

SPORTS...

By Eddie Ash

"Playing the game keeps me young and I intend to don the tools and do a lot of catching for the Indianapolis Indians this year, unless Johnny Pasek, the 1941 Tribe workhorse, forces me to ride the bench . . . and I am allergic to splinters."

There you have Gabby Hartnett's No. 1 statement that tickled listeners late yesterday when the Tribe's new field manager made his local debut . . . The "big name" pilot rolled in from Chicago, greeted all and sundry and lived up to his reputation as Mr. Personality Personified . . . half, hearty and quick to cement friendships.

Stepping into a new baseball sphere—the minors—after serving 20 years in the majors, has not lessened Hartnett's baseball enthusiasm and this explains his determination to catch as many games as his veteran physique will stand . . . The big fellow indicated that, he realizes Indianapolis fans want to see him as they know him from the records . . . an active player.

At the time the Gabby Guy was signed as manager by Messrs. Owen J. Bush and Frank E. McKinley, the Indians' new owners, they estimated that catching 40 to 50 games would cover his regular playing service . . . But from Hartnett's own estimate, he'll be back of the plate at least half the American Association schedule of 154 games.

"And when I'm not in there backstopping I'll be in there pinch-hitting," he added.

Incidentally, that nickname "Gabby" was bestowed because, as a shy big league rookie, he had little to say on his first spring training trip . . . But he learned to gab plenty to his pitchers, to his infielders, to batsmen and umpires and on the coaching lines down through the years under the big top.

Gabby Prefers One Practice a Day

HARTNETT HAS NEVER PLAYED a game in Indianapolis, in fact he's never been inside an Indianapolis ball park . . . "I rolled through here many times on big league jumps but always had my exact fare ready and was never booted off at your Union Station," said the jovial skipper in one of his many lighter moments.

"The 500-mile race at your famous Speedway? Never had the pleasure of attending one. You know Memorial Day is double-header day in baseball and you have to stay on the job."

Hartnett postponed until today his meeting with Messrs. Bush and McKinley and Tribe Secretary Al Schlesinger to complete spring training arrangements.

He did say, however, that he preferred the one-long-practice-a-day plan . . . go out about 10 a. m. and work two hours, put on the feed bag at the park and then drill a couple more hours.

THE GABBY GUY was to get his first look at Victory Field today, you know, "old" Perry Stadium . . . "Big league layout, better than some in the majors, I'm told," said Charles Leo the Lion-Hearted . . . "But I think our outfield lineup and first sacker will belt as many over the wall as any of our A. A. rivals. We've been trying to build a roster that will powder the pellet and if we don't get first-division action in the early season there will be players coming and going until we do."

'Hustle or Else,' Says Tribe Skipper

THE INDIANS' new master-mind promises a hustling team, "or else" . . . And that includes from the first day of spring training on through," said he . . . "We're pretty sure of the new talent and are on the lookout for additional strength on the infield and in the box."

"Take my word for it. Outfielders Joe Moore, Morrie Arnowich and Jake Powell and First Sacker Johnny McCarthy are destined to achieve some heavy business in this league. I know 'em and if I don't miss my guess they'll come through in a big way in Victory Field and all around the league."

"Never having played in the American Association, I am not qualified as yet to pass judgment on the Indianapolis 1941 holdovers. President Bush holds the breakdown on that angle. It's evident, however, that some of the 1941 Indians will be on deck again. There's a scarcity of talent all over the country."

BOOKED IN the knife and fork league here through Saturday, Hartnett suspended steam bathing and dieting "for the duration." "And I guess I'll have to include Sunday, too," he chuckled. "I'll be back in Chicago then and the family will expect me to bat .400 at the home plate after being absent four days."

But after Sunday I intend to resume the slimming process to shave off about ten pounds before greeting the boys at the Cocoa, Fla., "dri" grounds. Hurry the day!"

College, H. S. Net Scores

STATE HIGH SCHOOLS
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