

# Sports Illustrated

JULY 4, 1977

ONE DOLLAR

THE HOMER-MAD RED SOX

## TERRIBLE TED TAKES COMMAND

America's Cup  
Leader  
Ted Turner

COURAGEOUS



A cap, a glove and a wad to chew are classic baseball appurtenances.



Herman Franks, Cub manager



Darrel Chaney, Brave infielder



Sparky Lyle, Yankee pitcher

*This article may cause acute mental discomfort, nausea  
and fainting spells, but stouthearted readers will learn  
more than they ever wanted to know about . . .*

# CHAWS

**By Roy Blount Jr.**



I remember when I was a young kid trying out with different clubs," says former major league Pitcher Dick Hall. "It was something seeing real major-leaguers. Clint Hartung really impressed me. He'd been a big-bonus rookie about a year or two before and he could spit all the way across the Giants' dressing room. A big, beautiful shot. He might have been the best distance chewer I ever saw. But Pittsburgh had some good chewers, too. Both O'Brien brothers chewed. They liked to spit on each other."

Oh, yes. There is fielding, running, throwing, hitting, hitting with power. And then there is chewing. People don't always appreciate the talent involved in chewing. Or the teamwork.

They say that Rocky Bridges was managing from the third-base coaching box at El Paso when one of his players, Ethan Blackaby, hit a home run. As Blackaby rounded third, Bridges, extending a congratulatory shake, pressed a wad of wet tobacco into his hand.

Without a sign of emotion, Blackaby continued down the line and across home plate, where he was greeted by the next hitter, Tom Egan. Blackaby passed on to the unsuspecting Egan the still dripping wad.

You've got to be *ready* in baseball. Egan nearly fainted.

Chewing in some form is practiced in conjunction with most sports activities—maybe all of them, aside from, oh, swimming, gymnastics, chess. (In fact, Red Sox Pitcher Jim Willoughby chews tobacco while playing chess. But chess is not his primary game.)

Jockey Steve Cauthen is into oral snuff, though not while riding. College hockey players sometimes spit tobacco on bothersome fans, which may be why the rink is surrounded by a plastic shield. Campy Russell

*continued*

Bobby Murcer, Cub outfielder



Mike Ivie, Padre first baseman



Vic Correll, Brave catcher



Billy Gardner, Expo coach

## CHAWS *continued*

in basketball and Tony Jacklin in golf chomp gum fiercely while playing.

Snuff is very big in football lately. Bert Jones (who goes into press conferences with a little cup to spit in), the Cowboys' team physicians (who are forever spilling their cups on airplanes), Terry Bradshaw, Joe Namath and Fran Tarkenton all do snuff, and in television commercials Walt Garrison has explained to the public how snuff is done: "You don't light it up. You just take a pinch and put it in between your lip and gum. And it sure feels relaxing in there." (What Garrison doesn't tell the viewers is that on his first date with his wife Pam he overturned on her the contents of the spittoon he keeps in his car.)

After New England beat the Steelers early last season, Patriot Guard John Hannah said, "This is like having the best chew of tobacco in the world in your mouth and never wanting to spit it out." Former Cowboys Lee Roy Jordan and Bob Lilly and former Colt Billy Ray Smith are said to have gone out and banged into people in regular-season games not only with fire in their eyes but tobacco in their mouths. And either never swallowed it, or didn't notice. Smith, a defensive tackle, used tobacco

tactically, splattering the ball liberally on obvious passing downs.

Jordan, Lilly and Smith belong in the Chewers Hall of Fame. And yet they would have to be consigned to lower niches than Bridges, or Nellie Fox, the old second baseman, or several other of the greatest chewers in the history of the most ruminative sport, the most bespeckled sport, the premier chewing sport: baseball.

Only in baseball does the chew bulk so large in oral history. Hear Tom Morgan, former Yankee relief pitcher, who roomed with Bridges when the two were Angel coaches:

"Rocky would pretend to go to sleep with a chew in his mouth. When he thought I was asleep he would spit it out. The next morning he would get up before me, put another chew in and pretend it had been in all night.

"Once he and I had a bet on who could go the longest without chewing tobacco. I won. He didn't make it through three hours and he cheated.

"He used to have a camellia bush just off his porch at home. The first thing he would do after stepping out of the house would be to spit on the bush or throw his cigar on it.

"He didn't know I cleaned that bush. When he told me he hadn't been chewing, I caught him. There was tobacco on the camellia.

"It's a funny thing about that bush. It was dead when he moved into the house. After a year of tobacco it was the most beautiful thing you have ever seen."

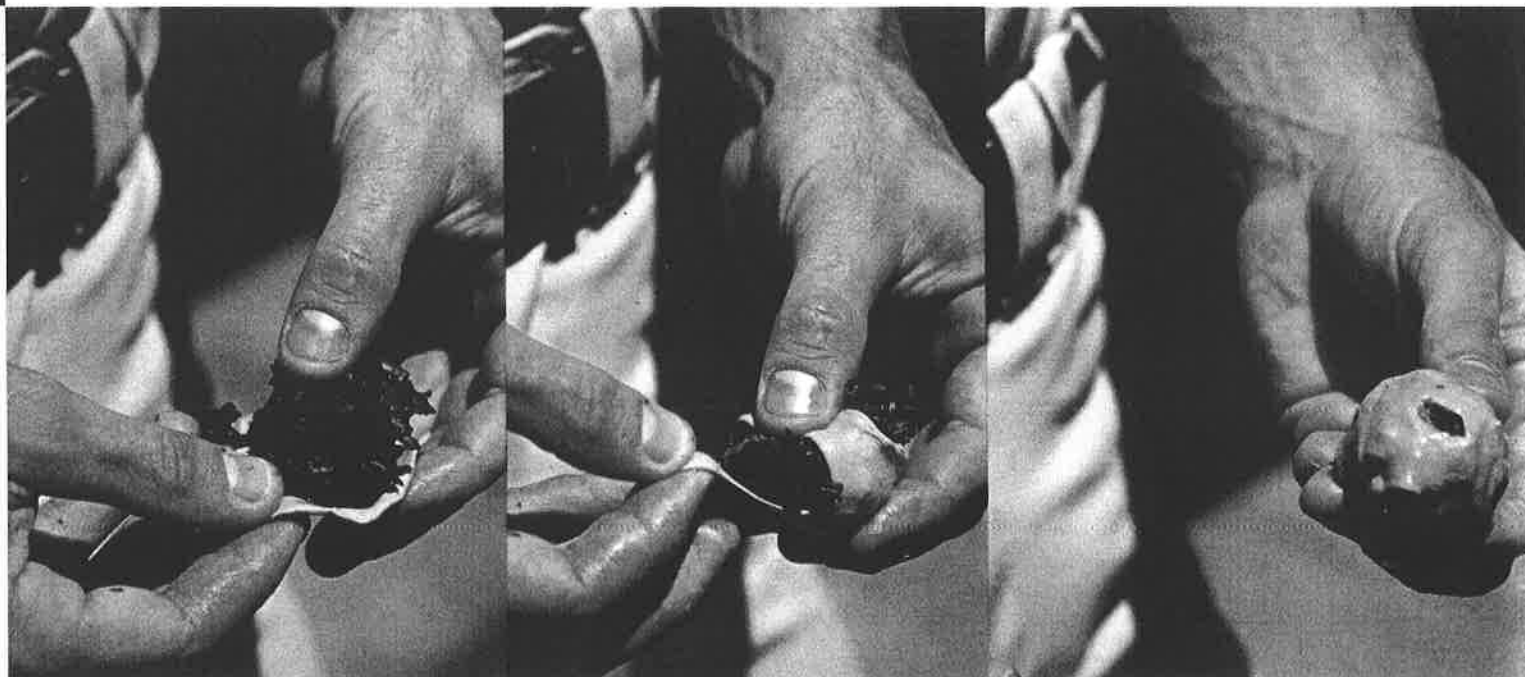
But this article is about more than Rocky Bridges.

Babe Ruth was a prodigious chewer. His brand was Horse Shoe. "Sometimes he would swallow his plug and tell the trainer, 'A little bi [bicarbonate of soda], please.'" recalls Angel Coach Jimmie Reese, who occasionally roomed with the Babe in the early '30s.

This article is about more than tobacco.

"Joe Horlen chewed Kleenex," says former Dodger fireballer Rex Barney. "People used to think that Horlen chewed a lot of tobacco, but he never did. He had several Kleenex in his mouth. You wonder whether it would disintegrate in there, but I guess it's the same as tobacco. Instead of swallowing it, you spit it out. Which is a horrible thing to even say."

This article is about all the ins and outs of all the things ballplayers chew.



*Deft hands of Darrel Chaney demonstrate art of wrapping pre-masticated bubble gum around chewing tobacco to create a favorite new chew: gumbacco.*



and why they chew them, and a little of the history and sociology of it, and chewing contests and rituals, and the agony (for most people) of swallowing.

Chewing has been with us for a long time. Samuel Pepys chewed tobacco, and long before him the Incas, Mayans and Aztecs. Not minor league teams by those names—the Indian tribes. “When the whites settled on this continent,” says Dr. Jack Hoyert, superintendent of the Tobacco Experimental Farm at the University of Maryland, “they picked up these habits from the Indians. You couldn’t be busy with a pipe or a cigar when you were busy hammering or driving a mule or oxen. Chewing was the ideal thing for working people.” Whether or not ballplayers are exactly working people, they do use their hands a great deal. And there are questions of propriety. Says tobacco-chewing Giant Pitcher Ed Halicki, “How would it look if I lit up a cigar between pitches? Picture me asking the umpire for a match.”

Big-leaguers have chewed since the game’s earliest days. Tobacco chewers come into the game from farming and coal-mining country. The moistness generated by chewing relieves dusty mouths. Baseball is a hot, dusty game with slow and tense stretches. Outfielder Bobby Murcer, who goes through a can of wintergreen-flavored Skoal snuff a game, says, “I think it’s a tremendous help, a relaxer. It keeps my mouth wet and occupied. Maybe it goes back to nipple days.” George Brett of Kansas City, who favors Bazooka sugarless bubble gum, says, “It gives you something to do between pitches.” Managers like Ralph Houk of the Tigers and Herman Franks of the Cubs chewed when they were players and haven’t stopped.

Many players chew to keep their whistles wet (Montreal Coach Billy Gardner, who chews, is known for his whistling) because when they grew up they were warned that drinking water during games would “bloat you,” and maybe too much will, although progressive trainers now warn that it is bad for thirsty athletes to avoid water during competition. Weight-watching players chew to cut down their calorie intake. Rod Carew used to drink 15 bottles of pop before and during every game, and sometimes would get nau-



*Chaw of Fame: bulging cheeks accent faces of alltime-great chewers Nellie Fox and Rocky Bridges.*

seated. Now he chews three packs of tobacco a game, wrapped in gum. He has cut his soft drinks to two or three, and his stomach stays settled. Other players chew to keep from biting their nails, or they use snuff or chewing tobacco as a substitute for smoking. “If I didn’t chew,” says retired Catcher Dave Duncan, “I’d smoke five, six or seven cigarettes a game between innings.”

Chewing tobacco is clearly a drug of sports. “There’s a little something in it,” says Pitcher Gary Nolan. “There’s a little kick in there.”

“It’s like cigarettes,” says White Sox Coach Bobby Knoop. “I just decided to try it. I use Day’s End. It’s a great high in the morning and it’s legal. And it makes a great stain in the sink.”

“When the day is going bad,” says Cub Pitcher Rick Reuschel, “I’ll stick a chaw in my mouth and everything seems to get a little brighter.”

Snuff, in fact, affords a real rush—too much of a jolt for many hardened tobacco chewers. “That stuff has got to put a hole in your seabag,” says Rocky Bridges. English dandies used to sniff small pinches of finely ground tobacco to produce little sneezes, but Copenhagen and Skoal, which athletes use, are coarser, darker and more powerful. Holding snuff against the delicate membranes of gum and lip for long periods is the next thing to mainlining nicotine.

Which is not to say that tobacco-product chewing is in all respects harmful to your health. Catcher Bob Stinson of the Mariners says, “Tobacco gives your teeth

protection on plays at home plate. Once in Albuquerque I had a collision in center field and broke one side of my jaw. I think the tobacco cushioned the other side.”

Chewing is also a good thing around which to organize the japeries and incidental competitions to which ballplayers devote a great deal of time. And it gives them something to chew that they probably like to chew more than anything else: the fat.

Former American League Pitcher Dick Bosman recalls good chewing times when he was with the old Senators: “We had two kinds of contests, flies and peanut shells. I held the club record for flies. Shot down 10 of them one day. On rainy days we would sit on the bench and shoot at peanut shells running down the gutter in the dugout.”

Gum contests are more highly organized. The Topps company, manufacturer of Bazooka gum, held a bubble-blowing tournament in 1975 with the finals on television. Pitcher Mickey Scott had won the American League West title by shaving, putting Vaseline on his face to reduce abrasion, wrapping a towel around his neck, putting his cap on backward to protect his permanent while keeping the bill out of play, holding a windbreaker up against the elements and producing a gonfalon bubble whose diameter, measured by official cardboard calipers, was 20 inches.

The bubble-blowing champion of all baseball that year was Infielder Kurt Bevacqua, now in the minors, who swears

*continued*

# The 14<sup>k</sup> Gold Camera.



Win it and a trip for two to Tokyo.

We're celebrating.

This is the year that Yashica produces its 5 millionth Electro-35 Rangefinder Camera.

And in honor of this historic achievement, Yashica is offering you the opportunity to win the 5 millionth camera. It's 14k. Gold\*, one of a kind, and comes with an all-expense-paid two-week trip for two to Tokyo.

All you have to do is fill out the coupon below and drop it off at your Yashica dealer. No purchase is necessary. Contest closes July 31, 1977. Void where prohibited.

**YASHICA**

\*All exterior metal parts custom plated in 14k. Gold.

## 14k. Gold Camera Entry Form Complete and give to your Yashica dealer.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Yashica Dealer \_\_\_\_\_

### Need more information first?

Just send in this coupon and we'll send you more information on Yashica rangefinder cameras and the name of the dealer nearest you. Yashica, Inc., 411 Sette Drive, Paramus, N.J. 07652.

## CHAWS *continued*

he keeps his gum in a little metal safe, "like you buy at the five-and-ten," with an air freshener inside. "It keeps just right," he says.

Gum can also enter less innocently into baseball's give-and-take. Andy Seminick, the old catcher, used to stick a wad of gum onto his thumb, shake hands with someone and rub it forcibly into the hairs on the back of the hand, from which it could be removed only with some pain. Pepper Martin used to do the same thing. It is tobacco, however, that is most often used aggressively, especially against white shoes.

"Rocky is very good on accuracy," says Tom Morgan of Bridges. "He's one of the best on shoes. He has what we call a soft wad. You don't feel it when he spits on your shoes."

"Aw, no," says Rocky modestly. "Some guys can drown a dime. I'm just sloppy big. I'm not an accuracy star. And I've got the shirts to prove it. Tattletale brown. Thank God for the new polypesters."

Johnny Mize used to put chaws he was finished with into other people's pockets. Then he would let them dig them out as best they could.

"Peanuts Lowrey was always a great chewer," says former Catcher Clay Dalrymple. "When I was with the Phillies we were giving hotfoots one night, and I think he kind of set me up. He had his foot up on one of the dugout steps and he was kind of leaning forward with his elbow on one knee. I snuck up behind him to give him a hotfoot. As I reached in between his legs to light him, he had a big load of tobacco ready for me and he really caught me on the hand. Man, he laughed like hell."

"It's an unwritten law," says Pitcher Steve Renko, "that you are permitted to spit on the shoes but not on the uniform. More often you pick out a target such as ants and spiders."

What happens when insects are hit?

"It makes their eyes bright," says the Reds' Woodie Fryman.

Eccentric Catcher Vic Correll's eyes are always bright, especially when he is making up baseball wisdom. He maintains that a switch hitter must be a switch chewer. "Say you're going up to bat left-handed. You've got to chew on the right side so the pitcher can see it and think you're tough. And then when you're bat-

# HOW TO FEEL LIKE A MILLION.



Nothing gives a man more of a touch of class than taking a cigar out of a tube. And there's no better tubed cigar for the money than Royale by Gold Label. A stylish cigar with a rich Cameroon wrapper. And all the mildness and freshness sealed in by the tube. So take out a Royale and take on the look of a millionaire.



*ROYALE in a tube  
by Gold Label*

ting right-handed, you've got to chew on the left. All that switching is hard on the front teeth."

Third Baseman Doug Rader is known as a "defensive chewer." He takes his tobacco out of his mouth after each inning in the field, puts the chew in his glove and his glove on the bench. When he retakes the field he retakes his chew.

Catchers Carlton Fisk, Gene Tenace and Ed Herrmann tip their masks back to spit. Johnny Bench and Milt May spit through the bars. So did Roy Campanella. "Nobody else would ever wear his mask," recalls Rex Barney, a devout non-chewer who confesses that seeing "my catcher spitting out at me always bothered me.

"Roy was a great chewer of tobacco," remembers Barney, "but at home or on the road he kept toothpaste in his locker at all times. The second a game was over, about the only thing that came off was the glove and the mask before he'd go spit the tobacco out and brush his teeth. Roy only chewed during games."

Catfish Hunter is a serious tobacco chewer; in fact, he got into trouble with the Yankees last year for filming a Red Man commercial at the park the morning of the day he pitched. But on the mound he often chews gum, starting with one stick and adding another each inning. A complete game, then, means a nine-stick wad. Juan Marichal would go through a dozen sticks a game. He was once clocked at 72 chews per minute on the mound. "Maybe it helped my rhythm," he says.

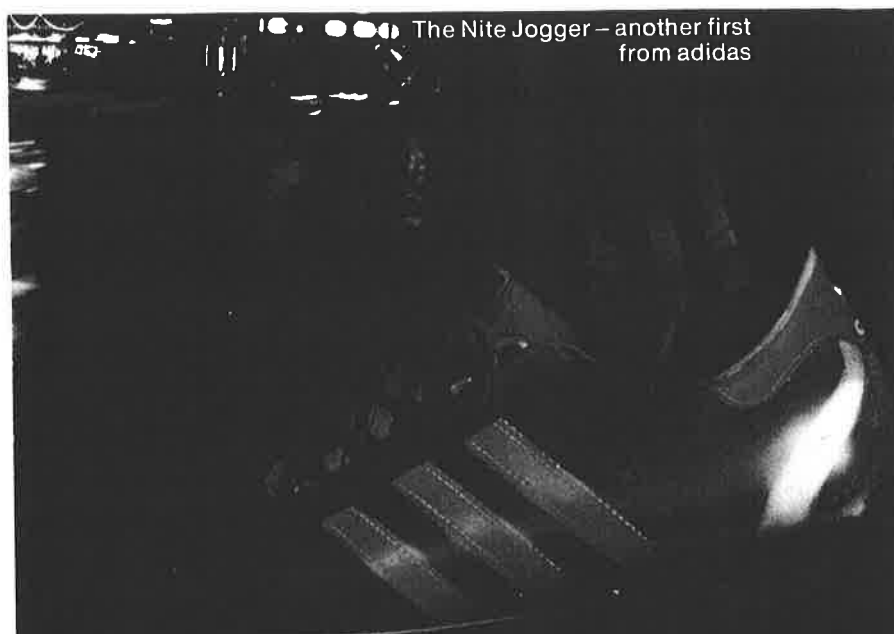
Chewers all agree that chewing helps *something*. Randy Jones of San Diego has been savoring tobacco off the mound for eight years but didn't begin to chew while pitching until 1975. That was the year he became a star, winning 20 games. "I don't know why," he says, "but it seemed to help."

"I'd feel naked if I went to the mound without my chew," says Minnesota's Don Carrithers. "And I have to have a pack in my back pocket. I just like the feel of it back there."

"The dentist tells me that even though it stains your teeth, chewing has hygienic value," says Astro Shortstop Roger Metzger. "Your mouth contains certain acids and tobacco counteracts them."

Says Houston Pitcher Ken Forsch, "I have a routine I go through every day. I

*continued*



The Nite Jogger — another first from adidas

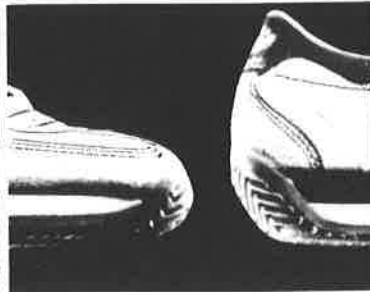
# Nite Jogger—the shoe to be seen in.

The Nite Jogger is the first road runner ever conceived for the after dark jogger. Its phosphorescent heel stripes glow brightly in the dark, making for safer jogging

in busy traffic areas. But there is more to this unique new shoe than glow. Designed primarily for road surfaces, these additional features make the Nite Jogger the shoe it is:

Thicker and softer midsole absorbs the considerable heel pounding experienced on road surfaces, and provides a perfectly cushioned roll action of the foot. Uppers made of Cangoran — a man-made leather-like material

that breathes and forms to the foot. New Ghilly lacing makes for easier lacing & unlacing. Traction sole profile is swept up on heel and toe to provide full protection against excessive abrasion and wear caused by road surfaces.



The all-sports people

adidas® 

For more information contact your local dealer.

had to start the routine because when I was switched from starting to relief I was going crazy sitting in the bullpen. I chew Red Man until about the fifth inning. Then I go into my program.

"I spit out the tobacco and I take a towel and wipe my teeth off. Sometimes once, sometimes twice. It's important to get the *inside* of my teeth completely clean, too.

"Then I go right to the gum. I take the wrapper off the gum and I save the piece of tinfoil. I wrap the tinfoil carefully into a ball so that the shiny part is on the inside and the glazed part on the outside. I take my time so this will use up about an inning. It keeps my mind off the bullpen.

"I flip the foil away with my thumb once I've got it rolled the way I want it. I use that green stick gum because I like the foil. Sometimes I go to the bubble gum if nothing else is available. But the bubble gum doesn't have any tinfoil—and that's when I have my bad days on the mound. I chew the gum on the mound. But when I'm in a jam I walk toward second base and spit it out—that gives me the sudden burst of energy I need."

"When I can't yell at the umpire and can't answer back at the fans," says Bench, "I just spit."

Pitching Coach Johnny Sain also speaks of tobacco in terms of speech: "I chew because it keeps me from talking, and I can tend to business." When Sain was pitching for the old Boston Braves he was said to have replied to writers' questions in a language of squirts. Straight down meant "Yes." Spits traveling outward meant "No." In conversations demanding a more refined control of the medium, Sain might be misunderstood. He receives considerable support as the game's sloppiest chewer. "The thing about Sain," says Ed Herrmann, "is that the juice runs down both sides of his mouth. He gets it all over his uniform."

That puts Sain up among the most distinguished chewers, of course. (The neatest chewers, says Herrmann, are "all beginners.") But who is the greatest of all? This is not an easy question to answer. Criteria vary. Sparky Lyle may be the biggest chewer ever, having been known to expand his cheek with a full pack, so that on the left side he looks

like Dizzy Gillespie hitting a high note. Steve Renko says the biggest chewer he ever saw was little-known Bobby Hendley, a teammate of his in the minors. "He could fill up an entire trash can with spit. It was amazing."

There are standards of offensiveness, an important consideration, because one of chewing's charms, to the chewer, is taking casual pleasure in something that causes other people, even from a distance, to blanch and grow dizzy. "You might say the alltime tobacco chewer, a guy who had some tricks that will go down in history, was John Boozer of the Phillies," says Dick Hall. "He had a number of little things he did, like eating moths, which he taught me. It's very simple. It really impresses people. He would bite grasshoppers in half. The back half would hop out by itself. Boozer also had a couple of neat tricks with tobacco. He'd spit the tobacco straight up in the air and catch it in his mouth. And miss most of it, of course."

Clay Dalrymple remembers Boozer. "You have to have a strong stomach for this story," he says. "Boozer used to go

into the clubhouse and spit on the ceiling. When it dropped back down he would catch it in his mouth. He was a breed all of his own. He would try to turn guys' stomachs. He had no scruples. He was a beaut, and a real nice guy."

Names that keep cropping up in any discussion of great chewers are Rocky Bridges and Nellie Fox. The most colorful stories are by or about Bridges, but Fox, who died in 1975, is generally acknowledged as the king. He was a classic tobacco chewer, carrying in his cheek a chaw half as big as his hat. "All class," says former Yankee Pitcher Steve Hamilton, himself a towering figure in chewing. "Great staying power. Could chew all day. Tremendous accuracy and finesse in his spitting."

Tobacco chewing has considerable symbolic value. During his first spring training last year, Mark Fidrych spit tobacco juice all over the front of his uniform on purpose and explained, "I want the guys to know I chew." Joe Nuxhall, the old Cincinnati pitcher, says, "In my day, and I'm talking about 1952 to 1960, to be a big-leaguer you had to chew."

## CHEWING ALL-STAR TEAMS

(Chew is tobacco, except as indicated)

ALLTIME		ACTIVE	
P	Johnny Sain	P	Catfish Hunter, New York
P	Clyde Wright	P	Mark Fidrych, Detroit
P	Juan Marichal (gum)	P	Ken Forsch, Houston
P	Sam Jones (toothpick)	P	Luis Tiant, Boston
Relief P	Steve Hamilton	Relief P	Sparky Lyle, New York
C	Roy Campanella	C	Johnny Bench, Cincinnati
C	Clint Courtney	C	Carlton Fisk, Boston (snuff)
1B	Johnny Mize	1B	Mike Ivie, San Diego
2B	Nellie Fox	2B	Rod Carew, Minnesota
3B	Harvey Kuenn	3B	Doug Rader, Toronto
SS	Rocky Bridges	SS	Roger Metzger, Houston
OF	Babe Ruth	OF	Reggie Jackson, New York (seeds)
OF	Country Slaughter	OF	Bobby Murcer, Chicago (snuff)
OF	Hank Sauer	OF	Gary Matthews, Atlanta
Mgr	Danny Murtaugh	Mgr	Ralph Houk, Detroit
DH	Rocky Nelson	DH	Gene Tenace, San Diego

Grounds of selection (in order of importance): 1) prominence in lore; 2) degree of obsession; 4) size of chaw; 5) playing ability.

Special recognition for offensiveness: John Boozer, pitcher, Philadelphia Phillies (retired).



"When I first broke into the Dodger system," recalls Rex Barney, "I was with Montreal, just a kid, 18 years old, and we had a coach, an old guy named Barney De Forge, or something like that. This was during the war, and babies like myself were playing. I was sitting in the bullpen one night and De Forge said to me, 'Kid, you want to get to the major leagues?'"

"I said, 'Sure, that's what it's all about.'"

"He says, 'You don't chew tobacco, do you?'"

"I said, 'No.'"

"He said, 'Well, you'll never get there unless you chew tobacco.'"

"In those days, if you had 25 players, 24 chewed tobacco. Very naive, I said, 'O.K.' I tried it. The only thing I remember is chomping down a couple of times and getting deathly ill. I was supposed to start the next night and I was still so sick I couldn't even leave the hotel. I said to myself, 'If that's what it takes to make the major leagues, I'll never make it.'"

These days the chewing situation is laxer, more pluralistic. Snuff dipping has always been around—Ruth did that too—but lately it has achieved a perhaps faddish popularity, helped along by Murcer, and Carlton Fisk, who, like Garrison, promotes snuff in TV commercials.

"You know what's good?" asks San Francisco Pitcher Dave Heaverlo. "Copenhagen dipped in Scotch. A real neat flavor."

A snuff-in-Scotch dipper cannot be accused of effeteness; still "a real neat flavor" can hardly be what a man like Nellie Fox had in mind.

Another relatively new baseball chew is sunflower seeds. Reggie Jackson keeps them in his pocket and chews them constantly at the park. "I started in college," he says. "The guys at Arizona State chewed them. They're good for nervousness and it's an easy way of getting salt."

"Seeds came onto the scene about 1969, 1970," says Dalrymple. "Oakland started using seeds, and all of a sudden they started showing up all over the place." Baltimore Manager Earl Weaver is a big seed man, as is Boog Powell. Former White Sox Outfielder Buddy Bradford tells how seeds are chewed:

"What you do is store 'em in the side of your mouth, then pull one seed out with your tongue, chew it, spit the

shell out, then take another one, and so on. It's hard to eat them when you're trying to hit. The only time you can eat 'em is when you're in the dugout or the outfield."

The trouble with seeds is that the shells tend to wind up concave side down on clubhouse floors and stick there with a suction so broom-resistant that some clubhouse men refuse to dispense them.

Seeds bother traditionalists, on principle. "We had an onslaught of those things the last few years," says Bridges. "Most of the dugouts looked like bird cages. I had a couple of players that I had to watch pretty carefully—I was afraid they were going to start moulting."

There are miscellaneous chewers. Champ Summers of the Reds chews licorice, as did Hank Greenberg. "Hank used to spit the licorice in his glove to firm it up," says Montreal President John McHale, who played with Greenberg on the Tigers. "Once he gave me some. I got so sick I can't imagine ever trying tobacco." (The only front-office figure associated with chewing tobacco is Atlanta owner Ted Turner.)

John Bateman used to mix tobacco and licorice sticks when he caught for Houston. The late Danny Frisella occasionally chewed tar. Bridges used to change pace by chewing cigars. "I had my trips measured by cigars," he says. "From Cincinnati to Long Beach was 40 cigars." And, of course, there was Toothpick Sam Jones, who was always working on a toothpick when he pitched. "Chewing or keeping the mouth busy is normal," he once explained. "A toothpick does not stain your teeth, does not pull out fillings or cause cavities. It's a substitute for overeating. And you can still get a supply free in restaurants. It may not be approved at society events, but I say it's healthy."

But the major alternative to tobacco is gum. Topps furnishes 250,000 boxes of Bazooka free to big league clubhouses annually. Some observers, including the possibly biased Bridges, see tobacco in resurgence, but gum is now the leading chew. For one thing, black and Latin players, who almost all eschew tobacco, prefer gum. Among the exceptions are Cesar Geronimo, Dan Driessen, Pedro Borbon, Rod Carew, Luis Tiant, Ben Oglivie and Gary Matthews, whose spitting last year was praised by authority

Murcer: "The kid's got length and strength."

Billy Williams was a chewer for a while in the minors but, "I gave it up when I was in AA ball. It was all part of the tough, dirty image of those days—chewing, spitting, baggy uniforms. It's strong stuff. It stays on your breath. I found decay in my teeth, that's why I quit. I don't know why black guys don't chew. Maybe Dock Ellis does. He'll try anything."

Dick Allen has been doing a little pregame Red Man lately as an aid to quitting cigarettes, but he says, "I can't really handle it. I wouldn't want my name associated with it, actually, because of the kids." When Ed Herrmann was with the White Sox, he succeeded in converting one black player, Carlos May. "We had to start him out with one leaf," says Herrmann, who adds, "I've seen some umpires chew, but I've never run into a girl chewer."

Joe Morgan feels not at all self-conscious about being a Juicy Fruit chewer, and Dave Nelson of the Royals says fastidiously, "I chew nothing but gum. I remember watching Rocky Bridges play at old Wrigley Field in L.A. He had juice all over his shirt. It made me sort of sick. Most of the Texas Rangers chew tobacco. They sit in the dugout and see who can make the biggest puddle. It's sickening."

Although 35% of major-leaguers chew some form of tobacco, it no longer seems to disturb front offices. "Mickey Mantle liked a good chew," recalls Steve Hamilton, "but the Yankees frowned on it. Said it spoiled his image. So Mickey would sneak out and grab a wad on the sly." When AstroTurf was new, Houston owner Roy Hofheinz called down from his box to order Nellie Fox to stop spitting in the coaching box. But no one complains about tobacco on artificial turf now. Only bubble gum provokes restrictive measures. Houston Manager Bill Virdon has a rule that no player can blow bubbles during the national anthem. His predecessor, Harry Walker, ordered all bubble gum removed from the clubhouse—players were throwing it at each other and Walker feared someone would get hit in the eye.

"Players today are more sophisticated," notes Milwaukee Coach Harvey Kuenn, with some sarcasm.

If oldtimers are put off by bubble gum,  
*continued*

another trend in chewing has something to offend nearly everybody: the *mixing* of tobacco and gum. An early experimenter was the former National Leaguer Frank Torre, who, according to Dalrymple, "would take a stick of gum and a big piece of chewing tobacco and tighten it up into a wad. Then he'd take chewing gum and wrap it all the way around until there was no tobacco showing. Then he'd stick that into his cheek and it would make him look like he had a big chew of tobacco in there, but in reality most of it was sugar."

Also at work in this field at about the same time was former Yankee Coach Frank Crosetti. "He started mixing gum with tobacco because it lasted longer," says Sy Berger, a Topps vice-president. "After that we mixed a batch of bubble gum with a tobacco flavor."

Only for him, though. The gumbacco chaw did not come into its own until three or four years ago. Milwaukee Manager Alex Grammas, then a Cincinnati coach, introduced the technique to Johnny Bench and it spread from there.

"I marinate mine in a soft drink," says Merv Rettenmund. "My best is the 6¢ special—the deluxe gumball. I take two large sugarless sticks of gum and one flavored. I chew them until the gum is moist and soft. Then I take it out of my mouth, sit down on the bench, spread it on my knee into a big square and put a clump of tobacco in the middle of it. I wrap the gum around the tobacco and pop it back in."

Darrel Chaney of the Braves says he wraps gum on "two or three sides or all the way around" his tobacco. "Gives it body," he says. "But you have to use dental floss like crazy after a game."

"I chew four sticks of gum for half an hour, then wrap it around the tobacco," says Cincinnati Manager Sparky Anderson. "Albert, my son, tells me I'm a sissy for using the gum with it. Albert is 14 and he chews. He chews at home, too. He's got a spittoon in his room."

Pitcher Clyde Wright, now retired, whose eight-pack-a-day tobacco consumption may have been an alltime high, is said to have been able to chew tobacco and bubble gum, smoke a cigarette and drink V.O. all at once. A mixing act like that is hard to follow.

"I used to wrap gum around my chew, like twine on a ball," says Tiger Catcher

John Wockenfuss. "But it was too much trouble." Now Wockenfuss is one of the few big-leaguers who bites off chunks of plug tobacco—Cannonball is his favorite brand—instead of taking it loose from a pouch.

Steve Hamilton, although he once threw up on the mound while chewing tobacco during a televised Sunday game, and although he once swallowed a straight chaw while working on a roof and fell off the roof, would applaud Wockenfuss' return to basics. When Hamilton first heard of mixing gum and tobacco, he nearly choked. "Why that's like putting foxtails on a Mercedes," he said. "No purist would think of such a thing."

Rocky Bridges' judgment on mixing is less harsh, but he does say, "That one's got me. I've never tried it, but if a guy wants freckles when he blows a bubble he's probably in good shape then."

When nearly any chewer is definitely *not* in good shape is when he inadvertently swallows. Some can handle the juice alone. "Rocky Nelson would put a chew in on a plane and you'd watch him and he *never spit*," says Sparky Anderson. Herrmann says, "Swallowing doesn't bother me anymore. It's like hot sauce. When I was in the minors we had a bus driver who would chew for the whole six-hour trip and spit into a cup. At the end of the trip he would drink the juice."

Murcer claims, "I've gone out for a fly ball on a long chase and swallowed the whole pinch. But I haven't gotten sick." Carew, who has occasionally swallowed his tobacco-gumball while sliding or making a diving stop, says it only makes him "woozy."

But most chewers dread the fiery gulp. Harvey Kuenn tells of a player being unable to get a meal down for a week after swallowing a chaw. Pee Wee Reese never chewed again after his went down as he reared back to throw. When he catches sinkerball pitchers, who produce a lot of foul tips, Milt May forgoes the pleasures of chewing. He is willing to accept a tip into his Adam's apple as part of the job, but swallowing a chaw in the bargain is too much.

"You've never lived till you've swallowed a chaw," says Bridges. "It brings up everything bad you've ever thought of. I've downed them a couple of times. Once on a head-first slide, and I damn

near died. It sure cleared the dust in a hurry, I'll tell you that."

Chewing, then, is not, so to speak, all gravy. Even in the clubhouse it sometimes leads to social embarrassment. One year Bo Belinsky brought his dog to the Houston training camp. The clubhouse man built a sandbox for the dog next to the one he had installed for Barry Latman, the pitcher, to discourage Latman from spitting on the clubhouse rug.

"How am I going to explain to my wife that I have the locker next to a dog?" said Latman.

Outside the stadium, chewing becomes awkward. Rocky Nelson, it is true, felt secure enough socially to show up at one of Pittsburgh's best restaurants dressed in a handsome sport coat and string tie, with his wife in a full-length mink coat, and after a fine leisurely dinner to pull out his tobacco pack for desert, and to spit into a water glass. Nelson was also at home in a movie theater, where he would never order butter on his popcorn because he would throw out the top half of the corn so he could spit in the cup. And Johnny Bench, to be sure, shared a pouch with his father-in-law-to-be and Ed Podolak of the Kansas City Chiefs during a break in his wedding rehearsal. But most players leave the chewing at the park.

"My wife doesn't appreciate me spitting in the house," says the Twins' Don Carrithers. "We have a little baby, you know."

"Only trouble I ever had with chewing tobacco," says Atlanta Manager Dave Bristol, "was that the orthodontist said my daughter was going to have to give it up because of her braces."

"I chew at home and spit in a cup while my wife is out," says Rettenmund. "But I don't like to do it around the family. It's not a habit you can do out in public. But it's a nice habit at the ball park."

Maybe this is a good place to end. Rettenmund has said something, after all, that can be said about so many habits ballplayers can practice at work but which most of the rest of us cannot: wielding a club with ferocity, screaming at authority figures in blue suits, pouring champagne on top of executives' heads, hurling taunts at friend and foe, sliding in the dirt with good clothes on, making rolling, tumbling shoestring circus catches—and spitting across the room. **END**

## OLD PRO'S BIG CHAW OF TOBACCO

Rocky Bridges, utility infielder of the Cincinnati Redlegs, could chew contentedly as his club prepared for the opening of the season. Capable of doing almost any job

satisfactorily (he is shown pitching batting practice below), Rocky was secure in the knowledge that there are many times when a team is only as strong as its reserves.

