

Observing Sports

By GEORGE MASKIN

Tabs Ty The Greatest

The mail brings a flattering letter from the Baseball Writers Association of America.

"Help select the All-Time All-Star baseball team," president Dick Young of the BBWA requests.

"Help, too, name the best manager and the best player of all time," Young asks.

The selections of the Baseball Writers will be announced at a black-tie dinner to be held the night before the 1969 All-Star game takes place in Washington, D.C. on July 12.

As you perhaps know, this is the 100th anniversary of baseball and to herald the occasion all of the teams have been picking their all-star dream teams.

The Tiger fans picked theirs last week. In case you missed it, the infield was comprised of Hank Greenberg at first, Charlie Gehringer at second, Billy Rogell at short and George Kell at third.

Ty Cobb, Harry Heilmann and Al Kaline formed the outfield. The catcher was Mickey Cochrane and the pitchers Denny McLain and Hal Newhouser.

WHAT ABOUT AN ALL-STAR team from all teams?

To simplify matters, each BBWA writer has been provided with a list of the standouts at each position—those who have been named to the Hall of Fame and to the various individual-team all-star selections.

So let's run down the positions.

FIRST BASE: Such names as George Sisler, Lou Gehrig, Frank Chance, Bill Terry, Jimmy Fox and Greenberg regale the slate. Our pick: Gehrig.

SECOND BASE: What a group—Nap Lajoie, Eddie Collins, Rogers Hornsby, Frank Frisch, Gehringer, Jackie Robinson, Bucky Harris, Red Schoendienst. We like Gehringer, the smoothest ball player we ever have seen.

THIRD BASE: There's John McGraw, Pie Traynor, Jackie Robinson, Ron Santo, Brooks Robinson, Kell, Frank Baker. Perhaps, the toughest of all positions. The nod goes to Traynor.

SHORTSTOP: Hall of Famers like Honus Wagner, Hugh Jennings, Joe Tinker, Joe Cronin, Luke Appling, Rody Wallace and Rabbit Maranville. We remember seeing Cronin and Appling . . . none of the others. But from all we've heard our choice must be Wagner.

OUTFIELDERS. My, what a contingent. Try picking three from a list that includes Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth, Tris Speaker, Mel Ott, Harry Heilmann, Joe DiMaggio, Stan Musial, Mickey Mantle and Kaline. Cobb and Ruth are "musts." The third choice has to be DiMaggio—Jumping Joe from the old Yanks.

CATCHER: There's quite a group here, too. Did you know Connie Mack caught? Then there was Cochrane, Bill Dickey, Roy Campanella and Roger Breshnam. Our pick: Cochrane, the fiery Mike.

RIGHT-HANDED PITCHERS: Inspect this group—Christy Mathewson, Walter Johnson, Cy Young, Grover Alexander, Ed Walsh, Dizzy Dean, Bob Feller, Don Drysdale and our Tigers' Denny McLain. It's like stabbing in the dark—Johnson.

LEFT-HANDED PITCHERS: Carl Hubbell, Lefty Grove, Sandy Koufax, Whitey Ford, Hal Newhouser and Warren Spahn. We'll go for Koufax.

TRY PICKING the player-of-players from the aforementioned.

So many have contributed so much. So many have sparked. We have had different eras when pitchers have dominated, when the hitters have reigned.

We'd have to say the choice must narrow down to Cobb or Ruth. We remember seeing both when we first went out to old Navin Field.

Cobb did more things than Ruth, but it was Ruth who helped baseball become a tremendous drawing attraction.

Many will object either way we go. So, let's show favoritism . . . pick the guy who played in Detroit — Ty Cobb.

When it comes to managing, why fool around?

The choice has to be Joe McCarthy, who enjoyed all those great years with the Yankees.

For No. 2 manager, it'd have to be Casey Stengel, certainly, the most colorful manager the game ever has known.

There you have our selections. On July 22 we'll know how we compare with the hundreds of other members of the Baseball Writers Association of America.

It'd be most interesting to note how brothers Tommy Thompson and Eddie Edgar of the Observer ballot on the same subject. They also are veteran members of the BBWA.

Gentlemen!

"DURING MY YEARS as sports editor and news reporter, I have seen many of the nominees for the all-time baseball team in action," writes Tommy Thompson, Observer managing editor.

"My choices differ from those of our sports editor. I am voting for Mickey Cochrane as catcher, Lou Gehrig on first, Rogers Hornsby at second, Honus Wagner at short and Pie Traynor on third. The best outfielders I have seen are Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth and Stan Musial.

"The choices for pitcher are Bob Feller, whom I watched make his debut as a high school senior many years ago, and Bob Grove, the great south-paw of the A's during Connie Mack's greatest managerial era.

"Like Maskin, I will cast my vote for Joe McCarthy as the greatest of all major league managers."

Portage Star

Cager Casts

Lot With U-M

Leo Roberts, all-state basketball and football player from Portage North High near Kalamazoo, made it official that he will enroll at the University of Michigan this fall.

The 6-2, 185-pounder had signed a Big Ten tender to Michigan, but Michigan officials had been waiting on his signing of a national letter of intent. Several other universities outside the Big Ten had been vigorously recruiting Roberts, who will attend Michigan on a full-ride basketball scholarship.

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