

pivot. At the bat, he had him swing off his rear foot, move in on the plate and punch the ball. On his own, Nellie made himself one of the best bunters in the game. Before anyone knew quite what had happened, Nelson Fox was the league's all-star second-baseman.

Richards is not completely unwilling to accept some of the credit, but he does insist that a player can only develop out of his own will to excel and his own willingness to learn. He will not go so far as to say that any players with the initial ability to have been signed by a major-league club can make it if his ambition is strong enough, but he does say that the reverse is true: "There is a line somewhere, where a boy either has or has not got enough ability. No one can measure it exactly, but a good baseball man can recognize it. On the other hand, I've seen many a ballplayer in the minors who had everything he needed except the willingness to let it hurt. Except the determination to make it in spite of everything and everybody."

Since he firmly believes that the game is in the hands of the players, Richards firmly believes that the thinking has to be done by the players. At least half the manager's job, he says, is teaching players to anticipate plays, to think under competition.

The White Sox went as far as their talent could possibly take them in four pennant races, but they always fell off toward the end. After finishing fourth in 1951, Richards got three straight thirds. His 94 wins last year must constitute some kind of a record for a third-place club. Despite Lane's shufflings, the Sox were always one man short. Given one more big man—another player like Minoso—and Richards thinks he could have taken it. "Most people don't appreciate the psychological importance of the big man in the lineup," he says. "He gives the rest of them somebody to tie onto."

The break with the White Sox came at the end of last season, when Paul demanded more money than Chuck Comiskey was willing to pay. When Paul argued that he could do better elsewhere, Comiskey—probably thinking he was bluffing—told him the Sox wouldn't think of standing in his way. After getting Lane's permission to look around—Lane may also have thought it was a bluff—Richards got in touch with Clarence Miles, owner of the Baltimore Orioles. He was not looking to manage the Orioles—that would obviously be no improvement—he was offering himself as general manager. Miles, on the other hand, wasn't thinking of Richards in terms of becoming his general manager; he

wanted him as his manager. Result: Richards ended up with both jobs. It is not unfair to say that Richards sold a general manager and Miles bought a manager.

With his two hats fixed firmly upon his head, Richards walked into one of those new-town-with-a-toy deals. Baltimore, after suffering the Orioles for close to two seasons, still seems to be just as excited as ever about being certified as a big-league city by the board of directors of the American League. With screams filling the park after every called strike and every high fly, every day sounds like Ladies' day in the Municipal Stadium. The sport pages still print the attendance totals along with the players' averages; matronly waitresses talk about the team as they take your order; Baltimore cab-drivers—who must be the talkiest in the country—second-guess Richards whether their passengers are interested or not.

As general manager, Richards went to work almost from the moment he signed his contract. Instead of going home to Waxahachie, where he has a farm, real-estate interests and "an oil well or two," he spent the off-season touring the United States, Cuba, Mexico and Puerto Rico to set up a scouting system, "streamlined for quality," he says, "rather than quantity." He streamlined the farm system too, cutting his clubs from twelve to eight. The top team, San Antonio in the AA Texas League, is the only franchise owned outright. Behind it, he has working agreements with one Class A club, two B's, two C's and two D's.

His most spectacular move, it goes without saying, was The Trade. He sent about all his beads and baubles to Manhattan Island when he sent Turley, Larsen and Hunter to the Yanks for pitchers Harry Byrd, Jim McDonald, Bill Miller, catcher Hal Smith, first-baseman Gus Triandos, third-baseman Kal Segrist, second-baseman Don Leppert, shortstop Willie Miranda and outfielder Gene Woodling.

The key man from Baltimore's point of view was Hal Smith, a .350 hitter in the American Association. Smith is already beginning to look like Richards behind the plate. "Even," as Casey Stengel says, "to the way he argues with umpires." Richards has spread Smith's stance for balance and taught him to sit back and let the pitch come to him, instead of reaching out and knocking low pitches out of the strike zone. Smith calls the signs, for Richards believes that a catcher can feel the pulse and flow of the game as a man on the bench never can. When things get tough, nevertheless, Smith has instructions to look to the bench for the pitch. And, perhaps as many as

a dozen times in the course of a tough game, Lum Harris goes to the mound with instructions from the manager.

(Ever wonder what a manager or coach says to a pitcher when he goes out to the mound? More often than not, it's nothing more than a word of caution. "Don't throw this guy a fast ball," or "On this guy, keep it up." He may say: "Whatever you do, don't let him hit one out of the park," which seems like good advice under any circumstances, but which freely translated really means: *walk him if you have to, but give him nothing.* Under different circumstances, though, the admonition might well go the other way: "Whatever you do, make him hit. Don't walk him.")

As far as The Trade is concerned, Richards knows in his heart it was the kind of deal he had to make. In Turley, he had one great pitcher whom he could put on the field every fourth day. With Smith, Triandos, Leppert and Segrist, he has the foundation of the team he hopes to build into a contender. "If we spent a million dollars on a farm system, and at the end of four years came up with four players of that promise, we'd consider ourselves lucky."

(Leppert and Segrist were eventually sent to Baltimore farms.)

He needs young players and he needs them immediately. When he opened the season he had only five players under 28—Smith, Triandos, Ferrarese, Miranda and Pyburn. This, of course, was not Paul Richards' team; it was merely the team that had to be put on the field when the gates were opened.

It takes, he believes, two years for a new manager's influence to make itself fully felt. He believes also that it can last for the same length of time after he has gone. If that means he is staking out a claim for whatever success the White Sox may have this year and next, who can blame him?

A second problem Richards faced as general manager was whether or not to bring in the fences of Baltimore Municipal Stadium, which has so much pasture that war between the cattlemen and the sheepmen is apt to be renewed momentarily.

The field is symmetrical, only 399 feet at the foul lines, but curving quickly to 380 and 447. From right-center to left-center, there is a low wire fence, 450 from the plate. Ted Williams wrote the caption for the stadium when he took one look and said: "Gonna be a lot of obscene 2-1 games here."

Richards says he has no intention of fooling around with the fences at the moment, and if you had his team you wouldn't either. There is nothing to equalize hitters like a great