

From Up Close

By Tom Anderson

Quotes from people prominent in sports:—

Jackie Robinson: "The reason I am hated and booed, especially in Milwaukee, is not because I am a Negro but because I was the Negro who broke the color line in baseball."

Jackie Robinson, later in a speech in Milwaukee: "The people here are just wonderful. They are the most partisan baseball fans anywhere and I would just love to play for them."

Dan Parker, in the New York Mirror: "In his three-part autobiography, which has started in Look Magazine, Jackie Robinson says that baseball fans who boo him do so because he's the Negro who broke the color line. Why do they boo Ted Williams, I wonder!"

Ban Johnson, president of the American League in a letter to Babe Ruth: "It would be the height of folly to condone the things you have done . . . You are plainly not earning your money, and your prestige has sunk to a standard where you are of no particular value to the New York club . . . It seems the period has arrived when you should allow some intelligence to creep into a mind that has plainly been warped."

Babe could have (but didn't) whined that everybody was prejudiced against him because he was an orphan.

Some of us fear that mercenary baseball is a moribund duck. The Sporting News, which knows more about the game than anybody, doesn't think so. The weekly paper is convinced that a professional ball club is a tremendous civic asset. Excerpts from a fairly recent editorial:

"The visitors who came to Baltimore to watch the Orioles spent at least \$5,500,000 in the city. This should be impressive to business organizations, to say nothing of civic promoters, in every town in baseball. It suggests that civic support of the national pastime should be a continuous process, not an expedient to be grasped at when it looks as though a city is about to lose its franchise."

Ed Hickey, coach of the St. Louis Billikens, disagrees with most of basketball's critics in that he thinks the officials should toot their horns more often:

"It is just as painful to me as it is to other coaches to see so many teams outscore the opposition from the floor, and lose because they gave the other team more free throw opportunities. But that's how it has to be until the coaches wise up."

"I don't know if I am in the minority (you are) or not, but I feel that there isn't enough whistle blowing by the officials today . . . It's time the coaches, players and fans realize that the pros and colleges are playing two entirely different games with different purposes."

"The pros are interested in dollars and cents, and there is nothing wrong with that. The colleges ought to be interested in providing wholesome competition and in stimulating and developing inter-school rivalries . . . Leave the rules alone, I say."

Jackie Robinson: "The Sporting News of St. Louis, the national baseball weekly, said that I only had enough ability to try out for a Brooklyn B farm—if I were six years younger and white. A year later The Sporting News presented me with its award for being, in its opinion, the Rookie of the Year for 1947."

J. G. T. Spink, publisher of The Sporting News: "Jackie, we have been unable to find any trace of such a reference in our files. Therefore, I believe I am justified in asking that you name the specific issue in which this alleged statement appeared . . ."

"Since your entry into Organized Ball, The Sporting News has carried many laudatory stories and references to you, over a period of years. Yet you single out one alleged slighting reference, which you say appeared in our publication as far back as 1946, and choose to ignore a multitude of favorable comments."

"Surely you do not mean to imply that you should be immune to all criticism as a player, simply because of your race?"

Jackie Robinson: "Pitchers throw at me because I am a Negro."

Yogi Berra: "Pitchers throw at me because I am a good hitter and they want to loosen me up."

Willie Mays: "Pitchers throw at me because they know I'm liable to get hold of one and break up the game. If I's pitching I'd throw at me, too."

Jackie Robinson: "Leo Durocher's claim that Willie Mays is a greater player than Stan Musial is a lot of baloney. Let's wait until he has had more than one good year before classifying him with stars like Stan Musial and Joe DiMaggio."

Jackie Robinson: "Umpires make it tough on me because I am a Negro."

Stan Musial: "Umpires work harder than players and they are honest. Sure, I think they are wrong a lot of times, but not as often as players are."

Ted Williams: "To hell with people. Give me a fish I can catch."

Today's sermon:

The person who does not work very hard
Is likely to get surrounded by lard.