

As Seen in The Mirror's

SPORTS

REFLECTIONS

of Athletes and Events

Retirement of Irv Dickens as the athletic director at Wilson's Charles L. Coon High school removes a fine figure from the world of sports.

During his nine years as baseball coach at the Wilson school he produced three Eastern AAA champions. More important than his enviable record was his unflinching sportsmanship.

Irv exhibited the same sort of sportsmanship when he was playing second base for the Wilson Tobs. Playing it so well, we might add, that he repeatedly rated All-Star selection in the fast Class D loop.

New Bern fans have no trouble recalling his timely hitting and fancy fielding during his many appearances at Kafer park. Even when the hustling veteran was totting Father Time on his back he robbed opposing batters of countless base hits, much to their consternation.

Never one to deliver that long ball when he stepped to the plate, Dickens didn't clout a single home run during his best season—1946. However, in achieving a batting average of .305 he collected 124 hits, including 21 doubles and three triples. He scored 88 runs, drove in 44, and stole 25 bases.

Defensively, he had 340 put outs, 315 assists, and committed 42 errors. Rarely did he make a miscue in the clutch, and the ones he made were more than offset by his brilliant stabs and those would-be Texas Leaguers that he grabbed in short right or center field.

Moose Shetler, at first base, was the only New Bern Bear to make that 1946 All-Star team. Rocky

Mount's Charlie Munday was the catcher, Eddie Bauer of Wilson was at third, Greenville's Ray Carlson at shortstop, and Greenville's Vern Blackwell, Wilson's Johnny Wolfe and Fayetteville's Ed Musial in the outer garden.

Rocky Mount's Bill Kennedy and Goldsboro's Bill Herring were the All-Coastal Plain pitchers. Herring was also named manager, with Rocky Mount's Dave Fowler given the nod for the utility assignment. Kennedy was the only unanimous choice, while Dickens and Shetler each landed all but one vote in the poll. It was, to say the least, a choice aggregation.

Speaking of big Moose Shetler, he led the league in hitting that year, with a lofty .362 mark. Coming to the plate 403 times in 123 ball games, he came through with 146 hits. He batted in 95 runs, scored 83, and had 31 doubles, 11 triples and 20 homers to his credit. It's hard to believe in retrospect that he even stole 10 bases.

Twenty-five billion postage stamps are sold and used in the United States each year.

Ted Williams Truly Great Star

Those who criticize Ted Williams, and his critics are many, evidently haven't bothered to delve into the inner qualities that make the Red Sox star as truly great off the baseball diamond as he is on.

They ignore his tireless but unsung work as national chairman of the Jimmy Fund, created to fight the tragedy of malignancy in children. They minimize his heroism as a pilot in World War Two and the Korean conflict—five years of military action that robbed him of his chance to set many a new all-time record in the national pastime.

They obviously don't know or care that other Major League players on all teams say he goes out of his way to help even the most obscure rookie improve his performance at the plate. Sports writers may heap unkind words on Ted, but ball players praise him to the sky.

New Bernians who had the privilege of knowing the baseball immortal during his brief stay here liked him immensely. As far as the editor of The Mirror is concerned, we found him to be remarkably modest, completely frank and honest, and emphatically fond of kids.

Well do we remember his eagerness to comply, when we asked him to attend a work-out of New Bern's American Legion knee-pants team at Kafer Park. It meant canceling a fishing trip that Ted was dressed for, but he passed up the fish and we headed for the park instead.

Bill Kafer will never forget that



Bill Lansche, Jr., had a different experience. We were en route to a downtown lunch counter when the Lansche youngster stopped Ted and asked him for an autograph.

Ted was in a mighty big hurry (another fishing trip on tap) but he asked Billy for his name and included it in the autograph. Then, blushing with embarrassment as only a Lansche can blush, Billy asked for a second autograph to give a friend.

Readily obliging, Williams said, "I'll just write my name, since I don't know your friend as well as I know you." Billy's chest puffed out like a bantam rooster's, as he walked away.

Then there was that time at the Hotel Queen Anne, when Ted had just checked in. He was sprawled on the floor with his five-year-old daughter, adorning a coloring book, when we heard a knock on the door.

In walked five Negro chamber maids, to clean up a room that was already clean. It was quite apparent that they were more concerned with seeing Ted Williams than they were with straightening up the room.

They finished the job in three or four minutes. No piker when it comes to tipping, Ted handed each of the five a dollar bill as they marched out, walking on air.

Let others speak evil of Williams if they want to. In New Bern he proved he was the nicest sort of celebrity—a guy with a heart.

day. Ted asked Bill for his autograph, and the little redhead, though flabbergasted, scrawled it, and William tucked it away in his pocket.



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