

The Battalion Sports

Thursday, June 16, 1983/The Battalion/Page 7

Kuhn's time is short on baseball's throne

by Milton Richman
UPI Sports Editor
NEW YORK — Time is running out on Bowie Kuhn.

His contract is up in less than 30 days. The clubs who have voted against him expect to have another commissioner by Aug. 1. But who knows? They may have another Sewell Avery in-charge.

If you don't know who Sewell Avery is, go ask your father or brother. They know.

They can tell you all about him, the resolute corporate king from Chicago who defied the

U.S. Army, flatly refused to budget, and was way ahead of his time in boldly proclaiming, "No, no, I won't go."

Avery was board chairman of Montgomery Ward in 1945 when the War Labor Board ordered the company's main warehouse in Chicago taken over because of a labor dispute over the supplying of military equipment.

Soldiers were dispatched to the warehouse, but Avery would not leave. He wouldn't even get out of the chair behind his desk, so two soldiers picked up the

chair and carried it out onto the street with Avery sitting in it. He was the picture of supreme defiance with both his arms folded in front of him. A footnote to that episode was the fact Avery was back at his desk as if nothing happened two days later.

Whether Bowie Kuhn is prepared to go to the same lengths is a good question, but he does have a good start. Last November in Chicago, the owners voted not to re-elect him when his present contract expires on Aug. 13.

At that meeting, five National

League clubs — the St. Louis Cardinals, the New York Mets, the Houston Astros, the Atlanta Braves, and the Cincinnati Reds — voted not to renew his contract. Four votes would have been enough, but there were five. Now that figure is up to six, with the Chicago Cubs also opposed.

The American League clubs voted 11-3 in favor of Kuhn in Chicago, but that didn't matter since his failure to get three-quarters of the votes in any one league was enough to cost him his job.

Kuhn made what everyone assumed was his "acceptance speech" after the vote, accepting the result although certainly far from delighted with it, and he promised he would keep serving as commissioner until it was time for him to go.

He has done that and then some. He has shown so much zeal, he looks as if he's warming up to take over the job, not leave it. More than that, he has said he would like to continue as commissioner.

For that to happen, no other candidate to replace him would

have to be found acceptable, and baseball's executive council then would have to vote Kuhn as his own interim successor.

But there is a provision in the Major League Agreement which says that can't be done either with less than three-quarters of the clubs in each league voting for it, since that doesn't look as if it will happen, Kuhn's chances of continuing aren't good at all.

Bowie Kuhn has some firm support in his camp, but simply put, there are not enough of them. It strikes me this has to leave him with a rather empty,

uncomfortable feeling, working as hard as he does at his job every day and knowing he'll be out soon unless at least three NL owners who are against him now suddenly flip-flop and go the other way.

That's not likely to happen, and those who have voted against re-electing him wonder why he hasn't submitted his resignation yet. They fear it's primarily a matter of ego that's keeping him from doing so, along with the hope that some of them will switch their vote at the last moment.

Overwhelmed

Evans riddles Astros with 3 homers

United Press International
SAN FRANCISCO — Darrell Evans is hitting the ball so well this season that even he lists his accomplishments to this point as incredible.

"I don't know what else to call it," Evans said Wednesday after hitting three homers and driving in six runs while leading the San Francisco Giants to a 7-1 victory over the Houston Astros.

The likeable veteran, who hit 41 homers for the Atlanta Braves in 1978 but never more than 25 in any one year since then, now has 18 for the 1983 season, as well as 44 runs batted in and a hitting average of .314.

Evans started on a tear the first week of May and outside of one short U.S. National in which he went 0-for-14, he hasn't stopped.

All of this won't win him the National League's starting first base job in next month's All Star game, which almost surely will go to Al Oliver of the Montreal Expos, but it's certain to get him some playing time in the mid-summer classic.

"That's baseball's showcase game," Evans said of the All Star game. "Over the years there have been cases where players are named and found a way to back out. Not me. If they pick me I will regard it as the honor of my life."

That last statement tells more about Evans than anything else, and is illustrative of why he is one of the most popular players among his peers.

"Darrell has no enemies, only friends," says Giants teammate Jim Barr. "I'm sure everyone in baseball is delighted he's having such a fine year. It couldn't be happening to a nicer guy."

It's hard to tell why opposing pitchers don't keep him on his toes, but the way Evans is hitting he should be seeing a lot of push-back pitches.

"You expect them when you're hitting the way I am," said

Evans, "because that's the way to play this game." Evans unloaded his first two homers Wednesday off Houston starter and loser Mike LaCoss. His third came off reliever Frank LaCorte. All three were solid blasts that wound up deep in the bleachers.

"I've always had a lot of confidence in my swing," Evans said, "but I didn't start hitting until Frank (Giants manager Robinson) moved me up to second in the batting order."

Now, Robinson has dropped Evans to third, in front of Jack Clark, and Darrell said he is seeing pitches he's never seen before.

"That's important," he said. "Where you bat in the order may be the difference between 30 to 40 points in your average."

Fred Breining went the distance in Wednesday's game and wound up with a four-hitter after holding the Astros hitless for 5 1/3 innings. His performance, as fine as it was, couldn't upstage Evans.

Even the Astros marveled at Evans.

"He's swinging the hottest bat in the National League," said manager Bob Lillis. "Pitches we used to get him out with now are landing over the fence. We're all going to have to take another look."

Errors stunt Rangers' attempt to move closer to league lead

United Press International
ARLINGTON — Both the Seattle Mariners and Texas Rangers did something they haven't done much of this season Wednesday night.

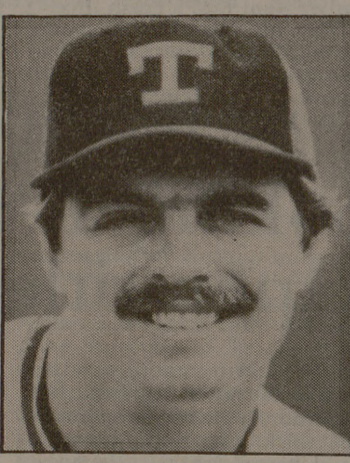
The Rangers let a sizeable lead slip away and the Mariners overcame a sizeable deficit.

"We haven't won many games like that this year," said Seattle manager Rene Lachemann. "But that is the kind of game that can be a confidence booster. When you come from four runs down it makes you think you can do it again."

Texas owned a 4-0 advantage through the fifth inning Wednesday evening en route to what appeared to be its sixth straight victory. A Rangers' win would have moved them to within a game of the lead in the American League West.

But three Texas errors led to three Seattle runs and the Mariners then struck for three more in the ninth to down the Rangers, 6-4.

Al Cowens, batting an .184, drove a two-run, two-out tri-



Frank Tanana

ple to right in the ninth, bringing home the tying and go-ahead scores for the Mariners — who had lost seven of their previous nine outings.

"We were just one strike away from winning," said Texas manager Doug Rader, who was in a less than pleasant mood following the contest. "It's frustrating. But this won't set us back. It's just one

loss."

Pete O'Brien had keyed a four-run Texas fifth inning with a two-run homer.

But Seattle started chipping away in the sixth with two runs set up by a throwing error by normally solid third baseman Buddy Bell. Another unearned run resulted from a two-base error by second baseman Wayne Tolleason in the eighth.

Then, in the ninth, Domingo Ramos and Steve Henderson delivered back-to-back, one out singles.

Jones retired Manny Castillo on a fly ball, but Cowens produced the game winner on a 2-2 pitch. His liner skipped past O'Brien in right field all the way to the wall.

After reaching third Cowens promptly scored the final run of the inning on a single by the designated hitter.

Before his ninth-inning appearance Cowens had grounded out three times and walked once.

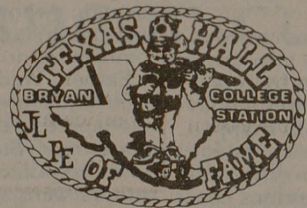
"I never considered pinch hitting for Al," said Lache-

mann. "If you do that you show him you don't have any confidence in him and then he doesn't have any confidence in you, either. Maybe this will be the big hit that gets him out of his slump." Cowens admitted he had listened to everybody and tried just about everything to improve his lowly average.

"If you told me I could have stood on my head and gotten a base hit I would have done it," he said. "But all I can do is try the best I can each at bat. I wasn't guessing any particular pitch. When you are hitting .180 you can't guess."

"I think I have been trying to pull the ball too much. When we get behind I try to hit a home run every time and that is a mistake."

Ed Vande Berg, Seattle's third pitcher of the evening who threw 3 1/3 innings of one-hit relief, was the beneficiary of the comeback and evened his record at 2-2. Jones' record dropped to 2-3.



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