

AARON AT BAT

Changing Positions

Spring training and the early part of a baseball season are the times for experimenting. Some of the experiments involve the pitching rotation, and others are adjustments in strategy that the team will use in certain game situations.

But as far as individuals are concerned, nothing is more dramatic than when the manager calls a player into his office and says, "We want to try you at a new position."

Some players get upset when asked to learn a new position, but many times it is the best thing for their career. It certainly was for me. I started out as a shortstop, but after a year of pro ball, the powers-that-be wanted me to change.

There were several good reasons for making the switch. First of all, I wasn't a very good shortstop. I could catch the ball, but the way I threw was suspect. Too many of my throws ended up in the dirt.

Another major reason was that the Braves already had an outstanding shortstop in Johnny Logan, who was still in his prime. There was another kid in the minors with me by the name of Felix Mantilla, who was a better position player. Moving me to the outfield got me to the major leagues quicker than if I had been playing behind those two. Speeding up progress to the majors is an argument most young players can understand, and I was no exception.

Some moves are harder than others. Going from the outfield to the infield is tough because the throws are different and the movement is different. But it varies from position to position. For example, some players can manage third base but can't play any of the other infield spots. A third baseman may not be a good fielder, but he can knock down balls hit to him and still throw out the runner. But you've got to have a good fielder at shortstop, and the first baseman has got to be able to field the ball.

A player also increases his value to a team by increasing his versatility. A manager loves to have a player who can move from second base to shortstop to the outfield and not embarrass himself or the manager. Versatility has kept many players in the major leagues.

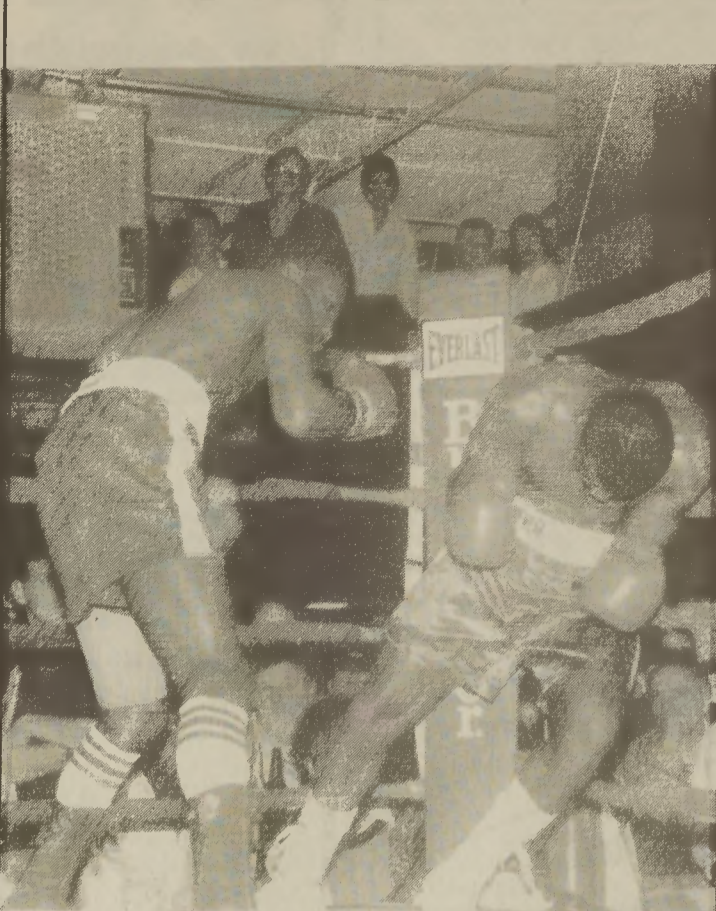
Although I'm best known for my years in right field, I was something of a jack-of-all trades. I could play all three positions in the outfield and in an emergency, I could be called on to move to the infield.

I never regretted changing positions. Moving to the outfield allowed me to concentrate more on hitting. I doubt that I would have hit nearly as many home runs as a shortstop. **ll**

Hank Aaron is the top home run hitter of all time with 755 homers. A member of baseball's Hall of Fame, Hank is vice president of the Atlanta Braves.

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The Beginning Of The End



Bo Bo Brooks (right) starts to fall after a Kelvin Seabrooks barrage to the midsection in bantamweight boxing action last week at True Legends restaurant. Seabrooks, who was fighting for the first time in nine months, scored a technical knockout in the fourth round to run his record to 26-14. Although Brooks landed several good shots early, Seabrooks, the former International Boxing Federation bantamweight champion, came on to score well with combinations while pushing Brooks against the ropes.

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Crawford Signs CFL Pact

HICKORY --- James Crawford, a four-year standout tailback for the Lenoir-Rhyne football team, has signed a contract with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers of the Canadian Football League.

Crawford agreed to terms with Winnipeg and signed on Monday, April 3. Details of the contract were not disclosed.

Crawford becomes the first Bear football player to sign with a professional team since wide receiver Terence Steward inked a free agent contract with the Dallas Cowboys in 1986. Crawford is projected as a running back and kickoff returner for the Blue Bombers.

A native of Charlotte, Crawford led the bears in rushing and scoring each of the last three seasons, becoming the first Bear ever to accomplish that feat. Crawford is also the only Bear griddler to be listed among the all-time L-R leaders in both rushing (sixth) and receiving (10th). He rushed for over 2,500

yards, caught 55 passes, and scored 31 touchdowns during his time with the Bears.

A team captain and All-SAC-8 performer as a senior, Crawford will graduate this May with a double major in psychology and sociology.

"We are very excited that James is getting this opportunity to further his football career in the Canadian Football League," said Bear head coach John Perry. "James' style of play is very well suited for the CFL and we are certainly proud that he is getting this chance."

Crawford's CFL opportunity arose after he attended a tryout camp with over 100 participants in Atlanta during January. Winnipeg, the 1987 Grey Cup champions, contacted Crawford following the tryout.

Canadian Football League teams are limited to 15 non-Canadian players, known as 'imports'. Crawford reports to camp in mid-June.

Hornets To Treat Fans At Season Finale April 21

In observance of the final home game of the inaugural Charlotte Hornets National Basketball Association season, and to honor the fans who supported the team in record numbers, the Hornets are planning FANTastic FANale on April 21, Hornets Vice President and General Manager Carl Scheer announced today.

The day-long celebration will include the official proclamation of Teal Day in Charlotte by Mayor Sue Myrick and an evening of festivities at the Charlotte Coliseum where the Hornets will face the Milwaukee Bucks in the last home game of the year.

"We may not have made the playoffs in our first year, but we still won a championship," Scheer said. "Thanks to our great fans, we have established our place in history, leading the league in attendance this season."

When the sellout crowd of 23,388 enters the turnstiles for the 7:40 p.m. tipoff, it will make official the Hornets' attendance championship for the 1988-89 season. It will mark the first time a major league expansion team has led its sport in attendance in its charter season.

Additionally, the nearly 950,000 who filled the Charlotte Coliseum this year falls second only to the Detroit Pistons, who placed just over 1 million in their final season in the Pontiac

Silverdome last season.

"This franchise was met by considerable skepticism from the national media about market size and population. Many said the team would not draw well because of the strong ties to college basketball in this area," Scheer said. "The fans have proven them wrong. This is a major accomplishment on their part."

"For their efforts, we will designate the Charlotte Hornets fans as the team's official Sixth man."

Through the proclamation of Teal Day on April 21, Charlotteans will be encouraged to wear teal to work and school during the day as a prelude to the excitement that will take place that evening at the coliseum. Activities will begin in the parking lot with live entertainment, games, prizes and remote radio broadcasts with participating stations sponsoring a Best Banner Contest from which finalists will be selected and displayed during the game. There will also be a most creative Hornets fan costume contest.

On the concourse will be live music and a carnival-like atmosphere will be purveyed. Fans will have the opportunity to register to win valuable prizes, including a car, which will be awarded throughout the evening.

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