



The Red Sox have taken the hurdles well in baseball's 1948 steeplechase. Here their shortstop, Vern Stephens, throws to first for a snappy double play

# The Big Series Scramble

By KYLE CRICHTON

**T**HE 1948 pennant races in the major leagues resembled a steeplechase in which the horses had been thoroughly doped with gin in the paddock. No club was able to keep in a straight line for more than twenty feet; each spurted, wobbled, fell back, picked up again and finally were all running haphazardly in a bunch.

The Boston Red Sox won twelve straight in a home stand in late July, went West and began wandering aimlessly across the landscape like a mule with the blind staggers. The Cleveland Indians had a great spurt in August and topped it by losing three straight to the Chicago White Sox, one of the worst big-league teams in history. The New York Giants' pitchers strung together three shutouts in a row at

one period in July and proceeded to hurl thereafter in such fashion that their lives were in danger from enemy line drives.

The sentimental and actual sensations of the year were the Philadelphia Athletics, who had the look of an old-fashioned jitney held together with baling wire. Connie Mack ruled over this amazing outfit with his usual score card and uttered thanks in his prayers every night for the good fate that had dropped into his lap such pitchers as Joe Coleman, Lou Brissie, Bill McCahan and Dick Fowler.

The best crack about the A's came from Hank Greenberg, who said: "I'm not afraid of them; nobody in our league is afraid of them, and the team that meets them in the World Series probably won't be afraid of them."

The A's pitching suffered a bad sinking spell in late August, the hitting was never much good and the end was inevitably sad.

Joe McCarthy showed his intelligence when joining the Red Sox by arranging for the purchase of Jack Kramer and Vern Stephens from the St. Louis Browns. This represented an investment of approximately \$250,000, but it proved warranted by midsummer when Kramer's pitching was holding the team up almost singlehandedly and Stephens was beating such a tattoo off the left-field wall at Fenway Park that he was leading the league in runs batted in. Since Ted Williams was leading it in almost everything else the Sox were right up there all the time despite a pronounced weakness in the box.

The Cleveland Indians, who never seem happy

PHOTOGRAPHS FOR COLLIER'S BY DAVID AND HY PESKIN

The season-end party for the two pennant pinchers should be a wild one. The quality of baseball has been lousy but loud; the race the tightest ever, for a record number of major-league teams

unless surrounded by tragedy, found themselves in first place for months with little help from their fireballer, Bob Feller. With Feller in his old shape the race would have been a runaway, because Lou Boudreau not only knocked the cover off the ball all season but came up with two fine pitchers in Bob Lemon, converted outfielder, and Gene Bearden, a former member of the N.Y. Yankee chain. To cap it all Bill Veeck provided the publicity coup of the century by signing Satchel Paige, the famous Negro hurler, who though approaching fifty or thereabout, held his own with the American League hitters and drew monstrous crowds wherever he appeared. The Indians also profited at the gate and in the field from the spectacular play of Larry Doby, their Negro outfielder.

The Yankees were up and down all year like a man lost in a lift. They got started finally in late August when they planted Larry Berra firmly in right field, established Bobby Brown at third base and converted Tommy Henrich into a first baseman. Manager Bucky Harris also did a little button pushing which brought Bob Porterfield in from Newark, and things began to hum shortly thereafter. Despite injuries Joe DiMaggio was as great as ever and held the club together during the dark days.

In the National League the dogfight was even more frenzied, with five teams engaged in the struggle. Billy Southworth had great pitching at Boston from Johnny Sain, Warren Spahn, Bill Voiselle, the old Giant castoff, and Nelson Potter, who had been hurled into outer darkness by M. Mack in a fit of pique. Southworth never got the team really rounded away until he placed Alvin Dark at short, and after that, the Braves were always favorites.

There was a great detonation in midsummer when the Giants dropped Manager Mel Ott and took over Leo Durocher, but the results were what might have been expected: Johnny Mize, Sid Gordon, Whitey Lockman and Willard Marshall were not hitting in 1947 style and the pitching remained weak. With Durocher gone, Burt Shotton resumed his comfortable seat on the Brooklyn bench and the Dodgers finished their climb from last place to first, were knocked off, got up again and were knocked off again. The Brooklyn accent was on youth and speed, with such antelopes as Jackie Robinson, Marv Rackley, Gene Hermanski and Pee Wee Reese burning up the base paths. What they lacked was experience and a long-ball hitter but they were always an interesting team.

Billy Meyer made a surprise entry out of the Pittsburgh Pirates by juggling a patchwork pitching staff with finesse and fingers crossed. He came up with a great young pitcher in Bob Chesnes and as usual had the heavy-artillery fire of Ralph Kiner and Wally Westlake. Stan Rojek, ex-Dodger, became a Pittsburgh pet with his hitting and fielding.

For a long time the St. Louis Cardinals consisted of Stan Musial. He was murdering the ball at a .400 clip and leading everything. Harry (The Cat) Brecheen was doing the pitching and the others were oiling their squeaking joints for the stretch drive. Marty Marion, Enos Slaughter, Terry Moore and Whitey Kurowski were definitely getting old, but when the chips were down they began to rally and were making it tough for everybody as the autumn leaves began to fall.

The quality of baseball was lousy but, boys, was it loud, raucous and rousing! Along about July the teams looked at the standings and said to themselves: "Nobody seems to want this pennant. Maybe we better grab it!"

That started the hottest pennant scramble in the history of organized baseball. Never before had so many teams fought so long for leadership in both major leagues. The World Series will have a lot of exciting baseball to live up to. □□□□



Roy Campanella of the Brooklyn Dodgers slides safely into third base as Erv Dusak, St. Louis Cardinals' third baseman, tags him too late. This year, youth and speed have been the Dodgers' biggest asset



Alvin Dark, Boston Braves' prize rookie shortstop, gets off a fast throw over Buddy Kerr, of the New York Giants, to complete a double play at the Polo Grounds. Brilliant pitching has featured the Braves' play. Larry Doby, Cleveland Indians' center fielder, belly-slides safely into home plate, below, as Yogi Berra, Yankee catcher, waits for a late throw-in. Bob Feller's slump hurt the Indians badly

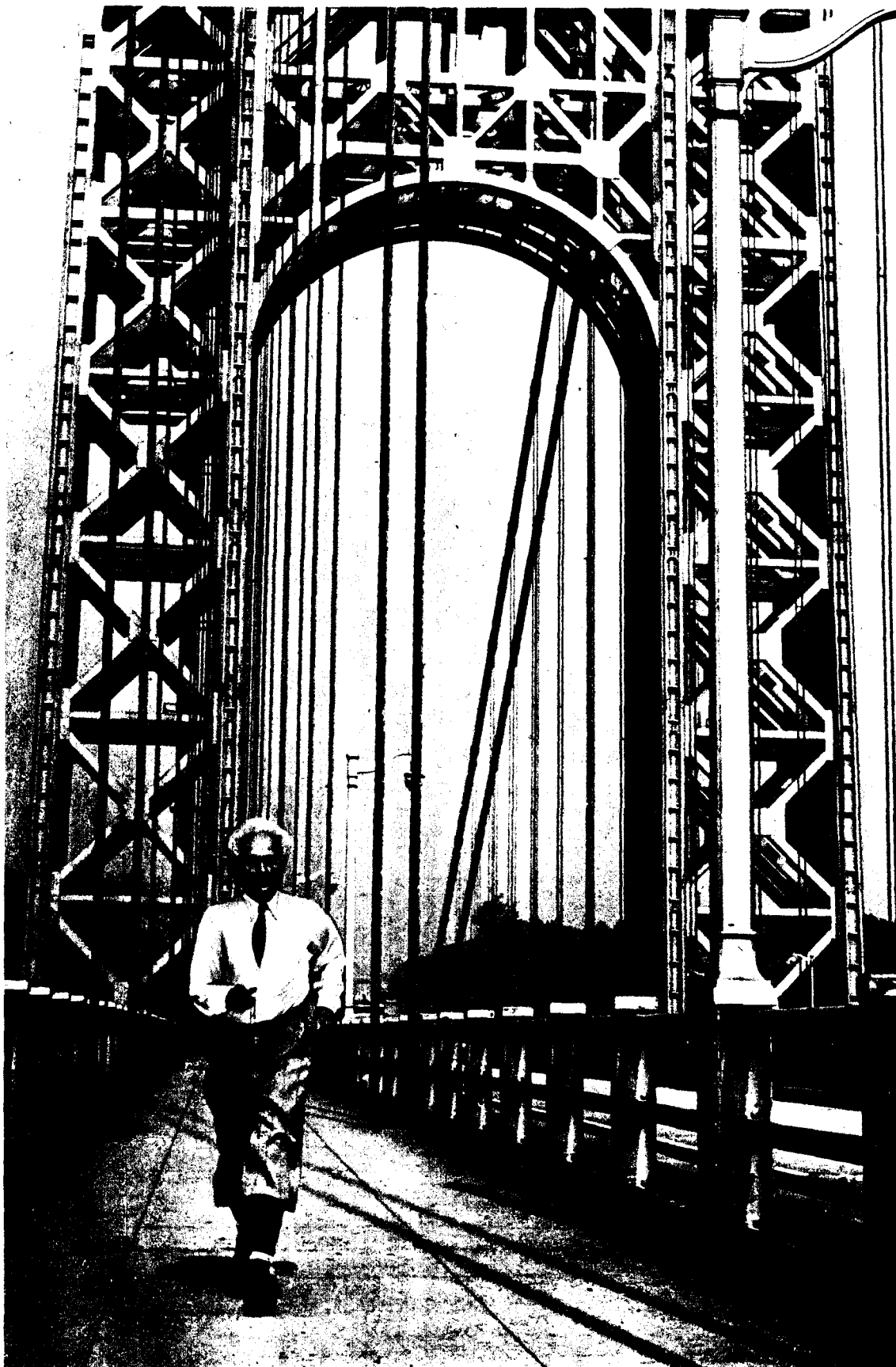




# Mr. Heel and Toe

By **TED SHANE**

You, too, can be a hiker in six easy steps if you follow the heel-and-toe prints of Jim Hocking. In his ninety-two years he's hoofed more than 260,000 miles, and he expects to do a hundred on his hundredth birthday



Our nonagenarian shanks'-marian stepping out briskly across New York's George Washington bridge

**A**S WAS his custom, on his seventieth birthday, James Horatio (Jim) Hocking walked 70 miles—one for each year of his life. The next day he recorded his sensations in an outdoor column he was conducting at the time for a New York paper. "Why write such lies?" the unbelievers wrote in. "No man in the world could walk 70 miles at seventy."

That was in 1926.

This year on October 15th, the white-thatched, Lincoln-lean, Indian-bronzed Hocking will eschew the mile-a-year plan, and content himself with a short stroll around Long Beach Island, New Jersey, where he's been summering. This will be a matter of about 35 miles, and the venerable Hocking will shanks'-mare it in about 11 hours. It seems that three years ago, Jim was injured by a car while walking home from his work—from New York City to Teaneck, New Jersey, about 12 miles—and he's had to taper off some on his heel-and-toeing since. He's ninety-two now. But he hopes to do the 100 miles he's been planning when he reaches one hundred in 1956.

And how far did *you* walk today?

Sound as a berry, bright blue-eyed and never sick a day in his life, Jim Hocking admits he owes his long life and incredible spryness to the world's cheapest, most natural and satisfying sport: hiking. For Jim has literally walked through life. Technically he's a heel-and-toe man: a speed walker from way back when pedestrianism, as walking races were called before the motor age, was the international pastime. Hocking estimates that during his lifetime he's dogged in over 260,000 miles.

He holds almost every amateur distance record from 75 miles to infinity. He's walked the 97 miles from New York to Philadelphia nonstop in 19½ hours; at sixty-nine he piked from New York to Chicago in 16 days; he once walked across the entire continent, topping the stroll off with a return amble up to Canada from San Francisco, across Canada, and down the Hudson Valley home. This 8,000 miles was ripped off in 250 days. He arrived without a blister, a care, or a nickel in the world. Also without anything but brief newspaper mention. Jim's always been, and will always be, an amateur who walks for fun. "The world is your footpath," he says rapturously. "Walk 10 miles a day and live to one hundred and twenty-five!"

Oh, yes, Hocking was well over sixty at the time of this jumbo hike.

## A Trail for All Classes of Hikers

Hocking, of course, doesn't recommend the transcontinental trudge for beginners. He does, however, urge you seekers after health and the peculiar joys of the shanks'-marian to hit the Appalachian Trail. Two thousand and fifty miles long, and developed entirely by volunteer hiking enthusiasts, this trail is the longest single hiker's artery in the world, a veritable bunion Broadway. From Mt. Katahdin in Maine to Mt. Oglethorpe in Georgia, the Appalachian is four feet wide at its narrowest, completely blazed, foolproof, and safer than a city street. Except for a few spots in the Great Smokies, it is fitted with huts, shelters and camp grounds, spaced for an easy day's hike, though certain sections still show the neglect of the war years.

The way to walk the trail, Hocking advises, is to decide at exactly what point you want to cut in. Write to the Appalachian Club headquarters in Washington, D.C., for detailed maps and information, chart your course carefully and travel any length of it your legs, and time, can stand. Many drive a car to a specific point and walk a round-trip hunk. There are sections where you may even drop your car at one point and make a deal with other hikers to have it delivered at a desired exit.

One of Hocking's favorite hauls happens to be on the Appalachian Trail—from Mt. Katahdin to the Massachusetts State Line, several hundred miles of breath-taking beauty. Hocking helped blaze it. It merges with Long Trail, and includes nearly every kind of terrain and scenic wonder. You may even run into a summer blizzard above timber line. Except for the winter months in New England, the Appalachian Trail is hikable the year around. On the hottest summer days, it's cool in the trail mountains and you'll find a sleeping bag handy at night. *(Continued on page 39)*

Collier's for October 9, 1948