

day televised NBA playoff game. One by one, in reverse order,

player. This season he had to learn how to blend with other

Ewing is only one of five blue chips now.

"BLAB AND STEVE" FROM sustained their attack," Tennes-

Bo's Given Up Life in Fast Lane

By Rod Ohira
Assistant Sports Editor

For the past 3½ years, Bo Belinsky has been living on the North Shore and doing absolutely nothing.

It has, he says, prepared him for a return to regular life.

"I've had a great time . . . doing nothing was something I wanted to do all my life," Belinsky said. "But I'm just about ready to start busting out. I've got to start getting back into the flow of things."

Belinsky is "dry and clean," having eliminated alcohol and drugs from his life for the past nine years.

He's definitely prepared for a comeback. It may be the first

enough with Belinsky's performance in the Trenton City Recreation League to offer him a contract.

"They were so awed they offered me \$185 a month . . . that's how much of a chance they wanted to take," Belinsky says with a laugh.

He was released by the Pirates after a undistinguished 1956 season in the old Georgia-Florida League.

The Baltimore Orioles gave him a second chance. He had good strikeout-walk ratios, respectable earned run averages and a 41-42 record over the next six seasons but was going nowhere with the Orioles.

"I wasn't what they called major-league material mentally, physically I was okay," said Belinsky, who had learned how to throw a screwball during winter ball in South America in 1961. "They had no plans for me."

But the California Angels, an expansion club, did and Belinsky once again was not prepared for the hand fate was about to deal him.

On May 5, 1962, in his first appearance against the Orioles, Belinsky pitched a no-hit win that changed his life. It didn't erase years of frustration in the Orioles' system but the no-hitter did make thinking about them more tolerable.

"Baltimore's first base coach, George Staller, was my manager three different years in the minor leagues and we didn't get along at all," Belinsky said. "I probably had some terrible recommendations from him about my major-league ability. And he had to stand in there for nine innings and watch me beat them with a no-hitter."

The no-hitter turned on the lights of Hollywood for Belinsky.

"It was an exciting time for me," he said. "They were just starting to write about Sandy Koufax and Don Drysdale but who wants to write about ball-players just winning games? You want something a little more controversial. I gave them what they wanted."

IT SOON BECAME evident, however, that Belinsky was not prepared to deal with success.

"I was set up in so many ways, shapes and forms," he said of his dealings with the press. "I was



time in his life that he's prepared himself to meet a challenge.

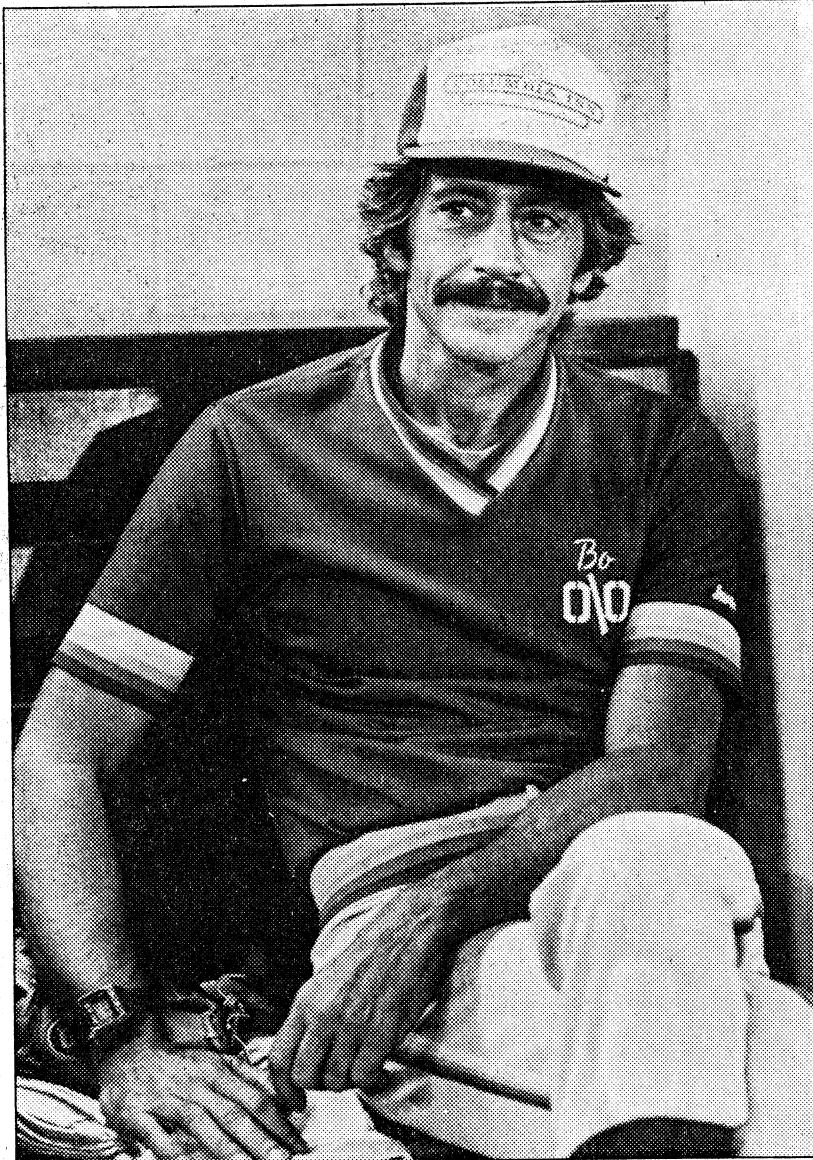
When Rex Bowen, a bird-dog scout for the Pittsburgh Pirates, signed him to his first professional contract, Robert "Bo" Belinsky had more experience shooting pool than pitching a baseball.

He played sandlot ball in Trenton, N.J., but did not participate in high school sports.

"I never played high school sports because it was something I never felt a part of," Belinsky says. "I was the odd-man out but that seems to be the story of my life."

Belinsky, though, had a good arm. "Back in the streets of New Jersey and New York, if you weren't big and strong, you had to learn how to throw flying projectiles to defend yourself," he says kiddingly. "I was always an accurate rock thrower as a kid."

BOWEN WAS impressed



READY FOR COMEBACK—Former Islander pitcher Bo Belinsky has been "doing absolutely nothing" in recent years but says he's ready "to start getting back into the flow of things." —Star-Bulletin Photo by Ken Sakamoto.

out there and felt I had to accommodate them. I felt I had to be something I wasn't."

Belinsky was 10-11 his rookie season but the life in the fast lane caught up with him in 1963.

The bad news of '63 was his 2-9 record and 5.76 ERA for the

with the Angels in 1964 but an altercation with a sports writer opened the door for his exit from Los Angeles.

"It cost me my stepping stone year in the majors," Belinsky said of the altercation. "When I got out of Los Angeles, I knew I wasn't going anywhere."

Third in a Series

Angels. The good news was his introduction to Hawaii via a demotion to the Pacific Coast League.

He was 4-1 with the Islanders and had a 2.50 ERA.

"What was a demotion at the time turned out to be a gift," Belinsky said. "Since 1963, Hawaii has been as much a part of me as my skin."

His stint with the Islanders paved the way for a good start

Nowhere turned out to Philadelphia and Houston. Both National League clubs failed to bring out the best of Belinsky and by 1968, not many baseball clubs were interested in the playboy left-hander.

But the Chicago White Sox took a chance and optioned him to their Triple-A farm club, the Hawaii Islanders.

Belinsky, now 32 years old, welcomed the assignment. Over the next two years, his popular-

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