

Martin may soon return to Yanks for third time

by Milton Richman
UPI Sports Editor

NEW YORK — Nobody knows Billy Martin better than George Steinbrenner. That's what he thinks anyway.

"He has a history," Steinbrenner once said. "He'll take over a club that's not doing so well and move it up quickly the way he did with Minnesota, Detroit and Texas, but then the club will go to pieces. That's his history. It wasn't any different here with the Yankees. He's great when it comes to motivating the players but after awhile, I don't know what it is — he just can't do it anymore."

Twice, Steinbrenner had Martin in his employ and twice he has let him go.

In 1979, the year before Martin took them over, the A's finished last in the American League West. His first year with the club, Martin boosted Oakland all the way to second place and in last year's split season, he got the A's into the playoffs.

This year, though, it all came apart. The A's have no chance of finishing better than fifth and "Billyball" is only a vague memory.

Martin's contract has three years to go with the A's, but his bosses, Roy Eisenhardt and Wally Haas, won't stand in his way if the Yankees and the Indians would like him to manage for them.

Eisenhardt has clearly demonstrated how the A's feel about that by giving his permission to both Steinbrenner and Gabe Paul to speak with Martin.

If Steinbrenner could get Martin to manage the Yankees again, it would take some of the pressure off for the wretched showing the club made this year. And if Paul manages to sign Martin, he'd at least be doing something about the flagging interest in Cleveland about the Indians.

Steinbrenner, naturally, has the better chance of the two to get Martin for any number of reasons, not the least of which is that Martin has always considered himself a Yankee first, last and always.

"They remind me of two moths going after a flame trying to destroy themselves," one veteran front-office man said. "They can't live with each other and they can't live without each other. From what I hear, the people running the Oakland ball club will throw a party the day Billy leaves."

As for Oakland officials' response to that statement, all they would say is "no comment." Gabe Paul said the same thing. Suddenly, everyone's saying "no comment" as if some major crime has been committed, when all that has happened is that Steinbrenner and Paul have both asked permission to negotiate with Martin and that permission has been granted.

That's no crime.

Martin is the one responsible for the story getting out. He told the Oakland Tribune the Yankees and Indians had asked permission of the A's to talk to him and he planned to talk to both Steinbrenner and Paul.

From the sound of it, Martin is conveying the impression he wants to go. On the other hand, he's not that happy about the A's giving their permission so easily. He gets the feeling they're trying to tell him something.

If he does manage the Yankees a third time, he'll still have one more time to go before equaling the late Danny Murtaugh's record. Murtaugh piloted the Pirates four different times. Apart from Murtaugh, Bucky Harris is the only man ever to manage the same club as many as three times. He did that with the old Washington Senators.

"Every time Bucky got fired, Clark Griffith felt badly about it," Twins' owner Calvin Griffith says about his late uncle and adopted father. "Clark never could forget Bucky was the 'Boy Wonder' who managed the Senators to a world championship in 1924 and to a pennant again the next year. Clark was very sentimental about it."

Padres down Astros behind 'hot' pitcher

United Press International

SAN DIEGO — San Diego Padres pitcher Tim Lollar, plagued with a slight fever, said he expected to get "kicked" by the Houston Astros.

Instead, he became only the fourth pitcher in the history of the Padres franchise to win 15 games in a season as San Diego downed the Astros 3-0 Tuesday night.

"Lollar went out there with a 101.6 fever," said San Diego manager Dick Williams. "The last thing he told (pitching coach Norm) Sherry is 'I'll probably get my rear kicked tonight.'"

In the sixth, when he walked two batters and I sent Norm out to the mound, he asked if he could start the inning over and take his eight warmup throws again."

Lollar, 15-9, who went seven innings and gave up only four hits: "I didn't think I would have too much. I had pretty good control, but as far as I'm concerned, that's all I had. For the past few days, I've had a really bad sore throat and the glands in my neck have been inflamed. I've had all the general flu symptoms."

On the overall season, Lollar said: "I felt there were no limitations as to what I could do. Games

like tonight help. You don't have anything when you go out there, but you manage to win anyway. I've let some games get away from me that I shouldn't have. I think I can improve."

"The only goal I have is to make this team a contender year in and year out. We're the only team in the division that hasn't won (the division title). Next year and the year after, we're going to be a team to reckon with."

San Diego came alive in the seventh when pinch hitter Kurt Bevacqua singled off Knepper's glove to score Luis Salazar from third base and ignite a three-run inning.

Salazar opened the inning with a single to center and raced to third as George Hinshaw legged out a roller towards third. Bevacqua then bounced back to the mound and the ball kicked off Knepper's glove for a hit as Salazar scored the game's first run.

Hinshaw reached second on the play and eventually scored on an error by first baseman Ray Knight. A single by Gene Richards drove in Bevacqua with the third run of the inning.

Luis DeLeon pitched the final two innings, allowing only one hit to earn his 15th save.

NFL players on winning streak, may attempt network shutdown

United Press International

WASHINGTON — On a winning streak, the NFL Players Association upped its record to 3-0 Tuesday in unfair labor-practice disputes with the league.

A National Labor Relations Board administrative law judge ruled the NFL is guilty of unfair labor practices for refusing to give the union copies of player contracts and non-monetary details of network television contracts.

The NFL Management Council, the league's negotiating arm, said it will appeal the

ruling to the full NLRB.

While "ecstatic" over the decision of Judge Julius Cohn, Ed Garvey, union executive director, agreed the appeal could keep the matter unresolved for a year or more.

"This is just a recommendation by an administrative law judge," said Jim Miller, spokesman for the NFLMC. "These recommendations are routinely overturned."

Two previous NLRB rulings also went against the NFL.

Garvey said he wants related agreements and memoranda leading to the signing of the

NFL's contracts with the three major television networks.

"We want to know if there was a 'What happens in case of a strike?' clause either in the contract, or in a memo leading to the contract," said Garvey. "We know the networks are paying the league for games not televised and we're reasonably sure of the amounts. We want to know the details of the payments."

Garvey said the union may sue the networks for financing the current strike, or choose to

picket them. He said the picketing would be an attempt to shut down the networks because union employees would not cross the picket lines.

If the NLRB rules the work stoppage an unfair labor practice strike, all players on strike would be guaranteed their jobs when it ends and would be paid for games not played during the strike.

Contract negotiations are to resume Thursday afternoon in Washington. The last talks were held Sunday in New York with no substantial progress.

Cowens attempting to regain old form

United Press International

MILWAUKEE — For the first time in two years, Dave Cowens suited up as a professional basketball player.

The 33-year-old former Boston Celtic star Tuesday practiced in the morning session of the Milwaukee Bucks' rookie and free-agent camp even though he does not have to report until Saturday with other veterans.

"We decided quite a while ago I should spend a few days with him before (regular) camp and he wanted to come," said Coach Don Nelson, a former teammate of Cowens at Boston.

Cowens quit two years ago, citing a number of nagging physical injuries and a lack of desire to continue playing after spending more than a decade as one of the league's most dominating players.

The biggest question mark is his health.

The Bucks gave up point guard Quinn Buckner in gambling Cowens can shake off the layoff.

Nelson, who runs rugged training camps and stresses fitness, liked what he saw Tuesday.

"It (his conditioning) was good," said Nelson. "It shows that he's been working for four months on his own."

"He's certainly not in NBA playoff shape but I would say from what I saw, he will be like a typical veteran coming into camp who has worked in the off-season."

Nelson said he thinks it is important that he work with Cowens, who he sees as a power forward and not a center, so he can introduce him to the Bucks' system.

Nelson said he expects a decision by today from the Philadelphia 76ers on what they will do about Steve Mix.

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