

Offensive Pirates rely on questionable defense

Golden Glove Award winner, World Series hero, National League Most Valuable Player, Baseball Hall of Fame member — Roberto Clemente will never be replaced. He was killed in a plane crash December 31, 1972 off the shore of San Juan, Puerto Rico while trying to fly relief supplies to the earthquake victims in Managua, Nicaragua. He left behind a void in the Pirate outfield and in the hearts of Pittsburgh baseball fans that will never be filled.

Strangely enough, insensitive and harsh as it may seem, he may not be missed. The fans and the veterans will remember, of course, but of all the teams in the National League the Pirates are best equipped to adjust to the loss of their leader. While Clemente has been the heart of the Pirates during the past decade and a half the new Pirates are confident they can go on winning, even without Roberto.

The 1973 edition of the Pittsburgh Pirates looks as solid, strong and deep as any of the previous three eastern championship clubs. Add to last year's league leading team batting average of .274 the fact that Pirate pitching yielded the fewest runs and one can begin to see why manager Bill Virdon isn't ready to jump off the sixth street bridge into the Allegheny River.

However, that doesn't mean Virdon is skipping the Grapefruit circuit for an extended seven week vacation in the Florida sunshine. Defensively, the loss of Roberto could be felt very deeply. Since the beginning of spring

training Virdon has been hatching his "Grand Experiment" which, if successful, will transfer catcher Manny Sanguillen to right field permanently.

Sanguillen saw some right field duty last season but his play was not perfect and the question of his capability in the outfield was unresolved at the end of the year.

So far this Spring he has handled the right fielder's job adequately and Virdon has been content to leave him there but if the Bucs cannot come up with someone to back up Milt May, Sanguillen's replacement behind the plate, the situation may force Virdon to abandon his experiment.

The Pirate skipper has indicated he is disappointed with the play of catchers Charlie Sands and Chuck Goggin so he now must go hunting for someone to back up May.

May doesn't exactly have the reputation of a Lou Brock or a Maury Wills on the base paths so consequently Virdon would like to be able to pinch run for him in the late innings of a close game, without exposing any defensive cracks. Sanguillen would be the logical choice in such a situation but Virdon, with good reason, doesn't want Sanguillen burdened with the added responsibility of catching.

The Pirates are trying to pick up a good defensive catcher but have been unsuccessful so far. Also, if Manny does return to his former duties behind the plate Virdon probably would make it permanent. At present May's bat is just too hot to cool on the bench behind Sanguillen. Virdon is faced with quite a dilemma. He's still thinking about it.

Al Oliver is well established in center and will be the

last three seasons and if he comes up with his usual quota he will again play a key role in the Pirates' attempt to repeat as champs.

In the infield the Pirates have more defensive woes. Hebner is sound at third but the shortstop position remains a question mark. Will Gene Alley be able to cover the ground after his second knee operation in two years? So far this spring he appears capable but the season is long and Alley will be 33 in July.

His backup is Jackie Hernandez but he and second baseman Dave Cash have not turned into the double play combination that Alley and retired second baseman Bill Mazerowski once were.

The Pirate pitching staff is intact from last season with the exception of Bob Miller who was dropped last week.

Steve Blass heads a staff that combined for 96 wins last year. Blass had a final mark of 19-8 and he was followed by Dock Ellis, Bob Moose and Nelly Briles all of whom had winning 1972 records.

Finally, with Virdon at the helm the Pirates should sail on a pretty even keel. Besides leaving him a World Series team, Murtaugh also gave Virdon a little of his patience and calmness which Virdon used very wisely last year while guiding the Bucs to the National League Playoffs.

But Virdon has been tipping the offensive and defensive scales of that championship team all spring and the possibility exists that he may have sacrificed too much defense in favor of stronger bats.

With Clemente, Virdon could have both. But Roberto is gone and it is doubtful another ever will be cast from his mold.



BILL VIRDON



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electing to go with an inexperienced fielder to get some more power at the plate. Last year Robertson played left field for the first time since 1967.

Virdon's decision to move Robertson off of first base was prompted by the weak knees of Pirate slugger Willie Stargell.

Stargell has been a puzzle to both Murtaugh and Virdon. A good consistent long ball threat throughout the season, Stargell's bat was silent in the playoffs the last two years and in the 1971 World Series. Still, he has hit 112 homers in

Olympians highlight track season

By DAVE DUNLÖP
Collegian Sports Writer

A batch of classy athletes, including six Olympians, highlights Penn State's 1973 track schedule which features four home meets.

Three Olympians come to Beaver Stadium April 21 when the Lions host Kent State in a dual meet. Gerald Tinker, a United States Olympic team member, gold medal winner in the 400-meter relay and NCAA 60-yard dash champion, and French Olympian Jacques Accambay, national hammer throw champ and capable shot put and discus man, will compete for Kent State.

Mike Sands, Bahamian Olympian in the sprints and 440, will compete for Penn State.

Other home events include the Nittany Lion Relays (April 13-14), a double-dual meet May 5 with West Virginia and Syracuse and the All-Pennsylvania Track Classic and Open Invitational (May 18).

The rest of the card rounds out with away meets at the Georgetown Relays in Washington, D.C. (April 7), the Penn Relays in Philadelphia (April 27-28), the Pitt Invitational (May 12), May 31 at powerful Villanova and of course the Intercollegiate Amateur Athletic Association of America Championships (IC4A) in New Brunswick, N.J. May 25-26.

Groves called the Penn Relays the "oldest relay carnival in the country" and termed it "a classic." This is

where all the top athletes are stacked against each other, Groves explained.

The All-Pennsylvania Open Invitational, Groves said, gives athletes some competitive exposure without too many double or triple events. He said the meet is a good place for athletes to qualify

1973 spring outlook

for the IC4A's. Groves said, "A guy can't develop if he must compete on the nose every weekend."

The Lions will see many top notch trackmen this season, starting with the Nittany Lion Relays home opener. This 33-event, two-day affair will bring some of the East's top performers to Beaver Stadium April 13 and 14.

Colgate's Chris Dunn, a two-time high-jump champion and United States Olympian, John Hartnett of Villanova, an Irish Olympian and Dick Bruggerman, Ohio Track Club member and an Olympic 400-meter hurdler, are a few.

Also here will be Seton Hall's indoor mile relay champs, Cornell with a solid all-around team, and Villanova, which Groves said is "loaded" with talent.

Kent State, besides Accambay and Tinker, features a pair of sprinters who reached last spring's NCAA semi-finals — Len Turner and John Mason. Dan Phillips, an NCAA hurdles semi-finalist, will also perform for the Golden Flashes.

WVU sports lightning fast football flanker Danny Buggs, who burned the Lion gridders in a losing cause last October. Buggs led the country in the indoor 300 and the 60-yard dash last year.

Syracuse's Bruce Fisher ran against the Russians last winter and was an Olympic

trials finalist in the 1,500 meters.

The Lions have a few potential eye-openers themselves, although All-America miler Greg Fredericks is gone. Ken Andrews could be one of the East's top javelin throwers and in last year's 120-30 house-cleaning of Villanova he offered his best collegiate throw, 221 feet.

Matt Chadwick is one of the

East's top 6-milers and his 28:31.4 in the NCAA's last spring gave him third place and national ranking.

Charles Maguire was an IC4A 3-miles runnerup and United States Junior Nationals 3-mile champion. He competed in the Russian-American Junior Meet and was a 10,000 meter finalist in the Olympic trials.

Football flanker Jimmy Scott is the defending IC4A 100-yard dash champion (9.7) and a threat in the 220. Additionally, he anchors the Lion 440 relay team and is the leadoff leg on the mile relay.

Bill Whittaker, the Lion entry in the first IC4A decathlon this spring, garnered a school record 5,920 points in his first decathlon run in January.

Freshman Al Jackson is a national high school hammer throw record holder from Providence, R.I.

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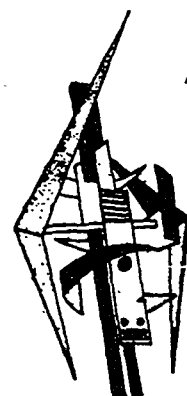
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