ball. What made this equally significant was that in the same year the Dodgers won the National League pennant by a scant game over the same Cardinals.

The other highlight was playing in the '47 World Series with the New York Yankees when they beat the Dodgers in seven games. Jack was a steady hitter with a

lifetime batting average in the high 200's but was better known for his defensive ability around first base where he played for the majority of his major league years.

Among his roommates of the road were Johnny Lindell, a fine outfielder with the Yanks, and Ralph Kiner, Hall of Famer and broadcast announcer for the New York Mets.

At the twilight of his career playing for the Buffalo Bison's in 1958, a farm club of Kansas City, Jack was honored by his friends and fans with a Jack Phillip's night. Clarkson representatives were in attendance to present him with an award and he showed his appreciation by hitting a home run that same evening.

Jack now serves as varsity baseball coach at Clarkson where he always seems to build a quality team. Socs and Jack, thanks for an enjoyable hour, certainly one that will stay with me for quite some time.

Baseball Trivia- (Who was in the starting outfield for the Mets in the first game of the '69 World Series?) (Two are easy, the third should make you think.) Answer next week.



TRAVELING GOLFERS—A 10-man team of Potsdam golfers took to the road over the weekend to compete in the St. Lawrence District Golf Association Tournament at the Glen Lawrence and Country Club in Glen Lawrence, Ontario. The

team placed fifth in the 10-team field. From left to right are Robert Bicknell, Mike Lebeda, Butler Sullivan, Geoff Brown, Steve Hansen, Chris Papanakos, John Pederson, Chip Hunter, Bill Pelotte and Brian Doran. (Hal Stokes photo).

Potsdam Golfers Place 5th

GLEN LAWRENCE, ONT.- Robert Bicknell stroked a 157 on a two-day, 36-hole card to lead a 10-man team representing the Potsdam Town & County Club to a fifth place finish in the St. Lawrence District Golf Association Tournament held here over the weekend.

Bicknell's 157 was followed closely by teammates Brian Doran and Steve Hansen, both at 160. As a team, Potsdam turned in a 1645 aggregate. The hosting Glen Lawrence team captured first-place honors with a 1576 total. Ten teams competed in the tournament.

Also for the Potsdam team, Chris Papanakos and Mike Lebeda both finished at 163, Chip Hunter, at 165, Pete Shelley at 166, Butler Sullivan at 167, Geoff Brown at 169 and Bill Pelotte at 175.

Cornwall finished in second place, 11 strokes off the pace set by the Glen Lawrence team. Brockville finished third at 1608, Gananoque was fourth at 1634, Massena was sixth at 1666, Malone was seventh at 1671, Mississippi was eighth at 1680, Perth was ninth at 1712 and Caturagu finished 10th.

Martin Hasn't Changed, Phillips Recalls

(Continued from page 24.) What had seemed the last straw for Steinbrenner in the long-simmering feud was Martin's remark the night before that "One's a born liar (referring to Jackson) and the other's convicted". Steinbrenner was found guilty of illegal campaign contributions made during the 1972 presidential election.

But the surprise ending, at least for the moment, came Saturday in the midst of Old Timers' Day ceremonies when announcer Bob Sheppard stunned the crowd with the news that Martin will be "the manager in 1980 and hopefully for many seasons after that" of the New York Yankees. It was an announcement that drew a prolonged standing ovation from the crowd, overshadowing even the introductions of such legends as DiMaggio and Mickey Mantle.

"This whole situation has been very hard on Billy, of course," Phillips said. "And you can trace it back an awful long way. The thing is, all Billy's known all his life is hustle, hustle, hustle. He's a perfectionist. And anytime a guy shows indifference or any kind of a lazy attitude, Billy isn't going to put up with it. Looking at the incidents with Jackson (last year's near fist-fight between the two in Boston and this year's controversial bunt), I think it just came down to the point where Martin felt no one wearing a Yankee uniform was going to pull this kind of stuff."

In addition to jeopardizing his working relationship with Steinbrenner, Martin is also remembered for an off-the-field episode in 1967 that hurt his friendship with another Yankee immortal, Casey Stengel. Celebrating at the well-known Copa nightclub in New York, Martin became involved in a brawl with other patrons. Shortly after the incident, Martin was traded to the defunct Kansas City Athletics.

"That shows you how little Billy has really changed since his playing days," said Phillips. "I think he's a little more mellow now, but he's always been willing to fight for what he believes is right. When he was playing, though, he was a much more highly-strung individual. Always a real competitor. Always fighting, always involved in scrapes. He was another Eddie Stanky—in that same mold. You see somewhat of that kind of thing today in a guy like Pete Rose. Guys that always give their most."

"So intimidation was always Billy's forte. Don't get me wrong. He was a good ballplayer. It's just that he was never a real big star in the class with a Mays or Mantle. But he was always in there fighting, always giving his best. Because of that, he was an inspiring type of player. And now, because of that, he's an inspiring type of manager."

Phillips, who himself managed in the Philadelphia Phillie minor league organization before being drawn back to Potsdam by former Clarkson baseball coach Hal Hodge, says he now feels strong ties to each of the major league clubs he played on. That's due, he says, to a more intense feeling of loyalty that carried with the ballplayers when he was playing.

"Not that there aren't loyal players today. But there are certainly many more in the game today who have a stronger loyalty to the dollar than to the team," he said. Billy Martin isn't one of those. He has his ideas of what kind of players it takes to win and those are the ones you'll see playing for him every day.

"In the end, I believe a smart major league manager is worth 8-10 victories a year to his team—a lot of ground when you're involved in a pennant race. Billy Martin is that kind of manager."

LaBaff Entry Places High In Hunt

LYNDONVILLE, VT.- P. R. Carter's Pru Cricket, owned by Wayne LaBaff of Potsdam, placed third in overall points in the New England Coon Hunters' Reunion Night Hunt here Saturday night. The two-year-old Blue Tick coon hound, entered in its first hunting

competition, finished as the first-place registered dog, the highest-scoring Blue Tick and the highest-scoring dog of the opposite sex. The points will be applied to the year's overall night championship. The local entry was one of 124 dogs participating in the event.

Swim Races Scheduled

TUPPER LAKE- The 3rd Tupper Lake Invitational Swimming Races will be held at Little Wolf Beach Saturday, Aug. 19, starting at 11:30 a.m.

The races will consist of freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke for all ages. Age groups will be set up for 0-6-year-olds, 7-9-year-olds, 10-12-year-olds, 13-15, 16-18 and 19 and over. Medals will be awarded to first, second and third place finishers as well as overall

best swimmers. Entry blanks may be obtained from Sun Sports, Box 607, Tupper Lake; the Tupper Lake Chamber of Commerce; or Little Wolf Beach swimming instructors.

The entry fee for the event is \$1 and must accompany the entry blanks which are due no later than Aug. 17 at 5 p.m. Late entries will be charged \$1.50.

Pee Wee Soccer Set To Start

The first practice for the Pee Wee Soccer program is scheduled for tonight on the fields adjacent to the Maxcy Hall Athletic Complex on the State University College campus. The practice will start at 6:30.

League games will begin Thursday. Rosters for this year's teams are: AZTECS- T. Savis, S. Regan, Lewis, J. Tomalty, M. Sharlow, P. Doran, D. McGregor, S. Mundy, S. Sharlow and G. McCasland.

ROWDIES- L. LaBrake, Bitely, S. Fuller, A. Marsjanik, M. Young, D. Katz, McCabe, M. Bronsman, D. Carey

and J. Grant. COSMOS- A. Forget, S. Forget, Egan, Cross, J. Sweeney, A. Coleman, A. Arollullan, D. Tomalty, Viviamore and R. Sharlow.

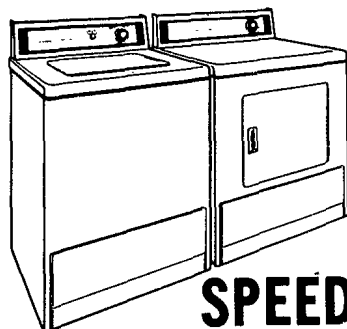
STING- Wiberg, Domingos, J. Carey, Batin, G. Forgit, D. Johnson, D. Rust, C. Kingsley, D. Rische and E. Powers. SOUNDERS- Wheeler, J. Davis, P. Vaska, M. Bondello, K. Kingsley, K. Decker, C. Powers, Semnatore, Blanchard and L. Bondello.

ATOMS- Garcia, K. Young, M. Vaska, K. Rust, Munge, C. Bondello, Daniels, D. Thaller, Kirka and Manning.

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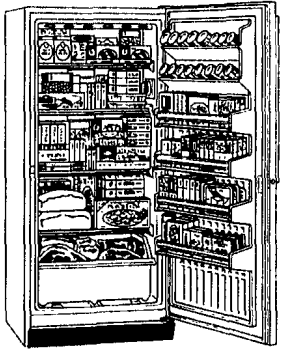
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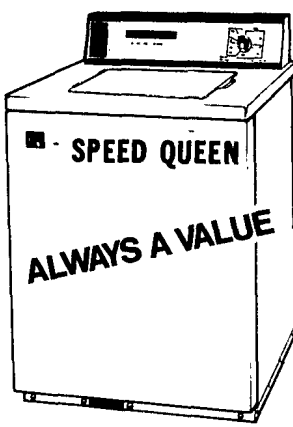
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