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# Chapter 1

## Homers and a Rhubarb

A ninth-inning rally by the National League fell one run short as the American League barely saved a 6-5 victory in the twenty-fourth All-Star game on Tuesday, July 9, 1957 at Busch Stadium in St. Louis. Starting pitcher Jim Bunning of the Detroit Tigers pitched three perfect innings to earn the American League victory. Detroit right fielder Al Kaline exhibited a golden glove on two outfield plays and also got two hits, driving in two runs. Chicago White Sox outfielder Minnie Minoso doubled home what proved to be the winning run in the top of the ninth and made a game-saving throw during the bottom of the ninth. Starter Curt Simmons of the Philadelphia Phillies took the loss.

The National Leaguers were managed by Walter Alston of the Brooklyn Dodgers, whose team had been in the previous year's World Series against Casey Stengel's New York Yankees. No Dodger players were in the starting lineup for the National All-Stars although first baseman Gil Hodges, outfielder Gino Cimoli, and relief pitcher Clem Labine saw action late in the game.

In the only game scheduled in the National League on Wednesday, July 10, the Pittsburgh Pirates defeated the Milwaukee Braves 5-2 at Forbes Field in Pittsburgh. The Pirates tied the game at 2-2 in the fourth inning when, with a runner on first, left fielder Bob Skinner hit an inside-the-park home run. Pirate third baseman Gene Baker supplied the payoff hit with a three-run single in the sixth to break the tie. Winning pitcher Bob Purkey, who gave up six hits

## Chapter 2

### A Squeaker and a Slaughter

On Saturday, July 13, the league-leading St. Louis Cardinals jumped to a 3-0 lead over the New York Giants in the first inning on the strength of a two-run single by left fielder Wally Moon and a one-run single by center fielder Ken Boyer off pitcher Curt Barclay. The Redbirds had just added an additional run in the second inning with a home run by Alvin Dark when, with two out, plate umpire Ken Burkhart called time when the rain that had been falling at the Polo Grounds since the first inning became too heavy to allow a continuation of the game. Baseball law dictated that umpires wait a minimum of thirty minutes before calling off a game because of inclement weather. Burkhart waited seventy-three minutes before finally bowing to the elements and nullifying everything that had happened.

While the teams were waiting for Burkhart's decision, word reached the Polo Grounds that the Milwaukee Braves had gained a 4-3 victory over the Pittsburgh Pirates. The Braves took the lead in the second inning with an inside-the-park home run by Wes Covington and added another run in the fourth. A two-run homer by catcher Del Crandall in the seventh inning gave the Braves a 4-1 lead and allowed them to survive a two-run rally by the Pirates in the ninth. Winning pitcher Lew Burdette scattered ten hits and earned his seventh victory of the season against six losses. He also belted what would have been a triple in the seventh inning but this was negated by his failure to touch first base. Losing pitcher Ronnie Kline was 2-12.

## Chapter 3

### “Showing Their Bats”

On Tuesday, July 16, the Pittsburgh Pirates took a pair from the Chicago Cubs in Pittsburgh. The first involved the resumption of a June 16th game between the two teams that had been suspended because of the Pennsylvania Sunday curfew law. It was resumed with the score tied at 4-4 and one man out in the Pirate half of the seventh inning. Chicago pitcher Jim Brosnan got Dee Fondy on an outfield fly before left fielder Frank Thomas hit his thirteenth home run of the season, putting Pittsburgh ahead 5-4. Pitcher Vernon Law garnered his fifth win in nine decisions by setting the Cubs down in order in the two remaining innings of the game. Loser Brosnan was 1-4.

In the regularly scheduled game, Pittsburgh defeated Chicago 5-3. Chicago was ahead 2-0 and pitcher Bob Rush had a one-hit shutout going until the seventh inning when Frank Thomas doubled home two runs then scored on Gene Baker's triple, putting Pittsburgh ahead 3-2. The Pirates added two runs in the eighth on singles by Dee Fondy, shortstop Dick Groat, center fielder Bill Virdon, and Thomas, chasing Rush. The Cubs threatened in the ninth when they got two of their nine hits and scored a run but pitcher Bob Friend survived to complete the game and gain his seventh victory against eleven defeats. Losing pitcher Rush was 1-9.

The New York Giants treated a home crowd to a 6-1 victory over the Cincinnati Redlegs as Willie Mays hit four consecutive singles and second baseman Daryl Spencer drove in four of the Giant runs with a single and two home

## Chapter 4

### Gil and the Duke

On Saturday, July 13, 1957 my parents, John and Dorothy Nordell, and I left our home in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania for a week's vacation in Silver Beach, New Jersey. We were accompanied by my aunt, Dorothy Nordell, of nearby Kingston, Pennsylvania.

While there we kept track of the National League race by listening to the Brooklyn Dodgers Radio Network and reading the New York *Daily News*. We enjoyed the play-by-play of Dodger announcers Jerry Doggett, Al Helfer, and especially Vin Scully.<sup>1</sup>

We were excited about the Dodgers' growing prospects for winning the pennant but the biggest thrill of all came on July 18 when we left the shore to attend our first game in Brooklyn. Until then we had only viewed Dodger games on our 1953 black and white RCA television set.

My first sight of Ebbets Field in real life color was breathtaking – the bright green grass, the stands, the right field wall and screen, the Schaefer Beer scoreboard, and, above all, the players. We had box seats along the left field line, shortly beyond third base. Emmett Kelly, a former circus clown who entertained the fans in 1957 as the renowned Brooklyn Bum, walked by our area prior to game time and posed for a picture for my father.<sup>2</sup>

The starting pitchers were Johnny Podres, 7-3, for the Dodgers and Larry Jackson, 10-5, for the Cardinals. The game began at 1:30 P.M.

In the bottom of the first inning, with one out, Jim Gilliam walked then stole second base, his hat flying off as

# Chapter 5

## High Tide

On Saturday, July 20, Del Ennis drove in four runs and Eddie Kasko accounted for two more as the St. Louis Cardinals put together an eighteen-hit attack to down the Pittsburgh Pirates 9-4. Both teams scored two runs in the first inning but the Cardinals took a four-run lead in the third when Ennis hit a three-run homer, his fourteenth, then Ken Boyer singled, stole second, and scored on a single by Kasko, knocking out Pittsburgh starter Bob Friend. A double by Boyer and a single by Kasko added another run in the fifth. The Cardinals scored their last two runs in the eighth when reliever Lloyd Merritt walked then Don Blasingame and Alvin Dark doubled. Starter Murrey Dickson, who pitched seven innings, got credit for the victory and was 5-2. Friend was tagged with his twelfth defeat in nineteen decisions.

The Philadelphia Phillies defeated the Cincinnati Redlegs 7-5 in a come-from-behind, ninth inning victory. The Phillies scored runs in the first and second innings and Harry Anderson hit a two-run homer in the third, routing Cincinnati starter Hal Jeffcoat. The Redlegs, in turn, chased Philadelphia starter Jim Hearn with a three-run rally in the fourth and scored two more in the fifth off reliever Warren Hacker. The Phillies came to bat in the bottom of the ninth, trailing 5-4. With one out, pinch-hitter Chuck Harmon beat out an infield single and Richie Ashburn walked against reliever Don Gross. Stan Lopata pinch-hit for second baseman Solly Hemus and hit a game-

## Chapter 6

### An Indelible Memory

What a ball game the Dodgers and the Cardinals played on July 18! *The Sporting News* called the ninth inning “[the] most fantastic inning of [the] season,”<sup>1</sup> and I had seen my hero on the Dodgers, Duke Snider, hit a home run and score the winning run. Despite its roller coaster excitement and sudden death finish, the Dodger victory competed for headlines with another ball game and, together, they represented a turning point in the 1957 National League pennant race. Eighty miles southwest of Ebbets Field, at Connie Mack Stadium in Philadelphia, the Braves completed a three-game sweep against the Phillies and moved into first place. It was the fourth time in five days that first place had changed hands but with the outcome of the Brooklyn and Philadelphia contests on July 18, the National League standings came into alignment with the rankings that would exist at the end of the year: Milwaukee first, St. Louis second, and Brooklyn third.

Milwaukee was the sleeping giant of the first half of the 1957 season. With its 5-2 loss to the seventh-place Pirates on July 10, Milwaukee trailed first-place St. Louis by three games. The turnaround in Milwaukee’s fortunes began the next day, July 11, which was the same day when the Dodgers mounted their own mid-season pennant drive. The Braves defeated the Pirates 7-2 and went on to post a 10-3 record during July 11-23. It could have been a very different story. Coming off a 20-4 drubbing at the hands of the Dodgers on July 15 and facing a three-game series against the suddenly first-place Phillies on their home turf