



CHARLIE BOONE

ROGER ERICKSON

Baseball's Opener—1979

with Boone and Erickson

At the Mid-Winter Baseball Banquet, WCCO Radio's Charlie Boone and Roger Erickson took a look at baseball's opener—1979. What they saw, you won't believe . . . or maybe you will!

ERICKSON: Here it is . . . the day of the season's opening game, 1979. Ten years ago, Billy Martin successfully started his tenure as manager of the Minnesota Twins. Today, on the Boone-Erickson show, we'll cover the events surrounding this new season.

BOONE: There's a chance the game may not be played today. As you recall, last year . . . 1978 . . . for the first time in baseball history, there was a strike. The baseball players' union went on strike . . . and stayed out for the entire season. President Clark Griffith hired a number of scabs to play . . . among them Julio Becquer, Reno Bertoia, Bill Tuttle, Billy Gardner, Elmer Valo, and Paul Giel. Early Wynn did most of the pitching and tried all season to win his 301st. However, his earned run average of 30.75 kept him out of the Hall of Fame.

ERICKSON: More about the union in a moment. There's a staff meeting

going on in Jimmy Robertson's office right now. Let's switch there.

BOONE (in announcer's voice): Mr. Robertson, there has been a lot in the papers lately about prices.

ERICKSON (in Robertson voice): Look, the price of hot dogs has to go up to \$5 and that's that! Parking will be \$10 a car. Tickets will remain at \$29.60, however. Fortunately, we've been able to keep them under \$30. Even at that we just barely break even. I might have to turn the entire food concession over to that food company run by Bobby Feller . . . and some silent partner. Look, we have to hit the public to help pay for those writers who freeload in the pressroom.

BOONE: Well, that's it from Jimmy Robertson's office. One consolation for the Griffiths . . . the two Duluth girls hired as pickets kept the crowds coming into Met Stadium. There

were a few editorials criticizing their complete nudity, but as Clark Griffith said, "Anything that's good for baseball is good for the community."

ERICKSON: This is 1979 . . . the opening of baseball . . . and since there are now four baseball leagues, a new commissioner is being sought. As you know, William Eckert has been retained on a temporary basis since 1968. But now, many owners feel there should be a determined effort to find a good one. President Clark Griffith says he is for Joe Cronin . . . or else his dad, Calvin.

BOONE: As you know, the Twins and the Vikings have been playing in the new domed stadium for the past five years. It features Minnesota Mining's Tartan Turf. However, there still is a problem scheduling the Twins and the Vikings since they both favor different kinds of Tartan Turf. And the change requires three days.



ERICKSON (as announcer): I am talking now with Clark Griffith, president of the Minnesota Twins. President Griffith, why this scheduling problem?

BOONE (in Griffith's voice) Why? Well, for one thing, the football season conflicts with baseball so much now that the football teams play their Super Bowl game on Easter. And why should the Vikings get all the breaks anyway? They haven't won a championship yet!

ERICKSON (as announcer): Can anything be worked out?

BOONE (as Griffith): Well, now that Bud Grant has retired, maybe I can talk to that new coach . . . Joe Kapp.

ERICKSON (as announcer): Hey, that's right . . . Joe Kapp . . . retiring to become coach even though he was selected All-Pro for the last 10 years.

BOONE (as Griffith): I can't get anywhere with the Vikings general

manager, Lance Rentzel. Why I've even thought of bringing the problem to a higher authority . . . even the new president of the United States . . . Joseph Namath.

ERICKSON (as announcer): Thank you. You have just heard President Clark Griffith.

BOONE: This is Boone and Erickson, broadcasting the events surrounding the opening of this new baseball season, 1979.

ERICKSON: Speaking of President Namath, he will be unable to throw out the first ball today since he is having a knee operation. So, he assigned his vice president, Mrs. Walter Butler.

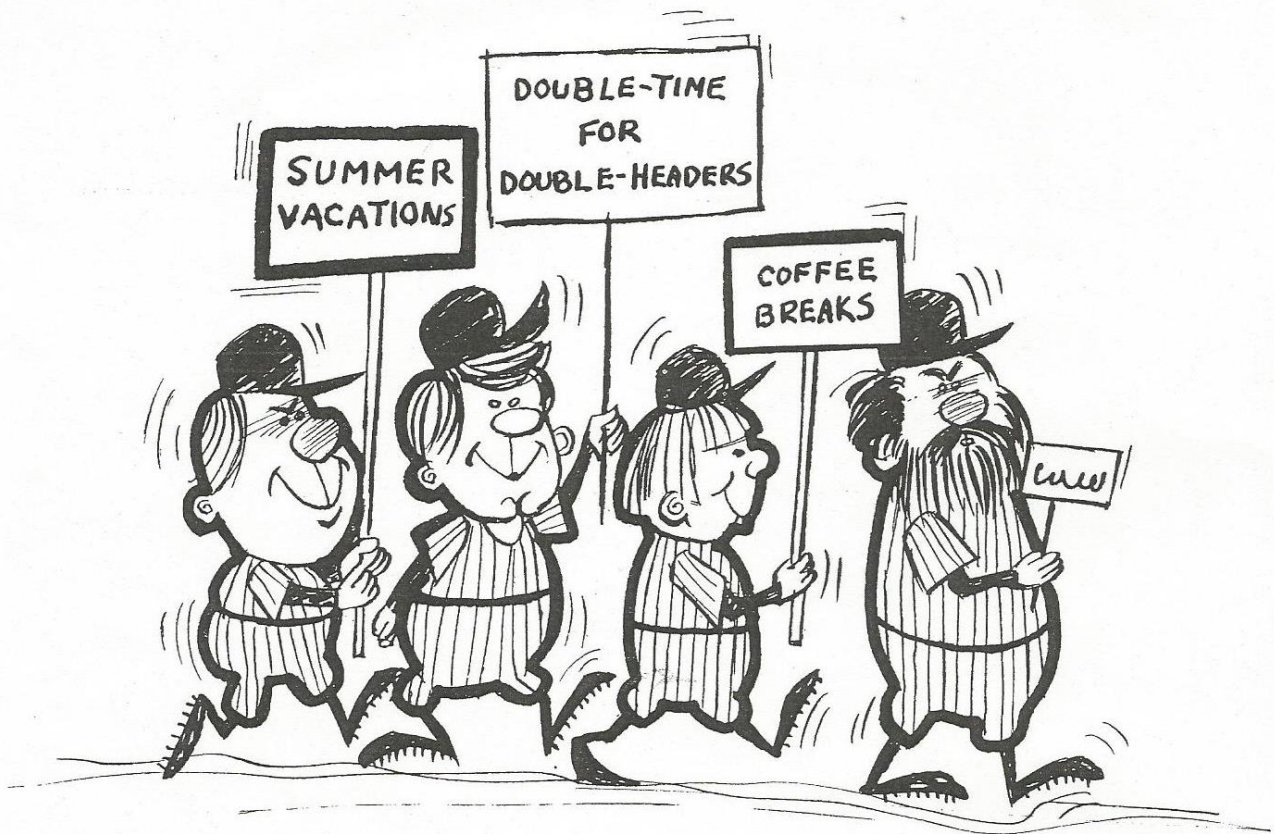
BOONE: Doc Lentz is under fire from the Minnesota State Medical Association this year for completely freezing one player last year.

ERICKSON: More baseball news. Dave Boswell, aging relief pitcher for the

Twins, wants to shave his face and get a crewcut even though the accepted form in this year of 1979 is long hair and beards. President Clark Griffith says that the fans who have bought box seats have complained, saying, "If they wear beards, the ball players should too. They don't want to take their children to see bare heads and bare faces. After all, this is a family game." As you probably know, the Minneapolis Fire Department has a similar controversy. Some firemen want to shave, but the fire chief says they should keep their beards as they filter the smoke.

BOONE: This news just in! There might be even more problems scheduling baseball and football. The Twin Cities now have a team in the American Football League . . . Edina High School.

ERICKSON: With anticipated bigger crowds, President Griffith has started proceedings to have the Met Sports



Center condemned for more parking space. The North Stars have agreed to play their remaining games at the St. Paul Auditorium. The Pipers will play theirs at the YMCA. Speaking of the North Stars, Wren Blair has stepped down as coach to be general manager for the 12th straight year. Now! . . . This news just in! A break in union negotiations. Let's talk with the Twins' players union representative . . . Johnny Sain. John?

BOONE (in union representative's voice): Yeh, I think we might play yet today. The only thing is that management won't agree on double time on Sundays. Thankfully, they have agreed to pay summer vacations during July. There was that problem of featherbedding, ya know.

ERICKSON (as announcer): That's right. You were asking for another infielder.

BOONE (as union rep): These guys gotta cover too much territory. So, we

want another guy behind third and second. Call him a short-third or second-stop. Also, we compromised on territory coverage. We don't believe an outfielder should have to run more than 30 feet to catch a fly. The management wanted 40 . . . we settled on 35. We also got the game down to six innings now. We wanted five. The management has agreed to Jimmy Jingle coffee after three innings. And we'll get a rest period during the fifth inning stretch.

ERICKSON (as announcer): Have you found that the sports writers are not on your side?

BOONE (as union rep): Well, I'll tell you . . . the only one really on our side is that great sports writer who has taken over Don Riley's column.

ERICKSON (as announcer): And that would be . . . ?

BOONE (as union rep): Jim Kaat. Calls the column "Spoutin' Off". I always

figured he'd make a good writer. But that Charlie Johnson. Every year he retires! I wish he would!

ERICKSON (as announcer): How about Paul Foss?

BOONE (as union rep): Well, thankfully he's too busy writing about Edina High School to bother us.

ERICKSON (as announcer): Jim Klobuchar?

BOONE (as union rep): Well, Klobuchar ain't got much time for ball players since he became city editor of The Star . . . and that television show keeps him busy. Beside that, he's having enough trouble with that bright new sports columnist . . . Chad Hartman, Sid's kid.

ERICKSON (as announcer): Well, we certainly hope you and management can get it worked out. We didn't care for the kind of baseball that scab team played last year.

Greater Minneapolis



BOONE (as union rep): Yeh, wasn't that something? Last year, they had the worst record in baseball . . . with the exception of Bob Short's Washington Senators, of course.

ERICKSON (as announcer): Thank you, Johnny Sain. This is baseball opener, 1979.

BOONE: This news just in! Commissioner William Eckert has just approved the transfer of Bob Short's Washington Senators. Eckert explained that since baseball has spread all over the globe, it would be okay to take his franchise to Bermuda . . . where the team will be known as the Bermuda Shorts. He had considered moving the team to Miami, but he decided against it after the National League Miami team was hijacked and never returned.

ERICKSON: This news just in! The new union contract has been agreed upon and signed. And the game will soon

April, 1969

be underway. I'm sure one of the happiest individuals will be Halsey Hall, who begins another year as color man for the Minnesota Twins. Here he is now . . .

BOONE (in Hall's voice): That's right, boys and girls. Another baseball season. Why, I remember way back when they had that old open-air Met Stadium. Lots of things have happened since then. I remember the old timers . . . Rich Reese . . . great first baseman . . . settled down now . . . got 10 kids. Dean Chance . . . got a string of pool parlors across the country now . . . calls himself Ohio Fats. Bob Allison . . . poor guy . . . had to quit baseball at the pinnacle of his career . . . got his hand stuck in the Coke machine. Of course, Cesar Tovar is still playing ball . . . matter of fact, Max Nichols voted him most valuable for the 10th year in a row.

ERICKSON (as announcer): What's been

your greatest thrill in your years of broadcasting, Halsey?

BOONE (as Hall): Well, I think it was 1975. That was the year Tokyo came into the league . . . and I started getting those giant Japanese onions. I'm looking forward to this season. Bob Short said he'll get me some from Bermuda.

ERICKSON (as announcer): Thank you, Halsey Hall. This is baseball opening, 1979.

BOONE: Well, baseball is coming up shortly on WCCO. It will be the Minnesota Twins and the new expansion team in Honolulu. You'll hear it direct from Hawaii beginning at midnight. But first . . . the Sid Hartman Show. Here's Sid and Billy the Kid . . .

ERICKSON (in Hartman's voice): Here it is . . . 1979. Billy, you won the pennant as a rookie manager in 1969 . . . and you haven't won one since. ▲