

CAROLINA COUGARS

Bill Bunting

Cougar's top draft choice acquired from Miami. Called "Dollar Bill" by his teammates because of lucrative contract.

Mounties Dedicate Park Friday

When Struttin' Bud Shaney Pitched, Everyone Knew It

By BOB TERRELL
In The Asheville Citizen-Times

They called him Struttin' Bud, and when he pitched the whole city knew about it. Those who weren't at McCormick Field to watch waited breathlessly for the results.

Not often did Struttin' Bud let'em down. Mostly he won...yes, sir, MUCH more often than not.

Over the five seasons he pitched for the Asheville Tourists, Struttin' Bud Shaney won more than 100 games. Those were great years, 1925 through 1929. The 1928 Tourists ran away with the Sally League pennant and many called them the greatest team ever produced here.

Struttin' Bud and Bill Harris roomed together and together won 48 victories on the mound. Bill won 25 and Bud notched 23. With the 1970 baseball season just around the corner, it is fitting to tell Struttin' Bud's story to a new generation who may never have heard of him, and to the older generation who knew him when.

Struttin' Bud is 70 now, born Jan. 9, 1900 in New Albany, Ind., but his muscles are still hard as nails and he could yet throw a baseball through a barn door. He's a tough old coddler who survived three severe heart attacks one cold January night in 1959, lying unconscious 12 days and then coming slowly round.

He lives on a farm in Mills River, works as a bondsman for the Allied Bonding Company here, and talks baseball at the slightest provocation. With anyone. Anywhere. Anytime.

Bud's voice is pitched about an octave high and is of such quantity that it sounds weak. "I think I've got permanent laryngitis," he said. "I umpired five years and used to let'em have it. When that third strike came in, I let'em know he took it. Ruined my voice, but they knew old Bud when he walked in the park."

That's the way it was when Bud was a pitcher, too. He toiled professionally on the mound from 1920 when he got out of the Army until 1942.

He's a World War I veteran; spent most of the war in Siberia as a hospital corpsman. "We went over," he said, "to bring back the 27th and 31st Infantries, but they weren't ready to come back, so we stayed over there till the war was over."

Besides that stretch in the Army, his recent years as a bondsman, a spell as a U. S. Marshal in Alaska 20 years ago, and several years as Asheville's special agent in charge of keeping McCormick Field playable, Struttin' Bud was a ball player.

He was of the old school, a man who spat on the ball and threw the juicer, who rubbed the ball on his wool trousers until he slicked one side and threw the shiner. He was accused of doctoring the ball with every imaginable device, because his pitches wereso effective, but he denies that.

"Bobby Higgs used to take baseballs that I'd pitched and saw them in two and shake'em over a newspaper to see if any phonograph needles or anything else came out," Bud laughed. "But I never used anything like that. I didn't need to. I could make the ball do things, and that was enough. If I'd used emery paper, they could've seen the scars on the ball, but I was never thrown out of a game in my life for doctoring a baseball."

"I lost from 185 pounds to 140," Bud said, "and Mr. Navin, the business manager of the Milwaukee ball club, had heard of a man with yellow jaundice who came to Asheville and was cured in a year. He told me to pack my bags, that I was going to Asheville."

"The season had started when I arrived here by train," he continued. "There was a wire waiting for me, telling me to join the Asheville club. I called Bob Huggins, the manager, and he told me to come on out to the park."

"When I got there, I told him I wasn't too strong, but he said he understood, and I took it easy for a few days. Then he gave me an assignment against the Charlotte Hornets, who were Asheville's arch enemies, and I beat them. Next thing I knew Asheville had bought my contract from Milwaukee."

Shaney and Asheville hit it off from the start. He liked the city and its people and they loved him and his pitching.

That's how Struttin' Bud Shaney came to be in Asheville the summer of 1928, pitching for a club that sent six players to the major leagues and could have sent more, had there been a place for them.

There was one who made the trip in reverse. He came from the New York Yankees to Asheville. Roy Lubbe was his name. He went to sleep on the Yankee bench one day and Miller Huggins, the peppy little manager, saw him.

"Lubbe," Huggins shouted, "What's the score?" Lubbe popped open his eyes and stared desperately at the scoreboard. "Two to one," he said. "Pack yer bags," said Miller Huggins. "You're going to Asheville."

That's the last Roy Lubbe saw of the New York Yankees. "In my opinion," said Struttin' Bud Shaney, "no Asheville club before or since could match the 1928 club. It was a great club, not just a good club. If that club was in the American League or National League today, with all of its capabilities, it would be a first division club."

"Eddie Cicotte, who was banned from baseball for life for taking part in the Black Sox scandal in 1919, showed me how to shine a ball. Jeff Tesreau, the old Giants pitcher, taught me the splitter."

"With my speed and strength, those were all the pitches I needed besides the curve, and I could always throw the curve."

Bud had been in baseball five years before he came to Asheville. He had risen to triple-A, to a berth with the Milwaukee Brewers of the American Association, just one step away from the major leagues, and the future looked bright, indeed, when he contracted malaria and yellow jaundice in Florida in the spring of 1925.

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"Bill Harris won 25 games and lost nine. I won 23 and lost 11. Harry Smythe was 16-11. Marty Baylin 14-7, Joe Heving 13-5 and Joe Marty 1-1."

"We had great hitters. The guys had a team batting average of .304. Ray Kennedy, our manager, hit .366. Dusty Cooke .362 with 30 doubles, 30 triples, 13 homers and 21 stolen bases. Ben Chapman hit .331 with 31 doubles, 17 triples and 39 stolen bases. Stanley Keyes batted .330 with 30 doubles, 19 triples and 15 homers. Al Green was a .310 hitter with 31 doubles. Dabbe hit .290 with 20 doubles. That's the kind of hitters we had. Those fellows could swing a bat."

That team clouted 240 doubles and 112 triples. There was no fence around McCormick Field at the time and any ball hit into the shrubbery bordering the outfield was still in play.

From that team Cooke and Chapman went on to the Yankees for long major league careers, Heving went to Cleveland, Smythe to the Phillies, Marty to the White Sox and Harris to the Pirates.

"Making the major leagues was a tough proposition back then," Struttin' Bud said. "In fact, it was tough just getting a job playing professional baseball. There were only 13 leagues, including the two major leagues, and it wasn't anything unusual to see 20 men in spring training fighting for one position."

"You didn't just play a couple of years in the minor leagues and then get a chance in the majors. Lefty Grove and George Earnshaw, two of the greatest pitchers Connie Mack ever had on his Philadelphia Athletics, and Max Bishop and Joe Boley, the second-short combination at Philadelphia, all played seven or eight years at Baltimore before Connie had room enough for them

in Philadelphia. And they were star players in the majors.

"Bobby Higgs (now part owner of Sams Lincoln-Mercury here) could have been a star in the majors, but he never got the chance. I know I could've won in the majors, but I never got a chance, either."

So it was well that Struttin' Bud Shaney liked Asheville, and that Asheville liked him.

"Boy, those were the good old days," Bud said, and his eyes twinkled. "We didn't have to pay no income tax, shoes cost \$2.50 to \$3.50, you could buy a suit of clothes for \$15."

"Meals cost a quarter, with dessert 35 cents. They allowed us a dollar a day meal money and we ate good. Hotel rooms were a dollar a day."

"We smoked Sweet Cappelard and Old Mill cigarettes, brown paper cigarettes they were, a nickel a pack, and we chewed Horse Shoe, Star or Climax tobacco, nickel a plug. That's what you paid for a beer, too, a nickel."

"And baseball was as tough a game as a man could play. Everybody sharpened his spikes, like Ty Cobb, and most came sliding into second with their spikes flashing."

The incident that Bud Shaney remembers most vividly was the time Tom Farrell killed Pete Mann with a baseball.

"It was in 1926 or '27," Bud said, "and we were on a road trip to Macon and Augusta. It was my turn to pitch the last game in Augusta, but Larry Gardner, our manager, told me he'd work Tom Farrell that day and me the next in Augusta."

"Pete Mann had a batting stance like Heinie Groh. He faced the pitcher square away and held the bat straight up in front of his face. At the last instant he would turn and swing at the ball."

"Farrell was a big, strong kid, about 6-2 and 190 or 200 pounds and he could throw hard. He was property of the Detroit Tigers who wouldn't have taken \$100,000 for him."

"Farrell threw one inside to Mann and Pete didn't get out of the way. The ball drilled him in the rib cage on the left side and he went down like an ox. I was the first man to him and cradled his head in my lap. A shudder ran through him and he became still. A doctor came out of the stands and examined him and said, 'Boys, he's dead.'"

"Well, they formed a panel right there in the park and exonerated Tom of any blame, and I took him to the hotel, but had to help holding him. He tried to jump out the window and all he could say was 'What will his mother say!'"

"Finally, Larry Gardner got there and sent one of the boys out for a bottle of whisky. Larry poured a water glass half full and made Tom soak it down and he calmed down a little after that. But that ruined him (the incident; not the whisky). He never made it to the big leagues."

MORE & MORE & MORE & MORE "Larry told me that I didn't have to pitch the next day in Augusta, that all I had to do was take care of Tom. So the next morning Tom and I rode a meter-cab the 110 miles from Macon to Augusta. We walked into the ball park, and I told our business manager I had a cab outside. He said he'd take care of it and when he saw how much it was, he almost fainted."

"Anyway, our troubles weren't finished yet. Larry pitched a school teacher that day, and of course, word of Tom Farrell's killing Pete Mann had been printed all around the league and everybody knew about it."

"Well, early in the game this school teacher hit an Augusta player named Crouch in the head with a pitch and knocked him cold. The fans poured out of the stands and came after us. We beat it to the bus, got inside, closed the door and lay down on the floor and those fans broke out every window and the windshield of the bus. When the driver got up enough nerve to start the engine he asked where we wanted to go and Larry said, 'Asheville—fast.'"

Verode all the way home in that drafty bus in our baseball uniforms and the club had to send a truck to Augusta to bring our clothes and things from our rooms."

Shaney was sold by the Asheville club to Williamsport, Pa., of the Eastern League for the 1930 season. With his new club, Struttin' Bud won his first 15 starts. In the 16th he was leading by a run and needed only one more out to win when a good hitter named Cobb (not Ty) came up.

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SHORTSTOP — Senior Philip Francis, who started in the outfield last year as KMHS won the SWC and association titles, has been moved to shortstop this year and has performed well for Coach Bob Hussey's Mountaineers. The Mounties dedicate their new park Friday afternoon when East Rutherford comes to town.

East Rutherford Here On Friday, Belmont Tuesday

Kings Mountain's Mountaineers, 2-1 in Southwestern Conference play and 2-2 overall, dedicate their spanking new baseball diamond here Friday afternoon when East Rutherford's Cavaliers come to town.

Coach Bobby Hussey's Mountaineers, the defending conference and association champions, will be beginning a two-game home stand which they hope will put them nearer the top of the SWC standings.

The Mountaineers had their Tuesday game with Crest postponed because of rain. The two clubs were rescheduled for Wednesday afternoon, but it was doubtful they would get the game in.

Thus, the Mountaineers have a pair of makeup games as they had already been rained out with Cherryville.

East Rutherford hasn't won in league play this year but the Cavaliers are always dangerous and Coach Hussey is reminding his boys that the East lads handed them one of their two losses (3-2) last year when they went all the way, posting a 20-2 record.

The Mountaineers haven't played since last Thursday when they nipped R.S. Central, 3-2, in chilly weather at Rutherford. Bobby Ethridge hurled a one-hitter in posting his second victory against one setback.

"Neither team played very well," commented Hussey. "There were a lot of misjudged fly balls because the wind was blowing so terribly. We had a few passed balls and some poor play in the infield, and we were fortunate to win it."

The Mountaineers were also held to only one hit, a two-run single by Grafton Withers in the first inning on a passed ball.

Special dedication ceremonies, handled by Superintendent Donald Jones and Athletic Director Bill Bates will precede Friday's game with East Rutherford.

Tuesday afternoon, the Mountaineers will host South Point of Belmont. The Red Raiders, 1-1-1 in conference play, own one of the state's top right-hand pitchers in Rick Cherry and under new coach, Phil Tate, the Raiders will be out for revenge for a pair of setbacks handed them by the Mountaineers last year.

The Mounties behind Rocky Goforth and Ethridge, blanked the Raiders both times they played them last season, 7-0 behind Goforth on a two-hitter and 5-0 behind Ethridge on a one-hitter.

Both hurlers were bothered with wild streaks. Carroll in the first when St. Michaels scored three runs and Cobb in the fifth when the Gastonians got their final tally.

Kim Bumgarner, Jimmy Fitts, and Butch Blalock supplied the hitting punch. Bumgarner had three hits while Fitts and Blalock added two each. Mike Gaffney and Daryl Van Dyke each scored four runs for the Patriots.

Coach Gibson used 17 players in the win, Central's ninth in its past 11 games.

The Patriots play at South Cleveland Thursday.

Lin scores: R H E
Central 943 000 0 16 12 4
St. Mich. 300 010 0 4 1 6

Joseph Levinoff, a nationally known ballet master, is serving as ballet master and lecturer-in-residence with the Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

HARRIS, N. C. — Preston Humphries of Shelby continued his winning ways at Harris Speedway Sunday afternoon, adding more points to push his No. 65, a '55 Chevrolet, further into the point lead for the Sportsman class.

Rookie driver Larry Petty of Gaffney, S. C. and Hobby driver Leslie McKinney of Mayo, continued on their winning journey Sunday, also.

Next week end, the action will return to Harris Speedway at 2 p.m., but even greater things are in store as Clyde Dedmon, Hobby Racing Association president and promoter of racing at six tracks in this vicinity, gets his entire circuit into full swing.

The Clay tracks on the circuit get into action Friday night as Rutherford County Speedway, located between Forest City and Spindale, opens under the sponsorship of the Forest City Jaycees and De'Mon. The 8 p.m. event will open with a full card as Rookies draw for starting positions and run a 20-lap main event; and the Hobbies and Late Models run 10 lap heats and 25 and 30 lap main events respectively. The Lancaster Speedway

at Lancaster, S. C., also runs at 8 p.m., Friday.

Saturday night, the HRA circuit opens its Saturday season at the Shelby Speedway located at the Cleveland County Fairgrounds. The 8 p.m. program will be identical to the one put on at Rutherford County Friday. In addition to the Shelby program Saturday, Dedmon and associates will open the Starlite Speedway at Monroe. The sixth track in the HRA will be idle until late May — the Spartanburg Piedmont Interstate Fair round track.

All the clay tracks on the circuit are one-half mile ovals — the Harris Speedway, a 3.10-mile paved track is the only asphalt oval on the loop.

Two Promising Rookies Make It To Sportsman

HICKORY, N. C. — Two promising rookies, well known to area fans for their successes as Hobby drivers, will be making that big jump to the Sportsman ranks as Hickory Speedway begins its 19th season of Saturday night programs this week.

Morgan Shepherd of Conover and Ab Schronce of Hickory will be piloting identical 1957 Chevrolet, both of which are sponsored by Everett Chevrolet of Hickory.

One of the hottest Hobby drivers in the country last year, Shepherd won 21 of the 26 races he entered, captured the track title at New Asheville Speedway and ran a close second for the state title. He won every race he entered at Hickory Speedway in the '69 season.

Stepping up to the Sportsman ranks, Shepherd is learning, is a whole new ball game. In their first start on March 15, the cars of Shepherd and Schronce brushed and Shepherd's machine dented off the homestretch wall, causing considerable frame and body damage.

Schronce, who has the good fortune of operating a used parts business, picked up some Sportsman experience last year but called it quits in mid-season after a number of costly crashes.

What the Hickory driver is looking for is another season like 1968 when he won the track Hobby title in a walk-away. He finished a respectable 7th in his first start at Hickory last month.

The top newcomer in the Ford ranks is Hickory's Jim Ward, who made a shambles of the Rookie division in 1968. He'll be running as a Sportsman without ever having tried his hand in the intermediate division.

The track's top sophomore Sportsman has to be Blain (Black Jack) Hall of Bethlehem Community. Known for a heavy foot despite his slight build, Hall's Bolck Oil Special Chevy took track honors last year for the most spectacular crashes.

The gates open at 6, with time trials following at 7:45 and the first of seven events at 8:30 p.m.

Ellis Is High Scorer In Men's Bowling League

High scores continue in the local bowling league at Mountain Lanes Bowling Center.

Monday night in the men's league, Mack Ellis had single games of 148, 130 and 114 in posting a 392 set which led Ronnie Culbertson's team to three wins over Plonk Oil Co.

In the same match, Ronnie Culbertson had a 359, Aud Tignor a 330 and John Dye a 331 for the winners while Bob Herndon tallied a 345 and Dwight Reeves added a 347 for the losers.

Randy Blanton scored a 136 line and 389 set in leading Vincent's Sinclair to three wins over Richard Culbertson's team. Furman Wilson had a 120 line and 351 series for the losers.

Moll Ramsey had a 128 line and 363 set in leading Quality Sandwich to a split with Dilling Heating. Richard Bridges had a 138 line and 359 set for the Dilling team.

Cole Is Named Most Valuable In All-Star Tilt

Kings Mountain's Otis Cole was named most valuable player after leading the North squad to an 88-76 victory over the South in the annual Marion Civitan Classic Saturday night in Marion.

Cole, assuming the role of playmaker for the North after playing at forward for the Mountaineers, scored 20 points, turned in several assists and steals, and played a great defensive game in leading the Northwest and South-west Conference seniors to their second straight win in the charity event.

Although Shelby's Forrest Toms was the North's leading scorer with 23 points, it was Cole's great all-around play which sparked the North from behind in the third period.

With the South ahead 38-35 at halftime, Cole furnished the floor leadership and Shelby's Cedric Hogue dominated both backboards as the North outscored the South 27-14 in the third quarter to put the game out of reach.

Hogue, a 6-3 jumping jack, finished with 18 rebounds, including nine in the third quarter. He also scored 11 points.

The North once led by 19 points (71-52) late in the game, but a South rally cut the difference to six (74-68) with four minutes to play.

That's when Cole was at his best. Before the South could score again, Cole stole the ball three straight times, scoring twice himself and feeding to Hogue for a layup to stretch the North's lead to 12.

Kings Mountain's Charlie Barnes started for the North and scored four points, hitting on two of three attempts from the floor.

Avery County's 7-3 Tommy Burslen withdrew from the game in order to play in the Dapper Dan all-star game in Pittsburgh, Pa., this Saturday.

High scorer for the South was James James of Davie County with 19 points.

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Here's the Plonk Oil Co. men's basketball team which successfully defended its regular season and tournament titles in the local recreation league this year. Plonk defeated the Bessemer City Blues for the tournament title after winning the regular season bunting by one game over the Blues and Gastonia.