

FROM THE BULLPEN

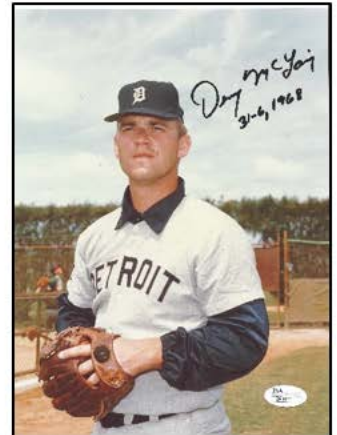
The Nebraska Hot Stove League



of the Summer of '68,
"The Year of the Pitcher"



Bob Gibson



Denny McLain

2018 Campaign

Edition No. 11

September 19, 2018

**FIVE (COUNT 'EM, FIVE) TEAMS
WITHIN 200 POINTS WITH TWO WEEKS TO GO;
CHIEFS LOADING UP QUIVER;
SCREECH IN BUTTERFLY WHISPERER MODE;
MAGPIE LAVISHING PRAISE ON RESILIENT WAHOOS MANAGEMENT;
PAWESOME BARING CLAWS AND HISSING FEROCIOUSLY;
JIM ED DRINKING HEAVILY AND CONSTANTLY;
FINAL FORTNIGHT TO BE A FRENZIED FISTFIGHT**

Brethren:

With a mere two weeks of play left in the 2018 version of the HSL Challenge Cup, the Top Five contestants are advised to buckle up their chinstraps, adjust their jockstraps **FN 1**, lace up their big boy britches, have their Maalox jug handy, and double down on their statins and beta blocker medications, because they are about to engage in one of the most compelling, competitive, exciting, fingernail-biting, bare-knuckle fistfight of a pennant race that has ever been witnessed in 34 spirited years of HSL competition. And that's no bull.



5th Place



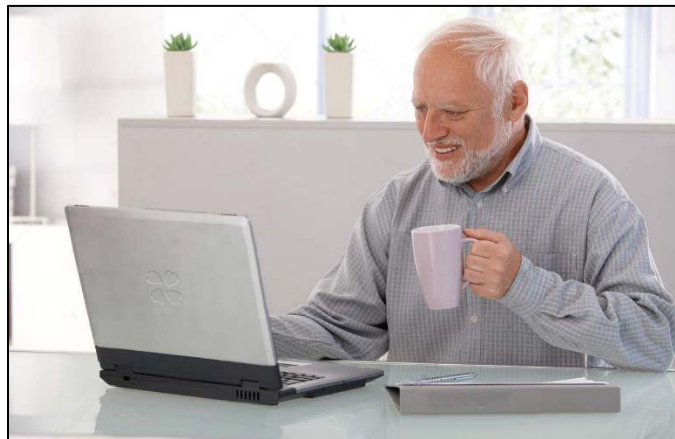
4th Place



Third Place



Second Place



First Place: And who will this happy guy be?

As for the rest of the nine of us who are not in the race for Green **FN 2** October, sit back, settle in, pour yourself a cool one, and get ready to watch the fur fly. It's gonna be real interesting, to say the least.

**STANDINGS THRU WEEK 25
ENDING SEPTEMBER 16, 2018**

| | | | |
|---|----------|---------|-------|
| 1 | Chiefs | 11510.4 | - |
| 2 | Monarchs | 11397.4 | 113.0 |

| | | | |
|----|-----------|---------|--------|
| 3 | Redbirds | 11341.4 | 169.0 |
| 4 | Bums | 11314.3 | 196.1 |
| 5 | Wahoos | 11313.0 | 197.4 |
| 6 | Bears | 11205.2 | 305.2 |
| 7 | Blues | 11017.6 | 492.8 |
| 8 | Cubs | 10891.0 | 619.4 |
| 9 | Skipjacks | 10849.7 | 660.7 |
| 10 | Senators | 10646.2 | 864.2 |
| 11 | Tigers | 10253.2 | 1257.2 |
| 12 | Tribe | 10156.7 | 1353.7 |
| 13 | Bombers | 10038.4 | 1472.0 |

**POINTS FOR WEEK 25
ENDING SEPTEMBER 16, 2018**

| | | |
|----|-----------|-------|
| 1 | Wahoos | 586.0 |
| 2 | Monarchs | 517.4 |
| 3 | Blues | 497.9 |
| 4 | Bears | 487.1 |
| 5 | Tribe | 472.4 |
| 6 | Bums | 470.4 |
| 7 | Skipjacks | 469.4 |
| 8 | Chiefs | 465.3 |
| 9 | Redbirds | 462.9 |
| 10 | Senators | 415.7 |
| 11 | Bombers | 358.0 |
| 12 | Cubs | 345.4 |
| 13 | Tigers | 298.0 |

TOP 25 PITCHERS

| | | | |
|-----|------------------|-----------|-------|
| 1. | Max Scherzer | Tigers | 854.0 |
| 2. | Justin Verlander | Blues | 808.0 |
| 3. | Jacob deGrom | Skipjacks | 780.0 |
| 4. | Aaron Nola | Monarchs | 740.0 |
| 5. | Gerrit Cole | Wahoos | 717.0 |
| 6. | Corey Kluber | Redbirds | 713.0 |
| 7. | Blake Snell | Bears | 689.0 |
| 8. | Chris Sale | Bums | 671.0 |
| 9. | Patrick Corbin | Tigers | 667.0 |
| 10. | Trevor Bauer | Redbirds | 639.0 |
| 11. | Zack Greinke | Cubs | 622.0 |
| 12. | Mike Clevinger | Senators | 609.0 |
| 13. | Luis Severino | Bombers | 608.0 |
| 14. | Carlos Carrasco | Senators | 603.0 |
| 15. | Charlie Morton | Redbirds | 598.0 |

| | | | |
|-----|-------------------|-----------|-------|
| 16. | Kyle Freeland | Bears | 591.0 |
| 17. | David Price | Chiefs | 566.0 |
| 18. | Miles Mikolas | Skipjacks | 562.0 |
| 19. | Rick Porcello | Chiefs | 561.0 |
| 20. | Zack Wheeler | Bears | 558.0 |
| 21. | Mike Foltyniewicz | Redbirds | 537.0 |
| 22. | German Márquez | Chiefs | 532.0 |
| 23. | J.A. Happ | Tribe | 530.0 |
| 24. | José Berríos | Tribe | 527.0 |
| 25. | Jameson Taillon | Bears | 520.0 |

WHO'S HOT -- PITCHERS

| | | | |
|-----|-------------------|-----------|------|
| 1. | Justin Verlander | Blues | 72.0 |
| 2. | Luis Castillo | Blues | 59.0 |
| 3. | Jacob deGrom | Skipjacks | 52.0 |
| 4. | José Ureña | Bears | 49.0 |
| 5. | Mike Minor | Blues | 48.0 |
| 6. | German Márquez | Chiefs | 46.0 |
| 7. | Francisco Liriano | Skipjacks | 45.0 |
| | Jon Lester | Wahoos | 45.0 |
| 9. | Trevor Williams | Monarchs | 43.0 |
| | José Quintana | Monarchs | 43.0 |
| | Chris Stratton | Wahoos | 43.0 |
| 12. | Walker Buehler | Redbirds | 42.0 |
| 13. | Zack Wheeler | Bears | 40.0 |
| | Adam Wainwright | Bears | 40.0 |
| 15. | Shane Bieber | Redbirds | 39.0 |
| 16. | Mike Foltyniewicz | Redbirds | 38.0 |
| | David Price | Chiefs | 38.0 |
| | Blake Snell | Bears | 38.0 |
| 19. | Stephen Strasburg | Wahoos | 36.0 |
| 20. | Reynaldo López | Wahoos | 35.0 |
| 21. | Noah Syndergaard | Monarchs | 34.0 |
| | Jake Odorizzi | Monarchs | 34.0 |
| 23. | Masahiro Tanaka | Cubs | 33.0 |
| | Miles Mikolas | Skipjacks | 33.0 |
| 25. | Mike Clevinger | Senators | 32.0 |

WHO'S NOT -- PITCHERS

| | | | |
|----|-----------------|----------|-------|
| 1. | Marco Estrada | Redbirds | -17.0 |
| | Zack Godley | Wahoos | -17.0 |
| 3. | Austin Gomber | Bums | -14.0 |
| 4. | CC Sabathia | Tigers | -10.0 |
| 5. | Yovani Gallardo | Tribe | -8.0 |

| | | | |
|-----|--------------------|----------|------|
| | Alex Wood | Bombers | -8.0 |
| 7. | John Gant | Tribe | -7.0 |
| 8. | Max Scherzer | Tigers | -6.0 |
| | Brett Anderson | Bombers | -6.0 |
| 10. | Wei-Yin Chen | Tigers | -5.0 |
| 11. | Daniel Norris | Cubs | -4.0 |
| | Chase De Jong | Bums | -4.0 |
| 13. | Trevor Richards | Blues | -3.0 |
| | Corey Kluber | Redbirds | -3.0 |
| 15. | Anthony DeSclafani | Tribe | -2.0 |
| 16. | Vince Velasquez | Tribe | -1.0 |

TOP 25 HITTERS

| | | | |
|-----|-------------------|-----------|-------|
| 1. | J.D. Martinez | Skipjacks | 702.7 |
| 2. | José Ramírez | Redbirds | 698.3 |
| 3. | Mookie Betts | Monarchs | 679.6 |
| 4. | Alex Bregman | Bums | 675.6 |
| 5. | Mike Trout | Wahoos | 663.6 |
| 6. | Francisco Lindor | Blues | 658.7 |
| 7. | Paul Goldschmidt | Cubs | 640.5 |
| 8. | Manny Machado | Blues | 622.6 |
| 9. | Trevor Story | Bears | 621.3 |
| 10. | Nolan Arenado | Bears | 621.0 |
| 11. | Christian Yelich | Blues | 607.4 |
| 12. | Bryce Harper | Chiefs | 606.1 |
| 13. | Javier Báez | Monarchs | 593.9 |
| 14. | Matt Carpenter | Wahoos | 593.0 |
| 15. | Freddie Freeman | Bears | 580.1 |
| 16. | Khris Davis | Skipjacks | 566.0 |
| 17. | Giancarlo Stanton | Bums | 554.6 |
| 18. | Eugenio Suárez | Bums | 547.9 |
| 19. | Scooter Gennett | Senators | 547.0 |
| 20. | Charlie Blackmon | Tigers | 542.8 |
| 21. | Mitch Haniger | Blues | 538.1 |
| 22. | Andrew Benintendi | Redbirds | 536.6 |
| 23. | Rhys Hoskins | Chiefs | 528.4 |
| 24. | Matt Chapman | Skipjacks | 520.7 |
| 25. | Whit Merrifield | Tigers | 519.9 |

WHO'S HOT -- HITTERS

| | | | |
|----|-------------------|-----------|------|
| 1. | Juan Soto | Tribe | 56.5 |
| 2. | Yasiel Puig | Redbirds | 54.5 |
| 3. | Didi Gregorius | Tigers | 53.7 |
| 4. | Adalberto Mondesi | Skipjacks | 46.4 |

| | | | |
|-----|-------------------|----------|------|
| 5. | Whit Merrifield | Tigers | 43.0 |
| 6. | Justin Upton | Bums | 42.0 |
| 7. | Anthony Rendon | Senators | 39.1 |
| 8. | Michael Conforto | Bums | 36.5 |
| 9. | Andrew McCutchen | Senators | 33.5 |
| 10. | Nolan Arenado | Bears | 33.1 |
| 11. | José Peraza | Bums | 32.5 |
| 12. | Justin Turner | Cubs | 32.4 |
| 13. | Mitch Haniger | Blues | 32.1 |
| | Daniel Palka | Bombers | 32.1 |
| 15. | Jurickson Profar | Senators | 32.0 |
| 16. | Edwin Encarnacion | Bombers | 31.0 |
| 17. | Matt Olson | Tribe | 30.8 |
| 18. | Marcell Ozuna | Tribe | 30.5 |
| | Bryce Harper | Chiefs | 30.5 |
| 20. | José Ramírez | Redbirds | 30.0 |
| 21. | Jose Altuve | Redbirds | 29.6 |
| 22. | Alex Gordon | Blues | 29.5 |
| 23. | Ryan O'Hearn | Wahoos | 29.3 |
| 24. | David Peralta | Wahoos | 29.0 |
| 25. | DJ LeMahieu | Senators | 28.3 |

WHO'S NOT -- HITTERS

| | | | |
|-----|------------------|---------|------|
| 1. | Billy McKinney | Bears | -7.0 |
| 2. | Ryan Braun | Cubs | -4.5 |
| 3. | Jonathan Schoop | Bombers | -3.0 |
| 4. | Johan Camargo | Bums | -2.9 |
| 5. | Starlin Castro | Bears | -2.2 |
| 6. | Taylor Ward | Chiefs | -1.7 |
| 7. | Odúbel Herrera | Blues | -1.5 |
| 8. | Rougned Odor | Tribe | -0.7 |
| | Brandon Crawford | Tigers | -0.7 |
| 10. | Daniel Murphy | Cubs | -0.4 |

If there is an odds-on favorite for the crown at this stage of the season, it has to be the wily B.T., who is not only the current leader but has been there before, many times, and knows the heat of a pennant race. In a similar vein, both Magpie and PAwesome are thoroughly battle-tested, having each won multiple crowns and having showed the wherewithal to deal with the jangled nerves of a tight pennant race to the finish. Screech, with one championship, and Tirebiter, with none, are seemingly the underdogs who will have a chance to prove their mettle if they can pilot their squads to a championship. Good luck to all five of them, as they make this a race for the ages.

THE TRIP REDUX

Thanks once more to Itchie for chronicling our 34th Annual Hot Stove League Trip to Kansas City in his amusing little scandal sheet known as *The Jiggernaut*. Once again, he has proven beyond reasonable doubt that he is more than a pretty face with an outsized hankering for fun **FN 3** and copious intoxicating spirits. Interesting that his near PANIC ROOM episode of losing first his cell phone and second the Sunday ducats didn't get a lot of play in his newsletter--must have been a temporary writer's block.

Not much to add to *The Jiggernaut*, it is quite complete. However, there were a few notable quotes from the Trip worth preserving for posterity. Who can put a name or nickname with these famous words from the 2018 Trip:

"How long is the statute of limitations for illicit drug use?"

"If I were you, I would be . . . leaving."

"Let the Big Dog eat."

"Dogs can't make a fist."

"Burt Blyleven had 300+ wins. I am *absolutely* sure of it."

"I'll bet those damn cleaning people took the tickets."

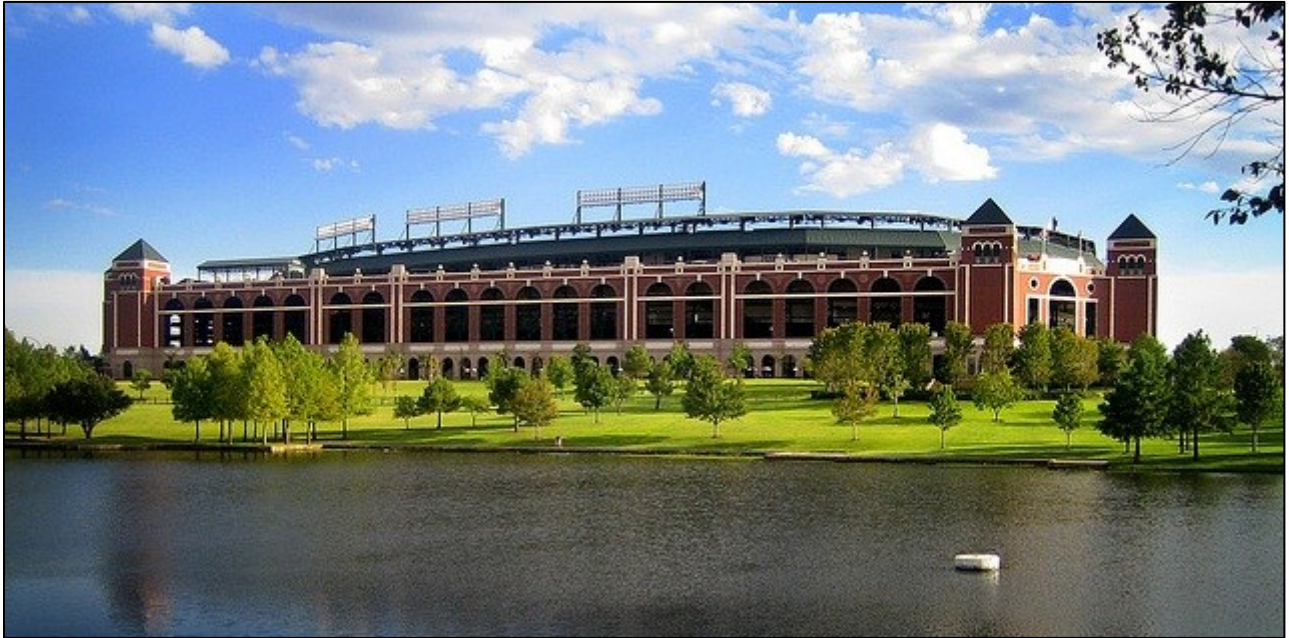
MOBILE SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT REVISITED

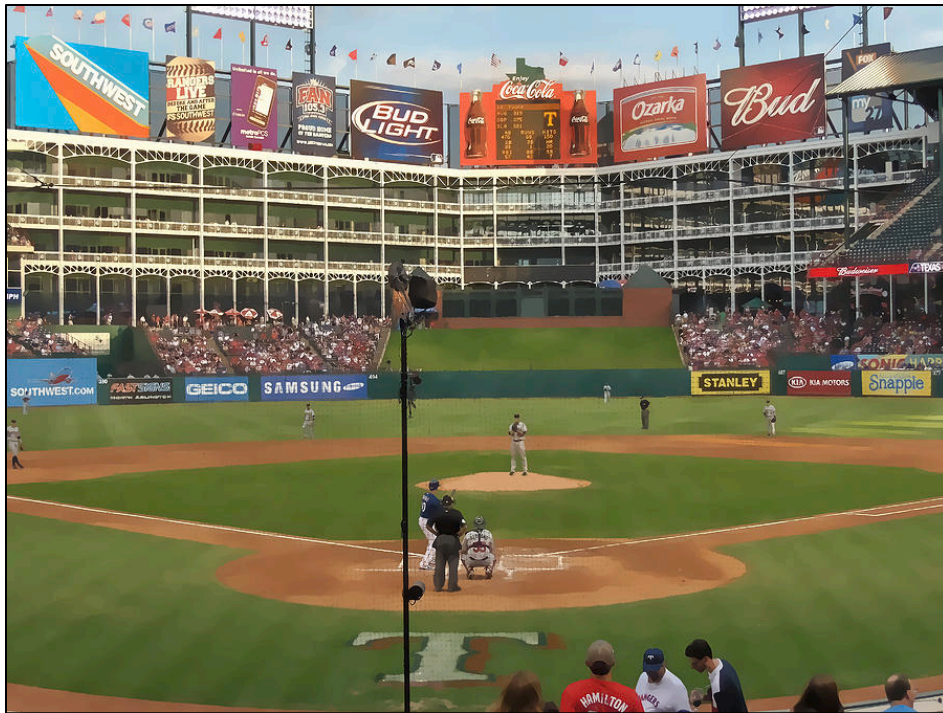
While riding in the lap of luxury aboard B.T.'s Mobile Men's Room, there was a lot of talk about the previous HSL excursion down I-29 when an earlier copy of the rig snapped an axle near Rockport and had to be towed to Mound City for repairs. Credible sources say that the ruts in the interstate surface still were evident on I-29 until just a few years ago, and the exact situs of the near HSL calamity was pointed out by said source on this year's Trip. Once more, B.T. recounted how Itchie (then known chiefly as Sandjigger) was robustly rebuffed **FN 4** by the kindly but circumspect Missourian who agreed to transport certain others to Mound City for aid, assistance and comfort.

There was also much talk about *when* exactly this ill-fated junket took place. If anyone cares to hazard a guess, post it on the Message Board on the website this week. Let's see if anyone can remember, first, the year, then the month, then the day of the week that this junket occurred. The tiebreaker will be the actual date and the Royals' opponent that day. (Only those to whom I have not already given the answers are eligible to compete.)

2019 TRIP

The consensus on the 2018 Trip is that for our 35th anniversary of the league, we shall venture to Arlington to see a couple of Rangers games in the final season of The Ballpark at Arlington. The rationale for this location for the trip are: 1) the last Hot Stove League junket to Arlington was almost three decades ago, in 1990, when we saw Nolan Ryan pitch while seated in the No Alcohol section; 2) quite a number of you have not yet been to The Ballpark at Arlington, and it would be a darned shame for it to be shut down without all of you making it there for a Trip; and 3) BT is driving.





So plan on it. Start salting away those kitchen passes, and get your mind right to participate in the 2019 HSL Trip.



YOU WANT THIS,



NOT THIS.

ON THE ROAD TO: KEIZER, OREGON

While on assignment to Portland late last month, I meandered south down to the Salem/Keizer area and took in a Northwest League contest at Volcanoes Stadium between the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes (one of the Class A farm clubs of the San Francisco Giants) and the Eugene Emeralds. Nifty little ballpark, intimate setting, dedicated fans. My first professional baseball game in the state of Oregon and hopefully not my last. I could spend a month in the Pacific Northwest, so beautiful and so relatively unspoiled.

Oh, yeah. Here's what the Volcanoes' ballpark looks like:

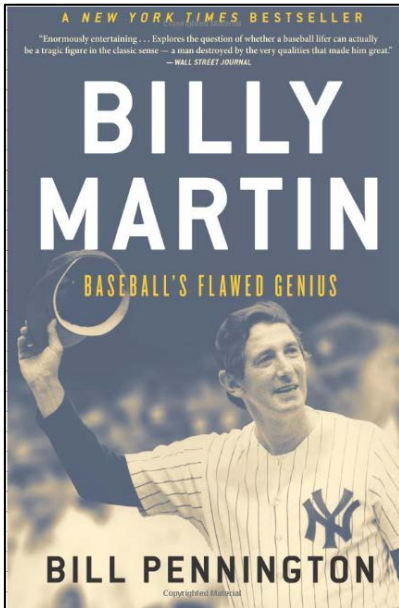


Some of the Major Leaguers who once called Volcanoes Stadium home include:

Adam Duvall
Joe Panik
Brandon Crawford
Buster Posey
Pablo Sandoval
Tim Lincecum
Boof Bonser
Ryan Vogelsong
Francisco Liriano
Joe Nathan

On that particular night, the Volcanoes rallied in the bottom of the 7th to score 3 runs and close the gap to 6-5, but could do no further damage and ended up losing to the Emeralds by that score. Cam Sanders, the 21-year-old son of former Major Leaguer Scott Sanders, and a product of Thibodaux, Louisiana who played college ball at LSU, picked up the win for the Emeralds. Nineteen-year-old Gregory Santos of the Dominican Republic was discredited with the loss, giving up 5 hits and 4 earned runs in only 2 innings of work, worsening his record to 1-5. Eugenio Palma of Maracay, Venezuela, threw 2 perfect innings of relief ball to get the save. Joey Bart of Buford, Georgia, the San Francisco Giants' 1st round draft pick for 2018, went Yard for the hometown Volcanoes, recording his 11th home run of the campaign.

BOOK REPORT: BILLY MARTIN: Baseball's Flawed Genius



I just this week finished the *magnus opus* of an author by the name of Bill Pennington--previously unknown to me--entitled *Billy Martin: Baseball's Flawed Genius*. Wow. I mean, wow. An incredible read about a fascinating force of nature, someone that if you ever met, you would never forget.

Pennington's book begins and ends with Billy's tragic and untimely death on Christmas night of 1989, almost 29 years ago, when a pickup truck owned by Billy but reportedly being driven by his longtime pal, Bill Reedy, missed a turn and struck a concrete culvert directly adjacent to Billy's 150-acre farm/acreage in the upstate New York hamlet of Fenton, New York, near Binghamton. Martin and Reedy were on their way home from a bar after a few pops, and neither of them had seat belts on. Billy broke his neck and died within an hour or so of the accident.

The subsequent viewing of Billy's body in state and then his funeral service at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City drew enormous crowds, more than anyone could remember, as Billy's blue collar faithful turned out in droves to pay their last respects to this beloved and beleaguered five-time manager of his own beloved Yankees.

Pennington reportedly spent thirty months researching and writing this masterpiece, and it shows in the meticulous recounting of virtually all aspects of Billy's 61-year-old life, from his squalid start in rough and tumble East Berkeley, California, as the son of an F-bomb dropping mother and a father who ran off before he was 2 years old; to his playing days for Casey Stengel on the Oakland Oaks of the Pacific League and then the champion New York Yankees between 1950 and 1956, excluding 1954 when he did not play because he was in the service; to his being named the MVP of the 1953 World Series; to his hard-drinking friendships with Mickey Mantle and Whitey Ford, including their infamous Copacabana brawl in Manhattan on May 15, 1957; to his managerial debut with the Minnesota Twins in 1969; to his next job with the Detroit Tigers (1971-1973); to his subsequent stint with the Oakland A's (1980-1982); and to his five different managerial employments with the New York Yankees (1975-1978; 1979; 1983; 1985; 1988).

And as the announcer for the Popeil's Pocket Fisherman says so delightfully, "*And that's not all.*" Just a few of the other great stories in the book about Billy include fascinating stuff such as:

- The fact that he was named after his father, Alfred Manuel Martin, a truck driver for the city of Berkeley, but did not even know this until he was in the 7th grade, having

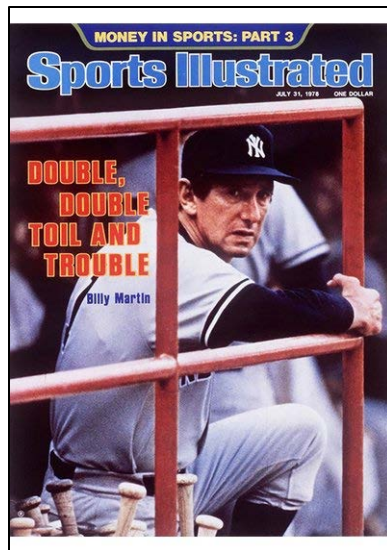
been called "Billy," which came from "bella," which was Italian for "beautiful," during his early days.

- His four different marriages, including a 20-year union to the daughter (Gretchen) of an **Alliance, Nebraska** cattleman (Cyril Winkler), whom Billy met when she was a TWA flight attendant, which produced his only Martin-named heir, Billy Joe Martin, Jr.
- According to his players, when the game started, Billy was always all business, from the moment that he put his foot up on the top step of the dugout, with his hands in his back pockets, his signature pose.



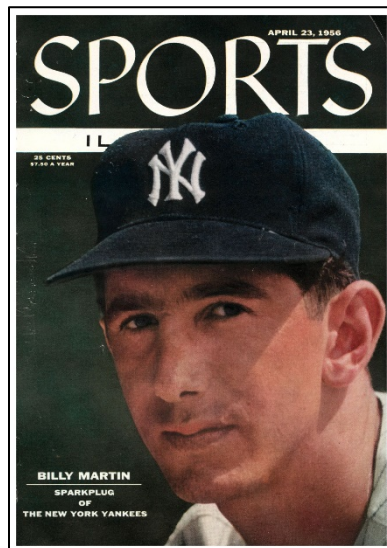
- His dinners with his buddy **Joe DiMaggio** and **Marilyn Monroe**, and the fact that the Yankee Clipper spent a lot of time with Martin when he was a brash Yankee rookie, affectionately referring to him as "the Dago."
- His love-hate relationships with **Reggie Jackson** and **George Steinbrenner**, including his dugout brawl with Reggie at Fenway which was captured on television.

July 31, 1978
Sports Illustrated
 "A Bunt that Went Boom!"
 Read article



- His pure (but manly) love for his favorite catcher, **Thurman Munson**, and his tearful visage while attending Munson's funeral in Cleveland after he died in a plane crash.
- His pseudo fatherly relationship with **Rod Carew** of the Twins, whom Billy encouraged to steal home, and often.

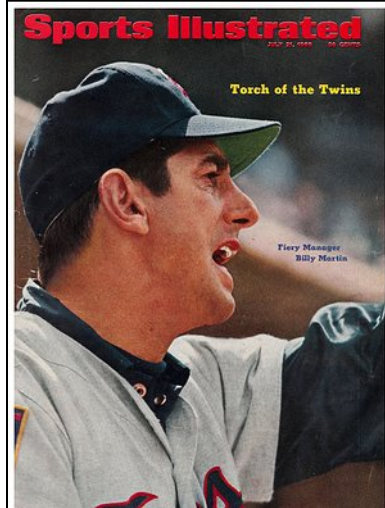
April 23, 1956
Sports Illustrated
 "The Damnedest Yankee
 of Them All"
 Read article



- His mentoring of **Rickey Henderson**, and his prediction to Rickey in spring training (1980) that he would steal home 8 times and have at least 100 steals for the season. (He did.)
- His great affection for Yankee second-sacker **Willie Randolph**, who was so shook up upon learning of Billy's death that he could not even talk, and who served as one of the pallbearers at his funeral.

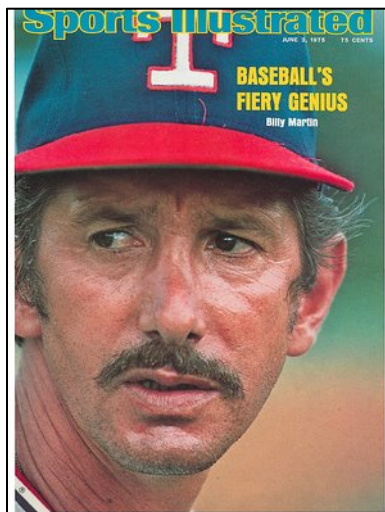
- His close relationship with **Lou Piniella**, who was described as Billy's kind of player because "he smoked, drank, swore like a sailor, and played with a fury." "On the field, he's always got a case of the *red-ass*," Billy said of Piniella. "I like that about Lou."

July 21, 1969
Sports Illustrated
"A Torrid Time for the Twins"
[Read article](#)



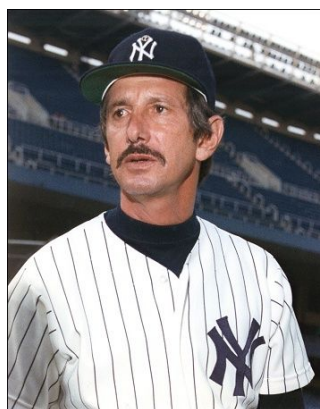
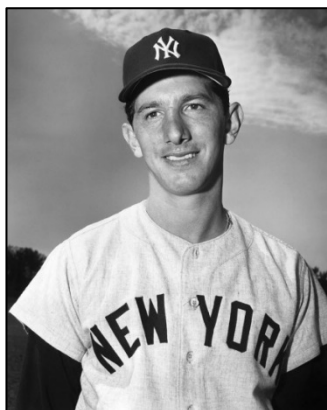
- His four-round Texas death match fistfight with Yankee misfit hurler **Ed Whitson**, which left Billy with a broken wing.
- His infamous punching out of the so-called "Marshmallow Salesman," **Joseph Cooper**, in **1979**.
- His nearly constant IRS tax problems.

June 2, 1975
Sports Illustrated
"Love, Hate
and Billy Martin"
[Read article](#)



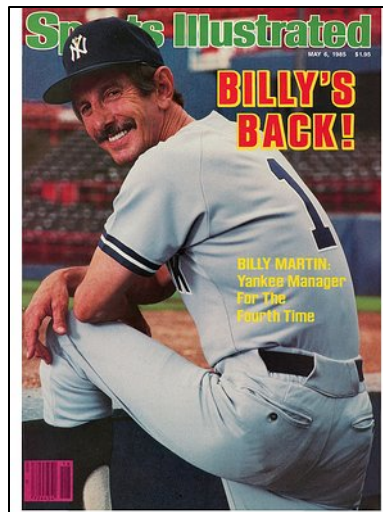
- His marriage to his fourth and final wife, Jill Guiver, a real looker who was raised in prosperity and who was largely responsible for Billy's near estrangement from his family and many friends near the end of his life.

- His relationship with fellow Italian manager **Tommy Lasorda**, who once called him “Banana Nose” during the course of a game and got into a brawl with him, which later led to mutual apologies and a warm and lasting friendship.
- His two plastic surgeries on his nose when he was in the very early years of his career, because of his extreme self-consciousness about his elongated probiscus.



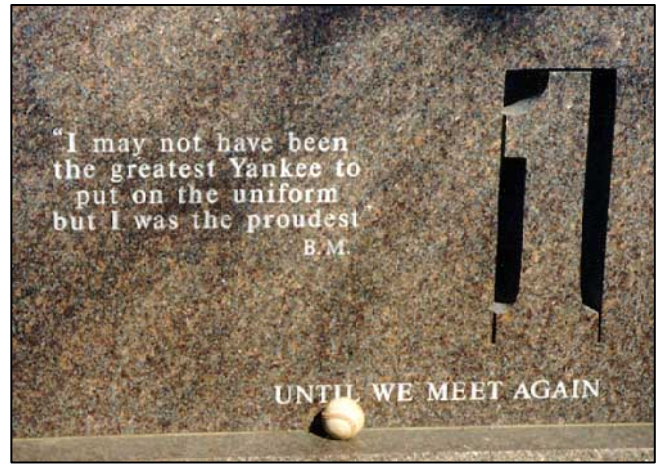
- His friendship with Nebraska native and former Yankee teammate **Bob Cerb**, who was invited to one of Billy’s birthday parties which ended in a brawl.
- His playing career with the Idaho Falls Russets, the Phoenix Senators, the Oakland Oaks, the New York Yankees, the Kansas City Athletics, the Cincinnati Reds and the Cleveland Indians.
- Close friendships with **Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis, Jr., Jimmy Durante** and **Jackie Gleason**, all of whom wanted to see and be seen with this Yankees star baseball player.
- The fact that ballpark attendance skyrocketed virtually everywhere that he managed, due to the excitement that he created with the brand of baseball (famously known as “Billy Ball”) that he taught and managed.
- The reality that although he was beloved and described as a “man of the people who always had a joke and an open bar tab,” his humble roots left scars that made him feel that he was being judged by the same people, and he felt slights everywhere. As his good buddy **Mickey Mantle** said of him, “Billy is the only guy in the world who can *hear* someone give him the finger.”
- The five covers of *Sports Illustrated* that were graced with Billy’s photo.

May 6, 1985
Sports Illustrated
"Oh No, Not Again"
[Read article](#)



- The Elias Sports Bureau came up with a formula to measure the effectiveness of baseball managers which said Billy was the top-scoring manager among pilots with at least 1000 major league games under their belt, averaging 7.45 more wins per season than expected in a 16-year career. The second-best manager averaged 6.38 wins. This led the Elias analysts to declare that "Billy Martin happens to be the best manager in the history of major league baseball."
- Through the end of the 2014 baseball season, there were 22 managers in the baseball Hall of Fame. Billy Martin is not among them. However, as a manager, Billy had a higher winning percentage than thirteen of the Hall of Fame managers, including **Joe Torre, Dick Williams, Sparky Anderson, Whitey Herzog, Casey Stengel, Tommy Lasorda** and **Tony La Russa**. Perhaps because he only had one World Series winner on his resume, the 1977 Yankees, but more likely because of his problems with the press, with umpires, with owners, with alcohol, and with getting into fights, he has been denied enshrinement in spite of his worthy track record.
- And finally, the fact that Billy was buried at the Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Hawthorn, New York, about 25 miles northeast of New York City, about 30 yards from **Babe Ruth's** final resting place. On his tombstone is a quote by Martin from the day that his #1 uniform was retired by the Yankees:

"I may not have been the greatest Yankee to put on the uniform but I was the proudest."



As Tom Verducci put it in his "Praise for Billy Martin" on the book jacket: "Two words of advice: **READ THIS.**"

**NEXT ISSUE OF THE BULLPEN:
THE SHOULDER MIRACLE DRIVE
FROM TORONTO TO CLEVELAND**

Skipper

FN 1 Making sure your cup is firmly in place.

FN 2 As in the 8 crispy green C-notes that our league winner will receive in prize money.

FN 3 For once in his life.

FN 4 As in: "You can come, and you can come, but *that one* (gesturing toward JT) stays."

THIS IS AN ARTICLE FROM THE JULY 21, 1969 ISSUE

A TORRID TIME FOR THE TWINS



SPEAKING SOFTLY AND CARRYING A BIG
BLOWTORCH, BILLY MARTIN HAS HIS
FIRED-UP TWINS IN FIRST PLACE
DESPITE WOBBLY PITCHING. THEY HIT
THE BALL HARD AND THEY NEVER STOP
RUNNING UNTIL THEY CROSS HOME
PLATE

B

illy Martin (see cover) says that since 1962, when he ended his career as a desperado infielder and settled down with the Minnesota Twins as a scout, "I have been an organization man."

But that is an oversimplification. During the period referred to he has punched

not the organization's clock but one of its vice-presidents. He has also come up with the idea of Nuns' Day, played Pygmalion to a one-shot Most Valuable Player, masterminded so many thieveries of home that in half a year one of his thieves tied the record, expressed public reservations about Ted Williams, won Joe Frazier's endorsement as the only man in the majors who knows how to handle his fists, threatened to drown Joe Gordon, put up a tomato crop in cans and set fire, as they say, to the Denver Bears once and the Twins, themselves, twice. Billy the Kid, in short, has not become some faceless, plastic cog.

Martin the Torch first lit up and into the Twins in 1965, when he became their third-base coach, by establishing a special relationship with Zoilo Versalles and provoking the rest of the Twins enough to earn a good deal of the credit for their comeback from sixth place to a pennant. Last year he took over the previously sodden Denver farm club and got it hot, and this year, as manager of the Twins, he has irritated his team up from a dreary seventh place finish behind even the Yankees in 1968 to a crowd-warming command over the American League's Western Division.

Of course a manager, however incendiary he may be, does not account for the whole fire. Harmon Killebrew, who was injured in 1968 and is now threatening to drive in his weight (210 pounds) in runs, started pushing the ball to right field this year for base hits and recommenced pulling it over the fence for home runs, of his own accord. Leo Cardenas has transformed the Twins from the team making the fewest double plays in the league to the one making the second most. Ron Perranoski has saved more games in relief than any other American Leaguer. And Rod Carew is hitting .356, Tony Oliva .339, Cardenas .297, Rich Reese .324 and John Roseboro .283. Martin, in fact, is the only genius in the American League who has at his disposal, among other recourses, at least eight (including Ted Uhlaender and Cesar Tovar) really good-hitting regulars.



ORIGINAL
LAYOUT

On the other hand, he is the only first-place or even second-place manager in the majors who

has no pitcher at all who can be called a stopper, and only two (Dave Boswell, 11-8, and Jim Kaat, 9-6) who can be called regular starters. (Dean Chance, the Twins' top pitcher, is supposed to come back after the All-Star break, so far, an arm injury has kept Chance from being of much value.)

More to Martin's credit, he was instrumental in the acquisition of Cardenas this winter from the Reds. Carew is grateful to Martin for batting tips. Selective platooning has helped improve team hitting. Furthermore, without Martin's inspired guidance the Twins would not be the exciting team they have become.

Last year—at least after they went into decline and always seemed to be too far behind to take chances—the Twins tended to sit back and hope for a game-saving homer. This year they do everything but run up and grab the ball out of the opposing pitcher's hand and fungo it somewhere. Killebrew is a convenient symbol for this new fluidity, having stolen four bases so far this year, after stealing seven between 1954 and 1968. But what goes on out there when the Twins get fancy cannot be represented by statistics. Consider the fifth and eighth innings of the Twins-White Sox game of July 1, before 7,609 souls in Chicago.

The Twins are behind 5-3 going into the fifth. Uhlaender leads off with a home run, and Carew follows with a nice triple. Now, a tremor goes through the crowd, as well it might. "I've always said home is the easiest base to steal," says Martin, "if you time it right. You can get a big lead, because you know the pitcher is taking a windup."

Martin relished stealing home himself, and under his tutelage the Denver Bears developed the stratagem into a specialty. So far, in '69 the Twins have done it eight times, which is eight more times than last year. Once it was Frank Quilici, the utility infielder, scoring from third on a special play set in motion when a runner on first allowed himself to be picked off. That was the second theft of any base in Quilici's four years in the majors. Once it was Tovar against Detroit's Mickey Lolich. On that play Carew went to sleep and stayed on second base. He atoned by stealing third and then home in the space of Lolich's next three or four pitches. Six times in all it has been Carew, who already has tied the American League season record held by Bobby Roth and Ty Cobb and is only one shy of Pistol Pete Reiser's major league mark of seven.

The time is ripest with a right-hand hitter at the plate, because he can stand in there until the last moment and block the catcher. The runner has studied and timed the pitcher's delivery, so that he knows exactly when to take off. He slides so as to catch the one exposed corner of the plate with his right foot. Carew is 6 for 6 (8 for 8 counting spring training), and in every case the run

has been important, or seemed so at the time. Only once, the last time, did he go without a signal. Killebrew was at bat and fortunately heard Carew coming just in time to restrain himself from hitting him into short left field. Afterward, Martin told Carew never to choose such a situation again.

To return to the game in Chicago: although nobody is out and Oliva and Killebrew are the next two hitters, Wilbur Wood of the Sox is pitching out of a stretch to hold Carew on. "That takes something away from the pitcher," says Martin. "At least it takes away some of his deception." It also makes it hard for Carew to catch Reiser. He confines himself to bluffing, as Oliva pops out. But when Killebrew taps to the mound, Carew has somehow got such a jump that he beats Wood's throw to the plate. Killebrew gets an RBI and is safe on a fielder's choice, but the play has been virtually a double steal, of home and first. Then Reese hits his second home run in two innings, and after a walk Martin brings in Tovar, the best overall base runner on the team, to pinch-run.

While Roseboro is at bat, Tovar steals second—on a pitchout—and then third. After Roseboro pops out, Cardenas comes up, and pretty soon Tovar breaks for home. He has it made, but the pitch hits Cardenas, sending him to first and Tovar back to third. Pitcher Dick Woodson is up. White Sox Catcher Don Pavletich, a seasoned receiver, is so rattled by Tovar's fits and starts that he keeps dropping pitches. Finally, the third strike to Woodson gets away from him entirely, and Tovar, going on the pitch, crosses the plate. Unfortunately Woodson dawdles and is thrown out to end the inning, no doubt to get himself chewed out.

"A man will do something wrong," says Quilici, "and Billy gets so wound up in the game he'll get up from the bench and chew him out from his toes to his teeth right there." Anyway, four runs and a lot of fun on three hits.

Cisco Carlos sets the Twins down in order in the sixth and seventh, but Roseboro leads off the eighth with a single and goes around to third on Cardenas' single. Now ordinarily a 30-year-old man on first and a 36-year-old catcher on third are not an intimidating pair. But the White Sox appear to be uneasy. Carlos throws a pitchout, then a very high ball. Finally, Cardenas breaks

for second, and Pavletich cocks his arm, cocks it again and inexplicably throws a soft grounder toward the hole between third and short. Cardenas is safe at second, Roseboro holds. Carlos then tries to pick Roseboro off third and throws the ball away. Roseboro scores, Cardenas goes to third. The suicide squeeze figures to be on. That is the only kind of squeeze Martin believes in. Woodson, however, grounds out, bringing up Uhlaender. At last, Cardenas breaks for the plate. If Uhlaender doesn't bunt it on the ground, Cardenas is dead. Uhlaender bunts it just right. Two runs on two singles. No other team in baseball can turn beating Chicago 10-5 into such an experience.

But then no other team is managed by a man who once made an alltime great hair-raising catch on a pop-up just to the right of the mound. The Yankees' pitcher and first-baseman were somehow reluctant to get involved that day in the 1952 World Series with two out and the wind blowing and four Dodgers rounding the bases at once, but Martin, as far away as he was from the ball, just could not stay out of the action. Now, he refuses to sit back and trust his big batting guns to overpower the other side.

And when someone asks him a question, he cannot be discreet. Take the question about Ted Williams a few weeks ago. Martin said (as he recalls it now), "He was the greatest hitter I ever saw, but as a second baseman I didn't have any respect for him, because he never slid into me. On a double play he'd go out of the baselines. It's nothing personal. But if the truth is a crime, then this country is in trouble."

Earlier in the year, when asked at a luncheon in Cleveland about Joe Gordon's managing of the Indians in 1959, he replied Joe didn't do a good job—he "let personalities enter in"—and benched Jim Piersall, Vic Power and his second baseman, named Martin. Manager Martin added that he thought Gordon was doing a good job this year in Kansas City, but that angle was not played up in the press, and when the Twins came to Kansas City in the last week of June, Gordon told a reporter that the visitors were handicapped by their "young, outspoken manager. Martin is too immature in some of his ways."

But Martin continued to speak out the next day, and so the feud became the most enjoyable of the year. Most of the byplay was relayed between the Minnesota and Kansas City benches by eager reporters, so there is no one authoritative account, but Martin says it all began when he shouted across the field to Gordon in the opposing dugout, "Hey Joe, you're too outspoken." It ended with Martin inviting Gordon on a fishing trip, and then recalling that he and former Twins Manager Sam Mele went fishing once, Mele fell in, and Martin had to pull him out by the hair. It would be hard, Martin noted, to save the bald-headed Gordon that way.

Day-to-day Martin is not nearly so lighthearted. Whenever he thinks someone has done wrong, Martin tells him. "A lot of veterans don't like to be told about little things," observes Quilici. "They figure they've been around and they know when they do something wrong. But Billy believes in telling them anyway." Roseboro, one of those who does not care to be nagged, says playing for Martin "is not the easiest job in the world, because he wants everything just so. But as long as you're winning, you don't give a damn how hard it is."

An important point. Martin brashly told everybody what they were doing wrong when he was playing for the Yankees, and they liked it, because they were winning and he was helping. When he went on to other teams, all of which were losing, he was unpopular. After he left Detroit, for instance, Al Kaline was quoted as being relieved that "we don't have that pop-off Martin, talking about pennants."

On the field Martin mixes freely with his players, fielding pregame grounders and joking in his rather high-pitched voice, but sometimes it is possible to sense the fine line he treads, by nature, between being provocative and being provoking. It is hard to imagine his ever becoming venerable. The "Dead End Kid" who fought his way up seems to abide in him still—a fresh, awkward recruit, innocently determined to be the best Marine possible, covered over by a hard but semitransparent layer of drill instructor.

"Billy was always stuck with the label of a kid," says Quilici. "He would tell people to do things before he was manager, and they'd think he didn't know what he was talking about."

Yet Martin says he was resolved to hold on to his job as third-base coach for the security. But his wife Gretchen talked him into taking the Denver job—she says she knew managing was what he really wanted to do. "When he said he wanted to go to Denver," says Twins President Calvin Griffith, "I told him he was a damn fool. He was valuable as a coach, and I had no idea he'd ever be our manager. His biggest fault was his temperament. [As late as 1966, he hit Vice-President Howard Fox in the eye.] But he learned to control it. I went down there and watched him manage, and I liked what I saw."

Martin bought his first home in 1962, in suburban Richfield near the Twins' park, and he spends his scant free time there wrestling with his 4-year-old boy Billy Joe, growing eggplant and tomatoes (which he had to can himself one year when Gretchen was sick) and working around the house. "He's one of those people who just have to be doing something all the time," says Mrs. Martin, a Nebraskan and former airline stewardess. When the Twins lose, she says, "I don't even try to console him. I'm sure I couldn't."

"She's actually got a bad temper," Martin says happily. "She's the one who gets mad all the time around the house. But she's a very level-headed, intelligent woman, and a very pretty one. We've been married going on 10 years, and I couldn't have picked a better girl."

Undoubtedly, then, he is more settled personally than in 1955, when his first wife left him saying you "can't stay in love with a newspaper clipping." And he appears to have channeled his popping-off instinct into a good technique for handling men. He coaxed Versailles in '65 into the best year of his checkered career, Martin says, not by being solicitous, but by giving him hell carefully and away from everyone else, so as not to hurt his pride.

"The day after he chews you out," says Quilici, "he'll sit down and talk it out with you, explain it, and you'll know where you stand. And he'll play you again in the same situation."

On a recent sweltering day in Kansas City, Carew was slow to cover second, and the resultant stolen base contributed to Boswell's being knocked out of the box. Boswell came into the dugout tearing his shirt to shreds, shouting and waving in the direction of Carew. It was an unseemly show, but Martin understands temper. He talked it out with Boswell and then told Carew what the situation was and what he'd done wrong, and eventually the air was clear.

Another time Martin went out to Boswell, who hates to leave a game, and asked him if he was tired. Boswell admitted that he was, and Martin took him out. "After the game I told Boswell, 'Now you've come of age. Now you're interested in the ball club.'"

" 'You know, Billy,' he told me, 'you're the first man I've ever told the truth to.'"

"Talk about something rewarding....," concludes Billy Martin.

Sports Illustrated may receive compensation for some links to products and services on this website. Offers may be subject to change without notice.

A part of the Sports Illustrated Network Copyright © 2018 Time Inc. Sports Illustrated Group. All Rights Reserved. Use of this site constitutes acceptance of our [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy \(Your California Privacy Rights\)](#). [Ad Choices](#) | [EU Data Subject Requests](#)

OH NO, NOT AGAIN

FIRED SEVEN TIMES AS A MANAGER,
BILLY MARTIN WAS HIRED FOR A
FOURTH TERM BY THE FLOUNDERING
YANKEES

BY STEVE WULF



THIS IS AN ARTICLE FROM THE MAY 06, 1985 ISSUE

own the rabbit hole we go. Once again, George M. (for Madness) Steinbrenner III has gotten the harebrained idea of hiring Alfred M. Pesano (a.k.a. Billy Martin) to manage the New York Yankees.

D

Steinbrenner fired Yogi Berra on Sunday, 16 games into the season, and hired Martin for the fourth—or is it the fifth?—time. The Yankee owner unfortunately fell two games shy of breaking his own major league record for impatience at a season's start, set on April 25, 1982 when he fired Bob Lemon and replaced him with Gene Michael, whom he had once before fired in favor of Bob Lemon.

Some people might be happy to know that Steinbrenner could hardly sleep on Saturday night. He came to his difficult decision while visiting Culver (Ind.) Military Academy, of which he is a graduate and trustee. Steinbrenner is something of an expert on discipline, and he was upset with what he saw as a lack of such on the part of the Yankees. After Saturday's loss to the White Sox, New York was 6-9 and in last place in the AL East. On Sunday morning he phoned Martin, who was advance scouting in Texas and asked him to re-re-return. Martin said yes.

"George told me he was making a change and he wanted me," the new manager said Sunday night. "He said, 'I want you to push them, get them back on top.' And I said, 'George, if that's what you want, I'm ready.' "



ORIGINAL LAYOUT

When general manager Clyde King, who once replaced Michael, only to be replaced by Martin, checked in with Steinbrenner during Sunday's game in Chicago, he was told to can Yogi. Berra had no idea, because after the game, which the Yankees lost 4-3 on a bases-loaded walk in the ninth, all he could talk about was the bad umpiring that had cost the Yankees the game. But 15 minutes after the loss, King brought the bad news.

King went into Yogi's office and closed the door. Then Joe Safety, the team's p.r. director, began distributing a four-paragraph statement. Some of the players took a peek at the press release, and the reactions were immediate.

Don Baylor, the DH and the leader in the clubhouse, kicked over a heavy metal garbage can, muttered, "Bull——, bull——, bull——" and stormed into the shower room. Pitcher John Montefusco stood with his mouth open in the middle of the clubhouse and said, "I don't believe it." First baseman Don Mattingly cursed Steinbrenner loudly and repeatedly and went into the trainer's room, where he hurled a metal container against the wall. The only player who seemed happy about the move was outfielder Rickey Henderson, who set the stolen-base record, under Martin while with Oakland. But Henderson tried to hide his smile from the glares of Mattingly, Baylor and Ken Griffey.

Later that night Martin said he didn't care about the players' reactions: "Guys were upset about Yogi and that's O.K. Yogi was their friend. Well, I've been Yogi's friend for 35 years, and the reason he had to leave was that they put him in last place. I don't want any friends like that. I want winners. If they don't like me, then they can't come over to my house for spaghetti."

Berra took the news well. "I had an inkling," he said, "so if it happened now or later, what's the difference? I still think this is a good club, and they're getting a good manager in Billy. George is the boss; he could do what he wants. Me, I'm going to play some golf."

Steinbrenner had assured Berra that he would be the manager the entire season, but he said the same thing to Lemon in '82. Yogi was lucky to last this long into the year. After the Red Sox blew away the Yankees in the first three games of the season, Steinbrenner talked to Earl Weaver about Weaver's managing the Yankees. Weaver apparently would rather play golf.

The last straw may have come on April 22, when only four Yankees on the roster showed up at the Stadium for a voluntary workout on an off day. Steinbrenner thought the workout should have been mandatory. "I'm damned disappointed in the turnout, especially after a team loses two of three to the Cleveland Indians, who aren't exactly the Detroit Tigers," he said. "But Yogi's running the club, he's the manager so it's fine with me."

A storm watch was put into effect, and when the rumor that Martin might come back floated down to a veteran Yankee, that player said, "You screw people like Steinbrenner does and you get yours eventually. We're fed up. Everybody likes and respects Yogi. The other guy...well, when we lose, Yogi doesn't hide in his office. He stays at the door of the clubhouse and pats us

on the back."

Not only were the Yankees losing, but the Mets were winning—fans, as well as games. New Yorkers were falling in love with Gary Carter and Dwight Gooden while Henderson was recuperating in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. from an ankle injury. When Henderson finally showed up, at that infamous Monday workout, his first words were, "I don't need no press now." He made his official debut in a series against the Red Sox. A total of just 71,615 fans were at Yankee Stadium for the three games, in which Henderson went 2 for 15, left 16 runners on base and had one error and no steals.

Says one AL East general manager about Martin's return, "It's a clear indication that George is overcome by the Mets' taking publicity away from him. George can't stand the Yankees not being the preeminent team in New York, so he feels he has to do whatever he can for publicity." Sure enough, the New York papers gave Martin's fourth coming royal treatment, far overshadowing the play given the Mets for moving to within a half game of the Expos in the NL East with a thrilling, 18-inning 5-4 win over Pittsburgh.

When Martin talked to SI senior writer Ron Fimrite on Sunday, he could hardly contain himself—not about the team's prospects, but about the rules he planned to impose on the Yankees. "They'll wear coats and ties while traveling," he said. "They have to be in three hours after a night game, or by midnight after a day game. No golf or public appearances on game days. I'll have additional rules on drug abuse. All radios must have headsets. When I call a practice on an off day, attendance will be mandatory. I'll have a system of fines: \$500 for a first offense, \$1,000 for a second, \$1,000 and a suspension for a third."

As for actual changes on the Yankees, Martin gave his coaches new signs for the hit-and-run and suicide squeeze. He may move Griffey up to second in the lineup behind Henderson and move Willie Randolph down. He would like to get Dave Righetti back in the starting rotation, but he realizes his relief pitching would be nothing without him. Martin wants another lefthanded hitter to DH, which should make Baylor even happier. Martin will also take coach Lou Piniella under his wing and groom him as a replacement. When will Piniella replace Billy?

"In a couple of years," said Martin.

In a way, the players have themselves to blame for Martin's return. They had a manager whom they liked and respected, and when they had to win for him, they didn't. When they scraped up only four guys for a workout, they probably lost their freedom.

One by one, the Yankees filed into Berra's office after they heard the news. Yogi's son Dale was the first one in, of course. Then came Randolph, who has seen 10 of these changes in 10 years with the team. Winfield gave Berra a big hug. Mattingly, the most upset of all, left the office with tears in his eyes.

Later, Dale talked about what his father had told him: "He said, 'You have your future ahead of you. Mine is behind me. I've had my career. Now I want you to go have a great career. Don't let this get you down. You've known Billy since you were a kid. Just play hard, that's all he asks. I'll be watching you.'"

"He's a great man, my father. He didn't deserve this."

Sports Illustrated may receive compensation for some links to products and services on this website. Offers may be subject to change without notice.

A part of the Sports Illustrated Network Copyright © 2018 Time Inc. Sports Illustrated Group. All Rights Reserved. Use of this site constitutes acceptance of our [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy \(Your California Privacy Rights\)](#). [Ad Choices](#) | [EU Data Subject Requests](#)



THIS IS AN ARTICLE FROM THE APRIL 23, 1956 ISSUE

THE DAMNDEST YANKEE OF THEM ALL



INFIELDER BILLY MARTIN, A MAN OF
JAUNTY TRUCULENCE, IS CASEY
STENGEL'S PRIDE AND JOY

BY PAUL O'NEIL

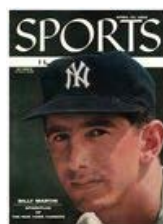
If it would help the New York Yankees win a ball game, Billy Martin would stand on his hands at second base and catch grounders with his teeth. He would also be first to light a match if there seemed the slightest likelihood that a Yankee pitcher could throw better with his pants on fire. Billy can imagine nothing quite so hideous as getting beaten at baseball—and since he has come to consider the Yankees as a sort of extension of his own roomy personality, defection by his teammates scars his soul almost as deeply as his own infrequent failings on the field. He does not hesitate to criticize their sins.

Billy is the bee which stings the Yankee rump, the battery which fires the Yankee engine,

thefellow who makes the Yankees go. In his six years of perfecting this role he has been roundly booed in almost every park in the American League, has engaged in personal combat with a list of opposing players too long to enumerate and has hustled in to the mound to tell so many eminent Yankee pitchers how to improve themselves that thousands of baseball fans still wonder why his teammates have not hanged him in the clubhouse long since. But Billy has also made his fellow toilers love him—although in some cases it is the sort of affection they might feel for a pet jaguar—and as the 1956 season opens this week it is difficult not to conclude that he is the most valuable as well as the damndest Yankee now extant, and that New York, spurred by his jaunty truculence, will resume its heavy-handed domination of the American League.

If the Army had not netted Billy and put him into khaki during 1954 and 1955, so bullish an estimate of his worth might well sound like romanticism. Baseball giants like Mickey Mantle, Yogi Berra and Whitey Ford are not to be lightly dismissed; and during spring training, despite a horrid list of cripples, the Yankees have shown power, pitching and whole droves of talented players both young and old. But it is hard to ignore the things that happened to the Yankees when Billy was absent. They lost the American League pennant in 1954 and were wavering perilously late last summer when he got back to New York. Billy minced no words. "I had three cars when I went into the Army," he cried at a secret meeting of Yankee players, "and now I haven't got even one. I'm broke and you're playing as though you're trying to lose. We gotta get into the Series." The Yanks won the pennant and, though Billy had played in but 20 games, voted him a full share of Series money—a truly stupefying act of financial largess.

A SPIRITED FELLOW



ORIGINAL
LAYOUT

"Billy," says Casey Stengel, "never went to the university, but he is an intelligent baseball player. All big league players are supposed to know baseball and most of them do. But Billy doesn't have to think for two minutes to do the right thing. He has sense enough to tell other men what to do. He is a spirited fellow and doesn't loaf. He can play second base and third base good. He

can play shortstop in the big leagues. He'll make the double play. If you want a bunt, he'll bunt. He can hit singles, doubles, triples and home runs. If you want him to play a new position, he doesn't say, 'No, it will hurt my work.' He will say, 'Yes.' So you understand he is a valuable fellow."

Billy is a good baseball player. He is a team man, first and last. He is shrewd. He is a baseball perfectionist. Though he weighs but 165 pounds, stands 6 feet and looks almost bony in his uniform, he is a powerful man. He is curiously built. He has a modest neck (15½-inch collar), a narrow waist (31-inch belt) and a long torso. But he has big shoulders, big arms, thick wrists and heavy thighs and calves. Though his big league batting average is only .263 he is a ferocious fellow at the plate when there are men on bases. None of this, however, really explains Billy. "We're all pros here," says Mickey Mantle, his old roommate. "We all want to win. Everybody on this club is good. But Billy gives it something extra. He makes you play harder."

The extra is the imperious Martin personality. Billy is easy to like and easy to forgive; he is generous, he is entertaining, and among his intimates he is a friendly, boyish and charming fellow. When Billy smiles—which is often—he is not only hard to resist but curiously handsome despite the big nose and jug ears which opposing bench jockeys have subjected to so much raucous description. Ego flickers away inside Billy as steadily as a pilot light in a gas oven. He is a creature of moods and is easily bored; he drums on tables and stuffs nickels into jukeboxes to assuage the horrors of inactivity. But he speaks gently and politely. When Billy blows his stack, onlookers generally react as though they were witnessing some fascinating natural phenomenon like the eruption of Krakatoa. Billy is a man of genuine temperament; he is governed by inward pressure rather than malice, but he must reign or burst.

Baseball is Billy's life, but it is easy to visualize him in other roles. Billy would have been perfectly at home among the hot-blooded bravoes of Cellini's Italy, or among the hot-blooded unionists who organized Big Steel. Give Billy a million dollars and a sports car and you would have a millionaire playboy worthy of any cigaret ad. Billy is persuasive. Give him three walnut shells and a little elbow room and he would soon have your money. Wherever Billy goes, admirers spring up like magic. Billy rewards them with a ducal approbation. When he anchored himself at New York's Edison Hotel this spring after the Yankees had departed for Florida (thereby getting his salary raised from \$17,000 to \$20,000 a year) bellhops, waitresses, guests and room clerks offered him incessant encouragement. When Billy is at home in Berkeley, Calif. his mother serves no vegetables. Billy hates them. Al Faccini, manager of Berkeley Square, his favorite home town bar, stands ready to lend him a new Buick day or night.

Billy is hurt to the quick by his reputation as a troublemaker. "When I was in the Army I was in the Square one night," he said, "and a fellow came in and sat next to me. He said: 'You know who comes in here all the time?' I said, 'No,' and he said 'Billy Martin.' I said: 'No kidding—you know him?' He said, 'Sure, I went to school with him.' Hey, this guy was 40. He had gray hair. 'What's he like?' I asked him. 'Billy?' he says. 'Billy is a big jerk!' I didn't get mad. I got a kick out of it. I let him buy me a lot of drinks. But baseball's different. The Bible says you should turn the other cheek. I think about it a lot. I'll turn the other cheek off the field. But God couldn't have known anything about baseball. In baseball you've gotta be aggressive."

As a second baseman—and consequently a fellow who has to endure the charges of behemoths intent on breaking up the double play—Billy on one occasion was moved to warn off a base runner who hadn't batted for 27 years. He sat next to Ty Cobb at a San Francisco banquet for old time baseball players and, on being asked for a few words, rose and said: "I've got a lot of respect for the old players. But I'll tell you this, Mr. Cobb. If I'd been playing when you were playing you'd only have come into second high on me once. After that you wouldn't have had any teeth!" Said Billy, moodily, later: "I just don't like guys who try to spike you on purpose. Let them try and I'll throw it at them. Can I help it if their heads get in the way?"

Billy says, "People think I'm conceited about baseball. But if you don't believe in yourself on a bad day nobody else will. I think I'm better than the pitcher when I go to the plate. I hope I'm a good winner but I won't be a good loser. I holler at the umpire if I think I've had a bad call. People blame me for being confident. A guy wrote me a letter from a different hotel in Los Angeles everyday during the last Series. They all said, 'I hope you lose.'"

"A couple of years ago Phil Rizzuto got a letter from some crackpot—the fellow said he was going to shoot Phil during the ball game. I didn't want him to worry when he was playing so I talked him into trading uniforms with me. Mine has No. 1 on the back and everybody sees it. After batting practice Phil came up and said, 'Give me back my uniform. I'd rather get shot than get booed like this.' " Billy added: "They boo me. What are they booing me for? I'm trying to win."

THE REAL TOUGH LOOK

"Look—I get in fights. I never started a fight in my life, but God hates a coward and I've never run away from one. I'll tell you this—if I get in a fight I don't want anybody stopping it. I'm not afraid of these big guys. Weight doesn't mean anything. When I was 19 a fight manager out in Oakland wanted me to turn pro. He wanted to manage me. I'd have been a good fighter. I could make the middle-weight limit and I can punch harder than most middle-weights. The only thing I worry about in a fight is that I get mad. I get vicious. I don't want to stop punching. I don't think much of baseball players who cop a Sunday and then somebody stops the fight. They walk around being cocky. I try not to get into fights but I can't be a coward. So I get booed." Billy reflected a moment. "I look up at the crowd," he said grandly, "and I pity them." Suddenly he grinned delightedly. "Sometimes I give them the real tough look when I go to the dugout. You know—under the eyebrows. It makes them jump."

Billy is not a man to nurse a grudge, and his blackest moods cannot long resist the gaiety which boils around inside him. Life is an exciting affair to Billy—and to those around him. This seems natural enough. Excitement was his birthright; he comes from people to whom noisy drama was the breath of life. Billy, despite the Anglo-Saxon ring of his name, is of Portuguese-Italian blood. "I'm a Dago," he says happily. "I'm proud of being a Dago."

Billy's mother, a tiny, voluble, hot-tempered and dramatic woman, talks about the family background with great gusto. Her father, Nicholas Salvini, was an Italian fisherman who came to San Francisco in the 1870s. Her mother was a picture bride whom the fisherman imported, sight unseen, from Italy. "He was 35 then and he was bald. Mother was just a young girl. She took a look at him and started crying and said, 'Oh, I don't wanna marry that old man.' But she did. She was nuts about him. They lived in this same old house here in Berkeley—they came over before the earthquake.

"He used to go away on fishing boats for six months—Alaska, China, I don't know where he went. When he was coming home she used to run up the American flag on the flagpole and send me over to San Francisco to get whiskey. I was just 12 or 13. There was a little train that ran down from Oakland to the ferry. We called it in Italian the ciuciuminca train. I'd take it and go to Martinelli's in San Francisco and get two gallons of whiskey—\$1.50 a gallon in those days—and bring it back. He liked whiskey for breakfast. When he came in the house he'd have \$200, \$300—a fortune. He'd have a lot of silver and he'd come in and throw that money all over the house. What a big time when he came home!

"I got married when I was only 16. That was to Pisani, my first husband. I had Frank, that's Billy's oldest brother. Then I married Martin. That Martin! Let's face it, we didn't get along. He left me. Billy's real name is Alfred Martin—I named him after his father, but Martin never came back. God, how I hate that name Alfred. Billy's grandmother used to call him Bellino—in Italian that means pretty. The kids thought it was Billy, and I liked Billy too so that's what he's called. Billy was a 10-month baby. I never thought I'd have him. If I hadn't fallen into the coal bin, I don't think I'd have had him yet; I was hanging up clothes, and I tripped and fell and got all bruised up. The next day I had Billy—right in the room Billy uses now."

Billy's boyhood was one of family warmth, Depression poverty and baseball. "My grandmother," he says, "she used to bite my hand when I was bad, and when I sneaked in late she'd bang me on the back of the head and make me say my prayers in Italian. But she always said: 'You will be a baseball player.' "The old two-story frame house—now fitted out with a gleaming kitchen and a display of kimono-clad dolls Billy has brought his mother from Japan—sits a few blocks from the shore of San Francisco Bay at Point Isabelle. His mother's third husband, a placid and kindly Canadian-born truck driver named Jack Downing, sometimes took him duck hunting, and Billy and his friends built rafts and endlessly searched for crippled birds which other hunters had missed.

"But we were broke," says Billy. "There were five of us kids. When I went to Berkeley High School I never went to a dance. I didn't have the right clothes. My high school letter—that's what I had." Billy's real alma mater was James Kenney Playfield, a neatly turfed municipal diamond one block from home, and Billy's real education involved but one subject: baseball. He learned in a hard school. To most of the men and boys in his neighborhood, weekend games at the playfield were the very meaning of existence. Semipro players, big leaguers, coast leaguers, men in their 30s and hopeful teen-agers gathered there to choose up sides. The rivalry was fierce—the big leaguer who did not try was benched. Billy asked and gave no quarter, and by the time he was a bony, hot-eyed kid of 16 he had caught the eye of Red Adams, trainer for the Oakland Acorns.

Adams took to smuggling him into the Oakland ball park, putting him in an Oakland uniform and sending him out to warm up with the team. "I felt funny," Billy says. "I was too bashful to

ask to bat. But Red told Casey [Stengel then managed the Acorns] that I was going to be a good player. Casey rasped: 'Who—that scarecrow?' " But one day the next summer Casey consented to hit Martin some ground balls. "Casey," says Billy, "would glare at me and grit his teeth and cock his head over to one side—and whack—he'd drive me a hot one. I'd catch it and give him the limp wrist and throw it back."

That was the beginning of a mutual admiration society. Billy's truculence kindled a spark in the Old Roman's heart—where it burns hotly still. Billy thought Casey was a great man. "If Case told me to run through a brick wall—I mean if he said, 'Billy, I think you can do it,' I'd give it a try. Case doesn't kid me and I never lie to him. I think of Case as a strong fellow, even if he's old. When I was with Oakland I got in a fight with a fellow and who do you suppose was the first guy out there swinging?—Case. You respect Case. Of course I needle him. Hey—I think I'll tell Case —'Case, gimme a piece of your oil wells, Case. I deserve it, Case. Look at my scars, Case!' "

SINK OR SWIM

Oakland signed Billy when he was 17 and shipped him off to sink or swim with Idaho Falls in the Pioneer League. "I didn't even have a pair of good pants," he says. "I didn't have a suitcase. They gave me some money to buy a pair of slacks. I snatched a mitt from the play field and got on the train. I was lonely. The other players went into bars after the games but they wouldn't let me in. I was too young. But I got even. There was a real pretty girl who was a waitress in the restaurant where we ate. All the players were trying to date her, but she wouldn't have any part of them. But one day I heard it was her birthday and I left a dollar on the table at breakfast. She said, 'You forgot a dollar.' I said, 'No, that's for your birthday.' She said, 'Do you mean that?' I said, 'Sure I mean it.' The next day when we were leaving on the bus she came out and said, 'Here's something for luck,' and gave me a big kiss. Did those players hooraw me! They thought I was pulling a fast one on them. I wasn't, though. I wasn't very fast with girls in those days. I was afraid of them."

It took only three more years to fabricate Billy Martin, New York Yankee. He went to Phoenix in the Arizona-Texas League in 1947. Unmarried players live in a Quonset hut inside the ball park and the team traveled enormous distances (to El Paso, Tucson, Juarez, Bisbee and Globe-Miami) jammed into two station wagons and with their gear bouncing along in trailers behind. At one roadside stop the cars halted beside a turkey farm. Billy was over the fence in a flash. "Oh, that turkey was tough," he says. "I didn't know they were so big and tough. But I finally got him wrapped up in my uniform and I got back into the station wagon with him. Arkie Biggs, the manager, was driving. Just before he stepped on the starter there was a silence. The turkey

started fighting again. It made a noise: 'gurble gurble.' Arkie turned around and said, 'What's that?' Nobody said anything. He turned back and then the turkey got his head out of the sleeve and gurbled again. 'Put him back!' Arkie hollered. I said, 'Gosh, he's already scratched me up.' I was bleeding. But I couldn't keep him. We could have cooked him up in the Quonset hut."

Billy was triumphant, however, on the diamond. He batted .392, hit safely 230 times (a record), stole 31 bases, led the league in doubles (48) and in runs batted in (174). Casey called him back to Oakland, where in 1948, as the only youngster among a crew of hardbitten veterans, he helped win the Oaks's first pennant in 21 years. One night he was spiked badly. "There was blood all over everything. They got me back in the dressing room and called a doctor from the stands and gave me a belt of straight whiskey and four big guys held me down and he sewed it up. I didn't holler." Oakland might be called the Brooklyn of the West, and there was a certain Dodgerishness about the old Acorns. Their scarred wooden grandstand caught fire regularly during games and their customers were raffishly critical. But Billy fitted in. He was ridden mercilessly by every bench jockey in the Coast League. His aplomb was unmarred. And he learned the arts of the infielder.

"I had an awful time playing third. I've got a good arm, but I'd just scoop up the ball and fire to first any old way. I didn't get set. It was awful—the ball would curve. I knew I had to change. I used to stand around with a mitt on my hand and practice grabbing the ball out of it with two fingers. Thousands of times. I got to throwing with my arm in close—snapping it like a catcher. Second base—I had to learn to make the double play. I always made it my way, though—I'll listen to advice but I only take advice that seems right to me. A good second baseman will make the double play even if he gets a bad throw. You've got to be in position for anything. I don't get mad if a base runner comes into second and tries to break up the play—he's supposed to do it. Sometimes I'll let him hit me, but I'll stand so he has to hit my left leg. He'll knock me down, but I throw off my right and so I get the ball away. You've got to know the runner. Is he fast? Is he slow?

"You have to study the batter. You've got to be where he's going to hit. You've got to get the jump on the ball. If we've got a fast-ball pitcher throwing, I'll play a right-handed batter to swing late on him. I'll play out in the hole toward first. But after six innings when the pitcher's getting

tired, I'll play him to pull—I'll be near the bag. You've got to watch the batter's feet—if he shifts on me, I'll take off. There's a million things. I never go out to the bag but what I look at the grass to see if it's wet—wet grass or high grass makes the ball slower and you've got to jump it faster. I look at the flags to see if the wind has changed. I look at the sun so I'll know just where it is—every inning. I don't wear dark glasses. I look up for fly balls out of the corners of my eyes—with my head turned away a little. That way you don't get blinded—but you have to know where the sun is all the time. You've got to learn to play in the summer when you sweat so much the bat slips in your hand. You've got to play when you're hurt. I broke a blood vessel in 1953, and my hand turned black and I couldn't bend two of my fingers. But I put a pad of foam rubber on my hand and wore a golf glove backwards and I batted pretty good."

MESSAGE FROM ON HIGH

Casey Stengel went to the Yankees in 1949. Late that year the Yankees bought Billy. "Nobody told me," says Billy. "I was playing second in a night game at Oakland and an advertising blimp came sailing over the ball park. It had an electric sign around the bottom—you know, with lighted letters that ran round it spelling out news events. I looked up and it said: 'BILLY MARTIN SOLD TO YANKEES.' I was kind of mad when I found out the rest. Oakland was paying me \$9,000. When I went to the Yankees the next year they only gave me \$6,000. But I knew I'd make it in New York. I never had any doubts about it."

Billy jauntily banged a double off Red Sox Pitcher Mel Parnell in his first time at bat as a Yankee; it was a big inning and he came up again with the bases loaded and hit a single. "Pretty good way to break in, kid," said Joe DiMaggio. Billy—although few of Billy's teammates had the grace to concede it at first—had just taken over the team. "They tried to ride me," says Billy. "Johnny Lindell—guys like that. All the other rookies would grin and act as though they liked it, but I gave it back to them. I found out some of them couldn't take it so good. After a while they left me alone." When Casey batted him eighth in the lineup he screamed: "What is this, a joke? Next thing you'll be batting me after the groundskeeper." Billy was in the Army for five months in 1950 and 1951. He broke his leg in two places during spring training in 1952. But to say that he did not burst upon the American League like a basket of Roman candles, or galvanize the loftiest of his teammates, would be an understatement of fact.

Billy tangled with Red Sox Outfielder Jim Piersall ("He invited me under the stands and I hit him a couple and knocked him down"), he tangled with Detroit Catcher Matt Batts, he tangled with Clint Courtney of the Browns and before the dust had settled Allie Reynolds, Joe Collins, Gil McDougald and Billy Hunter of St. Louis had all joined in. "If you let anybody get the best of

you in this game," cries Billy, "you're done."

Billy, in two words, took charge. "Somebody had to do it," he says. "The Yankees haven't had a captain since Lou Gehrig—maybe they don't want to pay the extra \$500. But I get mad when we're losing. I've just got to do something. I talk to Case about it too. I don't charge around getting in people's way. Take a pitcher like Vic Raschi. Vic bore down on every pitch. If you touched Vic when he was pitching it was like touching a red-hot iron. I'd never say a word to Vic. But pitchers that coast—I get mad. Allie Reynolds grinned at me once when a guy hit a double off him. I went up and said: 'You don't look so funny. He hit a double, didn't he?' "

"Billy," says Casey Stengel, "is usually right on the field—and players don't resent a fellow like that who is right. He helps them." Says Gil McDougald, with admiration: "Billy wants to win so bad that he'd run out and hit the pitcher over the head with his bat if that would help anything." Billy does the next best thing; he delivers in the pinches—and never more dramatically than in the 1953 World Series when he batted .500 and tied the alltime record of 12 hits. He treasures the memory of the last of them. He came to the plate in the ninth inning of the seventh game with the score tied 3-3, with two men on, and hit a single, while thousands cheered, to beat the Brooklyn Dodgers.

"We'll win it again this year," he says. "You'll see. They're all tough when they play us, but we'll be tough too. You know, I'm broke after two years in the Army. I liked the Army fine—I marched and mopped like anybody else. I was a killer. A rifleman. I shot the Tommy gun. I met a lot of nice fellows in the Army. I'm sore at the draft board. If they threw me out of the Army the first time for having five dependents, why did they put me back again with the same five—my mother, my father, my sister, my ex-wife and my little girl? Because I got my name in the paper and they didn't have guts enough to stand having people ask why I wasn't in the service. I'm glad to serve my country—but why didn't they just leave me in the first time? It's tough on a baseball player. Right now I'm 27 years old and I've got nothing in the world but my name and my daughter. But it's funny—I don't think about all that much. What I think about is winning the World Series.

"When we lost it last year," he says, darkly, "I cried. I cried. I hated myself for doing it but I couldn't help it. I should have hit late in that last game. Podres had been throwing me change-ups all day. But I should have known he'd throw me fast balls when the light started getting bad. I didn't think. I went into the back room after the game. I didn't want the fellows to see me. I hit the lockers with my fists but I couldn't stop crying. I don't want to feel that way again."

THIS IS AN ARTICLE FROM THE JULY 31, 1978 ISSUE

A BUNT THAT WENT BOOM!



FOR BUNTING WHEN MANAGER BILLY
MARTIN ORDERED HIM TO SWING AWAY,
REGGIE JACKSON WAS SUSPENDED,
AND SO BEGAN A CHAIN OF
TUMULTUOUS EVENTS THAT
CULMINATED IN MARTIN'S RESIGNATION

BY LARRY KEITH

It ended for Billy Martin on Monday afternoon. He would no longer have to deal with George Steinbrenner, his least favorite owner. He would no longer have to pencil the name of Reggie Jackson, his least favorite player, on the New York Yankee lineup card. And he could forget the run he wanted so much to make at the division-leading Boston Red Sox, but that hardly mattered. Martin's stormy—but successful—three-year stint

with the Yankees was over. And, predictably, the fiery manager had gone down in flames as if he were fulfilling a death wish.

Martin's resignation came less than 24 hours after he had lambasted Jackson and Steinbrenner in Chicago's O'Hare airport while the Yankees were waiting to board a plane to Kansas City. "The two men deserve each other," Martin told reporters early Sunday evening. "One's a born liar, the other's convicted."

The diatribe followed Jackson's return to the Yankees that afternoon after a five-day suspension and Martin's discovery of what he believed to be an attempt by Steinbrenner a month ago to trade him for Bob Lemon, then the manager of the White Sox and now Martin's replacement in New York. Although both Steinbrenner and Bill Veeck of the Sox denied there was any "direct communication" between them on the subject, Martin felt the trade, whether it was seriously contemplated or not, was an indication that Steinbrenner intended to go back on a promise he had made several weeks before that Martin would be the Yankee manager at least for the rest of the season.

Martin leaves New York having won the last two American League pennants and the 1977 World Series. But he was also embroiled in a number of bitter controversies involving Steinbrenner, Jackson and other Yankee players. Thus, despite New York's accomplishments on the field, Martin was forever on the verge of being fired. That he was finally done in by his own hand this time suggests that he had taken all he could stand. Resignation had been in his mind for some time, but he had intended to wait until the end of the season "because I wanted to give the Red Sox a run."



ORIGINAL LAYOUT

That the Yankees finally appeared to be making a run at Boston was one of the reasons that on Saturday Martin had been laughing, joking, telling tales of life in the bush leagues. He seemed happy. But before Sunday's game he was dark, sullen. It was as if the arrival of Jackson had

changed not only his mood but also his whole outlook on life. Jackson and Martin do that to each other.

Unlike last year, when the Yankees bickered and won, this season, until Jackson's suspension, they had maintained their equilibrium in the clubhouse but fallen in the standings. And nobody had suffered more during the team's slide than Martin. In various ways, Steinbrenner, Jackson, fate—and the Red Sox—all worked against him. He got sympathy and drew his strength only from the New York fans, with whom he remained immensely popular.

"Injury after injury have broken us down," Martin argued. Steinbrenner agreed, but he suspected that poor preparation and conditioning in spring training were as much to blame as plain rotten luck. And he criticized Martin for that poor preparation.

It would not be fair to say that Martin was in better spirits while Jackson was away simply because Jackson was away. After all, the Yankees did win four straight games after Reggie's departure, and another on Sunday when Jackson was in uniform but did not play. And Martin did catch 10 bass during a fishing excursion in Minnesota. But certainly Jackson's absence was a factor. Martin's decision to suspend him was endorsed by Steinbrenner and supported by his players. Martin had seldom enjoyed that kind of unanimous backing.

The incident that caused the suspension occurred in the 10th inning of the Monday, July 17 night game in New York against Kansas City. Jackson tried to bunt when he was told to hit away, and the Yankees eventually lost the game. But the incident involved more than that. It was a confrontation of giant egos and willful spirits. And it came at a time that was particularly bleak for both men.

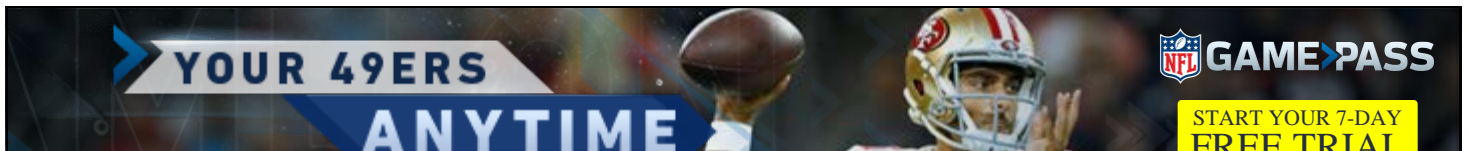
In the preceding days Martin had been faced with published reports of his own declining health and with the specter of the Yankees settling in for the rest of the season as a fourth-place—perhaps even a fifth-place—team. Sore shoulders, pulled hamstrings and hairline fractures have put 10 Yankees on the disabled list this year, and put unknowns like Damaso Garcia, Brian Doyle and Mike Heath on the roster and, frequently, in the starting lineup. In recent weeks the ill health or ineffectiveness of Pitchers Ed Figueroa, Catfish Hunter, Don Gullett, Dick Tidrow and Andy Messersmith had forced Martin to give work to guys named Bob Kammeyer, Larry McCall and Dave Rajsich. It is axiomatic in baseball that a team cannot win championships without strength up the middle, and that truth had certainly applied in New York's case.

Centerfielder Mickey Rivers, Second Baseman Willie Randolph, Shortstop Bucky Dent and four starting pitchers had been on the disabled list one or more times each. And the regular catcher,

Thurman Munson, had suddenly taken over Jackson's old spot in rightfield, principally to save wear and tear on a body badly bruised from working behind the plate.

Martin had been ailing—he has a rebellious liver—right along with his team. Precisely how serious the condition is remains something of a mystery, but there is no doubt about two things: Martin's psyche could never take too much losing and his liver can no longer take too much drinking.

Jackson, of course, could never take too much Martin. During July, when he had not been hitting all that well, Reggie had been shuttled in and out of the lineup, yo-yoed up and down the batting order and finally banished from rightfield to become, in essence, a part-time designated hitter who played only against righthanded pitchers.



A year ago Martin tried to duke it out with Jackson during a game in Boston. On the night of the bunting incident, Jackson seemed likely to provoke another round of fisticuffs. When Munson led off the 10th with a single, Martin flashed the bunt sign to Third-Base Coach Dick Howser. Howser duly relayed the message to Jackson. That was fine with Reggie. Never mind that he had not executed a successful sacrifice since 1972 or that he had felt insulted when Martin had asked him to lay one down in the past—this time he wanted to bunt. Jackson had even told Munson in the on-deck circle that he planned to do it when Munson got on base. "Don't get ahead of yourself," Munson had responded. "I've got to get there first." And Munson did, lashing his hit to centerfield. So, after taking the first pitch for a ball, here was Jackson trying to bunt and failing.

In the dugout, Martin changed his mind. Third Baseman George Brett had moved in. Martin to Howser to Jackson: hit away. But Jackson, who later said he misread the sign, tried to bunt again. Foul ball. Howser walked in toward the plate and summoned Jackson to him. "Billy says to hit away," said the coach. "I want to bunt," said Reggie. "Billy says to hit away." "I want to bunt," said Reggie. Al Hrabosky threw his next pitch, Jackson's hand slipped up the bat and he popped a bunt into foul territory for an automatic out.

Martin was furious. "That's the maddest I've ever been in my life," he says. Jackson knew he was in trouble. He walked to the bench, sat down, laid his glasses beside him and waited for Martin to arrive from the other end of the dugout. During their 1977 set-to in Boston, when Martin pulled Jackson out of a game for failing to hustle, the two had exchanged words, and Martin had launched a roundhouse punch that missed. Martin should have been fired, suspended, fined—something—but he wasn't. So what prevented Martin from attacking Jackson this time? "No player has ever challenged me the way Reggie did," he says. "I know what I would have done in private. First I'm a man, then I'm a manager." On this occasion, Martin the manager controlled the worst instincts of Martin the man. He sent Coach Gene Michael to tell Jackson that he was out of the game.

After Kansas City won in the 11th inning Martin went into a rage, smashing a soft-drink bottle against his office wall and heaving his clock radio into the hall. Then, following a conference with Steinbrenner and Yankee President Al Rosen, an indefinite suspension was announced. Jackson's term subsequently was set at five days. The suspension cost Jackson \$9,273 in salary, but to get their money the Yankees must await Jackson's personal check, because he receives his annual \$332,000 stipend in advance. Martin had hoped to contribute Jackson's payment to a pension fund for old ballplayers.

Why did Jackson disobey his manager's orders? "That's the mystery," says Martin. "He'd been working hard all year and didn't have a chip on his shoulder. We had talked the day before, and I had told him that I liked him no matter what he had heard and that I would give him a chance to play rightfield some."

Martin's soothing words had come too late and rang too hollow for Jackson. He knew where he stood with his manager. Forget that they had embraced after the Yankees won the 1977 World Series; they did not mean it. To Martin, Jackson was George's boy, not one of Billy's. In Martin's mind, Jackson was also a player with more money than talent, more flash than consistency. Realizing this, Jackson had gone to Steinbrenner the day after hearing Martin's friendly words and laid his gripes out: he was unhappy playing in New York; he did not consider the criticism of him by Martin and Rosen to be fair; he wanted the respect and treatment that his hard work and productive performance deserved. Indeed, despite his .189 average and solitary homer in July, Jackson was first or second on the Yankees in virtually every important offensive category—RBIs, runs, home runs and stolen bases—and had cut his errors from seven at this point last year to three this season.

Steinbrenner listened to Jackson for an hour and a half. He is Jackson's friend, so he gave him

sympathy. But he is also Jackson's boss, so he gave him the facts. "I don't think you're a very good outfielder," Steinbrenner said. Clearly Steinbrenner agreed with Martin that Jackson should be used primarily as a DH, a job Reggie considers the lot of the aged, inept or infirm.

From Steinbrenner's office, Jackson went down to the clubhouse. He was quiet and sullen. He says now that he had felt all day that something was about to happen but he didn't know what. In the 10th inning he found out.

Afterward, Jackson pleaded innocent to outright defiance, and after coming off suspension he detailed his reasons for bunting. "I had not been playing regularly and I wasn't swinging the bat very well," he told a mob of reporters in Chicago. "I thought under the circumstances that bunting was the best thing I could do. Even after Howser spoke to me, I didn't realize exactly what the consequences would be. I didn't consider it an act of defiance, and I don't feel I did anything wrong. I would even do it again if I didn't know what the consequences would be. For that reason, it would have been better if I had struck out swinging and avoided the hassle."

Although Steinbrenner believes that one of Jackson's motives for bunting might have been to help the team, he also thinks that defiance was a more compelling reason for Reggie's action. Perhaps the best explanation comes from young Outfielder Gary Thomasson, a recent New York acquisition from the A's. "I tried to understand how it happened," Thomasson says. "I said to myself, 'I'm Reggie Jackson. I've done a lot in baseball and signed my last contract. Why would I get overly excited or overly depressed about things?' Then I decided the answer was ego or pride. Sometimes ego and pride can be your worst enemies."

The Yankee locker room is a storehouse of ego and pride, a lot of it bruised these days. Jackson says he is not sure if he wants to play next year or where, but at least he is leaving open the possibility of another season in New York. Other Yankees have no hesitations. Munson wants out. Roy White wants out. Sparky Lyle wants out. Figueroa wants out. Cliff Johnson wants out. Jim Spencer wants out. Several of them are likely to be accommodated. Martin probably wanted out, too, but he had not foreseen his departure coming as early as it did. Steinbrenner had guaranteed Billy his job for the rest of the season, but two weeks ago, when he learned about

Martin's liver condition, he offered him a lucrative and graceful way to retire immediately. Although Martin turned down this offer, he was almost certainly aware at the time that only two things could have prevented his firing at the end of the season: the Yankees pulling out the division title, which was highly unlikely, or Martin quitting before Steinbrenner could give him a pink slip.

It seemed eminently logical that if Jackson stayed, Martin wouldn't. If Martin stayed, Jackson shouldn't. Steinbrenner's preference was for Jackson, because George and Billy always seemed to have too much in common to stay together. In the opinion of each, the other is untrustworthy, is disliked by the players and, unkindest cut of all, is "not a true Yankee."

How can anyone say Martin is not a true Yankee? He sitteth himself on the right hand of his idol, Casey Stengel. "I came here three years ago to help put the Yankees back on top," Martin said three days before his resignation. "I've done that. It was nothing but fun in '76, and it was nothing but aggravation last year, but we did it. When I leave here, I'll think about all my years with the Yankees and I'll cry."

Nobody was crying for Jackson last week. The Yankees played well and cut four games off Boston's lead. They also nosed past the Orioles and back into third, five games behind the hot second-place Brewers. And Third Baseman Graig Nettles said it sure was peaceful with Jackson gone.

Back home in Oakland, Reggie was enjoying his first summer vacation in years. He went out to dinner, saw a movie (Damien—Omen II), tinkered with his cars and listened to people tell him what he should do next. His attorney, Steve Kay, suggested a brief statement of contrition on ABC. Reggie said no. He did not want to talk to anybody. But still it upset him to read so many negative reports about himself in the papers. The president of the Confectionery Division of Standard Brands, the company that manufactures the gooey REGGIE! candy bar, flew to Oakland and conferred with Jackson. Standard Brands does not want Reggie to make any more enemies than necessary, and the company also wants him to stay in New York. High visibility equals lots of candy bars sold. Sales last week were way up, probably because the furor surrounding Jackson coincided with the kickoff of the advertising and promotional campaign for the bar. No, no, it's not what you think. The sales push had long ago been scheduled for mid-July.

Last Saturday night, after he arrived in Chicago, Jackson watched the Yankee game on his hotel-room television set. He knew what it would be like tomorrow, he said. The reporters, the

cameras, the crowds, all wanting to get a piece of him. And then Martin came on the tube, to reflect on the victory, to praise his battling team, to say that New York was still not out of it. Maybe it's because nobody asked, but not once did he mention Jackson's name.

But when Jackson returned to the Yankee clubhouse Sunday and refused to admit to reporters that he intended defiance, there was no way that Reggie's name would not come to Martin's lips. "I'm saying shut up," the manager said at the airport. "We don't need none of your stuff. We're winning without you. We don't need you coming in and making all these comments. If he doesn't shut his mouth, he won't play and I don't care what George says. He can replace me right now if he doesn't like it."

Forty-five minutes later, Martin resumed his outburst, throwing in his double-barreled "liar" comment for good measure. Although he did not mention Steinbrenner by name, the reference was obvious because the owner had pleaded guilty on Aug. 23, 1974 to one count of conspiring to violate the campaign-funding law and to another count of attempting to cover up the donations.

Steinbrenner, who was at his home in Tampa, was shocked when he learned of the outburst. He responded by sending Rosen to Kansas City to meet with Martin. The manager had made his decision to quit even before Rosen arrived and even though he denied he made the comments attributed to him. Regardless of what Martin may have said—and The New York Times' Murray Chass, who covered Billy's outburst, is one of the most reliable reporters around—there can be no doubt that he was thinking along the lines described in newspaper reports. He made similar comments to a SPORTS ILLUSTRATED writer in his clubhouse shortly after Sunday's game.

Martin's tirade brought into the open his dislike for Steinbrenner and Jackson, even though his relationship with the two men had improved this year. And it also jeopardized Martin's income for the next year and a half, because there is a special provision in his contract stating that it can be terminated if Billy openly criticizes Steinbrenner.

The owner believed the resignation was for the best—for Billy, for the club and for himself. Certainly it may have been best for Martin. Yankee management had indicated that if Martin coupled his resignation with an apology, he would still be paid by the Yankees until the end of the 1979 season. As late as Sunday afternoon, just a few hours before the airport blowup, Martin had said, "I've got to be careful what I say about George. I need the money." He said that speaking out would cost him his salary, which is about \$80,000 for 1979.

Whether Martin picks up his 80 grand, plus his salary for the remainder of this season, depended on how Steinbrenner viewed Billy's resignation statement that "I'm sorry about some things that were printed. I did not say them." Steinbrenner accepted Martin's denial, instead of seeing it as stonewalling, as he well might have. Certainly the walls of Martin's kingdom had come crumbling down around him. A few seconds after making his denial, Billy was overcome by emotion. The man who minutes before had opened his press conference by proudly saying, "I'm a Yankee," tearfully left the room, a Yankee no more.

Sports Illustrated may receive compensation for some links to products and services on this website. Offers may be subject to change without notice.

A part of the Sports Illustrated Network Copyright © 2018 Time Inc. Sports Illustrated Group. All Rights Reserved. Use of this site constitutes acceptance of our [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) ([Your California Privacy Rights](#)). [Ad Choices](#) | [EU Data Subject Requests](#)

LOVE, HATE AND BILLY MARTIN

THE MAN WHO TURNED THE TWINS,
TIGERS AND RANGERS INTO WINNERS
IN SPITE OF A BRAWLER'S IMAGE THAT
JEOPARDIZED HIS CAREER
CONFESSES TO A 'DEEP LOVE-PRIDE'
IN BASEBALL. BUT HE HASN'T
MELLOWED, SO CROSS HIM AT YOUR
PERIL

BY FRANK DEFORD



2, 1975 ISSUE

It was 18 years ago this spring that the Yankees got rid of Billy Martin. He was a bad influence, they said. Nobody saw him land a punch at the Copacabana nightclub when a bunch of his teammates got involved in a scrap with some fellows celebrating the end of their bowling season, but it was Martin's birthday party, and since he had a record for

I

brawling, much of the blame landed on him. Then, the next month, he was in the middle of a big scuffle with the White Sox at Comiskey Park, and was thrown out of the game. Three days later the Yankees sent him to Kansas City for Harry (Suitcase) Simpson. In the clubhouse Mickey Mantle cried. Casey Stengel told Martin, "Well, you're gone. You're the smartest little player I ever had."

In the cheerless cavalcade of the playing career that followed, Martin lasted no more than one season with any team: Detroit after K.C., then Cleveland, Cincinnati, Milwaukee and Minnesota. The late Jimmy Cannon wrote the foam about Martin that all the baseball people blew off their beers: "Now to Cincinnati in another league. And Billy Martin is positive he has come home at last. He always is."

A few years later, when Martin got a chance to manage, he won a division championship for the Twins and was fired, all in his first season. He won a division title with Detroit, but couldn't last out another year. Then Texas. He was Manager of the Year last season. This is his second full season with the Rangers. "It's been a truthful relationship here with everybody," says Martin, a man who prizes truth. "I have a real foundation here. I think I'll stay here for the rest of my career." So now Texas. And Billy Martin is positive he has come home at last. He always is.

The problem is not just that Billy Martin gets in fights and becomes a pugnacious embarrassment for more civil men. Were he merely truculent he would have long since been cut loose from baseball. The problem is that he is a terribly complicated personality—not necessarily sophisticated-complicated, more ironic-complicated. He is a kind of Sir Walter Scott knight errant cast loose into this strange modern world of compromise and convention, where duels are frowned upon and damsels in distress can be put on waivers. Despite all the Donnybrooks, Martin is a man of sweet sentimentality. He believes in absolutes—some might say simplicities—and he is nurtured by the fundamentals of chivalry, which he introduces into conversation as readily as he might order breakfast or argue with an umpire. Words such as loyalty, honor, truth, love, belief and pride surface regularly; and in his universe, where such absolutes rigorously figure, we should not be surprised that Martin also finds liars, backstabbers, cowards, bullies and other blackguards lurking about, anxious to do him in. When in fact they do cross him, he does the only thing left for him to do in his well-defined world, which

is to pop them in the chops or, where bosses are involved, to supply the lexical equivalent. Frank Lane, a man never known for being demure, admits that Martin is in a league all his own. "When I've talked like he does," Lane says, "I've always made sure I was talking on a five-year or seven-year contract."



ORIGINAL LAYOUT

Yet Martin also possesses powerful qualities of organization, inspiration, evaluation and attention to detail that make him nearly peerless among managers. Counting a minor-league season managing Denver in 1968, he has taken four teams with losing records and turned them instantly into winners. This bespeaks more than a touch of genius. Since his abrasiveness draws attention, he also sells tickets, which managers and coaches almost never do, whatever the sport. The enraged citizenry of the Twin Cities and Detroit responded with classic organized American hysteria to his firings—printing up buttons and bumper stickers and indignantly registering their opinions on radio call-in shows. So we can be sure there will always be a home for Billy Martin.

Wherever he goes, Martin wants things his way, and he is not bashful. While it is politic for most baseball managers to utter platitudes about the managerial dependence upon the athletic talent at their disposal and to allow that they can really only do a little bit here and there—a suicide squeeze twice a season, that sort of thing—Martin believes that the manager should be the force about which the team revolves. Copernicus, you may recall, had similar public-relations difficulties with the Establishment over what revolves around what. "A manager can change the outcome in anywhere from 20 to 50 games," Martin proclaims heretically.

Twenty to 50? Why, you're talking about one out of almost every three games.

"Sure," says Martin. "That is, if he's the kind of guy I am, who handles everything himself. I'm not talking about the managers who just make out the lineup cards. I call everything myself. Infield in, halfway, back; all the pitchouts; whether to throw through or not. I call a lot of the pitches, too. There's someone out there looking at me before every pitch."

Charley Dressen failed to impress his players with a similar view of self-eminence: "Stay close, boys, and I'll think of something." But while Martin has quipped that the secret of his profession "is to keep the five players who hate you away from the four who are undecided," he has really been quite popular with his minions. What he did learn from studying Dressen—who once, furious and fully clothed, followed the naked Martin into a shower to get the last word—is that confidence need not be confused with majesty.

But if Martin picked up this or that from Dressen and some of the others he played for, Stengel, his patron, is the lone Influence. Indeed, on the days when a breeze blows, so that Martin's dark blue Ranger jacket billows in back above where he jabs his right hand into the rear pocket, a man can take off his glasses, and it seems once more that it is the bandy-legged old man going out to lift Lopat for Page, not merely his favorite protégé about to lift Bibby for Foucault. Lift: that is precisely the word. Any hired hand can change pitchers, replace them, signal to the bullpen; but a man does not truly become a manager until he can lift a pitcher. Billy Martin lifts pitchers.

He juggles lineups as well, promiscuously, if not capriciously. He gambles, always forcing the action (as he played). "The manager who runs scared usually gets beat," he declares. He much regrets that the American League permits the designated hitter because that makes managing easier, and with his confidence and skills Martin would rather have everybody in with him a little deeper.

Baseball intelligence seems to have infiltrated Martin by osmosis. When he was 15, 16 years old he was 5'5", 125, mostly ears and nose, playing sandlot ball in the off-season in Berkeley with major-leaguers. He roomed with Cookie Lavagetto while he was still in his teens. The first time Mantle saw Martin, The Kid was telling Frankie Crosetti, a sacred font of keystone wisdom, how it was you made the double play. From Stengel he may have most obtained the psychology of leadership.

"Stengel showed me how you don't even have to mention names to get discipline. That's good." Pause. "Stengel...." Martin puts the name off by itself, rolling it in pleasant reverie over the taste

buds of the mind. "Yeah, there was this time he called a team meeting. 'Now, first, you lovers,' he began. 'You single guys who are out chasing something all night and you married guys who are telling the girls you're single.' We thought he was gonna stop there. But he went on. 'And you drinkers'—Case was getting some guys more than once—I'm the only one who is gonna stay up all night drinking.' Everybody was sure he was through then, but he went on. 'And you churchgoers and milk-shake drinkers. Now, it's fine to have some of you guys on a team, but if you don't start showing me some guts out there, if you don't play hard enough for me, I'm going to make every one of you go out and get a double Scotch and a woman.' Oh, he got everybody that time, Casey did. He didn't mention a name, and he got the whole team."

At the batting cage Jim Fregosi, a Ranger infielder, says, "You know, one of the things Billy can do, he can get his point across without naming names. I remember one time last year some pitcher forgot to cover first base. The next day he had the whole staff out there covering first base for a half hour or more. Billy never said a word. I don't think anybody messed up on that the rest of the season."

Finally, although they largely go unnoticed, are Martin's tutorial achievements. In a way they gratify him the most. "When I was a kid," he says, "I never understood what teachers got out of it. But now I know. Why, to see somebody do something you showed them—that's a wonderful feeling. You feel better than if you had done it yourself."

And yet there is always a frenetic atmosphere attending Martin, so that his players must constantly remain at psychological battle stations. "The team was always so tense," said Coach Joe Schultz after Martin was axed at Detroit, "because we weren't sure what Billy was going to do next, personally or strategically." For one thing Martin usually fights a three-front war, battling his own front office while carrying on the traditional attack against other teams and The Men in Blue. The skids were greased for his firing at Minnesota after an argument over the farm system with a front-office subaltern named George Brophy. "If he'd been a younger guy, I'd have punched his lights out," Martin says now. He lets fly these declarations very casually, although one would never assume idly; he and the Twins' traveling secretary, Howard Fox, had already, in fact, exchanged punches in a hotel lobby one 4 a.m. Martin's end at Detroit came about strictly because of his policy disputes with General Manager Jim Campbell, who fired Martin despite advancing the opinion that "foul line to foul line" Billy had been exemplary.

It is not generally known, but Martin stood on the brink twice last year at Texas. In one instance he went to the front office and said that David Clyde, the local fireball sensation, should be sent out for seasoning. No doubt Martin was right; Clyde is in the middle minors now (SI, May 26)

playing the title role in *The Von McDaniel Story*. But at that time Clyde was still attracting crowds, and the accountants hated to see him go. So Martin said well then, if Clyde doesn't get farmed out, I quit. The Rangers replied that they would be real sorry to see Billy leave. For once Martin backed down without resorting to either tongue or fists. But then, late in the season, in a perfectly asinine dispute over a players' wives' auxiliary Martin slapped Burt Hawkins, the team's traveling secretary, and his job was in serious jeopardy for a time.

Martin looks even more like a genuine desperado now, thanks to his big, looped mustache, which is certainly more appropriate than the pointed wise guy's face that he owned when he first came up and established his scrapper's reputation with a one-two knockdown of Jimmy Piersall. Before that, back in Berkeley, it had been Martin's jug ears and Naples nose, and the uncomplimentary remarks they occasioned, that had introduced him to fisticuffs. But now, helped by the mustache, he has settled into his looks, and it is neither his nose nor his ears, but his eyes—soulful and dark, brooding more than menacing—that hold one's attention.

The manager uses half glasses for reading, peering over them in a scholarly way, and he relaxes, if he can be said to relax, by drawing on those big U-shaped pipes that one associates with Swiss grandfathers. His desk is littered with pipe apparatus, and with tapes from his country-and-Western music collection, a taste he came to via Mantle. Martin was attracted to country songs by the lyrics—visceral, brutally hurting, soupy and troubled. *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry* is his favorite.

Martin shares his office with Art Fowler, his pitching coach, who has been with him since the minor league year at Denver. The club was 8-22 when Martin arrived. Like King David sending Bathsheba's husband to battle, the Twins urged Martin to go out there in order to get rid of him; feeling guilty, a Twins' executive admitted this later in private. They figured Martin would louse up a bad team more, panic, get frustrated, get in trouble and give them an excuse to zap him. But Martin crossed up the organization by bringing the 8-22 team in 65-50 the rest of the way, and what could the Twins do but hire him? "He's so far ahead of everyone," Fowler says in his Carolina drawl. "And the only difference from Denver's he's got smarter."

Martin was saddled with a coach at Detroit he was convinced was ratting on him to the GM—never again. His four Ranger coaches are all his own men, each from a different phase of his life, so that together they know the whole man, but apart each coach knows only his share. It is Martin's wife Gretchen who says, "You see only a small portion of Billy. Of course, he must have designed it that way." Merrill Combs played with Martin in the minors 27 years ago; Charlie Silvera was with him on the Yanks; Fowler was Denver; and Frank Lucchesi was managing the Phillies and Martin the Tigers when they met. The four coaches span his career. There is a great constancy to Martin, and despite all the upheavals in his life he seems to have made each stop have some meaning. And always he keeps harking back to his childhood.

"You know, Billy," he was told the other day, "you ought to write a book."

"Someday I'm going to write a book about my childhood," he replied, although the subject of his youth had not been in the discussion.

That upbringing, despite a father's desertion and a Depression backdrop, was not really unhappy; there was much love for him and no real deprivation. He was born May 16, 1928 in the oldest house still standing in Berkeley; his mother lives there still. Eight months after his birth his father walked away. Mr. Martin is a Portuguese—Por-to-gee (hard g), Martin says—from the Hawaiian island of Maui. Martin's mother is Italian, and he refers to himself as a Dago, but Martin (Mar-teen in the Latin pronunciation) is indeed his real name. He was christened Alfred Manuel Martin, but was always Billy, which came from his grandmother calling him bello, cute in Italian.

Martin's mother married again, to an Irishman named Downey, but Billy lived next door with his grandmother Selvini, sleeping in the same bed with her until he was 15 and kicking so much they got him a cot. Mrs. Selvini died in 1946 when he was 18; she sang 'O Sole Mio! on her deathbed. The two major influences in the home in Billy's life were both female—grandmother and mother. As any knight would have, he felt very protective of them.

Martin can remember walking down the street with his mother when he was about 11 years old and flushing with anger when men turned to look her over or whistle. "Now you got to understand," he says, "my mother's only four-eleven, but she's the toughest little thing that ever walked. Oh, you'd like her. She's something. She was good and chesty and had one of those round little Dago heinies, and all that whistling was really embarrassing me. This is my mother. I wanted to fight these guys. She sensed that, and suddenly she turned to me and said, 'Listen, Billy, don't you ever forget that I got the best-looking fanny in town.' "

From his father, his disappearance notwithstanding, Martin seems to have obtained some other hard qualities. Martin is only 5'11", but his father is big, maybe 6'2", and Martin always heard that the Por-to-gee was the toughest son of a gun on Maui. But he never saw his old man until one day when he was 14, and his father showed up out of the blue, bringing him a pair of corduroy pants; then he popped up again four or five years later when Billy made the roster of the Triple A Oakland Oaks, and they had a long, even satisfying chat. His father materializes now and again in Oakland, and Martin seems to accept him without emotion one way or the other. The real father-son devotion in his life goes the other way, to his boy Billy Joe, age 10, on whom he lavishes his time and attention. "We do as much together as we can," he says. "I try to include Billy Joe in everything I can when we're home. We have some wonderful times." He pauses and looks away, actually beaming. "Oh, it's so exciting, that kind of love."

Exciting. When was the last time you heard anyone refer to that kind of love as exciting? The thing you must remember about Martin is that he is every bit as intense and compelling about the positive emotions in his life as he is about the negative. It is just that bopping people is what he does in the sector that is being recorded. And he is gloriously candid. Of Umpire Ron Luciano he recently declared, "I don't want him fined, I want him fired." When he beat up on Dave Boswell, one of his best pitchers at Minnesota, Martin graciously provided a full accounting: "He hit me in the temple and the ribs. I just held on, and then I started to hit him in the stomach. I worked up and hit him in the mouth, nose and eyes. He bounced off the wall, and I hit him again, and he was out cold before he hit the ground." But here, too, is the sort of thing Martin does: all of a sudden one day last winter he decided to write Stengel a thank-you note. "I just thought it would be nice to say something good," Martin says. "I just said that I was writing him to thank him for being a great manager and teaching me all the things he did."

Stengel, obviously, was something of a father figure for Martin, and not only because he managed him when he played for the Oakland Oaks and brought him to the majors. Stengel seemed to comprehend Martin, how to direct the furies within him. Once, when Martin was fuming about some slight, Stengel walked over, chucked him under the chin, and cooed, in baby talk: "Ith Li'l Bill-wee mad at naughty Ol' Case?" And yet as much as the two men came to prize one another—"That fresh punk, how I love him!" Casey once rhapsodized in a weak moment—Martin felt that Stengel failed to stand up for him following the Copacabana hassle, and after he was traded Martin literally did not say a word to Stengel for six years.

Martin was 29 when he was sent to K.C.—old enough, a man. But in context the Stengel rejection, coming as it did not long after Martin's first wife ditched him in extraordinary circumstances, really served to extend the pained adolescence of a sensitive, fatherless, unattractive boy—one who could succeed in sports and with his buddies but who could never find acceptance in the respectable grown-up world. Accounts of Martin's disputes with school officials (for fighting in basketball and baseball games) seem no different in substance from what we have 30 years later, Martin railing at Bowie Kuhn or general managers or umpires. We have often wondered what James Dean would have been like in middle age; well, Billy Martin is James Dean in middle age.

Significantly, the first decision Martin had to make in organized ball came on the day he signed with Oakland and they told him to give up his old street gang buddies. Flabbergasted, he refused. Martin is perfect for baseball because it is the belonging that counts so much, the camaraderie, the men in groups. The players who stay on in baseball as managers and coaches, even as broadcasters, are not necessarily the sagest; often they are not the type we expect, for we are looking for the wrong things in the career men. Instead, the only strain that runs through virtually all the oldtimers who stay in the game is that they can't get the club out of their systems.

The club—yessirreebob, baseball is still a club with a clubhouse. Football is not a club, or basketball or hockey; they are just teams with locker rooms. So, baseball coaches and managers individually may be smart or dumb, shy or ebullient, city or country, and now even black or white, but almost all will be marked by one trait—a love of that club. Characteristically, at each of his managerial layovers, the first thing Martin has done is to issue edicts more firmly establishing the sanctuary of the clubhouse. In a letter of some 20 paragraphs to the Rangers in advance of spring training this season only one regulation is underscored: "No one, and I mean no one, will be allowed in the clubhouse...."

In order to better remain a part of the club Martin has violated one of the hoariest of baseball traditions by making it his custom to drink with his players. Purists, appalled at this practice, could hardly wait to say I told you so when it was revealed that Martin and Boswell tangled after hoisting a few at the same bar. But alone is the worst part of being a manager, Martin says. He doesn't see why he can't have a pop now and then with the other guys on the club. "I've taken

the manager off the pedestal and put the team on the pedestal," he says. "Why should the manager get the hotel bar and make 25 other guys go somewhere else? Besides, communication is the name of the game, and you get communication when you drink with someone. Don't give me that baloney about 'my door is always open' because the ones you have to communicate with won't care whether the door is open or closed. You've got to talk to these kids, learn their language. And if you can do that having a drink or two with them, so what? At Detroit I had a guy who needed five drinks. Five drinks, he was going to be MVP. He never was, that's for sure, but he was better for having five drinks with the manager."

Martin came up at a time when clubs were even closer and more homogeneous. There are more cliques now, the kids are better educated, have more money and thus are less intimidated. But a team is still a very exclusive club that comes together every day. The one word Martin uses to characterize the year he spent out of baseball—1970—is "lonely." Oh, sure he'd love to get out there and play again, but he was never all that good a player, and the belonging in baseball still means the most.

Martin's closest friend ever, he says, is Mantle, who now lives in Dallas, a vice-president of Reserve Life Insurance. "I was the happiest man in the world when Billy got the job down here," Mickey says, "because it gives me somebody to hang around with." And here is Mantle, who hit 536 home runs and made the Hall of Fame, on what he misses in baseball: "I miss the playing. I still dream of a comeback. I do. Almost every night I still play ball. When Aaron hit that home run last year, I just had goose pimples all over me. When he ran around those bases, I knew exactly how he felt. It almost felt like it was me." It was eight o'clock in the morning, seven years since he last played; Mantle stared out happily into the pale light over his backyard, savoring the old acclaim. "I miss the crowds applauding. I miss the big ovations," he said, smiling.

Billy Martin, who hit .257 lifetime, on the same subject: "What I miss when I'm away is the pride in baseball. Especially the pride of being on a team that wins. I probably was the proudest Yankee of them all. And I don't mean false pride. When it's real on a team, it's a deep love-pride. There's nothing greater in the world than when somebody on the team does something good, and everybody gathers around to pat him on the back. I really love the togetherness in baseball. That's a real true love."

And with this attitude comes the territorial imperative: to protect the club, to be loyal to it, to stand up for it, to be a stand-up guy—Really, all you have to know about Billy Martin is what Merrill Combs, his coach, says: "All Billy wants is what is ours. And he'll fight to get it. That's

all." And Combs hits another fungo. That's all.

It might seem an anachronism that suburban-raised college graduates would give a hoot about whether their managers were stand-up guys who kicked dirt on umpires and threatened to retaliate against brushbacks and all that plug-ugly John McGraw stuff. But it is difficult to talk to any player who has ever worked for Martin who does not start off by referring to his loyalty: Billy Martin is behind you. That sort of thing still matters very much on the clubs. It is worth noting that Frank Robinson, one of the youngest managers and the new breed, for sure, made his biggest fuss last season when he claimed that Bobby Winkles, the college coach the Angels had hired as manager, didn't fight for his men hard enough. Football coaches are generals, but baseball managers are master sergeants.

The one track Billy Martin's mind runs on in this department can best be illustrated by an incident that occurred early this season when he was thrown out of a game by a rookie umpire, Richard Garcia. Martin maintained that Garcia had called a grounder fair only after getting a sign from his colleague at third base, Ron Luciano. Martin swore he had seen his nemesis Luciano give the signal. Garcia denied it. Thus the dispute became much more than a simple matter of judgment; to Martin it was a point of honor. Garcia was not wrong, he said; he could tolerate that. No, Garcia was lying. "Truth," he observed to several newspapermen in his office after the game, puffing on a pipe, reflecting on a favorite theme. "Truth. I don't think you see much of it anymore." He shook his head sadly; it was as if truth were a favorite puppy dog which no longer came when he called.

The newspapermen eyed him warily, as did the coaches. Martin can do a wonderful imitation, complete with darting eyes and shuffling feet, of how strangers react around him, convinced that he is going to haul off and hit them in the nose. You can't be too sure. Certainly nobody took any chances this time. Nobody smiled at all. The newspapermen competed with the coaches at trying to out-grim one another.

Postmortems done, Martin could at last begin to assess the full impact of the situation. "They're out to get me," he declared ominously. "Two National League umpires asked me in spring

training why the umpires in my league were all out to get me. And if they're out to get me, it will be very difficult for my ball club to win this year. I've got to protect myself and my team."

Art Fowler came by, and Martin told him to get a microphone so he could wear it the next day and record any conversations with umpires for use in his defense in the league office's "kangaroo court." Fowler nodded and went to his locker. After so many seasons with Martin, Fowler could work earthquakes without getting perturbed.

"The really sad thing about Garcia," Martin said, picking up the thread again, "is that he had called a good game up to then. He could be a good ump. But he was out to get Martin, wasn't he?" For emphasis, he began to address himself directly to Garcia. "So you're real cute, Garcia. And now it's you and me. Let's see how you handle the pressure that way because you're going to get a lot of it now."

Martin leaned back, relit his big pipe and mused on tactics, a professor addressing a small seminar. An idea came to him. "I'm going to call him Spic or Greaser or Wetback, and see how he likes that," he said. The remark was made sot-to voce and, understand, it was spoken absolutely without malice or racial antagonism. Indeed, a complaint against Martin is that he favors Latin ballplayers. They remind him of the scuffling minority kid he was 25 years ago—and they return the affection. No, he was not being racial at all, merely pragmatic. This just seemed to him to be the most effective way for a stand-up guy to serve his club in this particular instance.

"They called me Dago and Wop, all that, every day I was growing up," he went on evenly. "That doesn't bother me anymore. I just look through those people. But can this guy? Let's see how he takes it when I walk out there tomorrow and say, 'Hello, Greaser.' Let's see."

As it turned out, Martin decided against using this ploy because he felt that Luciano was the greater threat. He put on a lavalier mike and went after Luciano even before the game started.

Such controversies and disputes, violent or otherwise, are simply part and parcel of Martin by now. Deadpan, he maintains that he has never started a fight, but even granting that claim he certainly has set a lot of tables. Fights aside, twice he has been fined or suspended for ordering his pitchers to throw spitballs and brushbacks. When he was at Detroit and Baltimore was the chief foe, he orchestrated a feud with Oriole Manager Earl Weaver. Now that Oakland is Martin's Baltimore, he is spoiling for a newspaper scrap with the A's Alvin Dark.

In each case Martin seeks out the best weapons. As he would use ancestry to rattle Garcia, so against Weaver, a coarse little scuffler himself, Martin employed the most basic alley cat approach ("I'm going to take care of him, I'm going to hurt him"), and now for Dark he is plainly fondling his jugular—religion. Martin, who always pins a little gold cross on his cap, suggests that Dark is a Pharisee who wears his Christianity on his sleeve. "Everybody's always talking about my ego or this or that," Martin says a bit testily. "But do these people really know me? The Brat, they dubbed me. But I went to church every Sunday, I prayed to my God. And those people who dubbed me, did they go to church? I gave a car to a priest once. I don't believe anybody in a front office ever gave a car to a priest."

That display of largesse came after Martin was named MVP in the 1953 World Series, which turned out to be the apex of his playing career. His hustle won games—Mantle says Martin really didn't have much besides a good arm which, for a second baseman, is the fifth teat on a cow—but his dustups hardly fit the classic Yankee tradition of dignity, and he was sometimes nearly unstable. Once, Martin broke a leg sliding in spring training. So scared was he that he would never play again that he could not eat, and dropped from 163 pounds to 132 in the two months he had to sit out.

And then one morning, two weeks after his first child, a daughter, was born, his wife woke him and said there was a fellow at the door who wanted to see him. It was a process server delivering her divorce papers. Desperately, Martin fought for his marriage—"out of love, pride, hurt, who knows?"—in the bargain suffering acute melancholia, insomnia and hypertension. A winter's stay with Mantle in Commerce, Okla., where the city boy hunted and fished and funned, ate quail and mashed potatoes for breakfast and ballooned to 185, may have saved Martin's sanity.

But at least he was with the Yankees then, proudest of them all. After he left New York nothing seemed to work anywhere, and when he slugged Cub Pitcher Jim Brewer in 1960, the jig was really up. Brewer had to have an eye operation, and he and the Cubs sued Martin and the Reds for better than a million dollars—even though all the evidence indicates that Martin only bopped Brewer on the chin (after the pitcher called him "a little Dago son of a bitch," Martin says) and that it was a teammate who hit Brewer near the eye in the melee that followed. After the Reds

ditched him, no one else in baseball offered support, even though the case set a nasty precedent in civil courts for intrasport conduct. Martin was saddled with suits for years, and has paid out \$22,500 for legal fees and hospitalization. It was in effect the final repudiation of Billy Martin by the Establishment.

In the year and a half more he managed to hang on as a player Martin became a pariah; no longer just a brash pepperpot, in the public mind he was a psychotic who maimed people. So bad was his reputation that when Martin was cut by the Twins just before the '62 season, he turned down a \$100,000 Japanese offer because he thought it was crucial to stay in the game here and try to rehabilitate his image. He signed on with the Twins as a \$10,000 "troubleshooter" and settled into what became a six-year vocational hiatus.

"I had been knocked down so badly," he says. "The things they said about me. And when I was released, I was determined to come back. I thought: I got to stay in this game. I was going to eat humble pie, but I had to prove to people in baseball that I was a different person than who they thought I was. I'd let them see the real Billy Martin. But some of the stuff would follow me wherever I went. I know I'll never get completely away from it. But they've taken so many cheap shots at me, and I've won so often, I don't care anymore. I don't even take any satisfaction when I win again because it's just their own urine blowing back in their faces. It doesn't concern me."

When the offer to manage Denver came up suddenly in '68, Martin was still so insecure and defensive that his first response was to turn it down. Gretchen, a refined, small-town Midwesterner with Junior League looks, not at all the kind of woman you would expect to have been married to Billy Martin for 16 years, had to stay up with him till one in the morning convincing her husband to reach for the brass ring. Even then, he did not make up his mind until after a long prayerful session in church. Similarly, it took two days of the same sort of emotional gyrations before he finally agreed to head up the Rangers.

Perhaps he fears that it takes too much out of him, managing baseball. "I love it, I'm very happy," he says, "but I can't ever get away from it. I take it home with me, I take it to bed with me, I wake up with it. And what I feel inside you'll never see on the outside." Always, too, he is on trial in a way that other managers who may be just as obsessed are not. Martin is guilty until proven innocent, and he knows that. Rookie umpires don't throw Managers of the Year out of ball games the moment they say one naughty little barnyard word unless that is the case.

As Martin puts it, he is almost like a gunfighter now, with a reputation that invites challengers.

Umpires, executives, journalists, tough guys—each in their ways are looking for a shot at him. He went into a bar not long ago, and down at the other end a guy bet his buddy he couldn't beat up Billy Martin. So he snuck up behind Billy and decked him. When Martin got up he took the fight to the aggressor, ruining his clothes and face in the process of playing catch-up ball. When he got home he said, "Gretchen, you'll never believe this, but I was just sitting there. I didn't say anything, I didn't do anything. It just happened." And what did she say? "She said, 'You're right, I don't believe it.' "

The world is always out to get Billy Martin—he is right—because the world cannot afford to tolerate Billy Martin. It would all come apart at the seams if we acted like him. This is another reason why we have commissioners. But nobody is going to do Billy Martin in, because he believes in himself as surely as he believes in the other things he fights for. "I don't care what the others think," he says. "I've always been the toughest critic of myself, and the only one I want to know me is Jesus Christ. They talk about my temper. Well, I haven't seen a good race horse yet who wasn't high-strung. And anyway, temper is a wonderful thing if you can control it and it doesn't control you. Jesus Christ took a whip to the money changers, right? Well, that's a temper, and that's not a bad guy to follow. The way I see it, my temper is a great ally. It is what has pushed Billy Martin."

And then, he has another edge on more temperate people in that he doesn't need a name on a mailbox to tell him where home is. Martin is at home wherever he pulls on a uniform and walks out there to get "ours" for the club.

