

Cox Could be in Majors If He Could Hit, Manager Says!

Putnam County Sentinel – January 15, 1970

Inability to make connections between the bat and the ball may keep Larry Cox from a major league career, according to Nolan Campbell, manager of the Raleigh-Durham Phillies where Cox played last year.

Campbell said that if Cox can correct his hitting problems he is sure to have a great chance at the big time.

Cox is a graduate of Ottawa-Glandorf High School where he received the school's outstanding player award in his senior year. He is the son Mr. and Mrs. Wilfred Cox, Route 1, Cloverdale. Larry is presently living in Lima.

During a recent interview, the Raleigh-Durham manager said that Cox is one of the outstanding defensive catchers in baseball today. He has a great arm and plenty of baseball savvy, but poor hitting has been his problem.

“Outside of Johnny Bench (The Cincinnati Reds' star backstop,) Larry may have the best arm of any catcher in baseball,” Campbell commented. “If he could hit, there is no telling where he would be now.”

BUT PAUL OWENS, the Philadelphia Phillies' farm director, has a pretty good idea where the 21 year old would be if he could arrange a rendezvous between ball and bat more often.

“If Larry could hit .240, he would probably be with us in the majors right now,” Owens said. “You don't expect a catcher to hit .280 or .300, but he should hit around .240.”

Cox has never hit .240 since he entered pro ball. In his first season at Huron, S.D., he hit .225.

Last year at Raleigh-Durham he finished at about .180.

Spartansburg, S.C. tried to make a pitcher out of Larry and used him sparingly during the 1968 season, but Cox wanted nothing of that, even though he had success on the mound with two no-hitters in high school. Although he has a strong arm, he does not want to pitch, but would rather play every day. At the beginning last season, he wrote to the Phillies that he would not come back as a pitcher, so they gave him another chance behind the plate. He did well enough to be named to the league's all-star team last year.

LARRY IS perplexed over his inability to hit, but is not letting it worry him, feeling he still has a chance. He was a pretty good hitter in high school, with a four-year average of .340 and he concluded his prep career with a .365 mark his senior year.

In spring training in 1969 Larry played on an AAA roster and hit over .400 but once the regular season started he began having trouble again.

Looking forward to starting spring training again in a few weeks, Cox said he isn't letting the hitting problem worry him. “I feel that even if I don't hit, I can always help the club defensively. Oh I wish I was a better hitter okay, but I don't lose any sleep over it.”

“Heck, I'm only 21 years old and I know I have a long way to go. I know it's going to come one day.” If it does the Phillies have a place for him in the majors.