

Manager Is Told He Will Remain for Season

As they did every few weeks last season, Billy Martin and George Steinbrenner cleared the air yesterday in a meeting that solidified Martin's job as manager of the Yankees.

Two immediate problems were resolved in the morning session held between Martin and his agent, Doug Newton, on the one hand, and Steinbrenner, the team's principal owner, and Al Rosen, the Yankee president, on the other.

For one thing, Martin will no longer be in imminent danger of dismissal, contrary to what Rosen indicated last Thursday. For the other, Art Fowler will remain as Yankee pitching coach instead of being banished to the minor leagues to work with young pitchers, as Rosen had suggested Sunday.

'I'm the Manager'

"I'm the manager, he's the pitching coach," Martin said as the Yankees prepared a statement saying that he would remain as manager this year.

In a statement released just before the game, Steinbrenner said: "This should end the speculation that has been developing of late concerning Billy's job. It was a solid, air-clearing session. Everything was discussed in considerable detail, and I think Al and Billy got a lot of things ironed out. In fairness to Billy I think this commitment to him is warranted in view of his cooperative attitude at the meeting."

Rosen, in reply to a question, said he was not sure what was meant by Martin's "cooperative attitude."

However, when asked what brought

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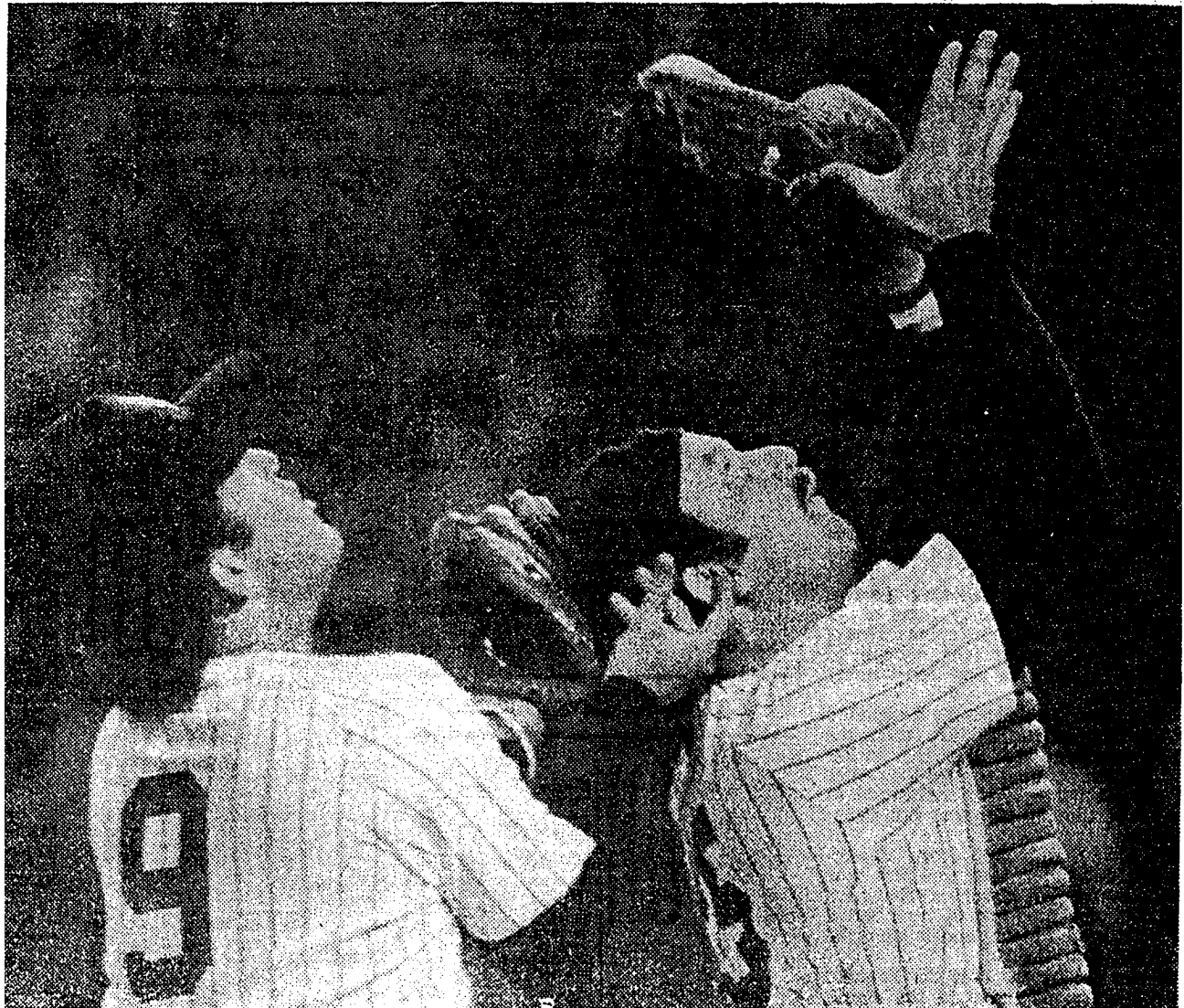
Billy Martin, Yankee manager, joking with newsmen before game last night at the Stadium.

about the change in thinking from last week when Martin seemed to have one foot over the edge, the Yankee president said:

"I said at the time there was a danger in falling 14 or 15 games back of a hot club. That's something we wanted to avoid. That's been avoided. At the moment, it's not a reality. We felt that getting Billy away from a feeling of anxiety might precipitate an emotional uplift for our ball club."

Martin had been so incensed Sunday by Rosen's treatment of Fowler that

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The New York Times/Larry Morris

Yanks' Thurman Munson, right, and Graig Nettles converging on pop up hit by Boston's Jerry Remy in first inning

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Martin's Job Is Solidified After Meeting With Owner

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some people close to the manager thought he might confront Rosen and Steinbrenner with an ultimatum: Restore Fowler to his position as pitching coach or Martin would resign.

Martin's resignation, however, was something Steinbrenner might have desired. The owner was extremely unhappy with the way the team had been playing and was said to have favored changing managers.

Martin, though, said no ultimatums were given at the meeting yesterday, which developed because both sides wanted it.

"They probably were tired of hearing that I'm going to be fired, like I'm tired of it," said Martin, appearing much more relaxed and serene than when the Yankees arrived in New York from Detroit Sunday night.

"Things were talked about," the manager added, "that clubs should talk about more. We talked about personnel and what our problems are. I explained about a couple of our younger pitchers, what their problems are."

Meetings Not New

When Martin's status was in serious doubt from time to time last year, the owner, the president and the manager would get together, discuss their differences and clear the air. The only difference in this meeting was that the president was Rosen and not Gabe Paul.

"They wanted to make it very clear to Billy Martin," said Newton, the manager's agent and spokesman, "that they weren't going to make any managerial moves on him at any time this year. I pointed out that his contract includes next year, too, but I guess it's difficult to talk already about next year. But what was important to me was there would be no movement from now until the World Series.

"I was personally delighted at the type of conversation we had," Newton

went on. "It was a very reasonable conversation. It was straightforward. There was a lot of understanding of a mutual goal, a mutual objective. What I liked about it was the atmosphere we have now. I know Billy feels terrific about it; I know they feel terrific about it."

The meeting lasted about two and a half hours and resulted in at least one other development. Clyde King, a Yankee scout who worked with the pitchers in spring training, will go to Tacoma, the Yankees' Pacific Coast League farm team, and work with Jim Beattie, the 23-year-old right-hander who started eight games for the Yankees this season with less than impressive results.

After he finishes that assignment, King will join the Yankees and work with Ken Clay, a 24-year-old right-hander who has shown great promise in the past but who has not lived up to it this season.

Steinbrenner was critical last week of the way the Yankees' young pitchers had been handled. His remarks were aimed at Fowler, and that was why Rosen had Fowler ticketed for a trip to the minors. Fowler, however, has been Martin's pitching coach wherever he has managed.

'Don't Know What's Going On'

"I still don't know what's going on; they still haven't told me" Fowler said about an hour before Martin arrived in the clubhouse and disclosed that peace reigned once again.

Upon arriving, the manager routinely went about his business, sitting behind the desk in his office and opening his mail. A few minutes later, a member of the ground crew stopped in the office to give the manager a rain report.

"The heavy stuff is over now," he said.

So it was on the managerial level, too, at least for now.