

Ernie Banks and Joe Garagiola came to the White House and traveled with him on Marine one to Andrews. Also guests on AF1 with the President were three sports writers...David Isreal of the Wash. Star, Jim Murray of the LA Times and John Underwood of Sports Illustrated. All rode with the President in his compartment of the plane. Staffers aboard were Cheney, Nesson, Greenspan, and Stu Spencer who said he was along because "I'm a jock." Nesson said Garagiola did most of the talking spinning "5000 baseball stories. He just tells one after the other." Gargiola was also handing out bubble gum cards with his own picture on them. Trip from airport to the stadium was uneventful.

The President went immediately to a reception where he spent about twenty minutes greeting baseball officials. Poolers recognized few of them although Joe Cronin President of the American League was there.

None baseballers in attendance were Mayor Frank Rizzo and Danny Kaye.

The President next went to the dressing room of the national league ballplayers. He was met by Manager Sparky Anderson who escorted him around the room to each player's locker. All of the National Leaguers ~~xxx~~ had baseballs ready for the President to sign. He autographed each one in turn. The President seemed to know something about each of the players and had remarks for each. Steve Garvey, of Los Angeles, offered the President a hat (baseball type) and asked ~~xxxxx~~Ford what size he wears. ~~xxxxxx~~. "Depends on how the polls are going," answered the President. Johnny Bench gave him another cap and Dave Concepcion, like Bench of the Cincinnati Reds asked about Mrs. Ford's health. John Montefusco of S.F. Giants gave the President a sort of bear hug and said, "If you ever need anyone to pitch for you, I'll do it." When he was introduced to Robin Roberts, former pitching great of the Phila. Phillies, the President said, "Oh yes, Michigan State (Roberts' alma mater) I know you."

Then the President moved over to the American League locker room and because of the press of time and the fact they didn't have so many balls to sign went through it in about half the time. When he met George Brett of Kansas City who is leading the league in hitting he said "I saw a nice story on you (Brett was on the cover of Sports Illustrated about three weeks ago) Good luck." When he was signing a ball for Mark Belanger (SS of the Balt. Orioles) the President said "I read the sports pages first. It has a fifty-fifty chance of being right.* If you read the front page... as Ford paused Belanger said "the odds are against you." "That's right" the President agreed. Carl Yastrezemski of the Boston Red Sox kidded Mr. Ford about associating with a mediocre hitter like Garagiola. When Ford got to Fred Lynn of Boston Ford asked "are you hitting third?" meaning third best in the league. Lynn said "I wish I was. I've slipped a couple of notches.

The President stopped and talked for some time with Detroit starting pitcher Mark Fidrych. Fidrych said afterward the President had called him ~~xxxxxxx~~ after he pitched recently in Baltimore against the NY Yankees. Fidrych asked the President since the call was never completed, if it had actually been he who called. The President assured him it was. Fidrych said he was out to dinner when the call came and had thought it was "One of my teammates trying to deke me." (Definition of deke - "to fool") Fidrych said to poolers he wasn't as interested in talking with the President as he was in talking with Jack Ford. Fidrych said "I wanted to ask him what Chris Evert is like." Pooler talked with Jack Ford later. Fidrych had reached young Ford to ask him that. Ford said "If you're interested, I'll set you up."

President had a brief wait to be introduced in the AL dugout. He hefted a bat and took a couple of practice swings...in time honored

Walter Mitty fashion.

De Frank / Beckman / Gibson