

Bill Van Heuitt, "Throwing It All Away"

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June 24, 1954, was a day to forget for El Paso Texan left fielder Bill Van Heuitt.

In the bottom of the ninth inning in the first game of a Arizona-Texas (C) League doubleheader against the Phoenix Stars, Van Heuitt loses track of the outs and turns a tie into a defeat when he tosses the game ball into the stands allowing the winning run to score from third.

Trailing 9-to-8, the Stars have runners on second and third with one out when Jim Davis singles to left scoring Jack Spence to tie the game, with Jack Haley stopping at third. After fielding Davis' single, Van Heuitt believes the game is over and throws the ball over the fence in disgust allowing Haley to come home with the winning run.

The 25-year-old Van Heuitt is charged with an error on the play and his mishap over shadows a three-hit, two-RBI game for the Oakland, California native.

Returning from a two-year stint in military in time to play for El Paso, Van Heuitt enjoys a career year for the Texans in 1954, batting .322 and leading the Texans in both home runs (27) and runs batted in (147).



Bill Van Heuitt
1951 Pocatello Cardinals

Angry Fielder Throws Away Ball and Game

PHOENIX, Ariz. (UP) — An Arizona-Texas League player literally threw away a ball game Thursday night.

Bill Van Heuitt, left fielder for the El Paso Texans, presumed in the ninth inning that Jack Spence of the Phoenix Stars was crossing the plate with the winning run, so he threw the ball over the left field fence in disgust.

Then Jack Haley, who had singled to left field, continued around the bases to score — and Phoenix won, 10-9.

June 24, 1954
Phoenix Stars vs. El Paso Texans
Vinton Street Park, Omaha, Nebraska

EL PASO					PHOENIX						
	AB	B	H	O	A		AB	B	H	O	A
Aldama, 2b	5	2	2	3		T'thman, ss	3	1	2	6	
Garcia, rf	3	1	0	0		Smith, lf	4	3	1	0	
Morales, cf	4	1	2	0		Swarts, cf	2	1	4	0	
VnHeuit, lf	4	3	2	0		Jackson, lb	2	2	9	0	
Gauthier, c	3	1	1	0		Lndbrg, rf, p	4	0	1	0	
Urias, ss	4	1	1	4		Gardner, c	4	1	3	0	
Bldacci, lb	4	2	8	2		Spence, 3b	3	1	0	1	
Juarez, 3b	1	0	2	2		Coughlin, 2b	3	1	1	1	
McNulty	0	0	0	1		Haley, d	1	1	0	0	
Glenn, p	1	0	0	0		Wilson, p	1	0	0	1	
Ochoa, p	2	0	1	0		Corella, p	0	0	0	0	
						Shaw, a	1	0	0	0	
						Schroyer, p	0	0	0	0	
						Rowe, b	1	0	0	0	
						Davis, rf	1	1	0	0	

TOTALS 31 11 19*12 TOTALS 30 12 21 9

- *—One out when winning run scored.
- a—Grounded out for Corella 4th.
- b—Grounded out for Schroyer, 6th.
- d—Singled for Coughlin, 7th.

EL PASO	031	410	0—9
PHOENIX	400	200	4—10

R—Aldama, Garcia, Morales 2, Gauthier, Urias, Baldacci 2, Juarez, Toothman 2, Smith, Jackson 2, Gardner 2, Spence, Coughlin, Haley, E—Toothman, Morales, Van Heuitt, Gardner, Coughlin. RBI—Aldama, Garcia, Van Heuitt 2, Gauthier, Baldacci 3, Smith, Jackson 3, Gardner, Spence, Haley 2, Davis. 2B—Aldama, Morales, Van Heuitt, Gauthier, Baldacci, Smith, Jackson, Gardner, Spence. HR—Baldacci, S—Glenn, Swarts. DP—(Juarez unassisted); Coughlin, Toothman, and Jackson. Left—El Paso 7, Phoenix 7. BB—off Glenn 2, Ochoa 1, Wilson 1, Corella 1, Schroyer 2, Lindborg 1. SO—by Corella 1, Schroyer 1, Lindborg 1. HO—McNulty 5 in 2, Glenn 4 in 3, Ochoa 3 in 2, Wilson 4 in 2, Corella 4 in 1, Schroyer 3 in 2, Lindborg 0 in 1. HBP—by Ochoa (Jackson 2). R-ER—McNulty 4-4, Glenn 2-2, Ochoa 4-2, Wilson 4-3, Corella 4-4, Schroyer 1-0, Lindborg 0-0. W—Lindborg (4-3), L—Ochoa (9-4). U—Haynes and Best. T—2:08.

And then he just walks away from it all in a belated and unsuccessful attempt to play professional football as a kicker and defensive back with his hometown San Francisco 49'ers.

A three-sport star and teammate of Billy Martin at West Berkeley High School in Oakland, Van Heuitt enrolls at St. Mary's College in Moraga, California, in the fall of 1947 where he excels in both football and baseball for the Gaels for one season before leaving to pursue a professional baseball career.

Van Heuitt makes his professional baseball debut with the Sunbury Reds of the Interstate (B) League in 1948, and will eventually plays for seven minor league teams over five seasons.

Van Heuitt hits .317 for the Pocatello Cardinals (C Pioneer League) in 1951 with a career-high 40 doubles, six triples, 22 home runs with 93 RBIs en route to earning league All-Star honors.

Bill Van Heuitt [2 of 3]:

At the end of the 1951 season, he is one of four Cardinals traded to the El Paso Texans for 24-year-old shortstop Hector Mayer. But, before the 23-year-old Californian can suit up for the Texans, he is drafted into the U.S. Military where he serves for two years, 1952-1953.

He finishes his minor league career with 130 doubles, 83 home runs, a .279 batting average and a .469 slugging percentage.

Van Heuitt re-emerges two years later in 1956, with Fairmont of the Southern Minnesota League.

Van Heuitt passes away on July 27, 1986, in San Francisco, California at the age of 58.

Bill Van Heuitt Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Level	AB	HT	2B	3B	HR	RBI	AVG
1946	Buon Gustos Bakery	Oakland City	Amt	-	-	-	-	-	-	--
1947	Vallejo Merchants	Oakland City	Amt	-	-	-	-	-	-	--
1948	St. Mary's College	Pacific Coast	NCAA	-	-	-	-	-	-	--
1948	Sunbury Reds	Interstate	B	418	107	26	6	15	-	.256
1949	3 Teams	3 Leagues	B-A	503	122	21	6	10	-	.243
1949	Sunbury Reds	Interstate	B	389	98	18	6	7	-	.252
1949	Charleston Senators	Central	A	32	7	2	0	1	-	.219
1949	Columbia Reds	South Atlantic	A	82	17	1	0	2	12	.207
1950	2 Teams	2 Leagues	B-A	331	78	14	4	9	-	.236
1950	Omaha Cardinals	Western	A	156	34	4	3	3	-	.218
1950	Allentown Cardinals	Interstate	B	175	44	10	1	6	-	.251
1951	Pocatello Cardinals	Pioneer	C	521	165	40	6	22	93	.317
1954	El Paso Texans	Arizona-Texas	C	546	176	29	8	27	147	.322
1956	Fairmont Martins	Southern Minnesota	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
Minor League Totals				2319	648	130	30	83	-	.279

1951 - Named to the Pioneer League All-Star team

VAN HEUITT CHRONOLOGY

May 1947

The Reno Gazette reports that Van Heuitt, a three-sport star at Berkeley High School in Oakland, is expected to enroll at Notre Dame University in the fall.

December 1947

Playing football for St. Mary's College in Moraga, California, Van Heuitt ties for fifth nationally among NCAA interception leaders with seven. St. Mary's will discontinue football after the 1950 season.

STAR QUILTS

MORAGA—(UP)—Bill Van Heuitt, St. Mary's College football and baseball player, resigns today to sign a professional baseball contract. Van Heuitt declined to say what club he planned to sign with. He said he had several offers.

set no date for their reporting to the parent club.

March 13, 1949

Invited to the Cincinnati Reds' spring training camp, Van Hewitt is 0-for-2 in a 7-2 loss to the Boston Red Sox.

March 21, 1949

Van Heuitt is 1-for-2 with a double in a 2-1 loss to the St. Louis Cardinals.

November 29, 1949

The Cincinnati Reds announce that Van Heuitt, who hit .252 with seven home runs while playing most of the 1949 season with Sunbury of the Pennsylvania Interstate League, has been sold outright to the Tulsa Oilers of the Texas (AA) League.

W and M Back Nation's Top Pass Stealer

New York, Dec. 18—(AP)—Nobody had heard of John Bruce of William and Mary's Southern conference football champions as a contender for national pass-interception honors—until after his last game of the season.

Against Richmond, a 35-0 victim, he stole four in a one-man effort to wreck Richmond's air game, and final national collegiate athletic bureau compilations today show that his total of nine for the season made him the 1947 champion air pirate.

The nine interceptions were two short for the season record of 11 by Elmer Tarbox of Texas Tech in 1938, but they were high for the past two seasons.

Three tied for second place with eight interceptions—George Sims of Baylor; Phil O'Donnell, Harvard, and Ed Stec, Bucknell. Six snagged seven each—Jack Jensen, California, leader most of the season; Allen Davis, Utah; Van Heuitt, St. Mary's; Bill Vich, Rutgers; Darrell Royal, Oklahoma and Paul Page, Southern Methodist.

Bill Van Heuitt [3 of 3]:

December 5, 1949

Van Heuitt is selected by Rochester of the International League in the annual Double-A draft.

May 18, 1950

Irked that he has lost 12 players over the past three years from major league scouts "raiding" his roster, St. Mary's baseball coach Johnny Vergez says that only one of the 12 taken from his program has a chance for the major leagues, "My guess, and I will bet my World Series ring on it, is that Billy Van Heuitt, who signed with Cincinnati, will make good."

Van Heuitt Delayed Again This Time by Accident

Bill Van Heuitt, who will be a new outfielder for the Texans this season, was delayed on a trip to El Paso by an automobile accident on Feb. 27 near Amarillo. He was uninjured but his wife received a broken collar bone and other injuries that are still hospitalizing her and Van Heuitt's car was a total wreck.

Van Heuitt was driving from East Orange, N. J., to Berkeley, Calif., to visit relatives. He had planned to stop off in El Paso and talk salary terms with the El Paso front office. He'll be a little late as a result of the highway accident. But since he's two years late in reporting, a little while longer won't hurt any. He was traded by the St. Louis Cardinals to the Texans for Hector Mayer in 1951. But Uncle Sam exercised an option on him before he reported here. Van Heuitt was in the service in 1952 and 1953."

El Paso Herald-Post
March 8, 1954

October 15, 1950

The pennant-winning Pocatello Cardinals of the Pioneer (C) League announce that they have obtained three new players for the 1951 season, including OF Bill Van Heuitt from the Allentown Cardinals (B Interstate League) ... the 21-year-old Van Heuitt batted a combined .236 with nine home runs and 53 RBIs while playing with Allentown and Omaha.

May 4, 1954

After failing to hit a home run in El Paso's first 13 games, Van Heuitt hits his third, and fourth home run in as many days when he goes deep twice in a 9-7 win over the Nogales Yanquis ... "He's really meeting the ball well." Texans Manager Syd Cohen says, "Bill's homers have traveled far, too. One he hit (last night) must have gone between 425 and 450 feet."

May 9, 1954

Van Heuitt hits his ninth home run in eight days when he hits a solo home run in the third inning of a 12-8 come-from-behind win over the visiting Bisbee-Douglas Copper Kings ... Van Heuitt connects off of 22-year-old pitcher Ray Steele, who is making his first start of the year.

July 21, 1955

In a San Francisco 49'ers intra-squad scrimmage, Van Heuitt intercepts a pass by John Dean (Virginia Poly) and returns it 40 yards for a touchdown.

July 1, 1956

Back to playing baseball, the 27-year-old Van Heuitt hits a first inning three-run home run lifting the Fairmont Martins to a 3-to-2 win over Faribault in the independent Southern Minnesota League.

July 17, 1956

Van Heuitt is named as the starting right fielder in the 6th annual Southern Minnesota League All-Star Game.

July 27, 1986

Van Heuitt passes away on July 27, 1986, in San Francisco, California at the age of 58.