

Tiger Opener Adds To Stadium Lore

(W. W. Edgar, senior member of the Observer Newspapers editorial staff, covered his 49th consecutive opening game Saturday when the Tigers faced the Boston Red Sox. This is Eddie's story of the first strike-delayed opening game in baseball history. Eddie is the holder of the No. 2 card in the Detroit chapter of the Baseball Writers' Association of America.)

By W. W. Edgar

When baseball historians get around to compiling the many contributions to the lore of the game that were provided in Tiger Stadium they had better save a chapter for one of the most unusual opening day games of all time — the Tigers inaugural against the Boston Red Sox last Saturday.

Over the years many unusual things have happened in the Tigers' lair but never before, in a Tiger opener, has the starting pitcher been touched for four hits and never before has the Bengals' boss ordered action in the bullpen before two men were retired in the first inning.

Strange enough — but it was stranger still to see one of the highest paid players in the American League — Carl Yastrzemski — running helter-skelter into third base with one of his Boston mates aboard in a daffy first inning to spoil a promising rally.

JUST AS UNUSUAL was the sight of Norm Cash, one of the slowest of the Tigers, racing home with the winning run by beating a throw from this same Yastrzemski, possessor of one of the best throwing arms in the game.

In the end it was the performance of Mickey Lolich that will be listed with the most unusual. From that dismal start in the first inning, when Manager Billy Martin was on the verge of taking him out of the game, he came on to pitch the entire nine innings and retire the last 17 men who faced him to register the 3 to 2 victory.

When the Tiger boss ordered action in the bullpen in the first inning, one of the oldtimers sitting high up in the press box asked, "Have you ever seen anything like this before?"

Not quite. But there was the time in the final game of the 1934 World Series with the St. Louis Cardinals leading, 13 to 0, and the legendary "Dizzy" Dean on the mound, that the Cards' manager, Frankie Frisch, ordered all of his pitchers into action in the bullpen.

"Mind you," Dean often remarked in later years, "and we didn't have a game scheduled until the next season. It was the worst insult I ever was given."

It was in that same series that white-haired Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, then commissioner of baseball, ordered "Ducky" Medwick, the Cardinals' left fielder out of the game

because he was the target of a fruit barrage from the fans.

And as Lolich kept retiring batter after batter in those late innings oldtimers in the pressbox recalled the afternoon in the 1935 world series with the Chicago Cubs when Little Tommy Bridges earned an all-time hero role among the Tigers.

That was the day Stan Hack opened the ninth inning with a triple and then, to paraphrase the late Mickey Cochrane, "Tommy threw his heart up there" to keep Hack on third, retire the side and help the Tigers win the world championship.

ANOTHER OF THE oldtimers recalled the afternoon when Little Tommy was the victim of one of the oddest bits of strategy ever seen in Tiger Stadium.

With two out in the ninth inning of a game against the Washington Senators he hadn't allowed a hit or a man to reach first base. He was just one out away from a perfect game when Walter Johnson, then the Senators manager, sent in a fellow named Dave Harris as a pinch-hitter. The game seemed hopelessly lost and a goodly chorus of boos greeted Harris as he stepped to the plate.

Then all quieted down in the tense drama. Bridges wound up and let go his best pitch. Harris swung and singled amid the wildest chorus of boos that ever greeted a player in the ball yard at Michigan and Trumbull.

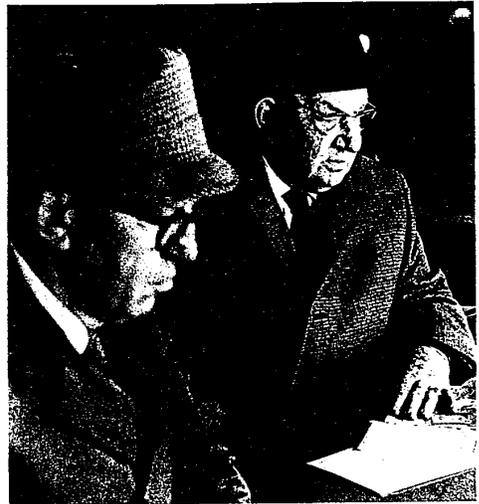
As some of the oldtimers sat there on opening day they looked down at the visitors dugout and recalled that there, on the top step, Lou Gehrig the New York Yankees' "Iron Man" made his exit from the game in May of 1939.

IT WAS ON this same playing field down below that a handle hit, known to the baseball trade as a "blooper" won a world series for the Tigers.

It was "Goose" Goslin's famous little looper over second base that enabled Manager Mickey Cochrane to score the winning run and give the Tigers the title.

Through the years also came the sight of Harry Heilmann on the closing day of the 1929 season, getting seven hits in nine trips to the plate in a doubleheader against the Cleveland Indians, to give him the batting championship of the American League for the third time. In those days he won the title in the odd years 1925-1927 and then with a splurge on the final day in 1929.

Nothing like that ever has been seen since. True, much baseball lore has been provided in Tiger Stadium and the unusual 1972 opener has added another fine chapter to the colorful history of the ball park that may, in a few years, give way to a modern river front facility. But they'll never erase the memory from high up in the press box.



THAT MAKES 49 consecutive opening game assignments for W.W. ("Eddie") Edgar (right), senior member of the Observer Newspapers Inc. editorial staff. Eddie is sitting alongside Watson Spoelstra, veteran baseball writer of the Detroit News and former chairman of the Detroit Chapter of the Baseball Writers' Association of America. Edgar holds the No. 2 card in the chapter. Numbers are issued on the basis of seniority. (Observer photo by Tom Donoghue)

Franklin Falls To Groves, 5-3

A two run homer by Mike Picelli in the bottom of the seventh spelled the difference in a Birmingham Groves victory over Franklin, 5-3.

It was the Northwest Suburban opener with Groves improving its overall mark to 2-1 while Franklin fell to 1-2. Franklin started off with a bang with Karney Dederian knocking out a single and Gar Frantz blasting a two run homer to put the Patriots in front.

GROVES got one back in its half of the inning with Del Felker singling and two fol-

lowers left Ricelli on first. Two errors and a single by Mickey Siegel drove in Ricelli and it was a 2-1.

The Patriots added a notch to their margin with one in the third on a double by Jeff Waterstone and back to back singles by Wayne Darraugh and Gar Frantz.

Groves tied it up at three- all in the bottom of the fourth on singles by Siegel and Scott Friesner. The Patriots fell apart and committed two errors and when the dust cleared, two runs had crossed the plate to notch the score.

Tim Griffin took over mound chores for Franklin and Scott Friesner was coasting along for Groves. It was one, two, three till the bottom of the seventh.

Felker walked and with one out, Ricelli blasted one over the fence and it was all over. Friesner went the distance for Groves chalking up his second win in as many starts. Franklin tapped him for eight hits and only three Patriots went down swinging.

Dennis Watson started for Franklin and pitched four and two third innings giving up three runs and five of the six Groves hits. Griffin allowed only one hit but it was the four bagger and he took the loss.

FRANKLIN		ab	r	b	bi
Dederian 2b	3	4	1	0	0
Waterstone cf	3	2	1	0	0
Darragh 3b	3	0	1	1	0
Fritz 1b	3	1	2	2	0
Liverson ss	3	0	0	0	0
Watson p	2	0	0	0	0
Crowell lf	1	0	0	0	0
Dettlor cf	2	0	0	0	0
Falmer cf	1	0	0	0	0
Hollandsworth c	2	0	1	0	0
Fritz p	1	0	0	0	0
Watson p	2	0	1	0	0
Griffin p	1	0	0	0	0
Totals	25	3	8	3	0

BIRMINGHAM		ab	r	b	bi
Felker lf	3	1	1	0	0
Petrovsky 2b	3	0	1	0	0
Ricelli cf	3	2	1	2	0
Siegel cf	3	1	2	1	0
Fritz ss	3	0	0	0	0
Frantz p	3	0	0	0	0
Crowell lf	3	0	0	0	0
Griffin p	2	0	0	0	0
Hales lf	2	0	0	0	0
Watson 2b	1	0	0	0	0
Eisen 3b	1	0	0	0	0
Totals	25	4	3	3	0

FRANKLIN 2 0 1 0 0 0 3
GROVES 1 0 2 0 0 2 5

RU Rolls To 3rd Win; Crushes Southfield, 9-5

by TOM DONOGHUE
Observer Sports Editor

Redford Union just keeps rolling along with non-league baseball victories and Coach Bob Atkins is now looking at the Suburban Eight race with a sly grin.

His Panthers crushed Southfield, 9-5, and stand at 3-0 with league rival Bentley on tap Friday afternoon.

RU sophomore Tom Miller went the distance in his first pitching performance for the team. In seven innings, he

allowed seven hits, struck out 10 and walked only one. Southfield Coach Ed Bryant went through the rotation of Rick Moscow, Jack Booth and Bruce Digue but couldn't come up with a stopper.

Moscow took the loss with the three hurlers giving up eight hits, striking out four and walking four.

RU BOOMED to a 5-4 first inning lead with Mike Kalli and Mark Durance drawing base on balls. Steve Friedman sacrificed and Kurt Fritz

followed with a two run single. Fritz came around to score the third run on a double by Glenn Richmond and Rob Campbell followed with a walk.

Next came a Panther double steal that resulted in Richmond and Campbell both scoring on a wild throw and RU was up 5-0.

A Durance single and a triple by Friedman accounted for a second inning tally and RU was on top, 6-0. Miller was safe on an error to open the fourth and scored with the

help of a wild pitch and a single by Durance. SOUTHFIELD finally got on the board in the top of the fifth with John Wenzel doubling and Glazer driving him home.

The Blue Jays added two more in the sixth on a single by Markson and a "lost ball" home run by Bruce Digue.

It started off as a routine fly ball to leftfield but RU's Kurt Fritz never saw it and the ball rolled to his right... about 25 feet away and kept on rolling while Fritz was caught looking up in the air.

"Fritz never saw it," said Coach Atkins. "It's tough to play leftfield with the setting sun glaring off the school wall. This isn't the first time this has happened and it won't be the last."

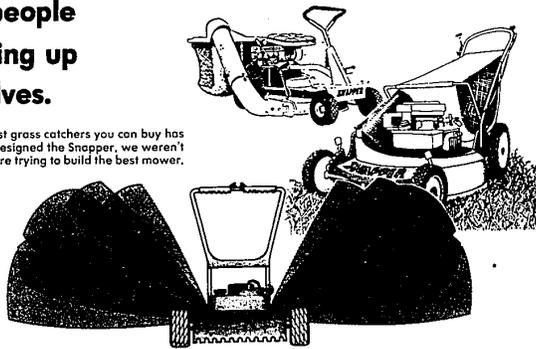
RU increased its lead to 9-3 in the bottom of the sixth on singles by Kalli and Durance. Kalli was chopped down on the bases on a fielder's choice and Fritz walked.

RICHMOND followed with a single scoring Durance and Friedman, and the Panthers were not to be tampered with.

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Observerland Relays Coming

10 DAYS AWAY - The 18 school Observerland Relays is only 10 days away on Saturday, April 29, at Redford Union. The field events are slated to kick off at 5 p.m. with the running events starting at 7:30 p.m.

The schools in the running for the area crown are: Bentley; Birmingham Groves; Bishop Borgess; Churchill; Clarenceville; Farmington; Farmington Harrison; Franklin; Garden City East; Garden City West; North Farmington; Northville; Plymouth; Redford Union; Southfield; Southfield Lathrup; Stevenson; and Thurston.