

Is there a doctor in the locker room?

United Press International
NEW YORK — Next time you happen to catch one of those film clips showing a bunch of players celebrating a pennant clincher, slapping each other on the back and happily guzzling champagne, see if you can spot that one individual off on the side taking in the whole scene calmly and quietly.

Chances are you're looking at the team physician, without whom in so many cases the players would simply be unable to perform.

One of these physicians is Dr. James Parkes, and one of the rea-

sons he's so unusual is because he still makes some house calls.

That's in his private practice where he functions as an eminently successful orthopedic surgeon. He's also the team physician for the New York Mets and in that capacity he conducts sick call every day the team is at home treating practically every known ailment from dermatitis to diarrhea.

If there is any complaint either he or trainers Tom McKenna or Joe Deer can't cope with, the Mets also have a club internist in Dr. Ken Donaldson as well as a number of other specialists they can call on in each field. Generally, though, Jim Parkes manages to handle most of the physical problems himself.

"People ask me whether ballplayers make good patients," he says. "My answer is, anyone makes a good patient if he or she realizes you're honestly trying to help them. I've never had a single player who didn't convey that feeling. To me, the art of medicine is getting the patient's confidence and once you do that, with ballplayers or anyone else, they'll walk through fire for you."

The Mets' players have enormous regard for Jim Parkes, not only professionally, but personally. He's a gregarious, outgoing fellow, who's always cheerful and never strait-laced. The players appreciate the fact that they can always talk to him on their terms.

When Joe Torre was still playing for the Mets before he took over as their manager, for example, he came up with a severe pain in his left heel.

He hobbled into Parkes' small but sterile-looking office in Shea Stadium and said to him:

"I know what you're gonna say. You'll want me to take physical therapy and some pills and then you'll give me a pad inside my shoe. But I don't want any of that. I want to be able to play immediately. I want you to give me an injection, a shot of cortisone in my heel, because I know that'll make me feel better quicker."

"It'll hurt like hell," Parkes told Torre.

"I don't care," Torre said. "Just do what I ask you to."

Reluctantly, Parkes agreed, and Torre got up on the table.

The Mets' physician secured his syringe, drew up the fluid and then stuck the needle deep into Torre's heel. Torre went straight up the wall. The pain was so intense, he turned snow white.

"I just wanna ask you one question, Joe," Parkes said with a straight face as he removed the needle. "Do you think I hit the spot?"

Recently Parkes had to make a decision on whether to operate on Tim Foli after the Mets' shortstop suffered a serious knee injury.

"It was a critical decision," Parkes

says. "Had he injured anything within the joint itself, an operation would've been necessary, but after examining the knee, I determined the injury was only to the ligament. So surgery wasn't necessary."

"Whoever said Tim Foli was difficult to deal with didn't take the necessary trouble to know him. He cooperated beautifully and now he's playing again. That makes me feel wonderful."

Parkes, who's 43 but doesn't look it, is president-elect of the Major League Physicians' Association. He's on the staff of both Roosevelt Hospital and Columbia Presbyterian in New York and teaches medicine at Columbia University.

A former navy commander,

Parkes comes from Red Bank and originally aspired to be a trooper. That was before he attended Dartmouth, then the Medical School. Sometimes mistaken for one of the players by autograph seekers.

One of them, a boy about 10, thrust his scorecard at Parkes coming out of the exit at Shea Stadium the other day.

Parkes obliged the boy by signing his name. The kid even signed for a moment and fell when he realized it was the team physician.

"Gee," said the boy's mother, glumly. "He's across Lee Mazzilli's name."

Cardinals' catcher can hit Astros

By United Press International
HOUSTON — The rest of the National League is now learning what the Houston Astros have known for years: Ted Simmons is the best catcher around.

Simmons, the St. Louis Cardinals' offense, slipped into the league lead in hitting this past weekend by upping his batting average to .337. Against the Astros, he always has hit a ton.

"I pitch as carefully to Ted as I do to anyone else in the league," said Astros pitcher J.R. Richard, whose five-hitter Sunday was not good enough.

Richard's physical and mental mistakes made him a loser for the sixth time this year. Simmons' run-scoring single in the first inning contributed to the Cardinals' 4-2 victory.

In the four-game, three-day series at the Astrodome, Simmons reached base eight times in 13 at-bats. Richard, en route to a 13-strikeout performance, allowed two singles in the first four innings Sunday. Simmons got them both.

The next two times he came to bat, after the Cardinals had struck for a 4-1 lead, Simmons was walked.

St. Louis manager Ken Boyer said simply, "I don't know how any catcher could hit any better than Ted."

If Boyer had any other consistent hitters to bunch with Simmons, the Cardinals would be a much better team.

Manager Boyer still is looking for hitters, but one of his pitching problems is being eliminated by second-year right-hander Silvio Martinez. Martinez' second major league start Sunday was not as impressive as his first — he one-hit the Mets last Tuesday — but he pitched well again in picking up his second victory.

Dallas man dune buggy race winner

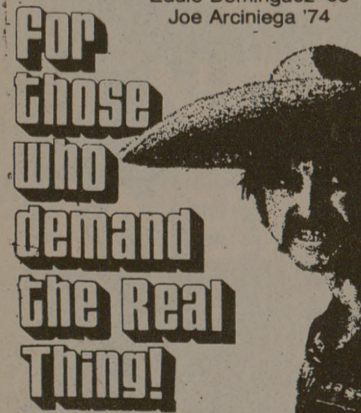
GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. — Ron Martin of Dallas drove his dune buggy to first place Sunday in the two-wheel drive event of the eighth annual Colorado West 200 Off-Road Race.

Martin finished the 200 miles in five hours, 35 minutes, 21 seconds. Larry Olsen of Salt Lake City, Utah was second with a time of five hours, 38 minutes and 15 seconds. Third was Larry Jobe of Las Vegas, Nev., who finished in five hours, 59 minutes and 55 seconds.

Jim Burnside of Denver won the four-wheel event Sunday by completing the race in six hours, 32 minutes and 51 seconds. Burnside was far ahead of second-place finisher Chick Burnham of Midvale, Utah, whose time was eight hours and seven minutes. Third was Bob Atkinson of Littleton, Colo., in eight hours, 24 minutes and 16 seconds.

Tupinamba

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