



By MARK QUEEN

WHEN MATT KELLY SCHOOL teacher John Bass, a comparative novice at handball, won the Class C championship in the city tournament several months ago, it was predicted in these pages that John was "a man to watch in local handball circles."

That prediction took on added significance recently when John moved up to Class B competition in Las Vegas Handball Association play and finished third in a strong field by defeating Sam Drake in a two-hour marathon, 21-12, 18-21, 21-15.

Bass had previously upset several veteran players, including Pat Fitzgibbons, before losing to Hank Mőzzetti in the semifinals. Keep up the good work, John!

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PRO GOLFER Pete Brown, who became the first Negro to qualify for the local Tournament of Champions by winning the Waco Turner tournament this spring, and rodeo champ Will Dawson, are the subjects of heavily illustrated articles in the current issue of Sepia, with Dawson featured on the cover.

It is interesting to note that Brown, who was interviewed by Sepia quite some time before the recent United States Open, says "Ken Venturi was my favorite golfer--I even copied his style at first. But I found out pretty quick you have to play your own way in order to win." Venturi, of course, won the national title two weeks ago after two lean years on the tour.

In the article, Brown rates Arnold Palmer and Jack Niclaus as the world's two best golfers in that order, but predicts it won't be long until he's No. 1. That's a pretty big order, but here's wishing Pete all the luck in the world.

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SEVERAL SPORTS COLUMNISTS around the country have suggested that the Cassius Clay-Sonny Liston rematch may be staged in Las Vegas. This may be so, but we doubt it.

We are quite sure that Clay will not fight anyone for the title before he fulfills his obligation to give Liston another crack at the crown Sonny lost so ingloriously in Miami Beach. You can bet there's an iron-clad contract guaranteeing Liston a return bout. But we expect the fight to take place in Louisville, Ky., The Lip's home town, sometime between Oct. 1 and Christmas.

ANGELS NOW HAVE THEIR OWN "WONDERFUL WILLIE"

(Sid Ziff, veteran sports columnist for the Los Angeles Times,, recently presented some interesting observations on Willie Smith, one of the big heroes of the 11-game winning streak put together by the Los Angeles Angels. Ziff's comment appears below.)

Wonderful Willie Smith, batting hero of the Angels' sizzling win streak, carefully refrains from pinching himself in the morning to see if it has all been for real.

Among his accomplishments were to deliver the winning hits in four games, hit safely in every game in which he started, and get 7 out of 14 as a pinch hitter.



Willie Smith

"If I've been asleep," reflects Wonderful Willie, who was converted from a pitcher in a moment of desperation by manager Bill Rigney, "I don't want ever to wake up."

Although he reached the majors as a pitcher, it is doubtful whether he'd ever have made it in that category. For instance, in his last relief performance, he gave up back-to-back home runs to Leon Wagner and Bob Chance.

As a hitter, however, he seems to have unlimited possibilities.

"I don't try to make a problem out of it when I come to the plate," he divulges amiably. "I tell myself I'm going to pick out my best pitch. Sooner or later the pitcher is going to come up with it. I leave the others go. When I swing, I swing. I've hit hanging curves, good curves, fast balls and what not. I've been real lucky."

Smith's only previous experience in the outfield was limited to a few games for the Birmingham Black Barons in the Negro League. He hit so well that Detroit first looked him over closely as a batter. They signed him as a pitcher because that's where they needed the most help.

He got nothing for signing.

"But it didn't matter too much," he says. He's just glad that someone wanted him.

Things to Learn in the Outfield

Willie has adapted himself very well with the help of Jimmy Piersall. He says Piersall goes over all the hitters with him. He tells him when he should play up and when he should play back.

He says he hasn't had a real tough play come up yet. There was a sinking line drive by Jim Gentile but he got in front of it and managed to make a good stop.

Smith has discovered there are things you have to learn by experience about playing the outfield. For in-

stance, in Dodger Stadium, the ground is much harder near the foul line. A ball which hits there, he says, will really take off and zoom.

Wonderful Willie's earliest ambition was to be a boxer. He had 10 amateur fights, winning 8 and losing 2. He gave it up the third time his nose was broken. "I wasn't much interested in it," he says understandably.

Smith's normal weight is around 182 pounds. He lost four in the last month. "I've been worried," he confesses. From the way he's been hitting you wouldn't think he'd have a care in the world.

Aside from boxing and baseball, the only thing Willie has done is some part-time work as a waiter.

The Angels got him from Detroit in a swap for reliever Julio Navarro. If Willie keeps on hitting, the deal may rank as a Detroit booboo comparable with the trading of Jim Bunning last winter to the Phillies for Don Demeter.

Bunning recently twirled a perfect game for the Phils--the first in 42 years in the majors in a regular season tilt. Demeter has been a washout and spends most of the time on the bench.

Wonderful Willie is an exciting player who has helped turn the Angels into a highly interesting club.

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