

Blues in Smyrna

Zurenko came through to win it, 12-4, over the second-place Carteret Tides.

George first saw the light of day on Sept. 2, 1949, in Spangler, Pa., a village of 2,500 inhabitants, 60 miles west of Pittsburgh. The hamlet was so tiny, in fact, that Spangler High never could muster enough hopefuls to man a baseball team.

SO ZURENKO got his baptism in Little League ball. He came into his own in Senior Babe Ruth competition when he first met Zeke Hamzik, his coach and a former second-baseman from the Pittsburgh Pirate organization.

"Look, George, you're not big enough to overpower these batters," Hamzik told him. "Try something special. Let's try what I call the fork ball."

ZURENKO PROVED an astonishingly apt pupil. You throw a fork ball with your index finger and your middle finger forked into a "V." With that "something special" to go with his jumping fast ball and excellent control, George wound up his Senior Babe Ruth League season with an earned-run average below 1 run per game. That kind of pitching brings the big league scouts swarming to inspect any 18-year-old.

But the day George Zurenko turned 18, he closed his ears to college scholarships and pro baseball offers and followed his boyhood dream. He went to sea and joined the proud service of the United States Coast Guard at Cape May, N. J. That memorable red-letter year on the calendar read 1968.

IN LESS THAN 4 years, George had risen to the lofty

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