

25¢

FIFTEEN



JUNE

# SPORTS

15  
STORIES

STORIES

25  
CENTS



WM. R. COX

WILLIAM

HEDMAN

MURRY

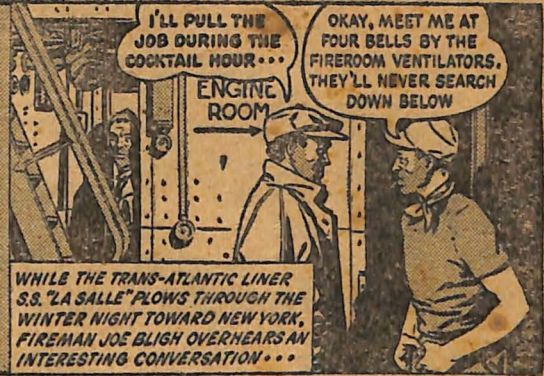
OWENS

HELL ON  
CLEATS  
by DANIEL  
WINTERS

DYNAMITE  
DUKES  
by W. MORRY



# JOE NABBED THE CROOKS AND THEN...



I'LL PULL THE JOB DURING THE COCKTAIL HOUR...

OKAY, MEET ME AT FOUR BELLS BY THE FIREROOM VENTILATORS. THEY'LL NEVER SEARCH DOWN BELOW

ENGINE ROOM

WHILE THE TRANS-ATLANTIC LINER S.S. 'LA SALLE' PLOWS THROUGH THE WINTER NIGHT TOWARD NEW YORK, FIREMAN JOE BLIGH OVERHEARS AN INTERESTING CONVERSATION...



... AND MY DAUGHTER'S JEWELS ARE MISSING!

IF I'D ONLY GIVEN THEM TO THE PURSER?

H-M-M-M. BLIGH WAS RIGHT

LATER



W-W-WHAT TH'...

DROP 'EM, 'FUNNY.' PUT UP YOUR HANDS!



'FUNNY MONEY' COOK IS ONE OF OUR BEST-KNOWN COUNTERFEITERS. THIS JEWEL THEFT WAS JUST A DIVERSION

AND MR. BLIGH HERE IS A FEDERAL OPERATIVE



I'VE ASKED MR. BISHOP AND HIS DAUGHTER TO JOIN US AT MY TABLE

MISS BISHOP'S A KNOCKOUT, YES, AND THAT REMINDS ME, I NEED A SHAVE



RAZOR PULLS, EH? TRY THIS THIN GILLETTE BLADE



SOME DIFFERENCE! THIS THIN GILLETTE SKIMS 'EM OFF LIKE MAGIC!

YES, THEY'RE PLENTY KEEN AND LONG-LASTING



OUR WINTER HOME IS IN WASHINGTON. I HOPE YOU'LL CALL ON US SOON

I'M HONORED, SIR. I CERTAINLY SHALL

HE'S MY IDEA OF A HANDSOME MAN

An advertisement for Gillette blades. It features a box of Gillette blades and a portrait of a man.

YOU ENJOY SMOOTH, REFRESHING, GOOD-LOOKING SHAVES WITH THIN GILLETTES. THEY ARE FAR AND AWAY THE KEENEST AND LONGEST-LASTING BLADES IN THE LOW-PRICE FIELD. ANOTHER THING, THIN GILLETTES FIT YOUR RAZOR EXACTLY... PROTECT YOU FROM THE NICKS AND IRRITATION CAUSED BY MISFIT BLADES. ALWAYS ASK FOR THIN GILLETTES





ALL STORIES NEW—NEXT ISSUE OUT JUNE 2nd!

25¢ **FIFTEEN**  
**SPORTS**  
**15 STORIES** **STORIES** **25 CENTS**

VOLUME 2, No. 1



JUNE, 1948

Two Headline Novels

1. **MR. SHORTSTOP** ..... *William Heuman* 8  
"Your payin' back days are over, Gibby. We're runnin' you right out of baseball!"
2. **FIVE STAR FURY** ..... *John Wilson* 40  
A team divided against itself—two coaches locked in deadly feud—one last quarter to glory!

Seven Smashing Stories

3. **DYNAMITE DUKES** ..... *Walt Morey* 30  
Three minutes of man-made hell in a circle squared—for murder!
4. **ROOKIE FROM NOWHERE** ..... *Nelson A. Hutto* 68  
The fateful ninth—the inning where pennants are made!
5. **HELL ON CLEATS** ..... *Daniel Winters* 78  
"There's only one sure thing about football, kid. You gotta cross that last white line—alone!"
6. **ONE MILE TO GLORY** ..... *John Wells* 90  
This was one race where he'd have nothing left at the end—except a heart that wouldn't let him quit!
7. **THE RELUCTANT SOUTHPAW** ..... *Robert Shankland* 98  
"The kid's a natural born miracle—an' we need a miracle to win this series!"
8. **ACES AWAY!** ..... *William R. Cox* 106  
The last, blazing set where a dream of glory may die—or come true!
9. **STEEL IN HIS HEART** ..... *Jimmy Jamieson* 117  
Two swordsmen in a battle where the only winner could be—Death!

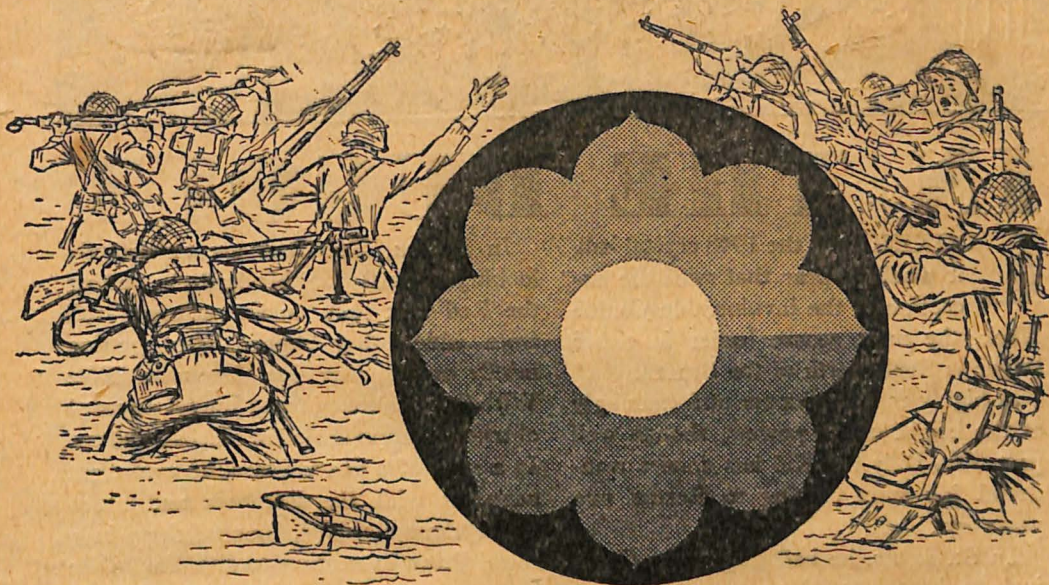
Departments and Features

10. **IN THE DUGOUT** ..... big league crystal ball ..... *A Department* 6
11. **I HOPE YOU'RE SATISFIED!** second guesser *Logan C. Claybourne* 39
12. **ALL-SPORTS QUIZ** ..... what do you know? ..... *M. Kane* 67
13. **THE BIG SIX** ..... all-time greats ..... *Ned Cady* 86
14. **KING OF THE KEGLERS** .. bowler extraordinary ... *Charles Webster* 88
15. **MIGHTY MEN OF SPORTS**... Hudson's masters ..... *Nelson, Allen* 96

Published monthly by Fletioneers, Inc., a subsidiary of Popular Publications, Inc., at 2256 Grove Street, Chicago 16, Illinois. Editorial and Executive Offices, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. Henry Steeger, President and Secretary, Harold S. Goldsmith, Vice-President and Treasurer. Entered as second class matter November 18, 1947, at the Post Office at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1948, by Fletioneers, Inc. This issue is published simultaneously in the Dominion of Canada. Copyright under International Copyright Convention and Pan American Copyright Conventions. All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction, in whole or in part, in any form. Title registered in U. S. Patent Office. Single copy, 25c. Annual subscription for U. S. A., its possessions and Canada, \$3.00; other countries, 75c additional. All correspondence relating to FIFTEEN SPORTS STORIES should be addressed to 2256 Grove Street, Chicago 16, Illinois, or to 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. For advertising rates address Sam J. Perry, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. When submitting manuscripts, enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return, if found unavailable. The publishers will exercise care in the handling of unsolicited manuscripts, but assume no responsibility for their return. Any resemblance between any character, appearing in fictional matter, and any person, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. Printed in the U. S. A.



# Only real men can wear it



No shoulder insignia in the U. S. Army is more proudly worn than the red-white-and-blue Octofoil of the Ninth Infantry Division. Along with it goes the Belgian Fourragere. You can wear both—if you're man enough to measure up to the standards of a great fighting tradition.

The Ninth Infantry Division spearheaded the invasion of North Africa. It helped stop Rommel and drove the enemy into the sea at Bizerte. The Ninth was in Sicily. It won the first smashing victory of the Normandy invasion. It was the first U. S. infantry division to cross the Rhine.

Yes, the Ninth was a great outfit then and it is now. Today's Combat Soldier is hard physically and alert mentally. He is skilled in the use of many weapons and has his choice of training in a wide variety of technical skills. He moves fast—often

through the air, usually by swift motor transport.

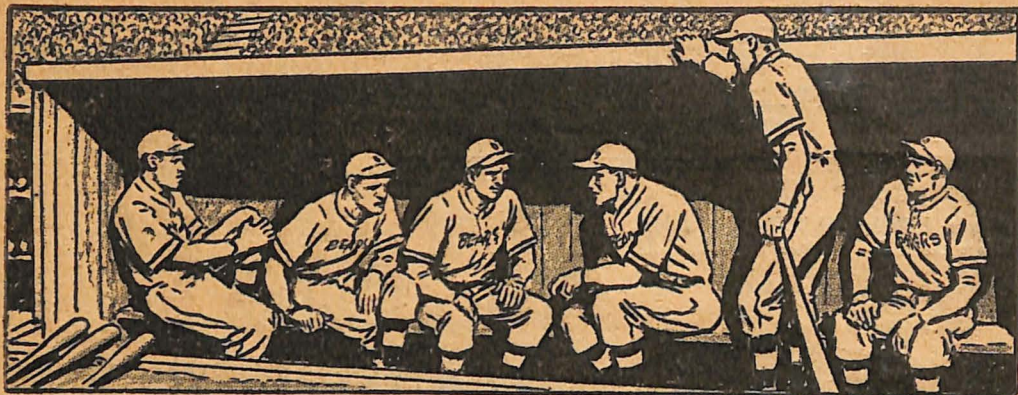
If you are 17 to 34 and can measure up to the high standards of a Combat Soldier, you'll get your training with the Ninth or one of three other famous divisions. If you are a veteran of the Armed Forces you may be able to enlist directly in the Ninth. Get the facts at your U. S. Army and U. S. Air Force Recruiting Station.

**U. S. ARMY AND U. S. AIR FORCE  
RECRUITING SERVICE**

CAREERS WITH A FUTURE

**U. S. Army and  
U. S. Air Force**





## IN THE DUGOUT

**L**OOKING into the 1948 crystal ball, it would appear that with the exception of the invulnerable Connie Mack, the most secure leader in either league is Southworth of the Braves.

A highly capable skipper and seemingly at the height of his powers, though well past fifty, Billy the Kid has done a wonderful job since coming to Boston two years ago.

In St. Louis, he had driven the Cardinals to three successive pennants and two world championships.

However, on going to Boston where the Braves admittedly provided no such glittering talent, Southworth quickly demonstrated that a manager can be something more than a mere figurehead. Within a couple of years, he has converted the once lowly Braves into a strong first division contender.

The upshot of it all is that Southworth, during the past winter, signed a five-year contract at a salary calling for \$50,000 a year.

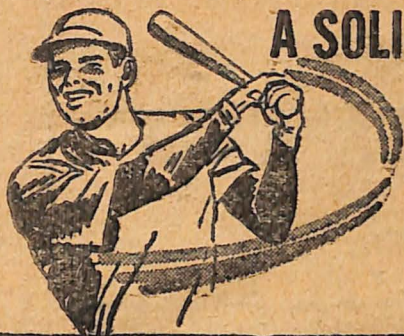
As for the others, there is a lot of dubious head shaking and to most observers it would not be at all surprising to see another wholesale shakeup, come next October. Even those with long established reputations may not, for one reason or another, survive another campaign.

In Boston, Hub fans are expectantly looking toward Joe McCarthy's putting the Red Sox back on the winning trail from which they slipped after getting briefly on it under Joe Cronin in 1946. With the Yankees, Marse Joe set a record of triumph unparalleled in baseball history. In a span of a dozen years, he won eight pennants with the Bombers and seven world championships, four of them in a row. Prior to coming to the Yanks, he had also won a pennant with the Cubs in the National League in 1929.

But like McKechnie, McCarthy, too, is getting along in years. He has just turned sixty and while apparently back in good health again, the rigors of directing a big league ball club on a sweltering bench in mid-summer can become mighty wearing, especially if things do not go so well on the field.

McCarthy didn't like his year and a half in exile after he quit the Yankees and is now mighty pleased to be back in harness once more. But it is also well known that McCarthy never was one to take kindly to defeat, even in his most vigorous years. Should the Red Sox not come through this campaign as expected, it would not be at all surprising to see Marse Joe call it quits on a brilliant career of his own accord.





**A SOLID HIT WITH MEN EVERYWHERE**

# THE MAY ISSUE OF **ARGOSY!**

**COMPLETE DETAILS ON ARGOSY-DODGER ROOKIE HUNT**

## **A DODGER ORGANIZATION CONTRACT TO THE WINNER**

... Here's what the *outstanding recruit* will receive: ... A ten day road trip with the Dodgers ... in a Dodger uniform ... with all expenses paid ... An invitation to be the Dodgers' guest at the 1948 World Series ... **A PLAYER. CONTRACT WITH THE DODGER ORGANIZATION!**



## **OFFICIAL ENTRY BLANKS**

... The May issue of Argosy contains your Official Entry Blank! Just fill it out, giving complete details of your baseball record. If the information on your blank passes the joint Argosy-Dodger board of judges, your name will be given directly to the Dodger scouting system ... and you'll hear from them.



## **101 AWARDS**

—Actually, 101 awards will be given! 20 other recruits will be invited to attend a special Dodger training school, with all expenses paid. The next 80 winners will be given sets of baseball gloves and spikes, just like the pros use, by A. G. Spalding & Bros., the nationally known sporting goods manufacturer.

## **BOARD OF JUDGES**

—The Argosy-Dodger board of judges is composed of William O'Dwyer, Mayor of New York City; John Kieran, veteran sports writer and star of "Information Please"; William J. Klem, Supervisor of Umpires, National League; Red Barber, Sports Director of Columbia Broadcasting System; Branch Rickey, President of Brooklyn National League Baseball Club; Rogers Terrill, Managing Editor of Argosy Magazine; and George Sisler, Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, N. Y.

## **AND THESE OTHER FEATURES . . .**

## **ERLE STANLEY GARDNER**

... A Daring Exposé of the Most Sensational Murder Trial of Our Times; A Timely Sportsman's Almanac article on fishing; The "Great Armored Car Robbery"; and "Las Vegas, Bargain Basement Monte Carlo."

**GET THE MAY ARGOSY TODAY!**

**25¢ AT ALL NEWSSTANDS**



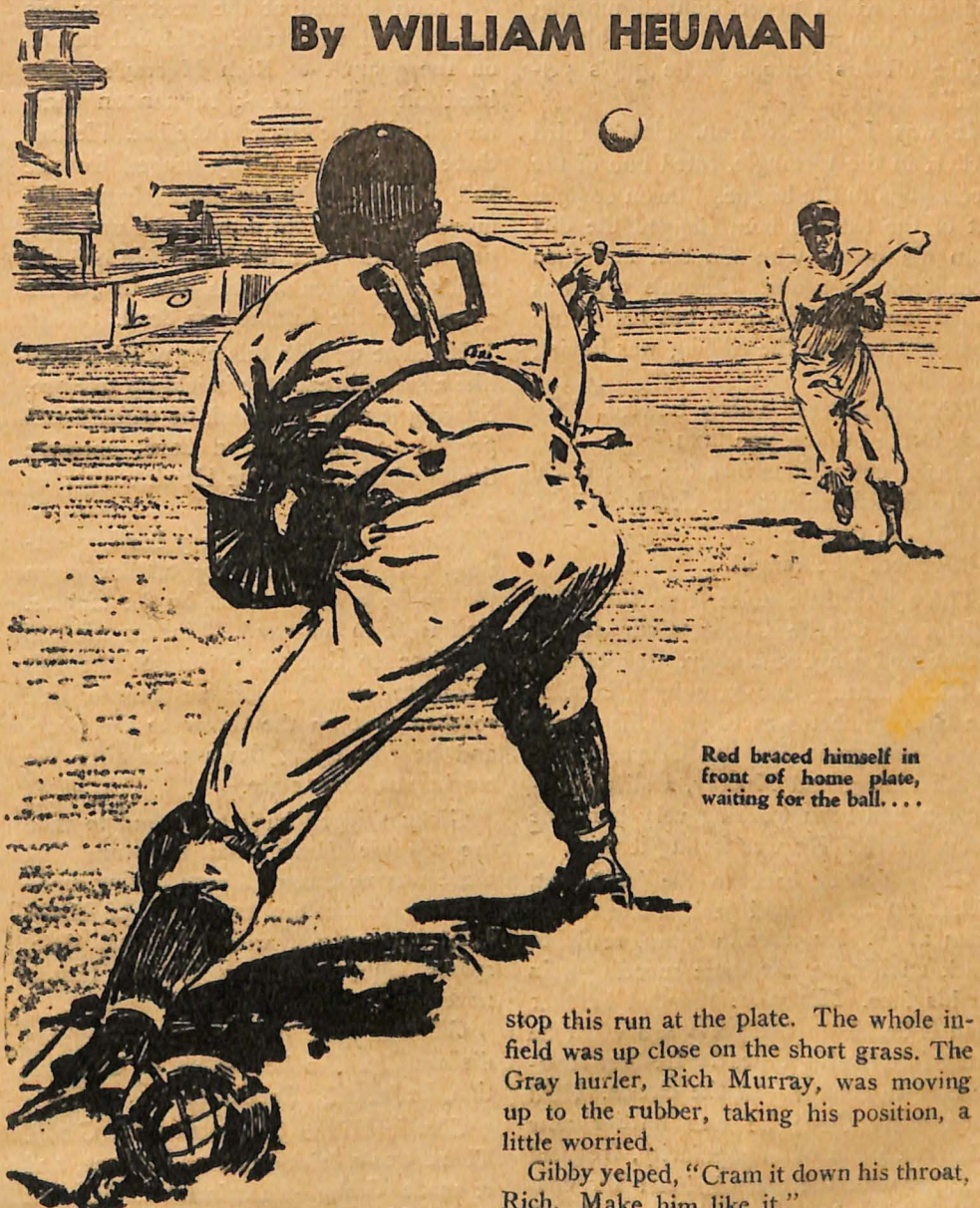
# MR. SHORTSTOP



*"Your payin' back days are over, Gibby. We're runnin' you right out of baseball! Keep the hell outa our base path—or look around for a new pair of legs!"*



## By WILLIAM HEUMAN



Red braced himself in front of home plate, waiting for the ball. . .

**G**IBBY PRYOR, new Gray short-stop, moved in onto the short grass of the infield, running with that peculiar skip and hop, slapping his glove, face twisted as he worked on the Hawk batter at the plate.

With none down and a Hawk runner on third base, the Grays were playing to

stop this run at the plate. The whole infield was up close on the short grass. The Gray hurler, Rich Murray, was moving up to the rubber, taking his position, a little worried.

Gibby yelled, "Cram it down his throat, Rich. Make him like it."

His voice carried. It was a piercing voice, a nasal quality to it, a voice practically every player in the league had learned to hate, even the men on his own club!

Gibby squatted, hands on his knees, a short man, rather stockily built, with a wide, pugnacious face, pale blue eyes,



and jaws which never stopped moving.

"Dust him off, Rich," Gibby blared. "Take off his buttons. The guy's yellow."

It was Lonnie Mason, Hawk third sacker, in the rectangle, rated one of the nicest guys in the league. Mason stepped out of the batter's box, slapped the dirt from his spikes with his bat, and then went back in again. Mason's cap was pulled low over his eyes, but his mouth was tight because the ribbing was having its effect.

"Bubble hitter!" Gibby howled. "Go back to the bushes, you bum."

Mason cut viciously at the first pitch, an inside ball, missing it cleanly. Gibby shrieked in delight.

"Busher!" he roared.

There was little noise from the other infielders. Charlie Hilton, Gray second sacker and player-manager, was talking to Rich Murray, calmly, quietly, because the Gray pitcher was tired. This was a two-to-one game for the Grays in the eighth inning, and Murray, a slim right-hander, had been working very hard the early innings. He was feeling it now.

Gibby danced back to the hard dirt, picked up a few small pebbles and tossed them away. He came in again, ready to work on Mason, the same sneering grin on his face. His voice sounded harsher than it had been ten years ago when he broke into the big time, the freshest bush-er ever to come up to the circuit. He'd been nasty then; he was nastier now after ten years of unpopularity, frequent brushes with the commissioner for conduct detrimental to baseball during the off season, numerous fines slapped on him by various managers who couldn't stand his tongue any more than the opposing batsmen.

Lonnie Mason was not a bad looking man, but he had rather large ears of which he was very sensitive. Gibby Pryor yelled at him, "Loving cup!"

Mason slashed at the next pitch, his face twisted with rage. The ball rattled on the ground to Rich Murray's right, hard hit. The Hawk runner on third moved with the crack of the bat. He had three steps when Gibby lunged for the ball, reaching with his gloved hand. He moved very fast for a man who was supposed to be "over the hill." He had big hands, and when he was able to get his glove near the ball, it was dead.

He came up with this one which looked like a sure hit with the infield up so close. Snaring it with one hand, he whirled and pegged to the plate, a hard, accurate throw which caught the Hawk runner by several feet.

The runner came in very hard, upsetting Tate Winston, Gray catcher, even though he was called out by the umpire. Ball tight in his hand, Winston tried to roll free so that he could get the ball down to second. Lonnie Mason had reached first on the throw to the plate, and he was going down now after the crashup at home plate.

Gibby skipped back to second to take the possible throw from Winston. But there was no throw, Mason having made the bag without any trouble. The Hawk went into second with a vicious slide, spikes high, something Lonnie Mason never did.

Gibby hopped out of danger, laughing disdainfully. As he trotted to his position, he jeered, "Sorehead."

Charlie Hilton looked over at Gibby. There was a faint smile on his face, and it made Gibby uncomfortable. He felt that he'd rather have Hilton bawl him out, even slap a fine on him, but Hilton evidently didn't work that way. His first year as manager, his club was in fourth place. It was not too bad, and it was not too good. There had been talk already that Hilton, a fine ball player, was not good managerial material. He was reputed to be too easy with his club.



"One away," Hilton called. "Let's get 'em."

Lonnie Mason took a lead off second base. He called down to Gibby tersely, "You little bag of wind, keep the hell out of the base path or I'll cut you to pieces."

Gibby calmly thumbed his nose at the Hawk runner. There had been a time when a gesture like that would have drawn a roar of laughter from the fans, but not any more. They'd been fed up to the ears with his conduct on and off the field. There were a few boos now because the Gray fans hadn't wanted him and couldn't understand why Charlie Hilton had signed him up after the commissioner's two-month suspension had ended, and the Owls asked waivers on him. He'd been suspended earlier in the season because he'd been involved in a barroom brawl which had received much publicity in the papers.

There had been other things which had drawn down on him the commissioner's wrath. He'd made newspaper headlines with his gambling exploits during the winter in Reno and Las Vegas. He'd played the horses despite the commissioner's objections.

He was reputed to be a troublemaker, even though still rated a top infielder. He'd never been too strong at bat, but he made his hits when they counted. No other club in the league wanted any part of him, but Charlie Hilton, the guy everyone thought most unlikely to succeed in the task of reclaiming Gibby Pryor, had signed him on.

**G**IBBY didn't like that slow smile on Charlie Hilton's face. He'd seen Hilton look at him that way before during the three days he'd been with the club, and he didn't quite understand it. It made him uncomfortable, and he didn't like to be uncomfortable. It was as if Hilton knew him, understood him, and

could see right through him. What he saw made him smile.

Moving back on the deep grass, Gibby started to work on Lou Bradbury, next Hawk batter. Bradbury was a big, lumbering man, an outfielder, very slow, but a heavy hitter.

"Let's see you hit it, Fatty," Gibby yelled. "I like to watch you run."

Bradbury didn't like that. He was a sensitive man. He was distinctly not fat, although heavy around the waist. He spat in the dust and glared down toward the Gray shortstop.

On the second pitch Bradbury hammered the ball down on the ground to Charlie Hilton. The Gray manager came up with it, handling the ball easily, flawlessly. He held Lonnie Mason on second with a look, and then whipped the ball to first for the second out.

The next Hawk batter lifted to the outfield, ending the inning, and preserving the Grays' one-run lead. Hilton trotted in behind Gibby as the shortstop ran for the dugout. The Gray manager said, "Nice going, Gibby."

Gibby glanced at him in surprise. He'd made a good stop on Mason's hit, and he'd cut off a run, but it had not been a sensational stop; he'd made many better than that, and other managers hadn't bothered to notice them. He'd been a classy fielder so long that he was taken for granted. When he made one misplay, however, they jumped on him with a will, spectators and players. He'd goaded the opposing players for so long that even his teammates were glad to see him bobble one once in a while.

Gibby said, "Thanks, Charlie." He sat down in the dugout. Duke Phelan, the third sacker, was getting up to hit, with Jim Bonnet in the circle. He didn't know this club as yet; he didn't quite get them. He'd been around long enough to recognize class when he saw it, and occasionally the Grays revealed flashes of bril-



liance which made Gibby wonder what they were doing down in fourth place.

In the very next inning they would relapse into the drab club they appeared to be to most sportswriters—a distinctly second rate outfit, not even considered as a pennant contender.

It was difficult to put the finger on the fault. The Grays had pitching, at times; they had hitting, at times, and they had tight defensive fielders, but they seldom got all three together. They'd been very weak at short most of the season, with Charlie Hilton trying out three different rookies, and then signing up Gibby Pryor in mid-August.

There was already talk in the local papers that Hilton would be deposed during the winter, even though he was popular with the fans and he'd been a dependable Gray performer for more than a dozen years. They said Hilton lacked color, didn't know how to handle men.

Gibby had been aware of the first fault for many years while he'd played against the Grays. He'd razzed Hilton along with the other Gray players but he'd never been able to get a rise out of the tall, calm second baseman. Charlie Hilton was one of those men who always did his job without attracting attention. He'd been a better than good fielder, and a solid, dependable hitter even though he'd never won a batting championship.

Hilton seemed to get along pretty well with the men. They liked him, and he knew his baseball. The sportswriters evidently were all wet, but the Grays were in fourth place, and they'd been picked this year to finish much higher than that.

Gibby watched Phelan slap out a nice single, and Bonnet push a shot between first and second, advancing Phelan to third. Charlie Hilton called for a squeeze play which caught the Hawk defense napping, and another run was in, making it three to one, giving the Grays a little more breathing space.

Gibby came up to the plate with two away in the inning and runners on first and second, another run in, making it four to one. He lifted a weak pop fly to the infield, and the Gray fans roundly razzed him. The Hawk players in the dugout went to work on him, also, and there was a bitterness in their voices which was lacking when they worked on other men.

In the ninth Gibby got back at them because Rich Murray set them down in order, allowing no hits. Gibby rode each batter to death. He was almost directly responsible for the last out—a strikeout by Hen Leland, Hawk infielder. Leland got so mad he swung at a ball which was neck high, missing it, falling to the ground at the end of his swing.

Gibby was giving him the Bronx cheer as he ran toward the dugout. Leland got up and looked for a moment as if he were going after his tormentor.

"Rabbit ears," Gibby howled just before he ducked through the door and started up the ramp.

Charlie Hilton was coming behind him, Hilton smiled at him, and Gibby got the queer feeling that the Gray manager was feeling sorry for him!

**A**N HOUR later, coming out of the dressing room alone, Gibby found Lonnie Mason and Leland waiting for him. Mason was the spokesman.

"We tossed a coin," the Hawk third baseman said grimly, "to see who would have you after the game. I won."

"And you were the lucky guy," Gibby sneered, "or is it unlucky? Why the hell don't you both jump me?"

"You want to talk all afternoon?" Mason asked him quietly, "or you want to show us whether you have any guts besides that big mouth."

"Let's go." Gibby grinned coldly. Mason was the bigger man, taller, heavier, but he wasn't afraid of him. He'd



fought bigger men than Mason, and sometimes he even won—but not often. He fought everybody, and there wasn't a player in the league who'd been involved in more fisticuffs.

He knew where to go because he'd fought in this Gray ball park once before. There was a place beneath the grandstand over near the first base side of the field. There was a kind of storeroom or warehouse with a dirt floor. He'd fought Butch Harrigan there five years before, and Butch had really butchered him because Harrigan had been in the pro ring for a short while before playing baseball.

The big stands were empty now, with only a few attendants moving around. They went down along a ramp, through an open gate, and then into the big square, dimly lighted.

Leland said once, "I'll give you ten bucks, Lonnie, to let me go after him."

Gibby laughed. He had his brown hair combed flat, and the cold sneer was still on his wide, bony face. He said, "You'll both have your chance, and after that you can call up your whole cheap club. I'll take every man in order."

Lonnie Mason took off his coat and handed it to Leland. He turned around and he said, "When I get through with you, Pryor, there'll be nothing left for anybody to take."

Gibby swung the first punch because he didn't like to wait for hostilities to begin. He missed, and Mason knocked him down with a right to the face.

Sprawling, Gibby rolled over and got up. He tore in, blood leaking from a cut on his cheekbone. He noticed the way Mason moved around, the way he held his hands, and he knew that the Hawk infielder had had some boxing experience somewhere.

Mason caught him with a short right to the side of the jaw, and then hit him again with the right, dropping him to his knees. Gibby got up more slowly, but he

got up, and he was grinning. It helped.

Leland sat on an overturned crate to watch. He lit a cigarette and puffed on it calmly. Gibby lunged in at his man, swinging hard with both fists, missing, landing one light punch. He was hit several vicious blows in the stomach which didn't help any. He was starting to feel sick, but he stayed on his feet this time. He kept swinging, missing, nearly falling when he missed.

He was knocked down for the third time, and he was getting up when Charlie Hilton came through the iron gate. Lonnie Mason looked at Hilton uncertainly. The Gray manager said, "That'll be all, Mason. You had your fight."

The Hawk nodded. He took a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped his hands. Gibby daubed at his mouth with a handkerchief. He could taste the blood. It was dripping down on his shirt front. He said tersely, "You want to try it again tomorrow afternoon, kid?"

Mason looked at him curiously. He said finally, "You wouldn't be a bad guy, Gibby, if it wasn't for your mouth." He walked off with Leland, carrying his coat on his arm.

Gibby looked at the blood on his handkerchief. He said to Charlie Hilton without looking at him, "How'd you know we were here?"

Hilton shrugged. He leaned against an iron railing, his hat on the back of his head. He said, "When you've been around a while, you learn to read the signs." He pushed away from the railing, and he said, "Let's get back to the dressing room and wash out those cuts."

Gibby smiled grimly. "How much am I soaked for this?" he asked.

Hilton smiled. "You mean fined?" he asked.

Gibby Pryor nodded.

"Nothing," Hilton said. "You had your fun. What the hell more do you expect?"



Gibby blinked at him. He walked along in silence for a moment. Then he said, "You're a queer guy, Hilton. I don't get you."

"Neither do the sportswriters or the Gray fans," Charlie Hilton said gravely. "They have me tabbed as a queer guy, too. They're pretty sure they made a mistake last winter signing me up for this job."

Gibby didn't say anything to that. They entered the empty dressing room, and Hilton walked into Doc Barnard's room to get some cotton and peroxide. Gibby went to one of the wash basins and started to work on his face. It wasn't too bad when he got the blood washed off.

The Gray manager sat on a stool a few yards away, watching him. He said finally, "What are you afraid of, Gibby?"

Gibby Pryor stiffened. He turned around slowly, looked at Hilton, and then again to the mirror. He said, "That's a damned fool question, Charlie."

He knew it wasn't. He knew that this quiet, easy-going guy had put his finger on the trouble; he'd psychoanalyzed his man, getting right down to the roots.

"You've been afraid all of your life," Charlie Hilton said, "and you know it."

Gibby closed his eyes briefly, and he saw the kid again—the small, frail, wide-eyed orphan kid being pushed around by bigger, tougher kids, crying himself to sleep night after night, always afraid—then, growing older in the orphanage, deliberately putting on a veneer of toughness to cover himself, going out of his way to antagonize other boys because he was still afraid and wanted to conceal it. At fourteen, still small, but no longer frail, he'd already developed that hateful sneer to his voice. He perfected a jaunty walk, and he was ready to fight at the drop of the hat because he was afraid of people and he needed a covering.

Breaking into the big time, after a year in the bushes, he'd carried this trait with

him. He was the holler guy, the big mouth who rode every player on the opposing club. He'd been doing it so long that he'd almost forgotten why, but it was there—deep down, a slimy, yellow fear.

Charlie Hilton was saying, "You're thirty years old, Gibby. You have a few years of good baseball left in you. Get wise to yourself."

Gibby said slowly, "You're nuts, Hilton." He could see clearly that all his actions ever since he'd come up to the big time were based on this same weakness. The devil-may-care attitude, the ridiculous escapades, the gambling, all stemmed from the same root. He was afraid and he had to do the things no one else would do.

"Busy tonight?" Hilton asked.

Gibby laughed bitterly. He roomed alone with the Grays because there wasn't anybody who particularly wanted to room with him, and they'd been all paired up before he came to the club. The few days he'd been with the Grays, he'd been by himself. Guys he'd ragged when he was with opposing clubs didn't want anything to do with him. He sat in the lobby one night; he went to a movie; he played pool one night with total strangers. He was getting bored to death, and he was ready for anything.

"How about having supper with us tonight?" Charlie Hilton asked. "My wife will bawl the hell out of me for not telling her I was bringing home company, but I guess I can take it, and she really won't mind."

Gibby blinked. He'd never been invited to a manager's home before. Most men usually had enough of him on the diamond in the afternoon, and they didn't want to see him any more than that.

Hilton got up when Gibby hesitated. "I'll give her a ring anyway," he said suddenly. "It'll give her a chance to set another plate and she won't feel so bad." He walked across the dressing room and



stepped into one of the phone booths.

When he came out Gibby said to him, "I didn't say I was going, Hilton."

The Gray manager grinned. "Too late now, kid. She's expecting you."

THE Hiltons had a nice place, not spectacular, a new development just outside of town. They had a lawn in front and some room in the back. The house was a bungalow. There were rose bushes, summer flowers, a sprinkler was going on the lawn. Charlie Hilton grinned and said, "My wife's sister does this. She's the gardener around here. I got no time for it."

Gibby met the gardener a few minutes later. She'd been in the rear garden, and she came into the house wearing worn blue levis, the knees crusty with brown dirt. She had a trowel in her hand.

Gibby Pryor stared at her. She looked somewhat like Mrs. Hilton, but she was younger, dark, bright-eyed, a nice smile. She held out a hand and she said, "I've watched you play many times, Mr. Pryor."

Gibby swallowed painfully. That meant she'd *heard* him play, also. Anybody within smelling distance of the park had heard and identified that raucous voice.

"I hope you enjoyed the games, Miss Kramer," he said.

Charlie Hilton was grinning at him from across the room. The Gray manager said, "Linda is quite a baseball fan, Gibby. She can trip you up on some of the batting averages."

Linda smiled. It was a nice smile. Gibby noticed that she didn't have a ring on her finger—any kind of ring, wedding or engagement. He didn't know why that should make any difference to him. He hadn't particularly bothered about women during his baseball career.

They had a good time. Hilton had two kids, both under six. They were crazy about him. Gibby watched the second

baseman roll on the floor with them. He was seeing another side of Charlie Hilton, a side few people knew existed. The Gray manager was not quiet and taciturn here. He was not the phlegmatic ball player sportswriters termed him. He was warm, alive.

At eleven o'clock Charlie Hilton drove him back to the hotel. When Gibby was getting out of the car, he said quietly, "I'd like to know one thing, Charlie. Why the hell did you sign me up?"

"I needed a shortstop," Hilton said promptly.

"Why else?" Gibby persisted.

The Gray manager was smoking a cigar. He took it out of his mouth and looked at it as he sat behind the wheel. He said finally, "I've watched you play a good many years, Gibby. I've always liked your style; you're a hustler all the way. If you didn't have that big mouth and if you didn't go around with a chip on your shoulder, you'd have been the most popular guy in the league."

"You figured you could straighten me out," Gibby accused.

"I needed a shortstop," Hilton repeated, "badly, and I needed something else. You've seen my club. Why aren't they up higher in the standings?"

"They're as dead as hell," Gibby told him promptly.

Hilton nodded. "They play the kind of ball I've played all of my life. It's good, sound baseball, but there's no fire in it. You've got to have a spark to win a pennant. You're the guy with the spark. If you can light up this fire, they might see a pennant race this summer."

"These guys don't like me," Gibby pointed out. "You're playing a long shot, Hilton."

"Better than playing no shot at all," Charlie Hilton smiled calmly. "I'm through at the end of this season unless the Grays suddenly come to life and end near the top. I've always wanted to han-



dle my own club, and one bad season like this is enough to ruin a guy forever. Once baseball men get the impression that you can't handle the job, you never get another chance."

"I can shut my mouth," Gibby told him, "if you think that'll help." He found himself liking this tall man, liking him more than he'd never liked a teammate before.

"That won't do it," Hilton said surprisingly.

"What the hell will?" Gibby asked, mystified.

"I don't know," the Gray manager told him. "I haven't figured it out, but quieting you down, making you as dull as the rest of us won't help any. It'll have to be something else."

He didn't know what, and he left Gibby that way. It was one of those things which had to be worked out on the playing field; it wasn't something you could figure out with a slide rule.

Walking into the lobby, Gibby passed Jim Bonnet and Ray Oliver, the left fielder. Oliver nodded to him, but he didn't smile. Bonnet had his head stuck in a newspaper. He didn't even look up. Gibby took the elevator up to his room. He was thinking of a lot of other times, a lot of other clubs, where players had become antagonistic to him, and he'd eventually become a lone wolf. It was going to be hard helping Charlie Hilton.

---

---

## 2

---

---

### Clamor Guy

---

---

HE ENTERED the dressing room the next afternoon. He walked with the same jaunty step because he couldn't break himself of that, but his hat wasn't perched on the back of his head, and he wasn't whistling in that peculiar off-pitch manner which exasperated

men. He went straight to his locker and got into his uniform.

They had the Hawks again this afternoon, last of a three-game series. They'd split the first two with the third place club, and this was the deciding game. The Grays had won two and lost two since Gibby joined the club. It was not an impressive record. Gibby had been doing very little hitting, although his fielding had been flawless as usual, and the sportswriters were still panning Hilton for taking a chance with him.

Leland was the first one to spot Gibby when he came out on the field. The Hawk second sacker grinned coldly, looking critically at Gibby's swollen left eye. He said, "How's it feel, champ?"

Ordinarily, Gibby would have had a crack ready for him. He said now, "I've been hit harder." The old malice was out of his voice, and Leland glanced at him curiously as he walked over to the batting cage. Charlie Hilton was there, and Hilton nodded and spat.

Gibby saw Linda Kramer sitting in one of the box seats with Mrs. Hilton. He took his hits and went back to the dugout. He didn't feel like yelling today. Since Charlie Hilton had exposed him to himself, he felt strange about carrying on as before. With even one guy knowing why he was doing it, the riding act became rather ridiculous.

In the first inning, the Hawks were waiting for him. Both Hawk coaches were primed to give him back as much as he handed out. They were waiting, but Gibby looked at Linda Kramer and said nothing.

Third base coach, Bennie Ryan, walked over to him.

"Where'd you get that eye, Gibby? You walk into a door?" He let out a howl of derisive laughter then, but Gibby didn't rise to the occasion. He stared at the Hawk batter, slapping his glove gently.

Mason, leading off, belted a hot shot past the Gray pitcher, Slim Murdock, and



Gibby skidded over very fast, scooped up the ball with one hand and made his throw to first for the out.

"Lucky," Ryan jeered.

Gibby spat in his direction, but said nothing. Charlie Hilton edged over nearer second. He called softly, "Where's the holler, kid?"

Gibby shook his head. He went back to short left to take a pop Texas leaguer, making a beautiful grab of the ball as it was dropping near the foul line. The fly would have gone for two bases.

He got a grudging hand from the Gray fans. They'd expected good fielding from him, but that wasn't enough. It was thought that the Grays lacked a punch at the plate, and most critics thought Charlie Hilton should have shopped around for a shortstop who was tough with the willow. They had plenty of good fielders. The guy who'd been in before Gibby had been a good fielder, too.

The Hawks jumped to a three run lead in the third inning, added two more in the fifth, and had a five to nothing ball game when the Grays came in at the end of the fifth. There were some boos then because the Grays needed this series, and the fans were disappointed.

Leading off to start the fifth, Gibby caught some of this. He'd gone none for two thus far in the ball game, and the fans needed a scapegoat. The Hawk catcher, Jake Wheeler, went to work on Gibby because Jake had always been one of Gibby's targets when he was up at the plate. Wheeler said softly, "I hear Lonnie Mason had a little sparring match with you yesterday, Gibby. Who won?"

"You like to try it?" Gibby asked him. Wheeler was a big man—over six feet, weighing two hundred pounds.

"Get a reputation," Jake Wheeler said disdainfully. "Lick somebody and then come around and talk."

Gibby caught hold of a fast ball and laced it over third for a clean base hit.

He'd been praying for a waist-high ball, inside, the kind of pitch he liked. The Hawk pitcher put one in there by accident.

Standing on first, he was in a position to work on the Hawk pitcher, Mickey Sloane. Mickey was expecting something as he went out to pick up the rosin bag, and then came back to the mound. Gibby stood on the base, watching the pitcher, arms folded across his chest. He stepped off the bag when Sloane put his toe on the rubber.

Oliver, next Gray batsman, had the sign for the hit-and-run. He tried to shove it through the slot between first and second, but he hit too close to Leland.

Gibby went down fast, watching Craddock, the Hawk shortstop, coming over to cover the bag for the double play. As Craddock caught the ball and his foot touched the sack, Gibby slid hard, fast, low, trying to upset him—a perfectly legal maneuver—and block the double play.

Craddock got rid of the ball, doubling Oliver at first, but he was dumped hard, falling on top of Gibby. There was a cloud of dust raised from the slide, and both men were struggling, trying to disentangle themselves. Gibby could hear Craddock cursing. He remembered that the Hawk shortstop was another "rabbit ears." He couldn't take it, and Gibby had ridden him unmercifully for a good many years.

Craddock came up off the ground, throwing his body around wildly. One of his elbows caught Gibby in the mouth which had been cut by Lonnie Mason in the fight.

Tears of rage starting up in his eyes, Gibby threw a left hook for Craddock's chin. The nearest umpire, big Frank Moran, didn't see Craddock's elbow come in contact with Gibby's mouth; he did see Gibby throw a punch.

Craddock went to his knees, scrambled up, and lunged in. Leland caught him, and Frank Moran pinioned Gibby's arms to



his side, Moran was saying quietly, "That does it, Gibby. Take a walk."

Moving toward the dugout, head down, Gibby took another riding from the fans. Every one of them had decided that it had been his fault because Craddock, even though an enemy player, was regarded as a mild mannered man.

**C**HARLIE HILTON shook his head regretfully as Gibby came down into the dugout, picked up his jacket, and ducked through the door. He went up the ramp alone and into the Gray dressing room. There was a bitter smile on his face as he sat down on the stool in front of his locker. He'd tried to help Charlie Hilton out a little; he'd kept his mouth shut and he'd played baseball but still he'd been canned. If anything, he'd gotten Hilton in worse with the Gray fans who hadn't wanted the new shortstop to begin with.

He took a long time showering and getting dressed. When he was adjusting his tie before the mirror, the Gray players started to straggle in, hot, dusty, grim-faced. They'd taken it by a nine to one score this afternoon, and they weren't feeling good about it.

Jim Bonnet passed behind Gibby as he stood in front of the mirror, clean, cool, ready to leave. Bonnet cleared his throat noisily, took a deep breath, but didn't say anything. He looked it as he went on to his own locker.

Phelan called grimly, "How do you feel, Gibby?"

Gibby turned around slowly, recognizing the danger signal. He said quietly, "Okay, kid."

"Must be nice," Phelan grated, "drawing pay for half a day's work."

Gibby looked at him, and then at the other players who'd stopped to listen. He read the dislike in their eyes, and he was positive now that Hilton had pulled an enormous boner thinking his new short-

stop was the guy who could help this crowd.

Gibby didn't want any more fights now, particularly with his own teammates. He said without emotion, "Okay," and he tried to let it go like that, but Phelan was in a bad mood. The third sacker had gone none for four, and struck out twice this afternoon. He'd made an error in the field, and he'd been picked off first bag when he got on through an infield error. It had been Phelan's worst afternoon of the season.

Phelan said slowly, "What the hell Charlie Hilton wanted with you I don't know. You've never played with a winner in your life, Gibby, and you never will."

Gibby had enough. He put the comb in his pocket and he stood there, hands in his pockets, the old sneer coming back to his face. He said tersely, "A cheap outfit that quits every other afternoon doesn't deserve to win a pennant, Phelan. Figure it out."

Duke Phelan was standing ten feet away, his fielder's glove in his hand. He was a stocky man, red in his hair, blue-green eyes. He said softly, "So we're quitters and we're cheap. You little rat."

Phelan's glove followed the remark. It whizzed through the air, grazing Gibby's right cheek. The Gray third sacker followed the glove, fists knotted, face twisted.

Charlie Hilton, coming through the door, caught him just before he tangled with Gibby. Gibby had been waiting for him, ready to fight now, not giving a damn any more because it didn't matter.

Hilton said, "That won't help any, Duke. Lay off."

Phelan laughed coldly, but he walked away. Gibby looked into Charlie Hilton's tense face. He knew that there had been plenty of booing for the Grays near the end of that shellacking from the Hawks, and some of it had been for the Gray manager. That had hurt.



When Hilton went into his office, Gibby followed him. He closed the door behind him and leaned against it. Hilton was stripping off his shirt in front of his locker. Gibby said, "Okay, Charlie, let's get wise to ourselves."

Hilton looked at him. "Go ahead," he said, knowing that Gibby had something on his mind.

"I'm through with this club," Gibby said quietly, "and I guess I'm through all around the circuit. I've played with six teams in the league already. Ask waivers on me and then send me down the river."

"That won't help you any," Hilton observed. "It'll mean the end. You'll never come up again, Gibby."

"It's not helping you to keep me here," Gibby told him. "Your job is on a string now, Charlie. If the story of this near-fight in the dressing room gets out, they'll pan you the more. You pulled a boner when you signed me."

"I think I'll stick behind that boner," Charlie Hilton said slowly. "You just play ball for me, Gibby."

"Until when?" Gibby asked, and then he answered his own question. "Until the Gray fans and the club itself kicks out you and me. You don't want to lose this job, Charlie. You've waited a long time for it."

"I won't cry if I lose it," the Gray manager said, but Gibby was thinking that the man had a family to support. Charlie Hilton wanted to stay in the big time when he was finished as a ball player, and he didn't have more than a year or two at the most.

Gibby went out, knowing that it was useless to try to persuade Hilton.

"I'll be out anyway at the end of the season," the Gray manager grinned calmly. "I might just as well have my fun, and there's always the possibility something might happen."

Gibby didn't know what. To make matters worse, a prying reporter got wind of

the trouble in the Gray dressing room, and blew it up into a nice story. The troublesome Gibby Pryor was hauled over the coals again, convicted of throwing a monkey wrench into the Gray machinery. Charlie Hilton got it for tolerating the guy when no other manager in the league would.

After reading the story in his room, Gibby got Hilton on the phone. He said quietly, "Now it's out, Charlie. You'd better act quickly. Put me on the block and they'll welcome you home. If you don't, you might not even finish the season."

Hilton laughed over the phone. He said, "Be at the ball park, Gibby, and stop worrying." He hung up.

GIBBY was there, the first of four with the league-leading Lions, the toughest, roughest outfit in the circuit. Gibby had spent a year with the Lions four seasons back, and many of the men remembered him well. There was a rumor in the dressing room before the teams took the field that the Lions were out to get him.

There was a chorus of boos when he came out on the field. He went over to the batting cage and he stood there, waiting his turn, very positive, now, that the end was near at hand. He'd hung around for a long time with a weak batting average, getting by on his fielding skill, but he wasn't getting any better in the field now and his value was steadily decreasing. He wasn't worried about money because he didn't particularly need any, not having a family to support, and he knew that he could play for some time in the bushes before he really slowed down, but he didn't like to go out this way, and he didn't like to think of Charlie Hilton following him, his own career wrecked to some extent because he'd backed an unpopular ball player.

The Lion baiters were ready for him



the first time he stepped up to the plate to hit in practice. A half dozen of them were squatting on the dugout steps—guys like McCann and Slattery, Slick Ryan, Blimp Porter.

There was a concerted Bronx cheer, and then Ryan yelled, "Keep out of the base paths this afternoon, Gibby. We're gonna slice you up."

Gibby was still putting on the silent act. He took his hits and sat down. Duke Phelan laughed at him disdainfully when he came in. The Duke thought he was worried about the Lions. He said tightly, "You've been ridin' everybody in the league all your life, Gibby. Now these guys are going after you. Why don't you crawl out of the ball park?"

"I'll crawl when I'm ready," Gibby said.

He was almost ready in the first inning. The hardcase, Tug McCann, Lion second sacker, got a life on a Texas league single to right. With two away and a left-handed batter in the slot, McCann was due to go down, and Charlie Hilton had to cover his position, giving Gibby the assignment to cover the bag on the throw-down.

Gibby had an idea what was going to happen. He could see McCann, hard as nails, one hundred and ninety pounds, very fast for that weight, standing on first, grinning down at him. McCann broke on the second pitch.

Winston's throw to the bag was a foot over on the first base side and low down. Gibby could hear McCann coming. He steeled himself for the contact.

McCann came into the sack high and hard, spikes gleaming. Gibby put the ball to him, and then his legs were swept from beneath him. McCann's shoe smashed against his shin. He wasn't spiked, but the force of the big man's slide rolled him in the dirt. He lost the ball as he fell, and he saw it rolling away in the dirt. He heard the disapproval from the stands.

There was pain in his left shin as he got up. Umpire Tom O'Hare had ruled McCann safe because Gibby hadn't held the ball long enough. McCann grinned as he got up, dusting himself off. He said softly, "How do you like it, Gibby?"

Gibby walked away without limping, but it hurt like hell, and he knew that in the morning there would be some stiffness. McCann called after him, jeeringly, "Where's that holler, kid?"

The two Lion coaches went to work in earnest. Gibby grinned coldly, taking no particular offense. He'd been razed and worked on before, but he had the feeling that this was different today. The Lions were going after him in earnest; they meant business; they'd taken it for ten years, and this was a concerted action to put him in his place.

Slattery hit one down on the ground to short, and Gibby came in for it to make the play at first. He was directly in the base path as he went down to field the ball, but he didn't think McCann would go that far. McCann did.

The big Lion piled into him, heavy legs driving. Gibby went down, the ball in his glove, McCann on top of him. It could have been accidental, and McCann may have made it look that way to the fans, but Gibby knew better. He put the ball to the Lion runner for the third out, and he walked to the dugout, his ribs hurting him, pain in his left shoulder when McCann's knee had come in contact with him.

The third base Lion coach, Leo Sexton, said softly, "Gibby, you're havin' bad luck this afternoon."

"It'll change," Gibby told him. He saw the Gray players looking at him as he came in, but there was no sympathy in their eyes, no resentment of the Lions' acts. A club was supposed to back its players when another team went to work on one of them. It was not going to happen this afternoon.



In the second inning, Gibby came up to the plate with none on and two away. Slick Ryan was on the mound for the Lions, and Slick promptly sent the first pitch, high, inside, very close to the head. Gibby hit the dirt.

He got up to see Slick grinning at him, his cap pulled low over his eyes. The Lion catcher, Red Hackett, said innocently, "Now we almost hit you that time, Gibby. Think of that!"

Ryan put another close across the neck, a slider, a wicked ball at best. Gibby broke away from the plate again. They were howling in the Lion dugout.

**L**INDA KRAMER was out again this afternoon, and Gibby saw her watching him quietly as he dusted himself off and came up to the plate, standing as close as he'd ever stood, defying Ryan to do it again.

Slick eventually passed him after get-

ting two strikes on his man. Gibby trotted down to first, running with a bounce, but feeling plenty of pain all through his body.

Ryan tried to pick him off the sack twice, and on one occasion Blimp Porter, shifting his feet around as he made the catch, brought one of his spikes down on Gibby's instep.

"Oops!" the big man grinned. "Pardon me, Gibby."

"I'll pay that back," Gibby said, "the next time you come my way." This was beginning to work on him now. He'd been very quiet; he'd been taking it, but it was getting under his skin.

Porter said quietly, "Your paying-back days are over, Gibby. We're runnin' you right the hell out of baseball!"

"I'll see that day," Gibby retorted. He had the sign from the dugout to go down on the next pitch, and he had a very definite knowledge of what was going to happen to him when he went into second.

**DON WINS A WELCOME NOW!**

HOW ABOUT SUPPER AT THE HOUSE TONIGHT, DON? MY SISTER WANTS TO MEET YOU.

WONDERFUL! I WANT TO MEET HER, TOO!

FUNNY HOW SOME FELLOWS WORRY ABOUT MEETING PEOPLE.

WELL, I USED TO ... BUT NOT SINCE I SWITCHED TO LIFEBUOY!

LIFEBUOY IS THE ONLY SOAP ESPECIALLY MADE TO STOP B.O. - CONTAINS AN EXCLUSIVE PURIFYING INGREDIENT - MY DAILY LIFEBUOY BATH GIVES ME LASTING PROTECTION.

THIS IS FUN, DON! YOU'RE ALWAYS WELCOME HERE.

AND I'LL KEEP WELCOME ... WITH LIFEBUOY!

LIFEBUOY HAS AN AMAZING PURIFYING INGREDIENT THAT STOPS B.O. YOUR DAILY LIFEBUOY BATH IS SO REFRESHING, TOO! USE LIFEBUOY FOR A WEEK, AND YOU'LL USE IT FOR LIFE!

Used in the homes of 40 million Americans.

**LIFEBUOY**  
HEALTH SOAP

ANOTHER FINE LEVER PRODUCT



Tug McCann would be covering the bag

Gibby took off with Ryan's first motion. As he sprinted for second, he saw McCann shifting over to the bag. He watched McCann's face as the big man hovered near the bag, waiting for the throw-down. He saw the cold grin, and then he hit the dirt. He tried to draw as far away from McCann's tag as possible, giving the Lion just the tip of his toe. He wasn't prepared for what happened.

Coming in on a cloud of dust, McCann's actions were pretty well concealed. Taking Hackett's throw, McCann suddenly lunged forward with the ball, swinging his gloved hand toward Gibby's head, at the same time dropping his weight on the base stealer.

The ball gripped tightly in McCann's gloved hand collided with Gibby's mouth, drawing from him a small cry of pain, and at the same time McCann's heavy knees dug into his ribs as he came down on top of his man.

Even before the ball touched him, however, Gibby's right toe was on the bag. He was ruled safe. He got up, spitting blood, tears of anger and pain in his eyes. Some of the Gray players were standing up in the dugout, and Charlie Hilton was looking at him closely. Everyone knew what had happened out there even though they hadn't seen it too clearly.

McCann said, "I slipped, Gibby."

"All right," Gibby grated. "I'll see you around, Tug." He was beginning to feel washed out inside. He had pain in his ribs and in his shoulder; the spot where Blimp Porter had stepped on his foot didn't feel too good either.

Umpire Tom O'Hare moved over behind Gibby, and as he walked, he said, "If I could do it, kid, I'd hand out a penalty for unnecessary roughness, but there ain't no such rule in my book."

"I'm not crying," Gibby said coldly, but he didn't speak clearly now because his lips were puffing up. He spat again.

O'Hare said, "That's right."

Before Gibby could get his breath, Oliver laced a single out to right field. Gibby hit for third, caught his signal from the third base coach, and then lit out for home. He was remembering, as he pivoted off the third sack, that Charlie Hilton wanted this game very badly, and that it was going to be a pretty close game with Slick Ryan facing the Gray ace, Johnny Blunt. There was the possibility this run might mean the ball game, and a win over the league leaders would give the Grays a kind of lift which they badly needed.

Red Hackett was bracing himself in front of the home plate, blocking it completely, squatting a little as he waited for the ball. Gibby gritted his teeth and kept going.

Hackett was reaching for the ball, a high throw bouncing in from the outfield, when Gibby hit him head-on. The force of the collision sent Hackett reeling back over the plate before the ball could touch his glove.

Gibby fell on top of him, with Hackett kicking at him viciously, cursing, as he tried to roll Gibby off. When the Lion catcher scrambled to his feet, Gibby thought that he was going to swing. He had his own fists balled, ready to hit back, even though he knew that against a guy like Hackett the fight would be short and sweet, but not sweet for him!

Hackett caught umpire Chad Osgood watching him a few feet away. Osgood had already ruled Gibby safe at home, and the home plate umpire was ready to banish the first man to throw a punch.

Red Hackett thought better of it. He glared at Gibby, and said, "Pryor, I never did like you—or your mouth. Don't try that again."

"I'll do it every time you block that plate, you big bum," Gibby snarled. He was fighting mad now, and he didn't care what happened. When he walked away



from the plate he had the bounce to his walk again, and he shifted his cap over to the side of his head. There was a little trickle of blood sliding down his chin from his cut lip; the sneer was on his face as he came down into the Gray dug-out. He said disdainfully so that everyone could hear it, "The lumphead. I'll kick his teeth out the next time I come in."

None of the Gray players said anything. Charlie Hilton sat on the bench watching him, his face expressionless. They had a one to nothing lead in this ball game.

---



---

### 3

---



---

#### Hot Sack Hellion

---



---

THE Gray trainer, Doc Barnard, got a sponge and a bucket of water. Gibby bathed his cut mouth and dried it with a towel Barnard handed to him. Barnard looked at the puffed mouth, shrugged as if to say it wasn't too bad, and then sat down.

Gibby was still mumbling to himself. He trotted out on the field with the third out and, immediately, went to work on the Lions. It wasn't easy making a noise with that battered mouth, but he did it. He started on Tug McCann as the big Lion second sacker trotted in from his position. He called loudly, "Hey, Button Nose."

McCann spun around at the sound of the hated name. McCann did have a rather small nose, but very few men in the league would dare to mention it. The second baseman's jaw was tight when he ran on again.

Gibby started off on the first Lion batsman, Blimp Porter. The heavy first baseman stumbled a little as he came up out of the dugout to get his bat from the rack. Gibby's taunting voice reached him,

"Don't trip over that feather, Fatty."

Porter reddened because the fans in the boxes behind the Lion dugout could hear that, and they were grinning. Gibby kept after him when he stepped into the rectangle.

Porter fidgeted at the plate. He was a big man, but he'd never been too tough with the willow. Gibby howled at him, "What's the bat for, Blimp?"

Porter stepped out of the box and glared down toward short. Gibby screeched, "Two, sixty-three." That was Porter's present batting average.

Porter rolled an easy grounder to Charlie Hilton and was thrown out. As he was walking back toward the dugout, head down, Gibby called after him, "Two, fifty-nine, Blimp."

Charlie Hilton grinned and slapped his glove. He said softly, "Let's get 'em."

They held a one to nothing lead for five innings, but in the sixth the Lions tied it up on a screeching double off the bat of Tug McCann. The tall Lion infielder went into the bag in a cloud of dust, spikes high again. Gibby managed to leap out of the way. Stepping away then, he kicked some dirt into McCann's face as the runner lay on the ground. Tug scrambled up, face twisted with rage, but Gibby calmly walked away from him.

The Lion coach on first was howling down at the runner, but Tug was too mad to listen. He took a step off the bag in Gibby's direction, and he snarled, "You little rat. I'll bust your face in."

Charlie Hilton stepped over and dug the ball into McCann's back, neatly picking him off the sack with the ancient hidden ball trick. McCann strode off the field, crackling his knuckles as he walked. His hit had, however, brought in the tying run of the ball game.

Gibby started to stiffen up as the game progressed. His lips were badly swollen, and his left shoulder was aching. In the sixth inning another Lion runner smashed



into him at second as he was covering the bag on a throw-in from the outfield. In the seventh he was accidentally on purpose spiked in the right ankle by Huck Slattery as he slid into third base following another pass and a base hit by Oliver.

There was blood staining his sock when Charlie Hilton came over to look at him. Hilton said quietly, "I'll put a runner in Gibby. Have Doc look at that ankle."

Gibby walked from the field, down into the silent Gray dugout, and through the door. He nodded to Linda Kramer as he went by, and he thought he saw the sympathy in her eyes. She was the only one in the park who felt that way.

His run came in on an outfield fly a moment later, and it was the run that won the ball game, Johnny Blunt pitching airtight ball for the Grays the final three innings.

Gibby was on the rubbing table, and Doc Barnard was working on his ankle when the players came in. Gibby looked at them contemptuously. He was getting ready to needle Jim Bonnet when he caught Charlie Hilton's warning glance. He didn't say anything, but he wanted to. He wanted to work on them because they'd been dead again this afternoon. They hadn't exhibited a spark of life, and only the superlative pitching of Blunt had held them up.

Hilton came over and said, "How's it, Gibby?"

"Okay," Gibby growled. "I'm still alive."

"They're going to work on you tomorrow, too," Hilton observed. He looked critically at the ankle. The cut was not too bad, and bandaged, Gibby would be able to play. Hilton said, "I might keep you on the bench the remainder of this Lion series, Gibby."

"Like hell," Gibby snapped. "I owe those guys something. They're getting it back."

"Kind of a one-man crusade," Hilton

said. "It's gonna be your funeral, Gibby."

Charlie Hilton was eating in the city with his wife tonight. He came over when Gibby was nearly dressed, and he said casually, "Myra and Linda are coming in, Gibby. Why not make it a foursome? I'm sure Linda would like it."

Gibby blinked. He said, "It's okay with me if—"

"Sure," the Gray manager grinned. "Leave it to me."

Gibby did, and they had a good time. He found himself dancing with Linda Kramer later in the evening after the supper. He didn't look too pretty with his mouth still puffed out, and he was very stiff. Linda said to him, "You had a rough afternoon, Gibby."

"Those monkeys—" Gibby started to say, and then he saw that the girl was grinning at him. He started to grin, too.

"You're not afraid any more," Linda Kramer said. "You got over it."

Gibby stared at her. "What—what do you mean?" he asked.

She laughed softly. "I guess Charlie didn't tell you. I was the one who kind of psychoanalyzed you, Gibby. I told Charlie, and he agreed with me. You see, I've taken courses in psychiatry."

"Psychiatry?" Gibby muttered.

"I've watched you play many times," Linda said, "even before you came to the Grays. I was convinced quite a while back that you'd been afraid of something in your childhood, that you'd been fighting it all of your life, and that accounted for your actions on the field. I told Charlie that when you got straightened out, you'd be pretty valuable to a club."

Gibby blinked at her. "Did Charlie Hilton sign me on *your* recommendation?" he asked, dumbfounded.

Linda Kramer grinned again. "Charlie's smart enough to know that a psychiatric case doesn't help any. I told him I'd take a chance with you."

Gibby said slowly, "You will?"



The music stopped, and Linda Kramer only smiled at him as they left the floor. Gibby said before they reached the table. "So you think I'm over it now?"

"I'd say you'd cured yourself," Linda told him. "You'd overbalanced the scale the other way in order to do it, but if you can get on an even keel now, you'll be all right."

"You mean—cut out the holler?" Gibby asked her curiously.

"No," Linda stated. "Make all the noise you want, but don't *mean* it."

Gibby let that sink in as he sat down. Charlie Hilton started to tell him later in the evening that his sister-in-law had taken several extra-curricular courses in applied psychiatry.

"She knows her stuff," Charlie Hilton said.

"You're telling me," Gibby retorted. "I understand she even knows yours."

The Gray manager chuckled. "She's been a help," he admitted. A shadow crossed his face then, and he said, "I don't seem to know mine too well, Gibby. I was on the carpet again this morning with the big bosses. They want to know how come the bad showing this season."

"They're putting the skids under you?" Gibby asked slowly.

Hilton nodded. "Maybe I'm too easy," he murmured. "This club probably needs a driver—a guy with a big whip."

"I've played with six clubs in this league," Gibby said quietly, "under a half dozen different managers. I've never known a guy to play better, sounder baseball."

"Thanks," Charlie Hilton smiled, "but a big time manager needs more than that. We can pick up minor league managers who know as much baseball, but you need something beside that. Up here we're handling the best mechanics of the business; they're higher strung; they need special handling, and unless a guy can get the best out of them, he won't stay."

GIBBY caught the note of regret in the Gray manager's voice, and he felt sorry for the man. Hilton deserved to stay. He was well-liked by the players, and they wanted to play ball for him, but they hadn't been set on fire, and Charlie Hilton wasn't the guy who could do it. Charlie didn't have that in him, himself.

That night Gibby didn't sleep. The soreness in his body and the worry about Hilton kept him awake till the small hours of the morning. His own problem, the fact that he was practically finished in the big time, did not matter so much. He'd been expecting that a long time.

He had Linda Kramer on his mind, too, and it was the first time in his life a woman had kept him awake. He didn't particularly mind that part of it, either.

The Lions were ready for him again the next afternoon, ready to finish off the job. Gibby came out on the field, wishing he could limp. He wanted to limp, but he didn't want to show it; he didn't want to give them the satisfaction. He walked as if there was nothing the matter with him, and he walked with a cold grin on his face.

Tug McCann was waiting for him on the third base foul line when he came out of the dugout. McCann said grimly, "Gibby, if you live through this damned game, there's a half dozen guys will be waitin' under the grandstand for you when it's over. We're takin' you on one after the other. We're shuttin' that big mouth for good."

Gibby spat. "That'll take a good man," he said coolly, "and there's not a good man on that cheap club of yours." He walked off with the old bounce.

He was on his toes when the first Lion batsman came up to the plate. He was ready to turn in the ball game of his life for Charlie Hilton, bruises or no bruises. The Grays had beaten the Lions once. A second straight win this afternoon might



ALL STORIES NEW—NEXT ISSUE OUT JUNE 2nd!

25¢ **FIFTEEN**  
**SPORTS**  
**15 STORIES** **STORIES** **25 CENTS**

VOLUME 2, No. 1



JUNE, 1948

Two Headline Novels

1. **MR. SHORTSTOP** ..... *William Heuman* 8  
"Your payin' back days are over, Gibby. We're runnin' you right out of baseball!"
2. **FIVE STAR FURY** ..... *John Wilson* 40  
A team divided against itself—two coaches locked in deadly feud—one last quarter to glory!

Seven Smashing Stories

3. **DYNAMITE DUKES** ..... *Walt Morey* 30  
Three minutes of man-made hell in a circle squared—for murder!
4. **ROOKIE FROM NOWHERE** ..... *Nelson A. Hutto* 68  
The fateful ninth—the inning where pennants are made!
5. **HELL ON CLEATS** ..... *Daniel Winters* 78  
"There's only one sure thing about football, kid. You gotta cross that last white line—alone!"
6. **ONE MILE TO GLORY** ..... *John Wells* 90  
This was one race where he'd have nothing left at the end—except a heart that wouldn't let him quit!
7. **THE RELUCTANT SOUTHPAW** ..... *Robert Shankland* 98  
"The kid's a natural born miracle—an' we need a miracle to win this series!"
8. **ACES AWAY!** ..... *William R. Cox* 106  
The last, blazing set where a dream of glory may die—or come true!
9. **STEEL IN HIS HEART** ..... *Jimmy Jamieson* 117  
Two swordsmen in a battle where the only winner could be—Death!

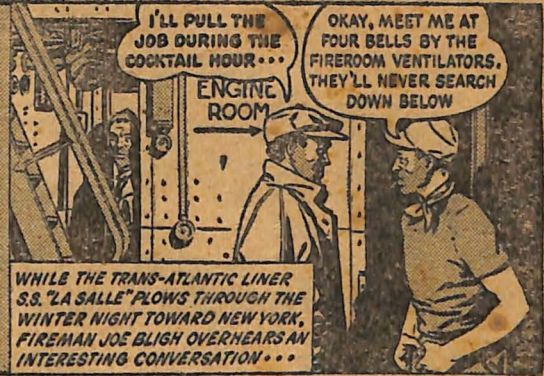
Departments and Features

10. **IN THE DUGOUT** ..... big league crystal ball ..... *A Department* 6
11. **I HOPE YOU'RE SATISFIED!** second guesser *Logan C. Claybourne* 39
12. **ALL-SPORTS QUIZ** ..... what do you know? ..... *M. Kane* 67
13. **THE BIG SIX** ..... all-time greats ..... *Ned Cady* 86
14. **KING OF THE KEGLERS** .. bowler extraordinary ... *Charles Webster* 88
15. **MIGHTY MEN OF SPORTS**... Hudson's masters ..... *Nelson, Allen* 96

Published monthly by Fletioneers, Inc., a subsidiary of Popular Publications, Inc., at 2256 Grove Street, Chicago 16, Illinois. Editorial and Executive Offices, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. Henry Steeger, President and Secretary, Harold S. Goldsmith, Vice-President and Treasurer. Entered as second class matter November 18, 1947, at the Post Office at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1948, by Fletioneers, Inc. This issue is published simultaneously in the Dominion of Canada. Copyright under International Copyright Convention and Pan American Copyright Conventions. All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction, in whole or in part, in any form. Title registered in U. S. Patent Office. Single copy, 25c. Annual subscription for U. S. A., its possessions and Canada, \$3.00; other countries, 75c additional. All correspondence relating to FIFTEEN SPORTS STORIES should be addressed to 2256 Grove Street, Chicago 16, Illinois, or to 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. For advertising rates address Sam J. Perry, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. When submitting manuscripts, enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return, if found unavailable. The publishers will exercise care in the handling of unsolicited manuscripts, but assume no responsibility for their return. Any resemblance between any character, appearing in fictional matter, and any person, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. Printed in the U. S. A.



# JOE NABBED THE CROOKS AND THEN...





do something to them; it might snap them out of this lethargy and make a ball club out of them. They might have a vision.

Gibby streaked behind second, pounding with that cut ankle, to knock down a hot liner through the box, and throw Chick Manning out at first. The play was on the sensational side, and Charlie Hilton nodded his head appreciatively.

And Gibby was working on the Lion players as they came up to bat. It was the same barrage, but it sounded different. The malice had gone out of his voice. He was a guy making a lot of noise, rattling the enemy batsmen, but that was perfectly legitimate. Charlie Hilton glanced at him once, noticing this difference immediately.

The Lions didn't sense any difference. The players sat in the dugout, listening to him, faces grim. Speed Russell got on first with two away, and he lit out immediately for second, coming in high and hard.

Gibby took the throw from the plate, dug the ball into Russell's leg and leaped back at the same time. He came away with a neat cut in his trouser leg—just above the knee.

Russell said tersely, "Kid, I'm taking your leg off next time down."

"And I'll shove it down your throat," Gibby chuckled, "spike and all." He trotted in to the dugout and he went to work on the Gray players. He said, "Let's act alive in here. Let's polish off these monkeys."

Jim Bonnet said, "Sit down, Pryor."

Gibby snorted and got a drink at the fountain. He saw Hilton shaking his head at him again, and he got the impression that the Gray manager didn't think talk was the thing at this time. The Grays weren't in the mood for it.

In the second inning Gibby came up with runners on first and third and two away. Charlie Hilton's long single to right had sent Alcott all the way to third from

first. The score was nothing to nothing, and the signs were pointing to another pitcher's battle with the tough left-hander, Solly Durkin, throwing for the Lions, and Ed Chambers for the Grays.

Durkin threw the first pitch for Gibby's head, dropping him in the dirt. Solly threw the fastest ball in the league, and he was just wild enough to keep the hitters from digging in on him.

Gibby got up slowly. Red Hackett said to him, "You hear that sing, kid?"

"It'll whistle," Gibby grinned at him, "when I lace it to the outfield."

Durkin threw another close one, making Gibby jump out of the rectangle. The ball had a wicked hop to it, and Gibby didn't like the way it spat into Hackett's big glove. He came into the rectangle, saying nothing this time, listening to the Lion infield give him the works. He was about six inches back farther from the plate than he'd been before, and the Lions had noticed it.

"Yellow belly!" Tug McCann yelled from second. "Cram it down his throat, Lefty."

Durkin was going to put it over the plate now, and Gibby knew it. The lank left-hander wasn't going to walk him and take a chance with Oliver, a pretty tough clutch hitter.

Gibby was still far from the plate as Durkin took the stretch, but when the ball sped down the lane, he was moving over and in—walking into Durkin's fast one, a wild, wicked pitch!

It was on the outside corner, waist high. Gibby hit it cleanly, sending it over second base, bouncing it on the grass halfway to center field. The run scored from third, and the grinning Hilton pulled up at second, Gibby taking first.

Blimp Porter said to him sourly, "The luckiest damned base hit you ever got in your life, Gibby." But there was some respect in his voice which had never been there before. Porter had seen him move



in on that pitch, and Porter knew that it took nerve to step into anything Solly Durkin threw up.

That was the only run they scored that inning, and when the Grays took the field, several of them looked Gibby's way, a little surprised that he'd hit the tough Durkin safely.

Linda Kramer was watching this one again, and she waved a hand to Gibby after he'd made the hit. Gibby smiled back at her. He handled another hot chance this inning, converting a near-hit into a neat double play, and the Gray fans gave him a hand when he came in at the end of the inning. It was again a one to nothing ball game.

The Lions came back with two runs in the fourth and another in the fifth to give them a three to one lead, and with Solly Durkin winging the fast one down the lane, it looked very bad for the Grays. The big crowd which had turned out for this one sat back, disgruntled. They'd hoped against hope for another Gray win and two straight over the league-leaders.

The Gray infield was dead with the exception of Gibby Pryor at short. Gibby kept it alive, making the noise, working on every batter, and the Gray fans listened to him—had to, because he was the only one talking. He did more than talk. He went out into short left for a Texas League pop, taking the ball over his right shoulder, getting a hand from the fans.

In the fifth, he was knocked down at second when Blimp Porter tore into the bag with the force of an express train; in the sixth it was McCann doubling to right-center, and Gibby taking the throw-in again. There was a wild scramble. McCann was safe, but Gibby got up, white in the face, his lips tight. The cut ankle was bleeding again, the wound having been ripped open. He walked away from second without a word, and McCann called after him, tauntingly, "How's it feel, sucker?"

Gibby was too sick to reply, but he picked up, a few minutes later, with Carson batting. The Lion outfielder had rabbit ears, and Gibby went to work on him so hard that Carson cut at a near wild pitch, going down for the third out.

In the dugout the end of the sixth, Gibby kept up the chatter, working now on Solly Durkin. The left-hander grinned in the beginning, but the talk had its effect. Once the Lion pitcher picked up the rosin bag and slammed it down hard on the ground. Gibby started to yell, "He's ready to blow. Anchor him down."

Durkin walked Jim Bonnet after getting a three and two count on the first baseman. Whitlock dropped a neat bunt along the first base line and Durkin came in to cover it. He'd never been too strong on bunts, and his height made it difficult for him to field them properly.

Gibby screeched, "Watch it, Solly! It's goin' foul!"

The ball was on the line, and Durkin hesitated a moment, doing it unconsciously when he heard the warning. The ball remained inside the line, and, cursing, Durkin picked it up, dropped it, scooped it up again, and then held the ball in his hand. Whitlock was already over the bag with a life.

**D**URKIN glared toward the Gray dugout, and Gibby gave him the horse laugh. Durkin walked Alcott because he was still red mad, and was trying to blaze the fast one down the middle.

Charlie Hilton came up with the bases loaded and one away, and the Gray manager promptly pushed a single into right, scoring two runs and tying up the ball game. The Gray fans went wild.

Again it had been Gibby's needling which drove Durkin to the point of distraction and enabled Hilton to step into a fat pitch which he may not have gotten otherwise.



Gibby came into the slot with Hilton on first and Alcott on third, still one away. Durkin fumed on the mound, took his stretch, and then whipped the fireball in under Gibby's chin.

Gibby hopped back on rickety legs. They had Durkin on the run now, and one good push might send him to the showers. With Durkin out of the way, the Lions had no one worth mentioning in the bull pen this afternoon.

It was not exactly the spot for a bunt, and Gibby had his orders to hit away, but a bunt was the play now, considering Durkin's condition, and with the tough Oliver moving up next, Gibby was not sure of a hit; he was positive he could lay down a tricky roller which might upset Solly Durkin again.

Stepping out of the batter's box, he gave the sign to Hilton on first, hands across the letters of the shirt. Hilton looked a trifle surprised, but he grinned, then. Alcott had it on third base, too. They were set.

Durkin blazed in another fast one, in close, waist high, a good pitch to lay down. Gibby's bat went dead in his hands as he crouched in front of the plate. There was a dull, deadening sound as ball met wood, and then Gibby started to run, following the ball as it trickled down the first base line.

Durkin was coming in, running with that peculiar lumbering gait. Alcott was streaking in from third with the run which would put them in the lead.

The ball was a foot inside the base line, stopping, when Durkin reached it. He was bending down as Gibby tore up at him, yelling at the top of his voice, pounding toward the big man, with his spikes high.

Durkin didn't fumble the ball this time. He picked it up cleanly, his face white with rage, and he swung at Gibby, ball in glove as the smaller man went by. The force of his tag knocked Gibby off bal-

ance and he was leaning forward as he covered the remaining distance to first.

Durkin, in his anxiety to hurt his man, had lost the ball as he slammed Gibby in the back with it. The ball was rolling away, and Alcott was in with the run. Charlie Hilton was streaking to third, and Red Hackett, the Lion catcher, raced after the ball which had rolled toward the screen, at the same time yelling for Durkin to cover the plate in case Hilton kept going.

Gibby stumbled over first base, the toe of his left spike striking something hard, something which should not have been there. He took a flying dive forward, landing on the side of his face and his right shoulder. He knew, as he was going through the air, what had happened. Blimp Porter's foot had been on the sack, not touching the edge of it. Blimp had deliberately tripped him up on that one.

Rolling over, his face and mouth full of dirt, Gibby came up, raging mad. He staggered as he ran back toward the bag, knowing he was going out of the game, not caring any more. He swung at the big first baseman, missing him, and Porter slapped him across the side of the face, knocking him into the dirt. He was getting up when he saw big Jim Bonnet racing from the Gray dugout, followed by Phelan and Winston, the catcher.

Charlie Hilton was calling "time" to the umpire, and running across the field toward the fight. Gibby wasn't through. He came up, lunging in, but umpire Dennison caught him, pinioning his arms. He was so tired now he almost fell down. Then he caught a glimpse of Jim Bonnet's face.

The Gray first sacker was pointing a stiff finger at Blimp Porter a few feet away. He was saying tersely, "You touch that guy again, Blimp, and I'm layin' you out."

Porter stared at him uncertainly. Gibby only gaped.



"Hell," Porter growled, "you don't like this little rat any more than I do, Bonnet. I've heard you say so."

"All right," Bonnet snapped. "If I want to bat him around a little that's my business, but you monkeys lay off."

Lion players were coming over, from the dugout, and from the field. More Grays swarmed out of the dugout. Winston was talking with Solly Durkin, and it looked like the heavysset Gray catcher was all set to swing at the tall lefthander when Charlie Hilton caught him. Winston was growling, "Who the hell does he think he is—the stringbean."

Phelan was talking with Tug McCann, and Phelan wasn't mincing words.

"You guys pull any more funny stuff," Phelan said quietly, "an' you'll run into a hell of a lot of spikes when you come down toward third."

The disgusted McCann scowled, "You are talkin' through your hat, Phelan. Shut up."

Phelan let go with a right hand punch. McCann came back with lefts and rights. Two bluecoats rushed out on the field and separated them, with Charlie Hilton running around, trying to watch Winston and Durkin who were all set to go at each other again, trying to get Phelan away. There was a funny little grin on the Gray manager's face as he hopped around. Gibby was remembering that, as far as he knew, there had been no fisticuffs in a Gray ball game in a good long time and this was overdue.

Gibby was banned. Phelan was banned. Tug McCann was sent to the showers, following Blimp Porter. Gibby walked

toward the dugout, remembering only when he was halfway there that he'd lost his hat. There was a lot of noise in the stands when he got near the dugout. He looked up.

Charlie Hilton was walking with him, helping him a little because that bad ankle was hurting now. Hilton said, "You hear it, Gibby! They liked that."

Gibby grinned. "A good fight helps once in a while," he chuckled. "This team acts alive."

They were alive. Gibby sat in the dugout watching Oliver line a double off the right field wall. Winston, following, tripled to deep center. Gibby got up then because he was looking at a new club, a fighting club. He listened to them yelling in the dugout, booing the Lions now, jeering them.

Hilton said to him, "Let Doc look at that ankle, Gibby. I don't want to see you benched now, kid."

Gibby nodded and walked toward the door. Jim Bonnet looked straight across the field as Gibby passed in front of him, but Bonnet said, "How do you feel—kid?"

It was the first time Bonnet had called him, kid. It meant something.

Gibby took a deep breath. He said softly, "Okay, Jim." It was better than okay; it was perfect. He poked his head above the dugout roof for one moment before ducking down through the door. He looked straight at Linda Kramer in the box behind the dugout.

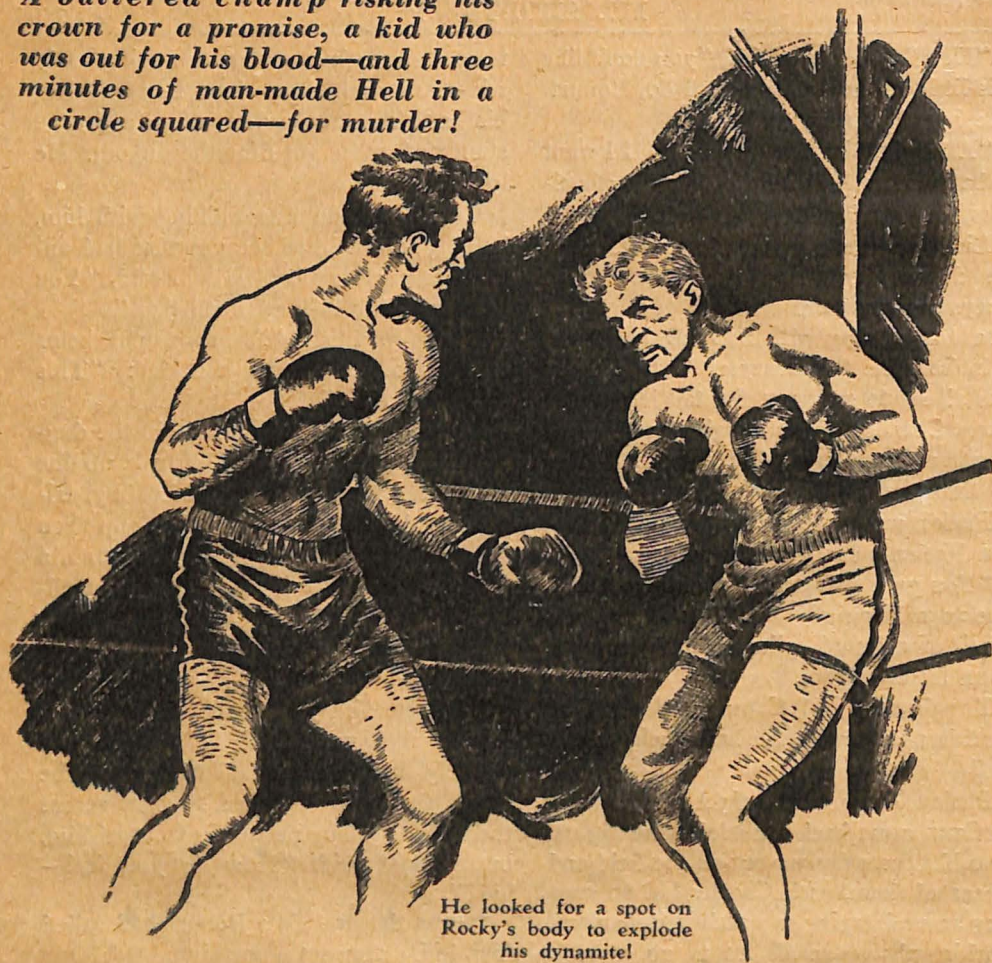
The girl winked at him and held up two fingers in the victory sign.

Gibby Pryor said softly, "Okay."





*A battered champ risking his crown for a promise, a kid who was out for his blood—and three minutes of man-made Hell in a circle squared—for murder!*



He looked for a spot on Rocky's body to explode his dynamite!

# DYNAMITE DUKES

By WALT MOREY

WILEY slammed the door and said, "Nice goin', Mick."

Mickey Monahan sat on the bed and held his aching head. "He fed me so much leather, I couldn't see. And you say nice going. Hah! I was lucky his jaw tinkled."

"Th' record book'll say Mickey Monahan kayoed Paulie Jones in four."

"Ain't it the truth." Mickey stood up,

moved his tortured body experimentally around the room. He said with a note of sadness: "The time has come. It came tonight. I felt it, Wiley."

Wiley sat down in the only chair. "It hadda come. After all, you're thirty-three," he said philosophically.

"Five years ago that punk couldn't have mussed my hair. Tonight he almost kills me, till I get lucky. That's no good,"



"What do you wanna do, quit—like that?"

"I been thinking. There ought to be one good fight left in the old frame. I'd like to make it a dilly—then go out. The tumult and the shouting and the referee lifting my arm. Something to remember when I got my carpet slippers on."

Wiley understood. Wiley was an honest man who managed fighters for a living. He said: "I'll miss you, Mick. How about a re-match with Rocky Sullivan?"

"I'd like that. He's the only guy ever k.o.'d me. I'd like to return the compliment. I'd like to see his manager, Benny Peoples, too. Good old Benny." Mickey rubbed the knuckles of his right hand. His smile was reminiscent. "Yes, sir! I'd like to see Benny."

"Lay off him," Wiley said. "He's too clever for you."

"We've got some unfinished business."

"It don't matter. You concentrate on Sullivan. He's won nineteen — some against good boys. You won't end up on top less'n you do some fancy plannin' against him. He'll knock your head off—like he done before."

"Things'll be different this time."

"They better be."

"Where is this fight, Wiley—L. A., Frisco?"

"Portland. They want it for durin' Rose Festival Week—inna ball park. We'll hang 'em from the light poles."

"Let's hang 'em in some other town. Portland's poison to me."

"That lickin' botherin' you? It shouldn't. That's part of a fighter's business. Besides, Sullivan didn't lick the real Mickey Monahan. He licked a shadow."

"Don't remind me of the details." Mickey sat on the bed, remembering. The anger came up in him, even after two years.

Benny Peoples had been his manager then. He'd said: "This Rocky Sullivan

is just another college-joe, a good right hand and a football player's body." But Mickey had already had twenty hard fights while barnstorming, and the fire had burned out of him. The spring had gone from his legs, the snap from his punches. It had lasted five rounds, each an eternity. He had been down four times, Sullivan twice.

He had come to in the dressing room, still in fighting trunks, the gloves on his hands—and alone. Benny Peoples had skipped out, taking all his money, even his clothes, so Mickey couldn't follow. He had been left broke, stranded.

Pop Rogers, a farmer who'd come in to the fight, had found him, got him some clothes and carted him off to the farm.

Rocky Sullivan had been there. He was working for Rogers and had been fighting around during a year off from school. Mickey and Rocky had got along fine. Rocky was a clean-limbed kid who'd been a college halfback and was studying to be a scientific farmer.

After knocking out Mickey, Rocky's ideas had changed. Two months later, he'd left college. Mickey learned that Benny Peoples had contacted Rocky, given him a buildup, and Rocky had gone to fight for him. All this he had told Wiley. He had never mentioned Laura Rogers. He didn't, now

Wiley said, "Sullivan and Peoples have claimed the Pacific slope light-heavy title and challenged all comers. It's a natural grudge fight between you two. It's that dilly you wanna quit on."

"But not in Portland."

"It's got to be. I signed the papers."

"I can't go back there," Mickey groaned. "I just can't."

Wiley studied him. "I never pried into your affairs. I never asked questions."

"You've been okay."

"I got some brains, too. For instance, I know you ain't in bad with the law. It ain't Rocky Sullivan. So, bein' young



and single and not too bad lookin', for a pug, it can only be one thing. A dame. You want to tell me about her now?"

"I'll bet you're good with mirrors, too," Mickey said. "Yeah, there was a girl."

"You were in love with her?"

"Me—and Sullivan."

"And you gave her up to Sullivan. I thought you were a fightin' man, Mick."

"She was engaged to Sullivan."

"Then you were a gentleman."

"The hell I was. I should have seen what was happening to me and cleared out."

"That's why you don't want to go back. You're afraid to meet her. You're still in love with her."

Mickey raised his hand arm's length above his head. "This deep, Wiley."

Her name was Laura Rogers. She was Pop Rogers' daughter, and a librarian in the city's suburb.

"I saw her the first time, the night Pop took me home."

"She and Sullivan had been standing in the big living room before the fireplace. The firelight was in her hair. She was beautiful."

"When did you fall in love with her?" Wiley asked.

"Right after she said, 'How do you do, Mr. Monahan'. I fell that deep."

"What happened next?"

"It was winter. There was orchards to prune, chemicals to spread. Pop wanted me to stay and work for my board, him not being too strong. So I did. Nights we'd sit around and play games, or read. Laura had some books on farming and I read 'em. When I got interested, she brought more from the library."

"Like them I see you readin' now? 'Successful Farming: The Fruit Grower's Guide'."

"That's right. Two months after I got there, Sullivan left to fight for Peoples."

Laura had missed him, at first, but she'd gotten over it. Mickey had felt guilty

being near her so much with that diamond on her hand glaring at him, but the sense of guilt had worn off.

"You never made a pass at her? Not once?"

"Well—yes. Once."

"What happened? No, don't tell me. I'm no snoop."

"I'll tell you. I can talk about it, now. I've been thinking so long, I can't hold it in any more. It was spring, and we walked out to look at a job of plowing I'd done that day. We sat on an old wagon tongue. There was a full moon and you could smell the fresh-turned earth and the apple blossoms. The furrow ran straight as a gun barrel beneath the moonlight. I was proud of that furrow and turned to brag. She was looking at me, her face close, and all soft in the moonlight. I forgot what I was going to say and leaned forward and kissed her—just like that. I kissed her good. Then I saw the diamond again. It looked as big as a sixteen ounce glove. It was hard to act natural after that. We went back to the house, kind of embarrassed."

"That's why you left?"

"The spring work was done. I didn't have any further excuse for staying. And it wasn't good to be around Laura any more, as long as she was engaged to Sullivan."

"You pack a suitcase full of agricultural pamphlets because you kissed a girl one night?"

"No. I did a dumb thing after that. But keep it to yourself. There was a twenty acre fruit orchard for sale next to theirs. A few months ago I got to dreaming of moonlight nights, and plowed fields, and wagon tongues and retiring. I wrote the real estate people. Now I own it. But I can't go back there and watch her happy with Sullivan. So when I got some sense again, I put the property up for sale. But it hasn't sold yet."

"You have got it bad," Wiley said.



"This deep," Mickey agreed.

"You should have told me this before. As it is, we're goin' back to Portland just the same."

**P**ORTLAND was in holiday mood. The streets were hung with flags. Signs proclaimed: FOR YOU A ROSE IN PORTLAND GROWS. The streets could not hold the surging crowds.

Mickey saw Benny Peoples and Rocky Sullivan the first day at the gym. He'd finished his workout, was leaving when he saw them through the open door of the second dressing room.

Mickey walked in, closed the door, said: "Hi, Rocky! Benny, I'm glad to see you, very glad."

Rocky Sullivan lifted his blond, curly head and winked. His face was broad-boned, firm, unscarred. He had a fighter's healthy confidence. He said, "Mickey! It's good to see you again." He meant it, too.

Benny dropped the bandage and left it

dangling from Rocky's hand. He backed away. "You got no business in here. Get out!" His voice was defiant but fear brightened his eyes.

Mickey moved forward. "I've waited two years for my cut on that last fight, Benny. You owe about fifteen hundred bucks. Give."

"I lost money on you," Benny snapped. "You got your cut. Prove you didn't. Prove it. You're just sore because I dumped you when you was washed up."

"You even look like a rat," Mickey said, and swung his open hand against Benny's thin mouth.

Benny fell into corner, screaming: I'll get th' cops. I'll sue ya for every dime ya got."

"No—you won't. I can tell a couple of stories. Even if I can't prove 'em, you won't like the publicity."

"Rocky, do somethin'," Benny whined.

Rocky Sullivan smiled stiffly: "I'll get somebody to finish bandaging my hand."

## Like Money in the Bank! Big Yank Work Clothes Look Better, Last Longer!

Ask the men who wear 'em! They'll tell you there's plenty of extra wear in **BIG YANK** work shirts and pants, plenty of comfortable good looks, too! Covert shirts have triple-stitched seams, elbow-action sleeves . . . covert pants with reinforced crotch, button or zip fly . . . and they're all roomy, full-cut, and Sanforized for less than 1% shrinkage. Get **BIG YANK** today . . . today's best buy . . . at good stores everywhere.





He went out and banged the door shut.  
"So you been doing things to Rocky, too."

Mickey's hand slashed again into Benny's face and knocked him to the floor. He lay there, moaning. "That's for Rocky. You're getting off cheap, rat."

Mickey left the room.

Rocky Sullivan stood beside the big bag, trying to tape his own hand.

Mickey took the tape and began bandaging the hand. Rocky said: "I should have listened when you tried to tell me about Peoples, when we were on the farm."

"How so?"

"Some of those nineteen wins weren't on the level. But if a man's going to dive, I can't stop him. When I yelled, he threatened to hang it all on me. He can, too, me being the fighter. He can have me barred for life."

"How long has your contract got to go?"

"Two years. Before then he'll have me caught in some jam I'll never get out of. I'd have a chance to go places, if it wasn't for him. Benny'd sell his soul for a dollar."

"He still bet on fights?"

"Sure. And he'd as soon bet against me as on me. Benny bets on sure things, or the next best to them."

Mickey dropped the bandaged hand. "I'm getting an idea. Maybe we can make a good boy of Benny. Are you game?"

"If it's on the level."

"It don't concern our little party Tuesday night. Anyway, I figure to knock you kicking about the fifth."

"I figured on doin' the same to you about the fourth," Rocky grinned. "About the other—tell me more."

"You still got that detective friend on the force? What's his name—Hennessey? Get in touch with him. I'll see you later."

Rocky caught his arm as he was turning away. "You been to see Pop and Laura?"

"Not yet."

"Laura will want to see you."

"It's okay with you if I go out?"

"Don't be a dope," Rocky said.

Wiley was in the room when Mickey got back to the hotel. Mickey said: "You know Georgie Franks pretty well. I want you to send him a telegram and ask him to wire you offering me a good fight."

"You're quittin', remember?" Wiley said. "Besides, you don't do that to big time promoters like Georgie."

"I don't want a fight. I just want the telegram offering me one. I want Benny Peoples to see it. You're going to drop it in front of him, accidental-like."

"Maybe you waited too long to quit. Make sense, Mick."

"I want Benny to think I'm going to win Tuesday. If he sees a telegram from Franks offering me a fight even before I've taken on Sullivan, it'll look like Franks figures I'm a cinch to win. Benny will be convinced I'm going to win too, then. He'll bet a fistful of money on me. That's what I want him to do—bet against his own man."

"And then?" Wiley asked suspiciously.

"Rocky's got a detective friend. He'll take over from there."

"Is that a smell I'm beginnin' to notice?"

"The fight is on the level. I'm going out on that high note."

"I know what you're plottin' to do," Wiley said. "Just remember—it can backfire. If it does, Peoples will have Sullivan barred for life and he'll sue you for everythin' includin' your shirt. And win. It will create a stink that'll take twenty years and a hurricane to blow away. You better be sure of this."

"I'm sure. I know Benny Peoples. Hurry up. Send that telegram to Georgie. He don't like Benny. As I remember, Benny tried to pull a fast one on him once, when Benny was my manager."

"I must love you like a brother. I will



do this," Wiley growled, then went out.

**M**ICKEY sat around the lobby for a time, watching people come and go, listening to the crowds. He went out, finally, and called a cab.

He quit the cab before a brick and ivy covered library in the suburbs. The front doors stood open and he could look through to the big desk and the girl behind it. All he could see of Laura was the top of her blond head behind the stacks of books, but that small glimpse was like taking Rocky's hardest punch over the heart. He drew a deep breath and climbed the steps.

He leaned across the books and asked: "Have you anything on the care of apple orchards?"

"Mickey!" She jumped up, holding out both her hands. "Oh, Mickey, it's so good to see you. Let me look at you. The bluest eyes he'd ever seen, gazed at him. A scar or two more, but the same old Mickey."

*Same Laura, too—beautiful as ever, Mickey thought. Like apple blossoms. Like all those you see downtown, only better. The past eighteen months hadn't changed her one bit. She was wonderful and the most precious thing in his life.*

They became conscious, then, of the old greybeard staring reprovingly at them from a nearby table, and of the two kids giggling in a corner. They had been talking too loudly. Laura drew her hands away and color came into her cheeks.

Mickey asked in a low voice: "When do you get off?" As if he didn't know. As if he hadn't timed it.

"In about ten minutes. Sit down. Wait for me, Mickey."

He sat and watched her. *Why punish yourself like this, he thought. She belongs to Rocky and he's a nice guy. Why don't you bow out?* But he kept sitting there and the pain in him was sweet and sad and terrible. He sat there until the relief girl

came, in horn-rimmed glasses and flat shoes.

Laura said, "Of course you haven't been to see Dad. Let's go out. I'll drive you back."

Now that his first rush of boldness was over, it was hard to talk to her. Those eighteen months had raised a wall between them. He noticed she wasn't wearing the diamond but he remembered she was always taking it off to do something and forgetting to slip it on again. He did finally ask: "I thought you and Rocky would be married by now. How come?"

"Rocky is happy fighting. He wants to be champion."

"It would be nice having a champion for a husband."

"Nicer than a first class fruit grower?" she asked.

"Why, I don't know," he admitted honestly.

"Should I have gotten something special for you to eat? I know you're in training."

"Don't worry. I'll make out."

They passed the twenty acre orchard he'd bought. It had been neatly disked, the trees pruned. The house was painted. A red lettered FOR SALE sign stood boldly in the front lawn. He felt a little sick. Then they were turning into Laura's driveway and it was like old times around the table. Pop said, "Seems kinda funny. You two are pretty good friends, and still you'll try and beat each other's brains out."

"That's business, Pop."

"You won't be mad at each other?"

"No more than you and your neighbor when you sell apples side by side."

"It don't seem right," Pop insisted.

It was getting dark when Mickey and Laura went out to look around the farm. They arrived, in time, at the apple orchard and the field Mickey once had plowed. There was no full moon and the apple blossom smell was gone. The field lay



carpet smooth beneath a foot of growing grain. But the wagon was there, as it had been before, and Laura sat on the tongue. Mickey sat beside her and fresh pain was added to his already battered heart. His hands trembled and he pressed them hard on either side of him. He thought of the farm, and of Laura and said suddenly: "You're right. What's Rocky want with a title, anyway?"

"Rocky takes his fighting seriously," she said. "I guess all fighters are alike."

"How do you mean?"

"They sidetrack everything for fighting."

"That's not true." He grew bold again. "If I had a setup like this and a girl like you waiting, you couldn't blast me out with dynamite."

"You left once," she reminded him.

"Because I'm Mickey Monahan, not Rocky Sullivan. Because fighting is the only thing I know."

"You knew almost as much about fruit as Dad when you left."

"Thanks, but I'm not so sure. I haven't forgotten any of it. I've kept right on studying. By now every librarian in every big city along the coast knows the kind of books I want. When I quit, I'll have a place." He wanted her to know he had plans. He wanted her good opinion.

"But when will you quit?"

"Tuesday night," he said. She looked startled. "I've reached the end of the road. I've got grey whiskers down to here, as fighters go."

"I'm glad," she smiled at him. "You've worried me these eighteen months."

He was afraid to pursue that thought farther, so he said: "I guess Rocky's worried you, too. Hasn't he?"

"He should finish college. But he never will. And I don't like Benny Peoples," she said emphatically.

He thought of telling her about the plan he had but then changed his mind. No use to get her hopes too high. He stood

up, "I've got to get back or Wiley will have the police out for me."

They drove back to town and their ease in talking to each other was once again lost somewhere behind a wall. Laura parked at the side of the hotel in a five minute zone and killed the motor. "I can't wish you luck, Mickey. I don't like the idea of you and Rocky fighting each other."

"It's a boxing match, a business—like I told Pop. Look at it that way."

"I will." She was silent a moment, arriving at some conclusion. Then, "Mickey, there's a twenty acre orchard for sale up the road from us. It has a nice four room house."

"I'll think about it," he promised. He held out his hand, then changed his mind. This was good-by. He took her by the shoulders and kissed her, hard. "I've a hunch things are going to be better for Rocky after this. Don't worry." He turned and walked away swiftly into the hotel without looking back.

SO THIS was it. This would be the last time his hands would ever be taped, the last time he'd sit waiting for the call to go up and get his lumps. He felt good, as though all the energy he had left had come up to spend itself in this, his last fight.

There were several people in the room, among them a kid named Jerry, who would help Wiley in the ring, and a scowling individual from Rocky's gang, who watched the bandaging of his hands.

Mickey waited until the scowling one had gone, then asked: "Did Benny Peoples see that telegram from Georgie Franks?"

"When I dropped it, accidental-like, he pounced on it like a hawk. But I don't like this. It's too much bluff."

"Relax," Mickey said. "Nothing'll go wrong on my big night."

In the hall, a burly man leaned against



the wall, smoking a cigarette. Mickey asked: "Everything okay?"

"Everything's fine," the man said. "Good luck."

"Rocky's detective friend, Vic Hennessy," Mickey told Wiley.

As they came out from under the grandstand, Mickey saw it was a huge crowd. The ring was set over second base and the infield was jammed. The grandstand and bleachers overflowed.

Wiley said proudly: "Fifteen thousand, Mick. That's somethin' to remember."

They went down through the crowd and the noise bloomed satisfyingly around them. *Nice*, Mickey thought. *You'll never have fifteen thousand people yelling for you again.* They climbed the steps to the ring and the swelling sound kept pace with each upward step. Mickey lifted his hand to the crowd, and began jiggling in his corner, tapping the red gloves together.

He glanced down along the ringside, then stopped. There, the third row back, was Laura's face staring up at him with a strange mixture of hope, worry and fright.

Wiley snapped: "Keep your sweat up. Keep jigin'."

He began to jig again and pulled his eyes away. *She'll hate me now*, he thought, *when I hurt Rocky, when she sees the blood. She doesn't understand about fighting.*

The yelling climbed again. Rocky Sullivan slipped through the opposite ropes and waved. He looked good, with his blond hair, his jet black robe. He danced a little and threw vicious punches at the drama-charged air.

"He's a hitter," Wiley said, a small doubt in his voice. "You got to watch him."

"Relax and have fun," Mickey said. "This's my night."

He danced out briskly at the bell, slipping sideways, and whipped a nice left hook at Rocky's advancing chin. He blocked a countering right and shot the left

again. Then he stepped straight in and smashed both hands to Rocky's middle. He sank another right, wrist deep, for good measure, and heard Rocky sigh as he grabbed and hung on. No, indeed, this was not two years ago. This was *the* Mickey Monahan tonight, and riding high. He felt explosive, and pushed Rocky away, ripping both hands to his startled face. He drove Rocky back, slashing, slashing. Rocky's mouth was bleeding. There was a bruise high up on his cheek. He was feeding Rocky a stream of lefts at the bell. What a night!

The crowd said so too, all through the rest period. He couldn't even hear Wiley's words of caution, even if he'd wanted to.

At the bell he moved out, deliberate, businesslike. He'd make it neat and clean, the way a good workman always did a job. He looked for a spot on Rocky's body to explode his dynamite. The dynamite, however, backfired, blowing him half across the ring.

"—Five—six—"

Mickey blinked and the lights were like a river made of gold—a river rushing down some deep canyon with the thunderous roar of rapids all around. He was angry and disgusted with himself for having walked into the blast and being tripped up. Where was that high note ending now? Not down here on the floor, that was sure. He got to his kness and shook the fog from his brain. The referee was counting: "Eight—nine!" and Mickey got up.

He walked to meet Rocky, tightening his hands in his gloves. It was going to be a fight. He whipped a haymaker to Rocky's jaw and bulled him across the ring into the ropes. He held the younger Rocky there and raked him from belt to chin with savage punches. He took what Rocky had and gave it back, fighting through the tumult and the shouting and the storm of leather, just punching, punching—fighting all the way—



Rocky was hanging on for dear life. Mickey had him licked. One more shot to the whiskers would put him on the floor for keeps. He tried to wrestle loose and Rocky's voice kept talking to him from a long way off, and it sounded very much like Wiley's voice saying: "Stop it! Mick! Stop it! You hear me? Smell this!"

"Smell what?"

"This."

"Where's Rocky?"

"Gettin' dressed, I guess."

Mickey saw the dressing room walls then and felt the rubbing table beneath his shoulder blades. He heaved himself erect. "What happened, Wiley? I win? What round I knock 'im out?"

"Middle of the fourth. You was both on the floor. It was a hell of a fight. But that Crosby endin' went sour, Mick. He won."

"I didn't win? So I go out like a bun. A fine thing to remember. Why is it I always wake up in dressing rooms in Portland?" He held his aching head. "What a night!"

The kid, Jerry, came in and said: "That guy, that detective is outside waitin' for you."

"Tell him five minutes. I don't think I can walk yet. Wiley, how'd I get down here?"

"Walked, every step of the way. A little goofy, maybe."

Vic Hennessey was waiting in the hall when they came out. Mickey asked, "Everything set?"

"All set," Hennessey said. "That was a nice fight. Too bad."

"Thanks."

**R**OCKY was sitting on the rubbing table half-dressed when they went in. Benny, for all that his man had won, looked sick.

Rocky held out his hand. "I'm sorry, Mickey."

"What for? You won."

"You know what I mean."

"Sure, I brought you a new manager, Rocky. Wiley will make you a champion, if you got it."

"What's that?" Benny pushed belligerently in front of Rocky. "He ain't goin' no place, see! I got a two year contract. Whatta you think you're pullin', Monahan?"

"Rocky wants an honest manager, Benny."

"Get out, alla you—before I drag the whole bunch to court and bust you down to your socks. Go on, beat it!"

"Not so fast," Mickey said maddeningly. "You know who this man is? Detective Vic Hennessey, Benny. He's been following you around for days. He knows how you bet, even how much. How's it going to look to the boxing commission when they learn you bet on me?"

"It's a frame," Benny screamed. "I ain't a bettin' man."

Hennessey said: "The little rat who placed your money talked plenty when I cornered him, Peoples. You lost three thousand dollars. Your rat's name is Eddie Reynus. I've known him for years. You wanta hear more?"

Benny wiped his sweating face. "Look, boys. Sure I bet a little. Just a little." His voice was wheedling. "What's a little bet between friends? We can fix this up, huh?"

"Sure," Mickey said. "Just tear up Rocky's contract."

"And throw away a fortune? I'll go to court! You tricked me! I'll bet you and Rocky framed this deal. I'll fight! You try an' bar me, I'll blow this whole thing open. I'll get everybody barred. How d'you like that?"

"That's okay," Mickey said. "We don't care. Rocky plans on going back to finish college sometime, anyway. I quit the ring tonight. I'm through. You can't hurt Wiley. He hasn't a thing to do with this. Go ahead, Benny. But what'll you do if



you're barred for life? What profession have you got to fall back on? You'll have to sell your sweat, Benny. And there's not much in your skinny hide. You'll look fine on the business end of a pick."

Benny Peoples had a fine imagination and it was working overtime. He made strangling noises in his skinny throat and Mickey knew from previous experience that he was licked. He said: "Think it over for ten minutes, Benny. I'm going back and dress."

Twenty minutes later he shook hands with Wiley and Rocky underneath the stands and watched them leave. He stood there after that, listening to the last of the people going out. He waited until they were gone. He put on his hat and left.

On the steps leading from the field Laura Rogers said softly: "Hello, Mickey. What took so long?"

He sat down beside her on the steps. The field was dark and empty now.

"It didn't turn out the way you wanted, did it? I'm sorry, Mickey. What will you do now?"

"I'll get a place," he said vaguely. "Like I told you."

"Why don't you run that twenty acre orchard you bought near ours, and have had for sale the past month?" she asked.

"How did you know about that?"

"I asked the real estate people. Would you believe it—I've had to run up there as many as two and three times a day to talk people out of buying it? I've told some awful lies."

"Why? I don't get it."

"I figured you could easily take care of that along with the one at home. Dad is getting old, you know. He wants to quit. He'd be glad to turn it over to you. You see—Rocky isn't coming back."

"And you're going with him?"

"With Rocky? No."

"He didn't ask you?"

"Why should he? I gave him back his ring eighteen months ago."

Mickey moved closer to her. He didn't know what to say.

"Let's go out and take down that 'for sale' sign, Mickey. And talk it over with Dad."

"Come on," he said.

They went down the steps and out the gate. She walked close to him and it was easy to put his arm around her.

*She wouldn't understand, he thought. Or she might think he was a dope. He was thinking: Ending on a high note, eh? That's fine. Just fine. But who cares, when a brand new song is just beginning? Here it is. Hear it? Hear it? Hit it, Mr. Crosby. Hit it!*

## I Hope You're Satisfied!

THE one person Wilbert Robinson, late manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, feared was "Maw" Robinson, his wife. She considered herself a keen student of baseball strategy and would greet her husband with a flood of second guesses after he returned from the ball park, when his Dodgers had lost a game.

One day Robinson started a second string pitcher against the Cubs who, from his first pitch, showed that he had no business on a major league diamond. Robbie folded his hands around his stomach and with a contented grin on his face, watched his hurler become shellshocked under a barrage of base hits.

With none out and five Cub runs across, Robbie leisurely got to his feet and ambled over to his wife's box. He put his hands on his hips and sneered, "I hope you're satisfied." When he got back to the dugout he snorted, "What makes these women think they can tell us men how to play baseball!"

*Logan C. Claybourne*





# FIVE STAR FURY

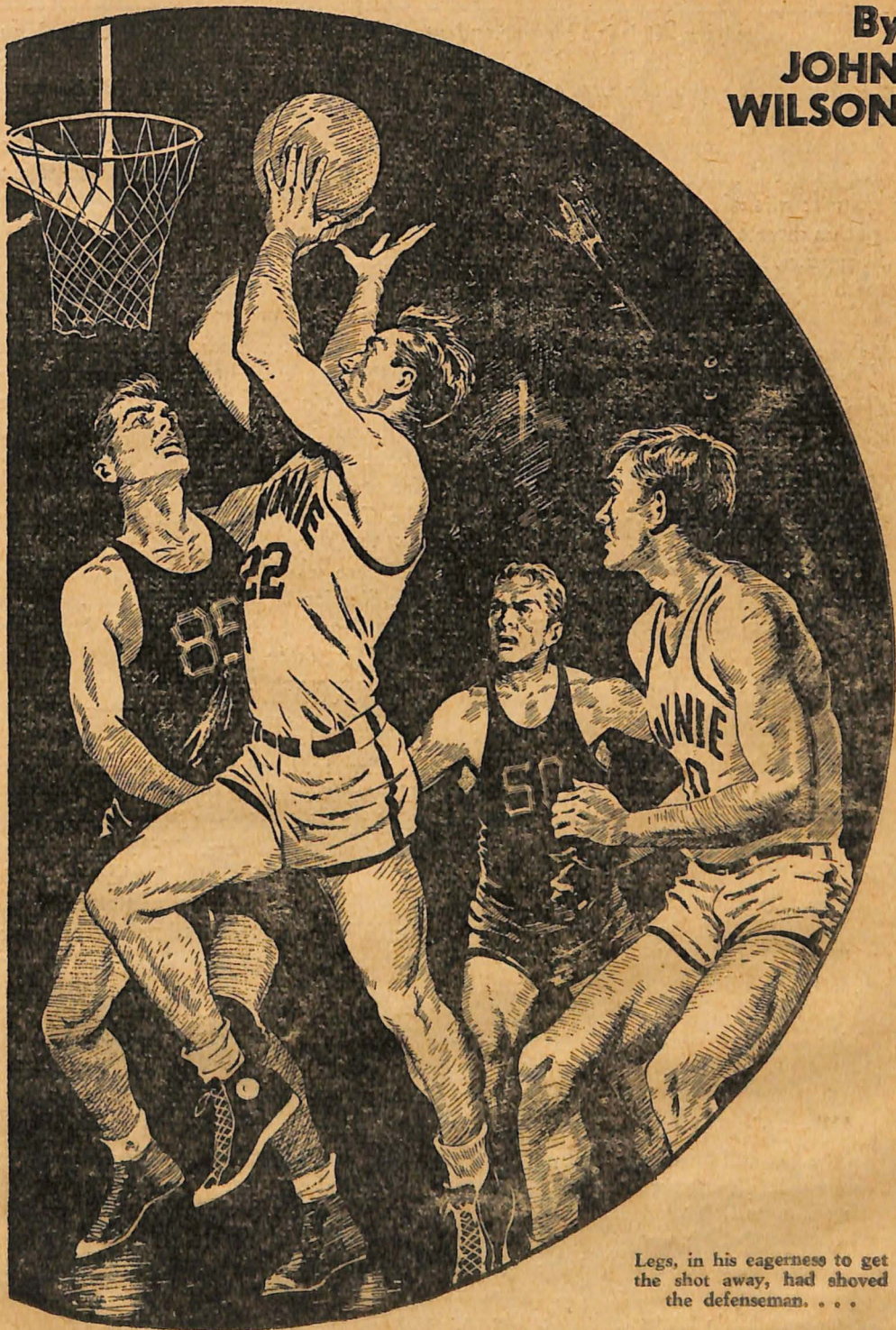
**H**E SAT there on the Carnie College bench alongside of Pops Grissom and swore under his breath, trying to fight back the feeling. And still it kept coming, twisting and turning and arousing a bitterness that he himself could not quite understand. Even now, looking at Pops, he found himself experiencing an odd sense of guilt. It was simple enough wanting Pops' head coaching job, but never, he told himself, at the direct expense of Pops' being ousted to make way for him. He was determined to stick to the man who'd made it possible for him to be Carnie's assistant coach.

"Alex," Pops was suddenly saying softly, "We've got to pull this one out of

*A team divided against itself—two coaches locked in deadly feud—and a last, desperate quarter to follow one man's lead, to glory—or oblivion!*



By  
**JOHN  
WILSON**



Legs, in his eagerness to get the shot away, had shoved the defenseman. . . .



the fire for the boys. This is a big one and it's got to be wrapped up."

Alex nodded, thinking how they were all big ones insofar as Pops was concerned, even when Carnie was moving against the basket bushers on the collegiate circuit. It was odd, too, the emphasis Pops put on the coaching end of things, making it appear as though that department rated with the men plugging the leather up and down the hardwood. Maybe so, but Alex Harley had been quite a basket-bomber himself and he could not see things that way.

"They're beginning to hit and come on now, Pops," Alex said confidently. "We look stronger than Western and we've got five minutes to catch them. That should be enough, Pops."

"Legs has got himself a batch of personals," Pops said uneasily. "One more and he's out of there. I'd give him a breather except that he's been our big wheel all night and the boys need his momentum."

Alex said, "There's this kid, Stretch Novacks, the most improved guy on the squad, Pops. You can take a chance with him." He paused thoughtfully, then added: "Besides, he doesn't foul as much as Legs."

Pops looked at him, the ram-rod straightness of the wiry frame seeming to stiffen a bit more. "Yes, he's coming along nicely but this isn't the spot for him."

It was a mild rebuke and Alex said nothing more. The Carnie Terriers, huddled in a time-out session, broke away at the ref's shrill blast on the whistle. They were a dead-game outfit, conditioned to the hilt and owning the savvy that had come with almost three seasons of operating as a unit. They belonged to Pops in the sense that he was officially the head coach, though Alex handled the squad in most of their workouts. But come that opening whistle, Pops took over the controls.

It was Pop's health that kept him from getting around as much as he would have liked. He had come down with pneumonia before the start of the season, and had turned the team over to Alex for their preliminary drilling. Pops still hadn't gotten back enough of his strength to put in a daily appearance on the court and Alex continued to run things. But now Pops was beginning to look like his old tough-fibered and rugged self again.

Alex saw the grim, flushed expression on Pops' face as the teams picked up the tempo again. He couldn't remember when he'd last seen Pops so obviously excited about winning a ball game. It was a Conference tilt, this game with Western, and the Carnie Terriers were on the wrong end of a 46-41 count.

There was a whirling scramble under the Terrier basket, Western breaking its offensive sharply and moving both forwards in there. A short pass-in and the Terrier guard, Dave Oliver, covered the thrust. The green-clad Western forward threw a fake and then spun the melon off his fingers, looping it into the pivot slot. His centerman stepped right into the keyhole, giving Legs Lindsey the slip and picking off the pass. He swung toward the goal, pitching the leather over his shoulder and drawing a ripple of the cords. Alex shook his head on that one, aware that Legs Lindsey had been picking daisies, afraid of risking contact and the possible foul that would mean his exit from the game.

The Terriers took up the attack, working the leather up-court on the wings of a sizzling exchange of short passes. Dave Oliver rifled to Ziggy Briscoe traveling the sideline trail, and then drifting behind the forward. That was the cue for Muff Ives to whirl down the opposite side of the court and slice in under the basket. The Terriers were tossing bait, clearing that center alley. It was nice, the pinwheeling effect of the attack, splintering in all direc-



tions. Then Legs Lindsey was shooting the payoff heave. Legs didn't miss often on that hook shot, and he made good now.

It was a Carnie crowd and they were standing and yelling, beseeching the Terriers to open up on the throttle for all they were worth. The roar grew even louder when Chuck Morse stole a pass. Legs Lindsey was down there in the Western scoring zone, and went in alone on the layout. Dave Oliver snapped a set-shot through the strings the next time the Terriers got their hands on the ball. They were driving, hitting it off at a dazzling pace, and ripping the Western defense to pieces before it could really fasten the hooks. The gap in the score was cut to a lone talley—Carnie trailing, 48-47.

Alex watched them make their all-out bid to sew up the game, and the tingle of his personal achievement was missing. He thought how tirelessly he'd worked with these guys, doing Pop's job and his own. He'd primed each separate weapon of their game, developing them into a machine capable of giving any outfit in the country a run for their money. All this he'd done without credit or the slightest recognition from Pops, who seemed to take him for granted. But it somehow didn't seem fair, Pops taking the bows and never quite handing the full reins of the team over to him.

He smiled grimly. The Terriers rode bluntly into the Western zone. This time it was Ziggy Briscoe shaking loose and scoring on a honey of a one-handed push-shot near the sidelines. The Terriers went out in front for the first time: 49-48.

**W**ESTERN fought back, setting a hard, swift attack into motion. They swirled down the court, probing the wings and then launching the business off the bucket slot. The green-clad centerman gobbled the pass and Legs Lindsey started to leave his feet, trying

to block the over-the-shoulder shot. Alex winced because he knew Legs had telegraphed his motion, and that he'd been suckered. He was beaten badly on the play because the Western man suddenly ducked around Legs and rode in on the goal. Legs desperately trying to atone for his error, reached across the green-clad shoulder. He broke the guy's shot, making an obvious foul on the play.

There was a whistle and the ref waved Legs out of there. The big guy turned his back, shrugging his disgust and walked toward the bench. Alex looked at Pops, wondering if the coach would go along with Stretch Novacks. He was a newcomer to the squad, Novacks, and the third string center, which meant he'd be lucky to see ten minutes of action during the season. Pops didn't hesitate a moment, calling Novacks to his side. Pops had a way of talking to the men he put into a game at an important moment. His voice was low, spilling words of confidence into the kid's ear.

A grin played across Alex's lips. Pops was a great one for pouring the oil, making a sub's entrance into a big game the event of his life. That kind of stuff didn't quite register with Alex. In his book, a guy depended on his own guts and savvy for his stimulus. Maybe the pro game had hardened him to that fact, but a guy couldn't expect to have a coach follow him through life patting him on the shoulder.

Alex leaned toward Pops, saying: "The kid will do his talking with baskets, Pops. He's going to give Legs an argument before the season is finished."

Pops looked at him. "We'll see about that," Pops said. "Maybe right now." Then Pops was turning to Legs Lindsey, handing him his sweat togs and slapping him across the shoulders.

"It's all right, Legs. You were in the fight all the way. Nice goin', fella."

The big guy shook his head a little,



and then he grinned with the compliment.

It was two free throws for the Western centerman. He toed the mark, took careful aim and caged shots, putting Western in front again: 51-50. The Terriers roared down the boards then, Muff Ives driving in on the goal and letting go a one-hander, when the green-shirted guard forced him off his course. The leather flicked off the backboard and the Western guard went up to take it. That's when he got himself a handful of nothing and an eyeful of surprise. Stretch Novacks, springing up there with him, rolling the leather off his fingertips. Stretch nudged it into the mesh.

There was less than two minutes remaining of the game, but it all belonged to the green kid, Stretch Novacks. On the Eastern return surge up the hardwood, he broke up the attack, stealing the ball off the palm of the bucket man as he started to get his shot away. He locked that pivot slot guarding close and expertly. Then he came on to dunk the leather again, working Legs Lindsey's familiar hook shot. He was the medicine Carnie needed in the clutch and they came off the board the winner: 57-53.

Alex got to his feet and looked at Pops. "Well, that's one step closer to that conference title, Pops. The kid came through in bang-up style."

"He's all right," Pops said. "Maybe he'll turn out to be another Legs Lindsey."

Alex started to tell Pops that he thought Stretch had it all over Legs right now and with a couple of ounces to spare. But the fans were swarming around Pops, pumping his hand and telling that this was the season they'd been waiting for. This was the ball club that was going to bring Carnies that Conference championship that they'd been without for a long while.

Alex stood there a moment, his eyes on Pops, and his ears filled with the roar of

the crowd. The Terriers had sprung an upset, a really big one, and Alex noticed that Pops' face was more flushed than ever. He was trembling under the excitement and the joy of the victory. Alex turned his back on the celebrating fans surrounding Pops and walked toward the dressing room. He could feel that surge of bitterness rising in him again.

He went into the dressing room, and there was laughter and yelling and underneath the noise, the confidence of a team that knew it was headed places. They'd knocked off six straight wins, four of the games nonconference tilts, but beating Western was the clincher, in their minds. The experts had rated Western's chances among the brightest in the setup.

Muff Ives spotted Alex and from across the concrete he hollered: "Hey, Alex, where's Pops? I'll bet he liked that one and that's just the beginning. We'll be even hotter when the Mountaineers come in next."

"He liked it fine," Alex said. "Just fine."

Pops would come in the door beaming like a proud papa, Alex knew. He'd go to each of them, shaking his hand and telling each guy how wonderful he was. It was a kind of after-game ritual with Pops, to empty the can of oil. Then Pops would come to him and tear the game apart, putting his finger on their mistakes and ordering him, Alex, to iron them out.

Alex saw the tall, blond kid, Stretch Novacks, getting out of his togs, and went over to him.

"You were great," Alex said. "You weren't in there two minutes and you looked better than any time in practice."

"I'd feel awfully ashamed if I let the gang down," Novacks said, looking up then: "You've sure put in a lot of extra time with me."

Alex nodded. "It was worth it." Alex was suddenly aware of Legs Lindsey's stare as he turned away from the sub



center. The big guy was frowning, and Alex sensed a flash of resentment. He walked up to Legs, saying: "I was telling Stretch that he was plenty good in there, Legs. I've been working pretty hard with him and he's coming along real good. Maybe you'll be able to get more relief during the games."

Legs said, "I'm not asking for any breathers. The hotter it is in there the better I like it."

"That appears to be the case," Alex said. "But all this fouling is beginning to catch up with you. This club needs somebody to fill that hole when you get the heave-o, Legs." He stopped, added thoughtfully: "You're fouling too much, more lately than ever. You and me are gonna have a little session and see what we can do about it."

Legs said dryly, "Maybe I don't want that extra session, coach. Maybe I can get along without it fine."

"Listen, big shot," Alex snapped. "You might be the big offensive gun on the ball club but your defensive work is lousy. So you'll do things my way and kick the rust off the back court assignments."

Alex looked straight at the rangy pivot man, saw the dark, rebellious glint in his eyes.

"Yeah," Legs said abruptly, "I guess you'd like the idea of seeing more of me—on the bench." He swallowed hard. "But

Pops is still the head coach, unless I've been misinformed."

It was just about then that the dressing room stilled and the electric seemed to gather and hold. Pops Grissom was standing at Alex's elbow and his ruggedly hewn face was set grimly. Alex got the impression that Legs, seeing Pops enter, had deliberately thrown that last remark.

Pops said, "I don't think there's any doubt about who is head coach. He was looking at Alex. "Nor should there be anything but a lot of good feeling here. You men have just won a fine victory."

Alex said, "There's some definite flaw in Legs' defensive play. It appears that he isn't interested in my helping him to iron it out."

"He's more interested in landing me a seat on the bench," Legs put in begrudgingly.

Pops was silent a moment, the faintest trace of a grin edging onto his lips as though he'd hit upon some secret thought. Alex had a pretty good idea what was behind that grin. Pops was probably thinking of how he'd been boosting Stretch Novacks, and playing down the worth of Legs to the team. But one thing, Alex knew. Whatever opinions he'd expressed were honest and forthright.

"Well," Pops said at length, "I don't think you have to worry about being benched, Legs." He paused, adding, "Alex has been around in this game, and

# Edward Mann\*

**has switched to Calvert because  
Calvert makes a lighter highball**

\*of 1522 Kelton Ave., W. Los Angeles, Calif.

**CALVERT RESERVE** Blended Whiskey—86.8 Proof—65% Grain  
Neutral Spirits, Calvert Distillers Corp., New York City





I don't suppose it would hurt a bit if you hear him out."

Alex said nothing more. He'd certainly expected something better in the way of backing him up than a few compromising words. In fact, it seemed that Pops had given him the worst of it, and the grin on Lindsey's lips angered him.

The tension was broken though, and Pops began making with the smooth talk and handshaking.

Alex was putting on his overcoat when Pops came into the office a little later. Pops said: "There's good spirit in this club, Alex. This win over Western was a fine thing for their confidence."

Alex brushed aside the comment. "Maybe I'm wrong but you seemed to take Leg's part in that little tiff, Pops. I was trying to help the guy and he kicked me in the teeth and got away with it."

Pops said, "You know why he's resentful of your criticism, don't you Alex?"

"There is no logical reason that I know."

Pops took a breath. "Well, there's a very good reason insofar as Legs is concerned. He's piled up quite an impressive scoring record, and he's got a good chance or breaking the conference mark. Think you're trying to stop him. Who'd want that record to stand more than you?"

It hit Alex then, the bitter resentment on the part of Legs even to the slightest thought of pulling him out of the games. Alex himself was the holder of the Conference scoring record, and he was also the best point-writer in the history of Carnie. He poured his scoring onslaught through the hoop from a forward slot, but there wasn't much he didn't know about any position on the floor. Alex laughed a little in his amazement that Legs believed him envious and seeking to protect those old scoring marks.

"I'm all for Legs or anybody else knocking down my point total," Alex said. "Those marks have been up there too

long and I'm certainly not going to beef when they're finally spilled."

"I realize that, of course," Pops said. "But you've been touting Stretch Novacks a lot and Legs is beginning to get the impression that you're fighting him."

"That's ridiculous," Alex said. "Why doesn't the guy grow up?"

"Sometimes they don't always grow up as fast as might be expected," Pops said, smiling a little. "But Legs is a good kid and he's got his heart set on busting your scoring record—just like mine is set on winning the Conference title. The combination might work out nicely for both Legs and me."

"It's been a long while, hasn't it Pops?"

"Too long," Pops answered quietly, "and they don't give you forever to win the Conference. But I've got high hopes for this season."

Alex said, "And if you do win it, then what?" He spoke casually, but he was suddenly aware of the impact of his question. Even if his query had been deliberate, it couldn't have been much plainer that he was asking about his own future.

---

---

## 2

---

---

### Too Good to Play

---

---

POPS eyes were on him, regarding him curiously. "I don't know, Alex. Sometimes, I'm all for the idea of retiring. I'm getting to be quite an old man, and the pace is too tough for my health. But I've been feeling much better lately and maybe I'll stick around awhile. It's something I haven't made up my mind about." He stopped, then shrugged his shoulders. "From the talk I've heard around, I may not have to make a decision if we lose out in the Conference chase. The Athletic Board will do that little thing for me."



"They wouldn't fire you, Pops. You're practically a tradition here."

"Don't kid yourself, Alex," Pops said. "Traditions are often broken."

For just that moment their glances locked, and Alex couldn't help but wonder if Pops hadn't discovered his impatience with the assistant coaching job. *He knows that I've got my sights on the head coach job, Alex thought, and he's laughing at me. I don't think he intends to give it up to me, especially if the Terriers grab off that Conference thing.*

The newspapers, of course, made a big thing of Carnie's upset of Western. There wasn't much doubt but that the Terriers had just about crept to the head of the class on the strength of that one. The Conference, on the basis of the games already in the book, was a wide-open thing. The teams appeared to be more evenly matched than in many seasons and one stand-out aggregation could make a cake walk out of it. The Terriers were more than hinting that they were just that kind of an outfit.

The fact that Legs Lindsey had racked up nineteen points against Western got him some nice clippings for his scrapbook. It also increased his Conference scoring margin over the field, and pressed his bold challenge to smash the record Alex, himself had set. That did not bother Alex in the least. But what did make his blood boil a little was the wave of praise given Pops for his choice of a third string center to take over when Legs was disqualified on fouls. "I had a hunch the kid would come through for us," Pops was quoted.

It was the same old story. Maybe if Pops had spoken one good word in his favor, just to let folks know he was around, Alex would not have minded so much. But Pops was too busy taking the ice cream off that pie even for that.

So, once again, Alex had sweated overtime, moulding Stretch Novacks' game

only to see Pops step in and take the gravy. He'd even had to coax Pops to give the kid a chance.

Pops became more active than he'd been in some time in the handling of the squad. He seemed fully recovered from his illness and didn't miss a single practice session during the next two weeks. Alex found his own role reduced to simple routine work. He couldn't help but get the impression that Pops was shoving him completely into the background. In the past, Pops had allowed him to take over much of the play-making duties and instruction of coping with the opposition.

But Pops wasn't calling on him much now for any sort of opinion.

The Terriers ran up a streak of ten straight wins. They were a hard-driving, victory hungry crew and there wasn't much doubt that the earlier win over Western had been the turning point. Legs Lindsey was operating handsomely in the scoring department. He was amazingly accurate from the three-second zone, and it was apparent to Alex that he was being fed more leather with each game. The whole squad was conscious of Leg's chances of breaking the Conference scoring record, and they were certainly going to bat for him in a big way. But Alex had noted that Legs was his old careless self on the defense. He seemed too much in a hurry to get under the enemy basket to care much what happened in the back court. Legs had that knack of fouling when he'd been tricked on a play. He got tossed out of a couple of games on personals.

It was when Legs was forced out of the action that Pops used Stretch Novacks. The kid didn't let Pops down once, fitting smoothly into the pattern of attack and playing an inspired brand of ball. But aside from these brief spells, Stretch didn't see much action. It seemed pitiful to Alex to waste that kind of talent.

In the game with the Kings, Legs had



his biggest point-gathering session of the season. He rolled thirty-three points through the hoop, more than half the Terrier total output for the game. He came to the bench at the finish, stared a minute at Alex, then laughed softly and bitterly: "That's another hunk outa that record you hung up, palsy. Stick around and see the rest of the show. It's gonna be great—for me."

Alex leaped to his feet, a torrent of angry words on his lips. Then Pops stepped toward him, touching his shoulder.

"No, Alex," he said quietly. "That's not the way. Pops turned to Legs and in the same quiet voice, said: "We can't have any more of that kind of stuff, Legs."

"I'm sorry," Alex said. "It won't happen again." But Alex saw the dark bitter glint that remained in Legs' eyes. *That guy really hates my guts*, Alex thought.

It was almost as though Pops had read his mind because he said, "Alex, there's too much tension building up between you and Legs. You know we're getting at the crossroads and it's liable to hurt our Conference chances."

"Do you feel that I'm responsible, Pops?"

"Let's just say I'm a bit disappointed in you, Alex."

It was like a blow landing out of the dark. It seemed incredible that Pops should make such a statement when he knew Alex had contributed so much to the drive of this Carnie team.

"I'm disappointed in you, too," Alex said, some of his anger spilling into his voice. "You're not being very fair about all this, Pops."

Pops gave him a steady stare for a moment, then suddenly turned and walked away without another word. Alex stood there, his gaze following Pops' retreating steps. He knew that the threatening split between him and Pops had finally hap-

pened. He could not go on living in Pops' shadow, no more than Pops could accept him as the real builder of the Terrier team.

A COUPLE of days later, Alex got a call from Prexy Andy Martin to stop in and see him. The Carnie prexy was a rugged, square-jawed man, a genial and smiling man, and he hit straight from the shoulder.

Prexy Martin smiled cordially at Alex and picked up a letter on his desk when Alex entered the office.

"Alex," he said, fingering the envelope. "It appears that you're a coach quite in demand. I've received this letter from Madison U. inquiring about the possibility of hiring you as their basketball coach."

Alex said, "They sounded me out on that job last season. I told them I was perfectly satisfied here, for the present at least. Frankly, I did leave the door open for a later offer, though."

"Well, they seem determined to hire you," Prexy Martin said, smiling slightly. "Do you want to leave Carnie, Alex?"

The directness of the question jolted Alex. As things stood between him and Pops, he wanted to get as far away as possible from Carnie. But still, there was the memory of his own collegiate career at Carnie. There was the apprenticeship that he'd served under Pops and the vague promise that he'd one day become the Carnie coach. And there was no greater prize to be sought, Alex knew, than to be head coach at his own alma mater.

"I honestly don't know whether I want to step out of my coaching here, Prexy. Maybe that sounds foolish, a man not being able to make up his mind about a better job," he said.

"Not a bit," Prexy Martin said, eyeing him closely, "especially when that man wants to become head coach of his own college. You'd receive just as much money



here. Most of all, your becoming Carnie's coach would fill quite a gap in your ambitions."

Alex looked up quickly. "You seem awfully sure of your ground, sir."

"Let's not kid ourselves," Prexy said evenly. "You couldn't help but want Pops Grissom's job. And perhaps you deserve it, too. After all, it's been obvious to some of us the work you've done with the team. Pops owes a great deal to you for the team that we hope becomes the Conference champions. There's no need to go more into detail concerning the part you've played in developing them."

Alex said, "I'm afraid Pops doesn't share your enthusiasm for me."

"It's not entirely enthusiasm," Martin corrected him. "You've done a sound methodical job and I admire your ability. In my humble opinion, I don't think Carnie has ever had a greater basketball player than you," he smiled faintly, "including our present star, Legs Lindsey."

"Thank you," Alex said.

Martin's expression was suddenly serious. "Well, I want you to make up your own mind about this Madison offer, Alex. You've got a while. But I hope I'm not giving away a secret by telling you that if Carnie wins the Conference title, Pops will be rewarded with a new contract. A three-year contract, Alex." He paused, his gaze fixed on Alex. "I think in fairness to your decision, that factor should be taken into consideration."

Alex drew sharply on his breath. He was suddenly thinking of how Pops had led him on through three seasons, teasing him with the head coaching job—Pops, who'd asked him back to Carnie from the professional ranks, hinting to him about turning over the coaching reins to him. So he'd returned to Carnie, throwing himself into the job during Pops' illness, practically becoming their head coach in all but name. Pops Grissom was a clever man to have taken and used his skill. But now

there was no further need for him, Pops getting a renewal of his contract. The Conference championship was within his grasp, practically wrapped up.

Alex said: "It would have seemed more like the old Pops I knew had he brought this Madison offer to me himself. But instead he let you do it for him, Prexy."

Martin smiled indulgently. "Pops did tell me that he thought I might be in better position to handle the matter."

"Well, Pops apparently wants to get rid of me," Alex said.

Martin was silent a moment. "Possibly he does," he said at length. "Wouldn't any coach who felt that his assistant was gunning for his job?"

Alex conceded the point. He said simply: "I'm glad Pops is getting what he wants most—a new contract. You can have my resignation right now if you like, sir."

"No," Martin said, shaking his head. "It would be much wiser for you to continue in your present capacity. Certainly, it would be bad for you to resign with any stigma whatsoever. And there would be one, if you quit before Carnie clinches the Conference championship."

"Just as you say."

Prexy Martin stood up, indicating the interview was finished. He walked toward the door with Alex. Then he said: "You're a young man and Pops is an old man. That makes a difference, Alex. So I'm very glad that the Athletic Board is prepared to extend Pops' contract, more so because he's been criticized and has been perilously close to being fired the past few seasons. But he's come back strong—with your help, of course, but then we expect our assistant coach to be capable, too. I'm hoping that I can be glad for you, whatever final decision you make."

As Alex walked down the steps of the administration building, he was aware that he was trembling. The ground he walked



on seemed to be caving in ahead of him. He told himself that he should be glad and proud of the Madison coaching offer. But the deceit Pops had practiced on him, the big hope in his life of coaching a Carnie team somehow outweighed everything else.

The Terriers hit the road, playing a set of six games, although only a pair of the contests were within the Conference. They rolled through the opener, winning handily over Tech. Then the going got tougher and the gap in the scoring no longer was as one-sided. Berkeley fought them down to the final gun before losing: 63-61. They ran head-on into another squeaker, playing Westleyan. With less than three minutes to go, Legs Lindsey was excused from the fray after committing too many fouls and the Westleyan crowd sensed an upset. Westleyan led, 56-55.

They were plenty confident with Legs out of there. He'd chalked up eighteen markers and had been his usual brilliant self on the offensive. But time and again, Alex spotted flaws in his defensive play. Alex knew that Legs had cost the club just about as many points as he had scored. Another contributing cause to the nearness of a Terrier defeat was that the offensive was being crowded too hard upon Legs. The attack isn't being varied enough, Alex thought. They're much too interested in Legs breaking a lot of rusty scoring marks.

With Legs Lindsey relegated to the sidelines, Pops called on Stretch Novacks once again. Stretch wasn't in there ten seconds before he'd faked a shot from the bucket and laid the melon in Ziggy Briscoe's hands, driving in on the goal. Westleyan surged back, pinwheeling the attack off Stretch's slot, believing him to be the soft link with Legs out of there. Stretch tied up his man, and on the tip-off, gave the leather to the Terriers. A moment later Dave Oliver hit from deep

court. Muff Ives snapped up another pass that Stretch rifled through a hole in the defense and batted in a deuce. Stretch scored just two points but he'd been the payoff guy, and the Terriers nailed the win.

After Stretch had pulled one particularly sweet play, Pops turned to Alex saying, "He's a real discovery, that Stretch. I think that boy could be used as a fill-in at forward or guard. He's fast and smooth and certainly not the least awkward."

"He seems too good to keep on the bench," Alex said.

Pops grinned slightly. "Maybe next season, Alex. But right now I'd rather use him as a handy man. That's where he fits best on this team."

The Terriers returned home, their unbeaten streak still intact. The trip had been long and nerve-wracking. Some of the sparkle had gone out of Pops' eyes, Alex noticed, and the grind made him appear tired and worn. Pops stayed away from the practice court a couple of days and just prior to the return engagement with Tech, took over the reins of the team again.

Alex thought it strange when Pops abruptly halted a practice workout and dismissed the squad. The players were starting toward the showers when Alex saw Pops' face suddenly pale, and his legs buckle a bit. He rushed toward Pops and grabbed him. He led him to the bench, and after resting a moment Pops said! "I'm all right now, Alex. I've been letting the excitement run over in me, forgetting that I'm not one of the youngsters. This is nothing, though, that some rest and a cup of coffee won't take care of."

That evening Pops Grissom had a stroke. It was described as mild, but he was hardly likely to be with the Terriers during the remaining games on schedule for the season.



---

---

**3**

---

---

---

---

**Blueprint to Nowhere**

---

---

**T**HE next night Alex was in full command of the team when Tech came in for a Conference game. In the dressing room they pored over the weaknesses and strength of the Tech team. He gave them hard, cold, information. None of the pampering and hand-on-their-shoulders stuff that Pops was inclined to pass around.

"Okay, you've whipped them once," Alex finished. "Mix up the attack and keep 'em guessing and you'll do all right again."

They started through the door and Alex was aware of Legs Lindsey lingering a moment longer than the others. Legs' stare settled on him, measuring him coldly behind the dark, flashing eyes. Then Legs whirled, following the others down the corridor that led to the gym. Alex shrugged.

It was a quiet, almost solemn Carnie crowd that packed the gym. The news of Pops Grissom's stroke had stunned them. Alex sensed a feeling of resentment that he'd come into control of the team in such a manner. He'd long ago discovered that there wasn't much that occurred on a squad that somehow didn't find its way to the ears of the fans. He knew that there was talk of dissension between himself and Pops and also where Legs Lindsey was concerned.

The game got under way and in the scramble that followed the tip-off, Tech took possession of the ball. They'd used a fast break and plenty of basket sniping from all angles in the previous encounter. But they'd switched tactics in the return match. Tech pressed the offensive, the leather flying in a blurring series of short, probing passes. Twice they moved the ball

into the thick of the defense, but on each occasion the receiver passed back court. The Tech guard feinted to his forward along the sideline, and rifled underhand into the center slot. The center picked it off his knee and wheeled sharply, leaving Legs Lindsey glued to the spot. He went in alone, scoring easily. Alex winced.

Carnie broke down the boards in a whirlwind rush. They quickly resorted to the old formula of feeding in to Legs. There wasn't a thing wrong with the delivery or execution of the play. It was a matter of the Tech guard anticipating Legs' maneuver and beating him to the punch. He stole the ball and this time Tech had a forward under the basket before the Terrier defense could jell. That one was tough for Alex to swallow because the guard who'd made the interception had allowed Muff Ives to scoot into the clear. But Muff hadn't even been noticed in the attempt to fatten Legs Lindsey's scoring total.

A long set-shot clicked for Tech. They followed with another scoring thrust through the middle, snarling up Legs on a two-man break. Before the Terriers got up some steam of their own, Tech was out in front: 8-0. Legs connected then, and Muff Ives flipped in another deuce. Tech came right back, raking the center alley, matching that pair of baskets. Alex knew right then that Tech's drive was more than a flash that would die as quickly as it had begun.

The Tech gang had planned its strategy carefully. The players had been well coached on the Terriers' knack of building their attack on Legs Lindsey. They had two men for the most part double-teaming Legs, a guard shifting with the ebb of the play, and their centerman. That strategy itself did not differ too much with the general setup that the opposition employed against Legs. But Tech was doing the job with greater abandon, and deliberately risking loop-holes in their defense. They'd



been smartened up all right, Alex knew, to the Terriers' desire to help Legs break that Conference scoring record.

Dave Oliver and Chuck Morse kept trying to wipe out the resistance around Legs and got nowhere. Maybe it was the harrassing effect of the guarding and maybe Legs was having his first really bad night of the season. Even when he was getting his shots away, he wasn't hitting with his usual marksmanship.

Alex glanced down the bench at Stretch Novacks, tempted to send the kid in for Legs and get the outfit going. But he shook off the thought, deciding to give Legs every chance to find the range. In the next few minutes Alex was convinced that it was time to make a change in there. Legs scored on a rebound, and with five minutes of the quarter remaining, had notched a pair of double-deckers. Tech peeled a forward loose and he went in, sinking the deuce. The visitors were turning the game into a rout, leading: 21-12.

Alex looked down the bench once again. "Stretch," he said, "G'wan in for Legs and wake up that bunch."

The kid looked up suddenly, then moved swiftly to Alex's side. He crouched there a moment as the subs generally did when Pops was on the bench. Then Pops would whisper his instructions and send them in with an encouraging slap across the shoulders.

Alex merely said, "Play ball."

Stretch hesitated, looking at Alex as though he meant to say something, and then suddenly changed his mind. Alex watched Stretch report in there and somehow he couldn't help but get the impression that Stretch wasn't his old eager beaver self. The crowd let out a moan when Legs started toward the bench.

"They're watching you like a hawk," Alex told Legs, "and it's like throwing the ball into a bad wind trying to get it through to you." Alex paused, added, "The game is the important thing, Legs."

Legs said grimly, "Yeah, important like it is for you to stop me from cracking that scoring record you hung up. Isn't that your racket, Mister?"

"I don't care whether you score a million points," Alex said furiously. "But I'm not going to sell a championship down the river to help you get it."

"You're selling out the team and me," Legs murmured.

Alex quivered with anger and was on the verge of giving Legs one awful tongue-lashing. Then he was suddenly aware of the players on the bench staring at him. He realized he was making himself appear ridiculous, allowing himself to argue with a player.

"We'll see about this later," he said quietly.

Alex put his mind on the evenly paced Tech machine as they deftly maneuvered for an opening. They baited the sidelines, fed into the circle, and the ball kept traveling in a monotonous patter of motion. Then they threw the big punch, and the centerman took the flip, and whirling, lofted the melon. It dropped through, pretty as a picture, and Stretch had been caught flatfooted.

That play was the indicator on Stretch. He'd looked bad and strangely, he didn't improve. Dave Oliver slipped him the ball on the next trip up the floor, and his shot was blocked. His work in the pivot became more shoddy and the kid seemed to be anchored to the boards. He wasn't getting up there on the rebounds and his passing was hurried and missing the targets. All the teaching and poise that Alex had instilled in him seemed to have left him.

Alex sat there, baffled and angered, trying to make sense of the wreckage that was piling around the Terriers. He watched the Tech attack grow stronger, ripping the defense to pieces. Tech surged on and at the half was ahead: 33-17.

As he walked across the floor toward



the dressing room, Alex sensed the eyes of the crowd on him. He thought how he'd waited through the seasons for a chance to prove himself as a head coach. Now, in the role of acting head coach, and for the first time handling the team in a regular game, he was making a miserable debut. The Terriers had looked more like an awkward high school team than the outfit that had roared to sixteen consecutive wins and were considered the cream of the Conference.

There was a panic rising in Alex that he'd never quite experienced in the past. Something had to be done and quickly. There'd be no excuses accepted if the Terriers were to blow this game to a Tech team they'd walloped so handily in the previous fray. The blame would fall on him for this was the same team, the same setup, except that Pops Grissom wasn't around.

The dressing room was grim and filled with an air of defiance. It had never been quite like that when Pops was around, even under the most extenuating circumstances.

Alex said, "You don't win ball games on reputation. These Tech guys are smart, and they've managed to tie Legs up in a knot. Believe me, that's not too tough to do when Tech knows that you're making a feedbox out of Legs. You're pulling for him to bust that Conference record and shoveling too much leather to him. You've

got to use Legs as a decoy and start cooking on the opening Tech is leaving, to guard Legs."

Dave Oliver said, "We did okay against some better teams than Tech using this system. It was good enough then and good enough for Pops."

"Well, I'm telling you to toss it out the window," Alex snapped. The moment the words rolled off his tongue, he wanted to recall them. He meant the system was not working in this particular game and should be discarded, but his anger had gotten the best of him.

He stood there and saw the exchange of bitter glances, the dark, almost gloating stare that Lindsey gave him.

"Why don't you come right out and say it?" Ziggy Briscoe snarled. "You're afraid that Legs is going to wipe your pretty scoring record off the books. You've hated his guts since he started to go after that thing. That's why you've been so anxious to sack him and slip Stretch in there. That's why you pulled Legs out."

Alex said, "That's your opinion and there's nothing I can do about changing it. But I still expect you to play the brand of ball that I believe is best for you. Get me?"

**H**E PUT the lid on the tension, ignoring it. He spent the remaining minutes of the respite combing the mechanical flaws out of the teams. He

# HEADACHE

UPSET  
STOMACH

JUMPY  
NERVES



# RELIEF!

THANKS TO FAMOUS  
**BROMO-SELTZER**

Millions turn to Bromo-Seltzer to relieve ordinary headache *three* ways. It's famous for giving fast help. Caution: Use only as directed. Get Bromo-Seltzer at your drugstore fountain or counter today.

A product of Emerson Drug Company since 1887.





mapped out counter-strokes to meet Tech's precise offensive and took apart the play of each of his men, examining and analyzing like he would a piece of machinery. And all the while, an awful ache was gnawing at his stomach, because the feeling was there that no amount of talk was going to be able to pull this game out of the fire.

"All right," he said finally, "the same team starts as finished the first half."

He was the head coach and he wasn't going to be bullied into letting them have their fair-haired boy, Legs Lindsey, in the game. Let him sit on the wood and cool his heels awhile. Just as they started toward the door, Stretch turned to Alex. The kid's face was pale and he was plainly nervous.

"Coach, I wish you'd put Legs in my place."

Alex stared at him. He'd never before heard a ball player ask to be taken out of a game because the white feather was showing.

"The first real chance you get and the lump comes up, huh?" Alex said tensely. "Nice goin', fella."

"It isn't that," Stretch said. "It just happens that I'd like to see Legs get a fair chance at breaking that record. He can't do it on the bench. Hell, I've got a couple of more seasons of this stuff and Legs won't be around for another try."

Alex said, "Thanks for the advice. But suppose we do things my way."

A Tech forward grabbed the center tip, and that weaving driving attack took the ball deep into scoring territory. There was a low pass and a Tech forward palming it off to a guard breaking for the basket. He went up, scoring.

So it began all over again, Tech's dominance of the pace and the game. The Terriers had a few moments there when they showed flashes of their old skill and threatened to make a game of it. But Tech always seemed to find the answer and put

on an offensive of its own. Going into the fourth period, Tech led: 45-29.

Alex sent Legs into the game.

Ten seconds later, Legs swept a long arm across his shoulder and split the cords going away from the basket. The crowd howled.

Chuck Morse drifting with his cover suddenly stepped away and stole the pass-in aimed down the middle. Carnie rode the ball down, breaking fast and hard, and feeding in there to Legs once again. He hit. Tech started to climb Legs Lindsey's frame, and Ziggy Briscoe found a wide open groove and tossed in a lay-up.

The Terriers broke two men down the middle. Dave Oliver fainted into the pivot and then whipped through to Muff Ives slashing in on the left side of the goal. The Terrier attack jolted alive, and began closing the gap in the score. They were ripping into those pockets that Tech left in their defense to concentrate on Legs. Then when Tech moved to plug those holes, the leather was winging in to Legs and the big guy was hitting with a sudden uncanny precision.

It was precisely the strategy Alex had blue-printed. The Terriers were mixing up their attack, pitching the melon into the holes and exploding their shot-making at close range. They kept Tech guessing until they no longer dared assign two of their defense to guarding Legs. And when the cover was pulled off Legs, the big guy began to murder them. The Tech bulge was beaten down. Three minutes to go, and Tech led: 51-44.

Dave Oliver popped one from the sideline corner. Legs batted in a rebound. Tech took possession. They stalled, fought the clock, and the seconds dwindled low. Chuck crowded the Tech ball-handler too hard and the guy collected a free throw. He made it good. It was Tech 52—Carnie 48.

The Terriers drove down, and were stopped. Dave Oliver picked up a loose



ball and fed to Legs under the basket. 52-50.

Tech worked the leather with an eye on the clock. There were twenty seconds and they were still holding possession when the timekeeper's gun spat. They'd ended Carnie's unbeaten season.

Alex didn't have to wait very long to discover just how hot a spot he was sitting on. The newspapers the next day were harsh in their criticism of him. They said it didn't make sense pulling Legs Lindsey out of the game and keeping him on the bench until the game was beyond retrieve. In Legs' place, he'd used a green rookie, more the pity of his blunder. It came from everywhere, the torrent of bitter criticism, and the local armchair masterminds had themselves a wonderful time.

Just as Alex expected, he was accused of deliberately attempting to protect his own Conference scoring record in his treatment of Legs Lindsey. Somehow, it became known that Pops had a three-year contract hanging in the balance. The ugly rumor hit the campus that Alex did not care to win the Conference title because his appointment as head coach of Carnie would become an automatic thing.

Alex himself said nothing in reply to the accusations hurled at him. But the sheer viciousness of the charges made against him sickened and filled him with a terrible frustration. Once he'd been Carnie's greatest basketball hero, acclaimed and beloved, and now they were stripping him of that glory and branding him a traitor.

He went to see Pops whose condition was greatly improved. Alex was surprised that Pops was not nearly as downcast about the defeat as he'd expected him to be.

"I'd hoped to win them all," Pops told him, "but how many teams go through a season without having their ears pinned back at least once?"

"The coaches don't get hit with a ton of bricks," Alex said slowly. "I did what I

thought was right, benching Legs. The guys were sending too much leather into Legs, and Tech was waiting for just such a thing. It wasn't till we started to mix up the attack that we started to click. Then Tech didn't know whether Legs was a decoy or the payoff guy."

Pops smiled slightly. "You were right. They've become very conscious of Legs cracking that scoring record, and were riding for a fall." He stopped, looking straight at Alex. "Strangely enough, it means almost as much to them that Legs succeeds as winning the championship does. Legs is popular with the gang, and there's a team pride of accomplishment in seeing him hang up a new mark."

"Well, they've got to make up their minds," Alex said evenly. "They aren't likely to have their cake and eat it, too. It just about amounts to a choice between the Conference thing or Legs putting a new scoring record in the book."

Pops was silent a moment. Then he said, "I'm afraid you're on more of a spot than they are, Alex. If you lose out in the Conference, it isn't likely that Madison will want you as their coach. Win, and I get me a new contract—and I don't think I'll want you back as my assistant."

---

## 4

---

### Goal for Goal

---

THE old man continued, "You're just not meant to be a coach, Alex. You're a machine, and you expect your men to be machines, too. It just doesn't work out that way."

"You seemed to have a different opinion when you asked me to quit pro ball to take the job with you, Pops."

Pops shrugged. "I made a mistake—almost a very bad one."

Carnie copped their next game, taking



Luzern, but not before an awful scare had been thrown into them. Dave Oliver unleashing a long, desperate heave in the last ten seconds, connected with the strings. That shot gave Carnie a 55 to 54 victory.

Alex left Legs in there the full route. Oddly enough, Legs was far short of being his usual sensational self. He collected exactly six points, and missed several incredibly easy lay-ups. Alex saw Legs shake his head bitterly as he walked off the floor.

Again in the dressing room, Alex's attention was drawn to Legs as he passed through on his way to his own cubicle. Legs was slouched on a bench in front of his locker, and Alex thought he noticed a misty look in the big guy's eyes. Alex paused a moment, thinking he should go over to Legs. Then he shrugged off the thought.

Alex went into the office and took a deep breath of relief. He thought of the tough spot the Terriers would be in if they'd lost to Luzern. There was just one more Conference game ahead and that one with Berkley—for the chips. A win for Berkley and the Conference race would be snarled in a tie, necessitating a play-off game.

There would, under ordinary circumstances, be every reason to feel confident of whipping Berkley and nailing down the championship, Alex reflected. Even a loss would allow Carnie a second try in the play-off. They'd handed Berkley their lone defeat earlier in the season in a tough scrap. But things were a lot different now than when the Terriers appeared unbeatable.

The dressing room was quiet and no shouts of triumph echoed. There hadn't been much of that stuff since Pops had gotten sick. But this night there wasn't even the hiss of the showers. They seemed awfully slow getting out of their togs, Alex thought. The stillness was suddenly broken, Dave Oliver's voice sounding

clear as a bell through the thin partition.

"Twenty-six points is a tough mark to shoot for or against any ball club," he was saying. "But against Berkley, it's twice as tough, I guess. Gosh, Legs, I'd sure like to see you get 'em, but you know what we're up against, and I don't just mean—Berkley."

"Yeah, I know," Legs Lindsey said. "This guy, Alex, would probably yank me outa there if I got within smelling distance of his scoring record." There was a pause, and Legs added: "Hell, I could do without the thing okay. But you guys got together on the idea and you've been pushing it right along. I've stood around out there and you've fed me till I couldn't help but pile up a stack of points. It looks like I'm gonna let you down and miss on the thing."

Muff Ives said, "We've gotten a real bang outa helping you try to turn the trick, Legs. After all, you have the eye, and you won us plenty of ball games."

"That Tech game ruined you," Dave Oliver put in. "If he had let you stick in there, there'd be nothing to worry about now."

"I was lousy tonight," Legs said. "The pressure got under my skin just like against Tech. I was trying too hard and flubbing 'em."

"If Pops was around, he'd find a way," Muff Ives said. "Pops always has the answer when things get rough."

There was more, but Alex didn't listen. He got to his feet and slowly put on his hat and coat and walked out into the night air. He swallowed hard and wished there were some escape for the swirling sickness spreading through him. He could once again hear the words that Pops had spoken, ringing in his ears. "... You're a machine and you expect your men to be machines, too. It doesn't work out that way, Alex. You're just not meant to be a coach. . . ."

That's right, Pops, he thought grimly.



I've been a machine, and not really a coach, and nothing has worked out for me.

He'd developed them, even more than Pops, into the sleek and powerful team they were. There it was, that mechanical perfection, and he'd won a kind of grudging respect, but never their hearts. That was the difference between them as coaches. Skill and savvy, sure, but a piece of your heart has got to go into the job.

Way back in high school, in fact ever since he could remember, basketball had been his game, and he'd always been the star of the show. It had all come naturally, the acclaim, the success, everything except the one thing he wanted most—the head coach job at Carnie. Odd, how he'd hardened along the route, until he looked upon even college kids as machines—how he'd put his own ambition ahead of those he coached.

There was such a thing as a coach's influence on his players, though he completely overlooked that side of the job. After all, they were still boys until they went out and competed with the men outside the collegiate fringe. They still needed the kind of spiritual leadership that Pops and men like him gave them. That confidence and faith instilled in them that would later on mature and mean more than the ball game they played today.

No one could explain these things to him for he had to experience and feel them inside himself. Pops had tried and so had Prexy Martin, and he'd seen no deeper than his own ambition to become head coach. So he'd finally found the answers in that locker room a while ago when his team needed him and yet would not come to him. He'd found it in their distrust, the storm of criticism surrounding him, the disappointment of Pops in him. But mostly he'd found it in his own heart.

It was Pops in whom the Terriers placed their confidence. Pops it was who'd inspired them to a point where they believed him possible of performing miracles

for them. And yet, it was they themselves who were responsible for the miracles. Pops shaped the miracle out of his understanding for them.

Alex laughed bitterly, remembering how he'd looked upon Pops Grissom's attachment for his players as the old malarkey—those little things like a slap across the shoulder, a nice word, the way he walked among them after a ball game. It had never occurred to him that the rah-rah stuff was anything except silly sentiment or a slick line of gab to kid them along. But Pops really meant that stuff, and was sincere in his leadership of them. You either are or aren't sincere and you're found out pretty quick. Pops had lasted a long time. And those little things somehow meant a great deal to the team, letting them know that their work was appreciated.

It was too late now, Alex told himself, to mend the injustice he'd done them. It was almost better that they played Berkley without a coach on the bench than to have him there. They hated and distrusted him and he'd be more of a sixth player for Berkley than a help to them. It was Pops they wanted and needed. Since they could not have Pops, they were entitled to run things on their own. . . .

The lights were burning in Prexy Martin's study when Alex knocked on the door of the greystone house. Prexy's wife, a trim pretty, dark-haired woman opened the door.

"Come in, Alex," she said smiling. "And tell me quick that we're going to beat Berkley and win the championship."

"The boys will do all right," Alex said, trying to make himself sound convincing. "They've beaten Berkley once, you know."

"All right, Alex," she said laughing. "That restores my confidence. I'll tell Prexy you're here and make some coffee."

A moment later, Martin looked up from his desk, waving Alex to a chair.



"Quite a ball game, that one tonight, Alex. You'd have to go to the story books before you'd find a more thrilling finish."

Alex nodded. "It was a good game. We did better, though, in the first game with Luzern. Beat 'em by eighteen points and the boys weren't even breathing hard."

"I see," Martin said. "I think I see what you mean."

Alex said, "The first game Pops was handling the team. Well, the difference has been just as marked in other games, if not more so. It's obvious to everyone that the real difference is not so much in the team itself but in the coaching."

"Do you believe that yourself?"

"It's the truth, much as I dislike having to admit it. Pops brought out the best in his players and I've done exactly the opposite." He paused; then in a quick rush of words said: "I want to offer you my resignation, effective at once."

Prexy Martin was silent. "If you resign now," he said slowly, "I can almost assure you that Madison will withdraw its offer to you. You'll be quitting under fire, though that is not exactly new to the coaching profession. But what is different, you were handed an unbeaten team, and one heavily favored to win the Conference championship. To quit under those circumstances and with the big game coming up might be disastrous to your coaching career."

"It'll be more of a disaster if I'm on the bench for that game, sir. You can believe me when I tell you that they'll do better without me. They've no confidence in me and when a coach loses his team's confidence, both are licked."

"If I accept your resignation and Madison withdraws its offer, then there's not much left for you."

ALEX said, "I can always go back to professional basketball."

Martin's wife appeared then, carrying a tray with coffee and biscuits.

When she'd departed, Prexy said: "You know, of course, what this game means to Pops Grisson. It decides whether he receives a new contract to continue to coach here."

"I know that and in fairness to him, it's better that I have nothing more to do with the team," Alex said, shaking his head. "I've been awfully wrong about things, Prexy, wrong about Pops, wrong about everything. There's no place in this setup for the wrong-way guy I've been, and in getting out, I'm simply beating the gun."

Prexy stirred his coffee slowly, and then sipped it. He put the cup down smiling a little. "You know, I don't think I've heard a dozen people admit they were wrong about something, Alex. It's not an easy thing to do and it takes a real man to own up to his own inadequacy."

"I don't exactly feel happy about it."

Prexy said, "You could have become Carnie's head coach, Alex. In fact, Pops had that in mind when he brought you here. You had all the qualifications except the one that could make you really successful. You didn't understand your players. Too cold and hard-fisted. Pops tried to change you, giving you more and more control of the team so that you'd really get to know the players. Pops couldn't honestly turn his team over to your type of coach."

"I got the impression he was kidding me along," Alex said. "Pops never handed out a good word about my coaching."

"The credit automatically belongs to the head coach," Prexy said. "So does the blame. But in your case Pops would not have hesitated to give you full credit for your work—if he thought you'd one day be the coach he believed you'd be in the beginning. He waited quite awhile for you to come through for him, Alex."

Alex drank down his coffee, and stood up. "Well, I'll have my resignation in writing to you before the game, Prexy."



Prexy Martin said evenly, "I'll accept your resignation and recommened the proper action to the athletic board . . . after the Berkley game, Alex. . ."

The Carnie gym was jam-packed to the walls, and a steady, relentless wave of noise beat against the dressing room. The Terriers were dressed and waiting restlessly for the word to go out there. Alex walked into the room from his office, deliberately delaying his entrance. The less they saw of him, the more it was likely to please them, he knew. Even now, he could feel the tension stiffen, and their stares fall bitterly upon him.

Alex said: "There's a lot at stake in this ball game besides the championship. You've no doubt heard a rumor that Pops Grissom gets a three-year contract if this game is won. Well, it's true. I hope you can give him that present." He stopped, taking a breath. "About myself, I've already submitted my resignation, effective after the game. In fact, I felt you could do better on your own than having me run things. However, I've been ordered to stay with you this game. It will be the last one, believe me."

He felt the thickness of the silence, the heaviness of his words on them. They looked at him, shocked and aware that he'd struggled to get the words out. Dave Oliver said: "It was our tough luck when Pops got sick again. Nobody could fill his shoes."

Alex said, "Yes, I didn't even know which shoe went on which foot. I hope I can make it up to you—by clearing outa Carnie after the game. That's all from me except that if you've ever had a good ball game in you, give out with it now for Pops. What you think of me doesn't matter but this championship means plenty to Pops."

He turned his head slightly then, because his throat was dry and scratchy. He walked to the door, pushed it open and went out. They were moving swiftly past

him on their way to the court. There was a sudden, breathless silence and then the tumultuous outcry of the crowd breaking upon the Terriers as they stepped onto the hardwood. The roar softened and then came on again, and Alex knew the Berkley crew was making its entrance.

Alex went down there and took his place on the bench. He felt the tension gathering in him all through the warmup session, and he squirmed restlessly. He'd always been able to accept the pressure as a routine thing, but that was mostly in his capacity as assistant coach. It was Pops who'd done the squirming and felt the bite of the tension. He knew now what it was to be head man on the bench, to experience the responsibility that went with the job.

The ref was walking the ball to the center circle, and the crowd waited tensely for the whistle. There it was, the crouching centerman springing, and Legs Lindsey flicking the ball to Chuck Morse. The Terrier guard twisted in mid-air, pushing a pass ahead to Muff Ives scooting down the right alley. The crimson-clad guard, fading with Muff Ives, was a half-stride off the pace. Muff dribbled in, losing his advantage. The guard caught him, crowding him a little. Then Muff swung in a pivot and looped the melon to Legs following down the middle. Legs had all the time in the world to get his shot away, but he hesitated and finally tossed to Ziggy Briscoe driving on the right side of the goal. Ziggy put it up, the ball seeming to connect and then spinning off the inside iron. The Carnie crowd groaned.

Berkley snared the rebound and they broke down the boards, moving the leather in a swift, dazzling pattern. They were big and rough and fast, these Berkley hoopsters. They had a guy, Jeff Elliot, an all-Conference, all everything, and he was murder on that one-handed push shot. He dominated the Berkley scoring column. The power-maker, though, was Mike Kern, a guard and one of the top



defensive aces of the Conference. Mike Kern unbuttoned the power as he saw fit, and ran the club with the precision of a coxswain.

It was Mike Kern handling the leather now, feinting with his feet, and laying it on a hook for Elliot to stab. Dave Oliver moved into the slot, covering. The crimson-clad stepped sideways, hoisting the ball as he made the maneuver. It arched prettily, hanging over the target and slipping through the cords. Nothing could be done about that kind of shooting except forget it and hope it didn't happen too often.

The Terriers drove down, forwards clawing for an opening, and guards unable to move it in there. Dave Oliver took a pass, shifted, and whipped the ball into the bucket slot. It was a perfect heave, and Alex waited for Legs to coil and let go that hook shot. Legs spun and gave the leather to Oliver again, cutting on the left side. Mike Kern danced over and deflected Oliver's shot just enough to make it fall short of the basket.

Alex couldn't quite figure it. Twice he'd watched Legs Lindsey in the clear, and the big guy didn't pull the trigger on either occasion. He was handing the ball off to his teammates, and letting them undertake the shot-making role. They were hardly the tactics of a man who was gunning for a new Conference scoring record, Alex thought. Legs needed twenty-six points to turn the trick, and he'd have to get started in a hurry if he hoped to make even a strong bid. He couldn't afford to ignore the kind of openings that had been presented him.

The Crimson found the Terrier defense too tough to crack after some feinting and bait-passing. Jeff Elliot dropped back and fired a long one and the crowd howled its amazement. He'd hit again. Even before the Terriers could get up some momentum of their own, Mike Kern had stolen the ball. He moved like a cat, shifting his feet

in one direction and suddenly changing his direction and pouncing. He went in all alone, flipping the lay-up through, and Berkley was ahead: 6-0.

They tasted victory in those opening minutes and opened the throttle wide in an all-out bid to pile on the score. They smashed the Terriers' scoring bid, and when a set-shot missed, their centerman leaped and tapped in the rebound. Elliot hit again with that amazing one-handed swipe and the Terriers asked for a timeout. They were being buried: 10-0.

Alex stared at the Terriers, huddled and grim. He looked across the hardwood into the tense, bitter faces of the Carnie rooters. He knew they were thinking that if Pops Grissom were on the bench, Berkley would not be running through the Terriers like sand. Pops would find a way to stop them. But nobody was going to stop Berkley until they cooled off a bit. The club was hot, hitting with an amazing average, and all the defense in the world can be hopeless against that kind of sharp-shooting.

The Terriers plunged into the game for all they were worth with the blast of the ref's whistle. Chuck Morse fed into the sidepocket, and Muff Ives dribbled around his cover, and tossed a one-hander. It narrowly missed, but this time Legs was under the basket, leaping and batting the rebound through the strings. The Terriers seemed fully launched when Dave Oliver intercepted a pass. Legs was suddenly wheeling in the keyhole slot, and again passing to Muff Ives riding in on the hoop. This time Muff scored.

It was a bitter see-saw struggle, the next five minutes. They were swapping goal for goal, with Muff Ives doing the brunt of the climax shooting for the Terriers. Legs Lindsey finally nicked the cords, letting go the bucket shot for the first time. But time and again he was feeding to Muff Ives and Ziggy Briscoe, and there was nothing sustained about the



Terrier attack. Legs wasn't too good in the passing role, and the Berkley guards began giving Muff Ives quite a going over. Mike Kern was having himself a time, blocking and wrapping the Terrier forwards in knots.

A couple of minutes before the finish of the first period, Berkley got hot again, and let loose with another barrage. Mike Kern dropped a set shot, and Jeff Elliot clicked twice in succession. A pivot play and the ref shrilled on his whistle, and poked a finger at Legs. The foul was converted and seconds later, the ref was calling a second foul on Legs. Berkley was ahead at the quarter: 23-14.

**5**

**Last Quarter Lightning**

ALEX smiled grimly, aware of the Berkley tactics to get Legs to foul himself out of the game. They'd worked that trick twice now, knowing Legs' susceptibility to fouling.

Alex watched the Berkley guards bait Legs, flipping the leather in there time and again. The Berkley pivot fiddled with the sphere, feinting one way and then the other and sometimes driving straight ahead in a direct assault on the goal. Once, the crimson-clad got tagged with a foul

call himself in his eagerness to make Legs jump the gun. But the strategy was doing fine because Legs had three personal fouls charged against him midway in the second period.

It wasn't going to take that Berkley gang much longer, Alex realized, to slick Legs into five personals and a ticket to the showers. That would be an inglorious finish to Leg's Lindsey's bid to set a new Conference scoring mark. And with that blow would very likely fall the ax on the Terriers' hope of clinching the championship.

Alex was aware now of how the seemingly individual feats of Legs Lindsey were really a team thing. He inspired the Terriers to score heavier, fight harder. It gave them a double incentive, and was the kick in their drive on the Conference title. Pops had sensed how the scoring challenge that Legs hurled at the record book blended into the setup and had encouraged the centerman and his teammates to shoot for it. Sure, Alex thought bitterly, there'd been a couple of times when they'd let things get lopsided and allowed the scoring angle to spoil the balance of their attack. He'd been harsh, then, where Pops would have pointed out their mistake in a softer and wiser way. His method had been to drag Legs out of there, though Legs had not been as much at fault as his teammates. He had cheapened their ambitions, stung their pride. He hadn't even


**CAN YOUR SCALP PASS THE \*F-N TEST?**



**\*The Famous Finger Nail Test**

1 "It's F-N, the test for men!" Scratch your head—if you find dryness or loose dandruff you need Wildroot Cream-Oil. Buy the large economy size.

**YOUR HAIR CAN LOOK LIKE THIS WITH NEW WILDROOT CREAM-OIL**



2 Only a little Wildroot Cream-Oil can do a big job for your hair. Keeps your hair well groomed all day long without a trace of that greasy, plastered down look! Your hair looks good and feels good too!

**CREAM-OIL CHARLIE SAYS: "IT CONTAINS LANOLIN!"**



**3 TUNE IN: 2 NETWORK SHOWS!**  
 "The Adventures of Sam Spade" Sunday evenings, CBS Network; "King Cole Trio Time" Saturday afternoons; NBC Network.





reckoned with the pressure that closed harder on Legs with each game as he soared within range of the scoring record. He'd allowed for nothing except mechanical perfection.

There'd been another warning sign, too, that he'd disregarded. He'd been quick to sub Stretch Novacks for Legs. Even here, he hadn't counted on the team spirit that Pops had given the Terriers. It gripped subs as it did varsity men. It had never occurred to him that Stretch was rooting for Legs to bust that record as hard as any of the others. He'd simply looked upon Stretch Novacks as a rival for Legs' job. Stretch Novacks was going to be a great pivot man in seasons to come, possibly more brilliant in his all-around game than Legs could ever hope to be. But that day had not yet arrived and Stretch was green. Pops was breaking him in as a spot player. Pops had picked the moments, ripening Stretch under fire and testing the man's endurance.

Pops knew of Stretch's loyalty to Legs and to the team as a unit. He realized that when Legs fouled out of a game and Stretch took over, the rookie would fight desperately to keep the team from sagging. He'd do it for Legs, the guy for whom he rooted so hard to knock down that scoring record, and for Pops and the team. There was this terrific emotional appeal and Stretch went out there riding the crest of it. But the night he'd sent Stretch into the game because Legs wasn't producing, this fierce loyalty was missing, and Stretch had played rottenly.

All these things Alex could see with startling clearness now. They'd been right there in the front row but he'd been so grim and methodical in the pursuit of his own ambitions that he'd failed to recognize the signs. Pops and Prexy Martin had tried to point his head in the proper direction but he'd stubbornly looked only upon his own charted course.

So there was nothing bad about Legs'

chalking up his points record. He was a college kid, not a machine, and when he began to doubt the confidence of his coach in him, his play had slipped into a shoddy bracket. After all, the coach himself held the scoring record, and in view of the circumstances and the ax grinding, it was not surprising that suspicions formed in Legs' mind.

Alex was very much aware of what was taking place on the hardwood, and in Legs Lindsey's mind. Legs was deliberately blowing his chances of setting a new Conference scoring record. He'd told them how a contract for Pops hung in the balance. They were afraid, Legs and all of the gang, to shoot for the record. Legs did not want to own the guilt of putting a scoring mark ahead of Pops' chances for a new coaching contract. He was passing a ball around, letting the others do the shooting and trying to fit into the unfamiliar role of play-maker. But in his desire to help Pops, he was defeating his own purpose. His brand of pivot-play had been woven like a delicate stitch into the attack, and without it they were helpless and beaten. The old smooth tick-tock was gone and the machine sputtered and jerked and could not roll with its one-time consistency.

Berkley was jabbing that three-second zone again. Once they passed in, and the centerman weaved and sought to draw a foul. He passed out again. Around the horn; then he clicked another thrust down the middle. This time the crimson-clad faked a straightway lunge and then fired the leather. Alex drew in his breath sharply, noticing that Legs was perilously close to having a fourth foul called on him. The ball struck the backboard, and slammed through the netting. Berkley was ahead, 33-18.

"Stretch," Alex called. "Come here. You're going in for Legs."

Alex was conscious of heads jerking up and bitter eyes scolding him with hatred.



His own throat was lumpy and a desperateness pounded in him. He had to do something quick to save Legs from getting slicked into committing the maximum fouls. He looked at Stretch standing beside him, his lips thin and defying.

"Stretch, I'm putting you in because Legs isn't going to break any record the way he's trying to play it. He's not shooting enough, Stretch. He's also letting them sucker him into fouls and he won't last the rest of the quarter unless he's smartened up."

The kid stood there a minute seeming to battle his own thoughts. He wanted to be certain that the guy doing the slick work was not Alex.

"They are working a lot of monkey business with Legs," Stretch said finally. The tautness of his lips relaxed somewhat. "And you're right that Legs ain't shooting enough. . . ."

Stretch went in there, and Alex came out amid a howl of protest from the stands. Alex got to his feet, meeting Legs and throwing a sweat shirt over his shoulders.

"Sit next to me, Legs," he said. "There are some things that you and I should straighten out right now. . . ."

The game roared on. It was the Terriers storming up the boards, and Dave Oliver firing the leather into the pivot. Stretch crossed into the zone, whirling and sweeping the ball over his shoulder. There was a swish of the nets. The Crimson carried. In their desire to break quickly, somebody overlooked Stretch Novacks lingering in their territory. He darted forward suddenly, intercepting, and dribbled in, caging the bunny.

Berkley took it up again. Jeff Elliot raced along the sideline and gobbled a pass. He slashed in, leaping and letting go the one-handed shot. Dave Oliver was up there with him, slapping the sphere. Chuck Morse picked it up and the Terriers whirled away. Muff Ives pumped it

through. The Terriers came into possession on an out-of-bounds and Stretch put another deuce away from the keyhole circle. At the half, the Terriers were slashing and ripping at the gap in the score. They left the court, trailing 37-27.

In the dressing room Alex said: "There's an old rule about not breaking up a winning combination. But I'm putting Legs back in there because Stretch did his job. He showed that all you guys need to win is a pivot man who will shoot. That's your game and system, and you've built the attack around Legs." He stopped, turning to Lindsay, added: "G'wan back and break that scoring record wide open, Legs. You need nineteen points and these guys are going to help you get 'em."

Legs stared at Alex, a silly grin on his face, his eyes misty. "You're the coach," Legs said. "Our kind of coach."

They started out there then, and Alex clenched his fists and bit down on his lip and felt a wonderful tingle surge through him. They grinned and looked at him as though really seeing him for the first time.

A wail came from the throats of the fans when the lineup change was announced. They wanted Legs to get his crack at the record, of course, but they wanted the game more. This kid, Stretch Novacks, had put the blaze in the attack and now Alex was yanking him and putting Legs back in. They booed a little and Alex somehow didn't care how much they jeered or scorned him. This ball club was going to be even better with Legs in the pivot slot. . . .

The tip-off and the teams were tangling again. Legs guided the sphere to Dave Oliver and cut straight down the boards. He flung up his hands, and Chuck Morse hit him with the pass. Legs got it away, an overhead, two-handed shot. It nestled lazily into the netting.

Berkley poured more coal into its own attack, feeding into the corners, and then



moving the ball down the middle. There it was again, their pivotman, weaving and bobbing and looking for a foul at Legs' expense. Legs drew back a step, flung up an arm in a blocking gesture. The ref's whistle tooted. Alex's heart leaped, then seemed to drop back in place with relief.

The ref was shaking an accusing finger under the Berkley center's nose, calling a charging penalty on him. Legs walked to the free throw mark, throwing a glance at Alex, and winking. He dropped the charity toss cleanly through the webbing. He was sixteen points away from the Conference mark.

The Berkley siege gun, Jeff Elliot, drilled the hoop, pulling a sensational sideline toss. The crimson shifted its defense to meet the attack that they sensed would explode around Legs Lindsey. The pass-in was to Muff Ives and the forward came off the other end of a feint, shoveling the leather at Legs. Mike Kern maneuvered toward the circle, half crouching to stop the hook shot. Legs didn't hook. He faked it, and dribbled a spider web around Kern. He went straight in, laying the sphere away. Berkley 39, Carnie 30.

It went on from there, the battling soaked in thrills and hard, rough going. Berkley scored and Carnie leveled that one with a basket of their own. The score kept flashing a new set of figures, both teams hitting from all angles of the court. The third period ended, Berkley out in front, 48-41.

The hoarse holler of the crowd spilled in continuous waves of frenzied excitement now. There were the Terriers shaving away the Berkley margin and Legs Lindsey needing just eight points to crack the Conference scoring record.

Berkley took up the attack, and the leather slipped out of bounds. The Terriers were driving hard now, and probing for an opening. The defense edged warily toward Legs Lindsey. That was fine. Dave Oliver fed to Ziggy Briscoe, slipping

into the hole. He tossed up a set-shot, scoring. Berkley took some of the load off Lindsey's back, guarding the corners tightly. A pass-in to Legs and he whirled, and spun the leather through again.

A whistle had cut the crowd's roar short. The ref was shaking his head, refusing to allow the goal. Legs, in his eagerness to get the shot away, had shoved the defenseman. One more personal foul and he was finished.

Alex leaned forward on the bench, his own strength seeming to drain out of him. He was trembling, feeling an excitement that he himself had never quite experienced even as a player. He wanted that championship badly, but the feeling almost as urgent that Legs shatter the old scoring mark he'd put into the book.

The Berkley man tossed the free throw cleanly into the bucket. The Crimson led, 49-43.

Muff Ives winged under the basket and snared the pass, pushed it up against the backboard and through in one flowing motion. It seemed almost impossible for both teams to hold the scalding pace. There almost had to be a decisive break somewhere that would give one of them the drive to go on and win.

The Crimson surged. Jeff Elliot twisted and uncorked a heave. The ball ringed the iron, and Dave Oliver gobbled it. Legs Lindsey sniped from the pivot, made it good. Chuck Morse intercepted and the Terriers were pounding the boards again. Dave Oliver fainted Legs, and popped from deep court. A mighty lung blast signalling the Terrier comeback. They'd knotted the score at forty-nine.

Berkley fought back, savage in its determination to stop the game from slipping from their grasp. They'd had their turn at being red hot and now their shot making was a trifle off the target. Jeff Elliot took things into his own hands, whirling in and pulling the trigger on that



one-handed miracle shot he owned. But Dave Oliver was there, anticipating the play, and forcing the Berkley ace to yield ground and hurry the heave. He partially blocked it, and before Elliot could get back on the defense, the traffic was all ahead of him. The Terriers broke a pair against one man down the center slot. Ziggy Briscoe, too anxious, flubbed and the Carnie fans groaned. Then they were cheering wildly as Legs dove in and salted away the rebound. The Terriers were ahead, 51-49. Legs was a lone bucket shy of the new record.

The fans waited, the tenseness sealed in their throats. The noise subsided. Legs himself was feeling the pressure because he missed twice in succession. The minutes were dwindling down.

Berkley scored. Then it happened. Dave Oliver pumped the leather into the circle. Legs came out of a half crouch, and hooked. The ball went up there, seeming to have an ounce too much steam to connect. It struck against the backboard—trembled on the iron rim, and rolled through the netting.

Alex slouched back on the bench, the rush of a joyous tingle spilling through

him. He heard the crowd roaring, roaring in a ovation that he knew Legs Lindsey would never forget. And neither would he.

The game rode to its finish. The Terriers winning going away, 61-55. They were the Conference champions—at long last.

Alex sat there a moment, the din of all the jubilant Carnie rooters crashing around him. He lifted his head and it was as though the roar of the crowd was something new and strange to him. He'd taken their cheers back down the seasons, but the feeling inside him had been different. He knew he was really hearing the crowd's voice for the first time.

He got to his feet and walked slowly toward the dressing room. He told himself that he wouldn't mind leaving Carnie now. He'd have this game to remember, the game in which he knew he really found himself and became a coach in the real sense of the word. He'd partially paid his debt to Pops.

Alex pushed open the dressing room door, and there was the sound of laughter and rollicking voices. It was like old times, he thought, when Pops was on the



## PAYOFF CHUCKER

William Heuman's gripping story of a guy with a big league heart and a broken down wing, and one ninth inning pitch that was his ticket to glory—or oblivion!

## ONE MILE TO GLORY

Wallace Umphrey's tense tale of a crew, destined to lose—and a tough little pilot, hell-bent to win—in the roughest, thrill-a-second race on the river!

Plus—These sports specialists: Bill Erin, baseball; Walter Hecox, fight; W. H. Temple, tennis; Roe Richmond, Larry Donovan, John Drebingler, and many others!

All in the big June issue.  
On sale now!





job. He stepped inside and they were waiting for him.

Dave Oliver said, "Here he is, guys. Give."

They did, rocking the place with "Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here."

One of them was not singing. Legs was stepping out of the crowd toward Alex, his hand outstretched. Legs started to say something, but the words caught in his throat.

"You don't have to tell me, Legs," Alex said, taking his hand in a firm clasp. "We both learned a thing or two tonight." He grinned. "I learned the most, Legs."

"I'm almost sorry I broke the darn scoring record," Legs said. "A great guy held that mark."

Alex smiled. He knew that another player would come along to break the new mark Legs had put in the book. There'd always be a new record rolling off the presses.

A voice at Alex's shoulder said, "Come with me, Alex."

Alex turned, looking straight at Prexy Martin. "This one was the greatest, sir," he said softly. "Better than any I played in myself."

Prexy nodded, motioning Alex to follow. "There's quite a surprise awaiting you."

Alex followed Prexy Martin into the office behind the dressing room. There was a surprise, all right—Pops Grissom sitting behind his desk, a yard-wide grin on his face.

Alex stared and Pops, seeing the expression on his face, laughed. "They couldn't keep me away from this one, Alex. Didn't see the whole game, but enough to satisfy me."

"I'm glad, Pops," Alex said. "A championship without you being here wouldn't seem right."

Pops said, "It wouldn't have mattered whether you won or lost insofar as wanting you to stay at Carnie is concerned,

Alex. Prexy and I made up our minds on that before the game."

"I'll stick around as your assistant for the next dozen years, Pops," Alex said quietly. "And consider myself the luckiest guy in the world."

Pops laughed again. "Not as my assistant, but as head coach."

Alex felt something happen to his breathing. "But it's silly for you to quit now, Pops. You'll be in top shape again for next season, and you've got a new contract. . . ."

"I'm old, Alex," Pops cut in. "I wanted one more championship, and I got it—rather, you got it for me. It's been a long while since that has happened. Some of the folks were getting a little impatient with me and I wouldn't have wanted to leave Carnie sorta second-class."

Prexy Martin winked at Alex. "It's in the bag, Alex. The Athletic Board will approve your selection." He laughed good-naturedly. "You know, I'm really the big wheel around here."

"And a pretty wonderful big wheel," Alex said.

There was more chat and then the newspapermen came in. Alex stood there while Pops talked to them.

"By the way," Pops said at one point, "it was really Alex who made these boys champions. He did the hard work and I just stood around and tried to look impressive."

Alex said, "Don't believe that stuff, guys. Pops made this club champions, He. . . ."

"Alex," Pops said, waving him down, "there are things that belong just to us coaches."

Alex nodded and started toward the door. A newspaperman said: "Hey Alex, wait a minute. We wanna talk to you about. . . ."

"In a little while," Alex said. "First, I want to make sure that everything is okay with my team."





# ALL-SPORTS QUIZ

By M. KANE

SOME of the correspondence we've received suggests we're not too sharp. Who is, these days? It seems that the shortest fight on record was not Al Foreman's kayo of Ruby Levine in eleven and one half seconds, including count, as we reported some months ago. A Canadian correspondent remembered a bout in Maine that ended in a kayo in ten and one half seconds, in 1946—Al Couture over Ralph Watson. It still is a wonderful way to make a buck. In the meantime, the Kane second chin is out for twenty more swipes—slug away, gents, and score yourselves as indicated. (Answers on page 77.)

## Baseball

1. You pitch to this guy—a curve thrown three-quarters overarm—and he whiffs. What's his weakness? *One out.*
2. The next guy up is a banjo hitter. Does this mean he's an easy out, since the rules require he use a bat? *Second out.*
3. Third man pushes a bunt between first and second. From which side of the platter? *Third out.*
4. As a pitcher, with men on, you would prefer a right-handed first baseman—because lefthanders are a little crazy? *If you got the first three, this puts you on base. Otherwise you're still throwing, and a correct answer will get you an out.*
5. Who were the Bridegrooms? (Before they married the old bat and became—what?) *If you haven't got the side out—and miss this—score it as a homer for the other guy. Otherwise it's a homer—or a whiff—for your side.*

*Golf (Score 1 round for each correct answer—thus, 5 answers will see you through finals, 4—semi-finals, etc.)*

6. Bogey is something every top-notch golfer lies awake worrying about. True?
7. True or false—it (bogey) is particularly important in match play.
8. Wooden clubheads are made of the finest briar, huh?

9. How many titles are included in golf-dom's famed "Grand Slam?"
10. What is the origin of "caddie"?

## Basketball (Score as indicated, either for yourself or opponent)

11. What is the minimum number of players per team, in play? *Six points.*
12. True or false—the visiting team generally supplies its own ball, to be used during one half of the contest. *Five points.*
13. True or false—a perfect shot will drop through the basket without touching the netting. *A foul—one point.*
14. True or false—it is impossible for even a professional team to be "too good." Sustain your answer with example. *Ten.*
15. True or false—an active forward will cover more territory in the course of a game than a cross-country runner. *Five.*

## Miscellany (Score 1 for each)

16. What game uses "the first rush"?
17. True or false—jumping is the most perilous form of skiing.
18. Swimming is the one sport in which women equal men—true or false?
19. What's Canada's national game?
20. What method was used by the Indians to determine the number of players on each team in their original version of lacrosse?



# ROOKIE FROM

**A**N EXPECTANT buzz rippled through the vast Bear Stadium. The Bears, trailing two-one in the sixth, were in a good spot to get themselves some runs. They had two men on, nobody out—and tall, willowy Duke Dixon was striding to the plate.

Suddenly, down in the Bear dugout, a big, rawboned kid jumped to his feet. His raucous voice blasted the serene atmosphere.

"You're the baby, Duke! Bust that thing, Duke, old keed! Move 'em around, boy, old boy!"

Players looked up with traces of annoyance. Bubs Bovard, ample-hipped first sacker, snorted, "A hog caller we got on the bench. A great talent goin' to waste."

Moose Jeffrey grunted, "Yuh know, maybe that's what they pay him for—a one-man cheering squad for Dixon."

Sad Sam Gressett affected great surprise. "Yuh mean they *pay* him! Hell, I thought he was the mascot or some-thin'."

The big, rawboned kid sat down, a puzzled, vaguely hurt expression in his blue eyes. Back where he'd come from, a guy could sound off any time he felt the urge. But then, this was the big time. And the big time, he supposed, was different.

His name was Johnny Burns, and he was nineteen years old. He'd come to the Bears as one part of a double purchase from the independent Class A Panthers. The other part was Duke Dixon.

The Duke was something of a sensation. He'd led the Border League last year with a .410 average and thirty-nine home runs. Half a dozen major league clubs had angled for him. The Bears had

evidently offered the highest price, reported to be fifty thousand dollars.

That, the fans could understand. The Duke was a nice piece of baseball goods, befitting the array of top-priced talent gathered by owner Frank Kenyon's fat purse.

But why, they asked, buy the Burns kid too? Had the Panthers thrown him in for free, or what?

Sometimes Johnny Burns wondered himself. He'd certainly busted no records in the minors. In two seasons he'd hit a little under .300, had performed his outfield chores in a steady but not spectacular manner. No one had been more amazed than he at his sale to the big league Bears.

He remembered the day Hap Perry had called him in to give him the news. Grizzled old Hap was more than just field manager of the Panthers. He owned a big share. The stockholders let him run the outfit, and his word was law. It was Hap, Johnny knew, who had sold him to the Bears.

He knew Hap liked him pretty well. The old manager had taught him plenty of baseball in those two years. But even then Hap's words startled him a little.

"I want you to remember, Johnny. Those guys up there . . . they put their pants on the same way you do. Keep swingin', kid!"

It was a nice sendoff from Hap. But it didn't make a lot of sense, either. He wouldn't be playing "up there" for some time yet. By all the rules, he'd be farmed out the first year anyway.

But the season was a month old now, and here he was, still wearing a Bear uniform. It was a funny deal, all the way.

And the craziest part of all—he wasn't

By **NELSON A. HUTTO**



# NOWHERE



*A rookie without a chance — a team without a future—together they fought into that last fateful ninth—the inning where pennants are made!*



He hurtled into second—the ball was just coming in.

even sure he liked it, this new feeling.

Back with the Panthers, he'd been able to enjoy his two greatest pleasures—friends and baseball. You could always stir up a bull session on short notice. There'd been a trio of country boys who,

like himself, preferred dominoes to bridge. And he'd played ball every day. All in all, it had been a good life.

Here, he rode the bench. And if he had any friends, he hadn't noticed it. The Bears treated him with lofty coolness.



Even Duke Dixon, his old Panther mate, didn't seem to have much time for him. The Duke was a businesslike young man with a reputation to uphold, and working very hard at it.

It was all rather bewildering, Johnny decided. He'd had his ambitions, like any kid busher. He'd dreamed of being up there some day. But somehow this wasn't the way he'd pictured it. . . .

There was a moan from the stands. Duke Dixon had just hit a feeble roller to short, an easy double play. The Duke came in, shaking his head.

"It's the old averages, kid," Johnny told him. "You'll give that thing a ride next time."

The Duke didn't answer. His handsome dark eyes were unhappy. The first three weeks he'd lived up to all notices. He'd blasted the long ones to all corners. Then suddenly his big bat had gone sour. In five days he'd had two hits. And for a guy who was supposed to make 'em forget Mize and Williams, that wasn't good.

Oddly enough, the team had been slipping, too. And that was cause for comment. Frank Kenyon, a very rich young man, had bought the Bears, then set about to buy a pennant. He'd got Moose Jeffrey from the Lions, Lew Hagan from the Sox, paying fabulous sums for the two power hitters. He'd given the Grays a cool hundred thousand for Hex Hamner, slightly aging but still crafty southpaw. Other trades and purchases had been effected. The Bears were loaded. They were out to break the long reign of the champion Cougars.

But after winning eight of the first ten games, they'd hit the skids. They were four games behind the Cougars now, and about to be overtaken by the Falcons in this series.

Lew Hagan was up there. The chunky third baseman was bad medicine with that stick. But his best effort now was a

hard drive to center for the third out.

Sad Sam Gressett was working for the Bears. The loose-jointed right hander got the first man. Then Duke Dixon misjudged a high one in right, and it went for a cheap double. Sam gave the Duke a morose stare, and proceeded to pitch four straight balls. The next two hitters plastered his curves, but brilliant catches in center and left saved him.

The Bears came in, and Moose Jeffrey said, "I'm gettin' on this trip, mates. Somebody push old Moose around, and we'll be on our way."

It sounded a little silly, Johnny thought. But moments later the big guy was roosting on first with a single. Bubs Bovard waddled up and planted a base hit in center. Tony Cassina, wasp-waisted short-stop, struck out swinging, but Waddy Pate, the catcher, managed to wait out a walk, and they had the bases full. Sad Sam started out.

"Hold it, Sam." Jim Cordray, the Bear manager, was on his feet. "All right, Burns. You're hitting."

Johnny nearly fell off the bench. Twice in a month he'd been out there, both times on the tag end of a lost ball game when it didn't matter. Now they were calling on him in the big clutch!

**H**E GOT hold of a bat, still a little dazed. Then he was walking out there, feeling very lonely in front of fifty thousand people.

He stepped into the box, and his knees weren't behaving too well. Solly Morton, the Falcon curve baller, looked him over, taking a lot of time. Then the pitch rode down the slot, and the umpire's "Strike!" sounded dim and far away.

Johnny knocked dirt from his spikes, very casually. But inside, his heart was going like a hammer. That thing had looked about the size of a taw marble.

The next one nipped the outside, but a bit low, Johnny thought. The ump



called it good. The crowd groaned. Somebody in the boxes howled, "Take a cut anyway, yah bum!"

Morton fed him the jughandle curve, a foot wide. Johnny let it go, smiling faintly. The guy must think he was a sucker for sure. The fast one was good, and he struck, tipping it to the wire. The tension was dropping away. He was getting the feel up there, after so many idle days.

He fouled off another one, and then the really big one came in there, letter high. Johnny shifted, sensing the wicked break in time. He swung smoothly, leveling off with a snap of big wrists. The wood took hold. He heard the startled thunder as he ran, and he knew it was tagged for extra bases. He hurtled into second with an unnecessary slide. The ball was just coming in.

He got up, grinning a little at the noise in the stands. Three runs were in, and the Bears were in front, four-two.

But that was all. Mayer and Stewart went down on fly balls. Johnny walked to the dugout.

Jim Cordray met him. "Good lick, Burns. Take right field."

Johnny trotted out, soberly thoughtful. He'd never been able to figure out the lean, narrow-eyed man who managed the Bears. Cordray rarely said anything to him. His performance at training camp had been passable, no more. The manager, he felt, hadn't been impressed. Yet, the man had kept him.

It was a puzzle, Johnny figured, any way you looked at it.

Fireman Truax was in there now for the Bears. The old dippy-do artist had the Falcons swinging early. Two of them went down on ground balls, and then the hitter teed off with a drive to right. Johnny pulled it down with a nice running catch. The bleacher bugs noised their approval.

At the bench, Duke Dixon grinned, a

little weakly. "You keep on, and I'll be sitting here all the time."

"Not a chance, kid," Johnny said, honestly enough.

Morton set the Bears down in order, and they went back. The Fireman got the first two Falcons on easy pops, then yielded a single. Bettencort, a dangerous hitter, was given a walk. The next man went after a bad one and dribbled it toward third. Lew Hagan charged in on it, and his throw was a fraction late. The bases were loaded.

A left hander came up, a pull hitter by his stance. Johnny moved over toward the foul line. The guy slammed a two-two pitch. The ball described a vicious hook into deep right.

Johnny was running at the crack of the bat. It was going to be awfully close, he knew. Then, eyeing the ball over his shoulder, he suddenly knew he wouldn't make it.

He figured the thing in a flash. If he made a futile leap for the catch, he'd lose a vital split second on the recovery. All three runners would score, and the Falcons would be ahead by a run. By playing the rebound quick and clean, he'd surely cut off the third man, and the count would only be tied.

He checked himself a little, to get set for the rebound. The ball hit, fair by inches, smashed into the wall and caromed off crazily. Johnny grabbed, missed it. He'd miscalculated; the fence was closer than he'd realized. Frantically, he chased the ball down, turned and threw. The relay stopped the hitter at third, but the damage was done. The Falcons were ahead, five-four.

The Fireman retired the next man on strikes, and they went in for their last chance. Johnny shook his head. "Charge the big one to me, gents. Maybe we can get 'em. . . ."

He didn't finish. No one, he noticed, was listening.



Bubs Bovard growled, to nobody in particular, "Any man has a right to a bobble now and then. But when he's too scared to try. . . ."

Moose Jeffrey drawled, "Them concrete walls are plenty mean, pal. Some guys just don't like to tangle with 'em . . . even when a catch would save the ball game."

Johnny sat down, his eyes bleak. Anyway, that didn't leave much doubt about how he rated. When a guy couldn't even get a decent benefit of the doubt, he might as well quit hoping.

He was still trying to shake off the low feeling when he went up there, minutes later. There was one down, Bubs was on second and Waddy on first with a walk and a single. It was a mighty fine chance to get rid of some of the bitter taste.

Maybe he was trying too hard. The pitch came in, breaking over the pan just right, the kind he liked. He lashed into it, aiming for the bleachers. It was straight to the shortstop's hands—for a double play, and the ball game.

In the dressing room, Bubs Bovard tossed a glove at his locker. "That one, pals, oughta put us in the market for a right fielder."

Sad Sam came out of the shower. "We had to buy a busher to get a busher—and it looks like we lost all around."

Johnny looked up with a puzzled frown.

Waddy Pate said mildly, "Easy, Sam. The kid gave us three runs with that double."

"Then gave 'em right back," Moose snorted. "And hit into a double play at the payoff. A stirring performance."

Lew Hagan laughed mirthlessly. "Dixon and Burns, the pride of the Panthers—the double play kids."

Johnny wasn't hearing them. He was still looking at Sad Sam. He walked over to the pitcher. "Say that again, mister. Somethin' tells me I didn't hear it right."

Sam said, "It's pretty simple, sonny. This ball club paid fifty grand for Dixon. And every chucker in the league'll soon know what we know already—he can't hit a low outside hook, and. . . ."

"I mean. . . ." Johnny's voice was a little strained, "that riddle about you bought a busher to get one."

Sam looked at Bubs uncertainly. "You reckon he really don't know about that?"

Bubs shrugged. "Maybe not. We got it from a leak in the office, remember." He looked at Johnny. "I'll give it straight, Burns. The Panthers were pulling some-thin' cute. They were holding out for a deal on Dixon—the team that got Dixon had to take you too. Kenyon didn't like it, but he wanted Dixon, plenty. So he shelled out an extra ten grand. . . ."

Duke blurted, "So that's why the Bears gote me, instead of the Cougars. . . ."

Lew Hagan grunted, "For my money, chum, the Cougars can have you yet."

Moose put in. "You might as well get all of it, Burns. In the sale agreement, Cordray couldn't farm you out—not till he gave you a month's trial. I dunno what kind of drag you had with that Panther outfit, but it musta been good." He shook his head, a little wearily. "Maybe we shouldn't hold that against you, personal. But in my book of rules, that's a hell of a way to back into the big leagues."

Slowly, a little numbly, Johnny said, "I get it, fella. You don't have to draw diagrams."

He got it. He understood now why he'd been Mister Zero with this outfit all along.

But inside the stunned hurt, there was a small core of anger, too. He said, "Anyway, you won't have to bother long. The month's about up, and I'll be goin' back to the sticks . . . where I belong. And I can't exactly say I'm sorry. There's a lot of guys down there that make a lot better company than I been enjoyin' around here."

He walked to his locker. For a fare-



well speech to the big time, maybe that wasn't much, but it would have to do. . . .

**T**HEY went out next day to finish the series with the Falcons. The Duke was back in the lineup, trying grimly to regain his lost glory. And Johnny hoped he would somehow do it. The Duke still had that low swing that was pretty to watch. Surely, an outfit like the Bears had coaches who could show a guy how to hit those hooks.

The tall kid did all right. He struck out the first two times, but he came back in the seventh with two on and smashed one into the upper tier in right. Those three runs were what the Bears needed. They edged the Falcons, six-five, and they were still hanging on to second place.

They took the road West, and on the train Johnny had lots of time to himself, time to think. He thought about Hap Perry, a great old guy who had somehow rated him big league stuff. Hap had been trying to give him the big break, a quick push upstairs. And there was a funny twist of irony in that, too. Because the way he'd done it had marked Johnny Burns as a phony from the start.

They played the lowly Grays. They got plenty of hits and put fifteen men on the bases. But they left an even dozen of them stranded, and in the eighth the infield went haywire, and the Grays chased over four runs. It was enough. The Bears

had finally lost the ball game, four-three.

Hex Hamner throttled the Gray bats in the second game, but the Bears did nothing right in the final and lost, seven-one. Baseball's supermen, Johnny thought, were looking mighty ragged around the edges. There was something wrong, he decided, when the best talent you could buy went out there and looked like a patched-up collection of bushers.

Not that it concerned him much. The Bears were bringing up a clouting star named Wetzel from a Double A farm, he understood. His own days with the Bears were short.

He worried, though, about Duke Dixon. The tall kid was in a slump for sure. Since that home run, he'd got one scratchy single, no more. He was looking more harried and desperate every day.

After the Grays series, Johnny told him, "You're pressing, kid. Loosen up and take your old easy cut, and they'll start ridin' again."

The Duke peered at him sourly. "Look, pal. You rode into the majors on my wagon. You queered my sale to the Cougars. Maybe it wasn't your idea . . . but you oughta see why your advice don't cheer me much. From here on out, just stick to your own troubles, and I'll handle mine."

He walked away, leaving Johnny too stunned for anger. . . .

The Bears moved on. They dropped



**A CLUE FOR YOU**

*IF it's mystery and adventure you want in your radio listening fare, just tune to these programs.*

**QUICK AS A FLASH**  
Sundays, 5:30 p.m., EST.

Detective drama for quiz fans

**NICK CARTER**

Sundays, 6:30 p.m., EST.

Lon Clark as radio's Nick Carter

**SHERLOCK HOLMES**

Sundays, 7:00 p.m., EST.

Conan Doyle's stories dramatized

**THE FALCON**

Mondays, 8:00 p.m., EST.

Romance mixed with murder

**QUIET PLEASE**

Mondays, 9:30 p.m., EST.

By W. Cooper, writer of "Lights Out"

**MYSTERIOUS TRAVELLER**

Tuesdays, 8:00 p.m., EST.

Eerie and supernatural tales

**RACKET SMASHERS**

Wednesdays, 9:30 p.m., EST.

Experts counteract crime

Check local newspaper program listings against possible variations in broadcast schedules.

**MUTUAL BROADCASTING SYSTEM, INC.**



three straight to the Sox, and they were in third place. In the last game there was plenty of loose play, but the Duke was the goat. He dropped a fly ball in the sun to let in two runs. He fanned twice to retire the side with men on base.

They went inside in a snarling mood. Moose Jeffrey declared, "If that Wetzel guy don't get here pretty soon, we'll be in the cellar."

Bubs Bovard laughed harshly. "The fifty thousand dollar fluke!" He addressed Duke Dixon. "How many hits you had in a week, slugger?"

There was a silence, then a few laughs, none pleasant. The Duke stood there, white-lipped, and said nothing. In a week he'd had no hits at all.

Johnny got up. He never knew why he did it, but there was something inside, swelling, pushing the words out. He said to Bubs, "That's right, Bovard, blame the Duke. Take it out on a rookie, a kid that's too scared and mixed up to fight back. But that still don't explain why you're losing ball games."

He eyed them, almost fiercely. "You wanta know why! Individually, you're the greatest outfit in baseball. As a team, you stink. There's too many guys figurin' how their record's gonna stack up, how much dough they can demand next year. . . . That Kenyon guy sorta went at it wrong, pals. You can buy a million dollars worth of baseball stars—but you can't buy a team."

Bubs sputtered, "Why, you damn bushier—"

"I've seen plenty of bushers that could tell you things, pal, about winnin' ball games—how you gotta have nine men pullin' together, watchin' the runs on the scoreboard instead of the box scores in the papers." He paused, feeling a little silly all at once, and finished weakly, "I guess that's all, gents. From a guy that's on his way to nowhere, I guess it's enough."

Bubs growled, "I've a good mind to

take a punch at that silly face of—"

"I wouldn't advise it, mister—no unless you got hospital insurance." It was Duke Dixon, suddenly standing close to Johnny. "This Burns kid can do more with his fist than throw a baseball."

The Duke's voice was strangely calm, and the fearful, harried look was gone from his dark eyes. "I'll tell you something else about him. If the Bears let him go, they're gonna lose lots of ball players. I'm not kidding myself. I . . . I'm on my way out, and I know it. Maybe I'll learn to hit them hooks and come back . . . maybe not. But if the Bears keep Johnny Burns, they won't lose anything on that sixty thousand bucks. Hap Perry knew that all the time. Hap never cheated anybody yet, and—"

"The rest of that speech will keep, Dixon."

They turned, startled. Jim Cordray stood just inside the door. The manager's lean face was haggard. He could have been standing there for some time.

He said, "Al Wetzel is joining us in a couple of days. Until then. . . ." He looked at Johnny. "You talk good baseball, Burns. We'll see how it looks in action—against the Cougars tomorrow."

He was out there next afternoon, and the half-scared, shaky feeling wouldn't leave. He had just one day to earn something good to carry back with him—or carry a sour taste for a long time to come.

It was the last of the second, without a score. Hex Hamner with the cunning left arm was holding the Cougar bats in check, thus far. Jim Cordray had thrown Hex in there today because this was one the Bears had to win.

The series was a showdown. The Cougars were riding high, far in front. The Bears were on the sled. A rough shove from the Cougars—and they'd probably slide right into the second division. If the Bears had any pennant stuff in them, this was the time to show it.



**H**EX worked without haste, a thin, dour, imperturbable man. He retired Revilla, a .350 clouter, on a ground ball. He struck out the fearsome Nils Thormalen. Then the next hitter got hold of one, pointing it to right center.

Johnny started for it, and for a horrible instant he lost it in the tricky background of the towering stands. Then the ball rocketed into the clear sky, traveling far and fast. Still running full tilt, Johnny leaped, and a sob of relief escaped his lips. By some miracle, the ball had stuck in the webbing of his glove.

He walked in, seeing the curious stares, wondering if they knew how fearfully close it had been. He didn't have much time to think, however. He was first up.

Hal Verde was on the hill. He was the Cougars' best, a big, red-haired man with a tireless arm and a world of savvy. The Cougars wanted this game, too.

Verde poured the automatic strike in there, and Johnny had to take it. He let a bad one go, then fouled an inside pitch into the dirt. Verde seemed to freeze at the top of his windup, and then his right arm whipped out. The ball blazed right down the groove. Johnny swung, stood there a moment, gaping foolishly. He'd missed a wide hook by a good foot.

He went back, and Bubs snorted, "Wotta swing!"

Moose drawled, "Reminds me of a rusty gate we had on the farm."

They came to the bottom of the fourth, and there was still no score. The Bears were touching Verde very meagerly, and Hex Hamner had allowed no Cougar past first.

Pogue, leading off for the Cougars, rapped out a single behind short. Revilla topped one down third base line. Rushing, Hagan made the play at first, Pogue advancing to second.

Thormalen was up. His big bat flashed on the second pitch, smashing a low drive

to dead right. Pogue tagged up, waiting. Johnny was coming in, throttle wide open. The ball was diving fast, pulled by the powerful overspin. He stretched his arms. He had it. . . .

And then a most unaccountable thing happened. One spiked shoe snagged the turf too heavily, pitching him off balance. The ball slammed into his shoulder as he fell, rolling. He scrambled to his feet and chased it down, far over toward the screaming stands. He straightened and fired it in. Waddy took it and threw to third—all to no avail. Pogue was in with the run, and Thormalen was on third.

Thin face expressionless, Hex struck out the next two men, and they went in.

Lew Hagan said, "There's your big run, pals. We better start gettin' it back. It ain't gonna be easy."

Moose snarled, "That Hap Perry might be a good judge of horse meat, but I can see he don't know much about ball players."

Color flooded Johnny's face. His fists tightened. A guy didn't have to take so much—

Then he sat down, the anger suddenly gone. It came to him all at once, the cold, hard truth. In a sense, Moose was right. It all paraded across his mind with strange clarity. *Keep swingin', kid.* Hap's parting words. Hap had believed in him, with a faith stronger than reason. And Hap had been trying to tell him—he had to believe in himself! Somehow the words had never meant much to him—up to now.

His mouth hardened. He wouldn't be around here much longer, just an hour or so. But somewhere in that brief slice of time, he'd get his chance—a chance to square things with Hap. For five innings, anyway, he was going to be the kind of ball player Hap Perry had sent to the big leagues. . . .

He heard a dull *crack* and looked up. Bubs was going into first with a single. Johnny got up and went on deck.



Cassina bunted, a surprising thing, since there was one down. He was out, but Bubs was safe at second. Johnny stepped in there, a grim little smile touching his narrowed eyes. Two down, the tying run on second. He hadn't had to wait long!

He watched Verde, and he had a feeling. It was dangerous business, doping the pitch ahead, but the hunch was too strong.

He slid his hands up the bat handle. And when the first pitch came in, the old power ball riding the inside groove, he was ready. He flicked the bat, letting Verde's speed furnish the power. The ball sailed beautifully over the infield, into the hole between right and center. Johnny hit the dirt at second, got up, and saw Bubs walking serenely to the dugout—*with the Bears' first run.*

It went to the last of the sixth with the score still tied.

Hex retired the side without much difficulty. The Bears came in, and the air was unmistakably glum.

Johnny said, bristling a little, "What the heck, we ain't through yet. They still play nine innings in this league, don't they?"

Bubs regarded him sourly. "Siddown and rest, Burns. One lucky base hit don't entitle you to give lectures."

Hagan said, "Justa same, the kid's notion sorta appeals to me. I'm gonna see what can be done."

He walked out and nailed the second pitch for a double against the left field wall. Moose made Verde work, but the redhead finally got him, on a third strike across the knees. Bubs caught a piece of one, and the left fielder took it for the second out. Then Tony Cassina went up and amazed everybody, including himself, by scratching one between third and short.

Johnny stepped in there. It had to be this way somehow. The fates had singled him out this day—to be a ball player or a bum.

He waited, loose and ready. Verde cut a corner, tossed a wide one. Johnny made no offer. Verde stretched, paused, and fired. It whistled down the slot, a little high. It broke across the letters, maybe a shade outside. Johnny stepped into it, feeling the rhythmic flow of power all the way from his heels. The solid shock traveled up his arms, and he knew before he'd run five steps—they didn't build fences far enough for that kind.

He trotted around the bases, and the Bears were in front of the dugout to meet him, grinning a little sheepishly.

Moose shook his head, incredulous. "I could see that thing break, all the way from here. That Verde never threw a better one."

Jim Cordray said quietly, "Perry told me that kid could hit real curve-ball pitching. I guess Perry knew."

After that, it was hard to believe. Charlie Mayer went up and blasted the first pitch on a hit-and-run. Waddy, with a fat lead off second, scored standing up, and Hex went to third. The Cougars held court, trying to reassure Verde, then scattered again. Clint Stewart got in a one-two hole, then swung on a bad one. It trickled toward short, an easy out—and Revilla picked it up and threw it into the stands! Hex scored to bring the count to six-four. And Verde, fuming, walked off the field.

In the last of the ninth, the Cougars made a dying gesture. Thormalen crashed one out for two bases, and the next man eked out a walk. Then after two pop-ups, the Cougars sent in a pinch hitter. The guy got hold of one and cannoned it to right center.

Johnny went back, spikes flying. He turned his head, eye fastened on the ball. He found an extra burst of speed, then soared, glove taloned to the sky. The ball spat into the leather—and then a giant mallet slammed him down. He staggered to his feet, tossed the ball to Stewart,



wobbled, and then fell on his face. . . .

The lights came back on, and he found himself sitting up on the rubbing table, blinking through a fog. Then a lot of anxious faces emerged out of the haze.

Moose was saying, "Yuh didn't have to do it, kid. We had the damn ball game sewed up anyhow."

Bubs said gravely, "We might as well own it, pals. The guy's a ball player. All we need is eight more like him."

Lew Hagan said, "We got 'em pal."

He grinned at Johnny. "You did it, kid. This crew'll be pullin' together from here on out—and I don't think them Cougars'll ever be quite the same again."

"I was thinkin'," Bubs grinned. "You just missed a record, kid—four for four

in your first full game in the majors."

Johnny said, "I don't guess it matters much. We won the ball game."

There was a short silence. Then Jim Cordray said, "Hap told me about you, kid. He told me the records wouldn't give the story . . . that you were the greatest team and clutch player he'd ever had . . . but I couldn't believe him." He stopped, smiling quietly. "You were kinda to blame, kid. You never seemed to realize you were a real big leaguer."

Johnny said, "About Wetzels?"

Cordray's smile widened. "On reserve duty. But we won't be needing him much. In right field we're fixed—with Burns."

Johnny grinned slowly. Hap, he guessed, would be proud of him now.

## — Answers to All-Sports Quiz —

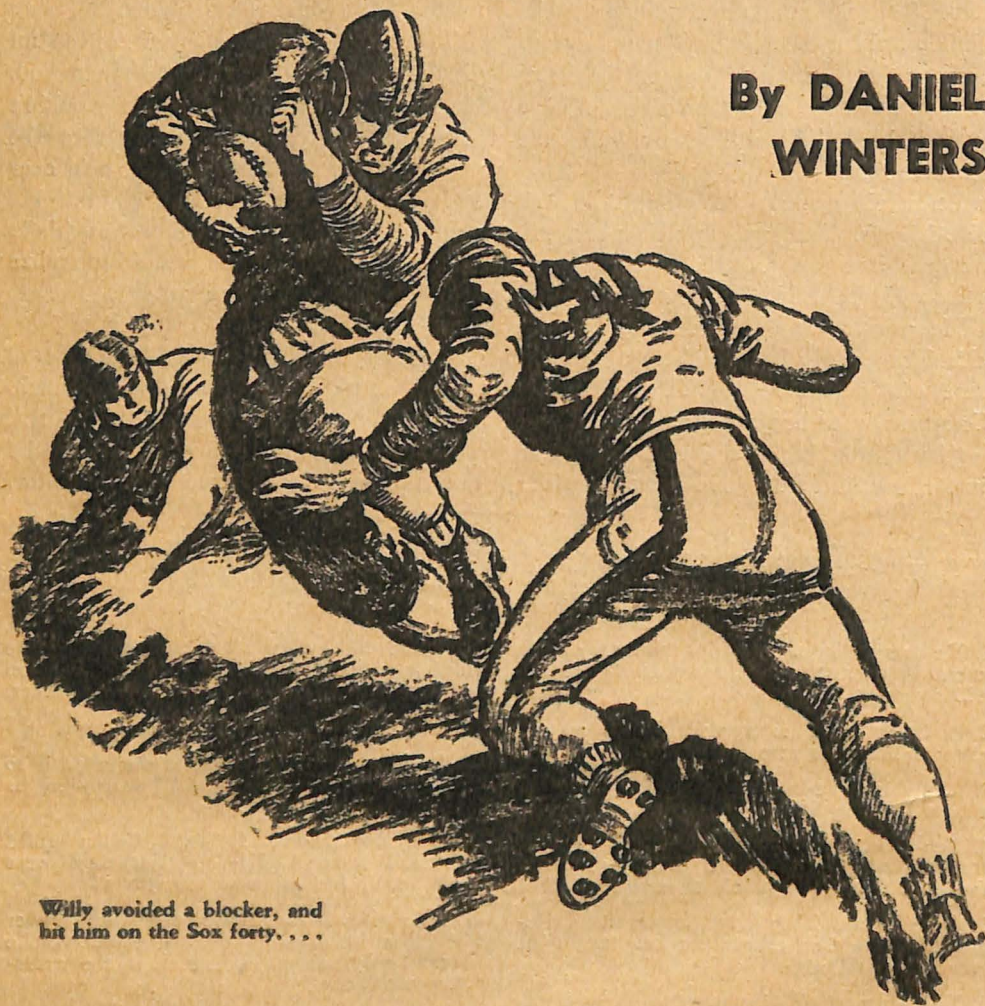
(Questions on page 67)

1. He doesn't like to reach for them around the knees. A curve thrown three-quarters overarm will dip down and out.
2. A banjo hitter is a place hitter, an unpleasant fellow as seen from the mound.
3. Batter is right-handed. A lefty would *drag* a bunt between first and second.
4. You would be crazy. A right-handed first sacker would have to shift in order to make throw on force play at either second or third.
5. The Bums. They were known as Bridegrooms before their ever-loving fans taught 'em how to—uh—Dodge.
6. No top-notch golfer would worry about bogey. Bogey means a few strokes over par, a sort of special par for the average dufer to aim at.
7. Match play is decided on number of holes won or lost—hence, neither par nor bogey matter.
8. Wooden club heads are made of persimmon.
9. Four—British and American Amateur and Open championships.
10. One version is that Mary Queen of Scots originated the term while playing in France—she had "cadets" chasing her pill. This was corrupted to "caddie" by her subjects.
11. Minimum number of players is—one. A game on record was won by a sole survivor, left on the court with four minutes to go and the score tied, when all his teammates were ruled out on fouls. He held the opposition scoreless while sinking a foul and a two-pointer.
12. The ball is supplied by the home team.
13. False—the net, according to the rules, is so constructed as to halt the ball briefly in its passage.
14. The professional Original Celtics ruled basketball from 1918-1928—when they were ruled out of the league as too strong!
15. An active forward will cover something over five miles in the course of a game. While courses vary, about six miles is the cross-country distance.
16. The "first rush" in roller polo performs, roughly, the same function as center jumper in basketball.
17. The Flying Kilometer, not the jump, is considered the riskiest form of skiing. Skiers hit speed of about ninety m.p.h. over iced course on lead-weighted skis.
18. Men hold the records—but women look better. Take your pick.
19. Lacrosse—by legislation.
20. There was no limit on starting number of players. Hence, since a couple of hundred braves might start on either side, scoring at the start was well-nigh impossible—and no attempt was made to score until each team had cleared the field by crippling as many opposition players as possible.



**"There's only one sure thing about football, kid. You gotta cross that last white line—alone!"**

**By DANIEL  
WINTERS**



**Willy avoided a blocker, and hit him on the Sox forty. . . .**

## **HELL ON CLEATS**

**W**ILLY PALMER sat in the doctor's office without his pants. His left leg was extended upon the examining table and the doctor was probing at it gently. The doctor finally nodded, then looked at several x-ray pictures for a few moments.

Willy was a very large young man with

black hair and a nice face. There was an amusing smile upon his mouth, now, as he looked in turn at the other men in the room.

Pop Jordan was getting a little heavy around the middle. The great coach had left quite a few years behind him, and their mark was in his eyes, on his creased



face. His eyes were sympathetic rather than anxious as he followed the doctor's movements.

The other two men were as alike as giant peas in an enormous pod. They were both over six feet in height and two hundred and fifty pounds in weight. They both wore expensive camel's hair coats, and each head sported a gray felt hat turned down on one side. Their faces were fat and red and identical. They were the famous Fabry twins, Ivan and Evan. It struck Willy funny that they should own most of the peanuts in the country. It made them extremely wealthy men, and it almost put them in even closer kinship to the elephant. It was the first year they had owned the Cubs.

The doctor looked up, then, and shrugged his shoulders. "The leg looks fine. The break is almost four months old, and it has healed perfectly. It was a bad break, but it's come along nobly."

One of the Fabry brothers—Willy thought it might be Ivan—said, "What we want to know is, can he play football?"

The other brother, who, if Willy's first guess had been correct, perforce must be Evan, said, "On Sunday."

"I don't see why not. The leg is just as strong as it ever was." He looked at Willy. "How does it feel?"

Willy said, "Fine. All this is unnecessary. I've been running on it, working out, for a month. Certainly I can play on Sunday."

Pop Jordan said, "I just wanted to be sure. I didn't want it to get any worse. I've seen kids with bad legs get crippled when they used them too soon."

Ivan Fabry said, "Over three months is not too soon."

Evan Fabry said, "For a leg to heal. At these prices."

Willy put his pants on. He said, "So, okay. Sunday we play. I'll earn some of that money."

"Fifteen thousand dollars a season,"

Ivan said, looking at him thoughtfully.

Evan said, "For nothing. For getting a leg broken before the season starts."

Willy said, "You can afford it. Sell another bag of peanuts. Get acquainted with some people who have elephants."

Ivan said, "That is not funny."

Evan said, "At all."

They turned with one motion and went out the door. Willy looked after them and shook his head. "Those kids kill me."

"They would like to kill me," Pop Jordan said. "They figure it's my fault, that I hit you on the leg with a club, or something. That fifteen thousand bucks worries them. They want a little work for it."

"Sure. I don't blame them. It's a lot of dough to throw out for nothing." The situation had worried Willy, too. He had come out of school with a terrific reputation. All-America for two years—one of the greatest running backs the East had ever seen. The Cubs had drawn him in the draft, and with all the publicity he'd had, they had acceded to his demand for fifteen thousand. There was an injury clause in the contract that made the club liable. The salary had to be paid.

Pop said, "Let's get out to the park." They said good-by to the doctor, went to the street and got a cab.

Willy looked at Pop Jordan. The man had aged a couple of years in the last two months. It had been a win-lose season, a bad one. The clubs in the league were very evenly matched, and although they had lost four games, they still had a chance to grab off the Eastern championship.

Willy said, "It's been a tough season for you. Those clowns are gunning for you, eh, Pop?"

Pop shrugged the once-mighty shoulders. "Sure. For fifteen years I've been turning out Cub teams that were on top or close to it. These peanut vendors take over, and immediately they want miracles.



You got hurt, Kelly got hurt, Morano got hurt. We should have played most of our games in a hospital ward."

Willy said, "And you have a little contract trouble."

"When they took over, they gave me a one-year lease. It doesn't look as if they're happy about how things panned out." He took a cigar from his pocket and jammed it into his mouth. "With you in there, Willy, it would have been a cinch."

Willy said, "Sure," but he didn't mean it. He'd seen every game, and they had all been tough. He said, "If we take the Panthers on Sunday, we'll have the Eastern half. Will that make those characters happy?"

Pop shook his head. "They talk of nothing but the league title. They say that with the dough they put out, they should own the league."

They got to the park, and Willy dressed. Horse Mulvey, the big fullback, said, "So you'll play on Sunday, eh, Willy?"

"We should score three hundred points," Willy told him.

"And then we can play the Sox," Mulvey said, and he looked at Willy as he spoke.

"We will certainly play the Sox, the Western champs. I predict a large score."

"The Sox," Mulvey said again. "And Wheeler."

"And Joe Wheeler."

It was a slightly sobering thought, and one which Willy had entertained many times in the past. Joe Wheeler was his own personal eight-ball.

**M**MULVEY said, "On the level, Willy. Did that guy dirty you both times?"

Willy said, "Horse, that is something only Wheeler knows. I honestly couldn't tell you. All I know is that I was hit, and both times I came to in a hospital. He might have been carrying a sledge hammer under his hat. I don't know.

But he sure did hit me hard enough."

Wheeler had been a great fullback for Tech while Willy was at State. The Tech-State game was traditional, and wound up the schedule of both schools. And for two years running, Joe Wheeler had hit Willy Palmer, both times in the first quarter, and had knocked him completely out of the ball game.

Horse said, "Because if he dirties you, kid—I can take very good care of him. I will do a nice, quiet job. I've been at this business for years."

Willy shook his head. "You will handle Wheeler gently. You will leave the man to me. If he does it a third time, he owns me."

He thought back to the two Tech-State games. Each time he had been hurt he had been carrying the ball, on sideline plays. Each time, Wheeler had hit him alone. Willy had seen the moving pictures of both games, had studied them. Wheeler was a powerful, vicious tackler. On both occasions, Willy had been slightly off balance, twisting away from some other Tech man, and Wheeler had whacked him. Once he'd had a bad concussion, and on the other occasion two ribs had been broken.

In watching the pictures, Willy had detected no outward evidence of foul play. Wheeler had hit him and he had been hurt. That was as much as he knew. And it had not been pleasant.

He went out with the rest of the squad and worked. Pop used a single wing, and Willy knew the stuff the way he knew his own shoes. He was in good shape, except for contact work, and while the game might stiffen him, it was not an important factor.

After the workout, Horse said, "These Fabry guys. You think they're goofy?"

"They're goofy, all right," Willy said. "A couple of million bucks worth apiece, goofy."

"It ain't hay," Horse admitted.



"To them, it's peanuts."

"They don't like Pop," Horse complained.

"They figure they paid for a winner, and Pop doesn't seem to be giving it to them."

"He's gettin' no younger," Horse said. "I've been working for him for years, and he's the greatest guy in the world. I hate to see him go out on his ear. He's too old to go lookin' for something else."

Willy said, "I like him very much. Let's keep him his job."

They hit the Panthers on Sunday before a good crowd. The Panthers had beaten them by two touchdowns, earlier in the season, but it had been a fine game. The crowd wanted to see another like it.

They didn't. Willy got in there in the first quarter, and he was as hot as a summer day in St. Louis. He took the opening kickoff back forty yards, and on the second play from scrimmage, he passed thirty yards to Harris, the big end. Harris went all the rest of the way on his own.

Horse Mulvey busted through the middle for twenty yards, shortly thereafter, putting the ball on the midfield stripe. Willy cut through the tackle, with splendid blocking, and romped the rest of the distance. Pop promptly took him out.

"I don't want anything to happen to that leg," he said.

"It'll atrophy from lack of exercise, the way you're treating it."

Willy wanted more. He had a bank account full of thousand dollar bills which he'd been paid for doing this, and today was the first chance he'd had to earn his money. More important, it felt good to be out there again, hitting into the tackles, feeling the turf under his cleats. He wanted more. He was like a racehorse who'd been in the stable too long. He was full of running and he wanted to spend some of it.

He was in for five minutes of the second quarter, and he got off for sixty yards

and was bumped outside on the five. The Horse took it over from there.

The club seemed to pick up in such good company. They blocked beautifully for every runner, stopped the Panthers cold. At the half they led, twenty-one to nothing.

In the dressing room, Pop was a quiet, approving gentleman. He said, "You're looking good. It's a fine ball game. You play like this against the Sox and we won't have any trouble."

The door of the dressing room opened to admit two huge, racoon-coated figures—the brothers Fabry.

Said Ivan, "You should have left him in."

Said Evan, "That Palmer, I mean."

Said Ivan, "Fifteen thousand dollars he gets paid all season to sit in a hospital."

Said Evan, "Fifteen thousand dollars he gets now to sit on a bench."

Pop said, "You will kindly get the hell out of here before I . . ."

The official came in at that moment to tell them they were due on the field in three minutes. The brothers Fabry said in one voice, one tone, "Leave him in. We'd like to get our money's worth." They left.

Willy said, "Contrary to popular belief, vaudeville is not dead."

Willy did not score in the second half. He threw to Polaski for one, Mulvey ripped up the middle for twenty yards and another, and Johnny Evers scored a third. The Panthers were goose-egged and furious.

And through the week, Willy had time to think of the Sox and Joe Wheeler, the unpleasant incidents the man's name brought to mind. Pop Jordan spoke to him about it.

"This feller Wheeler seems to have you jinxed, Willy. He under your hide right now? He bother you?"

Willy looked at him. "Pop, I don't know. He's been bad medicine for me,



and maybe it's true that I'm afraid of the guy. But I don't think so."

The papers had played up the angle during the week. They wondered if the Cubs' new back wasn't a little fragile around the edges. They asked if Wheeler wouldn't run him out of the park.

Even the Fabry brothers were curious. They came to the last workout, and when it was over, they took Willy and Pop Jordan aside.

One of them said, "Is he frightened?"

The other said, "Of that Wheeler fellow, I mean?"

Willy said, "Look. Why don't you two gents go off someplace and count your shells? Scout the circus, or something. But leave me alone. You'll get a ball game from me. Don't worry about it."

Ivan said, "I hope we do."

Evan said, "On Sunday, that is."

"They get you down," Pop complained. "I have to work for people like that. They don't know what the hell is going on, but they tell me my business."

**W**ILLY came up to the Cub game with a small doubt in the back of his head. He held very vivid memories of his meetings with Wheeler, and they were heavily with him now. He did not want his neck broken. He did not want his arm broken. He didn't even want a punch in the mouth. All he desired was a good, fast, peaceful ball game.

Pop told them, in the dressing room, "I'd like you to take this one. It's a little while since I've had a championship, and it's a nice thing to carry around for a year. Get along out there and grab yourselves the big chunk of money."

They went out, and the house was packed today. While they warmed up, Willy couldn't keep his eyes from traveling down to the other end of the field. He picked up Wheeler without trouble. The big, heavy guy was booming punts downfield, his black hair close-cropped

on the bullet head, his shoulders broad.

Horse Mulvey said, "Willy, that guy seems to annoy you even at a distance. Leave me give it to him early."

Willy said, "Horse, behave yourself. Let him alone."

They kicked to the Sox, and Buscom took it on the goal line and came out to the twenty. Willy was playing the left defensive halfback, and the first play the Sox ran was a quick opening shot through the middle. It worked perfectly. Wheeler went into the line like a beefy comet, and he came right on through, running like a truck. Mulvey missed him and Winson, the center, missed him. He was running free as the breeze when Willy avoided a blocker and hit him on the Sox forty.

It was a terrific impact, for the man ran with great force and Willy weighed a hundred and ninety-five pounds. Willy got to his feet, shaken but with nothing hanging loose that he could see. Wheeler got up, looked at him and said, "Hiya, Palmer," with an expressionless face.

Willy said, "Hello, Wheeler."

And this initial contact had not accomplished what he had hoped it might. Far back in his mind, he admitted only to himself, there was a fear of Wheeler and what the man had done to him in the past. It was still there. It had not been erased.

The two clubs fought it out from there on. They were both big, fast, and at the peak of their games. The Cubs went to the Sox twenty, late in the first quarter, but that was as far as they could get.

The Sox had power, and they used it. Wheeler cannoned into the line like a crazy horse, and Mulvey and Wilson, backing up, got sick of the sight of him. He went for five and eight and ten. They couldn't stop him. The Sox were on the Cub twenty when Mulvey called for a time out.

They sat on the grass, and Willy said absently, "Why don't you give him the



business, Horse? Punch him in the nose or something."

Mulvey nodded. "I did. I gave him the elbow. Look what it got me on the next play." He opened his mouth to show a lovely space where two teeth had been. He said, "The guy is rugged. We should have mined the field."

They altered their defense, played almost an eight man line, and it did the trick. Wheeler got a yard or two, but no more. On third down Buscom passed, and Polaski intercepted and took it back to the thirty. They were out of the hole.

Horse said, "Let's grind these guys down to size."

He got three in the middle; then Willy waltzed through the tackle, cut sharply for the middle of the field, got up to the forty-eight before they stopped him. He got eight more on a wide sweep, and Horse made it a first, inside.

Willy tried the weakside tackle and got four, and Mulvey was stopped inside. Willy passed to Harris for seven and a first, and the stands started rooting for the score. Willy said, "Let's make them happy."

He got six inside tackle. He felt as strong as a bull and he wanted work. They went to the left and he took it wide for six more and a first on the Sox eighteen. He faked to the right and Horse went into the middle for five. Willy took it and ran wide, looking for Polaski or Harris downfield. He couldn't find a man open—he saw a hole and took it. He got all the way to the three before they pulled him down. Horse went over on the second try, then kicked the point.

It stood through the quarter, then it stood through the next, for neither club got inside the other's thirty after that. It was a rugged ball game and a bitter thing to watch. But they could not tally. They went off the field with the score still seven to nothing.

Pop told them, "You're doing fine.

You stop Wheeler and you stop the Sox. Just hang onto that gorilla."

And just before they were to go out, the Fabry brothers entered. They looked like a couple of circus bears.

One of them said, "We need more passing. More scoring."

The other said, "Forward passing."

Pop glared at them and started in their direction, and they made a dignified exit. He turned and said, "This is all. If they offered me a million dollars, I wouldn't come back. They'd drive a man batty."

The club went out again, and Willy said, "See if we can't grab one fast."

They kicked to the Sox, and Wheeler took it on the five. He came straight up the middle, like a tank, and he got to the thirty before he was hit. And while he was falling, he lateralled to Sando, off to his left. When Sando hit the midfield stripe, he was in the clear. He scored without having had a hand put on him. Wheeler kicked the point.

From there on it was murder, with no holds barred. Both clubs gave it everything they had, and neither of them got anywhere. Near the end of the third quarter Mulvey tried a place kick from the Sox thirty-four, but it was wide.

For the Sox, halfway through the fourth, Buscom got away for forty yards, Willy finally hauling him down on the twenty. Wheeler got two, then tried again and was stopped cold. Buscom tried a pass that was no good; then Wheeler stepped back and kicked it neatly between the crossbars for three big points. It was discouraging.

Mulvey took the kickoff and labored desperately back to the thirty. He said, "If we're gonna collect, this is our last chance."

**W**ILLY was pooped. He had been in there for most of the game, and it was telling on him. The leg ached, his lungs ached, and he felt



about sixty years old. He said, "So I'm stupid. Give it to me."

He got it. He made four into the tackle, then slipped off the weakside for twenty-three and a first on the Sox forty-three. He ripped into the tackle again, and Wheeler knocked him outside on the thirty.

He went back into the huddle and told them: "Once more for old Fabry U."

He got inside the weakside tackle. Wheeler hit him and when they got up, he said, "Don't you ever get tired, Palmer?"

"Just tired of seeing you, and that's not a song title."

Mulvey took it, then, his big hulk crashing through for eight yards and a first on the sixteen. The Sox called for time.

Willy stretched on his back on the grass and said, "Today I am earning a year's salary."

This was a fine club he was working with, and he wished that he had been with them all along.

Mulvey said, "We got a minute and a half by the clock."

They went to work. Mulvey got a yard and Willy got seven. He tried again for no gain. Mulvey cannoned into the guard and barely made a first on the Sox five and a half. They called time.

Mulvey banged in there once again, and they held him to a yard. Willy passed twice. One was batted down; Harris had his hands full of the other, in the end zone, and then dropped it. Willy ran it wide.

The Sox tackle was under control and Mulvey took wonderful care of the end. Willy raced on tired legs for the corner flag, trying to beat the halfback heading him off. He made one despairing lunge, just as he was hit and knocked outside. He had a dim recollection of having heard a gun on the play.

He hadn't made it. He was short by six inches, and he had been right about

the gun. The game was over. The board said: SOX 10—CUBS 7. It was hard to take.

He got to his knees and saw that it was Wheeler who had hit him. The man was holding his arm tenderly, and Willy said, "What makes?"

He had forgotten about Wheeler, he suddenly realized—not forgotten about the man himself, but about his own fear of him. Since their first contact, he had thought of Wheeler as just another player on the field. A great player, one to be watched and one always to be considered, but not a man to be feared.

Wheeler told him now, "The wrist is busted."

Willy couldn't believe him. "The hell it is."

Wheeler showed it to him. He was right. It certainly was broken.

Willy said, "It's the wrong script. That should be *my* arm." Then he asked the question that had been on his mind for two years. "By the way, Wheeler. In those State-Tech games. . . . Could you have deliberately . . . er . . . shall we say . . .?"

Wheeler shook his head. "No, sir. My pappy always told me not to dirty anyone. Always said that a smarter man would come along and push an eye out on me. It was just an accident, kid. Both times. Hell, with people like you around, this game is tough enough if you play it on the level." They led him away.

The clubhouse was a sorry place and held no joy. Pop walked around saying, "Never mind. It was a hell of a ball game." But Willy could see how he felt.

Mulvey said, "Next year, with half the club out of the hospital, we'll murder those bums." It didn't ring true. Willy looked at Pop, and he knew this was a bad day for the old man.

He himself would suffer, he knew. His salary next year would be greatly diminished, for which he could not blame



the Fabry brothers. He hadn't been much help.

At that moment, they came in—the twin giant racoons. Willy stared at them.

Ivan was on the left. His left eye was wonderfully discolored. Evan was on the right. His right eye was swollen and purpling. Their hats were torn, their huge coats ripped.

Ivan said, "We were greatly displeased."

Evan said, "With the score, that is."

Ivan said, "But with the team, no! A fine performance by the team!"

Evan said, "An excellent performance under odds!"

Pop stared at them and said, "What the hell happened to you two?"

Ivan said, "A dispute. We passed some people who were speaking disparagingly of our team. Of us."

Evan said, "They were saying that the Cubs were bums. Imagine that! We defended our honor. There were four of these men."

Pop said, "Well, I'll be hanged!"

Ivan said, "The first year is a trial balloon. How much did we make in our first year in the industry, Evan?"

Evan said, "Thirty-two dollars. Strictly peanuts."

Ivan said to the dressing room, "But next year we will all try again. And because of the fine performance today, there will be raises."

Evan said, "As an added incentive, that it. For everyone. We must win the championship."

"You will see about the contracts, Mr. Jordan," Ivan said.

He turned to go. Evan said, "At the office, that is, Mr. Jordan. A matter of a bonus."

They wheeled and went out in step.

Pop Jordan sank weakly into a chair. "Well, what the hell do you know about that?"

Mulvey said, "They're slap-happy. Too many peanuts."

Willy said, "I'll forgive them. I'll even buy a pack. I think they're wonderful characters." He grinned. "The rough-house twins. What do you know about those guys!"

Pop relaxed and leaned back in his chair. He smiled and said, "Well, it's always nice to know where you can find a couple of tackles when you need them."



June's Big-League Headliner—  
Zene Tuttle's Smashing Story

## TAKE THE BUM OUT!

Players may come and players may go, but the fans go on forever. One day they want your scalp, and the next they wanna make you president! Get out there an' give 'em something to yell for!

—also—

**CLEAN-UP CHUCKER**

A Novel by Theodore J. Roemer

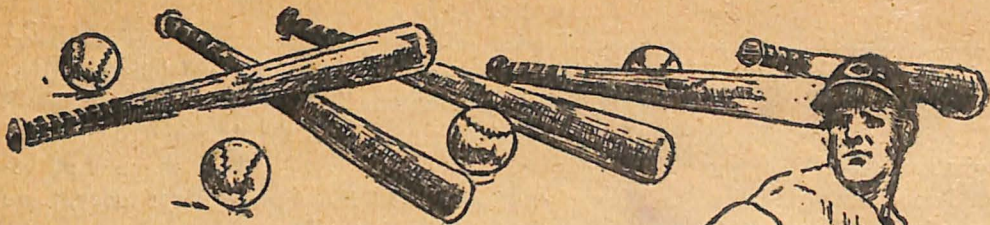
—and—

Complete headline sports coverage by Giles Lutz, John Wilson, and many others—once more featuring the big, new SPORTS NOVELS—June issue on sale at your newsstand on May 12th.

"Headline sports by sports headliners!"

**SPORTS**  
**25¢ NOVELS**





# THE BIG SIX

By NED CADY



**W**HO was the greatest pitcher ever to throw a baseball?

Well, what is your idea of a great pitcher? And how many "buts" will you allow in the argument?

Jimmy Wilson once told me that Herb Pennock was the tops, because Herb threw him just one pitch under pressure. The pennant hung on that game; there were two down, three on base, three and two on the batter. Under all that load, Herb nicked the corner he aimed at with a curve ball. It was the third strike, and the game.

But does that one pitch plus a record which was long and good label him "greatest"?

The record books list Christy Mathewson, Walter Johnson, Cy Young, Grover Alexander, Carl Hubbell, and Bob Grove, as the immortals. Among these, the fans make all sorts of choices and each man makes up his mind about whom he calls "great".

Cy Young is hard to classify. He did too much of his pitching back in the gay '90s when the batter called for the

kind of ball he wanted and the pitcher had to throw it. He is an immortal, all right. But it is hard to pit his record against modern ones. Baseball was altogether different when he was at his best.

The ability to finish a game is another point to be considered. Old timers paid a lot of attention to it. The fans did not like to see a pitcher yanked unless the other team blasted him out. But to the modern generation, the parade of pitchers in and out of the box goes on all through game after game and does not mean a thing.

Mathewson finished eighty out of every hundred games he started, Johnson seventy-five, Alexander only sixty-five. But Alex was going strong in the Twenties when the strategy of yanking



the pitcher for a pinch hitter was going strong. In former years, he might have finished more games. Grove and Hubbell got started so late that most of the books do not even bother to list the number of games they completed.

Would Matty have had a better record, or a worse one, if they had benched him the minute he began to tire?

You can argue with an old-time fan all night about that one. When Matty's arm got tired, he pitched with his head. He threw strikes at the parts of the plate where the batter had the least chance, and dared the hitter to try to crack one safe. And plenty of times he came from behind to pull out the game. In fact, he did it so many times that he crowded the ball parks with fans.

Some of the games Mathewson won that way would have gone into the loss column if John McGraw had sent in another hurler.

Did that make Mathewson the greatest team pitcher, the one who made the most use of the fielders to win for him?

Old timers say yes, but the book says no. In an average ten games, Matty would strike out thirty-one more men than he gave free passes to first base either by walks or by hitting the batters. In the same number of games, Alexander only struck out eighteen more men than he presented with free trips. It is obvious that if you think making the batter hit a ball that the fielders can handle is the sign of a great pitcher, Alex is your man.

If you like a strike-out pitcher, then Walter Johnson is your man with an

average of fifty-three per ninety innings pitched. Bob Grove is right behind him with an average of fifty-two on the same basis. Both of these are speed ball artists, and walked a great many men. But there you have another argument. If some of the others had taken more chances and walked more men, would more batters have taken chances on waiting them out and thus been struck out?

Johnson is right behind Mathewson in the matter of striking out more men than he put on base, his figures being thirty to Matty's thirty-one. Grove had twenty-one, but, in their days, far more batters were walked as a matter of master minding from the bench.

Remembering them all as the fans saw them, it is hard to choose. Cy Young was a wizard, Johnson was unbelievable, Alexander was the friend of every man in the stands and even his opponents loved to see him win. Grove was fantastic on his good days, and Hubbell was a cold-headed pitching machine.

As for me, I am an old timer and I'll take Christy Mathewson, the old "Big Six." Matty always suited himself to whatever the game called for. On dull days he could blaze them over, and on bright days he used curves. If the batters swung, he gave them something good looking to swing at, and if they bunted, they found him laughing as he fielded the dribblers.

When Matty stepped out on that mound, there never was any doubt about who was boss. It was either he or the other team—mostly it was Matty.





---

# KING OF THE

---

**A**SK Andy Varipapa of Hempstead, N. Y., the name of the greatest bowler in the world, and he'll tell you in no uncertain terms that you're looking at him—the undisputed master of the mapleways.

He can back up that statement, too. Now pushing hard at fifty-four, and with a rich vein of silver running through his thick black hair, Varipapa on December 15, 1947, walked away with the Match Game Championships in Chicago—thus being the only man in history to cop the highest tenpin honors two years running. And that's something to brag about, when you consider the competition offered by the nation's 20,000,000 bowlers!

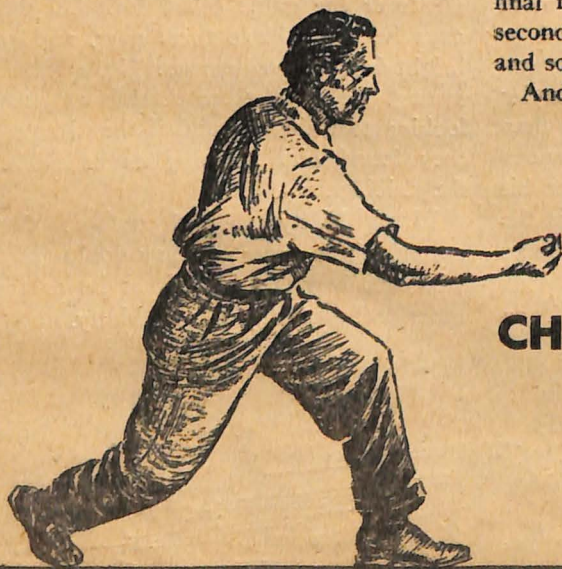
Andy, who in his youth was a boxer and later a professional baseball player under the nom de diamond of Andy Bell, copied a chapter out of Horatio Alger in winning his latest triumph. At the end of

the nine-day grind in which one hundred games were racked away, he topped balding Joe Wilman of Berwyn, Ill., the 1945 winner, by only seventeen pins. He beat Wilman with games of 257 and 236 to win the title in the most sensational finish ever seen in a championship match, with a total of 13,448 pins against 13,431.

The margin was still finer when the number of points are considered. Both Varipapa and Wilman won and lost exactly the same number of games, but Andy finished the run with 309.23 points against 309.06 for Joe. Under the Petersen point system a bowler gets one point for each victory, and one point for each fifty pins. Pins in excess of fifty are carried over.

The sixteen finalists in the Match Game Championship engaged in a real endurance test. Over a four-day span, each had to engage in sixteen four-game matches, and with each of his fifteen rivals and a final round in which the leader met the second-place man, third met the fourth, and so on down the line.

Andy and Joe, who bowled through the



By  
**CHARLES WEBSTER**



---

# KEGLERS

---

eliminations to get the feel of the alleys although automatically "seated," immediately turned the tourney into a personal struggle, and during the last two days it was a two-man fight to the finish.

Wilman overshadowed Andy, 241 to 225, in the first game and went ahead 2.16 points. He repeated in the second, chalking up 202 to 190, and the difference became 3.28 points. These two lost games made Varipapa's task almost impossible. They meant that he not only had to win the last two games but at the same time pick up seventy eight pins, or 1.28 points.

Strike after strike fell before Andy's powerhouse delivery as he won the third game 257 to 183, making the difference only 1.04 points. Then came the windup line, and the Hempstead miracle man's smashing 236 to 215 won the victory by just 17 pins and .17 points!

"Winning the championship again this year was the biggest kick I ever had in bowling," Varipapa says, and the way he spreads that smile across his affable face, you know he means it.

But he is not completely satisfied with the way things were run during the match. He says that the alley conditions were good, but that the pins used in the eliminations weighed 3.4 pounds, whereas in the finals they weighed 3.6. "They should all be the same," he asserted.

Andy first gained bowling fame as a trick-shot artist. He can bowl with either hand, and can knock off strikes in two alleys at the same time. His specialty is a double reverse hook.

He took his first crack at the keglers crown in 1942, and finished third. He failed to make the finals in 1943, landed in fourth place in 1944, and moved up to

third the following year. In 1946 he hit the jackpot for the first time, taking the title from Joe Wilman, the defending champ. Andy summed it up when he accepted his trophy from Mayor J. Kelly of Chicago, saying, "This is long overdue."

Proving his victory had been no fluke, Varipapa went on to annex another national crown in Houston, Texas, when he and Lou Campi of Dumont, N. J., won the Two Man Championship against a powerful field.

The *still* champion shrugs when asked about bowling tactics. "There's no such thing as defense in bowling," he says. "It is all offense. When somebody gets hot there's no stopping him."

Over a bowling span of thirty five years, eighteen of which have been as a professional, Andy has tallied seventy perfect 300 games, which is more than any other man has ever rolled. Along the years, he scored a 253 average for thirty games, and on another appearance in a special match, he racked up an amazing 256 figure for six games; in this latter match, his uncanny skill showed three successive 279 games. In addition to the Individual and Doubles titles, he also holds the ten-year American Bowling Congress high average record of 204.

One of the most colorful figures in a colorful sport, Andy Varipapa has sharp, determined eyes that can spot even the slightest variation in an alley. He stands five feet, eight inches and tips the scales at close to two hundred pounds. In making his delivery, he tosses right from a spot and takes five steps, never more, never less.

Hail to Andy Varipapa—certainly one of the world's ace pin splitters!



# —ONE MILE

*This was one race where he'd have nothing left at the end—nothing except a heart that wouldn't let him quit!*

JOHNNY PIKE looked out the hotel window and said, "It's a big town, Hank. A hell of a big town." He was enjoying the trip. He was a tourist, easy and relaxed. He had nothing at all to worry about except Pop Watson's chances of getting the job he wanted. He wanted Pop to get the job, but there was nothing that he, personally, could do about it, so it would be foolish to worry.

Hank Shaw shifted his huge bulk on one of the room's twin beds. He said, "After tonight we'll own it. We'll take that damned meet, and Pop will clinch that Olympic coach job, and we can go home happy."

Home was at some distance. Hillworth Tech was a mountain school, and it still surprised everyone that they had been given a bid for the Eastern Invitations. The team's win at the Tri-State meet, two weeks before, had taken care of that.

Johnny turned from the window. He eyed that great body of the other man. "You feel good? You gonna heave that thing tonight?"

Hank said, "I feel fine," and sneezed twice.

Johnny walked to the bed. He said, "What the hell makes?" and stared at the big man. Hank's face was flushed, his eyes watery. Johnny said, "How long has this been going on?"

"It's from nothing. A little cold in the head. Musta picked it up on the train yesterday. All I need is a nap to round out the afternoon and I'll be all right."

"You'll be all right as soon as you see a doctor," Johnny told him. "Why don't

you tell a guy when something's wrong with you?"

He started for the door. Hank Shaw came off the bed with surprising agility and took Johnny's arm in a huge paw. "No doctor. There's nothing the matter with me, and I don't want Pop to get into a stew. You know what he's like. He'd have me in the hospital in five minutes if he caught me blowing my nose."

Johnny tried vainly to pull his arm away. He said, "I'll do it nice and quiet. Pop won't know a thing. I'll just call the hotel doctor."

"Sure. And if I have a half degree of fever, he'll yell to Pop, and there you are." He sat down on the bed, took a box of aspirin from the drawer of the night table. "A couple of these will fix me up."

Johnny looked at the small box and saw that it was half empty. "How long you been knocking yourself out with those things?"

"I had a couple of them, two three hours ago, while you were out?"

Johnny said kindly, "You're a liar. You've had plenty. I'm talkin' to Pop about this. You need some attention."

Hank looked at him. "So help me, Johnny, if you talk about this, I'll beat your brains out. I'm all right, really. Just the sniffles. And you know how Pop wants to win this one tonight."

Johnny sat in a chair near the window and studied the big man. Hank was right about one thing, that Pop wanted to take the meet. He'd been working at Hillworth for almost twenty years, turning out good



# TO GLORY—

By JOHN WELLS



track teams. Good, but never good enough to compete with the best—until this year. This year's club was fine and nicely balanced. With Hank Shaw breaking the

He couldn't save anything for the finish...



world's record in the shotput, Joe Fanchet a cinch in the pole vault and Ken Barnum in the sprints, it was a compact team that had not lost a meet all season. Johnny Pike had not lost a mile, either, but he did not expect to win tonight, not with Danver running, and Klassen, the Dutchman. He might get a third or fourth, but that was all he could expect. He was just along for the trip.

It had been rumored in the papers that Pop, who years ago had forsaken a fat job at one of the Eastern universities to take the post at his beloved Hillworth, would be named Olympic coach if his team took the Eastern Invitation. This would be in recognition of his long years of devotion to the sport as well as his coaching ability.

Hank said, "You just leave me and my nose-cold alone. You start playing nursemaid and we're liable to drop this one."

Johnny looked at his watch. He said, "It's two o'clock. I'll give you until six to get better, Mr. Shaw, or I blow the whistle on you. For all I know, you might be needing some penicillin about now. I'm no doctor, but I know how damned stubborn you are. You hop into the sack and I'll get some hot tea for you. But at six, on the dot, I call the doctor."

Hank thought about it for a moment, then said, "It's a deal."

He undressed, got into bed, and Johnny rang for plenty of hot tea. He fed it to the giant, then said, "Get some sleep. I'll be back in awhile."

He went out to see the sights, but found none of his former pleasure in the city. The thought kept creeping into his mind that if Hank were sick, Hillworth might just as well have stayed at home. His winning points were essential to a team victory, and Johnny did not know just where the burden of his responsibility lay, with Hank or with Pop. If he told Pop that the big guy was sick, Pop would unhesitatingly yank him from the meet. And without Hank heaving that lead, Hill-

worth couldn't win. And Pop would be stuck. It was a problem.

His anxiety drove him back to the hotel at five o'clock. He went up to the room and opened the door, and the first thing he heard was Hank's voice. The big guy was saying, "Sure. It get it. We go up to the town under cover of the trees and try to get rid of that mortar they've got on that roof."

For a moment Johnny was back in the army with the big fellow. Then he went to the bed and put his hand on Hank's forehead. The huge man was asleep, tossing restlessly, and he was burning with fever. Johnny went directly to the phone, cursing himself for his negligence, and called the house doctor. The man was up to the room within five minutes.

Hank Shaw had a fever of one hundred and four degrees. Within fifteen minutes he was on his way to a hospital with his sudden and flaming attack of pneumonia. And Pop Watson was in as much of a rage as a mild and gentle man can get.

"The moment you knew he wasn't well you should have told me," he raged at Johnny Pike. "That poor boy lying there all alone, with no one to take care of him."

Johnny looked at Pop, short and grey and slim, and it did not surprise him that the man's concern was not with the track meet, but with one of his boys. Pop was always like that. He wore his heart on the outside of his vest.

Johnny tried to explain. "He thought it was just a cold. So did I. After all, Pop, the guy is six-feet-three and built like an oak tree. The sniffles, was all we thought it was."

Pop wrung his hands and walked about the room. "If anything happens to Hank, I. . . ."

The doctor was still there. He said, "I'm sure we caught it in time, Mr. Watson, and that there's no need to worry. He'll probably be on his feet in three or four days. He's a strong man. Remarkable



constitution, it seemed to me. Shotputter, isn't he?"

Pop looked at him and said, "Shotputter, hell! He's one of my boys."

Johnny put his arm around Pop's shoulder. He said, "He'll be all right, Pop. Stop worrying about him. The big lug will be fit and sassy in a couple of hours. They'll shoot him full of bug juice, and I'll bet he'll be listening to the meet on the radio."

And he wondered what sort of a meet it would be, without Hank.

**T**HE GARDEN was packed, and halfway through the evening, things were going according to schedule. The Eastern A.C. was out in front. They had taken the quarter and half, and the relay. They were due to pick up some points in the sprints, and Pete Danver was almost a sure win to take the mile for them.

Johnny Pike watched the pole vault. Joe Fanchet took it at fifteen feet, two inches, and Hillworth moved up in the point score. They ran off the sprints, and Ken Barnum won his first heat.

Joe Fanchet said to Johnny, "How's about the mile, kid? You gonna take it for us?"

Johnny looked at him. "Against this crowd? You kidding? I've never run better than four-ten in my life, and that was in the Tri-State. Hell, Danver has done four-six a couple of times, and this Dutchman, Klassen, is supposed to be classier than that. The rest of the field is good—out of my league. If I'm lucky, I might pick up a fourth."

Joe rubbed his chin. He said, "You know something? I never did over fourteen feet until a year ago. I knew how to vault, because Pop had made sure of that. But I couldn't get over fourteen feet, in my head. That's where you have to do it, first. And one day after I'd warmed up, Pop put up the bar and told me it was

fourteen-two. I cleared it by five inches, feeling good. And then Pop showed me. It was fourteen-ten. After that the numbers didn't bother me. I just went up as far as I could and to hell with what it measured."

Johnny said, "That's fine. But I've no pole out there to work with."

Joe told him, "You've never had runners like these to work with, either."

Barnum took the sprint finals, then astounded the house by grabbing off a second in the broad jump. The Bankers Club ran one, two, three in the two twenty, robbing the Eastern A.C. of points they'd put in their pocket before the race was run.

Pop was on the track, now, and his thin face was wreathed in a smile. He said to Johnny, "Just called the hospital. Had a time getting the information I wanted. Hank's all right. They gave him a couple of shots and he's sitting up in bed. He's in danger of nothing but hitting his head on a pillow." The little man had his hands in his pockets and was tilting up and down on his heels as if he'd just been told he'd won the sweepstakes.

Johnny said, "That's marvelous. I told you they couldn't kill him with an ax."

Pop looked smilingly upon the proceedings. He said, "How are things going out here? Where do we stand?"

"You don't know?" Johnny asked him.

"I've been in a phone booth for the past half hour. What's the score?"

Johnny said, "The Eastern A. C. is leading us by two points. Everything's been run off and we did just as you figured we would. Except for Hank. Eastern took that. The big Blake guy."

Pop nodded. He looked at Johnny and said, "Just the mile to go, eh? You and all these big name fellows."

Johnny said, "Me and the runners."

Pop scratched his ear. He said, "Best you've ever done is four-ten, Johnny. Right?"



"Right. And it sure pooped me."

"And these fellows have been running four-six's and four-seven's all season. Against each other."

"There's a difference in those times," Johnny said. He felt a strange and unexpected excitement. Something in Pop's voice always warned him.

"So if you let them set their own pace," Pop said, "they'll run the same sort of race they've been running all year, and it'll be a strange thing to you."

Johnny did not speak. He listened.

"Why don't you go out there and just run them off the boards?" Pop asked. "Give 'em something to think about. Upset 'em. Instead of following their tactics, make 'em follow yours. Say a first quarter of about fifty-eight seconds."

Johnny said, "Fifty-eight! That's murder, Pop. These guys would let me go, then run right past me. I couldn't keep up a pace like that."

Pop looked at him and said, "The hell you can't, Johnny. The hell you can't. Try it." He was grinning.

And just then came the call over the speakers for the mile. Johnny had trotted his laps, and now he started to peel from his sweatsuit. He stared at Pop, but the little man just grinned at him and said, "This is the first time you've ever run against real milers, son. Let's see what you can do."

They drew for positions. Klassen had the pole, and Danvers was just beside him. Johnny had number four spot, flanked by Ollie Morris of the Bankers Club and Sid Feinberg of Normal. Lew Reynolds, of State, was on the outside. Feinberg grinned at him and said, "Hello, Pike. How do you feel?"

Johnny said, "All right, I guess." Then he took a deep breath and said, "Fine."

Feinberg said, "Good luck," and Johnny said, "And to you." He suddenly felt wonderful. He had never expected to win

this thing, and he didn't, now. He'd try Pop's crazy suggestion. What did he have to lose?

HE CROUCHED for his start, and he was going away with the gun. There was a bit of crowding on the first turn; then he was clear of it and out in front. The roar of the crowd was full and throaty, speaking of its excitement, and he lengthened his stride and settled down to run.

Everything was behind him, and he knew now that he was going to follow Pop's advice. He had them at his back, and when they'd pass him, he was through. He'd see how long he could hold them off.

He slacked the pace only slightly for the second quarter. When he hit the half, he was beginning to feel the effort and he knew the time was very close to two minutes. The feet in back of him were not so close, now, and the crowd was in a frenzy. He kept hammering away. The speakers blared out the time for the half, then, and though he could not make it out, the terrific roar of the crowd told him it must have been very fast. He wondered just how much longer he could keep this up. Then he decided to see.

The third quarter was just a fraction slower, he knew. He wasn't trying to save anything for the finish, just enough gas to get home on. But he'd never run this sort of a race before, and he wasn't sure of himself.

It was near the three-quarter mark when Danver and Klassen made their bids. He heard the feet coming up on him and stuck to his long and steady striding on the rail. There was someone at his shoulder, then, coming out of a turn, and he turned the power up just a trifle and the other men came with him. He went down the backstretch and into the far turn, and the heavily breathing shadows clung to him but dared not pass.



A figure came abreast of him as they entered the last quarter, and Johnny would not let the man pass. He felt the going in his legs, now. They were getting heavier with every stride, but he made them behave, do what he wanted them to do. His breath was coming from somewhere down around his heels, and he knew this was one race where he'd have nothing left for a kick finish. He was pouring it all out evenly, and if there wasn't enough to last, he was just out of luck.

The man beside him made his bid with two laps to go. He was inches out in front going into a turn, and Johnny saw that it was Danver. The man was running hard, but Johnny poured on a bit of juice and beat him to the turn. The man fell back, and Johnny heard him fade as they hit the straightaway.

It was Klassen, then, on the next stretch, and Johnny fought it out with him all the way down to the turn. He breathed with a terrible effort and kept his form through a miracle. It was a slugging match, now, and you brought it up from your toes if you had it.

And Klassen had as much as he did.

Klassen clung to him all the way. The last lap was eight miles long, and a heavily mudded road all the way. Johnny picked them up and put them down, picked them up and put them down, and he was unaware of the moment when Klassen faded, drifted back. Johnny just kept plugging, fighting not to break, fighting to keep it as smooth as possible.

He was alone when he hit the tape, and he couldn't hear the roar of the crowd for his own hoarse sobbing as he gasped for breath.

He ran it out for a few steps, then jogged to a walk, life coming back into him again. He turned back to the finish line and there were hands slapping at him, reaching for him. Joe Fanchet was at his side repeating, "What a race! What a

race!" and Johnny was surprised to see that Feinberg, and not Klassen, had finished second. Danver was fourth.

Pop was there, then, the big grin cutting his face in half. He said, "It's one way to do it. Run 'em into the ground. Even out those quarters and make 'em catch you if they've got it."

The speakers gave the time, then, and Johnny listened. He had recovered his breath, but the announcement took it away again. "Four minutes," the metallic voice said, "and five seconds." The crowd's voice was a tremendous thing.

In the dressing room Pop said, "They get into habits. Each fellow figures to run his own race, and they only know about the others they've raced against. You jump 'em like that, then pour it on, and anything's likely to happen."

Johnny said, "Well, I'm a glad guy, Pop. I thought that with Hank out of it, we could never take this thing." And he felt a lift inside him. It was almost a sure thing that Pop would be given the big job. He looked at the little man and grinned, and Pop grinned back at him.

"Hank?" Pop said. "Shucks, boy, that would have been a win we didn't need. We'd have been wasting something. We'll save that until we need it. Hate to waste them, son."

Johnny looked at him. "You mean you figured that I'd. . .?"

Pop said, "Hell, yes. Even called the time before the race started. Didn't I, Joe?"

Fanchet nodded. "Called it on the button."

Johnny sat there and stared at the little man. Pop said, "Now, a couple more races against competition like that, and we'll get it down to. . ."

But Johnny didn't listen to the numbers. He just looked at the little man and grinned. And he knew that whatever Pop said was right. The little man could really call them.



# MIGHTY MEN OF SPORTS

by Ben Nelson  
Stookie Allen



## MASTERS OF THE HUDSON

SEVEN CREWS DUG IN AT THE STARTER'S GUN IN THE 1928 ROWING CLASSIC AT POUGHKEEPSIE. FOUR HAD ALREADY BETTERED CORNELL'S 1901 RECORD OF 18 MINUTES 53.2 SECONDS.

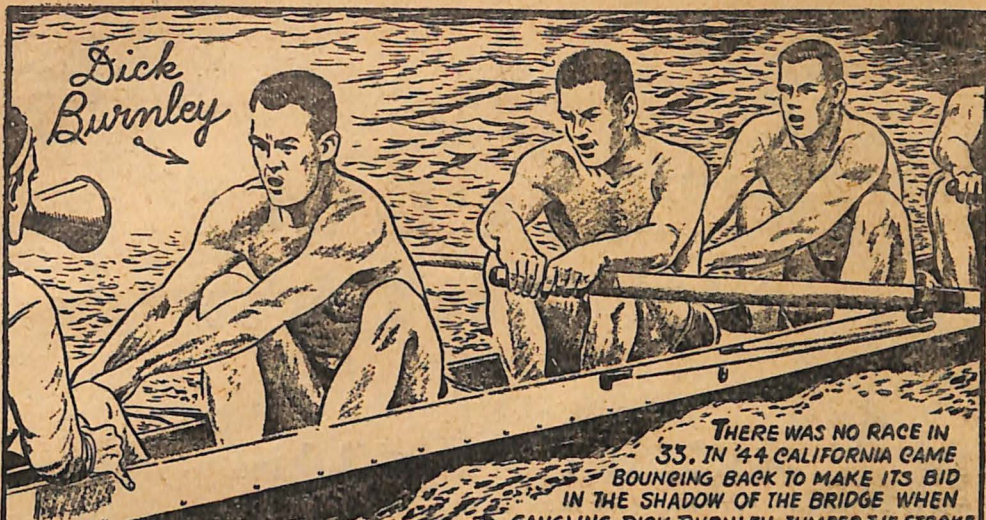
OUT TO EMULATE THEIR MIGHTY PREDECESSORS, CORNELL SET A BLISTERING PACE FOR 2 MILES, WITH COLUMBIA A LENGTH BEHIND AND THE GOLDEN BEARS OF CALIFORNIA HOLDING THIRD WITH A SMOOTH 34 STROKES A MINUTE.

THEN THE BLUE PUT ON PRESSURE AND PASSED THE BIG RED, CALIFORNIA MOVING ALONGSIDE. UP WENT BOTH BEATS, THE BEARS FORGING AHEAD AS THEY SWEEP INTO THE LAST MILE. COLUMBIA HUNG ON GRIMLY BUT CALIFORNIA FINISHED WITH A TERRIFIC 40 THAT CARRIED THEM TO THEIR FIRST TRIUMPH ON THE HUDSON IN A RECORD-SHATTERING 18:35.8. LATER THIS CREW WON THE OLYMPIC CHAMPIONSHIP.



COLUMBIA, CORNELL AND NAVY TOOK THE NEXT 3 CLASSICS. IN 1932 COACH KY EBRIGHT TOLD HIS BEARS TO GO OUT IN FRONT AND STAY THERE, AND THEY DID JUST THAT. MASTERS OF THE RIVER AGAIN, THEY WENT ON TO ANOTHER OLYMPIC VICTORY.





THERE WAS NO RACE IN '35. IN '44 CALIFORNIA CAME BOUNCING BACK TO MAKE ITS BID IN THE SHADOW OF THE BRIDGE WHEN GANGLING DICK BURNLEY JUMPED THE STROKE, ROWED THE WASHINGTON HUSKIES DIZZY AND WON BY  $\frac{3}{4}$  OF A LENGTH.

IN 1935 THE HUSKIES LED AGAIN FOR 2 MILES, THE BEARS MOVING RELENTLESSLY THROUGH THE PACK TO PASS THEM AT THE BRIDGE AND PULL EVEN WITH CORNELL. THEN BEGAN ONE OF THE GREATEST DUELS THE RIVER EVER SAW AS THEY SLAMMED THROUGH THE LAST MILE TO THE FINISH WITH CALIFORNIA OVER THE BIG RED BY  $\frac{1}{6}$  TH OF A LENGTH!



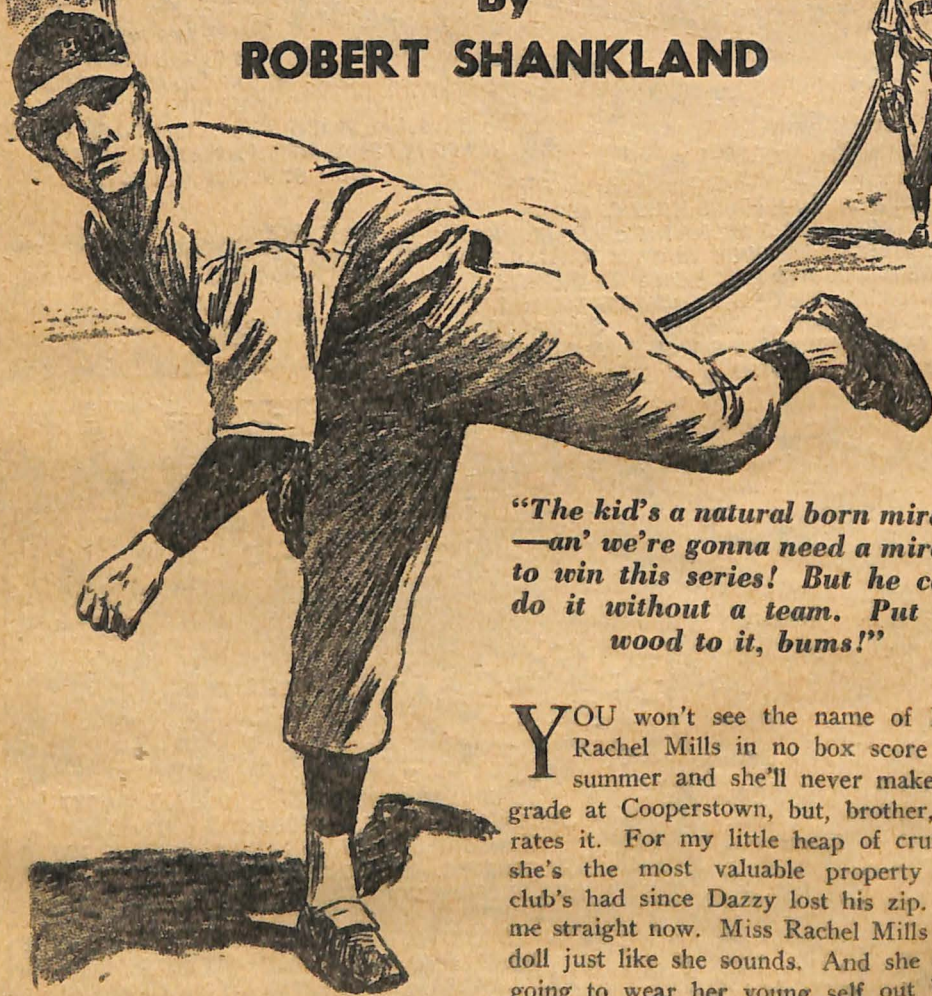
Ky Ebright

WASHINGTON WON IN '36 AND '37. THE NEXT JUNE NAVY SMASHED THE RECORD WITH A 18:19. EBRIGHT BROUGHT HIS FINEST EIGHT TO THE '39 REGATTA. ROWING IN THE LOW 30S, THEY SWEEP BY THE LEADERS AT THE MILE WITH WASHINGTON  $\frac{1}{2}$  LENGTH BEHIND. COLUMBIA CHALLENGED AND FELL BACK. WITH A HALF MILE TO GO THE HUSKIES WENT UP TO A DESPERATE 40 BUT KIRK SMITH MET THEM WITH A POWERFUL 37 THAT PUT THE BEARS ACROSS WITH A RECORD-SLASHING 18:12.6 FOR THEIR FIFTH TRIUMPH IN 10 YEARS!



# THE RELUCTANT SOUTHPAW

By  
ROBERT SHANKLAND



*"The kid's a natural born miracle  
—an' we're gonna need a miracle  
to win this series! But he can't  
do it without a team. Put the  
wood to it, bums!"*

YOU won't see the name of Miss Rachel Mills in no box score this summer and she'll never make the grade at Cooperstown, but, brother, she rates it. For my little heap of crumbs, she's the most valuable property this club's had since Dazzy lost his zip. Get me straight now. Miss Rachel Mills is a doll just like she sounds. And she ain't going to wear her young self out bird-dogging line drives or swinging for the cheap seats. What she'll be doing is sitting

All he does is fan six and rub out the three lucky ones on pop-ups. . . .



in a nice comfortable box back of first keeping a miracle alive. So you know the whole story, I got to go back five, six weeks when we was training down South and this big kid, Slocum, nobody ever seen before shows up in a uniform. Fogarty says to me, "Hey, Bert, look. Rubé Waddell's back in baseball."

The kid makes you think of Waddell at that—big, strong, walks like a farmer, kind of slow and round-shouldered, longest arms I guess I ever seen. The loose way he swings them around you take another look if maybe they got sash-weights tied to the end.

"Hey, kid!" Fogarty yells to him.

The kid shuffles across the baseline without going wild with joy somebody's noticed him. A sleepy-eye kid. I got a fair notion what's next. A guy told Fogarty once he's quite a ribber and Foge took the nut serious.

"Paw started seeding corn yet?" Foge asks this kid.

The kid, he just blinks.

"How are the folks back in Ioway?" Foge asks him.

"Don't live in Iowa," the kid says.

Foge looks at me, disgusted.

"Don't live in Ioway," he says. "Pay off, lumphead. I told you this was a Nebraska kid."

"Vermont," the kid says.

Foge laughs. "How come we never get no country boys on this club? All the time these slick ones from Times Square, The Loop, Vermont, places like that." You'd never guess to listen to Foge rave that he came out of a whistle-stop name of Peyton Corners, Ohio, thirty-five years back.

"What are you doing down here?" Foge finally asks this kid. "Selling brushes?"

"Man named Chase signed me."

"What for?" Foge turns to me. "You ain't heard we need no lefthand catchers, did you, Bert?"

"Catcher's the one position I don't play," the kid says. "Chase told me you boys want pitchers bad."

"Sure, we want pitchers," Foge says. "Growed-up pitchers that's played places besides a cow pasture. Did Chase blow any secrets, such as this is the big time?"

"He told me that," the kid says. "But I knew it already." All the while this kid gives the impression he regrets he's missing a little nap. He's wide across the shoulders, curly brown hair sticking out under the bill of his cap, kind of pink-cheeked, stands six-two, six-three. You get the feel he's a ballplayer all right, only average ballplayers show more of a resemblance to a eyesore, and he, for one, don't wear that rookie look where they want to bust their back to pieces to make the club.

"How old are you, son?" I asks him.

"Twenty-two," the kid says, "I guess."

"You guess!" Foge yells. "Don't you know how old you are?" The kid he just stands there. "What do they call you back in Vermont, Diz?"

"Name's Roger Slocum," the kid says, scratching his ear, "but up home they call me The Big Train."

Foge don't believe it. His eyes pop out, his face gets all red, and he says, "The news ain't reached there yet about Walter Johnson. Is that it?"

"Oh, sure," the kid says, deadpan. "Up home they call him The Little Train."

Foge's speechless, which surprises me as much as this kid does, but I manage to ask the big rube where he pitched last year.

"No place special," the kid says. "Never played organized ball. Fellows always wanting me to play. Never played."

"Well, now, kid," Foge says, sarcastic, "you probably don't need no experience or nothing. You're a home-growed big leaguer. If we beg, you're a cinch to win thirty your first season."



"Least thirty," the kid says, "if I get feeling that way. Long as the boys give me a run once in a while. Course I can powder them myself." He gazes up at the sky. "When I get feeling that way."

"Well, if we ain't found ourselves a fresh rookie!" Foge says. "First one since we sent Dooley down to the Sally League to die."

I realize Foge won't rumble this kid if he keeps it up till he's on pension, so I says, "O.K., son. See that bunch over there? You start playing beanbag with them."

The kid ambles away—you think he's got till July Four to get there—and I and Foge hop to work. No use tipping off Barney he's stuck with two worn-out coaches.

THAT evening I'm sitting in the lobby smoking a nine-cent heater with a couple of dandy salesmen for company. They don't figure to provide me much company because they both are fracturing their vertebrays trying to catch the eye of the doll behind the desk. I keep thinking about this big kid, Slocum, and that dynamite personality of his. I got to admit he looks like a thrower, and I hope he is. Understand, I don't put much store by how they look. Ted Crandell looked strong as this kid, almost, but all he served up was balloons. With Crandell in there, our infield thought it was back in the Battle of the Bulge ducking cannonballs. I got a kind of hunch on this big kid, though—something about him. Maybe it's just because I still don't sleep nights for the memory of the scatter-arm parade marching in from our bullpen last fall. We got the best collection of pitchers that don't shave yet ever to shrink a manager's heart. Not one of the starters, except maybe Jack Braslo, is less than two years away. It we didn't have old Carey to stop them in the late innings, we'd of lost the Series in four instead of seven.

Joe Hand, our bullpen coach, ankles into the hotel.

"Relax your dogs, Joe," I tells him. "Have a smoke." Joe squeezes his big bat-rack in an easy chair.

"How'd they look out there today?" I ask him.

"Not bad," Joe says, "not bad for the work they've had. I think we finally get that big year out of Braslo."

"You notice a tall, sleepy-eye kid just showed up?"

Joe looks at me. "Yeah," he says. "What do you know about that kid?"

"Not enough," I says. "He got anything?"

"He ain't got a thing," Joe says, "except this one thing I hear it coming kind of whines and tears off a arm when it goes past. Hardest throw I seen since Dizzy used to blow them by me."

"Green, ain't he?"

"Not so's you'd notice it. Different than most of them fast kids. He knows where the ball's going. Lefthander, too."

"He in shape?"

"If he ain't, he's going to scare the league to death when he is. He must of been throwing in his old man's barn all winter. The first one he turns loose knocks me down and I tells him, 'Take it easy, kid, this ain't the Series; this is spring training' and he yawns-like and says, 'Well, let me know when you want a look at my fast one'."

"If he's that good," I says, "I wonder why he don't seem to show much enthusiasm."

Jack Braslo strolls through and slips the desk doll a wink. The doll paid no mind to the sales stiffs, but Braslo's another story. She flashes her choppers and chirps, "Good evening, Mr. Braslo," like he's Gary Grant. Jack don't need to draw cards to Gary at that. Even my old lady gets a flutter out of him and she stopped looking at ballplayers that way about the time Merkle forgot to touch second.



"Well, if Braslo has his year," I says to Joe, "and this kid comes up a surprise, we figure to cop the Series too, this time."

"It's a lot to look for," Joe says, "a kid to win up here without he beats the bushes first. But Johnson done it. Feller done it. Some others, too. Maybe this kid does it. We need plenty more line on him before we can tell much."

"I hope he delivers, Joe," I says, "and I hope nothing's wrong with him—like he's nuts or something."

Well, it turns out this kid's a natural-born miracle. His hard one's so hard they have to judge where it goes by the thunder and lightning. And nothing fazes him. He'd just as leave pitch to big Mize as to your Uncle Bill. But my fear comes true. The kid's bughouse, unless you don't call a guy that gets no boot out of baseball bughouse, and maybe you're right at that. The whole camp's high on him, especially Barney, our skipper, but what we have to put up with him is more than fair you should put up with any rookie. He don't want to do nothing but hoard his strength. He don't want to throw. Nobody can half the time ever find the big boob. All the while he says he wishes he's back in Vermont where folks don't get so excited, and in my book it's four-two-and-even he lights out for there before opening day. "Sleepy Slocum," Foge tags him.

I'll give you an instance. One day we persuades this kid he gets up in a standing position and pitches the last three innings against a bunch from the Southern Association, and the whole stretch he's got them worrying they've come down with a case of the dim-eye. All he does is fan six and rub out the three lucky ones on pop-ups. I starts walking to the clubhouse with him and I tells him he looks good.

"You'll stick, sure," I tells him.

"Don't care if I don't stick," he says.

"Playing the big league's a fat spot for a young fellow," I says.

"Being home's better."

"What's the matter?" I says, cautious. "Somebody in the family ailing?"

"Everybody's fine. But it's spring now up on the old farm and I sure miss it, fishing and all."

"Kid," I says like I'm his kindly uncle. "You know what they paid Feller last year? Eighty-seven thousand rugs, that's all. What type green do you think he'd be drawing if he'd stayed on the old farm, fishing?"

"Money," the kid says. "What's money? All it buys is trouble," and the big clunk does his favorite exercise, which is to yawn. "Never could see much object in throwing a ball past some poor chump that only needs to hit it to be happy."

We're a couple steps from the clubhouse when Dan Mills, our new secretary, yells at me. He's got a doll with him, a little golden-head doll, kind of schoolgirl-looking but not so schoolgirl at that—the sort that chokes me to recall it was 1924 I got my last base hit.

"Bert," Dan says to me, "I want you to meet my daughter, Rachel. She's come down to watch a little of the work."

"Well, miss," I says, "how'd you like the game today?"

"Oh, it was wonderful," she says, and uncorks a smile that starts hair to growing on my bald dome. "But I was so disappointed Mr. Braslo didn't pitch."

"We're using him tomorrow," I says.

I then glance at big Slocum and that causes me to glance once more. He gives the impression he must of swallowed the baseball. He's staring at the doll—first time I seen him with his eyes open—and there's a darsight more get-up in his face than I ever noticed him show on the mound.

"This here's Slee— This here's Roger Slocum, Miss Mills," I says.

"Oh, Mr. Slocum," Miss Rachel Mills says, doll-fashion, "you looked awfully impressive out there today. I was wild about your high hard one."



The way the kid works his mouth you wonder if he's chewing up a large caramel, but he don't say nothing intelligent.

"What was it you whiffed that last man on?" she asks him. "He swung on it like a second-hand windmill. I decided it was a slider."

"I don't have a slider, miss," Slocum says. "Not yet," and he moves his big feet around. "That was just my change-up."

"Well, I must say, you can certainly pour on the old swift. You're already nearly as good as Ja—, as Mr. Braslo, and he's had two years of big league experience."

"Ha," the kid says.

We stand around chinning for a couple minutes, and the kid keeps eyeing Miss Rachel Mills like King Nero eyeing the big fire. After they leave, I walk with him to the shower and he says to me, "Where's she get that stuff, 'almost as good as Braslo?' I'll outpitch Braslo any day I feel like it."

"Maybe you will, kid," I says, "but not back in Vermont," and I clam up because I'm doing some thinking which, being a coach, I'm supposed have good practice doin'. Then the next day I hear the kid speak to Carey: "Say, Pat, how do you throw that slider of yours?" And I do some more thinking.

It turns out Miss Rachel came down to watch a little of the work, all right, but the work she watches hardest a lad name of Jack Braslo does. Jack met her up North during the winter and made a play for her, as what young guy wouldn't, and being a nice healthy doll with normal eyesight, she decides that's great. Her dad gets a big laugh out of my proposish, but Miss Rachel Mills herself don't see it that way.

"I couldn't possibly," she tells me. "It wouldn't be honest. Besides, what makes you think I could coax him to stay on with the club?"

"Listen, Miss Mills," I says, "just take

my word on it. I got a feeling you could make this Slocum cut and run if you try and there's a sight I want to see before I die. Don't forget you do this kid a favor, too. If we cop the flag again and the Series, he stands to grab ten, twelve thousand for his summer's toil plus maybe a bonus if he's a big winner which he can't miss. Also, your dad's dealt in on that Series loot, and you wouldn't do your dear old dad out of nothing, would you? All I'm asking is you favor the kid with a few of them smiles of yours and hint you regard ballplayers more romantic than farmers."

"As a matter of fact, I do," she says. "I'll take a good, fast, homely shortstop over the handsomest farmer in business, including Henry Fonda. I love those ball hawks!"

Well, between Dan and I, we convince her. She says O.K., she looks at the kid once in a while as if he's Lefty Grove and Abe Lincoln wrapped in one.

**F**IRST, it's great. The kid goes for her all right, which cheers me up to know he's alive. He gets so desirous that she thinks he's Vermont's answer to Iron Man Joe McGinnity, he starts throwing holes in our catchers. He works up a fair slider to go with his fast one, and even Charlie Perrilla, our centerfielder, the guy that gives lefthanders a nervous breakdown, can't reach him for nothing but a high fly to the dugout. Miss Rachel Mills talks it up from the side—stuff like, "Fog it through there, Roger boy! Send that jockey back to the Can-Am League! He's swinging with his eyes shut, Roger boy!" Stuff like that. Roger boy eats it up. I don't hear a peep out of him about Vermont and the good old farm. I even start to feel some confidence I'll wake up in the morning with the kid's nose still present for counting purposes.

He takes Miss Rachel Mills to the movie shows and I see them once in a while to-



gether. For my dough, this Miss Rachel Mills is the greatest actor since Theda Bara was knocking around in a union suit. The way she looks at this kid I almost believe her myself if I didn't know different. I now and then feel sorry for the kid, but them times I try to think of the team. I kind of keep my eye on Braslo also, because the boys tell me Jack's leveling when he acts sweet on Miss Rachel Mills. He looks sore for two, three days; then he brightens up and I figure he's got so many dolls to pick over he don't care if he loses one, even if she is the best tomato in the whole basket.

Jack shows plenty on the mound, too. He's a slim right-hander with a world of stuff but wild and, of course, that's why he flopped in the Series. But this spring his control's more sharp and we all predict that in the kid and him and the support we give them, we got a one-two, left-right stopper good for maybe forty-five wins, maybe more. In fact, the picture looks too rosy to believe and, sure thing, this bird Homer Pettengill turns up to make you stop believing.

This here Homer's an old guy, older than me even, and not much higher than one of them singing midgets, and if he weighs one-ten in his long johns, I'm surprised. He's got a face like a prune somebody should of ate quite a while back. I notice him and the kid around. I notice because I wonder I ain't never seen this bird before. Also when he's with the kid, he looks like the kid could put him in his pants pocket. But I just figure this is one of them dodos worse than schoolboys for making an idol out of ballplayers. Still, I says to the kid one morning when we're getting into our monkey suits, "Who's your pal?"

"What pal?"

"Little pickle-face."

"Oh," the kid says, "that's Mr. Pettengill. Homer Pettengill. Hardware dealer from up around home. I saw the Vermont

plate on his car and so I looked him up."

"Know him before?"

"Nope. Fine fellow, though."

"Down here on vacation, I suppose?"

"That's right. Wishes now he'd stayed home. Nobody ought to leave Vermont," and the kid's eyes moon up. "Sure does do me good to talk to a fellow like Mr. Pettengill."

"Seeing much of your girl?" I says quick.

"Yeah!" the kid says, commencing to flash lights like a pinball machine. "Gosh darn, Bert, but she's a pretty girl."

"That's the most true thing you said this year, son," I tells him. "You stick to her."

"Awful crazy about baseball, though."

"I notice she can serve up the lingo."

"Listen, Bert," he says, looking around, "I'll let you in on something. Excepting for Rachel, I'd be shoving off Wednesday morning."

I almost lose my upper plate.

"How come, kid?" I says.

"Mr. Pettengill's starting back, and he's offered me a free lift."

"What the devil's the matter with that bag of bones?" I says. "Don't he want to see you make nothing out of yourself?"

"Aw," the kid says, "Mr. Pettengill's like me. Thinks this stuff's a lot of foolishness. Also, somebody picked his pocket at a game in Nineteen-eleven."

"It must of been Jesse James done it."

"I wonder," the kid says. "Do you think Rachel'd go back with me?" He puts on his moon eyes again. "Mrs. Roger Slocum," he sighs.

This is my signal to steal, and don't you worry, I waste no time getting hold of the bride prospect. "Look, angel," I tell Rachel, later. "Whatever bum luck happens to you in your whole life, be sure it ain't you lose your smoke now," and I explain to her why.

"What do you want me to do, coach," she says. "Go to work on Homer?"



"Homer!" I yells. "That apricot ain't looked at a dame in forty years except maybe he's got ideas of selling her a door-knob. Just keep a tight line on the kid, that's all."

"The poor dear," she sighs. "Roger's really awfully sweet, Bert. It's a shame to deceive him this way."

"It's a worse shame if we lose the best young southpaw I seen in a lifetime of baseball. Listen to me, angeface. The sweetest thing about that kid hangs off his left shoulder," and then I stop to get my control back. "He's a nice kid, you're right," I says, "only he requires some inspiration to keep him breathing, and you're it."

"Of course, I couldn't imagine spending the rest of my life in Vermont," she says. "No good fast ball games. But Roger's as sweet as he can be. Handsome, too," and she looks dreamy for a minute. "And, oh brother, can he fling that old potato!"

"Well, keep that in mind."

"He won't go home, Bert. Count on me. Besides, he told you he isn't going."

"I know, I know," I says. "But one thing I learned all these years is to spot it when something ought to give you a case of the bends. I spot something of the kind now, and it's Hardware Homer."

The team's coming along, playing regular exhibitions, and we got one scheduled for this Tuesday against the Boston American club. With the pitchers rounding into shape, Barney decides he'll let Braslo see if he can go the full nine. But Monday afternoon we get a telegram saying because of the big storm downstate we better not count on the Sox keeping the date. So Barney tells the squad we'll play another Regulars versus the Yannigans.

"Braslo starts for the team," Barney says, "against Slocum, and you both stay in till you get bumped out. If you can last nine, do it. Get a good night's sleep and make me happy out there tomorrow."

"Well, kid," I says to Slocum, "here's

your chance to prove to your girl you're more of a pitcher than Braslo."

"She knows that already."

"Maybe she does," I says. "But it might slip her memory if she sees the boys knock your brains out tomorrow."

"Nobody knocks my brains out," the kid says, "if I get feeling like not letting them."

"One thing about pitchers," I says, "they should have plenty of confidence."

I DON'T feel easy in the mind, and I try to tell myself this game's making me a old woman. That evening I'm sitting in the hotel room with pen in hand toiling over a letter to friend wife, which I think when she gets it she'll holler for them to commit me. My worries squatting there beside me, I'm producing a cockeyed brand of literature. Finally I decide to forget it, and right then the kid walks in. I don't like the look on him.

"Sit down, kid," I says. "Been to the movie show with your girl?"

"No," the kid says. "She told me she was helping her father entertain some people. Of course, that's only what she told me."

"Well, you can't expect to see her all the time."

"Who wants to see her all the time? I don't care if I never see her."

The kid looks sore, that's for certain, and I don't need only one guess at the trouble.

"I'm going home Wednesday, Bert," he says, "to see some honest folks."

"You been hearing bum chatter, kid?"

And he tells me. It was good old Homer at the bottom of it, all right. Homer kept nosing the soil till he hit gold. Someplace around town, he listened in on a couple of the boys ribbing Braslo about losing his girl to the kid. Jack does a slow burn, and finally he tells them it's all a phony, the great Braslo just don't lose girls, she's only trying to keep the kid interested long



enough so's he gets to like playing ball. Homer hightails it straight to the kid.

"I had some suspicions for a while," the kid says, "but only for a little while. She fooled me good."

"Now look, kid, I—"

"Glad Mr. Pettengill's around. I don't have the money to pay my way home."

"You can't—"

"Tell Barney about me going, will you? And tell Miss Baseball if she wants the club to have a southpaw winner this year, her boy Braslo better start learning how to throw from the other side."

And he walks out. Then he sticks his head back in. "Second thought, Bert. Don't tell Barney until after the game tomorrow. I want to keep that date with brother Braslo."

It takes me three days to locate Miss Rachel Mills. She's with her Dad and some people in a eating and dance place at the edge of town, and I have her called out front. She feels terrible when she learns.

"Will you please explain to me," I says, "how it happens Braslo got wise?"

"I honestly couldn't help it, Bert," she says.

It appears Jack got all riled up; then he threatens to shinny the flagpole, dive off, and make himself forever a part of center-field. Miss Rachel Mills decides the guy's too handsome to perish, besides she hates to see her country lose a good righthand pitcher, so she confesses all it he swears to keep it a secret.

"Too bad you ain't a little older, angel," I says. "Nobody that respects himself like Braslo would jump off even the top of the dugout."

"But, Bert, what are we going to do?"

"Do?" I says. "We'll do what we did last year—blindfold ourself every time we got to start a southpaw. This kid's going to spend the summer fishing—provided he gets feeling that way."

"Oh, Bert," she says, "I don't want him

to go back to Vermaaahnt," and she starts the well to working, so I blow.

I must of slept twenty minutes that night.

We get good weather the next day, in spite of it could blow a cyclone without me requiring no crying towel. The kid don't have much to say, but there's a mean expression on him I'm glad no young children got to witness. Me it just fills full of sorrow. Here's what we been waiting for—something to light a fire under the kid, and he gets it the day before he starts a career fishing.

I see him and Miss Rachel Mills holding a pow-wow near the stands, and after he commences his warmup, I accidentally stroll near to her. She don't look so good with red eyes.

"It's no use, Bert," she tells me. "I can't convince him. I told him the truth. Everything. I told him I'm not pretending any more. I . . . I love him, Bert."

Seeing I'm strictly a baseball man and the problem's now left that department, I got no helpful answer.

"Well," I says, "you'll probably see a ball game anyway." But I ain't felt so rotten since that bouncer got through for three bases in the Series of '20.

One thing I'm right about. She sees a ball game. Braslo's fast one's hopping, sailing, and all but vanishing. Bixler, the kid second baseman, beats out a roller in the third and Slocum himself meets one square for two bases in the fourth. Otherwise the rookies might as well of stayed in the hotel tearing up the pool table. But good as Jack is, big Slocum's better. Slocum's perfect, and that's just what I mean—zero-zero-zero every inning. Even the fouls ain't loud. The boys keep coming back, shaking their heads.

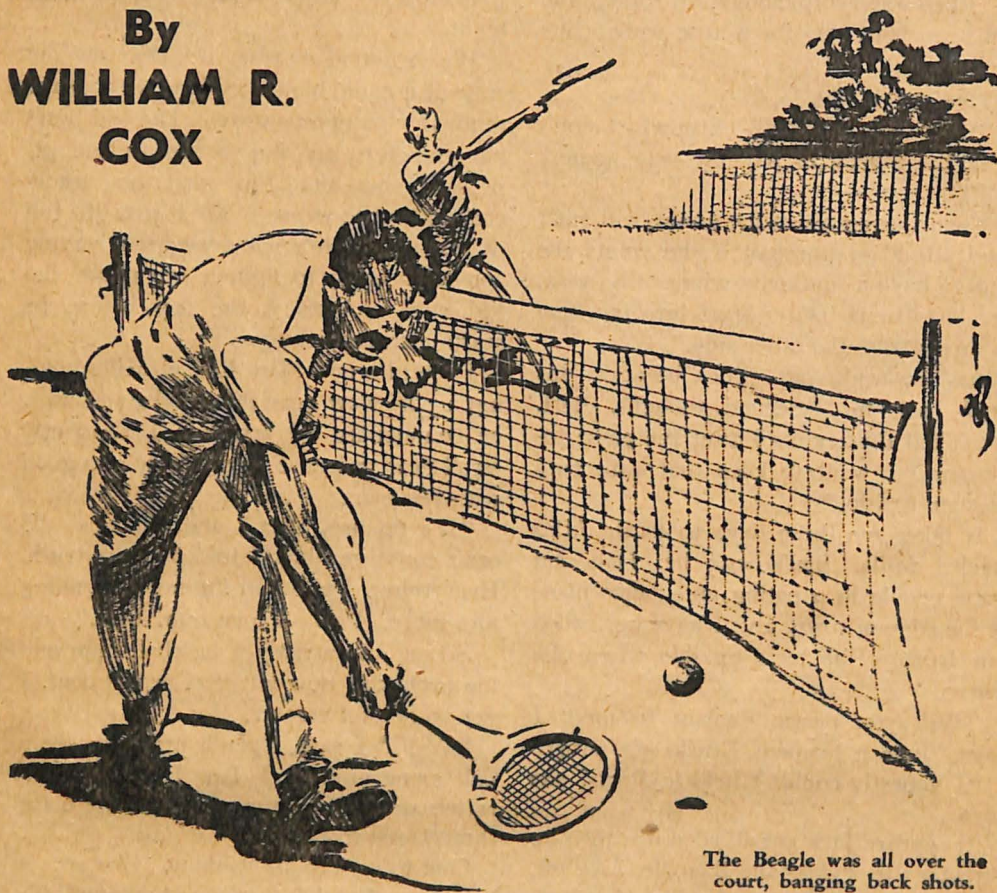
The game goes up to the seventh, nothing-nothing, the kid looking meaner all the time and Braslo himself—when you glance at him you don't figure he cooks his meat

(Continued on page 129)



# ACES AWAY!

By  
**WILLIAM R.  
COX**



The Beagle was all over the court, banging back shots.

|| *A fading champ with hate powering his racket—  
a kid, with savvy and no heart—one last, blazing  
set where a dream of glory may die—or come  
true!* ||

**S**LIP COONEY heard it first in the locker room at Sea Bright. It was a whisper among the tennis elite, then it suddenly blew up to tornado size. "The Beagle is coming back," they said. "The nerve of him. He won't be welcome here. Why, it was the biggest scandal. . . ."

Slip Cooney was only twenty. He had never seen The Beagle play. He shrugged

and went out of practice with Harry Fortney.

Slip was a tall, lean lad with good legs and a ready grin. He liked playing tennis; he liked being a champion in a small way, down in Florida. He had been junior champion of the East, was now ranked in the first fifteen in the country. He had been picked up by Harry Fortney and that veteran had taught him well.



Fortney was rich. He was a thick-bodied man, but amazingly swift and graceful. He had almost been a champion, himself. The Beagle had reigned in his time, and there had only been one Beagle. Fortney was thirty-two now, but he could still give Slip Cooney a workout.

It was a fine day at Sea Bright. Fortney came over, peeling off a sweater. He said, "On that backhand today, Slip. You've got to hit with authority. You're just keeping it in play. If I ever get you hitting that backhand as you should. . . ." He had a heavy face which could be hard. He shook his head and ended, "You could beat Joe March."

Joe March was the current champion. Slip almost laughed at the idea of beating Joe March.

He said, in jest: Maybe. But how about The Beagle?"

Harry Fortney paused in the act of putting the sweater down. He seemed to freeze, the dangling garment in his hand. He said, in a voice strange to Slip, "What about The Beagle?"

"He's comin' back," said Slip negligently. "They say he is, anyway."

"Why . . . he almost went to jail," said Fortney thickly. "He was arrested. He got clear on a technicality."

Slip said, "What did he ever do, anyway?"

"It was a stock deal," said Fortney absently. He put down the sweater and picked up a racket. "The Beagle, eh? He'll never come back. Too proud. He couldn't face. . . ."

A voice said, "How are you, Harry?" It was a cold, precise voice. The man who owned it was six-feet-three and lean as a crane. He stood twelve feet away, seemed only to whisper, but his voice was like a whiplash. He was thirty-five years old and he looked it. His nose was large and thrusting from a lean face and his eyes were deep-set and burning. Slip had a curious feeling that he was somebody

important, even before he recognized The Beagle.

Fortney turned. His motions were stiff. He said, "Grant, you shouldn't be here."

Grant Barden, the greatest of all tennis champions, said drily, "Why, Harry, my friends will welcome me. My enemies do not count. Is this your protege, Harry?"

"Slip Cooney. . . . Grant Barden," muttered Fortney. "Yes, Slip is a comer. Uh—we're going to hit some, right now. . . ."

Slip found himself on the court, racket in hand. The tall, incredibly thin figure stood stock still, watching. The Beagle's nose seemed to quiver, as though sniffing out the real extent of Slip's tennis ability.

Slip shrugged. He drove off forehand to Harry. He warmed up nicely and Harry put a couple on his backhand; Slip hit freely enough at them, getting the ball nice and deep. He forgot everything but tennis for a half hour, keeping his head down, concentrating on the ball. He was never careless, not even in practice. He was developing power and he knew it. Maybe he was not ready for Joe March, but in a year or two he meant to be up there at Forest Hill—in the finals and confident of victory.

When he looked up, The Beagle was gone. Harry Fortney was puffing and sweating. Slip said, "How'd it go, Harry?"

"All right," said Harry shortly. "The Beagle couldn't have entered. They didn't announce him. They wouldn't have him."

"Hey," said Slip, "I forgot you played him so often. You know him well, don't you?"

Harry said, "Know him?" He laughed, but not with pleasure. "He's the sneakiest, dirtiest. . . . Well, he's too old now."

"Too old for what?"

"To play tennis the way he did," said Harry. "He's been away five years. In South America, I hear. Had a job down



there someone got him when the scandal broke. Of course, he could have been playing down there. . . ."

Slip said, "I'll bet he was. He was the greatest, wasn't he? How could he stay away from the courts?"

Fortney said, "He can't play well enough. He shouldn't have come back."

Slip said, "He kept you out of the championship, didn't he?"

"Yes," said Harry shortly. "Go and dress before you catch cold."

"I wanted to play some doubles with Joe and Danny and Emil," said Slip. "For ten bucks."

"I've warned you about gambling," said Harry. "Now get dressed and remember, the tournament opens this afternoon. You're in strict training." He turned and walked off. He had been very good about finances, which fact had kept Slip from being a tennis bum; he had coached wisely and well. He was, in some ways, a strange character, but Slip was a grateful protegee. He went to the clubhouse, pausing only to look at the entries.

There it was, inked in after other entries. "Grant Barden, Buenos Aires." He was in Slip's half of the draw, too.

Slip shrugged, going to the showers. The old guy was through. He was too old. But he had come back to prowl the scenes of his greatness. It would be pathetic. There had been something appealing about the lone, battered lean man. Slip wondered how The Beagle had got into trouble.

That afternoon Slip beat his first round opponent to death with his blazing forehand, overhead and service. His backhand was adequate against mediocre opposition. When he came off the court, Harry Fortney was waiting.

"You've got to meet him! I've complained, but it's no use. His application was in and the committee couldn't do anything about it. He's a big shot down in Argentina."

"You mean The Beagle? Slip was amused. "Did he beat his first round guy?"

Harry Fortney said, "You don't know him. He's a devil. He'll have you crazy with his tactics and his game. He wins by breaking up the other player. He ruins opponents he doesn't like. He'll try to ruin you, because you're my protegee."

"Don't get yourself in an uproar, Harry." Slip stared at his coach. "How can he do all this? Witchcraft?"

"It's not what he does. It's the way he does it. You will have to stay with the ball and ignore him. Don't pay any attention to anything he says or does." Harry was so excited, he stuttered a little. "Remember that. Don't be friendly with him. Don't speak to him."

Slip said, "You mean that skinny old gee is going to eat me up? Harry, you're livin' in another day. Remember me? I'm a tough kid. Joe March beat me, but he never ate me up."

Harry said, "You don't understand. The Beagle. . . . well, he's been beaten, of course. But almost never when he wanted to win bad enough. He hates me, Slip. He always hated me. He'll be after you."

"Why?" asked Slip.

"Because. . . . well," said Harry. His heavy face was colorless. "Tomorrow you'll learn what it is to play a devil."

Slip was getting a little disgusted. He said, "Look, Harry, you're upset. I'll see you later. And—I ain't scared, Harry. I won't let The Beagle hurt you or get at you through me. I swear!" He walked away to the dressing room. Harry Fortney was husky enough to whip four Beagles, he thought scornfully, so why should he be frightened?

**T**HE second set of the Barden-Cooney match was ludicrous. At five-love, The Beagle threw up a ball and hit a sliced service which twisted off the grass



and seemed to bounce lazily high on Slip's backhand and when Slip went for it, he struck it with the wood and knocked it into the stands.

Slip shook his head and stared at the treacherous racket. Then he grinned. The tall, skinny veteran across the net changed courts to serve again. The ball went up. Slip was set for a service to backhand.

In that short time of watching, yesterday, The Beagle had found the backhand weakness. The amazing thing to Slip was how the aged character could keep knocking them on that side. Again and again Slip had tried to force, to put The Beagle on the defensive so that he could not choose his spots.

It was like attacking the backboard. The thin legs danced like Astaire dancing, the ball rapped back, with spin, with stuff, always with stuff, always to the backhand. Or else it went far to forehand, drawing Slip out of position so that he would be passed on backhand later. Like chess, it was, with The Beagle setting up the plays, then moving in for the kill.

Slip just kept plugging. That was his way. The service came now. It was on forehand, flat and low. The Beagle had every shot in the book and he had them under control. Slip had never seen anything like it.

He could balance a little himself, though. He took the forehand first service and swung. The strings sang and he knew the shot was good. He raced eagerly to the net.

The Beagle had been over, waiting for the raking cross-court forehand return. He cut under it. He applied the smooch.

Slip turned and raced desperately back under the lob. It was not a high lob, just a searching shot for the backline. Slip saw it hit the line and flung himself after it. He muffed it.

A linesman called, "Out!"

Slip drew up short. He saw The Beagle across the net. The tall man was

coming in, but at the call he stopped. He put both hands on his hips. He fixed his gaze upon the offending linesman.

The Beagle said in his distinct, carrying voice: "I beg your pardon?"

The linesman colored. He said firmly, "Out!"

"Fifteen—all," droned the umpire. "Play, please."

The Beagle did not alter his position. Slip could feel the burning intensity of his eyes, bent upon the linesman. There was a hush in the arena.

Then the lean man turned. His every move was histrionic. He walked, with vast dignity, to the baseline. He weighed two balls, glanced at Slip. His shoulders hunched.

Slip never saw the next three services. They were blinding. They were perfectly placed for aces. They were examples of the cannonball which was storied, which The Beagle seldom used.

They ran out the match: 6-0, 6-0—for Grant Barden. The veteran had simply run the protege of Harry Fortney off the court in the historic Sea Bright Bowl, where Slip had been primed to start showing his stuff.

Slip came to the net. He said, "Beagle, you're great! Great!"

The handclasp of the other was perfunctory, cold. Barden said, "No one refers to me by that name to my face."

Slip said, "Aw, the hell with that. . . . I ain't scared, just beaten!" He laughed freely.

The tall old champion turned his high shoulders. He stalked from the court. Slip picked up his sweater. Harry Fortney was pallid with rage and something akin to panic.

Harry said, "That devil! He's after something. He's back to do some harm. He started on you, but that's not all he'll try to do. . . ."

Slip said, "Nope. He'll try to beat Joe and win the title. But wait'll he gets in a



long match. I'd like to go five sets with him. He simply can't last. No man can, at top speed—not at his age."

Harry said, "He's uncanny. The game, the same strokes. . . ."

Slip said, "He's terrific. But old. . . ." It was funny, the way Harry babbled, the real fear in the heavy-set man who had always been so calm and superior, who had taught Slip to be cool and unruffled under any circumstances. Slip could tell, even then, that Harry would be little help to him through the gruelling campaign of this important summer in his life.

It became a thing that the tennis crowd sensed and then watched with avid interest. The lone, tall figure of The Beagle moved through the campaign on grass in the big Eastern meets like an avenging angel. By the whim of Fate it seemed that he always moved at the expense of Slip Cooney.

Yet Slip Cooney was doing extremely well. He was gaining the quarters and semi-finals whenever he did not meet The Beagle in an earlier round. He was beating Lamarr and Tenniel and Adams and the others when he got the chance. He was putting on a little weight that year and growing stronger. He never got to meet Joe March, but he showed his form in whipping the other ranking players of the country.

Had it not been for the return of The Beagle, he would have been the sensation of the year.

Asking no favors, granting none, The Beagle was finalist in every one of the five big meetings. March beat him three times. . . . Then The Beagle got all of his game together and won in New England, and the stage was set for Forest Hills. The sports pages were full of it. The thirty-five year old machine-like hasbeen was the story of the year.

And, as is the custom in the sports world, no mention was ever made in the public prints of the reason for Grant Bar-

den's desertion of American tennis half a decade earlier. Even when it was discovered that he was a citizen of Argentina, that he had taken out his papers there, the press refrained from pointing out that he had been involved in a stock scandal which nearly resulted in sentencing him to jail.

Slip Cooney came to Forest Hills tanned, fresh and eager for combat. He looked at the draw and grinned. He was in the same half with The Beagle again, with Joe March in the other portion of the field. It was as if some guardian saw to it that Barden got his chance at Harry Fortney's boy. They would meet in the semi-finals, if each got through, Slip knew.

He went on inside the big, famed clubhouse. In the small room where the pro had his shop he saw the elongated, crow-like figure of his nemesis. He leaned an elbow on the showcase and said, "I'm a lucky kid."

Several men turned their heads. The initiated covered any emotions they might have felt.

The Beagle said coldly, "Indeed, Cooney?"

"I get another lesson," explained Slip gaily. "Did you see me beat Adams with the chop-drive on a high bounce you use from baseline? You taught me that, Beagle."

"I seem to have taught you everything but good manners," said Barden. "Those you will never learn."

Slip said carelessly, "Oh, you still haven't got me scared. I know you're a big, bad wolf, but honest, Beagle, what can you do to me?" He faced the big man squarely, weight balanced, moving away from the glass case. "You can beat me at tennis, sure. Now, you can. But I'm twenty and you're thirty-five. I've got time, Beagle, and I'm not impressed, see? And—you better be rested and on your game this time, too. You'll never last five sets with me."



The tall man seemed to grow to eight feet in height. His mouth tightened, his eyes blazed that peculiar fire which was always latent beneath their slightly opaque surface.

Then a thin smile adorned his bleak face. He glanced at the tennis elite who were holding their collective breaths in the small room. He said: "Gentlemen, there speaks youth—personified. Brash, confident youth—unmannerly, ignorant, but muscular. Some day this crude boy may be a champion. He has no nerves. He has some skill, very little, but he has muscles." The famed high shoulders shrugged. "Bah! I should never cross rackets with them!" He walked, almost mincing, but with dignity, from the room.

The pro said heavily, "You shouldn't have said it, Cooney. He'll skunk you. He'll humiliate you, in the Stadium."

Slip turned away. His smile was as easy as ever. "He said I was all muscles. You heard him. We'll see about that."

Harry Fortney was waiting for him. The heavy-set man was drinking a high-ball. He had been imbibing freely since Sea Bright, although Slip had never known him to drink much before then. Fortney said, "They're framing us. It's impossible for you always to be in the same half of the draw with him."

Slip said, "That's plain silly."

Harry had not hit a ball with him for weeks. For long periods of time, Slip had not even seen his former constant tournament companion. Harry had said his business in New York called him away, but business had never before bothered the wealthy dilettante.

Fortney said, "I'm going to lodge a formal complaint. . . ."

"Not in my name," said Slip quickly. "I won't hold still for that."

Fortney put down his glass. He said thickly, "I tell you, he is attacking me through you. He knows I coached you, planned for you to upset the field this

year. And you would have done it. . . ."

Slip said patiently, "Look, he beats me. On the tennis court."

"He taunts you. He uses dirty tactics. . . ."

"He's always within the rules," Slip said. "He's smart. That's his way. It ain't mine . . . but it don't bother me."

"Are you taking his part?" demanded Fortney. His face grew red. "That's gratitude. I should have known it! That's what I get! I picked you up and made a tennis player of you and now you're stringing along with him!"

"You must be nuts. Or maybe just drunk," said Slip bluntly. "Look, Harry. You don't own me, you know. I owe you a little dough, and the idea was that I'd pay you back after I got into the chips. That still goes. I'll turn pro when I get an offer and with my game, I'll make money. You'll get paid. As for the rest, I'm grateful to you and I'm going to try and knock The Beagle's block off. But don't run on me, Harry, not now, with the Nationals starting tomorrow."

Fortney said, "Why, you young ingrate, I'll. . . ."

But Slip had walked away. He was shaking a little, for he had never quarreled with Harry Fortney before. He was very young, but he sensed what was happening. He could feel Harry's fear of The Beagle. He could not understand it, but he could feel it.

He could not understand how one man could so frighten another. He had listened, lately, to stories of the old rivalry, how The Beagle had always beaten Harry in the payoff matches of another day, ten years back. Going around with the tennis crowd, he had learned some things about the hatred of the two, how they had always clashed, on court and off. There were tales of a woman, of gambling, of many things over which two men can fight to the death. None of it was definite, but there were stories which Slip did not believe.



Still, he could not understand Harry's fear. He kept wondering what The Beagle could do to frighten Harry. It was like he had said in the pro's room. . . . What could The Beagle do to him?

He had other worries. There are no soft touches in the Nationals. He had good players to meet and defeat before he even got to The Beagle. He gave all his attention to that problem. Harry Fortney, who had been so close to him, was a shadowy background figure that week, lapping up his whiskey, frightened at an old ghost.

WHEN the stadium was finally jammed to the brim and the flags of the nations stood fast on their staffs and the green grass, white-lined, lay crisp across the center court ready for the match, Slip Cooney felt an odd emptiness in his flat middle. It was like waking from a dream and finding reality. He had stayed within the boundaries of his tennis; he had outfought Adams and the others; he had come down to the match against The Beagle and now the chips were really down.

For The Beagle had superbly outmaneuvered, out-stroked and out-manned each of his opponents. Never extended, he had gone three sets each with them, and had prevailed. It would be Joe March tomorrow, for the national title, against Grant Barden, age thirty-five—or Slip Cooney, age twenty. It seemed impossible, but it was true.

In the dressing room, Harry Fortney, trembling, helped Slip change. He was a wreck of the heavy, confident man before Sea Bright. He said, his voice thick and strained, "You've got to beat him. He is malevolent. Today he threatened me. If you beat him, you'll break him. He could not bear to be beaten."

"How can he threaten you?" Slip persisted. "What can he do to you?"

"He's a fiend," said Fortney. His eyes were bloodshot. "The man has returned to get me."

"Makin' a bogey man out of a tired old tennis player is somethin' I don't get," said Slip. "But I'll be after him Harry. I'm sorry it's got you so. I'm sorry we had those words and everything."

"You've got to beat him," the man begged. "You've got to!"

Slip shrugged and picked up his rackets. He went out through the marquee and many called, wishing him luck. The Beagle was never popular—he never sought popular acclaim.

The Beagle wore his customary white flannels. He was like a figure from another day, so tall, so stooped, slightly bald now, his leathery face tight and relaxed at the one time. He nodded to Slip and went immediately to the umpire's stand. There was no friendliness in him; he was a machine, Slip thought.

They chose courts and began to rally. No balls came to Slip's backhand. He banged back the forehands, shifted over and hit a backhand behind his back. It was a clowning gesture, meant as a rebuke for The Beagle because he had not given Slip's port side some practice. Barden slammed it down the line in a terrific response which left no doubt that the battle was joined. Slip proceeded to pat every other shot back, little, amateurish shots which gave The Beagle nothing at which to shoot.

The umpire scowled. Officialdom was heavily represented, as always, and The Beagle was no favorite. Still, they feared him, his acid tongue, his biting intelligence, Slip thought. It was strange, the way they all feared him. Even Joe March, even the president of the USLTA himself, had this deep respect for The Beagle.

Well, Slip had respect for him, in his own way. The Beagle had first service and this was an advantage for the veteran, putting him on top. The stands quieted as



new balls came in. The umpire's voice sounded strained, saying in a low tone, "Ready? . . . Play!"

The Beagle almost anticipated the words. He threw up the first ball and hit it, very hard, before Slip had a chance to get set. Slip barely returned it off back-hand and the old champion contemptuously put it away and sauntered over to the odd court.

He paused there, bent and deliberately adjusted a shoestring. Slip bent his knees, flexing young muscles. The Beagle served his American twist on first ball for a switch. Slip patiently played it deep. They rallied, and then The Beagle got Slip deep and applied the drop shot. Slip came in fast, slipped, and netted the ball.

The Beagle did not even glance at Slip as he ran the game out at love and they changed courts. Slip took the balls and plodded to the baseline.

He served, feeling the power and canniness of his opponent on every stroke. He lost that game, too. He could not break The Beagle's serve, and was behind at three-love.

The stands were deathly quiet. Slip weighed the balls. He grinned. He threw one up. He was warm now, and the young muscles were strong. He let go with a full California swing. The swift service bit lime. The Beagle lunged and made a short return. Slip was already at the net. His punch volley was decisive for the point.

He stood there a second, grinning at the old champion. Then he went back and turned loose his speed again. He won that game.

It became four-one, then four-two. The rallies grew longer. Slip, getting to feel of the good grass on the main court, was hitting out for the corners. The Beagle got there, usually ahead of the ball with his great anticipation, but there was little he could do with those strong, deep shots except return them. In the end, Slip

usually committed the error. But the rallies took time.

The Beagle won the set, 6-3. They changed courts and Slip paused briefly to wipe sweat from his hands and face. The Beagle was not even perspiring. Slip shook his head and went to position and now it was his first service.

He won it, with his power and speed and dash. He lost the next game. He was really in there now, thinking of nothing but the next shot, never the last one. The Beagle had done nothing but play tennis since the opening of the match, and Slip had played along with him.

The Beagle won the second set, 6-3.

There was a sigh which swelled to the skies. The crowd was awed at the spectacle of the tall, unpopular, dour veteran marching through the youth of America at one of the world's most difficult and exhausting games. The assortment of shots, superbly executed, which kept the boy off balance and unable to attack streamed off The Beagle's racket without effort. The man was not even breathing hard. He won his service in the opening game of the third set, and all seemed over.

But Slip Cooney clung to the edge of life. At four-three he suddenly began to slam the ball with the abandon of a Don Budge or Ellsworth Vines. He came to four-four with the seemingly ageless and unbeatable veteran.

Then it was five-four . . . and then, running and hitting and attacking the net, killing lobs like swatting flies, Slip Cooney had accomplished what no other had been able; he had won a set from Grant Barden: 6-4.

They went into the clubhouse to change and rest. There was a moment when the tall man passed close to Slip. The burning eyes looked down from the tremendous height of the veteran. He seemed about to speak; then the thin lips closed over the gash of a mouth and Grant Barden went ahead.



Harry Fortney shrank back to let him pass. Barden did not speak. Fortney said to Slip, "You can't do it. You can't spot him two sets. No man who ever lived can do it. You had to win the first two."

Slip said, "That third set felt good."

"He'll go after your backhand, next set," muttered Fortney.

Slip said, "All he can do is beat me. It ain't blood, you know."

"The power. He's got the power," said Fortney. At that moment he seemed either drunk or deranged. "The devil always wins."

Slip said, "He lost one time. They ran him out of the country."

Fortney said, "He came back . . . the devil came back . . ."

**T**HERE were others who had advice, important people, even Joe March. Fortney seemed to disappear into thin air. Slip did not see his mentor as he went back on the courts.

The Beagle seemed fresh, unperturbed. It was the thirtieth game, Slip's service.

Then he turned on his power. He had The Beagle stretching for that first service, he saw thankfully. He poured it on, won game after a long deuce rally.

The Beagle was going all-out, Slip knew at once. This was the set. The aching cannonball and the American twist were mixed with a slyness no one had ever approached. Slip could not break through.

They went to four-all that way, hammer and tongs, neither giving an inch on service, neither able to break the other player's fine attack.

As he took the balls to serve the thirty-eighth game, he felt the pressure for the first time. He had to hang on now. He saw the bent form of the great man across from him, the furrowed brows, the attitude of confident power and skilfulness and a little shiver went up and down his spine.

But he smiled. He smiled and hit his service. The Beagle hit it back, with top-

spin, to backhand. Slip leaned into the ball. He did not undercut it, as had been his fashion. He beat right through it, reaching out and going around the ball.

The Beagle had started in. He had to retreat, to push back his forehand as the unexpected line shot caught him out of position. He attempted a brilliant cross-court forcing shot.

Slip went over. He nailed the ball on the rise with everything he had. He felt the solid impact and for the moment thought he had missed. Then he saw The Beagle reach a long arm under to lob. He poised. The ball dropped and Slip waited, then cocked it off his left shoulder for a perfect placement on the sideline.

Slip served. The Beagle was all over the court, banging back shots. Slip put on the speed and power. He held service to make it five-four.

But now it was The Beagle's turn. He handled the balls as though they were eggs. He threw one up and sent in the flat hard one to the backhand.

Again Slip spun on it. He applied top-spin, sending it deep. He danced on the baseline, awaiting return. He took it on backhand and forced, deep down the line. It was an amazing, gambling shot. It went in and The Beagle had to run and lob again.

Slip's ball struck deep and again the miraculous Beagle was there, lobbing, trying to stave it off.

Slip came one step farther in toward the net. He slammed again. He put it right where he wanted it, in the backhand corner, but the thin man in the pleated, long flannel trousers was there, imperturbably trying his chop-drive off a shot which was impossible to drive.

The ball cleared the net. It was aimed for the short sideline. It was the most brilliantly executed shot of the day, played by the best shot-maker of all time.

Slip, already inside the court, threw himself over the grass. He reached a



country mile. The Beagle was storming in, anticipating a short return.

Slip knocked the ball, almost gently, down the angle. The Beagle tried to change his course. Smooth rubber soles slipped on the grass. The Beagle fell down, sprawling, his long length like a clothesline across the lawn.

They laughed. In the stands, because of tension, the laugh was brittle, barking. The laughter grew and it went around the seats. Maybe there was a note of hysteria in it, but it was cruel and unjust.

Slip, at the net, said sharply, "Damn them! *Damn* them! Are you all right, Beagle? Want a rest, pal?"

The lean man arose slowly, with grace in every movement. He stared at Slip. His mouth cracked and he said, "That was a good shot, Cooney. Play!"

Slip went back. He glared at the umpire, at the stands. His obvious distaste drew a blanket over the laughter. He stalled a moment, regaining his temper. It was the first time anything had disturbed his concentration. He felt loose, and it was not good.

He could lose the match right here, he told himself. If he lost that keen edge of concentration which is so important to the game of any tennis player, he could be wiped out in a few strokes by that implacable, indomitable old man across the net.

Slip received. The service, to backhand, was spinning, deep. Slip knocked it back. He played for time, fought for control.

He found it in a moment. Then he suddenly realized that during his flurry of nervousness, The Beagle had done nothing but return the ball. He had returned it well, but he had attempted none of his tactics which could rattle an adversary, none of the tricky spins, the mannerisms and feints which were part of his stock in trade. Tentatively, Slip hammered one to forehand corner, shot for the net.

The Beagle attempted a passing shot. It was an extremely good try, just clear-

ing the cord. Slip stretched, went to one knee. He put his racket on the ball and cut it. The pellet slipped up over the net, crawled along the cord. The Beagle came in like a whirlwind.

The ball fell into play. The Beagle put it back. Slip, lunging from his knees, got in the way and tapped it. The Beagle took it on volley, but the action was too fast for anything but reflexes and he could only pat back.

Slip jumped the other way and slammed. The ball hit the strings, off-center, but on good enough. It sprang back. The Beagle, running, hit it on volley again.

The stands were delirious. The two men were not twelve feet apart, yet the ball remained in play. Slip lobbed.

The Beagle ran back under it. Slip, teetering at the net, found his heart up in his throat. The Beagle ran and ran.

The ball hit. It had top-spin and it bounced high. The Beagle struck at it. The fuzzy white streak flew down the line.

Slip never knew how he got there. But he knew enough to apply the stop-volley, dropping it in forecourt. The Beagle had to race all the way back to the net. He got there and tapped. Slip was over and aimed for the sideline with everything he had off backhand.

It was very close, but the linesmen said nothing. Every eye was on The Beagle. Close decisions were his meat, his chance for acting up a storm.

The Beagle did not even look at the ball. He stared at Slip. Then he said, "That was an intelligent shot, Cooney."

"Thank you," said Slip. He had won the fourth set, 4-6. He walked back to the baseline. He took the balls and served.

It was kind of funny, after that. The Beagle just did not get there, but never gave up. He tried for every shot. He fell again, twice. No one laughed, now.

And then, like magic, it was ended. Slip



had won the deciding set, and he had won it six games to love!

Harry Fortney was not in the dressing room. Slip sent boys after him, but Harry was not even in the club.

People kept coming up and congratulating him. He showered and dressed and waited around and pretty soon everyone seemed to be gone. But there was still no sign of Harry. He picked up his bag, left the clubhouse in the twilight.

A man stepped from the shadows. "I was afraid you would be worried."

"Beagle!" said Slip.

"It is unfortunate about Harry," said the tall man. "Perhaps I have done wrong. I shall not harm him. I want only to frighten him, to make him realize how it feels to be wrongly accused."

"I don't get it," said Slip.

The tall man said, "Five years ago Harry Fortney arranged a stock deal through a third party. It looked like a good thing. I went in and something went wrong. The SEC objected . . . and I left America. I lost my country, Cooney."

Slip said, "Now wait. Harry did that to you? Just over tennis?"

Grant Borden shook his head. "There was a girl, Cooney. He never got her. Neither did I . . . not then. She is waiting for me now. I promised her I would only frighten Harry. I arranged for his firm to dabble in some things it should not touch. Then I put the screws to him."

"That's why he was so scared. Something about Argentina. I see!" said Slip.

"Maybe tennis symbolized it for him," said The Beagle. "I arranged for him to be notified of his troubles during the match. You see, I had a hunch about the match. I remembered Sea Bright, young Cooney, when nothing I did haunted you. And I remembered that you were not afraid." The greatest tennis player of his time sighed. "I was never afraid. Not when I was young. But today, when you took all I had and came back . . . I just

wasn't there. It was foolish of me to think. . . . Ah, well. You can't have everything. Tomorrow the pressure will be off Harry. I hope he knows what he did to me, and how it feels to be faced with jail and disgrace."

Slip said, "Beagle, I never was scared of you—but I never hated you, either. You had a right, I reckon. You wouldn't lie about it."

"You are a smart young man," said Grant Borden. "If you care to turn pro after you beat March tomorrow, I have something which might interest you. South America is a hotbed of tennis enthusiasts. I intend opening some clubs down there, to make money. I need someone like you."

Slip Cooney said, "Now that's right decent of you, Beagle. But . . . well, you see, Harry started me. I owe him money."

"Ah," said Borden. "I see."

"And even if he was wrong . . . he's in trouble. And you scared him plenty."

"I am glad," said Borden simply.

"Well, okay. You had a right," repeated Slip. "But . . . he was my pal. I got to look him up, see?"

"Yes," said Borden. His voice shook a little. "Yes, indeed. You are a very remarkable young man. You will be a great champion." The long arm bent in a sort of salute. Grant Borden bowed and turned away in the twilight.

"So long, Beagle," Slip called after him. "Maybe I'll see you in Buenos Aires when I turn pro and tour. So long."

Again the long arm went up. But The Beagle did not turn back. He made his lonely way toward the girl who had faithfully waited for him.

Slip Cooney picked up his bag. He had to find Harry.

Because Harry was not like The Beagle—nor Slip Cooney. You could scare Harry. All you could do to The Beagle or Slip Cooney was beat them—and then they would be back for more some day.



# STEEL IN HIS HEART

By JIMMY JAMIESON

*Blade met deadly blade as a grim-faced king of the sabers and a crazy, unknown swordsman engage in a battle where the only winner could be—Death!*



He made a half lunge, saber flicking from left to right in a tight plane. . . .

AS FAR as his friendly nature would permit, Dan Tracy hated J. Warfield Calder. He hated Calder's supercilious manner, his superiority over all the fellows in the *salle*, and especially his habit of humiliating a man by exploiting his weakness.



It was true, as Dan admitted to himself, that Calder had reason to be snobbish about his prestige, if not his character. He had recently won the national saber title, was ranked number one in that weapon and a sure selection for the forthcoming Olympics.

It is also true that, of all sports, fencing holds closest to the traditions of nobility. Its followers and devotees are supposed to uphold all gentlemanly attributes of honesty, fair play and a generous regard of an adversary. To these should be added a modest demeanor, as became the knight of old; but J. Warfield Calder exhibited none of the humility of the novitiate in the night-long vigil before his armor, preceding his advent to knighthood. And Dan Tracy observed this trait before it became a personal matter between the two and he learned to hate Calder's guts. . . .

Dan, as a new member, entered the *salle*, carrying his togs and a felt bag holding a pair of his favorite weapons. It was early and the *maitre d'armes* laid aside his book of poetry, adjusted his *plastron* and invited him to the strip with a smile of his own. A wise man, that *maitre*—gold medalist at Joinville, a master of his craft and a shrewd judge of men and their varying temperaments. For it should be understood, as it was in days of old, that in addition to skill at arms, a fencer's temperament and character contribute mightily to the successful wielding of weapons.

When Dan was ready, the *maitre*, foil in hand, watched him draw the shining blades from the bag.

"Ah, M'sieu Tracy, so you prefer the *sabre*. First, we will have a little exercise with the *fleuret* and I will see what you do with it."

Dan was glad for the chance to loosen his muscles and learn what he had retained of coordination and reflexes.

"*Engagez.*"

Dan felt the steady, light pressure of the master's blade against his own. It was a touch of authority that thrilled him. There was no uncertainty, no fluttering, no jittering of steel against steel.

"*Degagez et allongez. Un, deux. Doublez et degagez.*"

And so it went, with the tempo building up and varied by parries and ripostes, the soft scuff of shoe on the rubber strip, the tap of the *maitre's* foot, the slither of steel on steel. Dan was aware that two men had entered the hall but he kept steadily on with the work and the minutes sped. Finally the *maitre* paused and removed his *plastron*.

"We will have a little *assault*, no?"

This, right off the bat, was more than Dan expected. In his small, remote college, his instruction had not been of the best, but once well grounded, he had developed theories of attack and defense of his own and worked them up faithfully, as best he could. And to some the sword comes naturally. It wasn't in Dan's character to overestimate his ability; yet this recognition that he was no tyro pleased him greatly.

He took his position; the blades engaged. Then Dan was aware that someone stood beside him; he felt the pressure of an elbow. It was as if someone said: "Get the hell off here. I am here now." And a voice spoke brittlely.

"Garnier, I want a little work on parry and riposte."

Dan didn't move. He gazed steadily at M. Garnier, and the *maitre* gazed steadily back at him. He was frowning slightly behind his mask, he who had had dealings with gentlemen on the Place San Michel and the Sword Club in London.

"Just a little moment, M'sieu Calder." And to Dan: "*Pour la belle, s'il vous plait, M'sieu Tracy.*" For the one touch—the triumph.

Disappointment flooded Dan, and mounting resentment. He settled him-



self loosely, but he was remembering that brushing elbow and was in no mood to make the attack. He'd parry, or attempt to, and get it over quickly.

With slight flick of fingers and wrists, the master disengaged; Dan followed, with a counter in *quarte*. Again; then faster, faster until the master's blade was free, ahead of Dan's, and he lunged. But Dan was waiting for that instant. He crossed to *sixte* with a counter in *sixte* and the blade slide harmlessly by.

"Bravo!" M. Garnier applauded, even as he parried Dan's riposte and his point rested on Dan's chest.

They saluted each other with *deux appels*, the two taps with toe of shoe, removed their masks and briefly shook hands. The *maitre* turned his back to the strip, and Calder, and walked with Dan toward the racks.

"There are some little things, M'sieu Tracy; your grip too strong. We shall work upon them, no?"

"Thanks, Monsieur Garnier. I'd appreciate it."

Turning, Dan faced a well-built, florid faced man, a little older than himself, who smiled at him and extended his hand.

"New here, aren't you? I'm Ted Marshall."

Dan gave his own name, liking the strong grip the young fellow gave him.

From the strip at one side of them came the tic-tac, tic-tac of blade meeting blade in swift stroke and parry. Marshall nodded in that direction.

"Don't sell us short, Tracy." Ted Marshall made no effort to lower his tone. "He's the one and only, you might say—clever but crude."

The tic-tac ceased abruptly.

"You speaking about *me*?" Calder demanded.

"None other, Jimmy, old top," Ted said cheerily. "Making your apologies."

There was a moment's silence. Then

the click of blades was resumed, mounting in almost frenzied tempo, like the distant, faint pounding of the light bag under the hands of a pro fighter—it was that fast. And Dan made note of Calder's quick temper, knowing that it was logical that they would meet on the strip eventually.

"What's your weapon?" Ted asked.

"Saber. Yours?"

Ted Marshall laughed oddly, with another gesture of his head toward the strip.

"To keep peace in the family I gave up the saber for the *épée*. Fact is, though, I've got so I prefer it now—point for edge, you know."

He turned a little aside and lowered his voice.

"Don't let Calder bother you. He is cock of the walk just now and knows it. Not a bad sort, perhaps, away from the *salle*, if his streak of wins doesn't stick in his head. If you're out for saber you'll go up against him—that is, if you're that good, and from what I saw of your work with the *maitre*, I guess you are. I'd suggest, in practice with him here, you don't show too good."

Dan smiled.

"I'm not in his class. As a matter of fact, I've never had a chance to go against really good men."

"I sort of like the way you said that, Tracy," Ted said slowly. "All right. Get busy and work like hell, with my blessing. Well, the king has abdicated and the *maitre* is ready for me, unless you want to complete your turn?"

"Thanks. I think I've had all I'm entitled to."

Dan got a towel from the dressing room and set it up as a target against one wall of the *salle*, then placed another foil butt against it, much in the position that an adversary would hold it. Working slowly, he practiced lunging, making his disengagements as fine as possible.



While thus engaged, he observed that Calder had also discarded saber for foil and paired with one of the newcomers.

From Dan's position, Calder was in his range of vision, and without appearing to do so, he watched the champion's style. Calder, he saw at once, was a rusher. He had good legs and he would suddenly spring forward, beating his opponent's blade and following with a cut or straight point. It was a vigorous style, and Dan understood readily how it could be applied to the saber. It was also a dangerous practice, and, as he was thinking this, it happened.

Calder sprang ahead; his opponent failed to retreat. Calder's point caught the sleeve of the jacket near the wrist, the blade snapped and the broken point pierced the other lad's shoulder.

**I**MMEDIATELY all other activity was suspended. Dan, Ted Marshall and the *maitre* gathered around the wounded man, one measuring the broken foil with a sound one to discover if any portion was missing. A physician was among the members present, and took the fellow to the dressing room, to swab out the wound with iodine and bandage it. Calder did not follow them. He tossed his broken blade to a corner without a word, and in the general silence it made a resounding clatter.

Dan dismantled his practice target, took up one of his sabers and was testing his grip when Calder came up to him.

"Know anything about the saber?"

Dan turned deliberately, controlling the resentment he felt for the fellow's cold-blooded attitude.

"A little," he said quietly.

"All right. Come out and give me a little practice."

Without answering, Dan adjusted his elbow guard, caught up his heavier mask and stepped to the strip.

Right off, Dan was glad for his con-

servative remark to Ted Marshall. Calder's speed on attack was bewildering. What he might be on defense, Dan couldn't say in those first few moments.

Men had drifted back from the dressing room, paused to watch. Calder showed his awareness of them, but Dan had too much to occupy him to waste thought on onlookers. Calder pressed constantly, seeking to gain the timing on Dan, feinting left face, right face, faster and faster, after he had caught the rhythm, so that when the defense should lag, the touch would follow inevitably.

To defeat it, Dan took a quick backward step and as Calder, exasperated, pushed close again, Dan disengaged with straight arm and the point struck Calder's chest.

Someone clapped his hands. Calder struck the blade aside savagely.

"Stop running away," he called angrily. "I want some practice. I don't want to chase rainbows."

Dan smiled inside his mask. He also wanted practice. So he stood his ground, trying to match the speed of his hand with that of Calder; but he wasn't yet geared to it and touch followed touch with a rapidity that apparently restored Calder's equanimity. After several minutes, he paused and then, with a gesture and manner as if approving a servant, struck Dan lightly on the thigh with the flat of his blade.

It was insulting and Dan's response was automatic. His wrist whirled over and a good length of his blade slapped sharply on Calder's chest.

"Damn you," Calder shouted. "So you want it, huh?"

He went to work on Dan in savage earnestness. Before, his strokes had been reasonably light; now he put the full strength of his arm and wrist into them. And if you don't think the light saber can hurt, just let somebody take a full-arm swing at you. Moreover, Dan, not



expecting a bout, had only a light sweat shirt beneath his jacket.

With every blow, Dan knew that welts were rising, whether or not they had drawn blood. He took several of them that either beat through his guard or eluded it, and then the fencer's greatest asset, his fighting spirit, was aroused. Deliberately, he let Calder's swinging stroke strike home, but he took that instant for a mighty swing of his own at the torso's most tender spot, the belly just below the ribs.

Calder ripped out an involuntary oath of pain. He rose to his toes, smashed down with an overhand swing and, although Dan's blade met it, Calder turned his blade flatwise, so that the end snapped over and came down in full force on Dan's shoulder.

Abruptly a third blade was thrust between the two. A voice said sternly: "Enough, Calder. That was disgraceful and I am ashamed of you."

Dan stepped back. As he removed his mask, his eyes were afire but he was smiling. A tall man, whom Dan had not observed before, stood between them.

"He asked for it, Gordon," Calder snapped.

"It is plain," the man said quietly, "that you wouldn't understand his language and mine. We both resent a bully and a cad."

He turned his back to Calder and extended his hand to Dan.

"I'm John Gordon and I happen to be president of the *salle*. You haven't had a very good introduction to our club."

Dan was still smiling.

"No damage done," he said lightly. "It was good practice for me and I learned a lot."

Gordon eyed him shrewdly.

"I wouldn't be surprised," he said, "if, in all good time, we should have a new champion in the club, and one who would do it honor."

He bowed a little, smiled and turned away.

Preferring not to exhibit his stripes and welts in the dressing room, Dan went over to the racks and took a long time to look to his saber after the savage encounter. He was a little ashamed of his own part in the fray but he was more concerned that the wide swinging strokes tended to disrupt his careful attempts to adjust his technique to the light weapon. With the older, heavier saber, the swinging stroke, the French styled *moulinet*, was in order, following the tradition of the Nordic races whose heavy armor could be defeated only by the heaviest blows, with the mace, the battle axe and the short, straight heavy sword. And he and Calder both, in their desire to sting and hurt, had been using these wide, and free swinging blows.

Dan, of course, knew that the proper stroke with the light saber is a slashing, drawing one, on the principle that a razor cuts when drawn. Although he was aware that this was largely disregarded here, he surmised it would be held in better repute abroad and, hopeless as it might be, he was going all-out for a place on the Olympic team.

Dan was thinking of all this, the danger of exposing his arm and opening his guard on those wide *moulinets*, as the members finished and left, Calder among the first. Ted Marshall, on his way out, brought over a couple of pleasant appearing fellows whom he introduced.

"I'm tied up tonight," Ted said, "but how about dinner the next time in, Dan. Right? We can have a bull session."

"Suits me fine, Ted."

They all three called a cheery good-night. Then Maitre Garnier came to him, smiling a little.

"Enough for this evening, M'sieu Tracy. Let the hot shower run over you and I shall bring you a salve. A little moment, please. I have watched. You have the



strong legs, a quick hand and, *possible-ment*, the best of all, *esprit de combat*. I will tell you—if you want to get on?" He made it a question.

"I most certainly do—now," Dan added drily, "probably more than ever before."

"*Bien*. I will then tell you. Since the tournaments, the members come but twice the week. From the end of this month and during the summer, not at all, I am not otherwise occupied. I shall come, if it pleases you, each day, and we shall work at it, yes?"

"Why do you do this for me?" Dan asked.

M. Garnier regarded him shrewdly, and there was the suspicion of a twinkle in his usually sober eyes.

"A good pupil brings renown to the Maitre; and it is possible I like the way you fight, M'sieu Tracy."

And so it went—the long, hard grueling work in the quiet *salle* with no interruption. In the rest periods, there was the talk, stories of famous swordsmen, the renowned French duellist of recent years, a stout *gauche* whose left forearm was pitted from wrist to elbow but with, as M. Garnier expressed it, *la poitrine du vierge*—a chest that no *épée* had ever touched. Then the corrections, the explanations, and the *maitre's* patience was without limit.

"Hold the weapon as you would a live bird, M'sieu Tracy. Do not crush it; don't let it escape. . . . So, your muscles are loose. . . . Taut muscles are slow. . . ."

Day after day, week following week, until it came to the time of the tryouts for the Olympic teams. Current national champions in the three weapons, foil, duelling sword and saber, were automatically members, alternates were determined by competition. John Gordon, president of the *salle* and a veteran fencer, although no longer in competition, was captain of the Olympic fencing squad and director of the

eliminating bouts in the final rounds.

Dan Tracy won his early matches but none of them by a wide margin. For one thing, M. Garnier had taught him the value of restraint and relaxation, so while his victories could not be disputed, they were not spectacular. There was also another, a personal reason for this.

Calder tried to have himself appointed as director of the preliminary bouts but the committee forbade it. Foiled in that, he openly showed his antagonism to Dan and his wish to contribute to Dan's elimination. When Dan was fencing, Calder posted himself at one side of the strip beyond the judges and facing Dan so that Dan was bound to see him past his opponent's shoulder. When the competitors changed ends, Calder also moved to take a similar position.

Whenever Dan made his touches, Calder turned and looked questioningly at the judges, then shrugged in disapproval when they were allowed. When Dan was touched, Calder clapped his hands silently and smiled in satisfaction.

It wasn't possible for Dan to be oblivious to these efforts to disconcert him and it aroused in him a deep anger. But it was different from the explosive burst of rage when he took what Calder gave and returned it to him. Now his anger took the form of a firm resolution to square accounts with the champion—if he could.

DAN controlled his feelings, smiling to himself as he purposefully allowed his opponents to reach him, but always within the margin of safety. And that assurance worked magically with his form. M. Garnier, watching from a little distance, smiled too in perfect understanding. Dan had trained faithfully and well and the *maitre* had already gauged the quality of his protégé.

After several such matches, with Dan advancing steadily, Calder left the competition *salle* in disgust. With his de-



parture, Dan took the voluntary wraps off his sword play, winning the concluding three matches without a touch scored against him. Dan received the conservative congratulations of John Gordon, while Ted Marshall, who'd won a place with the duelling sword, and other members of their *salle* made no effort to conceal their elation. However, Calder endeavored to put Dan's victory in another light.

They were gathered in the *salle*, checking and packing equipment for the morrow's boat, when Calder threw in his barb.

"Too bad you gave up the saber, Ted," he drawled.

"Why? You getting ready to abdicate?"

"Not until I win the Internationals. But these eliminations were silly. Nothing to them; so easy that a mere beginner wins, if you call it winning anything."

Ted Marshall laughed, long and heartily.

"You slipped then, Jimmy, me lad," he said, with a wink at Dan who had not interrupted his packing to listen.

"What do you mean?" Calder demanded belligerently.

"Why," Ted drawled, "that was exactly the same crowd you beat for the title. So I suppose that wasn't winning anything, huh?"

Calder's face got red.

"Damn," he said. "I wonder if I've lost my extra glove," and he hustled into the dressing room. In a few moments he reappeared, empty-handed and scowling. He went up to John Gordon.

"Look, John," he said, "the trip is going to be pretty expensive and I don't see why we should add to it unnecessarily."

Gordon, who had listened to the exchange between Ted Marshall and the temperamental Calder although he had not joined in the general laugh at the champion's expense, eyed him shrewdly.

"A very commendable thought, Calder. Are you thinking of staying at home?"

"Hell, no. I simply don't see why we should take excess baggage. I can handle all the team and individual matches, and if we should need an alternate, Marshall can step in. You know he's good with the saber and I can work him up to top form."

Dan Tracy straightened from his packing. He had contributed nothing whatever to the squabble, except the passive position he had attained, and the fact that Calder ignored Ted, who had needled him, and chose Dan for the victim of his attack, aroused his smouldering anger. Dan had a saber glove in his hand and without a word he took a step in Calder's direction. His intention was plain to those looking on.

Both young men were slightly under six feet. Dan's shoulders were broader and his appearance of slenderness was due to hard trained muscles than to the characteristic leanness that was Calder's. The difference was more marked, however, in another way. Calder's expression was contemptuous, sneering and thoroughly self-assured; Dan was calm in outward appearance except for the hard determination in his eyes, and this did not escape the attention of the president of the *salle*. Gordon intervened.

"Calder," he said coldly, "as you know, I am captain of the fencing squad with full authority to select the American contestants from the team. In victory or defeat, good sportsmanship plays an important part in these Olympic games. It might be well for you to bear that in mind. . . ."

Then they were on the boat, a gay shipload of American athletes bound to pit their brawn, muscle and skill against those of all other nations. And there was pride of country in every member of the group that had nothing to do with conceit, a team spirit that was not spoken of but was plain to see in their faces.



Dan Tracy almost felt a part of it. If he were a principal, or even like one of the big teams of sprinters and distance men—that is, sure to compete, he would have felt himself more entitled to share the enthusiasm as a representative of his country against the world's best. As a subordinate, relegated to being a mere onlooker, he could not give way to the exuberance he felt, and this, together with his natural reserve, gave Calder another chance to nag him.

Dan, without his fencing clothes or equipment, was idly watching the squad at practice when Calder singled him out.

"What are you growling about, Dan?" Calder said in his loud tone. "You're getting a free ride and a free show. What more do you expect? Come on, now. I want some practice."

"No, thanks," Dan responded quietly.

"What's the matter with you? I won't hurt you."

"Do you know, Calder, I am quite sure of that," and Dan turned to walk away.

"Hell of a teammate you are," Calder growled behind him.

What Calder didn't know was that M. Garnier had told Dan to lay off contact work on the ship.

"The light off the sea is bad," the *maitre* said. "You will not improve and you will do careless things. It is better you should strengthen your legs and arms. Walk or run twelve, twenty times around the deck each day. Stand and make fifty *moulinets* each way, with the wrist. Then your arm, it will not tire."

The squad had its own table. There were Ted Marshall and his principal, Bob Sloane, from another metropolitan *salle*; Jim Hovey, foils champion, formerly intercollegiate champion from Yale, and his alternate, Bill Gorsky, of Annapolis. Quiet spoken men they were, and Dan liked them all. John Gordon sat at the head while J. Warfield Calder usurped the other end. And Calder found the gath-

ering an excellent opportunity for expressing his views.

"No use kidding ourselves," he said to the table at large. "If we get beyond the first round in any of our team matches, I'll be surprised. Take the Italian team, or the French. We can't touch either one with foils or *épée*, although I'm hoping they won't be so strong in saber. But one win out of three won't help us."

"You're getting us down, Calder," Jim Hovey drawled. "Keep on and you'll make me cry."

"Might as well look at it squarely," Calder retorted. "Now if only one of you could come through with the Belgians or, say, the Germans, we could make something of a show."

"So you are winning all of yours, Calder," Bob Sloane put in. "That's just fine. Builds up my morale."

"Probably not," Calder said. "If you fellows both fail in the other weapons, it might be wise for me to save myself for the individuals. Now as I see it, there are two men I have to beat in that. Van Gulin, of Holland, who won in the last Olympics and who, they say, is going as strong as ever, and de Peyser, of Belgium."

"Dan," Ted Marshall spoke in his drawling tone. "Do you taste anything sour in this soup?" The other men roared at that and then engaged in a lively conversation on any subject except fencing. . . .

**T**HEN they were on land, in the big stadium, and the parade of the athletes of the world was starting. It was brave marching to the stirring band music and the cheers. And again Dan Tracy wished he were a runner, a jumper, anything where he would have a chance to give whatever he had to the cause of his team.

The fencers lost their first two matches, and, contrary to Calder's prediction, it



## STEEL IN HIS HEART

was Sloane who contributed the single point in the first, and Hovey in the second. They won the third, and it was Sloane and Hovey who brought in the victory. And that meant three straight defeats for Calder. On the following morning, John Gordon made his announcement.

"We will have to try a new setup," he said. "Hovey will stay with the foils, Sloan with épée, Tracy with saber."

Calder pounded on the table.

"No," he shouted. "I won't stand for it. I knew there was no chance in the team matches, as I told you. That's why I eased up and saved myself."

"I didn't observe either Hovey or Sloane saving their energy," Gordon said coldly, "and they will be in the individuals later. Tracy with the saber."

"You can't do it. The rules say that national champions are the principals. I'll appeal to the director of the A. A. U."

"I've already sent him my selection. There's no use in arguing, Calder. Either you are definitely outclassed or, by your admission, you have let your teammates down. At least I can count on Tracy not doing the latter."

"But it's so damned silly, Gordon. I can beat him left-handed. Let's not be ridiculous."

John Gordon was slow to anger, but now red was beginning to flush his cheeks. As for Dan Tracy, beyond his first surprised glance at Gordon, he had continued with his breakfast, unperturbed by Calder's last outburst. He looked up to find the captain of the squad regarding him quizzically. Dan nodded, as if that would convey his message.

"You are definitely placed on the team, Tracy," Gordon said, "but I wonder if you would mind showing Calder the wisdom of my choice. The matches will not be resumed until tomorrow."

"Not by a damned sight. I won't do it," Calder exploded. "If he is on the

## AUDELS Carpenters and Builders Guides 4 vols. \$6



**Inside Trade Information** for Carpenters, Builders, Joiners, Building Mechanics and all Woodworkers. These Guides give you the short-cut instructions that you want—including new methods, ideas, solutions, plans, systems and money saving suggestions. An easy progressive course for the apprentice and student. A practical daily helper and Quick Reference for the master worker. Carpenters everywhere are using these Guides as a Helping Hand to Easier Work, Better Work and Better Pay. To get this assistance for yourself, simply fill in and mail FREE COUPON below.

### Inside Trade Information On:

How to use the steel square—How to file and set saws—How to build furniture—How to use a mitre box—How to use the chalk line—How to use rules and scales—How to make joints—Carpenters arithmetic—Solving measurement problems—Estimating strength of timbers—How to set girders and sills—How to frame houses and roofs—How to estimate costs—How to build houses, barns, garages, bungalows, etc.—How to read and draw plans—Drawing up specifications—How to excavate—How to use settings 12, 13 and 17 on the steel square—How to build hoists and scaffolds—skylights—How to build stairs—How to put on interior trim—How to hang doors—How to lath—lay floors—How to paint.



AUDELS, Publishers, 49 W. 23rd St., New York 10, N. Y. Mail Audels Carpenters and Builders Guides, 4 vols., on 7 days' free trial. If OK I will remit \$1 in 7 days and \$1 monthly until \$6 is paid. Otherwise I will return them. No obligation unless I am satisfied.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Employed by \_\_\_\_\_ PER \_\_\_\_\_

## FACTORY REJECTS (UNPOLISHED) FULL SIZED PIPES OF GENUINE IMPORTED BRIAR



**3**  
 PIPES FOR ONLY—  
**\$1.00**  
 POST-PAID

These pipes of genuine imported briar were taken out of the factory production line of \$3.50 to \$5.00 pipes before final smoothing and polishing due to defects which do not impair their smoking quality. Smoke them "as is" or fill the defects with wood filler, then smooth and polish. Limited supply. Act Today.

### WALLY FRANK, Ltd.

150 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK 7, N. Y., Dept. 372  
 Enclosed find \$1.00. Send postpaid 3 pipes described above. If, upon examination, I am not satisfied, I will return pipes for full refund. (Sorry . . . no C.O.D.'s).  
 PRINT NAME AND ADDRESS BELOW



# HOME-STUDY BRINGS BIGGER PAY

Don't be caught napping when Opportunity knocks. Prepare for advancement and more money by training now for the job ahead. *Free 48-Page Books Tell How.* Write for the book on the business held you like—or mail us this ad with your name and address in the margin. *Now, please.*

- |                                                        |                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Accountancy            | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Management            | <input type="checkbox"/> Salesmanship        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Law—Degree of LL.B.           | <input type="checkbox"/> Expert Bookkeeping  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Management         | <input type="checkbox"/> C.P.A. Coaching     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stenotypy (Machine Shorthand) |                                              |

## LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY

A Correspondence Institution

Dept. 6334-R, 417 So. Dearborn St. Chicago 5, Ill.



● Prepare for the big earning power of Diesel Trained Men. Start learning at home, in spare time. UEI's easy, practical training covers all phases of DIESEL engine operation, fuel systems, auxiliary equipment, repairs and maintenance. When home course is completed, you come to Chicago for actual shop practice on DIESEL MOTORS under expert instructors, at UEI's fine, modern school. **BEGIN AT ONCE—GET ALL THE FACTS FREE. WRITE TODAY!**

**DIESEL UTILITIES ENGINEERING INSTITUTE**  
DIVISION  
2521 Sheffield Avenue • Dept. 1168-D • Chicago 14, Illinois



### LOCKSMITHING COMPLETE UP-TO-DATE

Course . . . How to pick locks, decode, make master-keys, repair, install, service, etc. \$2 easy illustrated SELF-INSTRUCTION LESSONS for every handy man, home-owner, carpenter, mechanic, etc. Satisfaction guaranteed. Full price only \$3.95, postpaid—or COD plus postage. Address below.

**WATCH & CLOCK REPAIRING LEARN AT HOME IN YOUR SPARE TIME!** . . . Prepare for a happy future, with security—and quality for a good job NOW. A fascinating and thorough self-instruction training in American and Swiss watches and clocks. Special section on alarm clock repairs. Fast-growing field. Complete. \$4.95 postpaid—or COD plus postage. Satisfaction Guaranteed! Nelson-Hall Co., 1139 S. Wash Av., Dept. F-65, Chicago 5, Ill.



## BAR BELLS

Buy Direct From Factory  
Save 20% to 30%

\$8<sup>95</sup>  
up

Write for Free Booklet  
and Price List

**INDEPENDENT IRON WORKS**  
2440 EAST 23RD STREET DEPT. PP  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

# INVENTORS

Patent laws encourage the development of inventions. Write for further particulars as to patent protection and procedure and "Invention Record" form at once. No obligation.

**McMORROW, BERMAN & DAVIDSON**

Registered Patent Attorneys

150-R Victor Building,

Washington I. D. C.



ONLY \$6<sup>98</sup>

Plus 20% Fed. Tax

**VETERANS EMPORIUM, Dept. B-44**

1148 W. Chicago Ave.

Chicago 22, Ill.

## LIKO 45 x 3.5 BINOCULARS

with COATED OPTICS and  
Interpupillary Adjustment

and other features found only in high price binoculars. See close-ups of all events with these excellent all-purpose heavy-duty binoculars. Carrying case and shoulder strap included. An ideal gift for anyone.

**SEND NO MONEY!** Just pay postman on delivery plus charges. If you send remittance with order we ship postpaid. 10 day trial—Money back guarantee. **ORDER TODAY.**

## FIFTEEN SPORTS STORIES

team anyway, there's no point in my showing him up."

Dan looked at the raging Calder steadily, then turned to John Gordon.

"If you will allow it, Mr. Gordon, let's make it for the place on the team and sole representation in the individuals. If he is so much better than I," Dan threw his challenge, "it wouldn't be fair to the other fellows for me to handicap them."

"I had an idea you would want it that way, Dan, and I agree all the way. Do you understand the stakes, Calder? Place on the team and solo in saber in the individual championships," Gordon said.

"That's pretty strong, isn't it?" Calder asked, with a marked change of tone. "I wouldn't have bothered to come over except for the individuals."

"You have been asking for it a long, long while, Calder," Ted Marshall said coldly. "I don't believe I would crawl now if I were you."

"Who the hell is trying to crawl?" Calder blustered. "All right; we'll settle this in no time at all."

And so, several hours later, they faced each other on the strip. John Gordon acted as director of the bout, Marshall and Bill Gorsky, the judges. M. Garnier, trainer of the squad, stood quietly by himself at one side.

"*En garde!*" Gordon called; the two blades touched his sword, and as it was withdrawn, Dan observed that Calder's saber clicked a little against his own, telegraphing Calder's tension, his high-strung nerves—and his intention.

Once the *maitre* had told Dan: "The duel is no longer in America and rarely now abroad. But if you were to engage in one and your opponent were an unskilled man intent on rushing in to destroy you—a matter the most clever swordsman fears—retreat swiftly to evade his wild swing and before you begin your play."

Dan remembered this now. Not that



## STEEL IN HIS HEART

Calder was any tyro, but his impetuousness was obvious.

So, on the instant their blades were free, Dan stepped back quickly; Calder sprang ahead and slashed. His stroke fell short and Dan, leaning forward on the riposte, cut down on Calder's mask.

"Touch for Tracy," Gordon announced.

This was the first time their blades had crossed since their hectic battle in the *salle*, but meanwhile Dan had studied Calder's style on every opportunity and decided that Calder was much better on attack than defense. Therefore, on the next engagement, Dan anticipated Calder's move and went to the attack.

Dan's legs were strong and he could lunge at their full stretch; hence his engagements were never close. A tap on his foot checked Calder an instant, warning of attack; then Dan lunged toward Calder's left face, leaning a little to that side, but in the last extension his wrist flicked under and his blade caught Calder wide open, with his saber held high to his left, set for a slashing riposte.

"Touch for Tracy." The director's cool voice drowned Calder's muttered oath.

On the third engagement, Calder wouldn't be denied. As their blades touched, he made a half lunge, saber flicking from left to right in a tight plane. Dan retreated and when Calder pressed swiftly, Dan timed Calder's feints, disengaged and lunged like light with a thrusting cut against Calder's neck, the weapon making only slight sound. Right on top of it, Calder's saber struck Dan's shoulder.

"Touch for Tracy."

Calder stepped back and removed his mask. His face was twisted with rage.

"That was my point!" he shouted. "I don't intend to be cheated out of it."

"Tracy's touch was first," Gordon said quietly, and the two judges nodded.

"That wasn't a touch. He just laid it against my neck."

# Now Any AUTO REPAIR JOB

CAN BE A "Push-Over" for You!

in LESS Time with LESS Work!

YOU can laugh at auto repair problems when you've got MOTOR'S New AUTO REPAIR MANUAL! Covers every job on every car built from 1935 to 1948!—from carburetor to clutch—quickly, easily. Simply look up make, model, job. Clear, illustrated instructions. This remarkable 1948 Edition contains all facts you'll ever need from Auto Mfrs' Own Shop Manuals.

Over 700 big 8 1/2" x 11" pages—more than 200,000 service, repair, adjustment, replacement, tune-up facts. Over 1700 cut-away pictures, diagrams show exactly WHAT to do, HOW to do it. Used by U. S. Army, tech schools, auto servicemen.

SEND NO MONEY

Book sent on FREE TRIAL. If not completely convinced that it's the answer to every problem, return it in 7 days, pay nothing. Otherwise send only \$1 (plus 35¢ postare); then \$2 monthly for 3 months; 95¢ one month later. Write us TODAY! MOTOR Book Dept., Desk 222, 572 Madison Ave., New York 22, N. Y.

FREE 7-DAY TRIAL

MOTOR'S AUTO REPAIR MANUAL

Solves EVERY Job On EVERY Car Built from 1935 to 1948!

Covers all 32 car makes, all 653 models, including Crosleys, Kaisers and Frasers, Jeeps! Over 200 charts, tables: Valve Measurements; Engine Clearances; Generator; Body Service; Dash Gauges; Brake Specifications; Electric, Fuel, Cooling, Lubricating Systems; Transmissions; Universals; Rear Ends, and much more!

## For that NEW Look use MR. AND MRS.

"Beautify your skin as you shave!"

MR. AND MRS. is a semi-liquid brushless shaving cream scientifically developed to smooth and beautify your skin. MR. —Eliminates razor-burn and chapping. It gives you a facial as you shave.

MRS. —Romance and roughness don't mix. For that satin-smooth skin texture shave legs and under arm with MR. AND MRS.

No need for "after-shave" lotions.

Send \$1 for several weeks' supply to Dept. M, Firebird Corp., 120 Liberty St., New York 6, N. Y.

## 3 In 1 AIR PISTOL

SPORTSMAN JR.—Sensational, low-priced air pistol. Ruggedly built, full size target gun shoots either standard BBs, pellets or steel darts. Fast, single-action compression chamber. Single shot, silent shooting. Use indoors or outdoors. Modeled after famous target pistol. Economical to operate. Die cast all metal non-slip moulded grip; machined steel chamber and barrel. 8-in. long; 4 1/2-in. deep; full size, weighs 15 oz. EACH \$3.49

Shoots BBs, Darts, Pellets

Add Sales Tax

BBs, 3 pkgs. 25¢; .177 steel darts, 33¢ package. (Order please, Holster 50¢.)

No C.O.D.

JOHNSON SMITH & COMPANY, Dept B-238, Detroit 7, Michigan

SAVE 5% Genuine Quality

GABARDINE Dress Trousers

\$11.95 VALUE! Order by mail and SAVE! Firmly woven virgin wool and fine-spun rayon. Twill weave resists wrinkles. Holds crease, gives amazing wear. Expert fashion tailored for perfect fit. Zipper front. Roomy pockets, bar-tacked for double strength. Blue, Tan, Sand, Lt. Brown, Dk. Brown, Blue-Gray. WAIST SIZES: 28-36 pleated—38-44 plain

Only \$6.95 PR.

SEND NO MONEY Send name, waist size, color. Pay postman only \$8.95 plus C.O.D. Or, send money and save C.O.D. Money-Back Guarantee!

LINCOLN TAILORS Dept. P46 Lincoln, Nebr.

127



LEATHERETTE  
CASE  
INCLUDED



## AIR CORPS TYPE

Ground & Polished  
Minisous Curved Lense

# SUN GLASSES

For All Outdoor Uses!

ONLY  
**\$3.49**

Manufactured to high optical standards. 14 Karat Gold Filled frame—Pyralin sweat bar—Comfort cable temples—Sage green lenses—Large aviation type.

**SEND NO MONEY!** Just pay postman on delivery plus charges. Post paid. Order TODAY. If you send remittance with order we send

**VETERANS EMPORIUM, Dept. W-17**  
1148 W. Chicago Ave. Chicago 22, Illinois

## High School Course at Home

Many Finish in 2 Years

Go as rapidly as your time and abilities permit. Course equivalent to resident school work — prepares for college entrance exams. Standard H. S. texts supplied. Diploma. Credit for H. S. subjects already completed. Single subjects if desired. High school education is very important for advancement in business and industry and socially. Don't be handicapped all your life. Be a High School graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation.

**American School, Dept. HA49, Drexel at 58th, Chicago 37**



## FREE TO ALL WHO NEED MONEY

I'll help you get extra cash to fill your pocketbook—to live on. Supply my food and household products to regular customers. No experience or capital needed. I'll send FREE assortment of fine full-size products to test and show. Start near home, full or spare time. Gift premiums. Rush name and address today for Free outfit. Hurry!

Pay Nothing!

**BLAIR, Dept. 42-DK, Lynchburg, Va.**

# ACCOUNTANT

BECOME AN EXPERT

Executive Accountants and C. P. A's earn \$2,000 to \$10,000 a year. Thousands of firms need them. We train you thoroughly at home in spare time for C. P. A.'s examinations or executive accounting positions. Previous experience unnecessary. Personal training under supervision of staff of C. P. A's. Placement counsel and help. Write for free book, "Accountancy, the Profession That Pays."

**LASALLE Extension University, 417 So. Dearborn St.**  
**A Correspondence Institution Dept. 6334-H, Chicago 5, Ill.**



## SEND FOR THIS FREE!

Make money. Know how to break and train horses. Write today for this book FREE, together with special offer of a course in Animal Breeding. If you are interested in Galting and Riding the saddle horse, check here ( ) Do it today—now.

**BERRY SCHOOL OF HORSEMANSHIP**  
Dept. 846 Pleasant Hill, Ohio

# INVENTORS

Learn how to protect your invention. Specially prepared "Patent Guide" containing detailed information concerning patent protection and procedure with "Record of Invention" form will be forwarded to you upon request—without obligation.

**CLARENCE A. O'BRIEN & HARVEY JACOBSON**

Registered Patent Attorneys

826-D District National Bldg. Washington 8, D. C.

## STAMMER?

This new 128-page book, "Stammering, Its Cause and Correction," describes the Bogus Unit Method for scientific correction of stammering and stuttering—successful for 47 years.

**Benj. N. Bogus, Dept. 4625, Circle Tower, Indianapolis 4, Ind.**

# LAW

**STUDY AT HOME FOR PERSONAL SUCCESS AND LARGER EARNINGS.** 30 years expert instruction—over 108,000 students enrolled. LL.B. Degree awarded. All texts furnished. Easy payments. Send for FREE BOOK—"Law and Executive Guidance"—NOW!

**AMERICAN EXTENSION SCHOOL OF LAW**  
Dept. 80-D, 840 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 23, Ill.

## FIFTEEN SPORTS STORIES

John Gordon turned to the *maitre*.

"Your opinion, Monsieur Garnier?"

"It is regarded here as the best touch, for, with the sharp blade, it would cause the greatest hurt. It will be so judged in the matches."

"Continue," Gordon directed coolly, but from then on the bout was all Dan's. He had control of himself and promptly took command of his adversary. His speed matched that of Calder and his footwork at times made Calder appear almost awkward. M. Garnier had trained him long in that, telling him that it was one of the chief assets of the foreign competitors.

On the last, victorious touch, Calder turned aside, disdaining the customary salute and friendly handshake. He removed his mask, with his back to the others, gathered up his equipment and stalked from the *salle* without a word.

Dan watched him go with a slight frown. He didn't glory in his triumph. In a way he felt a little sorry for the temperamental Calder. Then the others gathered around him, shaking his hand, congratulating him and welcoming him to the team. And Dan was proud, wishing only that it had been so in the beginning.

At any rate, now he was one with the great team of high-spirited, husky young Americans, come to match their skill with the best and to display the American brand of fair play and sportsmanship. They would do their best; that was assured, for they played it that way. But they wouldn't be gloating winners or rotten losers.

A knot gathered in his stomach as Dan thought of the task ahead and hoped at least he would do honor to his fellow teammates and his country. Then he told himself that he had two legs and a hard with the best of them, and of one thing he was certain; he would give the best that was in him, and he had a feeling it would be enough. . . .



## THE RELUCTANT SOUTHPAW

(Continued from page 105)

before he eats it. Then, that frame, after young Lewis touches him for a single, Jack crops up with his old trouble, the trouble where he don't find the plate with a road map. He throws four straight scatter-shots to Bixler, one an easy three feet over the head, and four more of the same to Jonesie. Foge goes out to the mound for a roundtable on the Europe situation, comes back to the dugout and Braslo squares away from the next hitter and of course it's big Slocum. I take a gander across to where Miss Rachel Mills is sitting. The way she watches puts ten years on me. *Don't you worry, angel, I'm thinking. Your hero's going to bust the first pitch screaming all the way out to a certain flagpole.*

He don't, though. He never gets the chance. That first pitch sings down and cracks him square over his left ear and it's all over.

I ain't so clear on what came next. I remember everybody running out to where the kid's laying there, and Braslo with the tears in his eyes yelling about how the ball got away from him, and Miss Rachel Mills turning white, and then some of us are at the hospital waiting for news from the doc—waiting a long time. Finally it comes.

The doc's a young one. "I understand this man's from Vermont," he says, "and that's where he must be from because his head's made of solid marble. We can't say for sure yet, of course, but there's no fracture, and I think he'll be sound as ever with a few days rest."

Miss Rachel Mills is happy.

I and the doll take a peek in, and the kid's on his back, gazing at the ceiling. When he comes aware of us, he says, "Who won?"

Miss Rachel Mills grows stern. "Never mind who won," she says. "Why, that's the most dangerous— Why, it's— You

KNOWLEDGE  
THAT HAS  
ENDURED WITH  
THE PYRAMIDS

## A SECRETE METHOD FOR THE MASTERY OF LIFE

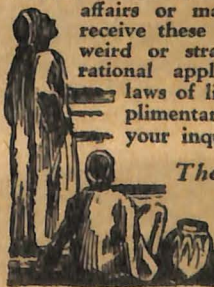
**WHENCE** came the knowledge that built the Pyramids? Where did the first builders in the Nile Valley acquire their astounding wisdom that started man on his upward climb? Did their knowledge come from a race now submerged beneath the sea? From what concealed source came the wisdom that produced such characters as Amenhotep IV, Leonardo da Vinci, Isaac Newton, and a host of others?

Today it is known that they discovered and used certain *Secret Methods* for the development of their inner power of mind. They truly learned to master life. This secret art of living has been preserved and handed down throughout the ages and today is extended to those who dare use its profound principles to meet and solve the problems of life in these complex times.

### This Sealed Book -- FREE

Has life brought you that personal satisfaction, the sense of achievement and happiness that you desire? If not, it is your duty to yourself to learn about this rational method of applying natural laws for the mastery of life. To the thoughtful person it is obvious that everyone cannot be entrusted with an intimate knowledge of the mysteries of life, for everyone is not capable of properly using it. But if you are one of those possessed of a true desire to forge ahead and wish to make use of the subtle influences of life, the Rosicrucians (not a religious organization) will send you *A Sealed Book* of explanation without obligation. This *Sealed Book* tells how you, in the privacy of your own home, without interference with your personal affairs or manner of living, may receive these secret teachings. Not weird or strange practices, but a rational application of the basic laws of life. Obtain your complimentary copy by addressing your inquiry to Scribe F.D.F.

The ROSICRUCIANS  
(AMORC)  
San Jose, California





# CRACKS, ITCHING between TOES?

Help Yourself to Quick Relief with **QUINSANA**  
—Amazing Results on Athlete's Foot!

Tests prove that 9 out of 10 get complete relief from itching, burning Athlete's Foot after 30-day Quinsana treatment.

Quinsana's *antiseptic* action helps prevent the growth of the fungi that cause Athlete's Foot. It works fast to end the misery of itching, cracking, peeling between toes. And daily Quinsana use helps prevent recurrence of Athlete's Foot!

Relieve burning tired feet! Soothing, cooling Quinsana Foot Powder helps keep feet dry, comfortable. It aids in absorbing excessive perspiration. Quinsana helps combat foot odor.

Shake Quinsana on your feet. Shake it in shoes to absorb moisture. Use Quinsana every day.

**MENNEN QUINSANA FOOT POWDER**

**PULVEX FLEA POWDER**

TWO KINDS

WITH 5% DDT

... for dogs. Kills fleas and lice quick. Keeps fleas off 5-7 days. Many home uses.

OR WITH ROTENONE

... for cats, dogs. Quickly kills fleas, lice. Kills fleas when put on a single spot. Pre-war formula.

EITHER KIND: 25¢ & 60¢



**HOTEL TRANSCRIPT CLERKS and CASHIERS** are always in demand. Also **SWITCHBOARD OPERATORS (PBX)**. Prepare NOW in short courses **AT HOME** for these excellent paying positions. Write: **BISCAYNE HOTEL SCHOOL, Room 17, 68 West Flagler St., Dept. F, Miami 32, Florida.**

**DO YOU LOVE HORSES?**

• ARE YOU INTERESTED IN HORSE TRAINING AND MANAGEMENT?

SUBSCRIBE FOR The "EXPERT HORSEMAN"

FREE BOOK—You will also receive a booklet that tells how you can learn to break colts, gait show horses, train rodeo, stock, and race horses, break bad habits, handle any horse and train circus trick horses.

2 YEARS \$7.00

SEND \$2.00 TODAY



**ANIMAL LOVERS ASS'N** BOX 6111 TARZANA, CALIF.

For FATHER'S DAY Give DAD a **Nimrod PIPELITER**

\$3.50 and up

AT YOUR DEALER

CHIMNEY-ACTION

- WINDPROOF
- LIGHTWEIGHT
- LARGE FLAME

Unconditionally Guaranteed

## FIFTEEN SPORTS STORIES

might have been killed." And she plants a beautiful smack on him, loud. It's a very beautiful scene.

The kid gets red as a fire wagon and he stares some more at the ceiling and after a while he says to her, "You're going to be crazy about winters in Vermont. It's wonderful up there then." Which inspires him to put in still some more ceiling watching.

"Feeling all right, kid?" I asks him, quick-like.

"Sure, Bert," he says. "Lucky that ball hit me the one place it couldn't hurt. Say, how'd I look out on the old mound today?"

"You looked great, kid. Best lefthand pitcher I seen in my life."

"Funny, I never felt exactly that way before. I wanted to murder every guy that stepped in."

"You almost did. They might as well of been swatting at mosquitoes, for all the good it did."

"That's what they looked like," the kid says, laughing. "I sure was feeling I was the king of the hill today."

"Beat fishing, kid?"

"Beats it good."

Miss Rachel Mills says, "If you think you're going to play any more baseball, mister—"

"That's enough," the kid says. "A man's got to start putting his foot down early or else his wife'll run him. You better get used to the idea of being married to a southpaw pitcher. I guess you can, all right, when he's only the best in the game."

"Why, darling," Miss Rachel Mills says, "you're proposing!"

"Oh, I expect we'll be marrying some time," the kid says, and grins. "Provided I get feeling that way."

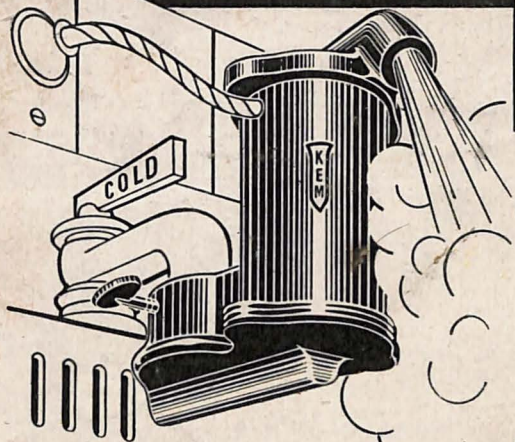
And the gaze he lobs at Miss Rachel Mills leaves very little doubt. He's feeling that way.



# Running HOT WATER

*-in a Jiffy!*

ANYTIME—ANYWHERE  
from any COLD WATER FAUCET



Seems too good to be true until you see steaming hot water running continuously from any one of your cold water faucets! With the revolutionary new KEM INSTANT HOT WATER HEATER you get as much hot water as you want—right when you want it! All without waiting, fussing with fires or the landlord!

## Just Turn Faucet To Regulate Temperature

Not just hot water, but water at exact heat desired, is what you get with this amazing new heater! A slight turn of your faucet gives you water of any desired temperature from warm to extra hot.

## Easily and Quickly Attached

Takes only a few seconds to attach or remove KEM INSTANT HOT WATER HEATER. No special skill or knowledge required. Easier to operate than the average electric iron!

## Fits Any Standard Faucet

KEM INSTANT HOT WATER HEATER fills a long and urgent need in basement, garage, cottage, tourist camp, office and factory—and when home hot water supply fails in kitchen or bath.

## Fully Guaranteed

Heater is precision made and guaranteed against any and all defects in material and workmanship. With ordinary care, it gives many years of satisfactory service.

KEM COMPANY, Dept. 37, 18 E. 41st St., New York 17, N. Y.

## Check THESE ADVANTAGES

- ✓ NO MOVING PARTS to wear away or get out of order
- ✓ Runs on AC or DC current
- ✓ Constructed of handsome hammered aluminum
- ✓ Measures 2 3/4" x 3 3/4", requiring small storage space when not in use
- ✓ Fits any standard cold water faucet
- ✓ Carries 7-foot extension cord
- ✓ Takes only few seconds to attach or remove
- ✓ Exceedingly low cost operation—only a few cents an hour
- ✓ Fully guaranteed against defects in material or workmanship

NOW ONLY  
**\$3.98** ★

**YOUR MONEY REFUNDED WITHIN 5 DAYS  
IF KEM HEATER FAILS TO GIVE  
INSTANT HOT WATER!**

Don't be inconvenienced another day by lack of hot water in home, cottage, office or factory. ORDER YOUR KEM HEATER TODAY! SEND NO MONEY. Just fill in and mail coupon and then pay the postman \$3.98 plus postage when your heater is delivered, or send \$3.98 and we will pay postage.

KEM COMPANY

Dept. 37, 18 E. 41st St., New York 17, N. Y.

Rush KEM HOT WATER HEATER C.O.D., I'll pay postman \$3.98 plus postage.

Enclose \$3.98, send postpaid.

NAME.....

STREET.....

CITY.....

ZONE..... STATE.....



# New Direct Mail Plan Saves You Big Money!

## DE LUXE QUALITY SCOTCH PLAID Fibre AUTO SEAT COVERS



*Slips on  
in a Jiffy!*

Colorful, Water-  
Repellent Scotch  
Plaid Fibre

For Coupes and  
All Front Seats

Unbeatable  
Low Price **\$3.98**  
POST PAID

Sedans  
and Coaches  
**COMPLETE SET**  
Front and Back  
Seat **\$6.98**  
POST PAID

*Fits  
most Cars!*

### RICHLY GRAINED LEATHERETTE TRIM

We challenge comparison because nowhere . . . but NOWHERE will you get these fine seat covers at our **low price!** Yes, thanks to our amazing direct-from-distributor to you plan, you can now own long wearing DeLuxe Auto Seat Covers at much **lower prices** than you pay elsewhere. And don't let our low price lead you to confuse our fine covers with those being sold elsewhere. No indeed! These are top-quality, DeLuxe Seat Covers finely tailored of rugged, **water repellent** scotch-plaid fibre and richly grained leatherette. Their smooth fit and handsome appearance will vastly improve the looks of your car, make it easy for you to slide in and out, protect your clothing and upholstery, and check driving discomfort. **SEND NO MONEY . . .** pay postman \$3.98 plus postage or send cash and we pay postage. If not completely delighted return within five days for refund under our **you-must-be-pleased—or money-back guarantee.**

### Check your CHOICE OF Front Seat STYLE



**A SOLID BACK**  
For 4-door  
Sedan.



**B DIVIDED BACK  
SOLID SEAT**  
For Coupe or  
Coach front.



**C INDIVIDUAL  
SEATS**  
For divided  
back and seat

**SOLD ONLY  
BY MAIL**  
Order Direct  
and Save

American Merchandising Co., Dept. SC105  
9 Madison Ave., Montgomery 4, Ala.

Please send me the DeLuxe Seat Covers for car checked off below:

Make \_\_\_\_\_ Model \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ Price in Canada  
add 50c.  
No C.O.D.'s

FRONT SEAT TYPE—A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_

**CHECK**  I am enclosing \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in full payment. Send Postpaid.

**ONE**  Send C.O.D. I will pay postman \$ \_\_\_\_\_ plus postage.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zone \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR SAVINGS MOUNT UP LIKE MAGIC

BECAUSE  
YOU . . .

**Make Money With Your Own** \$5 \$5 \$5

A Real Money-Maker  
for You . . . Because

## JUKE BOX BANK



### PRESTO-ELECTRIC WATER HEATER

For a Limited **\$4.98** POST PAID  
Time Only **2 for \$9**

**FAST . . . CONVENIENT . . . SURE**

Now you can enjoy the luxury of steaming hot water . . . anytime, anywhere . . . and you don't have to heat your house to get it! Simply plug heater's cord in socket and presto! you have the hot water you want "in no time at all!" Completely portable and lightweight. Carry it anywhere! Use it for everything from boiling eggs to taking a bath. Immediate delivery guaranteed only if you act now!

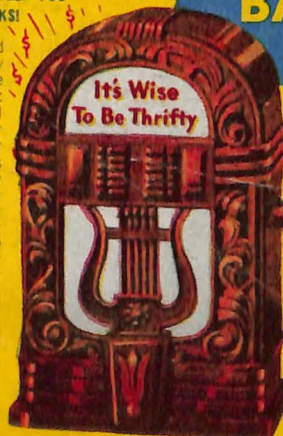
**SEND NO MONEY:** Merely pay postman \$4.98 plus postage on delivery. Or send cash and we pay postage. If not delighted, return in 5 days for refund.

AMERICAN MERCHANDISING COMPANY,  
9 Madison Ave., Montgomery 4, Ala., Dept. PH142

FRIENDS AND RELATIVES WILL HELP YOU  
SAVE. JUST TO SEE HOW IT WORKS!

You'll see those nickels and dimes rapidly add up to mighty dollar bills with this new Juke Box Bank that's a gay plastic reproduction of the tuneful Juke Box down at the corner soda fountain. Bring it out at parties or when company comes to call. The coins and currency will really pour in, because everyone wants to see it light up electrically and flash its bit of advice "It's Wise to Be Thrifty"—to which we might add, it's easy to be thrifty when you have an attention-getting, fun-producing Juke Box Bank.

**SEND NO MONEY:** send only your name and address. Then pay postman only \$1.98 plus postage. If you are not delighted, return within 10 days for speedy, cheerful refund.



**\$7.98** Post Paid  
Complete With  
Battery & Bulb

Put Your Coins in  
Slot and Press-in!  
**JUKE BOX  
BLAZES WITH LIGHT  
AS IT FLASHES:**

*It's Wise to Be Thrifty*

AMERICAN MERCHANDISING COMPANY, 9 Madison Ave., Montgomery 4, Ala., Dept. JB18