

Ex-yank Duncan signs with Mets

The Record (Bergen County, NJ) January 23, 1999 | T.J. QUINN, Staff Writer

Infielder Mariano Duncan, a member of the 1996 world champion Yankees, signed a minor league contract with the Mets on Friday.

The 35-year-old Duncan played in Japan last year, but the Mets feel he might be able to provide right-handed help off the bench, something they currently lack. Matt Franco provides the primary left-handed bat and can play third base and first base, but the Mets need a right-handed hitter besides Luis Lopez who can play shortstop and second. Duncan has played all four infield positions, but spent the early part of his career at short, and has played mostly at second base the past few years.

The Yankees traded Duncan to the Toronto Blue Jays in 1997, and the Jays let him go as a free agent. He played for the Yomiuri Giants

last year, batting .232 with 10 homer runs and 34 RBI.

Duncan is a career .267 hitter, but has played in more than 100 major league games in a season only once since 1993. He will be invited to spring training as a non-roster player, and will compete with minor-leaguer Ralph Milliard for a spot.

Transactions

The Washington Post January 26, 1999

Baseball New York Mets -- Signed INF Ralph Milliard and INF Mike Kinkade to one-year contacts.

Peter Gammons's 1999 scouting report: NL East New York Mets

The Boston Globe (Boston, MA) January 31, 1999

- 1998 finish: 88-74, 18 GB. - Offseason transactions: Resigned C Mike Piazza, LHP Al Leiter, LHP Dennis Cook, and RHP Masato Yoshii. Signed 3B Robin Ventura, LHP Allen Watson, OF Rickey Henderson, and INF Mariano Duncan. Traded C Todd Hundley in a three-way deal with Los Angeles and Baltimore for OF Roger Cedeno and RHP Armando Benitez. Traded RHP Mel Rojas to Los Angeles for 3B-OF Bobby Bonilla. Obtained RHP Oscar Henriquez from Florida as a player to be named later. Traded OF Butch Huskey to Seattle for RHP Leslie Brea. Traded 3B Joe Randa to Kansas City for OF Juan Lebron. Signed INF Mariano Duncan. - Rookies and other strangers: RHP Octavio Dotel (12-8, AA-AAA). RHP Jae Weong Seo (3-1, 2.31, A). LHP Rigo Beltran (6-5, AAA). INF Mike Kinkade (.305, 8 HR, AAA). 2B Ralph Milliard (.259, AAA). OFFENSE - Runs for/against: 706-645, +61. - Home runs: 136. - Walks/strikeouts: 572/1,039. - Leadoff on-base percentage: .321 - Stolen bases/caught stealing: 62/46. - Comments: Bobby Valentine is one of the smartest men in the game, and he loves cerebral players

who turn every at-bat into a mini-drama, as the '98 Yankees did. This could be his team. Remember, they went through 13 leadoff hitters last season whose on-base percentage was pitiful. Enter Rickey Henderson, and answer this: What team led the AL in pitches per at-bat last season? Right, the A's. Henderson (4.33 pitches per at-bat), Ventura (3.9), and Bonilla (3.8) are patient and wear pitchers down. They are good additions to a decent offensive team, and if each can play 110-120 games, the Mets will be fascinating. PITCHING - Starters: 62-48, 3.74, 1,022 2/3 IP. - Quality starts: 95. - Comments: Al Leiter won 17 games in 28 starts and is one of the game's best lefthanders. Rick Reed, while he wears down, is a solid starter who does all the little things well. But while they have depth, how good is this staff? Bobby Jones has chronic back problems, Yoshii is a question mark, and Watson is an unknown. So the key to jumping over the 90-win mark is Hideo Nomo. Last season, his stuff was as good as ever (lefties batted .210 against him), but his command would disappear; for instance, he'd set down six in a row, then walk three straight. Some feel he'll come back, but others caution that he has a shoulder condition and was strained by years of pitching in Japan, where he averaged close to 150 pitches per start and sometimes threw 190-200. His strikeouts have declined and his walks and ERA have risen every season. They are very encouraged by Paul Wilson's progress, and he and Dotel -- the double-jointed prodigy who has great stuff -- could be ready in a couple of months. - Bullpen: 26-26, 3.80. - Saves/opportunities: 46 for 76. - Appearances/innings: 399/435 1/3. - Comments: In some ways, this is a huge problem. While John Franco is a very important person to this team's makeup, he had eight blown saves and eight losses last season. If he struggles, how will Valentine handle Benitez, and how will this affect the Beverly Hills Sports Council clique that includes Bonilla, Piazza, and Henderson? If Franco keeps rolling at age 38, he has Dennis Cook, Benitez, Turk Wendell (if his arm recovers from appearing in 33 of their last 55 games), and Greg McMichael for setup roles. Benitez could be a huge player. DEFENSE - Fielding percentage: .984. - Errors: 101. - Comments: The infield should be super, presuming Edgardo Alfonzo can play second (and he's so smart, you figure he will fight down the weight and play the position well). But the outfield could be a trip for Brian McRae, running back and forth between Henderson and Bonilla; remember, at the press conference announcing the Bonilla deal, Valentine was asked what he meant about questions surrounding any deal and he answered, "There's a question every time the ball starts to come down." - Spring training questions: Can Alfonso adapt easily to second base? How will Bonilla take to his homecoming? Is Dotel close? What is the medical status of Wilson, Jason Isringhausen, and Derek Wallace? - Team song: "If I Should Fall Behind."

Tomko strong again in five-inning stint for Reds: SPRING TRAINING
Sunday Gazette-Mail March 14, 1999

SARASOTA, Fla. (AP) - Brett Tomko became the first Cincinnati pitcher to go five innings this spring as the Reds beat the Philadelphia Phillies 7-1 Saturday.

It was the third consecutive good outing for Tomko, who allowed four hits but walked none and struck out four for the win.

Philadelphia starter Chad Ogea pitched four scoreless innings, with three hits, no walks and four strikeouts. The Reds scored twice in fifth off loser Ken Ryan on a two-run double by Barry Larkin after a single by Mark Lewis and a walk to pinch hitter Eddie Taubensee. The Phillies got their lone run in eighth to make it 2-1 on a single by Joel Bennett and triple by Reggie Taylor off reliever John Hudek. Cincinnati put it away in the eighth with five runs off Mike Welch. Ralph Milliard singled and scored from first on a single by Hal Morris. Back-to-back doubles by Jeffrey Hammonds and Lewis scored two more, and a single by Taubensee drove in the final run. Larkin had two hits and drove in two runs. Lewis had two hits, scored two runs and drove in one.

Southern League Recap

Posted: Wed May 26, 1999 at 12:55 a.m EDT

CHATTANOOGA (REDS) 6, MOBILE (PADRES) 0
MOBILE, Alabama (Ticker) -- Jim Crowell tossed 6 1/3 innings and Wonderful Monds went 4-for-5 with a home run as the Chattanooga Lookouts blanked the Mobile BayBears, 6-0. Crowell (5-1) allowed a single to Ethan Faggett leading off the bottom of the first before retiring the next 14 batters. He did not surrender another hit until the seventh, finishing with three walks and six strikeouts. John Riedling and Pat Flury combined to toss 2 2/3 hitless innings, closing out Chattanooga's ninth win in 12 games. Flury fanned five of the six batters he faced. Monds opened the game with a homer and added an RBI single in the sixth. Brady Clark and Ralph Milliard added solo homers for the Lookouts. Milliard's blast, leading off the sixth inning, was his third in the last four games. Ray Ricken (3-3), who tossed a shutout in his last start, allowed five runs -- four earned -- and nine hits over 5 2/3 innings to take the loss, Mobile's sixth in the last eight games.

Rockies report

Rocky Mountain News (Denver, CO) May 17, 1999 | Tony Jackson, Tracy Ringolsby

. . . Second baseman Ralph Milliard (back) and right-handers Stan Belinda (shoulder), Scott Winchester (shoulder) and Mark Wohlers (anxiety) are on the disabled list.