



How Good Is The Toledo Ball Club

*A Discussion on the Merits of our Mud Hens by a Man
who made the Western Invasion with Them*

By ROBERT FRENCH

HOW good is the Toledo ball club?" Altho the team is now performing before the home fans at Swayne Field, not enough games have been played on that greensward to give the dyed-in-the-wool rooters a real line on the strength or weakness of the aggregation Casey Stengel is bossing. Therefore a few words from one who was on the recent tour of the four western cities of the league with the club may be of some interest.

The above question, which has been on the lips of all of the city's fandom since early March, is now one of the principal topics of conversation in many another American Association metropolis just now. The showing made by the Stengel athletes on that first invasion of the west was an impressive one and showed Toledo possessed so much hitting strength that sport writers in every city visited were rather emphatic in saying that the Mud Hens were a real menace to the more highly touted clubs in the circuit.

EXPERTS who unhesitatingly picked Toledo for a lowly position in the pennant scramble were just as unhesitating in asking to be allowed to register another guess. Toledo's

smashing attack caused a world of comment and the fact that the club had runners on the bases in 33 of the first 36 innings played during the season spoke volumes for its terrific power with the batting mace.

But there have been other factors which may not have appeared in the box scores. One of these is base running. Speedy work on the paths has characterized every game played by the Hens this year. When one of our men reaches first base he doesn't stand there with his hands in his pockets and wait for some one to wallop the ball far enough to permit him to amble home with a minimum of effort.

EVERY Toledo base runner has shown a "heads up" running attack on the lanes as well as at the plate. He not only tries to get somewhere by his own efforts, but he keeps the opposing infielders watching him so closely that they do not cover the ground they might have if they could have payed their undivided attention to the batter.

The pitchers haven't looked any too strong, but perhaps the coming of warmer weather and the fact that they are hurling on the home lot may bring better results. The way

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In the photograph at the top of the page President Dick Meade and Manager Casey Stengel of the Mud Hens are shown talking things over with Woody English, their promising young shortstop. At the right Bobby Veach is getting ready to pole one to the fence in deep center, and at the left Bevo Lebourveau, another of Toledo's slugging outfielders, has just crashed out a long one.



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several of the relief throwers have gone in and clung gamely to precarious leads has shown that they possessed at least one of the great qualifications of a good moundsman—nerve.

Bill Clarkson was wild and was an in and out on the trip, but he needs a bit of real hot sunshine to be at his best. He seems to have the ability to win in the A. A. and has a fine nerve and bearing. Ernie Woolfolk and Aaron Herman have done very well and made many wonder if a real pitcher or two isn't hidden in the obscurity of the Toledo bench.

THE outfield is without question one of the greatest combinations which ever performed on any American Association club. The remarkable hitting, fielding, throwing, base running and strategic playing of Veach, Myers and Lebourveau has already caused many keen observers to ask why this trio is performing below the big leagues.

The infield has shown fine defensive ability, and has hit as well as anyone expected. Bud Connelly at third shows promise of developing into one of the great third sackers of the league.

The trade which brought Lebourveau to Toledo from Kansas City in exchange for Fred Nicholson was a wonderful stroke of business for Toledo. Good ball player that Nicholson is, he can't compare with the colorful Bevo who has been hitting, fielding and speeding around the bases in beautiful style.

SOME hard luck was experienced in the first game of the season when Catcher Luke Urban broke a small bone in his ankle sliding into second base. Urban is a young, hustling, full of fight receiver who knows the weaknesses of the various batters in the circuit better than Heving, who has been carrying on in fine shape since his backstopping partner was injured.

The great winning and fighting spirit of every man on the club has been a big factor. This, and the fine strategy developed, are due in large measure to the unceasing efforts of Manager Stengel to develop "inside ball."

No one can predict the finish of a race in any league, and guessing is especially hazardous in the A. A. because of the acquisition each year of star players from the big loops, which radically changes the relative strength of the contenders.

TOLEDO stands at least as good a chance as the other clubs to improve. The winning spirit, the never say die determination of every player, and the cooperation which has prevailed, should continue to bear fruit throughout the season.

The Mud Hens need pitchers. So do most of the teams in the circuit. Perhaps by the time this reaches print a hurler or two may have been acquired. We hope so. And if they have not come as yet, let us pray that the day of their delivery be not far off. A moundsman or two of tried ability from the major leagues would make everybody feel decidedly optimistic.