

... was at a ratio of virtually 9 hits every 20 times at bat, and it tends to prove that Ruth was right. It really is theoretically possible to hit .500.

Stan Hack, who was always a consistent .300 hitter, used to worry about his own batting. "They ask you," said the ever-grinning Stanley, "to take a round bat and a round ball, and hit it square. How can you do it more than three times in ten?"

Willie Shick did. And while the Valley League was a Sunday bush circuit, consider the pitchers who performed there! There was spitballing Pop Arlett at Marysville, emery-balling Jay Saunders at Colusa, the great and ultimate cheater of them all in Frank Juney at Willows, another deft one in Joe Oeschger at Chico, Sailor Stroud at Oroville, etc.

If there were illegal deliveries, and the Valley League did know about 'em, it would send on a Saturday, and the new merchandise would arrive Sunday morning by special.

Ray Had 28 Hits in One Week

You had to be a hitter in that league, because you saw all the good stuff that was available. Those old-timers, rested for a full week, had zipping fast balls for four or five innings. Then they went to their breaking stuff, either with slippery elm from the mouth, a cola bottle-cap in their glove, or emery dust off their pants-leg.

Still another LaSalle immortal filling up Christian Brothers' cafeteria with line drives Monday night, and hitting many of them all the way downtown, was Ray Rohwer.

What a great go-for-the-downs this left-handed batter was!

Rohwer played a 10-game series once for the Solons against the Missions in San Francisco, and got 28 hits during the week, even though he was horse-collared in one game. When he was in a hitting streak, they used to knock down little Ray quite a bit. He weighed only 154 pounds, but he had a way to retaliate. He hit doubles and homers almost figuratively laying on the flat of his back.

But imagine, 28 hits in one week. It would be a good month of July for the aforementioned Yastrzemski.

"What was your average that week, Ray?" became the inevitable question at LaSalle Club.

"Dunno," he answered. "I just never figured it out. You know how I hit—always between .310 and .340 for the season. Never very good and never very bad."

Well, it's all relative.

Ray Rohwer was just born 40 years too soon. And so was Willie Shick.

1969

It Says Here

Two .400 Hitters Alive to Tell

By BILL CONLIN
Sacramento Union Sports Editor

An esteemed baseball writer named Ring Lardner once asked Babe Ruth a penetrating question about hitting.

"Big Man," said Lardner, "if you chose to hit to left field and lay a bunt down the line, once in a while, do you think you could hit .400?"

"Hell, kid," responded the Bambino, "I'd hit .500."

You know what? Lardner, and he was a very good baseball reporter, was inclined to believe Ruth, who never overplayed his great and gargantuan talents.



What could Ruth do, hitting for an average? The fact is he never hit .400 but he left a lifetime heritage of .342. He also put 711 home runs in the major league record book.

Consider that last year in the American League, which was Ruth's league, a fellow named Yastrzemski led the whole 10-team circuit with an anemic .301. He was the only one in the whole kaboodle who negotiated the magic rhythm and ratio by which you get three hits in every 10 times at bat.

Ruth was great, and there was nobody like him. But Monday night at the LaSalle Club Hall of Fame the image of the Bambino is brought back into some semblance of mortal frame.

At the LaSalle Club, for instance, was a fellow named Bill Shick and all he did in the '20s was to lead Sacramento Valley League in hitting.

With .442!



FORMER SACRAMENTO Solons talked over past glories at the La Salle Club's gathering. From left are Larry Gillick, Butte County sheriff and former pitcher; Ross "Brick" Eldred, outfielder, Frank Osborn, outfielder, and Jack Costa, outfielder and pitcher.

Old Sluggers Go To Bat, Fan Breeze

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the Pacific Coast League. He came to the Senators in 1925 in a trade for right-handed pitcher Bill Hughes.

A long ball hitter, he classes the late Ray Keating as one of the best clutch pitchers he ever knew.

Hepting was signed to his first contract by the late Bill Essick for the old Vernon club. Essick later became a famed scout for the New York Yankees. Hepting played for several PCL clubs, including the Solons under Charley Pick. Pete also was on the traveling House of David team. He has remained active in baseball circles as an umpire.

Shick, a Sacramento native, attended the old Washington and Mary J. Watson Grammar Schools. He began his baseball career when he was 17 and received several professional offers but rejected them. He played for the Ed Dell Stars, the Young Men's Institute team and also for Willows, Colusa, Oroville and Woodland in the Sacramento Valley League. He once batted .442 for the Willows team.

Gorman, a potent left-handed hitter, was a member of the Sacramento Elks Lodge team when it won the state championship in the 1920s. He also was associated with the famed Rooney - O'Neils, Weinstock - Lubin and Leo Lobners.

Marietta divided his time between first base and pitching and originally signed with a team known as Mike's Cafe. He also performed for the Southern Pacific nine, Foresters, Sacra-



THE OLD AND the young attended the La Salle Club's party. Fred Pearl, who will be 90 on Feb. 25, looks over an old scrapbook with John Gorman Jr., 12, who has aspirations to be a catcher. Pearl is the oldest living busher in the Sacramento area. John's grandfather, E. J. "Jim" Gorman, was taken into the Hall of Fame. Bee Photos