Peterson Bothered by Status
As ‘Forgotten’ Man of Yanks

By MURRAY CHASS

Weary from Earl Weaver's pestiferous protests, the Yankees enjoyed a well-deserved day off yesterday. One of the players who could have chosen the occasion to launch his own protest, but somewhat surprisingly, he declined.

The player is Fritz Peterson, and for anyone with short memory, he used to pitch for the Yankees. While he is technical about it, still pitches for them but infrequently he has become the forgotten member of the pitching staff. In fact, he has appeared in fewer innings this season than any other member of the team's 25-man roster.

As he pondered his inactive, relatively inactive future, Peterson understandably could be upset and bitter about his plight. Upset he is; bitter he isn't.

"I don't blame [Manager Bill] Virdon for doing anything but what he is doing; I'd do the same thing," said Peterson, who has been banished from the starting rotation this season after averaging 21 starts a year in his first 5 seasons with the Yanks.

"At the beginning of the year, you have to go with the pitchers who are pitching best. In the process the fourth or sixth man is going to hurt a little bit, but you can help it because you have to keep your first four in rotation or they'll have a layoff."

As long as Peterson's layoff has been this season—has made one unsuccesful start and his first relief appearance since 1971—it appears now that it might be even longer. Sam McDowell, who is competing for Peterson for the fifth spot in the rotation, performed well enough last Sunday in Baltimore to warrant another start next Sunday against Texas.

Many people believed McDowell wouldn't emerge from spring training with the

Yankees, but if he continues to pitch decently, Peterson will become even more solidly entrenched in the bull pen.

"I want to pitch but not in the bull pen," the 32-year-old left-hander said. "I don't think I can work in the bull pen. I can't warm up every day. I guess what I have to do is do well in a game, but I've been weakened in the pen by not pitching. By the time I finally get a chance

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to start, I'll have to go through spring training again. But I have to add again, it's nobody's fault."

The answer, of course, would be for the Yankees to trade Peterson—or McDowell. The team can't be accused of not trying to do that because it has been trying since last winter to exchange either left-hander for an infielder.

There are teams that need a starting pitcher, such as the Chicago White Sox and Minnesota, but Gabe Paul, the Yankee trademaker, hasn't been able to pry out of any-one the player or players he feels would be sufficient payment for the players he's willing to trade.

The biggest problem with Peterson is that he has lost much of his market value because he won only eight games and lost 15 last season. And since he is not in rotation, he doesn't have a chance to rebuild that value. Meanwhile, Peterson tries to remain patient and understanding.

"I have two choices," he said. "I can give up or keep trying, and I don't feel like giving up yet. I think I've done enough in the past to be one of the four starters, but a manager should go on what he sees on the field and not on reputation. He did the right thing. There's no question in my mind. I have no complaints about how they've done things because if I was Bill, I would have done things the same way."
American League
LAST NIGHT'S GAME
Boston 4, Kansas City 1.
Other teams not scheduled.

National League
LAST NIGHT'S GAME
Houston 7, Atlanta 0.
Other teams not scheduled.
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