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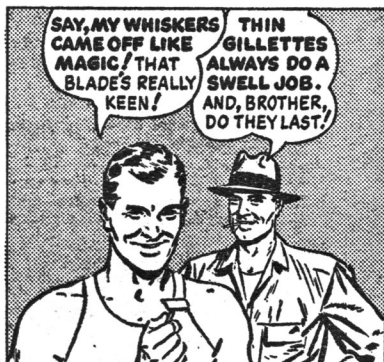
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NEW SPORTS

MAGAZINE



Vol. 5

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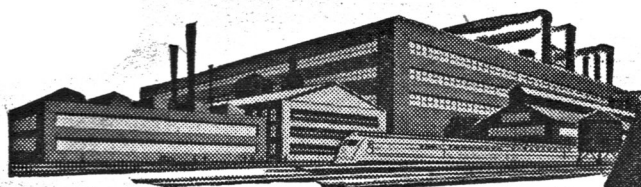
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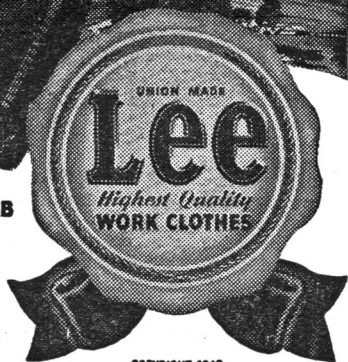
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THE SCORE BOARD

JIMMY JOHNSTON is dead more than a year now, but the little guy with the derby is still part of the boxing picture. During his lifetime, the "Boy Bandit of Fistiania" managed six ring champions. But the frustration of his life was the fact that he had never managed a heavyweight champion. Three times he made a bid for the golden crown—once with big Abe Simon, and twice with Bob Pastor, who tried to topple Joe Louis from his pedestal. But both men failed him.

However, as the story goes on Jacobs' Beach, there came a day when Jimmy Johnston found himself a heavyweight who stirred his imagination as no other fighter had. The Boy Bandit of Fistiania went high on that heavyweight pug. He thought he really had a guy who could lick Joe Louis, but everybody along Jacobs' Beach gave little Jimmy Johnston the horselaugh. They ridiculed his heavyweight find as just a broken-down bum. When Jimmy Johnston brought his heavyweight find to New York, the boxing commission refused him a license. They said his fighter was too old. The name of that fighter was Jersey Joe Walcott.

It could be that Jimmy Johnston, wherever he may now be, might still have the last laugh on the fight mob.

(Continued on page 8)



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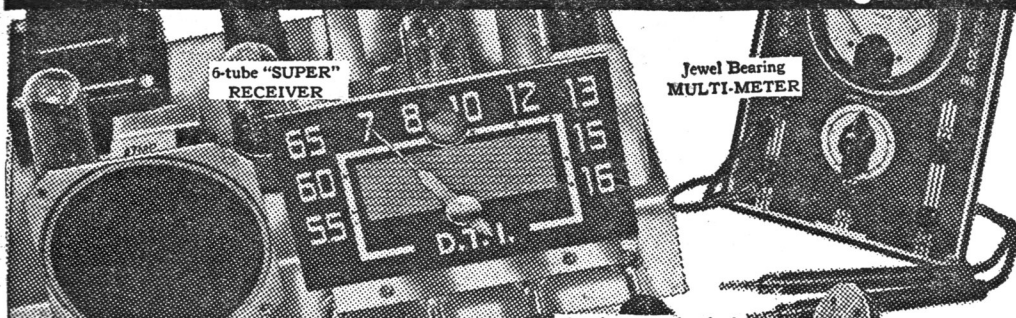
(Continued from page 6)

HENRI COCHET is playing amateur tennis again in his native France. Little Cochet, who played tennis with all the splendid grace of a virtuoso playing a violin. How that little Frenchman could handle a racket! He was the brilliant star of that famous trio, the "Three Tennis Musketeers of France," who from 1925 to 1933 monopolized the Davis Cup, symbolic of the tennis championship of the world. Now, little Henri Cochet has returned to the amateur tennis wars and he seems to be doing not badly at all. Recently he reached the finals in a tournament for the singles tennis championship of France. He lost, but it was fine work for a little guy who is crowding fifty.

HARRY HARPER spent eleven years pitching in the big leagues. He hurled for Washington, the Boston Red Sox and the New York Yankees, but there never was one season when he set the baseball world on fire, nor a season in which he earned more than seventy-five hundred dollars working with his soupbone. Harper was pitching for the Yankees in a Series game against the Giants. He threw his best ball at Pancho Snyder, and the Giants' catcher slugged it clear out of the park for a home run. That home run knocked Harry Harper out of baseball. No big league wanted him after the Yankees fired him. Harry Harper took stock of his dismal baseball future, tossed in the sponge as a ball player, took his meager savings and went into the trucking business. He prospered. He invested his profits in the construction of highways. His bank account grew. He built the largest food market in New Jersey.

Today, the ex-major league pitcher is reputed to be worth close to a million. He has been New Jersey's State Labor Commissioner, and a prominent figure in politics.

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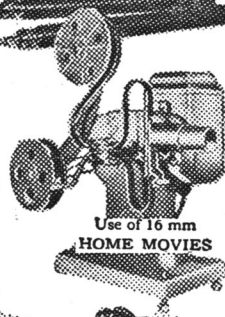
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HELL'S BELTERS

Have the modern maulers smashed the saga of yesterday's iron arms?



By
**JOHN
DREBINGER**

ALTHOUGH statistics are not kept on such matters it is reasonably safe to venture that between the close of the 1947 major league baseball campaign and the launching of the 1948 pennant races more ball players underwent surgical and medical repairs than in any previous off-season.

The world champion Yankees alone had three of their most prominent players going under the knife, with Joe DiMaggio and Spud Chandler having bone chips removed from the elbows of their combined throwing arms, while Yogi Berra had his tonsils removed. Then, too, there was Charlie Keller recovering from a delicate spinal operation that had been found necessary right in the middle of the 1947 race, and Johnny Lindell who had wound up the World Series last October with a couple of cracked ribs.

Stan Musial, brilliant first baseman-outfielder of the Cardinals, barely waited for the season to end when he dashed into a hospital where they all but took him apart and put him together again as doctors removed his appendix and tonsils and performed sundry other repairs.

Three other Redbirds also were hospitalized. Pitchers George Munger and Howie Pollet underwent arm operations, while the veteran George Moore had his nasal and breathing apparatus thoroughly overhauled.

The Giants had their young freshman

star, Bobby Thomson, going under the surgeon's knife to correct a balky knee joint, while Pitcher Dave Koslo submitted to another one of those "chip removal" operations which seem to have become the fashion with so many hurlers.

In fact, lucky was the club at the close of the 1947 campaign that had no more than one or two of its athletes waiting to have a repair job done somewhere on his physical equipment. And all this seems to have given rise to a question.

Are ball players today more brittle than they were a score or more years ago?

Old-timers, of course, will insist that they are. Most any old ball player who slammed his way through the rough and tumble days of Ty Cobb, Eddie Roush and Frank Chance, will tell you that the performers of today are a weak lot, that soft living has made them too fragile to withstand the rigors of a game that is no rougher today than it was at the turn of the century.

Another theory is that actually there are no more aches and pains today than there were forty years ago. The only difference is the old-timer bore his ailments in silence while advanced medical science today deftly removes the trouble. When pitchers in the era of Cy Young, Jack Chesbro and Christy Mathewson had a sore shoulder or elbow they went into the clubhouse where the trainer doused it

(Continued on page 12)

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(Continued from page 10)

with a strong liniment, rubbed it and then let nature do the rest.

Today such a player is hustled off to Johns Hopkins or some other famous medical center, where some of the nation's foremost bone specialists study the injury under the X-ray, slice it open, sew it together and restore the arm to its owner as good as new.

Be all this as it may, there is no denying that club owners and managers are becoming increasingly concerned over the apparent brittleness of their players. Pitchers seem to suffer a higher casualty rate than other players, including the ever-hazardous job of the guys who catch.

Not only does a season of the modern era see an endless chain of hurlers go out of action with arm ailments of every description, but even the flingers lucky enough to escape serious injury find it troublesome enough to come through with a fairly good record. Twenty-game winners are mighty scarce these years, and even some of the game's top-ranking pitchers are satisfied to settle for from fifteen to eighteen victories.

As for the reason for this, virtually all baseball men are more or less agreed. As Eddie Dyer, shrewd manager of the Cardinals, so tersely sums it up, it all stems from the homer craze and the ever-increasing demand for conditions that permit the batter to hit for distance.

Most any veteran baseball man actively connected with the game for thirty or more years, will agree that were pitchers of the long ago to hurl under present-day conditions they would never be able to match their former exploits so far as durability is concerned.

IN THE days of the Mattys and the Mordecai Browns, when twenty-five or thirty victories a season was not an uncommon lot, pitchers threw a soft

ball that became quickly discolored and was allowed to remain in the game until lost. In addition, the hurlers were allowed to "doctor" it with all sorts of innovations of their own.

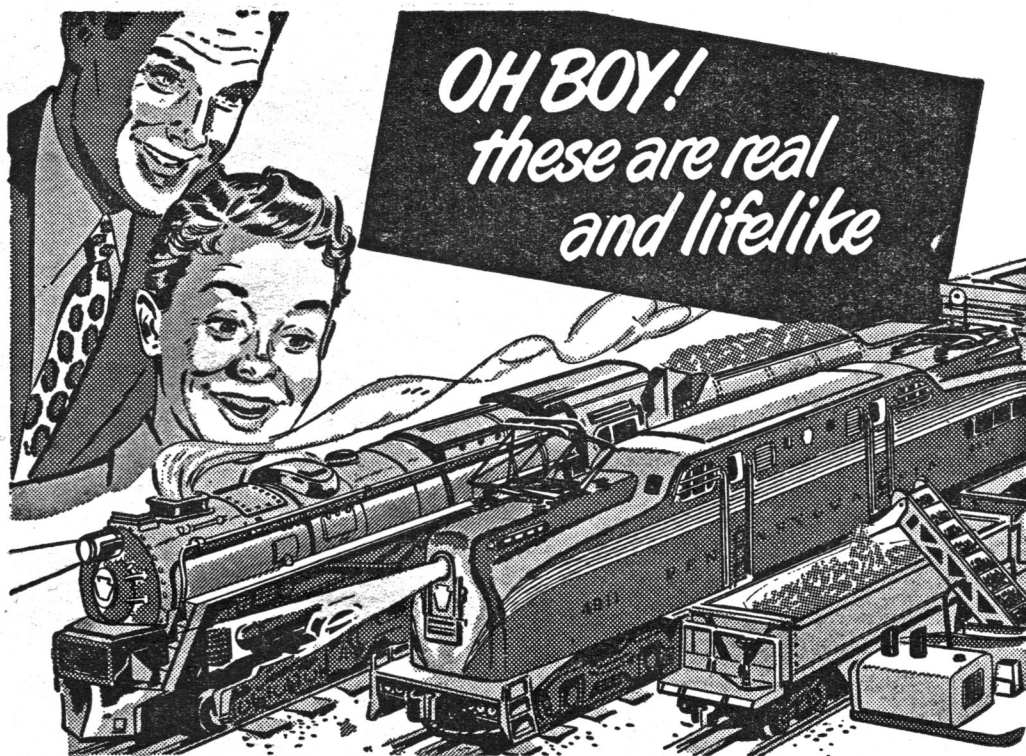
They nicked it, roughed one side and smoothed the other, and also puts gobs of saliva on their fingers with the introduction of the noted "spitball." Eddie Cicotte of the old White Sox threw a so-called "shine ball." Hod Eller of the Reds of that era perfected this delivery with a "paraffin ball." He roughened one side of the ball in the dirt, then rubbed the other side on his shirt front on which he had smeared a layer of paraffin. Equipped with such an assortment of tricks, all legal at that time, it is a wonder pitchers ever failed to retire a batter in a clutch.

But with the advent of the Babe Ruth home-run era that began in 1920 all these innovations which had made a pitcher's life a paradise were legislated out of existence, and life for the average hurler became little more than a nightmare.

Not only were all trick deliveries, including the spitball, banished from the game, but other rules, such as those governing the balk, elimination of the "quick pitch," and the like, were introduced to further hamstring the already harried pitcher. On top of that came a demand that the ball at all times be a shiny spotless white. Today, if the ball is so much as slightly scuffed in striking a stand it is immediately tossed out by the umpire.

All this, of course, served to put a tremendous strain on the pitcher and, according to Eddie Dyer, himself a former pitcher who went out with a sore arm, fans today scarcely realize the full extent of the strain their desire for home runs has placed upon the pitcher's arm. The greatest single factor that contributed to the present-day home run epidemic was the hopped-up "rabbit ball."

(Continued on page 97)



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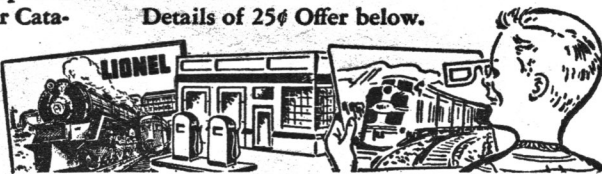
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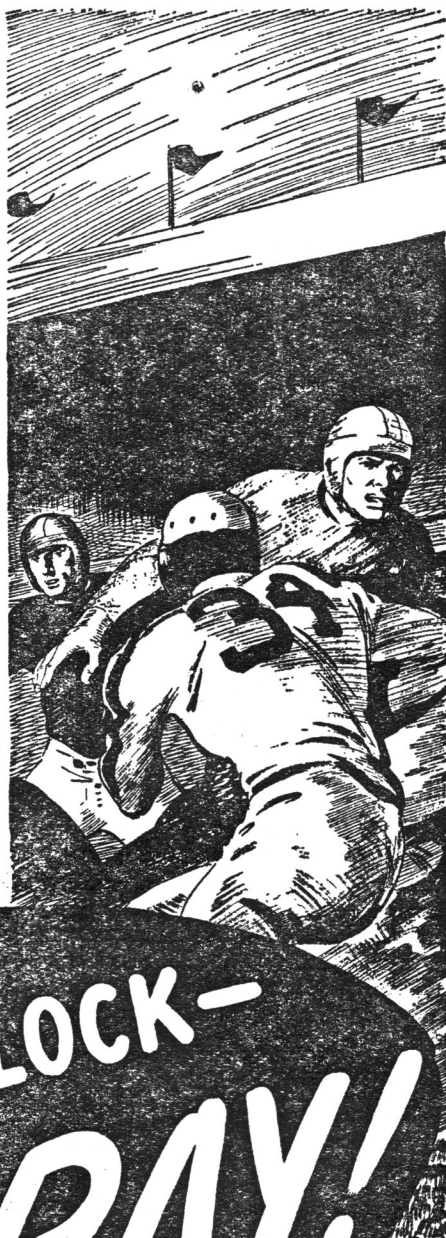
By
**WILLIAM
HEUMAN**

CHAPTER ONE

Backfield Bust-Up

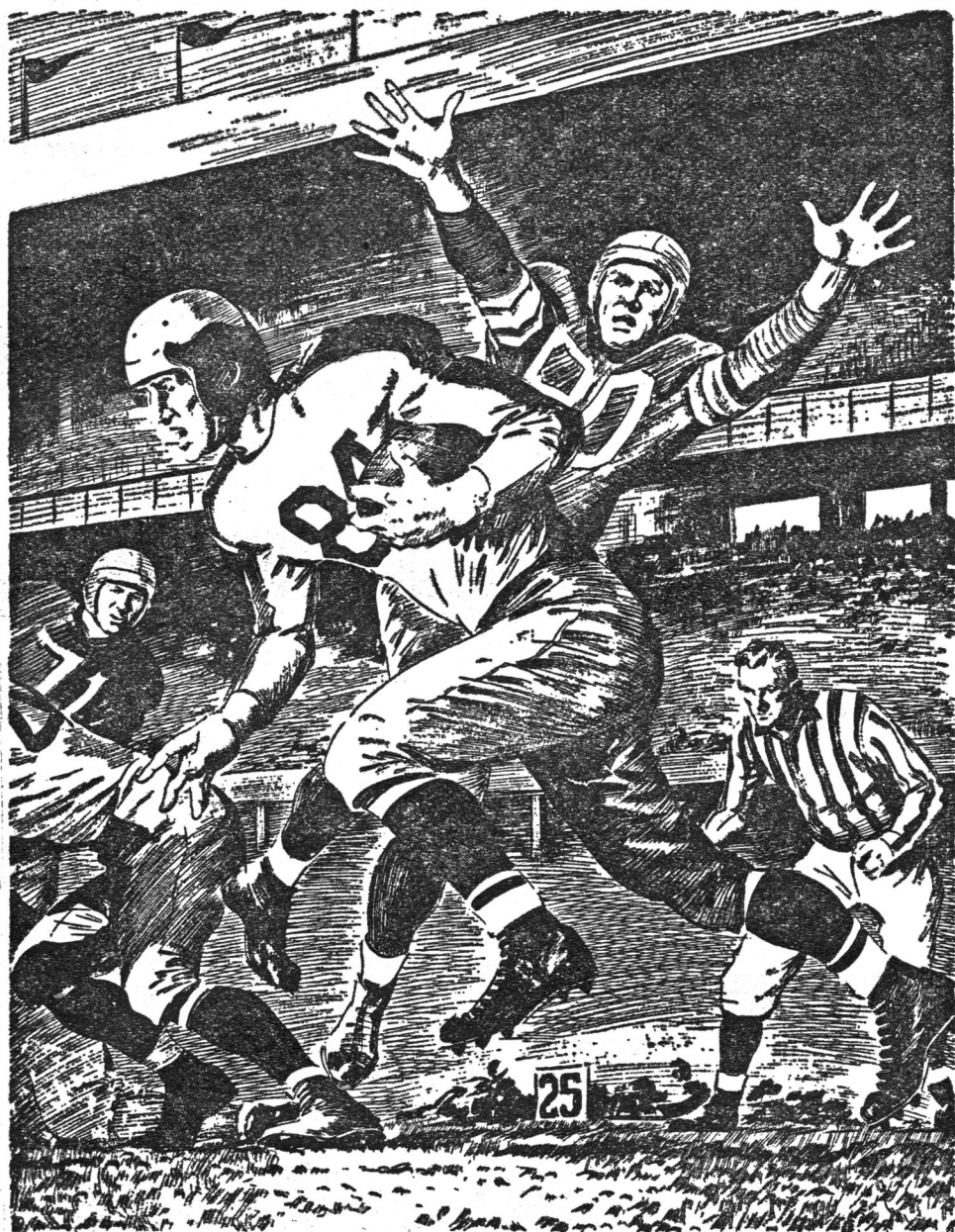
THE turf was soggy from the rain which had started with the opening kick-off and then stopped shortly after the first quarter. It was ideal footing for men who had slowed down to a fast walk. It was the kind of footing Rip Riordan, Falcon center, captain and co-owner, liked because the speed kids of the opposition were brought down to his size.

Time had been called by the battered third-place Cougars in this final period of the game, with the Falcons on the long end of a 7-0 score. Rip Riordan wiped his wide face with a towel, took a drink of water, and spat it out on the grass. He said to Sammy Brewster, veteran Falcon quarterback, "Keep socking it in. Let the 'Bull' run them into the ground."



**SOCK, BLOCK—
AND PRAY!**

**A
NOVEL**



They sprang him into the open and Richfield, the picture runner, ran as he'd never run before. . . .

They were the Falcon's player-owners, battered cleat
vets with all their thunder in yesterday's headlines—
and all their tomorrows in sixty fateful seconds of
gridiron hell they had stored up for themselves!

The Bull was Bull Rudolph, Falcon fullback, two hundred and thirty-five pounds of beef and brawn, once the terror of the pro gridiron, now slowed down to such an extent that he could not run the length of the gridiron without falling in exhaustion. The Bull was thirty-four, just as Rip Riordan was thirty-three and Sammy Brewster, thirty-two.

It was old for pro football. It was old for any sport, particularly the pro game with the kids coming out of the colleges, scrambling for positions, kids with wings for legs, kids who ran on air.

Rip Riordan wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and then looked at the blood on his hand with little interest. He looked more like a professional pugilist than a pro football player. Twelve years in the game had left its mark on his face. There were scars around the eyes, a battered nose, two false teeth in the front of his mouth, and a very meager balance in his bank account.

The Bull came over, grinning a little, face dirty, swollen from the pounding he'd been taking this afternoon. The Bull's black hair was not as black as it had been when he and Rip Riordan starred for that great State eleven which had gone to the Rose Bowl thirteen years before. The Bull's hair was getting thin and there was gray in it around the temples.

Rip said to him, "How do you feel, kid?"

"Gimme the ball," Bull Rudolph scowled, mimicking a punch-drunk pugilist. "I can lick 'em."

Rudolph came from a good family. He'd been an honor student in college. Rip looked at him and frowned. He said, "All kidding aside, George. You want a little rest?"

"Hell," the Bull said. "Let's win this game. We need it."

He was winning it, too, with his short bull-like charges into the tiring Cougar line. Rudolph knew how to use that tre-

mendous weight when carrying the ball. Tackled, he always managed to fall forward with the ball, and it meant another yard, two yards, the difference between a first down and loss of the ball.

For a few minutes in the first quarter the Bull had looked like his old self, like the man who'd hit an enemy line with the pile-driving force of a locomotive. Then the spark was gone and he was an old man, using his wits to get by against younger, faster men.

They were all like that on this Falcon club—Brewster, Rudolph, the end, Jim Shelby, the once spectacular broken-field runner, Ken Richfield, and Rip, himself. On the field, they were the bulwark of this surprising Falcon club. Off the field, they owned it!

They were all over thirty and they were all castoffs from other clubs, playing now in the twilight of their careers, playing it fast and smart, and a little loose, playing for high stakes.

The idea was Rip's, and therefore the club was in his name and Richfield's, even though the five men had pooled every dollar they could scrape together or borrow to buy the almost worthless Falcon franchise.

The idea had come on the seat of a lifeguard watchtower at a beach resort where Rip had been making thirty-five dollars a week keeping kids and fools from drowning themselves. The first-place Clippers had just dropped him from the roster without even notifying him that he was through. It had come out in the morning paper that the club was not sending him a contract this year. He'd slowed down the previous fall; he'd become brittle and hadn't been able to play too often.

He'd half expected that the rich club wouldn't be signing him up, but the method of doing it made him bitter. He'd given eight years of his pro career to the Clippers, and four times out of those eight

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the club had won the division championship. He felt that he was at least entitled to a letter or a phone call.

Sitting on the bench, watching the big waves roll in, Rip had concocted the scheme. Ken Richfield, a one-time Clipper star, had received the same discourteous treatment. Richfield's flashy running was a thing of the past. The lean halfback had been replaced as the star performer by several other kids who could give him three steps and beat him every time to the other end of the field.

Richfield had listened to the proposition that night and instantly given his unstinted approval. Richfield was also working for thirty-five a week at the resort on the next lifeguard tower. As Richfield put it, "Somebody owes us a buck somewhere, Rip. It's about time we collected." Richfield, too, was bitter.

THEY'D come into the game too late for the big money the kids were getting now. Rip had played for seventy-five dollars a game in the beginning, and no pay when you were hurt and unable to start. Only recently the Clippers had paid the sensational college star, Johnny Shane, fifty grand for three years' play. It was quite a difference.

Briefly, the plan was to buy up the almost-defunct Falcons, cellar club for three straight years, with the owners desperate to sell out to the first bidder and nobody biting. Rip had been informed that they could get it dirt cheap.

There were other castoffs like himself and Richfield. Bull Rudolph, his old teammate from State, had just been released by the Lions. Shelby, whom Rip had learned to respect for ten years on the wing, had been dropped by the Trojans. Sammy Brewster, once the shrewdest quarterback, and one of the best passers in the loop, had announced his retirement from the game after being offered less money than he'd received the first

game he'd ever played in the league.

The idea was to bring all the veterans together, add a shot or two of young blood from the sandlots, the tough kids who'd never gone to college, the rough mill-hands who loved the game and would play for almost nothing. The experienced veterans, with the know-how, and the kids supplying the speed and pep, could very well give the dead Falcons the needed shot in the arm. With a few breaks, Rip pointed out, they might be able to get the club up into third or second place. It was distinctly a one-year club, because that was all the decrepit five had in their aging bones.

They were to put the Falcons into the fight for the flag, make them look good, and then find a sucker, somebody who would want to buy that franchise and who would pay big money for it, thinking he had a gold mine in the making.

"There are plenty of them around," Rip had explained to the five assembled veterans. "We want one of these young guys with a pile of money he inherited from his father, and nothing to do with it. We'll soak him good and we'll let him worry about the next season when we fall apart."

Standing on this rain-soaked field now, leading the Cougars by seven points, and with the game practically in the bag, Rip Riordan was thinking that it had worked out wonderfully well thus far. They'd received the breaks—more than he'd hoped for. They'd had soggy fields, like the one this afternoon, when the veterans like Bull Rudolph became the equal of the top ball-carriers in the league. Mud and bad footing is the great equalizer in football.

They'd won two games because they'd gotten exceptional breaks, and they were in second place now, getting ready to give the mighty Clippers a fight for the lead. The whole eastern seaboard was talking about the sensational Falcons, sparked by

the 'five old men.' They'd won five games and tied one, while the Clippers had six straight wins to their credit.

The kids Rip had picked up in the Pennsylvania hills had come through amazingly well. They were the lowest paid performers in the league, but they were making double what they'd been able to make in the coal fields and the iron mills, and they were happy about it.

They were not college graduates, and many of them had not even played high school football, but they were tough and they were willing, and what they didn't know, Rip and Jim Shelby taught to the linemen, and Brewster and Richfield taught to the backs.

Sammy Brewster looked at Rip searchingly as they waited for the whistle to resume play. The little quarterback said finally, "Why don't you take a little rest, Rip? The kid can hold them, and if they get in scoring position the last few minutes you'll need everything you have."

Rip thought about it and it was good logic. He'd played a lot of football this afternoon because he'd wanted this game badly. He had the feeling now that they were going to fight it out with the Clippers and he wanted to beat the Clippers, aside from the money angle.

Young Eddie Polinski, a mill-town kid, had been spelling him at center, and Polinski, with no previous pro experience, was proving himself the lineman find of the season. The kid was a hundred and ninety pounds, but very fast and he seemed to diagnose the plays instinctively. Rip had worked hard with the twenty-year-old, teaching him the tricks of the trade. In the pro loop they were playing against the smoothest and smartest operators in the business, and a center had to know what he was doing out there or be sucked out of every play run from scrimmage.

Rip said, "I'll send the kid out, boys. Mop 'em up for me."

As he started toward the sidelines, Ru-

dolph called after him tauntingly, "Yeller."

Rip grinned back. Jim Shelby, long, rangy, red-haired, with the perfect football hands for pass receiving, slapped Rip's back as he went by. Shelby said quietly, "Nice game, Rip. You deserve a rest."

Shelby needed a rest, too, and he knew it, but he couldn't afford to take it in this game. The Cougars were hitting at the wing positions this half because they couldn't do a thing in the middle of the line with big Rip Riordan roaming behind it. Shelby had groomed a kid to take his place when he was out of the game, but the kid wingman didn't have enough moxie yet. Experienced Cougar linemen would box him in on every play and make substantial gains around his end. With a seven-point lead it was too dangerous, and Shelby had to stay in on his tottering pins, taking the punishment, but stopping the plays.

From his wheelchair, Rip Riordan knew, the rangy redhead would be stopping enemy plays. Shelby never let himself get boxed in. Shelby was no longer fast, but he was smart. He knew how to feint his way in through a phalanx of blockers to get at the runner, and once his fingers touched a man, that man was through running.

Walking to the bench, Rip was thinking that it was a nice club, a good club with good spirit. It was almost a shame that next year the insides would be ripped out of it after it was sold. Brewster had definitely decided to retire; Shelby was taking over a coaching assignment in a small western college. Richfield was going into the insurance business. Bull Rudolph intended to open a sporting goods store in his home town.

EDDIE POLINSKI had his helmet on and was ready to dash out when Rip came in. The black-haired kid was rubbing his hands, dancing up and down, grinning.

Rip said, "Watch them on that fake pass. They're sending the left end in to suck you out of position, and then they hit through right guard. Brewster will watch that end for you; you've got to stay in real close."

"Okay," Polinski nodded. There was respect in his eyes—something Rip Riordan had not always seen in the young college stars coming to the pro ranks with their big salaries and exaggerated opinions of themselves. This kid was still learning, learning a hell of a lot of things all over again.

Rip sat down next to Richfield who'd gone in a few minutes before after scoring the only touchdown of the afternoon. Richfield was the 'climax runner' now, the one-play man. He'd looked his old self on that thirty-five yard run from the wingback position. Fast only for short spurts, Richfield had to depend upon other things to get by now—a clever change of pace, deft little feints which left tacklers off balance, a side-arm thrust which was like a rapier warding off enemy tacklers.

Richfield said, "We have this one, Rip. Thanks to the rain."

Rip nodded, but he was thinking that it was not all the rain. It was Bull Rudolph hammering for two yards and for three yards, putting that ball into position for a score. It was Sammy Brewster's artful punting with a wet ball, kicking out of bounds on the coffin corners. It was Jim Shelby's sterling end play, and also the work of the other guys—the tough kids who were proud to be playing alongside the former greats, even though they were playing for chicken feed.

Richfield said, "Davey Greene is back there in the box again, Rip."

Rip Riordan frowned. He didn't look back. He said slowly, "I hope it's somebody else, Ken."

"He's the only one who's showed any interest so far," Richfield stated, "and he has the money." The halfback didn't

sound too enthusiastic about it, either.

Rip watched the players out on the field, but he was thinking of the young man in the box seats behind them—of Davey Greene, in his twenties, the 'sucker' they'd been waiting for, reputedly with more money than he could spend in two lifetimes. Young Greene was a football bug, and the rumor had it that he was crazy about the Falcons and was thinking of buying in if they were for sale.

Davey Greene was the sucker they'd hoped to rope in on this deal, but there was one thing which went against the grain. Young Greene was a cripple. He'd never left his wheelchair since he was twelve years old, when infantile paralysis had struck him down.

Richfield cleared his throat. He said, "He has a girl with him this afternoon, Rip. Must be his sister. I've read about her in the social columns."

Rip did glance back this time. He saw young Greene seated in the wheelchair in his private box. He was bundled up with a blanket now because the afternoon had turned raw after the rain. He was leaning forward in his chair, watching as Bull Rudolph pounded into the Cougar line for another three yards, putting the ball on the Cougar eighteen, first and ten.

The girl with Davey Greene was wearing a Persian lamb coat. Her hair underneath the chic red hat was of a rich chestnut hue. She had an excited flush on her cheeks, and she was very pretty.

Rip Riordan looked and then looked again. He heard Ken Richfield say dryly, "Stay in your class, Rip. That's high society."

Rip grinned. "A girl like that," he murmured, "has every high-hat in the country chasing her. Looks and money—a wonderful combination."

"And all you have to offer," Richfield chuckled, "is brains and brawn, and not too much of the former, else you wouldn't have had to play pro for a dozen years."

"And nothing to show for it when I'm finished," Rip scowled. "There's the rub."

"Maybe," Richfield observed, "after we make about three hundred percent profit on the sale of this franchise at the end of the season, we'll all be feeling much better."

Rip didn't say anything, but he did hope that another buyer would come along instead of Davey Greene. Even if Greene did have all the money he was supposed to have, it didn't seem like the right thing to stick him.

CHAPTER TWO

Scrapiron Scrimmaggers

THE FALCON drive stalled on the Cougar nine yard stripe, and Sammy Brewster dropped back to try a placement. It was the play, fourth and seven to go, with Brewster a very clever

toe man. The three extra points would put this game on ice with only about five minutes remaining.

Rip sat back on the bench, some of the tension going out of him. He said to Richfield, "This does it, kid."

Brewster didn't miss many from that distance, and he'd cleverly worked the ball on the previous plays until he had it directly in line with the posts. Brewster could kick them through from that position with his eyes closed.

This play backfired. The kid wingman on the left side of the line, Nat Rollins, was fainted out of position by the veteran Cougar end, Johnny DiMarco. DiMarco literally flew over the back of the Falcon left half, Leland, who was blocking on the kick, and DiMarco's hand touched the ball as it caromed off Brewster's toe.

As the ball bounded away, Rip Riordan was remembering that last year the tough DiMarco had established a record for



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blocking punts and placements. He should have remembered to swing Bull Rudolph over on DiMarco's side on placements and kicks. DiMarco would spend a month of Sundays trying to get around Rudolph's bulk:

The ball bounded away and a Cougar lineman fell on it on the Cougar twelve.



Rip said grimly, "That's my fault. I should have known Johnny would get through those two boys sooner or later."

"Can't think of everything," Richfield consoled. "You've got enough on your mind handling the business end of this club and the coaching job."

Rip stood up suddenly. He said suddenly, "Damn it! They're going to kick, Rich!"

Ken Richfield shook his head. "They'll want to keep possession of the ball," he started to say, and then he stopped.

The Cougars were lined up for a running play, working very fast after getting possession of the ball. Long passes seemed

to be in the order of things now, but Rip had the feeling the wily Ben Talbot, Cougar quarterback, was going to pull a fast one on them. Talbot was known for his quick kicks from the line of scrimmage, and the kid safety man, Lonnie Carson, was playing up close.

Rip could see that Sammy Brewster had the same conviction because immediately before the ball went into play Brewster glanced back to see where Carson was.

It was a quick kick. Long, rangy Talbot uncoiled himself, his long leg coming in contact with the ball from up close to the line of scrimmage. He got it off beautifully, a long spiral which zoomed far over Lonnie Carson's head, bounced on the Falcon forty-five and then kept rolling down the field, passing stripe after stripe as the Falcon rooters howled in dismay.

The ball was finally downed by DiMarco on the Falcon fifteen. Rip said tersely, "That damned Talbot is playing for a break now. If we fumble down there on the next few plays they can tie it up."

"Sammy won't fumble," Richfield consoled.

It was the strategy now to play it safe, and to take a lot of time doing it. Brewster, with the game in his hands, would run the ball into the line two or three times, taking his time, stalling between plays to consume the precious seconds, and then he would punt up the field.

The Cougars were playing the long chance that something would happen deep down in Falcon territory. Rip Riordan hoped that it wouldn't, but it did. On the first play, Ed Polinski sent back a bad pass from center. The ball got away from Brewster who made a desperate try for it.

Again it was the uncanny DiMarco, driving in from the wing, going after that bounding ball like a terrier. DiMarco attempted to pick it up and scoot over the goal line with the tying touchdown, but Bull Rudolph fell on the man with his full two hundred and thirty-five pounds. Di-

Marco was flattened on the eight yard stripe, but it was the Cougar's ball, first and ten and about two minutes to go.

Richfield stood up. He said, "That's it, Rip."

Rip Riordan picked up his helmet. He said gruffly, "Let's go," and they trotted out on the field.

The Bull was waiting for them, big hands on his hips, tired legs spread far apart. He sneered and he said, "Here come the prima donnas. It's on ice now, boys."

"Nice work, Bull," Rip said.

"Glad you came in," the Bull said gruffly. He slapped the crestfallen Eddie Polinski's back as the kid center trotted from the field. He said, "I remember Rip passing back six bad ones when he was a sophomore at State—six in one game!"

"Make them fight for this one," Rip said.

THEY were ready to go, the Cougar backfield lining up with the weight toward the right. Rip moved up close behind the line of scrimmage, ready to shift to either side of the field. He was tired; his legs felt like lead weights, and his body was bruised and battered from dozens of tackles earlier in the game. But he liked this part of it—the waiting just before the ball was snapped, trying to diagnose the enemy play, trying to out-think the opposing quarterback.

Ben Talbot was nobody's fool. Talbot had been up a number of years and he knew this game. The shift was toward the left. They were running their plays out of the single-wing, and the shift put Tony Wilcox, the right half, in running position.

Wilcox started out wide, as if heading around the end. His blockers fanned out in front of him, Wilcox running low, but Wilcox wasn't going out wide.

Rip Riordan was watching the Cougar left guard and tackle as well as the runner. When he saw them suddenly galvanize

into action, drive forward to gang up on the Falcon tackle, he raced in that direction.

The end run was a fake. Wilcox left his blockers, cut on a dime, and plowed into the line at the tackle spot. The Cougar guard and tackle had opened the hole for the Cougar speed boy, and he was coming through like the fast express when Rip hit him at the line of scrimmage.

The impact could be heard up in the stands. Rip had twenty pounds on the hundred and ninety pound Wilcox, and he had his cleats braced in the dirt. Wilcox went back for a yard loss.

Rip got up, shaking his head, his lip bleeding again. Wilcox said, "Damn you, Riordan," and walked away.

Rip stopped behind his two guards before moving back to his position on the defense. He said, "I'd look for a fake pass over the center, with Jamison coming through the middle on a spinner. Knock him down."

He was afraid of that pass, but he didn't think Talbot would try it yet. Talbot wanted to keep that ball until it was over the goal line. He'd try more running plays and use the pass as a life-saver on the last down, but he'd fake it, and there was the slim possibility that he'd cross them up and use it before the last down.

It was a fake pass on the second down, and then a short lateral to Jamison driving in toward the center of the line. The two kid guards didn't touch the runner this time because a long, rangy red-haired man whirled in from the right side of the Falcon line, left the ground with a flying dive, and got one hand on Jamison's ankle.

The ensuing wrench nearly pulled the arm off Jim Shelby, but he held on, dumping his man for another two yard loss. The Cougars were back on the eleven, third and goal to go, and the Falcon crowd was howling gleefully.

Talbot was going to pass it now because he had too much ground to make, and he

wanted to have two tries for his throws.

Bull Rudolph said, "All right, Glue-Fingers, grab this one for us."

Rip smiled. He had a reputation with this club as a pass interceptor. He held the record thus far this season for most passes intercepted, and he wanted this one.

He was back deeper now, watching Talbot as the tall quarterback called his signals, his jaws working methodically on a wad of gum. Talbot threw them like bullets from behind the line. His height made him all the more dangerous because he could look over his line and spot his receivers, and the man had no nerves.

He was positive Talbot would try to keep it away from his sector because he had the reputation. It meant that Talbot would have to throw an angle pass and he didn't like that because the angle passes were the ones which could be intercepted.

Rip watched the two Cougar wingmen, and also Tony Wilcox, the halfback. One of these three would take that pass over the goal line.

The crowd was standing, knowing what was going to happen now. The noise drowned out Talbot's signals, but it didn't mean anything. The ball was snapped and Talbot started to run toward his right, two blockers in front of him.

Rip watched Jim Shelby driving in like a madman, fighting to get through the blockers, using his hands as only Shelby could use his hands, but the redhead wasn't getting through quickly enough.

Talbot had stopped very suddenly after his fake run toward the right. The right arm was drawn back, the ball clenched in those long fingers, and still Rip Riordan wasn't sure. He'd shifted with Talbot; he'd watched Wilcox, but Wilcox was the decoy this time, the man who was to draw him away from the danger zone.

It was Marty Paige, the Cougar left end, streaking now, cutting in behind Rip. Rip caught a glimpse of his dirty green jersey, the big Number 7 on it.

As the ball left Talbot's hand, Rip lunged in Paige's direction. Talbot hadn't been looking at Paige, and it was for that reason Rip selected the left end. The man Talbot didn't look at was usually the man who was to receive the ball.

It was going toward Paige, and it was going hard into the end zone. Fighting for distance, Rip hurled his body forward, reaching with both hands. He was on the goal line when he caught the ball. He was in the clear for one moment and he could have brought the ball up a few yards before the green jerseys swamped him, but he didn't. He went down in the end zone, the ball clasped against his chest, grinning.

As he went down, Johnny DiMarco hit him, but there was an expression of disgust on the Cougar end's face as he made his tackle, hoping against hope that he could knock the ball out of Rip's hands. He tried hard, tearing at the ball even as he rolled Rip over in the end zone, but he might just as well have been trying to tear one of Rip's arms off.

The referee was blowing his whistle fitfully, his arms up in the air. It was a safety—two points for the Cougars, making it a 7-2 game, and the ball went out on the twenty yard line, Falcon's possession. Bull Rudolph kicked it far up the field and the game was over.

Rudolph said, "Pretty smart, kid."

Talbot, walking off the field, fell in step with Rip for a moment. He said grimly, "They told us you were washed up last season, Riordan. What's the idea?"

"Second childhood," Rip told him. "Better luck next time, Ben."

SOMEBODY handed him his sheepskin jacket and he put it on, thankful for the warmth it gave. He was walking past the box in which Davey Greene and his sister sat, talking with Jim Shelby and Richfield, when he saw a reporter he knew motioning for him to come over.

Richfield said, "There's a nibble, Rip."

Greene must want to talk with you."

Rip frowned, but he left the players and walked over to the box. Davey Greene's face was flushed as he sat in the wheelchair. His sister was looking at Rip curiously.

Greene blurted out even before introductions could be made, "Riordan, that was a wonderful game, and that last play was the smartest I've ever seen on the gridiron."

"Thanks," Rip nodded. "Glad you liked it." The kid was sold on the club; he could see it in the young man's eyes.

The reporter said, "Rip, this is David Greene."

Rip took the crippled man's thin hand. He said, "Glad to know you, Mr. Greene."

Davey Greene said, "My sister, Inez, Riordan. This is her first pro football game. She's still a little hoarse from cheering you on that last interception."

Rip reddened, and he saw some color come into the girl's face. Her eyes were gray, while young Greene's were blue.

She said, "I did enjoy the game, Mr. Riordan. I don't know too much about it."

That was the trouble, Rip Riordan was thinking. Neither of them apparently knew too much about the game, or Davey Greene wouldn't be considering buying the franchise of a decrepit club which would certainly fall apart next season when the veterans retired.

Greene was saying, "You're the spokesman for your club, Riordan, and I understand you're part owner."

"That's right," Rip said.

"I understand, also," Davey Greene went on quietly, "that the Falcons will be up for sale this winter."

Rip Riordan moistened his lips. They'd been careful to let that rumor circulate. They'd dropped hints to news reporters. They'd made sure everybody heard.

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He said, "We—we've thought about it, Mr. Greene."

"How about stopping out at my place tomorrow afternoon?" young Greene asked. "We might be able to talk a little business." He handed Rip a card.

Rip took it in a big hand that was dirty, bruised, and the card looked very small as he held it. The address was Greene's country house. Rip had seen pictures of it in the newspapers.

"We're not in too big a hurry to sell, Mr. Greene." He wondered if he was playing fair with his teammates. Some of them like Shelby and Richfield had gone into hock to raise their share of the money to buy the franchise. They deserved a good profit on the deal because they'd taken the risk. They'd nearly killed themselves to lift the dead Falcons up and make them look like a good buy.

Some disappointment showed in Davey Greene's blue eyes, and it was reflected, also, in the girl's. "We can get acquainted anyway, Riordan. I'd surely like to have you come out."

Rip nodded. He said, "I appreciate the invitation. I'd like to come."

He went back to the players who had slowed down and were waiting for him.

Richfield said, "How about it?"

"I think," Rip told him, "he'd like to buy in."

Jim Shelby looked at him. "Serious?" he asked.

Rip scowled. "Serious," he said. "He wants me to come out to his place tomorrow for a talk." He looked at Richfield and he said, "I told him we weren't too anxious to sell right now."

"Good sales talk," the halfback grinned. "That'll boost the price."

Jim Shelby didn't say anything, and Rip realized the end was thinking the same things that the was. It seemed wrong no matter how much money Davey Greene had.

They had a conference in the dressing

room after the other players went home. Rip called them in to the office and closed the door behind them.

Rip said, "This isn't a formal meeting of the board of directors, but any time anything comes up I feel it my duty to bring the matter to your attention."

"He sounds like a bloated corporation president," Bull Rudolph observed. "He's even getting the belly of one."

"If it's about Greene," Sam Brewster murmured, "I already heard that. Ed Mackey, of the Herald, told me yesterday he thought Greene wanted to buy the franchise and was all set to close the deal now if we were willing."

"This is the real thing then," Rip told him. "Greene invited me out to his place tomorrow to talk turkey. I believe if we say yes he'll give us the cash immediately. He likes this club."

Bull Rudolph made a funny noise in his throat but didn't say anything. Shelby looked at the floor and rubbed his hands. Brewster was watching Rip's face, but he volunteered nothing. Only Richfield spoke, and Rip could see that the halfback had been going over the business in his mind, and even though he needed cash desperately, he didn't like it too much.

Richfield asked, "How much did he offer, or how much will we take?"

Rip shrugged. "It's your club as well as mine," he pointed out. "I want to know what I'll tell him if he makes an outright bid."

Shelby said, "Nobody else in sight, Rip?"

"I haven't heard," Rip said.

Sammy Brewster scratched his chin. He said, "We paid twenty-five thousand for the franchise. I'd say it's worth a hundred thousand now, the way we look."

"You want me to tell Greene that?" Rip asked.

Brewster scowled. "Don't put me on the spot, Rip," he said. "I'm only one man."

"I make a motion," Jim Shelby said, "that we stall him off until the end of the season." He looked straight at Rip and he added, "The price might go way up higher if we clinch the flag this year."

Rip realized that that wasn't what he had in mind. Shelby didn't want to chisel Davey Greene, and that's all there was to it. Shelby was asking for a postponement of the decision, hoping that some other sucker would turn up, a sucker they didn't object to so much.

The motion went through unanimously. The meeting was adjourned, and Rip walked to his locker to put on his coat.

Bull Rudolph called after him, "My best regards to that beautiful doll, Davey Greene's sister."

Rip glared at him. "I'm going over there on business," he snapped.

"Hell," Rudolph ribbed him, "Why not combine a little pleasure with business, Rip? You could stand it."

"Shut up," Rip said.

Richfield said, "Let the president alone, Bull. He has all kinds of big things on his mind."

CHAPTER THREE

Touchdown Merry-Go-Round

RIP RIORDAN wasn't sure, himself, what he had on his mind when he got off the train the next afternoon in the swanky suburban district where the Greens had their estate. He wasn't quite sure how to get out to the place either from the railroad station.

But then a station wagon swung up to the platform, and a girl waved to him. Rip pulled up, recognizing Inez Greene behind the wheel. She was hatless this time, and she wore a leather jacket with a white silk scarf.

She said, "I figured you'd be on this train."

"Hate to bother you," Rip said. "I

could have gotten a cab. Or something."

"I was in town," the girl smiled.

Rip climbed in beside her.

She said, "You look different in street clothes. I'd say somewhat smaller."

"Not so much like an overgrown ox,"

Rip smiled. He watched her swing the car away from the station and roll out on a back road. They drove for about fifteen minutes before the station wagon turned up a gravel driveway, stopping in front of the door to a home that looked like a castle. Rip figured that there would be about twenty-five or thirty rooms. He saw the swimming pool down across the lawn, empty now for the winter, and tennis courts.

A butler at the door took Rip's hat and coat. Davey Greene sat in his wheelchair before the fireplace, books, newspapers and magazines scattered around him. His face lighted up when Rip came toward him. His handshake was warm, cordial. Rip had the feeling that even if he wasn't here on business, Davey Greene would have been glad to see him. He was like that.

"We don't have too much company," young Greene grinned. "Sit down, Riordan, or can I call you Rip?"

"Rip's the name," Rip smiled.

Inez sank down on a sofa. She said, "Davey's been a football bug all his life."

Davey Greene wanted to know about the Falcons. He'd been reading that the club had broken all precedents by going outside the colleges for football materials. Every pro coach in the country went after the big stars, or even the little stars from the colleges—big colleges and small colleges. The Falcons had gone to the coal fields, the mill towns, the rural districts where young guys played football on Saturday or Sunday afternoons, with a rope around the field, and a passed hat for a collection.

Rip told him about it. He told of the weeks and months that summer and fall he'd ridden around on buses to the tank

towns. He told of the dozens of semi-pro and sandlot clubs he'd watched, picking out a man here, a man there.

Davey Greene's eyes were glistening, and Rip could see that this story had thrilled him. "It is true, isn't it, Rip, that the Falcons are up for sale?"

Rip Riordan looked at him. "Do you want to buy?" he asked.

Greene nodded. "Name your price," he said.

"It—it's a hundred thousand," Rip muttered, "but we're not selling just yet." He saw Davey Green glance at his sister triumphantly, and he wondered at that. Inez Greene was looking at Rip curiously.

"When you're ready to sell at that price," Greene said, "I'm ready to buy, Rip."

"I'll tell the other owners," Rip said. He managed to change the subject to talk about other clubs in the league.

Toward late afternoon Rip took a walk around the grounds with Inez. They were standing before the empty swimming pool when the girl said quietly, "Why don't you want to sell to my brother, Mr. Riordan?"

"I didn't say that," Rip stammered. "It's just that the club isn't for sale right now."

"Do you think you can get more money for the franchise?" Inez asked him.

Rip laughed. "I'm sure your brother could top any bid I received if he really wanted the Falcons."

Inez didn't say anything to that.

When he got back to the city and went up to his room, he found the four club owners playing cards, waiting for him.

Bull Rudolph scrutinized him carefully. The big fullback said, "He's got stars in his eyes but no dough in his pockets."

Rip stretched himself on the couch on the far side of the room. He looked up at the ceiling and he said, "Davey Greene will pay us a hundred grand any time we'll take it."

Ken Richfield got up, limped to the bathroom, got a drink of water, and came back. Rip watched him, looking down at the bad leg. Richfield's ankles had never been any good. Even the small workout he'd gotten in the Cougar game had put him out of commission temporarily. The others were pretty well banged up, too.

Jim Shelby tossed his cards on the table. He said, "I'll still say wait."

"That's what I told him," Rip nodded. "There's no rush."

None of the others said anything, but Rip knew what they were thinking. Suppose nobody else should bid for the club? Suppose most of the smart operators in the business recognized this team as a one-year outfit which would be back in last place again next year, with the crowds falling off and the team going into the red?

THEY had the weak Mustangs on deck for the following Sunday afternoon. Rip started his morning practice sessions on Tuesday, giving the club a one day rest, but even on Tuesday Rudolph and Brewster weren't in uniform. Richfield and Shelby came out, but only to coach and not work out with the team. It wasn't until Thursday that Rudolph was able to maneuver properly, and Brewster's leg had responded to treatment.

From Tuesday until Friday Rip worked patiently with the kids, moving around on his own ailing legs, even taking part in several scrimmages. The big pro outfits didn't do much scrimmaging during the week because of the danger of injuries to star performers, but Rip felt that he had to do it with his charges.

Against the Mustangs he kept Shelby and Rudolph on the bench the first quarter, along with Richfield. They managed to get the ball down to the Mustang twenty yard line where they stalled for three downs.

Rip put in a hurry-up call for Richfield. The picture runner came in, took a short pass from Brewster, fainted his tacklers out of position, and scampered for the score. Richfield went out soon after that and he was limping as he walked from the field.

The Bull lacked his tremendous drive this afternoon, too. Rudolph had been slowing down perceptibly each week. He'd reached his peak the Sunday before in the mud against the Cougars, but now that was over and the field was dry. Tacklers were hitting the Bull before he could get under full steam.

Some of the kids responded nobly. Franzini, Carson, Rollins, McRae played beautiful ball, considering their inexperience, but they still lacked polish, and time and time again they were sucked out of position by decoy plays. Last minute tackles by Rip and Brewster, behind the line, prevented several Mustang scores.

It was 7-0 at the end of the half, and in the second half Brewster managed to boot a beautiful forty yard field goal, giving them a 10-0 lead, which they nearly lost in the final quarter when the Mustangs pushed over a score and had the ball at midfield when the final gun went off.

The 10-7 margin was not very convincing against the last-place team, particularly when the Clippers had swamped the Mustangs by a 51-7 score the previous week.

Ken Richfield said in the dressing room, "We won it. That's the big thing."

Rip Riordan looked at Brewster, and he could see that Brewster was thinking the same thing he was. Brewster was worrying about that Clipper game next Sunday afternoon. If the Clippers ran true to form they were destined to ride roughshod over the second-place club.

A one-sided Clipper victory might send the Falcon stock tumbling, scaring away prospective buyers, and that left only Davey Greene. Rip was positive Greene

would still buy because he wanted to get into pro football, and this was the only opening.

Inez and Davey Greene sat in their usual box behind the Falcon bench, and Inez waved a gloved hand to Rip when he came out on the field.

Bull Rudolph said, "Throw her a kiss, sweetheart."

Davey Greene still seemed enthused when the game was over. Rip had a word with him, and young Greene wanted to know about their chances against the Clippers in view of this game.

"We take them one at a time," Rip told him. "I'm not worrying about the Clippers until next Sunday afternoon."

He had to start worrying sooner than that because Jim Shelby's shoulder was very bad on Monday morning. Sammy Brewster, the brains of the club, could scarcely walk. Bull Rudolph was nursing a nose which had a slight fracture in it, and the Bull would be forced to use a mask if he got into the game the next week.

Sammy Brewster said to Rip, "Anybody in on the know could clean up on the Clippers next Sunday. They could give thirty points and still be pretty sure."

Rip looked at the quarterback steadily. He said, "Don't talk like that, kid. We're out to win this game. These boys are planning on winning."

Brewster nodded. "Sure," he said, "I'll give both legs to win, Rip. You know that, but let's face the facts."

ALL during the week he was hoping that someone would show up with an interest in the Falcons, but nothing happened. The wise guys with the money were watching to see what this club could do when the chips were down. The breaks had been with them since the opening game of the season, but it would not be a question of breaks on Sunday. They'd have to play football to beat the Clippers.

Davey Greene sent a wire on Sunday

morning, wishing them luck. Rip was reading it in his room when he got the phone call that there was a party by the name of Roberts down in the lobby. Roberts wanted to come up and see him. Rip said to Ken Richfield after he'd told the desk clerk to send him up, "Who is Roberts?"

Richfield shook his head. "Never heard of him," he said.

When Roberts, a short, squat man with dead, fish-colored eyes, entered, he didn't take off his hat, nor did the two gorillas with him. He had an unlighted cigar in his mouth and he was chewing on it methodically, his eyes flitting around the room.

"Have a seat," Rip said quietly.

"I understand," Ace Roberts said, "that the Falcons are up for sale."

Rip moistened his lips. "That might be true," he said.

Roberts looked at him suspiciously. "It is true or it ain't true, kid," he said. "For how much?"

Ken Richfield said it, his voice sounding unnatural, "One hundred and fifty thousand."

Roberts took the cigar from his mouth, looked at Richfield and then at Rip. He said, "Who's this character?"

"Co-owner," Rip told him.

Ace Roberts grimaced. He looked at his cigar and he said, "I'll pay cash in full if you guys can lick the Clippers this afternoon. You'll have the dough twenty-four hours after the game."

Rip heard Ken Richfield's heavy breathing across the room. Neither of them said anything as Roberts got up.

The gambler said sourly, "I'll be working this whole thing through a front man. My name don't go too good in sports. You don't have to mention that I'm in it at all."

Ken Richfield was the first to find his voice. He said, "All right, Mr. Roberts."

Roberts went out, his two stooges following him. The door closed behind them.

Rip sat down on the couch. He heard Richfield say, "That's it, kid! That's it. We wanted a sucker and we got one. Ace Roberts, supposed to be the smartest guy in the world. He's our sucker!"

"Didn't you see the joker in the deck?"

Rip asked him. "We're supposed to knock over the Clippers this afternoon."

"For twenty-five thousand dollars profit on my original investment of five," Richfield said tersely, "I'll play sixty minutes of football for you this afternoon, Rip, if I have to do it on one leg, and I'll score points."

Rip Riordan said slowly, "We know Roberts is no sucker. What does he want with this club?"

"All right," Richfield told him, "he doesn't have to be a sucker. He has an investment here. If we can knock over the Clippers we win the flag. We're big money then. He doesn't know that the five of us are out after today's game."

They had a little meeting right before going down to the field. Rip was strangely quiet, but the other four men were ready to sell to Roberts. Even Shelby felt that Roberts was a sucker on this deal. The guy had been drawn in by the sensational play of the Falcons. He knew there was big money in pro football for a winning club, and he thought the Falcons would be that club for him.

"All right then," Rip said slowly, "if that's the way it is, let's take the Clippers this afternoon. If we can't beat them there's no deal anyway."

CHAPTER FOUR

Give 'Em Hell!

THEY were on the field then and Rip was watching the big crimson-and-white club going through their paces. The Clippers worked with precision. They were big, fast, experienced, a championship outfit in every respect.

"Hap" Hickey sprang his runners from a tricky T formation, and with the big, powerful line in front of the backfield, screening the movements, giving them plenty of protection and time to work out the plays, the Clipper offense had been a thing of beauty and power this season.

The Falcon kids were a little awed by this team. Rip saw them watching the crimson-and-white club march down the field—three teams, and it was hard to tell which was the first and which the third.

Hickey came over to the Falcon bench to pay his respects. He stood out in front of the big crowd, in fawn-colored topcoat and expensive fedora hat, a lean, hatchet-faced man with a smile Rip Riordan had never liked. The crowd thought Hickey was wishing his old center luck when he held out his hand, but what he said was, "How'd you tankers stay up so long, Riordan? You been paying off the opposition?"

"Good luck," Rip said. "I hope you fall down a sewer hole before the day's over."

Hap Hickey's grin broadened. "You'll wish to crawl in one before we get through with your muckers," he said, and he went away.

Rip won the toss and elected to receive, with the thought in mind that the more the Falcons had the ball in their possession, the less chance the Clippers had of scoring. He had Shelby, Brewster, Rudolph and himself in the line-up, with Richfield on

the bench, waiting for them to get the ball in scoring position so that he could come in for his one play.

It was Lonnie Carson, the Falcon right half, who caught the kick-off, fumbled it momentarily, picked it up and started to go, but was smashed before he had taken half a dozen steps.

Rip stepped into the path of the charging Mike Scarsella, Clipper guard. Scarsella weighed two hundred and thirty and he ran like a deer. Rip felt it when he threw his body into the path of that fast express.

Scarsella said, "Pardon me, bud. Was that your ribs I heard crack?"

Carson was downed on the fourteen, first and ten. Brewster sent Bull Rudolph into the line, and the Bull got no further than the line. The play was supposed to go through right guard. Rip lurched forward after spinning the ball back. He rammed into the Clipper guard, sending him spinning, but George Campbell, Clipper fullback and line-backer, closed the hole before the slow-moving Rudolph could reach it.

Sammy Brewster looked at Rip, his face glum after that play, and Rip knew what he was thinking. That was the way it would go this afternoon. Brewster tried a spinner with Carson carrying, and the mill kid made half a yard.

Rip said to the quarterback, "Play it safe, Sammy."

Oh! Boy! What a Shape! It's



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Brewster nodded. He kicked on the third down, keeping the ball away from the fleet-footed Johnny Shane at the safety position. Shane had to run across the field, but he picked up the ball before it could go out of bounds and he ran it back fifteen yards, cleverly eluding Jim Shelby's diving tackle.

Shelby came up, hobbling after the play, and Rip stared at him. It was Shelby's shoulder which was giving him the trouble, not his legs. Shelby shook his head in disgust and Rip realized what had happened. The tall end had wrenched his ankle going after Shane. He was going to have an awful time from now on trying to keep the fast Clipper backs from rounding his end.

The Clippers scored in four plays from the Falcon forty-one. Shane ripped off twelve yards through tackle. Campbell piled through for another ten over center after two Clipper linemen came through to block out Rip Riordan. A short pass put the ball on the Falcon six, and then Campbell shot through the middle, apparently carrying the ball.

Campbell was downed, but Shane had the ball, and the speedy back was rounding Jim Shelby's end, racing the veteran for the corner of the field. Shane won, and it was a score.

They made it 7-0 by kicking the extra point. The Falcon fans who had come to root the home team in watched silently.

BULL RUDOLPH took the ball on the kick-off, and the Bull, trying very hard, managed to work his way up to the twenty before he was smothered.

Sammy Brewster said to Rip, "I'd like to throw passes, but you know that damned Hickey."

Rip nodded. Hap Hickey usually had perfected a beautiful pass defense with his clubs, and this year, with fast backs patrolling the area behind the line, it would

be even tougher than ever to gain that way.

Brewster did the best he could. He sent a few plays through the middle, and Rip, driving through like a madman, managed to open small holes. Bull Rudolph was too slow this afternoon to take advantage of them. They made six yards and then Brewster punted again, this time putting it out of bounds on the Clipper forty-five so that Shane couldn't run it back.

The Clipper power machine went into high gear immediately. With Shane, Campbell and Brand alternating they marched to their own fifteen in eight successive power plays.

Rip, fearful of passes, was afraid to play too close. He'd always been the roving center type, and Hickey, knowing this, remembering that he had a knack for snaring passes, sent his runners into the line.

The tricky spinners, the deception coming out of that T, was proving too much for the Falcon sandlotters. Constantly, they were watching the wrong man, being drawn in on mousetrap plays, being shoved out of position by the alert, experienced Clipper linemen.

Rip came in close. He made two tackles in succession, stopping the runners as they came up to the line of scrimmage. The Falcon fans started to cheer, but the cheers were short-lived.

Brand, Clipper quarterback, sent Campbell into the line on a fake, and then cleverly stepped back and pegged the ball into the end zone to one of his ends. Lonnie Carson, who should have been covering that man, was nowhere in sight.

The extra point kick made it 14-0, and the game was just getting under way. Rip Riordan had visions of another debacle like that 73-0 victory of the Bears over the Redskins years before.

Again Rip asked for the kick after the touchdown. Leland, the left half, fumbled the ball and it was recovered by a Clipper lineman on the twelve. Rip called time

out. He looked at the ten men in front of him and he said, "They're not as tough as all this, boys. Let's stop the parade now."

He cautioned his linemen against driving in too quickly before they knew the direction of the play. He told each man what he had been doing wrong; he'd been able to see that from his position behind the line. He saw them relax a little, and they did better from there on.

The Clippers reached the five, but the Falcon line held, and then Rip Riordan intercepted a Brand pass, carrying the ball from the goal line out to the six before he was slammed down hard.

Brewster got off a beautiful kick, and they had a breathing spell for a while. Rip called in Ken Richfield, and once the back got away for a fairly long run down the field, but the ball was called back for offside.

Sammy Brewster said dryly, "The gods are against us, Rip. We'll have to do it alone this afternoon."

They didn't do much the remainder of the first half. They were nearly scored upon again in the second period when the Clippers pounded down to the three, but Shelby tore in to knock down Shane, and fall on Shane's fumble. Then, with only two minutes of the half remaining, and the Clippers again deep in Falcon territory, Rip Riordan made his second pass interception of the afternoon, taking another Brand throw which may have resulted in a score if he hadn't broken in on it. It was still 14-0 at the end of the half, but it could easily have been double that.

Walking from the field, Rip saw Davey Greene and Inez watching them from he box. Greene waved an encouraging hand, and Inez smiled cheerfully at him.

Rip spotted Ace Roberts and his boys in another box on the forty-five yard stripe. Roberts was chewing on his unlighted cigar, his wide, flabby face expressionless.

Ken Richfield said in the dressing room, "Not so good, Rip."

"No," Rip said. He looked around for a bench to sit down on. He didn't remember ever being so tired. That second quarter he'd been in on every other tackle, and the Clippers had worked on him. His legs felt like lead weights and his arms were bruised from shoulders to wrists.

Richfield said, "You'd better let Polinski in there for a while next half. They'll carry you off dead."

Rip looked at Shelby, at Rudolph and at Sammy Brewster. The three of them had taken it just as much as himself in this vain attempt to halt the Clipper drive. Rudolph and Brewster had backed up the line along with himself. Jim Shelby had been trying with a bad shoulder and a bad ankle to do the work of three men. He looked pale, haggard, as he sat down on a stool and put his head in his hands.

The younger men, the sandlotters, weren't so much tired as they were confused. Rip was thinking that he'd like to see this same club up against the Clippers in two or three years when they'd learned things, when they could recognize a feint from the real thing. Today they were lost.

He started to talk to them. The kids listened to him. They listened to him repeat their mistakes. Rip got the impression that they would make mistakes again, but not those particular ones.

THEN they were ready to go out and Rip had made up his mind. He could scarcely stand up. Shelby was still white and drawn even after the brief rest in the dressing room.

Rip said, "Polinski in at center; McRae at right end for Shelby; Franzini at quarter for Brewster, Leland left half for Richfield; Grogan at fullback for Rudolph."

The kids looked at him and at each other. It was the first time this season that all of the five veterans had been on the bench at the same time.

Brewster said, "It's just as well, Rip. We need the rest."

"We'll go back in after five or ten minutes," Rip said. "Maybe we can do something the last quarter."

The Clippers went right to work the start of the second half, realizing that the "five old men" were out of the game. It was the same deception, the same bewildering feints, spinners, decoys, drives at the weak spots. They pushed the kids down down to the ten yard line, and they were getting ready to go over for the score.

Ken Richfield said, "Rip, don't let them get too far ahead of us. We still have a chance in this game."

Rip stood up. He was watching them far down the field. Eddie Polinski, acting captain, had called time now, and he could see Polinski talking, gesticulating with his hands. Even at the distance he could see the expression on the tall, black-haired boy's face. Rip sat down again.

Campbell, the huge Clipper fullback, came hurtling toward the line, and Ken Richfield groaned. Rip expected Campbell to keep going right through under the goal posts, but something happened. The center of that Falcon line held Campbell for a fraction of a second, and then a tall man in a blue jersey charged in. He struck that group with the force of a thunderbolt and they went back. Polinski went over the top of them, reaching for Campbell, legs churning, throwing him for a three yard loss.

Richfield said softly, "Mama!"

The Clippers tried it again, this time Johnny Shane carrying off right tackle. It was McRae this time, filling in for Jim Shelby, coached meticulously by Shelby, driving in low, hard, reaching for Shane's rapidly moving legs, holding his man, upsetting him for still another three yard loss.

Rip swallowed the lump in his throat and the mist came into his eyes. He could

hear them yelling down there now—his kids. They were pounding each other on the back and the slightly amazed Clippers looked at them, uncomprehendingly. A pro club didn't act like this. A pro football eleven was cold, quiet, grim, playing for the shekels, playing hard, of course, but playing for the dough. They didn't get too excited because excitement made them lose their effectiveness.

Jim Shelby came over and squatted down beside Rip on one knee. Shelby's head was half hidden in the hood of his sheepskin coat. Shelby's voice was vibrant with emotion. He said, "Rip, they're hot. Do you hear me? They're hot!"

Rip didn't say anything. He was out on the edge of his seat. He watched that seven-man Falcon line rise up and pile in on the next play. They moved like a blue wave pushing back the crimson-and-white of the Clippers. They smothered the runner for a five yard loss—smothered the mighty Johnny Shane before he could get going!

Sammy Brewster said aloud, "They're going to pass, Rip. They're going to pass now." Brewster was afraid of that pass.

The Clippers did pass down to the goal line, but little Franzini, running like the wind, leaped high into the air to snare the ball out of the hands of the Clipper end. On the last down Franzini should have knocked the ball to the ground, but he caught it instead and he started to run. It was inexperience; it was excitement. He kept going.

He got up to the five and was knocked from his feet by Campbell, the fullback. Franzini bounced as he hit the turf; he came up like a rubber ball and he was running at top speed over the ten, the fifteen, with the crowd beginning to yell.

A FLYING tackle from an angle knocked him off his feet again, but he wouldn't stay down. Miraculously recovering, he kept running,

slicing through Clipper tacklers. He was over the thirty, the forty, and he was coming over in the direction of the Falcon bench, running like a fiend. His face was distorted as he hacked at a tackler with a free hand and staggered up to the fifty.

He was hit then by three crimson-and-white jerseys. He was hit harder than Rip Riordan had ever seen a runner hit. He bounced across the sideline, smashed into a linemaker, and kept rolling toward the Falcon bench.

The kid got up, grinning, the ball under his arm. The crowd was going wild, and Rip could scarcely hear what Franzini said, but he was yelling to them, to the five men huddled close together on that bench—the five old men. Franzini's lips said, "That's for you."

Rip Riordan saw Jim Shelby drop his head and look at the ground when the quarterback ran back on the field. Shelby said it, the bitterness in his voice, the self-condemnation in his voice.

"For us," Shelby repeated, "for the five louses who were going to sell them down the river to a crooked gambler."

The five of them sat there, watching, saying nothing, but Rip Riordan felt a wave of joy run through him.

The Falcons didn't stop on the fifty. They slugged, battled, ripped their way down the field, playing the kind of ball the Clippers had never seen before, playing the kind of ball which was played on rock-studded, rope-enclosed fields behind steel mills. They went over for a score, and Rip sent Brewster in to kick the extra point. Brewster came out immediately after making it.

With a wild, crazed crowd cheering them on, the Falcons continued the drive, taking the play away from the Clippers, getting that extra step on them. They were penalized time and time again for off-sides, but it didn't bother them. Carson, Franzini and Grogan carried the ball, and Grogan, two hundred pound fullback, was

the hammer. He was an Irishman from the steel mills, as hard as the steel he'd made, a square-jawed, blue-eyed Irishman who loved a fight, and this was a fight.

Hap Hickey sent in replacements to take the edge off this drive, but he couldn't stop it. Grogan hammered for six, for eight, for ten. Franzini broke away again in a wild dash down the field to put the ball on the four yard stripe. Grogan tore through for the score, and then Brewster went out again to kick. It was supposed to tie it up at fourteen all, but it didn't. Brewster's placement struck the crossbar and bounded back on the field, leaving it at 14-13 for the Clippers.

Hap Hickey sent in more replacements, fresh men to wear down the Falcon kids, and the going became heavier.

"They're tired," Jim Shelby said. "Nobody could keep up that pace for long."

Rip could see it, too, as the fourth period wore away. They'd burned themselves out with their terrific play, and they were digging down now, trying to find new energy inside, but it wasn't there.

Then the Clippers started a drive of their own halfway through the fourth period. They took the ball to midfield, and then started to push it down toward the goal line to clinch the game.

Rip Riordan stood up. He said, "I have seven minutes of good football left in me. Who else has?"

The four of them got up with him, and Rip Riordan was smiling as he trotted out on the field. He watched Ed Polinski coming off, a truly great football player that afternoon. Polinski was worn out, his face tense, bruised, dirty. But he was grinning. He said, "Knock 'em out, boss."

The Clippers sent Shane around Jim Shelby's end, but Shane didn't make it this time. The red-headed end lifted the runner off his feet, slammed him down so hard that the ball bounced out of his

(Continued on page 93)

—BUZZ-SAW

CHAPTER ONE

Mayhem Maestro

I'VE told this story to a lot of people without telling them who the lead character is. Some of them think the story is about Stone Gowal. He has a part in it. A lot of prominent people have come off the hot, littered pavements of the East Side. A lot of little kids who are now sleeping out on the fire escapes to get out of the heat will be making headlines when they grow up.

Stone Gowal grew up on those streets. Seeing him from a distance he looks like any other hard boy. Short neck, big shoulders, heavy face bones. A lot of pounding has thickened his brows and his lips and widened his nose. Close up he's something else. Close up his skin has a hard, grayish look, and under the shelves of his brows his eyes are a pale watery gray. Killer gray.

By tradition, outside the ring, he should be a big, happy, gentle animal. But all he has is the animal aspect. He is vain, ruthless, brutal.

Maybe this is rightfully a story about Len Kennedy. A lot of boys have drifted into the boxing game via the college route. Few of them have been any good. None of them have been champions. The write-ups have given Len Kennedy some American Indian blood. He looks it. He is what the folks think about when they talk about turning fighting into a clean American sport.

Maybe the story really started ten years ago. Stone Gowal was twenty. That was when "Chalk" Leebna was still ac-

cumulating his big stable. Chalk saw Gowal in an amateur semi-final in Jersey City and liked the looks of him. The next day Stone Gowal was a professional and Max Gleason, to whom Chalk was paying a hundred a week, started to teach him how to move around a ring, how to hold his hands. Billy Lee Gleason was a golden-headed ten, with skinned knees and a collection of movie star cutouts. Len Kennedy was fifteen that year. He was doing well in high school football.

Stone Gowal was a surly kid, unpredictable. During that first week at Dannegan's Gym, Gowal, fretting under the constant instruction, pasted Max. Max, who ten years ago was forty something, still had enough left to give Gowal a worse beating than he has ever taken since. Max cut him to little bits, but the kid wouldn't stop trying until both eyes had swelled completely shut.

Max has since told me that during all the years he worked with Gowal, he never once lost the feeling of being a sort of animal trainer. Gowal was like one of those big dangerous cats who, if they feel in the mood, will leap through the flaming hoop.

Chalk Leebna died a year later. He was crossed by a punk who, on another charge, is still doing twenty to life up the river.

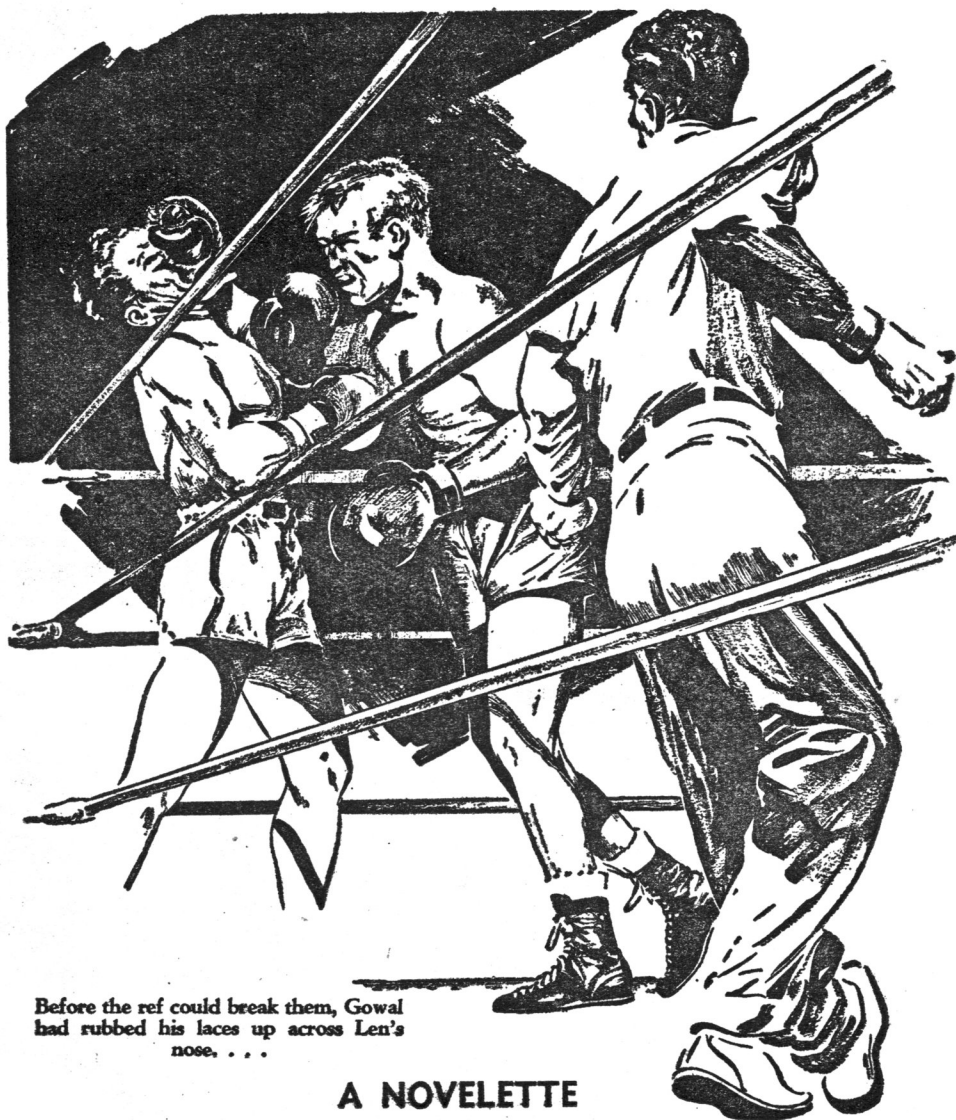
Leebna lost a lot of dough and made the mistake of sending the punk over with the payoff. The punk pocketed the payoff and told the syndicate that Leebna had sent him to tell them that they'd better try to collect.

Chalk Leebna died on his hands and knees in an alley. At that point Max had saved some money. When the stable dis-

—By JOHN MacDONALD—

BELTER

A man-eater champ—an out-of-the-hinterlands
challenger—a fight where hate rides every punch
—and only sudden death can name the winner!



Before the ref could break them, Gowel
had rubbed his laces up across Len's
nose. . . .

A NOVELETTE

solved, Max then bought Stone Gowal.

It was about that time that my name started to appear on the sports page of the paper I'm still with.

I'll never forget some of those early fights as Max Gleason started to bring Stone Gowal up the ladder. The crowd loved him in the same way they love to go to the midget auto races in hopes of seeing somebody smashed to a pulp.

His style was the same as it is now. But cruder. Stone would come out slow at the bell, his face impassive. He was never a pretty boxer, but he could roll to take the sting out of a punch, and he kept that jaw down so tight behind a humped left shoulder that he was hard to hit.

That left jab of his was like a piston. In the clinch he would appear to paw almost aimlessly at his opponent's middle. But each lazy pat would boom like a big drum and soon the poor guy in the ring with him would be panting for air.

Max, during those early years, finally convinced Stone to wait until Max gave him the word. Max waited until that jab and the pawing right had taken the edge off the other man. When he finally gave Stone the word it was like unsnapping the leash from the collar of a mad dog.

Max never did manage to get Gowal to defend himself in the payoff round. Very few boys lasted beyond that round. The roar of the crowd always started in that round, building up into a scream as Stone moved in for the kill.

I'LL never forget the way Gowal's thick lips would lift away from his teeth so that the white rubber guard showed. With his eyes slitted, grunting with each punch, he would work his man onto the ropes and even the slow motion camera couldn't take the steam out of some of those punches. Imagine an unarmed man in the ring with a savage who carries a rock in each hand. It'll give you the general idea.

Stone Gowal's specialty was waiting until his man was headed for the floor and then he'd hook up on him with a blow that would straighten him for the payoff punch.

If Stone Gowal had happened to be under the wing of a syndicate, he would have become champion long before he did. But the fight racket had a million angles. With only one fighter under his wing, Max couldn't arrange the proper favors, or get the proper booking. And when boys were brought up via the tank route for a shot at the topside, they avoided Gowal on the way up. But on the way down Gowal got to them, doing a much more serious job on them than the champ had done.

Even so, by the fourth year they were getting four-figure purses and Gowal was fighting a lot. You could tell when they started to make money. Stone started wearing neckties because then he could afford the tailored shirts to fit around his bull neck.

Billy Lee was sent away to a decent school. Max wanted to turn her into a lady. That was silly, because there was no time, even in the bubble-gum stage, that Billy Lee wasn't very much of a sweet little lady.

Maybe in the movies they would have it that Stone Gowal, the refinement of brute fury, had a soft spot in his heart for the kid of the guy who managed him and trained him. But to Stone she was "the brat" until the skinny, little-girl frame began to fill out into the contours of woman and then Stone began to have a wet look around his mouth—but that comes later in the story.

There is an easy way and a hard way to come up in the fight game. The syndicate way is the easy way, because then you have the dough to buy your own publicity, and buy your victories. The other way is the way Max Gleason and Stone Gowal traveled. They got their publicity just

by being around, by knocking the ears off everybody who came their way, by making trips through the brush and knocking off the promising beginners before the syndicate could step in and put those promising beginners out of the reach of the Gleason-Gowal combination.

You do that long enough and the sports writers begin to put little digs in the columns, and after a while it snowballs up to the point where the syndicate has to give the unconnected boy a shot at the tame champion.

It takes a long time.

Stone Gowal's private life gave Max a lot of trouble during that period. When Gowal's divorce came up, the plaintiff appeared in court with the jaw Gowal had broken the week before. Her teeth were wired together. The alimony kept Stone poor. It was two years before she married, taking away the financial burden.

The college kid Stone slugged in a Birmingham night spot never regained the sight in his right eye. Only the fact that both parties had been proven very drunk kept the settlement as low as it was. Even so, Gowal got a lot of bad publicity.

Stone Gowal carried his belligerence around with him. He strutted when he walked, and the tiniest slur, real or imagined, could tighten those huge fists that looked like paving bricks.

But nothing can contradict a long string of knockouts. Not forever.

Toward the end of the seventh year of Gleason's handling of Gowal, the syndicate had to throw a bone to the dogs by giving Gowal a shot at the "ranking contender for the heavyweight crown."

The night before the fight a few sharpies moved in on Gowal at his hotel. That's a story that didn't get in the paper. They slugged him, stripped him, moved him out onto the fire escape and doused him with cold water. The temperature was about ten above. At the end of an hour they brought him in and put him to bed and left.

They got what they wanted.

The next night Gowal went into the ring with a temperature of a hundred and two. Max knew he was weak and feverish and he unsnapped the leash in the first round. You may remember reading about that fight. Maybe you even saw it. Barney Jeeno wasn't too bad a boy. He came out feeling with a cautious left which Stone slammed out of the way to plant a solid right hook under Barney's heart. Barney's mouth sagged open and he got on his bicycle.

Stone stalked him like a big cat. He moved Barney into a corner and rolled with the stiff left and right that Barney laid alongside his jaw. Stone looked like a man spitting on his hands before chopping down a tree. His shoulders rolling in heavy rhythm, Stone went to work on Jeeno's middle. From my ringside seat

HEADACHE

UPSET
STOMACH

JUMPY
NERVES



RELIEF!

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it sounded like somebody slapping a tile wall with a wet mop.

Finally, when Barney's arms sagged, when only the force of Stone's blows were keeping him upright in the corner, Stone moved back a little and shifted to the head. Barney's mouthpiece flew out in a fine mist of blood and his eyes rolled up so that there were just slits of white visible.

The bell sounded and Stone swaggered away. They dragged Barney to his corner and held him on the stool, slapping his face, dousing him with water, holding the smelling salts to his nose. Barney stirred a little. When the bell sounded, they pushed Barney up and took away the stool. Barney never took a step. He just swayed beyond the balance point and went over on his face. Barney was never able to bring himself to climb into a ring again. Stone Gowal spent the next six days in the hospital fighting pneumonia with the same brute courage that he fought everything else.

It was obvious to all of us that Stone Gowal had earned a shot at the title. But even so they stalled another six months. The angered yells of the sports scribes rose to a shrill scream and died away when the date was set.

CHAPTER TWO

Blood Feud

MAX should have known that the syndicate would move in another direction. Max should have known that Stone Gowal didn't know the meaning of the word loyalty.

I had coffee with Max Gleason on the afternoon of the day he heard what they were going to do to him. He had a beaten look.

He made me promise that I'd keep it off the record.

It was beautifully simple. Max stirred his cooling coffee and told me how he had

turned down a cash offer for Stone's contract. The next day he had received in the mail a photostat of a statement that was going to be sent to the Commission.

It was a notarized statement, signed by Stone Gowal, and it stated that during his entire relationship with Max Gleason, he had never been permitted to receive his full legal percentage of the purses. It further stated that he had received falsified expense accounts, and that it was only with great difficulty that he had prevented Gleason from "fixing" his fights, and from giving him "mysterious medicine" before some of his tougher bouts. Appended to the statement was a second one signed by a hanger-on who had sometimes been used in Gowal's corner. It substantiated the statement by Gowal.

"Did you talk to Stone?" I asked.

"Yes. He did it for thirty-five thousand, cash. I've never handled a champion and this was my chance. If I don't accept their price, the frame goes on and I get tossed out of the business. Gowal will get suspended temporarily, but they'll get him reinstated under their management."

"Can't you fight?" I asked.

He shrugged. "Fight who? And for what? I've made a little. I've still got my health. They'll give me twenty-five thousand. A gift." His lip curled.

At that moment Billy Lee came in and slid into the booth beside Max. She was on vacation. "Hello, Mike," she said to me. She put her fingers on her father's arm. "I thought I'd find you here. Did you tell Mike?"

It was good to look at her. When I was a little kid I had a picture on my bedroom wall that I had cut out of a magazine. It showed one of those Viking ships with a blonde woman standing on the bows. Billy Lee sort of reminded me of that girl. Not as beefy, of course. But just as straight and clean and—shining.

Max said that he had told me. Her eyes flashed as she looked at me. "Did

you ever hear of a more stinking trick, Mike? That Gowl is a prize louse. We've always known he was a stinker, but we didn't know he was that bad."

"When do you sign him over?" I asked.

Max glanced at his watch. "In about an hour."

"Then what?"

"Then I'm going out to the West and take another look at a boy I saw a month ago."

"Heavy?"

"Right."

"Bring him along to lick Gowl?"

Max doubled his fist. "I'd like to. But by the time I bring him along, Gowl will be out of the fight game."

"Maybe I could help in that department," Billy Lee said in a faraway voice.

I didn't see what she could mean. Neither did Max.

Under new management, Stone Gowl did just as good. The things that Max had taught him had become such a part of his fighting pattern that he couldn't lose them now that Max wasn't handling him any more.

The syndicate lips, curled around cigar butts, wore wide, wet smiles. Sixty thousand is cheap for a champion.

Even so, Gowl nearly lost the big one. He stepped out when the champion was too fresh. He got arm weary before he started to land solidly, and some of the sting was gone. The champion began to cut him up. But in the closing moments of the tenth round Stone snapped back and floored the champion. The champion tried to keep out of trouble in the eleventh, but his legs were gone. Stone got him into a corner and slowly battered him to the floor. He had to do it a second time, and a third time. The third time the champion stayed down, though at the ten count he was trying to get his knees under him.

Syndicate publicity went to work on the new champion. They had pictures of him patting dogs and refereeing settle-

ment-house bouts, and smiling at the camera. But over that wide-lipped smile, those gray eyes were as cold as the eternal tomb.

As champion he fought often, which made him popular with the folks. He did very little training. But the quality of the competition was pretty sketchy. Stone had a little gray tire around his middle and a spray of pimples on his gray back. But in the ring he stalked and killed.

Max dropped out of sight. I knew that Billy Lee had probably finished school. I wondered about the two of them. And one day they came back to town, and Max brought his new heavy with him. I met the kid and liked him at once. He had a nice grin and a good way of handling his big body. Max got him booked into the garden and I saw the bout.

Len Kennedy, his name was. For the first two rounds the excitement grew in me. He moved his hundred and ninety-something pounds with all the blazing speed of a lightweight. The opposition was Tubbs Warner, the wheelhorse who is always in there trying.

Len Kennedy was built just right. Lots of shoulders, a flat belly and dancer's legs. And Max had brought him a long way. He could do an acceptable foot-feint, good enough to fool old Tubs. He could land his punches just where he wanted to, either coming in or going away. On defense he was something for the records. Once he let Tubs corner him and open up. Tubs swung three hard lefts, alternating with three hard rights. Two blows were caught on the arm, one on the shoulder, one in the glove, and two were clean misses.

Len slid out fast and nailed Tubs lightly behind the ear before he could turn himself around.

I noticed then that Len Kennedy had virtually no marks on him except for a straight nose which had a tiny slant toward left field.

BUT in the third round, I settled back in my seat in disgust. He had everything in the wide world but a punch. The punches looked good, looked as if they had the old zing, but Tubs shook them off the way a honey-bear shakes off bees. When Gowl had licked Tubs he had dropped him on his face with his arms spread wide and a beatific smile on his lips.

Len got the decision, of course, but it wasn't a popular bout. For a fighter to have that indefinable something called "color" he has to start with a punch and a killer instinct. Those two things seem to go together.

I ran into Max a week later and he said, "What do you think, Mike?"

"You want the truth?"

"Would I ask if I didn't?"

"Max, you got a nice clean boy. A wonderful boy. He ought to teach boxing in some nice clean Ivy League college. He could maybe smash a fly on the wall flat—if he hit it square."

Max just grinned and said, "Come along. Want to show you something."

Len was working out at Dannegan's. But it wasn't the usual workout. I saw that at once. Len grinned at me. The sweat was running down his face. Max had him turn his back to us and pull the sweat shirt up around his neck. It was a smoothly muscled back.

"Move your arm, kid, your right. A slow motion punch."

Max pointed to a little oval pad of muscle just below the right shoulder blade. "Mike, you watch that muscle right there."

I did. It was smooth at first and then as Len's arm got out further it bunched up.

"I don't know the right names of the muscles, Mike. All I know is that on every slugger I ever see, that little fella is oversize. It gives the snap to the punch."

"I don't get it."

"Sure you do. On Len here, the muscle

is small. Okay, we find the workout to make it big."

Len pulled down his shirt and began to work again on the heavy bag. His lips were moving. He was arm weary.

"How many?" Max asked.

"Over half," Len grunted.

As we walked away Max said, "He can throw fifty a minute. Three thousand an hour. I got him on a four-hour workout. Six thousand with each arm."

"Won't he get muscle-bound?" I asked.

"Not with the rest of the workout."

"What's that?"

Max grinned. "I make him swim two hours a day. You ever see a muscle-bound swimmer?"

That is why the record book looks so odd when it gives the statistics on Len Kennedy. All those decisions in a row and then the beginning of the string of knock-outs.

I saw the third one in the string. Everything was exactly the same as in the Tubs Warner bout. The punches looked just the same. Tubs had shaken them off. The kid that Len fought tried to shake them off, too. He shook off a few and then he wilted at the knees. When he got back up he was an angular, dancing scarecrow, blundering in windmill fashion around the ring. When Len got close enough he chilled him with a short, right, overhand chop. He had his back to me. I saw the little pad of muscle stiffen. Only it wasn't so little.

Stone Gowl had been on top of the heap for two years. I was in a Village club one night and the master of ceremonies had one of the spots switched to a table on the other side of the floor. Stone gave the folks his party smile. A little table for two, he had.

Seeing the gal at the table with him almost made me bite a piece out of the rim of my glass. When the show was over and the house lights went back on, I made certain.

Yes, it was Billy Lee Gleason. Her shoulders were bare and smooth and they were the shade of ice tea with milk.

Ignoring the glare of the gal I was with, I excused myself and went on over to their table. Stone's shoulders were so wide they were grotesque.

"Hi ya, Mike," Gowal said in his husky fighter's voice.

I nodded to him, spun a chair around from a nearby table with a "reserved" sign, sat down and said, "Imagine seeing you here, Billy Lee."

To tell the truth, she didn't look too out of place. With a touch of aqua eye shadow, a bit too much goo on the ripe lips and an extreme hair-do, she looked like any other club chick.

"How have you been, Mike?" she asked, using the tone of voice that said she didn't care how I'd been. Even thick-head Gowal got the chill and beamed with delight.

"Max know who you're out with?" I asked.

"What's that to you?" Stone rasped, his eyes narrowing. A big gray fist on the table top slowly tightened.

Billy Lee slipped her arm through his, ran her finger tips back and forth, up and down his hand. She leaned closer to him and said, "Don't get steamed, honey-bun. He's a newsboy. Remember?"

"I don't care who the hell he is," Stone Gowal said without taking his eyes off

me. "Crack wise and I break his mouth."

Billy Lee looked at me and lifted her chin. "I don't remember asking you to sit down here, Mike."

"Nice to have seen you folks," I said. I went back to my gal. But my heart wasn't in the evening. I kept remembering Billy Lee at ten. Without reaching too far for the comparison, seeing her with Gowal was like seeing an Easter lily floating down an open sewer. I wondered how Max was taking it. And at the same time I thought I could see why Billy Lee was chumming up to Gowal. There was something in every woman that responds to brutality, just as there is a streak of brutality in even the mildest of men. I thought of the two of them together and nearly gagged on a perfectly good Scotch and water.

The next day I looked up Max. He had a bleak look. I didn't have to open my mouth. He saw the look on my face and turned his back. "A lot of people been telling me," he said. "She was twenty-one last Tuesday. What can I do?"

Len Kennedy was within earshot, working on the heavy bag. With his next punch he nearly busted the seams and let out the sand.

It was just another sordid story. The big city has a lot of stories like that. In my game you're supposed to get used to it. Somehow, I've never been able to grow a thick enough shell. Something always

**MEN CAN
HAVE THE
NEW LOOK
TOO...**



**WITH
WILDROOT
CREAM-OIL
HAIR TONIC**

GROOMS THE HAIR
RELIEVES DRYNESS
REMOVES LOOSE
DANDRUFF



EASY TO USE
NO WASTE
OR SPILLING
HANDY FOR
TRAVELING

knives through and gets hold of me deep down inside.

Max Gleason should have had to wait another three or four years before getting Len up into the big time. But a month later Len was booked to fight Gowal. The whole distance for the title. I was on vacation when the deal was made and when I got back I started to dig out the angles. It was something that shouldn't have happened—but it did. The syndicate doesn't play that way. But they did.

I picked up a rumor here and a word there and a hint the other place. All of them steered me right to Billy Lee. We sat across from each other in a drug store and she drank a coke while I tried to get the facts from her.

Finally I understood. I stared at her and said, "You fool! You wonderful damn fool!"

"It worked, didn't it?"

"But how did you know it was going to work? How did you know that if you broke a bunch of dates with Stone Gowal and went out with Len that Stone would force his managers to make a bout with Len?"

She shrugged. "I told Gowal that I thought Len could lick him. And that this little girl was going to go out with the best man, bar none. It was as simple as that."

"You could have gotten in a terrible mess, Billy Lee."

Her level eyes were on mine. "Mike, ever since Stone crossed dad, I've been planning this. It had to work. And I was able to handle Stone." Her eyes looked haunted. "But just barely. Now I keep my door locked nights and a gun under my pillow. I had him running around in mad little circles. It isn't love with him. It's just wanting to destroy. And now his pride is hurt. It's up to Len, now. Len has to win."

I shook my head. "Yeah, he certainly has to win this one—or else!"

CHAPTER THREE

Champs Don't Quit

NOTHING can ever duplicate the atmosphere of a championship bout. I had taken two trips up into the mountains to the training camp. Len looked good. Very good.

He had come into the ring first. Gowal had made him wait while the crowd grew impatient. At last Gowal had come down the aisle. He went over the top rope in his usual flashy style, taped hands raised and clasped, that false grin of his shining out at the crowd.

I was in the press row and from time to time I turned to look back across the sea of faces. The faces at the Roman Amphitheatre must have looked like those faces. Eager, sweaty, nervous, blood-hungry. Sharp faces, with the bestial quality not far below the surface. The crowd made a low humming like some vast dynamo slowly building up its power.

The staring eyes of the television cameras peered down through the smoke at the brilliantly lighted ring. To the public this was just another championship fight. They didn't know what was back of it, how the lives of four people were inextricably tied up in the outcome of the fight.

They came out for the instructions, not looking at each other. The referee finished, slapped them on the shoulders and they went back to their corners. The handlers stripped off the robes that had been slung over their shoulders. They poked the mouth-guards in with the awkward gloves, chewed down on them, rubbed their feet in the rosin and stretched their arms on the top ropes.

Stone Gowal looked like what he was. A fighting machine. A big, fast, dangerous man without an ounce of pity. He had climbed to the top with his fists and they were all he had. Len Kennedy looked rangy and taut and clean. His skin was

a clear pink as compared with the haired and grayish texture of Stone's body.

They came out at the bell, and circled cautiously. Len came in with two jolting left jabs, caught Gowal's jab in his right glove, moved quickly to the left, and reversed, ripping a good left hook to Gowal's middle, but taking a right high on the head in return.

Gowal was moving as he usually did. Always inching forward, looking flat-footed, but capable of moving quickly in any direction. Gowal thought he saw an opening and threw the right. Len stepped inside with another left hook to the pit of Gowal's stomach.

At the bell I watched Max go up on the apron of the ring, talk into Len's ear. Len nodded, looking perfectly cool. I looked for Billy Lee. Though it was against her custom to attend the bouts, I knew that she'd be in on this one. She had an aisle seat in the fourth row almost directly behind Len Kennedy. Her eyes were narrowed and her lips compressed.

Gowal, at the bell, tried to fool Len. He came out slow, and, as soon as he was within range he led with a right that, if it had landed, might have ended the fight right there. When you're as good as those boys, leading with the right is not dangerous.

All Len caught was the breeze, but he had come so close to catching the whole works that it made his face pale. He moved in behind his fine left jab and gave it to Gowal three times over the left eye. Gowal nailed him with a very hard left jab, half hook and half jab. Len's knees sagged and Gowal came in fast. But Len had tricked him. He rocked Gowal with a left, a right and a left to the head and Gowal, surprisingly, hung on. I moved up to the edge of my seat. Before the ref could break them, Gowal had rubbed his laces up across Len's nose. The referee warned him and Gowal put on an expression of injured innocence. On him

that look was as out of place as a pink ribbon on a grease gun.

LEN'S next left jab opened up a streak of red over that bad eye. Gowal shook his head impatiently and countered with two left jabs of his own and a right cross that Len took on his shoulder. Len came in and planted two more on that bad eye, was dropped by a short right. He calmly took the nine count, came up and moved away fast as Gowal rushed him. When Gowal made his second rush, Len bounced off the ropes, tagged that bad eye with a screaming right hook.

After the bell Gowal's seconds worked frantically over that eye. It was cut deep.

The bell for the third brought Gowal out of his corner like a raging lion. Take three to get in one. That was his formula for the kill. He snowed Len under with a hail of gloves. Len ducked and weaved and rolled and shot back whenever he got a chance, but he couldn't withstand that mad fury that Gowal had turned on. He went down, off balance, with a right that hit him over the ear. He came up on one knee, shaking his head to clear it, waiting for the nine count. The crowd was screaming. Gowal stood in a neutral corner, his arms outstretched on the ropes, his chest heaving. He kept his eyes on Len. The moment Len came up, Gowal was all over him again.

Len, with his chin on his chest, suddenly stopped rolling and weaving and walked right into Gowal's rhythm. Suddenly it was a tank-town amateur bout. Two huskies that didn't know anything except to stand and trade leather.

Blood covered the left half of Gowal's face. Len's mouth slowly disintegrated into a bloody smear. Left, right, left, right. With each blow Gowal made a gasping sound that seemed to tear his throat.

And miraculously Len was no longer

pinned in the corner. He was coming out, inch by inch. Gowal was giving ground! Len's punches were landing cleaner. The bell clanged, and clanged again, but they kept punching until the referee managed to get them apart. They went back to their corners like men walking in their sleep.

Len gulped air through his torn mouth. Max had his lips close to Len's ear. Gowal slumped in his corner, his good eye nearly shut.

They came out at the bell, marched stolidly to the middle of the ring and started again where they had left off.

At last Gowal wavered, stumbled and went down heavily. Len had to be pushed away by the referee. At five Gowal was on his knees, blinking through the blinding haze of lights. He was up at nine. Len went in, took three in the mouth and knocked Gowal down again. This time Stone Gowal came up with a little more trouble. His face was no longer human.

Len couldn't hit him. He measured him, the right poised, the left outstretched, barely touching Gowal's chest. The referee knew he should stop it. I could see it by his face. But he was looking toward one of the big guns in the syndicate who sat ringside, and he was licking his lips in indecision.

The great fighting heart of Stone Gowal hadn't quit.

Len, his left still against Gowal's chest, turned his head and yelled something at the referee.

Maybe it was some dim instinct, the last vestige of consciousness. The last bolt of fury. The last spasm of deadly anger.

Len turned his face back to Gowal in time to meet a right that nearly tore his head off. As he fell, he fell against Gowal and they both went down. The bug-eyed referee started the count, looking from Gowal to Len and back to Gowal. Stone Gowal crawled over to the ropes and hauled himself to his feet.

Len Kennedy didn't stir.

And so the story comes out wrong. The bum licks the hero. Maybe too many times life makes it come out that way.

By the time I managed to get to Len's room, Billy Lee was already there.

Len was still dazed. But after Billy Lee put her hands on those sweaty shoulders and kissed that broken mouth, he came out of it a little. The press gang was over talking to the winner—and still the champion of the world.

There is only a little bit more of it. Len wanted to fight again. But it took him three weeks to completely wake up mentally, and Max talked him out of it. Max tore up the contract. Max has two new boys. A middle and a lightweight.

I saw Max in the flea-bag hotel he favors just the other night. He talked about his boys. He had that "going to have a champ" look on his face. Then he showed me the picture of Billy Lee's baby. Like all babies, it had the Winston Churchill look, but I said it was beautiful like you always do. In the picture, Len was holding it. He works on a construction job in the South.

But the main reason I came to see Max was to tell him about Gowal. Maybe I should have been able to tell Max that I had run into Stone Gowal selling neckties in some "cocktail-lounge" saloon.

But all I could give Max was Gowal's message that he was thinking of retiring as champ and was thinking of going into the managing end and wondered if Max was too sore to make it a partnership deal. Ordinarily, you'd expect that Max Gleason would have spurned the offer.

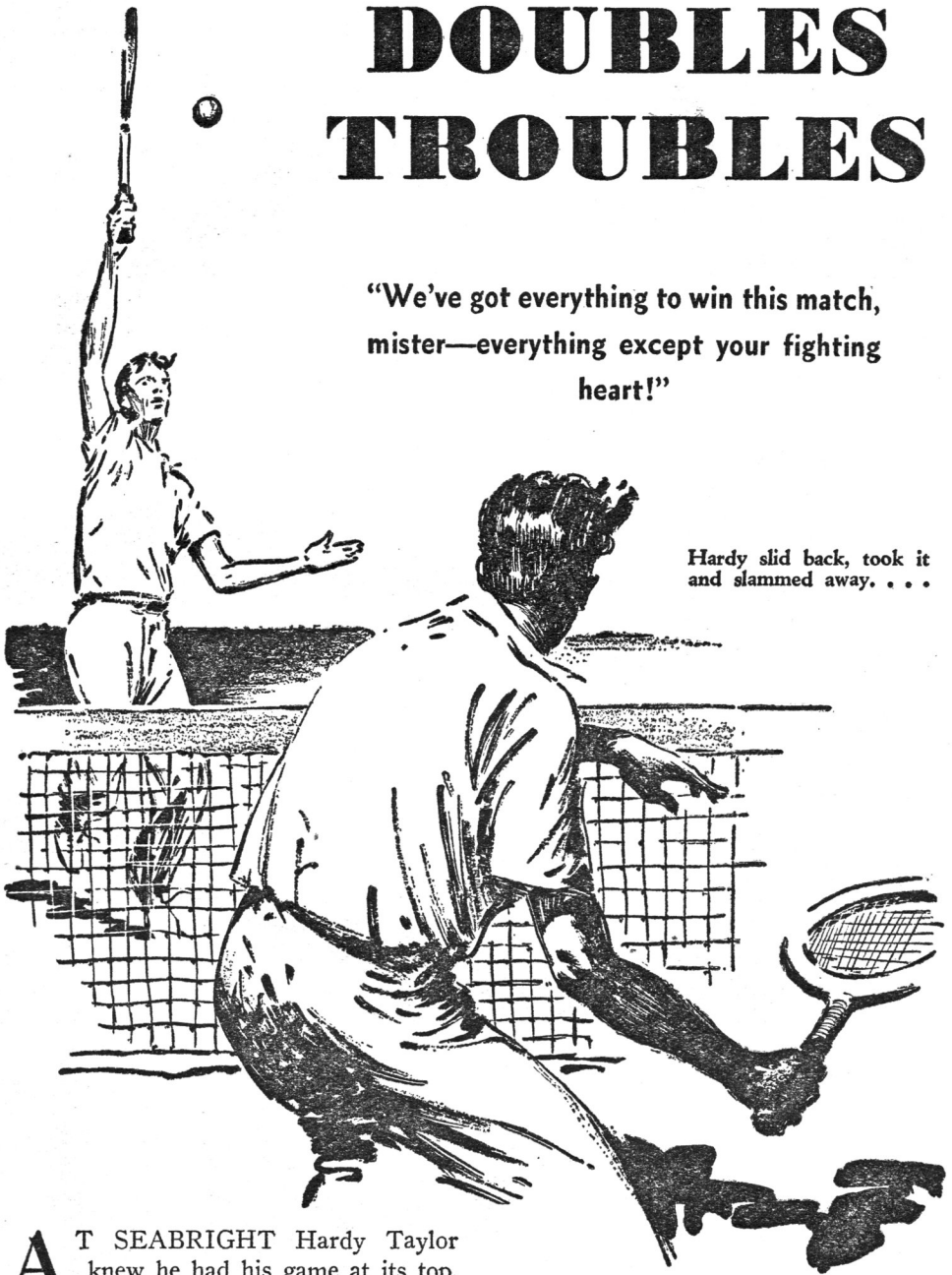
But Max said, "Hey, with his name I could really get the bookings for my boys!"

So all you can say is that in the fight game the stories don't always have the right and happy ending. It's sometimes even hard to tell when the stories are over. But all I want is the ringside seat I had for this one.

DOUBLES TROUBLES

"We've got everything to win this match, mister—everything except your fighting heart!"

Hardy slid back, took it and slammed away. . . .



AT SEABRIGHT Hardy Taylor knew he had his game at its top. It was a grand feeling. He was very young, although not new to the tennis wars, and to be accepted by the real stars of the game was meat and potatoes to him. He rallied with big Jim Byrd.

His forehand was especially good. He

By
WILLIAM R. COX

kept rapping it deep, making Jim hustle for it. The morning was crisp and the weather promised fair for the hallowed tournament. Byrd, favorite to, cop the nationals this year, already doubles champ with Cy Latham, came to the net. Hardy passed him with a sharp, angling top-spin forehand.

Byrd shot a look at him. "That's better than you know how."

"I'm hot," Hardy said happily. "I may be in the finals with you, at that."

Byrd said, "You're hot, all right." He shrugged. He was as confident as he was large. He was a steady-going, serious athlete accustomed to the challenges of the best.

In an excess of ebullience, Hardy said, "How about the doubles, Jim? I hear Latham's not going to play."

"Doubles?" Byrd shifted his racket to his left hand and reached for the towel on the net post. His gaze went up and down the lean length of Hardy Taylor. He said slowly, "Doubles mean a lot to me. I like to win."

Hardy flushed. He knew what the big man meant. He said, "I like to win, too."

Jim shook his head. "I may play with Midge."

"Midge? Midge Mallard? Why, Midge is—" He had almost said "through". He caught himself and said, "Midge has the experience, all right."

Byrd hesitated. Then he said, "That isn't it. Well, thanks for the workout. You sure are hot." He walked away.

Hardy Taylor bit his lip. Jim Byrd was a nice guy. It wasn't good to know that Jim would not play doubles with him, that he preferred a beat-up little old man like Midge.

Hardy went into the clubhouse. The first person he saw was Cy Latham. Cy was grinning and shaking hands with Jim; he was going to enter after all. Hardy wished he hadn't asked Jim about the doubles.

In the showers he remembered the times he had played through to the finals of small tourneys on the winter circuit. He had played doubles with some real good partners at times. But he had never won. Yet he loved the game. Like many amateur tennis stars he considered it the most interesting form of the net game. It would be fine to tie in with a good partner, stick with him and have a chance to win the nationals at Philadelphia. But he could never seem to keep a partner.

Midge Mallard came in and began stripping his tiny, compact body. He was a gnome-like little valiant, a veteran of the tennis game from away back, a gamecock of the courts. Lacking the size to win national honors, he had concentrated lately on doubles, where his size was less of a handicap.

Hardy said impulsively, "Hey, Midge. I hear you haven't got a partner now."

"Thought I had Jim," Midge nodded. There was a brief silence.

Hardy said, his tongue a trifle thick, "I haven't got anyone, either. Thought we might try it."

Midge looked squarely at him. "You'll get to the semis, maybe the finals in singles. You may have to go five sets. Then we play the doubles. You and me could get to the finals against Jim and Cy."

Hardy said eagerly, "You think we could?"

"And then what?" The little man's blue eyes were steady.

Hardy's head sank. "Okay, Midge. Thought I'd ask." He started for the showers. Under the hot water he lost all the thrill which had been occasioned by his reaching top form. He turned on the cold tap and grimly endured the icy blast.

When he was toweling, Midge Mallard came toward him. The little man wore a contrite expression. He said, "Hardy, I'll play with you if you like."

"That'll be fine," said Hardy. "Uh—thanks, Midge."

"I like the backhand court," said Midge diffidently.

Backhand is the strong court, where the best player generally plays. Hardy said, "Sure, Midge. Perhaps you'd better take it. My forehand is going pretty good now."

"We'll practice in the morning," nodded the veteran. "Get used to each other. And Hardy—you don't run around nights, do you?"

Why—no!" Hardy was startled. "I'm serious this year."

Midge nodded. "Okay. Let's give it a try, then."

Hardy dressed. Somehow his hands were shaky, doing up the buttons of his shirt. This had become more than a romp through the doubles of a grass-court tournament. It had become important. Jim Byrd's refusal to play with him, Midge's initial reluctance had made a huge difference.

Yet his ambition was to get to the top in singles. That is the big event. Every tennis player yearns to take that middle court at Forest Hills and crash through to win the big cup of the game. Hardy was young and Jim Byrd was good, but Hardy had secret hopes, not wholly unjustified, that by September he would have a chance to win. This sudden crisis about the doubles perturbed him. He could not deny that it had become of vast importance to him.

THE day of the finals was warm and sticky. Hardy Taylor picked up two rackets and his towel and paused.

Midge Mallard sat on the bench and said, "You did it. You only have to beat Jim."

"I've been hot," said Hardy.

"And we're in the finals against Jim and Cy," said Midge.

Hardy said nervously, "I know. I want that match, too. But I've got to throw everything at Jim."

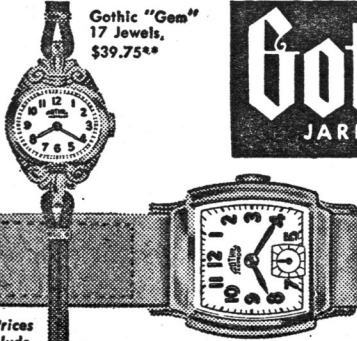
Midge scowled, "Of course. That's the game. Go out and fight him."

"It's a long afternoon," said Hardy. "Okay, Midge. You're a great partner to have."

"Thanks," said Midge drily. He followed Hardy onto the court. The bowl was loaded with fans. The setting was perfect, the groundskeeper had cleaned up the rich green grass to perfection. Hardy took a deep breath and walked to where Jim Byrd waited.

Byrd looked fine; big, tanned, strong. He was at ease, he was in his element, a great man when the chips were down. He said, "You're going like a house afire, Hardy."

Hardy said, Thanks, pal. I'll be in there trying." He took the court and they rallied. His forehand was going the best ever. He essayed a few services and his stroke was full and easy. He had cut down on his service speed at Midge's advice and sought now for placement and



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spin rather than the possibility of aces.

He had learned a lot from Midge in that week. The little man was a walking tennis library. His soft, quiet voice almost hypnotized Hardy. Midge was never roiled, never excited, and he was always there when needed. Hardy won the spin and elected to start the finals match by taking the wind, allowing Jim to serve.

He had not hit four shots before he knew he was in for it. Jim Byrd rallying for exercise, and Jim Byrd playing for a tourney win, were two different characters. The big man was like a machine, only with soul. He covered the court amazingly, he smashed his service to the corners, and followed to the net.

Hardy forgot the doubles. He forgot Midge. He forgot everything but the ball, bounding back from the racket of the big man. He lost the first game at love, changed courts.

He sent over his spin service, slowing down Byrd's steaming attack. He took the return and nailed to crosscourt, making Jim run. He went in fast and volleyed. He put the ball away.

He worked on Jim's backhand, moving the big man deep and out, then applied a drop-shot which caught Jim flat-footed. He served again, took the return and raked his forehand across the court for a change of pace. He got Jim on the lam and ran out the game.

Jim Byrd never changed expression. He crashed his service through. He held on, and then with the score four to five on Hardy's serve the big man began to move.

Hardy stroked desperately, but every time he looked, there was the wide, strong Byrd at the net. Hardy almost passed him twice. Each time Byrd made heroic saves and stashed the ball too deep for Hardy to handle. On the last spin service Jim hit back hard, came in and slammed a backhand volley away for the point and the set.

Hardy steadied for the second set.

Employing a deep loop-shot, he managed to keep Byrd on the baseline. Occasionally he went in, volleyed. He reversed the score, winning 6-4.

Again Byrd seemed to piece his game together in championship form. Only the dogged determination of Hardy saved the third set from turning into a rout. Jim won it, 6-3.

They rested. Midge was waiting with a towel and some rubbing oil. He made Hardy lie down and rubbed the oil into his muscles. He said in his easy, low voice, "You've got to keep him moving on the baseline. If he gets set he can beat anyone. How do you feel?"

"I'm not tired . . . yet," said Hardy. He was slim and wiry under the rubbing fingers of the veteran but exhaustion had not set into his muscles. He was on fire with ambition. He said, "I can play better."

"Sure," said Midge. "You can play better. So can he. It's a question of brains—and guts."

"I'll fight him," muttered Hardy. He tried hard to relax, but he was too tense. He got up and went out to play.

It was good to have Midge behind him. It was good to know the steady little man was on his side. He had never enjoyed the satisfaction of having someone root for him before. He realized that it had been a wonderful thing when he had teamed up with Midge. Now he put everything aside except the terrific concentration required by the game.

He won the fourth set.

They changed, all even. Jim Byrd said, "The doubles will really be tough. Whew!" He was still grinning, good-natured, unruffled.

Hardy glanced at the bench where some of the players sat. Cy Latham, a clothes-pole sort of man, was seated next to little Midge. Hardy remembered then what it meant to Midge to win the doubles. Midge's days in singles were over, but he

was still a great doubles player. His only reason for following the tournaments was to win the doubles cups his insatiable competitive spirit demanded.

And now the poisons of overexertion were working in Hardy's slim frame. He felt it coming. He still had it, he could still hit and run. But he would be dead when this was over. What about Midge?

He shook off fear. He went at Jim Byrd, eager to end the match. He fought like a madman, racing to every corner of the court, booming that sharp forehand to the deep spots, making Jim move. He faced Jim's devastating serves, trying to figure a way to break through. They went to four-all, to five-all. Panting, sweating, Hardy fought to six-all, seven-all, then to eight games apiece.

The worst had happened. Jim had been content with a steady game. He was hanging on, aware that his great strength would enable him to outlast Hardy. Everyone knew it. Hardy knew it.

But Hardy had no weapons except those in his racket. He dragged his slim legs to position and served. Jim nailed the ball down the line and Hardy had to run. He essayed a difficult drop-shot. Jim came in and snooped it down the line. Hardy drove too hard and lost the point.

He took a deep breath and went back. Eight-all and he had to hold on to service. He worked the forehand, hoping for a forehand return, but Jim kept it down the line. Hardy hit off backhand. The ball went fairly deep. Jim crashed it.

Hardy turned on the return, whacking with all he had. Too late he saw Jim at the net, tried to return to defensive deep position. Jim put the ball away.

Love-thirty. It pounded in his head. He served with care. Jim played it safe. Hardy whipped a forehand for the backhand corner. Jim was short and Hardy raced for the net on his sharp return.

Jim whaled away. Hardy lunged. The ball, going straight down the line, evaded

his racket. He watched it land. It was good.

He walked to serving position slowly. He had given, was giving, everything he had. He was playing on top of his game. But the big, strong, confident man across the net was beating him. It was a hard thing to face. It was near-tragedy to a kid about to find himself.

He switched back to his old bullet-service for a strategic attempt to unsettle Byrd. The large man was imperturbable, using Hardy's own speed to gain advantage for himself. Hardy raced for the return. He shot it back, deep and good. Jim had to run.

It became the longest rally of the tournament. Each player was hitting away with all he had. Hardy's mouth was cotton-dry, his kneecaps trembling, but he never failed to get to the ball in those long moments. The crowd was tense, watching two experts give a demonstration of perfect tennis. Moments ran away into the limbo of time and still the ball went, barely skimming the net cord, back and forth between the flailing rackets, bouncing, spinning.

Jim drove down to backhand. Hardy crossed his shot to the corner. Jim backhanded in his turn, a shot which just did stay inside. Hardy saw it going and ran. He got to it. He put everything he had into his return. Then he kept moving, going straight in.

His shot had not been that good. It was a daring tactic. But his legs were lead and he knew his limitations. He had to put away this point, break the charm, get to deuce so that he could drive in the wedge that would eventually crack Byrd's game. He watched Byrd go after the ball.

Byrd leaped and swung. In the little slot not much bigger than a hat which is the perfect passing shot place went the discolored ball. Hardy slammed for it. His feet went from under him. He fell heavily on the grass.

IT WAS five to four, but in another moment Jim Byrd's flashing service had won him the Seabright Bowl in five torrid sets.

Midge said, "You played as good as you knew how."

Hardy shook his head. "I didn't last."

"Jim's beat up, too," said Midge calmly. "It'll show in the doubles. He had to work his head off to win."

Hardy said, "I—I'm weak, Midge. I'm scared of letting you down. Why do they play doubles and singles finals on the same day? It's not fair."

They were sitting in the dressing room. Hardy had changed to dry clothing. In a moment they would have to take the court for the doubles event. Within Hardy there was a great void, a let-down feeling of having failed which crowned his exhaustion. His head drooped.

Midge took a deep breath. He said slowly, "Tennis does not consist merely of the game of singles. Doubles are part of it. To be a tennis player, a man must be an athlete. He must be able to do whatever the game demands of him."

The slow voice had its effect. Hardy stared. "I hadn't thought of it that way."

"I know," said Midge drily.

Hardy remembered the refusal of Jim Byrd to play with him. He remembered Midge's reluctance. So that was it. They did not think he had the stamina—the guts!

He said, "Singles, then doubles. I see what you mean."

"I took you on because I thought you had it," said Midge. His voice was still quiet, but it sounded remote, as though Midge had retreated some distance away. "I want this cup. I've got two legs on it. I'd like to take mine home and rack it up."

"Sure," said Hardy. "I understand." He was slightly dizzy when he got up, but the salt tablets would take care of that. His arms and legs obeyed him and this came as a surprise. He got his rackets.

He said, "It's been an exciting week, huh? And important. Very important. So I got beat. Let's go out and play, Midge."

Midge said, "Somebody always has to lose." He followed Hardy onto the court, a sturdy little man with sharp eyes and a solemn visage.

Jim Byrd did not look weary. He looked big and strong to Hardy. Cy Latham, a canny crow-like figure, grinned across at them as they lined up to rally.

Cy said, "Some strength on the backhand side, huh, Midge?"

Byrd called, "Going to blast us, Midge?"

Neither of them kidded Hardy. They were the national champions. They were confident of running over the worn-out youngster in three quick sets to win the cups. They carefully refrained from rubbing it in and Hardy was suddenly a little resentful, wishing they would.

He snapped, "Midge can hold up his side. You'll see."

Cy and Jim shut up. They finished warming-up and went to position. Hardy had won service and began the match. He took one deep breath and prayed that his slim legs would hold up.

The spin service Midge had taught him was more useful in doubles. It kicked off well and he went to the net behind it. Cy drove at his feet. Hardy bent for a low volley and shot it back to Cy. The thin man slugged at Midge. Hardy covered center court, poised.

Midge put on the stop-volley, angling for the alley. He drove Jim away off the court. Jim drove back. The ball shot in behind Hardy for a beautiful placement attempt.

Hardy spun. His forehand flashed. The ball went into the opening left by Jim. Midge said sharply, "That's shootin'."

Jim came back on the court frowning. Midge's tactic had been perfect. It had opened the court, and Hardy's put-away

had been superb. Jim took service from Hardy and tried to get the ball down center, fast.

Midge slipped over. Again he put the stoppers on it, bringing Cy in toward the net. Cy lifted a half-volley. Hardy cut it off. Jim tried to lob. Hardy slid back, took it and slammed it away.

In another moment he had held service at love. They changed and Midge spoke for the first time, "Playing the kid don't work, champs. Try it on me."

Cy said, "You'll get yours, little man."

Cy seemed annoyed. Jim was the better player, but nobody took liberties with Latham, either. Jim served first for the champs.

Hardy could feel Midge's intensity. The little man could not boom the ball back to keep the other team away from the net. But he had terrific spin on his shots, making them hard to handle. He knew every angle of the court, he knew how to keep opponents busy chasing the ball. He got top on his backhand, making the pellet drop at the feet of the charging champs.

It went from thirty-love to deuce. Hardy's legs were weak, but he was managing to get around on them pretty good, he thought. He tried to forget the pain, the weariness that was in his lungs. Somehow he felt different about this match than he had ever felt before. He sent a forehand blazing down the middle. Jim volleyed, but the ball was short. Hardy pounced on it, knocking it at Cy.

Cy flubbed the shot. They were playing Hardy, trying to run him off the court, knowing he was tired. It was not working.

With ad against him, Jim served with all his might. But the pick-up team would not be deterred. The ball flew back and forth. Suddenly Midge hit a lob, yelling, "Back, Hardy! Back!"

It went over the heads of the champions. It was not too high, just high enough. They both turned and ran after it. If they got it, the return would be a smash!

It was Jim's ball. Cy was a step ahead, but on the other side. Jim got it, reached for it—and missed!

It was two-love for the underdogs and Hardy went thoughtfully to position for Midge's service. His eyes rested on Jim. Cy had run faster, going back. Jim was very big and strong but—

Midge was serving his slow twister. Cy poured it back. Midge came in and applied his snoopers down the line. It opened the court and Cy had to shoot at Hardy. The ball was a good one. Hardy threw it straight down toward Jim Byrd.

Byrd was covering the opening down center. He had to turn and go back. He put up a dinky. Hardy smashed it, right at Jim's feet. Jim blew it a mile.

MIDGE glanced at Hardy. There was surprise on his tight little countenance. Hardy did not dare say anything then, with Cy and Jim watching him. But he winked, and Midge nodded in return. A man never had a smarter partner.

Midge held. Jim floundered quite a bit. The team of Midge Mallard and Hardy Taylor won the first set, 6-4.

There was a murmur of amazement through the stands. The champions did not lose many sets to pick-up teams around the land. Then everyone settled down to watch Jim Byrd regain his form and sweep the upstarts off the court. After all, Jim had just won a hard five-set match. And Hardy Taylor must be in worse shape than Jim.

The battle joined. Midge was steady as a rock. The champs kept playing Hardy as much as they could, trying to run him. He knew what they were attempting as well as they did. He gained the net whenever possible and stood there like a rock. When he had to run he gauged his chances. He let two balls go, not even trying for them. Both were good.

Midge said, "You all right, kid?"

"I'm trying to be," grinned Hardy.

Midge said, "That's it. You've got the idea."

They could not prevent the champs from winning the second set. The sun was going down. This match could never be finished if it had to go the limit, Hardy knew. He threw off the weariness which gripped him. He had a plan and Midge was agreeable to it. He had to make it count now.

He served cannily, making the ball bounce left, then right. He pulled Jim out of position. He soft-balled the big man. Jim ran. When the ball zoomed back, Hardy played it safe again off the volley. He was keeping it deep, not making any errors. He was shooting for Jim's feet.

For a while it seemed he was making a huge mistake. He held service only when Cy muffed a return by Midge. Jim had tightened his belt. He was playing superb doubles. He took the balls for service for the second game of the third set.

He banged it at Hardy. It was a good one, but Hardy somehow found the strength to leap and slam. The ball thunked at Jim's feet as he came to the net. Jim picked it up and threw it back. Hardy saw it in the making and recklessly ran in. He took it at top of bounce and leaned into it. Jim volleyed again.

The ball went to Midge. Concealing his shot with great finesse, Midge faked at Cy, and then shot it crosscourt to Jim. Again the court opened. Jim hit to Hardy.

Hardy laid it in there for the point. Jim could not get back.

Jim was plainly scowling, now. He tried to ace Midge. The little man fell away from the shot, put up a lob in defense. It went deep. It landed on the line as Cy elected to let it bounce. Cy hit hard.

Both Midge and Hardy were at the net. Hardy volleyed to Jim. He danced on leaden legs, awaiting the return. Jim netted the ball.

Then Jim again took a brace. His serv-

ice was perfect. He hit every ball they fed him, and they fed him plenty. He held to even it.

Midge was indomitable. His seemingly soft service was aggravating in its unexpected spinning accuracy. Hardy, at the net, turned away the blasts they directed at him. The set moved along, each team holding. It went to five games each.

Then Jim broke again. He missed easy shots. He failed to cover. The champions lost the third set.

It was getting very dark. Hardy said suddenly, "Let's cut the rest period."

Midge said promptly, "Suits me."

Cy Latham said, "Well, I'm all right, of course."

They all looked at Jim Byrd. The big man flushed. There was nothing else for him to do. He said grimly, "Okay. Let's go."

Midge and Hardy walked to their court. Midge muttered, "You sure you are all right?"

"I'm dead," said Hardy. "But I learned something today."

Midge said, "I know you're beat. Can you make it?"

"I don't know," said Hardy frankly.

"Okay. You're pulling the wagon." They're playing you." Midge's voice was low and steady. It made Hardy feel good to hear it.

Byrd, on his mettle, was a fireball. Yet at every turn Hardy managed to meet the challenge. Midge never faltered. Cy was playing his best. They went along, holding service. The light was dimming. It became four-all. If the champs won this one, the deciding set would have to be played in the morning. Hardy did not want to meet this pair after they had enjoyed a good night's rest. Jim's recuperative powers, he knew, were far greater than his own.

He braced himself to serve. He tried to bring up all his energy. He managed to get through the game and make it five-

four, with Jim's redoubtable service coming up.

The effort had been terrific. He went to position to receive. The racket weighed a ton. It was as if the stopper to his strength reservoir had been pulled out and all energy had gone down the drain. He looked over at Midge and the little man said, "Steady in there, kid."

He looked at Jim. The big fellow threw up a ball. It came over into service court. Hardy looked for the kick-off on the bounce.

There was almost no kick. Hardy knocked the ball back. Jim had to take it on half-volley. Hardy got his racket up somehow and blasted for the center. Cy poached a little and Jim collided with him. The ball flew out of play. Jim had lost the initial point.

Hardy staggered a little. Midge's voice was quiet, "Fifteen for us, kid."

Jim served to Midge. This time he had his stuff. Midge soft-balled a deep return, one of his peculiar floaters. Hardy wondered if he could get the return which he knew would be directed at him. Jim nailed the ball down the line.

Hardy went into the alley. He hit off backhand. Jim was at the net like a large tiger. Hardy lobbed.

Jim turned and went back. He smashed. The ball bounded high. Hardy leaped and hit. Again he aimed it at Jim. The volley was good. It was to Midge!

Midge had a way of turning on the ball, concealing his intent. It was a cute trick and it fooled Cy Latham, who moved out of position. Midge snookered the ball down the line.

"THIRTY for us," croaked Hardy before Midge could speak. His arms belong to someone else, he thought, some weak invalid.

Jim served. Again it was not severe. Hardy hit it and Jim was a step short of the net. The half-volley went to Midge. It went back to Jim. Then it came to Hardy. Cy was fresh and agile, dancing.

The champions stood their ground. The ball went up to them. They volleyed it back. He did not think he could return one more shot. Jim hit to him, a nasty backhand try for placement.

He got over. He fell, but he hit the ball as he went down. He put up the necessary lob. He got up, somehow. The shadows were bad. His head was dizzy.

He stood firm. He saw the ball coming off a smash by Jim. He got to it and lobbed again. Jim was under it. Hardy made himself retreat. Jim slammed again.

A small form streaked. At the precise moment when Hardy felt himself falling apart Midge had taken the big chance. He darted in, cutting off the ball. He angled it off the court, a beautiful and sensational shot.

(Continued on page 95)

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CHAPTER ONE

Pigskin Rebels

CROWNED by the ivy-clad chapel that had cost half a million dollars, the hill at Colton College sloped gently downward to the east, where, on the flatlands, lay the thirty acres of immaculate athletic fields.

There was a massive gymnasium at Colton about which a bitter alumnus had

once remarked, "Where they learn to play squash!" There was a football stadium at Colton that would have rattled around inside Soldiers Field.

The sun glared on the gridiron.

Resplendent in red-white uniforms, the Colton varsity, holdover men from last season, grouped around Snapper Hagensen, the quarterback.

"Let's get rolling," Snapper ordered. "Make it thirty-eight."

Line Raider

When you shoot for touchdown sevens—you've got to roll with an eleven that saves its hell for the other guys—and its help for themselves!



He churned his way through, and Chowder Bock billy-goated a key Aggie tackler out of the way. . . .

By
TED
STRATTON

"Thirty-eight off this formation," Malbey, the Clutcher, griped softly. He added cryptically, "And who does he think he is?"

Nobody answered.

Several men glanced hostilely at Bart Tabor, the new coach, who waited yards off the huddle.

"He can trek back to his native Ohio farm," somebody sneered sotto voice, "and husk corn!"

"And take his ringers with him!" another added.

Snapper's voice ordered impatiently, "Hike."

They swung from the huddle. Against

the sweatshirt-clad scrubs, the varsity deployed into a single-wing formation with the Clutcher at left end, two yards loose from the short-side guard.

A little man with a bull-voice, Bart Tabor shouted, "Drive it, drive it! I wanna hear the smack of the blocks, you lugs! Drive it for blood!"

Across from the Clutcher, the defensive tackle yawned, "I don't see any blood on him, pal."

"Ah, beautiful Ohio," the Clutcher murmured. "When will he use his ringers for good, eh?"

The tackle smacked his lips. "He won't win games with those four," he promised darkly.

The crisp sound of starting numbers. The snapback.

Rusty Kelter, the fullback, wheeled. Palming the ball, he worked elbows to accentuate the fakes. With the right half-back riding herd on his tail, Snapper raced past Rusty. They faked wide into the short-side flat.

The tailback delayed for the fakes, then moved. Rusty fed him leather, went off on a spurious mission to the strong side. The tailback latched on to Captain Danny Dor, the tackle, who had swung left to run line interference.

It was a beautifully designed play on paper, but this happened to be the Colton College practice gridiron.

The fakes failed to suck defenders out of position. Sweatshirts jammed the hole. Danny Dor piled up. The tailback rammed at the pile and lost half a yard. The men unscrambled, waited.

Bart Tabor jumped down their throats. "Three weeks you been at it," he yapped. "You run it like it was tea party stuff on the lawn!"

Snapper shrugged, offered lamely, "It's the shift from our old T to single-wing that we don't get, coach."

"It's that you don't mind losing," Tabor countered.

"Not that," Danny Dor cut in sharply, and wiped blood off his chin. "We'll catch on to your stuff. A couple of weeks and we'll have the hang of it."

"That I doubt," Tabor said, and let the words drift around in the uneasy silence. "Look, we hit Eastern Tech next weekend. With this club, we'd lose by six touchdowns! Three weeks I've given you regulars every break in the book. What this club needs is new blood mixed with the old. That'll make the single-wing click. Now—"

Ominously, Tabor let the word hang. He turned towards the sideline, strode off yapping, "Hey, Bock! You, Maloney! Tink, Fatso, on the jump! And with the helmets, you lugs!"

"The ringers are on the march," the Clutcher said.

Four men detached themselves from the bench. They were four new men that Tabor had brought in with him from Ohio. Pretty good football players, everybody knew. Big men, fast, football-wise.

"He stole them off the State frosh team out there," somebody had said.

Now the Clutcher eyed the varsity. "We played for two seasons together," he said softly. "Now four of us ride the bench, right?"

"We don't have to take it," somebody snarled.

Easy with that stuff," Danny Dor advised crisply. "If they're better than we are, let 'em play."

TABOR strode back to the silent men. The four men trailed along. They were big men, had the look of football players in their broad shoulders, in their bulging calves, and the grins on their faces.

Chowder Bock, a tackle, strode ahead. Fingers Maloney was an end, tall and glue-fingered. Tink Gattle played quarterback. He had a mouse-trap mind and an arm that could gun passes. Fatso

Runke, a fullback, was the fourth. Nothing fat about him. Two hundred pounds, stripped weight. Low-slung, wide—and fast.

"Malbey, Hagenson, Dor, and Kelter, sit it out for a while," Tabor ordered. He turned to his men, said, "Now you four show the rest of these lugs how it's done."

Chowder Bock grinned nastily. "They don't know from crab apples," he said casually. "Let's show 'em stuff, gang."

The deposed men moved towards the bench. "Me," Rusty Kelter said, "I don't like it a bit."

"Second the motion," the Clutcher agreed, and glanced at Snapper and Danny Dor.

"Let's wait and see what happens," Danny Dor suggested. "It's about time we started a win streak at Colton."

"They can't win without help," the Clutcher said, and Kelter nodded.

They were good on the gridiron, those four newcomers to Colton College. On the first play, Fatso rushed at the line. Chowder Bock belted two scrubs aside. Fatso rushed through. Lean-hipped Fingers Maloney knifed in from the side, knocked the first backer-up sprawling. Tink Gattle, who had faked into the flat, came on with a rush. He bowled over the safety.

Fatso sprinted into the clear, braked on a dime, and planted the ball on the turf. At the top of his lungs, Chowder

bellowed, "Come on, come on! Let's murder the dumb kids!"

Pleased with the change in the team, Bart Tabor went around crowing, "That's how it's done, you lugs. No stalling around the line. No nice-nice tactics. It's smack, sinack with my men!"

"His men," Rusty Kelter said, gathering splinters on the bench. "His hired hands!"

"We don't have to take it," the Clutcher said softly, his eyes on Danny Dor and Snapper. "That Chowder's a bum, and so are the rest. Athletic bums for pay!"

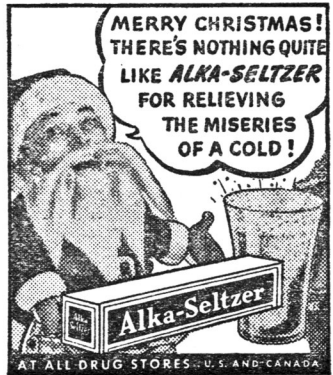
"You see Fatso widen that slot with one heave of his shoulders?" Danny Dor asked Snapper.

"I watched Tink," Snapper said. "He faked into the flat and hooked back to floor the safety. Some actor, that Tink."

Out on the gridiron, the varsity returned to action. Fatso grabbed the snapback. He faked to Tink and the wingback straightened and faked a short heave over the line. The scrub backfield men rushed in.

Leisurely, or so it seemed, Fatso pivoted, slung the ball wide to Tink Gattle drifting deep in the left flat behind the wingback. Tink snared the lateral. He set himself, heaved the ball diagonally far down the field.

Fingers Maloney, the left end, had drifted straight down, then made his cut behind the in-rushing scrubs. Over his



AT ALL DRUG STORES... U.S. AND CANADA

shoulder he gauged the flight of the ball. At the last moment, just when the ball seemed far over his head, Fingers went up into the air. He snatched the ball off the hook, hit the turf in stride.

Nobody had a chance to pick him off. He galloped for a touchdown.

With the four ringers heading the attack, the varsity beat the brains out of the scrubs. Everything worked. Nobody could stop the bull-like rushes of Fatso Runke. There was no scrub defense against Tink Gattle's accurate pegs, nor defense for Fingers Maloney's sharp cuts. Chowder Bock simply shredded the scrub line, heaped abuse and ridicule on the battered men.

After the scrimmage, Bart Tabor let off steam. "That's how it's done," he crowed. "You got to have the old want-to-do-it in your blood to win. You lugs hear me, eh?" Tabor lifted his voice, belatedly, "You lugs hear me? We'll murder Eastern Tech!"

Trudging back to the gym, the Clutcher grumbled, "Did we hear him! If we were back in Ohio, we could have heard him. Sure, we're just lugs to the great coach." He turned to a couple of varsity men, slugging along. "It must be nice for you guys out there with the great ringers. How'd you like to sit on the bench with four good Colton men, eh?"

"It takes eleven men for a team," one of the men said, picking up the beef. "The way Tabor talked you'd think *four* men make a team. Look, pal, we're with you."

"We'll get Tabor and the ringers," the Clutcher vowed.

Up ahead, Captain Danny Dor told Snapper Hagenson, "Maybe we *did* need new blood. We lost our last four games last season. Baynard beat us 27-0 and that hurts the most."

"They've got practically the same team back," Snapper said. "If we can beat Baynard, I don't mind collecting splinters in my tail."

"You can make that double," Danny agreed, sudden hope in his eyes.

The next day the varsity, with the four ringers in full stride, went through the scrubs like a knife slicing cheese. Most of the time Danny Dor, Snapper, the Clutcher, and Rusty Kelter rode the bench.

BEFORE the game with Tech, Coach Bart Tabor strutted around the lockers like a bantam rooster. "Eastern Tech," he crowed. "Now don't tell me that's a college! I saw them out there warming up. You lugs hear me? They're a bunch of kids. Kids in football togs!"

The coach turned to Chowder Bock, "You play some real football today, you lug."

"It will be a pleasure," Chowder said, "to knock them kids loose from their shoes. And I am the tough guy what can do it."

"Watch that Adler they got," the coach warned. "He may cause us a little trouble. He's fast and knows how to cut."

Chowder flexed his biceps. "With me on the line, coach," he bragged, "we got no worries about Adler. If you had these Colton mugs, instead of us out there, you could worry."

With the four ringers in starting assignments, the varsity trotted out for the kick-off.

Tech had a fast, light team. Adler, their speedster, turned Colton College's right end at will. Twice in the first quarter, Tink Gattle stopped sure touchdown runs by Adler. Once, Colton College worked in close to Tech's goal line, but lost the touchdown chance when the right wing-back fumbled and lost the ball on a reverse.

Late in the second quarter of the scoreless game, with time running out, Tink Gattle completed a long heave to Fingers Maloney in the clear. Tech's Adler, ir-

repressible and speedy, cut across from safety and bumped Fingers outside at the Colton ten yard line.

Again Tink tossed to Fingers on the goal line. Adler jumped high, batted the ball to the ground. In the huddle, Tink warned, "We got just time enough for a field goal. Fatso, do your stuff."

Fatso Runke deployed in placement formation. Tink spotted the center's pass. Fatso booted as the gun went off to end the first half. It was a good kick, high and far. The ball split the uprights. To the accompaniment of Colton cheers, the varsity left the gridiron leading Tech, 3-0.

But Bart Tabor wasn't satisfied with the score. In the dressing room, he ripped into everybody's hide. "Lugs," he snarled, "every one of you. From left end to right end and around the backfield, you're lugs! Tink, make with the passes and run up a score. Feed Fingers. And Fingers, don't be so gentle out there. Fatso, you couldn't bust through a paper hoop, you lug! Lower those shoulders and ram!"

The coach crouched on the cement floor, drove off with his head up and his buttocks low. "Like that!" he told Fatso, and the big fullback nodded. "Rock 'em and sock them this next half," the coach continued. "Now get out there and run up a score. Yeah, and that Adler is too much for you lugs! You afraid of him, eh?"

The squad started for the door. The coach called, "Wait a sec, Chowder," and the big tackle stayed behind with the coach.

Outside, the team waited a couple of minutes. The coach and Chowder came out, and the coach barked, "Do it like I told you, Chowder. The rest of you lugs, drive it!"

Tink warned the varsity in a brief huddle, "Let's get together on this one. We can play Tech off their feet. All for one and one for all—right?"

Some of the men nodded.

Tech took the opening kick-off. Adler, wings on his feet, sprinted back to mid-field. On the first play, he set sail around Colton's right end. The end hedged the play in. Adler cut back, stripped of his interference.

Chowder Bock hit the little speedster from a blind-spot angle. No high tackle for Chowder. No low tackle. No tackle at all. Chowder sailor-dived headlong into Adler. His helmet clunked against Adler's chin. The sudden, sickening crack of broken bone. Adler went down under the dirty tactic as if he had been hit with a hammer.

Chowder jumped up, towered over the inert Adler. "That's the way we hit 'em in Youngstown," he bragged, puffing out his chest. "When I hit 'em, the stretcher comes out."

"You dirty bum!" a Tech man growled. He stepped up to the posing Chowder, bounced a punch off Chowder's chin. Men from both teams rushed in.

The officials separated the scrappers. They thumbed three Tech players to the sidelines, including the man who had smacked Chowder Bock. They didn't have to thumb Adler out. The stretcher men trotted out and carried out the unconscious little speedster.

The first three Colton men who had rushed in at the start of the fight also went out. They were Tink, Fatso, and Fingers. Chowder, the cause of the mess, stayed in.

That brought Rusty Kelter, Snapper Hagenson, and the Clutcher in from the bench. Tech subs sprinted in, fire in their eyes. With Adler out, you'd have thought the Tech lightweights would have folded up.

Instead, they played way over their heads. Their line began to outcharge the heavier Colton forwards. They halted Colton's attack cold. Finally, late in the fourth quarter, Adler's sub fired a long

pass that clicked. Tech bolted into the lead, 7-3.

The coach benched Chowder Bock, sent in captain Danny Dor to rally the Colton team in the closing seconds. It was no use. The aroused Tech men batted down desperate passes. At the final gun, Tech left the gridiron, the game won, 7-3.

"That was for Adler, you dirty bums!" a Tech man shouted.

CHAPTER TWO

Runaway Backfield

IN THE Colton locker room the men showered, dressed quickly, and drifted out. Malbey, the Clutcher, gathered the regular varsity men outside, told them, "It was like this, that dirty stuff on Adler. When Tabor told Chowder to wait in the locker room at the half, I ducked into the shower stall. I heard everything that louse of a coach told that bum Chowder."

"And what was it?" they wanted to know.

"To sailor-dive Adler, bust his jaw. Anything, the coach told him, to get Adler out of there so we could win it."

There was a flurry of outraged growls. "Dirty stuff," somebody snapped.

"Cost us the game," Rusty Kelter said.

"That lousy coach!" the wingback growled. "You hear the way he tore into me for that fumble?"

"Run 'em out of town, all of 'em!" somebody snarled.

The Clutcher grinned cagily. "Look," he said, "I got a better idea. They can't win games, not just the four of 'em. They got four of us on the bench, including our captain." The Clutcher lowered his voice. "Put the skids under the coach and those ringers! Just miss an assignment here and there on the offense, see? Shift a space wider on defense. That will show up the ringers and let the State team through. The coach will have to put the

regulars back in and bench the ringers, see?"

"I don't like it," Danny Dor said slowly. "If Chowder and the coach planned to get Adler the way you say, it was dirty stuff and I don't stand for that. The other three—Tink and Fatso and Fingers—had no part in it, Clutcher. They rushed in to stop the fight and all of them got thumbed out."

"Nuts!" the Clutcher flared. "I saw those three flinging punches and the officials didn't miss it!"

He was in the driver's seat. The rest of the men agreed with him.

"We'll fix the ringers," they said, and nodded grimly.

And they did fix the ringers on Saturday against State.

At critical moments the Colton attack sputtered to a stop. On defense, the Colton line sagged to let State runners through twice on bucks. State scored twice. Fatso Runke, playing like a mad man, butted through the State line once, bowled over two tacklers, and made a one-man sortie for a touchdown.

State won, 13-7.

"We fixed them good," the Clutcher crowed afterwards.

"And ourselves, too," Danny Dor said. "I don't like it."

"Nuts," the men clamored. "We don't want this new gang."

With the morale of the squad shattered, it was easy for the Cardinals, an average team, to nose out Colton College the next Saturday.

Sunday's newspapers headlined the third defeat in a row.

COLTON LOSES TO WEAK CARDINAL OUTFIT

The running story said in part:

... and Colton's losing streak continues to grow and grow, despite the new coach and the four players he brought in. There are rumors of dissension among the Colton

players. Coach Bart Tabor had better stamp out the trouble or Colton will be lucky to win a single game. We warn you readers that Baynard, the big rival, beat the Cardinals 21-0 last Saturday. This looks like the bluest season of them all for Colton College unless the team rallies. How about it, Coach Tabor?

The coach ran the squad ragged during the week of the Aggy game. In scrimmage, tempers flared along the line as the scrubs held the varsity even. Chowder Bock and the Clutcher, playing opposite each other, exchanged insults.

Finally, Chowder and the Clutcher slung punches. Fatso and Danny Dor rushed in, dragged them apart. "Let me at the bum!" the Clutcher raged, struggling with Fatso.

"Play football," Fatso advised.

Bart Tabor stepped in, snapped, "You lugs could win if you played together. No more fisticuffs." The losing streak had frayed his temper. He was drawn about the eyes, had puffy lumps under his sleepless eyes. He sent the Clutcher to one side of the field, ordered Chowder Bock to the showers.

It was the night before the Aggie game. The players drifted into the downstairs lounge room in East Hall. They came in silently, watchfully.

"Who ordered this meeting?" Malbey, the Clutcher, demanded of Captain Danny Dor.

"I did," Danny Dor said.

"And where is the great coach from Ohio?" the Clutcher wanted to know, glancing around at the silent Colton men.

"This is just for players," Danny explained.

"Players," the Clutcher said, and grinned. "I don't see the ringers here. Or aren't they the top men any more?"

Somebody snickered. "They took a powder," he said. "Let's get together and beat the Aggies tomorrow. We don't need a coach and we don't need the ringers. Let's—"

The door opened.

Tink Gattle, trim in a T-shirt and slacks, strode in. His eyes swept around the men. He grinned, saying, "Hi ya."

"Glad you came," Danny Dor said, but nobody else said anything.

Fatso Runke came in next. Big, solid, competent Fatso, with a grin on his face. Then Fingers Maloney barged in, with Chowder Bock trailing along.

"Hi ya, bums," Chowder said, and the Clutcher came halfway up from his seat on the battered divan. Snapper Hagenson pulled the Clutcher down, snapping, "Keep the cork in. This is a council of war."

"Everybody here?" Danny Dor asked, taking charge.

They nodded, waited.

"We haven't been going good," Danny began, his eyes sweeping over the men.

"We're a better team on paper than we've

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been on the gridiron. I don't like the string of losses and I know most of you don't like it, either. We've got to get together. We've got to beat the Aggies tomorrow. Most of all, we've got to beat Baynard! That's why we're here. To straighten out this mess."

Danny Dor turned to Tink Gattle. "Getting us together like this," he said, "was your idea. You want to talk?"

"Sure," Tink said, and stood up.

"It's like this," he said, facing the hostile glances. "The four of us have been outsiders here at Colton College. We happen to think it isn't entirely our fault. Let's get this straight. No matter what some of you think, we're not tramp athletes. Sure, we get free tuition at Colton, but a lot of you regulars don't pay any bills at the bursar's office, either! As for board and room rent we four work that off. We're like a lot of you, including Danny Dor and Snapper. We work here at Colton for a chance to play football. Is that right?"

Some of the men nodded. Several grumbled, but it was true what Tink Gattle had just said.

"So it comes down to this," Tink continued. "Some of you don't like being benched while we four play. Maybe if I were in your places, I wouldn't like it, either. We want to straighten out that mess. We want to see everybody play!" There was a ring to Tink's words, something beyond pettiness. "We're tired of seeing Colton beaten on Saturday afternoon, every Saturday afternoon! We came here to play football, winning football! So we worked out a plan."

The Clutcher climbed to his feet. "I've got a plan, too," he jeered. "We'd have a football team if we ran you bums out of town! You don't belong at Colton. You're—"

"Bums, he says," Chowder Bock belowed. "I don't string along with this plan of Tink's. Me, I'll give you Colton

sissies the old Youngstown treatment!"

"You and your dirty tricks!" the Clutcher yowled. "You lost the Tech game when you and the coach planned to sailor-dive Adler! You—"

Tink called to Danny Dor, "We got our problem and you got yours. Let's settle it."

"Right," Danny Dor said, and Snapper Hagenson moved in close to the Colton captain.

Fingers and Fatso and Tink suddenly swarmed around Chowder Bock. Fatso pinioned Chowder's arms fast from behind. Tink and Fingers each grabbed a leg.

"You can play football when you play clean and keep the mouth shut," Tink said. "You get straightened out in the head and—"

"I'll murder you bums!" Chowder howled.

"He needs a lesson," Fatso drawled. "Let me work him over and we'll see how tough he is."

They carried Chowder outside.

Danny Dor walked over to Malbey, the Clutcher. "You've been doing a lot of talking this fall, as if you were the captain of the club."

"Me?" the Clutcher said, and glared.

"You," Danny Dor answered. "We've got our end of the deal to handle and you're next on the housecleaning. You've been needling everybody because Fingers Maloney is a better end than you are. You've got us squabbling and crabbing and playing stupid football."

"Next," the Clutcher sneered, "I'll be the coach who told Chowder to sailor-dive into Adler!"

"You were wrong about that," Danny Dor snapped. "Sure, Chowder lost his head and played dirty, but the boys are outside now straightening him out. You didn't stay behind in the lockers and listen to what the coach told Chowder. You were with the rest of us outside! I braced

the coach about what he told Chowder and the coach says he told him to delay on the line, then slide outside to hit Adler when he cut back. Tabor is all right. He's new and not half as tough as he sounds. He—"

"We're just lugs to him," the Clutcher said.

"He calls everybody a lug, remember?" Danny Dor countered. "It's a word to him, that's all. You've just built this up, Clutcher, until we're playing poor football."

"Me!" the Clutcher said, miles behind the tempo of things. "Maybe you're not such a great captain, sitting on the bench!"

Danny Dor grinned. "I want to help win games and beat Baynard, you lug! I guess you need a lesson, fellow."

The Clutcher had guts along with his sharp tongue, but he was no match for Danny Dor. Danny weathered a couple of tough punches, got in a solid right to the belly, followed that with a stiff right to the jaw. The Clutcher sat down hard, jarred clear to the top of his head.

"Will you listen to reason," Danny demanded, "or do I work over you some more?"

The Clutcher shook the cobwebs out of his mind, grinned sheepishly. "Maybe I been asking for it," he said, "but I want to play football, not sit on the bench."

Danny heaved the Clutcher to his feet. "I hope that sock straightens you out, lug. We need everybody."

The door banged open. The four newcomers barged in. They had grins on their faces, except for Chowder, who wore a mouse under one eye. Fatso Runke rubbed his bruised knuckles, said, "We got our end straightened out. What's with you?"

"We're set," Danny Dor said. "It's everybody together."

"Right," they agreed, and Tink Gattle added, "And everybody gets a chance to **They left it that way.**"

CHAPTER THREE

Hit That Line!

"**Y**OU lugs," Bart Tabor said in the locker room before the Aggy game. "Get out there and play football!" He ranted on in the old vein, but the players shrugged it off.

They trotted out on the gridiron. A faint cheer from the Colton cohorts grated their ears. Coach Tabor started the four new men, along with seven holdover members of last season's team.

"All for one, right?" Tink Gattle asked, and they nodded.

"We start fast," Tink said.

The Aggies kicked off. Tink picked off the ball at the goal line. Men laid in blocks ahead of him. He churned his way through and Chowder Bock billy-goated a key Aggie tackler out of the way. Tink churned to midfield.

On the first scrimmage play, Fatso Runke carried. He shouldered through the line on the short side, cut back. Chowder waited, step-crashed an eager Aggie. Fatso lunged on for more yards, hitting the line like a runaway tank.

There was a rising fire in the Colton attack. They got the wingback through for six yards on a shallow reverse. They cleared the way for the tailback on a slant. Seven more yards.

Then Fatso lost a yard over guard. Tink got that yard back and six more on a fake pass. Tink drifted back, spun a pass to Fingers Maloney, who made a great catch on the five yard line, stumbled and sprawled dead as a duck on the three yard line.

"Now," Tink said, "we take 'em. In one gulp."

It was easy for Fatso to pound over from the three. He booted the extra point that rocketed Colton into a 7-0 lead.

They collared and held the Aggies after the kick-off. With no substitutions, with

the same eleven men working as one, they thwarted every Aggy attack in the first quarter.

As the teams changed goals for the start of the second quarter, Tink Gattle studied the bench for signs of movement. Not a substitute was warming up, preparatory to coming in.

Tink called his three mates around him, said, "The coach doesn't want to break up the combination. Look, those four guys on the bench deserve a break."

"Can do," Chowder growled.

On the first play, Chowder got caught under a pile. He came up limping. As he started benchward, he winked at Tink Gattle. Danny Dor, the captain, sprinted in as a replacement. There was nothing radically wrong with Danny Dor's playing. It was just that Chowder had more on the ball.

Later, Fatso got bruised in a scrimmage, took himself benchward to shake it off so that Rusty Kelter could play. That left only the Clutcher and Snapper Hagenson, of last year's regulars, out of the play. Tink and Fingers took care of that.

"A bit dizzy from a smack on the noggin'," Tink told Bart Tabor, the coach, on the sidelines. "Need to rest this quarter."

"That old elbow injury again," Fingers explained. "We got this game in the bag, coach. And you'll need me for Baynard next week."

The Clutcher and Snapper went into play. Which made the varsity all hold-over men from last season.

The Aggies had spark. They drilled off tackle, fired a pass or two. Colton rallied, failed to notch out a first down, and punted. The Aggies started from their own thirty yard line. A yard here and there, nothing spectacular, but steady. They moved across the midfield stripe, pushed deep into Colton territory while the fans pleaded for a rally.

With a first down on the five yard line,

the Clutcher miraculously got over his limp and Fingers Maloney forgot his elbow was supposed to hurt. They sprinted in.

Chowder took over for Danny, patted the captain's shoulder, and said, "You was step-crashing against their plays and they set you up for a sweep. You gotta vary the charge, see?"

And Fingers told the Clutcher, "Use the hands on the lead blocker and *then* dump the interference, pal."

CONFIDENTLY, the Aggies returned to the attack. Chowder spilled the ball carrier for a yard loss. Fingers belted out the interference on a sweep to the right and it was easy for Snapper Hagenson to dump the runner for a three yard loss. On a pass, Fingers and Chowder hurried the passer.

Rusty Kelter jumped high in the air, plucked off the stray pass on the Colton five yard line. He cut for the sideline. A couple of Colton blockers picked him up, carried him along to midfield, directly in front of the bench.

Tink came in for Snapper. On the first play, Tink passed deep to Fingers at the ten yard line where an Aggie dumped him. With time running out, Fatso jogged in, booted a field goal. Colton left the field at the half with a comfortable 10-0 lead.

It was easy to coast through the second half. Subs shuttled in and out steadily. It made no difference. Colton played it conservatively, held the ten-point margin right down to the final gun.

There was laughter and singing in the locker room after the losing streak had been snapped. Bart Tabor came in and somebody had the bright idea of cooling him off under the showers. Naked men carried him, squirming and kicking, under the needle-points. He came out of it, sputtering.

"My only good suit, you lugs," he

shouted at them, but he grinned from ear to ear.

"Lugs!" they told him. "We're all lugs, but we won."

Tink Gattle pulled Danny Dor aside, said, "Everybody's happy, cap. You fellows played and we won. You deserved to play. Now we'll beat Baynard."

Danny Dor said, "I've been waiting four years to see that, pal!"

"You'll not only see it," Tink promised, "but you'll be in on it. We worked the switch smooth today and the coach didn't catch on. If he won't put you in, *we'll* put you in. And you guys deserve the breaks. You've waited around a long while to see it piled on Baynard and we've got two more seasons to face them. We'll see that you get in for the kill, pal."

Tink strolled off. Malbey, the Clutcher, came over to Danny Dor. "It was close out there for us when those four were out," he offered. "What do you think?"

"A little too close," Dor decided.

The Clutcher nodded. "My idea, too." He grinned. "But it was good to get the old tail off the bench and cleat that turf."

There was plenty of tension in the locker room before the clash with Baynard. Bart Tabor strutted up and down, told the clustered, silent men, "Sure, Baynard is tough. Any team is tough that can win five games. But any team that wears football pants can be beaten and that goes for Baynard."

Massed thousands of Colton rooters cheered the team as the men trotted out on the field. The Baynard team looked big, solid, efficient. Colton College kicked off, with the four new men on the field. Fingers Maloney dumped the carrier on the twenty yard line. It was hammer and tongs after that.

In the middle of the first quarter, Colton caught fire. They surged downfield to the roar of steady Colton cheers. They stormed past the Baynard thirty yard line, rolled to the twenty. The yards got tougher in close. It took four plays to belt out a first down on the nine yard line.

Baynard held Fatso to a yard on a buck. Tink Gattle picked up four on a fake reverse. The tailback sliced for two more yards. That left it fourth down, and two yards needed for the score.

Colton huddled, wheeled up to the line. The snapback. The lines met. Fatso faked, pivoted, rammed. He went under the pile, his legs working. He ended over the goal line and the Colton fans went slightly mad. Fatso kicked the point.

In the second quarter, Baynard recovered a fumble at midfield. They drove for a touchdown, booted the point, and knotted the score at 7-7. That score held to the intermission.

It was anybody's game during the third quarter. Baynard had a chance to score, fumbled it away. Colton got its chance on an intercepted pass, but Fingers Maloney,

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CLEAN—SAFE—ACCURATE

the old reliable, let a pass dribble off his fingertips on fourth down.

Colton rolled in the final quarter. Chowder blocked like a jeep. Fingers made an impossible, one-handed catch of Tink's short flip over the line. Fatso butted and bucked to the eight yard line.

Two minutes left in the game. First down for Colton on Baynard's eight. Eight yards to gain. The climax, the game in the balance, and the score snarled at 7-7.

THEN, from the huddle of Colton players, the great Fatso Runke stumbled. He limped toward the bench, pain on his face. Behind him came Chowder Bock, helmet off, one hand over his eyes. Back of Chowder, Fingers Maloney, holding his elbow. After him, Tink Gattle, his jersey in shreds from the clawing fingers of the Baynard tacklers.

Aghast, the Colton fans rose. Substitutes jumped off the bench, pushed towards the sideline. Four key men, coming out of the game at the climax. His face white and grim, captain Danny Dor grabbed Tink Gattle, held him from stepping off the field.

"Now what?" he demanded.

Tink winked. "It's on the hook for you guys," Tink said.

Danny Dor glanced along the sidelines. He saw Malbey, the Clutcher, grab Fingers' shoulders, spin him around, and shove him towards the Colton team near the goal line. And Snapper Hagenson, anger on his face, shoved Chowder Bock across the grass. And Rusty Kelter, the regular fullback, who had seen Baynard bop Colton for three straight years, raved at Fatso, "You lunkhead! Get back in there! You think we're crazy, you lug?"

A grin on his face, Danny Dor turned to Tink Gattle. "Thanks," he said, "but we don't belong out there. You guys got our touchdown the first quarter. We lost the lead in the second. This is no place for the subs, pal. Get back in there!"

The four key men trotted back to their huddle. There was the crisp chant of the starting numbers, then the snapback. The lines crashed. Fatso palmed the ball.

Then, casually, or so it seemed, Fatso wheeled. Facing the line, he slung a wide, accurate lateral out to Tink, drifting deep into the left flat.

Tink caught the pass. He set himself. Baynard tacklers knifed in for the kill.

He flung the ball, diagonally.

Fingers Maloney had delayed on the line, then slammed straight ahead. Now he cut to the right, put on a burst of speed. The spiraling ball caught up with him at the goal line.

It was high over his head, soft and fluffy. Fingers went up, speared the ball with one hand. He cradled it to his belly, plunged into the end zone, and this time, the Colton fans did go crazy.

Sure, Fatso missed the extra point, but Colton led, 13-7.

Sure, there were more plays. A long boot into the end zone on the kick-off. Baynard put the ball in play on the twenty yard line. Time enough, barely time enough, for two desperation passes and a trick play from a spread formation.

Then the gun banged. Colton had won, 13-7.

Fans carried the team and the subs into the locker room. There was bedlam and laughter, hysteria and singing.

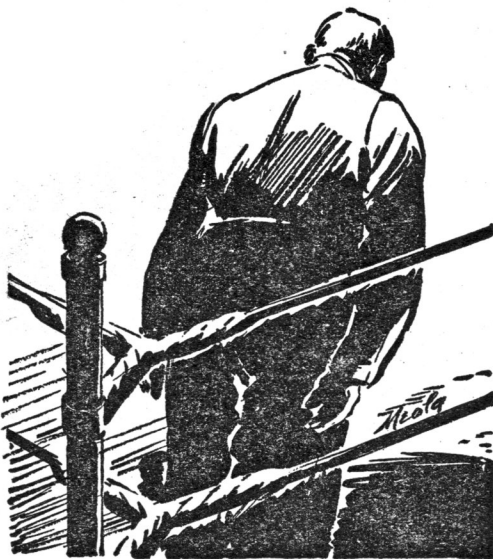
When it had calmed down a bit, calmed down enough for sanity to return, Malbey, the Clutcher, put in the clincher.

"Sure," he said, "we wanted to be in on the kill. Most of all we wanted to win. Thirteen to seven, you lugs! I'm gonna wear that score on my heart!"

And that was that, except that Coach Bart Tabor took the handshakes, the back-slapping from the alumni, and said modestly, "They're a great set of players. It took me a long while to bring them around, but we made it, didn't we?"

And sometimes, that's the way it is.

By
**SKIPPY
ADELMAN**



When one man's
meat was a whole
town's poison!

Boom Town Ring Bust

IN THE twenties, Shelby, Montana, was a boom town, made wealthy by money made from taking copper out of the ground. The town looked like something out of a corny western film, with ramshackle, false-front wooden houses and rough, bearded miners.

Virtually all the miners were rabid fight fans and one of them came up with the bright idea of inviting the heavyweight champ, Jack Dempsey, to defend his title at Shelby.

Overtures were made to Doc Kearns, Dempsey's dapper little manager. They wanted Jack to fight Tommy Gibbons. Kearns demanded a \$300,000 guarantee.

The fight was held on July 4, 1923, in a large outdoor arena especially constructed for the great event. That morning it was obvious that the promoters had failed dismally. There weren't enough fans to make good even a tiny fraction of Dempsey's \$300,000 guarantee. Kearns refused to let his fighter enter the ring unless they were first given the money.

The dazed miners, sick with disappointment, didn't know what to do. The payment of Dempsey's guarantee would ruin them, yet he wouldn't fight without it and there were people who had come a long way to see the fight. Frantically the people of Shelby scraped together most of the \$300,000 a few hours before ring time, but they had to mortgage their town to do it.

The fight went fifteen rounds. Dempsey gave the lighter Gibbons a bad beating and easily won the decision. Immediately after quitting the ring he and Kearns, holding the satchel full of money, scooted out of town, as the miners were showing more and more distaste for the idea of making Kearns and Dempsey rich at the expense of their own bankruptcy.

The vacuum left in Shelby's pocketbook by paying off Kearns was ruinous. Three banks failed. As recently as a few years ago the town was still paying off.

Instead of putting Shelby on the map, as some of its boosters dreamed, the fight came very near to wiping it off the map.

By
DANIEL WINTERS



The mob gave it to Marlowe as he pitched. . . .

Dust 'Em, Busher!

ON THE first of September we were in second place, half a game behind the Colts. August had been a rugged month for us. The papers all had it right when they headlined, "Sox Fade In Stretch." We'd been in front by five games at the beginning of August, but the lead had been whittled down by the rampaging Colts.

It was the pitching. Not too strong at the beginning of the season, it had held up surprisingly well for most of the campaign, but then the pace had taken its toll. Morton was still working well, after taking a three day rest. He was winning most of his games. Lavorio was helping him, but the rest of them—Hayes, Sullivan, Lerner, Brooks—were about washed up. They'd worked hard, given their best, but they were through for this season.

He was up in the big time with only a high hard one and a prayer—and one grim chance to prove that bushers die hard—even in a hard-guy's league!

I spoke about it to Gabby Hall. I said, "Gabby, we need some pitching. Get some kid up from the farms. That Marlowe, for instance. Anything is better than this bunch of dead arms. We're half a game behind, but if you don't watch out, we'll wind up in the second division."

Gabby was a small man with a hard chin. He was gray around the temples. He was anywhere between forty and fifty. I'd never asked. You wouldn't ask Gabby about a thing like that.

He looked at me. "So we need some pitchin', eh? I wouldn't know anything about that—would I? I just been managin' this outfit for twelve years, but I gotta have a catcher tell me my own business."

"I get discouraged," I told him. "I squat back there every day and watch those guys throw nothin' but gopher balls. Morton and Lavorno, fine. The rest of them are through."

"And what made you think of Marlowe?"

"We own him. He's with Twin City. He's won twenty-three games for them this season. I thought you might not have heard." Once in a while, when I got real sore, I could talk that way to Gabby.

Gabby looked at me, then spat into the dirt out in front of the dugout. "He's joinin' the club tomorrow. I sent for him. I had to wait until Twin City had their pennant sewn up. The fans would have torn the park down if I'd taken him before."

I said, "Oh."

He looked at me and shook his head. "Sometimes I wonder that you have enough sense to put a mask on. And sometimes I wonder why you bother. Let's play a ball game, Cassidy."

I got my gear on and went out there. We were playing the Bulls in the last of a three game series. We'd each won a game, and this one would help. Because

tomorrow the Colts were coming to town for a five game stretch, and it would certainly decide the pennant. If we won today, we'd start even with them, for they had a day off.

Hayes started for us. He lasted three innings. Sullivan came in to relieve him. Sully went two frames. Brooks followed him. The Bulls got four runs off Buster in the seventh. Lerner came in then and stayed the route. In two and two-thirds innings, he held the Bulls to seven hits. We dropped the game, 13-2. It was very discouraging.

And to think of the Colts coming into the park the next day was much worse. A month ago I'd had my heart set on some of that fine Series dough. It looked far away, right now.

I was showered and dressed and ready to leave the park when Gabby called me into his office. He said, "You know anything about this Marlowe kid?"

"Just what I've heard. He must be good. That's a fast league he's travelin' in."

Gabby lit a cigar and leaned back in his chair. "He's big. Six feet two and about a hundred ninety. Throws very hard, lots of control, a nice hook."

"What else does he need—a straw hat?"

Gabby didn't say anything for a minute. Then he asked, "You remember a Tommy Marlowe? He was up with us about eight, nine years ago."

"Sure. I was with the Cubs, then. He seemed to have a lot of stuff, but he had rabbit ears, too. They talked him out of the league."

Gabby nodded. "That was the boy. A fine pitcher. But shy. Shy as a deer. The fans or the other bench would start on him and he'd fold. We couldn't keep him."

"So what about him?"

"This kid is his younger brother."

I lit a cigarette. "That's fine. We get a pitcher who has a fast ball, lots of con-

trol and a fine hook, but he's shy. The bashful type. That's just dandy. Probably a family trait."

Gabby shrugged. "I dunno. We've got to find out. This kid has been keepin' fast company for the whole season. He's probably been ridden hard enough, but it's nothing to what he'll get when he comes up to the big time. He might fold, just like his brother."

I looked at him. Gabby had kept the Sox near the top of the league during most of the years of his tenure as manager, but he'd never taken a flag. I knew how bad he wanted one. And I knew, too, how the fans had been counting on it this year, ever since we'd gone into the league lead, early in July. They'd have his head if we didn't cop.

"Well, there's nothing we can do but wait. We'll see soon enough," I said. "You're gonna work this kid right away?"

He nodded. "Maybe tomorrow. Maybe the next day. We need someone, and we need him now. There's no sense wasting time."

The kid showed up at the park in the morning. He was young, maybe twenty-two, and that sort of surprised me, somehow. Tall, broad, nice-looking and a red-head. Built nice and loose and rangy. The sort of a guy who'd been around for years, if he had anything like what he'd shown in the minors.

He got a suit and came out on the field, and Gabby went over to him and said, "So you're Marlowe, eh?"

The kid grinned. "That's right, Mr. Hall."

Gabby looked him up and down. "Well, I hope you last longer than your brother did. I had him for a couple of months. He didn't stay too long."

The kid's mouth tightened. "No, he didn't stay too long."

Gabby said, "Warm him up, Cassidy. Maybe we'll start him today."

I said, "Let's go, kid."

I WARMED him. He started slow and easy, and he had a nice, comfortable motion that didn't put too much strain on his arm. He was a right-hander, and after ten minutes he started to sling them in there.

He had plenty of control. He'd put it right in the glove when I held it for him. And speed. Plenty of it. When he got real warm he almost took the glove off my hand. I asked to see the hook, and he threw it and it was lovely. It broke sharp and hard, like a ball rolling off the edge of the table.

I told him, "All right. That's enough. You might work today, so don't waste any more of it."

The kid put on a jacket and grinned. He said, "Okay, Pete. I'll see you later." He went back into the clubhouse.

I found Gabby. I said, "He's got it. All of it. I don't know how far he can go, how long he can keep chuckin' it, but while he does he's gonna make some guys very uncomfortable."

Gabby just nodded his head. "We'll see. His brother had it, too. Everything but the staying power. He was too nice a guy. Couldn't get him sore. He just took everything to heart and it got him down. I hope this kid's not the same."

But the kid didn't start. Morton had had his rest and was ready, and when you play the best, you pitch your best, in a spot like this. The Colts were working on a nine game streak after touring the west, and the ball park was jammed to the guards for these vital games. When Morton went out there, they howled with joy.

Jimmy Morton was hot, and when he was hot he was almost impossible to beat. He had a high, hard one the hitters could barely see, very lovely control, and a hook you could use to catch fish with.

Phil Kelaher was on the hill for the Colts, and he was having a fine day. It was a hell of a ball game.

In six innings the Colts got just two hits off Morton, and we weren't doing much better with Kelaher. Neither club had been able to score, and it looked like one of those all-night affairs.

In our half of the seventh, Bruckner singled and Maronna bunted him down to second. I went up there, looking for a fat one, but Kelaher wasn't handing any out. I cut at the three-two pitch, a fast ball just a touch high, and I really put wood on it. It went to the wall in deep right field, and Wilson had to bring off a miracle to grab it. Bruckner took third on the catch.

It was a tough spot, and I wondered what Gabby would do. It was Morton's turn at bat, and he was the weakest hitter in the league. Gabby motioned to the bullpen for young Marlowe to get to work, and sent Willy up to hit for Morton.

It worked fine. Willy slapped at the first pitch and it was a blooper into left center that no one could lay a hand on. Bruckner scored, and the run looked big.

But Kelaher struck out Phil Ryan, and that was the end of the inning. The run looked fat, but I would have liked a couple more. The Colts were a hell of a hitting club.

Young Marlowe came in from the bullpen, and I went out to the mound and said, "You feel all right?"

He was a little pale, a little nervous, but he grinned and said, "I'm all right, Pete. Just tell me where you want them."

I went back behind the plate. I'd shown him the signals during the pre-game warm-up, and he was smart and didn't have any trouble with them. He started to pitch.

The fans were both curious and anxious. The kid's name had been in the morning paper, but most of them knew nothing about him.

They found out about him that inning. He struck out Marks, a good hitter. He breezed three fast ones past Kelaher, not wasting any time with him. He got Landers to lift a dinky little pop that Ryan took in back of second base.

And he got a big hand from the crowd.

In the eighth we couldn't do a thing. Hollis flied out, Nevers grounded out to short, and big Henny Ferman sent Manning back to the centerfield fence for his drive.

We went out on the field for the ninth, and I told the kid, "You just keep slug-gin' 'em in. You're doin' fine, Joey."

HE PEGGED them in, all right. He got two strikes on Vorne, then the Colts' left-fielder fouled off two more and took a ball. The next one was a little low, but he took his cut and

Mister Grove Catching!

CONNIE MACK, the dignified octogenarian who manages the Philadelphia Athletics, is one of the most admired and respected of Americans. Ever calm and unruffled, Mack's cussing is limited to the expression, "Golly."

Lefty Grove, former A's pitcher, never was regarded as a ray of sunshine. And Lefty could get very angry, indignant and belligerent when asked to pitch out of turn. Connie asked that extra chore of Grove one afternoon. After prolonged storming, Lefty roared, "All right, I'll pitch. But nuts to you, Mr. Mack."

Dignified Connie turned slowly and, just before closing the clubhouse door behind him, replied, "All right, you'll pitch. And nuts to you, Mr. Grove!"

—Lance Kermit

(Continued from preceding page)

it went out to short, an easy play. And Nevers booted it. He fought it, dropped it, picked it up and heaved it to first. The ball went over Ferman's head and back to the boxes. Vorne wound up on third.

Marlowe pitched to Lewis. He breezed the swift in there, then cut off a sharp hook. The next one was letter high, right across the plate, and Lewis took his futile cut for his third strike. He walked away shaking his head.

Manning came up. The guy was a fine hitter, and tough to pitch to. One thing he didn't like and couldn't hit too far was a low ball outside. So I asked for one.

Marlowe started his short wind-up, let it go, and it came in there. It was just where I'd asked him to put it—fast, low, and outside. Manning had never hit one in his life.

But he hit this one. He stepped in a bit, took his cut, and the ball rode on a line into the right-field stands.

Well, you couldn't do anything about it. Sometimes you're wrong. I'd never seen Manning offer at a pitch like that, but there was always a first time.

The fans didn't know that. They started to boo Marlowe. They took the usual attitude, that he'd fed Manning a fat pitch. They started a chant and didn't let up.

He pitched to Wilson, but I knew that something was the matter. Either the fans were bothering him or Manning's hit had made him lose a faith in me. His control was just a bit off, and he walked Wilson on five pitched balls. The fans started to howl. They wanted Gabby to take him out of there.

But Caldwell grounded out to Maronna at third, and Hamlin flied out deep to left field.

The damage had been done, though. Cole struck out, Bruckner grounded out, and Maronna lifted a lazy fly to left that Vorne took without moving. It was the ball game.

The fans booed Marlowe all the way off the field. He'd lost their ball game for them by handing Manning the juicy one. They didn't like the kid.

He was depressed, I could see. I tried to talk him out of it, but he just looked at me without saying anything. Gabby asked me, later, what he'd served Manning, and when I told him the kid had delivered just what I'd asked for, he just grunted.

Lavorno started, the next day, and the kid was out in the bullpen again. Lavorno was good, and he was lucky. We had our hitting shoes on. We won for him, 8-4, and we were just a full game behind the Colts. I wondered who Gabby would start tomorrow.

It was Marlowe. I'd taken a shine to the kid. He was so quiet, he had so much stuff, was such a potentially fine pitcher. I hoped he'd come through.

He went off to a fine start. The minute he stepped into the box, the crowd jumped on him. They told him he was all kinds of a bum and to go back to the bushes where he belonged. I could see him coloring, feel some sort of difference in his pitching. When he walked Landers, the first man up, I went out to the box. I had to shout to be heard above the roar of the crowd.

"What's the matter, kid? You lettin' this crowd get you down?"

He shrugged. "They've got a right to yell, I guess. I haven't done them any favors so far."

"They're batty. Don't pay any attention to them. You win just one, and they'll carry you off the field. But they're tough. You've got to stand up to them, you've got to lick them."

He shrugged those big shoulders. "They don't like me, they never will. Let's get going."

I went back to the plate. The Colts bench was riding Marlowe, too, and some of the stuff wasn't pretty. He pitched.

He fed one to Vorne that my six-year-

old kid could have put out of the park. The guy pasted it a mile, and Cole, out in centerfield, pulled it down after a long run. It was such a belt that Landers took second.

Lewis came up, and I called for an inside pitch. It cut the heart of the plate, and Lewis belted it. It went out to right field, and Bruckner climbed the wall for it and came down with the ball in his glove. Landers moved along to third.

Manning came up there, and he laughed at Marlowe. He said, "Just put that thing within six feet of me, busher, then head for the showers."

Marlowe stuffed one in there, and it was pretty. Manning took his terrific cut and the ball went to the outfield on a line. Hollis got it in deep left-center. He was running when he jumped, and the ball stuck in his glove.

Three miracle plays to take a guy out of an inning. The mob gave it to Marlowe as he pitched, and kept it up as he came in to the bench.

He sat down, and Gabby got up from the other end of the dugout and walked to him. He stood in front of the guy and looked him up and down and then talked.

"JUST like your brother. The same damned thing. Someone starts to shout at you, and you go haywire. Too damned nice to get sore, at the fans or the other club. No guts. Just

like your brother, Tommy. And you'll go out of the league the same way. And whatever happened to that gutless wonder?"

Marlowe got up, and his face was chalk white, his mouth a thin, murderous line. He took Gabby's shirt in his big left hand and shook him like a rat. He spoke as if he had a cake of ice in his mouth, and if I've ever seen murder in a man's eyes, his held it.

"What happened to Tommy Marlowe, my older brother? That gutless wonder? Why, he was killed, about five years ago. He was with the Marines, on some dinky, lousy little island in the Pacific, and his group was stopped by a Jap machine gun. Tommy took the gun, then he went right along and took another. But the second one got him. They figured he saved a lot of lives, and he was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal. That's all that happened to that gutless wonder, Mr. Hall."

He shook Gabby again. "And if you weren't twenty or thirty years older than I am, I'd probably kill you for talking like that. Get away from me before I forget that fact."

Gabby got away, and fast. The kid sat down again, and his eyes were like iced steel. I wondered if he'd bother to pitch the rest of the game. He did.

I guess you've read about it. He had everything in the world, that day. The



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fast ball was impossible to hit, the hook was sharper than a razor, his control was perfect.

The fans gave it to him for a few innings, then let up. It didn't make any difference. He was sore as hell and he wasn't paying any attention to them. Once, in the third, he just looked up at the stands, then spat on the ground.

The Colts rode him brutally, but he never looked their way. Manning got real brassy up at the plate, in the fifth, but Marlowe dusted him off with a high hard one that had me scared until Manning ducked, just in time. There was no more lip from Manning or anyone else.

Well, he went all the way down to the ninth without giving them a hit, and then the one that Marks got, with one away in the last inning, was a cheap little Baltimore chop that didn't come down out of the air until Marks was on the bag. He struck out Sweet, a pinch-hitter, to end the ball game.

We'd scored three in the seventh, and it was all we needed.

Well, I'd been right about one thing. The fans came down on the field and tried to carry Marlowe off the field. He took it on a run for the clubhouse.

In the dressing room I congratulated him on the wonderful game. He thanked me and grinned. "You were right about the fans and the other club, Pete. I'll never let them get into my hair again. I've shed those rabbit ears."

I said, "We'll see a lot of each other, Joey."

I showered and dressed, then went in

to see Gabby. He was sitting behind his desk, smoking a cigar, looking out the window. I knew what he was thinking. We had the pennant practically in the bag, now. All we'd needed had been one more good pitcher, and we sure had him.

I said, "You like the game?"

He turned and grinned at me. "That kid can pitch, eh, Pete?"

"He can pitch for ten, twelve years. He's terrific."

"I had to jolt him out of his fog. Just like his brother. Too sensitive, too nice. Never get sore. Had to get him angry just once, so he could forget the fans, the bench jockies. Now that he knows he has it, they'll never disturb him again. He knows that, too."

I thought of what the kid had told me, and I nodded. Then I said, "You sure pulled a boner when you asked what happened to his brother. I'll bet you were surprised when he told you."

Gabby looked at me and smiled sadly. "It was no boner. My own kid was in the Marines, in Tommy Marlowe's outfit. He was his best friend. My son wrote and told me the whole story. I've known about it for years."

I stared at him. The thing had been a frame to excite the kid. Gabby had figured it would be the one thing that would really make him sore.

Then I thought of the murderous anger I'd seen in the kid's eyes, when he'd been holding Gabby by the shirt.

I walked over and put out my hand. I said, "Mr. Hall, my compliments. I know a daring guy when I see one."

== ANCIENT HOCKEY ==

A GAME like our hockey was played in fourteenth-century Denmark during the winters when the lakes were frozen. Each team consisted of five men. The object of the game was

to force a pellet, usually a five-inch square of colored wood about one inch high, into a certain delineated confine belonging to the team that was "it," and for the "it" team to keep the pellet out of there.

Simpson M. Ritter

TEE-OFF TERROR

He was a never-guy par-buster who couldn't find himself—or the greens—until a links king called for a showdown to carve out a better man's glory—or snuff out a has-been's comeback!



By
GILES A. LUTZ

ASHLEY MEDFORD walked down the fairway, and the nerves were bunching again in his stomach. He didn't have to worry about that last shot anyway, it'd been a nice drive, two hundred and fifty yards straight down the middle. The gallery was packed in tight all along the fairway, and he listened to their rising hum of conversation with increasing irritation. It didn't use to be this way. He used to bask in this

He laced into the ball, and it was a magnificent drive, straight down the fairway. . . .

sort of attention, but that had been when he had only himself to think of, and pressure didn't matter.

He stopped beside the ball, studying its lie. This last hole was a tough one. It was a dog-leg, par five. The safe way would be to play along with the angle, taking two more shots to get on, then the conventional two putts for the par. He

knew he was taking too much time. He didn't use to do this. He used to step up and whack them, and they could fall where they would.

He'd been hot today, just as he'd been hot in the first three rounds. If he could hold it for this last hole, those clubs in his bag would have made him more gold than a miner's pick.

He looked at Laura Wilson, standing at the fringe of the crowd, and gave her a strained smile. Sometimes, he thought it was bad when she watched him play, but when she didn't he missed her.

She was tall with the grace of a model and had the fine, streamlined sleekness of a thoroughbred filly. She had calm, level eyes and shining hair. She drew attention wherever she went.

She caught his smile and lifted her hand in acknowledgement. He started to put his attention back on the ball, and a short, blocky man moved toward Laura.

Ted Farrel was five years younger than Ash, much nearer Laura's age. He had the deeply bronzed face that came from being under countless suns. He'd battled Ash in many a tournament, and he'd fought him in other things. Farrel had known Laura first. He'd introduced her to Ash, and when he'd seen how she'd grown to feel about Ash, he'd said all the things a good loser is supposed to say. But Ash felt that Farrel hadn't meant them. That Farrel was pulling hard for him to break his neck.

He saw Farrel stop and say a few careless words to a fan, saw the fan's face brighten. The fan turned and said something to a man standing beside him. Ash saw it spread through the crowd like the ever-widening ripples made by a stone thrown into a lake. It was important news, it was news big enough to set this crowd agog.

He saw Laura's face tighten as she heard it, and it wasn't hard to guess what the news was.

Farrel had turned in a hot round.

Ash looked around for his caddy, and the kid had edged toward the crowd. The kid said something to a man, then hurried back, his face woeful with his news.

"Mr. Medford, Farrel just posted a two seventy-nine."

Ash's face didn't change. He swore silently, and he could feel the lumps in his stomach twisting viciously. Par on this last hole would only tie him with Farrel. Ash had been counting this tournament as won, until Farrel had gone wild. Tying Farrel would mean a play-off tomorrow.

He threw a calculating look at the corner of the dog-leg. It was well guarded by a thick bank of trees. If he could clear it, he might reach the green with his second shot. That'd leave him two putts for his birdie and the tournament.

The kid put the number two wood into Ash's hand. He read Ash's face and his eyes widened. "You going for it all?"

Ash nodded soberly and took his stance. Outwardly, he had the loose, easy relaxation of a cat, the strain and tension was all hidden underneath where it did the most damage. He was tall and lanky, with a crewman's shoulders and fine, sensitive hands. He had an engaging grin, and ordinarily his eyes saw the humorous things in the world. He had more than just a tournament title riding on this shot—he had security and dreams, and it was a rare and wonderful thing to find the two combined.

The swing came back slow and steady. The club head came down with an increasing flow of power, and the powerful wrists rode it on through the ball. The ball took off cleanly, not a blade of grass disturbed beneath it. It climbed like one of the new jet-propelled planes, and it looked like it had enough height to clear the moon.

The murmur was still rising from the crowd when the ball hit an outflung branch of a tree. An inch either way would have

cleared it. But the ball didn't clear—it hit with a solid thwack, deflected sharply and bounded into the deep woods.

NOTHING showed on Ash's face. The sickness was inside. That was part of the breaks, those intangible things a man could never figure.

Laura's face was stricken. Farrel had moved close to her, and Ash saw the smug look on the guy's face.

He threw down another ball and whaled into it before the sickening disappointment could set in too solidly. He went for the corner again, and he cleared it this time.

He was thirty yards off the edge of the green. He was lying four, and he'd have to hole this one to stay in the running. He needed a miracle, and he didn't think he'd get it.

He stabbed the club's blade at the ball, and it rose in a jerky little arc and barely made the green. He had a thirty-foot putt. He overshot the hole by eight feet and there was no more feeling in his hands than in two rigid pieces of castiron. He tried to make that eight-footer, but he tried too hard, and the ball curled off. He wound up by three-putting and took a disastrous eight.

The crowd had already forgotten him. They clustered around Farrel, expressing their admiration. Only Laura and the caddy were still with Ash. The kid stood off to one side, the tragedy of the world on his face, and Laura hurried up to Ash, her face grave with concern.

Laura put her hand under his arm, and they walked silently toward the clubhouse. She was a wise girl. She knew there were no words to take the sting out of a moment like this.

He said bitterly, "I even blew myself out of second money. I'll probably take down around three hundred dollars."

"It's a lot of money," she said calmly. "It'll take you to the next tournament."

He started to say something, and she pressed her fingers over his lips. "You take a shower and hurry back. You need a long, cool drink."

The warm water felt fine, but it couldn't wash away the disappointment and sober thoughts. He came out, and to all outward appearances the three-day grind had left no mark on him. He saw people glance at him and he knew that they were thinking that Ash Medford was all washed up.

He sat down beside Laura on the veranda and reached for the glass. He took a long drink, and she asked, "Feel better?"

He looked at her, and all the bad thoughts gushed out into words. "It's no good, Laura. I'm trying too hard. I put a couple of good rounds together, and I blow the next one. You've got to be tournament-tough to win the big money. I'm not any more."

She was silent for a long while, then she said in a low voice, "You used to be tournament-tough, before I came along. I'm not good for you, Ash."

He denied it vehemently. She was good for him. But his falling off did happen after he'd known her. Indirectly, she was the reason. He said slowly, "I'm getting too old for this treadmill, Laura. I want a home for us. I want a pro job at some good club. I want to take the creaks and groans out of some duffer's swing and get the knots out of my stomach. I want to get married, Laura."

She stared off over the fairways, her forehead wrinkled in thought. Then she turned her chair so that she could face him squarely.

"You think you aren't blaming me, but you are. I've waited for almost a year now. Don't you think I want the same things? If you'd saved your money, we wouldn't have to be trying to win another big one. If you'd won a few times recently, maybe some club would have made you an offer."

He stared at her, astounded. He could have taken any of half a dozen offers right after he'd met her. But he was almost broke, and he had wanted to win a couple of big ones so that they'd have the money for a proper start. But he'd started pressing, and the big wins never came along.

He said defensively, "If I'm tying you up—" He stopped, sick with the awareness that they were close to a quarrel. He reached for her hand. She jerked away.

She said passionately, "How do you think I feel?"

He felt the little muscles throbbing along his jaw lines. Anger made him say an unwise thing. "Maybe you're sorry you didn't pick Farrel. He's making money."

She stood up and said quietly, "Maybe I am, Ash. I know we're not good for each other." She twisted at her finger, and something flashed in the semi-darkness. She put the ring in his hand and said, "Good-luck, Ash." She turned and was gone before he could stop her.

HE GOT up and walked savagely into the club bar. He bought a drink and then walked into the locker room. A crap game was in progress there. Farrel had the dice, and he had a nice stack of money before him. This seemed to be Farrel's lucky day. Ash looked at the guy and hated him.

Farrel looked up, an enigmatic expression in his eyes. "Room for a hot shooter," he called.

Ash irritably shook his head. He didn't have enough money in his pocket to get into that game.

"I'm broke," Ash snapped. "I haven't collected yet."

"I'll let you shoot on the cuff." Farrel looked around the room, a faint grin in his eyes. It was an insulting grin.

Ash pushed his way into the little circle. He got down on his hands and knees. He said harshly, "You're faded."

He got up after Farrel had made five straight passes. There wasn't anything but sevens and elevens on those dice. It was hard to keep his face blank. His three hundred was gone.

He awakened in the morning with a headache. He called Laura at her hotel room, and her voice held no trace of friendliness. His face hardened as he listened to her.

"I meant what I said, Ash. You're not good for me. I'm not good for you."

He argued explosively, and the silence at the other end remained unbroken for so long, he thought she'd gone. She said finally, "You lost your prize money, didn't you?"

"Who told you?" he shouted. "Farrel? He would come running to you."

She said softly, "At least he isn't broke. He doesn't have to worry about how he's going to get to the next tournament." She hung up then, and the click was a very final thing.

He paced the room like a wild man. He hadn't known that money had been so important to her. It had been a well-hidden trait. Now, he could see what she'd been doing. She'd picked Ash off his last year's record, and her shock at his poor winnings so far this year must have been a blow.

He cut his belongings to the minimum and grimly went out to the highway and thumbed a ride south. Last year, he'd seen some of the younger pros doing the same thing. When he'd first started this heart-break circuit, he'd done the same thing. Now, he was starting all over again.

FIRST place in the Miami Open was a lucrative prize. He walked into the locker room and saw the same old faces. They greeted him with the usual bantering talk, but he wasn't fooled. They didn't like him any better than he liked

them. He represented one more thumb in a pie already too full of thumbs. It was a new feeling, a new thought, and he examined it curiously. He guessed being old and broke made a man feel that way.

Farrel came in, and it was hard for Ash to keep his face blank as he returned the guy's nod. Farrel's eyes had a shine to them as though he had a secret knowledge. Ash was afraid that knowledge concerned Laura. He wondered if she were here.

He got in as many practice hours as he could before the tournament started, and his mind and his sticks wouldn't behave. He kept thinking of too many things when he should have been thinking only of his swing.

He had a miserable first round. He was tormented the entire eighteen holes by putts that refused to drop, drives that hooked, and iron shots that refused to sit down on the green. At the end of the first round, he was seven strokes off the pace.

He turned in a neat 71 the following day. It was under par, but it was nothing spectacular, nothing hot. Farrel saw him studying the posted scores and grinned at him. Farrel had added a 68 to his first day's score.

He drew Farrel the following day, and he'd rather have played with a contagious disease. They had all the gallery, but Ash knew it wasn't because of him. Farrel was the current champ, the fair-haired boy of the sporting pages.

Farrel was hot from the first tee. Ash pressed too hard, trying to add extra yards to the woods, trying to set the ball down within inches of the pin, instead of feet. He was three strokes behind Farrel at the fifth hole, and he was getting tighter than a new pair of shoes.

Farrel laced a beauty down the sixth fairway. He stepped back and grinned with good fellowship at Ash. Ash glowered at him. He hooked his drive into

the rough, and Farrel's face showed professional sympathy. It went over big with the gallery, and Ash burned.

He tried to wipe his mind clean of everything but the immediate stroke ahead of him. Once, he'd just walked up to a ball and whacked it, and he tried to regain that old, carefree feeling. He topped the ball out of the rough and got a skimpy hundred and twenty-five yards.

He breathed hard as he walked toward it, trying to calm himself. Just as he reached the ball, Farrel moved over to him and said, "You're getting too much left wrist in it." His voice had a carrying power. Ash knew several nearby spectators had heard it.

Ash glared at him. His words came out in an explosive burst. "Why, you grandstanding bum. You'd be happier, if I broke off my left wrist. You'd be—"

He checked himself as he saw disapproving looks. On the surface, Farrel had

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only been offering help, and Ash had rudely refused it. He tried to settle down, and the rage kept churning in his head. He blew sky-high. He took a horrible seven on the hole, and before the round was out, he was completely out of the running. He didn't even play the fourth round. It didn't help to see Farrel take down the heavy end of another purse. Ash spent a lot of time feeling sorry for himself. It didn't help a bit.

H E FINISHED out of the money at New Orleans, and there was a small bit of glum satisfaction in the fact that Farrel finished third. Farrel gave out an interview blaming it on a lot of things, and one sheet printed it. Ash was beginning to hate the sound of the guy's name.

He played in two more tournaments, and Farrel took down top money in both. Ash got a small check in one of them. His nerves were screwed to such a pitch that solid food wouldn't stay on his stomach. He found it easier to buy a drink.

The newspapers no longer listed him as a possible contender for any part of the purse. When he walked into a bar, no one hurried over to him, no one was interested in his opinions. He cut out the drinks, and he worked hard. He went into the Phoenix Open with the grim intensity of a man facing a firing squad. It was one of those do-or-die chances.

He turned in a sizzling first round, and he couldn't relax. He worried about the next day's round, and he knew he shouldn't be doing that. One hot round never won a tournament. You had to put four of them together. The worry caught up with him the following day. He went to pieces like a ten-cent toy under a heel. At the end of the third round he was hopelessly out of it. He stopped in the locker room only long enough to change. He shouldered his clubs and walked out. He was walking out on tournament golf.

He couldn't beat Farrel; he couldn't beat anyone. A little voice screamed inside him. *You can't even beat yourself!*

He went to an obscure club in a small city and got himself a job as assistant pro. The title was the only important thing about the job. Ash ran the shop. He rented and sold and repaired equipment and tried to keep from thinking.

He earned enough to live on and not much more. He tried to keep busy, but he stayed off the links. His eyes grew clear, and the shakiness left his hand. But he didn't want to play. He'd handle clubs in the shop, and that was as far as he wanted to go.

He looked up one afternoon to see Randall standing at the counter. Randall was looking him over with shrewd eyes. The guy wrote a gossip column that was confined to sporting figures. When Ash had been riding high, Randall had written several nice pieces about him. Ash was both glad and sorry to see him. He stood for a connection with the past, something he wanted to forget.

Randall said, "I was passing through town, Ash. I just happened to hear you were here. Thought I'd drop out and say hello."

They talked about bygone tournaments, about Ash winning at Pinehurst and his blazing finish at Augusta, and every memory brought out hurt.

Randall asked abruptly, "What happened to you, Ash? You're not old. You look in shape. But they tell me you never play any more. A champ usually doesn't fall apart all at once."

Ash said in a hard voice, "I lost something. You have to be right in your hands and your head and your heart. I wasn't." He got up and left Randall. He was sorry about not being able to give him a story, but there just wasn't one to give him.

Ash saw the paper a few days later. He was surprised to see what Randall had done with those few remarks. Randall

had made quite a story out of them. Randall recounted some of Ash's past glory, and told of how Ash had suddenly blown up. The final paragraph read:

He looked fit. But something was lacking. You could feel it as you talked to him. He said a champion had to be right in his hands and head and heart. I wasn't sure which one he was stressing. I'm sure of one thing. Ash Medford is through with competitive golf.

Ash tossed the paper aside. A lot of people would read that and speculate about it. Maybe Laura would see it. He wondered what her reactions would be, then doubted that she'd have any. A good deal of time had passed, and time has a brutal way of widening a gap. He doubted whether it would make any difference to her at all.

The old pro came into the shop and said, "The Los Angeles Open is next week."

Ash waited, his face impassive.

"You won it last year, didn't you?"

Ash nodded.

"And you're passing it up this year?"

Ash nodded again.

"Why?"

"That's my business.

"I read where Farrel whipped you like he owned you. He's the favorite for that tournament. I'm thinking you're afraid of him."

"I don't give a damn what you think," Ash snarled and walked out of the shop. He sat in his room that night and thought about it. The old pro was close to being right.

He turned to the sporting pages, and the coming tournament at Los Angeles was getting a lot of space. It was a ten thousand dollar purse, and the winner would take down close to four thousand dollars.

He turned to Randall's column.

Joltin' Jim Farrel is a heavy favorite to take the Los Angeles Open this year. He's

won six of the nine tournament's he's played in, replacing last year's champ, Ash Medford. Medford won last year at Los Angeles. There's a rumor around that golfing honors aren't the only thing Farrel is taking from Medford. The attractive Miss Wilson has been seen lately in his company. When asked about it, Farrel said, "No comment." But his wink was meaningful. Farrel said that he was thinking of quitting tournament golf. Several clubs have been after him. If he adds the Los Angeles Open to his list, he can choose almost any club in the country. Is Joltin' Jim thinking of settling down?

ASH stared at the wall, and the blood pounded fiercely in his veins. He didn't realize his hands were working until he saw the shredded newspaper at his feet. What he'd been dreading for so long had happened. Laura's and Farrel's names were now openly linked together. Farrel was thinking of settling down. Laura would get that home and that nice, secure spot she wanted!

He went to the club the next morning and got his sticks out of the shop. The old pro looked at him. "You going to play a round?"

"I'm going to play a round," Ash said grimly.

He bought a bus ticket to Los Angeles and made his entry. He walked into the locker room the day before the opening round and saw the surprise on all the faces there. There were curious questions in those eyes, too, but they weren't asked. Ash's face stopped the asking of any of those kind of questions.

Farrel scowled at him and came across the room. He pulled Ash to one side and said, "What're you trying to do?" His glower grew more pronounced under Ash's level scrutiny. He said hotly, "She doesn't want to see you."

"Hold it," Ash snapped, and the heat was beginning to pump through his veins.

"You've caused her enough trouble. You leave her alone."

"I said hold it." Ash's fist was clenched. Farrel was getting louder. Heads were turned in their direction now.



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NEW SPORTS MAGAZINE

"If I catch you around her—"

A roaring was in Ash's ears, and the red mists bothered his vision. Farrel's features were all run together in a misty blur. He threw the fist at the blurred outline of Farrel's face. He heard Farrel's strangled gasp, and that misty blur reeled away from him. He heard a resounding clang as Farrel slammed against a locker. He heard startled outcries in the room as men sprang to their feet. He had only one desire—to get at Farrel.

He bounded after him and took a hard set of knuckles alongside the head. It didn't even slow him. He pounded a fist into Farrel's belly and heard Farrel's choked swearing. Then something hard smashed against the end of his nose. Farrel was still swinging. Ash waded through those swinging fists to plant a right full on Farrel's mouth. He felt teeth give, and pain shot through his right hand. Then strong arms grabbed him and pulled him away. Others took hold of Farrel.

"I'm all right now," Ash said.

They looked at him and decided that he was. Their arms fell away. He was aware for the first time that his nose was leaking. He put a hand to it and stared wonderingly at the stain on it. He hadn't even felt that. He looked across the room at Farrel, and the swelling in Farrel's face was a wonderful thing to see.

Ash said in a low, carrying voice, "I'm going to knock off your ears out there, too. I'm going to see how big you can talk to the newspaper guys after it's over."

Farrel tried to sneer, but it was a hard thing to do with those swelling lips.

Ramsey said nervously, "Lord, if this gets in the papers—" He looked imploringly around the room. "You guys keep it quiet."

When he got up in the morning he took a quick look at the paper. His face hardened. Some of the facts had leaked out, and there was enough good guessing to

wrap a story around them. The story said there was bad blood between Ash and Farrel, intimating that the cause was Laura. He winced at what she'd think when she saw it.

HE WAS off in one of the early morning rounds. Farrel would be playing his first round in the afternoon. Ash was glad he didn't have to look at the guy this morning.

His first drive was only fair. There was a trap twenty yards in front of the first green. It'd take a long carry to reach the green, some two hundred and fifty yards. Once, he would've banged away for it all. Now, he was afraid of that trap. He gave the number two wood back to the caddy and took an iron. He wound up forty yards short of the trap. It was nice, safe, Sunday golf. It'd keep him out of trouble. It put him on in three and down in two more. That was one over

par, and it couldn't even win an approving look from his caddy.

He played that eighteen in alternate surges of caution and recklessness. He got a beautiful birdie on the eighteenth, and he needed it. It gave him a one over par for the round. He knew it'd give him practically no standing at all.

He couldn't keep away from the board where the scores were posted during the day. He saw all too many scores that topped his 73. Farrel came in late in the afternoon, and Ash's face tightened at sight of the girl beside him. It was Laura, and seeing her was like being hit in the pit of the stomach with a maul. Farrel was laughing and chattering with her. The gallery trailed in Farrel's wake, and one of them shouted to someone on the clubhouse porch, "He had a sixty-eight."

It was the best of the day. Farrel had an early lead. The guy was still hot, and this was one tournament where Ash had

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been hoping Farrel would fall off. He started to slip away through the crowd, but it was too late. Farrel had spotted him. Ash saw the malice in the guy's eyes and set his jaw. He'd have to take some words from the guy, and he'd have to take them without a show of feeling.

Laura's face was calm. She said in a matter-of-fact voice, "Hello, Ash."

There were a million things he wanted to say to her, and he couldn't say any of them. He forgot how much he disliked her.

Farrel said in a slow, insulting tone, "I see you didn't get off to a very good start."

The rage started its wild, fierce pounding. Ash started to snap something in reply, and he saw the slow smile at Laura's lip corners. She approved of Farrel, approved of everything he did, and that did more to calm Ash than anything else. The rage was still with him, but it was an icy, calm rage.

"Thanks," he said to her. He gave her a long, appraising look before he turned away. He saw the color come into her face and felt a savage satisfaction.

He went out to the first tee the next morning, and that icy calm was still with him. He fired a beautiful 67. He needed a curling, downhill ten-foot putt to make it a 66 and just missed when the ball hit the back of the cup and bounced out. There'd been no hesitancy about that putt, or any of the other shots. He walked up to them and hit them, and he wasn't thinking of failure or ridicule.

It was a good round, a fine one. But Farrel posted a 69, and he still had three strokes on Ash. But Ash had moved up in the field. He was third now, and he wondered if Farrel was beginning to worry.

His gallery was a lot larger the third round. That 67 had drawn them. Several of his shots faded off, and he knew the

TEE-OFF TERROR

cause. The old pressure was building up again, riding him with cruel spurs. He made three lovely recoveries that put him back in the running. He exploded a shot from a trap on the fourteenth hole that sank and gave him a birdie. He grinned weakly at the roar that went up from the crowd. It was good to hear it again. He finished with a 70. It was sub-par golf. Added to his previous rounds, it put his total in nice shape. But Farrel had another 69.

He drew Farrel for the last round. He wished it hadn't worked out that way. Laura would be watching every shot, and she'd be pulling for Farrel. It'd be a decided psychological handicap. He saw her look up and smile at Farrel on the first tee. It lit that flaming rage inside him, and it burned steadily.

He heard the swelling murmur of the crowd as Farrel hit a tremendous ball off the tee. He flashed a quick glance at Laura as he stepped up to his ball. She was giving Farrel that smile again. He laced into the ball, and it was a magnificent drive, straight down the fairway. It had a slight tail-end hook on it, and it picked up additional yardage after it hit. It rolled beyond Farrel's ball, and the murmur from the gallery was enthusiastic.

FARREL'S jaw was set in grim lines as he stalked down the fairway. Farrel was a front-running guy. He didn't like to be topped.

Farrel rammed a long, brassie shot straight at the green. It stopped near the edge. He was good for his par.

Ash walked up to his ball. He looked at it and felt a little sick. It was lying in a divot hole that made it impossible for him to shoot for the green. He took an iron, and he laid into the ball. He had to dig in under it to get it out of that hole, and he still got a fair amount of distance. He walked up to the ball, let fly.

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NEW SPORTS MAGAZINE

The ball seemed to have a magnetized center, with the pin as the attraction. It flew along that beautiful arc straight at the pin. The ball came down just short of the green. It took a series of hops, never swerving from that straight course. For a moment it looked as though it were going in, then it stopped. From where Ash stood, it looked as though it were kissing the pin. He'd guess it was five or six inches away.

He looked at Farrel, and the guy's face was hard. "I meant what I said last night," Ash said softly. He didn't look at Laura. He could keep his hatred alive better by not looking at her.

Farrel laid the ball dead to the pin, and Ash grinned sardonically. He watched Farrel sink an eighteen inch putt, and the grin didn't leave his face. He'd been right about that five or six inches. It took a simple tap of the putter to drop the ball. It was par for both of them. Ash forgot that there were seventeen holes ahead of them; he forgot too, that he was four strokes behind. He'd beaten a tough break, and somehow that seemed initially important.

On the next hole, his second shot lay about thirty-five feet from the green in a tight clump of shaggy grass, a tough spot to chip out of. He jerked a little as he swung into it, and he was lucky that he was no more than ten feet away.

Farrel's second shot lay to the right of the green about twenty feet from the edge. He studied the shot carefully, selected his iron and swung. The ball hopped along the green. Its momentum petered out, and it stopped on the lip of the cup. Farrel had an inch putt for a sure four, and Ash had a ten-foot, sloping, downhill putt over a glass-slick green. If he missed it, he'd fall another stroke behind Farrel on this round.

He saw the triumphant glitter in Farrel's eyes. Farrel had the situation sized

TEE-OFF TERROR

up the same way. He saw Laura move to Farrel's side and touch his hand lightly.

He forgot all about what that missed putt would do to him. He stooped over the ball and lined it up. He didn't baby or stab it or allow it to slide off the putter blade. He stroked it firmly, and it started off as a straight putt, with the slope of the green and the nap of the grass figured in by experience and guessing. It curled gently off its straight course and plopped into the cup.

Farrel's grin faded. Ash saw Laura shake her head, sympathizing with Farrel.

THEY halved the third, fourth, and fifth holes. Worry was driving through Ash's mind again. Five holes were gone, and he hadn't gained a thing. He saw Laura look up into Farrel's face, laugh and say something, and he knew it was about him.

He got in trouble on the sixth. His second shot finished up in a deep trap. When he reached it, he saw it was almost buried. His caddy's groan didn't help any.

He wiggled his feet around until he had a firm footing. He addressed the ball with an open stance, playing it off a line just back of the left heel. He laid the club well back, its face toward the sky. He brought the club in and across the ball, cutting into the sand back of and beneath it. He hammered that ball with all his power, using a full follow-through. He whaled the club on down and through the sand, and there was a full cushion of it between the ball and blade. He couldn't see for a moment because of the explosion of sand.

He saw his caddy dancing madly on the edge of the green. He couldn't see the ball, but he could see where the caddy was pointing. That ball was in.

Farrel had to sink a twelve-foot putt to lose only a stroke. The guy had heart.

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NEW SPORTS MAGAZINE

He didn't falter, and the ball plunked into the can. He picked up another stroke on the eighth, when Farrel's approach didn't hold, and both of them took a birdie on the ninth.

It'd been hot, tremendous golf, and he'd only halved Farrel's advantage. He had nine holes left, and two strokes to gain.

The tenth and eleventh holes were even, and he was on in three on the twelfth, but thirty feet away. Farrel was on in the same number of strokes, but his ball was a mere two feet from the cup. Ash lined up that putt and stroked through it before he had time to think. He followed its curving progress and groaned inwardly. Too hard! It hit the back of the cup, bounced straight up into the air—and dropped in! He was weak with emotion. His knees felt as loose as boiled macaroni. He looked at Farrel and Laura, saw their stricken faces, and the weakness went away. That had hurt them.

The fourteenth was tough. The green was elevated and guarded by a wide ditch. There'd recently been water in the ditch, and in places pools were still evident. Farrel played his second shot beautifully. The ball sailed over the guarding ditch and stopped four feet from the hole.

Ash met the ball squarely and it sailed high over the ditch and came down on the green, rolled toward the pin, and stopped inside Farrel's ball.

Color flooded Farrel's face, and for a moment he looked as though he'd choke. He stalked up to his ball and stabbed angrily at it. It skidded off the blade, rolled around the hole and stopped a foot away. Carefully, Ash sank his putt. He was a stroke behind.

He sensed the break in Farrel's composure then. Farrel's comfortable lead had almost vanished.

They both took threes on the fifteenth, and it was Farrel who was pressing. The sixteenth was long, over five hundred

TEE-OFF TERROR

yards. Ash's drive swept half of the distance behind it. Farrel's face was grim as he stepped up to the ball. He took time, a lot of it, and Ash heard his grunt as he laced into the pellet. Farrel was trying to get the same amount of distance. His drive had a small slice to it, and it landed at the edge of the rough, twenty-five yards behind Ash's drive.

Farrel boomed a long shot toward the green. He still needed a fair-sized iron shot to get on. Ash took the number two wood. He whaled into the ball and heard the good, solid sound of the club-head meeting rubber. The ball took off on a rapidly rising line. It traveled string-straight toward that pin, and it looked as though it'd never come down. It hit in front of the green, ran across it, and slowed down as it neared the cup.

Farrel's face was colorless, but the guy had guts. He hit a nice approach, but he was still sixteen feet away. Ash had a three-foot putt. Even if Farrel sank that long putt, it'd give him a four. And Ash would be putting for a three and a tied score. Farrel put too much on the ball and rammed it beyond the cup. He went six feet over, but he came back and dropped it. It gave him a five. It was par, but it wasn't enough. Ash tapped in his putt, and he was a stroke in the lead.

He knew he wouldn't be beaten then. He had that calm, sure feeling, but he also had a sense of loss. He looked at Laura, and the victory didn't mean anything. He played the remaining two holes in par, and Farrel blew up completely.

ASH started toward the clubhouse. He'd won, but there was no taste to it. Randall came up and stopped him. He wore a big grin as he said, "There's nothing out there that can catch you. You're in, guy." He looked at Ash's face, and his grin grew broader. "You're heading the wrong way. She's waiting."



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NEW SPORTS MAGAZINE

Ash's jaw went slack.

Randall said, "She didn't know where you were until I wrote that first story about you. She came to me and told me what she was planning to do. She hoped that'd bring you out of retirement. Farrel took a lot for granted and talked."

Ash could see her standing behind a fringe of people. He elbowed his way through them, rough in his haste.

She reached out and took hold of his hand and hung onto it tightly. "That night on the clubhouse veranda, I thought I was being wise, Ash. You'd built up a complex, and it included a lot of things. It included your bad luck and Jim Farrel and us. I thought if I could make you angry at me, you'd forget all those things and quit pressing. I thought if I stayed completely away you could win a tournament or two and be satisfied. I didn't care about the winning, Ash. I didn't care if you left golf completely. But you wouldn't have been content to leave that way. It didn't work out that way. You disappeared. I tried to find you. No one seemed to know where you went. When I read Randall's story, I went to him. He wanted to see you come back, too."

He asked, "If it hadn't worked?"

"Then I'd have come to you."

He looked at her, and the old adoration was in her eyes. There were a lot of people watching, but he didn't care. He started to pull her near.

A tall, gray-haired man came up and said, "Medford, I want to talk to you. The pro job is open at Clearview. We'd like to have you with us."

Ash knew of Clearview. He and Laura would like it there. He said, "I'll talk to you later." He seized her hand and started running. The tournament chairman yelled and started after him, waving a slip of paper in his hand. It was a funny thing, seeing a guy running away from a nice check like that.

SOCK, BLOCK—AND PRAY!

(Continued from page 35)

hands. Ken Richfield, coming up very fast recovered on the Falcon thirty-five.

Rip said to Brewster, "This is it, Sammy. This is for the kids."

The Bull hit through for five, for six, for eight, and they were in Clipper territory.

Richfield said, "This is mine, Sammy. One nice run and I hang up the cleats."

They gave him the proper blocking; they sprang him into the open, and Richfield, the picture runner, ran as never he'd run before. He had speed for this last one; he had deception, and he had some of his old power.

Richfield reached the seven yard line, putting the ball directly in front of the goal posts. Bull Rudolph made two as that tired blue line surged forward. Brewster, on a quarterback sneak, made two more to put it on the three, and then the Clippers held the Bull on the next rush.

Rip Riordan said, "Sammy, you never missed two in a row in your life."

"Not this afternoon," Brewster vowed.

He dropped back to kick, Richfield holding the ball for him. Rip Riordan bent over the ball. He looked back at them, Richfield kneeling, Brewster waiting calmly for the pass, the Bull crouching, blocking. He was very proud when he spun that ball back perfectly to Richfield. He heard Brewster's right toe meet the pigskin and the sound was solid. The kick was good.

And that was the ball game!

They had a meeting in the dressing room, in Rip's office, and Rip was saying, "We'll sell to Davey Greene, but we'll give it to him straight before we make the deal. We'll tell him we're through, but if he wants to use us as coaches or scouts, why we'll stick with him."

He'd heard man after man say that he didn't want to leave the Falcons now. They'd watched the kids go through their

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NEW SPORTS MAGAZINE

paces that second half and they'd been proud. It was their club; they were keeping part of it. Shelby had made the proposition that they sell only fifty-one percent of the stock to Davey Greene and keep the rest for themselves.

"We need Greene's money," Shelby had stated, "to pay off our own debts, and I'm sure none of us would object to Greene taking over the presidency of the club."

None of them did, and Rip went out to look up Davey Greene. Young Greene was waiting in the corridor outside the dressing room, his sister standing beside the wheel chair with him. His eyes were shining as Rip made the proposition.

"I'd want you men with the organization," he said happily, when Rip finished. "I want you as head coach, Rip, and I'd like the other men to help you or to scout for new talent. Your plan of working with non-college boys is the finest thing I've ever heard. I'd like you to continue that, Rip, to go out into the sticks every year and bring these boys in, teach them the game, make men out of them."

"I'm glad," Inez said, "that he only had to buy half the stock, Mr. Riordan. We could have gotten all the money, but it might have been a hard pull."

Rip stared at her. "A hard pull?" he repeated. "You—you mean money?"

"I don't mean hay," Inez grinned. "The famous Greene fortune is somewhat of a myth. It's a kind of hollow shell. Father lost millions in real estate speculations before he died. With the little Davey had left, he's been trying to get into some kind of business. I think this is it."

Rip said, "You're not a millionaire?"

"I'll be working in Davey's office as secretary," Inez told him. "Is that bad?"

Rip said softly, "Lady, that's good."

He thought Inez Greene knew what he was referring to because she smiled, and it was a very friendly smile. Possibly even more than a friendly smile.

DOUBLES TROUBLES

(Continued from page 55)

"Forty for us," he said calmly. "Match point, kid."

Jim Byrd visibly hauled at his remaining strength. He served a near ace to Midge. He cut off the return for a placement.

The big fellow got his kick on the service to Hardy. It was too good. Hardy blew it miserably. It became thirty-forty.

Hardy walked around in a small circle. This was it. This was where he had fallen down a dozen times before. This was where the strength oozed out of him, the last vestige trickling away. This was where only one thing counted—guts!

The difference was that, now that he could see it. The calm words, the precept of Midge Mallard had pointed it out to him. He moved in a little, squinting in the twilight. He tried to focus his gaze on Jim.

He saw the service go to Midge. He saw the little guy hit the ball harder than at any time in the match. The shot was at Jim's feet. Jim got it back, champion that he was.

It was up to Hardy. The pressure was on, now. He managed to hit at Cy. Midge came in and tried to draw the play, but Cy put it back up to Hardy.

There was a moment when Hardy thought it was over. If they went to deuce he would collapse, he was certain. The ball was hard to reach. He fumbled after it. He knew what to do.

He hit it, the best he could, at Jim Byrd. He saw the big man swing. Jim's arm was not as whip-like as before. The ball trickled back. Hardy had to move.

His legs ached like infected wisdom teeth. He moved them in a peculiar stiff fashion. He got somewhere near the ball and put down his head. From far away Midge said, "Hit it!"

He managed to turn on the ball. His forehand, always his best weapon, came alive for one brief instant. He got the ball

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exactly in the center of the strings. He was closest to Cy Latham.

But he hit it with all his remaining ability at Jim Byrd. He heard the big man grunt. He staggered to position.

As he reached the strategical spot he looked for the ball. He knew Jim had to put it there. The opening had been left when he moved.

The ball came over. It was shadowy and dim. This had to be the last of the contest. The darkness would be complete in a few moments. Hardy got the racket up.

He dropped it over the net, running it on the most difficult of all angles. He put it where Jim Byrd would have to chase it.

Jim was game. He stumbled forward. He went to his knees. With superhuman effort he got his racket under the ball and lifted it. It cleared the net by two inches.

Hardy whacked it gently. He sent it into the spot Jim had vacated. The ball fell to the grass. It rolled and lay still.

The Seabright doubles was over. The national champions had been defeated. Jim Byrd had not been able to last.

Midge said, "It was smart. And it was game. You figured Jim must be tired because you were. So you played him."

Hardy said, "It was more than that. You put it in my head. I had to last. It wasn't so much the tennis. I mean it was tennis, all right, but it was more—"

"You grew up a little," nodded Midge. "It's tough, growing up."

Jim and Cy came by. They stopped and Cy said, "Some smart trick, skippin' the rest period. You so-and-so!" His smile was rueful but broad.

Jim said, "I'll murder you next time out for that. How'd you know I was pooped? You rat!"

"Your grandmother wears army shoes!" said Hardy.

They laughed together. The champs moved on to their lockers. Hardy sighed. "Gee, it's great to be abused sometimes!"

HELL'S BELTERS

(Continued from page 12)

By increasing the resiliency of the ball the club owners have now made it possible for almost any player to give the ball a ride into the stands or over an outfield barrier if he happens to connect with it solidly.

"The lively ball," says Dyer, "plus bringing the outfield barriers in closer, by constructing bullpens, has changed the entire strategy of baseball in general and pitching in particular. A good pitcher with fine control used to work on a system of getting a batter down to the point where he would have to hit at the type of delivery the pitcher wanted him to hit. It would be a pitch the batter could hit but wouldn't hit far."

Bone fractures caused by sliding, collisions and other accepted hazards of the game run about the same as ever. In fact, as old-timers rightfully point out, baseball was far rougher and the conditions of the playing fields were far more hazardous than they are today. The introduction of protective devices worn inside of batters' caps have reduced the chances of serious head injury from "beanings" by the pitchers.

On the other hand, outfielders find encroaching fences which owners keep introducing to increase the homer output, adding much to the normal risks of their trade. Pete Reiser of the Dodgers has repeatedly crashed into barriers at a considerable cost to his playing usefulness.

Curbing the home-run craze would help the lot of the pitcher. But the fact that DiMaggios, Musials, Kellers, Greenbergs and scores of others, not hurlers, repeatedly find it necessary to undergo medical repairs, continues to give managers no end of worry. Maybe their bric-a-brac is more fragile than it was in the good old days when a sturdy Wilbert Robinson, with a finger snapped off at right angles, taped it up and went right on catching.

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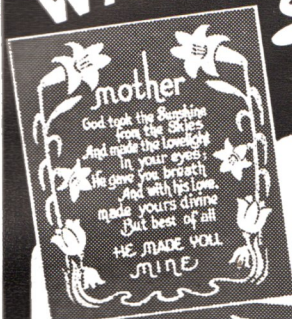
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