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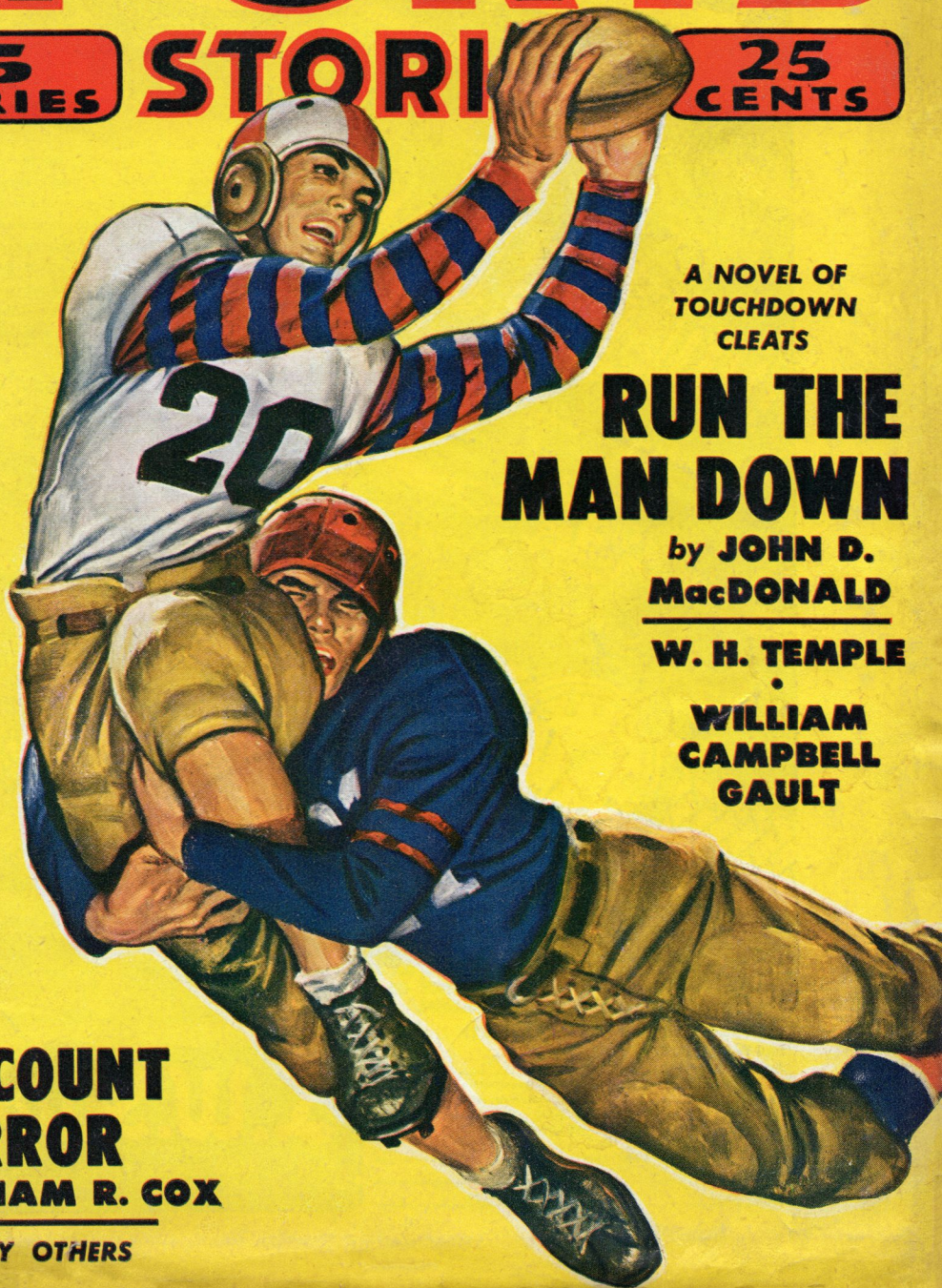
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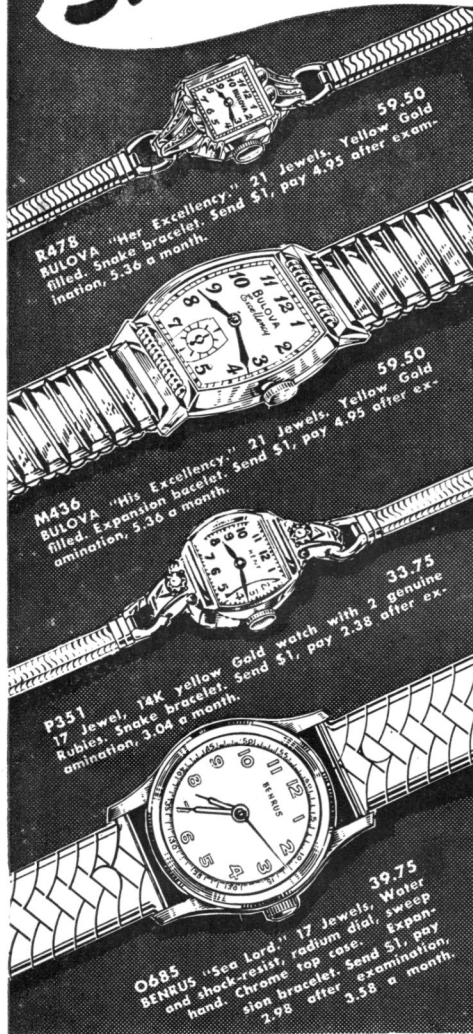


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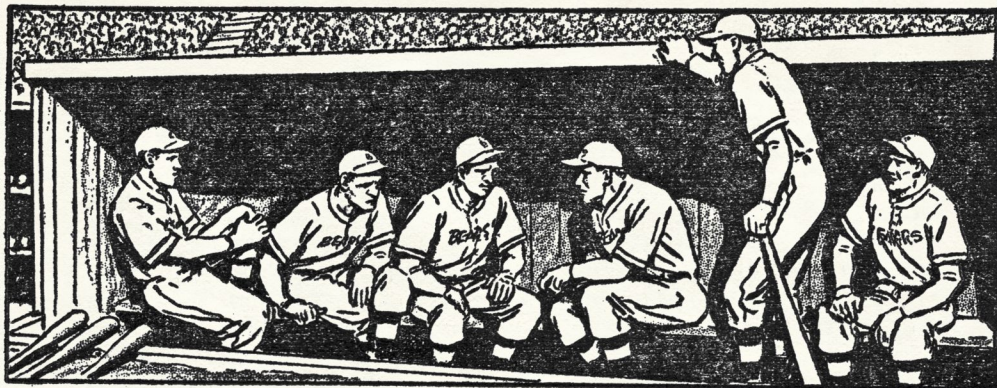
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# IN THE DUGOUT

**G**REETINGS, chums. There's plenty of room in the grandstand for all you sit-down quarterbacks. Just make yourselves at home. The best is none too good for you—because without the constant check you give us on our selection of stories, our job would be twice as tough. We couldn't do without those comments and suggestions—so keep 'em coming, won't you?

Dear Editor:

I want to compliment you on the fine job you are doing with *Fifteen Sports Stories*. I have read every issue for several years now—and you've never let me down yet.

Although my playing days are over, I'm as strongly interested in sports as I ever was, and your magazine gives me a lot of pleasure. I see that you want letters from readers, so this is the best way I can say "thank you".

You've published short items about many great football stars, but I believe you've never mentioned Harvard's Charlie Brickley. Brickley was one of the most amazing booters of all time. During one season, he tallied thirty-four field goals in thirty-seven attempts, some from as far out as midfield, some from difficult angles, some in the dirtiest weather imaginable, when rain or sleet or mud made the ball hard to handle.

One November day in 1913 Harvard was playing her deadliest rival, Yale. It didn't matter if every other game of the year were lost; if the Blue were trampled into defeat the season would be a success.

Early in the first half Charlie was hurt. As he made a flying tackle, a cleated foot smashed against one eye. It swelled shut, and the pain was so great he could barely open the other.

The coach wanted him to go to the bench. "No use taking chances," he said. "If you play, you may risk your sight altogether. Besides, a half blind man can't do us much good."

"Nuts!" retorted Brickley in a most un-Harvard-like manner. "I don't have to see to boot that ball between the uprights."

This might have sounded like boasting. It wasn't. The Crimson back knew what he could do, and proved it heroically that afternoon. Harvard's running and passing game bogged down at critical moments, but it didn't matter.

Pain-wracked, half-blinded Charlie Brickley kicked five field goals . . . and whipped Yale single handed! There have been no more amazing feats in the history of football.

Sincerely,  
James W. Austin  
Madisonville, Ky.

We agree that it would be pretty hard to match. Anybody know of an instance wherein anybody else pulled off a similar feat?

Dear Editor:

Thanks for a swell September issue. I read every story, as always, and didn't find one lemon.

Ed, my hobby for some time has been collecting facts about baseball players. I have a pile of stuff in five scrapbooks, some interesting, some junk. But in rearranging the material a few days ago I found that I had a lot of items about ballplayers' superstitions and other peculiarities. Here's a sample. If you like it, I've got more.

(Continued on page 126)



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# **MONEY PIN**

*When the big name golfers shoot for the money pin, the pin money is considerable —but the little giant was shooting for something even bigger!*

IN 1923 Bobby Jones had the Open golf championship at Inwood cinched beyond any question. As he stood on the final tee, he led his closest competitor, stocky, Scottish Bobby Cruickshank by four strokes. Cruickshank was playing directly behind the boy from Georgia.

The hole was four hundred forty yards, with a guarding lake in front of the green. Jones hit a beautiful drive. His second wasn't good, a pulled iron that landed to the left of the green.

Bob chipped, jerked up his head, and stabbed. The ball skittered only a few yards. Then, for the first time, the ghost of fear touched his heart. Of course, he could still flick one close enough for a single putt, and a five would be good enough to win with several strokes to spare.

The next chip wasn't good either. It left him nearly twenty feet from the cup . . . and, of course, he three-putted for a seven! The youngster walked off the green, with his heart in his spiked shoes.

"Cheer up," said O. B. Keeler, his closest friend. "It was a lousy finish, but Cruickshank has to get a birdie to tie you, and the odds are almost anything you can think of that he won't."

The news was carried to the wee Scot as he walked up to his drive. The pin was two hundred yards away, hiding behind the lake. Even though Jones had made the most miserable finish of his life, Cruickshank had to make a tremendous shot.

As a matter of fact, it was one of the

greatest of all shots under pressure. His ball landed within six feet of the pin, and he sank the putt to tie. Picking up a four-stroke deficit on the final hole of a National Open championship is the most unlikely happening of all time . . . but that is what happened.

That Bobby Jones won the playoff with an almost exact duplicate of that Cruickshank iron shot doesn't change the picture. Nothing like it ever happened before or since.

THREE years later Bobby Jones reached the final tee at Scioto, tied with Joe Turnesa. That hole is a four hundred eighty yard par five, with plenty of trouble along the way. Jones probably never hit a better drive in all his life. It roared three hundred ten yards down the fairway. As he stepped up to his ball he must have thought of the killing shot he had made in the playoff at Inwood.

Jones could almost certainly get a tie here, but he regarded another playoff with revulsion. He wanted to win or lose on one throw of fate's dice, because he was wearied to death of tournament play.

Bob took a four iron, and while ten thousand people watched, he hit the ball as he had at Inwood. The impact was sweet and clean. This time he did not even have to look up to know his ball slipped past the cup by inches, and stopped ten feet away for the birdie that would win the Open for him again.

**By JACK KOFOED**



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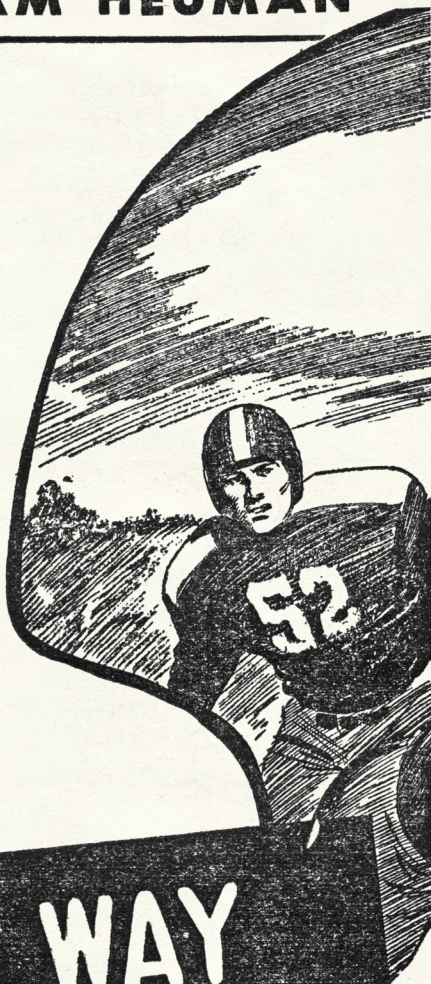


## A Novel by WILLIAM HEUMAN

**I**N THE first half, Hook Hannigan scored three touchdowns. Between halves, and a little after the two teams had gone back on the field, he made a rapid survey of the battered lockers in both dressing rooms. He found a half dozen of them open, the locks not working, and from trouser pockets and wallets stuck in shoes, he managed to extract eighty-two dollars and seventy-four cents, which, added to the ten dollars he was being paid to play this game, made a nice afternoon's work.

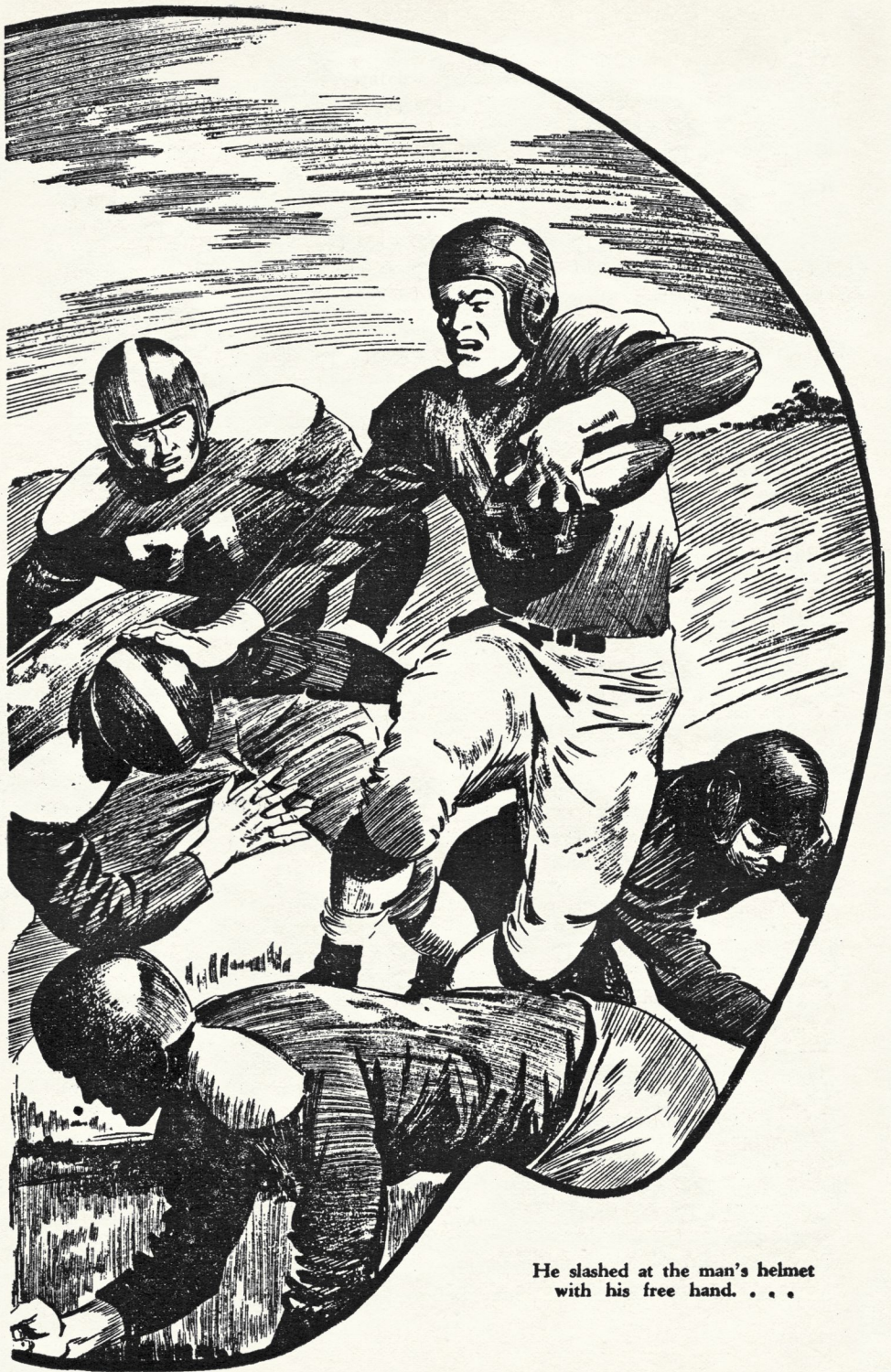
He came out of the dressing room whistling softly, adjusting the cheap Rambler helmet. The money he'd wrapped into a handkerchief which he'd taped

*Bitterly they battled for that last thundering yard—the back who had everything but a team behind him, and a team that had nothing but fight—fight to make a last down terror out of a—*



**WRONG WAY  
BACK**





He slashed at the man's helmet  
with his free hand. . . .



inside his football pants. Knowing that no one trusted him, he didn't trust anyone else.

Big Mike Brennan, part owner, coach, manager and tackle of the Ramblers, grinned at him when he approached the bench. Brennan had thin, reddish hair, a battered nose and a wide, homely face. He was nearly forty, but he was in the lineup every Sunday afternoon.

He said, "You got it, kid. Them monkeys think they're tacklin' a greased pig out there this afternoon."

Hook shrugged. He fingered a rip in the black Rambler shirt and said briefly, "Eager beavers."

That was his pet expression for those who were enthusiastic, honest, industrious, but without any particular talent, and he had his contempt for them.

The opposing club, a semi-pro outfit from a town about thirty miles to the west, had been outclassed from the start. Little Jerry Flynn, other owner of the Ramblers, and quarterback, had flipped two passes to Hook in the first quarter, and Hook, in the clear, had had little difficulty driving through and running away from the tacklers.

Mike Brennan said, "Glad you came along yesterday afternoon, kid. You got a job with this outfit."

"Okay." Hook nodded with no particular enthusiasm. He'd drifted to town yesterday afternoon, a truck driver having left him off near the Rambler field where the club had been going through a light practice session, preparatory to today's game.

Brennan had liked his looks—the size of his hands, neck, and tough face, his rock-like shoulders—when he'd asked to try out.

Hook had run through the whole Rambler team, the first time he carried the ball, and Brennan had signed him on the spot. He drifted in here to play one game and he'd drift away when he was

ready. Giving a promise to play meant nothing; signing a piece of paper, a contract, meant nothing. He'd done that with another Industrial League club outside of Akron—when he got tired of a place he thumbed a ride out and was gone. Quite a few of the Akron club players, and the visiting teams complained that their lockers had been opened and some valuables and money stolen. There had been talk of notifying the police.

Jerry Flynn came over, wearing his helmet. Flynn always wore his helmet on the field because he was a little embarrassed about his hair, or the absence of it. He was semi-bald at forty-one, and the opposing clubs and spectators sometimes made an issue of that.

Flynn said, "We can keep throwin' down that left alley, kid. I'll bet they put two men on you this half."

"An' they won't hold him either," Brennan chuckled admiringly. "The kid runs like old Red Grange."

Hook didn't say anything. He watched the two Rambler managers walk off together. Both of them were ten years past their peak, and they'd never been anywhere as football players, but they loved the game.

Eager beavers, Hook Hannigan thought contemptuously.

They owned a five-and-ten-cent semi-pro football team, and they leased a rocky, uneven piece of ground with a fence around it. They charged thirty-five cents admission, and the fans, mostly a mill crowd, sat in the rickety bleacher seats, yelling, booing, storming out on the field occasionally when the situation grew tense, having a general good time for their money.

Grossing a couple of hundred dollars at most, Flynn and Brennan probably cleared twenty-five bucks apiece for themselves on a Sunday afternoon, after paying for the field and the salaries of the players. They had to earn that twenty-



five, too, because both of them were sixty-minute players, and the clubs against which they played, lacking real ability, made it up in roughness.

A bunch of kids had been out on the field, kicking a football around during intermission. They were chased, and the two teams took the field. The Ramblers were the richer club. Their uniforms matched. The opposing eleven, designated as the Westville Warriors, wore blue, red and gray uniforms, different colored helmets and socks.

As they lined up for the kick-off, Jerry Flynn said to Hook, "This club's gonna play for you now, kid. Watch 'em."

Hook Hannigan grinned. The Warriors were kicking off, and he stood on the five yard line directly between the goal posts, staring upfield.

He said, "Let 'em, mister."

He weighed one hundred and ninety pounds, and it was solid weight. It was up in the shoulders and in the neck. He had black hair, pale blue eyes, a thin slit of a mouth. When he smiled it was a crooked smile, not genuine.

The Warriors aimed the kick at him as he expected they would. They were going to gang up on him this time, smash him into the hard, frozen dirt, take the ginger out of him.

Hook watched the ball tumble down out of the gray sky. He caught it against his chest and started to run, veering toward the right sideline. He liked to run; he'd always like to run in the reform school where he'd first played football. It was as if the whole world was against him, trying to catch him, to nail him down to the earth, and he wouldn't let them. He'd twist and dodge and rip his way through; he'd tear away from restraining hands and he'd be free—free!

On the fifteen yard line he was moving at top speed, and he ran like a sprinter. A Warrior player, wearing a faded red jersey and a dirty white helmet, sprang

up at him, reaching for his shoulders. Hook Hannigan slashed him full in the face with his free hand.

He heard the man yelp, and there was blood on his hand as he continued up the field, moving in behind big Martv Milano, the Rambler fullback, and heavy Mike Brennan.

He went up to the twenty-five and they had him hemmed in on the sideline. Milano, a two hundred and thirty pound Italian bricklayer, roared through, knocking down a couple of tacklers. Hook Hannigan, grinning, followed him, churning like a steamroller over the men who'd gone down.

He ripped away from another tackler, and then he was hit on the thirty-five. He went down, twisting his body violently as he fell, swinging his free elbow. The elbow crashed into the face of the tackler, and the man released his hold. His nose was bleeding profusely as Hook rolled on the ground, scrambled to his feet and plunged on to the fifty before they hit him again.

This time they gave it to him good. Three Warriors plowed into him. One man hit him high, another down low, and the third around the stomach. Two others, running up, piled on top of him as they went down.

An elbow was grinding into Hook's neck. A hand scraped across his face, and Hook opened his mouth and bit one of the fingers. The man yelped, and when he got to his feet he protested wildly to the referee that he'd been bitten.

The referee, a fat-faced glib man, grinned, and said. Bite him back on the next play."

"If he does," Hook Hannigan chuckled, "I'll tear his arm off and throw it in his face."

"A nice game," the referee smiled. "Next Sunday afternoon I'll be home readin' the funny papers, an' to hell with Jerry Flynn an' his five bucks."



**T**HE RAMBLERS lined up, running out of the T with Jerry Flynn directly behind the center. The elderly quarterback's eyes were shining. He had a split lip, and a big lump under his right eye, but this was his game.

Milano roared through the center, eyes closed, big head bent. He went fourteen yards for a first down. Mike Brennan and Jerry Flynn howled jubilantly.

Flynn said in the huddle, "This one for you, Hook. That off tackle shot. You go through Mike's position. Okay, Mike?"

"Plenty o' room," the Rambler co-owner growled. "I'll give you a hole ten feet wide, kid."

Hook Hannigan wanted to tell him just to stay the hell out of the way. He'd had more trouble in some of these semi-pro games getting around his own men than avoiding the enemy tacklers.

They lined up, Flynn calling his numbers, the crowd yelling enthusiastically. They were on the Warrior thirty-six.

Flynn reached down for the ball, faked it to Marty Milano, and handed it to Hook. Hook whirled away, starting wide for the end, and then cutting in to the line.

Mike Brennan didn't have a hole ten feet wide, but it was at least six feet wide, and Hook Hannigan tore through it, legs churning, weight forward. He went five yards before he hit a tackler, and he ran through the first man, knocking him to one side.

Spinning, he rolled away from a second man, and came out into the clear with the goal line less than thirty yards away. The Warrior safety man was still in front of him, backing away, looking unsure of himself.

Hook drove straight at him, that crooked grin on his face. He swerved when the Warrior dived at his knees, and his left hand crashed down on the man's helmet with stunning force, knocking him to the ground. Hook sprinted the rest

of the way to the goal line for his fourth score of the afternoon. It was 26-7 for the Ramblers.

Jerry Flynn trotted up, yelling. He slapped Hook's back, and then Brennan raced up, shaking hands with him, acting as if he'd just broken a deadlock.

Hook Hannigan looked at the two men curiously. He'd seen men who liked their football, but never anything like this. Flynn and Brennan had really been bitten by the bug.

We got 'em on the run," Flynn whooped.

"We'll take 'em," Mike Brennan growled. "We'll take 'em all."

The Warriors looked pretty sore. Several of them were making remarks when the two teams lined up for the extra point kick. They didn't like the way Hook Hannigan played; they didn't like the viciousness he displayed.

Mike Brennan said, "Watch 'em kid. They're sore at you now."

"I'll hide under a rock," Hook sneered. "Watch me."

A couple of them tore in as Jerry Flynn attempted the kick. They didn't bother about the kicker, and they didn't try to block the kick. They went straight for Hook Hannigan, blocking for Flynn.

Hook saw them coming. He went in low, upsetting one man, and kept charging forward. He felt a man's knee coming up into his face and grabbed the knee and yanked. The Warrior player landed on his back.

Another man straightened up and swung his right fist at Hook's face, missing by a fraction of an inch. Hook let go with a left hand punch, himself, and he heard the roar from the stands. Two other men rushed him.

Marty Milano and Mike Brennan tore into the fray, swinging punches from all angles. Milano picked up one man, whirled him around and banged him against the wooden goal post.



The crowd was coming through the rope around the field, rushing toward the players. Substitutes on both benches were discarding sweaters and overcoats, tearing across the frozen turf.

Hook was punching away at the Warrior player in front of him a, big, blond guy with a flattened nose, who looked like an ex-pug.

The guy grated, "Watch this one, kid," and Hook beat him to the punch, hitting him in the mouth, dropping him to his knees.

Then the crowd was in among them and Mike Brennan was roaring, "They asked for this, gang. Give it to 'em. They jumped our boy."

Hook Hannigan moved out to the edge of the crowd. He had a cut on the mouth, but nothing serious. He watched the other players swinging away at each other, and he murmured, "Eager beavers."

In about ten minutes it was all over. A police station wagon rolled onto the field, a dozen bluecoats jumping out. The whistles started to blow. The crowd gradually dispersed, but the game was over.

Jerry Flynn said grimly in the dressing room, "We'll never book that club again, Mike. They're too dirty."

Brennan nodded. He had a beautiful shiner and his nose had been bleeding from the fray. He said, "This is a nice clean park, an' a nice clean club. We'll keep it that way."

Hook sat in front of his locker, undressing. Very deftly, he transferred the handkerchief from inside his football pants to his coat pocket and waited for the first outburst.

Marty Milano, the fullback, came over to Flynn and said quietly, "Some guy stole four bucks out of my wallet, Jerry."

Little Flynn hit the ceiling. "Them dirty crooks!" he yelled. "They were in here while the fight was goin' on. Them

Warriors! How do you *like* them bums?"

Hook took the cue immediately. "I lost eight-fifty," he said. "They cleaned me."

"We'll go over there," Mike Brennan rasped. "We'll take 'em apart again."

The dressing room was a long wooden shed, divided into two sections with a kind of hallway in between. When they opened the door they found the police officers standing there, grinning at them.

One of them said, "Didn't you get enough fight yet, Mike Brennan?"

"We was robbed," Brennan growled. "Some wise guy rifled our lockers."

"Report it to the sergeant," the officer told him. "There'll be no more trouble at this field, Brennan."

The Ramblers went back to the dressing room. Hook took his shower and came back to his locker. When he was almost finished dressing, Jerry Flynn came over with a wad of bills. Flynn was paying off the men. He counted off eighteen dollars and fifty cents, and handed the money to Hook.

Hook looked at it. "You said ten bucks yesterday," he pointed out.

"That crook robbed you of eight-fifty," Flynn smiled. "The management is makin' it up."

Hook took the money, rubbing his chin with his free hand as he did so. He was thinking, *You suckers!* But he felt kind of funny, and he'd never felt funny before taking money from anyone under any conditions.

He said slowly, "Okay—thanks."

He combed his hair in front of the mirror. It had been a good afternoon, a very good afternoon.

Flynn said to him, "You'll be around for next Sunday's game, won't you, kid?"

"Guess so," Hook told him.

He didn't know. He'd always wanted to go to California, and this money in his pockets would get him there without too much trouble if he used it only for food, and hitchhiked the distance.



"I'll pay you fifteen next week," Flynn said apologetically. "Best I can do now, kid. You rate much more."

"Okay," Hook nodded.

"Where you stayin'?" Flynn wanted to know.

"Back in town," Hook said. He'd slept in the railroad station the previous night.

"Mike an' I live at a nice boarding house," Jerry Flynn told him. "Good meals an' inexpensive. Why don't you come along with us?"

Hook Hannigan thought about it. He could stand a good meal, not having had one in a long time. He said, "I'll try it."

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### Goal-for-Dough Guy

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THEY rode back to town in Mike Brennan's dilapidated old roadster, the three of them sitting in the front seat.

Brennan said thoughtfully, "A kid like you ought to go someplace in this game, Hannigan. How old are you?"

"Nineteen," Hook said.

"You never went to no college," Jerry Flynn said.

Hook grinned. "No college," he said. His education had been on the informal side.

"Maybe," Brennan said, "some day we take you up for a try-out with the big time Buffalos. They'd be glad to see a guy can hit a line like you."

Hook didn't say anything. He'd never considered football as a career. He'd never considered anything as a career. For two years he'd been drifting, not caring much as long as he had a good meal in his stomach once in a while, and a place to sleep.

The boarding house was on the outskirts of the town, not very large, and it could stand a coat of fresh paint.

Mike Brennan said, "You'll like Mrs. Monihan, kid. Everybody does."

Three other Rambler players stayed at Mrs. Monihan's boarding house, and the club meetings were held there. Hook learned quite a lot about the Ramblers, and about Flynn and Brennan, on the way back. The two owners were bachelors; they worked in the local steel mill during the week, along with a lot of the other players. Football was their recreation. They dreamed about it day and night. Even in the summer they did some scrimmaging on a Saturday afternoon when they could get enough men together. They owned the Ramblers for about a dozen years now.

"Guys like us," Brennan grinned. "we got no wives, no kids, no home. Football makes it up for us. Jerry here reads all the books. He goes up ever once in a while to watch the big time Buffalos. He picks things up an' he passes 'em on to us."

Hook met Mrs. Monihan, an elderly Irish woman, who looked upon Mike Brennan and Jerry Flynn as her two sons. She greeted Hook warmly from the kitchen where she was making the evening meal. She was a big woman, in her sixties, gray-haired, red-faced, with broad arms.

She said to Flynn, "Take him upstairs, Jerry. Show him Marty's old room."

"Marty Milano used to live here," Flynn explained. "He got married this fall."

Hook followed little Flynn up the stairs. The house was clean, warm, comfortable. Milano's old room was at the end of the hall on the top floor, large, nicely furnished and warm.

Hook said, "This will do." He'd never slept in a nicer place in his life. He went over and felt the bed. It was soft, comfortable. He grinned, thinking of the hard wood benches on which he'd slept in the past.



"Supper will be ready in about thirty minutes," Flynn told him. He looked around the room, and he said, "No bag?"

"Travelin' light," Hook stated.

Jerry Flynn nodded and smiled, getting the point then. Flynn knew that he was a drifter. He said, "Maybe if you'd like a job, kid, we can get you one in the mill. Always openings for a guy with a strong back."

"I'll think about it," Hook told him. "Don't know how long I'll be stayin' in this town."

He didn't particularly want to work. The eager beavers worked; they slaved and married and had families. Sometimes they bought houses and fixed themselves very comfortably, and then a depression came along and it was all gone—it was all down the drain. The wise boys cleaned up and the plodders were cleaned out.

Downstairs, a few minutes later, Hook met some of the other Rambler players, a few of them bearing scars of the afternoon's battle. They were going over the game in detail, denouncing the Warriors for their dirty play.

There were eight men around the supper table that night, and the meal was enormous. Mrs. Monihan came in with overloaded dishes, setting them on the table, carrying on good-natured raillery with the men as she worked.

The players stowed away vast quantities of food, and Mrs. Monihan brought in more plates.

Once, she said to Hook, "They don't eat so well when they lose. That's when I save money. Mike and Jerry sit around here all week moping."

"Ain't lost many this year," Brennan grinned, "an' with this new kid here carryin' the mail we're gonna be tough to beat."

"I been thinkin'," little Jerry Flynn said thoughtfully, "we're gettin' to be a pretty big club now. Maybe we oughta have contracts, Mike."

"Contracts?" Brennan scowled. "What in hell for, kid? We never needed no contracts before with our guys."

"So we lost that Lorenzo guy," Flynn observed, "an' Benny Knox last month when the Mustangs offered 'em more dough. We get their John Hancocks on a piece o' paper an' they stay with us. That's how the big clubs do it, Mike."

Mike Brennan considered this, and then nodded. "You're the guy's got the brains, kid," he said. "Go to it."

"I'll have some papers printed tomorrow," Flynn said. "We'll make it all legal."

Hook Hannigan, stowing away an enormous quantity of food, listened to this talk with little interest. It made no difference to him whether he gave an oral promise to play with a club or whether he signed a contract with the most durable ink ever made. When he wanted to walk out, he'd walk out.

When he finished eating and sat back at the table he felt better. He listened to the talk, taking little part in it. It was mostly football. Mrs. Monihan came in once and looked at Hook.

She said, "I think Mr. Hannigan is tired. Why don't you go upstairs and lie down, son?"

She spoke to him like a mother, and he felt a little embarrassed. But he was tired. He'd used up a lot of energy this afternoon, and he hadn't slept too well in the railroad station the previous night. The bench had been hard, and after midnight it had gotten pretty cold.

Hook said, "I think I will go up."

"You'll find extra blankets in the closet if you get cold," Mrs. Monihan told him solicitously.

Hook was thinking of that as he went up the stairs—extra blankets! This was a racket. He lay on the bed and he could hear the men talking down below. Gradually, he drifted off. He didn't remember ever having slept on a softer bed.



When he awoke the sun was out and everything was quiet downstairs. When he went out to the bathroom he noticed by the clock in the hall that it was ten-thirty. He could hear Mrs. Monihan working down in the kitchen.

After washing he went down to the dining room and he stood there, looking at the table. The breakfast dishes had been cleared away, and he was wondering whether he would get any breakfast here, or if he would have to go down to the nearest diner.

The other Rambler players and boarders had probably gone off to work. This was Monday morning, but it didn't mean a thing to him. One day had always been like another.

Mrs. Monihan came in, a dish towel in her hands, the concern on her wide Irish face. She said, "You feeling sick, Mr. Hannigan?"

"Sick?" Hook looked at her. He shook his head.

"I thought you'd be going out to the mill with the other boys," the woman said. "Don't you come from the mill?"

"No," Hook told her, "I don't come from the mill."

The Irish woman looked at him sympathetically. "Out of work," she said. "You'll get something, Mr. Hannigan. Don't worry."

"I'm not worryin'," Hook said dryly.

"You mind eating out in the kitchen?" the woman asked him. "I have your plate set out there."

Hook was hungry enough to eat out on the kitchen floor. He followed her. She had his place ready at a small table by the window. He had orange juice, pancakes, a platter of toast, two soft-boiled eggs, all the coffee he wanted. He ate silently, absorbed in what he was doing, and Mrs. Monihan watched him, a smile on her face.

She said after a while, "You're not sick anyway. I'm glad of that."

Hook nodded. When he finished he went out on the porch and sat there for a while. With the sun out full it was almost warm, this latter part of October. He picked up a morning newspaper and scanned it. They had a writeup about the Buffalos, the big time pro football team.

Mrs. Monihan came to the door once and she said, "You'll find the want ads on the back page, Mr. Hannigan."

Hook moistened his lips. "Nothin' good," he said. There was a frown on his face.

HE TOOK a walk around the town after a while. It was a nice little town, not too big. The big steel mills were a few miles outside the city limits, and the town was clean.

He went into a cigar store to buy some chewing gum, and the man behind the counter grinned at him.

"You're the kid scored all them touchdowns for the Ramblers yesterday, ain't you?"

Hook said, "I scored a couple, pal." He was a little gratified to be recognized.

Two other men in the store looked at him, and the counter man said, "The gum is on the house, kid. How about a cigar?"

Hook didn't smoke, but he accepted two excellent brand cigars free of charge. He had noticed that Flynn and Brennan both smoked cigars.

The counter man said enthusiastically, "I never miss a Rambler's game, kid. They play pretty good football in this town."

"That's right," Hook said.

As he walked down the street, going back to the boarding house, he felt like somebody, and it was a new feeling. No one was after him in this town. They looked up to him. He was the big gun of the Rambler football team. A man had given him gum and cigars on the house!

When the players came back that night, Jerry Flynn had a batch of newly-printed contract forms in his hand. He said,



"Same as the Buffalo forms. I saw one of 'em, and had ours printed the same way. They're air-tight, boys."

After supper Flynn got out a fountain pen and placed the contracts on the table. He said, "How many guys want to sign up with the Ramblers? This is legal-like."

Everybody signed, including Hook. The whole Rambler team had come in, having been summoned by Flynn for the meeting. Hook could see that they felt kind of important signing the sheet of paper.

The meeting broke up late. The Ramblers were to play a pretty tough club from Irontown the following Sunday, and Flynn and Brennan wanted to go over some of the plays. They would practice on Saturday afternoon, the only practice session they could hold.

The backfield men worked out in Mrs. Monihan's living room, going through slow-motion formations, using an imaginary ball. Mrs. Monihan stood in the doorway, drying a dish, shaking her head at them.

She said to Flynn once, "You watch those lamps, Jerry. You broke one last week with this business."

Flynn grinned. He said proudly, "Some day we'll buy this whole house from you, Mom, an' make it our club-house. You can run it for us. We're gettin' into big time football now."

When the meeting broke up and the players who didn't live at the boarding house went home, Mike Brennan drew Hook into a corner. He said quietly, "I was speakin' to the superintendent at the mill, Hook. There's an opening if you want it. It won't pay much to begin with, but it's a job, an' you got a chance to make pretty good money later on when you know your way around."

Hook looked at him. He said, "Not right away, Mike. I got some other ideas. Thanks, anyway." He couldn't picture

himself sweating away in a hot steel mill, picking up a few dollars. He'd be tied down; he'd be like the others—the eager beavers.

Brennan managed to hide his disappointment. He said, "Sure, kid. You know what you're doin'."

THE IRONTOWN Bear game drew a capacity crowd to Rambler Field the following Sunday afternoon. The Bears had played here before, and they were a big, rough, aggressive lot. They'd whipped the Ramblers the first game of the season by a 36-3 score. The Ramblers were thirsting for revenge.

It was a clear, crisp Sunday afternoon, and Hook Hannigan felt like a million dollars. He'd slept well the previous night; he'd eaten well all week, and he was ready to go.

Marty Milano caught the opening kick and rushed it back to the twenty-eight yard line. The Bears wore crimson and white uniforms with gaudy crimson and white helmets. They were big, and they were tough. Hook Hannigan could tell from the way they blocked.

He carried the ball on the first play from scrimmage, swinging wide around the left end. The blocking on the part of the Ramblers was not too good, and before he was past the line of scrimmage three crimson-jerseyed Bears were in front of him.

He got away from one man, slashing at him with the free hand. He nearly got away from another man, and then he ran full into the third. He was moving so fast that he made five yards on the play, carrying the tacklers forward with him.

One of them said as they lay on the ground, "So you're the tough kid. We'll soften you up."

"Try it," Hook invited. "Now or after the game."

The second time he carried the ball he ripped off twenty-five yards through Mike



Brennan's tackle spot, and then he caught a short pass from Jerry Flynn, and he was away.

The Rambler crowd howled deliriously as he sprinted nearly forty yards for the score, the Bears trailing him, making desperate last-minute tackles down near the goal line.

Mike Brennan boomed, "That's our boy! They can't stop him."

He scored again five minutes later, going around the end this time, breaking into the clear, getting pretty good blocking from the Ramblers for a change. He went sixty-eight yards on this one, driving his way through most of the Bear team, bowling over tacklers right and left as he ripped down the sideline. The ground was hard, but the footing was good.

Some of the Bear players were looking at him curiously after this run. He heard one of them say, "Bet that guy's a ringer. He looks like a real pro."

The Ramblers scored a third touchdown later in the second quarter when Milano rolled into the end zone from the eight yard stripe, Hook having set the play up with a twenty yard drive through Brennan's tackle spot.

At half-time they led by a 20-0 score, and the Bears, confident of victory at the opening whistle, were walking around in a daze. Milano and Jerry Flynn broke away for long gains when Flynn started to fake his passes to Hook, and fed his two ends instead. The Bear defense was split wide open.

It was a jubilant Rambler team which walked off the field. The crowd surged around them. Hook felt people slapping him on the back. Just as he was going through the gate to the dressing room shed, a man grabbed him by the elbow. "You got a minute, Hannigan?"

Hook looked at him. He was short, on the fat side, with a round face and pale blue eyes, very well dressed.

"My minutes cost dough, pal."

"That's what I'm talking about," the fat man smiled. "Dough. How much you make with this club?"

Hook rubbed his jaw. "Fifteen bucks a game," he said.

The fat man lifted his eyes toward the sky and then dropped them again. He said softly, "Kid, stick around after the game. You and I have a lot to talk about. I have a gray sedan. You'll see it parked down along the fence. I'll be waiting in it."

"I might be there," Hook said casually.

"Kid," the fat man murmured, "this is so important that I'll sit there for two years. You hear me? If it's that important to me, it's important to you, too. I'm talking about money—real money."

Hook smiled. "I'll be there."

**H**E WENT into the dressing room, and Jerry Flynn said to him, "You got your fans, now, kid. You sure tore 'em to pieces that half."

"We'll do better next half," Hook said.

"We'll really rip into them."

They did, too. The dazed Bears *never* got started on the offensive, and they were being hammered to pieces when the Ramblers held the ball. Hook and Marty Milano pulverized the Bear line. Milano was good, too. The big Italian brick-layer moved fast for a big man, and he was hard to stop. With Hook skirting the ends, spreading the defense, and Jerry Flynn's ever-present passes to further confuse them, the line was wide open for Milano's plunges.

The Ramblers scored three more times in the second half, Milano accounting for two from in close, and Hook, racing with one of Flynn's passes, for the other. It was 40-0 for the Ramblers when the teams left the field.

In the dressing room the Ramblers were yelling, grinning at each other, slapping backs.



Jerry Flynn was saying, "We'll have a celebration tonight, gang. Everybody come up to Mrs. Monihan's."

In the shower, Mike Brennan said to Hook, "We'll take you back to the house, Hook, whenever you're ready to go."

"Have to meet a guy," Hook said. "An old friend turned up."

Brennan glanced at him quickly. He said, "Sure thing, kid."

Hook took a long time dressing and the room was almost empty when he left. It was getting dark outside. There were still a couple of cars parked along the fence, and he had no trouble locating the gray sedan. The fat man was sitting behind the wheel, smoking a cigar, coat collar pulled up.

He opened the door for Hook and said, "I knew you wouldn't walk out on this, kid."

Hook sat down on the front seat and the fat man started the motor. The gray

car rolled around the corner, went two blocks, and then the fat man stopped it alongside a vacant lot.

He said, "We can talk here, Hannigan."

"Go ahead," Hook told him.

"As a football player," the fat man said thoughtfully, "you have a lot to offer, Hannigan, a lot to sell, I might say."

"You want to buy or sell?" Hook asked.

The fat man grinned in the dusk. "You're smart, too," he said, "and that'll make it all the better. Here's how we'll work it. From what I've seen this afternoon you have enough on the ball to go right up to the big time pro league. I've seen all the clubs and I know what I'm talking about. I've also been a scout for two different clubs and it's my job to search around for new talent. You'd click right from the start. As a matter of fact I think you'd be a sensation with good

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blockers in front of you instead of the stumble-bums out on the field this afternoon."

Hook didn't say anything. He found himself resenting this statement with regard to the Ramblers, and that was silly because they didn't mean anything to him.

"Now here's what you could do," the fat man told him. "You're thinking right now that you'll go up to the nearest club, say, the Buffaloes, offer your services, and to hell with me. That right?"

"That's right," Hook nodded. "To hell with you, pal."

"But it won't work," the fat man smiled. "They'll look at you the way they look at a thousand other big guys coming out of the steel mills and the coal mines, thinking they can play football. Pro football is not like pro basketball. They look mostly for name players who will draw the crowds. They don't give every dub coming down the pike a tryout. You probably won't even crash the gate at the office."

"So that's where you come in," Hook nodded. "Go ahead."

"I have connections," the fat man smiled, "particularly in the newspaper profession—sports writers. I have a lot of other friends, publicity men. I'm one myself in a way. I can build you up into the biggest thing that ever hit the sports pages. You'll be a Red Grange and a Jim Thorpe all rolled into one, and you'll be in a position to ask for a small fortune."

"How do you build me up?" Hook asked curiously.

"I'd get you a job with another club in some bigger town than this," the fat man told him. "Then I tip off all the big league football scouts that there is a guy down here who is a sensation. I tip off sports writers—pay a lot of them out of my own pocket to come down and write you up. When the scouts see you they start to bid. We laugh at them until the

figure goes up to thirty or forty grand. We split it two ways. Twenty thousand apiece, and you land a juicy contract with one of the league teams. How do you like it?"

Hook Hannigan took a deep breath. "When does this start?" he asked softly.

"The name's Kolman," the fat man said, "and it starts tonight." He hesitated, then said, "You don't happen to be signed to a written contract with this bush league outfit, do you, Hannigan?"

Hook felt a cold chill go through him. He said, "I—I signed one last night."

Kolman let out a long breath. "I knew there'd be a hitch," he said tersely, and then he cursed. "Why in hell did you ever do that?" he asked. "We've got to get that contract back or the whole business goes down the drain. You're not worth a dime to anybody but the owner of the Ramblers. You understand that."

Hook stared through the windshield. "I'll get the contract back," he said grimly. "Don't worry about it."

"When?" Kolman asked him.

"I can have it tomorrow afternoon," Hook said. "That soon enough?"

"I'll stop over at the Lincoln Hotel in town," Kolman said. "You bring that contract with you and we start making money."

"I'll be there," Hook told him. "Just stick around, mister."

Kolman drove him in to town and he got out near the boarding house, walking the remaining distance. He was thinking of dollars now—thousands and thousands of dollars, big cars, luxurious hotel rooms, all the things that went with the big money.

The Ramblers were having a celebration that night. The married men brought their wives to the boarding house. Mrs. Monihan set up several large tables, end to end. Jerry Flynn and Mike Brennan came in with huge bags full of cold cuts, potato salad, beer, pickles, relishes.



Hook had to sit through it, but even as he ate he was thinking of that contract. Beyond a doubt, Jerry Flynn would have it in his room. Flynn wouldn't consider the papers so valuable that he'd put them in a bank. Flynn's room was at the far end of the hall, two doors from Hook's. The door was usually open. Hook had noticed that before.

At nine-thirty in the evening he got up from the table. He said something to Mike Brennan about having a headache and wanting to lie down.

Brennan said, "Sure, kid. You did a day's work this afternoon."

He'd been sitting at the end of the table, and was able to get up and move out into the corridor without anybody else having seen him. He went up the stairs to his own room, but before he went inside he noticed that Jerry Flynn's door was slightly ajar.

He waited for a few moments, listening, and then he stepped out into the corridor and walked to Flynn's room. He went inside, closing the door behind him. The room was about the same size as his own, a bed, a dresser, a few chairs, a table with lamp on it. The lamp was lighted.

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### 3

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#### Six Points or Bust!

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**H**OOK walked quickly to the dresser, opened one drawer after another, his hands probing swiftly. He expected the batch of contracts to be in a folder or possibly in a box. He reached the lower drawer without finding them, and he stood there, a frown on his face, studying the room.

The table was an old-fashioned affair, square-shaped, with another drawer. He went over to the table and was sliding open the drawer when he became aware

of the fact that someone was standing in the suddenly open doorway.

Whirling, he stared into the face of Jerry Flynn. He didn't know how long Flynn had been there. The little quarterback was leaning against the doorsill, watching him, a strange expression on his face.

Flynn asked, "Find it, kid?"

Hook Hannigan blinked. He was a cornered rat now, not sure which way to run, just waiting. He said slowly, "Find what?"

Flynn walked across the room to a little bookcase along the wall. He took out a looseleaf book, opened it, and slid out the batch of contracts. Hook watched him, his face red. Flynn was thumbing through the contracts. Then he took one out, walked over and handed it to Hook. He said, "All you had to do was ask me for it, kid."

Hook stared at the paper. It was the contract he had signed. He looked at the paper, and then at Jerry Flynn. He had nothing to say. He just stood there with the paper in his hand.

Flynn said, "I suppose you're the guy broke into the lockers that first Sunday, too, aren't you, Hook?"

Hook cleared his throat. His voice was raspy when he spoke. He said, "You can't prove a damned thing, Flynn."

Flynn shook his head. "I don't want to prove anything," he said. He looked at the contract in Hook's hand, and he said, "Somebody offered you a lot of dough, didn't they? You needed that paper to get it. Okay, kid, you got it."

Hook had the strange feeling that he should say, "Thanks," but under the circumstances it was ridiculous. He stood there, the paper in his hand, wanting to curse a blue streak. The paper tight in his fist he walked past Flynn, back to his own room, closing the door behind him.

He had his coat and his hat in the room, his only possessions. He put them



on, slipping the contract into the coat pocket. Downstairs, he could hear the Rambler club singing. He didn't think Jerry Flynn had told them anything; he didn't think Flynn was going to tell them anything either.

He went down the stairs and out the back door into the street. It was getting cold. He pulled up his coat collar and walked in the direction of the main part of town. His lips were tight across his teeth. He felt a little sick.

The Lincoln Hotel was at the other end of town. He asked for Kolman's room, then went up. Kolman opened the door. The fat man looked at him in surprise. He had his coat and tie off and he looked subtly different.

He said, "You got here quicker than I thought, Hannigan. Come in."

Hook went through the door. Without a word he took the contract from his pocket and handed it to Kolman. The fat man studied it for a moment, then touched the edge of the cigar to the paper. It started to burn as he held it in his fingers, and he dropped the burning paper into an ash tray.

Hook watched it curl up, grow black, and then crumple. He sat in a chair, his hat and coat still on, and stared at the floor.

Kolman said, "You look like you need a drink, kid. Have any trouble getting this?"

"No trouble," Hook scowled.

"Okay," Kolman was smiling expansively. "We go to work this week. We'll run on all six cylinders. I'll grease a few palms. I'll get you in with this Tiger club up in Benville. They play pretty good football. Get yourself some sleep. You're going to have to put on a show. There'll be some scouts at the game."

Hook didn't sleep. He got a room in the hotel, a good room, and lay on the bed, staring at the ceiling. He kept seeing Flynn's face, the strange look on it.

In the morning Kolman drove him up to Benville, a pretty large city about sixty miles north. The Benville Tigers were a professional club in the sense that the players did nothing but play football, and they were paid for their services. There were practice sessions during the week.

Hook met Joe Slade, the Tiger coach, and on Tuesday morning he went out for practice with the Tigers. Kolman had disappeared. He'd sent innumerable wires, letters, and long distance calls. The local papers had been tipped off that the Tigers had just signed on a new, sensational back, though Hook had signed no papers. Slade was being paid by Kolman to give Hook the try-out.

There were local reporters down for the first practice session, and they besieged Hook in the dressing room.

Joe Slade, a dumpy, unkempt little man with a huge nose, said to Hook, "These guys heard about you, kid. They want you to give out."

"With what?" Hook asked sourly.

"A news story," one of the reporters told him. "I understand Dick Kolman is your publicity man. He'll appreciate anything you can tell us. This is for free."

"This is for free, too," Hook said tersely. "Get the hell out of here."

They looked at him, not understanding at first. Slade licked his lips and said thinly, "Look, kid, I'm in on some of this stuff. Kolman's been talkin' to me."

Hook growled, "Then why talk to me?" He put on his jersey and went out on the field.

He was able to hit out at something now, and he hit, hard. Carrying the ball in scrimmage, he splintered the regular Tiger line. He went through with tremendous force, running harder than he'd ever run in his life, running with a kind of reckless abandon.

Reporters, who'd been sore and ready to go home, stopped and watched. Time



and time again, Hook roared through, making his own holes sometimes, legs churning. He played with a cold fury, lashing out with his free hand as he ran, smashing men down, running over them viciously.

Twice Tiger players swung on him during the scrimmage, and he fought back. Slade and some of the other men had to break it up.

The Tiger captain and quarterback, Bud McAllister, said grimly, "What in hell did you bring us here, Joe?"

Slade looked uncomfortable. "This is a try-out for the guy," he said. "Don't worry about it." He called the practice session short, and Hook went into the dressing room alone, showered, dressed, and went out. He didn't speak to anyone.

**K**OLMAN came back the next morning, flying in. He came to Hook's hotel room and said jovially, "Everything running along smoothly, kid. I hear you've been having a time

with the Tigers. I just had a talk with Slade, and he thinks it might be better if you laid off the rest of the week. You're on edge. You should knock them dead next Sunday, but we don't want you to knock the Tigers dead."

"Okay," Hook said.

Kolman looked at him. "Slade says you wouldn't talk with the reporters yesterday," he said. "That right, Hannigan?"

"That's right," Hook growled.

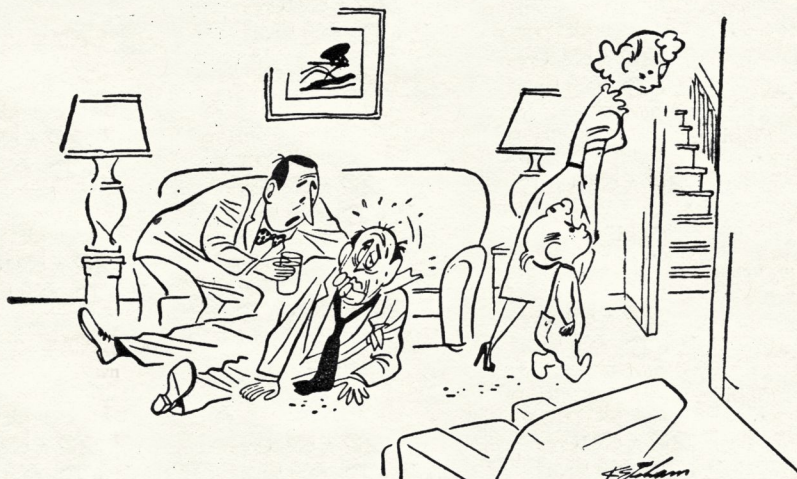
"Rather foolish," the fat man observed. "You know damned well we're trying to build you up, kid. Words do it, you know."

"You give out with the words," Hook said thinly. "I play football. That was the deal, wasn't it?"

"You're not helping too much," Kolman snapped. "We're both in this for the high dollar, aren't we?"

"I'm still playin' football," Hook told him. "That's all."

Kolman looked at him steadily, his greenish eyes a lighter color. He said



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softly, "I've put up a lot of dough already, Hannigan. You'd better play football Sunday."

THEY had a capacity crowd in the Tiger Stadium. Reporters and league scouts had flocked down to see the highly-touted star. Sports pages in various sections of the country had carried articles on the sand-lot sensation who'd suddenly flashed across the football horizon. There were records of his accomplishments, scoring records, long runs, lies and more lies, the concoctions of Dick Kolman.

Hook had played with teams he'd never heard of. The local reporters came out with stories of his terrific running ability. They claimed that Joe Slade had had to call off his Tigers before he ruined the whole club.

In the dressing room before the game they swarmed in for interviews, and Dick Kolman did all the talking. Hook got into his Tiger uniform, black with orange stripes. He said nothing. He didn't feel right; he hadn't slept well and he wasn't eating. He had no spring in his legs, and he didn't care either way.

The Tigers squared off against the Centaurs, rated a pretty good club, and the Centaurs had been reading the reports about the highly-touted Tiger star. When Hook walked out on the field they went to work on him.

A Centaur player yelled, "You bring your clippings with you, Hook?"

Hook didn't say anything. He was listless during the warm-up session. His legs felt heavy. When he ran out for a pass he dropped the ball.

A fan yelled, "You ain't supposed to do that, Hannigan."

Dick Kolman, on the bench, surrounded by scouts and reporters, was watching him tensely. The fat man said when he came in before the game started, "What the hell goes here, kid? You look dead."

"Don't worry about it," Hook growled.

"I'm worrying," Kolman snapped. "I've put up nearly twelve hundred bucks already, getting some of these guys down, paying for those phoney stories in the papers. How much have you put up?"

Hook didn't say anything. He went out on the field with ten other Tiger players, none of them having any use for him. He didn't care about that; he didn't care about anything.

The Centaurs kicked off, and Hook caught the ball on the five yard stripe. He started to run automatically, following blockers up ahead of him. He saw the green-clad Centaurs tearing down, sifting in among the orange and black jerseys of the Tigers, heading for him.

He swerved away, avoided one man, and then another sailed into him, driving him backward. Two other green jerseys hit him a moment later, and he went down on the eighteen yard line.

One of the Centaurs on top of him said caustically, "They told me you ran all kick-offs for touchdowns, Hannigan. What happened?"

Hook didn't say anything. He got up and went into the Tiger scrimmage. The Tiger quarterback, McAllister, looked at him and said, "Okay, All-Pro. Your ball around the left end."

Hook took it from center. They were running out of the single-wing. His blockers were moving—up there ahead of him, moving rather listlessly, the Centaur tacklers swinging in. Two of them came through the blockers, and one man hurled himself at Hook's ankles. He caught and held on. Hook went down as if he'd been axed, the ball plumping out of his hands.

A Centaur lineman fell on it, and the crowd yelled. There were boos. Dick Kolman and Joe Slade were standing up near the sidelines, staring out across the field.

Bud McAllister said tersely, "What are you, Hannigan, a practice field star?"

Hook didn't even look at him. He



dropped back on the defensive, and he heard one of the Tigers say to another, "They're gonna work on that guy today. He's the big shot."

He had the funny feeling that this was the way it was supposed to go this afternoon. The Tigers weren't going to give him too much protection—they'd had enough of him the other afternoon. They'd leave him out there alone like a sitting duck.

The Tigers took possession of the ball on their own thirty-one after a Centaur kick. McAllister called for Hook on the first play, an off-tackle slash.

There was no hole. Hook ran into the line, and the Centaurs were there waiting for him. Hands reached for his face, for his body, his legs. They dragged him down, and he took an elbow in the mouth which cut his lips. A forearm was across his throat when the referee pulled the players off him. He was gasping for breath and a little sick.

The referee said, "No pilin' up, you guys. I'll have to call it next time."

There had been no gain on the play, and there were some more boos from the stands. McAllister carried the ball himself on the next one, picking up two yards over guard, and then he gave it to Hook on a reverse around the right end.

Hook swung out wide, running fast, but he didn't have it this afternoon. A Centaur tackler knocked him down, rolled off, and Hook got up and tried to go again. Two men smashed him, and one was a flying tackle. He went out of bounds for a yard loss. His mouth was bleeding freely now, and he wiped the blood away with the back of his hand.

Even the Tiger players were grinning now, and the Centaurs were jeering openly. Hook took it without a word. Ordinarily, he would have become a raging demon carrying the ball, but somehow this was right—exactly right. He felt almost good.

The Centaurs scored the first touchdown a few minutes later, and then on the kick-off they aimed it straight at him. He caught the ball on the three, knowing what he was in for.

**T**HE TIGER blocking up ahead was weird. They seemed to be disappearing, and all Hook could see were the green jerseys converging on him, a big fan closing up. He could see their faces, taut, mouths open, eyes hard and cold.

He ran right into them, never slackening his speed, and the noise of the meeting was sickening. Five of them hit him, driving him back, knocking him to the turf with terrific force, falling on top of him, grinding him into the dirt.

His left eye got it this time, a hard bone, an elbow, a knee. He didn't know which. His head spun for a few moments and he couldn't see out of the eye. He could feel it swelling up rapidly.

When he got to his feet he was a little wobbly, the only time in his whole life that he'd been in this condition. He'd gotten up to the fourteen yard line with the ball.

One of the Tigers said in the huddle, "I got a fourteen year old kid brother can carry the ball that far."

McAllister said, "We're not getting any help from this guy."

The Tigers tried a line play and a long pass up the field. Both were unsuccessful, and then the Tiger quarterback said, "Can you see well enough to run, Hannigan?"

"Call the play," Hook told him.

They sent him over right guard, and he was murdered. There was no hole; there was a wall of writhing men, reaching for him. He hit the line of scrimmage and bounced off. They rushed him back and fell on him. He was kicked in the ribs this time, and it hurt.

He stayed in the whole half and it was a nightmare. The Centaurs scored three



more times, making it 28-0, and all the fight went out of the Tigers. McAllister let Hook run with the ball because it didn't matter too much anyway. He gained three yards in the first half.

Dick Kolman was waiting for him when he came off the field, and he could only see the fat man out of one eye, the other being completely closed.

Kolman's fat face was white with rage. He whispered, "You dirty double-crosser."

"Shut up," Hook growled. He pushed past the man.

"You fixed me," Kolman said slowly. "You fixed me good, kid."

Hook went on into the dressing room. He sat down in front of his locker and wiped his battered face with a towel. He was afraid to look into the mirror.

Joe Slade came over and said thoughtfully, "You looked a lot better the other morning, Hannigan. Somebody payin' you to roll over?"

"Find out for yourself," Hook said.

He sat there, his body pulsating, the pain in his face, in his sore ribs. The intermission period was up very quickly, and they had to go back on the field. Hook was in the lineup, and he knew why. Slade was going to let him take the rest of it.

The crowd booed when he walked out on the field. They booed everything he did now. A knot of angry reporters and scouts were gathered around Dick Kolman on the sidelines, berating him for getting them way out here for nothing.

McAllister said in the first Tiger huddle, "Okay, wise guy. Carry the mail."

Hook carried it for three inches across the line, the right tackle spot. His sore mouth got it again, but he stood up and walked back to his position. This was the works—for him.

He carried again and again, three times in the four downs, and then they threw passes at him, giving him no protection. He went out into the clear and McAllister

made him wait for the ball. When he caught it, the Centaurs slaughtered him.

They hit him when he caught the passes; they hit him when he dropped the passes; they smashed into him when he wasn't even near the ball, and with their big lead they didn't mind the occasional penalties for unnecessary roughness.

Hook picked himself up off the ground and walked back to the huddle. The resentment was beginning to burn inside of him now—a small flame eating at his insides. He deserved all this, every bit of it, but some of these guys were also beginning to owe him a little.

McAllister said, "How do you feel, All-American?"

"You want your face pushed in?" Hook asked him softly. It was the first time since the game started that he'd shown any spirit, any resentment. McAllister looked at him, rubbed his chin, and called the play—another back carrying this time.

It was 35-0 for the Centaurs, the ball on the Tiger twenty-five, second and nine. Hook Hannigan crouched, listening to McAllister call the numbers. He felt a little load beginning to lift from his soul.

The resentment included the Centaurs, too, who were battering him unmercifully because he'd been built up. He'd done nothing to the Centaurs; he hadn't rifled their lockers. They didn't even know him, and yet they were roughing him up on every play.

They were in the fourth quarter now, and he'd been in the game every minute. Slade was going to keep him in right to the finish and make him sweat. He had no use for Slade either, and he felt no sympathy for Kolman with his lies and his bribe money. Kolman had played it very close to the boards, and he deserved whatever came his way.

A Tiger back made no gain on an end run, and they went into the huddle again, a team which did not care. Hook crouched, looking at the ground, his jaw hard, mouth



tight. He said to McAllister, without raising his eyes, "Let me run that end."

The Tiger quarterback looked at his battered face, and for the first time some small respect came into his eyes. He said, "You're a glutton for punishment, Hannigan. All yours."

Hook took it. As he swept out wide he felt a measure of the old power come back into his battered body. He couldn't see too clearly with only one good eye, but he could see well enough to run. He could see where the Centaur goal line was.

He hit out wide and there were no blockers for him. He ran alone, with the green-clad Centaurs tearing in at him, grinning, reaching for him, and then he reversed his field. He came back the other way, picking up speed, and he heard the Centaur linemen yell the warning.

He whirled back in through where the Tiger center had stood, and he was moving now. He heard the yell from the stands, the quick whoop when a runner gets out into the clear.

A Centaur lunged for him and he smashed the man's face with the free hand. He went on for five, ten, fifteen yards out into the open, and he was still going. They were yelling in the stands in earnest now because this was the first time

he'd broken loose from the Centaurs.

He didn't look for blockers; he didn't need blockers now. This was out in the open—the old cops and robbers game he'd played as a kid, and the cops had never been able to catch him. He tore past another Centaur tackler; he broke through two more who had been converging on him, and he was up to mid-field, going over the stripe.

They knocked him down on the Centaur forty, but he scrambled loose from the tackler as he went down, and he came up again, lurching forward, battling desperately to regain his stride. He was hit again and he spun and tumbled forward to the twenty yard line where they fell on top of him, pinning him to the ground.

The league scouts, who had started for the exit gates, stopped, and then came back.

In the huddle, Hook said, "I'll have some of that."

McAllister moistened his lips. He said, "They're waiting for you now, Hannigan. Let me fake it and throw you one."

"Good enough," Hook said gruffly.

McAllister cleared his throat. "Give the guy a little blocking," he said.

Hook laughed at him. "Sit in the grandstand if you want," he sneered.

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THEY gave him a little protection on the pass, a short, hard one in the flat. Hook grabbed it against his chest, whirled, and tore forward, literally running over the first tackler. He went through to the five where three green jerseys met him. He pushed them back to the one.

They were yelling in the stands now. Hook said, "Dead center."

McAllister let him run. They gave him a hole this time, not a big one, but a hole. He went through it like a greased pig, driving deep into the end zone, Centaur tacklers clinging to him.

They kicked off, sending the ball far down the field, and Hook Hannigan went after it.

He went after the runner the way a terrier goes after a ball thrown ahead of him. He twisted in and out among the blockers, ripping past them, using his hands, and he was on top of the runner before the man even knew he was near. He went up high for the shoulders, and he pushed the man back to the ten.

There was a roar from the crowd this time. The Centaur back had lost the ball, and it was bouncing around on the grass a few yards away. Hook lunged for it, and he lay there, the ball under his chest, when the Centaurs fell on top of him. He was on the seven yard line.

McAllister said, "You still feel like running, kid?"

"What the hell did I come out here for?" Hook asked him, but he didn't have much left and he knew it. He was operating on sheer anger now.

McAllister gave him the ball over right guard. The hole was fairly good this time, and he whirled through, low, knees kicking up toward his face. They hit him on the goal line, but he kept going.

An elbow caught him in the face. He felt something hard, a knee, strike that sore mouth when he went down, and that was all.

He came to on the sidelines where they'd carried him. They were sloshing cold water over him, and he could hear the reporters talking excitedly.

IN THE dressing room mirror Hook Hannigan stared at his battered face. His eyes were nearly closed, but he could still see through them; his body felt as if it had gone through the wringer.

It was a two hour bus ride. He got off the bus at eight o'clock in the evening. He had not eaten; he hadn't even thought about food. It was two blocks from the bus stop, one block to the right. He went up the wooden steps and he pressed the button.

Mrs. Monihan came out. She stared at him in the yellow porch light and said, "Glory be!"

"I want to see Jerry Flynn," Hook mumbled.

Flynn came out. He looked at Hook, and then at Mike Brennan who was coming out behind him. Flynn said softly, "How's it, kid?"

"I want to sign a contract with the Ramblers," Hook growled, "and I want that job in the mill, Brennan. I want to live here."

Flynn moistened his lips. "Sure—sure, kid," he said.

"Next year," Hook went on slowly, "there'll be scouts out this way looking for me—big league scouts, Flynn. You can sell me for a big figure. You can build yourself a little stadium in this town."

Jerry Flynn said softly, "Why, kid?"

"I owe the Ramblers some dough," Hook mumbled. "Eighty-two dollars and seventy-four cents I stole from your lockers. I'm payin' it back, Flynn."

Flynn looked at Mike Brennan. He said quietly, "Offhand, kid, I'd say you paid it back already. Come on in. This is home."

Hook Hannigan went in.



By **WILLIAM R.  
COX**



Somebody yelled, "Oh, he  
does look like a monster!"

## **TEN COUNT TERROR**

**H**ALEY said, "Hello, Monster.  
What you doing in Miami?"

The big man smiled. His mouth was misshapen but his eyes were mild and bright. His nose was this way and that way, and one ear was pretending it was a doughnut. There were ledges over both eyes formed by cartilage and his brow was lumpy. His hair was receding but virile, curling on his skull. His name

*With the ropes at his back and mayhem in his mitts, the Monster hammered out his destiny—those last three minutes that seek out every fighting man, when he must wear a champion's leather—or go down still punching at a dream!*



was Charlie Catt. He said, "It's warmer here."

Haley said, "It ain't cold up north. You must be holdin' plenty scratch since you turned rassler."

Haley was a thin man with a thin face, a thin voice and pale, wide-open blue eyes which could appear deceptively innocent. He wore mauve slacks, a hound's tooth checked sports jacket and a surface tan acquired in haste on Miami Beach. He was Tim Haley, the fight manager, currently handling Big Boy Tanner.

Charlie Catt, known as The Monster, said, "I quit that. It's not funny enough."

"Haw!" said Haley. "You mean it's too crooked. You was always too dumb to be crooked. And lookit you! Fought 'em all, didn't you, Monster? Leveled with every good boy inna world. How many times didja fight the champ, Monster?"

There was a pretty girl at the bar of the night club talking with Big Boy. Haley was talking for her, Charlie Catt knew. Haley was always making with some good-looking girl.

"Three times. I went the limit once," he said mechanically. Charlie had been good when he went the route against the great champion. Charlie Catt had caught a lot of hell that night, but he had stayed in there. It was funny the way he had stayed upright against so many of the good ones. He wondered about it sometimes, but if he thought too hard about things his head began to buzz, so he just let it go that he was what they called him—a monster. He'd had the sinews and the beef and the durability in those days. Now it was not so good. Even the hip-podroming of the wrestling circuit had been a trifle arduous.

"The world's greatest ketcher and he ain't even in baseball," said Haley. "Whatcha doin' here, Monster?"

Charlie Catt turned his mild gaze upon the girl and Big Boy. He said, "Lookin'

around. Maybe I'll fight some later on."

"No!" Haley's mouth tightened. "You couldn't pass the docs."

Big Boy was holding the girl's elbow. She wore a loose peasant blouse and a skirt, and she had the figure for it. Her legs were long and shapely. She would weigh about one-twenty, Charlie Catt guessed. A lot of girl, he thought, watching Big Boy press her elbow. A lot of expensive girl, with her bright makeup and glistening fingernails and clothing which did not come from bargain basements.

Big Boy Tanner had a protruding underlip which grew moist when he became excited. He was young and tough and he had made some money, but somehow he and Haley had not caught on in the big time. Big Boy did most of his fighting out of town; never in New York. Charlie Catt had a few ideas about this.

He said, "I can pass any medical exam anywhere. I'm thirty-three. The champ is thirty-five. Don't ever worry about me passing the docs, Haley."

"But you're pun—plenty beat up," said Haley. He had begun to say "punchy", Charlie Catt well knew. Now Haley was thinking hard and it was no trouble to guess what he was thinking. After a moment Haley said, "If you showed you could go, I know a guy here. He'd promote it. Monster, it might work."

Big Boy was leaning on the girl now. He had a highball on the bar in front of him and the barkeep racked up two more. It was a medium-priced place, neither a joint nor a class bar. It was about eleven o'clock and people were coming in for the late show inside, in the restaurant-dance portion of the club. The girl's voice was clear and sharp, breaking over Big Boy's mumbling.

"I said I didn't want another drink and I have to go in and change. Please let go of my arm."

Big Boy tightened his grip. Haley



said, "That character! Always making with the broads." His tone was self-righteous and he took half a step toward his fighter. But he stopped.

The girl had a direct look. It rested on the Monster and for one second she flinched. He was certainly not prepossessing. He endured her stare, then saw the change, the softening sympathy of her. Even when she was annoyed and harassed the sympathy was apparent. She shifted her appeal to Haley.

Charlie Catt shambled over to the bar. He picked up Big Boy's fresh drink and sipped it. He said conversationally, "Let go of the gal, Big."

The fighter wheeled, scowling. "Mind your own damned— Why you dumb, worn-out, slap-happy jerk, I'll beat out your brains!"

Charlie Catt sighed. Big was drunk. Charlie threw the contents of the drink into the huge young man's eyes. Then he reached out and slugged Big on the chin.

The fighter slumped onto the floor without a sound. Charlie Catt stepped closer to the girl and said, "You better scram. Haley's worse than Big."

She breathed, "Thanks, and come back and see me. I'm Dotty Holiday."

He said, "Okay. Okay, I might at that."

Haley and someone in a tuxedo and a muscle-bound bouncer were picking up Big Boy. Haley was saying, "We'll settle

this—inna ring, Monster. He'll beat you to death for this—" Haley's off eye drooped; Haley's head motioned to the door. Haley would make capital of his own assassination, Charlie Catt thought, melting into the balmy Florida evening.

He liked to walk beneath the palms. They rustled, as though they were whispering to him. High in the sky rode a fabulous white moon. He turned his distorted, beaten face upward and his crooked mouth twisted into a broad grin.

Things were picking up. He went to his room and wrote a letter to New York reporting his progress. His head buzzed a little, but he felt fine for an old warrior. He rested for a while on the bed in the modest chamber he had rented for a month, then got up and returned to the night club. It was called The Green Dragon, he remembered, as he went through the curtains into the restaurant. It was pretty dark in there but he found his way past the dais upon which the band played and a waiter told him where to find the dressing rooms.

He saw her in the hall. She beckoned to him, and there was a door leading into an alley. They stood under the moon and he said, "You look like a nice gal. Stay away from Haley and Big. They're not nice people."

She said, "You were pretty wonderful to help me."

"It was part of an act," he explained

## Message from Garcia

### Texas Artist Tells Why It's Smart to Switch to Calvert

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—Tony R. Garcia, San Antonio artist and illustrator, knows that it's *taste* that counts in a whiskey. "Tell everybody," he says, "that I switched to Calvert because of its *mild, and smooth taste*."





with painstaking honesty. "I want to get Big Boy into the ring with me. You gave me the chance to start something with him, you see."

She said, "I can see you're a prize fighter." She hesitated.

"They call me 'the Monster'. It's all right. I fought a lot of good ones. I started young and dumb and cut up easy. I don't learn quick, like other people." He rubbed a hand over his head, scowling. He looked awful when he scowled, like a ferocious gargoyle. He remembered that and grinned at her. "Big Boy ain't nice. He and Haley did some bad things to friends of mine. I shouldn't be telling you this—but you're a nice girl. I can tell."

She said, "Your voice—it doesn't match the—the rest of you. Neither do your eyes. Sometimes you speak like a well-educated man."

"I'm a monster," he chuckled. "I went to night school once. But I'm slow to learn."

Her face was upturned into the full glare of the white moon. "You act quickly. And you're nice—nicer than me. Look, Monster, what is your real name?"

He was honestly surprised. "Why—I'm Charlie Catt. The fighter. I was a rassler for a while but I'm not proud of that."

She said, "Charlie, I'd like to see you again."

He said, "Naw. Girls don't want any part of me. You're just bein' nice."

She said, "All right, Charlie. We'll see. I've got to go now. Meantime—I wish you luck in whatever you're trying to do to Haley and Big Boy." She grabbed him, drew his face down and kissed him on his scarred mouth.

She was gone, gracefully moving through the door, not in flight but in smiling *au revoir*. He wiped off his lips, staring after her. This was something for which he had not bargained. It would

hurt him in the think-tank to worry about this.

So he decided not to worry. It made him feel brighter and lighter afoot, walking home.

THERE was a big colored man named Jack Jackson and the promoter, a man out to make a quick buck, arranged for Charlie Catt to meet this trial horse in his fight club. Charlie dutifully ran the sandy beaches and went through the motions in the local gym and climbed through the ropes on a Saturday night. He grinned at Jackson.

The Negro seemed scornful of his opponent. He came charging out with a fast left which had some skill and a lot of authority. Charlie took it on his bum ear, shook his head, frowned a little and walked around the ring. He had a style all his own, self-taught. He held his hands low, crouched a little, leaned this way and that, feinting with his distorted face. He drew a left lead and a right cross and then he belted both hands to the body, short and quick.

Jack Jackson turned an unhealthy color. He retreated. Charlie placidly plodded after him. Charlie laid in a left hook. Jackson shivered like a tree in the wind. The round ended.

In the tenth Jackson went down. He got up, went down again. Charlie shrugged and boxed and let time run out. He hated hurting people anyway and Jackson was not ready. He won the decision.

He went to the dressing room amid the plaudits of the mob and there were the usual smart cookies, the hangers-on, the people who had known him when—and now wanted to know him again. They were no good to him or anyone else but he smiled his best at them and after a while they went away, many of them muttering that Jackson was a bum anyway and Charlie Catt was certainly walking



down Queer Street if he thought he could beat any good man.

He went out alone. Haley met him and drew him into the deep shadow of palm fronds. He said, "You did good, Monster. Too bad you couldn't put him away, but you did good. The bout's as good as made."

"That's okay," said Charlie Catt.

"Look, Monster, Big Boy is goin' to slip it to you. He is sore about the beef in the Green Dragon. He is sore because the tomato won't have nothin' to do with him. He is ravin' mad about that sucker punch you threw at 'im."

"Guys been mad at me before," said Charlie Catt.

"But Big's a young kid. He can hurt you bad. Now if you was to take a quick out, Monster. Say inna second or third. You wouldn't get hurt much and we could clean up—y'know what I mean?"

There was a long silence. Then Haley sighed. "Always too honest. Always . . . Look, Monster, it ain't wrong. Big is goin' to knock you out any old how. Why not us know the round and make a bet? Tell you what I'll do, Monster. You dive inna third, see. I'll bet my roll on that. But we won't tell Big Boy! That'll fix him, the schmoe!"

Charlie Catt said, "You got the funniest ideas, Haley."

"Nothin' doin', huh, Monster?" Haley sighed. "It's on account of Big Boy

thumbin' your cousin Harry . . . right?"

Charlie said quickly, "Never mind that."

"I ain't dumb," said Haley softly. "Big Boy give your cousin Harry the thumb in Philly, then beat up bad on him. Harry went to the hospital and ain't been right since. I make a nice buck with Big Boy, Monster. But also I am blacklisted on account of his tricks inna ring—and out. I am, in a way, stuck with Big Boy. But I never like to see what he did to Harry Josephs."

"It's just another bout to me," lied Charlie Catt. He could not trust Haley. He was getting confused as things failed to run along the one-rail track he had laid out.

"Big Boy ruined a couple young kids down in Carolina last month," said Haley. "He hurt old Chopper Kane last year—wasn't Kane a pal of yours? You're makin' a big mistake, Monster. The thing to do is take a dive, but tip Big off on the wrong round. He'll bet his shirt and go broke."

Charlie Catt said, "Lay off, Haley. I won't play."

The sleek man shook his head. "I was scared of that. Okay, Monster. Big will do it to you, then. He didn't have no reason for doin' it to the others. You, he will murder!"

He walked away into the glorious Florida night. Charlie Catt stood a mo-

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ment, then turned and strode toward the Green Dragon.

The girl was in the alley, looking at the moon. She said, "I thought you might come. I heard the end of the fight on the radio."

"I'm going to meet Big Boy," he said.

"Yes. I suspected that." Her voice was low.

"Has he been botherin' you?"

"A little. But I can take care of myself."

Charlie could not think of anything to say. After a moment the girl said, "He will beat you horribly, won't he?"

"I been beat before."

"Why are you fighting him? Not for me?"

"No. It's got nothing to do with you." Words were difficult for him. "It's—it's just a thing I got to do."

"He is bad," she said without heat, merely stating a fact. "But even if you defeated him in the ring it wouldn't prove anything. He's a prize fighter. He's been beaten, too."

"This is different," Charlie tried to explain. "This makes sense. I dunno just how, but it does."

She murmured, "Tilting at windmills—" Then she said, "I'll be on your team, Charlie Catt. . . . I've got to go on now. See you—"

He stood in the alley for a while, kicking at a gnarled root in the ground. Then he went back to the hotel.

**A**LL THROUGH the training she had come daily to his workouts. When he went into the ring she was sitting up close, just behind the working press. He grinned at her and someone laughed at the disarrangement of his grotesque features. He had smeared the oil on his old cuts himself and in the lights over the ring he looked like a gladiator from the old Roman days of the metal cestus.

The training had gone well enough. He had never been out of condition. When he removed the robe the corded muscles stood out on his bulky body. He was thick through the middle, but it was solid flesh, with no bulge over the line of the belt. He squinted across at Big Boy.

Haley was putting on the act, being the fussy, attentive manager, the big-time operator in the sticks, ignoring everyone but Big Boy. Haley was a phony and a crook, thought Charlie Catt, but his worst sin was in fostering a character like Big Boy Tanner.

There was a good crowd. His end would be comfortable, thought Charlie. The promoter had agreed to match the winner against Tommy Aragon, Tampa's ranking heavyweight. The public had been sold on the comeback of Charlie Catt, the erstwhile Monster of the wrestling mats. Miami was holiday-town and the Broadway wisecracks would snicker, but they would turn out just to see any sort of a heavyweight fight.

Big Boy came to ring center with his sneer working in high. He ignored the referee and glared at Charlie. When the official said, "I want a clean fight . . . no hitting on the break, no heeling, back-handing, low blows. . . ." Big Boy laughed disdainfully.

Big Boy was the picture of an athlete. His dissipations were never enough to mar his shape. He was young and strong and wasp-waisted and there were women present who made mooring sounds at sight of him.

He said, "Okay, Monster. Now you catch it!"

Charlie saved his breath, going to the corner. The hired corner man took his robe and he pulled on the ropes and looked down at the girl. She held up two fingers, close together. Again he grinned, the red mouthpiece gleaming horribly.

A flashy woman nearby said, "Oh, he



does look like a monster, doesn't he?"

Charlie flinched, then wheeled at the sound of the bell. Big Boy was coming across the ring with left hand out, eyes half-closed, mouth working over the rubber guard. Charlie moved flat-footed, hands low, swinging his head like a bull. Big Boy fainted. Charlie did not seem to notice, going in. Big Boy lanced with a lunging left.

The glove smacked against Charlie's face. His head went back. He missed with a hook to the body. He spread his legs, expecting Big Boy to throw the right. Instead Tanner moved back, smiling thinly, advancing the left again. It spat on Charlie's skull, keeping him off balance.

He fought on, watching Big Boy's feet, watching the clever hands. This Big Boy could have been a very good fighter, maybe a champion, he thought. He had speed, he had style. He could stay on top of an opponent, he could hurt with his left hand. Charlie did not seem able to fathom the style of his younger adversary. Stepping around with the shuffle born of long experience he pondered, accepting lefts to the head, always watching.

Near the end of the round he suddenly charged. His hook sank into Big Boy's ribs. His right banged to the head. He pinned Big Boy to the ropes and the crowd yelped. But the bell rang.

Charlie dropped his hands, well satisfied. As he stepped back something hit him on the chin.

He went down like a log. The roar of the crowd increased. The referee hurled himself upon Big Boy, yanking him away, gesticulating wildly, sending him to the corner. The judges marked a big X on their score cards, giving Charlie the round on a foul.

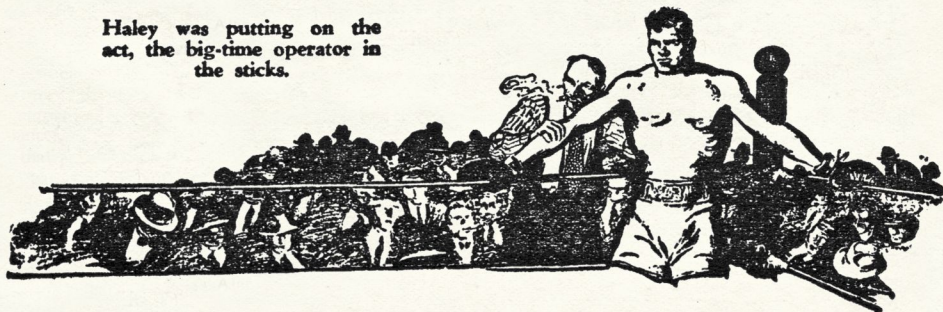
But the astounded handlers were slow bringing Charlie to the corner and administering restoratives. When he came out of the dim clouds, the whistle was sending them down from the ring. He wiped cobwebs from his brow and gritted his teeth on the mouthpiece. He heard the bell and clambered to his feet, blinking.

Big Boy came hurtling; but the punches he landed were not lethal. He was pecking away at Charlie's eye, trying to open a cut. He came close and roughed Charlie to the ropes and beat on his kidneys and dragged laces across his face so that blood ran. Then he stepped back and laughed and went to work with the rapier jab, cutting, slashing at the wound.

The blood ran down Charlie's patient face. He moved and his leaden legs buckled a little as he forced himself to weave and roll and slip as the punches rained. Big Boy had a real paintbrush jab when he wanted to use it and Charlie bled quite a lot in that round. When the bell came he staggered to his corner and flopped on the stool. The handlers were frantic with rage and dismay.

The referee came over and said sympathetically, "The rules only lose him the

Haley was putting on the act, the big-time operator in the sticks.





first round. Are you all right, Charlie?"

"I'm all right."

He was able to stand before the bell rang. He propped his back against the ropes and looked across the ring. Haley was standing at the edge of the apron. Haley's face was like a mask. Big Boy was laughing and dancing. The bell rang and Big Boy came roaring out to finish it. He had tasted blood, he'd had his fun, now he wanted to cop a kayo from a man who had once possessed a proud ring name.

Charlie decided to let him come. Big Boy danced in. Charlie removed himself, shuffling. Big Boy floundered a moment. Charlie moved and waited.

Big Boy rushed. Charlie let him get close, then he tied him up. He remembered the champion and how that had been his trouble with him; he could not tie the big guy up. Big Boy did not have that electric strength. Charlie handled him, turned him, spun him. Then Charlie threw a hook to the body.

Big Boy was slower, his eyes gleaming, taking his time about it now that his first effort had failed. He started again with the cutting jab.

Charlie kept weaving and ducking his head, hands held low. He came under the straight left and pegged two hooks to the midsection. He walked out, then back into Big Boy's terrain. He sank a right cross to the heart, brought up a left under Big Boy's chin. The round ended. He was close to Big Boy. He leaned forward as a whizzing right went over his head, after the bell.

He stepped back, tapped Big Boy on the head very gently and said, "Naughty, naughty."

Ringsiders howled. Big Boy snarled and sat down. Charlie rested on the edge of his stool, half-turned away, looking down at the girl. She was tearing a green scarf to bits, but her eyes were clear and steady, like always.

Again the bell, and again Big Boy came with that initial rush. It was a pattern. Charlie timed it, watching the feet, always watching the steps which were quicker than his. He slid along, smothering most of the long lefts now. Big Boy retaliated by chucking rights inside. Charlie rolled with them, moving to the left, his right arm doubled, catching a lot of blows on his muscular forearm. Big Boy's face was stiff with rage. He came closer.

Charlie went deeper into the crouch. His fists curled. He racked up three body blows. Big Boy went outside, dancing around, looking for an opening. His thumb reached for Charlie's eye.

Charlie drew his head aside, brought it back. His right fist chunked to the kidneys. Big Boy half-turned. Charlie walloped him on the jaw, his first clean shot to that point.

Big Boy staggered backwards. Charlie walked in, shooting them off the chest. Big Boy went into the ropes, then ran. Charlie followed, measuring his blows. He caught Big Boy in his own corner. The bell rang.

Charlie stepped back, wary. But Big Boy was not trying to fight after the bell. He was looking for his stool, for Haley.

**C**HARLIE went to his corner. It was just smart, looking for the full minute he needed to recuperate. Charlie was far from over-confident. He knew he was in danger every minute from this foul-fighting, rugged young man.

He got up again, just before the bell. He came out to ring center and Big Boy was there, jabbing. The left was his best weapon, a real big-time left hand which could have got him near the top if he had been a right guy, Charlie thought. It was hard to pull away from that left and still maintain balance. He moved around, and his sturdy legs carried him out of range. He had to think, but that buzzing had



started, a warning that he was taking too many punches.

Well, he had enjoyed his day. The champ had been too much for him, but he had put away a lot of good boys. He had done all right, he ruminated, watching Big Boy's feet. The game had been good to him and he had no complaints. He wasn't as sharp as in the old days, but he was still here, and he had something to do. . . .

He crept forward, watching the feet, watching the hands. He took a couple of jabs that hurt. He let a right go over his head. He sank a left to the body, walked away, then suddenly came back in and shot another left to the body. He felt Big Boy give a little.

He stepped back, watching. Big Boy had lowered his heels to the canvas. There was a flurry, a rush. Big Boy tried to step on his foot. Charlie removed it at the last possible instant.

Big Boy was butting him, hammering at him with heel and backhand. The referee was trying to get between them. Charlie lowered his battered face, pulled off. Big Boy pursued, shoving the referee aside, his eyes blazing now.

Charlie let him come. The referee, across the ring, was shouting something, but Charlie did not pay any attention. He was watching Big Boy. The feet were planted now, the hands spread apart.

Charlie hoisted his shoulders. The

swinging blows glanced off. Charlie's hook became a short, straight punch. It poked out and up. It banged against Big Boy's face. The mouthpiece fell out of Big Boy's pendulous, flapping lips. Charlie hit him again and blood ran down Big Boy's chin.

Again Charlie moved. He made Big Boy swing and come at him. He ducked a lead and hit Big Boy with a cutting right hand on the jaw. Tanner floundered, trying to get close and butt. Charlie propped him off. The referee was hovering, the ringsiders were screaming rage at Big Boy's tactics. Charlie went into a clinch, tied up the younger man and solemnly winked at the referee, who immediately calmed down.

Big Boy lurched and swung. His timing was off and Charlie impaled him on a left. Big Boy's mouth and nose were crimson.

Charlie crept imperceptibly closer, within Big Boy's terrain. He said, "This is for Harry." He belted a clean hook to the belly. Big Boy gasped.

Charlie said, "This is for Chopper Kane. Remember?" He hit another short one, cruelest of fair blows, straight to the chin. Big Boy's eyes went glassy.

"And this is for Dotty," murmured Charlie. He brought it over, off his chest, as straight as a lance-thrust. It banged against Big Boy's cheek, splitting it wide open.



## "Elementary!" says Watson

CAIRO, ILL.—Calvin Watson, Cairo businessman, says it's easy to pick today's best whiskey buy. "Judge taste, lightness, mildness, flavor—and you'll switch to Calvert. I did. Elementary!"



Big Boy began to run. He got almost to his corner, hands over his face, bending to last out the round. It was not cowardice, it was smart—Charlie was getting to him and he had to protect himself. But it looked cowardly and there was irony in that, Charlie thought as he went in and stabbed Big Boy erect.

"And *this* is for fight business," he said. He came all the way around with the swinging right hook. He got it through the crossed gloves and onto the jaw.

He walked to a neutral corner. Big Boy lay in a heap. The referee was counting happily over him, the arena was full of leaping, joyous people. It would be his most popular victory if Big Boy stayed down, Charlie thought.

He watched the sodden length of man. Big Boy stirred. He turned over. Charlie tried to think past the buzzing. It was getting worse there in the back of his head. His eyes went for a moment and he saw black. If Big Boy got up—

Big Boy braced his hands against canvas and pushed. The referee said, "Nine—ten and *out!*"

Big Boy collapsed in his own blood and spittle, his face against the canvas. Haley climbed through the ropes. Then the crooked manager did a strange thing. Instead of picking up his boy at once he paused and stared across at Charlie Catt. His lips moved.

"You Monster, you!" he said. But he was grinning with his eyes.

Charlie nodded. Haley knew. Haley wasn't all bad. Charlie turned and went to his corner. The handlers were doing a buck and wing. Charlie got his robe around him and climbed through ropes held apart by policemen who protected him from the crowd.

The buzzing had lessened. He could hear the wild cries of the crowd. He drank in the acclaim. He went up the aisle and to the dressing room.

The cops stayed on the door. Charlie showered and attended to the cut on his eye—he had suffered through that before. After he was dressed a policeman shoved his head inside and said, "Your girl's waiting, Charlie."

"My—" Charlie blushed to the roots of his receding hair. "Uh—send her in."

The handlers slipped out. Dotty Holiday closed the door and stood with her back to it.

He said, "Uh—well, it came out all right. He won't fight here any more. Haley's sorta disgusted."

She said, "You mean to follow him around the country and challenge him wherever he settles?"

"I got a lot of friends all over," Charlie said. "He'll either have to fight me or leave town. Wherever he goes."

She said, "You can't do it, Charlie. Sooner or later you'll give out. Let him go his way, Charlie. He won't last long. You took a lot out of him. Let the fight game clean up its own mess."

He said, "I got to do it, Dotty. He's no good. I'll finish him, sooner or later."

She came close to him. She said, "Charlie. Please."

He looked down at her. He was almost scared. Her eyes were brimful of tears and there was something in them.

He said, "Dotty—I'm just an old monster."

She said, "You're just an old Don Quixote. You're just a good, kind, wonderful man."

He said, "Hey! That ain't true. I'm—"

"Those cops believed me," she said. "They believed I was your girl." She came even closer.

He put his arms where they seemed to belong. He said, "Dotty—Dotty—"

There didn't seem to be anything else to say. He did not feel like a monster and his head stopped buzzing altogether.

He didn't think it would ever buzz again.



# GOAL-A-MINUTE GUY



Eddie went up and made  
the shot. . . .

By  
W. H.  
TEMPLE

**E**DDIE BRANDON rode the bench, not liking any part of what he saw out on the floor. What this Tyler outfit needed, he decided, was a shot in the arm. And he hoped that he could be the guy to give it to them.

• Eddie wasn't too big for a basketball player, only five ten, but he had the speed that bigger men lacked. He had an eye for the hoop and he knew his way around the court; he had savvy that wasn't being demonstrated in this workout between the

*The five star five were too big to shine—till their goal-a-minute midget told them, "I'm playin' to win, gents—not just winning to play! Get out there and fight!"*





varsity and the scrubs. Eddie had to admit that the big five led by captain Tom Clive moved around smoothly, but they had no fire at all.

Coach Brill suddenly blew his whistle for a time out. He gestured toward the bench and said, "Brandon, take left forward on the scrubs."

Eddie nodded and raced out on the court. They lined up for play under the scrub basket, and the varsity was taking the ball downcourt. Eddie raced back with the scrub five and took up his position to the right of the basket. The varsity began to weave in and out, trying to get the play in close for a shot at the hoop.

Captain Clive came racing in. He cut to Eddie's right to take a pass and Eddie's hand went out in a quick gesture. His fingers caught the bottom of Clive's trunks and the captain braked to an unexpected stop. He lost a fraction of his timing and in the meantime Eddie had the ball and was dribbling downcourt. He fired on down to a hanger who converted for two points.

Eddie saw Clive staring angrily at him. He grinned as play began again. The varsity worked the ball downcourt and once again Eddie broke up the play. He scored three baskets himself in the next five minutes and finally the coach stopped play again.

"Brandon," he said, "put on a shirt and take Jordan's place on the varsity."

"Yessir," Eddie said. "And that was it, the break he had been waiting for. Anyone could see the one glaring weak spot on the Tyler varsity. It had been the left forward post and now he was getting a crack at it. He was on the team, if he didn't start to flub his play."

The workout went on. Eddie didn't try to hog the show. He passed to the other boys, figuring it would look better to the coach if he didn't go in for firehouse play all by himself. Work into the team smoothly, that was the way to do it. Eddie

still got the jitters when he thought of making this club. He'd transferred here from a big city college. It had been a tough league where he had played, but this outfit had tradition behind it. It was high-class stuff and he wanted to make that club.

The workout ended fifteen minutes later and the squad started trooping toward the lockers.

"Brandon," Coach Brill said, and Eddie lingered. Maybe this was going to be bad news.

But the coach was grinning at him. "We've had a good team, Eddie," Brill said. "It hasn't been quite good enough in the past and we had about the same material, I thought, this year. You were an unexpected dividend. By your play this afternoon you've earned a starting berth with the varsity."

Eddie got a lump in his throat. He gulped out his thanks over it and raced down to the locker.

He charged into the locker room. Clive was standing near his heap of clothes. The captain looked down from his six feet three inches.

"You a football player, Brandon?" he inquired.

Eddie shook his head. "No," he said. "What made you think so?"

"I was just curious," Clive said. "I thought you were playing football upstairs and I was going to tell you that this is the basketball team you're trying out for."

It had all the earmarks of a nasty crack, Eddie figured, but he was too happy to let it get him down.

"I'm not trying for it, bub," he said, "I just made the team."

He grinned at Clive and headed cockily for the shower room.

Later, dressed and walking across the campus, he drank in the scene, the gray stone buildings, the manicured lawns and age-old trees. He thought of the tough industrial neighborhood where he had



grown up. It was a long way for a tough shanty Irishman to come, he thought, but he had made the grade.

He reached his room and he was cracking his textbooks when there was a knock on the door. It was the coach. Eddie greeted him effusively but there was a coldness in the coach's manner that made him hesitate.

Brill said, "When I referee a squad workout, Brandon, I'm not looking for fouls. I can't do a good refereeing job and study players at the same time, and my job is to study the play. I liked your style out there, but I've heard some things since the workout ended. To be blunt about it, I've heard that you played pretty dirty basketball out there."

Clive, Eddie Brandon thought to himself, Clive had got sore and sounded off.

"Want to say anything about it?" Brandon asked.

"Not a word," Eddie said. "I want to make this club. There's nothing in the world I want more. But I'll make it out on the basketball floor, I'm not trying to talk my way onto the team after practice is over. I haven't got a word to say."

Coach Brill nodded. He grinned a little. "Not a bad attitude, Eddie," he said. "I'm not taking any action. Not now. Just let me give you one word of advice whether you need it or not. Keep your punches above the belt."

The coach left the room and Eddie

went into a huddle with himself. He could ignore this thing, or he could bring it into the open. Eddie Brandon had never been a guy to run away from a fight. He flipped through the school directory and ten minutes later at a dormitory on the other side of the campus he was knocking at a ground-floor room door.

Somebody said, "Come in!" and he stepped inside. It was a large room. The windows were hung with white curtains; hunting prints and photographs decorated the walls. There was a group of young men in the room and Captain Tom Clive was in the center of them, sprawled in an easy chair.

"Like to talk to you for a minute, Clive," Eddie said. "Be better if it were private."

"I don't think that's necessary," Clive said. "These are friends of mine."

Eddie shrugged his shoulders. "I don't mind. I thought you might prefer privacy. You went and crabbled to the coach after practice today."

"I didn't crab," Clive said. "I pointed out to him that you're not the kind of player we want on the varsity. You're a dirty player and you wouldn't last ten minutes in a game."

"What I'm wondering," Eddie said, "is if you told him that you'd rather be the star of a losing team than have to share the laurels with another player."

A husky two-hundred-pounder who

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had been draped across the bed now got up. Eddie recognized him as a star on the football team.

"We have heard about enough from this punk, Tom," he drawled. "I will now have the pleasure of escorting him from the premises. The place is beginning to have an odor."

He moved in on Eddie's left. Another friend of Clive's approached from the right and Eddie grinned but without any humor whatsoever, and balanced himself on the balls of his feet, his hands doubled.

"Leave him alone," Clive said. "You've spoken your piece, Brandon. Got anything else to say?"

"One thing more," Eddie said. "You're a big man on campus. I'm not. But I don't scare worth a hoot."

He stepped outside and shut the door carefully and quietly behind him. He went back to his room and he figured he had handled himself all right. He hadn't blown his top, he hadn't shot off his mouth. He had just demonstrated that he was no pushover. It was up to Clive what happened from now on.

**H**E WAS still on the varsity the next day and the days after that. The coach, Eddie figured, was having no part of it, but there was one bad thing. The varsity was not playing well with him in the lineup. It was nothing you could put your finger on, but it was there.

And when the season began a week later, Eddie Brandon was back riding the bench and Jordan was reinstalled in the starting lineup.

It was a league game; they were playing Hanover, and every game was going to count. There weren't any soft spots in their schedule.

The game got underway and Clive was leading his team. He was the best shot—and that was the trouble. They had a tight defensive team; they had men who could

move and get rid of the ball and run all night; but they had only one eagle-eye guy, one real percentage shooter. That was Clive. He was deadly inside off the boards with a one-handed push shot, and almost as good from outside. The other teams knew it and Hanover played accordingly. They put two men on him in pinches. They couldn't hold him scoreless but they could throttle him to some extent. And at the end of the first half it was Tyler on top with a measly four-point lead.

Coach Brill discussed the play in the locker room. "We have to develop more scoring power," Brill said. "You're not doing anything wrong up there but Tom Clive can't carry the offensive power alone. We've got to score more baskets. I'm putting Eddie Brandon in the lineup to start the second half. You'll have two good shooting men to feed then instead of one. We ought to walk away from Hanover. Now let's get going."

They started up the stairs and Eddie halted Clive. He said, "We haven't hit it off too well. But I guess we both want this game. That's the object, isn't it?"

Clive hesitated just a moment, then shook hands, and they went on up the stairs and out on the court.

They started play with the center jump and Riley won the tap for Tyler. Eddie got his hands on the ball, turned and passed to Clive and the Hanover defense lined up in front of their basket. Clive passed the ball to a guard and drove through for the basket. Eddie cut through on the other side. Clive took a pass and whirled, throwing to Eddie at the corner. Eddie saw the guard coming up and he ran over him. He took the ball and turned for a shot but the whistle had blown.

"Charging," the referee said. "One shot." He pointed to the offender and Eddie Brandon raised his hand.

They walked down the length of the court and the Hanover player made the



shot good. His team was three points behind.

They took the ball out under the goal and started down again and at midcourt Hanover stole a bad pass and attacked. Eddie raced into position and a forward tried to get by him. Eddie got in front of him as the player started to shoot and the whistle blew again.

"Blocked in the act of shooting," said the referee. "Two shots."

Eddie took his place at the foul line and the Hanover player took the ball and made both fouls good. Hanover raced downcourt and Tyler took over the offense. They had only a one-goal lead now and neither side was able to score. Play went up and down the court and it was a Hanover player who broke loose finally. Eddie tried to stop the shot. He had to hack the player and where he had come from it was worth hacking to prevent a score. But he was late getting to the man and the shot was already on its way when the whistle blew. The ball dropped through the cords. The shot was good and the player had a free throw to boot; Eddie had committed his third personal.

A moment later Hanover was out in front. Two minutes after that Eddie committed his fourth personal; a minute later he committed his fifth and was banished from the game. He walked in to the bench. There were no cheers from the Tyler adherents, but a few scattered boos rained down.

Eddie sat down beside the coach. "I never saw that ref before," he growled. "Why he had it in for me I'll never know. I couldn't move without his calling a personal."

"You mean you couldn't move without fouling," Brill said, and his voice was icy. "I think you've lost the game for us. I didn't listen to Tom Clive. I thought maybe he was getting swell-headed, and it's going to cost us the game. You fouled us right out of it."

The coach had called the turn. On top with thirteen minutes to go, Hanover hung onto a slim lead, freezing the ball in the last two minutes to end up with a one-point victory.

The beaten squad trooped down to the locker room. Nobody said a word to Eddie Brandon. He thought it would have been better if they had yapped at him.

He dressed quickly and went up the stairs and was on his way down the corridor when he was hailed from the coach's office. Brill sat behind his desk.

"Want to talk to you," he said, and shut the door. "What do you think about tonight?"

"I guess I lost it," Eddie said. "I think Tom Clive is a snob and a heel and some day I hope to have it out with him, but that's not important."

"I was pretty sore," Brill said, "but I've just gone over your chart. You went to school at Bushwick before you came here."

Eddie nodded.

"I've seen them play," Brill said. "Basketball's a funny game some ways. They play differently in different parts of the country and they interpret the rules differently. They're pretty liberal where you came from. They don't like a lot of whistle-tooting. I thought you were just being smart but now I know I was wrong. And so was Tom Clive. We play a different game here, we stick more to the original rules of the game. You can't get away with anything in this league. The referees call every rule infraction. You weren't being persecuted tonight, you were guilty of flagrant violations of the rules. But back in your own home territory you can get away with a lot of that stuff—the ref looks the other way. It's not up to an individual coach to say who's right and who's wrong. Wherever you coach you conform to the local style of play. The same thing goes for a player."

Eddie grinned. He felt better. "I'm



glad you don't think I'm a louse." His face sobered. "I still blew the game for you, though."

Brill nodded. "The team isn't likely to forgive you. They've got it in for you and there isn't much I can do about that. I need you on this team but first you have to learn to play our way. It isn't a bad game the way we play it, outsmarting the other guy instead of knocking him bow-legged. But you've got a long fight to come back."

"As long as I can keep punching," Ed-die said.

He shook hands with the coach and walked out. Thereafter he knew he was poison. He was on the scrubs and even the scrubs didn't like him. In the scrim-mages Coach Brill watched him closely and read the riot act whenever he fouled. It was getting rugged. His play began to suffer. He was afraid of fouling and he tightened up. He was lousy and he knew it.

When games were played he rode the bench. He got in only when the Tyler team had a safe lead in the closing minutes. He got his chance then and he could see that he was improving . . . but not enough. He wasn't helping the team, and they were going to need help. They were in second place in the conference; State was on top and undefeated.

**E**DDIE got to thinking one day about a hook shot he had fooled around with, starting years ago as a kid in the back yard with a hoop nailed to the side of the garage. He made it with his back to the basket, pivoting and bringing the shot up with either hand, hooking it into the basket. It had seemed kind of showboat to him and he had never done much with it.

He got an idea about it now, and after a workout he went back to the gym by himself and practiced it. He kept it up for three days and then the next afternoon he

decided to try it in practice. He was working down under the varsity hoop and took a pass near the bucket. He stood there with his back to the basket, feinted a pass, then pivoted and swung the ball up in his right hand. He let it go and it fell through for two points.

The workout ended five minutes later, but Coach Brill stopped him as he went across the floor.

"That right-hand hook shot," Brill said. "Where'd it come from?"

"I used to fool with it a lot," Eddie said. "Thought I'd take it out and dust it off again."

Brill looked hard at him. "Got any ideas about it?"

Eddie nodded. "It's a hard shot to stop. Especially when you play in a league where they live up to the letter of the law. It's not easy to break up that shot without hacking. I got in trouble here by fouling. Maybe I can get out of trouble by letting other players foul me. I'd like to try it out some time."

"Maybe you'll get a chance," Brill said. "Soon."

They came up against the big State team a week later, and this was it, the big one. In league competition State had six wins and no losses and Tyler had lost that one game to Hanover for a five and one record. They could tie it up by winning the State game; if they lost they were out of it.

Eddie sat down in the locker room thinking when he saw Coach Brill watching him, that maybe tonight he was going to get his chance. But when Brill called off the lineup he was not named. Jordan was still in there and Eddie was riding the bench.

He trudged upstairs and warmed up, then took his place on the bench, staring out at the men on the floor.

The teams lined up, the ball went spinning upward between the centers and from the first moment of play the State strategy



was obvious. Tyler had been well scouted. They figured that Tom Clive was the man to be stopped—cork him up and the Tyler attack would fizzle.

Tyler won the tap. They took the ball into enemy territory and began weaving in and out, trying to shake Tom Clive loose. He went in close and a State guard hung to him like glue. He got a pass but he couldn't break loose to shoot and he had to pass outside again. Clive went out deep and got the ball and got a shot away but he had to hurry it. The ball went out of court and State took over.

They played a fast break and a moment later they had drawn first blood with a side shot that skidded off the backboard and through the hoop.

Five minutes later it was 9-3 in State's favor. Eddie Brandon slid up and down the bench and coughed and looked hopelessly at Coach Brill; but the coach didn't seem aware of his presence. The game went on, a losing game for Tyler.

Coach Brill said finally, "I see you squirming there, Brandon. Keep your pants on. The boys don't like you, they don't want you on that floor. But by the end of the half they'll know they can't win with Jordan. They'll be ready to try anything."

The game went on and Tyler had a twelve-point deficit when the half ended. Tom Clive had been held down to six points, and he was ordinarily figured to be

worth nineteen or twenty points a game.

In the locker room Brill said, "One change this half. Brandon in place of Jordan."

They went up the stairs and out on the court and Eddie Brandon was really ready to go. He felt hot as a firecracker and on the first play of the second half he went racing into the action. He lost his balance, fell into a State man and knocked him sprawling.

"One shot," said the referee, and Eddie Brandon felt a mantle of red ascend his neck and ears. Already he had loused it up.

They took the ball out after the fouled State man had given his club a thirteen-point lead. They worked it down the court and tried to feed it to Clive and he couldn't shake loose. Brandon got the ball finally, just outside the slot.

He took it in both hands with his back to the basket. He feinted a pass, then spun to his left and the ball was curled in his right hand. He looped it up and over his head and it hissed down through the cords.

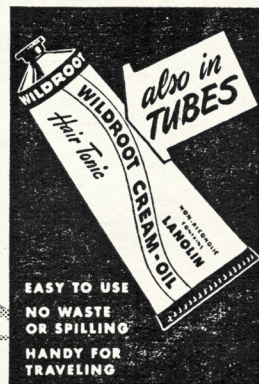
State took the ball out and brought it down and a shot went wide. Tyler attacked again and once more they had Tom Clive tied in a knot. He got the ball but couldn't get free to shoot and passed instead to Eddie Brandon.

He tried the shot again, the ball in the palm of his hand. He pivoted and started the ball up and a State player tried to

3 good reasons why men prefer

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HANDY FOR  
TRAVELING



knock the ball out of his hand and hit his arm instead.

The whistle shrilled. "Hacking. Fouled in the act of shooting. Two shots."

The shoe was on the other foot, and it felt pretty good, Eddie decided.

He stood at the free-throw line and bounced the ball on the hardwood. He sent the ball spinning up and out and it rolled around the rim and fell through. His heart went back where it belonged. The second one was better; it dropped through cleanly.

They started in again. Five minutes later Eddie had two more fouls against his name, but he had scored two more baskets with that hook shot, and State called a time out.

THEY came back into play and the next time Eddie was down near the bucket he had the glue man guarding him, the boy who had tied up Tom Clive. He was very adept. He swarmed all over Eddie but he didn't foul him. The guy was a guarding wizard. Eddie pivoted but couldn't shake loose.

He got a glimpse of Tom Clive on the outside and he bounce-passed to him. Clive went up in the air and this time he had no interference with his push shot. It went through cleanly.

They had the pattern established then. He and Clive switched it back and forth and five minutes later they had tied the game. They had a chance to win this, Eddie thought.

He raced into the play and a man went sprawling. Eddie hadn't laid a finger on the guy. But he was handy and the referee spun around and saw him and called the foul on Eddie.

It made Eddie peeved but he knew that those things happened; the best ref in the business pulled a boner now and then. He uttered a faint plaintive protest and shrugged his shoulders but he was totally unprepared for what followed. Somebody

went by him like a whirlwind, somebody was tugging at the referee's arm.

"Eddie never touched him," Clive shouted.

The referee pulled away and Clive jumped around in front of him, his face livid. "Why don't you put on glasses?" Clive was yelling. "Why don't you retire if you can't see any more?"

"Now listen—" the referee was getting sore but Clive paid no attention.

"Relax, chum," Eddie said. "They all make mistakes."

"It's your fifth personal," Clive said. "We need you—"

"It's my fourth," Eddie said. "I still got one to go."

He quieted him down. The upshot of it was the referee called still another foul, a technical foul this time charged to Tom Clive—vile and abusive language or something of the sort.

State made both shots but Eddie Brandon didn't care. Tom Clive had come to his defense!

They took the ball out and went down the floor. Eddie got in position again and pivoted and was going to pass to Clive when the captain shouted, "Shoot!"

Eddie went up and made the shot. A moment later Clive added one from outside. They were teaming up—and State could stop one but not both. Three minutes later Eddie fouled again but they were four points ahead.

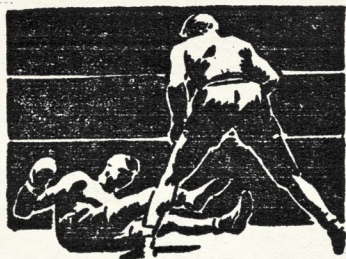
Eddie went in to the bench and was standing there when the game ended.

Captain Clive said, "Eddie, you got to watch that fouling."

Eddie frowned a little. Was this going to be a lecture? Clive went on, "We need you all the time, not just for half a game. How are we going to win the conference if you foul out?"

Eddie grinned at him. "I'll do my best. I'll watch the fouling and you stop trying to slug referees. We'll do all right—chum."





# RED LEATHER SPOILER

By RAY P. SHOTWELL

*Battered veteran of a thousand rings, he was just an easy step upward for the young bomber . . . but a step that was loaded with dynamite!*

CORN GRIFFIN was a thick shouldered jut-jawed soldier from Fort Benning, Georgia. Fast on his feet, and a terrific hitter, he became a threat among the heavyweights.

To gain experience, the soldier took a job with the champion, Primo Carnera, who was training for the Max Baer fight. He wanted to know just how good champions were, and this was an easy way to find out. Corn discovered what he wanted to know. He was faster than "the Ambling Alp." He could hit Carnera.

That was all, brother. Sooner or later, he would win the title. It was tailored to his measure.

It was the usual practice to put sparring partners of champion and challenger in preliminary bouts on the big night. Griffin was slated for the semi-final. The Madison Square Garden people were sold on this tough kid. They saw him as a headliner within a few years, and decided to build him up by giving him a reasonably soft touch.

It was easy to find the man they wanted—a washed-up heavy who had lost his ring earnings and had to go on relief to keep his family from starving. He had been out of the ring for some time, but he was well remembered as a game, hard-hitting fighter. So they tossed him into the semi-final with Corn Griffin.

When the bell sounded Corn came out with a rush, fists flying. The attack

was too fierce for the old heavy to meet. He retreated, playing the waiting game. A shrewd campaigner, he wasn't hurt, though it seemed to spectators that he was getting all the worst of it.

Griffin was exultant. The thing would end in the next round. Again he charged; again the veteran retreated. He let go the right—missed—was wide open for a split second. That second was all the old-timer needed. His own right had been a famous weapon. Now he fired it, straight and hard and true.

The whizzing fist caught Griffin on the button and his legs were swept out from under him. By the time he hit the canvas, he was unconscious.

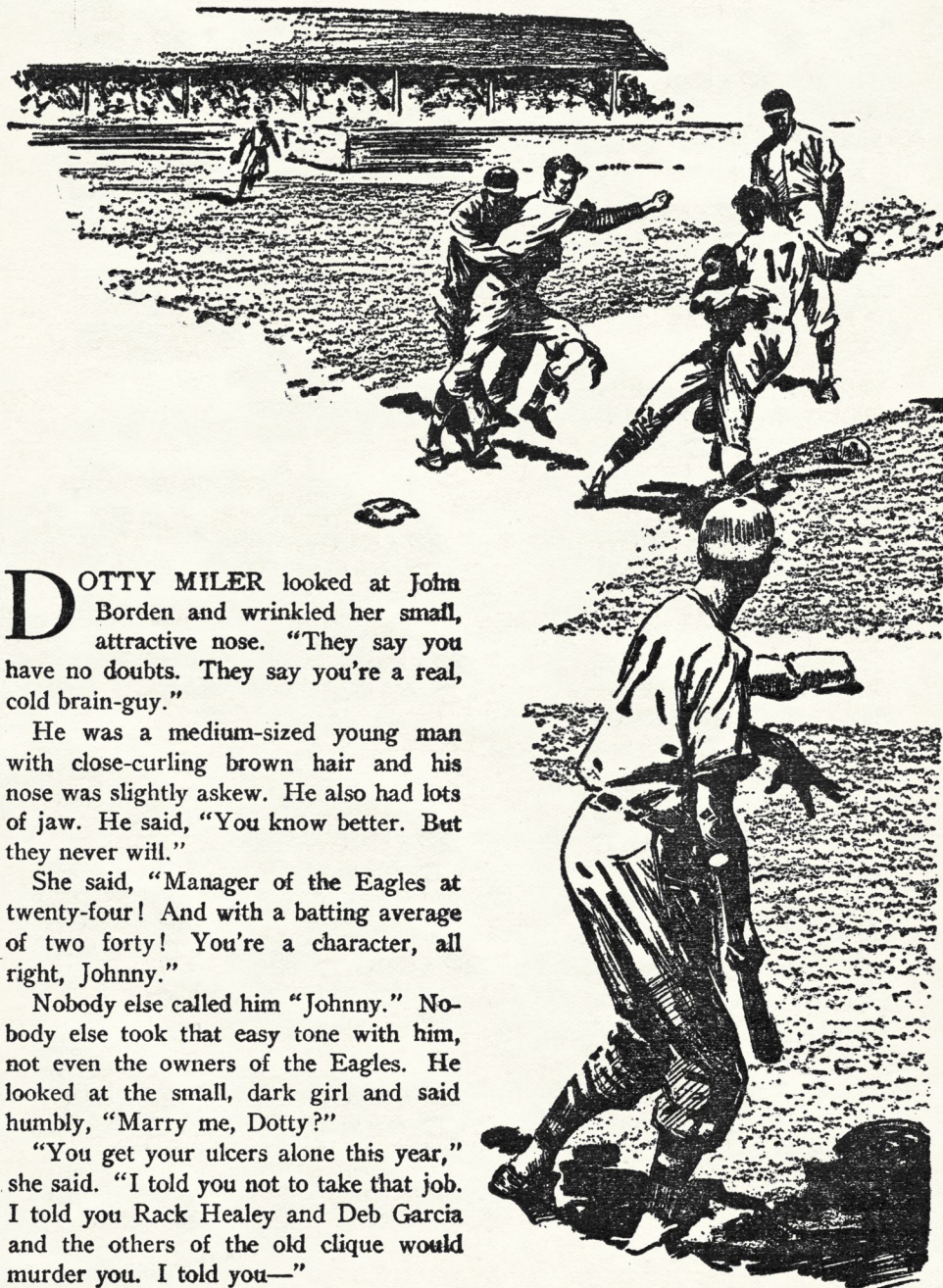
Other men have been knocked out, and come back to scale the heights. Not the soldier from Fort Benning. He had been so sure of himself—so blazingly confident, after the showing he had made against Carnera. Being flattened by a broken-down veteran killed both confidence and ambition.

Had Corn Griffin known that Jimmy Braddock, in just two more fights, would win the heavyweight championship of the world, he might not have been so depressed. There is a great difference in being whipped by a champion-to-be and a washed-out old-timer . . . and how was Corn Griffin to know the "setup" that had been arranged for him was really the next king of Fisticiana?



## By LANCE KERMIT

Dugan came to and rose with a roar,  
fists flying. The umpire called time. . .



**D**OTTY MILER looked at John Borden and wrinkled her small, attractive nose. "They say you have no doubts. They say you're a real, cold brain-guy."

He was a medium-sized young man with close-curling brown hair and his nose was slightly askew. He also had lots of jaw. He said, "You know better. But they never will."

She said, "Manager of the Eagles at twenty-four! And with a batting average of two forty! You're a character, all right, Johnny."

Nobody else called him "Johnny." Nobody else took that easy tone with him, not even the owners of the Eagles. He looked at the small, dark girl and said humbly, "Marry me, Dotty?"

"You get your ulcers alone this year," she said. "I told you not to take that job. I told you Rack Healey and Deb Garcia and the others of the old clique would murder you. I told you—"



*One guy had all the fight—the other eight had all the glory—till  
that last hell for horsehide inning when the double-or-nothing kid  
got his chance to prove he could—*

# SAY IT WITH SPIKES





He said dispiritedly, "Maybe I don't want to marry you. I hate anyone who says 'I told you so'."

"There you go!" she snapped. "Giving up! If you give up that easily on this job—"

He had almost forgotten how to grin during that season in Florida, but he remembered now. He seemed far too youthful to be a big-league manager, with that grin on his face. He said fondly, "My best friend and severest critic is my future wife."

She said, "And Harold still wants to marry me, so you—"

He stood up. The Eagles were opening the season tomorrow in the home stadium and it was too cold for the old-timers and Logan was beefing about his arm. Nobody was hitting and the Whales, who were in town for the two-game series, would be the hottest competition during the campaign. He said coldly to her, "Let's go. I don't want to hear about a guy who would try to keep me out of my job because he is after my girl."

They left the restaurant and took a cab to her apartment. She was a successful dress designer and did not have to marry anyone, he thought dully. She had been an actress, she had been a dancer and she would always be great. Harold Holcomb had millions, they said. What did he amount to—John Borden, manager by grace of co-owner Mace Keller of the Eagles baseball team, likely to be fired at the end of the season if the team did not win the pennant? What was he doing with this dark little girl who in her own right was richer, smarter and prettier by a thousand light years?

He stood outside her apartment and she said suddenly, "John, you're the nicest guy I know. By far. John, you're a headstrong, tough man. I'll be watching you, to see if you can handle this thing. I want it to be solid with us, all the way through. Call me, John, call me soon."

She was gone before he could close his mouth. She had never spoken quite that way before to him. There had been a breathless, pleading quality in her voice. He was not certain exactly what it meant, he only knew it touched something deep inside him. . . . What had she said? "You're a headstrong, tough guy. . . ." That was criticism; she had emphasized it.

He went back to the hotel. He saw Deb Garcia, his cleanup man and left fielder, talking to Rack Healy, the fabulous slugger and right fielder. It was eleven o'clock. He started toward them and their conversation died as they watched him, large brown men with cold faces.

Garcia was a picture athlete, six feet, almost slender, still speedy after years in the leagues. Healy, even older, was thick-bodied, slope-shouldered. It was Healy who had expected and wanted John Borden's job when old Frank Fordham retired.

Borden said, "Remember, tomorrow's the day. Hit that sack and snore it away."

Healy said, "It ain't quite eleven, Borden."

John gestured at the lobby clock. "It'll do for eleven. Is everyone else in?"

Healy said, "Would I be squealin' if they wasn't?"

John Borden's back hair bristled. He said, "Nobody asked you to squeal. I hoped you would be a help in keeping the boys in line. Holcomb thinks so. If you and Garcia want to play cozy, go ahead and be damned to you." He turned on his heel. He should have known better, he thought. He should have kept his distance, his own counsel; and checked the rooms.

He proceeded to do so. Everyone was in, some were already asleep. He left Easy Logan until last.

Logan was rubbing his left arm with wintergreen oil. John moved to his side and took over the job, kneading the long,



smooth-pitching muscles. There were no knots, no apparent soreness. He squinted at the lanky, lugubrious ace hurler of the Eagles staff and said, "Does it still hurt? You want me to start Knott?"

"It hurts," moaned Logan. "But I'll start. I always do start the opener, don't I? This cold weather—I dunno. And Healy ain't hitting. . . . I might could work if I got a couple runs to give me confidence. . . . But nobody's hitting." He stared accusingly at John Borden, who batted seventh and sometimes eighth in the list.

"We'll get you runs. You just throw," said John. He went on to his own room, which was next to Logan's. Both roomed alone, Borden because he was the manager and Logan because he was a star, a veteran and eccentric. There was nothing wrong with Logan's arm, of course. He was the sort of man who had to think he was ill and overcoming a great handicap before he could be at his best. But it was better to humor him. Logan was all right; he remained by himself and did not give counsel or aid to the clique.

John closed the door, removed his clothing and flung himself on the bed. He shut his eyes tight, but instead of sheep he saw ballplayers going past. He saw Healy, Garcia, Torrey, Tut Tuttle, all members in good standing of the We Hate Borden Association. He saw Yancey, Galt, Conn, who were on the fence. He saw his

pitchers, Logan, Ham Fitch, Okie Smith, Frank Knott, none of whom would lead the league in earned runs averages.

Tomorrow was the opener. Through the training season there had been no open breaks, but plenty of trouble for a boy manager who also essayed to play second base.

Precise Harold Holcomb, who parted his hair in the middle and had inherited his money, had said, "It is difficult enough to play and run the team without hiring a boy to attempt it—at our expense."

Mace Keller, that rubicund, convivial old-timer had roared, "My boy can do it and he will. Or by God, I'll pull outa this shebang and let you try and run it!"

Holcomb couldn't run it without old Mace and he knew it. So he had reluctantly consented. John Borden had sat through the whole conference, silent for once, boiling inside, hating Holcomb, knowing Holcomb was in love with Dotty.

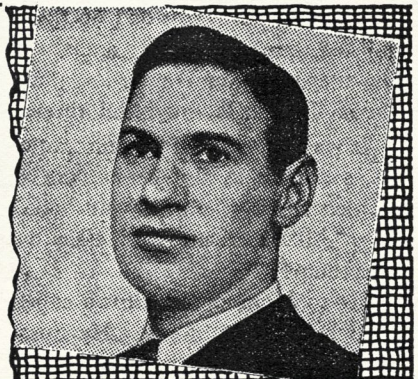
Well, he had the job. He had Ossie Morley as coach. He had his courage, his determination, his fight. What was he? Headstrong, tough?

Well, all right. They were a little scared of him, even Healy. They remembered how he got his nose shifted, fighting Tom Dugan of the Whales, the best scrapper in the leagues. John had not won that contest—they had been pulled apart. He had suffered a broken nose. But Dugan had

## REPORTER REPORTS ON SWITCH TO CALVERT

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Arnold Fine, Washington reporter and night club editor, flashes this news about today's whiskies. "Switch to Calvert," he says. "I have. Calvert honestly is lighter, smoother, milder."

CALVERT RESERVE BLENDED WHISKEY—86.8 PROOF—65% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS. CALVERT DISTILLERS CORP., N.Y.C.





never tried to renew hostilities. Dugan had been hospitalized when it was over. . .

All right, he thought grimly, he would fight. All the way. And if he had to fight Healy, he would do that too, and Garcia and all the rest. But they would play ball or have their pants fined off, he could tell them that. . . . He fell asleep on that discordant note and never turned over until eight the next morning.

**T**HE WHALES were full of ginger. They had a lot of youngsters and they were raring to go. They knew they had to knock down the Eagles; old Sam Dozier, their manager, had them primed. Tom Dugan hollered insults and the rest of the Whales infield provided a chorus for the tough third baseman. They had Pat Friden ready for the opener. Pat was very good with his curve and control.

John Borden ignored the barbers, paying attention only to Easy Logan, to the signs he read in the mitt of big Tut Tuttle, signs he relayed to the outfielders. Logan started well and the season was under way and it was just like any other season, John Borden supposed, except to Brainy Boy, the kid manager. To him it was the beginning of murder. . . .

Friden was hot as a firecracker despite the lowering skies. John Borden kept begging his men, "Give Easy a run. Just one. He'll work behind a run."

But the first six men up came right down, skunked, and in the third Borden had to lead off. He stood up there, loose-jointed, slant-jawed, hat pulled low, hearing the insults of Dugan but not heeding them. Friden laughed and threw curves.

It was too early. He could not quite get a good look at the hooks, not the way Friden threw them. Dugan was screaming, "All American Out! Easy bum, Pat, easy bum!"

He took one of them for a called strike, then had to cut at one. He missed. He settled himself, tugged at his cap, let

Friden waste two to bring them even. Then he saw the sneaker coming through and belted at it with all his skill and power. He met it on the nose and his heart leaped as he tore down the first-base line, not faster than anyone, but with the eager drive of a fighter.

He saw old Ossie spreading his hands, saw the coach's dolorous expression and slowed. In center field Pidge King was taking his liner without moving. He had not pulled it far enough toward left. He knew his fault well. He slowed and turned toward the bench. There was no Frank Fordham to bawl him out. He wished the old man were there to do so.

Rack Healy was there, scowling on the bench. Deb Garcia wore a sneer. Tut Tuttle was at bat. Friden threw Tut a fast ball and the Eagles catcher knocked it into right field for a clean double, the first bingle off Friden.

Slim Torrey drawled, "That woulda scored a runner."

Borden barked, "Never mind that. Get him around. Easy—win your own game, boy!"

Logan looked reproachfully at him from the batter's box. Then he struck out. Ed Yancey came up, hit a long fly to King and that was the side in the third inning.

Kicking the dirt between first and second, John Borden brooded. He should have pulled that ball. He snapped the chatter at Logan and the others chimed in, but something was missing. Logan pitched well, scattering the few Whale hits, but the Eagles were unable to get a hit under the dull April sky as the game dragged on until the eighth.

The ubiquitous King led off for the visitors in that inning. Logan, nursing his arm, threw too carefully and the fleet Whales centerfielder walked. Borden immediately ran over and spoke to Logan. Torrey and Yancey came in and Muddy Conn strolled over from third.

The Whales were whooping it up.



Logan said, "I dunno. My arm's been hurtin' all day. You know, John—"

Borden said, "Okay. Hit the showers, Easy. Ham can take over."

Logan protested, "I on'y give them four hits. I'll finish."

"All right," said Borden. "Pitch to them, then."

He motioned the infield back to place. Logan toed the rubber. Musso, the Whales right fielder, was up. Borden relayed the curve-ball sign to the outfield, which should have moved Healey to the foul line against this left-handed socker. Logan threw and sure enough, Musso hit it down the chalk mark, a vicious liner.

Borden took one look and knew Healy was not there. King was going like a wild steer into third. Healy chased the ball and took it on the ricochet off the fence. He threw for home. King slid in safe by many feet.

It was a helpless, hopeless feeling. Borden signaled the bull pen. Ham Fitch came in chewing tobacco and said, "Ol' hoss is stolen, Jawn. Too late t' lock the stable door."

Easy Logan was shambling off, head down, holding his arm in his left hand, a gesture which would do John no good with the experts—or with Harold Holcomb.

"Pitch to 'em," Borden snarled.

The big right-hander threw the ball. He got the side out. But the one run looked like a million with Friden coasting along in mid-season form.

Borden met Healy at the edge of the dugout. He said flatly, "Did you get my sign?"

"Sign? You crazy, Borden? No sign could keep Musso's shot from bein' a hit."

Borden said, "If you'd moved over King wouldn't have made home. One more, Healy. One more bad move. I'm warning you!"

The big outfielder said, "You must be nuts, Borden." He shrugged. "I dunno.

You just ain't got it, I reckon. Leavin' Easy and his sore arm in there—"

"That's enough," snapped Borden. "I'm fining you fifty, Healy. For disobeying that signal."

"Sure," nodded Healy. "I expected it. And I'll get it back from the boss, so what?"

The others were listening now. Healy was assured, grinning in a nasty manner, leaning against the edge of the dugout. Borden took a deep breath. He said in a low voice, "And you can take a shower until I think some more about you, too."

Healy paled a little. He said, "You—I bat this inning!"

"Is that what you call it?" asked Borden with heavy sarcasm. "Batting? You've gone three for three horsecollars today!"

Healy glared for a long moment. Then he turned and bent his broad shoulders and disappeared into the tunnel leading to the dressing room.

## 2

### Hoodoo Pilot

BORDEN said, "Litsky—bat for Healy." litsky was a big, untried Brooklyn sandlotter. He blinked and grabbed a bat.

Bud Galt was facing Friden. Tom Dugan was jumping around third base, yelling up a storm. Borden had to give Galt a sign. He watched Friden's arm, then touched his cap and nose. Galt let two bad ones go by.

Borden said on the bench. "Friden's tired. Wait him out and he'll give you a good ball."

Friden slid a strike through, then another. Galt hesitated and Borden urgently gave him the sign again. Galt



looked narrowly at the ensuing pitch.

The umpire roared, "Stuh - rike — three!"

Galt came slowly back to the bench. He was a blond, mild young man. He said, "John, I coulda had that one."

Deb Garcia snickered. So did Tut Tuttle and Slim Torrey. The Litsky kid was going to bat, shivering with nervousness. Garcia was taking his own club out to the on-deck box. John Borden bit at his lips. Must every single thing go wrong today, he wondered?

There was a crack of the bat and he came to his feet. Litsky, young and rattled, had missed the signal to wait it out and had crashed the ball against the centerfield fence. He was rounding second when Ossie's wild motions sent him back, scrambling.

Garcia prowled the batter's box, loose-jointed, graceful. Sam Dozier went out to parley with Friden. Sam came away and Friden remained in there. The first pitch was a curve on the outside corner. Garcia laid into it and the ball went out into right field.

Litsky rammed down to third. Musso ran and ran, then leaped, one hand stretching above his head. The white ball stuck in the pocket of the glove. He came down to earth and threw to second in one flowing motion.

Litsky was doubled off.

John Borden took the field, his pulses pounding. He would now have to get after Garcia for not waiting out Friden. Litsky would need more lessons in base-running. . . . What was the sign from Tuttle which he must relay to the outfield? . . . How was Ham's arm? . . . What was he going to do about Healey, a really great slugger when he was not in a slump? . . . Who was up and how should he play the hitter?

Fitch got the Whales out. The Eagles came in for their last raps.

Muddy Conn, the imperturbable, ape-

shaped third baseman, was the hitter. Borden yapped at him. Friden threw three straight wide ones. Again Dozier came out and this time Friden was yanked.

Only then did Borden turn on Garcia. He said several sharp things, then he said, "And that's why you are fined fifty. You'll take my orders or one of us will go, understand, Garcia?"

The tall outfielder said, "That's okay with me. You want me to go to the showers, too?"

Borden ignored him, watching Conn. The relief hurler pitched a couple of strikes and Conn was on the hook. Borden crouched. Conn, a phlegmatic veteran, checked on the key delivery. The umpire threw up his right arm and Conn sloughed his bat and trotted down to first.

Torrey looked over for a signal. Borden promptly gave him the bunt sign. Torrey went up there and Conn, never a swift, took a good lead. Torrey walked into the first pitch, fouled it off as the Whales infield came dashing in.

Dugan was yowling defiance. Torrey eyed the manager. Borden hesitated, then gave him the hit-and-run. The pitcher threw one outside, a pitch-out.

Conn, holding for the signaled hit, got back in time. Torrey rubbed dirt on his hands. Again the pitcher set, threw. Torrey laid the wood against the ball, angling for the right field, behind the runner. Conn ran like a truck horse down to second. Torrey made first.

Borden was up. He held the bat, wondering if he should take himself out for a pinch hitter. There were so many things to think about besides playing baseball. . . . He set his jaw and went to bat.

He watched the relief man's arm. The ball came in, fast and on the corner. He reached out and slapped at it. He got a piece of it and began running.

The big hop was down to deep short-



stop. Dugan was screaming at Jake Young, who had to back-pedal and leap. Conn slid into third. Torrey held second tight as a drum. Borden pulled up on first, his heart pounding. It had been a scratch hit, but at least it had been a hit!

They couldn't miss, now. Three on, none out, one run to tie; two would win. Tut Tuttle was up. Borden gave the hit-away sign, considering the slow runners, not suited to squeeze play.

Tut hauled back and whammed at the first ball. It went down to the redoubtable Tom Dugan on first hop. Dugan touched up. Then he lined to home plate as Conn floundered into a tag-out.

Borden perched on second, fuming. Tuttle was on first. Borden shouted, "Bishop! Bat for Fitch!"

Bishop, utility infielder, a fast man, took his bat in there. Dugan was yelling, "I hope you come down, Borden! I'd love havin' you slide in here."

Borden ignored his old enemy. He was praying that Bishop would come through. The count went the limit, dragging out what seemed to be hours. . . .

Bishop swung on the payoff pitch.

He missed it cleanly. The Eagles had lost a tough ball game, one to nothing.

Dugan chortled, "I knew it. You'll never win a game from us, Borden, you jerk! I got the whammy on you, fat-head!"

Borden trotted off, head up, chin out.

He went directly to his office, adjacent to the dressing room. He sat there a long while before he took his shower. . . .

**H**AROLD HOLCOMB parted his hair in the middle, but he had a tough streak. He said, "You can't make ballplayers better by fining them. I'm interested in winning baseball."

Borden said, "They disobeyed orders."

Mace Keller rasped, "Borden's right. Only so is Harold in a way. We just ain't winning. Sixth place on June fifteenth! And John, you're losin' weight, boy!" The inference was plain: that Borden could not run the team and keep in condition.

Borden said, "I'm not alibiing. But warm weather will help. Logan is just hitting his stride. So are Smith and Knott."

"The team is not hitting," said Holcomb sharply. "There is no inspirational drive to set off rallies."

Borden said grimly, "You're so right." His own average was, amazingly, .285. But Healey was about .230 and Garcia not much better. No Eagle was in the charmed .300 circle. This fact was bad for the team standing, yet it saved Borden. He could not be blamed for the team's poor hitting.

Holcomb said flatly, "I'll go along until July fourth. But then we'll have a change. That is fair, you'll admit, Mace."

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Keller grumbled, "Yeah, I expect it is. John, you've got to do somethin'. I got confidence in you, John. Get 'em up there—somehow!"

Borden went out of the offices of the club and down to the hotel known as Gotham Manor. His teeth ached from clenching. He waited five minutes, then Dotty Miler arrived, dressed in a summery frock to match the sunny day. She looked like a pennant, a world championship to the lonely, harassed young manager.

They sat at a table in the corner. The girl said, "You look thin, Johnny. Tell me, is it worth it?"

He said savagely, "I'll make it worthwhile."

She smiled sadly at him. "Still tough? But of course. I don't know, Johnny. The Whales in town again—you haven't beaten them, have you? Tom Dugan giving out those humorous interviews, saying you never will win from them."

"Those lucky bums," grated Borden. "We've got to win this series from them. Easy Logan is due—"

She said, "This is an off day and still you're tense and nervous."

"Who's nervous?" he demanded hotly. A waiter dropped a tray of dishes and he came to his feet in a jump which almost upset the table. He stood, glaring.

She said meekly, "I guess it's just my imagination."

He sat down. Suddenly he had to laugh. She looked demure and lovely, smiling at him. He laughed for a full minute. Then he said, "I'll be all right, Dotty. Holcomb is after me. Healey wants my job. Garcia isn't hitting. Logan keeps crying about his arm. Torrey's got a lame hip. But if we can grab this series from the Whales and the team will pull together we're going right to the top."

She said, "I read in the papers that Dugan still wants to finish that fight with you."

He said wistfully, "A manager doesn't fight with his fists any more. Your friend Holcomb would fire me."

She said quietly, "He asked me to marry him again last night."

John Borden held his breath. His eyes bored into hers.

She said, "I don't know, John. He's really very nice. And you have bitten off more than you can chew. And you won't admit it. Why don't you quit, Johnny, and go back to playing second base as you really can?"

He had messed up on a couple of double plays. He had missed chances he would have eaten last year. He knew it. He drew in his hot words, swallowing them before they were spoken.

Well, he thought grimly, that was a lesson he had learned. He thought before he spoke. He said now, "Let's not talk about it. Let's go to a show and enjoy the afternoon and evening."

"Only the afternoon," she said. "I have a date with Harold to attend the concert at Central Studio at nine."

He could swallow that, too. He could suffer in silence, stealing looks at her in the hours he had. Yes, he could take a lot, these days.

He left her at eight, at her apartment. And again she said, "Tough and headstrong. Oh, Johnny! You're ruining yourself this way."

He walked away. His chin was still jutting. He knew one thing above all: He was not quitting. He was making good on this job or they could fire him. But he wasn't quitting!

He went up to his room feeling as though a pack of wolves were at his heels. Even Mace Keller had shown signs of weakening. And Dotty—pretty, lovely, adorable Dotty—was out with Holcomb.

He stopped outside Easy Logan's room through habit. The mournful veteran was to start tomorrow against the Whales.

There was a light shining through the



half-opened transom. The pitcher's slow voice came through. "We got to git him to the Turkish bath. And if John checks the rooms, he's dead."

Deb Garcia said in muffled accents, "Rack didn't mean to get stiff. It's been tough on him."

"Sure. I know."

"He got a wire this noon. She's worse."

"I got a wife, too."

His hand on the knob, John Borden froze.

Garcia went on, "It's affecting his play. They got this baby, you know, and then she got so sick. And then this business with Borden."

Logan said, "John's all right. I won't listen to nothin' against John."

"That's why I got him up here," said Garcia earnestly. "You and Borden get along. I thought maybe you could handle him. But he's too far gone, I can see that. And if that stone-cold-in-the-graveyard manager of ours finds out, he'll have an excuse for getting rid of Rack."

Easy Logan said, "John ain't so bad. Jest tough. Anyways he's out with that purty gal of his. I'll help you get Rack to the bath."

"What can a girl see in that tough potato?" asked Garcia bitterly.

"John's jest a fightin' ballplayer," said Logan mildly. "He'll burn hisself out tryin'. John's all right."

"He can't hit. He can't even field any more," growled Garcia. "He's running himself into the ground trying a job he can't handle. How many playing managers have succeeded in modern baseball? You can count them on one hand."

Easy Logan said, "I ain't sayin' John'll succeed. I'm sayin' he'll kill hisself tryin'. Git holt of Rack's other arm."

"He'll kill all of us," grunted Garcia.

For one instant John Borden hesitated. Then he fled like a ghost to his own room, manipulated the pass-key like a magician getting out of a trunk and gently closed

the door behind him just as Easy Logan's door opened and the two conspirators lugged a sodden Rack Healey down the hall to the elevators.

### 3

#### One-Man Team

JOHN was in uniform. Mace Keller and Harold Holcomb came into his office, and Holcomb was quite agitated. John surveyed them coolly. He said, "This is the key game. If we win this one, we'll clip their wings. There are only two games between us and seventh place—and three between us and the Whales, who lead the league. You gave me until July fourth. I'll take one game. If we lose today, I'll resign."

Holcomb said, "Uh—Borden—I heard an ugly rumor today. It—uh—bears out some of your actions. A friend of mine was in a public bath last night when a man he swears was Rack Healey was brought in. My friend asserts Healey was intoxicated."

Borden said. "I can't believe that, Holcomb. I'll be responsible for my players."

"But if this is true—"

"I'm responsible," said Borden coldly. "Does that satisfy you?"

Mace Keller's shaggy brows contracted. "This boy's got trouble enough, Harold. Come away from here." He shoved the younger man out the door. Then he turned, staring at Borden. One eye closed slowly as he elbowed his partner out of the dressing room.

Rack Healey was sitting on a bench, his head down. Borden glanced at him; Healey seemed recovered, if disturbed. Garcia was beside him, faithful to the last. Borden walked past them and paused be-



fore Logan. "How's the arm?" he asked.

"It hurts," said Logan lugubriously.

"Good," snapped Borden.

Logan started. "Huh?"

"You never give more than four hits when it's bad," Borden said.

Slim Torrey guffawed and forgot to complain about his aches. Borden surveyed his Eagles. Hands on hips, he said mildly to them, "Well, this is it. Some of you don't like me. You'll be glad to know that if we lose this game I'm quitting."

The silence fell like thickest fog. Someone murmured, then hushed.

Borden said, "And if we lose one of these three games, you all ought to quit. That's all I have to say. Now we either play ball or go to hell."

He turned on his heel and walked out of the room. He heard his name called and wheeled, staring. At the end of the tunnel the small girl beckoned to him. He walked slowly under the grandstand. It was early and not many people had arrived. They stood behind a convenient pillar.

Dotty said, "Harold said you'd been partly vindicated. That Healey had acted up. What does it mean, John? Did you fire Healy?"

Borden said, "Nothing to that story, dear. Did you enjoy the concert last night?"

"Not as much as I should have," she said steadily.

He nodded. "I thought not. I'll see you after the game, Dotty."

"Something's happened," she cried. "I can feel it. What is it, Johnny? Can't you tell me?"

"After the game I can," he said.

She said, "Johnny, you look different today. Your voice is different. Are you all right, Johnny?"

"You *will* worry, won't you?" The tightness went out of him and he smiled. "I'll be all right, maybe. We'll see. There

comes a time when you either do or you don't. Then you have to be mighty sure you're right. I'm not sure, yet. Later I'll tell you."

He went back down the ramp and out into the sunshine.

Through the workout and batting practice he was strangely quiet for John Borden, the tough manager. The panoply of the game, the greensward, the banked tiers of people who came to see the league-leading Whales perhaps, but still paid their money; the crack of bat on ball, the cries and chatter of the players; even Tom Dugan's bawling challenges were all a part of baseball, his game, his life's work. That he had offered to quit seemed impossible, yet he must face it. He had worked himself into a fatal position; he had to take the consequences.

He watched Rack Healey and the big man seemed about as usual, except that his face was stonier and his eyes a little pink. Twice John started to speak to the outfielder. Each time he changed his mind.

Dotty was in the stands, he knew, behind third base. She could have used Holcomb's box, but she always sat in the grandstand, alone, incongruously munching peanuts, keeping a box score. He could feel her presence today. Things on the edge of the baseball world were reaching in and touching him today.

Yet when they finally took the field for the first inning he was relaxed. He started the chatter and his voice was controlled, sharp, admonishing Easy Logan. He relayed the sign from Tuttle automatically now; after ten weeks of campaigning, after arguments and battles galore he had decided to continue the old methods. It was in the cards now and it was, finally, up to him. He accepted that.

Pidge King, leading off, was contemptuous of Easy Logan and all the Eagles. The Whales had won every game from



their lowly rivals so far this season. King laced into the ball.

It came down with a low, skidding hop. It was a hit, all right. John Borden took off onto the grass toward first base in a headlong, sliding dive. His glove batted down the ball. He threw from the prone position.

It was too late, but King had to hustle to make it. Borden came up yelling, "Okay, okay. Get two now, get two!"

Torrey glanced curiously at him. Easy Logan shifted his chewing tobacco. Muddy Conn boomed, "'At's all right in there. Two comin' up."

Musso was next. He took a couple, then swung. The ball went down to short-stop. Borden touched up the bag, taking the throw from Yancey, pivoting, wheeling the ball to first.

They got two. Easy Logan took a deep breath, exercising his long left arm. Then he grimly struck out Kit Long, Whales left fielder.

John went to his accustomed place on the bench. He crouched there, watching Friden pitch. The Whales hurler was going great guns ever since the opener. Yet he could be had; Borden knew he could be hit. . . . Yancey struck out.

Bud Galt was up, Healey on deck. Borden said in a low voice to Healey, "Try shoving one out there, Rack. Just meet it. I think you're hitting behind the ball."

Healey blinked. He said nothing, taking two bats to the on deck box. Galt fidgeted himself into a walk. Healey went to bat and let two go by for a one and one count. Then he brought the bludgeon around and there was a dull sound. Galt was sprinting for second and Healey was safe on a blooper into right field.

The Eagles started to scream. On third base Tom Dugan howled back at them. Dugan was red-faced, long-armed, swaggering. He was a man to get under the skin of a rhinoceros. Borden looked cal-

culatingly at his old enemy. Deb Garcia fled out to deep left and the runners advanced.

Muddy Conn had a long bat up there. It was a time to go ahead of the Whales and stay there. Friden was scowling nervously.

There was nothing for a manager to do but pray. No strategy was any good with two down and men on second and third. Tom Dugan yelled, "The yella sons'll never score, Pat. Throw to the jerk!"

Muddy let a couple go by. Then he fell away from a close one. The ball hit his bat. It trickled toward third, an accidental fair ball.

Muddy ran.

Dugan was too far back. By the time he recovered from shock and came in Muddy was on first. John Borden came off the bench. His voice rang across the noise, "Where was Dugan? The balloon's going up! Where was Dugan, the tramp?"

Dugan's red face swung, his blue eyes glared. It was the first time that season that Borden had come back at him. Torrey was at the plate. Borden was getting a bat ready. Someone on the bench yelled, "Everybody hits today! Everybody hits!"

That was Tut Tuttle, Borden knew, going to the spot in the sun where he waited, watching Torrey. Tuttle was yelling, now. . . .

Torrey favored his lame hip. He stood calmly, watching Friden. The ball came in. Torrey lammed into the first pitch.

It skidded down to short, took a freakish hop. Jake Young leaped frantically for it. Galt scored. The other runners held bases.

Borden went to the plate. "Kill him, Pat," begged Dugan. "Bean him!"

Borden laughed. He faced Dugan and pointed with his bat. "I'm knocking it through you, Lucky," he said.



**F**RIDEN threw a curve, then a hard high one inside. Borden turned on it. He used every muscle in his body, crashing into the ball. It went straight down the third-base line. Dugan reached, could not find it.

Healey scored. Conn came in, and the Eagles had three runs.

Tuttle flied out to end the inning. John picked his glove up off the grass and walked in to where Easy Logan was assuming the mound. He said gently, "There's your lead, pal. Work on it."

Logan said, "You're purty hot today, aincha, John?"

"Everybody's hot," said Borden. "Throw, damn you!" He grinned at Logan. He had never been more relaxed.

Logan got Claire, the first sacker; then Dugan came up. The fiery third baseman was wild with eagerness. He got hold of one on the outside and lunged into it. The ball went into right for a single. Dugan bawled, "I'm comin' down full of steel and you better not cover, you yella jerk!"

Borden said, "Come on down, gluefoot. I love it!"

Wiley, the Eagles hitter, glanced one off. It had a hard hop to handle and Yancey did acrobatics. Borden was on second for the force-out. Dugan came in like a race horse. Dugan's spikes clawed air, thirsting for Borden's flesh.

The throw was necessarily late. Borden could not avoid the collision. He took the ball in his bare hand as the steel tore at his legs. He swung around, coming down with everything he had.

He felt the blood running. He jammed the ball against Dugan. Then he drew it back and jammed it again, blindly, in thorough rage. The umpire and Yancey pulled him away.

Dugan lay still a moment. Then he came to and arose with a roar, fists flying. Luckily the coach and Slim Torrev got between them and the umpire

called time. They led Dugan away fuming.

There was a nasty gash on Borden's left leg and his pants were ripped. There was too much blood. Easy Logan came out and said, "You better quit, John."

"Get me some tape," snapped Borden. "I'll show them quit!" He used bandage and the adhesive and pulled flesh and cloth together. The pain was a spur. He said, "Let's get two. I'll see Dugan later. Let's get two in there!"

Easy said gently, "There's two down, John, remember?"

Stunned, Borden said, "Golly! I forgot Claire."

"You got excited," grinned Logan. He seemed pleased. He went to the box and fanned Jake Young.

They re-banded John between innings. Friden had regained form and the Eagles could do no more with him. In the Whales' third, Kyle, the Whales catcher got a life, then Pidge King hit a home run and it was three to two.

The Whales would not quit. They were leading the league and they thought they had the Indian sign on the Eagles.

But Easy Logan and his imaginary sore arm kept going. Into the eighth, into the ninth, it was still three runs for the Eagles, two for the Whales, with the last raps for the visitors coming up. Borden, limping, fighting, covering his position like a madman, had grounded out each time up, unable to run them out, but the Eagles were flaming hot as they took the field.

Tom Dugan led off. Again he scratched a hit off Logan. Dancing on first, the fighter of the Whales uttered purple threats. Borden gimped over to Logan and said, "You all right, Easy?"

Logan wiped sweat from his lean face. "Good as anyone."

"Your arm hurt?"

"Yop."

"Okay, stay in," said John Borden, grinning.



Wiley struck out. Dugan made a terrific fuss. All the Whales were leaping and hollering on the bench. Sam Dozier was making motions like mad, but the Eagles infield did not go in against a bunt by Young. The tail-end was coming up.

Young struck out. Jo-Jo Kyle, the catcher, had one hit for the day, but was dangerous. Borden moved cautiously back and to his left against this right-handed batter.

Kyle hit a curve ball which Borden had signaled to Healey.

It went into right field. Still, Healey should have caught it. John Borden stared in shocked disbelief at the big man, out of position, chasing the bounding ball. Dugan ran happily around the bases and scored. Kyle went to third.

They put in a pinch hitter for Friden, of course. Logan threw heroically, but the man knocked one into the stands. Logan had to go. Okie Smith, a right-hander, came from the bullpen. The Whales were chortling with glee. They had a two-run lead in the ninth, as was customary. The Eagles had flunked it again.

Okie pitched to Pidge King. The lead-off man hit one as hard as he could over second base.

John Borden sprinted. Like a Phoenix from the ashes he soared into the air. His gloved hand stabbed at the ball. He dropped to earth with it in his clutch, gravely rolled it to the base umpire. Five to three now . . . who was up? What was the strategy?

He closed his jaw tightly. Healey was up.

A boy came through the tunnel and into the dugout. Borden, on the alert, called to him. The ballplayers looked over curiously. Healey was ready to go to bat to start the last of the ninth.

Borden had said nothing to Healey. Now he walked toward the big outfielder.

In his hand was a piece of yellow paper. He said to Healey, "This wire just came through. Your wife passed the crisis. She'll be all right." He handed the paper to the dazed big man.

Healey stared down at him. He choked, "You knew, huh?"

"Last night," said Borden, looking him in the eye.

"You knew about that? You didn't slap no fine on me?"



Kyle had one hit for the day, but was dangerous. . . .

"A guy's in trouble—he's in trouble," said Borden. "Why didn't you tell me? No, don't answer that. I've been plenty tough. Too tough about some things. So you missed a signal. So go ahead and get on base. And I'm rescinding those other fines—call it a present to your wife."

Healey said, "She's all right. She's all right!" His moon face beamed. He went to the plate.

The relief pitcher threw one ball. Healey carefully met it. He did not try for the stands. He tried for a hit and he got one into left field, a clean bingle.



**B**ORDEN nursed his aching leg, watching through narrowed eyes. Doty was watching, too. And Holcomb would be hoping that his own team lost this game, perhaps. Thousands were getting ready to leave the stands, but hesitating as Deb Garcia went to bat. Deb was having no luck that day. He fled out to short center.

Muddy Conn, the sturdy one, came up. Muddy had nerves of iron. John Borden gave no signals now. This was for keeps, this was all-out baseball, with one on and two runs needed. He hunched, caressing his sore leg. Dugan was yelling insults and Borden's eyes went thoughtfully to Dugan.

Muddy slammed a single into right field. Borden came off the bench as though lifted by a giant. "Let's go in there. This'll break their hearts. This'll do it!"

Dozier sent in another relief pitcher. Torrey waited, leaning on his bat. Torrey's face was calm. Rack Healey moved restlessly around second base. . . .

Torrey struck out.

Litsky was ready. The kid had come a long way since opening day. Borden had a bad leg. He could put Litsky in there and no one would think it a bad decision, he knew. It came to his mind, coldly, a managerial problem.

He refused to consider it as such. He tried not to limp, going to the plate. He glanced grimly down at Dugan who was mouthing imprecations. He looked at the hurler—Mason, a veteran with a flutter-ball. Borden knew Mason.

The swift came wide. Borden looked longingly at it, fell out of the box, knocked dirt from his spikes. Two on, two runs needed to tie. . . .

Mason threw the change-up ball. It wiggled over the plate for a strike. Dugan yowled with glee. Borden tugged at his cap, his belt.

Tuttle was coming up behind him. If

he could get a life, maybe the catcher could ram them around. Litsky could hit for Okie.

Mason threw without motion, a sneaker. It came singing for the outside corner of the plate.

Borden dug in his spikes. Forgetting pain, forgetting all else, he concentrated on the ball, his bat coming around. His shoulders swiveled, his wrists spun. He hit into the leather with everything he had.

He hit first base at half-speed. His leg muscle was tightening. He flashed a look at Ossie Morley. The coach was dancing a can-can. Muddy Conn had his cap off and was waving it as he jiggled along the baseline toward second. Healey was already in, his hands cupped, bawling, "It's in, John! Save your gam! It's in!"

King was against the centerfield bleachers. Then he was turning, shrugging, taking off his glove.

John Borden had hit his first home run of the season to clear the bases and beat the Whales.

He turned third past a silent Dugan. He touched home plate. People were storming the field. He wheeled and limped back toward third. Dugan was coming.

He had his fist cocked, ready to throw it. Someone interposed. Rack Healey had Dugan by the neck and was shoving him. Garcia was walking alongside, just in case Healey needed help. Slim Torrey and Tut Tuttle were there, too. The cops came.

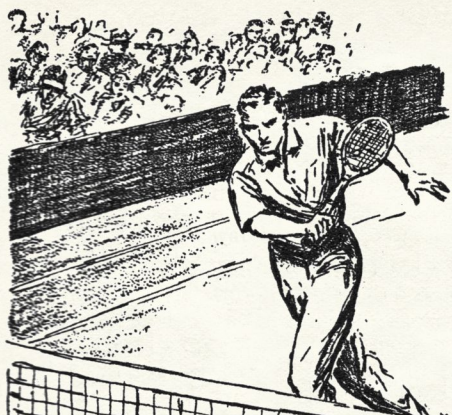
Borden called, "I'll see you under the stands, any place."

Then they were helping him with solicitous hands and Healey was saying, "After your leg gets better, John. You can lick him. After your leg heals."

In the dressing room Mace Keller was waiting. His face was wreathed in smiles. He said, "That'll take the guts out of them. Look, John, you got any money?"

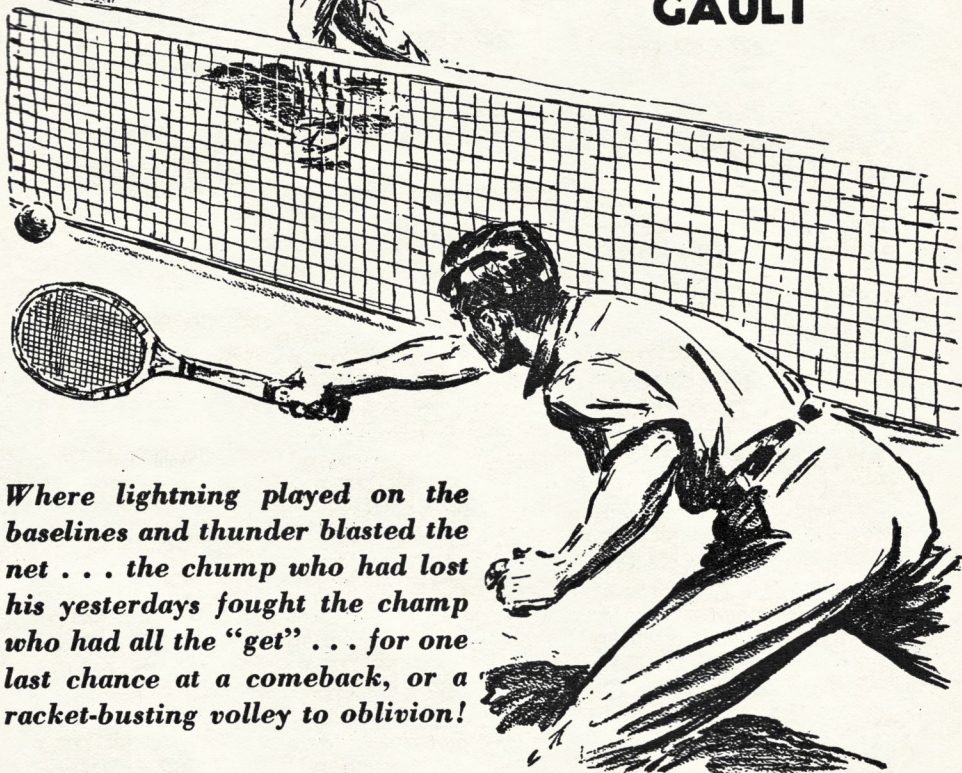
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# MATCH POINT

By **WILLIAM  
CAMPBELL  
GAULT**



*Where lightning played on the baselines and thunder blasted the net . . . the chump who had lost his yesterdays fought the champ who had all the "get" . . . for one last chance at a comeback, or a racket-busting volley to oblivion!*

**T**HE CALIFORNIA sun was hot, but Johnny didn't mind that; he'd been brought up under it. The clay under his feet was hard as rock, but he was used to that, too. And his dad was in the stands.

Across the net from him, Frankie Patton smiled in his patronizing way. Frankie had what the scribes liked to call a "sound, all-around game." Most of the ranking amateurs had another name for it. "Pat-ball Patton," they called him.

He dumped it over the net. . . .

But he'd made Johnny look awful silly with that game, back East, back on the grass. Today, Patton was moving like a robot on the clay, returning everything with that flat ball of his, concentrating, waiting for Johnny to blow.

Johnny kept pushing them deeper into Patton's backhand, where he loved them.

There was some vengeance in Johnny's game. Back East, Patton had been the



big wheel, and Johnny just a rube from the coast, a wildman with no savvy on the grass.

Cute, Patton was, and he knew all the strokes and he could run you silly if he ever got you started. He could run the legs right off you and still have enough left for the kill. All head, this Patton, but it had taken him to the National Singles title.

Johnny kept feeding his backhand, this hot California afternoon, until Patton had grooved it. Then Johnny sent a whistler down his forehand alley, and Patton raced for it.

The easterner got a racket on it, but it was a high lob. Johnny went up to the net and put it away. It must have bounced out of the county.

Game point, and the games stood at three-all now. Johnny looked over to where his dad sat, and smiled. His dad smiled back.

There was a restlessness in the gallery; it had been a tame match, so far. Neither man had broken the other's service. The applause following the kill had been scattered.

*Now would be the time,* Johnny thought, and went out after him.

His lanky, young body felt loose and confident as he stretched for his serve. A screamer, just over the net, a skidding ball that refused to come up.

Somehow, Patton dug it out, but it was another setup. Johnny came in for the kill, but a memory came to him, a memory of how Patton had made him look at Seabright. He dropped it over the net.

Patton came scrambling from his deep position, moving fast, stretching for it, his serious face grim in concentration.

About eight feet from the net his feet got tangled and he went down, skidding awkwardly.

A laugh was born—and died, in the gallery.

He didn't get up right away, and when

he did, he was limping. The linesman went over, but Patton shook his head. The gallery applauded.

It wasn't the first time that had been worked on Johnny, but it was the first time by Patton. Big-hearted Johnny, the rube from the coast, wasn't one to take an unfair advantage. . . . Patton must have forgotten Johnny had been around since they last met.

Johnny smiled to himself, and shrouded the big gun. He chopped them long and short, running Patton, making him scramble, shooting placement after placement just beyond the easterner's reach.

He ran it out at 6-3. He was sensitive to gallery moods and knew they weren't behind him, now, knew they considered it poor sportsmanship to run an injured man like that.

They hadn't been at Seabright. They didn't know Frankie Patton.

At the net Patton asked mildly, "Change your game, Johnny?"

"Just for the afternoon," Johnny said. "How's the ankle?"

Patton met Johnny's gaze. "It'll hold up."

There was no love lost between them. Johnny had been known as the Court Clown for months after his first meeting with Patton.

The gallery was restless. This soft stuff wasn't what they'd been expecting from their pride of the coast. But Johnny wasn't playing them; he was playing Pat-ball Patton. And beating him, at his own game. He was taking him back to Seabright.

His dad would understand that. His dad was a sportswriter on the coast's biggest paper, and he'd see what Johnny was doing. Only, for some reason, Johnny didn't look over now to get his reaction.

The second set was his, 6-2.

The next set, he gave them what they'd come to see. He smashed them deep, at Patton's feet, for the corners. Shot after



shot sent up chalk. He'd never felt looser in his life, nor played better.

It was a love set and he went over to shake Patton's hand.

"That was better, that last set," Patton said, and there was no smile on his grave face.

"I wanted to get it over with," Johnny said.

Patton stared at him, started to say something, and walked off.

JOHNNY went over to the box where his dad sat. His dad was frowning, his sharp, blue eyes searching his son's face. "I wasn't proud of you, that second set, Johnny. Running an injured man—"

"You've forgotten something, Dad. That was Frankie out there. If he's got a bad ankle, I've got two heads. He knew he was beat. He didn't have the strokes, so he played the sympathy angle. You've got too much knowledge of the game to fall for that, Dad."

His dad was still staring at him. "Maybe you'd better make sure, Johnny."

"I'll be back," Johnny said, "with the word."

Patton was in the locker room, and an attendant was bending over his ankle. Johnny went over to see what there was to see.

The ankle was as big as an outseam baseball.

Johnny said humbly, "I'm sorry, Frank. I thought—well, I'm sorry."

"It doesn't matter," Patton said. "What matters is you."

"Me?" Johnny said. "I'm doing all right."

Patton's thin, patrician face was tight. "You're doing all right for yourself. I suppose that's all that matters."

"What else?"

"How about the game? How about amateur tennis?"

"How about it?"

"You could be the biggest man in it." Patton said quietly. "You could be a credit to it. If you hadn't gotten so—so damned—cute, so clever."

"Easy," Johnny said. "You're the cute one. You're the drop-shot, chop-ball, soft-game wonder." Johnny paused, and then threw it at him. "Pat-ball Patton!"

Patton's color was high, and he was fighting for control. When his voice came, it was a soft whisper. "Has it ever occurred to you that a man fights with what weapons he has? I'll grant you I'm not a tennis player, not by the standards of the really great ones. And I know what they're all thinking of me, all the time. But it's my only game, the only one I've got."

"And good enough," Johnny said, "for the National Singles title. I'll settle for that."

"Not while I'm alive, you won't," Patton said. "You're not big enough for the title, and I'll see that you don't get it."

Johnny smiled. "This year it's mine." His voice was confident. "You'd like to see me play my big game, wouldn't you? You can handle that."

"I can handle any game of yours," Patton said, and turned away.

And maybe he could, on the grass, Johnny thought. Maybe . . . Well, it wasn't anything to worry about yet. But the prestige that went with the title would sell a lot of insurance. And that was the racket that paid off, in the amateurs. Insurance rates are all about the same, so you might as well buy it from the National Singles champ.

He had his shower and his rubdown, and went up to the porch. His dad was sitting in front of a Tom Collins, and his eyes had a question in them as Johnny approached.

Johnny said, "Frank wasn't hamming it. Bad sprain."

His dad didn't bother with any "I told you so." That wasn't his style. What he



said was, "You've changed, Johnny, since you've been east."

Johnny nodded, and sat down. "That's right. I've grown up, and I hope I've smartened up some. I was just another kid with two left feet when I went east."

His dad sipped his drink. "Don't outsmart yourself. What do you want to be, Johnny? A tennis player, or an insurance salesman? It's about time you made up your mind."

"I've got to eat," Johnny said. "I made nearly seven thousand dollars selling insurance, last year. Because of the tennis. That's making the tennis pay off, isn't it?" He paused. "Is that wrong?"

"Maybe," his dad said. "You—sold quite a policy to Mr. Gallatin, I hear?"

Johnny nodded, feeling a faint shame. "The day before you sold it, you played an exhibition set with young Gallatin. You carried him, let him look good in front of his friends, didn't you?"

"Maybe. I didn't let him win."

"No, but you let him look good. You gave him and his father the wrong idea, maybe, about the lad's ability?"

"Could be. That's wrong?"

"You'd have to decide that for yourself, Johnny. It's not tennis. But you're old enough to decide the rest for yourself." His father rose. "Well, I've got to get back to the paper, to write this up."

It wasn't much of a day after that. The sweetness of his victory over Patton was soured. He went into the clubhouse bar for a beer, and Sammy Fargo was there.

Fargo ran the big team in pro tennis. He said, "Going to take the singles this year, Johnny?"

"Or die trying."

"If you win," Fargo said, "come and see me. I think we can get together." He smiled cynically. "Then you can make an honest living from tennis."

Johnny said nothing.

Fargo went on, "Of course, I'll want to see some tennis. I'll want to see your

power game, Johnny. That's the kind of game the pro fans expect for their money. That's why I didn't sign Patton."

"I'll win the title, if I can," Johnny said. "And *any way* I can. That's the important thing to me, winning it."

After Fargo left, Johnny had some more beer, and some more. Everybody knew how he should play the game. But none of them played, not tournament tennis.

He had more beer than he could comfortably handle, and more than he should have attempted, with a finals match the next day.

He went to bed early, and woke in the morning feeling like an old bar rag. His mouth was dry, his head aching dully. But a shower would fix that.

It didn't.

Nor was his appetite any good. By eleven o'clock, the ache was gone, but his legs felt shaky. At eleven-thirty, he tried to get some more food into his stomach.

He was playing Ted Barkeldt in the finals at one o'clock, and Ted was one of those sluggers who blew hot and cold. If he was hot today, Johnny would need all the tennis he knew.

**I**N THE locker room Frank Patton said, "You're looking sick, Johnny. Indigestion?"

"I'm all right," Johnny said. "I thought you were going down to L.A. last night."

"I wanted to watch you today," Frankie said. He paused. "I'm sorry I sounded off yesterday. Just call me a poor loser."

Johnny said, "I hope I won't be, today."

Barkeldt came in then. He was even taller than Johnny, and a lot heavier. He looked confident. "Today," he said, "you'd better be right, Johnny."

Johnny was right only in spurts. He won the first game, giving Barkeldt only one point. He slammed the serve over, and followed it in for the kill. That was



his old game, and he was back to it because he didn't have the legs for the new one.

He couldn't break through Ted's service and the games stood at 1-1.

Over in the first row he could see Frankie watching, but his dad wasn't covering the match today.

The third game, Ted began to get his racket on Johnny's serve. Ted passed him, coming in, for the first point. Johnny served the second and stayed back.

Ted started to run him. Deep tennis, to the corners, but never to the same corner twice. Back and forth, Johnny went, forehand, backhand, getting them all—and feeling them all in his legs.

Then, when Ted had the pattern set up, he crossed Johnny with an angle shot for the corner he was leaving. Johnny stood there, resentment beginning to burn in him.

There was a laugh from the gallery.

Two points for Ted, and he was looking confident.

Johnny stretched and twisted and sent one screaming over the net for what should have been an ace. But Ted dug it out, somehow, just blocking it into play. It was a feeble effort, scarcely making the net.

But it *did* make the net, teetering on the cord. Then it rolled down on Johnny's side for the point. Another laugh, this time, and some applause.

Johnny put everything he had into the next serve—and it was out by a foot. The second ball was a softy that Ted angled for a clean placement.

He'd broken Johnny's serve, and led 2-1.

The rest of it Johnny didn't want to remember. Ted had him blowing. Johnny salvaged one more game out of the set; the rest were Ted's.

6-2, 6-0, 6-0, that was the final. It was the worst drubbing Johnny had experienced since he'd held a national ranking.

Johnny sat in the locker room, remembering his dad's words of the day before, remembering how hard and long he'd trained to get where he'd been—and remembering Seabright.

At home, his dad said, "Tough luck, son. I hope I didn't throw you off with my lecture yesterday."

Johnny shook his head. "I think I'll work for a while. I've had enough of tournament tennis for a while."

"What kind of work?" his dad asked. "Insurance."

His dad started to say something, but must have changed his mind. What he finally said was, "Glad to see you home."

Johnny learned, in the next couple of weeks, that peddling one- and two-thousand-dollar policies to sales-resistant small wheels was a different game than social selling to millionaires. He was digging for every dollar, and hating every minute of it.

He had about all he could do to keep his big convertible in gas. He sold it, and bought a smaller sedan.

Amateur tennis needed him as badly as he needed it. But the childish resentment he harbored, the humiliation that had been born at Seabright and nourished in the east, had reached its ultimate in the drubbing by Ted Barkeldt.

And pieces in the paper like the following didn't help:

... former wonder boy with the power game, Johnny Cochrane, now doing what he spent most of his time doing in the east: selling insurance. Johnny left us for the big eastern tournaments, taking his California game along. But Frank (Pat-ball) Patton was too much for him out there. And up at Artula, a few weeks ago, Ted Barkeldt showed us what a ranking player can do to Johnny's new game. So Johnny's peddling policies.

Johnny showed the piece to his dad, and his dad said, "I've read it. He's not the best man in town, I'd say."

"Is this what the rest of them think, too?"



His dad shrugged. "I don't know. They wouldn't be likely to say it around me. When are you going to grow up, Johnny?"

Johnny stared at him. "I don't follow you."

"When are you going to do what you want to do? You'll never be an insurance man."

"And I'll never be a phony amateur again. But how else would I make a living playing amateur tennis? The club here won't back me any more, and that defeat by Barkeldt didn't do me any good as far as getting another backer."

"You can have what I've got," his dad said, "but I was never a saving man."

"If I go back to the wars," Johnny said, "it will be with the few bucks I've saved, and what I sold the convertible for. But I'd be a fool to go back and try to play that grass game. What would it get me, even if I won?"

Again, his dad shrugged. "You'd have to decide that. You know what you want to do."

Johnny counted his money that night, and figured it all out. It came out a couple hundred dollars short and he was figuring close. He could sell the sedan, of course, and pick up an antiquated Model A. That would be all that the scribes would need. The rube from the west, in a Model A.

He bought the Model A for a hundred and fifty dollars, the same car he could have bought for twenty dollars ten years ago. But the Model A, he knew, was practically indestructible.

His dad didn't smile when he saw the car. His dad said simply, "Good luck, son. I'm going to miss you."

"I'll be back," Johnny said. "But not too soon—I hope."

He was as rusty as the car. He learned that at Wetherton, in the Southwest Clay Courts. He drew a new kid, an unranked kid from Dallas, and he was wilder than a rookie pitcher. But he had too much on

the ball, when he managed to get them in.

Johnny won the first set, 9-7. In the second he began to get a part of his stuff back. The kid he was playing blew up when Johnny began to click. Johnny had won his first round match.

In the second, though, he drew a ranking player. He drew Ted Barkeldt, who'd come through his first like a Texas tornado. But Johnny wasn't suffering from a hangover this time, and he hoped that would make the difference.

In the locker room Ted said, "I hope you're in better shape than you were at Artula, Johnny. I need the workout."

"I'll try to accommodate you," Johnny said.

Ted was a lot steadier than he'd been at Artula. He was still a blaster, with disdain for the finer points of the game, but his control was perfect. He sent chalk spurting on every shot.

For five games apiece, they held their own service. For six, for seven . . .

Then, on the fifteenth game of that set, Ted broke through Johnny's service when Johnny opened with a double fault.

In the sixteenth, Ted's first point was a clean ace, a streak of light, twisting erratically and bouncing low.

The sun was blazing, the court like concrete. Ted served his second, and followed it in. Johnny made the mistake of playing it cute. He angled it for the opposite end of the net.

It was a pooper, and Ted put it away with the contempt it deserved.

Ted went on to win that game, and the set 9-7.

THEY took a breather after that one. Ted didn't look as pooped as Johnny felt. Ted was a stickler for keeping in condition.

Johnny carried the big boy to five-all in the second set, but then Ted's condition took over. It was his set 7-5, and his match.



Johnny tried to convince himself that the Barkeldt jinx would take care of itself, after a while. Johnny had enough on his mind, thinking about Patton on the grass. Frankie was the boy he had to worry about.

And he was the boy Barkeldt had to worry about, too, Johnny learned next day. He was in the stands when they met.

Ted's overhead game was dynamite, his smashes off either side deadily and low. Frankie covered the court the way Bitsy Grant used to, getting them all back, waiting for errors. Frankie, the Labrador retriever.

Johnny saw Ted add more steam to his drives, smashing with an abandon that would have been disastrous if his range hadn't been perfect this day.

And Frankie got them back. Frankie blocked them into play, chasing, scrambling for impossible gets, waiting, waiting, waiting . . .

He didn't wait in vain. Ted added the overload of moxie that blew him sky-high. Ted started to miss, to net—and Ted was lickered in four sets, 5-7, 6-4, 6-3, 6-2.

*A man fights with what weapons he has.*

Frankie, who had more tennis in his head than in his body, had taken the man who'd taken Johnny. And on clay.

North, then back to Denver and the clay again. Johnny hoped Ted would be there. He wanted his chance at Ted again, so he could concentrate on Frank Patton.

Ted wasn't there, and neither was Patton. There were a few of the top twenty, and some new boys coming up. Johnny got through his first round without too much trouble.

He saw Sam Fargo at Denver, and Sam looked at the flivver with a smile. "Always the showman, huh, Cochrane? Insurance not so good?"

"I've quit peddling it," Johnny said. "How's the big show going?"

"We're making money." He looked at the flivver again. "How are you going?"

"I've gone back to the old game. It's rough, so far."

"The scribes were needling you, weren't they?"

"I'm thick-skinned," Johnny lied. "What kind of offer you giving the National Singles champ these days?"

"Enough. You figure this is your year?"

"If it isn't my best," Johnny said, "it will be my last."

Sam studied him. "If it's your best, don't bother to look me up. I'll be right there, in your hair."

Johnny came through Denver, all the way, with the California game, the big game. A few of the sportswriters ate a small portion of crow. The die-hards made remarks about a "flash in the pan." This tennis, Johnny reflected, is an easy game—played behind a typewriter.

Tulsa, and the flivver chewed up a timing gear. Tulsa, and two set wins for the new Johnny Cochrane, and a three-set win in the finals.

St. Paul and Chicago, doing all right, but this was clay. Winning and getting some favorable ink, though the humor angle wasn't overlooked. The big boy in the small car.

From Chicago, east. Johnny played a tank-town tournament in Maine, because the court was grass. He met a lad there who had all the strokes, a junior champ, but too good for his class.

Johnny stayed for a week, playing the grass with the kid. His bank account was dwindling to nothing, but he needed every minute of every workout.

He had a tendency to hit them too high off the grass. There wasn't as much bounce, and he tried to compensate. What he did was overcompensate, especially on his backhand.

The kid taught him a thing or two about that, about holding the elbow low. It



took long hours under the Maine sun, but Johnny worked tirelessly. His backhand was flatter; there were fewer setups off it.

To Jersey, and the dough close to bottom.

Sam Logan was there. Johnny asked, "Am I haunting you, or are you haunting me?"

"I'm haunting you," Sam said. "I've been reading the papers, Johnny."

"That wasn't grass," Johnny said.

"In Maine, it was."

"Minor league," Johnny said.

Sam nodded. "My boys are getting old. I need new blood."

"Wait until Forest Hills," Johnny said grimly.

In Jersey, he worked out on the grass with Patton. Frank slammed them to Johnny's backhand, mostly, waiting for the lob to put away. When they came back flat, Patton was frowning.

Johnny had the edge on him, but Patton wasn't one to burn himself up on the practice court.

As they were taking their showers, Frank said, "Hear you've quit the insurance angle."

"That's right."

"How you going to make a living, after I trounce you at Forest Hills?"

"I've got a paper route," Johnny said. "You're pretty smug, with all your papa's bucks, aren't you?"

"I try not to be," Frankie said. "What I was going to do was offer you a job, with papa, a job of *work*. One that would leave time for tennis."

Johnny shook his head. "What I get from here in, I'll earn."

"That would include the singles title," Frank said. "If you get that, you'll earn it, believe me."

As if Johnny didn't know.

He got so he hated to look at a tennis ball. He didn't look at much of anything else, for days, and he worried about going stale. He was lonesome and he wished his

dad would come east to cover this, but there was small chance of that. Since he'd left the social end of amateur tennis, there wasn't much he could do with his nights.

The morning of the big show, he had thirty dollars. His room rent was paid for a week, and he could eat on the thirty, but he was a long way from home.

He almost ran into a Tartar, his first match. Young Greg Nelson, up from Florida, was his first-round opponent, and he was having a hot streak. He took the first set, 6-4.

He took Johnny to 5-5 in the second set before Johnny broke through his service and held his own.

The third set, Johnny's backhand started to click and he had the feel of Greg's game. It was Johnny's, 6-1.

He studied the pairings that afternoon, and learned he'd have to meet both Patton and Barkedt, if they both survived the early rounds. He wondered who was responsible for that.

He tried not to think of it, tried to concentrate on each game and each opponent. He came through, getting the feel of the grass, right up to Ted.

Ted had been a ball of fire, and he'd played the eastern matches in order to get the grass feel. He had the poise that came with the two victories he held over Johnny.

It was a hot afternoon, and Johnny had fought some tough ones. He looked across the net at the big and confident Texas lad and went out after him, right from the first serve.

It was an ace. The second serve Ted sent to Johnny's backhand, and they stood deep, slugging.

Then Ted followed one in. Johnny passed him, for the second point. Johnny won that game. Ted held his service. Johnny held his.

It was hot, and they kept trading games, and Johnny should have been worried, remembering the other two encounters.



But each game only steeled his determination. At 7-7, it was Johnny who had the poise. Ted was looking bushed.

Ted held his own service again, but with a couple of impossible gets. He was starting to scramble. Johnny took the next game at love with two placements and two service aces.

Then Ted started to crack. That first set went to 11-9, but it was Johnny's.

They took a breather, and Ted said, "Getting better, Johnny." He was wringing wet.

"Getting smarter," Johnny said. "Playing my own game."

Each of them held his first service in the second set, and that was all for Ted. Johnny had earned the right to enter the finals—against Patton.

He looked around the huge bowl as he and Ted walked off the court, searched the boxes for a sign of his dad, but he wasn't there.

*This was dad's idea, Johnny thought, playing it rough. He should be here to see the results.*

THE UMPIRES were coming down off their high chairs, and the crowd was starting to file out. Sam Fargo was waiting near the door to the locker rooms.

"Tomorrow's what counts," he said, "but I like the way you were hitting them, Johnny."

"Tomorrow's what counts," Johnny agreed. "I'll see you then, Sam."

In the dressing room, beneath the stands, Ted was taking his shower. Johnny climbed up on the rubbing table and relaxed for a few minutes.

Ted came out, toweling himself. "You going to play that game tomorrow?"

Johnny sat up and nodded.

"Think it's the game, for Frankie?"

"It had better be. It's the only one I've got, or want."

"Frankie was brought up on the grass,"

Ted said. "He's a past master there."

"I know," Johnny said.

He went to bed early that night. He kept going over in his mind all the games he'd played with Frankie, and he could see every stroke. He could see the effortless way Frank seemed ready for every return, the professional way he saved himself for the crucial points. He played a brainy game, Pat-ball Patton.

The day dawned with a clear sky, and the sun was hot as Johnny went down to breakfast. It would get hotter by the hour.

Sam Fargo was in the hotel dining room. Sam had an idea. "It's a racket," he said, "called the Johnny Cochrane Personal Model. It's a new company and they want to get some names for their products."

"Have they got any other names so far?"

"Patton's. He's taking stock in the company. He's no dummy where there's a buck involved. But he can't take the stock until he turns pro."

Johnny said, "I thought you didn't want Frankie."

"I don't, personally, but the public does. And you know I'm a slave to my public."

"You got money in this company, Sam?"

"Some." Fargo smiled. "And the value of your name would depend on the results this afternoon—of course."

"Of course," Johnny agreed.

When he went out onto the grass to pose with Patton that afternoon, he didn't look toward the boxes. He had enough to think of. They shook hands, and the umpires climbed into their chairs, and the crowd stirred in anticipation.

They volleyed, and then Johnny spun it and Patton called it right. He went back to serve the first game.

It didn't look like an ace, that first serve of Patton's. It was cleanly hit, but there wasn't any smoke on it. It hit the grass,



twisted, and Johnny missed it by a full three inches. Fifteen-love.

The sun was a ball of horror. Frankie looked poised. He went over, his racket flashed and another serve came skimming the top of the net.

Johnny got a racket on it, this time, and sent it cross-court. Patton was waiting. Patton could read Johnny's mind. His return was to Johnny's backhand. Johnny laid it deep, and moved up.

Some surprise showed on Frankie's face, but no loss of poise. He swung like a slugger, and Johnny raced back desperately. But the call came arching up to the net, and trickled over for the point.

"Thirty, love," the umpire droned.

Cute Frankie, with all the tricks. Johnny began to get that barefoot boy feeling.

Another serve, and Patton followed it in. That couldn't be Frankie, doing that. Johnny lobbed one deep before he realized Frankie had stopped coming in. He'd wanted a lob, and his feet had fooled Johnny into handing him one. He was waiting for it, and he smashed it to the far corner for the point. One point from game, and Johnny had looked silly on all of them.

Johnny returned Frankie's next serve to the easterner's forehand. They volleyed back and forth while Patton waited for the opening or the error.

Patton got it, finally, with an angled placement Johnny didn't waste time chasing. Love game for Patton.

Johnny put everything he had into his first serve, and it was a heart-warming ace. Frank just looked at it. So was Johnny's second. The third one, Patton blocked into play, but Johnny was at the net, waiting, and he put it away.

The fourth point wasn't earned; Frank netted it, to lose the game, a love game.

Patton was wiping his hands on the towel near the post. He said, "You're getting the feel of the grass."

Johnny nodded. He wasn't going to encourage any verbal exchange. Patton was too sharp for him there.

They went on, holding service. There weren't any more love games, that first set; they were buckling down for every point. But each of them held his own.

Johnny thought, *I can stand this better than Frankie. He's got the brain and he knows the grass, but I've got the legs.* He told himself that.

He could feel the excitement in the stands, as the games mounted. There was nothing in the dry voices of the officials to indicate the tension of this set, but officials are kept in a deep freeze between tournaments.

Seven-7, 8-8, and Johnny thought Patton might be playing this dumb, wearing himself out so early. It wasn't like him.

Nine-9. Johnny was perspiring like a stevedore. If Frankie was wearing himself out, it wasn't visible. His neat hair was unruffled, and there was only a faint dew of perspiration on his high forehead.

Patton took his service, and led 10-9.

Johnny took his, and they were even.

In the twenty-first game, Johnny won the opening point with a backhand that nicked the line. Frankie's next serve was long, and he didn't ease up on the second. He put a lot into it, a deceptive, cut ball that was in by a full inch.

"Fault," the umpire droned, but Johnny knew it wasn't.

It was an important point. It could very well be the crucial point. At this moment, it meant plenty. Johnny knew the gesture any sportsman would make, but this was *Frankie* he was playing, and he wouldn't bet either way on Frankie in the same situation.

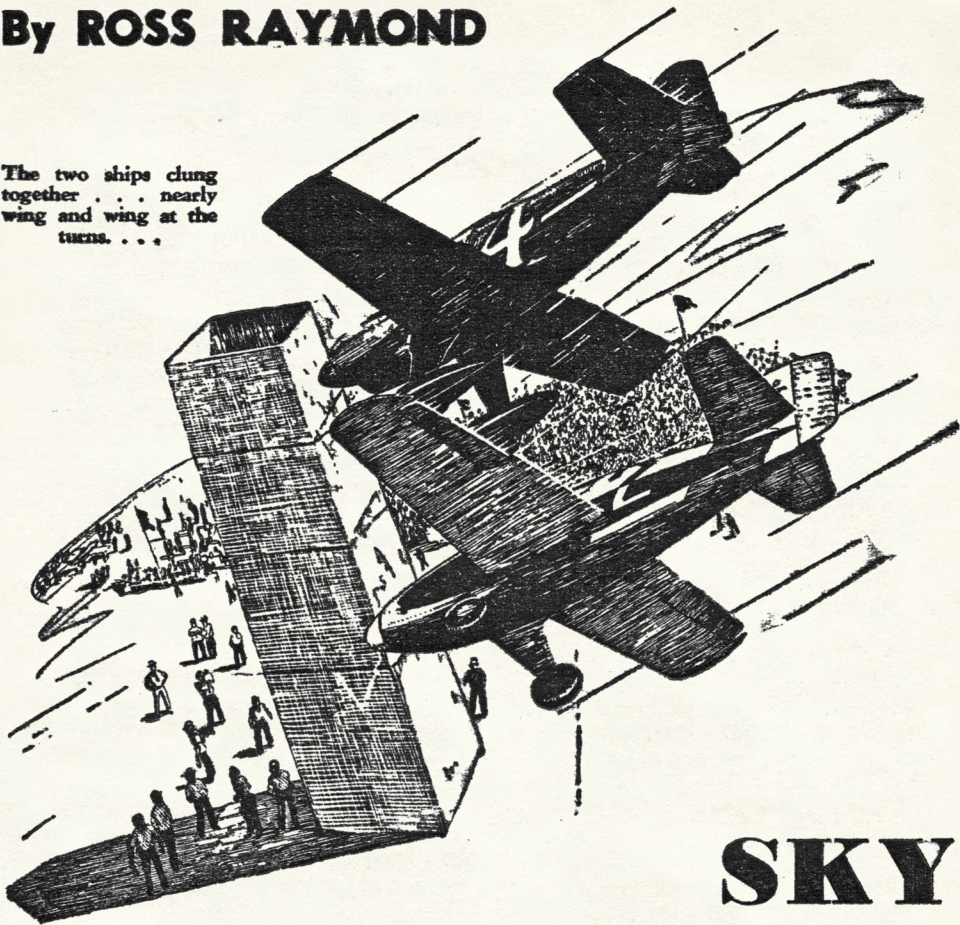
It was at that second he glanced over at the boxes. And there was his dad! The face blurred for a second, and Johnny thought back to Artula and Frankie's ankle.

(Continued on page 128)



By **ROSS RAYMOND**

The two ships clung together . . . nearly wing and wing at the turn. . . .



## SKY BANDIT

*Where the blue begins, the last dream of a lightning rider came to an end . . . for victory wings belong to no man forever—unless he's willing to let a better man wear them!*

**B**RUCE MELLOWS had the mid-ge't's cowl up and was tinkering with the Continental when Charley McClintock came out across the tarmac toward the plane. McClintock was so big a lot of people thought he could put a racing plane that size in his pocket.

"Well, here it is Miami," he said. "And maybe another dollar for you, Bruce. How do you feel about it?"

Bruce looked at Charley McClintock

and laughed. McClintock was secretary of the Midget Air Racing Association and was always going around taking the pulse of the membership that way.

"Another day, another dollar—maybe," he said. "I figure if I win fifty more of these things I'll have enough for my flying school." He wiped his hands on a rag. "Or, if I win the big one tomorrow maybe old Guthrie will set me up in business. He was hinting that way at the



party he threw up in his apartment last night."

"Well, he's got the dough for it," McClintock said.

"Maybe so," Bruce said, "but I don't like to count my chickens. And speaking of chickens, I ain't one any more, which is why I want that flying school. A guy of forty-five's got no business skinning pylons at fifty measly feet above the ground."

Bruce closed the cowl and fastened it down with Phillips screws. It was one of his prides with the hand-built plane that he could do nearly anything to it with a minimum of tools. He pulled the stubby prop through, experimentally. "Who showed up?" he asked.

Charley McClintock stood on the other side of the cowl and pulled the blades through as they came to him. "Usual gang," he said. "Mason, Gard, Anderhiven, Sorenson, Gasman and Wilmert."

Bruce stopped swinging the fan, went around to the cockpit and opened the canopy. When it closed there was just enough room inside the bubble for his head. He stepped on the low wing and swung into the pit.

"Your old pal Balis filed an entry, too," McClintock said, following him around. "Thought you'd like to know that."

"The million-dollar kid," Bruce said. He fastened the safety strap and buckled his crash hat. "What brings him down to this level again? I thought he was strictly Bendix and the big stuff these days."

McClintock rubbed the smooth skin of the cowl and grinned.

"Well, some guys think he's doing it for variety," he said. "But there's others who think he's doing it because he wants a crack at his old instructor."

McClintock backed away as Bruce closed the bubble. He shouted through his cupped hands. "I hope you didn't teach him too much, kid. I got an idea this means a lot to you."

**B**RUCE heard, but gave no sign of it. He looked closely at the dash, checked the instruments and turned the main ignition switch as McClintock flipped the fan. It went through short jerks, caught and the engine roared. He opened and closed the throttle in surges and then settled it at three-quarter while he checked the mags. McClintock pulled the chocks, went around behind the ship and grasped the tail in his hands. Bruce ran the Continental up to peak RPM, kicked the brakes as McClintock let go the tail, and the small ship went in leaps across the field.

Bruce held it on the grass by main force and pulled the stick back slowly. Once airborne, the plane went up fast and he leveled off at a hundred feet and entered the three-mile closed-course triangle at the grandstand pylon some several hundred yards along the tarmac. He banked in sharply, losing height as he went around. When he was level again he was fifty feet above the ground and moving along at a hundred and seventy miles an hour.

He turned the three pylons, boosted his air-speed to two hundred and went around on his second lap. The markers were something like a mile apart and the course was always in view of the people in the stands and on the field. That feature was one of the attractions of midget racing; the course was small, dangerous, and easy to see. It was fine for the public that way, though Bruce would have liked it better if they'd raised the number of pylons, thus making the turns less steep and providing more bite for the wings. He had never minded things the way they were before, and now he was not sure if it was because he was losing his grip or because he had developed more respect for his hide. Either way it was time to be getting on with his school.

Bruce had been flying so long it was sometimes hard to remember a time when



he wasn't. He had picked it up, like a lot of others, in an old World War I Jenny, had barnstormed, flown the mail and had done a hitch in Boeing fighters. He had been one of the first to fly the midgets and because of that a lot of guys had come under his wing to learn the ropes.

There had been so many that it was sometimes hard to recall their names. There were good ones and bad, wise boys and thick-heads, rich and poor. And there were a few who could not be classed with the others at all, and who stood off to one side by themselves. Guys like Kick Balis.

From the beginning Kick Balis had been a thorn because his attitude indicated that the midgets, like everything else in his life, were a joke. Before he took to the small racing planes the sport sheets of the national dailies had been alive with his exploits on the polo field, the speedboat race course and the amateur golf circuit. He had been a star and a world-beater in everything he touched and he had stepped easily from one thing to another the way a guy can when he has a bankroll that will buy anything he wants.

Maybe that had been the reason for the feeling between them. Bruce had always had to work like hell for everything he ever had.

He had been angered when Balis finally gave the midgets up as being a little tame for his blood, but at the same time he had been a little relieved that the guy would no longer be around. And he was not happy now that he was coming back. He was especially not happy in view of his stake in the big one; he thought how ironic it would be if Balis edged him out, just for laughs. Bruce had taught him everything he knew about the midget business, and Balis had been the best he'd ever taught. Balis had youth and money and he'd been around the big-time circuits for nearly three years now, and Bruce knew he would be dangerous.

He turned three laps before he skimmed low above the grandstand stretch and raised the throttle to the top. The little five-hundred-pound ship took the added power hungrily and as he bent the starting-line pylon around his back the air-speed needle had crossed two-ten and was going up. In the next stretch it trembled to two-fifteen and a few points beyond. The Continental Eighty-five howled along at top RPM and for a time, when Bruce looked at the ground, the earth was a brown and green maze, the white roads snake-lines cutting and switching, and the parked planes brightly painted butterflies.

He turned two more laps, crossed the grandstand line and hiked the ship to five hundred feet. Peeling away from the course, he swung around in a great arc and stuck the plane into a shallow angle toward the field. He kept his power on and landed in hard bumps on the green grass, rolling along until Charley McClintock came running to take one wing and Kick Balis —of all people—the other.

Balis was grinning as Bruce climbed down and stretched his legs. It seemed to Bruce that every time he'd ever seen the tall, confident Balis he was grinning, and he saw now that three years in converted Mustangs and Thirty-Eights had only made him more obnoxious.

"Getting a little stiff?" Balis asked. "Seems to me there must be other things a guy your age can do."

"A habit's a habit," Bruce Mellows said. "When you work for a living, that is. Or does that strike you as odd?"

"Just like cheese," Balis said to McClintock. "He gets sharper with age."

Bruce felt something drawing tight inside him and he walked stiffly around the wing and opened the cowl. McClintock and Balis leaned over his shoulder.

"Sounded fine up there," McClintock said. "Open long?"

"About two laps. I know what she's good for and I don't like to sweat her too



much. I ground those valves again, they're about as tight as they can get."

"Well, the old man has got an engine in there after all," Kick Balis said, and laughed. "I thought you'd wound up a bunch of rubber bands and stretched them on a stick."

Bruce Mellows snapped the cowl shut and turned around. He was not tall, but he was wide and powerful.

"Why don't you go on downtown and spend some of that dough?" he said evenly, and Balis stopped grinning. "Why don't you clear out and leave the common people do their work?"

"I like it right where I am," Balis said, and Balis was wary, waiting. Charley McClintock coughed delicately behind his hand.

"This may not appeal to you gentlemen, but among my duties are those relating to the maintenance of order and so forth, et cetera. Dull stuff, I know, but that's the way it is." McClintock laughed and stepped between them. "You don't want to put me on the spot, do you? After all, it's a soft job and I'd like to keep it."

Kick Balis stepped back and grinned. "You're safe, Charley. I was just checking the old man's engine temperature. See you around." He walked away, laughing over his shoulder. "See you in the big blue, Mellows. I've got an idea we're going to have a real fine time, yes, sir."

"That guy," Bruce Mellows said. "That guy gets worse every time I see him."

"Well, he's here," McClintock said, laughing. "He means business, I guess. That ship he's got is a honey. Cabiniss built it; plastic weldwood, monocoque. I've seen it fly; a whiz."

"I'm leaping for joy," Buck said, and they began to walk away from the plane. They were near the central hangar before McClintock said, "Say, it sort of slipped my mind out there, but I ran into Guthrie

while you were up and he said he'd like to see you."

"He did, huh," Bruce said, and kept on walking. "What did he sound like? You never know what those guys mean at a party."

"Couldn't say, Bruce. Never know what he means any time. I just hope he's not backing down on you."

"Yeah," Bruce said drily. "A guy can stand only so much bad news at once."

GUTHRIE was not around the field when Bruce reached the hangar, so he took a cab across the causeway to the hotel on the Beach where Guthrie maintained a suite during race week. He was an oil man who held large government contracts for aviation gasoline, and his interest in flying was intense. Sometimes he doled out favors, and it was one of these which had brought him and Bruce together. Only last night, at the banquet he had given for the pilots, he'd told Bruce that he'd had his eye on him for quite a while.

Bruce inquired at the desk and went directly to the top-floor rooms which overlooked the ocean. Guthrie, a large man with a florid face and sport shirt to match, opened the door and welcomed Bruce into the lavish living room.

"Charley McClintock said you wanted to see me," Bruce said, and he somehow felt uncomfortable being in there with Guthrie. It was almost as though he was dependent upon the big man's whims for his future, and Bruce had never been indebted to anyone before.

"I just wanted to review our conversation," Guthrie said importantly. "That little chat we had last night." He smiled expansively. "Sometimes it does well to clear the air after a party like that."

"I see; sure." Bruce sat in a chair near a window overlooking the beach. "I got the thing worked out pretty well. I figure to start either here or Tucson or



San Diego, all warm-weather spots, with a fair amount of clear sky. In time I'd plan to have facilities in each of those places, each one a complete setup in itself—take a man right through from primary to advanced. Instruments and everything. It'll cost something when it reaches that stage, but in time it'll pay its freight."

Guthrie stood in the middle of the room with his hands behind his back, his stomach bulging slightly over a woven leather belt. "Well, that's pretty ambitious," he said carefully, and he cleared his throat. "I don't recall that we covered all that ground last night."

Bruce hitched forward in the chair. "Well, that's the ultimate goal. Couldn't start off that size, of course; probably have to get along on primary stuff for a while until I built a rep. Probably set up at Tucson first, and expand from there."

"Well, that might not be bad," Guthrie said. The oil man lit a cigar and offered one to Bruce, who refused. "What about cost?"

"I think fifty thousand ought to make it safe. That would be enough for a few PT's, a couple of Links, field rental and office and ground school space. I can put up ten of that in cash, and scrape up another ten or so on a loan."

"That would make me liable for say twenty-five," Guthrie said. He went to the broad window and stared out at the water. Bruce had the sudden feeling that everything was not going right. He had explained most of this the night before and now Guthrie was making him go over it all again.

"I'll tell you, Bruce," Guthrie said reflectively. "I like you, but I can't let sentiment come between me and whatever I put into this thing."

"I understand that," Bruce said uncomfortably, and for the first time he had the vague wish that he'd never talked to Guthrie at all.

"What I mean is," Guthrie said, "that we've got to exploit every asset we've got. Every one."

"I've got a fair rep to start on," Bruce said. "I've got a lot of hours, and I've showed the midget ropes to quite a few. I think I can handle it."

"You miss the point," Guthrie said and he faced Bruce squarely. "You're an asset; your name, your ability. It will mean a lot, I think, if you win tomorrow, or if you lose. Everybody likes a winner, Bruce. Nobody likes a loser. This thing will depend on you, see? You make a clean sweep and we'll get definite."

"I don't know that I can guarantee that," Bruce said, and he stood up. "But I understand what you mean all right. I'll do my best, but that's all I can say. There'll be some good boys out there."

"I've heard that, and that's why it's important. Get you off to a flying start. Even Balis is back for this one, isn't he? Met him one time; hard feller to understand."

Guthrie laughed, walked to the door and opened it. "You do just like I say and we'll talk business. I want a win and then we make plans. I've got a few thoughts on this myself; you've got to make money, you know. And so do I. You'll use Guthrie aviation products at all installations. I've got a tie-in with an electrical firm, and that will mean ignition parts, spark plugs, batteries and so forth. A smart business man never leaves any loose ends around, Bruce."

Guthrie laughed again as Bruce went through the door.

BACK at the field Bruce found Kick Balis peering into the cowl of a ship more beautiful than any he had ever seen before. It almost made him ill to look at it. There wasn't an exposed seam anywhere, and what rivets it had were all flush with the satin-smooth skin. Balis grinned.

"I hear you've been holding hands with



Guthrie," he said, laughing. "Watch out for that guy; he'll have your uppers."

"You had the wrong ear to the ground," Bruce said and he walked slowly around the small plane, looking at it closely. It was a custom job, no back-yard makeshift. "What'll it do?" he asked.

"Never stretched it out yet," Balis said. "Been saving it for you. Tell you what, I'm going up for a shot now. You want to come on up and tag along? My propwash won't bat you around too much."

"You ought to save that stuff until it's over," Bruce said. He thought carefully. He hadn't planned to fly again until the race, but Balis made it difficult to stick to that. "All right," he said. "Let's go."

Bruce walked across the tarmac to his ship, flagged one of the ground men to pull his prop through, and climbed into the pit. Balis was already taxiing when he checked his mags, and the new plane was in the air and moving into the course by the time his engine was warm and he was bouncing across the field.

He took the first pylon at a ninety-degree bank and swung in behind Balis who was far ahead, but holding back for him; he caught him on the second lap and they went down the grandstand stretch wing and wing, fifty feet above the ground. Bruce could see a crowd had gathered and he knew the gang had been waiting for a shake-out like this. The thing between him and Kick had been on the fire for quite a while.

They watched each other carefully for another lap before Balis dropped down suddenly and under, diving for the inside of the grandstand pylon. Bruce sliced down behind him, above his wing, kicked his throttle and booted his ship around a scant five feet above the other one. When they were level on the stretch Balis had the pole, but they were even prop to prop.

Balis held his advantage during that lap and the one that followed, and Bruce did not try to pass but watched him carefully.

He had flown against Balis many times before but not recently, and he wanted to find out what the big ships had done for him. Balis had always been a casual, care-free pilot; and his grin through the canopy told Bruce there was no change in that.

For three laps he sat above and slightly behind the other ship and then he swung down and under at the starting-line marker. He looked up quickly as he passed beneath and he saw Balis' wings slice down at the turn and arc sharply above him. They came into the stretch flat out and very low; Bruce's engine screamed at top speed and he grinned quickly as Balis failed to pass above him. It made him feel loose and easy again; some of the unsuspected tension went out of him.

There were fifteen laps in the standard heat. Bruce took the remaining distance at top speed and low along the ground. He was careful to keep his lead as solid as he could and he skinned his pylons with only inches between him and the markers. He was going fast enough and hot enough to beat out ordinary competition, and while he was keeping his lead on Balis, he knew there was nothing ordinary about the other man. It was a pleasure to cross the line in front; but his lead was less than five yards and it was something to think about.

Charley McClintock was on the field to take Bruce's wing when he rolled up to the chocks, and he grinned as Bruce hopped from the pit.

"Well, that was a show," he said. "A lot of people around here been waiting for that. It kind of whets the appetite for tomorrow."

"Yeah, I guess it would at that," Bruce said. He looked around the field and at Balis' ship sitting on the tarmac with a curious crowd around it. He tried to be happy that he'd come in first in this, a trial run, a sparring off, but he could not. It was easy for Charley and the others, who had no great stake, to be gay and en-



joy it. But the five-yard lead was not much room. He kept thinking that as he walked across the field.

AND after a dreary night of speculation and wondering, and little sleep, it was daylight again and Bruce was sitting in the pit of his ship, running his eyes over the instruments, fingering the throttle bar and taking an overlong time to fasten his crash hat. It was going to be a racehorse start, from the ground on up, and looking down the line, he could see the other ships—Anderhiven, Sorenson, Gard, Mason—crowded up and waiting for the big flag from the platform to the side. He could see the mechanics and ground men standing about the ships; the meat wagons and fire trucks resting at points of vantage around the course; the crowds moving in the grandstand and sitting in parked cars along the borders of the field.

Then the engine flag came down and Charley McClintock flipped the fan for priming. Bruce was looking around for Balis but there was no more time for that now because Charley was swinging hard on the prop and up and down the line the engines of the other ships were bursting into life. Bruce's kicked on the third pull and he stood on the brakes while Charley went around to the tail and grabbed. Bruce checked the mags and let the engine warm.

The time between the engine flag and the starting flag was brief but in those moments Bruce seemed to see a parade of the many years he had been flying pass before him. He thought quickly of the days of barnstorming, of mail flying, of fighter time, and then the midgets. It all seemed to culminate in this, his greatest effort. This was the biggest chance he'd ever had, and would likely ever have. It would have to be a win today, or never.

Bruce was thinking these things when the flag flicked down. He popped the stick

forward and crabbed his rudder into the slight cross-wind as the fan grabbed and the line of ships began to bounce across the field. To his right Anderhiven slewed close, then straightened. Sorenson was on his left and he tried to see around him for Balis, but he didn't spot him until the flight was airborne and streaking for the pylon. Then Balis screamed up from the left and was number one around the marker.

Bruce was number three after Balis, with Wilmert in between them. He tried to break through right then, a bad place, but the slipstream from the two planes bucked him and the plane jerked dangerously near to stalling as he laid the wings around the pylon. The tall, checkered pole blinked obliquely in his canopy as he scraped around and steadied the ship. He had made ground but he was still in third. Balis had the lead buttoned tight when they hit the stretch and began to settle down.

The first laps were bad for doing anything and Bruce let things ride until the field had lengthened out. The going was close and dangerous for the rest of that lap and the three that followed, and he concentrated on holding his position and keeping the others in back of him. Gasman made a big play for third in the second lap and Sorenson tried to jump in the fourth. He sliced down hard on the grandstand pylon, and for a short second his tilted wing lay dangerously near Bruce's landing gear. Then Bruce cut down tighter in his bank and the other ship fell back.

The pressure eased somewhat after the fourth, and with eleven left Bruce went after Wilmert. The green plane flew some fifty yards ahead and slightly below and he could see Wilmert's head through the glass. Sometimes he could see his hands as they squeezed the throttle and moved the stick. Bruce rode in that position through the end of the lap, then ducked



town into Wilmert's blind spot and closed his throttle to the wall.

In the sixth lap he was up close and he could tell that Wilmert had begun to look around. The green ship lay just above him and ahead, and occasionally it would fishtail slightly as the pilot tried to find him. He did it once too often in the seventh and Bruce switched lower and not thirty feet above the ground; when the pylon swam by Bruce cut deep around, and as the planes leveled he rode second by fifteen feet.

Then only Balis was left and Balis' fine ship was flying low, less than a hundred yards ahead. Bruce glanced back at the next pylon, saw the others sliding back and knew that only he and Balis had a chance. It was somehow fateful that it should be that way, he thought, because Balis was his prize pupil and the only thing that stood between him and what he wanted most.

Bruce flew close and studied Balis carefully as the laps went up. He tried to remember what he had taught the smug young man, and after a while it was almost like watching himself go through his paces. Bruce could have got a laugh from that, and perhaps felt complimented, if the day had been different, and if it had been another man.

In the thirteenth lap Bruce had worked up close enough to make his play for first, and he glanced down quickly as the two ships wailed along the grandstand leg. Down there somewhere in the crowd Guthrie was looking up and waiting. Bruce could almost imagine how the fat-faced man would be watching him with narrow eyes and perhaps counting the results already in a manner that spelled profit or loss on a balance sheet. He tried to think how it would be with Guthrie leaning over his shoulder all the time, laying down the law on how the money would be spent. He remembered how Balis had referred to Guthrie, and he

wondered how he had hit so near the truth. If Bruce won he would have his flying school, but it would be a question if he could call his life his own.

Then the fourteenth and the fifteenth and the most important three-mile stretch of air that Bruce would ever fly. The two ships clung together as though tied, scooped down nearly wing and wing at the turns and hopped out hot and level in the flats. Bruce saw the earth swim crazily beneath him and he saw the crash truck and meat wagons with their drivers sitting, watching.

In the stretch before the last he worked up carefully to pass. He was just above and to the rear and there was no chance of secrecy in this because Balis knew he was there and what he had in mind. He stretched up higher still and then the pylon was in his windscreen and Balis was skinning around; Bruce depressed the stick savagely and aimed the ship for the tiny space between the checkered fabric and the other plane. It dropped like a stone, and the space was there—and then it wasn't; Balis wrenched his turn in tighter and the passage closed.

Bruce jerked his stick and kicked hard rudder to avoid the crash and fought rough air as he cut across the propwash of the other ship. He was thirty yards behind when he hit the stretch and kicked in level, and he'd made up none of that when the line went underneath him.

**B**RUCE was out of the ship before the prop stopped jerking, and walking across the field toward the hangar. Charley McClintock was puffing when he caught him at the edge of the field.

"It's okay, Bruce; hell, you flew a damn good race. You nearly had him there."

Bruce stopped and stood wearily; he was trying to think what had made him take off across the field that way. "Nearly



isn't good enough in that one, Charley," he said. "And I taught the guy to fly; how do you like that? He pulled the same stunt on me I've used a hundred times."

"We all get beat some time," McClintock said lamely.

"I know, but it wasn't supposed to happen this time." Bruce looked around the field. The other ships were coming in, and he could see Balis talking with the ground men at his ship. He looked for Guthrie, but couldn't find him. McClintock squeezed his arm.

"I was talking to him," he said carefully. "I mean Guthrie; he left. I'm sorry, Bruce. I know it was what you wanted, but now I don't know if you're not better off at that."

"I was kind of thinking the same thing," Bruce said. "Then again, my life might not have been my own, but at least I would have had a crack at something I've always wanted. You see, Charley, there are two sides to that one, too."

Bruce slapped McClintock's shoulder and headed away toward the airport cafeteria. He wanted to sit down and think; he wanted to smoke a cigarette and maybe have a cup of coffee and just be alone and think. He was nearly to the door when Balis caught him. Balis was smiling, as usual, but he didn't seem so cocky now.

"You're faster on the ground than you are in the air, Bruce," he said.

Bruce looked at Balis and smiled. He couldn't be angry with him now; he'd flown a good race and he'd won square. He held out his hand and Balis took it, firmly. "Congratulations," Bruce said. "I didn't mean to pass you up. I guess I was just thinking."

"I know," Balis said. "Guthrie. Don't knock my head off for saying this, but I'm kind of glad he walked out on you that way. I've been mixed up with him, and like I said, your uppers aren't your own."

"You?" Bruce stared.

Balis nodded and looked around the field. "I had some land passed on to me by my father—west Texas land; and I didn't know much about it. I guess I never knew much about anything except flying, and you taught me that. Anyway Guthrie got his claws into me one time and I agreed to a scheme he had for developing it. By the time he was through with me I'd footed all the bills and he had my land spouting oil wells five to the acre—and I was on the outside looking in. It'd be the same with you, Bruce. He'd use you for what you were worth to him and when it was over you'd have your calluses to show for it."

"Funny, I had the same thought," Bruce said. "I guess I ought to thank you for confirming a suspicion."

"That's okay," Balis smiled. "There's a string to it. I was thinking about that school you had in mind. I've still got some cash, but I think it ought to go into something I understand—like flying." Balis stuck his tongue in his cheek and looked at the clouds. "Maybe a main office in Tuscon with branches in San Diego and here in Miami." He grinned at Bruce. "I know we never hit it off very well, but I figure it would be worth our while to unite our defenses against poachers like Guthrie."

"I'm a pretty bad risk right now," Bruce said. "Anyway if you think like Guthrie I am. I didn't hold up my end."

"You did for me," Balis said. "The proof is in the pudding or something like that. What I mean, the proof of a good instructor is in the student, isn't it? And who beat the old hand? With his own tricks? I think we ought to have a cup of java and at least talk this thing over, don't you?"

Bruce scratched his head and tried to think it out. It was a new idea, and one to get used to. But just then he couldn't think of any objections.



# MIGHTY MEN of SPORT

by Ben Nelson  
STOCKS ALLEN



## CALIFORNIA NINE

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, WITH A RECORD OF 37 WON AND 12 LOST, FIELDED AN ALL-TIME GREAT COLLEGE TEAM IN THE NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP AGAINST YALE AT KALAMAZOO IN 1944.

**BIG LEAGUE SCOUTS HAD FOLLOWED THE MIGHTY TROJANS: PITCHERS WALLY HOOD (150 STRIKE-OUTS, 20 WON AND 2 LOST INCLUDING 3 VICTORIES OVER BIG LEAGUE CLUBS) SOUTHPAW TOM KIPP, DICK BISHOP; CATCHERS BOB ZUBER AND BRUCE MCKELVEY; HANK CEDILLOS AT FIRST, ART MAZMANIAN AT SECOND, JIM BRIDEWESER AT SHORT, BILL LILLIE AT THIRD; OUTFIELDERS CAPT. HANK WORKMAN (HITTING .341 WITH 11 HOME RUNS) GORDON JONES, GAIL HENLEY.**



Wally Hood

IT WAS JIM DUFFUS, YALE'S NO. 2 HURLER, AGAINST WALLY HOOD IN THE OPENER. THE ELIS PICKED UP AN UNEARNED RUN AND THE SCORE STOOD THAT WAY GOING INTO THE 9TH WHEN MCKELVEY DRILLED AN 8TH HIT OFF DUFFUS. HENLEY FLIED OUT. LILLEY SINGLED.



Hank Workman

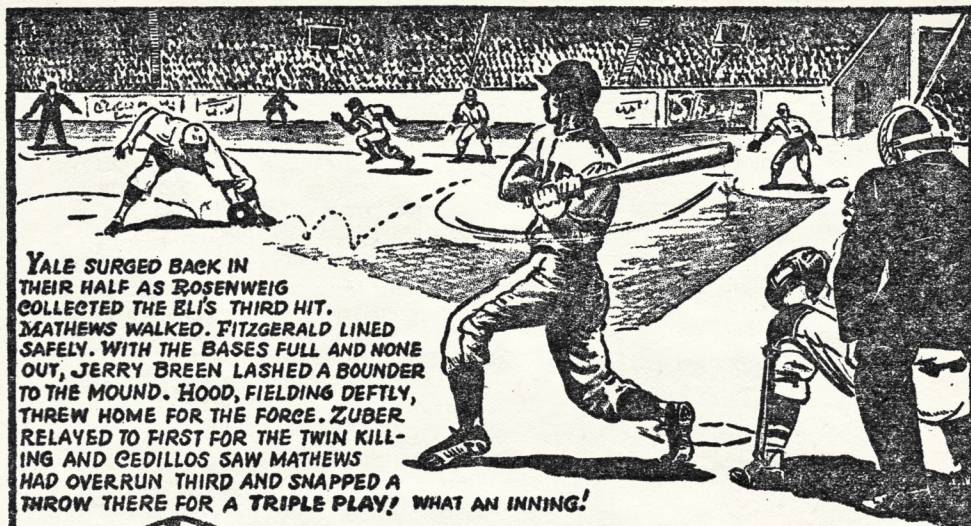


THEN CEDILLOS HIT ONE THAT DELOS SMITH KNOCKED DOWN AND RIFLED HOME TO NIP THE RUNNER SLIDING IN—BUT THE ELI CATCHER DROPPED THE BALL AND THE SCORE WAS TIED.

HOOD HIT TO THE SAME SPOT AND SMITH'S THROW TO THE PLATE WAS AGAIN DROPPED, LILLIE SCORING. CEDILLO CAME IN ON GORDON JONES' LONG FLY AND THE TROJANS LED 3-1!







**YALE SURGED BACK IN THEIR HALF AS ROSENWEIG COLLECTED THE ELI'S THIRD HIT. MATHEWS WALKED. FITZGERALD LINED SAFELY. WITH THE BASES FULL AND NONE OUT, JERRY BREEN LASHED A BOUNDER TO THE MOUND. HOOD, FIELDING DEFTLY, THREW HOME FOR THE FORCE. ZUBER, RELAYED TO FIRST FOR THE TWIN KILLING AND CEDILLOS SAW MATHEWS HAD OVERRUN THIRD AND SNAPPED A THROW THERE FOR A TRIPLE PLAY! WHAT AN INNING!**



**YALE'S ACE FRANK QUINN EVENED THE COUNT WITH AN 8-3 VICTORY OVER KIPP WHICH BROKE USC'S 19-GAME WINNING STREAK, BUT DICK BISHOP PITCHED THE PLAYOFF FOR A FINE 9-2 TROJAN WIN AND THE CHAMPIONSHIP.**

**THE YANKEES SIGNED WALLY HOOD AND HANK WORKMAN. GORDON JONES WENT TO THE INDIANS, TOM KIPP TO THE PIRATES. SHORT-STOP MOHER OF YALE SIGNED WITH THE TIGERS, DICK MATHEWS WITH THE PHILLIES, FRANK QUINN WITH THE RED SOX FOR \$50,000. BIG LEAGUERS ALL!**



# BLUE LINE BELTER

By JOHN PRESCOTT



Tommy's last sweep and quick pass sewed things up. . . .

*Curley's skates had cooled and the lightning had left his stick—but deep in his fighter's heart he knew that there's always room in the big time for a guy who can make five others play—the game of his life!*

ALL season we'd been scrabbling like tired pit-bulls toward the play-offs. All season—three nights a week sometimes—we would put on the armor and go out and throw steel and

lumber, first at the Blues and then the Hawks and the Leafs and the Rangers. All this time we were getting more tired and more worn out and more wonky with each other. The forward line would lose



patience with the defense and the goalie would bark at the forward wall, and then the defense boys would snarl at Charley Arens, the coach, and finally everybody would take it out on Curley Agate.

Everybody but me; because Curley was my boy and it didn't make any difference to me that they were down on him. Popular opinion or no, it still felt good to have his two-twenty up there in the line with me.

Curley Agate had played wing with the Shamrocks longer than most of the guys could remember. He had played longer than I—he'd taught me the fine points of the game, such as incapacitating members of the opposition without incurring the jaundiced eye of the ref. Curley had been with the Shamrocks as long as Charley Arens, himself. Indeed, he had been with them so long he was very nearly bald.

It was this outward sign of debility which at first had caused Charley Arens to sound Curley out cautiously at the beginning of the season, on the possibility of his taking a spot on some farm club's coaching staff; that and what Charley took as signs of sloppiness in Curley's stick handling. Of course this did not appeal to Curley and Charley should have known better than to ask, because Curley's idea of making a living out of hockey was to play it until he melted away with the ice. He should have known better for another reason; it was common knowledge—I was his pal and I admit it—that Curley lacked the natural savvy to coach mice to eat cheese.

And so all that season we scratched and clawed along, we got tired and browned off at one another. We in the forward wall swore and cursed at the defense and the goalie and at Charley Arens, and then Charley would make red eyes at Curley. But Curley never seemed to pay any attention to these manifestations of ill will, and whether we won or lost he would still be in the line, bigger and

fatter and older and more floundering than ever.

Floundering. That was Charley's word for it and it got picked up by some of the others, but Curley was my boy and I wouldn't let my mind think that way. I wouldn't, until our last game with the Blues, and then no long years of brotherly love or all the beers we drank together could help me then. The scales fell away from my eyes and I saw him the way Charley and the others did. He really was floundering.

THE BLUES had never been any sort of a snap anyway and with the playoffs coming up they were just that much worse. They had a lot of formidable people on their side of the red line and they all paid their own way and then some. It was even up with goose eggs at the end of the second period.

As usual Curley Agate, Race Jordine and myself were the starting line and when the ref dropped the rubber in the red-line circle I went all out and fought it back to Curley. He was to my left and back. He took it and circled and while the Blue wing chased him he fired cross-ink to the right and I took it off the boards. Race was waiting for my pass and he got it at center ice and went across the blue line.

The Blue defense was well back against the cage but Race stalled around to draw them out and gave me the rubber to take it in. It was an old dodge and it didn't work; they closed the gap before I could spring it; I took the puck around the cage and fired out to Curley. Curley took it straight in like a diesel locomotive and they all went down together in the cage.

Curley got two minutes for that one and when I lost the face-off, Race and I played Horatio At The Bridge all the way back to our own blue line.

Back there against the nets it got rough and Race tangled with the Blue center long enough to force a pass which wob-



bled badly across the rink. It came my way and I made a stab, but missed and was drawn out; the Blue wing picked it up and went around behind me. When I swerved the wing was tied up with our defense. Ganning made a short stab and stumbled and the Blue wing went over him and flat. The rubber went wild again and Race picked it up. He took it around the nets and passed out to me, but they tied up and the Blue center nailed it and lit up the bulb. A fine thing, and I swore a little bit at Curley.

After the face-off Curley came out of the box and we shagged up and down the ice for another minute or so before Charley sent the other line in. I managed to get the rubber on the drop and we stuck together, hogging it in short passes, until we got down around their blue line. I took it around the cage once and then Race did it and by that time Curley came out and we gave it to him. But Curley had no more grace or method than a third-stringer in some D league.

He got off on one of those battering-ram drives again and I stood there and thought about some more time in the box. Then he seemed to remember; he hauled up short. He looked wildly around for a receiver but he didn't have time to shoot and the Blue defense got him all fouled up before he could get rid of the rubber. They got it away from him and off in one corner. Race and I went in and clubbed around until the whistle blew for a face-off. Charley called us off then, and Musik, Jillicoe and Barnes went in.

On the bench it was nice to just sit there for a couple of minutes and not think of anything but how good it was to be right there and not out on the ice. I was beat up and sore all over, and furthermore I was more winded than usual, because when Curley had gone in the box that way he had put the load on Race Jordine and me; and we weren't kids.

But if I thought I felt bad I only had to

look sidewise at Curley. There sat real misery. He not only had the sag of a physical washout, but the badgered look of someone who knows he's done wrong and just can't feel lousy enough for it. When he looked that way, with his simple round face kind of crumpled and with the perspiration standing in bright beads on his high forehead, it made me think of some kid who needs a keeper. And like it or not, that's what I'd become to the guy. I got real sad looking at him sagged over that way and I slapped his leg.

"You ought to be more careful with that stuff," I said. "You don't want to try back-breaking when the ref's looking."

Curley looked at me and grinned sheepishly; when he did that you wanted to pat him on the head, or scratch him behind his ears. You couldn't stay mad.

"I didn't plan it that way," he said. "Everything just seemed to go wrong. I got fouled up and there was nothin' to do but plow."

"Yeah," I said, and I didn't add that it looked that way. Curley was at one time about the fanciest wing with the stick in the business, but it was different now when he got confused or something and used brawn. I looked down at Curley and Charley surprised me by looking up the bench at me. He had real cold, pale eyes and he was looking at me as if I were an accessory after the fact. Then he looked at Curley and I knew there was going to be a post-game session. You could always tell that when Charley's eyes fastened on some guy that way.

I looked away and half listened while Curley laboriously unwound a pointless tale about a traveling salesman. He just got to the most pointless part of it when there was a big noise all around and Jillicoe had got one on the Blues. After the face-off Curley finished the yarn and I was spared the pain of asking him the gimmick when Charley sent us in again.

Tied up that way with only a few min-



utes left, the pressure seemed about twice what it had been at any other time. It was an occasion for heads up, ace-high hockey, and it would be nice to say the Shamrocks rallied in fine style and racked up a half dozen or so in true champion form.

As it was we were looser than a bag of bolts. We staggered around like old sergeants at a G.A.R. encampment. We made only one concerted drive for the Blue cage and we got all fouled up around the rear of it and by the time we did clear into the open Curley stumbled and missed Jordine's pass. It was too far for me, and anyway the defense checked me out.

After that we fought practically on our hands and knees in front of our own cage and it was very rough and wild down there for quite a long time. It all broke up unexpectedly when Farley, the goalie, made a freak save that sent the puck skittering far up-ice. It went way beyond the circling Blue forward wall and by the time they broke from our cage Race was going like a dash man after it.

He picked it up around the red line and took it straight down and past the blue line. He was all alone and the Blue defense had it figured for him to go around and hole up behind the nets until Curley and I came down. But they had it all worked out wrong that time, and Race took it straight on through the small gap they left when they spread and left the cage open. The red light glared and three seconds after the face-off the game ended.

DOWN in the showers we were all walking around being sort of quiet and really surprised at the way things turned out. From the way we'd been going all night we didn't deserve that one; it was screwy, and it was hard to believe it was true.

But that didn't last very long and pretty soon Charley was walking up and down the lockers talking soft to this guy

and that about how he'd like to see him at his convenience—meaning just as soon as he got that flashy tie whipped up around his neck and his coat on. He didn't hit me, but he hit Curley, just like I knew he would.

After Curley'd gone up to Charley's office in the stadium I dressed slowly and hung around for a while talking to the guys who were checking equipment, and when they went home I talked to a couple of guys who were cleaning up the locker room. They left and I went up and sat near the rink and watched the ice melt in the white lights and wide quiet; and after a long while, when Curley didn't come at all, I knew it was something big and that there was no sense in waiting any longer.

When there was no game the next night we would sometimes go to a trap not very far from the stadium to have a snack and listen to the tin music, but I didn't go that night; instead I went to the hotel we had which was not on a bright street and which was half way across town from the trap and the stadium. I sat in the littered lobby until midnight and then I went up to the room Curley and I lived in. At twelve-thirty he barged in. No, barged is the wrong word. He sort of flowed in, like water under the door. He had a weak, liquid smile and he sat down hard on the edge of his bed.

AT FIRST I thought he was tanked up because every move he made was studied and deliberate; the way he took his hat off, and his gloves, and unbuttoned his coat, and the way he put the cigarette pack carefully on the table and then took one and lit it. It was just like some stew would do when he was trying to convince somebody, or maybe himself, that everything was normal. But when he got it lit and began to talk I knew he wasn't tanked. He was just scared; scared bad.



"You know what happened?" he asked, and I shook my head. I didn't, but he had been up there a long time and I could guess.

"Charley had a lot to say."

"Not only Charley," Curley said. "The big bosses came in too, after Charley got through with me. The owners. They got a way of not saying much, but what little they say means a hell of a lot."

"What was it?" I asked, and that was kind of stupid because I knew almost as well as Curley what the owners had said. But it wasn't nice to be obvious that way and not surprised.

"They said if I don't sharpen up they aren't going to renew my contract for next year; they said I might not even get into the playoffs—if we get to the playoffs, that is."

If he had said that almost any time up to that game with the Blues I'd have said the owners all required some sort of psychiatric consultation, but I knew I'd been blind and that it was not just the case of one game, but one of a series which I had been too biased to see impartially.

It was easy now to see how they felt because when you looked at Curley sitting hunched up and bulging in his overcoat, with little fretting lines running from the corners of his eyes and with the bridge lamp splashing against the ceiling and then upon his head you could see him as they had. You could see that he was big and overweight and getting old and sloppy. He did not look like the greatest wing in the business any more; he did not look alert or clever or any of those things. He looked tired and worried; and then he looked scared; and I had an idea why that was, too. Sometimes Curley's money went before the ink was dry on the paycheck.

"But they didn't say definitely, did they?" I asked him, and that sounded like wishful thinking even to me.

"Yeah, they did. They said I was getting slow and fat and that I'd lost my touch with the stick; relying on weight instead of skill."

"That plunge you made into the nets, for instance."

"Yeah, that for one. It seems that cost us a goal."

"While you were in the box it did," I said. "You were tired."

Curley took a deep drag on the cigarette and ground it out. "I was tired all right! I just wanted to get the rubber through there and get the business over with. I was beat, all right."

Curley smiled slowly and we both knew what it meant. He'd only been in two minutes when they'd called the foul. . . .

BEING a slack day there was nothing to do about hockey in the morning, but there was this thing nagging at me and so I went over to the stadium to look for Charley Arens. He was up in his office checking attendance figures and I had to wait nearly five minutes before I could see him.

"You come over here to mix with me about Agate?" he asked me when he let me in; and right away I knew there was trouble if I had a mind to be belligerent and remind him how much Curley had done for the squad. It didn't seem like any time for that.

"No," I said. "But Curley's my pal and I like to help him when he's in trouble. He's in it, ain't he?"

Charley Arens looked tired and harassed all of a sudden.

"He's in it, all right," he agreed, "more than he thinks. He hasn't played a really decent game all season. He's lost every bit of snap and elusiveness he ever had. He was great at one time; about the best wing in the game. He was really hot," Charley added reminiscently.

"He taught me just about all I know," I said to Charley. "That's why I'm here.



It don't seem like you could be through with him when he's meant so much around here."

"I know, damn it, I know; but we still got to make a living out of this. I feel lousy, too, but the bosses tell me this is no lounging club for varsity letter men, so what am I going to do? They want to can him. They want to drop him at the end of the season. And if he doesn't sharpen up he doesn't even get to the play-offs; he doesn't get to wind up this season."

"Listen," I said. "You mentioned some kind of a coaching deal for him somewhere; how about that?"

Charley smiled wanly with his old face and looked tired again.

"That's my way of lettin' him down easy, kid. I don't have the heart to can him outright, like the big boys want, so what I can do is release him here and send him to a farm outfit to coach. But he'll never make it. He don't have it, kid. He can't even organize himself any more. They'll let him go inside of two weeks—one-time big name or not. After that—" Charley shrugged.

"I don't even know if you could sell him on a coaching job," I said. "He wants to play hockey. Doesn't want to sit and watch."

"His days of getting what he wants are over," Charley said. "Fact is, he's as good as a reserve right now. I got a guy coming in here sometime this week; guy named Tommy Canon. I'm going to alternate him with Curley and see how things go."

"That's going to hurt."

"I know, but what can I do? I like the guy, too. But what can I do with the pressure from upstairs? He might just as well face it and be honest with himself; he just can't move any more. I just wish to hell he'd saved some dough. I just wish all those guys he so gladly handed the stuff out to had paid him back."

I DIDN'T say anything to Curley about the talk with Arens. I didn't mention any part of the affair at all; I just picked on him a little for being overweight. He was still gobbling enough for two at each meal, and that wasn't enough; he had to trot out every night, before we turned in, for a snack. I finally got him to give that up on the last day of the week. Or maybe I didn't; maybe it was because this Tommy Canon showed up that day and just completely scared him out of all thoughts of extra meals.

It would have been easier all the way around for my loyalties if this Canon had been a lout with a big mouth who was out to shove Curley out of the game as fast as he could. But he wasn't. He was the sort of a nice kid you'd like for a younger brother. He had smooth, neutral sort of hair, quiet gray eyes and the kind of manners that made him say, "Excuse me," when he walked in front of you, or even in a game when his stick slipped or something like that.

You might expect a guy who's sort of retiring that way to be a little slow or backward with his game, but he wasn't that way either. He was just so completely sure and competent and swift about everything that he didn't have any occasion for crudeness or banalities like the rest of us.

We saw all that stuff in practice, of course, and we weren't exactly sure if it was some pose or not until he got to play in the three-game series we had with the Rangers during the next week. We had dropped the first one by a close score and it wasn't until about the middle of the third period of the second game that Charley put the kid in and took Curley out. We all saw, then, that it was no pose.

He was sweet music and strong, solid rhythm out there, believe me. That stick was no piece of hickory, but some natural appendage of his body, like another arm. It had nerves; it could sense things. It



licked white and darting along the ice like a serpent's tongue; it was in and around the Rangers' legs, tangling their skates, stealing the rubber. It was there and it wasn't; now you saw it, now you didn't. And he did all this with no more effort than you'd expend in dealing a deck of cards. His hair didn't even get mussed.

When he came into the game we were trailing by two goals and he hadn't been in for more than a minute and a half before he got one back nearly single-handed. In the next three minutes he helped us fight off a Ranger rush and then way back around our own cage he stole the puck from two men and took it all alone way up the ice. He passed to me in front of the Ranger cage and I held it while he went around the nets. When he came on out I fed to him and he made the prettiest backhand shot I ever saw in my life.

That tied things up and we jarred back and forth that way until less than a minute to the last gun. And then somehow Canon shook loose again down behind our own blue line and ran like a scared deer the full length of the rink. All the way down he kept looking around, but neither Race nor I could catch him and he had to take it in alone. He feinted beautifully to tie up the Ranger defense in its own sticks, and let fly at the goalie. The goalie didn't even see it go by him, and when the buzzer sounded he nearly jumped out of his skates.

The sound of the star-makers was deep and rising in acclamation as Tommy Canon came to center ice for the face-off. He had that same pleasant, unassuming expression, but he seemed really embarrassed by what he'd done. Nobody else was, though; there wasn't time for another Ranger thrust and it meant we were one more step up the ladder for the playoffs. We were all very happy, we were all very gay. Even Curley; but his happiness was not a personal matter for him, but had only to do with other people being glad.

ANY GUY but Curley would have been sore and would have gone around making snide remarks about Tommy Canon; any guy but Curley. Curley was not that way, even where the only job he'd ever had was concerned. He took to the kid like an uncle and Tommy would listen to him with solemn eyes as though he were truly in the presence. And I guess he was, because Curley had been the best wing there ever was.

But when he would sit on the bench and watch the kid play or in those quiet moments when no one was looking at him or when he thought no one was looking at him, I'd glance at him and I could tell that he knew. It was a hell of a way for him to go; any way you looked at it, it was rotten and no good and so I went up to see Charley about it again, and up there I got a big surprise.

"He's been reading books," Charley Arens said one morning when I saw him in his office. "He's been borrowing my books. You're his pal—I thought you knew."

"No," I said. "I didn't know. What books?"

"He's been reading my hockey books. I think maybe he's been thinking that coaching thing over. Who knows? Maybe he can pick up enough out of 'em to bluff the boys downstate. More power to him."

Well, if that's what Curley had been doing he had been very cagey because I hadn't seen any of them around the room. But then, since Tommy had been playing so regularly lately he had taken up that old night habit again and so he probably thumbed through the pages with the books propped up against a ketchup bottle in some beanery. I knew Curley was death on coaching, but maybe he'd begun to realize what all the rest of us knew.

You might think that with the new life Tommy Canon's presence had breathed into the squad we would take the remainder of the circuit in a breeze; but



such was not the case. Coincidental with his fortunate advent, we began to suffer injuries in such quantities that without him we would not even be thinking of the playoffs.

It began with the second Ranger game. In that one we were so mildly delirious to have come out on top that we did not take seriously a leg injury which Farley, the goalie had got. That is we didn't until we tangled with the Leafs two days later and he had to be carried from the rink. The doc said later that he'd never skate again. The sub Charley used wasn't confident and so Ganning and Pease had to play down closer to the cage than usual; no team can be elastic with that setup.

As if that was not enough both Jillico and Race Jordine picked up head gashes in the second Leaf game and they went around wall-eyed through part of the third period, and then sat on the bench for the last games of that series. We were one apiece when that happened and Charley used Curley in the last one. We dropped that by two goals, but we were still in the running.

It was a miracle of some sort that we had gotten that far, and with only the three-game bout with the Tomahawks remaining to decide the playoff contender there was a strange doubt which you could almost feel that we would not make it. You could feel it because nobody talked about the playoffs now. It was very strange and I did not notice how truly universal this was until I noticed Curley was no longer going out at night to eat, which meant he was no longer reading Charley's books.

The reason for that, I found, on the afternoon of the first Hawk game, was simple and elementary. He didn't have them any more. Charley was reading them himself.

"I'm just checking up," he said when I caught him in the act. "I've read these things a hundred times, but I'm going to

find out if I know everything I thought I did."

That was the way we went into the Tomahawk series. That night we won the first one, 3-2. Tommy Canon made one and Musik made one. Race Jordine made the other, and that was his last goal of the season. In the second game, the next night, he got laid out colder than a Mackenzie River salmon. Curley finished up for him and we dropped that one, 3-1.

So we still had one more try, and Curley Agate, bless him and curse him, had his chance to play. If there had been any way to avoid it I know Charley would have done it.

**T**HAT last game began with the next thing to murder. Charley Arens didn't explain to us just why he started the second line rather than Curley, Tommy and myself. It might have been that he wanted to save Tommy, but on the other hand I couldn't help but feel that he did not want to play Curley any sooner than he had to.

But doing it the way he did was no good either. We'd always counted on the first line to loosen things up some, wear the lumps off and tire the opposition somewhat. But with Jillicoe and Barnes and Musik it was the other way around. The Hawks introduced their heavy guns right off, and within the first three minutes they had a point and Ganning and Pease were playing so close to the sub goalie you couldn't see who was in the cage.

The line had no real chance to carry the offensive at all and after the first Hawk rush they had to spend most of the time they were in there down behind our own blue line. After five minutes of that Charley called them out, and he was biting his nails when we went in.

The Hawks were all hopped up and raving when we came on the ice, but they cooled off when I got the face-off and



forked it back to Tommy. They were just too slow for that kid and they didn't like it one bit. They made murderous stabs at the rubber but he passed it back to me and we headed toward the Hawk cage.

I had it on the boards to the right and they'd made such a big thing of going after Tommy that I had clear ice down to their blue line. I took it over and then gave it to Tommy; he took it deep around the cage and out. The Hawk line went in after him and he couldn't find me so he passed to Curley. Curley got set and fired but their right defense stepped in front of it. The defense man went back to his spot slightly doubled over, but he'd made a good goal bad.

The Hawks made the retrieve on that one and we beat retreat all the way back to our line before we turned and fought. They came down fast behind us but they weren't using the razzle-dazzle they'd used on their sweeps on our other line. They used brute force, and in high gear.

The puck went from wing to center and back again and then Curley swung and stepped into the next one and met the center and the puck as they crossed the blue line. I think he was just as surprised as the Hawk he took down with him, but surprised or otherwise it cost him two minutes in the box; they carried the Hawk away. After that it was slaughter in spades and I was very happy when the other line came in.

On the bench I sat next to Curley but I did not say anything; even though he'd had a two-minute rest in the box he was leaning back with his eyes closed and with his heart making little leaps in that soft place at the base of his throat. There was sweat all over him again and he was breathing like a foundry bellows.

Well, it was nice to sit there but those things never last long and after the second line had dropped another goal to the Hawks we went back under the hammer again. It was no better that time

than the first; it was worse. We did not manage to get any past the Hawk defense, but our sub goalie was so bad they were going by him like rain. At the end of the period we stood 4-0.

Down below between the stanzas nobody said anything but you could tell everybody was sick about the sub goalie and had his back slightly stiff about Curley playing that way and lousing things up. I was a little sore at him myself and yet when I looked at him all humped up in a corner of the locker room and when I remembered what he'd said about himself and hockey I couldn't be sore; only sorry for him. I knew Curley would never wear Shamrock skates again. . . .

FROM fear or anger Charley Arens gave it to us down there and when we went back up it seemed to help for a while. Tommy Canon sparked a nice drive which surprised just about everybody in the stadium, and when it ended we trailed by three. That brought some of the zip and snap back, long enough to sink another; and then Curley missed Tommy Canon's sweet pass, the Hawks picked it up in our own back yard and the sub goalie couldn't do a thing about it.

That seemed to do it. It's hell to see a good team come apart at the seams and unravel at both ends. Nothing we tried after that worked; the passes were wide, the legitimate checks were called foul and the close-in shots went wide. And through it all staggered and floundered Curley Agate. It was enough to make a grown man weep; and twice I saw Charley Arens with his head in his hands.

When we went down below at the end of that one there was solid gloom from wall to wall. There was no talk, just silent stares and deep breathing. Nobody paid any attention to Curley and until we came up on the ice I didn't notice that he wasn't with us. Someone said he was talking with Charley and to



go ahead with things and not hold up the game.

The second line began again for us and it stayed in there for five minutes. I was beginning to wonder what we were going to do about a third man for our own line when Charley and Curley came up the ramp. Charley called for time and went into a huddle with the officials. Curley went into the cage and talked to the sub goalie. Pretty soon the sub goalie took off his armor and came to the bench, and then the next thing I knew Tommy and I were in the line with Jillicoe. Curley was grinning at us from the cage.

"This is ridiculous, of course," Charley said dismally, "but the big baboon convinced me it's our only chance. It's not wisdom; it's a straw in the wind."

"Let's play hockey," the ref said.

**M**AYBE it was the novelty of the thing and maybe it was because we had our backs to the wall and were playing from desperation; it's hard to say. But we got back in the game. I speared the puck and the heat was on.

I gave it to Jillicoe and he gave it back and I took it across the red line and down

to the blue line and gave it to Tommy Canon. Tommy took it across and flipped it to Jillicoe. The Hawks looked like they were sleeping, or maybe they were trying to figure out what Curley was doing in the cage, but they missed Jillicoe's pass to me and there was no one around the cage when the bulb lit up.

That was nice, but it made them mad and they came back with blood in their eyes. They came back a thousand miles an hour; they caught Tommy in his tracks and dumped him into the boards at the red line; they caught Jillicoe at the blue line and got him all tangled up in their razzle-dazzle and they wound me up with our own defense.

They ran right over me like wild horses and I lay there thinking of poor Curley and waiting for the buzzer. Then I heard a lot of noise and I looked up and there were Hawks spattered all over the ice in front of the cage; and Curley had given the rubber to Ganning who was going up-ice past a dazed Hawk line. Their amazement was so clear it was nearly vocal; you could almost hear them: "Hey, he's a defense man. What's he doin' head-in' for our cage?"



The kid's bloody fists roared their final three-minute message—a message that thundered . . . there's no way to talk back to lights out leather, except to—

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Ganning scored alone.

After that it got a little complicated and in all truth I will say that there was so much going on out there I didn't understand that I was playing on reflex. Somehow or other it was strictly Curley's show. He sat back there like a general on a horse and directed things.

The Hawks came back like savages going to a blood-bath and each time they got through the forward wall and down to the cage Curley would break them up like strikes in a bowling alley. And each time when they would run like mad to cover Tommy and Jillicoe and me he would slip it to Ganning or Pease and then the Hawks would have to unscramble and try to figure it all out again. It was like having five men in the forward line.

And when they got readjusted he would pull the switch and give it to Jillicoe or me; and sometimes too when we had the puck for a long time the five of us would just circle around the Hawk cage taking pot-shots at it. Pretty soon I stopped feeling sorry for us and felt sorry for the Hawks instead. Pretty soon too I was trying to get used to the idea of having a win on our hands. Tommy Canon's last sweep and quick back-hand pass to Pease sewed things up. Right after that we had our game.

DOWN below silence had become a habit with us, but this time it wasn't despair, it was stupified wonder. The team-wrecker had somewhere acquired an Olympian wisdom and had become a sort of saint on skates; we all stood around and gazed at him while he wallowed in the shower. When he came out and towed himself someone brought him a small steak and a quart of beer. He finished both before he said a word.

"It's in the books," he said airily. "You ought to read 'em—all of you. It tells you all about timing and surprise tactics; how to confound the opposition. I

figured we needed something like that tonight. All the time I've been playing hockey I figured all I ever had to know was in the end of my stick. Well, it ain't so. Some of it's in the books."

I listened to this and then I looked at Charley and raised my eyebrows. Charley looked like he was thinking awfully hard about just where in his books that might be. Pretty soon he got happy.

"Maybe we can see about a nice down-state spot for you, Curley," he said. "This is a kind of surprise; I sure never expected anything like this. I thought you were nuts when you wanted to try it. But it worked, and that's what we pay off on. I guess I kind of underestimated you. What I mean is—well, they'd be really glad to have you down-state now. A first-rate job. Hell, I'll write you the best letter in the world."

"Thanks," Curley said, "but I still want to play hockey, not watch it. I didn't do so bad in the cage, did I? And with Farley out, what's the matter with me? I've been filling out some, I'm not so good for the line any more."

Charley looked like he'd just had a revelation or shock of some kind and he backed away from Curley.

"You? The greatest wing that ever lived? In the cage?"

"Sure, why not?" Curley said. "If they can't see the cage they can't hit it. Ain't that logical? That one ain't in the books; I'm a little ahead of 'em now."

Charley looked vacant for a few seconds and then he nodded with slow wonder and his face got all bright and shiny.

"You know, that just might work. By George, if they can't see it they can't hit it. It just can't be done! They can't hit it!"

"Why sure," Curley said, "that's simple." He looked at me. "That steak wasn't much. I better get some more. If I'm going to really fill out that cage I better get into training right now."





# ALL-SPORTS QUIZ

By JOE HAMMER

(Answers on page 107)

**I**F YOU'RE the type who reads sports headlines instead of making them, this is for you. This kind of mental push-ups won't raise a sweat on your brow, unless you're a particularly hard thinker; but it will help raise your sports I. Q. Play it alone or with a friend. Score as indicated.

**Football—Top score, 23-0.**

1. A touchdown for you if you answer this one correctly. What college team holds a record of 13 years undefeated and untied?

2. What team first used the huddle? Get this one, and you convert.

3. What famous sportswriter dubbed Knute Rockne's unbeatable backfield "The Four Horsemen"? This will give you a field goal.

4. Who holds the pro lifetime record for total yardage gained? Get this one, and we'll give you a touchdown.

5. Of all college football's great coaches, only one was not a college grad himself. Can you name him, for another touchdown?

**Baseball—Top score, 2-0.**

6. Can you name four members of the same family who have a joint record of over 600 homers? Answer correctly—the last name will do—and you go to first.

7. If a game is declared forfeited by the umpire, what's the official score? Get this one, and the next man boosts you to second.

8. Who holds the major-league record for consecutive errorless games? Steal third on this one.

9. What player piled up a lifetime batting average of over .300 in four major leagues? This one takes you home.

10. If you've struck out, or died on base, here's your chance to make up for it. Who made the phrase, "Tinker to Evers to Chance" famous? Answer correctly, and we'll give you a homer.

**Tennis—Top score, 2-love.**

11. Tennis, along with racquets, squash, table tennis and badminton, is descended from one game which is no longer played. Name it, and you ace your opponent on your first serve.

12. Modern lawn tennis was first played in—America? England? Scotland? Wales? Choose the right one, and your score goes to thirty-love.

13. This one's easier than it looks. A championship tennis match requires fifteen officials. We'll give you five—umpire, referee, net judge and two foot fault judges. For forty-love, can you name the other ten?

14. What is the origin of the name "tennis"? This one gives you the game.

15. If the pace was too much for you, here's a chance to regain your loss. Name a tennis star who won six singles championships in a row at Wimbledon—losing only one set in each final round—and you break service and take the next game at love.

**Miscellany—Score 1 for each.**

16. What is Canada's official national game?

17. What physical development (aside from agility, suppleness, and other general factors) is required for mastery of jiu-jitsu?

18. What is "spelunking"?

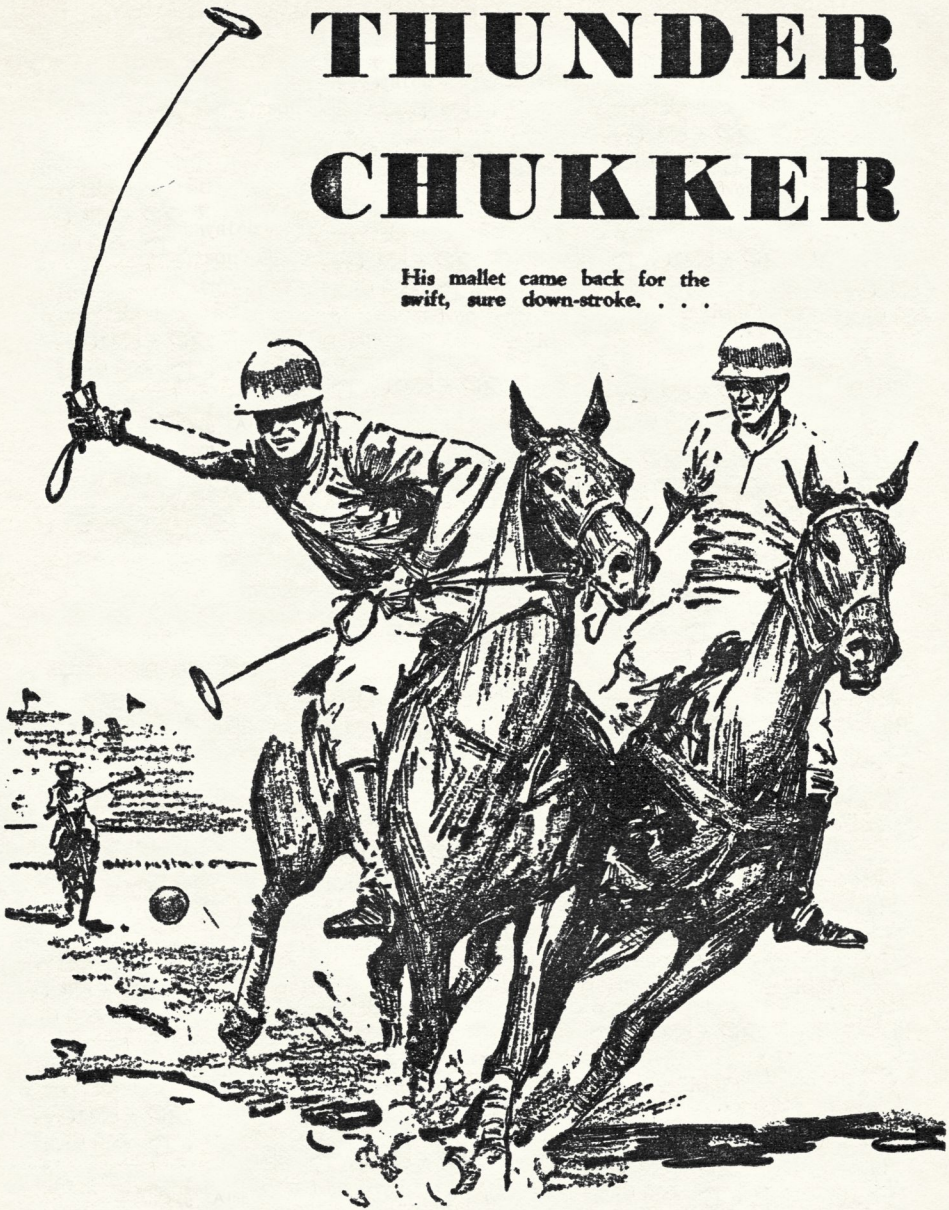
19. Can you name the country in which handball originated?

20. You've heard of bull-fighting—but can you tell us in what country cow-fighting is popular?



# THUNDER CHUKKER

His mallet came back for the  
swift, sure down-stroke. . . .



**By ROBERT SIDNEY BOWEN**

*In that deadly melee of flashing mallets and flying hoofs, a man can lose his skill, his courage or the respect of his teammates . . . and in one terrible instant Duke had to choose which it was to be!*

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**R**IDING hard and fast, Duke Rollins came up on the white willow-root ball rolling slowly over the close-cropped turf of the Black Oaks polo field. Out of the corner of his eye he saw the Cahmet No. 4 thundering over to inter-



cept, but a single glance told the eight-goal sharpshooter that he had time to spare on the shot. Almost as though to tantalize his opponent—actually to make sure of his timing and stroke—Rollins held his uplifted mallet poised for a moment and then brought it down in a flashing arc. The broadside of his mallet head hit the willow-root cleanly. The white ball took off and traveled the thirty yards like a bullet, to cut the twenty-four feet between the bamboo posts of the Calumet goal dead center.

The spectators in the narrow grandstand that paralleled the west side of the field applauded, but not too vigorously. One reason was polite compassion for the visiting team, trailing ten goals to one with only two minutes left of the eighth and final chukker. Another reason was that when Duke Rollins had a clean shot at the enemy goal, he simply didn't miss.

As Rollins turned his pony to ride back upfield to his No. 3 position, the Calumet back who had failed to intercept in time lifted his mallet in half-salute. Rollins smiled and saluted back, and felt the soothing glow of complete happiness drift through him. Not because he had just scored the sixth of the Black Oaks' ten goals, but for two far more important reasons. A week ago he had been unanimously elected captain of this year's team, a dream he had cherished since joining Black Oaks before the war. And, though it was a bit too early to know for sure, all things indicated that this year Black Oaks would have the fastest-riding, hardest-hitting team in all of its thirty years of polo-playing history.

Only one team stood in the way of an undefeated march by Black Oaks to the National Championship: the Kingspoint Royals whom Black Oaks would meet two weeks hence. The Royals were last season's champions and their early-season play this year gave reason to believe that, if anything, they had improved.

As Rollins waited for the next throw-in by the senior of the two mounted umpires, he thought of the Kingspoint game two weeks away. For no special reason he was suddenly convinced that the Black Oaks team would take it—perhaps by a very narrow margin, but take it nevertheless. Then thought of things to come fled his attention as the white ball came bounding in and Charlie Black, the Black Oaks' No. 2, and Rollins' best friend, raced for it and cracked it diagonally downfield into Calumet territory.

The opposing No. 4 was right there to intercept and in a superb exhibition of form and horsemanship he checked the course of the ball and started short-stroking it back upfield. Black and Stafford, the Black Oaks' No. 1, thundered over to intercept but a beautiful angle short under his pony's neck by the Calumet No. 4 carried the ball straight between them and down deep into Black Oaks territory.

Galloping over, Duke Rollins backswiped the ball out of the danger zone and then spun his pony and followed up the shot. The Calumet No. 4, riding up full out, got to the willow-root first but a crazy twisting roll of the ball spoiled a clean shot. The ball went skidding off to the left and both Rollins and the Calumet No. 4 went after it neck and neck. The Black Oaks star won the race by a hair but the Calumet player drove in hard to ride him off the ball before he could get his shot away.

The jarring bump of the two ponies colliding almost unseated Rollins, but he stuck to leather and swung for his shot. It was then that his pony seemed to stumble. Rollins caught a fleeting glance of the white willow-root sailing toward midfield where his own No. 3 was waiting, and then he was soaring up out of the saddle and down. In midair he tried to twist over so that he would land on hands and knees, and in that he succeeded. But the jar buckled his arms and he went



rolling over and over. He came to a stop flat on his back, and saw the leg-thrashing shadow of Lancer, his pony, dropping down on him. In the last split second he had left, he tried desperately to twist out from under that dropping shadow, and then the polo field exploded in a gigantic fountain of brilliant colors.

WHEN he eventually opened his eyes and his brain was able to register his surroundings, Duke Rollins found himself between the clean white sheets of a private-room bed in the local hospital. For one or two moments he lay very still and waited for memory to come to him. When it did he gasped aloud and sat up straight in the bed. At that moment a voice off to his left laughed and spoke aloud.

"Nothing like a good sleep to make a new man of you."

He turned his head to stare into the smiling face of Charlie Black, who was sitting in a chair with an opened copy of the morning paper in his lap. He looked past Black at the windows and at the bright morning sunlight outside. He looked back at his friend in uncertain bewilderment. Black smiled and shook his head.

"Not even part of a dream, Duke," he said. "A miracle no less, but a blessed one. How do you feel?"

Rollins jerked his thoughts back to himself and with swiftly mounting surprise he discovered that save for a slight sore spot on his left hip he was in perfect condition. He looked again at Black with a puzzled frown and made a little half-wave with one hand.

"Then why this?" he asked.

"My idea," Black told him. "Just in case anything developed. The doc assured me nothing would and gave you a little something to make you sleep. Frankly, it's incredible."

"Then I guess Lancer didn't fall on

me," Rollins said as he probed his memory. "I must have rolled away in time."

"No, and that's the miracle," Black said in a slightly awed voice. "I was this close and Lancer came right down on you. I expected to find you squashed flat; at least with a broken leg or arm. But no. You were only knocked out, and they couldn't find a single thing else wrong with you. As I said, a miracle."

"It will do until one comes along," Rollins said soberly. Then quickly he asked, "What about Lancer?"

"Fine," Black told him. "Not a scratch. You'll be playing her for years, yet. Incidentally there were only twelve seconds to go when you took your spill. After you were in the ambulance we finished it out for the record. No more scoring."

Black folded his paper, got to his feet and tossed the paper on the bed.

"I'll tell them to send in some breakfast," he said. Then with a quick look at his watch he corrected, "I mean, lunch. Take a day or two to rest up more, Duke. No sense pushing your luck. What about dinner tonight?"

"A date," Rollins told him. "Handle the practice today, will you? I'll be there tomorrow for certain."

"All right," Black nodded and turned toward the door. He paused with his hand on the knob and smiled soberly back over his shoulder. "It might be nice to thank your stars, or your patron saint, if you have one," he said. "I'd never have believed that one man could be so lucky."

"I already have," Rollins told him and reached for the morning paper.

When Black had gone Rollins thumbed carelessly through the paper and then tossed it to one side. Sitting cross-legged in the bed he stared fixedly at the opposite wall and let the wondering chill of reaction set in. He had taken his share of spills during his many years of polo, but none so violent as the one yesterday. How he



had come out of it with only a slight bruise on his hip was a miracle almost beyond credence. Many times had he witnessed spills half as violent that broke the rider's bones at least and caused his mount to be mercifully destroyed. Yet yesterday he had gone hurtling to the ground and his mount had actually crashed down on top of him . . . to knock him unconscious and bruise his left hip! Tomorrow, or the next day at the most, pony and rider would be out there again as though nothing had happened.

With a shake of his head Rollins cut off his thoughts and slid out of bed.

"I suppose it proves something," he murmured as he walked over to his clothes, "but I'm blessed if I know what!"

The following afternoon Rollins went out to the club and, after brushing aside Charlie Black's suggestion that he take it easy for another day, he climbed into his gear and had his groom take his mounts over to the playing field. For a short while he made some practice shots with Lancer under him, and both rider and pony performed in their usual flawless style. Finally he rode in over the sideboards, and gathered the other players about him and selected two teams for the day's practice match. He captained one himself and selected Black to captain the other.

A few minutes later the ball was rolled in and the practice match got underway. As he usually did in practice or match play Black virtually pounced on the roll-in ball and cracked it down into enemy territory. Rollins' No. 3 made a mighty attempt to trap-check the shot but he only succeeded in deflecting it over toward the west sideboards. Rollins caught it there and banged it back upfield. Caught off-stride, Black's players could not get over in time and Rollins' swift follow-up shot carried the white willow-root out into clear field. A clear field, that is, save for Charlie Black riding at a breakneck speed. Rollins saw

him coming and gave knees to his own pony for a shade more speed.

The beast responded nobly and Rollins had his mallet swung in a high arc . . .

He never made the stroke. A mere split second before he would have swung the mallet downward a part of his brain seemed to freeze up and lock all his muscles. A vivid memory picture of the Calumet 4, riding him off the ball two days ago, flashed across his brain and blotted out all else. The next thing he was able to realize he had ridden on by the ball, swerving his pony away as he did so, and Charlie Black was executing a saving cross shot on the ball under his pony's neck.

"Thanks, friend, but that kind of courtesy won't get you a thing, you know?"

The half-chuckled words broke the spell that had held Duke. He looked at his friend who had ridden up beside him and blinked and then smiled a little sheepishly.

"Correct," he said and made a little gesture with his mallet. "I must have been day-dreaming and forgot to make the shot."

Black gave him a sharp, curious look and nodded.

"Your face looked it," he said. "Like you were a hundred miles away and seeing ghosts. You feel all right, Duke?"

For no good reason the casual question angered Rollins. He scowled at Black and nodded curtly.

"Certainly I feel all right!" he snapped. "Why shouldn't I? Come on, let's get cracking!"

WITH another curt nod he galloped his pony downfield to where the ball was being batted around in front of his team's goal. As he rode down his sharp anger changed to an annoyance that was undermined with perplexing uneasiness. To no man would he have admitted it, but he was forced to admit to



himself that a sort of cold terror had frozen his brain and his muscles when he'd seen Black riding in hard on him. As a result he had ridden over the ball without so much as a passing swipe at the ball with his mallet. Never before had he ever done anything like that on the polo field.

His uneasy annoyance changed to anger at himself and he rode full out into the melee before his own goal mouth. For the next couple of moments his mind was a blank save for a savage concentration on gaining possession of the ball long enough for a quick shot. He didn't succeed but another player did and the white willow-root suddenly squirted out from the tangle of dancing pony legs and went bounding along open ground. In a flash Rollins was after it, and so was Stafford, playing No. 1 on Black's team. Both riders raced neck and neck with Rollins having a slight advantage.

Mallet high and poised to swing down, he set himself for a shot under his pony's neck that would drill the ball out of the scoring zone and up to midfield. But before he could make the shot Stafford rode into him hard to force him off the ball. For a fleeting instant he kept trying to make the shot, but his stroke timing was horribly off—once again an icy paralysis froze his brain and the muscles of his body. Before he could shake it off Stafford had made his shot on the ball and smartly rapped it through the open goal for a score.

The chukker ended shortly after that and on sudden impulse Rollins sent Jerry Banks in to spell him the second chukker. Sitting on the sidelines, he watched the play without attention. Over and over again he tried to plumb the depths for the true reason for the change that had come over him. But the more he thought the more confused he became. He'd taken many spills, a couple of them really bad ones, but not once had his nerve been shattered as it now appeared to be. Yet,

certain as it seemed, was it his nerve?

Even when riding up on the ball, fully conscious that an opposing player was thundering up to ride him off, he had not experienced that paralyzing terror . . . not until the very last second when his subconscious seemed to take over. Perhaps that was it—his subconscious over his conscious—a deep realization that all the luck one man could have had been expended to create that miracle that had come to him in the Calumet game. Never again could he be so lucky. Next time he was bound to meet with injury, and perhaps serious injury.

Or was it because his pony had stumbled? There is nothing a man can do to stop his pony stumbling. Was it because his subconscious knew he would be helpless to stop the next spill no matter what he did physically, and for that reason was able to overpower and check the will of his conscious self? Perhaps yes, and perhaps no, but one thing was certain. The way memory shock caught him off guard was utterly silly and ridiculous, and the sooner he shook it off and returned to his usual playing form, the better for him and the team.

ON THE following Saturday afternoon the Meadow Brook Falcons arrived for their scheduled match with Black Oaks. Nobody conceded the Falcons a chance, least of all the Falcon players. Because of that fact Charlie Black made the quiet suggestion as he and Rollins were taking it easy on the sideline a short time before the start of the match.

"How about letting Jerry Banks spell you for this one while you take it easy?" he said.

Rollins brushed aside the rambling thoughts in his head and gave Black a sharp look.

"Why take it easy?" he demanded.

Black smiled and made a slight soothing gesture with one hand.



"Don't go taking off, Duke," he said. "I simply mean because you look tired, and— Well, to be frank, you haven't seemed to be on your game this last week. You're under a strain, naturally, so maybe sitting this out will help you unwind."

Rollins didn't say anything for a few moments. He stared unseeing across the field at the partly-filled stands on the other side, and sweated inwardly. So Charlie had noticed? The others, too, probably.

He looked at Black and shook his head.

"I'd go crazy," he said. "Besides I need the practice. You read what the Royals did to Calumet yesterday?"

"I did," Black said soberly. "I thought it was a misprint and checked with two other papers. Twenty-two to nothing. Havers, their new Number Four, cracked in thirteen of them!"

"A polo player . . ." Rollins murmured.

For a few moments neither spoke, but both were thinking the same thing. With Bobby Havers, a nine-goal man, now playing No. 4 for the Royals, the Kingspoint team was a good twenty-five percent stronger than last year. With Duke Rollins off his game, Black Oaks wouldn't stand much chance in next week's match.

Presently Black got up from his chair and grinned crookedly at Rollins. "Well, if you must, then, play under wraps every chance you get," he said. "The whole Royal team is in the stands."

"Don't worry," Rollins said almost irritably. "We'll save enough for them!"

Black frowned. "Of course we will," he said. "Let's get cracking."

True to expectations, it was a one-sided match, a tune-up for the Black Oaks team. All, that is, except Duke Rollins. For him it was the worst blood-sweating match he had ever played, and it became increasingly worse as chukker after chukker went up. True, he scored once in the first, and twice in the third, and twice more in the sixth; but each tally was made when he was all alone with the ball and

the mouth of the Falcon goal was wide open before him.

At other times, the icy paralysis still continued to plague him in the tight spots in spite of his efforts to overcome it. Between chukkers when mounts were changed he had little to say to his teammates, and they had less to say to him. They were far out in front in the scoring, but that gave no satisfaction to anybody. Next week it would be the Royals, and if Duke Rollins, their eight-goal star, continued to play like a novice in his first season, they might just as well leave their ponies in the stables.

That thought was reflected in every player's face and Rollins was acutely conscious of it every second out on the playing field and during the between-chukker periods. Worse, the Falcons began to sense his weakness in the sixth chukker and they started playing him fast and hard at every opportunity. No less than five times he was ridden off the ball before he could get away a clean shot.

WHEN he rode out with the team for the eighth and last chukker he was mentally and physically as spent as a man can be. Just before, while mounts were being changed, Charlie Black had glanced at him in mute appeal to sit out the final chukker and try to unwind himself. He had ignored it and gone riding out to his position, body trembling with strain, but with the fires of stubborn determination burning within him more fiercely than ever.

Halfway through the chukker a melee in midfield resulted in somebody smacking the willow-root out into open ground where it bounded toward the Falcon goal. In a sudden display of fine horsemanship Rollins broke clear and went galloping after it. At the same time the Falcon No. 3 came thundering over from the far side to intercept. Rollins saw him coming and his trained eye told him that it was



going to be another tight one. He grimly put knees to his pony.

The two riders converged on the slowly rolling ball at top speed. The Falcon player had the shot position advantage, but Rollins went in for an off-side shot as though his life depended upon it. He swung his mallet high for the backhand shot. The last instant arrived and the crazy fear tugged at his muscles, but this time his determination held fast. His stroke was powerful and he swiped the ball clean as a whistle. It streaked out from under the Falcon player's mallet and traveled all the way by air through the Falcon goal.

As Rollins checked the wild dash of his pony, the weight of the world seemed to slide off his shoulders. Tears of joy stung his eyes as he rode upfield to his defense position and saw the broad, happy smiles on the faces of his teammates. He gave them only a passing glance, however, and a few moments later he was taking part in the play after the roll-in. Like a man released from certain doom he rode and played with reckless abandon, but not until the last few seconds of the match was he given another chance to go after a loose ball.

Most of the playing consisted of a series of short mallet-checking, poking, and ball-stabbing melees in midfield, but finally Charlie Black got room enough to drill the ball out of the melee and downfield toward the Falcon goal. As though a bit of movie film were being run through again, Rollins was off after the ball like a shot and the same Falcon No. 3 came galloping in on him from an angle. A tight grin on his face, Rollins went for the ball full-out, swung his mallet far back and up for another off-side shot.

His down-stroke was once again sure and powerful—but split seconds before his mallet-head cracked against the ball, a sudden thought darted into his head and exploded like myriads of colored stars.

Shocked, he lost the smooth coordination of his swing and his mallet head struck the side of the ball. The white willow-root, instead of arcing downfield toward the unguarded Falcon goal, trickled crazily over toward the Falcon No. 3, who promptly back-swiped it back past midfield and out of danger. Five seconds after that the match ended, and with the tight smile still on his lips, Duke Rollins rode off the field—seemingly oblivious to the disappointment that had returned to Charlie Black's eyes and to the eyes of the other winning team players.

ONE WEEK later came the big Kingspoint Royals-Black Oaks match. Long before match time the low wooden stands were packed, and the three other sides of the field were lined by two rows of cars parked hub to hub with spectators sitting all over them. Out on the field the players of both teams were sharpening up their aim and getting any possible kinks out of their muscles. Presently the players rode over to the sideboards and with a sign Duke Rollins gathered his starting team about him for the usual pre-game strategy huddle. Avoiding looking at any of them directly, he spoke quietly and without any particular emphasis.

"We can win this one, and we will," he said. "Until I give the word we'll play strictly a defensive game. Unless, of course, you have a clear field and a clear shot, concentrate only on keeping the ball out of our territory. And here's another thing."

Rollins paused and stared at the ground as though deciding whether or not to finish. Then he lifted his head and swept them all with a single keen-eyed stare.

"Unless you can't avoid it," he said evenly, "don't play any shots my way. Get the ball out of our territory, that's all. And, of course, watch that Havers. He's a wild man and he'll take a lot of stopping. But you can do it, I know!"



As Rollins stopped talking not a single pair of eyes was looking at him any more. Black, Stafford who would play No. 1, and Collins, who would play No. 3, were all staring at the ground. The Black Oaks captain opened his mouth to speak, but instead he gave a sharp, unnoticed shake of his head.

"All right, let's go!" he said a few moments later. "I'll pass the word when we're to go to town. For a starter, though, let's check them, and check them again! Luck to us."

Duke turned away and walked over to the pony he would ride in the first chukker.

A short time later he sat his pony in his No. 4 position and stared downfield at the members of the Kingspoint team. The player his eyes lingered on the longest was Bobby Havers. The big Royal sat his jet-black Arabian mount as though he were part of it, and just looking at him caused the icy chill of doubt to steal through Rollins. He shook it off with a savage movement of his head, patted his pony's neck for luck, and tried to work some of the dryness out of his mouth and throat.

The senior of the two mounted umpires rolled in the ball and the all-important match was under way.

The Royals started like mounted hurricanes and the Black Oaks four roared back just as furiously. Led by Havers, the visitors tried repeatedly to sweep downfield and get the scoring jump, but every raid was viciously beaten back, and at least six times Rollins managed to trap-check sure shot at his goal mouth and cracked the ball back up to midfield.

Not once, however, did he race upfield for a follow-up shot on the ball. He appeared content simply to knock the ball out of danger, and those in the stands and about the field, who were accustomed to seeing Duke Rollins make wild solo scoring sorties, looked at each other in wonder.

However, Rollins and his teammates

played an airtight defensive game, and the first chukker ended with no score by either team, nor even a close scoring attempt. The tempo of play and the style was the same in the second chukker, and in the third as well. Using every bit of their skill and power the Royals hammered relentlessly at the Black Oaks' goal, but to no avail. No more than two or three times was the ball beyond mid-field and in visitors' territory. The rest of the time it was deep in Black Oaks territory with the Royals trying everything short of murder to crack it through the twenty-four foot goal opening.

**I**N THE fourth chukker a long bounding shot off Bobby Havers' mallet came toward Duke as he rode guard over the Black Oaks goal. The Royal nine-goal player came thundering after the ball like a black bolt of lightning. Rollins rode for the ball and swung to knock it out of danger, but Havers almost rode him down. In the last split second Rollins simply rapped the ball a short distance to one side. Luckily, Charlie Black was in position at that spot and he cracked it far upfield before Havers could get over for a goal-shot try.

Havers checked his mount and smiled sardonically at Rollins. "Nice shot!"

The Black Oaks captain smiled at him pleasantly and nodded. "Thanks," he said. "I thought so, too."

Havers blinked, frowned, and then with a shrug gave knees to his pony and went thundering back upfield. Rollins held his smile as he watched him ride away, and a few moments after the chukker ended.

Both teams seemed to play the fifth chukker as a breather, and no more than two or three times was the willow-root very far from the midfield area. In the sixth, though, the Royals stepped the playing tempo up again. And this time they were out for blood. A beautiful cross-field shot by the Royal No. 2 rolled



dead to Havers' waiting mallet and not twenty yards from the wide-open mouth of the Black Oaks goal. Duke Rollins raced over madly to intercept but he couldn't have got there in time with wings. Havers' shot was deadly accurate and it sailed untouched between the bamboo posts to break the deadlock.

Shortly after that the chukker ended and as they changed mounts, the Black Oaks players looked questioningly at Rollins. The team captain could feel the hot blood rise into his face but he shook his head vigorously. "Keep checking them," he said. "I'll let you know when."

Charlie Black, Collins, and Stafford looked irritated. They frowned and bit their lips but they didn't waste breath with any further questioning. Silently they mounted the fresh ponies and rode out for the seventh chukker. It was a scorcher. Riding high with a one-score advantage, the Royals pulled out all stops in a frantic effort to double it, but the Black Oaks four fought back with renewed vigor and kept the ball a safe distance from their goal. On one occasion Charlie Black broke out into the clear with the ball and for a few brief moments it looked as though he had a clear shot at the enemy goal. Then two Kingspoint men came thundering over to save and the ball was quickly rapped out of danger. When the chukker ended the score was still the same: Kingspoint 1—Black Oaks 0.

The first three minutes of the final chukker were played mostly in the mid-field area. The Black Oaks four continued to play a tight defensive game, and the visitors, apparently content to win with a single score, relaxed somewhat in their attack.

And then, when only three minutes of playing time remained and Rollins was riding out from the goal to make an easy saving shot, he suddenly waved his mallet over his head.

"Let's go, Black Oaks!" he roared.

Duke made the saving shot over toward the sideboards, but instead of turning away he kned his pony to a furious pace and was up on the ball again in nothing flat. A suddenly stunned Kingspoint team gaped at him for an instant and then galloped in pursuit. It was too late. Rollins' shot on the ball drilled it by the leading Royal and deep downfield. Havers came thundering over to intercept. He rode at Rollins as though he were going to gallop right into him, but the Black Oaks captain didn't check his pony's speed a hair or swerve his mount an inch. He rode dead ahead full-out and made his shot almost under the pounding hoofs of Havers' pony. And the ball went dead true between the Royals' goal posts.

"Nice shot, too, don't you think?" Rollins yelled at the startled Havers, and went trotting back upfield for the roll-in.

When it came Charlie Black was on it in a flash. So were the Royal No. 1 and No. 2 men, but Black got his mallet on it first and cracked the ball across to Stafford. The Black Oaks No. 1 promptly angled it at the sideboards where Duke Rollins was coming up like the wind. Duke caught it on the rebound and smacked it cleanly out from under a Royal pony's nose.

The Royals tried desperately to intercept, but they were still a little under the shock of seeing a player, who for seven and a half chukkers had been avoiding trouble, suddenly ride as though he had blown his top. Bobby Havers came within an ace of stealing the ball from Rollins, but that was his best. Rollins rode him off and made a second scoring shot that traveled a good fifty yards.

In the half minute left, the badly shaken Royals rode their heads off and their ponies ragged, but their efforts came too late. When the match ended the host of spectators about the field sat in wondering silence for a moment before they fully

*(Continued on page 129)*



# The DANGER SACK

By DAVID CREWE



**B**ASEBALL is not one of the more hazardous games. It does not compare with football, hockey, six-day bike racing, jai alai or other sports in danger; but baseball players have been ripped with spikes, broken legs, suffered fractured skulls. Some have been killed.

Luck plays a big part in the saga of injury. Batting practice seldom offers risks. Yet it was in a practice session that one of the most shocking baseball injuries within memory occurred. Cleveland players were sharpening their batting eyes on the pitching of Joe Dobson. Joe wasn't trying to put much on the ball; just enough to get it over, so the boys could take healthy cuts.

Sammy Hale was at bat, and Sam really clouted the apple. Oscar Grimes, utility man, was covering second, and Ben Chapman, later manager of the Phillies,

was at third. As Dobson wound up, Ben shouted for Grimes to cover the keystone for a simulated double play.

Oscar started, and Hale hit the ball as hard as he ever hit one in his life. It went toward the pitcher like a bullet. Joe ducked, and the horsehide hit Grimes on the left cheek. You could hear the sound of bone breaking.

The infielder staggered and fell. He struggled to his feet, agony mirrored in his tanned face, then dropped unconscious. The entire side of his face had been smashed. They took Oscar to the hospital, and he was not able to play again for a year.

It is a tribute to the man's courage that, when he did return, Grimes played just as hard as though he had not come within an inch of death in the "safe" game of baseball.

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## ANSWERS TO ALL-SPORTS QUIZ

(Questions on page 97)

1. Princeton.
2. Georgia Tech, in 1896.
3. Grantland Rice.
4. Clarke Hinkle, for the Green Bay Packers—3,860 yards in 1,171 tries.
5. Orin "Babe" Hollingberry, who coached Washington State teams for 19 years.
6. Ted, Fred, Kenny and Jimmy Williams.
7. 9-1.
8. Danny Litwhiler, with 187.
9. Hugh Duffy—.340 in the American Association, .330 in the National League, .328 in the Players' League and .308 in the American League.
10. Franklin P. Adams, then a sports-writer for the N. Y. *Evening Mail*, in 1910—in an eight-line poem written to fill a column.

11. "Le Paume".
12. Nantclwyd, *Wales*, in 1873.
13. Ten linesmen.
14. The game was originated in France; English spectators heard officials shouting "Tenez!"—literally "Hold!"—meaning in this case to resume play—and mistook the command for the name of the game.
15. Mrs. Helen Wills Moody.
16. Lacrosse.
17. The fleshy part of the hands must be hardened like leather, since the bottom edge of the open hand is used in slashing.
18. Exploring caves—from Latin *spel-unca*, cave.
19. Ireland.
20. Switzerland. The cows, a special breed, fight each other; the one who pushes her opponent off the ground is the victor. They won't fight unless they're wearing bells, incidentally.



# RUN THE MAN

Tom took the backward pass and looked for a receiver. . . .



THE FLIMSY front door opened with a squeak and shut with a reverberating slam. Tommy, irritated at being trapped in the highchair too long, banged on the tray with his spoon and glared at her. Carol Ann said softly, "One minute, honey bun. That big man is home." She turned up the gas under the pressure cooker, met Big Tom at the kitchen door. Her heart ached at the lines of weariness in his face and with her arms

around him, she felt the leaden exhaustion of his body.

"They kept you a long time, darling," she said.

He smiled in a tired way. "Every day



# DOWN

*Some backs are born to glory—some achieve it—but sometimes, in the heart-testing minute before the final gun, only never-quit cleats will run the man down!*



**By JOHN D.  
MacDONALD**

on Robertson's squad is just like Sunday on the farm. Nothing to do but work. I think I'm too tired to eat."

He sat at the table in the cramped kitchen and Tommy crowed with delight, tried to express his approval of having his

father home by bashing him with the sticky spoon.

"Hmm," Tom said. "Offensive type. With the beef on you, we'll have to use you in the line."

"Say good night to your father," Carol Ann ordered.

Tommy made a few strangled gurgling noises. Big Tom rumbled the silly blond



hair, said, "Shove off, squarehead." Carol Ann took Tommy out of the highchair and into the bathroom.

The pressure cooker started to chuckle and she called to Tom to turn off the gas under it. From his chair at the kitchen table he could reach the stove easily.

She made quick work of Tommy, tucked him in his crib, kissed him and snapped out the light. When she went into the kitchen, Tom had his elbows on the table, his face on his hands. His dark blond hair was still damp from the locker-room shower.

He didn't stir until she put his plate in front of him, sat down opposite him. Then he smiled at her as he unfolded his napkin.

"A little on the beat side, darling?" she asked.

"Beat like a Dutch pudding. Every man with two left feet gets a bid to come to Carvel. Robertson's answer is to run us through the plays a couple of hundred thousand times. If I'd run in a straight line, I'd be in Chicago."

"How does it look for Saturday, Tom?"

"We ought to take 'em. The word is that their line is only two deep and by the second half we ought to be making yards."

He ate listlessly, and she saw that his big brown hands trembled with fatigue. She chattered gaily about life in "the barracks". Their small apartment was in the middle of what was called "Uncle Sugar Village", and the partitions were so thin that they could hear the private life of the married students on either side of them. She knew that it was no time to bring up the most recent blow to their budget, the insurance premium that they had both forgotten, the final notice that had come in the afternoon mail.

After he finished dinner, he pushed his chair back, glanced at his watch. "Poppa is off to keep the home fires burning," he said.

"Hurry back, darling," she said, and forced herself to smile.

The little apartment was quiet after he had gone. She did the dishes quickly, went to the desk and studied the budget again. Tom was making his rounds of the oil furnaces in the campus buildings. Ten stops. He had to check the fuel level, the flame and the water pressure at each stop. She knew that it would take him close to an hour.

When he was due back, she put the bills in the back of the check book, slipped it into the bottom drawer of the desk.

The walk in the night air had seemed to revive him a little; his face didn't look as tired. He sat in the big chair in the twelve-by-twelve living room, put the plywood board across the arms of the chair and pulled the books off the shelf beside him.

She loved him very much. He was a big man, rangy and strong, with quiet strength and good humor in his deep-set eyes. He had been raised on a fertile, prosperous Indiana farm. When he was fourteen, the farm had been "dusted out" and the memory of the poverty that followed was the bitterest thing in his life . . . and the urge that drove him.

They had met during the war and had been married three weeks before he had gone overseas. On one of their last few nights together, his voice hoarse with sincerity, he had told her his dream.

"Honey, after this war is over, one of the most important things in the world will be food. Food is just another way of saying good land. I'm going to come out of this war and go to college. And I'm going to be one of the guys who are going to see that our land isn't wasted. I want to learn the chemistry of the soil, and about erosion and how to save the greatest wealth this nation has. I saw what happened to my folks. It killed my dad. It doesn't have to happen, you know."

She looked up from her magazine, saw



his eyes intent on the lecture notes. Yes, he was fighting for his dream. And the fighting was hard and bitter. Little Tommy had come along. They had needed an extra source of income. The university was willing to provide jobs for the top football players. Tom got fifty a month for checking the oil furnaces every night.

That fifty, plus the G.I. Bill, gave them one hundred and seventy a month. His share of his mother's maintenance was twenty-five a month. The hundred and forty-five was dangerously little. Care for Tommy would cost as much as she could earn, so there was no point in her working.

On the basis of his work on the freshman team, Tom Lamar had made the squad the second year, had justified his position by a style of play that was outstanding. In this, his third year, he was team captain.

And Carvel, more than any other school in the country, could provide him with that knowledge of the soil which he wanted.

The budget was a cruel and inexorable thing. The printed words in the magazine faded and she saw the neat columns in her mind. Sixty for food. Forty for rent. Eleven for utilities. Fifteen for insurance. Those deductions left the magnificent sum of nineteen dollars a month to cover clothes, medical care, entertainment, toothpaste, razor blades, dry cleaning, and, of course, emergencies.

The gas bill was unpaid, and there was one hundred and fifty dollars still unpaid on the doctor bills. Twenty-two owing to the dentist. One dollar and ninety cents to the drugstore. And before the end of the month, she would have to start charging groceries.

And it was her job to stay bright and gay. The cheerful little wife. Everything is just ducky, darling. We are getting along beautifully. Tommy needs new shoes. You're almost out of socks. I have

one pair of stockings left. Things are lovely.

She glanced over and saw that he had fallen asleep over the books. His head was slumped to one side, and he was breathing through his open mouth. His brown hands rested on the open pages of the notebook.

She walked quietly over, touched his shoulder. He mumbled in his sleep, then jumped. "Huh? Oh! Guess I dropped off."

"I guess you did. Bed for you, Mr. Muscle. Come on. Up!"

He held his hand out to her. She grabbed it and tugged. He pulled her down, held her tightly. Then he got up and his walk as he went to the bedroom was like that of a drunk. He was drugged with the need for sleep. But she knew what he would do. He'd set the alarm for six, get in an hour and a half on the books before he had to go to class.

By the time she crawled in beside him, he was in the deep sleep of exhaustion.

CARVEL'S average season record was four wins and five defeats. The schedule was always tougher than it should have been. Carvel belonged to the borderline of commercialized college football. The alumni groups did a lot of scouting and various alumni scholarships were set up. Usually the first team was all composed of boys who went to Carvel because they had been sought out and urged to go there.

But about half the second team and two-thirds of the rest of the squad were on an 'amateur' basis.

Since the schools that did extensive and well-planned solicitation of athletic talent were content to fit breathers into their schedules, Carvel was matched against many of the teams that always attract national interest.

Thus the gate receipts were adequate, and Gunner Robertson, the head coach,



was very adequately paid. His job was to so handle a semi-commercial squad as to provide the constant threat of an upset.

Carol Ann knew Tom was disappointed that she wasn't able to attend the Saturday game against Blaight University, whose team maintained about the same standards as Carvel. But sitters cost money and the day threatened to be cold and she did not want to risk taking Tommy.

The small and ancient radio could pick up just one local station, but that was the station broadcasting the game.

There was always the fear of his being hurt, of course. And somehow it was worse listening to the game than actually being there.

She turned the radio on at two o'clock. She smiled when she heard the announcer say, "and in the offensive fullback slot for Carvel is Big Tom Lamar, six foot two, two hundred and fifteen pounds and one of the hardest-driving backs that these tired old eyes have ever seen. It will not surprise me, folks, if Carvel has All American material here. We'll watch him closely during this, Carvel's third game of the year. So far they have had one victory and one defeat. They are eager for a victory today.

"Now the Carvel team is coming out on the field. It's a clear, cold day, perfect football weather. The Carvel squad looks like it had a lot of snap. Those red and black uniforms have a trim look. Carvel will receive and defend the south goal."

Tommy was tottering around on uncertain legs, pulling a wooden duck that quacked and flapped its bill. He stopped by the radio with half his hand in his mouth and looked solemn as though he were following the game.

Blaight held Carvel after two first downs and ran back the kick to their own thirty. They kicked on third down, and Big Tom came back into the game.

On the second play, the announcer's

voice rose in excitement and she could hear the roar of the crowd. "Right through the middle he went in a line plunge, and got into the secondary and for once they gave him the right kind of blocking. Twenty, fifteen, ten, five and over for a touchdown! Man, that Lamar can run like a . . . well, he can run!"

"Daa? Tommy asked.

"Yes, baby. That's your pop."

In the second quarter, a pass into the flat took Carvel to Blaight's twelve. She held her breath while Tom took it over in three punishing smashes, once off tackle, and twice right through the middle.

After the half, with Carvel leading 13-0, Blaight took to the air in earnest. Their passes began to click and they took it in four plays down to the Carvel fifteen. Two defensive backs were injured and Tom Lamar was sent in as defensive fullback. Blaight shifted to line play and made four yards in two attempts. On the third play, they passed out to the right and deep. The receiver was waiting on the one. Tom came knifing in from the side, went high, and picked the ball out of the air. He made it back to the fifty before he was run out of bounds.

That setback seemed to take the heart out of Blaight. Carvel pushed over three more scores during the second half, and the game ended with the score 33-0.

He arrived back at the apartment a little after six. She met him at the door and after his kiss, she looked at the purple bruise under his eye, touched it with her fingertips.

"Hey!" he said, pulling away. "I got needles in there. Feels that way."

"Darling, you were a hog all afternoon. I've got no sympathy for you. According to the announcer, you're the greatest thing that has happened to football since the dropkick."

He had his arm around her as they walked through to the kitchen.

"Oh, sure!" he said. "Me and Grange.



Listen, I'm just a guy earning his fifty bucks a month."

"Go on, you love it!"

"That's the trouble with getting married, honey," he said fondly. "You have to let somebody in on all your secrets."

She became solemn. "Are you sorry?"

He rumbled her dark hair, and laughed at her. "I resent you every waking moment."

She pivoted as he had taught her, thumped him with a short right hook in the middle. He fell back against the wall, pretending to cry.

Tommy, in his highchair, gave them one wide-eyed look and then began to bellow with all the power of his lungs.

It took them a long time to convince Tommy that they had been fooling. When at last he smiled through the tears, Carol Ann said, "See how much security means to them?"

The good humor fled from Tom's face. "A good thing he doesn't know how thin an edge his security is balanced on."

"But that's a different sort of security, darling. That's financial. Emotional security is so much more important."

But somehow she knew her words had made him think of how they all were hostage to fortune, and how precious they were in their well-being.

After he came back from his rounds of the campus buildings, he sat at the small desk and puzzled over the accounts. She saw the frown on his forehead. She went over and put her hand on his broad shoulder. "It'll come out all right, Tom," she said softly.

He smiled up at her. "I'm glad somebody thinks so," he said wryly.

On the last Wednesday in October, Carol Ann counted the money in the cigar box in the top drawer of the desk. Two dollars and a little change. Not nearly enough to cover the groceries they needed. It was a surprisingly warm day. The grocery store was on the corner two

blocks from the foot of the hill on which they lived.

Tommy crowed with delight as she guided the stroller down the slope and she said, "On the way up, my man, you walk. Your vehicle will be laden with edibles."

Near the foot of the hill three coeds crossed diagonally toward the campus. Carol Ann was surprised at her feeling of anger when she looked at them. Maybe it was envy. They were laughing, their voices silver-clear in the autumn air.

Carol Ann knew that the two years of cutting corners had left a mark on her. Tiny lines at the corners of her mouth, a sallowness under her eyes. She felt enormously older than the three girls. They wore casual, sloppy clothes and somehow those clothes were in painful contrast to Carol Ann's ironed and faded neatness. For a moment she wished that she could return to those carefree days—days laden with nothing more important than a new shade of lipstick, a movie that couldn't be missed, a wonderful new dance band . . .

Immediately she was ashamed of herself, knowing that in many ways she had something that possibly not one of the three would ever possess.

The grocery store had been recently converted into a self-service steup. She parked the stroller in front, took Tommy through the entrance and looked around until she located Mr. Endry, the owner. He was in a far corner taking canned goods out of a case, marking the price on them with a black crayon and stacking them on a display rack.

She was timid about what had to be done, but there was a relief in remembering the way Mr. Endry had always joked with her, and clucked at Tommy.

Holding Tommy by the hand she went up behind him, coughed and said, "Mr. Endry?"

He turned and smiled at her. He had a lean face, a half-bald head and sharp smiling blue eyes behind rimless glasses.



"Well, hello there, Mrs. Lamar. Who's that good-looking fellow?"

"Say hello to Mr. Endry, Tommy."

Tommy put half his hand into his mouth and stared at Mr. Endry solemnly.

Mr. Endry laughed. "What can I do for you today, Mrs. Lamar."

"Well, I hate to ask for this sort of favor, Mr. Endry, but I wonder if I could charge groceries until the end of the month. It will only be a few days—"

He took the short yellow pencil from behind his ear and examined the point of it as though seeing it for the first time. He glanced quickly into her eyes and then away.

"You folks are up at the veteran's village, aren't you?"

"Yes, we are."

"Mrs. Lamar, I'm a businessman. I made the mistake of extending credit to some of you people up there and you left school without settling. I had to take my loss. Now the grocery business has a pretty tight margin these days, and I can't afford to do business with people that are going to do me that way. I'm sorry, Mrs. Lamar, but—"

His voice dwindled as she walked rapidly away, half dragging Tommy, her face crimson and her lips compressed.

She lifted Tommy, plumped him into the stroller and wheeled it rapidly away. Tears of bitter anger filled her eyes. It was not so much anger at being refused as it was at being thought a sort of—of second-class person, with less moral responsibility than the average.

She went to another store two blocks further on, and spent the little money she had with great care, for the cheapest and most filling food she could find.

WHEN TOM came back from the practice session, she thought she had removed all traces. But he looked at her carefully and said, "What happened, pun-kin?"

She went into his arms as the quick tears came again and after a little time he had it all. His jaw set and his nostrils flared with anger.

He sat in the big chair with her curled in his lap and he said, "Tomorrow I'll pay Endry a little visit."

"No, Tom. Please! That won't do any good at all."

"But what are we going to do?"

"Your check ought to come the day after tomorrow. We can get through tomorrow and I can borrow a couple of things from Janet next door. We'll make out all right. Honestly. It just made me feel mad, the way he talked so loudly that people nearby turned and looked at him, and at me. It made me feel like—like a cheat or something."

He tried to laugh. "They talk about rough times building character. Nuts! I wonder how good all this is for us. I wonder what effect it's having on us. I feel like it's making marks that don't show, but pretty deep marks for all that."

She tilted her head up and kissed the angle of his jaw. "Woof! Philosophy yet! Break it up, soldier."

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### A Buck for a Buck

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TOM LAMAR knew that his showing in the Blaight game was due mostly to a perfect meshing of his performance with that of Tide Wallinger, left wing, a perfect blocking back.

In the Blaight game they had reached that peak of partnership performance which immeasurably increased the chances of breaking into the clear. He got the glory and Tide Wallinger did half the work.

Tide was a Florida boy, a lean, knobbly character with a wide reckless mouth, a



hot glow in his faded blue eyes, and a lust for physical contact, for dumping the opposition as hard and as often as possible.

Yet he didn't throw away blocks. Cutting out ahead of Tom, he was able to gauge when Tom could avoid tacklers on his own steam. He saved his slamming, rolling-block for the boy who would have a perfect shot at Lamar.

As a ball carrier, Tide was average. When cutting back to avoid a tackle made sense, Tide preferred to try to run down the tackler, run over him, smash him back.

Saturday was open, and as injuries in the Blaight game had been fairly heavy, Gunner Robertson canceled the planned game with the freshman team and instead ran the first teams through the faster-breaking offensive plays, then ran a long session on the perennially important fundamentals.

Finally the call came to break it up as the last daylight faded. Tom, depressed with the worry he had concealed from Carol Ann, found himself walking beside Tide back to the locker rooms and showers.

"I want to talk to you. Private-like," Tide said.

"The only bills I've got are bills due, friend."

"This isn't the gouge, son. This is a little piece of heaven. And I don't want to be seen leaving with you. One of the back booths at Hogan's?"

"Okay. What are you now? International spy, perhaps?"

"No. I've just stopped being an international chump. Maybe you can stop too."

When Tom arrived at Hogan's, Tide was already there. He grinned up at Tom and said, "Sit down and listen, Big Tom."

Tom sat across the table from him. "Babble on, Florida."

"Whether you know it or not, my boy, we are hot this year. Steaming nicely. With your muscles and my brains, we

are a ground-eating combo, as the man says."

"So you asked me to stop by so we could admire each other?"

"You and I have two-bit jobs and heavy schedules, and change jingling in our pants is a novelty. Check me if I'm wrong. We, my boy, are potential beef for the big time. And they have noted us well."

"Which big time?"

"Southern Idaho University. Conference champs. Bowl material. A fine, fat country-club life, with bills rustling in your pocket. A special course for the football wonders, including such skull-busters as Appreciation of Music, Current Events, Philosophy of the Italian Renaissance. In the final test on the music course, they play three ten-second recordings. You have to tell which is a flute, which is a snare drum which is a cello."

"They fit you for life, hey?"

"Don't be so dewy-eyed, mate. It isn't what you know, it's what you look like you might know."

"You could take other courses?"

"Nope. No choice for the muscle-bound. Besides, the football work is too tough and too long to permit the idle fantasy of home work and term papers."

"I take it you've been propositioned."

"But right. Last Saturday they had a citizen in the stands. He wants both of us or either of us. Here's the pitch. We both find we have too heavy a schedule and we are forced to drop out. This week. We take a short vacation and then we move to the thriving college town of Barton where the little men find us an occupation not too tiring. They admit us for the spring session, provide summer employment, and we are on the squad in the fall. The eligibility rules will give us two full seasons with them, even though this is the beginning of our second competitive year. Get it?"

"Take a short vacation, the man says. On what, friend? You are full of single



bliss. I have a small family. Remember?"

Tide grinned widely. "There is a special fund for travel expenses. They have paid me my travel expenses in advance. Look closely, Big Tom." He reached into an inside pocket, took out a flat packet of bills, riffled the corner. "Here you see ten, fat, beautiful fifty-dollar bills."

Tom stared at the money and thought of how much that five hundred dollars would mean to him and Carol Ann.

"Of course," Tide said, "it costs you more to travel. The little man told me to tell you that they would double the travel allowance in your case."

Tom stared down at his clenched fists, saw that his knuckles were white with the pressure. "You've decided, then?"

"What other way could I decide, Big Tom? Do you hear any fall winds whining through the holes in my head? In the spring I take up my interrupted education. Books, tuition, living expenses are laid on. Plus forty a week out of a special fund to take care of—incidentals. You would get that too, right on top of the hundred and twenty from Uncle Sugar. A shade over two eighty a month. Pretties for the missus and a chrome-plated bike for the young 'un."

Tom's smile felt tight. "I hadn't exactly intended to start playing pro ball."

"It's all in the way you look at it. In pro ball your efforts are going to enrich a group of little men who wear hand-painted neckties. In this deal, your efforts buy nice new buildings and nice new scholarships so that the deserving intelligentsia can study how to be geniuses in the best of modern surroundings. What loyalty have you got to dear, dear old Carvel?"

Tom frowned. "Not exactly loyalty. They have some courses here I want."

Tide laughed. "I remember. You and the little green growing things that have to be protected from the dust and floods. Hell, on the reputation you'll pile up at

S.I.U. you will be able to grab a job where you can learn that gunk out in the field. Why keep hitting your head on the books?"

"Why didn't your friend come to me?"

"Well," Tide said slowly, "I told him that you might be a shade touchy. Why all the questions? You're going to do it, aren't you?"

"I—I guess I better think it over, Tide."

"And while you're thinking, just remember what those babies are going to do to you next Saturday without Tide Wallinger, that famous blocking back, to keep their greasy hands off you. Tomorrow I visit the dean with tears in my eyes."

"Are you going to hang around town?"

"Until you make up your mind. If it's yes, I contact a little man who gives me the roll which I pass on to you, maybe with a ten percent agent's cut."

"And what if it's no, Tide?"

Tide shrugged. "Will it be no? Ask the little woman. Last time I saw her, she had a hungry look. Just a little beat."

Tom clamped a lid on his anger. "I'll let you know." He got up heavily, walked out of Hogan's and went home.

DURING dinner he said little to Carol Ann, but he watched her. Her gayety seemed forced. He felt uncomfortable, realizing that the proposition relayed by Tide was the first thing he had ever kept from her. And yet he wanted to make up his mind alone, without her aid.

As they sat at the table after dinner, she said, "Darling, I love to have you come home to dinner, and it was nice that Robertson let us arrange it this way to give us a little home life during the season, but I really think we could feed a horse cheaper. If you would please eat at the training table, darling, I think we would save over five dollars a week, at least. Probably more."



"She's getting tired of me," Tom said mournfully.

"I hoped you wouldn't find out."

And so a joke was made of it. He wondered what had caused her to give up when she had fought for it so hard in the beginning of the season. After dinner when she handed him the letter, he knew.

It was from something called the Doctors' Credit Bureau and it said in a very cold manner that their account in the amount of so-and-so had been turned over to the Bureau for collection as it had been inactive for over a sixty-day period and would Mr. Lamar please write immediately and tell them what he intended to do to pay off the amount owing.

He crumpled the letter and threw it toward the wastebasket. He felt bleak and cold. Before, he had shrunk when he thought of how Gunner Robertson would react to his leaving school just as the season was well under way. Now it did not matter too much about Robertson.

Nothing mattered except any move which would save them from further shame.

"That does it!" he said hoarsely.

"Does what, darling?"

"That puts us on a fine little easy street from here on in."

He told her about the proposition and as he talked, she watched him with grave eyes, her clenched hand at her mouth, tapping her thumbnail against her teeth.

When he was quite through, she said calmly, "But it isn't what we want!"

"Is this what we want?" he asked, making a gesture that included the flimsy apartment, the mud where there should have been grass, the look in Endry's eyes.

"This is the way to get what we want, Tom. That other way is no good. No good at all."

"But I can't keep doing this to you, Carol Ann. I'm married to you. Remember? Don't you think I want to buy you nice things? Don't you think I want to

see you without those two little worry wrinkles between your eyebrows? What the hell kind of a life is this for you and the kid?"

"It's a good life because it leads to what we want, Tom. Can't you understand that? We'll get through somehow."

"But will we? How long can we go without having fun? Wouldn't you like to go dancing? Wouldn't you like to eat out?"

"But it won't last long, darling."

"It's been endless already and there's nearly two more years of it. I'm damn well sick of it right now. I'm sick of this—this—" Again he made the gesture.

All of the fight suddenly went out of her. He saw the look of weary resignation. "Whatever you decide to do will be all right with me, Tom," she said dully.

He stood up. "Oh, fine! You're really thrilled, aren't you?"

He walked out, slammed the door behind him. His anger lasted for about two blocks. Then he felt miserable. It was their first real quarrel, and it was heavy within him.

He made his rounds of the furnaces, walked heavily home. She was standing in the dark in the kitchen, looking out the window.

He went to her, put his big hands on her slim shoulders and turned her around, pulled her into his arms. She came willingly enough, and he felt her shake with the sobs she muffled against the front of his jacket.

"I'm sorry, honey," he whispered.

"So am I. Maybe—maybe you're right. Maybe we aren't—aren't strong enough, Tom."

He kissed her, tasted the salt of her tears on her lips.

**G**UNNER ROBERTSON was a tall, grave man who dressed like a bookkeeper. His coat pocket bulged with pencils and pens. There was



scurf on his dark shoulders and a somber look in his eyes. He was a strategist, a tactician of high order. His greatest delight came from engineering an upset through the use of a play so unexpected as to demoralize the opposition.

He sat behind his desk in the small office on the third floor of the gym. He held a broken pencil in his strong hands and, with a ridged thumbnail, he was picking the wood slowly away from the buried lead.

Tom Lamar sat in the straight chair across the desk. It was noon on Monday.

Robertson sighed. "You know, Lamar, I wouldn't be happy coaching that kind of an outfit. Of course the pay is terrific. That would be nice. But I guess I'm partisan to lost causes. I like to get there latest with the leastest, and still win."

Tom flushed. "What coaching? Where?"

Robertson looked at him with amusement. "Why at S.I.U., lad! Where else? You and Wallinger are naturals for them. You fill the slots where they're a shade weak, if an outfit like that can ever be weak. I listened to Wallinger's little tale of woe. According to him he's on the verge of a complete breakdown. Poor boy. The coat he was wearing was so new I looked for the price tag. And now you, Lamar. Tch, tch, tch!"

Tom felt uncomfortable. "I'm sorry I lied to you, sir. I should have known that I'd be better off telling the truth. I know you can raise hell with them through the proper channels, but that's about all. They want the two of us or either of us. I—I've had it rough and their offer will straighten me out, me and the wife and kid."

Robertson threw the pencil aside, swiveled the chair so he could look out the window. "I don't blame you, Lamar. It's your life. Football isn't too bad a career. I've liked it so far. You ought to make a good coach when you're older."

"That isn't what I had planned to be."

"That's about all you'll be trained for, Lamar."

"I can't think of myself in this. There are—other considerations."

"I understand that, too. I'm not begging for anything, Lamar. But if it's possible I would like to have you hang around until the Southern Mines game is over this Saturday. We won't win, but I'd like to put a few dents in them."

Tom thought it over. "I can do that."

"Good boy! Now, about Wallinger's slot. How do you think Sigel will shape up?"

"Not as good as Tide, of course. But Sigel's willing. He did okay in the first game and faded in the second. He was all right the few minutes he was in the last game."

"Work with him, will you? This afternoon I'll put you on your own, and give you Chalmers and Gorsek. You work with Sigel and see if you can teach him the knack of getting you through those two boys."

THREE hours later, Tom had Sigel, Chalmers and Gorsek over in the far corner of the number two practice field.

He spotted Chalmers and Gorsek fifteen yards away, about ten feet apart, and called out. "You guys try to nail me good. Charlie, you smell out which one to block and see if you can get me through."

The first three times, Tom was nailed hard after ten steps, with Sigel either muffing the block, or throwing it on the wrong one.

The fourth time he got through. He was running easily, leaving the burden on Charlie Sigel. They took a few breaks and kept it up until they were all bruised and panting.

Tom said, "You're catching on. You've got to develop a sixth sense of knowing where I am without looking around. And



you've got to stay close and yet give me room to cut around you. I'll follow your lead as well as I can, and when you do let the block go, you've got to drop one man where he'll be in the way of the other one. Get it?"

"I won't ever have it as good as Tide did," Sigel said.

Tom clapped him on the shoulder. "You'll get it down good enough so that we can bull off some yards, boy."

THAT evening, after his rounds of the furnaces, he and Carol Ann were oddly uncomfortable with each other. Tommy was coughing badly in his sleep and that made them both nervous and irritable. Somebody three doors down was having a party, and the laughter was too loud, too artificial.

He was studying when she said, "I'm going for a walk, Tom."

Before he could ask where, the door shut quietly behind her. He raised his eyebrows for a moment and then went back to the books.

The strangeness persisted between them on Tuesday, Wednesday—right up to Saturday morning. He had explained about his arrangement with Robertson. When he left, knowing that he wouldn't see her again until after the game, he held her close and said, "Wish you could come see it, honey."

"I'll be there," she said coolly. "Janet is coming in to watch Tommy. I wouldn't miss your last amateur game for the world."

"Please don't act this way, honey."

Her eyes grew wide. "Why, whatever are you talking about, Tom? Act what way?"

He turned and went blindly out, and after he had gone a half block, he wanted to hurry back and find some way to get through the odd wall that had been erected between them ever since the night when he had walked out in anger. But he told

himself that all would be well when he had paid off the outstanding bills and they left the flimsy apartment behind them.

Just one more afternoon of ball-carrying for Carvel. It was odd. Always before, he'd been nervous as a girl on the morning before a game. This time he was apathetic about it.

Sigel had shaped up pretty well—and even if he hadn't, what difference would it make? His mood was sour and he was tired before he started.

### 3

#### Sold-Out Thunder

HIS CLEATS rattled on the concrete as he ran up the steps with the squad and out onto the field. The roar hit them like a wave. Usually he was proud of the way they looked as they came swarming out. This time it didn't seem to matter.

Southern Mines was already on the field. They gave the impression of width and heaviness, but he knew that their style of play was wide open.

He lined up with the first team in the T, directly behind Judge, the quarter. Judge stepped aside and he took the long pass from center, faked a handoff to Brugan, the man in motion, and then swarmed down into the hole off tackle, Sigel bursting through first.

He felt lazy and depressed and he was mildly amused by the on-your-toes look of the rest of the squad. He went out and called the flip right, chose to receive, and they trotted back to defend the north goal.

The ball came high and far, end over end. Joe Brugan took it on the three and one of the Southern Mines ends slipped away from Tom's block, nailed Joe on the five.



Tom flushed and bounced up and down a few times, went back to the huddle. That had been played like a high-school sophomore.

Judge called for him to take it right through the middle on a straight line buck, taking it from Judge on the way past. He knew, even as he started, that he had taken a full stride before the ball was snapped. The horn sounded on the play before he hit the line.

The five-yard man-in-motion penalty put it back on the one-foot line, and Conway, the kicker, came in to replace Tom.

Robertson gave him an odd look. On the next play, Conway kicked nicely out of trouble, and the Mines safety man had to drop back to their forty. An end came in fast and outsmarted the safety man when he tried to circle out of trouble, nailing him on the thirty-five.

On the first play that Mines ran, their quarterback made a half spin and clumsily faked a handoff to the man in motion. That man made a slow awkward sweep around the left end of the Carvel line. The defense ignored him . . . but not for long. Just after he got outside the Carvel end, the little quarter, after faking to the other wingback, made a beautiful jump pass, directly into the arms of the man to whom he'd originally faked.

Two of the Carvel secondary were hit with driving blocks that took them out of the play as they tried to cut over and intercept the pass receiver. The safety man angled over to force the runner over the sideline.

But the man didn't force; he changed direction with a dazzling change of pace, and trotted unmolested over the Carvel goal.

The Carvel rooters sat in stunned silence and the Mines band blared in triumph as their men came trotting back up the field for the second kickoff.

Robertson sent Tom back in. The kickoff came to him. He pulled it out of the

air, charged straight ahead. Just as a tackler drove at him, he turned and flipped the short lateral back to Brugan running on his flank.

Brugan got his hands on it, but the ball came alive. Brugan, running, tried to hang on and failed. The tackle tore it out of his hands and Mines recovered on the Carvel eighteen.

Eight men of the defensive team went in, but Tom stayed where he was. Their right wingback took it from the quarter at the end of a full spinner, faked a jump pass, and went through a hole in the right side of the Carvel line. Tom slammed him down after a six-yard gain.

They lined up fast, and got three more on a quarterback sneak. On a straight line plunge, their big fullback barely made the necessary yardage for a first down on the seven and a half.

On the next play, Tom went high and batted down a lazy looping pass intended for a man in the end zone.

On the next play, a whole host of them swept the left end. Sigel missed his shot at the ball carrier. The carrier, trapped, went all the way back to the fifteen. The crowd noise was a constant scream. Back on the fifteen, the man ran the width of the field and was trapped again. He reversed his field, ran back to the twenty, stopped, and threw a long pass to an end who stood all alone in the far corner of the end zone. The man caught it neatly. Tom drove hard and opened a hole through which Sigel went to block the conversion attempt.

CAROL ANN sat high among the crowd on the Carvel side at about the forty-yard line and felt sick at heart.

Near her she heard a man say, "What the hell's wrong with Lamar? He acts as though he did a little celebrating last night."

Carol Ann's smile was bitter. She knew that she could tell the man why



Tom Lamar acted so dull on the field. She could say, "No, he didn't celebrate. You see, he's having wife trouble. His wife is a silly woman who loves him so much that she's made him feel guilty all week. That's what's the matter with Lamar."

It had been so stupid. She should have told him what her heart said. But she knew that she had been afraid of what was happening to them, what would happen to them.

Fear is a poor companion in marriage.

She knew that he was down there thinking of her, and wondering. She wished that she could have taken back the bitter words said when he left the apartment.

He moved as though he carried a heavy load of weariness. Near the end of the first quarter, Robertson took him out. She watched the game without interest. Southern Mines made an eighty-yard march for their third touchdown and, with minutes to play in the half, Tom was sent back in.

Twice he tried to run with the ball and was smothered. Then, with Sigel carrying, Tom looked for a moment like his old self. He cracked through, smashed two of the secondary out of the way, made room for Sigel to make eight yards before he was downed.

But then they had to kick, being too close to their own goal to risk running it with two yards to go.

Southern Mines hung onto the ball for four slow running plays. The half ended. The big board said 20-0.

During the third quarter and most of the last, Southern Mines should have scored again. But there was a fumble at a crucial moment, a back who slipped when he was almost in the clear, a pass that didn't get away properly, dropped into the hands of the Carvel center.

Carvel was doing little to deserve the breaks. Big Tom Lamar's apathy had

somehow infected all the rest of them.

Carol Ann was watching him when the change began to occur. Suddenly he seemed more alert. There seemed to be some sort of argument in the huddle. They came out, and Judge fed the ball to Tom. He made a bruising, punishing drive into the center of the Mines line, and smashed through for five.

On the next play, he slanted off tackle, picked up Sigel who smeared the closest man in the secondary, and Tom wasn't downed until he had made twelve.

Fifteen thousand Carvel fans yelled, and then looked nervously at the seconds ticking by on the clock.

The Mines team was laying for him the next play, but somehow little Judge appeared streaking around the right end with the ball tucked under his arm.

He made over twenty yards. Another first down was hung up when Brugan, on a naked reverse, cut back in time to dive for a good six yards.

With fifteen to the goal, Big Tom Lamar took it over in three smashes at the line. On the third and last smash, the sound of impact was so loud that Carol Ann heard it high in the stands and shut her eyes for a moment. When she opened them, Carvel was lining up to try for the conversion. Tom was still in the back-field.

The extra point was kicked and Carvel, for the first time, kicked off to Southern Mines. Mines felt the new spirit in the Carvel team and tried to hold onto the ball. But they were forced to kick short of a first down and Brugan took it on the Carvel twenty-three, fighting, spinning, slipping all the way up to midfield.

Carol Ann realized that Tom was playing harshly and well, channeling his anger at the world against the Mines eleven.

His smashes were so successful that Mines adopted, for the first time in the game, a seven, three, one defense.

At that point, Tom took the backward



pass from Judge, picked his receiver calmly and threw a flat pass into the arms of Sid Carver, the left end. Sid was dumped on the four. The game ended as Tom was stopped on the one-foot line and Carvel began to line up for the next play.

The man who had spoken before said, "If this game was ten minutes longer, it'd be another story."

She went out with the crowd, walked the long way home, thanked Janet, fixed Tommy's evening meal and put him to bed. Then she dressed carefully and sat to wait for her husband.

HE CAME in and his step was weary. But when the light hit his face, she saw that he had rid himself of much of the anger and frustration. His face was calm, almost relaxed.

He kissed her, said, "Hmmm! You smell good, punkin. All dressed up and no place to go?"

"Are you too bushed to talk, Tom?"

She saw the stubborn look appear on his face. He sat down and said, "No. Let's talk if you want to talk."

"Darling, I'm sorry for the way I acted this morning. I should have been spanked."

"You're a big girl now."

"I wonder. I haven't handled this right, Tom."

He looked puzzled. "What should you have done?"

She sat down opposite him, her chin on her fists, her eyes sober and grave. "Darling, I'm not a very brilliant woman. I like keeping your home and raising your child and cooking for you. Those, I suppose, are peasant delights. Anyway, I like doing it. I like it because our marriage is a partnership. We both have an equal vote. I'm not a chattel or a possession. I'm part of this tight little unit called a family."

He smiled. "So far, I don't know where you're heading."

"Patience, my love. I'm long-winded. As an equal partner in, say a company of some kind, if I saw the company adopting a policy that I thought was wrong, what could I do?"

"Change the policy or sell out. That's easy."

"This is a marriage, not a company, Tom. My investment isn't in money, but in emotions. I gave in to you and I shouldn't have. Now I want to change the policy."

"Or?"

"Or I want to get out."

"Could you?" he asked, his face white.

"It would be the closest thing to death that I can think of, darling, but I could do it."

He stood up and began to pace back and forth. The expression on his face frightened her. He said, "But I wanted to do this—"

"I know. For me. So that I might be gay and happy and carefree."

"And why not?" he demanded.

"It's what is called an initial error, I guess. You want something very badly. You know what you want to do with your life. It is a strong motivation with you. And through me you are forced to give it up. I think you are enough of a gentleman so that for all the rest of our life, you would never throw it up to me and say, 'Look at the sacrifice I made for you!' But that would be in your thoughts one day. And I'm too selfish to permit that sort of thing to happen."

He walked with the nervous monotony of a trapped animal. Suddenly he stopped and turned to her, his palms spread.

"But, Carol Ann! What else can we do?"

"I did three things today, Tom. Probably every one of them will make you angry."

"I'm too tired and confused to be mad."

"I sold the little star sapphire you brought back from India. The eighty dol-



## RUN THE MAN DOWN

lars I got for it are in my purse. I wrote for the accumulated dividends on my life insurance. They amount to another twenty-three fifty. At eleven o'clock I saw Mr. Bargoman who handles the employment fund. I told him about the cost of living and if you stay, they'll pay you sixty-five a month instead of fifty for tending the oil furnaces. And on Monday, I'm going to go to the campus office of the newspaper and put in an ad. There's no reason why I can't tend a few extra kids during the afternoons."

She looked at him defiantly. The silence was heavy between them. He had his hands shoved deeply into his trousers pockets and she couldn't read the expression on his face.

"I told Robertson," he said.

"I know you did. He'll be glad if you change your mind."

"I told Tide too."

"You didn't sign anything. This is where we belong, Tom. No matter how hard it is, this is what we want to do. We just forgot that for a little while."

"I don't see why you should take it on yourself to—" He paused as a knock sounded on the door.

He opened it. Tide Wallinger smiled and said, "Can three people get into one of these rooms?"

"Come on in, boy. You know Carol Ann?"

"Sure. Hi, lady. I'm that commercial Mr. Wallinger."

"So I've heard," she said flatly.

Tide sat down. "My, you two look happy! Did I interrupt any fisticuffs?"

She saw Tom grin. "We hadn't quite gotten to that point."

"Big Tom, that was an odd performance you put on out there on today's balmy afternoon. Very peculiar. You certainly needed me out there."

"I could have used you," Tom admitted.

"It almost made this old heart sad,

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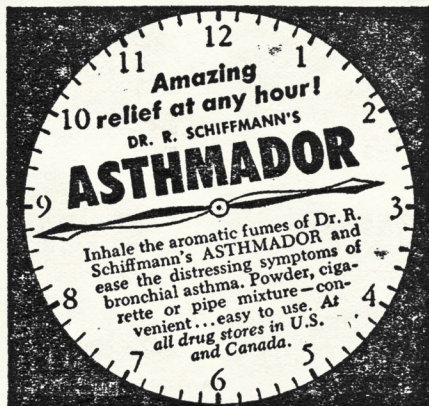
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## FIFTEEN SPORTS STORIES

lad. We could have shredded those smart punks in the approved fashion."

"But we didn't. We'll have our chance to do that next year. S.I.U. has Southern Mines in the schedule as a breather."

Carol Ann's heart sank as she heard Tom say 'we'.

But before Tide could answer, Tom said, "Correction, please. I forgot. Tell your chums that Tom Lamar is no longer on the market. Tell them his wife has decided that he should be a kept man, and she has decided to keep him."

"Darling!" Carol Ann said softly.

Tom grinned at her.

Tide Wallinger, slumped in the chair, looked speculatively up at Tom and said, "Behind that massive brow, Lamar, you do think, don't you?"

"How so?" Tom asked, anger in his tone.

"I sat high in the stands today about five rows back of your charming lady. I had a friend with me. He left after the third quarter. He told me to relay to you his best wishes and to advise you that should you seek a transfer to S.I.U., you do so at your own risk, and sans travel expenses. He felt that your performance was a bit too—ah—spotty for an outfit which deals largely in sure things."

She felt the laughter start, deep inside her. She caught Tom's eye just as it started to bubble out. The shocked look on his face changed and then he was laughing too.

She laughed herself into helpless weakness. Tom's great bellowing laugh filled the small room.

"What the hell?" Tide asked mildly. He stood up. "So, folks, I just stopped by to say that the gravy train pulled out without you and that I'm very sorry. You have my kind permission to read about me in next fall's sports sections."

Tom walked over to the door with him, shook hands with him, and said good-by.



## RUN THE MAN DOWN

When he came back to her, Carol Ann was still weak from the good laughter, the good, deep, wonderful laughter that had meant an end to their bad week.

When she was under control, she said, "You know, Tom, I don't know whether I like him or not. He's—so sort of cynical and funny."

"Underneath he's a good guy."

They talked together in low tones for a long time, and then she went out into the kitchen to prepare dinner. She was humming as she worked, and she felt young and very alive.

Tom's hoarse shout brought her to the doorway of the living room.

He handed her the note. It was from Tide. "Stuffed down there in the chair he sat on, honey."

The note read:

Kiddies:

Life is real and life is earnest, and if I tried a big fat gesture like this out in the open, Big Tom would break teeth off me. But honest and truly, it is not a gift. It is a loan. Conscience money, you might say. And when you get to work on those green little growing things, Lamar, I want it back with interest. Adios, you second-rate athlete with the first-rate wife.

—Uncle Tide.

She looked, saw on his broad palm the three crisp fifty-dollar bills.

"That crazy guy!" Tom said thickly. "He couldn't leave without throwing one more block for me."

"We're rich," she said gaily.

"Maybe I just learned something," Tom said.

"You! Learn something!" she said in mock surprise.

He put his palms under her elbows, lifted her high off the floor. "Sure, pun-kin. Maybe I learned that even without the money, I'm rich."

Then he laughed. "Stop looking at me like that! You look fifteen and you make me feel like a cradle-snatcher!"

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## FIFTEEN SPORTS STORIES

(Continued from page 6)

Eddie Plank, one of the great southpaw pitchers of all time, did not believe he could win a ball game unless he ate a bowl of tomato soup before the contest started.

Connie Mack chose his solemn-faced left-hander to pitch the third game of the 1913 World Series against the New York Giants. The sage of baseball did not know Plank was suffering from a painful attack of arthritis in the elbow of his pitching arm. Eddie, always close-mouthed, said nothing about it, because he was anxious to work against the National champions.

He did, however, take two teammates, pitcher Jack Coombs and catcher Jack Lapp, into his confidence. The night before the game they sat up in Eddie's room, piling one hot application after another onto the aching whip. It helped, Plank admitted, but the elbow was still sore at game time.

The veteran left-hander was one of the shrewdest men in the game. Mack did not have to signal pitches to him. Eddie knew the weaknesses of opposing batsmen, and how to pitch to them. The job of stopping the Giants was his alone.

As soon as he began warming up, Plank realized he would have to depend on his fast ball and a change of pace. His curve was a great one, but when he threw a curve the fire of hades burned in his elbow.

Through nine breathless innings Plank clung grimly to his fast ball and "mixer". He hurled curves only twice, and each time the Giants clinked out a hit. As a matter of fact, those two hits were all he allowed. To the day of his death Eddie believed that had he not gambled on the sore elbow by throwing curves, he would have had a no-hit World Series game in his record.

Back in the locker room, he doffed his sweaty uniform and showered. When he came out, Lapp sat beside him, dressing. Suddenly a startled look crossed the pitcher's lantern-jawed face.

"By gosh," he said, "do you know I forgot to eat my tomato soup before the game, my elbow hurt so. If I'd thought of that while I was out there working they would have beaten me sure!"

Yet, this triumph never changed Plank's belief in tomato soup as a talisman of good fortune. He continued to eat that delicacy before every game he pitched—and to claim he couldn't win without it!

Yours truly,  
Wilson Herman  
Malden, Mass.

We liked that one fine, Will. Let's see some more.

And that does it for this session, friends. We'll be back month after next—and we hope we can run a letter from you in this spot then.—THE EDITORS.



## SAY IT WITH SPIKES!

(Continued from page 64)

"Yeah, sure—" John was slightly dazed.

"I need a few thousand more to buy out Holcomb. You ought to own part of the club, anyhow. And you better go outside right now, before you shower. Holcomb is making a last pitch—"

He got out there. Dotty was leaning against the wall in the tunnel as if she meant to stay there a while. Holcomb was pleading with her. John wandered up to them and Holcomb glared, then sighed.

John said, "Take a walk, Harold. You don't even belong here any more. You're no Eagle now, you know."

Dotty said, "Johnny, you stopped and thought! You thought about how it would be if you were Healey—and I was ill—"

"Someone's been talking," said John darkly. But he could not be very angry with her in his sweaty, dirty embrace. Her head barely came to the letters on his chest.

She said, "You were tough on the field—but not tough off the field. It's what I wanted, Johnny."

He said, "We've got a long row to hoe. We haven't won this pennant by a long shot."

"I don't care where you finish," she said. "It's you, Johnny. You came through. You're my Johnny."

On reflection, that seemed good enough. Or almost good enough.

He wondered if he should let Bishop play tomorrow so he could get a rest for his leg. He thought about Dozier's pitchers and wondered who would start tomorrow. He had a lot of things to think out. Healey would be all right. Come to think of it, with Healey hitting he had less worries. He turned his attention to the small girl in his arms. He was getting the knack of taking care of many things at once, all right!

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## FIFTEEN SPORTS STORIES

(Continued from page 74)

He turned to face a suddenly tight and pale Patton. It was the first time in their encounters Johnny had ever seen him shaken.

His serve was an indication of his state of mind, an arching ball that Johnny could have put away with ease ten years back.

Deliberately, he smashed it into the stands.

He didn't want any favors from the officials, not today.

Frankie watched its wild flight, and he knew, as every fan knew, just what Johnny had done, and why. There was a smattering of applause.

Johnny glanced back at the place where his dad sat, and smiled. His dad formed an O with thumb and forefinger, and pride flowed through Johnny. He knew he'd come of age.

That had been the crucial point, and Johnny had thrown it away. Had thrown it away, and gained mastery of the Patton jinx. Because it wasn't only the grass, it had been mental, with Frankie, who used what weapons he had.

From now on, it would be straight tennis, and that it was. It was also straight sets for Johnny, 12-10, 6-3, 6-1.

Frankie came to the net and said, "You're the champ, and you earned it."

Johnny said, "It was just my day. We'll make a good doubles team, Frankie."

Then he hurried over to where his dad was talking to Sam Fargo.

His dad gripped Johnny's hand, and his eyes may have been wet. His dad said, "Welcome home, son."

Sam said, "I'm trying to convince him he should take on the press job with us, Johnny. He's a hard man to convince."

"We both are," Johnny said. "We're high-priced men, but I think we can get together, both of us, Sam."



## THUNDER CHUKKER

(Continued from page 106)

grasped what had taken place. Then they shook down the heavens with their applause.

Not until after the usual champagne bowl ceremony was over, and they were in the dressing rooms, did Charlie Black get the chance at a few minutes alone with Duke Rollins.

"Tell me this, to see if I've guessed right," Black said. "You got back on your game right at the end of the Falcon match, didn't you? But you deliberately missed that last goal try, right?"

"Right," Rollins smiled and nodded. "The Royals were in the stands watching. It gave me an idea, that might give us an edge on them. Let them think I was way off my game until it was too late for them to do anything about it. It seemed an idea worth trying, and . . . it worked!"

"It certainly did!" Black chuckled happily. "Now one more before I shut up. Why didn't you tell us?"

Duke Rollins let his smile fade and for a moment he stared unseeing at the rope mat on the dressingroom floor.

"Call it security reasons," he said with a shrug. "If you'd known I was back on my game you might have forgotten the plan and forced me to go to town sooner than I wanted to."

"Yes, we might have at that," Black grunted. Then grinning and wagging a finger he said, "Well, see that you don't get off your game again so close to a big match. This old pumper couldn't stand it twice!"

For a second Duke Rollins was tempted to tell the true story, but he decided against it. There were a few things a man didn't tell even his best friend. And, besides, it wasn't at all important now.

"And neither could this one," he said. "So it's a promise."

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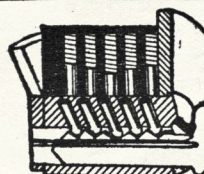
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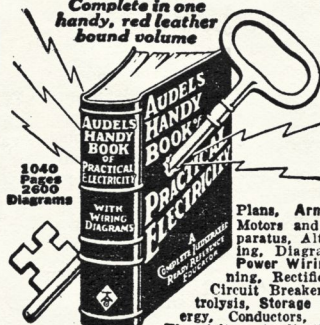
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The demand for white-enameled steel Youngstown Kitchens has accelerated with tremendous speed. We have received more than a million and a half inquiries from our advertising in the leading national magazines. More than a million Youngstown Kitchens have been sold. But there is still *time for you to get in on the ground floor*. More than 20-million home owners need a Youngstown Kitchen and can afford to buy. And there must be a kitchen in every new dwelling unit built.

To keep pace with this growing demand, Youngstown Kitchen dealers of America need more men to become kitchen planning experts and to learn the Youngstown Kitchen Mer-

chandising Business. If you qualify, you will be associated with one of these dealers — *probably in the city of your choice*.

Any previous experience in sales can help you move ahead very rapidly. However, you will get what we believe to be the best sales training available. Men with the will and ability to produce have every chance to *become supervisors, sales managers or to have businesses of their own*.

We firmly believe this to be today's richest opportunity for men of all ages. Send the coupon for full details. Your inquiry will be held confidential and you will hear from us at once.

*Chas. A. Morrow*

CHAS. A. MORROW, Vice President in Charge of Merchandising



## Youngstown Kitchens

BY MULLINS

MULLINS MANUFACTURING CORPORATION • WARREN, OHIO  
World's Largest Makers of Steel Kitchens

### SEND NOW!

Full details on  
today's richest sales  
opportunity

Youngstown Kitchens  
Mullins Manufacturing Corporation  
Dept. PF-1149, Warren, Ohio  
Attention: Chas. A. Morrow, Vice-President  
in Charge of Merchandising

Dear Sir:

Please send me at once details on how to get into the Youngstown Kitchen Merchandising Business. Consider my inquiry confidential.

(My Name)

(Street Address)

(City)

(Zone)

(State)



Millions of bottles are bought  
by men who like that

*clear  
clean  
taste*



Taste is funny! With half the words in Webster's Dictionary we just couldn't describe PM's "clear, clean taste" . . . but here's the story in a nutshell. This p.m. order PM . . . and know why so many millions of men are turning to PM.

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*BLENDED WHISKEY*

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