

Young Slaughter Gives New Killer Punch To Cardinals: Enos, Three Years Off Lots, Says "Call Me Country"

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Wallops Southpaws as Easily as Right-Handers; Seen as Club's Best Center Fielder Since Taylor Douthit

By J. Roy Stockton,
Of The St. Louis Post-Dispatch

A sturdy Carolina youngster of 18 years was fighting grounders at a baseball trial camp at Greensboro, N. C., in the fall of 1934. When he finally overpowered one of the grounders, he showed a powerful throwing arm as he fired the ball on a line to first base. When the work turned to batting, the same young man played a rataplan against the faraway fences. When he ran, he showed smooth rhythmic speed. He wasn't an infielder, the scouts and managers and other observers quickly saw at that trial camp, but they perceived baseball ability. They saw he was a find, a natural athlete. They told him to give up the idea of the infield and move out to the chasing department.

Today, the same young man is in the major leagues, a stand-out among the new players of 1936 and his potential brilliance may well take some of the sting out of a season already marked by many disappointments for the St. Louis Cardinals.

His name is Enos Bradsher Slaughter and if he continues to develop as he has during his rather meteoric career on the diamond, he easily can be before October comes, the best center fielder the Cardinals have had since Taylor Douthit used to roam the terrain in the middle garden for the Redbirds.

Yes, after only three brief years of professional experience, Enos Slaughter is up in the big time, and the Cardinal farm system and the scouts can take pride in his development and point to him as a shining example of how rapidly a young man can advance in the club's great organization—if he has the stuff.

After flashing his obvious, if crude, qualifications at that Greensboro camp in the fall of 1934, Slaughter was sent to Martinsville (Va.) club of the Bi-State League, where he bombarded the fences, easily earning promotion. In 1936, he flailed his bat for the Columbus, Ga., club of the South Atlantic League, building an average of .325.

By this time the scouts of the country were talking about the smiling young man with the strong arm, who made all right field fences seem too near to the plate, and in the spring of 1937, he reported to the Cardinals' training camp at Daytona Beach.

"He probably needs another year in the minors," the observant Frankie Frisch remarked after a week of training. "But he'll be up to stay before long. He seems to have everything that it takes to make a big leaguer."

Jumps From One Columbus Several Notches To Another

Slaughter jumped that spring from Columbus, Ga., to the American Association and immediately became the Columbus right fielder. The fans at Columbus had liked Nick Cullop, a hand-hitting right gardener, but Slaughter quickly made them forget that anybody else had ever patrolled the field. With only two years professional experience behind him, he topped the American Association in hitting with the remarkable average of .362, the first time in the history of the circuit that a first-year man stood out as the leading hitter.

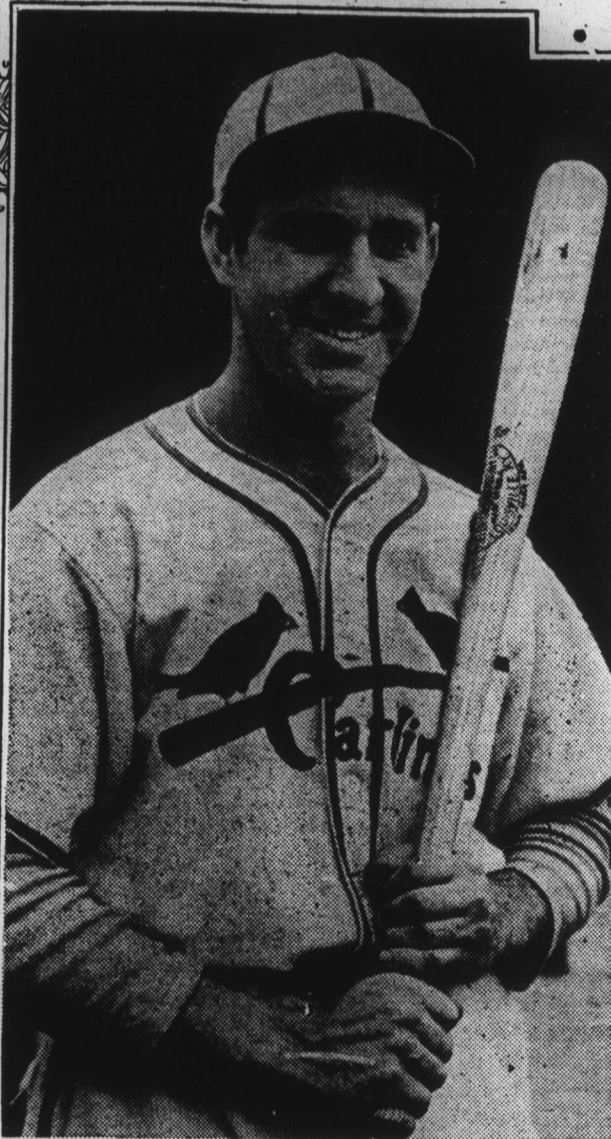
Besides having the highest batting average in the league, Enos made the most base hits, 245; the most total bases, 391; and scored the most runs, 147. His 245 hits included 42 doubles, 13 triples and 26 home runs. Although he batted in second position virtually the entire season at Columbus, he drove 122 runs over the plate.

Just as Slaughter had become a regular immediately at Mar-

His Batting Makes Hit In Majors



ENOS SLAUGHTER
MINOR LEAGUE ROOKIE IN 1935



AS A MAJOR LEAGUER TODAY...

tinsville, Columbus, Ga., and Columbus, O., so he quickly established himself when he reported at St. Petersburg this spring and put on a Cardinal uniform.

"He's my right fielder," Manager Frisch said, virtually the first day in camp. And Slaughter was the right fielder when the season opened, performing out there every day until Manager Frisch decided, May 11, that something would have to be done about center field.

The Cardinals haven't had a regular year-to-year center fielder since Taylor Douthit moved out of the picture. Pepper Martin had flashed out there and so had Ernie Orsatti. Johnny Rothrock had tried it. Terry Moore filled the bill defensively, but he didn't hit up to requirements. Don Padgett was given a trial, but he lacked the ground covering ability and so Frisch decided before the first game of the series with the Giants at Sportsman's Park that he'd make a change.

"I'm putting Slaughter in center field," Frank announced before the game. "And he's going to stay there. He's young, but I think he can make it."

Slaughter's first game indicated that Frisch was right. In the first inning, Hank Leiber hit a tremendous line drive to center. The ball plainly was headed for the flagpole near the center field bleacher wall. Slaughter was off with the crack of the bat. He turned his back to the grandstand and ran and when he had gone about as far as he could go, without interfering with concrete, he turned, reached out his glove and hauled down the drive, nipping a Giant rally and preventing at least two runs from crossing the plate.

Joe Medwick went almost out to the wall to congratulate Slaughter and escorted him back to his position. It was the best bit of outfielding Joe had seen in a long time—by a man who also could lambast a baseball with a bat.

The Carolina boy, who was a stand-out in three minor leagues, earning a place on the American Association all-star team, with unanimous choice of the baseball writers in that loop, has lived up to his reputation as a batter. Enos hits to all fields, has made a goodly share of extra-base blows and has shown as strong a punch against left-handers as against



SLAUGHTER'S BATTING GRIP

the supposedly-easy right-handers.

He Got Monicker of "Country" From Burt Shotton—

And Liked It

Slaughter is "Enos" to his team-mates, though he has a personally selected nickname, if anybody wants to use it. While he was with the Columbus Red Birds, one of the Columbus writers ran a contest to pick a monicker for the young slugger from Carolina. Hundreds of suggestions were made by the fans, but Slaughter, who was appointed sole judge, decided that he preferred one that was hung on him by his manager, Burt Shotton. Shotton had called Slaughter "Country" and it appealed to the youngster, who loves the cows and chickens and the earth which his family has tilled through many generations. Enos still loves the country and before he's through with baseball, he's going to have a large farm of his own. He already has a small tract of land near Roxboro, N. C., purchased for him by his brother.

It was on the family farm that Slaughter acquired the muscles that enable him to run and throw and bat so well. Probably, on the theory that no story of a farm boy's life and rise to fame would be complete without at least one "tall tale," somebody spun one to the effect that Slaughter had amazed the Carolina countryside with his skill as a rock-throwing hunter. According to the yarn, Enos spurned rifle and shotgun, and with only

Carolina Farm Boy Learned How To Throw Accurately by Winging Rabbits While He Was Going After Cows

on the way, for exercise and a bit of meat for the table, he would spy a rabbit or two or three with his keen eyes, and bag them with well-aimed rocks. The hunting with rocks didn't do the Slaughter arm any harm. He can rifle a ball to the plate with better than average accuracy, and the strong arm will help him as he patrols center field for the Cardinals.

Has the young man any faults as a player? Oh, yes, and he knows about them. He wants to practice on ground balls, which still give him trouble, as they did when he was trying to be an infielder. He's naturally modest and retiring, but he's overcoming that under the teaching of Herr Frisch, the Gas House Gange manager.

What does he think of the big league—especially the pitching he has to face?

"It's a whole lot like it was in the minors," he explains. "There are pitchers in the minors with as much speed as I've seen up here and some with good curves. It's the better control that makes the pitchers harder to hit up here."

Now that farm animals are accustomed to his electrical fence, John McElveney of Person County says he has to turn on the current only about once a month.

Cattle Breeders Hold Conference

More Than 700 Help Prize Bull Celebrate Birthday At Quail Roost Farm

More than 700 people, including cattle breeders from this and other states, attended the annual summer meeting and field day of the North Carolina Guernsey Breeders association held at the Quail Roost farm Wednesday.

Plans were approved by the members for the formation of a sales organization as a substitute for the Southeastern Guernsey Breeders association.

Karl B. Musser, secretary of the American Guernsey Cattle club, principal speaker at the morning business session, praised the Quail Roost farm as a fine example of what can be done in the development of dairy farms with the wise application of capital.

He pointed out that the occasion for visiting the local dairy farms was to celebrate the 14th birthday of High Point Prince Maxim, prize bull, who was one of the principal attractions of the cattle show, as he ate his large, synthetic birthday cake with 40 of his daughters and three sons looking on. The bull was purchased by Mr. Hill at a

cost of \$7,500. Members of the association passed a resolution asking that N. C. State college be given a tract of land, owned by the prison department, for dairy work. L. B. Compton, president of the state association, presided over the business session. George Watts Hill of Durham delivered the address of welcome.

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