

FALL
25c

POPULAR

FOOTBALL

FEATURED NOVELETS

GRIDIRON GIANT KILLERS

By ADD ARETZ

ONE LAST THROW

By ROBERT SIDNEY BOWEN

THIRD-STRING CENTER

By JOHN WILSON



Earn Big Money

WRITING ORDERS

AMAZING NYLONS

Guaranteed Against
RUNS AND SNAGS

Regardless of Cause!

The world's **ONLY** complete, nationally advertised nylon hosiery line actually guaranteed against runs, snags or excessive wear, **REGARDLESS OF CAUSE!** It's amazing, but true! No matter what the cause—hard use or deliberate abuse—Kendex nylons are replaced **FREE** if they run, snag or become unfit for wear within entire guarantee period! Every weight from sheerest 15 denier to heavy 70 denier—all gauges up to luxury 60 gauge—all sizes, lengths, popular shades, fancy heels, black seams—full fashioned and seamless. Nothing is missing to make sure every woman is pleased. In spite of the amazing guarantee, retail postage prepaid prices start at \$1.08 the pair for sheerest 15 denier 51 gauge. Should free replacement be necessary, actual cost becomes 54¢ a pair! How could any woman possibly resist saving money and solving her hosiery problems? **NOT SOLD IN STORES.** Men and women wanted **NOW**, spare or full time, to write orders and earn big money. You can get orders even if you never sold a thing in your life!



MEN'S HOSE **GUARANTEED 1 YEAR**

Kendex gives you **FOUR** complete lines, including sensational men's hosiery line actually guaranteed for **ONE YEAR!** Any pair not giving satisfactory wear within 12 months is replaced **FREE** without question. All styles, patterns, colors, yarns (including nylon) at lowest prices that mean steady income for you 52 weeks a year.

LINGERIE **HOUSECOATS — ROBES**

Full line of lingerie, housecoats and robes. Woven and knitted fabrics—rayon, cotton and **NYLON.** Nothing is lacking. Unbelievable prices that defy competition and make women eager to order. Imagine a beautiful all **NYLON** slip, with **NYLON** lace, at \$2.95 or a lace trimmed rayon satin slip at \$1.58! Kendex values sell themselves.

NATIONALLY ADVERTISED

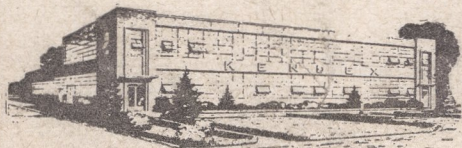
Kendex has advertised in Life, Look, Collier's, McCall's, Saturday Evening Post, Ladies' Home Journal, Good Housekeeping, etc. Carries the Good Housekeeping Guarantee Seal. Thousands of orders shipped daily. Yearly volume in millions. A dependable responsible national organization.

FREE NYLON STOCKING AND MONEY-MAKING OUTFITS

Man or woman — young or old, **YOU** can easily earn steady income, spare or full time. No money or experience needed. We supply **EVERYTHING** free and set you up in business at **OUR** expense. Nothing to buy or deliver. Write orders. We deliver and collect. Big advance pay plus huge cash bonus that increases your earnings up to 40%! Your name and address on postcard will bring you sample nylon stocking; samples of lingerie, hose, robe materials; self-selling sales books with **FULL COLOR** illustrations; 36-page sales manual showing you easy steps to success; color cards, free "door openers" worth \$1 each but which you give away free; special plan to have others sell for you, etc., etc. You can start making money the minute you receive the complete **FREE** outfits!

YOUR COST ONE CENT!

SEND NO MONEY. Pay nothing now or later. No obligation. Not even a promise to return outfits. Simply write your name and address on a penny postcard and mail to us. We'll immediately rush you everything you need **FREE** and postage prepaid. **WRITE TODAY!**



KENDEX CORPORATION • BABYLON 943, N. Y.

A tale of two Texans



J. R. TODD of Crane, Texas, has this to say about his I. C. S. Course in Certified Public Accounting:

“ My I. C. S. training is really paying off. Already, I'm netting \$120 a month profit on my investment—with more to come. Dividends like these are convincing proof of the value of I. C. S. training. ”



H. A. HOWELL of Big Spring, Texas, completed the I. C. S. Course in Architectural Drawing, is currently enrolled in the Complete Architectural Course. He writes:

“ I got my present job on the strength of my I. C. S. training. As a result, I'm \$100 a month richer. You can see why I'm so sold on I. C. S. ”

Few investments pay you as well as the time and money you spend preparing yourself for advancement. I. C. S. records offer convincing proof of this fact. Each year, I. C. S. receives more than 1500 letters from students reporting salary increases and promotions.

What they are doing, you can do. And now's the time to start. Your first step: marking and mailing the coupon. It brings you a wealth of information about the career that interests you.

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

APPROVED
under the
G. I. BILL

BOX 3968-T, SCRANTON 9, PENNA.

Without cost or obligation, please send me full particulars about the course BEFORE which I have marked X:

- Business and Academic Courses**
- ☐ Accounting
 - ☐ App. Psychology
 - ☐ Business Administration
 - ☐ Bus. Correspondence
 - ☐ Certified Public Accounting
 - ☐ Commercial
 - ☐ Commercial Art
 - ☐ Cost Accounting
 - ☐ Federal Tax
 - ☐ First Year College
 - ☐ Foremanship
 - ☐ Good English
 - ☐ Higher Mathematics
 - ☐ Industrial Supervision
 - ☐ Motor Traffic
 - ☐ Retailing
 - ☐ Salesmanship
 - ☐ Sign Lettering
 - ☐ Spanish
 - ☐ Traffic Management
 - ☐ Air Conditioning and Plumbing Courses
 - ☐ Air Conditioning
 - ☐ Heating
 - ☐ Refrigeration
 - ☐ Plumbing
 - ☐ Steam Fitting

- Chemical Courses**
- ☐ Chemical Engineering
 - ☐ Chemistry, Analytical
 - ☐ Chemistry, Industrial
 - ☐ Chemistry, Mfg. Iron & Steel
 - ☐ Petroleum Refining
 - ☐ Pulp and Paper Making
 - ☐ Civil Engineering, Architectural and Mining Courses
 - ☐ Architecture
 - ☐ Building Estimating
 - ☐ Civil Engineering
 - ☐ Contracting and Building
 - ☐ Highway Engineering
 - ☐ Lumber Dealer
 - ☐ Reading Structural Blueprints
 - ☐ Sanitary Engineering
 - ☐ Structural Drafting
 - ☐ Structural Engineering
 - ☐ Surveying and Mapping
 - ☐ Communications Courses
 - ☐ Electronics
 - ☐ Prac. FM and Television
 - ☐ Prac. Telephony
 - ☐ Radio Operating
 - ☐ Radio, General
 - ☐ Radio Servicing
 - ☐ Telegraph Engineering

- Electrical Courses**
- ☐ Electrical Drafting
 - ☐ Electrical Engineering
 - ☐ Electric Light and Power
 - ☐ Lighting Technician
 - ☐ Practical Electrician
 - ☐ Power House Electric
 - ☐ Ship Electrician
 - ☐ Internal Combustion Engines Courses
 - ☐ Auto Technician
 - ☐ Diesel Electric
 - ☐ Diesel Engines
 - ☐ Gas Engines
 - ☐ Mechanical Courses
 - ☐ Aeronautical Engineer's, Jr.
 - ☐ Aircraft Drafting
 - ☐ Flight Engineer
 - ☐ Forging
 - ☐ Foundry Work
 - ☐ Heat Treatment of Metals
 - ☐ Industrial Engineering
 - ☐ Industrial Instrumentation
 - ☐ Industrial Metallurgy
 - ☐ Machine Shop
 - ☐ Machine Shop Inspection
 - ☐ Mechanical Drafting
 - ☐ Mechanical Engineering

- Mold-Loft Work**
- ☐ Patternmaking—Wood, Metal
 - ☐ Reading Shop Blueprints
 - ☐ Sheet-Metal Drafting
 - ☐ Ship Drafting
 - ☐ Ship Fitting
 - ☐ Tool Designing
 - ☐ Toolmaking
 - ☐ Welding Engineering
 - ☐ Welding—Gas and Electric
 - ☐ Railroad Courses
 - ☐ Air Brake
 - ☐ Car Inspector
 - ☐ Diesel Locomotive
 - ☐ Locomotive Engineer
 - ☐ Locomotive Fireman
 - ☐ Locomotive Machinist
 - ☐ Railroad Section Foreman
 - ☐ Steam and Diesel Loco. Eng.
 - ☐ Stationary Engineering Courses
 - ☐ Boilermaking
 - ☐ Combust. Engr.
 - ☐ Engine Running
 - ☐ Marine Engineering
 - ☐ Power Plant Engr.
 - ☐ Steam Engineer
 - ☐ Textile Courses
 - ☐ Cotton Manufacturing
 - ☐ Loom Fixing
 - ☐ Rayon Weaving
 - ☐ Textile Designing
 - ☐ Woolen Manufacturing

Name _____ Age _____ Home Address _____
City _____ State _____ Working Hours _____ A.M. to _____ P.M.

Present Position _____
Length of Service _____
in World War II _____

Employed by _____

Enrollment under G.I. Bill approved for World War II Veterans. Special tuition rates to members of the Armed Forces.
Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Ltd., Montreal, Canada.

POPULAR FOOTBALL

VOL. VI, No. 2

A Thrilling Publication

Fall Issue



FEATURED FOOTBALL NOVELET GRIDIRON GIANT KILLERS

By ADD ARETZ

The Freemont coaching job was just a step in Tod Richards' route to Big Time honors, till he got sidetracked by the fightingest upset-hungry squad in all football annals!..... 11

TWO OTHER COMPLETE NOVELETS

- ONE LAST THROW**.....Robert Sidney Bowen 34
Johnny Sawyer knew his arm was about gone, but to help the owner-coach of the Beavers he vowed to put his team in the play-offs!
- THIRD-STRING CENTER**.....John Wilson 62
Hod Duncan was rated low on the Wesleyan roster—but when he got his chance to shine he showed a lot of better players how to play the game!

FIVE SHORT STORIES

- CLEATS IN THE MUD**.....Sam Merwin, Jr. 52
An old coach with new ideas sparks his team into a surprising win.
- LAST GAME**.....Giles A. Lutz 87
Mike Shores was nearly washed up in pro football, but—
- BLOCKING BROTHER**.....William Campbell Gault 97
When Steve Winter tries to shield his frater, things keep getting rougher.
- CHUMPS CAN'T BE CHAMPS**.....H. C. Butler 110
Turning the terrible Vikings into a winning team is Big Ed Wade's problem.
- THE GREAT MOMENT**.....Harrison Hendryx 121
It's here—Harold Preeble's last chance for glory on the gridiron!

FEATURES

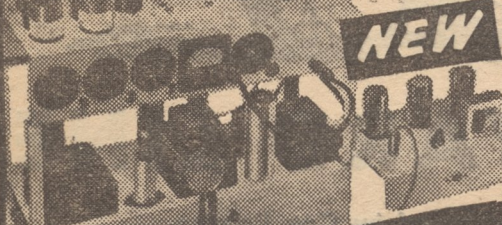
- THE FIFTY-YARD LINE (A Department)**.....Cap Fanning 6
- HIGH TRAINING (A Football Anecdote)**.....Matt Lee 86
- THRILLS IN FOOTBALL (True Stories)**.....Jack Kofoed 106

You Practice COMMUNICATIONS

I Send You Parts To Build
This Transmitter

As part of my Communications Course you build this low power broadcasting transmitter, learn how to put a station "on the air," perform procedures demanded of Broadcast Station operators, make many tests.

NEW



BE A RADIO-TELEVISION TECHNICIAN

YOU BUILD this Tester with parts I send early in my Servicing Course. Helps you fix neighbors' Radios and EARN EXTRA MONEY in spare time.

YOU BUILD Vacuum Tube Power Pack as part of my Communications Course; get experience with packs of many kinds. Learn how to correct Power Pack troubles.

YOU BUILD this A. M. Signal Generator as part of my Servicing Course. It provides amplitude-modulated signals for many tests and experiments.



I TRAINED THESE MEN



"I have been operating my own Servicing business. In two years I did \$14,000 worth of business; net profit, \$6,850. Have one full time employee, an N.R.I. Student."—PHILIP G. BROGAN, Louisville 8, Ky.



"Four years ago, I was a bookkeeper with a hand-to-mouth salary. Now I am a Radio Engineer with a key station of the American Broadcasting Company network."—NORMAN H. WARD, Ridgefield Park, N. J.



"When halfway thru the N.R.I. course, I made \$5 to \$8 a week fixing sets in my spare time. Am now selling and installing Television sets and antennas."—E. J. EYRENBENDER, New Boston, Ohio.



"My first job was operator with KDLR, obtained for me by your Graduate Service Dept. I am now Chief Engineer of Police Radio Station WQOX. I never hesitate to endorse N.R.I."—T. S. NORTON, Hamilton, O.

Veterans YOU MUST ACT FAST

G. I. Bill gives you valuable training benefits. For each 3 months of training eligibility, you can get a full year of N.R.I. Training. Keep your job while learning. But Act Now! Time is running out!

HURRY!

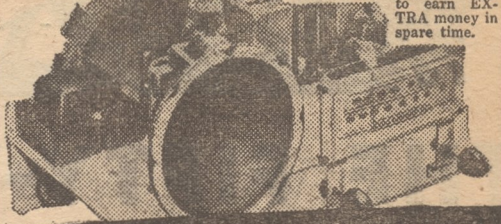
Mail Coupon Now!

You Practice Radio SERVICING

On This Modern Radio You
Build With Parts I Send

As part of my Servicing Course, I send you the speaker, tubes, chassis, transformer, loop antenna, EVERYTHING you need to build this modern, powerful Radio Receiver! I also send parts to build other Radio circuits, see below. You use for practical experience and

to earn EXTRA money in spare time.



Learn Servicing or Communications by Practicing in Spare Time with KITS OF RADIO PARTS I Send



J. E. SMITH, President,
National Radio Institute

Do you want good pay, a job with a bright future and security? Would you like to have a profitable shop or store of your own? If so, find out how you can realize your ambition in the fast growing, prosperous RADIO-TELEVISION industry. Even without Television, the industry is bigger than ever before. 81 million home and auto Radios, 2,700 Broadcasting Stations, expanding use of Aviation and Police Radio, Micro-wave Relay, Two-way Radio for buses, taxis, etc., are making opportunities for Servicing and Communications Technicians and FCC-Licensed Operators.

Television is TODAY'S Good Job Maker

In 1949, almost 3,000,000 TV sets sold. By 1954, 20,000,000 TV sets estimated. 100 TV Stations now operating. Authorities predict 1,000 TV Stations. This means more jobs, good pay for qualified men all over the United States and Canada.

Many Soon Make \$10 Extra a Week in Spare Time

Keep your job while training. Hundreds of successful RADIO-TELEVISION TECHNICIANS I trained had no previous experience, some only a grammar school education! Learn Radio-Television principles from illustrated lessons. Get PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE—build valuable multimeter—experiment with circuits common to Radio and Television. Keep all equipment. Many students make \$5, \$10 extra a week fixing neighbors' Radios in spare time. SPECIAL BOOKLETS start teaching you the day you enroll.

Send Now For 2 Books FREE—Mail Coupon

Send now for my FREE DOUBLE OFFER. You get actual Servicing lesson to show you how you learn at home. Also my 64-page book, "How to Be a Success in Radio-Television." Read what my graduates are doing, earning; see equipment you practice with at home. Send coupon in envelope or paste on postal, J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. OM09, National Radio Institute, Washington 9, D.C. Our 87th Year.

Good for Both—FREE

MRS. J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. OM09
National Radio Institute, Washington 9, D. C.

Mail me Sample Lesson and 64-page Book about How to Win Success in Radio-Television. Both FREE. (No Salesman will call. Please write plainly.)

Name.....Age.....

Address.....

City.....Zone.....State.....

☐ Check if Veteran Approved for training under G. I. Bill

The ABC's of
SERVICING

How to Be a
Success
in RADIO-
TELEVISION



THE FIFTY-YARD LINE

A Department for Readers Conducted by Cap Fanning

IT WAS Notre Dame's last game of the 1949 season. The Irish had rolled down to the Cotton Bowl Stadium at Dallas with the momentum of one of their greatest seasons behind them. Undefeated and untied, they had knocked over the best the Midwest, the West Coast and much of the South and East had to offer in the playing of one of the toughest schedules ever mapped.

The Mustangs of Southern Methodist figured to be tough—they always are, especially on their home grounds before their home rooters. They were keyed for the contest. But they could be beaten—they already had been in the tough competition of Texas football.

The Sideline Star

Furthermore, their great star, triple-threat-back Doak Walker, a two-year All American, was sidelined with injuries. They didn't figure to make things too rugged for the Irish, even though they were keyed up and Mustang Coach Madison "Matty" Bell was and is a shrewd old campaigner with more than three decades of big-time college football behind him, dating from his Centre College days.

But at half-time, according to Leon Hart, the great Notre Dame end who was not only a standout All American choice but being talked of as an all-timer, the visitors were a bewildered and beaten outfit. They came trooping into the field house with cleats dragging, wondering what had hit them and how to stop it.

Magnificently coached not only in all

phases of the T formation on attack, prepared defensively to mangle the same formation, the single wing, the double wing or any of the offensive variations that make up the modern game, they had had their attack all but stopped cold by the raging Mustangs and their defense riddled by an unscouted type of attack that had left them floundering in the wake of the Mustang runners and receivers like lost sheep.

"We figured," Hart said later to the sportswriters present, "that Frank Leahy and the rest of our coaches would have the Methodist offensive mapped and charted. We figured they'd tell us how to stop it."

The Attack Stumped 'Em

But apparently Leahy and his brilliant staff of young coaches were as bewildered as the players. They had seen nothing like it. Their scouts had come up with no warning of this apparently unanswerable new type of attack with which Matty Bell was making monkeys of them. They were stumped.

So the Irish went back for the second half, still unprepared. The Mustangs, with Doak Walker's substitute, Kyle Rote, playing the running and passing game of his young career to spark them, gobbled ground almost at will. Only bad luck in the clutches kept them from running up an unanswerable point total.

With the wreckage of their hitherto unbeaten season staring them in the face, Notre Dame finally got going. They hadn't taken the best the country had to offer to lie down and play dead, even though they couldn't

figure out what they were up against. They rallied and fought like madmen.

Ultimately, in a final-minute finish that all but broke Southern Methodist's collective heart, they took advantage of a couple of breaks and avoided going down in what would have been the upset of many seasons. They pulled it out but when they left the field after the final gun they were still a sorely bewildered gang of young men—who knew they had been lucky to come out on top.

What, they wanted to know, was this tricky and utterly unforeseen attack that had thrown awry all their beautifully conceived defensive signals?

An Old Formation

Matty Bell, although sorry indeed to have seen victory slip away from his team, could not help chuckling when he gave newsmen the answer.

"Why," he said, "when I looked at my scouts' reports I realized I was going to have to give my boys something special to crack that Irish defense. So I dug up the old Washington and Jefferson spread formation; the one that took them to a Rose Bowl tie back in nineteen twenty-two."

There it was—the Mustang assault that had stood the Notre Dame defense and its entire coaching staff on its ear. Of course Matty Bell had added a few refinements to fit the modern game—but as always the spread depended upon having one great triple-threat back, which is its major weakness. Southern Methodist had Kyle Rote at his peak and that was enough to make it work.

Leahy and his aides, who played their football in the late twenties and early thirties, simply didn't know about it—or how to stop it.

The single-star factor was the spread's downfall as a popular system—since there simply weren't enough of them to go around. The Notre Dame box and shift, the single wing, the double wing and the T had completely blotted it from current consideration.

Ore in the Records

There is plenty of strategic and tactful foot-ore to be mined in the records. Fifteen to twenty years ago runbacks of kickoffs became a tremendous menace—thanks to a re-discovery of the flying wedge with legal trimmings. These were quickly made illegal by

[Turn page]

"You ought to get a medal!"

says I

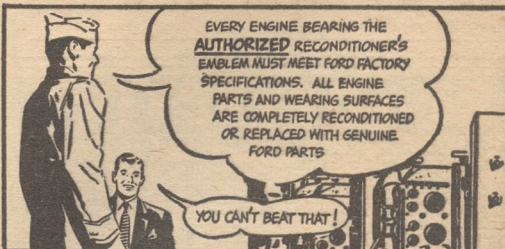
*NOT ME, FRED COMES BACK.
*THE FORD-AUTHORIZED RECONDITIONER SHOULD GET IT."



I STOPPED TO TELL MY MECHANIC FRIEND, FRED, HOW FRISKY MY FORD IS SINCE I GOT MY RECONDITIONED ENGINE.

SEE THAT EMBLEM? THAT'S WHY YOUR FORD'S GOT SO MUCH PER. IT'LL STAY THAT WAY TOO, FOR THOUSANDS OF MILES TO COME!

THEN THAT'S THE THING TO LOOK FOR WHEN YOU'RE BUYING A RECONDITIONED ENGINE!



YOU CAN'T BEAT THAT!



HE SHOWED ME A PILE OF OTHER PHOTOS TAKEN AT A FORD-AUTHORIZED RECONDITIONER'S AND, BROTHER...THEY HAVE SOME EQUIPMENT!



AUTHORIZED

RECONDITIONED FORD ENGINES AND ENGINE ACCESSORIES

LOOK FOR THE AUTHORIZED RECONDITIONER'S EMBLEM ON THE RECONDITIONED FORD ENGINE YOU BUY

EVEN IF YOU DON'T KNOW A NOTE OF MUSIC NOW...

**YOU CAN LEARN YOUR FAVORITE
INSTRUMENT THIS EASY A-B-C WAY**

● No special talent, no previous training needed. This U. S. School home-study method is so successful because you learn to play by playing real tunes by note, right from the start. And just think, you can learn your favorite instrument for only a few cents a day! If interested, mail coupon for **FREE Booklet** and **Print and Picture Sample**. See for yourself how easy it is to learn any instrument, right at home, in spare time, without a private teacher. **U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC**, 29411 Brunswick Bldg., New York 10, N. Y.



FREE! Print and Picture Sample

U.S. School of Music, 29411 Brunswick Bldg., New York 10, N. Y. Please send me **FREE** Print and Picture Sample and Illustrated Booklet. I am interested in the instrument checked below.

<input type="checkbox"/> Piano	<input type="checkbox"/> Piano Accordion	<input type="checkbox"/> Tenor Banjo
<input type="checkbox"/> Guitar	<input type="checkbox"/> Saxophone	<input type="checkbox"/> Modern Elementary Harmony
<input type="checkbox"/> Violin	<input type="checkbox"/> Trumpet, Cornet	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Instrument

Name.....
(Please Print)

Street.....

City.....State.....

Be a DETECTIVE

A CHALLENGE FROM WASHINGTON D.C.

Help Stop Crime! Train at home. Earn big money. Amazing training course from the **NATIONS CAPITAL** (center of law enforcement) by former **U.S. GOVT. AGENT** and **NAVAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICER** exposes actual methods used by Criminals. Write for **FREE BOOK**. State age.

INTERNATIONAL DETECTIVE TRAINING SCHOOL

1701 Monroe St., N.E. Dept. 1911 Washington 18, D. C.



LEARN TO MOUNT BIRDS



ANIMALS, FISH, PETS

Be a Taxidermist. Save your hunting **TROPHIES**. Have a fishhome-museum. Hunters, sportsmen and mount your beautiful **DUCKS, QUAIL, DEER, TAN skins, FURS**. Great Fun. Spare-time **PROFITS**.

FREE BOOK

Tells ALL about it. 100 fine wild-game pictures, 48 pages. **SEND TODAY**, don't delay. Get this **WONDERFUL FREE BOOK, MEN AND BOYS**. Learn Taxidermy. Double your hunting pleasure. Rush letter or **POSTAL** today. **STATE YOUR AGE**.

N.W. SCHOOL OF TAXIDERMISTRY, Dept. 4411 Omaha, Neb.

Raincoats At Prices That Sell

and Profits That Pay You Well!

BE OUR LOCAL DEALER

Earn extra money selling largest line **Leather Jackets, Gabardines, Overcoats, Double Purpose Coats, Ladies' Full-Back 3/4 Way and Zip-in Lined Coats** and other fast selling numbers. Write at once for **FREE** money-making outfit.

CONSUMERS RAINCOAT CO.
608 S. Dearborn St., Dept. 911
Chicago, Ill.



moving a number of the receiving team's players up close to midfield.

And the T formation is nothing but a variation on the old Walter Camp formation that made the Yale teams of '88 and later such juggernauts. Clark Shaughnessy, then of Chicago, and George Halas of the Bears, both keen students of the game, revived it around 1940—and look at the devastation they caused.

There is always the possibility that new rule changes can restore the effectiveness of some long-outlawed maneuver for which the modern game must get its answer the hard way. We have a hunch that, even with the one-second rule in effect, Doc Williams' famed Minnesota shift would be mighty hard to stop if a few man-in-motion and other up-to-date wrinkles were added to it.

This is the one in which guards and tackles line up in front of the backs behind center and can jump in on either side as the *hike* is called. In its day, without a one-second rule, it was unstoppable. The defense never got a chance to move over and meet it. But even with the enforced pause a few decoys toward the weak side might cause a similar scramble.

At any rate it is something to speculate upon. Even better, it means that ingenuity as well as power and depth and the multi-platoon systems can pay off with touchdowns. Matty Bell's shrewd strategy last autumn should pay off even better. For it is bound to send a lot of smart young know-it-all grid mentors scurrying back into gridiron history.

And the results of such research are bound to make the game more interesting.

OUR COMPANION MAGAZINES

OUR companion magazines at present have just about as good fact-and-action-packed a selection of sports fiction novels, novelets and short stories—to say nothing of features—on the stands as we have ever assembled at any one time. Here are the titles to look for as well as some of the stories to expect behind their covers.

EXCITING FOOTBALL—Here we have three big-time novelets, **THE HARD-BOILED COACH** by Robert Sidney Bowen, **THE GLORY ROAD** by William O'Sullivan and **TOUCHDOWN CHORUS** by Sam Merwin, Jr. And the rest of a big issue will contain, to paraphrase the recently-popular song, "football, football, football." Plenty of touchdowns in this one.

5-SPORTS CLASSICS—Two of the five are gridiron novels—**ROSE BOWL FEVER** by Nelson S. Bond and **UNDER FALSE COLORS** by T. W. Ford. This powerful newcomer to the sports-fiction field also contains a pair of baseball novels as well—**STARSTRUCK SOUTHPAW**, by Sam Merwin, Jr., and **BIGGER THAN BASEBALL**, by William O'Sullivan. The fifth novel is a new prize-ring yarn, **WAKE FOR A WARRIOR**, by William Campbell Gault.

POPULAR SPORTS—Football is again in the lead, as befits the season, with John Wilson's fine short novel, **COFFIN CORNER COACH**. Arthur J. Burks takes second lead with a very unusual fight novelet, **A LITTLE BROWN BABY**. And plenty of accurate action in varied sports takes up the rest of the issue.

THRILLING SPORTS—You'll get a great belt out of John Wilson's **GOAL LINE STAND**, another brilliant gridiron short novel. And if you care for action on ice you'll enjoy William O'Sullivan's **STANLEY CUP CRAZY**. Also plenty of shorter subjects.

If sports and sports fiction are your dish, these are the magazines and stories to look for. You can hardly go wrong with any or all of them.

—CAP FANNING.

America's Most
ENTERTAINING
Picture Magazine!



NOW ON SALE AT ALL STANDS
ONLY 15c PER COPY

LEARN
**Television
- Radio
OR Electricity**
IN THE GREAT SHOPS OF **COYNE**



TRAIN QUICKLY!
OLDEST, BEST EQUIPPED
SCHOOL of ITS KIND in U.S.
2 Opportunity Fields

Come to the Great Shops of **COYNE** in Chicago. Our 51st Year! Get quick, practical training in **TELEVISION-RADIO** or **ELECTRICITY**. G. I. Approved. Finance plan for non-veterans. Mail Coupon Today for complete details.

NOT "HOME-STUDY" COURSES!
You learn on real, full-size equipment, not by mail. Finest staff of trained instructors to help you get ready quickly for a better job, a fine future.

FREE BOOKS Clip coupon for big illustrated Coyne book on either **TELEVISION-RADIO** or **ELECTRICITY**. Both books sent FREE if you wish. No obligation; no salesman will call. Act NOW!

B. W. COOKE, Pres.
COYNE Electrical & Television-Radio School.
500 S. Paulina St., Chicago 12, Ill. Dept. 70-48K

Send FREE BOOK and full details on:
☐ TELEVISION-RADIO. ☐ ELECTRICITY

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY..... STATE.....

INVENTORS

Learn how to protect your invention. Secure "Patent Guide" together with "Record of Invention" form—without obligation.

CLARENCE A. O'BRIEN & HARVEY JACOBSON

Registered Patent Attorneys

08-K District National Bldg. Washington 5, D. C.

**SLEEP
LIKE A TOP WITH
ASTHMADOR**

The soothing medicated fumes of Dr. R. Schiffmann's **ASTHMADOR** relieve the choking agony of bronchial asthma. You breathe more easily—sleep better. Use **ASTHMADOR** anytime—powder, cigarette or pipe mixture—whichever is most convenient. At all drug stores in U.S. & Canada.

DR. R. SCHIFFMANN'S
ASTHMADOR

LUCK WAS WITH TOM WHEN...



ON VACATION, TOM MAHONEY IS SHOOTING THE LAST AND MOST DANGEROUS RAPIDS IN HIS LONG TRIP THROUGH MAD CANYON WHEN . . .



NEXT MORNING

YOUR FACE LOOKS WELL GROOMED AND FEELS SWELL AFTER A REFRESHING THIN GILLETTE SHAVE. THIS LOW-PRICE BLADE IS WONDERFULLY KEEN AND LONG LASTING. ALSO IT FITS YOUR GILLETTE RAZOR ACCURATELY AND PROTECTS YOU FROM THE DISCOMFORT OF ORDINARY BLADES. **ASK FOR THIN GILLETTES** IN THE CONVENIENT 10-BLADE PACKAGE WITH USED-BLADE COMPARTMENT

THIN Gillette 10 BLADES THIN Gillette 10 BLADES

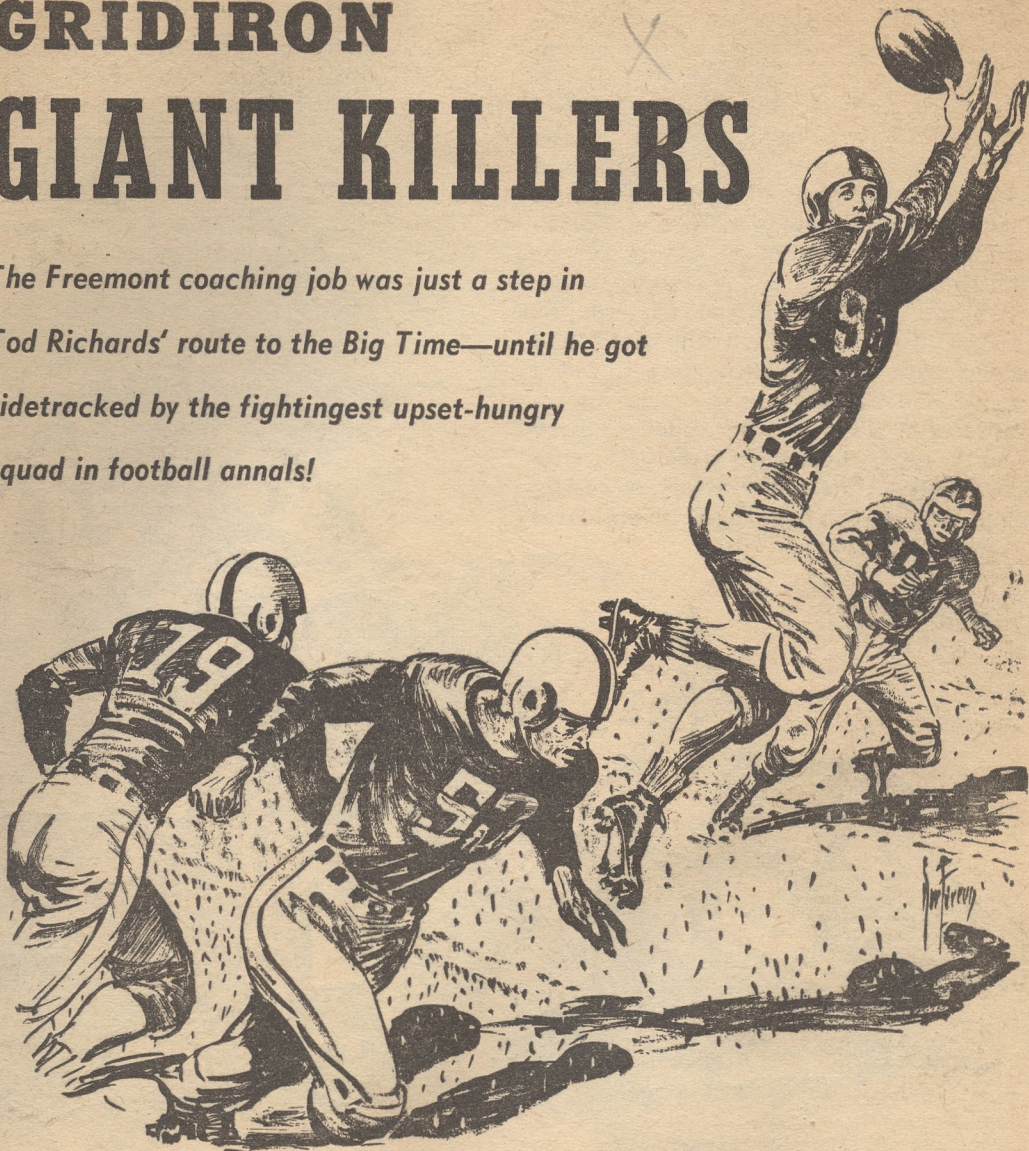
10-25¢ 4-10¢

NEW TEN-BLADE PACKAGE HAS COMPARTMENT FOR USED BLADES

 A black and white portrait of Tom Mahoney, smiling.

GRIDIRON GIANT KILLERS

*The Freemont coaching job was just a step in
Tod Richards' route to the Big Time—until he got
sidetracked by the fightingest upset-hungry
squad in football annals!*



A NOVELET BY **ADD ARETZ**

CHAPTER I

No Time to Dance

A THIN smile crept across Tod Richards' sharp features as he watched Steve Pupach's flying two hundred and ten pounds rip the tackling dummy off its hook and grind it inches into the brown autumn turf.

"Oh, Mabel!" Sully McMichael, watch-

ing with Tod, grimaced mockingly. "I better call that ape off that thing before he ruins it, coach. This school can't afford another one."

No, this school couldn't afford another one, Tod reflected disdainfully, as he walked onto the dusty Freemont College

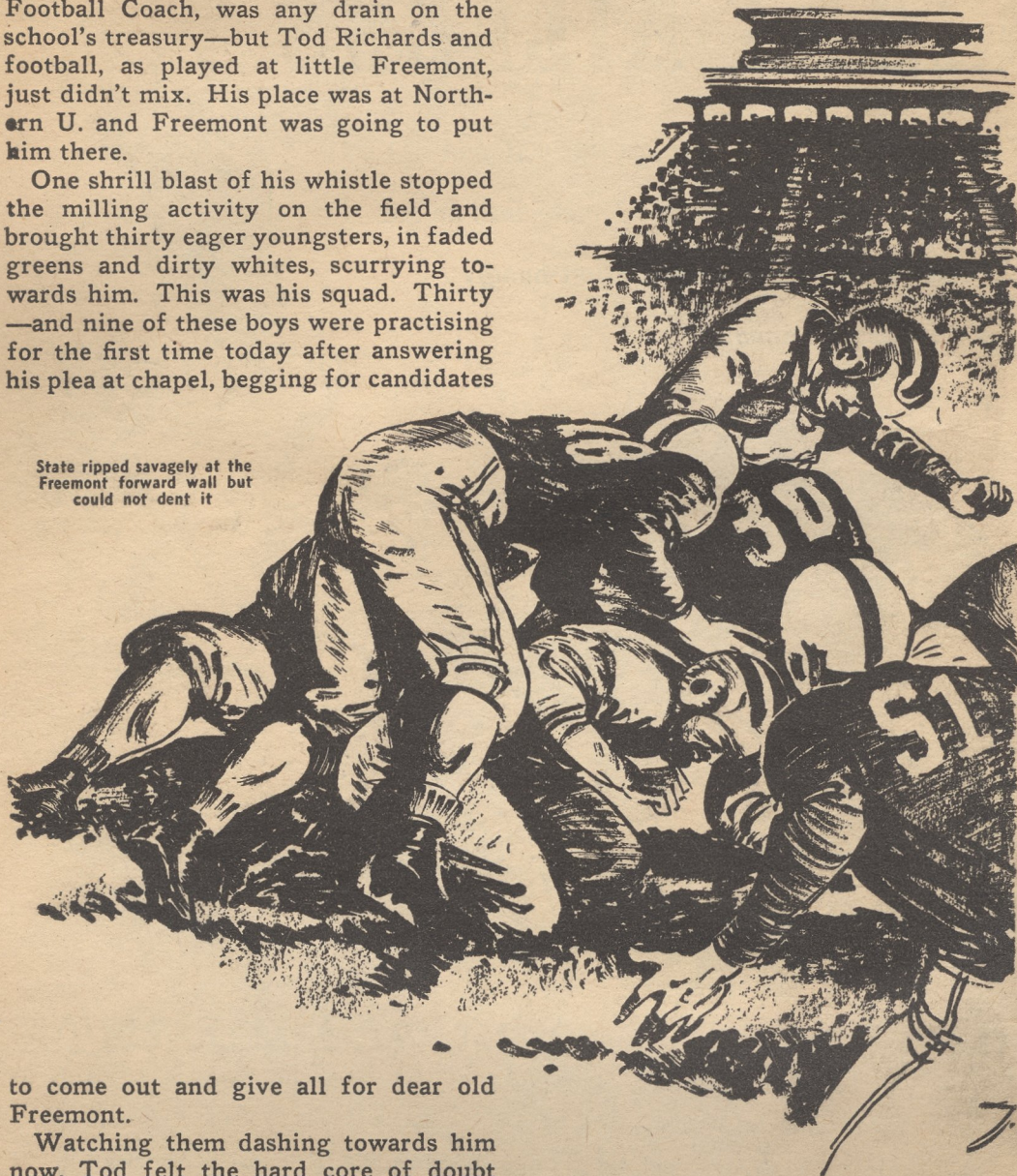
football field. In fact this barnyard college couldn't afford a lot of things—Tod Richards for one. Not that his meager salary, as Athletic Director and Head Football Coach, was any drain on the school's treasury—but Tod Richards and football, as played at little Freemont, just didn't mix. His place was at Northern U. and Freemont was going to put him there.

One shrill blast of his whistle stopped the milling activity on the field and brought thirty eager youngsters, in faded greens and dirty whites, scurrying towards him. This was his squad. Thirty—and nine of these boys were practising for the first time today after answering his plea at chapel, begging for candidates

ing but work.

"How many of you new men have played football before?" he asked when the squad crowded around him and Sully

State ripped savagely at the Freemont forward wall but could not dent it



to come out and give all for dear old Freemont.

Watching them dashing towards him now, Tod felt the hard core of doubt and resentment well up inside him again. Perhaps he had been too sure? Perhaps even his own determination was not enough to weld a team from this mediocre talent? He forced the doubt from his mind. There was time now for noth-

in the center of the field.

Six hands went up. One of them was Pupach's.

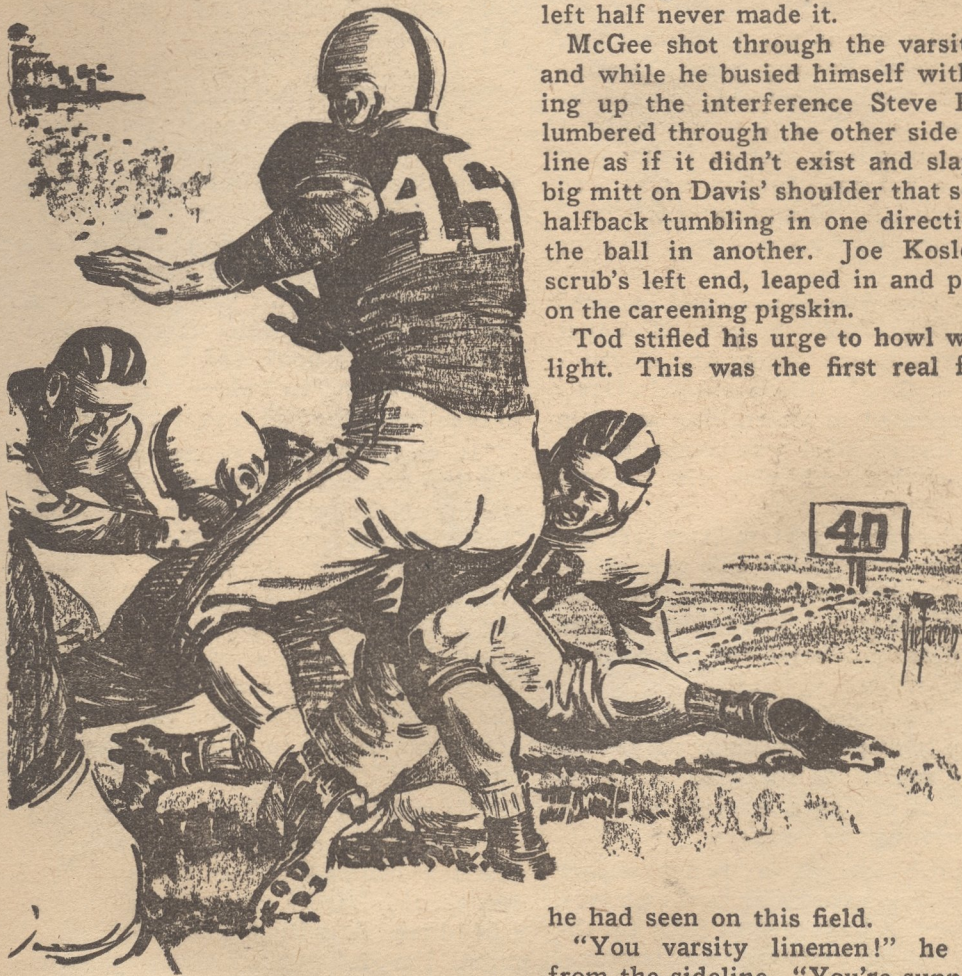
Tod said, "Good. We'll use you boys in scrimmage. Let me get a line on you."

Sully McMichael frowned. "Ain't that

rushin' it, Tod? These new kids ain't in shape."

Tod threw his big assistant an irritated look. "They'll do," he snapped.

He filled the vacant spots on the second team with Pupach at left tackle, a wiry looking sophomore named McGee at right guard—and for safety he choose a six-foot string bean, Herb Willison.



"Okay, men. Varsity's ball," he said. "Let's put some life in it."

AS THE two teams scurried to position Sully said, "Ain't that Willison a character? He won't go one-fifty with a pig of lead under each arm, but did you get a load of the lunch hooks

on him? If he can't flip that pill the length of the field I'll eat it. No sugar or cream either."

Tod hadn't noticed but it would be looked into before the day was over.

Out on the field the two teams lined up, jabbing good-natured insults across the line at each other. Al Marks, the varsity quarter, sent Skip Davis at the scrub's right tackle. The swivel-hipped left half never made it.

McGee shot through the varsity line and while he busied himself with fouling up the interference Steve Pupach lumbered through the other side of the line as if it didn't exist and slapped a big mitt on Davis' shoulder that sent the halfback tumbling in one direction and the ball in another. Joe Kosler, the scrub's left end, leaped in and pounced on the careening pigskin.

Tod stifled his urge to howl with delight. This was the first real football

he had seen on this field.

"You varsity linemen!" he barked from the sideline. "You're supposed to charge *forward*! Remember? Same thing again."

And that's what it was—the same thing again. Only this time Davis did manage to hold onto the ball.

"If you don't stop that, someone is gonna get maimed," Sully grinned. "And I don't mean Pupach or Scotty."

Inside Tod was glowing. Two good men can carry a line. And McGee and Pupach were good—a blind man could see that. A bit crude and plenty green, yes—but Sully would take care of that. His amiable assistant hadn't been named All-American tackle for two years just because he was an orphan. Now if Sully were right about Willison's passing a few schools were in for a rude awakening.

And Sully was right. Willison's first heave traveled seventy yards through the air. It wobbled, missed its mark by thirty feet—but Tod never noticed. It was Willison's form that held him. The kid was a natural. In two weeks Tod would have him dropping them in a bucket from five yards or fifty, take your pick.

It was dark when a tired and battered Freemont squad quit the field. Now that he had the hub of a strong first eleven—Pupach, McGee, Willison and Skip Davis—Tod intended to let nothing stand in his way until his job was completed. A first eleven that could play with the best of them.

With the opener against State just two weeks away, that meant only one thing. Work, all work. As Athletic Director he hadn't scheduled State, Denton and Northern as breathers—for State, Denton and Northern.

"Attention, men," Tod shouted above the noisy horseplay in the small, steamy dressing room. "Blackboard drill tonight, up in the gym, at eight sharp. I want every man to be there."

His words brought a sudden silence and a confused expression to the players' faces. Puzzled he turned to Sully for the answer. The big assistant was frowning.

"One of the sororities is holding a dance in the gym tonight, Tod," he explained. "And all the—"

"Oh, is that all," Tod broke in, relieved. Then starting for the door he added, "We'll hold our drill down here then."

Sully called him back. "It ain't that, Tod," Sully said hesitantly. "Most of

the kids are counting on going. You know how it is."

No, Tod didn't know how it was. Tod Richards was a football coach, not a ballet teacher. And so was Sully. And it was about time he started acting like one.

Tod ran his gaze around the room. "The men that want to go to the dance may go," he said evenly. "Those who want to play football for Freemont will be here—at eight sharp."

HE CLOSED the door on the stilled dressing room and walked home.

"Don't tell me," Marilyn greeted him at the door of their bungalow in Prof Row. "It's written all over your ugly face. You've discovered a Grange or a Baugh. Or is he another Nagurski?"

Tod laughed. This beautiful wife of his had but two faults. Her ability to read him like a book, and her money.

"Six of them," he kidded, sitting down to the dinner she had kept warm for him.

"It was that talk at chapel today," Marilyn beamed. "That was swell, Tod, talking to the boys that way. The great Tod Richards begging to be adopted by little Freemont College.

"My business is coaching football and I want to do it right here at Freemont. But without a team to coach I'm out of a job. You men who want me as one of you be on the football field this afternoon, ready to play with me for Freemont."

"Me and Rockne," Tod said.

"But it was grand. In many ways," Marilyn insisted. "You know, Tod, I was terribly afraid you wouldn't be satisfied here. At a little school like this, I mean. I'm glad you are, though, because I love it. It's not at all like Northern or those other big schools. Here the faculty's one big happy family, the students drop in and—well it's just wonderful."

Tod looked across the table at his wife and the laugh that was in his throat died there. Marilyn wasn't kidding. She really believed he was enjoying himself here. She would have to be straightened

out on this deal but right now he had work to do.

He said, "Me too. But I gotta dash. One of my new boys is another Baugh and I'll have to change some plans to suit him. I want to have them ready for tonight's drill."

"Drill? Tonight?"

"Yeah, blackboard drill at eight o'clock."

"But Tod! The sorority dance?" Marilyn exclaimed. "We're to be chaperones."

Tod nodded impatiently. First Sully, now Marilyn. As if the job ahead wasn't already tough enough.

"Sure, baby," he said, scraping back his chair. "Tell you what. You go and I'll drop in after the drill. Okay?"

"But Tod? The players—"

"We only have two weeks to get ready for State. We can't waste our time dancing now, can we?"

Marilyn looked up at him, confused, then her throaty laughter filled the small room. "Please, Tod," she said between laughs. Don't tell me we're going to beat State?"

"Yes, we are."

Marilyn stood up, the laughter gone from her eyes. "You're joking, Tod. Freemont beat State? You can't mean it."

Tod Richards did mean it. Out of the dozen or so offers he had received he hadn't chosen Freemont without a reason. It was the Athletic Directorship that had drawn him here. Not because of the few dollars extra it paid but because as Athletic Director he could arrange his own football schedule.

This was for Tod. A coach who can't build a schedule he can beat just isn't a coach. That was the way he saw it. Even a coach at a small school like Freemont, with three mighty football powers like State, Denton and Northern to face.

That's why, this year, Freemont opened against Deb Truxlow's mighty State Lions. Truxlow-coached teams were notoriously slow starters. A glance through the record books would show that their first three opponents each sea-

son were always pushovers. When Truxlow went searching for a soft opener for this season Tod was right there to oblige. Only he intended to see to it that Freemont would prove not quite soft enough.

Then four weeks later, when Freemont journeyed down to Denton, Denton should be 'down.' After meeting Army the previous week and looking to their battle against Notre Dame the following Saturday they couldn't be anything else. A fair ball club that was 'up' would find Denton not too rugged. Freemont would be 'up.'

The next to the last game on Freemont's schedule was against Northern U. Northern would be looking to their traditional clash with Brownston and Freemont was meant to be just a warmer-upper for this classic contest. When Tod was finished with them they wouldn't be just warm—they'd be roasted.

The other six opponents on Freemont's card Tod could do nothing about. They were Little Seven Conference members and had to be met. But the outcome of these contests was not important. With wins over State, Denton and Northern Tod would have the sort of reputation the head coaching job at his Alma Mater required.

CHAPTER II

The Boiling Point

WHEN he arrived at the dressing room Sully and the players were there waiting for him.

"Two of the new boys couldn't make it," Sully told him. "Too much scrimmage today. They're thinking of quitting."

Tod's eyes anxiously circled the room. Willison was here. So were McGee and Pupach. He breathed easier.

"Too bad," he said absently, going to the blackboard hanging on the wall at

the end of the dingy room. "I'll talk to them in the morning."

He began marking white X's and O's on the board and the faint sound of music and shuffling feet drifted into the room. Sully suddenly started talking louder than was necessary for a guy who wasn't saying anything and Tod silenced him.

He said, "Move up here, men. We're going to learn our offensive formations. I want strict attention and lots of questions. That's the way we learn this game."

He got the attention but not the questions. Walking home with Marilyn after the dance he realized that his blackboard session had been outplayed by a dance. It was wasted time that would have to be made up.

And it was made up. It was scrimmage every night until dark, then blackboard drill until ten. And it paid off. He had himself a team—a strong team. He was pitifully short of capable reserves but his first eleven was geared to play sixty minutes of hard fast heady football.

The first two hours of the three-hundred-mile ride down to State were a silent, dry affair. It annoyed Tod. His team was in perfect condition. They should be edgy, eager for battle. Instead they read the sportswriters' predictions of a five-touchdown win for State and agreed.

He took all he could. Then, when he could stand it no longer, he walked to the front of the bus and said, "Look, fellows. I don't go for that die-for-dear-old-Siwash routine but we're not on this bus just for the ride. We're gonna surprise a few folks and win ourselves a ball game."

The players eyed him suspiciously and he told them how it was with Truxlow-coached teams. He went back fifteen years, named opponents, quoted scores. When he had finished he added, "We've put in some hard hours, missed out on some fun while doing it but we've everything needed to take State. It's simply a matter of wanting to."

They studied him a moment longer,

looked around at each other, then captain Lou Thompson sprang to his feet.

"You planned this whole thing!" he exclaimed. "Those long drills? Right from the first you—"

Tod nodded. He said, "Right. It won't come easy but today Freemont is better than State."

They liked the idea. They liked it very much. They smothered Tod with questions about State, about their own game, even about his own two All-American years at Northern.

When Tod finally got them quieted, he said to Sully, "What just thinking about knocking off a big dog won't do. For weeks I can't drag ten words out of the entire squad, now I can't shut them up."

"Yeah," Sully shrugged. "Maybe it's that. Maybe it's something else."

"Huh?"

Sully returned his gaze to the window. "Maybe they figure their coach is human after all," he said.

TOD didn't get it. He waited for Sully to continue but when he didn't Tod shrugged it off. His assistant, he knew, still didn't believe they had a chance against State.

When the team was dressed, ready to go, Tod motioned them around him and said, "Here's how we do it. No matter where we are, the first time we get the ball send Willison at tackle off a cut-back. The second play we pass. A long one, Willison to Kosler. If you're on your toes you'll score. After that sit tight unless I tell you otherwise. Let's go."

They went up the ramp and onto the lush turf of the sun-coated stadium. They looked as if they didn't belong. Even the spotless green floor of the stadium served to accentuate the seediness of their worn faded green uniforms.

Seconds later a roar broke from the forty-odd thousand that only half-filled the huge saucer. The mighty State Lions, resplendent in their red-and-black silk togs, were racing onto the field. All six teams of them.

STATE won the toss and elected to receive. With Skip Davis holding, Al Marks got off a good boot. It went high and deep, giving his forwards plenty of time to go down there.

"Dutch" Brandt, State's candidate for All-American honors this season, took the kick on the eight-yard line. But before his interference could form in front of him "Scotty" McGee, Joe Kosler and "Barney" Atkinson smothered him down on the fifteen.

The Lions wheeled out of the huddle and lined up in their double wing. Fields, their hulking fullback, took the direct pass from center and bulled his way at right tackle. Steve Pupach was waiting for him. It was second and eight.

Fields made another two yards over right guard, then Brandt, coming around deep on a reverse, cut sharply at the hole at left tackle and Barney Atkinson slashed in from his terminal post to plug the gap.

Brandt veered to his right, picked up his blockers and, racing over the ground Barney had just vacated, went to the forty-seven before Skip Davis could bring him down from behind. The crowd voiced its approval. The romp they had come to witness was begun.

On the bench Tod scribbled in his black note book then snapped, "Ingram!"

"Barney was overanxious on that one," Sully, crouched alongside him, said. "He'll loosen up."

Chunky dark-eyed Bill Ingram stepped in front of the two men and Tod said, "Get in there for Atkinson. And if you don't lay a finger on the ball carrier keep him turned in. Can you remember that?"

The second-string end nodded vigorously and dashed onto the field. Atkinson jogged off and when he hesitated in front of Tod Tod waved him to the end of the bench. With plenty of time to mull over his boner Atkinson would remember his job the next time he got in there, Tod figured.

Mixing straight power thrusts with wide sweeps State worked the ball to Freemont's twenty-one. Fields plowed

for three. Then, after Brandt had made it fourth and one on the twelve, Pupach smashed through to spill Parry six yards behind the scrimmage line and Freemont took over on its own eighteen.

The Freemont scrubs sprang to their feet.

"Get down!" Tod barked.

"They might suspect something," Sully said to the kids. "Just act natural."

The green-clads lined up in a T, then shifted into a single wing. Willison took Ludwig's snap-back, faded for two steps, then cut over right tackle. State piled him up on the nineteen.

Tod moved to the edge of the bench, ground his cigarette into the sod. If they flubbed this one . . .

Freemont peeled off the huddle, went from their T into the single wing, then Willison had the ball, cradling it to his middle. He faded again for two steps, then, faking a lunge at right tackle, backpedaled fast to the ten. Downfield the State secondary began covering.

Cardoni, their safety man, followed Joe Kosler across midfield to the forty. But when Joe continued to race full tilt downfield Cardoni let him run and moved up to help cover the two Freemont men who were breaking for the sideline on State's forty.

Willison let go with his toss and an amazed cry broke from the stands. State men stood rooted as they watched the ball in its flight. Kosler took it on State's twenty-five and little Freemont had a 6-0 jump on big State.

The Freemont bench was a riot. White helmets sailed high into the air and hilarious teammates were hugging one another.

"Just like you said, Coach!" "Legs" Swanson shouted.

"Perfect! The kids worked it perfect!" Sully announced, a ring of pride in his voice.

Tod shrugged an arm off his shoulder. No, they hadn't worked it perfectly, he was thinking. But they would when they used it the next time against Northern.

Tod motioned Legs Swanson to him. "Get in there an' tell Marks to play it safe," he told the spindly half. "Outside their thirty kick on third down. No fancy stuff. Remember."

"Who for?" Swanson asked. "Skip or Herb?"

"Willison!" *Who else?* Freemont had seen the last of Herb Willison until the Denton game.

Willison jogged off the field under a warm ovation from the stands and his teammates swarmed over him.

"Nice job," Tod said absently, watching Swanson's place-kick split the up-rights for Freemont's seventh point.

Truxlow sent a new eleven into the contest and they returned Swanson's zooming kickoff to their own eighteen. State was unhurried, confident. They picked up six with a slash at left guard but could advance no further. McGee and Pupach teamed up to stop two thrusts at center and State punted out of bounds on the midfield stripe.

Two running plays netted Freemont four yards, then Legs got off a high lazy punt. It hit on State's eleven-yard line and dribbled out of bounds on the five.

IT WENT that way for the remainder of the first quarter. Swanson's sensational punting kept the big red team bottled inside its own fifteen and they couldn't move.

State's first eleven came in to start the second quarter and, more annoyed than angry at their own ineffectiveness, they opened the valve all the way. Brandt spun through for seven, Parry raced wide to the twenty-three. A plunge, a spinner, then a sweep by Brandt made it first and ten on State's forty-one.

State's supporters came to life. The holiday for the visitors was over. The collapse would come any moment now.

Mixing power thrusts inside tackle with sweeping reverses, State ground its way to the twenty-five. The green team dug in, desperately trying to stop this bid for a score. Lou Thompson came off the turf limping but Tod let him stay.

He had to. Edmundson, Thompson's replacement, was nothing.

Fields smashed through to the eighteen, then a bruising stop by Pupach halted the State drive.

Freemont's straight football was no match for the big State line and Swanson was forced to kick. His sixty-three-yard punt carried to State's fifteen and the red team came on again—slowly, incessantly.

Big Steve was a bear on the left side. McGee bored through repeatedly to dump the ball carrier. Captain Thompson, limping badly now, roamed along the line, encouraging, lashing his teammates to action. The forty thousand sat in stunned silence. A tribute to eleven outweighed, outmanned but not out-fought boys.

Tod sat forward on the bench and watched the play. This drive, he was certain, was State's bid. If his team could stop them now they would be spent. They'd never recover.

When State, using nothing but power, carried for a first to Freemont's twenty-two, Tod leaped from the bench. He suddenly had a hunch and intended to play it.

"Orsatti!" he snapped down the line. When the scrub fullback stepped in front of him he said, "Get in there for Reiter and watch for a first-down pass."

State broke out of the huddle and the pass came. It was their first of the afternoon and Freemont was waiting for it. Skip Davis picked it out of the sky on the goal line and broke upfield. Pupach, McGee and Marks opened a lane for him and he raced across midfield to State's forty-two before Brandt brought him down from behind.

Tod sat back, relieved. State's back was broken. They were a beaten ball club and they knew it. It showed in their every move.

Davis wheeled through tackle for six, then Marks made it third and one on the thirty-three. Freemont went into punt formation. Swanson took Ludwig's snap, swung his right foot back then forward

in a rhythmic arc but his foot didn't touch the ball. It was a fake.

Swanson took one step forward and lobbed the ball over the scrimmage line. Skip Davis, standing on the thirty behind five green shirts, was waiting for it. It was a screen pass and it caught State cold. Davis squeezed the ball and behind his protective wall he rushed downfield.

On the fifteen, his interference crumbled but Skip broke for the sideline and kept going. Cardoni hit him on the five and the ball squirted into the air. It hung there for a moment then came down into the waiting arms of a red-clad player. It was Dutch Brandt.

Brand straight-armed Ingram to the turf, pirouetted free of Yoder's outstretched hands and in front of him was nothing. He went the ninety-five yards without a Freemont man touching him. Freemont 7—State 6.

Tod was first stunned, then boiling. Marks had disobeyed his orders to play it safe. "Jenkins!" he shouted. "In at quarter!"

"It was a smart move," Sully was saying. "Skip's losing that ball was no fault of Al's. The kid's playing a ball game out there."

Tod ignored him. Maybe he was wrong about Sully, he was thinking. Maybe he wasn't the man for his assistant next year at Northern.

When Al Marks trudged off the field Tod waved him to the dressing room. What he had to say to Marks he wanted every man to hear.

Parry's placement split the uprights and it was 7—7.

Nick Reiter carried the kickoff back twelve yards to the twenty-five and before the teams could align themselves the gun banged, ending the half.

The forty-odd thousand stood and gave the boys in green a tremendous hand as they disappeared under the stands. The team for that little upstate school had played themselves half a ball game.

CHAPTER III

Orders for the Brain

TOD took his time going in. He had had this first needed win stowed away until his quarterback grew too big for his pants. Now they would have to unveil another cutie—a cutie he had been hoping to save for Denton or Northern.

He went into the dressing room and looked at Lou Thompson's knee. It was swollen, discolored. He probed the sore spot with his fingers, worked Thompson's leg. The captain clamped his jaw tight and took it. A wrench or a bad bruise perhaps—nothing too serious.

"Get some hot towels on this," he said to Sully. "Then tape it up. Tight."

"Tight? Why tight? He can't play on that leg Tod."

"Why not?" Tod wanted to know.

Sully stared at him for a moment then

[Turn page]

fast HELP for HEADACHE UPSET STOMACH - JUMPY NERVES

When headache hits, do as millions do. Take Bromo-Seltzer right away for fast help. Not only for the pain of headache but also for the upset stomach and jumpy nerves that often go with it.

Bromo-Seltzer effervesces with split-second action, ready to go to work at

once to fight headache three ways. Caution: Use only as directed.

Try Bromo-Seltzer. You must be satisfied or your money back!

Get Bromo-Seltzer at your drug-store fountain or counter today. A product of the Emerson Drug Co. since 1897.



BROMO-SELTZER

turned abruptly and went for the towels.

Tod went down the line, examining each player. Swanson had a split thumb, Yoder a lump on his side, Hank Ludwig's left eye was closing fast. There were other bumps and bruises but Tod was satisfied. His team was tired, a little worn, but still able to go another hard thirty minutes.

Walking to the center of the room he pulled his black note book from his pocket then said, "I warned you coming down that it wouldn't be easy. And it hasn't been. But the reason isn't State—it's Fremont."

He leafed through his note book, then began pacing the room. The players watched him silently, apprehensively.

He said, "Ludwig. On defense you're a line backer aren't you?"

When the center didn't answer Tod stopped in front of him. "Well are you or aren't you?" he demanded.

Ludwig moistened his lips, nodded. "Yeah, Coach," he answered hoarsely.

Tod turned his eyes to the ceiling, began pacing again. "The primary duty of a line backer is to stop the opposing ball carrier after his own linemen have stripped the ball carrier of his interference, of course.

"But—when his linemen fail to carry out this simple assignment, as incidentally ours have been failing, and the opposing ball carrier breaks across the scrimmage line into the secondary behind a protective screen of blockers, *then* the primary duty of the line backer is to destroy that screen, enabling his secondary to move up and make the stop."

Tod stopped again in front of Hank Ludwig. "Tell me, Ludwig," he snapped. "Have you ever heard that before?"

The big center kept his eyes on the floor.

"Well, have you?"

"Yeah, Coach. You told us."

"Well, well," Tod laughed mockingly. "You *do* know your job don't you? You just forgot. You were thinking of a sorority dance or a date you have tomor-

row night, maybe? Well, if you can possibly forget that girl for the next forty minutes and concentrate on your job we'll take home that win I promised you. Think you can do that?"

Hank Ludwig nodded.

Tod walked over to Al Marks. He eyed him for a tense moment, then said, "And you, Mr. Brain. I remember issuing instructions concerning our punting but evidently I've forgotten them. I know a smart guy like *you* wouldn't. How about repeating them for me, just so I'll know what they are?"

There was an uneasy stir in the room. Sully stepped beside Tod. "Look, Tod. Don't ya think—"

Tod brushed him off. "Well, Einstein!" he barked.

"Outside our thirty we were to punt on third down," Marks said lamely.

"Thank you. Outside our thirty we punt on third down," Tod repeated with mocking politeness. "Now one more thing. It's been a whole year since I've played this game and a guy forgets things. Tell me, Brain, is the thirty-three outside or inside the thirty?"

THE quarterback swallowed hard. "Outside," he mumbled.

"Then why did you throw that pass?" Tod demanded. "Because you know this game better than your coach? Is that it?"

"I don't know," Marks answered confused. "I mean—"

"You don't know? Well just slip out of that uniform and give it to me till you do know. When you realize that you don't you come and tell me. You'll get the suit back."

He went down the line berating each boy in his turn. Not one player escaped his acid tongue. When he had finished he closed his note book and dropped it into his pocket, then said, "If you can remember one thing we'll still win this ball game.

"Each time they expected a pass Kramer, their right tackle, dropped back to protect. On three of those third-down kicks, they figured a pass was coming.

Kramer dropped out of the line, leaving a fat hole.

"Now the first time we get the ball, Swanson will go into regular kicking formation on third down as we have been doing. But instead of kicking he passes. Whether or not it connects is not important. That State doesn't intercept is. The next third down Swanson does punt. Then we set Kramer up.

"The third time Swanson goes back on third down I've got a feeling Kramer will be expecting a pass. We give them the fake kick and cut back, Davis carrying. The hole at right tackle should be there. After that it ought to be easy. Can you remember that or is it too much for your heads?"

Nodding heads were his only answer.

"Okay, then" he said, motioning them out of the room. "The same team that finished the half will start. Let's go."

Out on the field Sully said, "Wasn't that being a little rough on the kids, Tod? They played a ball game that first half. After all we're not—"

"They'll play a better one this half," Tod said.

Truxlow had whipped his charges into a furious state during the rest period and they stormed down behind Cardoni's booming kickoff and smothered Nick Reiter on the nine. Swanson got one at center but Davis' try at end lost them and Freemont went into punt formation. The third-down kick was coming. State's secondary dropped back.

Swanson took Ludwig's long snapback, held it for a moment, then lobbed a wobbly heave over the line. It was an awkward almost laughable attempt but it caught State unprepared. Kosler picked it off his shoe strings and raced to the thirty-seven before five red-clads swarmed him under.

An infuriated State line smashed two tries at its middle and it was third and nine. Freemont went into punt formation. State was unsure. Brandt went back to his twenty but the secondary and the line-backers stayed close.

Shouts of, "Pass! Pass!" rose from

their ranks.

Brandt was forced to let Swanson's kick roll dead on his six. To do otherwise would have been suicide. Pupach, Yoder, McGee and Kosler were down there, waiting to jump him the moment he touched the ball.

Four plays put the ball on the twenty-two, then Freemont held. It was fourth and five and State was forced to punt.

Cardoni's kick went too high to make distance. Davis squeezed it on the fifty and with the aid of a bone-crushing block by Pupach sprinted to the thirty-three.

Tod moved to the edge of the bench. This was the break that should make the fake kick work. State was confident they could stop Freemont's ground game and now, with the play deep into their own territory, he was certain they would alert themselves for passes.

Davis made two on a sweep, then Reiter got one to the thirty. White helmets peeled off the huddle and when Swanson dropped back State shifted into the same formation they had used before with Brandt deep, the others up close. Tod glued his eyes on State's Kramer.

"Two—three—four—" Jenkins' shrill bark cut the late afternoon air. Then out of the corner of his vision Tod saw the ball spiraling back. Kramer went back-pedaling fast.

When Tod got his eyes back on the ball Davis was lifting it off Swanson's finger tips. He cradled the leather in his right arm and behind Reiter, Thompson and McGee dashed through the gaping hole on State's right side.

A State backer-upper slammed in but Reiter dumped him out of the way. Thompson and McGee were cut down on the twenty but Davis whirled free of two red-clads and was in the open with only Brandt between him and a touchdown. The State ace never had a chance.

IN THE open Davis was untouchable. At Northern next year Tod intended to give him acres. Brandt's desperate dive missed by four feet and Skip

went across standing up. Swanson's big foot made it 14—7.

The shocked surprise in the huge stadium was broken only by the wild hubbub on the Freemont bench. There insanity was in order.

State returned the kickoff to the twenty-four and opened the valve all the way. They threw power and deception at the Freemont forward wall—cutbacks, laterals, reverses and double-passes behind the line. The green team stood in there, sopping up the punishment, smashing threat after threat.

Pupach was favoring his left shoulder. Thompson was slower off the sod after each play.

"Lou's hurt," Sully kept repeating.

Tod left the captain in there. With Atkinson and Marks cooling their heels on the bench he could afford no more weakening of his team.

Midway in the last period State drove eighty-one yards to Freemont's nine before they were stalled.

Legs Swanson went back and got off his best punt of the day. It was a zooming tremendous thing that spun out of bounds on State's four.

State's adherents began moving for the exits. This surprising team from up-state had played their team to a standstill and the five minutes that remained were not enough.

Tod came off the bench, smiling. "Clark! Edmundson!" he called. "In for Pupach and Thompson." Time and distance were in his favor now. He could afford to replace his injured linemen.

A new team came in for State and they threw the book at the green team, using plays never meant for little Freemont in one last desperate effort to stave off this humiliating defeat.

Brandt swept wide for eight, then Fields carried through the middle for a first down on the eighteen.

Tod watched impassively. He was willing to concede State yardage as long as they didn't discover the deficiency in Freemont's left side. If they stayed away from Clark and Edmundson they'd

never cover the ground in time.

Davis batted down a long firstdown pass, then Cardoni wormed down the middle for six. They discovered it then—the hole in Freemont's left side. Brandt raced through for twelve, then went again for ten more. Hank Ludwig moved up to plug the gap and Cardoni promptly rifled a pass into the territory Hank had left vacant.

Tod was on his feet, watching the clock. Two minutes remained.

Brandt jammed between Edmundson and Clark to Freemont's thirty-five and a lunge at the same spot netted State six more. The partial crowd was hysterical. The big red team had finally found itself and was on its way.

"Pupach! Thompson!" Tod barked. "Get in there and stop this thing!"

The two linemen leaped out of their blankets and started onto the playing field. Sully McMichael stopped them, pulled them back to the bench.

"You can't use these kids!" he snapped at Tod. "They're hurt—bad."

Tod ignored him. Knocking Sully's grip off Pupach's and Thompson's arms he shoved them onto the field.

"But you *can't*!" Sully insisted. "Let State score. We'll still get a tie. That's—"

The two linemen hesitated, confused. "Get out there and stop them!" Tod shouted angrily.

They went out and they stopped them. State ripped savagely at the Freemont forward wall. They rocked it, bent it but when the gun banged they were still three yards away. Little Freemont had toppled mighty State 14—7.

It was a battered, spent but happy football team that trampled down the runway into the Freemont dressing room. When Tod went in the team pressed around him.

"You're all right, Coach," Al Marks spoke up. "It went off just like you said. I'll take that suit back if I can. From now on your word is law."

Every voice in the room but Sully McMichael's rose in approval.

CHAPTER IV

The Offer

SUNDAY morning, Freemont's upset win was headlined across the nation's sport pages. Tod Richards was again the toast of the gridiron world. Monday was a holiday at Freemont. The college band paraded the streets, flooding the air with "Fight, Freemont, Fight!" Even starchy Dean Yeastead joined in the celebration.

"If our boys can defeat State," he resolutely told a cheering gathering of students and townspeople, "then they are capable of defeating Dixon College."

This was the edict of the day. "We took State. We'll take Dixon and the Conference title too."

Dixon College, a perennial power in the Little Seven Conference, was Freemont's across-the-hill neighbor and heated rival. Their annual Thanksgiving Day clash on the gridiron, was the event of the year for this fertile rural valley.

That Dixon had trounced Freemont in their last six meetings was the cause for much grief among the loyal Freemont supporters. But this year Freemont had a ball club—and Tod Richards. Dixon's reign was ended.

Tod picked the magic bag clean. He dusted off the ancient Statue of Liberty, ran the kids ragged making the rosebud click, worked for hours perfecting the sleeper.

The kids ate it up. "Brother, what this stuff won't do to Dixon," Hank Ludwig chortled.

Tod let them talk. Looking to a win over Dixon and their first Conference Title in twenty years had them 'up' and would keep them there. Now that he had their confidence it left him free to give all his time to strengthening their game.

When Hilliard U. came down the following Saturday to pry off the lid of the

Conference schedule the rickety Freemont bleachers were jammed to overflow. Although their victory over State had read like an upset Tod realized that Denton and Northern would be taking no chances. Their scouts were part of this mob.

They would learn nothing.

Along with the injured Thompson and Pupach and the wayward Barney Atkinson and Al Marks, Tod kept Willison and Davis glued to the bench.

After a combination of first and second stringers, playing it straightaway, ran the count to 20—0, he let the scrubs run it out. The final score showed Freemont 26—Hilliard 18. Not the impressive victory the spectators had come to see but a victory. To the Freemonters, nothing else mattered.

They journeyed over to Mountain U. and, wearing the new green-and-white uniforms that Marilyn had bought for them, the scrubs went all the way to eke out a 14—13 win. It was Freemont 12—Yarmouth 6 and then, while Sully was scouting Denton, they racked up their fourth conference win over stubborn Stowe Tech 19—17.

Tod was satisfied. Although his reserves were battered and Sully's report on Denton was woefully meager his first team was primed for action. The injuries received in the State game were healed and after four weeks of riding the bench his first eleven was itching to run.

They motored up to Denton and they ran. Barney Atkinson was a bearcat out there. Al Marks played the game of his life. Two lightning-like thrusts in the first seven minutes of play put Freemont ahead 14—0 and the tired Denton team never recovered. Swanson's big foot kept them bottled the remainder of the contest and little Freemont came off with a convincing 14—6 triumph over big Denton.

Again Tod Richards' name blazed across the front page headlines. And it brought the results as he had known that it would.

WHEN he arrived home late after Wednesday's long drill Ed Halas, a former teammate and present chairman of Northern's Athletic Committee, was waiting for him.

"The 'Wizard of the Wilderness,'" Ed greeted him, laughingly. "Knowing that the papers don't get back this far, I thought I better drop back and let you know what they're saying about you."

Tod grinned. "So you've learned to read since I saw you last? That's great."

"Not nearly as great as the reputation you're building," Ed replied, following Tod across the room to the clothes closet. "That ball team of yours—are they really that tough?"

Tod peeled off his topcoat, hung it up, then with mock seriousness said, "Don't tell me you're down here to cancel our game with Northern?"

"Cancel it!" Ed exclaimed. "What I want to know is can you win it?" Ed went on suddenly serious, "Tod, you beat Northern and nothing alive will keep—"

"Break it up! Break it up!" Marilyn's voice came from the dining room. "That blarney will keep. This dinner won't."

The two men agreed. When they were seated at the table Marilyn said, "Now tell us, Ed. You didn't come down here just to taste my good cooking."

Ed Halas laughed. "As if you don't know—"

"I asked Ed to come down," Tod cut in quickly. He knew the reason for Ed's visit. He also realized it was better that his wife didn't—not just yet anyhow. He said, "I want Ed to up the ante on our cut from the Northern game. He's down here to argue us out of it."

The two of them gaped at him startled, then Marilyn exclaimed, "Oh, Tod! How wonderful! And you said nothing to me." Turning to Ed she went on eagerly, "You *will* do it, won't you Ed? For old friends. And Freemont will be forever grateful, believe me. We need so much here. Why, if the—"

Ed Halas wrinkled his nose. "But I didn't—"

"Of course, Ed, we realize that the Board will have to give their approval," Tod interrupted, holding Ed's eyes. "But as you said when you called me last week, if we can remain unbeaten until then it won't hurt the attendance."

Ed was staring blankly across the table at Tod. "When I called—"

Tod nodded vigorously.

"Oh! Yeah. Sure," Ed sputtered vaguely. "And as you say an unblemished record, on your part won't hurt any. I'll put it—we'll get together on it, don't worry. Say something around seventeen to twenty percent."

Tod leaned back relieved. Good old Ed. He'd have to buy the guy a box of his favorite cigars.

"That cinches our new stadium," Marilyn beamed. "If I have to buy up every seat myself the game will be a sellout. You know, Ed, I wanted to build a new stadium but we have a silly old rule that allows the Athletic Department to accept gifts only in proportion to the amount of cash in the Department's treasury."

"Why, I had to buy five hundred tickets to the Hilliard game so I could give them enough to get our new uniforms. When Tod becomes a director he's going to change that law, aren't you, sweetheart?"

Tod nodded. "Let's forget business and concentrate on loading Ed with that steak and mushrooms. A hideful of that should make him very agreeable, don't you think?"

"Plotters," Ed laughed.

It did the trick—took the conversation off Northern and Freemont and put it on safer ground. They reminisced of their days at Northern together and when dinner was over Marilyn hustled the two of them into Tod's study.

"Get in there and fight for dear old Freemont," she scolded.

Tod didn't have the door closed before Ed was on him. "This ante business? And that phone call? What the—"

Tod waved him to a chair. "Forget it. Forget it," he said.

HE WENT to his desk, got the box of cigars he kept in the drawer and, offering the box to Ed, explained, "It's Marilyn. She's got a crazy notion about liking it here. And— But tell me. What *do* we owe your visit to our fair city to?"

"Look, you phony," Ed growled. "You know darn well why I'm here. All I want to know is will you take the job and what sort of a contract do you expect?"

"Standley's not doing too badly," Tod parried. "Five and one. And I do lack a reputation."

"Pal," Ed laughed, "you've really got 'em humping. Standley's supporters shrugged off that win over State. But they're not shrugging your Denton game off. Take Northern and the job's yours—if you want it, that is."

"I want it," Tod said.

"Good. That's all I wanted to know. I can go back and start the ball rolling. But what's this about Marilyn?"

"Just a whim," Tod answered. "But about that percentage? Do you think—"

"Sure, sure. If it's going to make Marilyn happy we'll make it twenty percent instead of ten. You just keep that team of yours playing ball, that's all."

"Will do," Tod grinned.

After Friday's light drill Tod gathered the squad around him. "I won't be with you tomorrow at Ravensburgh. There's a scouting job that needs doing so Sully will be in charge."

"Dixon, eh, Coach," Al Marks spoke up. "You get the dope on them babies. We'll take care of the Ravens. Won't we gang?"

The gang agreed. Tod nodded absently. It wasn't Dixon he was going to watch tomorrow. It was Northern. But that was his business.

He said, "I just want to remind you that we still have two tough ones left. Ravensburgh is no pushover but let's take them under wraps. We're going to need that cute stuff before the season's over, so no shenanigans tomorrow."

"The gent who tries opening that bag

before Turkey Day gets lynched," Hank Ludwig growled and his teammates agreed.

Tod chased them in, then started for home. Any notions Sully had about how tomorrow's game should be played were now taboo, he knew.

He went down and watched his alma mater win a hard fought 20—12 victory over a stubborn Cornell team. What he saw pleased him. Northern was big, powerful and four deep at every position. But they were ripe for a plucking. It would come next week. While riding back on the train, he read of Dixon's win over Yarmouth and of his own team's 20—0 triumph over Ravensburgh College.

There was more in the paper that interested him—a two-column spread on page three by a headline reporter who predicted that a win for little Freemont over Northern next Saturday would have Tod Richards back at Northern again.

This time as head football coach.

When he arrived home the entire squad was waiting for him. "What's the trouble?" he asked.

Marilyn shoved a paper at him. "This," she said, pointing to the article about Tod and Northern. "I told them it was just paper talk but they don't believe me. You tell them."

Tod lit a cigarette. He said, "After all, kids, they have to fill their papers with something, don't they?"

It satisfied them. "Dixon. How do they look?" Skip Davis wanted to know.

"Yeah, Coach. What's our chances?"

Tod smiled. "Boys," he said. "On Saturday we play Northern, so this week we worry about Northern. We start worrying about Dixon next Sunday, what say?"

"Bingo!" Han Ludwig piped.

They went down to Northern and a worried Ed Halas was waiting impatiently for Tod.

"Standley's out to run it up," he told Tod. "He knows how it is. Even if it means the Browntown game, he's going

all out today. If you can just keep it close? Just close."

As if Tod hadn't expected as much. He pursed up his mouth, winked at his old running mate. "Just keep your pen wet, pal," he said, then followed his team under the stadium into the dressing room.

The boys took their time suiting up. They were loose, confident. Coach would take care of this one. They were looking to next week.

When it was time to go Al Marks asked, "What treatment do we give these guys, Coach?"

CHAPTER V

The Opening

TOD walked to the center of the room. He realized the instructions he was about to give would prove very unpopular. He also knew they would be carried out to the nth degree. Nothing else mattered.

He said, "Northern's a ball club. They won't be caught sleeping like State and Denton. So today we open the book. We go through it from cover to cover."

It puzzled them for a split-second then Joe Kosler laughed, "Holy mackerel, Coach! Don't scare us that way. For a—"

Tod raised his eyebrows. "Scare you?"

"About using our Dixon stuff today. Jeepers! If—"

Tod's cold stare cut him off. He said, "I didn't know Freemont hired a new coach—an undergraduate too. Someone should tell me these things."

The room went still. Sully started out towards Tod but Tod waved him back. He ran his hard stare around the room then said, "Maybe I'm wrong. But up to now I felt we've done pretty well—doing it my way. Seven games, seven wins. If any of you gentlemen feel you can improve on that now's the time to say

so. I'll gladly step down."

The twenty-eight boys fidgeted under his hard glare.

"Well?"

Lou Thompson got to his feet. "Coach is still right for my money," he said quickly and sat down.

Rube Yoder nodded. Skip Davis mumbled his approval. The others agreed silently. The dressingroom door opened then shut and without looking Tod knew that Sully had left the room.

He said, "You boys know the sequence to follow. Just as we've done it a hundred times during practise unless I say otherwise, of course. And one other thing. Northern will score—twice, maybe three times, but if you're on your toes we'll outscore them. Let's go."

They trooped silently from the room and Tod followed them out. When they hit the field a booming yell greeted them. This was Tod Richards' ball club. Another miracle today and Northern's most illustrious son would be back where he belonged—at Northern.

Marilyn was waiting for Tod at the end of the runway and the two of them walked arm in arm towards the Freemont bench, smiling, waving to their many Northern friends in the seats.

"They still love their old Galloper don't they?" Marilyn said. "You know, Tod, a decent game today and they'll want you here. Or do you already know that?"

Tod eyed his wife. "Are you kidding?"

"That's why Ed came to see you, wasn't it?"

Tod nodded. "Baby, when we—"

Marilyn's hand on his arm stopped him. It was trembling. She said, "If you want it, so do I. And so do your boys. Freemont—they think you're pretty swell too. Even now, if someone was to go out there and ask them to name the greatest coach in football today you know what they'd say? Tod Richards."

Tod stared at his wife. "What the—"

Marilyn turned away and walked towards the aisle that led to her box.

Tod watched her go, then went towards the center of the field, where his team was waiting for him. *Sully!* So Marilyn and Sully had got their little heads together, had they? They had decided he wasn't giving these kids a fair shake. That was a laugh. He was giving them their most successful season in thirty years, wasn't he? Eight out of nine. What more did they want?

Tod motioned to Lou Thompson and the two of them walked to the midfield stripe, where four spangle-clad officials waited. Cy Standley and Northern Captain Doug Miles came over and there was the usual handshaking, then the flip of the coin. Miles won the toss and elected to kick.

The field was cleared for action and the seventy thousand spectators came to their feet. Could Tod Richards really coach this game as he had played it? Today would tell.

The referee's whistle shrilled and Stush Novack, Northern's kicker, started forward, kicked. The ball rode high and deep and the entire Freemont team faded with it. Skip Davis, standing on the five, caught it, hugged it against his shirt, folded his body around it and moved slowly out to the ten yard line, then stopped.

Green-shirts, coming from all directions, converged around him until the entire eleven players were huddled in a tight circle on the ten. For three seconds they remained inert in their stooped position. Then with the precision of a Follies line the bud burst and eleven green-clads went scurrying in all directions. Each player was bent double, hugging an imaginary ball to his middle. Only one man was not hugging an imaginary ball. But which?

A BEWILDERED cry broke from the stands. The Northern players were confused. They hesitated, uncertain as to just what to do. Some searched for the ball, others began tackling the nearest green-shirt, hoping a lucky stab would bring down the ball carrier.

Along with the entire Freemont bench Tod was up, his eyes on Herb Willison. Those hamlike hands of Willison's were a perfect shield for the ball cradled behind them.

A Northerner drifted in beside Herb, eyed him suspiciously, jogged past. Herb stayed in his hunched position and moved leisurely down field for five more yards. Then, straightening out of his crouch, he broke into a mad gallop for the Northern goal fifty yards away.

A warning cry burst from the Northern side. The Northern boys, knowing now where the ball was, chased after that flying number twenty-nine but their discovery had come too late. When Willison crossed the double white line the nearest gold-shirt was still twenty yards behind.

The huge stadium fermented. The Tod Richards Express back to Northern was gaining momentum.

Tod hurried Legs Swanson into the game and Legs' automatic toe made it Freemont 7—Northern 0.

As his team went back to kick, Tod scoured the stands hoping to catch Ed Halas' eye. He found him beside Marilyn in box ten. Tod waved and Ed, his face split in an ear-to-ear grin, returned the greeting. Marilyn didn't. She kept her eyes on the boys on the field, lining up now preparing to kick off.

Novack took Swanson's towering kick on the five and jammed straight upfield to the twenty-three before Al Marks could pin him down.

Tod slipped to the edge of the bench. That rosebud had given his team seven points. It had also inflamed the proud Northern eleven, he knew. And no team was going to make fools of them—not for long.

Northern spun out of their huddle and Captain Miles cracked over Rube Yoder's position for six yards. Novack got two, then Russ Taggart, their All-American fullback, made it first and ten on the thirty-five. Each thrust had been pointed straight at Rube Yoder. Novack ground out four more, then Taggart picked up

another four. Both drives had gone through right tackle—Rube Yoder.

The green forward wall dug in but Miles cannonaded through the same spot to the forty-seven for another first down. Savagely, relentlessly the big gold team hammered at the same spot. Rube Yoder was their target and they hit the bull's-eye every time.

They crashed across the midfield stripe to the forty, to the thirty, and when a diving tackle by Lou Thompson slowed them a fresh Northern line came into the game.

Taggart bowled over Rube for three, Miles was good for five. Al Marks and Nick Reiter moved in to help the harassed Rube but Taggart ripped through for another first on the nine.

Tod watched apprehensively. Standley's strategy was obvious. He knew Tod was without capable replacements for his first eleven. If just one link in this formidable chain were broken Freemont would be rendered impotent and Northern would have the one-sided victory that Cy Standley needed. Rube Yoder was the link Standley had chosen to crush and his team was intent on fulfilling its mission.

Miles bulled through to the six, then Rube came off the turf, spitting blood, to crash through and dump Novack back on the nine. It halted Northern's bid for their first score and Tod sat back, relieved.

Freemont broke from their huddle on the goal line and a surprised cry broke from the stands. These kids were not going to punt! It was a single wing with Davis deep, Reiter close.

Tod wasn't surprised. He knew what was coming. Forty-four—a double lateral off a fake cutback. It would go for yardage.

"Two—three—four—" Marks' commanding bark cut through the uproar, then the brown oval was shooting back between Hank Ludwig's legs. It was low—too low. Ludwig, who hadn't made a bad pass all season, made one now.

Skip lunged for the ball but it caromed

off his cleats and went skittering along the five-yard marker in a flurry of chalk dust. Willison made a frantic leap at it but a flying gold-clad bumped him clear and dropped on the ball. It was Northern's ball, first and goal on the six.

Tod was on his feet, muttering oaths. "Fass!" he barked.

The pint-size reserve center leaped from the bench and hurried to Tod. "Yes, Coach?" he asked.

Tod looked at him for a moment, then, slumping to the bench, said, "Forget it. Go sit down."

The damage was done. Replacing the boneheaded Ludwig with the weak Fass was the sort of opening Standley was hoping for.

NORTHERN swaggered out of their huddle and Novack, behind a wedge of gold-shirts stormed Freemont's right tackle. Rube went down on the five and Novack went with him. Taggart cracked the same spot for two, Miles for two more. Bedlam ruled the stadium. It was fourth and one.

Northern discarded the huddle and quickly lined up strong to the left with Russ Taggart deep. The strapping full-back took the direct pass from center and, spilling up the sod behind him, hit straight at his target—Rube Yoder.

The big Rube stood in there. Tod had always known nothing but impatience for his big but slow-thinking right tackle but watching him now he realized for the first time that what the big boy lacked in head he more than made up with heart.

A gold-shirt ripped headlong into Rube. He knocked him aside, held his ground. Two Northerners bore into him, one from each side. Rube staggered back for one short step, piled the two opponents up and was still on his feet, waiting when Taggart exploded into him.

The crack of bone against bone split the wild din filling the stadium and amid a chaotic maze of green and gold both boys went down. When the teams

unpiled the nose of the ball rested inches shy of the double white line.

The small band of Freemont supporters at the far end of the stadium were having conniptions.

Tod rushed Legs Swanson in there and his first-down punt sent the home club back to midfield. A fresh eleven came off the Northern bench and continued to cut the life out of Rube Yoder. When Pupach switched sides with Rube, Northern switched also.

When Rube dropped out of the line into Hank Ludwig's backer-up spot the Northern blockers deserted their assignments to go through and chop Rube down. It fouled Northern's attack but didn't stop it. The quarter ended 7-0 with Northern in possession on the visitors' twenty-six.

Standley's first team returned to start the second quarter and they pushed to the three, where a slashing tackle by Scotty McGee halted them. Legs' tremendous boot set them back on their own thirty but the gold team was impassive. It was early yet and time was their ally.

Tod was on his feet, watching the play. After each scrimmage Yoder was slower off the turf. Each succeeding thrust by Northern was gaining more yardage. Four, five, six, weakening, breaking the chain he had worked months to develop. Bitterness, frustra-

tion gnawed at his stomach.

Standley was playing it smart—playing it as he himself would play it were the tables reversed. And he could do nothing about it, only pray that the sturdy Yoder would prove sturdy enough.

Northern went to Freemont's twelve and Tod toyed with the idea of sending Clark in for Rube and letting Northern score. It would give his team a chance to receive the kickoff and with it a chance to run—a chance to use the stuff he was certain would get them a score.

He thought about it, then discarded it. If Yoder could hold for the remaining six minutes, during halftime he would alter his defense in a way that would keep the pressure off any one man.

They held on the five and Legs kicked it out of there. Northern jammed back. Miles was good for six, Novack got eight, Taggart broke through across midfield to Freemont's forty-three.

Captain Thompson's sobbing voice rose above the racket, pleading, exhorting his teammates to stall the Northern machine. Twice Pupach slashed through to stop the ball carrier for no gain but Russ Taggart drove back to ride over Rube for another first down.

It broke the Freemont team. Miles cracked to the sixteen, Novack to the

[Turn page]

TWO GREAT ACTION NOVELS OF THE GRIDIRON

ROSE BOWL FEVER

By NELSON S. BOND

and

UNDER FALSE COLORS

By T. W. FORD

plus other novels and stories of sport in the big fall issue of

FIVE SPORTS CLASSICS

NOW ON SALE AT ALL STANDS—TWENTY-FIVE CENTS PER COPY!



nine, then Taggart plowed across for the score. Novack's perfect placement made it 7-7 with just three minutes left in the half.

"Jenkins!" Tod called down the line and when the second-string quarter stepped in front of him he said, "Go in and play it straight. Stall till the half. No fancy stuff."

Time was too short to open up with the surprises he had for his alma mater. The second half would be soon enough.

Davis returned the kickoff eleven yards to his twenty-one, and when three tries failed to gain Legs put his boot out of bounds on Northern's twenty.

Tod leaned back satisfied. Even with Yoder out on his feet the two minutes that remained were not enough for another Northern score.

But Northern did score. Four thrusts at Freemont's right side and they were across. The swiftness of it, the ease with which it was produced, the complete collapse of the Freemont team stunned the crowd. It went to Northern 14-Freemont 7 and before the visitors could run a play the gun banged ending the half.

CHAPTER VI

"You'll Think of Something . . ."

A ROUSING cheer flooded the field as the battered Freemont eleven trudged from the playing field. Tod stood watching until the last green-clad disappeared into the runway, then he started for the dressing room.

"Hear that?" It was Marilyn. She had come down from her box and was walking beside him now. "That's for you and your team. No matter what they do the second half you can still be proud of them. They were magnificent." She hesitated for three steps, then added, "And it was all for you."

Tod said nothing, kept walking. Ed Halas fell in on the other side and said, "So far so good. But do you think those dummies of yours will hold together the second half? They smelled pretty loud those last few minutes and if—"

Tod stopped in his tracks. "*Smelled!* Did you say my team smells?"

Ed Halas said, "Yeah, that Yoder. You should feed him—"

"Rube Yoder smelled! Did you count the men Standley used to break Rube? Forty-five! And Rube walked off the field, nobody carried him. Why if I had two more, just two more—"

"Tod, please," Marilyn interrupted. "You're shouting."

"Yeah, Tod" Halas said. "They're tough enough. But they won't—"

"But they won't be nearly as tough the second half," Tod broke in thoughtfully. "You know something, Ed?"

"What?"

"I got a hunch my dummies don't want to be tough. Not today anyhow."

He left them standing there, Ed Halas frowning, Marilyn smiling, and hurried into the runway that led to the dressing room. His team was waiting for him. He stood for a moment in the doorway, surveying the scene.

Then striding across the room to where Rube Yoder was slumped on the bench he said, "You know something, Rube? You smell. You stood—"

A rough hand on his shoulder spun him around. It was Sully, an enraged Sully. "Why you—I'll—"

Tod brushed him aside, walked to the center of the room. He said, "How do you like that. A jerk who should know better just tried to tell me that my ball club smells. Huh! So okay, we smell. But this half we smell even louder. If they want to score a million points we let them, see. But, brother, next year! We'll—"

"Next year!" Lou Thompson exclaimed.

"Yes, next year—and the year after too. We just schedule one big one—"

Northern. And we'll—"

"But, Coach," Al Marks broke in. "I thought we all figured you—"

"Oh, oh" Tod laughed. "Here we go again. Our quarterback is thinking again. What is it this time, Einstein?"

"I just—we just thought you wanted this one, that's all," Marks replied hesitantly. "It's a big game for you. That coaching job and, well—" He shrugged, letting his words hang there.

Tod pulled a cigarette from his pocket, lit it, watched the gray smoke curl up to the ceiling. He said, "You know that's one thing about this ball club that I never liked. A guy could never make an honest mistake without catching hell.

"So I did think I needed this ball game. That was five minutes ago and a lot can happen in five minutes. The one ball game left for all of us is Dixon and that Conference title. We start right now to win them both."

"My ears!" Sully wailed. "My ears! They're not hearing good."

FOR the first time in months Tod was seeing that old grin on his partner's face. He grinned back at Sully saying, "Your ears and appetite are still the only good parts about you."

Then facing his team, he went suddenly serious and said, "Now look—we go out the next half and let them run. We could stop them if we wanted to but we don't want to. Somebody might get hurt while doing it. And you, Einstein, keep that bag closed. No fancy stuff, see. We're going to need all that for Dixon, understand?"

They sat wide-eyed for a moment, then they were pressing around him, jabbering like chipmunks.

"If you still want this one, Coach?"

"I like licking them big dogs."

"It would be a nice win for you."

"Sure! Sure!" Tod snapped. "But why knock yourself out? And anyhow, who's coach around here?"

"You are, Coach," Lou Thompson admitted, laughing. "But like you said you ain't doing such a hot job right

now. It's fourteen to seven against us. Maybe I oughta take over? It's my privilege, you know."

"What!"

"The boy's right, Tod" Sully insisted.

"Now wait a minute," Tod shouted. "I don't want to get tough. But—"

The players were paying no attention to him. It was captain Thompson who had the floor.

"I'm in favor of winning this one for Coach," he was saying. "All in favor say aye."

The walls bulged with wild ayes.

"Hold it. *Hold it!*" Tod kept shouting. He might as well have been in the next state. His attempt to stem the tide was squashed like the peanut on the railroad track.

The team hustled past him out of the room and Lou said, "You just watch, Coach. Just watch."

For seconds after the last boy had left the room Tod stood staring blankly at the door. He looked up and Sully's grinning face was in front of him. He cursed.

"Okay, wise guy," he snapped at Sully. "You're responsible for the murder that's going to be committed out there. Why, I oughta—"

"All right, I'm responsible" Sully laughed. "And I agree about murder being committed. But like Lou said let's go out and watch."

They went out and they watched. It was brutal.

Freemont kicked off and Novack returned Legs' boot nine yards to the thirteen. The gold team took up where they had left off and two thrusts at Rube Yoder were good for eight yards.

Then, as Northern swaggered out of their huddle, preparing, as every person in the stadium knew, to go again at Fremont's Rube Yoder, a strange sight occurred on the field. The Freemont forward wall, already set on the scrimmage line, suddenly vacated their positions and became a confused conglomeration of green shirts.

When the Northern team was set to go they found Scotty McGee at left end, Lou Thompson at right tackle, Nick Reiter had vacated his backer-up post and was now playing the defensive left guard position. All along the line it was the same. Not a Freemont lineman was in his normal position.

It delighted the crowd, confused Northern.

They hesitated, attempting to spot Yoder, and it cost them five yards for taking too much time.

They went back to try it again but as they broke from their huddle they found the visitors repeating the act. They hesitated again, this time for only a moment, then ran their play as called. It was a smash at right tackle. But instead of a battered Rube they ran against a fresh Steve Pupach and it cost them another yard.

It was fourth and eight and for the first time that day the big Northern team was forced to punt.

Davis hauled in Novack's long kick on his own thirty and returned it to the fifty before three Northerners ganged up to cut him down.

Legs Swanson jogged off the field and, stopping in front of Tod, said, "Lou wants Herb in there."

"He's not getting him!" Tod barked bouncing to his feet. "You get back in there. We're saving Herb for—"

"Easy, boy, easy," Sully chuckled, pinning Tod's arms to his sides. "If Lou wants Herb he gets him. He's running this show, remember? Get goin' Herb."

Tod swore disgustedly and slumped to the bench.

Freemont wheeled up to the line in short kick formation with Herb deep. He took Ludwig's snap, faded. Then, looking deep downfield where three gold-clads were tailing Barney Atkinson, he rifled a short heave over the line. Joe Kosler was up there, waiting. It was good for nine yards to Northern's forty-one. They repeated the act. It was first and ten on Northern's twenty-two.

THE crowd was up, wide-eyed. Never had this stadium seen such pitching. Herb had it and was fading again. Cries of "Fake! Fake!" spouted from the Northern secondary.

Herb looked to the goal line, faked a toss to Joe Kosler cutting in front of the line, then hit Nick Reiter, who was running alone out in the flat. Nick went to the six. Freemont lined up, jabbering, and Herb pushed a jump-pass over the line. Joe Kosler grabbed it and it was Northern 14—Freemont 13.

The visitor's section was a turmoil, their bench a riot. Willison jogged off the field and said, "Lou wants Legs in there to boot it. He's to stay till we get it, then it's me again."

Tod said nothing. There was nothing to say. Swanson was already out on the field, lining up. His placement tied it up and Freemont went back to kickoff.

The stung Northern team, over the shock of Willison's throwing arm, forgot Rube Yoder and loosened the strings all the way. They had power. They had speed. And they used both. Taggart jammed for six, Novack cracked through for five.

They rammed the middle, turned the ends. They went under the green team. They went over it. When they slowed a fresh eleven came in to replace them. The boys from downstate clenched their jaws and hung on.

When Steve and Hank had to haul Rube off the sod and stand him on his feet, Tod intervened. "Leo," he barked at his reesrve right tackle. "Get in there for Rube."

Leo Clark went out and came right back. "Rube says when Steve and Hank set him up and he falls over, then you can send me in. Not until then."

Tod turned to Sully for help. "Relax, pal," Sully laughed. "The kids are loving this. Let them have their fun. They deserve it."

They had their fun. Northern went over for another score but outmanned Freemont smashed back and threw the book at their mighty opponent.

Skip Davis galloped eighty-two yards straight down the middle off the quick opener. Herb pitched a fifty yard touch-down strike to Joe Kosler. Al Marks' seventy-yard sprint was proof for the delirious spectators that the Statue of Liberty was not only alive but still kicking. Barney Atkinson ground salt into Northern's wounds by scoring Freemont's final TD off the sleeper.

For seconds after the final gun banged the huge crowd sat back limp. It was incredible. But there it was on the big gold-and-white scoreboard, Freemont 35—Northern 21.

Tod started out to his team but a hand on his coattail stopped him. It was a hysterical Ed Halas. Marilyn was beside him.

"Name your price, kid! Just name your price!" Ed shouted above the din.

Tod wasn't listening. He was looking down at his wife. "That wasn't my idea. I wanted them to play it—"

MARILYN nodded, half laughing, half crying.

"I know, Tod, I know," she said. "You could see it in their play."

"—and not only that but getting you a five-year contract will be a cinch," Ed was beaming. "Why don't the two of you stay over and we'll draw up the contract. Have it ready to—"

Marilyn's elated laughter cut him off.

"Are you sure I'm the guy for the job, Ed?" Tod mused. "I don't have a reputation. And—"

"Oh, brother!" Ed chortled. "All you have is everything."

Tod nodded. He said, "Right, Ed. Everything. And they're waiting for me in the dressing room. I better get down to them. I want words with those babies."

He turned from the puzzled Ed and to Marilyn said, "You tell him how it is, will ya, hon? I don't have the heart."

He went into the dressing room and his boys swarmed around him. He shoved them off, scowled at them.

"Okay, wise guys," he growled. "You had your fun. Now tell me. Just what are we going to beat Dixon with? You know, I suppose, that their whole squad was in the stands watching you guys showoff."

"Jeepers, Coach," Al Marks piped. "Is that all that's worrying you?"

"All?"

"Heck, that's nothing," Hank Ludwig boasted. "You'll think up something to take those phonies. Won't he gang?"

"Right, Hank," the gang agreed.

"Yeah," Sully said, "You know, Tod, I wanted to mention this before. Now on that quick opener, if we'd let Skip—"

"Sully!" Tod broke in sternly. "You've been holding out on me."

Sully eyed Tod for a moment, frowning, then said, "Who did you say was holding out on you?"

The room filled with laughter and Tod joined in. With a smart assistant like Sully around dreaming up something, taking Dixon would be child's play.

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

SEE
ADV.
PG. 3

BOX 3968-TA, SCRANTON 9, PENNA.

Without cost or obligation, please send me full information about the course marked X:

- ☐ Accounting & Mgmt.
- ☐ Advertising
- ☐ Air Conditioning
- ☐ Architecture
- ☐ Art
- ☐ Automobiles
- ☐ Aviation

- ☐ Chemistry
- ☐ Civil Engineering
- ☐ Concrete Engineering
- ☐ Electrical Engineering
- ☐ French
- ☐ High School Subjects
- ☐ House Planning

- ☐ Mechanical Drawing
- ☐ Mechanical Engineering
- ☐ Mining
- ☐ Plumbing
- ☐ Postal Civil Service
- ☐ Refrigeration
- ☐ Radio & Television

- ☐ Salesmanship
- ☐ Shop Practice
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Steam Engineering
- ☐ Steam Railways
- ☐ Textiles
- ☐ Welding

Name _____ Age _____ Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Working Hours _____ A.M. to _____ P.M.

Present Position _____ Employed by _____

Length of Service _____
In World War II _____

Enrollment under G.I. Bill approved for World War II Veterans. Special tuition rates to members of the Armed Forces
Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Ltd., Montreal, Canada

Johnny Sawyer knew his arm
was about gone, but with his
best friend, the owner-coach
of the Beavers, out on a
financial limb, he vowed
to put his team
in the play-offs!



CHAPTER I

Costly Conflict

HE JOGGED off the field, helmet in hand, and the thousands up in the seats bellowed their appreciation. That Johnny Sawyer! Hand him the ball within thirty yards of the end zone and he'd hang it on the receiver like a watchfob. Hadn't he just done it again, and kicked the point? Like Ole Man River, on and on and on. Indestructible Johnny Sawyer.

At the sidelines a flunkie threw a blanket about him and whacked him on the back. He sat down on the bench and dragged air into his lungs. His

head hurt and he wished he was home in bed. In fact, he wished he was most any place but here in the Polo Grounds in a Beaver uniform. Just how long can a guy fool all of the people all of the time, anyway?

"You all right, Johnny?"

He twisted his head to look into the good-looking but slightly concerned face of Frank Cabot, owner-coach of the Beavers. Cabot was the older by ten years, and the richer by half a million dollars, at the last count. During his first three years of pro football Johnny

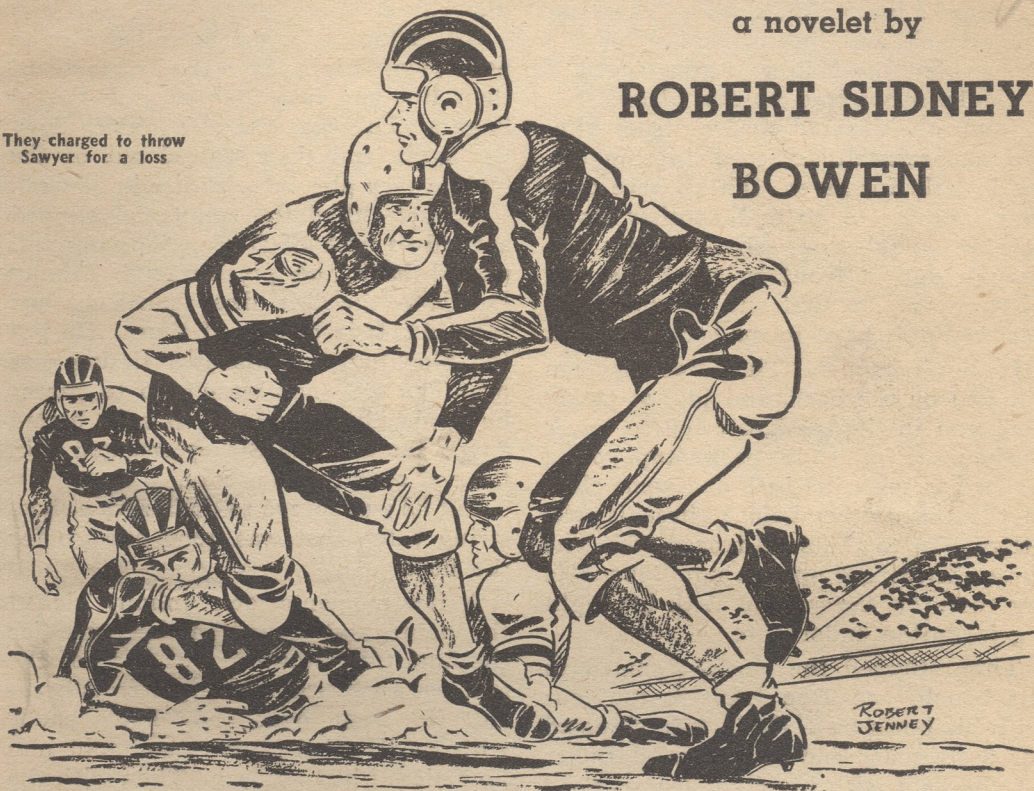
ONE LAST THROW

a novelet by

ROBERT SIDNEY

BOWEN

They charged to throw
Sawyer for a loss



had earned his dough but no more than that. When his name appeared in print it was usually one of eleven that made up the line-up.

These last three years had been different. With ideas and a good bank roll, Frank Cabot had come out of the West and formed the Beaver Football Team. He'd bought up Johnny's contract, put him in the star spot, and built the rest of the team around him. It had worked out fine. Last year they'd missed the league title by a single game. This year they were on top by one and only two to go, not counting this one with the Hawks. Very good, but three plus three makes six years of pro football. Just

how long can you fool everybody?

Johnny grinned, but he could feel how stiff it was.

"Me, I'm fine, Frank," he said. "But just let Baker stay in there and pitch for a spell."

"Sure, why not?" Cabot grunted. "We're nine in front. But—you're sure there's nothing wrong?"

It was neither the time, nor the place, nor the man to tell it to. Johnny shook his head.

"Nothing a world cruise wouldn't cure," he said. "Forget it."

CABOT frowned, then let it slide with a shrug and returned his at-

tention to the game. Johnny Sawyer bent his head a little and shut his eyes, but it didn't shut out the things he could see in his head. He opened his eyes and looked up just in time to see the Hawks fumble their second try after the kickoff, and Baker recover for the Beavers on the visitors' thirty-seven.

"Make a hundred points, please!"

Johnny whispered the words to himself and mentally crossed his fingers. He'd settle for seven. There were only four minutes to go and another seven points would put the Beavers far enough out in front to coast the rest of the way. Do that and Johnny Sawyer wouldn't have to go back to work.

It didn't happen. The fates that can pat you on the back, and just as easily kick you in the teeth, elected to lower the boom. From a fake pass setup, young Baker ran with the ball, and went clear to the twenty-five before three Hawks belted him to the semi-frozen sod. The three Hawks got up, but not Baker. He lay there on the ground with his right leg jackknifed under him.

They stopped the clock, signaled to the bench, and Doc Hansen ran out with his black bag. He in turn signaled for a stretcher and they carried Baker off the field with his right leg snapped through four inches below the knee.

Frank Cabot's face was pale and drawn as he looked at Sawyer.

"Lord, what next?" he murmured as though to himself. Then with a motion of one hand, he added, "Wrap it up, Johnny. We can't take a chance even now."

Words rose to the passing star's lips, but on second thought he swallowed them.

"Sure, Frank," he said, and put on his head-guard. "For you we do it."

Time was called back in, and in the huddle Johnny called for the fullback, Olsen, to take it through right tackle. They looked at him in surprise but didn't say anything. Johnny let them think what they would and broke up the huddle. It worked. Olsen lugged it ten

yards closer to pay dirt for a first down. As a matter of fact, had Johnny done a better piece of blocking Olsen might have gone all the way. But nobody seemed to notice that except Johnny himself.

In the huddle again, he called for the pass play. Right over the left side of their line and into Stacey's glue-tipped fingers. This was the old Johnny Sawyer again and they trotted out of the huddle very pleased with life in general.

Sawyer called the count and slipped around in back of Olsen. The big full passed back the pigskin and Johnny faded to the left like thousands had seen him fade dozens of times. He got the blocking, but his own timing was off. The old snap wasn't up to par as he made the pitch. It wasn't batted down, though, and Stacey snagged it in the end zone for the score.

But he was forced to do it with a shoe-string catch that was good enough for the book.

A few moments later Johnny kicked the point, and stayed in the game for the final two minutes. The bark of the gun was a sweet note straight from heaven. He went over and shook hands with the Hawks' captain, and told him how nice it had all been. Then with the rest of his mates he trotted off the field. As he went up the clubhouse steps a guy in his cups, or maybe he was a white-hot anti-Beaver, let it roar out from several rows back.

"Sawyer, you're rotten!"

Anger stabbed Johnny for an instant, and then he was through the dressing room door and all the familiar warm smells were enveloping him. He grinned to himself and gave a little twist of his head.

"Brother, you're so right!" he murmured, and went over to the bench in front of his locker.

WHEN he came out of the shower Frank Cabot was waiting for him. The owner-coach of the Beavers was all smiles, but way back in his eyes

were shadows that had nothing to do with pleasing things.

"Look, I'm picking up Betty at eight," Cabot said. "Got tickets for the hockey game at the Garden. How about it?"

For an instant Johnny was almost caught off guard. He checked himself and shook his head.

"Not tonight," he said. "This hired hand is pooped. Anything new on Baker?"

The shadows in the depths of Cabot's eyes darkened. He took a breath and gave a sad wag of his head.

"I just called the hospital," he said. "They're setting it now. At least it was a clean break. I'm dropping in on him later."

"Tell him I'll do that tomorrow," Sawyer said. "Better not have too many visitors tonight."

"No, not a good idea," Frank Cabot murmured absently. Then as he came out of it, he said, "Sure you won't change your mind and come along with us to the hockey game?"

"No, Frank, thanks."

The owner-coach of the Beavers shrugged and turned away. On second thought he turned back and gave Sawyer a keen look.

"Wait for the green light, Johnny," he said almost casually. "With Baker out the whole load is yours, you know."

"I know," Sawyer said with a nod. "I'll manage to last, somehow."

"Sure you will," Cabot said, with just a trace of forced assurance. "A kick in the face for us, but we'll take the title."

Sawyer reached into the locker for his shirt and spoke over his shoulder.

"In the bag, Frank," he said. "We haven't a worry. Give Betty my best."

"I'll do that, Johnny. See you boy."

It was five minutes later when Johnny Sawyer realized he was still holding his shirt in his hands.

Charlie's Chop House was one of those semi-hidden eating places in town you hear about through a close friend and then kept the information to your-

self so that it might not become overpopulated. The furnishings, apart from the thirty-foot bar, wouldn't bring a dime at a fire sale, but the food and the atmosphere were delightful beyond any monetary comparison.

With a meal fit to please a fussy king inside of him, Johnny Sawyer sat having one at the bar before going home to bed and another night of handwriting-on-the-wall dreams.

"Tough about Baker, wasn't it?"

Johnny turned his head to look into the unpleasant face of Standish, who wrote football for the *Globe*. A special kind of louse from way back, Standish had a nose for the shady and shabby side of things, and for that reason if none other, his readers were legion. Let a backfield star, or the water boy, get into any kind of a jam and the whole sporting world read about it in Standish's column the next day.

"Very tough," Johnny said, and turned back to his drink.

"Thanks, don't mind if I do," Standish murmured, and motioned to the barkeep. "Yes, very tough. Mostly for you, Johnny."

The Beavers' passing star shrugged and continued the inspection of his drink.

"Baker was good," Standish went right on. "He could do just about everything with a football, including passing. With him out, Frank Cabot will lose lots of sleep. And maybe something besides sleep. But you know about that, don't you, Johnny?"

For a moment Sawyer pretended he hadn't heard, but he couldn't keep it up. One of the rotten things about Standish was that when his warped brain got hold of something it was usually true. At least ten times out of ten it was. Johnny turned his head again.

"I don't play games, Standish," he said flatly. "So say your say, drink your drink, and get the devil out of here."

The football scribe laughed and hunched his expensive camel hair coat tighter about him. After all, it was only

eighty degrees hot in the place.

"I love you, too, Johnny," he said. "And tonight my heart just breaks in pieces. With Baker out, our hero must now do everything. But, my friends, can he? Did you see him today? Oh yes, very much the hero to the fat-heads who have not eyes. But to a guy who has watched him every game for six years—I repeat, six long years—today wasn't what you'd call—well, just what would you call it, Johnny? The end of the trail, perhaps? And right at a time when Cabot is getting himself caught ten feet off the bag?"

CHAPTER II

The Sad Truth

SAWYER took a long slow drink while the cool, collected half of him said to keep his hands right where they were. That half won and when he spoke there was nothing particular in the tone of his voice.

"Look, Standish, I just throw a football for a living," he said. "On the crystal ball and mind reading I'm not very good. You said something about Cabot. Finish it, or else get out of my reach!"

Something close to fear showed in Standish's eyes. Then a crafty cunning took its place, and he shook his head.

"I should let you scoop my readers, Sawyer?" he said, and slid off the stool. "Who are you but a run-down has-been? Nix. Buy the *Globe* tomorrow and read it along with the rest of the common herd. Thanks for the drink."

With a smirk and a nod the football scribe oozed away before Sawyer could make up his mind to snake out a hand and halt the man. For minutes afterward he sat staring at his empty glass, and then as he decided on one more, he caught sight of her reflection in the long mirror at the back of the bar.

Betty Norris was the kind of a girl you met and instantly wanted your folks to meet at the earliest opportunity. By no means a raving beauty, but no run-of-the-mill style either, there was a certain quality about her that caught you like a run-away locomotive and kept you that way all the time she was within view. It showed in her eyes, in the way she moved and the way she spoke. In short, if there was ever a girl born with an absolute minimum of feminine wiles, that girl was Betty Norris.

A couple of years ago she had come out of the West, too, with a letter of introduction to Frank Cabot from a mutual home-town friend. Not to study music, or become a famous writer, or even go on the stage. Just a swell girl who wanted a job in the big town, and didn't know a soul there. Whether because he felt obligated as a sort of a protector, or whether to save time calling up people and writing them letters of introduction, Frank Cabot never stated, but on the third day after her arrival Betty became Cabot's private secretary and sort of all-around Girl Friday.

In nothing flat she made good, and in a slightly longer time than that the entire pro football league was her friend. A hundred and one minor details, plus important ones, too, she took off Cabot's hands. In fact, by the end of the first year there wasn't a thing connected with the affairs of the Beaver Football Club she couldn't put her finger on and tell it to you a whole lot better than Cabot.

Long before the end of that first year Johnny Sawyer was a dead duck. But a strong, silent dead duck. Just a look at Betty and Cabot together was more than enough to keep him that way. After all, it had been Cabot who'd given him his big chance, and to that kind of man you owed not just one kind of loyalty but all the kinds there were.

However, a man's inner emotions are his own so long as he keeps them that way, and as Johnny stared at her reflection in the bar mirror his heart thumped

against a couple of ribs that had been thumped that afternoon by Hawk football players.

Then with a sudden start, he realized that unless the bar clock was two hours fast Betty Norris shouldn't be sitting there alone at a corner table. She should be watching a hockey game at Madison Square Garden with Cabot. He thought that over a moment, bought a drink on it and took the drink and himself over to her table.

She smiled and wrinkled her nose at him. "A hard man to pick up in a mirror, Johnny Sawyer," she said. "I've been trying my best ever since that dear friend of nobody's left."

Johnny grinned, sat down and looked at her a moment.

"So refreshing after looking at guys in helmets," he said. "But I'm a truant officer tonight. Why aren't you attending the Garden, young lady? And where's your escort with the funny face?"

She smiled, but the usual fullness was lacking. "De bum stood me up, Mr. Officer. Had a sudden, unexpected business meeting, he said. Imagine! And the tickets free, too."

Sawyer matched her grin and something clicked in his head.

"Business meeting, Betty?" he said casually. "Nothing trivial, I hope?"

THE grl's smile faded and she looked down at the checkerboard table, such as it was. When again she looked up something caught at Johnny and he was sure he understood.

"Didn't Friend Standish tell you just now?" she asked. "From the smirk he was wearing I was pretty sure."

"Baker?" Johnny said, and nodded. "Yes, he was rubbing it in between layers of salt. I have quite a job on my hands now, he says. Unfortunately, the little rat is right. We need Baker badly. More than anybody realizes, except me."

Fright showed in Betty's face and she impulsively reached across the table.

"Johnny, we *will* win the title, won't we?"

He stared at her and for some unknown reason he was a little frightened, too. He concealed it, though, and continued to smile.

"Like I told Frank just today, we haven't a worry," he said. "All we have to do is take the Lions next week and the Ravens the next. Simple. But even should the Ravens win, it'll only put them in a tie with us. And we'll take the play-off. We'll—wait a minute, young lady. *You've got money on it?*"

She shook her head and didn't smile. "No, Johnny, of course not. But Frank has. Practically everything he's got."

The words went into Johnny's head and spun around and around just out of his grasp. He had a drink and offered Betty a cigarette.

"Run that play through again, please," he said, and held a match for them both. "Frank has everything down on the title?"

She shook her head and picked a flake of tobacco from her lower lip.

"Not as a bet," she said, "but it amounts to the same thing. You see—Frank hasn't said a word?"

"No, and you don't have to, if you'd rather not. I'm just a guy on the payroll, you know."

She gave him a look intended to burn and it did. It even made him blink. "A little more than just that, Johnny. A little more, such as being his very best friend, I happen to know."

"Okay, my error," Johnny said. "It is also mutual. Now, what about Frank and the title?"

Betty Norris paused a moment or two, as though carefully selecting the words she would speak. When she did her voice was low and calm with still a faint tremor way down deep.

"In a nutshell, Frank made some poor investments shortly before I came to know him and he lost quite a bit of his money. Not all of it actually lost, but so tied up he cannot turn it into ready capital. Not being able to, he has had

to borrow heavily from the bank. Banks, I should say. Anyway, the notes come due in a month's time.

"And no dough to pay them off?" Sawyer murmured, as she paused for breath. "Then the Beavers *have* been losing him money?"

"Shut up, Johnny, and let me try to tell it. No, the Club has been making money, but as of the moment the total sum is slightly short of the total of the notes held by the banks. However, there are two games to go, and the national title game—if we play in it. Our take from the two on the schedule, plus our cut of the national title game, win or lose, will take Frank out of the red very nicely."

Johnny thought that over and a very familiar chill stole into his heart. "If we play in the national title game," he spoke the words slowly.

More fear touched Betty Norris' face as she nodded.

"As simple as that," she said gravely. "If we don't the banks take over, and Frank is out. After all he's done, and all he's put into it, I—I could shoot somebody!"

SAWYER nodded absently, for another thought had crept back into his head. "Standish made a crack about Frank," he said, "but refused to go into detail. This thing, Betty—who would know about it?"

The girl's face whitened, and she pressed two clenched fists against the edge of the table.

"Trust that weasel!" she said bitterly. "Only those concerned, Johnny. Frank and the banks. But if Standish has found out the whole world will know, now. Poor Frank! Why do such rotten things have to happen to such wonderful people?"

"I pass," Sawyer murmured, and sighed. "If twisting Standish's neck would help I'd gladly do it, but it wouldn't. Whatever his column says is on the press by now. But you spoke about a meeting tonight?"

"Frank didn't go into detail when he phoned me," the girl told him. "Simply said it was a special meeting with the bank people that he couldn't put off. At least he didn't sound more worried than he has been lately. Johnny, they can't take it away from him! They can't."

The note in her voice tied his heart in a knot and pulled tight on the ends. He made himself grin and do a short routine with his hands.

"They can't and won't," he said. "We'll play in the gravy game. There's not a thing the boys wouldn't do for Frank, and he knows it. He'll buy back those notes. Think nothing of it."

The color and the smile came back to her face, and she looked at him unspeaking for a long moment. During that period of time Johnny Sawyer almost came to hate the man who had done so much for him in pro football. Almost, and then he was deeply ashamed of himself.

"I feel better, much better," the girl suddenly spoke. "If you say so, Johnny, I can believe it. After all, you've made the Beavers the team they are today. Frank has often said so."

Johnny looked down at his drink, tasted it and then stared at it some more. A great dragging weariness that had been gone for a short spell came sweeping back to weigh down his spirit even more.

Sure, leave it to Johnny Sawyer. Leave it to him, but don't forget to pray. Yes, I said so, Betty, but there's things I didn't say. Like how the last three games have opened up the cracks in the old sharpshooter. Like how these six years have been catching up in a hurry. Like how I've had Baker under my wing for weeks, and sharpening him up so he could spell me more and more. And now he's out of the picture. Two tough grinds coming up, and just possibly three, and the load all mine.

Johnny Sawyer, the star, with the team built around him. And the cracks opening up wide! Maybe that drunk up in the stands today spotted it. Standish

certainly did, and how many others? Sure, Betty, I said it, but you'd never guess how much I left out. Baby, right now I'm the most unsure guy you ever looked at.

With an effort he shook away the thoughts, finished his drink and grinned at her.

"Not to change the subject," he said, "but in a way it was right nice of those bankers to take up Frank's evening. Just this one man's opinion, I hastily add. What would you like? Another drink, some talk? A late movie, perhaps? Or what?"

For a second he almost thought he saw her eyes light up with pleasure, but he must have been mistaken. She smiled at him and began to gather up her things.

"Just a cab to take me home, Johnny," she said softly. "It's been a day for all of us, and—well, perhaps the meeting won't be too long and Frank will phone."

Sawyer's heart slipped back into its icy coating and lay still. He nodded and signaled for the check.

"The inherent wolf in the guy, lady. Forgive him," he said lightly. "The best idea for both of us. Come along. I'll drop you off."

Just once more she seemed to get funny lights in her eyes. Then they were gone, and she was making a final check of her purse, gloves and et cetera.

CHAPTER III

Valiant Effort

BY THE time the next Sunday and the game with the Lions rolled around, the story of Frank Cabot's financial problems were more or less old hat. Not that the true facts were known by one and all. Even Standish, of the *Globe*, had only spotted his column with sly hints. However, those hints, plus a word heard there and there, plus

a man's own imagination, were enough to round out the picture. In a nutshell, Cabot was in hock, and only winning football by his Beavers would get him out of hock. As simple as that—only was it?

While the hired bands entertained the cash customers for the last few minutes they had to wait, Frank Cabot spoke quietly to his players in the Beaver's dressing room. It was the first mention he had made of the thing since Standish's Monday morning column. All during the week's practice sessions he had carried on as though nobody knew a thing. Not even a word of it had he spoken to Johnny Sawyer, and naturally the passing star had not brought up the subject.

The time to speak had come, though, and the owner-coach of the Beavers did not spare the horses, nor himself.

"You all know," he said quietly, "as do several thousand others, that I've got myself right behind the eight ball. The exact details are not important now. The fact is, I'm way out on the limb, and if we don't get into the national title game the limb is going to break off and I'll have to buy a ticket to watch you play next year. Assuming, of course, there will be a Beaver team next year."

For a moment Cabot paused and ran his eyes over the silent, solemn-faced group, letting them rest an instant longer on Sawyer. Then he smiled slowly and gestured with his two hands.

"So that ends the pep talk for today, fellows," he said. "If you win, three cheers for us. If you don't, I'll at least know there wasn't a man of you who didn't try his level best. All right, out and at them. And you might give a thought now and then to Baker who'll be listening in on his hospital radio. Good luck."

With nods and a scattering of reassuring smiles, the Beavers picked up their gear and started to troop out of the dressing room. Johnny Sawyer was the last to leave, and as he came to the door Cabot reached out and touched

him on the arm. For a moment the two men looked silently at each other, and then Cabot grinned and winked.

"Give Coach the old smile, Johnny," he said. "It's just another football game."

"Sure, just another game," Sawyer said, but his smile wasn't very much.

For an instant Cabot gave him a funny look, then the grin was back on his face.

"Betty tells me you more or less promised this one," he said. "So I'm not worrying. That's good enough for me. Good luck, boy."

A conglomeration of emotions swept through Sawyer, and then they were gone. He nodded and pulled on his head-guard.

"Thanks, boss man," he said. "Here we go."

Some minutes later Johnny won the toss in the center of the field and elected to receive the kickoff. As he waited for the Lion kicker to tee the ball to his fancy on the visitors' forty yard line, he idly looked over the fairly well-packed house, and wondered about all manner of things.

Mostly, though, he wondered about Frank Cabot and Betty. The two finest people he had ever known. And in a sense, a good part of their future rested on his shoulders. True, there had been as yet no official announcement of their intentions to team up together, but he had a feeling said announcement would be coming with the end of the season—if the Beavers came out on top of the heap. If they didn't, if Cabot was wiped out and lost the club, great would be the loss to both of them.

Then his rambling thoughts faded into thin air as the referee shrilled his whistle and the entire Lion wall moved forward in pace with their kicker. It was a good boot. Clear down to the Beaver nine where Olsen gathered it in, tucked it under his arm and started on his way. He got as far as the twenty before half the Lion team leaped upon him and brought him to earth.

In the huddle Johnny Sawyer had a

sudden inspiration. The kind of inspiration that comes to great leaders who perform great things. He looked at left end Collins and grinned thinly.

"Get the glue on your fingers," he said. "This one for the news reels. Twenty-six!"

Collins' eyes widened slightly, but he nodded and grinned. "Why not?" was his comment. "The sooner the better."

Johnny glanced at the others and got nods in return.

"Let's go before they wake up," he said, and moved out of the huddle.

THE Beavers went into kick formation, but the Lion safety men were not dumb enough to play it all the way. Their scouts had watched the Beavers in too many games. With a guy who could rip holes in you like Olsen, you couldn't see the Beavers kicking on first down from the twenty. So they played it half way and fastened their eyes on Olsen.

Johnny called the count and the center snapped it back to Olsen. The big full went through the motions of tucking it away and swinging to the right. But by then Johnny was there with him and took the hand-off and faded back. Just as the Lions came thundering through he cocked his arm and threw a long bullet right into Collins' hands as the fleet left end went scampering down the sideline. It was one for the newsreels, all right. Not a Lion was even close, and before the thousands in the stands could suck in air to let it out in a mighty bellow, Collins was over in pay dirt and touching the ball to the sod.

Mighty thunder still rose to the heavens as Johnny kicked the extra point and then trotted off the field, while Cabot sent in his defensive platoon. The owner-coach of the Beavers made room on the bench and grinned as Johnny sat down.

"Keep it up, boy," he gulped. "I've got the strongest heart in the world!"

Johnny grinned a little, tugged the blanket about him and focused his at-

tention on the field. A gift of seven points, and it could be the difference. He hoped! There was a faint aching tingle in his pitching arm and it wouldn't go away no matter how he rested it on his knee. That forty-five yard pitch had been the kind he used to make three years ago and think nothing of it. Not today, though. An old man feels things he never used to notice. Seven points, anyway, and they could be big.

They could, but not against a team like the Lions. Inveterately slow starters, they had come along like wild horses the last few weeks. That, plus the smarting sting from the razzle-dazzle being pulled right under their noses, gave them the jab in the places where it would do the most good. They took the kickoff on the eleven and ran it back to the twenty-eight. On the first running play their triple threat, Hickey, bulled and butted his way to the forty-one. Then, as though he was getting his second wind, he took it again and went over the mid-field stripe and down to the Beavers' forty-five.

Cabot promptly sent in a replacement to help plug up the hole in the right side of the Beaver line. That helped until it was third and three for the Lions. Then Hickey got it again, and though the entire Beaver team was in on the play, the Lion backfield star seemed to pop from the bunch like a seed from a pressed grapefruit, and went clear to the end zone. There, though, Lady Luck turned her head to one side. The Lion extra-point kick went a hair wide and the Beavers were still on top, but by only a single point.

Surprisingly enough, that ended the gridiron fireworks for both sides. It was as though each team had reached a point where they were a guess ahead of the other lads and couldn't be fooled any more.

Johnny Sawyer was in a good twenty minutes of the first half, but the magic of his arm was to no avail. And

there wasn't such a terrible lot of magic to write home about, either. From up in the stands you wouldn't have noticed it. You would have sworn that his passing screen was being banged full of holes, and that the Lion forward wall was coming through practically unhindered.

But not so, down there on the field. The old magic just wasn't up to par. The Beaver players could tell it, and the Lions could sense it. So the Lions trained their sights on Johnny, just as they had been drilled for weeks to do, and they pinned down his efforts to a bare minimum.

However, it was a six-of-one and half-dozen-of-the-other affair, for when the Lions got the ball their bag of tricks also didn't avail them much. Possessed of a far better running attack, they did not go to the air more than a couple of times. But even on the ground they were unable to get the ball very deep into Beaver territory. So when the half ended the Beavers were still a single point on top, and the cash customers settled back for the between-halves entertainment.

In the Beaver dressing room Frank Cabot talked quietly to his players. None of it was any sort of pep talk. Instead he pointed out some flaws he had noted in the Lions and called attention to some misplays made by his own team.

Stretched out on one of the rubbing tables, Johnny Sawyer listened to Cabot's words and wished very much that young Baker was there listening, too. It would certainly be nice to have Baker there to spell him. The kid might not have the caniness that comes with experience, but he was young and fast, and with a good head on his shoulders.

Yes, it would be very nice, but it was only the wishful thinking of an old man, he knew. The load was still all his to tote for another thirty minutes. That's all, just thirty minutes. Or thirty years, if you looked at it from a different viewpoint. Time was such a

relative thing.

Presently Cabot ran out of words, and shortly after that it was time to go out and go back to work. Once again Cabot stopped Johnny as he was about to go through the dressing room door.

"I'm still not worrying, Johnny," he said. "I want you to know that."

Sawyer nodded absently, and then as a crazy sort of anger stabbed him the words came out before he could check them.

"Lucky you!" he grunted, and shouldered on through the doorway.

WHEN the Lions took the second-half opening kickoff it was plain to see that their coach had not spent his time between the halves going over his monthly accounts. Hickey grabbed the ball, danced a little while his interference formed, and then went banging his way to the midfield stripe. There the Beavers dug in, but for a couple of plays it was as though they were going through their paces in slow motion. When they woke up the ball was on their eighteen and the stands were going mildly crazy.

However, they did wake up, and although the Lions shot the works, three tries got them exactly three yards. The fourth-down play was an open book to anybody who cared to give it a thought. It was like putting the intention up in lights when the Lion toe artist crammed on his hat and ran out from the visitors' bench.

A few moments later and his job was done to the satisfaction of all save the Beavers and their rooters. True, Olsen came awfully close to blocking the kick, but the ball did clear his fingertips and sailed between the uprights for three nice points.

It was the Beavers' turn to be stung and receive the prodding in places, and for the remainder of the third quarter be it said it almost got the desired results. One play, a beautiful thirty-yard pass by Johnny Sawyer, took the ball to the Lion twelve. The very next play,

though, upset the apple cart for the time being. Harris, the Beaver right half, fumbled the ball on an end-around, and that thorn in the side, Hickey, came crashing through to fall on it for his side. The quarter ended with the ball in midfield under the charge of the visiting team.

Playing defense as well as offense, Johnny Sawyer was a snapping ball of fire, and a perpetual walkie-talkie. The others caught the spark from the veteran star and played a brand of football that was a little above even their heads. At any rate, they dropped the Lion ball carriers like flies in their tracks and forced them to punt.

After a run-back by Olsen to the Beaver thirty-one, Johnny promptly went to the air. His efforts got the ball back to the fifty, but twice if he'd led his receiver a little more the pigskin would have been much closer to pay dirt. The sharpshooting snap just wasn't there when he needed it most, and finally on fourth down he was forced to kick it out of bounds on the Lion twelve.

Eight, nine, ten minutes of the big clock ticked away, and the Lions continued their relentless march back up the field. No spectacular ground gaining plays. Simply a continual hammering at the Beavers' line. A couple of yards here and three there, and that last eighteen inches before they would be forced to kick. The defense replacements that Cabot sent in were like a Beaver who's-who parade for the customers, but it seemed to do very little good.

Finally, though, when it was third down and four, on the Beaver twenty-nine, the fickle gods lowered the boom on the visitors. As Hickey came booming through tackle the ball squirted out of his arms and hit left end Collins smack in the face. The man grabbed it before it could bounce away and was off like the wind.

The big black hand of the clock showed two minutes to go when Collins started, and when he had criss-crossed

the field a couple of times and the Lion Safety man had finally brought him to earth, the clock said one minute and a half. But it was the Beavers' ball on the enemy's eighteen yard line. The stands went completely nuts, and the Beavers rushed into the huddle. Johnny looked at Collins and grinned.

"Want to be a hero twice, pal?" he said.

"Really get my name in the papers, eh?" Collins grinned back at him. "Gee, tanks!"

"So it's Twenty-six," Johnny told them. "End it the way we started it."

CHAPTER IV

Fading Star

AS THE Beavers trotted into the line a hesitant hush settled down over the entire park. Everybody guessed that a pass by Johnny was coming up, but just which one would be worked was something to wait for and find out. The wait was not long. As the clock hand moved toward the one minute mark Johnny barked the count for Twenty-six, and then got himself into motion.

The pass from center was clean as a whistle. Olsen took it, and this time for good measure, he started a fake swing to the left before quickly reversing to the right. And Johnny was right in step with him at the correct moment. He took the hand-off, faded back and looked toward Collins. The flashy left end was by himself but one of the Lions' secondary was coming over fast. A quick glance and then Johnny pivoted and let the ball go—a second too late.

For a mad instant the pigskin seemed to stick to his fingers. Then it slanted upward and forward. At that instant, though, an upflung hand of a charging Lion touched it and the ball shot almost

straight up into the air.

His heart stopped dead in his chest, and every muscle of him apparently paralyzed, Johnny watched the ball wobble upward, end over end, and then arc over and down. But it didn't bump against the sod to go for an incomplete try. The fickle gods were having a field day for themselves. A Lion lineman caught it a foot off the ground, and momentum carried him forward six yards before he fell flat with a couple of Beavers falling on top of him to keep him there.

That was it. For forty-eight heart-breaking seconds the Lions hugged the ball, quite content to make just a few inches at a time. The final gun hung a period on it all and the players went trooping off the field. When he went up the clubhouse steps Johnny heard words yelled at him, but he was sunk too deep in the black anger of despair for the cutting remarks to add anything. Once in the gloom-heavy dressing room, he ripped off his uniform and hurried into the showers.

He remained under the showers a long time while some of the aches and pains, and some of the black despair, drained out of him. When he finally came out most of the players had dressed and left. Frank Cabot was there waiting, though, and the owner-coach of the Beavers hurried over to his locker bench.

"Johnny, don't feel—" he began, and then stopped as Sawyer cut the air with one hand.

"Skip it, Frank!" the team star said tightly. "You've got eyes. You saw an old man, a has-been, fall on his face out there today. Period!"

"Nonsense!" Cabot shot back at him. "A couple of breaks the other way and we'd be dancing, now. So one play went wrong. What's a guy supposed to be, Johnny, inhuman? Don't be silly, boy. Nobody's blaming you. It was the breaks."

Sawyer gave a little harsh laugh and then stared bitterly into space.

"One word, Frank," he said presently. "Just a name. Baker. With the kid out of it I just didn't have enough left. I've known it for weeks, Frank. You have, too. That's doubly why I'm sorry. I wanted to make it fine for you, more than you realize, but the guy doesn't have it any more."

For an instant sympathy showed in Frank Cabot's eyes, and then his face tightened up.

"We will now all cry silently for two minutes," he snapped. "So you've been around for six years? Well, in my book you're better with only one hand than any quarterback in either league. I mean that, so cut out this stuff about letting me down. Besides, the game's down the drain. We lost it, and today the Ravens took the Hawks. So it's all tied up and next Sunday we settle it with the Ravens. And Baker won't be with us then, either. So?"

Johnny shook his head to drive away the mixed up thoughts. He took a deep breath and let it out slowly. The grin he gave Cabot wasn't much but it was something.

"Okay, Frank," he said. "I guess that's just another sign of mounting old age. A guy gets feeling awfully sorry for himself, too."

Cabot gave him a long thoughtful look, and there seemed to be a touch of wistful sadness in his eyes. Then he slowly shook his head.

"No, Johnny," he said softly. "I have a feeling. No need for you to feel sorry for yourself at all. See you tomorrow, boy."

"Sure, Frank," Sawyer said, and with a faint puzzled frown on his face he watched the club owner walk out of the dressing room.

THE following week was not one of the better ones in Johnny Sawyer's twenty-nine years. As a matter of fact, it was a kind of week he had never experienced before. At any rate, not during his high school, college and professional football career. For one

thing, the football scribes did not take kindly to his performance against the Lions. And with Standish, of the *Globe*, in the lead they put their opinions down in black and white for the thousands of newspaper subscribers to read.

They indeed did not take kindly to his work in the Lion game, and there was not one among them who gave Cabot's Beavers any more than an outside chance against the mighty Ravens. In short, the king was slipping from his throne, and every new column appearing in print gave him another little shove behind his back.

More important to Johnny, though, and the bitterest pill of all, was the reaction of his teammates. None of them spoke a word of it openly at any of the practice sessions. Secretly he would have welcomed it if only as an excuse to punch somebody on the nose. But no word was spoken. It only showed in their eyes, and in their actions. With Johnny Sawyer sunk, the Beavers were sunk, too.

True, a miracle might do it, but against a bunch like the Ravens—national champions two years running, and this season stronger than ever—what could you use for a miracle? Or even a substitute for one?

A fact was a fact, and not even the charm and fire in Frank Cabot's voice could change a thing. Not even a reminder that the poor guy was really on the hook now. For three years Johnny Sawyer had been the guy to take aim and pull the trigger. The rest of the hired help had simply held the gun steady for him. When you have a team like that you don't switch it all around overnight, or during a week. Most certainly not when the next best thing, young Baker, was still in the hospital.

On that note the final light practice on Saturday ended. Johnny Sawyer went straight from the park to his apartment, but he had not been there but a half hour when the phone rang. It was Betty Norris, and she was having dinner later with Frank, but would a guy

who hadn't even said hello to her all week like to buy her a cocktail at Charlie's in, say, an hour?

It was an invitation he could not refuse, nor did he want to for even a mere second. And so in exactly sixty minutes the two of them were seated at a corner table in Charlie's Chop House, and Charlie himself was serving the Manhattan.

The girl studied hers for a moment and then raising it a little looked across at him, solemn-eyed.

"To the very best of everything tomorrow, Johnny," she said softly.

Sawyer returned her solemn look and nodded. "Thanks," he said. "We'll all be in there, anyway."

A shadow crossed the girl's face and settled in her eyes. "As bad as that?" she murmured.

For an instant Johnny wished he hadn't come and then he forgot it.

"What do you think?" he said. "You know the score, too. Or are we playing kidding games?"

Betty let the question slide by unanswered. She stared silently at her drink and then suddenly lifted her gaze.

"Then Frank is cooked? Just like that? It's not like you at all to fold so easily, Johnny."

Sawyer took a slow count to allow plenty of time for the lump of anger to dissolve and go away.

"Look, Betty," he said earnestly, "there isn't a thing I wouldn't do for Frank. An arm, a couple of legs. Anything he wants, but no man can turn back a couple of years. Tomorrow I'll be in there every minute. All of us will. Maybe there'll be a miracle, who knows? But if there isn't, it won't be because we didn't try to make one."

SHE suddenly smiled and it lighted up her whole face. She nodded and lifted her glass again.

"There, that's much better, Mr. Sawyer," she said. "You had me worried for a moment, and thinking crazy things. If there's a miracle needed tomorrow,

there'll be one. For Frank's sake, at least."

He looked at her with irritation and longing. The words suddenly came to the tip of his tongue and no power on earth could have kept them there.

"Mind if I get personal?" he asked her.

"Go right ahead, Johnny."

"Maybe we'll win and maybe we won't," he said slowly. "But with Fort Knox or just a dime, Frank Cabot's still the nicest guy that walks the earth."

The girl's face colored, and for the first time that Sawyer could remember he saw real anger in her lovely eyes. Then it was gone in a flash and she was nodding at him.

"Perhaps I asked for that, Johnny," she said quietly, "but somehow the thought never once entered my mind. I'm sorry. The gal was simply trying to give out with a little pep talk because of what Friend Standish and a few others have been writing. No, don't apologize, Johnny. Just please make that miracle tomorrow. *Please!*"

He stared at her, helpless and miserable. For two cents he would gladly have cut out his tongue—if doing so would have taken back those words. Betty smiled at him, finished her drink and looked at her wrist watch.

"I still mean it, Johnny," she said, and stood up. "But now I've got to run. You can win it, Johnny, and you must. It could mean so much to so many!"

Still staring at her, and not getting the complete gist of her words, he rose to his feet, too.

"I'll get a cab right outside," she said. Then biting her lip, she looked straight at him, and said, "If a gal may add one more item, it's this, Johnny. Forget other people for a change, and think real hard about a nice guy named Sawyer. Good luck."

With that she was gone and Johnny simply stood there, watching her retreat with sagging jaw and baffled eyes.

"Now what did she mean by that?" he mumbled.

"I wouldn't know, Mr. Sawyer, I didn't hear."

Johnny jerked his head around and stared at Charlie standing by his elbow. He blinked, shrugged and started toward the door. When he got there he remembered and went back and paid the check.

CHAPTER V

Miracle Maker

THE rumble-mumble of the packed Polo Grounds seeped into the Beavers' dressing room like the echo of a mightily bombardment far, far away. It was the between-the-halves period when you get back your breath and some of your strength, and listen to your coach tell you about the things you overlooked or let slip through your fingers. Indeed, Frank Cabot, tight of face and slightly pale, was going over a few of those items, but if his players heard, their bleak, dog-tired faces gave no sign.

For thirty long minutes they had been battling a relentlessly raging hurricane that went by the name of the Raven Football Club. And out there on the big scoreboard, the tally showed fourteen points for those same Ravens and nothing but a lonely goose egg for themselves. It was in the cards and it was happening, as inevitable things must happen.

Not that they hadn't tried to hold back that roaring tide. They all had given with everything, and at times their big man, Johnny Sawyer, had shown flashes of his old self. But not enough flashes, and not at the right times. The Ravens had him pegged, and having him pegged, there had been little or nothing the others could do about it. Mangle the main cog, mister, and what good is the rest of your engine? I ask you.

It was tough. Toughest on poor old

Johnny. The guy was playing his heart out, and dying on his feet. And the Ravens had fourteen points, and the Beavers not a smell of a single one. Tough, but it was in the cards, wasn't it?

Stretched out on one of the rubbing tables, with his aching head buried in his arms, Johnny Sawyer tried not to think of a thing and as a result thought of everything. Those fourteen big points out there on the scoreboard. The thirty minutes of football coming up. Frank Cabot, deeper in the shadow of the eight ball, and chewing his nails up to the second joint. Of what Betty Norris had said last night, and not said. Of this, and that, and on, and on. We who are about to die have dropped dead already, he thought.

Finally there came the call. Cabot stopped talking, and the players gathered up their gear and trudged out toward the area of the slaughter. Cabot didn't have anything to say this time as Sawyer passed him at the door. Nor did Johnny have anything to say to him. On impulse, though, the once-great passing star reached out a hand and pressed Cabot's arm hard before he went through the door.

The Ravens kicked off to open the second half and Olsen took it on the one. He got inspired interference and went clear out to the twenty-nine. Johnny Sawyer had been part of that slashing interference, and as he bounced up off the ground his tired brains were suddenly crystal clear and clutching at a sudden thought as a drowning man clutches at a straw. To the referee's amazement he called time and gathered the Beavers about him. He pointed a finger at Hardy, who was playing offensive right half.

"Skip to the bench and send Young out here," Johnny told him.

Every jaw dropped, and it was finally big Olsen who spoke the words. "Young's a blocking back," he said. "You mean, Johnny, that you're—you're going to run it yourself?"

"Yeah, just that," Sawyer growled.

"We can't do it with football so we try mirrors. In high school I used to do real good lugging the ball. We'll try it, anyway. A quick switch. Everything a running play. Everybody a blocker for the ball-carrier. Get stepping, Hardy!"

Hardy ran off the field, and Young ran on with a question from Frank Cabot. What the devil was going on? Johnny let the question slide and explained his plan some more in the huddle. He broke it up just as the referee was getting black in the face, waved a hand toward the Beaver bench as a reassuring gesture to Cabot and then began the count of Twenty-six.

The Ravens thought they were way ahead of him, and as the ball was snapped two men dropped off to keep step with Collins scooting down the field. The rest of them charged to throw Sawyer for a loss if they could. They didn't, because Johnny wasn't there when they arrived. There was Olsen, Young and a couple of others to spill them, and Johnny was slicking around the opposite end like a frightened deer. The secondary slammed on the brakes and veered over, but Johnny Sawyer was on the midfield stripe when they hurled him to earth.

A WILD, crazy exultation bubbled in Johnny's heart as he joined the huddle. And there was a similar expression on the faces of his teammates.

"That was fun," he told them, and nodded at Olsen. "This time, Thirty-four. But you keep it, pal, and leg it. We'll be there."

It was another pass formation with Johnny moving back, but he didn't take the ball. Olsen went through the motions of a fake hand-off and then got his sturdy legs churning under him. And Johnny, functioning as a blocking back, threw his weight in there. The Ravens hauled him down before they saw he didn't have the ball. When they did wake up big Olsen was stiff-arming their safety man on his face and pounding down over into the end zone.

While half of the Polo Grounds went stark, raving mad and the other half sat in a spinning trance, Johnny booted it straight between the uprights, and they were lagging by only seven instead of fourteen points.

When it came their turn to receive the kickoff the Ravens snarled into it like so many hungry tigers who'd just had their tails twisted. But their tail-twisters were experiencing the joy born of magic inspiration. It carried them to heights of effort not half scaled in the first half. True, the Raven ball-carriers gained ground, but a little bit at a time. True, they made three first downs, but the Beavers held them cold and they were forced to kick.

Johnny was playing back with Olsen and he took the ball. He made fifteen back to his own forty before he got snowed under. By accident, no doubt, but several elbows and knees were dug into him before he was able to get to his feet under his own power. He forced himself to grin at a couple of the offending Ravens, wagged a finger at them and then went into the huddle.

The first switch-around play went for eight, the next for twelve yards. There the Ravens dug in and made a switch in their own defensive tactics. They broke through on the next play and smeared Johnny for a seven-yard loss. He got up very slowly this time, and Olsen stared at him anxiously. He shook his head.

"It's still fun," he said through his teeth. "Let us show them just how much. Twenty-six, and hand me that thing!"

Twenty-six it was, and the Ravens guessed wrong again. They covered Collins scampering down and went for Olsen who swung with the ball to the right. In the last second the big full-back tossed it to Johnny, who made as though to cock his arm, but in a continuance of the same movement spun left, tucked the ball to him and went legging around and down in Collins' footsteps.

The left end saw him coming and

managed to dump one of the Ravens detailed to cover a pass, but the other broke over and dumped Johnny two yards short of the pay-dirt stripe.

The roar of the crowd was heard for miles, and Johnny had to shout his orders in the huddle. A running play. Right through the center with Olsen carrying. Olsen carried it through with half the Raven team on his back.

Then the ball was moved out and they lined up for the extra point. You could have heard a pin drop as the ball came back and Olsen grounded it for Johnny. Then the mighty quivering wail of anguish as the kick missed by a foot. Sawyer stared, bleak-eyed and motionless, and one of the officials had to come over and tell him the third quarter was ended and to snap out of it.

The first ten minutes of the final quarter was like watching twenty-two madmen strive with might and main to commit suicide. Penalties were called thick and fast on both teams, but nobody seemed to care, for it seemed that this game would neither be won nor lost on penalty gains.

Finally wide awake to the Beaver switch, the Ravens acted accordingly. When the Beavers had the ball, they hurled all their superior weight into the line, and little by little it began to tell. Johnny Sawyer and his foredoomed pals shot their bolts and their hearts and their brains, but with a final two minutes to go the Ravens bulled the pigskin down to the Beaver fourteen to make it first and ten.

His head a lump of lead one moment and a fluffy ball of feathers the next, he walked up and down the Beaver line, whacking each weary lineman on the rump and screaming for him to dig in and hold. Then he moved back as the count was started.

It was another crushing drive through the line with a big horse named Stutz carrying the ball. The man came through like an elephant through waving grass and Johnny left his feet and dived forward. He experienced the

sensation of burying his head and shoulders in solid concrete, but out of blurring eyes he saw the pigskin pop from Stutz's clutching fingers and bobble to the ground. Then there was a tangled heap of kicking legs and feet, and the referee was blowing his lungs through his whistle.

ONE by one the kicking legs and feet were pulled to the side with bodies attached, and there on the bottom was Olsen. Dear old Olsen with the ball hugged to his heart. Johnny laughed crazily, crawled over on hands and knees and kissed Olsen on the helmet. Then he struggled to his feet and called for time as the thunder from the seats grew more and more deafening. The clock said a minute and a half to go, and the Beavers had ninety-one yards of land to cross for a touchdown.

In the huddle Johnny sucked air into his burning lungs and looked at the ring of haggard, sweating, dirt-smeared faces. Every pair of eyes looked back at him, waiting. He was still the miracle maker, but he hadn't been making any since the end of the third quarter. A minute and a half left. For what? Johnny licked his lips, and told them as he nodded at Collins. "One pitch left for Twenty-six," he said, with an effort. "Just be there, is all I ask. One pitch, and the arm falls off. Be there!"

"I'll be waiting," Collins told him.

They went out of the huddle and into the line. Eleven guys praying all the prayers they knew, and thinking up a couple of new ones.

Johnny looked at the Ravens watching him across the line, and then casually shifted his gaze toward Stacey who was playing right end today. He thought he saw a few Raven eyes follow his glance, but he wasn't sure. He started to count for an entirely different play, but worked it back into the one for Twenty-six. He hoped that would help.

The ball came straight to Olsen. The big fellow tucked it to him and spun around on one foot. With his back to

the line he tossed it quick to Sawyer. Johnny grabbed it, gripped it in his fingers and cocked his arm. For an instant he faced toward Stacey who was running toward the flat, then he pivoted and let the ball go with everything left in his aging money wing.

The pitch was a blunt brown arrow, arcing toward the sideline at the mid-field stripe. A blunt arrow, leading the racing Collins by just a hair. Two of the Raven secondary were streaking over, but the razzle-dazzle bluff had worked just enough. In the last moment of time Collins spurted, flung up his two hands and picked the ball out of the air. The Raven closest to him left his feet and slammed down on his face, and the other Raven was still five yards back as Collins went over into the end zone and collapsed.

On the try for the extra point Johnny did his best, but the gods had smiled at him enough for one day. The kick went wide, the final gun ended it, and the Beavers used up the last bit of strength they had to reach the clubhouse steps before the slap-happy fans could get through the cordon of cops to reach them.

The riot in the Beaver dressing room went on for a full thirty minutes without one single sign of a letup. Everybody hooted and screamed and pounded everybody else on the back. They were in! The big gravy game next. Maybe they'd win it and maybe they wouldn't. That didn't matter now. They were in, and Cabot was off the hook, and there'd be a Beaver football team next year. Old man Johnny Sawyer had made it so. Sawyer, the indestructible!

At the end of those thirty minutes Frank Cabot, shouting and hooting as loud as anybody, managed to pull Johnny from the pack and lead him into his clubhouse office. Closing the door on the roll of noise, he turned and looked at Johnny out of eyes that were moist with tears.

"Now it's my turn, Johnny, to do something for you," he said. "To tell

you something you've a right to know. Here it is. Last night I asked Betty to marry me. She said no."

Sawyer closed his eyes tight for a moment to slow down his galloping thoughts.

"What?" he heard himself gasp. "She said no! But I thought it was all fixed? The girl's crazy! There isn't a nicer guy who—"

"Yes, there's one, Johnny," Cabot stopped him, with a wry smile. "You. You're a very dumb ox, Johnny. I've had a hunch for months, but hoped I was wrong. I wasn't. It's—it's like football. You can't win them all. So I'm glad it's you. After all, I've got back the Beavers, haven't I? No man gets everything he wants. See what I mean?"

Sawyer had to try three times before he could form the words. "Betty—me?" he gagged. "Are you crazy?"

FRANK CABOT shook his head and took a breath. "Look, John Alden," he said, in a patient voice, "it's about time somebody drew you a picture. No, I'm doggoned if I will. I'll just tell you that Betty must be home by now, waiting for you to phone. Now get out of here and get into your clothes, and learn the facts of your *own* life, boy!"

For emphasis Cabot threw his arm about Sawyer and hugged him. Then he looked into the passing star's face.

"There's a couple of favors, Johnny," he said. "The club's that big the office will take all my time next year. Will you take over as coach, Johnny? And—well, will you ask Betty to stick until I can find somebody to take her place?"

Johnny Sawyer looked a little bit stupid, blinked and nodded.

"Sure, be glad to, Frank," he said. "And I'll ask Betty, but no need for that. She'll want to stick as long as I do. It's all one big family, isn't it?"

And then with the air and manner of a man who has just survived a very beautiful train wreck, Johnny Sawyer turned on his heel and walked out the office door.

An old coach with new ideas
sparks his team into
a win that surprises
even himself!



Wade Rooney plowed
into the line

CLEATS in the MUD

By SAM MERWIN, Jr.

FARSON waited until the Old Man had closed the door of the field-house behind him before he ducked into the visiting-coaches' room and lit a cigarette. He took a long, deep inhale before risking a look at the craggy features of "Clipper" Mack, the Munro line coach, who had put his size fourteens on the battered desk.

"You don't look as if you cared,"

Farson said accusingly, as he sank into a chair and flicked ashes on the concrete floor.

Farson was a small, nervous man, growing prematurely bald—which he laid to the ulcerous chore of serving the Old Man as backfield mentor, chief scout and supposed successor.

"We take another licking," said the Clipper, with a shrug of monumental

shoulders. He thrust his head forward and scowled ferociously in fair imitation of the Old Man, lifted his voice a full register into a tenor snarl. "You know how I want this played, men." He was quoting the pregame speech they both knew all too well. "Carry out your assignments, men—carry them out to the hilt! Punt on third down inside your own thirty-yard line. Pass only on third down if you have more than five yards to gain."

The Clipper paused to sweep the room from wall to wall with hypnotic piercing gaze.

"Outcharge them, undercharge them, outfight them, bend their line, then break it! Power, power and more power—inside the guards, outside the guards, inside the tackles, outside the—"

"Oh, cut it out," said Farson wearily. "The Old Man's coached a flock of winning teams in his day."

"Sure he has!" said the line coach, using his natural low growl of a voice. "Who couldn't, the way they used to pull in the players for him when he was coaching here at Stanley? He didn't have to be smart. He could put on a winning season with one play in his repertoire. Did I say 'could?' Hell, he did!"

"Still, he beat all the big ones," Farson sighed, unable to convince even himself. "I sure hope he wins this one, though."

"Not a chance," said the Clipper pessimistically. He gave Farson a look which had a certain amount of sympathy. "Our boys will be lucky if Rip Burton and this Stanley bunch let them off the field alive. We're out of our league."

"Still, it's raining," said Farson gloomily. He dropped his cigarette to the concrete, stepped on it, slammed a fist into an open palm. "What I wouldn't give to be able to—"

"Don't say it—don't think it. You won't get a chance. Nick." The huge line coach dropped his feet to the floor with a double crash and rose to his six-

feet five. "You sure do want to breed yourself a nice shinny new set of ulcers, don't you?"

"I'd like a shot at it—I'd give my arm for a shot at it," said Farson gloomily.

NEITHER man needed an explanation of this somewhat cryptic exchange. For seven long years now, Nick Farson had been coaching the backfield of the Munro Blues. Each season the Old Man had told him that he was going to retire the next year and name Farson his successor.

"All I want is one more big win," were his annual words.

But the big win had not come. Munro had long ago foresworn its day of athletic glory in favor of high scholastic rating. The fine old school had drawn its share of material none the less—the alumni saw to that—but the Old Man's immovable conservatism in football tactics had put the Blues far behind in the football parade.

They won some games—in their own level of competition—though even there lack of surprise in attack counted heavily against them at times. But they had never come up with the one big win. In fact, their chances were growing increasingly slim.

In an era of high-pressure schedules, no big universities wanted to play them. They could draw a bigger gate and get more practice against their own Jay-Vees. Mighty Stanley was still on the menu only because of its traditional rivalry with Munro. And it was no longer Stanley's final game—though it was Munro's—being a mere breather before the new Stanley windup with nearby State.

When they moved out now through the ramp onto the rain-drenched turf of the Stanley Stadium with the Blue-jerseyed Munro squad, a faint damp cheer greeted them. Great empty splotches of unsold seats held the mournful look of a fungus blight, and the ends of the vast structure were all but totally empty.

"Let's adjourn indoors somewhere and make this a debating contest," said the lugubrious Clipper out of the side of his mouth.

Farson shushed him, lest the team hear him and lose heart—a futile move, since dejection was the uniform mask of the blue-clad players.

Across the field, seven maroon-clad Stanley teams were running through pregame signal practice and their size and efficiency made Farson shudder inwardly. Munro could barely put three teams into formation and only one of them could move as snappily.

"Farson!" The Old Man was summoning him in his high voice.

Almost hidden by the big television set, tarpaulin covered at one end of the bench, Enos Duffield, the Old Man, presented a truly fantastic picture. Combine the eyebrows of John L. Lewis with the head of Peter Lorre, the chin of Winston Churchill and the overall shape of a roly-poly toy, and you have some idea. All this was covered with a paint-stained poncho and a beat-up sou'wester from which water dripped.

"Yes, sir," said Farson, trotting over. His feet were already squishing on the muddy turf and he hated to think of what the going would be like in short order on the field.

"Farson!" The high voice sang like a violin hideously out of tune. "Farson, it is your designated duty to see to it that this television set reaches the field in working shape."

"Yes, sir," said the backfield coach, peering under the poncho.

A round-cornered vision of a football field in pregame array danced before his eyes as the Old Man did some more tuning. "It looks all right to me, sir," he said hopefully.

"Of course it *looks* all right!" snapped the Old Man peevishly. "Any fool can see that! But the sound is on the fritz. Hear that?" He turned another dial and a hideous squealing resulted.

"I'll try to get it fixed, sir," said Farson.

"And not have it ready at all?" queried the Old Man. He gave vent to a snort that all but made the stadium rattle. "No, I'll have to get along with it the way it is, I suppose." He gave vent to a sigh. "Why is it, Farson, that even inanimate objects let me down?"

"I wouldn't know, sir," said Farson, accepting the implied rebuke meekly. He wished the Old Man had never seen the picture, a season or two back, in a national magazine of Jimmy Conzelman coaching the Chicago Cardinals with a TV set in front of him.

IN HIS great days at Stanley the Old Man had been used to all the trappings of a big-time football coach—a staff of line, end and backfield coaches and their aides; of scouts, a quartet of trainers, of publicity men; of special coaches stationed atop the stadium with telephones handy to send down word of strategic or tactical errors on the part of friend and foe alike.

At Munro, Enos Duffield was reduced to Farson, the Clipper and Nero Wilson, the trainer, with a small group of student managers and assistants and alumni scouts to help him out. It was a good deal like putting the President of the United States in as mayor of some small town when his term of office was up.

Somehow, after seeing the Jimmy Conzelman picture, the Old Man had managed to squeeze a television set out of an impoverished athletic board. He had convinced them that it would be of immeasurable value, and would replace an expert atop the stadium at each game.

"I am not in harmony with some of the changes referred to as 'progress,'" he had told Farson at the time. "But this television may be a great help—if it doesn't empty the stadiums of the land. I want you to see that it is ready for me at every game."

So care and transportation of the Old Man's TV set had become another of Nick Farson's many chores. For the Old Man would have nothing to do with

any other set. He claimed he had the hang of this one. So wherever he went, it went with him.

More and more, the Old Man came to coach by television alone. Sitting there, hunched behind the big box, his eyes glued to the screen, his thick fingers on the dials, he scarcely looked at the play on the field, claiming the TV set gave him a fuller picture of how the game was really going.

He issued orders without looking around, passing them through Nick or the Clipper to the players. And when the Munro team was not being televised he walked the side line irritably, resentfully, as if such lack of attention were a personal insult.

It was Nick Farson who gave Captain "Rags" Bechtold and the rest of the Munro starting eleven their final instructions. He looked at their tension-drawn young faces, at right tackle Leon Ettinger's partly-healed black eye, at the tape on halfback Tony Genovese's cheek, at guard Jack Burns' left leg, swollen with bandages.

"You know what to do," Nick told them. "You're receiving. I know we're underdogs this time, but you boys have plenty of what it takes, and on a day like this one anything can happen. Try to make it happen for Munro. That's all, men. Hit 'em hard and fast."

He watched them trot out through the rain into their positions. They were determined, but there was a sag to the whole team. He couldn't, and didn't, blame them. They had their reasons—and good ones—for feeling hopeless.

In Tony Genovese they had potentially one of the trickiest and most accurate passers to show up on the football scene since Sammy Baugh hung up his Texas Christian uniform and signed up with the Redskins. In Pat Norris they had an all-around kicker who could punt spirals or end-over-ends on quick kicks, or placements or field goals from either forty yard line. In Shawn Reilly and Fred Stevens they had a pair of fast, tricky glue-fingered ends. And in Wade

Rooney they had a fine, plunging fullback.

As it was, in the so-called "Duffield system", Rooney got most of the work on the endless power smashes over guard and tackle. But not even Bronko Nagurski could do much gaining when the opposition knew when and where he was to carry the pigskin.

The line was good, but discouraged that the backs seemed as a rule to get nowhere. They were thin in reserves, too—since Munro did not run to a big squad. All in all, it was a dispirited if a determined bunch that took the field to receive.

THE FIELD-WIDE line of Maroon players that moved forward with the kicker toward the Munro goal looked immense and ominous to Farson. He started to pull out a cigarette, remembered that smoking in sight of the players was against the Old Man's rule during the season, refocused his attention on the play.

The boot went all the way to the Munro three-yard line, where fullback Wade Rooney gathered it in and began to move it upfield while his interference formed in front of him. He reached the seventeen in safety, cut away from the Munro bunch, and was swarmed under when he attempted to bull through a quartet of Stanley tacklers on the twenty-three-yard line.

"He'd have made midfield if he'd cut the other way," Clipper Mack muttered in Farson's damp ear.

"Wade likes to use his left for a stiff-arm," Farson replied. "He doesn't want to risk losing his grip on the ball in this muck."

The teams lined up for the first play from scrimmage. Already the turf was torn and scarred with black streaks of mud from the kickoff. Eddy Lane, Munro quarterback, barked his signals.

It was Wade Rooney again, on the routine plunge inside tackle—the play with which the Old Man's teams opened every game on offense as regularly as an

opening radio commercial. Only, all of a sudden, it wasn't. Wade had handed off to Genovese, who came roaring around his own left end on a totally unexpected naked reverse.

It was unthinkable, it was blasphemy, even though the fast Genovese galloped clean around the Stanley right end and was not tossed out of bounds until he was almost at midfield. The boys had taken affairs into their own hands for a change.

Nick Farson and the Clipper exchanged long looks of surprise. Then both looked toward the Old Man. Farson would not have been surprised if Duffield had pulled out an ancient fowling piece and shot them both dead for treason.

But Enos Duffield remained crouched on the end of the bench, still half hidden by the tarpaulin-covered TV set. He did not so much as lift his head from the viewing screen that seemed to have absorbed all his attention.

"You don't suppose he's sick or something?" Farson ventured.

"I don't dare guess," replied the Clipper in low tones. "But if I were you, Nick, I wouldn't be too curious."

Nick merely nodded. He had a hunch that payment would be the heavier for being deferred—the Old Man had more tricks in everything but football than an old-time vaudeville magician. But at least the boys were moving in the right direction.

The teams lined up again, and again Wade Rooney plunged into the massed lines, head down, knees pumping. But again he had handed off to Tony Genovese, who was charging to the left. This time the Stanley end was not sucked in.

He waited, and left his feet in a beautiful diving tackle, but not before Tony had flipped an easy pass into the waiting paws of Fred Stevens, whose long legs ate up huge chunks of turf as he tore down the side lines like some tall two-legged greyhound.

Stevens went all the way and Pat Norris coolly booted the extra point, putting

the underdog visitors into the lead. The few hundred Blue supporters in the stands proceeded to stand up on their hind legs and go crazy.

Stanley elected to receive and their offensive team came trotting out onto the skiddy turf, looking clean and fresh among their already mud-stained mates. Farson sent in five subs, including Ben Reynolds, who spelled Eddy Lane at quarterback.

"What gives, Eddy?" said Farson in low tones, drawing the signal caller aside as soon as his parka was in place.

Clipper Mack was there with them. The quarterback glanced at the still-silent Old Man, then looked at Farson apologetically.

"We cooked it up in an after-hour skull session Tuesday," he told them in a near whisper. "Has he said anything?"

"Not yet," said the Clipper, "but that don't mean he ain't gonna. You'd better pull in sail for awhile, kid."

"Right," said Nick, giving the signal caller a pat on the shoulder. "For some reason, you got away with it. But it's not right and you know it. It's anarchy, Eddy! From now on I want you to play it by the book and do what the Old Man tells you."

"Okay," said Lane submissively. Then his face lit up as he grinned. "But it sure gave us a belt to make those big apes look silly out there." He shrugged, added, "Well, we scored first, anyway. And that's all we figured to do."

With that, he trotted over to take his place on the bench.

BUT ON the mudflat that had recently been a football field, an aroused Maroon was moving downfield, determined to erase the blot of being fouled and scored on by despised Munro. Ray Torrance, their great passer, and Nils Opfer, All-American right end, were hampered in their aerial specialty by the mud and water around them.

But Perry Simmons, their powerhouse plunging back, was not even slowed. He tore off yardage, four, five, nine yards at

a clip, and sent tackler after tackler flying each time he grabbed the ball and went bulling into the squirming, struggling forwards.

Stanley clicked off five straight downs in eleven plays and it was four downs and one to go on the visitors' six and a half.

"Well," muttered the Clipper to Farson, "it was fun while it lasted." He sat hunched on the bench, awaiting the inevitable.

The Munro secondary was drawn in close, prepared to stop another plunge through the middle. But Ray Torrance, operating from the offensive quarterback bucket of the T, crossed them up by floating a perfect pass into the flat. Lanky Nils Opfer reached out a paw to drag it in, and then went out of bounds on the one-yard line.

Farson shuddered, sighed his relief, then tensed once more. It was only a deferment. But on the next play Leon Ettinger came crashing through to yank Torrance to the mud before he could get the ball away. It was third down and there were five yards to go now. Saying a silent prayer, Farson closed his eyes tightly.

Screams of joy from the few Munro supporters massed in the stands caused him to open them. Evidently Stanley had fumbled. At any rate Rags Bechtold, Munro captain and center, was at the end of a long, confused trail of bodies and was hugging the ball tightly to his muddy chest on the seven.

"Farson!" The Old Man's shrill bel-lows was a command.

The backfield coach leaped to the head coach's side. Enos Duffield handed him a slip of paper on which was scrawled in pencil the number "71." The Old Man said, "Give it to Lane, Farson."

"Yes, sir," said Nick Farson in a daze.

He looked again at the paper before handing it to the quarterback, who was adjusting his helmet on the sidelines, waiting to go into the fray. Lane's eyes popped in turn as he read it. He

blinked, looked at Farson for explanation, then showed his teeth in a wide grin.

"Yes, indeed, Mr. Farson," he murmured before running out to report to the referee.

Farson stared after him, then back at the Old Man, who was still crouched behind his set. All at once, Duffield let out a peculiar calliope wheeze which with him was the equivalent of a roar of triumph. He raised both fists level with his shoulders and shook them in a gesture of sheer defiant gladness.

"Is he crazy?" inquired Clipper Mack, who had wandered over.

"Don't ask me," muttered Farson. "He gave me seventy-one."

"Good grief!" exclaimed the line coach. "Send for a straight-jacket and some damp sheets. The old boy's gone off his rocker!"

Out on the field, Eddy Lane proceeded to put Play 71 into execution. The ball went to Pat Norris, who stood in punt formation behind the goal line. Norris brought his foot up high, but there was no thud of shoe on pigskin. Instead, he handed off behind him to Tony Genovese, who faded farther behind the goal line and then dropped a pass diagonally across field to Shawn Reilly, the Munro right end, who had cut toward the far side line.

Reilly went all the way without a hand being laid on him, and Pat Norris kicked the point to put Munro ahead, 14 to 0.

There was new snap in the Blue team as it lined up for the kickoff. With the conservative wraps off, they were a good team and they knew it. They had scored twice on favored Stanley and the opening period was still five minutes shy of completion.

They dropped a bewildered Maroon back on his own sixteen, and in three plays the home team was back on its own eight. Ray Torrance barely got his kick away and it went just beyond mid-field, where Ben Reynolds, playing safety, gathered it in and brought it

back to the Stanley twenty-seven yard line.

BUT Munro's luck ran out with the quarter after they had worked the ball down to the eleven. With the Stanley defense disorganized and scattered, Eddy Lane sent Wade Rooney plowing into the line. For a moment he looked about to go for a third touchdown, but the slippery ball popped out of his hands and into the surprised mitts of a Maroon defender, who ran it out to the thirty.

From there, Stanley scored in exactly seven plays, a Torrance-to-Opfer pass doing the trick after Perry Simmons' plunges had decoyed the defense in too close. It was Torrance who booted the extra point to put Stanley back in the game.

But the Blue was not disheartened. Taking the kickoff on their own goal line, they ran it back to the thirty-nine, then proceeded to march it all the way to the Maroon eleven before a holding penalty and a backfield slipup lost it for them on the twenty.

Farson glanced again and again at the Old Man, but he remained crouched behind his tarpaulin-covered TV set, looking like some vast amphibious creature and saying not a word. And with the half drawing to its close the Maroon was pushing the Blue back again toward its own goal, threatening to tie.

Nils Opfer caught another Ray Torrance pass and ran it to the visitors' nineteen. Farson bit his lips and turned away—to meet the Clipper's unemotional gaze. It was too much to hope for, even after the unexpected early breaks. His team and a half had neither the right nor chance to score an upset over the Maroon.

"Farson!" The voice that had once sparked an archaic Ivy league team to four successive undefeated seasons could still cut through crowd sounds like a knife.

Nick Farson trotted over and the old man beetled his goatee-like eyebrows at him from beneath his sou'wester and

shrilled, "We got to improvise here, Farson. Send in Genovese. Tell him to sweep wide to the left when he gets the ball. They'll be going the other way."

Nodding, Farson ran a hand over his streaming forehead as he moved to obey. The Old Man must be out of his mind for Genovese was already in there. Under the enforced one-and-a-half platoon system at Munro, Tony was a sixty-minute man.

Farson glanced at him, caked with mud and grime from helmet top to cleats, and understood a little. In the television set the Old Man could not tell one player from another. After all, the numerals on the backs of their jerseys had long since been covered with dirt. Still, that didn't quite explain it—for Stanley had the ball, not Munro. Farson frowned as he sent in a substitute to call for a time-out.

While the teams were sipping and spewing water he got word to Tony via Hi Corliss, a substitute tackler. Genovese looked over at the side lines, startled. And all Farson could do was nod grimly. There had been enough defiance of the Old Man today. It was up to Farson to see that his orders were obeyed from now on in, no matter how eerie they might seem.

He turned away and walked back to the bench, where the Clipper at once collared him and wanted to know what was going on. Farson told him and the Clipper looked briefly wall-eyed.

"Gracious!" he said. "This is terrible!"

"Cut the clowning," Farson told him. "It ain't funny, bub!"

"Well, it's one way of getting that job he's been dangling over your head like a sword of Damascus," said the Clipper.

"Damocles," said Farson. "Damocles, you oaf!"

"Don't swear, Nick," the Clipper told him severely. "You know as well as me that the Old Man don't go for it."

"Oh, shut up!" said Farson wearily as play was called in.

The Blue went on the defense as the Maroon came out of its huddle and Ray Torrance barked his signals in a voice that sounded as being slightly under water.

Tony Genovese, bewildered, moved in a sort of circle like a man lost in the woods. He was still far too wide when the ball was snapped, trying to figure out how to make a sweep without it.

Apparently Torrance had decided on the play while Tony was walking the inner portion of his bemused circle, for he called another pass to Nils Opfer, a

rare during the halftime rest period and said nothing about the weird orders from the Old Man. They didn't quite dare.

However, team morale needed very little lifting. The boys were up and they were bubbling. Even though some of them, the linemen especially, were taking a terrific beating physically, they were enjoying themselves.

"Wonder why he took the wraps off?" Rags Bechtold asked Farson as he climbed into a dry uniform.

"Don't ask me," said the latter. He gave the center a whack on the shoulder

AN ALL-STAR LINEUP OF FOOTBALL FICTION

featuring

THE HARD-BOILED COACH

By ROBERT SIDNEY BOWEN

in the Fall issue of—

EXCITING FOOTBALL

NOW ON SALE—25c PER COPY AT ALL STANDS!



floater wide to the right flank. And Tony's bewilderment had put him directly in line with the toss. All he had to do was gather it in and cut over—on a wide sweep to the left.

Farson discovered suddenly that his mouth was hanging open, closed it with a snap just as Genovese crossed the Maroon goal line for the third Blue touchdown. In less than a minute the scoreboard was reading, Stanley 7—Visitors 21.

"Now how do you suppose the old so-and-so figured it would break like that?" Farson muttered, more to himself than to Clipper.

"One more and I'm turning in my suit," that worthy replied, looking faintly green around the jowls. "It's too fishy for me."

THEY were still in a half coma when the half ended a few minutes later. They concentrated on player mo-

pads. "Just try to hang on if you can, this half."

"Hang on, heck!" The big center looked his contempt of such a prissy suggestion. "We're going to pile it on! These babies aren't so tough. They're not so smart either. Wait and see."

"I'll keep my fingers crossed," said Farson, moving on.

It was incredible—these kids not only thought but knew they could win! He hoped they put it over, even though he didn't dare to be too optimistic. He had been waiting too long for the big win which would spell the Old Man's retirement. It simply didn't seem possible.

The Old Man came in toward the end of the intermission and stood inside the doorway. Looking them over, he said, "You boys are showing them, showing them the Old Man ain't dead yet." He laughed a short sharp goat-like laugh, added, "Though there's a lot of people

seem to think he's cold mutton these days. Just keep on playing them the way I call them and you'll come through okay. Now get out there and show them some more."

Farson lagged behind on the return to the field. It didn't add up—unless the Old Man were really off his rocker. "Just keep on playing them the way I call them," he had said. And not only the team but the Old Man himself had been playing fast and loose with his system. Farson finally gave it up and returned to the bench.

Stanley was out for blood this half. Despite a close and unlucky defeat handed them in early season by unwhipped Ohio, Stanley was generally rated one of the big teams of the country. They were supposed to be in line for a bowl bid once they got past the State juggernaut come next Saturday.

But if they blew this one to minor-league Munro, they were finished, and a fat chunk of New Year's Day gate receipts would be wending its way into some other athletic association bank account. Rip Burton had really steamed his boys up for their chore.

Their first effort was halted on the Munro twenty-seven when a roughness penalty and a crash through tackle by Leon Ettinger combined to toss the Maroon back from the five. It was Munro's ball. It looked like a spot for a counter-advance, but again the Old Man issued his call.

"Farson!" It rose like a foghorn—and far more dismal.

"Yes, sir." The backfield coach was at his mentor's elbow.

"Tell Lane to have Norris punt—quick," Duffield snapped.

The Clipper, who seemed to have sensed the situation, had a line substitute ready and they got the suggestion out there without drawing a penalty for twelve men on the field. Then both assistants sat down as one on the bench. The Clipper shook his head.

"You know, Nick," he whispered hoarsely, "a quick kick is just the play

I would have called for this spot—which proves the Old Man is nuttier than a praline. He's never agreed with me yet."

"Shut up! Let's see what happens," said Farson curtly. He too felt as if he were caught in some incomprehensible trap.

WHAT happened was as unexpected to the two coaching aides as it was to the Maroon. Just as the ball was snapped on first down, Pat Norris began backpeddling furiously. He checked as he took the pass from center, stepped forward and booted a long, low end-over-ender out of reach above the Maroon safety man's head.

This worthy, spurred to desperation by the lacing Rip Burton had given him between the halves, raced after the bounding oval with Blue ends Reilly and Stevens, and Rags Bechtold, who had come tearing up the center alley. The stands were going crazy.

The Maroon back should have let it roll, of course. It might have crossed the goal line for a touchback. But he didn't dare. Instead, he scooped it up on the three-yard line and tried to circle to his right, passing into the end zone to do so.

Rags Bechtold dropped him from behind so savagely that the muddy ball flew from his grasp and Fred Stevens caught it for the fourth Blue touchdown. In short order the score of the game was 28 to 7, Munro leading.

That was just about it. The Maroon spent the remaining time allotted them sending in substitutes in a mad parade, acquiring roughness and interference penalties in their desperation, having wild forwards intercepted, and ultimately managing to lose by a staggering score of 38 to 7. It was Pat Norris' educated toe that gave the Blue its final three points in the final three seconds of the game.

With this staggering upset in the bag, the boys on the team and their few hundred supporters in the stand went crazy. They capered and shouted

and then, feeling their fatigue, moved more silently to the side lines. The Old Man rose from behind his television set to greet them, his uneven features grim.

"Men," he said, his voice piercing even this tremendous uproar. "Men, nobody expected you to win today. Not even I. But I knew that if you played the game of football as it is meant to be played, as I have been teaching it to you for so many seasons, that you would play a game creditable to Munro and its traditions."

He paused and added, "Now I know how you must feel. A season like this is no easier for me to take than for you. But you have by no means disgraced yourselves today, as men or as a team. From the uses of adversity—"

His voice trailed off and for a moment his piercing eaglelike eyes squinted through the rain at a scoreboard.

"From the uses of adversity," he began again, and again paused to peer at a scoreboard, this time the one at the other end of the stadium. He ran a hand over his face and cleared his throat.

"From the uses of adversity," he began a third time and the tone of his voice changed, lightened, "you have learned not the habit of defeat but the signboards to glorious victory!"

The crowd was swarming around him then and he could say no more. He turned away, seemed to slip a little in the mud, sent the big television set crashing to the turf in front of a gang of Munro rooters who fell over it,

smashing it to matchwood.

"Good God!" moaned Farson. "He's busted it and he'll blame me. Why do things like this have to happen to me?"

But the old man was regarding the wreckage with a look of something that was apparently meant to be pleasure. He glanced at Farson and said, "Just as well, Farson, my boy. It's not personal enough, gets a coach too far from the boys." He emitted the expression that passed for a kindly grin. "Next year they're going to be all yours. We finally won that big one today. I wish you luck with them!"

With which, he turned and waddled across the now-swarming field to shake hands with and gloat over Rip Burton, the Stanley coach, who had supplanted him here at the larger school.

"Nick," said the Clipper in a low voice, "I was watching him. He bumped into that TV box on purpose."

"For Pete's sake, why?" countered Nick. Then, as it came to him, he muttered, "Those screwy plays, that speech between the halves, what he was starting to say about adversity before he looked at the scoreboard just now. Clipper, do you know what I think?"

The Clipper nodded. "Remember, the sound was out and he couldn't hear a thing over it, and in this rain all football players look alike—muddy."

"Omigosh!" said Farson, sinking onto the bench, weak in the backs of his knees. "The Old Man must have got the wrong channel. He was coaching the wrong game!"

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

SEE
ADV.
PG. 3

BOX 3968-TB, SCRANTON 9, PENNA.

Without cost or obligation, please send me full information about the course marked X:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting & Mgmt. | <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Drawing | <input type="checkbox"/> Salesmanship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Shop Practice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioning | <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Engineering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> French | <input type="checkbox"/> Postal Civil Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Railways |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Automobiles | <input type="checkbox"/> High School Subjects | <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigeration | <input type="checkbox"/> Textiles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aviation | <input type="checkbox"/> House Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio & Television | <input type="checkbox"/> Welding |

Name _____ Age _____ Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Working Hours _____ A.M. to _____ P.M.

Present Position _____ Employed by _____

Length of Service _____
in World War II _____

Enrollment under G.I. Bill approved for World War II Veterans. Special tuition rates to members of the Armed Forces
Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Ltd., Montreal, Canada

a novelet by



THIRD-STRING CENTER

CHAPTER I

Seeds of Dissension

HIS name was Hod Duncan and the souvenir programs listed him as a sub-center. Now and then Hod trotted on the field, getting in a few licks of exercise—or experience as it was known to the trade. But these infrequent occasions arose mostly when the score was heavy tilted in Wesleyan's favor and the crowd making toward the exits. This sort of thing had been going on nearly three seasons.

For his efforts the best Hod could show was a neatly-stacked pile of souvenir programs and a monogramless

sweater purchased during an impulsive moment. There was none among the Wesleyans though more bruised and lumped than Hod Duncan. These knocks he absorbed as a varsity battering ram during the midweek scrimmage exams. It was funny in a grim sort of way how Hod sweated his way through the rough grinding scrimmages and then rested on Saturday—the one day he'd love to die for Wesleyan. Sometimes he felt so beat-up come Saturday that it was just as well Wesleyan's Terriers went along without his services.

JOHN WILSON



Hod hooked his arms
around the runner and
held on

Hod Duncan was rated low on the

Wesleyan roster—but when he got his chance

to shine he showed a lot of better players how the game should be played!

On this particular Saturday Hod sat as usual on the far end of the bench, his gaze bright and intense on the colliding teams. Football on the highest collegiate level—Hod thrilled to it now as when he'd first come through the stadium tunnel with the Wesleyan squad. It was all a very wonderful and red-blooded show, and he was some small part of it.

But how different it was from the week-day drills and the drab preparation for the Big Game. Now the Terriers were dolled up in fancy satin moleskins,

and the turf was a rich, green plateau. And in the backdrop the rolling tiers, seeming to rise to the sky, were crammed and the noise swung with the fortunes of the Wesleyan Terriers.

Hod was so close to the whole picture and yet a million miles away from it. Sometimes the frustration of his effort to make the varsity ate at his heart. But he realized that time had run out on his hopes, that he was simply another also-ran.

This was a game that the experts had wrapped up in the Wesleyan win-

column. But Midland, a thrice-beaten outfit, had stormed and erupted all over the field, wringing misery from the hearts of some fifty-odd thousand home-team rooters.

Right off the bat Midland Tigers had struck for a tally. That kind of sudden lightning might be expected to flash anywhere except through the middle of the Wesleyan line—and "Moose" Dohler. This Midland gang was really fired up, primed to shatter Wesleyan's unbeaten slate.

They'd aimed that stroke at the Terrier strength and the sneaker caught the defense cold. A lot of grid dynamite had exploded since the Tiger thrust. The teams were turning into the payoff quarter and Midland led 14—13.

THE feel of an upset was in the air. That early slipup had stunned the Terriers and knocked the gears out of kilter. These slips happen and oddly enough Hod felt as though he himself had been the goat of the thing.

He hurt inside because the one dream that remained intact was to be a member of an undefeated squad. He couldn't help being puzzled about Moose Dohler seeming to be asleep when the Tigers racked their quick touchdown.

In all the collegiate ranks there wasn't a better pivot man than the Moose. He'd been an almost unanimous All-Amerk pick, building up to that peak during his junior year. Hod figured him a cinch to repeat this season but some sort of chink had appeared in Moose's armor.

That bothered Hod. The Moose was his pal and roommate and Hod felt a sense of pride in his accomplishments. Moose had gone to a lot of trouble, trying to make a half-decent center of him. It wasn't Moose's fault that the lesson hadn't really stuck.

Now the crowd's gloom spread thicker and the Tigers hauled the freight to the Wesleyan thirty. Hod watched Moose, who anchored the Terrier forwards and called the defensive maneu-

vers. Moose also captained the Terriers. The Tigers whirled away to the attack, springing a buck-lateral that got nowhere. Moose stole the key on that one, barging into the Tigers backfield as though he owned it.

But he didn't look so tough the next trip as the Tiger quarter faked a pitch, then knifed the middle. Almost the tick-et, that shot. Sal Jarvis, the last hurdle in the pigskin-toter's path, staved off the touchdown.

The Tigers were all steam and fury, smelling paydirt. A brand new series of downs and they tried the flank—another five yards chewed up. Again the linking and jolting impact of the lines—and right then the threat abruptly ground to a halt. The Tiger fullback made one trip too many to the middle pantry. Moose met the charge, with a jolting tackle and the other man lost interest in the ball. He bobbed and Howie Sherrod, a guard, parked on it.

Hod saw Moose rise to one knee, shake his head like a fighter trying to clear the cobwebs. Then he was up, seemingly okay. Hod grinned his relief, knowing that Moose Dohler was the breath and fire of this Wesleyan team. The bumps and jolts Moose could take in stride. He was an old-fashioned ironman, and staying in there the full distance was routine stuff to Moose.

A voice at Hod's shoulder said dryly, "Maybe he was all-Amerk last season. But not this trip, you can bet." The words came out of Stan Steffin's mouth and Hod turned, giving the big broad-beamed guy a quick defiant glance. Steffin was a sophomore, the center backing up Moose. A prized recruit, he was being groomed to fill the gaping hole that Moose's graduation would leave in the Terrier wall.

"I wouldn't make any bets against Moose," Hod said evenly. "Ask the guy he just bowled over."

Steffin grinned but it was sliced thin and hard. "I forgot you're Moose's favorite stooge. He's Mister Hero to you."

Color blazed Hod's cheeks. "Yeah, I think Moose is tops. So does everyone else around this burg, and then some—except maybe you."

"Don't get me wrong, palsy," Steffin said, "I know a football player when I see one and Moose is a great one. Maybe it'd be more accurate to say he's a darn good one—now. Anyway he's skidded a long way down the road."

Hod said, "What's the matter, the bench burning your britches, Stan?" Sure, Steffin's remarks had some basis. What angered Hod, though, was the guy's cockiness and apparent impatience to tie the strings on Moose's job.

"My turn is coming," Steffin was saying, "I'm not worrying about that. The iron-man trick Moose has been pulling for three seasons is beginning to wear thin. He's burning out fast."

It was no place to squabble. Hod checked the steam in his veins and dropped the matter.

The crowd was up and in a dither as the Terriers began to come on hard and determinedly. They rolled for a pair of first downs and the Tiger forwards fell beneath the souped-up momentum. The Terrier attack, built on the T but spiced with single-wing medicine, was finding its real cutting edge.

Sal Jarvis packed away a handoff and veered inside tackle, while his mates hacked open a chute. He could pour it on, that Jarvis, owning an amazing change of pace. His maneuvering, feather-footed, almost delicate at moments, could shift into high powerful gear.

A triple-threat guy and the all-American boon was roaring full-blast around Sal Jarvis. He swept past the skirmish mark and whipped along for another fifteen yards before being dropped from behind.

At the midfield stripe the Terrier drive stalled. The battling Midlanders swarmed all over Matt Ripnick as the streakish halfback tried to turn the flank.

Hod leaned forward on the bench, feeling the urgency of the moment. Second

down and still the full yardage to go. The crowd was still and the Tigers sniffed aerial fireworks. Ken Falcardo, the quarter, handled the leather and combined with Sal Jarvis to simulate a pass. But the handoff was slipped to "Wham" Kubiak, the bulldozing fullback. He smashed over that center lane and the chute was cleaved open for him.

There it was again, the Terriers bogged in the ruck and Moose Dohler carrying them on his shoulders. The Midland backer-up came up fast and Moose was there to meet him. That was the key-block except that Moose couldn't make it stick. The guy wiggled off the hook and smacked Wham Kubiak down.

HOD stared out at Moose, aware that the blocking bid had been a touch-and-go thing. Moose was dead on those things, especially in the clutch, and he'd gone soft on the throttle.

The Terriers moved, chewing up yardage on a series of power-smashes through the middle. Moose was breaking open the locks but not plowing under those secondaries. He seemed oddly hesitant and when he did pull the blocking-bid there wasn't enough steam behind it. Stan Steffin didn't say anything but Hod noticed the jeering triumph in the eyes and grin.

From the Midland thirty-five the Terriers struck for the touchdown. A trap-play, engineered over tackle, broke Sal Jarvis loose and he carved a path to paydirt. Sal's placement added the seventh point and the Terriers surged ahead 20—14.

A tight fiercely-fought game suddenly splashed wide open. The Tigers copped the kick off and then tried to catch the defense napping. A thrust through the air and Ken Falcardo picked it off the receiver's fingertips. A screen of blockers formed and the quarterback galloped down the sidelines. There was hardly a hand laid on him. A moment later the score leaped another notch to 27—14.

There was still a half quarter remaining and Hod figured he might get a taste

of the game. The Terrier coach, Spade Erskin, was pouring replacements on the field. Hod saw Stan Steffin rise to his feet, as though expecting Spade's call. He'd been in there briefly, spelling Moose for a few minutes of the first half.

"Duncan," the Wesleyan coach snapped, "go in for Moose."

Hod's pulse quickened and his knees stiffened a little. He just didn't expect to be given the nod over Stan Steffin and the coach's decision startled him.

He ran onto the field, half-stumbling, vaguely aware of the dark hard scowl that had lined Stan Steffin's jaw. He almost bumped into Moose, making an exit toward the sidelines. Moose's head was lowered and when he looked up there were gray and strange shadows in his face. He grinned suddenly, slapping Hod across the shoulder.

"Let's see you go, fella."

The Terrier backfield and front line were scrambled with second stringers. But Sal Jarvis and Ken Falcardo, strong defensive players, stayed in the line-up. Spade Erskin was taking precautions against Tiger aerial traffic.

Hod scuttled to his spot in the kickoff spread. He'd never got past third-string but here he was, moved up to the notch behind Moose. He didn't try to figure why Spade Erskin had made the switch to him. All that mattered was that he was getting a real chance to play some football. He wanted to make the most of it.

The ball sailed deep downfield. Hod set his sights on the receiver and blazed a trail toward him. A block almost nailed him and Hod's legs buckled a little. He kept going and was first on the scene. There was a two-man shield ahead of the leather-lugger.

No fancy sparring or caution did Hod show. He piled in there like a one-man gang, tearing away the protection and knocking down the runner. That shot drew some noise from the stands. Hod had dropped the anchor on the Midland fifteen.

He felt good and the tackle warmed

his blood. The Tigers bluffed a lateral and clawed the middle. Hod stopped that thrust. He did well on that series of downs, better than he himself would have believed possible. Hod was inspired, wanting to show the folks that he could be depended on to relieve Moose during the breather spells.

Nor could Hod help reflecting how the big W monogram would look to him. He'd taken an awful kidding about having bought a varsity sweater and then going through the grid campaigns without the monogram to sew on it. He'd tried to think of it as being a joke but somehow it hurt like the dickens.

Sal Jarvis had tricked him into buying the thing and then made a big noise about it. His years at Wesleyan, it seemed, had been spiked with little incidents with Sal Jarvis.

The Tigers were pinned back in their own pasture and forced to do some kicking. Hod crashed deep into the Tiger backfield and came within inches of blocking the boot. It was a gallant bid. The Tiger was smart and expert with the foot. He shortened up and lined a low skidding kick along the sideline alley. It was killed by the Tiger end before Sal Jarvis could handle the thing.

On the Tiger forty the Terriers took over. Even as Hod stepped into the huddle he could sense the electricity in the hard amused grin Sal Jarvis gave him. Hod felt a sudden uneasiness touch his stomach. Falcardo called the play, a cut-back over tackle from a single wing.

Hod trotted to the scrimmage mark, crouching over the pigpelt. The signals flew from Falcardo's lips and, like a key clicking in a lock, Hod fed the snapback. It was a good clean flip and timed to the lickety-split movement of the carrier.

Sal Jarvis faked a handoff and got away to a fast start. He cut back inside the tackle slot, appeared for an instant to be in the clear. But the Midland wing, who'd been a spoiler all afternoon, angled in and nabbed Jarvis.

"Listen, slow-freight," Sal snorted at Hod in the huddle, "don't make me beg

for the ball. Get it back when it's supposed to be there."

"It seemed okay to me—" Hod stopped short, realizing his response had been quick and impulsive. Much smarter under the circumstances to have kept his tongue still. After all he was a nobody and stirring up a fuss wasn't going to do him or the team a bit of good.

The scowl thickened on Sal Jarvis' face. "You make a couple of tackles and you're big stuff, huh, Duncan?"

Ken Falcardo said abruptly, "Simmer down, Jarvis. The talking is my little chore in these meetings." He threw a glance at Hod. "You stay awake on those feeds, mister."

CHAPTER II

Sauce for the Moose

THEY swung toward the line and Falcardo leaned close to Hod's ear. "Lookin' like a big leaguer, Hod. When Jarvis doesn't collect at least five yards a trip he's gotta blame somebody." The quarterback was grinning wryly.

The bad taste in Hod's mouth dissolved. He hopped to it and this time Falcardo was close behind him. The flip-back signal and Hod swept the ball into Falcardo's hands. Then Hod was driving ahead toward the blocking assignment. A buck-spinner and the gap ripped open and the carrier hit for six yards.

It was mostly power-stuff now as the drive punched deep into Tiger territory. Hod knew he was laying the snapbacks right on a dime and his blocking carried authority. This was a moment that made his heart sing and he burned with the anticipation of seeing the drive climaxed in paydirt.

The one dark streak in the picture was Sal Jarvis, whose breath seemed hotter than a pressure cooker on him. But neither did the halfback spread sunshine among the other Terriers. He grouched

about the blocking, the hand-offs, whatever else didn't please his fancy. Ken Falcardo and the other Terriers seemed to take the fussing in stride. That package didn't add up in Hod's mind.

On the ten-stripe, Midland stiffened, holding up a double-reverse. Then Al Jarvis tried to sneak in over guard, the play breaking quick and hard. But the line-backer slammed the door shut and Hod never had a chance to tag him.

Jarvis squawked and Hod wondered if the halfback believed he'd deliberately quit on the blocking chore. He brushed aside the thought as ridiculous. Certainly, Jarvis realized the thrust had been spotted and torn apart before it really meshed.

They went at it again. With the snap-motion Hod got jolted a shot that shook him right down to his heels. It wasn't a perfect passback perhaps, a trifle low and wide, but not bad enough to affect the flow of play. Sal Jarvis latched onto the leather and made toward the middle.

A fake buck and he was supposed to handoff to the other half, as he reached the scrimmage mark. Then the traffic would turn toward the flank. The cheers flattened into a groan and a whistle shrilled. Hod turned. He could guess what had occurred. The handoff had been bungled and the players were stacked like wheatcakes. A Midland guy was on the bottom and that finished the touchdown drive.

"What are you trying to do," Sal Jarvis said, stepping up to Hod, "make a bum outa me? Three years of practise and you can't even throw the ball between your legs."

Hod's breath caught, ached in his chest. "All right, that passback wasn't on the button. But it wasn't as bad as you'd like me to believe."

For a moment, Jarvis stood there, his face white with anger. He mumbled hoarsely and stomped away. Hod swallowed bitterly and trudged to his defensive post. He found it hard to believe that, for all of Sal Jarvis' personal dislike, he'd let it mix into the game.

Maybe that was part of the answer, but it still didn't account for the guy's rough-edged manner toward the other Terriers. There was some sort of strange voltage swirling beneath the surface that Hod couldn't figure.

Midland cut loose with a couple of desperation heaves that missed their mark. Then a guy dropped back and booted one a mile downfield. The Tigers dug in, fighting as though they were ahead on the scoreboard instead of trailing a couple of touchdowns. The Terriers took three stabs and then went into a kicking formation.

Hod looked back, gauging the distance between him and Sal Jarvis. Even then he felt a tightening of his muscles, a pressure lumping in his stomach. There was a kind of sneer on Jarvis' mouth as though daring him to miss with the snapback.

The tipoff signal and Hod released the ball. The instant he let it fly he sensed it was a bad pass. The ball was skittering in the dirt and Jarvis, scooping it, tried to run it back. He was trapped and the Tigers smeared him on the Wesleyan forty.

WHAT happened in the next couple of minutes was the next thing to catastrophe. The never-say-die Tigers turned that break into a touchdown. One long arching flip and they were back in the ball game. A sick miserable wave spread through Hod.

Well, he'd got a chance to show his stuff and he'd been lucky and over his head for awhile. But now he'd really made a mess of the whole thing. He wasn't surprised when Stan Steffin reported in for him.

The pot was boiling again, what with Midland still having a couple of minutes to catch the Terriers. They trailed 27—21.

That touchdown proved to be Midland's last desperate gasp. They kicked to the Terriers and Sal Jarvis roared back to the midfield stripe. Jarvis really took charge. On the second scrimmage

skirmish he swept around the flank and a raft of frustrated tacklers began falling in his wake. Fifty yards he rambled to lock up the game.

The Terriers copped 34—21.

One more hurdle to go and Wesleyan could come slanting through the curve of the rainbow—undefeated. But it would be a dangerous curve, shadowed with the jinx that Central dangled over Wesleyan teams. There'd been other Wesleyan teams that came up to the same turn—and had seen their unbeaten slates smashed to pieces.

Hod made his way to the dressing room and the place was already swarming with newspaper people and well-wishing alumni. He saw the sidelong glances and heard the careless, though unintended, hurts of their remarks. They were talking about the awful scare the Tigers had thrown and how he'd almost helped them to an amazing upset.

He sat down on the bench in front of his locker, the hubbub of the room seeming to magnify a thousand times in his ears. He'd always relished this part of the day, feeling the excitement of the victory and reveling in the glory of it. But he suddenly wanted to push it all far away and run from the room.

"Hey, there!" Ken Falcardo said, slouching down on the bench beside Hod. "We won the game, fella."

"I was a real big help," Hod said, "to Midland." He tried to laugh it off as a joke but his mouth felt stiff as cardboard.

The quarterback grinned. "There's an old gag about the only time a center being noticed is when he makes a bad pass. So you joined the club today."

"They notice Moose plenty," Hod said, "and he doesn't scatter any flips."

Falcardo was silent a moment and an odd grin slid across his mouth. "Yeah, they notice—maybe too much."

"What do you mean?" Hod looked hard at the quarterback.

"Just talking," Falcardo said, shrugging. He suddenly changed the tack. "Kind of found Jarvis harder to get

along with than the Tigers—huh, Hod?”

“He takes to me like arsenic.”

Falcardo laughed. “Well, I guess Jarvis would just as soon throw the welcome mat in your face. But what really has him all steamed up is this All-American business. He’s got the fever bad.”

“Treats the guys like peasants,” Hod said. “Always bellyaching about something—especially when the yardage sticks stay put.”

Falcardo said, “Got to move the freight to make All-Amerk, you know. Jarvis is so hepped with the idea that the steam has got to escape. But an undefeated season means more to the guys than putting Jarvis in his place. After all, he’s the payoff gun in the backfield—the guy who can really bring home the bacon.”

“I see,” Hod said, “I should have kept my big mouth shut.”

“Might have worked out a lot better for yourself,” the quarterback said, nodding. “But you got all tangled up in a stew and didn’t know where you were pitching the ball.” He stood up. “Just wanted you to know the score—in case there should be another time.”

Hod laughed to himself. What with Central coming up next there wouldn’t be another chance for him. Well—after all it was a small matter that he—Hod Duncan—third-string center, had flubbed his last chance to win a Wesleyan monogram. He couldn’t help being just a trifle envious of Moose with a drawerful of monograms and all sorts of grid honors.

THE monogram itself wasn’t important in the sense that he could stick it on his chest and look pretty. But one day soon Hod was going to leave the college campus behind and there was a job open for him back in the rural section where he lived. There he’d teach and coach.

But how could he make the kids—the pluggers like himself and there were lots of them—believe that sheer hard work and determination could accomplish miracles? How to make them un-

derstand the willingness to put up a scrap was a big long stride toward any goal?

A guy had to believe those things in his own heart and feel the confidence of real achievement. He himself in three seasons hadn’t even come close to earning what many subs owned—the varsity squad monogram.

Hod showered and started to dress. He noticed then that Moose had not yet begun to peel off the grid armor. A reporter was talking to Moose and the interview didn’t seem to be moving very smoothly. Moose’s answers and manner were short and gruff and he obviously didn’t want any part of the interview. And that wasn’t at all like Moose. He always had a nice word, whether it was the press or anyone else.

“So it’s all a deep secret,” a reporter was saying, “what happens to you after graduation. But the grapevine has it that you’re turning pro and going to collect a pretty bonus.”

“Look,” Moose said, and his voice was irritable, “I’ve got plans but nothing is definite yet, see? Now suppose you guys clear outa here.”

“Okay, okay—I don’t wanna put you on the spot,” the reporter said, shrugging, his grin thin and defiant. “But if the bonus is as big as your head is getting to be you’ll be able to retire early in life.”

Moose’s jaw set harder. “You should know, huh? Sittin’ up there in a press-coop you can measure the size of my head.”

The newspaper writer smiled faintly. “No, but I can add two and two, Moose. You’re not the same guy—or quite the same ballplayer.” He paused and his glance seemed to express some hidden meaning. “I hope for your sake it’s only a matter of a swelled head.”

Hod watched the reporter depart and shot several curious glances in Moose’s direction. Something stirred in Hod’s mind, watching how carefully Moose eased out of the blue jersey. And, when Moose finally pried it loose, there was

that same pale and pinched expression as when he'd come off the field.

"You're hurt," Hod said, going over to Moose. "It's the shoulder, isn't it?"

Moose stared at him, and a hotness flared in the eyes. "It's nothing—not a darn thing the matter."

"You were easing off a little on the blocking," Hod said, "and that's not the way you play the game, Moose." He knew that, whatever the injury, it'd happened a while back down the road. That's why Moose hadn't been his real self these past games.

"All right, the shoulder is banged up a little," Moose said, "but it's nothing to holler about."

Hod said, "You're crazy to take chances with that thing, Moose. You oughta see Doc Sawyer."

"I don't need you to tell me what to do about it," Moose said and his voice was tight and bitter. "So don't you try to be one of those snooping smart-alecks who know it all."

The words twisted inside of Hod like a knife. "I guess any advice from me—would sound kind of silly." He started to move away, but Moose's voice stopped him.

"I didn't mean to blow my top that way, Hod. There's a lot of things that sorta got me on pins and needles. Forget it—and forget to mention anything about my shoulder." An odd urgency slipped into Moose's face. "The shoulder will be okay, and there's no sense a lot of stuff about it getting into the papers."

"Yeah," Hod said, "I'll keep quiet—if that's how you want it, Moose."

A few minutes later, as Hod headed toward the door, Stan Steffin touched him on the shoulder. "What's the matter with your big-shot pal—kind of in a huff, isn't he? But I guess maybe he can afford to shove the newspaper guys around."

"If you really want to know go ask Moose," Hod snapped.

He went on out the door and tried to convince himself that Stan Steffin

was simply a kid spoiled by prep and high school headlines. A season of looking on from the sidelines had made him angry and frustrated. That guy, Hod thought bitterly, would just love for Moose to miss an afternoon.

Hod was riding a partial grid scholarship. When he put aside his football togs he got into a waiter's uniform at one of the town hotels. Weekdays his job was during the dinner hours but on Saturdays he was at it through the entire evening. He might just as well have skipped that night's work and, as it turned out, wished later he had done just that. What with the rush of business the hours ordinarily seemed to fly away but this night the time seemed to limp around the clock.

CHAPTER III

Slip of the Shoulder

IT WAS getting on toward the finish of Hod's shift when there was a sudden stir in the room. Hod took one look at the party, numbering about a half dozen couples, and a sudden tautness gripped him. In that crowd were Sal Jarvis and Stan Steffin and a couple of other gridders, including Ken Falcardo. There were lots of fraternity shindigs on Saturday night and this was probably the last stop on the circuit.

Hod went over to the table to take their orders. Sal Jarvis looked up and Hod was instantly aware of the nasty glint in his eyes. It was pretty obvious too that Sal and some of the others had celebrated the Wesleyan victory with the help of the stronger spirits. So Jarvis had come here, he realized, with the purpose of poking some fun at him. Well, fun was one thing, ridicule quite another matter.

"Look here who we've got for a waiter," Jarvis said and he winked at Stan Steffin, "Wesleyan's gift to Midland."

Steffin said, "I'll bet he handles those

dishes like he does a football. What a loss the management must take."

Hod braced himself. They rode him hard and the gals in the party laughed, unaware of the ugly currents swirling beneath the remarks. At first Hod ignored the talk, then tried to grin through it. But there was a slow, steady tension building up inside of him.

Then he became aware of Ken Falcardo's glance, telling him to steer as clear as possible of the whole business. It seemed to Hod that the quarterback had tagged along, knowing the Jarvis intention to stop at the place. Anyway Falcardo made a couple of attempts to change the topic, and then suggested that the crowd call it a night. But the vote was against him and Falcardo leaned back, as though waiting for the real trouble to come.

After finally getting their orders Hod came back with a tray of sandwiches and an assortment of drinks—from milk to highballs.

"Say, have you still got that varsity sweater," Jarvis said, smiling thinly as Hod made the servings. "The one you bought, figuring it would be a cinch to win a monogram." There was bitter amusement in his laugh. "But you couldn't buy the monogram, could you, Hod, old boy? It takes what you don't happen to own—guts—to get one of those things."

"Ah, Hod only wanted to throw a banquet for the moths," Steffin said, following up the lead. "Hod is kind-hearted that way."

The anger began to glow and ache in Hod's chest. He moved a step in Jarvis' direction and then Ken Falcardo was touching his arm.

"Take it easy, kid," Ken said quietly. "Let 'em spin themselves dry."

Hod moved away from the scene, working another table. He knew that if Falcardo hadn't sensed the tightness of the moment he'd have bounced Jarvis right out of the place. But his job would have bounced right along with Jarvis.

He laughed grimly to himself, think-

ing how Sal Jarvis had never really let the torn ground between them smooth and settle. Hod had tried to make himself believe that they'd simply got off on the wrong foot during their freshman year. But now he knew that the bitterness had not drained away.

Maybe he didn't blame Sal Jarvis for poking fun and derision when he'd arrived on the Wesleyan campus. He'd been an awkward and shy sort of individual, hailing from a small backwoods town. His clothes were old and didn't quite fit the big raw-boned frame.

Sal Jarvis couldn't seem to resist getting a laugh at the other fellow's expense—just as he was doing now. Underneath the suave handsome face and smartly-tailored clothes Sal Jarvis was nothing better than a bully.

How could a guy afford nice duds when he'd needed every penny to pay the college freight? He'd worked the summers on a farm, knowing that each day brought him a step nearer Wesleyan. His folks had made a tremendous sacrifice to help him toward a college education, borrowing money on the hardware store they owned. Together with what he himself had earned doing farmwork he had enough financial support to make a good college start.

He'd done some high-school fullbacking and it was something of a miracle that he had made the Wesleyan varsity squad. Practically all the Wesleyan grid-ders were hand-picked. Maybe if he'd realized the odds against an uninvited guy making the squad he would never have tried the stunt.

But he hadn't looked at the odds or quit to himself—even after he'd failed to make the frosh team. Sometimes he thought it was more sheer perseverance than ability that won him a berth.

"There's a place for your kind of guy on the squad," Spade Erskin had told him. "But let's forget you're a fullback and see how you work as a center. I've got a truckload of fancy backs but not enough centers." He'd shaken his head resignedly. "Glamour guys—everybody

wants to be one. Well, that's a worry you're not gonna give me."

He'd never been so proud and happy as that day his name was posted as a genuine member of the squad. It'd meant for one thing that most of the money his dad had borrowed wasn't needed after all. The partial athletic scholarship and an outside job took care of things nicely.

HIS head had swum with the excitement of the triumph, and he was an easy mark for another of Sal Jarvis' jokes. Sal led him into buying a varsity sweater—to save for the varsity monogram that would be a cinch.

It was, of course, a very foolish act, like counting his chickens ahead of time. He had not known that Wesleyan gave sweaters and monograms to those of its athletes who qualified at the finish of a season. It was a big joke and everybody laughed and kidded him. Sal Jarvis laughed the hardest of all.

There'd been one grizzer among the Terriers who hadn't thought Sal Jarvis' joke-making tactics very funny. Hod hadn't known then that Moose Dohler could have picked any one of a dozen colleges to play football. The Moose was also a small-town guy but the college scouts had beaten a pathway to his door. Maybe Moose simply felt sorry for him though he never gave that impression.

"You can room with me if you want to," Moose had told him. "Don't know much about farming. But I know a thing about the coal mines—and maybe playing center."

Sooner or later it was bound to come—a showdown with Sal Jarvis. It seemed to anger Sal more than ever that Moose was taking his part and the insults were no longer disguised as jests. And one day Hod handed Sal Jarvis the whipping of his life.

"Good," Moose had said, "now he'll leave you alone. . . ."

Hod's thoughts swung abruptly to the table where Sal Jarvis was seated. Jarvis was beckoning to him, snapping his fin-

gers for service.

"Fill up my glass again," Jarvis said.

Hod looked at him and saw the haze beginning to shroud Sal's eyes. "I think you've had enough, fella—more than the rules of the house or the team allow."

"That's a laugh," Sal said, his voice thick, "you telling me the rules."

Stan Steffin said suddenly, "Don't mind him, Sal. The guy rooms with an All-American and figures that gives him the right to throw some weight around."

"Ex-All-American," Jarvis snapped. "Duncan's bigshot pal is busy counting the money he's gonna make in the pros. Moose only exerts himself when the notion strikes him."

"That's a dirty lie," Hod said hotly. "Why, with the bad shoulder Moose has it's a wonder—" He stopped short, suddenly aware that he'd spilled the beans about Moose's hurt shoulder. The anger and eagerness to defend Moose had carried the words past his lips. He tried to cover up, adding weakly, "I mean Moose would be the last guy to loaf on the job."

"Listen to that alibi," Jarvis said. "Friendship is wonderful."

The words skidded past Hod's ears. He was looking at Stan Steffin, seeing the slow thoughtful grin and the hard shininess in the eyes. Steffin said nothing.

There wasn't even the pretense of kidding in Sal Jarvis' voice and remarks now. An uneasiness spread among the group and Hod started to walk away. Then Jarvis reached for his arm and, when Hod swung around, he saw that the face was puffed with fury. He'd hardly given Jarvis a tumble and that seemed to rile the guy more than ever.

Hod ripped the hand away and the anger that he'd checked trembled and suddenly exploded. He grabbed Jarvis, lifting him out of the chair like a toy. But even as he made the move Ken Falcardo was up and pushing between them.

"That's enough—plenty," Falcardo said tersely.

Jarvis was all fight and thunder then but Falcardo, in a quiet and effective way, handled the guy. And when Stan Steffin acted as though he meant to get in the act Bep Maloski, the two-hundred-odd-pound Terrier tackle, discouraged the idea.

The first chance he got Hod decided to tell Moose how he'd made that slip about the bad shoulder. But, as it turned out, it was Moose who brought up the subject. They'd finished classes at noon and had returned to the dormitory prior to a blackboard session that Spade Erskin always staged on Monday.

IT WASN'T a surprise to Hod that the news of the hotel rumpus had got around. There'd been plenty of witnesses and it had all happened in the hotel grillroom. He ran over the incident and got the impression Moose was waiting for some specific turn in the talk.

Hod got to that turn. He said, "Moose, I shot my big mouth off and yapped about your bad shoulder."

He expected Moose to be angry. But if anything, Moose looked disappointed and let down. And somehow that hurt more than if Moose had blown his top about the thing.

"I'm sorry you did that," Moose said simply. "All morning guys have been walking up to me and asking how my shoulder feels. Tomorrow, I suppose, I'll be reading in the papers about it."

"Some pal I turned out to be!" Hod said, wishing he could crawl away in a corner and hide.

"You were sort of edged into blabbing about the injury," Moose said quietly. "Falcardo told me that Jarvis made some crack about me loafing, and you tried to be a pal."

Hod said, "Maybe it's none of my business but some guys think you've lost some of your steam out there, Moose. What can be wrong in them knowing the truth—that your shoulder has been bothering you?"

"I'll tell you what's wrong," Moose said and his voice had a tight, hard edge,

matching the flinty gleam that came into his eyes. "I've practically got a professional contract in my hip pocket that includes a fat bonus. They don't want beat-up brittle guys in the pros. Let them get the idea that they're hiring a possible hospital case and there won't be any contract, see?"

Hod shook his head. "But you're only going to damage the shoulder more, staying in there, Moose. Anyway a shoulder injury isn't the worst thing that can happen."

"You might as well know it all," Moose said slowly. "I banged the shoulder in high school and ripped the ligaments loose. Maybe I tried to play again before it was really right and hurt the thing again. It's given me a little trouble right along—nothing really much till this season. In the State game I got it good and it's been pretty rough going since then."

Hod nodded. "Gosh, Moose, you should of pulled outa the line-up right then."

"Maybe," Moose said, a bitter laugh in his throat, "I got to believing my own scrap-book clippings—iron man Moose Dohler."

Hod said, "You wanted the Pros to believe they were getting a real iron-clad All-American."

"And why not?" Moose said tersely. "That pro tie-up means my old man can retire from the coal pits. It'll give my kid sister a chance to go to college and security for the whole family. And nothing is gonna stand in the way of me getting that dough." His fists had tightened at his side and his voice hardened with resolve.

"What's it gonna prove," Hod said, "for you to gamble on hurting the shoulder even more in the Central game?"

Moose said, "I can't afford to stay out and let the pros figure maybe I've got a fragile shoulder. Anyway, this is the last stop on the schedule. It's not going to be as much a gamble as you might think." He paused, then, taking a deep breath, added: "I've died a lot of times for ole Wesleyan but not this trip, palsy.

Moose is going to take good care of himself."

"Tell me something," Hod said and his own voice sounded strange. "What have you got to lose in letting a doc check over that shoulder?"

Moose laughed tensely. "That's something I've already done—seen the doc back home. Right after the State game—you remember how I went home for a few days. I drummed up an excuse about the trip involving personal family matters. Maybe in a sense it added up that way.

"I didn't want to take any chances of the news getting around that the shoulder was on the bum." He paused, and the shadows seemed to deepen in his eyes. "It's a sort of trick shoulder—a chronic condition. The Doc—well—he just doesn't think it will ever be right again."

There was a short silence and it was as though Hod were staring at a stranger. Always Moose, so sure and strong, and now he was simply a big worried kid, frightened that the pro money might be snatched away from him—money that could buy security and the things his heart yearned to give his folks.

How could it possibly be important to Moose whether Wesleyan beat Central and chalked up their first undefeated slate in some ten years? All the game meant was four quarters to be somehow endured and kidding the pros that his shoulder was sound.

But Hod couldn't help wondering if Moose wasn't deceiving himself as much as the pros. He'd be taking money, knowing that he couldn't give full value in return. In a sense that was stealing, no matter how urgent the need for the money.

Well, it was easy for himself to moralize about it, Hod thought, but something else to be Moose and on the spot.

Hod said, "I'm on your side, Moose." But his voice had a strange tight ring and he felt all torn up inside. It was as though something treasured and shiny had broken into pieces at his feet.

"Yeah," Moose said, "I can count on

you, Hod." But he seemed to read the uneasiness in Hod's face.

CHAPTER IV

Touchdown Slot

MOOSE was right about the rumor of his shoulder injury getting into the newspapers. The next day's editions made an even bigger thing of it than Moose had imagined. There were all sorts of dire speculations about Moose's fitness to go against Central's Red Demons.

Moose spent most of that day vigorously denying the reports of the shoulder injury. He was hot and furious and Spade Erskin chipped in to the effect that no such injury had been brought to his attention. "I'll show 'em," Moose roared, "that I can go the full route. I'll make darn fools of those smart-aleck writers." He was more angry than convincing, Hod thought.

The Terriers went through a brisk practise session that afternoon. When it was over Spade Erskin called Hod aside.

"I want to see you before you leave the dressing room," Spade said. "Stop in my office."

Spade Erskin was a medium-sized middle-aged man, whose browned face seemed to wear a perpetual worried expression. He'd fared better than previous Wesleyan grid mentors and his teams, if not great, had rolled steadily along the glory road. There were a couple of seasons when Spade had come up with teams that appeared certain to scale the grid heights.

But the pesky and dangerous Demons of Central on each occasion had upset the appiecart. Records and expert opinions meant little in the meeting of these arch rivals. A whole season of Wesleyan victories would go down the drain if Central were not included on the list.

A short while later, as Hod entered the

coach's office, he sensed the worry and strain of the man. Spade was sitting behind the desk, staring absently into space, seemingly unaware of Hod's presence. The pressure must have felt like a ton on Spade's shoulder, what with Central once again standing between him and an undefeated season.

And this trip the Demons had a conference title to fight for, not simply the hunger to spring an upset. They'd been tied once during the season and a win meant the whole shooting match.

"Duncan," Spade said, suddenly leaning forward and regarding him with a close, level look, "about this rumpus the other night—I've got to know a few answers."

Hod's heart lurched. "One of those things, I guess. Nobody got hurt."

"I give my players as much rope and responsibility as any coach," Spade said, "and I expect them to be fair with me and the school." He paused and the tension rose in his face. "Tell me, was Jarvis liquored up?"

Hod was silent a moment, his breathing seeming to stop. He knew that Spade had no other choice except to dig into this thing. Still, there was an odd and almost hopeful excitement in Spade's face. It was as though he feared the worst, yet dared to retain his confidence in the players he'd trusted to keep the training rules. Possibly Spade meant to take some disciplinary measures against the offenders if they'd really busted the rules to pieces.

"Why do you ask me?" Hod said slowly.

Spade said, "I've talked to the others, Duncan. I don't mind telling you that Jarvis has sort of made you the goat of the whole thing. He admits a drink but claims you stirred up the trouble. Some of the others—well, they just don't seem to have much of an opinion."

So there it was, making him the fall guy. Perhaps it was better that he took the rap and cleared the others. Nobody was going to give a hoot if he even showed up for the game. But it was im-

portant that Sal Jarvis be in the starting backfield, that Stan Steffin back up Moose at center.

And somehow it did not seem right that Spade, with his dream of an unbeaten team, should be forced to abandon it now through no fault of his own. Hod did not want to bring that sort of ugly pressure to bear. After all it had been Spade who'd gone along with him and made it possible to complete four years of college. Maybe he owed a favor to Spade.

Hod said, "Jarvis is right, coach."

"I see," Spade Erskin said and he drew a deep, heavy breath. Then he looked straight at Hod. "A pretty good job of whitewash but I don't know if Jarvis is worth it. But it's his last game for Wesleyan and the guy is All-American crazy. The alumni are crazy for an undefeated team and sometimes I think I'm the craziest of 'em all."

SATURDAY was a cold drab day with a thin drizzle slanting out of the leaden skies. Right along through the row of triumphant Saturdays the crowds had multiplied as the Terriers climbed toward the glory peak.

Now the huge Bowl sagged under the impact of the human mountain that had settled upon it. The bands cavorted and the cheer-leaders did fancy nip-ups and the teams trotted through their preliminary paces. And all the while the tension kept closing in tighter over the Bowl.

Hod came back to the bench as the field was swept clear of extra baggage. It was a funny thing, he thought, how he felt shaky and nervous before a kickoff. He could imagine the scuffed-up nerves of some of the starting guys.

One thing, though—he was glad to be out of the dressing room. Something had seemed all wrong in there. The Terriers hadn't looked nearly as confident and poised as in other big games. There was no sense kidding himself about it. The Terriers were fighting the past more than just this game itself. Old

ghosts of other heavily-favored and unbeaten Terrier teams walked in their minds.

Those nearly-great Wesleyan teams had come up to this same big turn in the road only to have Central wreck and humble them. Always Central, the spoilers and the one team that wouldn't be beaten. It almost seemed as though the fates had taken this game out of the hands of the Terriers and were defying them to fight back. So there it was, the defeatist attitude, spreading its poison and killing the spirit of the Terriers.

Hod watched Moose Dohler and the Central captain meet at midfield. He wondered if Moose could get past this one last hurdle that led to the pile of gold the pros held out to him. Maybe Moose could turn the trick and last the route as he'd vowed to do. He'd have to coast along even though the Terriers needed Moose at his best as never before.

The coin-flip fell in Central's favor and they chose to kick. The rain had made the turf slippery and Central apparently meant to rack the Terriers up in their own pasture. Pull a big scoring bid early and knock some of the starch out of the Terriers.

As the red-clad kicker ran forward a blast of noise swept down from the stands. It was a good deep boot, carrying to the last chalk stripe. Sal Jarvis fielded it flawlessly and, running easily, got back to the fifteen. Now he began the feather-foot stuff, the feints rippling, and then shifting past the Central man.

Jarvis loved the sidelines and he swung toward the outside. The whole red-wave seemed to shift with him, as though anticipating the maneuver. They swept in on Jarvis and half the Centrals, it appeared, had fallen on the halfback.

It was a rare moment, Hod knew, when Sal Jarvis got rapped in that fashion. He owned the knack of riding with the tackles as a fighter with a hard punch. But not this trip. Those Red Demons ambushed the guy.

Wesleyan wheeled from the huddle and Ken Falcardo faked to Wham Ku-

biak, bucking the middle. He shoveled the ball to Jarvis, close behind the line. Jarvis whipped up steam, cutting over tackle. The Central winger tabbed the play and slammed Jarvis and that was a five-yard loss. Matt Ripnick carried on a split-buck and the Central guard busted through and smeared him.

That was enough of a taste of the Demon defense. Third down and Sal Jarvis stepped into the kicking slot. Moose snapped the pigpelt at a perfect level but the Central forwards were fired to the hilt. They came on, big, fast and rugged, and Sal Jarvis barely avoided having the kick blocked. Hurried as he was he sailed a long booming spiral down the field. The Terrier rooters heaved a sigh of relief.

For the attack the Demons, a two-platoon outfit, had eleven replacements on the field. The offensive fireworks grew out of a mongrel-T with a large slice of double-wing stuff thrown into the pot. Central had a whole bevy of swift hard-striking backs—but the big guns, hovering above the pack, were "Sailor" Kallen and "Bunker" Hill.

This pair filled the halfback and fullback jobs and no team as yet had really throttled them. The impression was that the outcome of the duel between Sailor Kallen and Sal Jarvis could decide which of them deserved All-American rating.

Right away the Demons began to unleash a supercharged offensive. Sailor Kallen ran on a reverse, wheeling into a gap over the right side tackle, and collecting twelve yards. Bunker Hill crashed the middle and Moose came up to meet him and got his paws on the fullback. But Bunker wrenched loose and lugged the freight seven yards.

Again the Central full whammed away at center and peeled off the first down. Obviously the Demons meant to discover just how tough and able Moose was and if that middle alley measured up to full strength.

Hod watched Moose closely as the stripes flew behind the Demons. There didn't seem to be much fire in Moose's

veins. His every maneuver wore a caution tag and he was simply one of the pack, rather than the leader as in other games. Somehow Hod couldn't help feeling a sense of shock.

Sure, he'd known that Moose meant to protect that bad shoulder. Still he hadn't been able to accept the idea of Moose easing the pace. It just didn't add up that a competitor of Moose's brand could let down even if he wanted to. Well, it was a grim and bitter choice, between Wesleyan and the after-campus security that Moose was so desperate to gain—at any cost.

Central roared straight down the field, riddling the Terrier line, in complete control of the game. So often in other games, Hod reflected, when the tide rolled hard against the Terriers it was Moose who came up with the big clutch defensive play. But the magic was gone from the Moose.

FROM the Terrier twenty, the Demons struck for a touchdown. Sailor Kallen broke over tackle and his blockers cleared the road of traffic. He place-kicked the extra point and Central went ahead 7—0.

Wesleyan couldn't seem to shake their jitters. They were all wound up and tighter than a watch spring. They'd gone out onto the field with a doomed feeling in their bones and all their fears of the Central jinx crawled into the open.

The Wesleyan crowd seemed stunned and unable to believe that any team, even Central, could trample over their warriors in such a manner. They didn't get anything to cheer about when the Terriers again received the kick-off. Sal Jarvis came up the middle, then tried to skip into the sideline alley. Just as before, he got pinched and thrown hard.

Now Hod was certain that the Demons had learned many things about Sal Jarvis and were baiting him along. Between scouting reports and the films of Terrier games they had apparently found key tipoffs as to his maneuvering.

Wham! Kubiak cracked center and got nothing. A lateral with Matt Ripnick on the running end was piled up. Then Sal Jarvis tried to slip over guard and the red-clads tore him to pieces. There wasn't much any back could do when his up-front support faltered. The Central forwards formed a skin-tight defense and were getting the jump on the Terrier line.

And, to make matters even more hopeless for Sal Jarvis, the defense kept a double-watch on him. He was a marked man. Every turn and move he made seemed clocked. He was game though, soaking up the punishment, and still coming back for more.

Right now, Jarvis' big bid for an All-American rating was trailing in the dust. Despite his own dislike for Jarvis Hod experienced no sense of elation. Wesleyan was taking a drubbing and that hurt more than anything.

The game rolled along and, except for some overeager play on the part of the Demons, they'd have picked up another tally. A fumble and a flubbed pass kept them from paydirt. But no sooner were these drives interrupted than the Demons were at it again. They let Bunker Hill have a shot at the middle and Moose, in his ranging role, was a split-fraction off the pace.

Hill pounded into the open and the blockers worked on Moose. He hand-fought them, and gave ground, as though afraid of hurting his shoulder. Bunker carried the mail and nothing was going to stop him. He ran straight down the middle and a couple of Terriers closed in on him.

He let them come and suddenly flipped a lateral to Sailor Kallen, drifting in the wake of the play. The sideline was wide open and Sailor loped some forty-odd yards. He added the extra point and the Central bulge grew to 14—0.

Hod gazed out at Moose and the big center was standing in his tracks, hands coiled at his sides. Several of the Demons paused on their way toward the kickoff alignment to grin and have a few words

with Moose. It was easy to guess the drift of their remarks since they'd blown that touchdown right through the middle slot.

The Terrier fans were kicking up a fuss of their own. A splash of boos drifted across the field, partly in disgust at the Wesleyan showing, mostly because Moose had been the biggest disappointment of all the Terriers. Somehow they expected perfection from Moose and now they were discovering that he was far short of that mark. Hod had the odd sensation of looking upon a human volcano—ready to erupt.

The Terriers got their hands on the ball as Matt Ripnick bundled the kick-off and raced to the twenty. He had Moose ahead of him now as the red-jerseyed wave pounded around him. Moose picked a spot and blasted away and two red-shirts kissed the sod. Ripnick skipped into clear daylight and swept to midfield before they dragged him down.

With that play, the whole complexion of the game took a sudden and violent turn. That big, crunching block Moose had delivered chased the shadows and butterflies away from his teammates. The Terriers rolled for three straight first downs and twice vital yardage was carved through the center keyhole.

The wraps were off Moose now and above the crowd's roar Hod could hear Moose, his voice hoarse and exhorting. Moose was tremendous, the Mister Difference in the Terrier play. He knocked holes in the Central wall and went down-field, leveling the secondaries.

He'd heard the taunts of the Demons, the boos from the Wesleyan crowd. He'd seen the scoreboard. And suddenly he had accepted the challenge of it all and nothing else seemed to matter. However great the pull of gravity to protect the bad shoulder and a professional contract Moose was first of all a competitor.

He could not go against the instinct that had made him one of the game's greatest pivotmen. This was Moose's farewell game as a Wesleyan player and

captain. He was giving it the fling of his life.

There were three yards needed to pick up another first down. Sal Jarvis faked an end thrust and spun in over tackle. The chute ripped open for a split-fraction and Jarvis, churning up speed, slipped on the wet turf. He got nailed hard behind the skirmish mark and the leather flew from his grasp. A red-clad pounced on the leather and the Wesleyan drive died on the ten-yard stripe.

A few moments later Spade Erskin pulled Jarvis out of there. Sal Jarvis came off a bruised and dazed man. There was a smear of blood that mixed with the dirt and sweat and made his face a weird thing. But there was no great salvo of cheers, such as usually marked his entrances and exits during a game. The substitution was hardly noticed because the eyes and excitement of the crowd were on Moose Dohler and the mighty comeback effort of the Terriers.

CHAPTER V

Plenty of Action

WHAT happened in the minutes that followed Hod knew he'd never forget, nor would any of the thousands who witnessed the game. Moose was a whole riot squad, pulling runners down all over the field. He ranged behind his own line, tackling with devastating fury and pouring cement into the gaps that beckoned to the Central backs.

The fifth man in the Demon backfield, it seemed, as he pounded the attack out of kilter. It was one of these sledging tackles that produced a fumble.

That led directly to a Wesleyan touchdown. Ken Falcardo reined the defense in tight, then pitched to "Claw" Marek, scurrying along the opposite sideline. Falcardo's seventh point bid clicked, and the Central margin was 14—7.

The crowd was up and wild-eyed. Less

than two minutes later the Terriers scored again. Billy Seidel, in Jarvis' spot, grabbed a kick on the run and swirled into Demon territory before he made a forced landing.

Moose set up the sudden and explosive touchdown tally. The play veered toward the right, and the Demon center slashed in—mouse-trapped. Matt Ripnick took a feed-off, and cut back over center. The Central backer-up shifted, and Moose flattened him.

Ripnick raced into the clearing and then the other secondaries converged. He was socked in. The knot fastened and then Moose let go with a thunderous block and Ripnick shot into the open.

He quickly picked up a screen of escorts and that was the last the Demons saw of him.

But as the touchdown went up on the scoreboard Doc Sawyer was rushing to Moose's assistance. He was down. It was all over for Moose then and Hod knew it even before Doc Sawyer ran out there.

Hod bit down hard on his lower lip, and an icy fist seemed to squeeze inside his chest. It must have been pretty awful, he thought, the torture of that bad shoulder during the frenzied moments leading up to the final smashing blow.

"The shoulder," Hod heard Spade Erskin say, "it's broken to pieces." Spade's face was pale, and his voice sounded shaky.

They carted Moose off on a stretcher and no cheers could ring so loud as the silent awed admiration of the crowd. They'd seen raw courage and greatness and the moment touched their hearts.

Now it was Stan Steffin going out there and taking over the center berth. Hod saw the bright hard eagerness in Steffin's face and hated him for it. All Steffin seemed to understand was that he was getting a chance to step into the job that from here on in would belong to him. He had waited and craved such an opportunity and in a way forced it to come his way. Steffin had spread the word of Moose's injury around—hoping

it might worry Spade Erskin into using him.

The Terrier line held tight and Ken Falcardo booted the tie-making point, 14—14.

Hod sat there and his mind somehow wasn't on the game. His thoughts kept flying back to Moose, to how the guy had sacrificed more than any team might ask of a player. It was all gone now, he knew, Moose's hopes of a pro contract and bonus—and the security it meant for the big fellow's folks. Hod felt sick and miserable.

The teams slogged up and down the field as the minutes of the second period fled away. Steffin was doing fine, making some spectacular tackles and holding his own on the offense. He was cocky and defiant, challenging the Demons as Moose had done.

Central hammered inside and outside the tackles and Stan Steffin, backing up the line, was flashy and swift. The Demons weren't having much success handling Steffin. But a couple of perfectly targeted passes moved Central to the Terrier forty. Three tries to make the yardage still left them shy of the mark.

Fourth down and Central went into a punting spread. They gambled and faked. Sailor Kallen pitched a short zinging flip toward the flat. It didn't seem to have a chance of connecting. Matt Ripnick was over there covering and he started to move in on the Central wing.

But, right then, Stan Steffin leaped into the fracas, squabbling with the red-clad. He had the jump on the play and ahead of Steffin was the wide-open prairie. Maybe that's what he was seeing—an interception and quick spectacular touchdown.

That was a fatal mistake—and boner. The rangy and more adept Central wingler stole the ball with a miraculous grab and away he went. For just that instant, the Terriers had relaxed, believing Steffin and Matt Ripnick would kill the play. It took a desperation tackle by Billy Siedel to stave off a Demon touchdown.

THERE it was, the gamble paying off for the Demons because Steffin gave it a flashy twist, instead of grounding the ball. The Demons were charged up again, their attack flaring on the Wesleyan twenty. They crossed Steffin up again, sending the traffic toward the wing and then cracking over center. Bunker Hill bulled through, gobbling nine yards.

The Terriers braced for two downs. Then the weight of the attack fell toward tackle. Hod watched Stan Steffin scramble to the spot and then suddenly attempt to pull back over toward center ground. He'd been baited and the middle section was uncovered.

Sailor Kallen rifled a pitch and the red-clad snagging it, whirled into paydirt. The seventh-point placement clicked and Central surged to the front 21—14.

As the clock wore down, it became obvious that Stan Steffin was trying to imitate Moose's tactics. The Centrals pinpointed their attack off him, teasing with decoys, then belting through with the big punch. Steffin had been too confident and eager to demonstrate his savvy and it had backfired in his face.

He wanted to do his job and the job of ten other guys. Moose could play with thunder and burning fuses and look good in the act. But even so Moose's thrusts were calculated and fashioned into the team play. He was also as great a center as ever happened along and only a fool would have dared to trace his cleat-marks.

As the half ended a voice at Hod's shoulder said, "Stan is going to make a great center someday—when he learns to play center." Hod turned, and Spade Erskin had stepped alongside of him.

"He'll never be half as good as Moose in a hundred years," Hod said.

Spade nodded. "What we need in there is a plugger who isn't trying to cover himself with glory. I think you'll do, Hod."

When the second half got going, Wesleyan had switched from a second to

third-string center. The Terriers kicked and the burly red-clads gathered like a dark angry storm cloud and began making imprints of Wesleyan faces on the turf.

"Stumpy" Brink, a speedy and explosive half-back, packaged the pigpelt and whipped along to the twenty. Those red-clad ushers really cleared the aisles, bumping the traffic to the wayside. That's when Hod made his move, hurtling into the pack and smoking Brink out from behind the red-cloud. "Bep" Maloski followed in and felled Brink on the thirty.

Hod picked himself off the turf and for a moment it seemed as though he were walking in two directions. He took up his center post. He saw the Demon quarter's curious glance skip off him and knew that business was going to be brisk and rough. The leather flashed and the lines came to grips and Hod leaped into the thick of the milling. And then the lightning struck.

A red-clad spun him and, when he tried to keep driving, a shoulder dug into him from the other side. He did not know how many of those Demons took pot-shots at him but he'd almost swear they'd used clubs. He tried to push himself up off the turf but something was clamping him to the spot.

The weight lifted, some two-hundred pounds of Central tonnage. A kind of panic tore at Hod and for an instant he thought the ball-carrier had rambled through center and marked up a big gain. But nothing of the sort had happened. The play had been off the tackle and Bep Maloski handled the thing nicely.

Hod realized then that the Demons had run an "educational play" for his benefit. Now he was supposed to behave himself like a nice gent and show proper respect for the red-jerseyed people. He laughed grimly to himself and sleeved at the stinging sensation around his mouth. There was a smear of blood on the blue shirt. Ken Falcardo stepped toward him, eyeing him closely.

"You'd better take a minute to get

your mind."

Hod shook his head, "No, I'll be okay."

HE WASN'T being extra brave-hearted or anything of that sort. It wasn't much different from other times when he'd stood in the varsity scrimmages and been lathered and banged all over the field. Well, these Demon guys couldn't show an old war-horse like him any new tricks in the way of punishment.

The Demons came right back, smashing at the middle with their powerhouse, Bunker Hill, doing the blasting. That was the old grid one-two of setting up the fuse and then throwing the big punch at the weakened link.

Hod rammed ahead, meeting the thrust and telling himself he'd stop it or half die in the attempt. He thought of Big Moose and Hod could not let the great effort of the man go to waste. Some crazy emotion that was like a fever surged inside of him and he'd never before known anything close to it.

There was a hotness around his eyes and the Central fullback came at him through a burning mist. The impact jarred Hod but he hooked his arms around the runner and held on. Then, from behind, Ken Falcardo came up and floored the fullback.

Third down and the Demons built a screen and a short sizzling pass clicked and netted the necessary yardage. They drove down, mixing the attack, power and swift dazzling T-slabs. Hod hung in there, sometimes yielding a chunk of ground but never really being totally removed from the play.

There was nothing spectacular about him and, if there was a forgotten man on the field the description fitted Hod. Now and then he made the actual tackle but most of the time he piled up the blockers or stripped away the protection, so that Ken Falcardo or Wham Kubiak could come up and spill the runner.

He forced the leather-luggers off their course, and then the guards, "Howie" Sherrod and "Chet" Glavin, made the

pinch. But still the Demons moved, mostly on Sailor Kallen's pass-wizardry.

From somewhere in the past Spade Erskin's voice rang again in Hod's mind. "There's a place on this squad for your kind of guy. . . Glamour guys, I've got bunches of 'em. Everybody wants to be one but that's a worry you won't give me. . . ."

And Hod could begin to understand how the fibers and muscles of a team were strengthened through the effort and spirit of its subs. It was not a thing that could be seen or cheered, but it was felt nevertheless in the impact of the varsity team. Spade must have known that spots would come, demanding a plain old-fashioned plugger to fill the bill.

Hadn't Spade tried to prepare him for just such a moment, using him in the Midland game ahead of Stan Steffin? And he'd let Spade down that trip, given him no choice except to gamble on Steffin's streaky and flashy tactics.

If Hod had not realized it before he was aware now that every sub has his day—even if he never wins a monogram or gets into an important game. Football wasn't simply a game to prove how good or how high the headlines could be stacked. It had another side—what it did for a guy, whether All-American or scrub. What really counted was that he kept fighting and never quit to himself.

This one big moment among a thousand drab bitter days and in it Hod had found the answer. He would know how to make the pluggers he would one day coach in some small high school understand that there's a place in the game for them, just as there is for the stars. He could tell them with his heart that the real score was in the effort they made.

Central battered to the Wesleyan fifteen and aimed a reverse over the middle. That trip the up-front Demons pushed like a snowplow and Hod was trampled and Bunker Hill slammed through for nine yards. The Terriers asked for a time out and the cry went up from the stands to stick Stan Steffin in

the center slot.

It was the first time Central had really ripped open the middle and all the crowd could see was those nine big yards that had been gained. They couldn't be blamed for not being aware of how, in a methodical though effective manner, Hod had fouled up the Central offensive machinery.

They'd seen the brilliance of Moose and the flashy hit-and-miss tactics Stan Steffin had shown. Alongside such glamorous center play Hod's work looked dull and out of focus. But the Terriers themselves knew the kind of job Hod was doing and thanked him with their glances.

CHAPTER VI

Sewing Circle

THE teams went at it again and Bunker Hill hurtled himself at the middle section, trying to pick up the first down. Hod dug in for that one, charging low and submarining the pack. He came up, lifting with all his strength, and Bunker's churning knees battered his jaw. He held the Central fullback at bay for just that instant.

Chet Glavin stabbed over from guard, hit with a driving head-on tackle that was a vicious thing. The Central fullback bobbled and Hod reached for it. He was snowed under as a hundred other guys seemed to have the same purpose. But, when the official peeled off the trimmings he discovered Hod and the ball.

That recovered fumble knocked the starch out of the Central threat. But Wesleyan was still in an awful hole buried back on its own goal-line. Then onto the field came a rangy loose-hipped guy and Billy Seidel turned toward the sidelines.

Sal Jarvis stepped into the huddle and it was obvious that Spade Erskin had sent him on to kick the Terriers out of

the jammed corner. Sal looked pale and taut and Hod thought he detected a trace of panic in the eyes. The frustrations of the day were swimming and tearing at the guy.

"Okay, we kick," Ken Falcardo said. "Let's scrape up some real protection for Jarvis."

They ran to the line and Hod crouched over the ball. The signals ticked away and the leather swept back with a quick full-armed motion. A bull's-eye, that passback, and still Jarvis seemed a trifle slow getting away the boot. The defense held and the leather plunked some thirty yards downfield. Claw Marek covered the short punt and killed it on the thirty.

All through the third quarter the Terriers were back on their haunches, as the Demons launched a whole series of touchdown bids. Once, with inches needed to chalk up a first down on the Terrier six, Hod piled up the play without gain. Another trip Ken Falcardo stole the leather in a hand-to-hand duel with the Central wing.

The fourth period began and it didn't seem as though Wesleyan would ever break the headlock the Demons had on them. They were back on their own fifteen, having fought off another Central scoring bid. Sal Jarvis was being stopped cold and often as the Demons hawked his every move.

The harder he tried to burst from the shackles the easier it appeared for the Demons to trap him. There were moments when Jarvis ran in sheer angry rage. Other efforts took on a doomed hopeless look and Hod sensed that Spade Erskin would soon be pulling Jarvis from the game. The guy was wrecking the timing and pace of his backfield mates. That couldn't go on.

The Terriers huddled and Falcardo gave the play, a flanker. Hod said suddenly, "Let Sal try over center, Ken. I'll spring him."

A wall of silence closed over the huddle. That was a bold and surprising remark, and the quarterback stared at him. He saw Jarvis' head come up and there

was a strange brightness in the chalky face.

"All right," Falcardo said. "It's straight power stuff. No handoff because maybe they'll be looking for something fancy."

There was something electric in the grim sweaty faces, as they turned toward the scrimmage mark. Howie Sherrod touched Hod on the shoulder. He said nothing but his jaw was juttied, his eyes somehow told Hod that he could count on plenty of help.

The lines crunched together and Jarvis took a direct snapback, and came on with a rush. Hod surged ahead, his legs digging in short choppy strides, his shoulder making contact with the red-clad. Alongside of him Howie Sherrod let Hod handle that part of the assignment without the aid of double-teaming. The guard caved in another segment of the red-clad wall.

Half an army could have marched through that vacuum and Sal Jarvis stomped into the secondary. The backer-up closed on Jarvis and he seemed to be a dead pigeon. Hod, with one red-clad tasting the turf, came out of nowhere to swat a backer-up.

Suddenly Jarvis seemed to find his bearings, letting go with his famous change of pace and pulling another of the Demons off balance. He swirled his hips, sidestepping and picking his way into the clear. It was amazing how, on that slippery turf, Jarvis maneuvered so deftly. He'd have gone all the way except that his cleats wouldn't quite grip as he fenced with the safety.

That twisting run carried the pigskin over the midfield stripe. The Terriers huddled and the tension seemed to have loosened in Jarvis' face. For an instant his glance came at Hod and again touched his mouth.

JARVIS suddenly turned to Ken Falcardo. "Those guys will double the watch on me now. They seem to know what I'm going to do before I quite realize it myself." He paused and, then tak-

ing a quick swallow, added, "I might make a pretty good decoy."

The quarterback looked at Jarvis as though he couldn't believe his ears. But the meaning behind the remark was clear enough to Hod. That All-American fever in Sal Jarvis had turned to something real and good. Central had built a defense to stop him and it had proved an impregnable barrier.

He could go on, fighting it and, perhaps, finally forcing the grain his way. But that was a wild gamble, one that almost certainly spelled a Terrier defeat. Even before Sal Jarvis had registered his first real gain Hod sensed the change in him. Maybe the fact that he, who had every reason to hate Sal Jarvis wanted no part of revenge. He'd taken the blame, and protected Sal when the drinking incident came up.

And then, when the guy looked a whipped gridder, he'd called the shot over center that sprung him loose. It wasn't that Hod himself suddenly felt a lessening of his own bitterness toward the guy. But simply that this was a game that Moose had torn his heart to win for Wesleyan. And if the effort was that important to Moose and Wesleyan then it was also above and beyond any personal grudge or hatred.

Hod fed the ball back to Ken Falcardo, who faked to Wham Kubiak, who handed-off to Jarvis, making tracks toward the flank. The Demons had busted this one on other trips and a burly tackle swarmed through. The tackle was just a trifle too sure of himself, though he smartened up as Jarvis flipped off to Matt Ripnick, cutting inside.

He lunged toward Ripnick but Jarvis wheeled with him and threw the block. The Terriers handled their assignments with swift deadly finality and Ripnick streaked to the Central fifteen.

In two plays the Terriers struck pay-dirt. It was Sal Jarvis, leading the blockers and decoying the red-shirts. He faked them dizzy, blocking when they expected him to lug the mail. He was in a strange and different role and they did not quite

know what to make of it. Jarvis kicked the extra point and the game was knotted at 21—all.

The minutes burned away and the Demons worked up furious momentum. They weren't going to be satisfied with a tie after practically having the game wrapped up in a package. Twice they got within the Terrier goal-line shadows and the threats went up in smoke. They came on again and this trip Sailor Kallen got loose around the flank, and went over.

A stillness settled over the Wesleyan stands as though in a final bow to defeat. Hod crouched in the line as the Demon got set for the extra-point bid. His breathing was heavy and the cut inside his mouth was throwing off a lot of blood. He was sick.

Somewhere deep inside of him he'd lived this dream of an undefeated season—and he hung onto it for all he was worth now. He had come too far along the road this day to see it torn away from him. There'd been wreckage all around him—the dream that Moose had owned and the dream of All-American glory that Sal Jarvis carried into the game—the dream that Spade Erskin and all Wesleyan had of breaking the Central jinx. And for all the effort there'd be nothing left except the heartbreak of the day.

The snapback and the leather touched to the ground. The kicker came forward and directly in his path was Hod. He tore in there, immune to the blows and the blocking thrusts. His eyes were on that ball and he saw it starting to rise and flung himself at it. He felt the thump of the leather against his chest, then fell forward on his face. He'd spoiled the extra-point try but Central led, 27—21.

Hod started to pull himself slowly off the turf and then his teammates were helping him to his feet. His knees were rubbery and he went back down on one knee. A moment later Doc Sawyer was bending over him and smelling salts were stinging Hob's nostrils.

"That's enough of this game for you."

Doc was saying.

He laughed. "You'll have to use a derick to get me outa here, Doc. There's only a couple of minutes—"

They left him in there but he knew it would only be for a play or two. He saw Stan Steffin at the edge of the sidelines and Spade Erskin was talking to him.

The Terriers sprawled around in a time-out. Hod's head cleared but his stomach felt awful. He turned to Sal Jarvis.

"You've got a crazy habit of fainting toward the middle and then moving to the sidelines. They got that move tabbed, see? G'wan, let 'em have the feint but keep to the middle."

Sal Jarvis looked at him and there was an odd glint in the halfback's eyes. His lips moved but the words seemed to get lost in his throat. "Thanks," he mumbled. "I'll remember, Hod."

THE kickoff soared down the field and moments later Sal Jarvis' name was echoing through the afternoon. In the pressbox headlines were being built around Sal Jarvis and a whole nation would read of the season's most dramatic runback—a touchdown jaunt from a kickoff.

There might be a mention in the press accounts of a key-block that a third-string center, Hod Duncan, had loosed upon the last Demon player who had a chance to nab Sal Jarvis. But the accounts would bulge with Sal's tricky artistry. He'd faked the Demons into believing that he was aiming at the sidelines.

At the last lickety-split fraction he'd suddenly slashed straight up the middle. Ninety yards, that sprint, and the Terrier fans shrieked and rocked the Bowl. Jarvis then salted the wounds of the Demons, sailing the place-kick squarely between the uprights. Wesleyan was on top, 28—27.

Hod came out of there then and Sal Jarvis walked him to the sidelines. The crowd was standing and cheering him in a way that he had never believed could

happen to him. They were yelling mostly because he'd blocked that vital extra-point kick Central had needed so desperately. But they did not really know half of what he'd done to make the victory possible. But Spade Erskin knew and so did Sal Jarvis and all the other Terriers.

"This one I'll remember," Spade said softly in his ear, "the third-string center with the All-American heart."

Doc Sawyer began fixing the cut inside Hod's mouth. Central hauled the kickoff back to the thirty. They filled the sky with aerial fireworks and one of these shots Ken Falcardo grabbed. He galloped home with it and that was the last nail in the Central coffin.

Wesleyan racked up the game 35—27. The Central jinx was dead and buried.

The game belonged to the record books and the tumultuous dressingroom celebration was as hectic as anything staged on a New Year's eve. Every Wesleyan rooter, it seemed, tried to jam inside the place. The newspaper guys swarmed around Sal Jarvis, plying him with questions about his game-winning touchdown haul.

Sal kept trying to give the credit to Hod, and that was a nice enough act. But it was Sal Jarvis who'd crossed the goal-line stripe and Hod knew that whatever assistance given became a comparatively minor thing. Football's oldest unwritten rule—the backs the glory, the linemen the workhorses.

Hod began to remove his grid togs and somehow the clean good taste of the victory seemed stifled in him. He couldn't forget that Moose, who'd really made the undefeated season possible, was in a hospital bed. There was so much more than just a wrecked shoulder.

He saw Stan Steffin coming toward him and there was nothing defiant or cocky about the guy now. Steffin had almost thrown the whole shooting match away and the scare of it all still showed on his face. Hod thought of how Steffin owned gobsof ability but had used it

strictly for his own benefit—so that none of it went into the team. Sooner or later he'd have been forced to swallow more than he could chew. Steffin was lucky that the lesson came while he was still a sophomore.

"I dunno how to say it," Stan said, "but I guess I've been sort of walking around with a bomb in my pocket—and today it went off."

Hod said, "That's the way some of us have to learn—the hard way. But you learned early and maybe that's the important thing."

Steffin was silent a moment and then a grin started on his mouth. His hand went out and Hod took it and grinned back at him.

A while later, Hod came out of the showers and the noise and excitement had simmered down. Sal Jarvis said, "Hey, you got yourself a monogram, Hod. And I'll sew the thing on your sweater."

"That's a chore I'm going to do myself," Hod said, laughing a little. "I've had four years to practise the right stitch." It was odd how once the monogram had meant so much to him. But somehow it didn't seem so important now that he'd earned it.

He started dressing and Spade Erskin walked over to him. Spade looked years younger, what with the pressure off his back and the flush of victory in his eyes.

"You showed them the way, Hod," he said, "on the field and off it. Maybe Jarvis and Steffin and a few others finally discovered that school spirit isn't just a word in the book."

Hod said, "I wasn't trying to show 'em anything. If I helped, then it was a sort of accident."

"Hardly an accident," Spade said, "your letting Jarvis walk from under the blame of that drinking bout." He paused thoughtfully, then added, "It meant a lot more to you that we beat Central than any revenge over Jarvis. That was a shocker to Jarvis, your putting a prop under the lies he'd told me."

"It made him feel pretty small and

cheap and was worth more than any discipline I might have dealt. He sensed I knew the truth—which made him squirm even more. He was on the hook and I let him wiggle till some daylight got into his mind. Jarvis came around and set matters straight.”

“Yes,” Hod said, and a hard edge slipped into his voice, “it’s been a terrific day for Wesleyan, but I guess somebody had to pay the bill and Moose got stuck.”

Spade Erskin gave him a slow, thoughtful stare. “I have something to

tell Moose—but you go ahead and tell him for me, Hod. Tell him that Wesleyan is looking for an assistant coach, and that I can’t think of a better guy for the job.”

For a moment Hod stood there, the impact of the words reaching deep inside of him. Some thick tight knot seemed to fly loose and a wave of surcease spread through him. Then he was grinning and shaking Spade Erskin’s hand and in an awful hurry to deliver the message to Moose. He never felt so good in all his life.



HIGH TRAINING

ALTHOUGH at our leading universities it is customary for members of the varsity football squad to eat well and heartily, it is equally customary for the players to complain of the monotony of training table diets. Vegetable soups, roasts and steaks, potatoes and green vegetables, pie and ice cream, milk and fruit juices comprise the usual gladiator fare. The boys just plain get sick of it.

However, the Harvard varsity of 1924, a good-looking team in its early season games, had a taste of higher living—the hard way. The Sunday before the important Princeton contest the chef offered them a lobster salad by way of variation in the mealtime monotony—and the lobster, from a tin, was tainted.

The whole squad came down with ptomaine and it looked as if the Tiger game would have to be called off. The team physician called in a specialist, who announced that about all the boys’ stomachs would hold was champagne. So, after some consultation, champagne was procured, with the aid of a high police official, from stocks confiscated from raided bootleggers.

The Harvards were at least able to get on the field against Princeton come the next Saturday—but they were “up” for the contest in spirits only. Still below par physically, they went crashing down to a 34–0 defeat.

Since then neither tinned seafood nor Mumm’s Cordon Rouge Brut has appeared on the Harvard training table.—*Matt Lee.*

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

SEE
ADV.
PG. 3

BOX 3968-TC, SCRANTON 9, PENNA.

Without cost or obligation, please send me full information about the course marked X:

- ☐ Accounting & Mgmt.
- ☐ Advertising
- ☐ Air Conditioning
- ☐ Architecture
- ☐ Art
- ☐ Automobiles
- ☐ Aviation

- ☐ Chemistry
- ☐ Civil Engineering
- ☐ Concrete Engineering
- ☐ Electrical Engineering
- ☐ French
- ☐ High School Subjects
- ☐ House Planning

- ☐ Mechanical Drawing
- ☐ Mechanical Engineering
- ☐ Mining
- ☐ Plumbing
- ☐ Postal Civil Service
- ☐ Refrigeration
- ☐ Radio & Television

- ☐ Salesmanship
- ☐ Shop Practice
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Steam Engineering
- ☐ Steam Railways
- ☐ Textiles
- ☐ Welding

Name _____ Age _____ Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Working Hours _____ A.M. to _____ P.M.

Present Position _____ Employed by _____

Length of Service
in World War II _____

Enrollment under G.I. Bill approved for World War II Veterans. Special tuition rates to members of the Armed Forces
Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Ltd., Montreal, Canada



LAST GAME

By GILES A. LUTZ

Mike Shores was nearly washed up in pro football, and there was a way he could cinch that coveted coaching job, but—

MIKE SHORES wearily picked himself up off the cleat slashed turf. His bruises and aches sent up a jeering chorus of laughter, and he felt every century of his thirty years.

The referee put the ball down, and

the Eagles were six yards nearer the Hawks' goal. The home crowd groaned and Mike heard his name mentioned unpleasantly. It was a far cry to when he'd broken in with the Hawks eight years ago. There had been no unpleasant mut-

terings then. He thought soberly, it's even a far cry to last year. It was a frightening thing, the way a man's abilities disappeared, all at once, as though a thief had stolen them in the night.

The game was tied at 20-all with less than two minutes to play. If the Hawks could hold, they'd still be leading the league by a game, and with only two left, the title would look that much brighter.

It was third and one, and Mike didn't see how they could check the Eagles on this series of downs. He grimly amended that, he didn't see how *he* could check them. During this last half, they'd been smashing his tackle spot with maddening persistency, and he thought glumly that 14 of the Eagles' 20 points could be held against him. The little fear crept into him, almost nullifying his aches and hurts. He needed this last year. It had to be the best of them all!

The Eagles wheeled out of their huddle, and Mike painfully got into position. He saw the hard, bright eyes of the youngsters across from him, and the rage welled up inside him. A short step back in time, he'd been able to handle an entire side of the line made of these ex-All Americans. Now he wasn't even playing them even.

He wondered if Gillmore was watching this, and the fear was stronger. Gillmore wouldn't want a man who went out on the ebb tide. Gillmore was a hard man, and success was his fetish.

Mike put a ferocious scowl on his face. He tried to will yesterday's vitality into him and the canniness and the strength. The ball was snapped back, and he saw that big, beautiful hole before him. His heart bounded joyfully. He charged through that gap and saw the ball carrier wheel before him. His hands were reaching out when something whacked him hard from the rear. The carrier charged through the hole Mike had vacated, and the Eagles had that first down with margin to spare.

He got up, and the stands openly screamed their displeasure. The Hawks were scowling at him, and he knew he looked very bad. He'd fallen for the old mousetrap, and he looked fearfully toward the bench. Stanley wasn't sending anyone in for him—yet. The Eagles

were on the eighteen-yard line, and Mike prayed for that clock to run out.

THE ball snapped back, and the hole was there again. Mike stayed put, cautiously watching it, then he saw the pass play forming. He went in hard then, but it was too late. Just as he went up into the air, someone cut his legs from under him. He should've been in there digging, he might've rushed the passer or even batted the ball down, but he'd been afraid of the mouse-trap again. The pass was a short one, in the flat, and it was good for half of those eighteen yards. Lorimer cursed. Then he cursed again more fervently.

Mike looked at the Hawk captain and shook his head. Someone ran out onto the field, and without waiting to be told, Mike left the game. Stanley had had enough of him. He guessed everyone had. He went in to the bench, and the Hawk coach scowled at him. Mike was staring at the end of the road.

Even his replacement couldn't stop the Eagles. They went over just before the gun sounded, and there went possession of the league lead. Mike sighed and got up. They were tied now with the Rams. And the last game of the season would be against them. It looked to be a tough game, a very tough one.

He dressed slowly, trying to ignore the looks the Hawks gave him. It was harder to ignore the speculative look Stanley gave him. Mike suddenly knew there would be no contract mailed him next year. He thought with a touch of grim amusement, you're thinking too far ahead. You should be worrying about playing in the year's last two games.

He walked outside, and Nelson Garrick was there. Mike had the feeling the guy was waiting for him. Garrick never missed a chance to sink a harpoon. He wasn't as big as Mike was. He was built more on the long, lean lines of a greyhound, where Mike was broad and sturdy. Time hadn't enhanced Mike's feelings for him. Garrick played with the Rams, and Mike guessed he'd come across the river with the purpose of getting a line on the Hawks for their coming game.

Garrick's grin held a lot of malignance. He said, "Boy, you didn't look so

hot today. You get to be more of a bum all the time."

Mike reflectively rubbed his itching fist. He regretfully put away the impulse to sock Garrick. He'd done it once, a lot of years back, in college, and it hadn't solved anything. It'd only made Garrick stick to and plague him the harder. Mike remembered back through the years. He'd been a senior when Garrick had first reported for the team.

Garrick had been a loud, cocky sophomore—and good. That's what'd made it so hard to bear. He'd taken the publicity and the acclaim and even a girl Mike had been interested in. Those were youthful hurts and should be buried in the past, and Mike guessed he hadn't gotten over them. They'd gone to different teams for their pro careers, and Garrick always bobbed up at awkward moments. Mike remembered a title Garrick had won for the Rams back in '46; he remembered— He shrugged off the pricking thoughts. Some people had corns, he had Garrick. He said mildly, "I'll be seeing you around."

Garrick laughed. "You will. You'll be getting a worm's-eye view of me."

He walked away with that careless, cocky swing of his shoulders.

Mike's eyes were moody. He was afraid Garrick's words were too true. It'd been that way in their last game, and Mike hadn't improved since that one. Garrick was a hard running back. Mike grimaced as he remembered the impact of Garrick's driving knees.

He put away the annoying thoughts and went down the street, his eyes lighting. They always did when he thought of Dagmar Ferger. Mike Shores was a big man with a square, homely face and an easy, deceptive motion for all his bulk. He was a simple man, and complex things such as looking ahead into the future distressed him. He wished he'd done that looking ahead a little earlier instead of waiting until it rose up and smacked him in the face.

He called Dagmar, and that eager glow was in his eyes. He heard that low, sultry voice, and the blood raced in his veins. He said, "Hello, honey," and the wonder of her was as fresh as the moment he'd met her six months ago.

She said, "Have I got an evening

planned!" She named a very exclusive place for dinner where a ten-dollar bill got you an almost full glass of water, she rattled off the name of a play, then mentioned dancing afterward.

Mike winced. He'd been planning on a quiet evening, one in which he could rest his bruises. And besides there was the very serious matter of an almost empty pocketbook. He objected haltingly.

HE winced again at the acid that came into her voice. She said icily, "Have you been giving more money away?"

He said earnestly, "I only lent it—" He heard the click of the receiver and stared blankly at the phone. It'd always been a source of contention between them. He'd explain that he never gave money away, he only lent it to someone who needed it more than he did. He'd admitted that a great many of his loans were still out, but that didn't mean anything. It'd all be paid back.

He turned away sighing as he thought of the lonely evening ahead. He brightened with a sudden thought. Gillmore was in town. It would be wise to do a little judicious cultivation.

He found Gillmore in the man's hotel room, and his, "Hello," was big and breezy. Gillmore was a thin, dried-up man with sharp eyes. He knocked the assurance out of Mike fast. He said, "You looked terrible today. You looked worse than that."

Mike gulped, and the words were flypaper, sticking in his throat. He managed a grin and said, "I had an off day."

Gillmore said curtly, "Ashley is only interested in success, Shores. We feel that a successful man would have an influence for good on our students."

Mike's eyes were bitter. Gillmore was athletic director of Ashley Prep. He had the nose of a hound for stray dollars. And a big name would bring in those dollars. Next year's coaching job at Ashley had been dangling before Mike for the past two months, and he could never quite get hold of it. A man who could turn out a team there, could write his own ticket. Mike was desperate as he saw this chance slipping away from him. He said weakly, "Next week I'll be better."

Gillmore's eyes were frosty. "You better do something to wipe out the taste of the last two games." He shot Mike a glance from under lowered lids. "Garrick has asked for the job. He intends quitting earlier than you did. I still feel you'd be a more solid choice. But unfortunately you're not playing good football these days."

The silence was awful. Mike felt sick inside. He didn't know how Garrick had heard about this, but he was always around to grab what Mike wanted. He said hoarsely, "I never saw the day I couldn't outplay that bum." He hastily stopped it. That kind of talk got a man nowhere. "We'll see," Gillmore said softly. "We'll see."

Mike heard the chunks break off his future as he walked out of the room. They made sounds like great rocks falling a long way into the ocean. He hoped his fear didn't show on his face.

He walked out of the lobby, and a voice called, "Mike, Mike."

He turned, and he'd never seen this girl before in his life. She was tall and slim, with a conscious, controlled grace. Her features were regular, and her teeth, as she smiled, small and perfect. He thought she was a handsome girl, handsome compared with anyone except Dagmar. She said, "You don't recognize me," and he thought her smile was a little wistful. He felt he should, and he cudgeled his brain.

"Aileen Ewers," she said softly.

Even that didn't recall anything, and she sighed and said, "You aren't very good for a girl's ego. Don't you remember the Senior Prom at Wendell? You danced with me three times that night."

He snapped his fingers and said heartily, "I was just waiting to see how much you remembered."

She put her hand on his arm. "Thank you, Mike."

He did remember her now, that shy, little wallflower, hopelessly twisting her hands. But she'd been thin then with eyes too large for her face. Mike remembered how he'd felt at the time. No one should ever have that confused, lost look on their face, and he'd done his best to wipe it away.

The memories brought their warm glow. He'd been an important person

then, he could give favors instead of begging them. He said, "All these years, Aileen. What've you been doing for yourself?" He saw the bare third finger on her left hand, and his eyes held their question.

A FAINT color crept into her face. "Just busy, Mike. I have an apartment near here. Perhaps we could talk over the old days."

The words were casual enough, but he thought he caught a yearning in them. He thought with ironic amusement, Mike, you're getting delusions.

It was a pleasant apartment. He looked around and said, "You're doing all right for yourself."

"And you, Mike?"

He found himself telling her the sad, sad story, and he tried to put a whimsical quality into it. He finished and said, "So if I don't land that job with Gillmore, I don't know."

Her eyes had hardened when he mentioned Garrick's name, and he asked, "You know him?"

"I know him," she said.

He felt a surge of comradeship. Here was someone else who didn't like the guy.

She tapped her teeth with a forefinger, her eyes thoughtful. "Next Sunday you play the Beavers?" At Mike's nod, she went on. "And Horton gave you trouble last time, didn't he?"

Mike grimaced. Trouble was a mild word. Horton was a big, strong kid, and he'd done everything but barbecue Mike.

She said, "Yet we handled him." She saw his surprise at the "we" and explained, "I work in the Rams' office, Mike. Our scouts dug up something on Horton." She took a deep breath and went breathlessly on, "I could get those scouting reports for you. They could help you."

It was a new thought, and it set him back. For a moment he had the feeling this wasn't quite right, and he started to reject it. He sharply caught himself. He needed all the help he could get. He leaned forward and asked, "Why?"

Color was in her face again. "Maybe because you were kind to a lonely girl."

And again he had the odd feeling a deeper current ran through her.

He said his good-night and left, thinking deeply about this. It'd been a comfortable evening, and he realized it was because there'd been no demands upon him. He hadn't had to be bright and witty, he hadn't had to worry whether the money in his billfold would be enough.

He scowled and shook away those disturbing thoughts. He couldn't help his excitement. The Rams had easily handled the Beavers, yet the Hawks had dropped their game to them. This Horton had been the difference. If Aileen could get that scouting report—Mike softly knuckled his palm.

He went back to his hotel, and he didn't feel like going in. Dagmar's apartment was only a few blocks away, and he thought he'd walk over and say a brief good-night. He hoped her temper was over. He sighed. He was never quite sure about her. Maybe that was the basis of her fascination.

As he approached the entrance, he saw two people come out of it. He heard that light, tinkling laugh, and his heart dropped. He heard a man's deeper laugh, and his jaw jutted belligerently.

He hurried up, his mouth full of indignant words. He put a flash of black hatred on Garrick, then looked at Dagmar. She was tall and smartly dressed, and she wore those clothes with exquisite grace. She was brilliant, shining perfection, and his heart raced. She was going to be a great and shining actress, she said so, and he believed her. As yet, she'd had only a few minor parts, but the producers would wake up someday.

She started talking before he could open his mouth. "I'm not staying home night after night. I need to be seen at important places. You never think of my career!"

He was dizzy under the rapid thrust of her words. He blinked and said, "Aw, baby, don't be like that!"

He remembered Garrick and stopped. Garrick was enjoying every word of this. Mike tried to keep the thoughts off his face. He guessed Garrick had seen him with Dagmar and cut in. Mike could understand Garrick's part, but Dagmar's actions left him deeply disturbed. He looked back at her, the hurt plain on his face. She sniffed and took Garrick's arm. "We're late already," she said.

Mike, a big, sad-faced man, watched them go down the street. He spent some sleepless hours pondering over it, then brightened. She couldn't be serious about Garrick. She was only punishing him, she wouldn't stay angry with him.

HE was only lukewarm during the week's scrimmages, and he saw Stanley's cold eyes on him. He was putting out no more than he had to, he was saving it for Sunday's game, and Stanley's appraisal gave him no concern. Ordinarily, it might've, but Mike was bolstered with the scouting report Aileen had given him. It contained only the pertinent facts about Horton, but even then at the last moment, she'd been reluctant to give it to him. Then she'd said, "All right, Mike. It's for you. I guess I can be this disloyal for once."

Mike had now a moment's stab of feeling because of her distress, then it was swept away in his eagerness to get this information. He had it all memorized now, and he thought that Sunday, Gillmore would see a game.

He ran out onto the turf Sunday, and he felt good. For a little while he'd thought Stanley wasn't going to start him, and he'd begged hard. "You can always yank me," he'd finished earnestly, and it'd been the clincher.

He was good from the start, and it was so simple he almost laughed. Horton was a big, raw-boned kid with huge hands, hands that a few weeks earlier had cuffed and slapped Mike around unmercifully. They didn't today. For Horton gave away the plays by the position of his feet. When he was going to put a block on Mike, he crouched with his right foot back to get the angle on Mike. When he went out for a pass, he shoved off his left foot. If he was going straight ahead to cover a kick or block the half-back, his feet were close together. Little, simple things, but it made all the difference in the world. It put Mike's flagging speed on a par with Horton's; it minimized all that youthful fire and drive.

When Horton's feet tipped a pass, Mike bawled a warning to his backfield just before the ball was snapped back. It made for a great number of passes batted down and quite a few of them intercepted.

When Horton was going down the

field, Mike stayed wide and busted him from the side. He saw the growing bewilderment in Horton's eyes, and this was wonderful. He heard the acclaim swell from the stands. This was a day from the past when his facilities hadn't been dulled by age and knocks.

Horton never took Mike out of a play. When a block was indicated, Mike got down on hands and knees and jammed up the hole Horton was trying to clear. And that did nothing for the Beaver backs. The Hawks scored once in the first quarter and twice in the second. Covington went over again in the third quarter on an intercepted pass. Horton's eyes were now filled with sheer, helpless rage. He got up off the ground and cut a punch loose at Mike, and he was thrown out of the game. Mike watched him go, and he felt a little dirty. He shook the feeling away. This was for his own survival, and Horton had many, many years ahead of him.

Stanley took Mike out during the final quarter. Mike went in, and his exuberant spirits minimized the drag in his feet. He saw the puzzled look in Stanley's eyes, saw Stanley shake his head and he felt fine. Stanley was revising some of his estimates.

Mike saw that the Rams were winning their game, before he went in to the locker-room. It left a very tough game for next Sunday. It left Garrick coming and smashing at him with those high-driving knees. Mike passed a box, and Gillmore was there. Gillmore nodded, and Mike felt like shouting. A nod from Gillmore was real praise.

The idea hit him as he walked back to his hotel. If he had inside dope on Garrick like he'd had on Horton, he'd be set. His eyes shone at the thought. He tried to push it away, and it persisted. But Aileen wouldn't do that. The Rams were her own team, and she wouldn't betray them. But she might, a little voice said. She had a reason for doing the other. That reason could be developed. He fought the little voice, he fought it hard. But when he saw the early edition of the papers, he knew what he was going to do. It was very fine to have all that notice again. One writer went into rhapsodies, saying the Mike of old played yesterday. Another write-up

like that should make Gillmore's nod a positive thing, it should make Mike a cinch for the job.

MIKE called Aileen the following night, and she wasn't busy. They went out, and she chose an inexpensive place. They had a fine, gay time, and looking back he was surprised to realize how much he'd enjoyed it. He called Dagmar twice during the week, and she was furious. He gave her lame excuses for not seeing her, and she hung up on him. He almost broke his date with Aileen, then his jaw set. It wasn't just an evening involved, it was a future.

Aileen insisted on cooking dinner for him, and he watched her twinkling legs as she hurried about setting the table. He could've enjoyed it, if it hadn't been for the feeling of shame at what he was about to do.

After dinner, she tucked her legs under her and sat on the far end of the davenport. He saw the soft, little smile on her face, and the sudden thought came to him, she's pretty.

He talked about what a well-played game next Sunday meant to him, and he had an eloquence that surprised him. He finished and said huskily, "Aileen, why did you help me before?"

The glow in her eyes seemed to light the room. "Don't you know, Mike?"

He reached for her, and she came willingly to him. He pressed his mouth hard on hers, and that little voice jeered raucously in his mind. It called him some unpleasant names, and he couldn't deny the truth of them.

He held her at arms' length, and a tremble was in her voice. "You know now, don't you, Mike?"

It was what he'd suspected, and it made him miserable. "Yes," he said.

She didn't catch the unhappy note in his voice. "It's always been that way, Mike. Ever since the night of the Prom. Your kindness made everyone else seem unimportant after that." Her face lifted toward him again, and the groan in his throat was a small, silent thing.

He got up and paced about the apartment. She sensed his trouble, and some of the shine went out of her eyes. "What is it, Mike?"

He misrepresented to her more than

he lied. He told her he could make no future plans until he knew what he was going to do. A brilliant game next Sunday would make plans possible. And through it all, he intimated she was part of those plans. The shine was back in her eyes. "I'm not worried, Mike."

He shook his head. "I am. I need help." He looked squarely at her, the appeal naked in his eyes. "I need help like you gave me before. Not against the entire team, Aileen. I wouldn't ask that. Just anything that might help me against Garrick."

Her face was white and strained. "I couldn't, Mike. I couldn't do that."

He stared at her, glad to turn his anger from himself to her. "All right," he said harshly. "All right. You said you didn't like Garrick, either. He's trying to hurt us. I thought all this meant something to you."

He turned and tramped toward the door. She hurried after him and said dully, "I'll see what I can do. Come by tomorrow night."

He felt as though he'd struck her, and he searched vainly for words to take that expression from her eyes. He couldn't face her any longer, and he hurried away.

He came back the following night, and she handed him a sealed envelope. "Don't open it here, Mike," she said wearily. "And don't thank me—yet."

He was glad to get away from the probing of her eyes. He wanted to reach the security of his room, to open this envelope and learn things that would help him smear Garrick all over the scenery.

He sat in his bed, turning the envelope over in his hands. Somehow he couldn't open it. He kept seeing those haunting eyes on him. You played dirty ball, the little voice chanted.

He swore at the voice, and he couldn't hush it. He'd never turned a foul trick in his life. He tucked the envelope back into his coat pocket. He had two days left. Morning would be plenty of time to open it.

HE didn't open it Friday, and he didn't open it Saturday. He started to several times, and he always stopped. He was being a stubborn fool.

He had his future here in his hand, and he was being noble.

He walked into the locker-room Sunday, and the unopened envelope was still in his pocket. Stanley came over and put his hand on Mike's shoulder. He said quietly, "You stop Garrick like you did Horton."

Mike said gruffly, "I'll stop him." He wondered if he would. This was his last game, and he wanted it to be all his, not something he'd tricked a girl into doing for him. He wanted the memory of it to be clean and untarnished. He wasn't going to use that information at all. He heard the mocking, little voice and thought weakly, at least not until I have to. If he went bad during the first half, the envelope would be here waiting for him. He hadn't been fool enough to destroy it. But he didn't have to use it. He wished he hadn't thought of this brilliant idea of using her.

He went out onto the field, and the stadium was packed. He wondered if Aileen were watching this game. He hadn't called or seen her.

Pellini put his foot into the ball, and it went end over end. Garrick caught it and came threading his way back up the field. Mike pounded toward him. This duel between them had started early, it'd started on the first play. He knew a fierce and driving eagerness to knock Garrick down before anyone else reached him.

Somebody knocked Mike's legs from under him. He went down, feeling the rough rasp of the field against his cheek. He got up, silently swearing. He didn't need that envelope, he didn't need to trick a girl. He heard that little, jeering laugh, and his rage was a powerful spring, welling strength into him.

Harkness had dropped Garrick after a twenty yard run-back, and Mike fidgeted nervously as he waited for the Rams to come out of the huddle. He wished he knew where this play was going. He might've known, if he'd opened that envelope. He saw the Ram linemen look curiously at him and knew his face must be working with his thoughts.

He broke with the ball. He cuffed the Ram end with a big hand, knocking him out of the way. He burst into the back-

field and saw the play slanting to his right. Two Rams led Garrick. Mike got down low and under them. He rose up and threw the interference back in Garrick's lap. Covington came up fast and knocked Garrick back on his tail.

It was a three yard loss, it should've brought Mike a satisfaction, and it didn't. He hadn't made the tackle.

He raged and stormed along the line. He was in a fury of impatience to prove something to himself, to still that nagging, little voice forever.

The end and tackle double-teamed and carried him out of the play. Garrick plowed through for four, and Covington had to make the stop. Garrick grinned at Mike, his eyes bright and malicious.

They tried a cut-back through the other side and picked up a couple. The Rams had to kick then, and Mike dashed himself against a stone wall, trying to block it. He got up and went slowly down the field, as tired as though he'd played a half. His trying and his emotion were whipping him, and he knew he'd have to control them.

The Hawks punched out one first down, then they had to kick, and Mike raved again. He wanted an early touch-down, he wanted to force the Rams back on their heels.

The first quarter wasn't half gone before Mike could see the pattern of the game. It was hard and tough, it could stay hard and tough enough so that only a break could decide it. He rammed his head into guys' stomachs, and they rammed it back into his neck. He pounded and tore at them, and they gave it back with savage interest. He stopped Garrick and missed him. The lines surged back and forth over the cleat-torn grass, and there was blood in his mouth. His left calf ached where a cleated foot had ground, and the pounding was beginning to make insistent demands on him.

Then the first quarter was over, and he stretched gratefully out on the grass. Pellini gasped and muttered, "Fun, huh, Mike?"

Mike turned to ease his aching body. Fun, baloney. He was doing this the hard way, and he could've made it easy for himself. He felt a little pride though. So far, he thought he'd done all right.

THE Hawk backs knocked their brains out against the stone wall the Rams had for a line, and Mike was weary and sore from trying to tear a hole in it. The Rams were on the move again, but they were pounding the other side of the line. He got a little consolation from the thought. They were leaving him alone, they were afraid of him.

It was still in his mind when they hit him. He went down, and cleats walked the entire length of him. He pulled and clawed at them, and it was all ineffectual. Garrick went fifteen yards on that. The fear and the hurt came back to Mike. He'd slipped too much. He wasn't man enough on his own to stop Garrick. He tried to shut his eyes to the thought of the envelope.

They tried another power play at him, and Mike threw back the interference. He piled up the whole play and went down underneath it. He'd stopped that one, and the fear went away for the moment.

A Ram pass was no good, and Mike began to hope that this thrust would be stopped, too. The Rams were chewing away at the twenty-yard marker, but it wasn't too tight—yet. Then Garrick stepped into a steadily held ball and nudged it over the crossbars. A big 3 went up against the Hawks, and Mike heard the customers groan. He felt like groaning, too. Three points could mean a lot in a game this tight.

The score didn't change during the half, and Mike walked off the field, trying to hide the limp pulling at him. Stanley gave them the usual pep talk. He pointed out that 3 points weren't the national debt. One touchdown, and they were back on top.

Mike had been trying to keep his mind from the envelope, and now he brightened. What Stanley said was true. But just the same Garrick had made those 3 points, Garrick was out in front. Mike pulled the envelope out of the coat pocket. He stared at it a long moment. Then suddenly he folded it across and thrust it inside his kidney pads. If he needed it, he could open it during a time-out, he wouldn't call on it unless everything turned hopeless.

He went back out to that hard, slogging work. The lines rose up and

smashed at each other, and the Ram backs were vicious, armor-plated tanks. Mike's ribs felt like a busy blacksmith had been beating on them, and someone had been dropping safes on his head from dizzy heights. Garrick seemed to have more power, more speed now. And the voice screamed in Mike's head, you'd better open it, you'd better hurry. Mike dully gave in to it. He'd open it during the next time-out, he'd see if it didn't hold some help, if there wasn't some escape from this terrible beating.

Garrick smacked through tackle ahead of the ball, and he stabbed Mike's head with a high, careless elbow. The blood was thick in Mike's mouth, and he tried to free his arms from Garrick's pinning weight. Garrick said, "You bum," and rubbed the heel of his palm across Mike's face. The fury was a tonic to Mike. He threw Garrick off and was straightening when something hit him and knocked him out.

He came to, and Coach Stanley looked at him with a worried face. "Boy, you got a knock. You been drifting back, then going out a half dozen times."

Mike asked thickly, "How much time?" He looked at the scoreboard and got his own answer. The fourth quarter was old, there was less than three minutes left. He saw something else that shocked him. The Rams had 6 points, and the Hawks still had nothing.

"Garrick booted another one," Stanley said dully. He managed a mirthless grin. "It's been a good ball game."

Good wasn't enough. Mike rumbled deep in his throat. He buckled on his head-year. "I'm going back," he growled.

Stanley nodded.

MIKE ran out onto the field. He didn't even think of that envelope tucked inside his pads.

The Hawks had the ball on the Rams' forty-four. They had two downs left and six yards to go. Mike looked at those tired faces and knew it was a hopeless thing. He wasn't bringing anything to them. He felt that same terrible, draining weariness. That period of unconsciousness hadn't done anything for him. He thought of the envelope and bitterly cursed himself. It was too late now.

Covington was coming through Mike's

slot, and Mike didn't know if he had enough strength to clear a hole or not. He banged at the massed flesh before him, and it didn't budge. He felt Covington ram into him and grunted under the impact. It knocked him sideways off the piled up bodies before him, and he almost went down. He thought drearily, we'll have to kick now. And the Rams will stall, running out the clock. It's too late, I threw it all away.

He saw the ball then, bounding before him. Comprehension came to him in an instant, but it seemed as though he thought about it for hours. Covington had fumbled, it was a loose ball. Mike didn't think he was moving, then his hands closed around the ball. He lumbered forward.

Someone took a shot at him and bounced off, and he picked up speed. He broke out into the open beyond those piled up bodies, and hope pumped inside him. There was nothing graceful about him. Compared to the backs, he looked like a freight train against a streamliner. But he covered ground. He put a palm hard into a contorted face, twisted, and another white stripe fell behind him.

The yelling of the crowd was a far-away thing. He heard feet pounding behind him and looked over his shoulder. Garrick was picking him up with every step. Mike jerked his head around, and the Ram safety was angling over. Between the two of them, they would smear him, he thought, around the ten.

The safety-man's snarling face was right before him, and Garrick pounded on his tail. Mike shifted his feet in a clumsy imitation of a cut, smacked his palm into the safety's face, and to his astonishment, it fell away. A hand slid along his pants, its fingers desperately clawing, but he was still running.

He took another step, and the trembling in his legs threatened to pull him down. That last line should be right ahead of him, but things were blurred, and he wasn't sure. Then a terrible weight plowed into him from behind, and arms wrapped around his throat, choking him. He staggered under the weight, made a faltering step, then took another. He was lucky that tackle had been high, a low one would've knocked

him off his feet. But he was falling now, and he wished his body was rubber, so that he could stretch it a long way. The ground rose up and smacked him, and its jarring impact set off a million dull reverberations throughout his body.

He lay there, wanting to go to sleep. He heard a vast, far-away roaring and finally realized it wasn't in his head. It came from the crowded stands, and he couldn't understand why. He looked up and saw the caperings of his teammates, their weariness forgotten in joy. He saw Garrick's face heavy with frustration, then realized what'd happened. He was over. He'd scored the 6 points that'd tied up the ball game.

He got to his feet and walked back to the huddle. He had to keep concentrating, or his mind would slip away. He said thickly, "Let me take a handoff."

Lorimer gave him an odd glance, then slowly nodded. "I guess he earned it."

It felt funny standing here, waiting for that ball to come back. Then Covington had it, as if to drop-kick. Mike was running across behind him. He kept his head down, ignoring the growing, threatening shadows that seemed to be bearing down on him from all directions, he managed to get his hands on it cleanly. He dug his cleats into the turf, and his cut-back was fast and deceptive. Then those shadows had body and substance, they knocked him down and ground him into the turf. He heard the crowd yelling again, blinked his eyes several times, and he could see. The Hawks had a 7 beside their name now. They had a one point lead and a minute or two left.

The Rams filled the air with desperation passes, but the Hawks had the lead, and they wouldn't be denied. They batted those passes down, and the gun went off with the ball in mid-field.

Mike wearily stumbled off the field. He listened to the crowd yelling his name, and it was good. He passed a box, looked up, and saw Gillmore. He felt a savage fury at this man. He'd almost been tricked into making this last game a dirty thing. He yelled, "I can handle any job you've got."

Mike's mouth sagged open. Gillmore was nodding and saying, "I think so, too."

MIKE started to go on in, and he heard a feminine voice yelling at him. He saw Dagmar running down the aisle, waving frantically to him. He had a sudden insight, and he looked at her as though she were a stranger. Dagmar always associated herself with success, she had no time or comfort for a man who was down. Mike looked at her with no recognition as he went on in.

He pulled the dirty, grass-stained envelope out of his pants and put it carefully in his coat pocket. He was suddenly eager to get out of here, and he hurried his dressing. The Hawks wanted to make him the central part of their celebration, and he shook them off.

His heart pounded as he knocked on the door of Aileen's apartment.

She opened the door, and he couldn't read the expression in her eyes. He stammered, "I— I thought you might still be at the game."

"No," she said. "I listened to it over the radio."

She didn't congratulate him on his win, and he thought she felt a little soiled by this, too. He pulled the grass-stained envelope from his pocket and handed it to her. He blurted out, "I didn't open it. I played it on my own. The first time was different. You volunteered help. But I tricked you this time."

"Why didn't you open it, Mike?"

"I don't know," he started slowly. It hit him then with a great, blinding flash. "Yes, I do know," he shouted. "If I'd opened it, it would've always been between us. And I didn't want that. I guess it took me a long time to learn how much I needed you."

That sweet, warm smile was on her lips. She said softly, "Open it, Mike."

His fumbling fingers tore the envelope apart. He stared at the sheet of paper, his eyes wide. It read, "Mike, you wouldn't want it that way. If you feel like bringing this back, I'll be waiting."

He looked at her, feeling the great, comforting peace run through him. He had the sudden sureness she would always know what was best for him. His arms went eagerly out for her. He didn't have to worry about Gillmore's job, he didn't have to worry about the future. A man lucky enough to get her didn't have anything to worry about.

Blocking Brother

By

**WILLIAM CAMPBELL
GAULT**

When Steve Winter tries to shield his ball-running frater from rough knocks on the Varsity, things keep getting rougher than ever!

AT MORTON HIGH, Curt had been All-State. At Morton High, he'd been a ball of fire, with Steve out in front of him, throwing the big block. Steve understood the kind of lads who might give Curt trouble, and he'd taken care of them. At Morton High, Steve didn't make All-State or even All-Conference.

But this wasn't Morton High, now. This was Northern University. Curt had had his choice, and taken Northern. On condition that Steve come along, of course. It was a choice that puzzled Steve, for Curt was a flash back, a ball of fire. In the Southwest league, he'd have been terrific.

At Northern, they played another kind of ball. At Northern, they fashioned their lines of oak trees and their backs of rawhide and steel. At Northern, a pass was sissy stuff.

That first day, as they lined up for their equipment, Steve looked around the room and back at his brother.



"They'll murder you, Curt," he said. "Awful big and awful rough, these boys. I still don't get it, Curt."

Curt smiled at him. "They don't scare me. Not with you out in front, mowing 'em down. They've got to catch me, first, Steve."

"This is the wrong league for your kind of ball, Curt."

"Cheese? You're saying I'm cheese, Steve?"

"You know I'm not, kid. You're fast and slippery and you got all the courage a man needs. This just isn't your kind of ball."

Curt looked around, and his grin was still there. "Why'd they want me, then?"

"I've been working on that, in my dumb way," Steve answered. "I think they'd rather have you here than some place where you could hurt them. You'd murder them, with the right kind of team. With a smart team, you'd make them look awful bad."

"Ah, Steve," Curt protested. "This outfit's had three national titles in the last ten years. And four conference titles. They don't worry about a punk like me."

"You just don't realize how good you are, Curt," Steve said soberly. "You never did."

They were close, these two, even for brothers. Steve was the older, and he'd dropped out of high school for a year, so Curt could catch up. Steve was bigger, with solid legs and bulky shoulders and big, capable hands. Steve was a ball player's ball player. Curt was slimmer, but fast. Lordy, how fast!

Always, on the field or off, Steve had been out in front, throwing the big block for Curt. Their mother was dead; their dad was on the road, a lot. Steve was the anchor of the home.

THERE were a lot of notable frosh in the room. Jensen, the blond giant from Valley High, Kurtz, who'd been an all-time great among the passers at Mann Prep. Sivers, Presko—lots of the high school hot-shots. But this was where

they'd separate the men from the boys, at Northern.

They'd played against Kurtz; he waved at them. "Still together?" he called.

They nodded.

"For which Curt's grateful," Jensen said.

Steve looked the blond giant over coolly, and said nothing. Curt said, "You can say that again, Swede. When did you start talking English?"

There was a laugh, and the big lad reddened. He said something under his breath to Sivers, and Sivers nodded, not looking their way.

"That's the kind of guy who goes here," Steve said. "Big and dumb."

"How about Kurtz, and Presko?"

"We'll see," Steve said. "We'll see, when the scrimmage starts. We'll see, when they put us up against the varsity."

They didn't see, right away. There was calisthenics and the big tackling dummys and the tires to run and a million things to be learned, first. This was the big league, in college ball, and so darned much for the frosh to learn.

Cannon fodder is all they were, really. Running the opposition plays against the varsity, taking a nightly drubbing for the team numerals. At the end of this season the gold would be separated from the dross, and next year, only the strong would show up for varsity timber.

The frosh coach, Steinkamp, ran them ragged, getting them ready for the sacrifice.

Barney Kellner, the head coach, didn't even know they existed.

It was hot, those early fall days. Steve could take it, but Curt—Curt looked like he'd been de-hydrated. He got thinner, and he didn't grin quite so often, or even talk much.

On a Tuesday afternoon, in September, they went up against the varsity for the first time. Jensen at full, Sivers at right half, Curt at left half and Danny Kurtz running them from the T.

Kurtz was more than a passer; he was a sharp lad for spotting a weakness and a poised, deft ball handler. Northern

used the T, but what the frosh used would depend on the coming week's varsity opposition.

Steve stood on the side-lines, his eyes on Curt.

The varsity kicked off, and it came to Jensen in the end zone. Jensen was no man to play it cute; he headed straight up-field. He was a lot of man, this blond Swede, and relished the contact work.

But he was running into eleven men of the same inclinations. He was dropped on the seventeen. He could have grounded the ball in the end zone and had it on the twenty.

Danny Kurtz sent Sivers off tackle on the first play from scrimmage. Curt got rid of one line backer, and the frosh line had given him an adequate hole. Sivers went to the twenty-three.

Second and four, and the place for Jensen, again. But Danny must have noticed how close the varsity secondary was playing it.

Danny went back to toss one.

On the thirty, Curt caught it over his shoulder, near the east sidelines. Curt went seventy yards to the score, while the varsity monoliths futilely chased him.

Steve felt as good as though he'd done it, himself. He looked over to see Barney consulting his backfield coach. Even at this mastadon zoo, the class of Curt Winter was apparent.

And now the frosh were kicking off to the varsity, and Steve went in on defense, in Sivers' place.

Steve did the kicking, and he put his heart into it. The ball went to Stryker, deep in the end zone.

STRYKER had been All-Conference the year before. He was a fast and rugged man. But he ran into Nystrom on the fourteen and went down. He got up slowly, almost wonderingly, it seemed.

The varsity quarter seemed to sense Stryker's attitude. He sent him, on the first play, spinning right into center. The frosh line backers were playing it close. The frosh line bulged—and held.

Second and ten on the fourteen. Stryker, again, as though the varsity quarter was out to prove something. Stryker ran into Red Harlow and when he went down he bounced.

Third and ten and even a Northern quarter would know only a pass would do it. He went back to toss one.

It was a lousy pass from the varsity viewpoint, but Steve loved it. Steve went up on the thirty-two, hauled it in, and started back. His heavy legs were propelling him along the ground at a speed the varsity evidently didn't believe he possessed.

In any event, he was in pay dirt before they re-acted.

Which made two touchdowns in five minutes—against the varsity.

The varsity began to talk it up. Barney came out to talk to their quarter. Steve looked over at Curt, on the sidelines. Curt clasped both hands above his head, in salute.

They took the ball from the frosh and put it on the varsity thirty. There, Barney said, "A little imagination wouldn't hurt, Pete."

Pete Rommel was the varsity quarter, a stocky, heavy-legged mixer inclined to the orthodox game.

Varsity's ball, first and ten on the thirty.

The frosh had heard the coach's words and the frosh knew what to expect. Especially when Pete split the ends.

What they didn't expect was the elusiveness and speed of the soph end, Gus Winkle.

Winkle was on the frosh thirty-five when he caught the ball and he took off from there. Steve was five yards behind him, but Steve nailed him from behind on the twenty-two.

From the twenty-two, Pete didn't need any imagination. He sent Stryker off tackle and somebody took Harlow out of it. Stryker, with a head of steam, was a hard man to put down. Steve and Presko caught him on the eight.

And from there, in four plays, the varsity punched it over. But it took all

four plays.

Barney came out, and the frosh offensive backfield came along. Barney gave it to the frosh, on their own thirty.

Steve stood next to Presko, on the sidelines. Presko said, "And that's the team that finished second in the league, last year. I'm surprised Rommel didn't call a flying wedge."

"They didn't need anything but power," Steve said. "They lost some good men. Look what Sutherland used to do with power, at Pitt."

"Sure, sure. But this is nineteen-fifty. It's the wrong place for your brother, this school. I'm beginning to think it's the wrong place for me, too."

"You're rugged enough," Steve said. "And so am I. But, as you say, it's the wrong school for Curt."

Danny sent Curt off tackle on the first play. Sivers was supposed to be in front of him, but Sivers' timing was off. Curt ran into him, and went down.

Three of the varsity mammoths came in to see he stayed down. Curt jumped up, when the pile was unplied, but Steve knew Curt. The kid would jump up like that, even with a broken leg. He wasn't a lad to admit pain.

Presko said, "How about that Sivers?"

"I haven't made up my mind. If it happens too often, I'll have a word with him."

IN THE field, Danny had called time-out. Danny was talking to Sivers. Jensen came over to see what it was about. Steinkamp, the frosh coach went out, frowning.

"Danny doesn't miss much," Presko said. "Danny could have gone to Notre Dame."

"I just hope he doesn't argue with Steinkamp," Steve said.

Then Steinkamp was coming to the sidelines again, and Sivers was with him. He said to Steve, "Go in at right half, Winter."

This was more like it.

Steve went out and Danny said, "Now, we'll get some blocking."

"Now we'll get a brother act, you mean," Jensen said.

Danny looked at the big Swede, and laughed in his face. "You want to play quarter, muscles? Or can I run the out-fit?"

"Just give me the ball and let's quit yacking," Jensen said. "Let's get this show on the road."

It was a pass to the flat. Steve was out, as a decoy and for any block that seemed necessary. Steve went out, turned, and it was lucky he did.

For Danny wasn't throwing to the flat; Danny was tossing it to *him*!

Steve went up with the varsity left half. Steve went up and came down as the varsity man nailed him. But he came down with the ball.

First and ten on the frosh forty-two.

Danny was laughing; Curt was laughing. Steve said, "Who dreamed up that one?"

"Curt," Danny said. "He claims you're better than you look. I'll bet Barney is happy we improved on his play."

Barney wasn't. He came out, wrath on his broad face.

"This is not," he told Danny, "a sandlot game. If it's not too much trouble, Mr. Kurtz, you could stay with our plays. They haven't the ingenuity of yours, perhaps, but we like them. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes, sir," Danny said. "I—yes, sir."

"You were going to say something?" Barney's face was impassive.

"No, sir."

Barney went back to the sideline, and Jensen said, "Well, that's settled."

Danny said nothing. Danny sent Jensen into the middle of that varsity line and Jensen kicked his way to the forty-five.

Second and seven, and Curt, going wide. Steve put his heart and his hundred and ninety-three pounds into the block he threw into the varsity end. The end went down, but good.

And Curt was still going, on the fifty. On the varsity forty-five he was forced out of bounds.

Jensen said, "If he had any spunk, he'd have cut back."

Steve said, "Easy, Swede. Kind of watch your big mouth."

"I say he's yellow," Jensen said.

Steve took a step toward the big guy, and then Danny was between them. "Don't be a fool," Danny said. "Steve, there's no sense in arguing with a moron." His hands were on Steve's shoulders and his voice was urgent.

Jensen smiled, and walked away.

Curt was coming up. "What's the matter? What happened?"

"Nothing," Steve said. "Everything's just dandy."

On the next play, it was Jensen, again. Steve was supposed to be out in front of him, and he was. But the man Steve was supposed to take care of got by him, somehow, and the man was All-American Tim Devlin.

Jensen was stopped cold. Jensen got up and looked at Steve. Steve smiled, and shrugged.

Danny called Jensen again, and Devlin was waiting, again. This time Jensen's face was ugly in rage. He said to Danny, "A little blocking wouldn't hurt."

"No kidding?" Danny said. "I didn't figure a man your size would need it. I thought you didn't believe in blocking."

A GAIN, it was Jensen, into the line. The whole center of the varsity line closed in on him. But Danny had the ball, and way out—on the varsity twenty-five—Nystrom waited, alone. Nystrom made it look very easy from there.

Jensen said, "I could have done it."

"I know, Swede, I know," Danny said patiently. But we've only got until six o'clock."

It was now four.

Steve laughed, but to himself. By the time Jensen turned to glare at him, Steve's face was serious.

This Danny Kurtz, what a sweetheart. Lippy enough, but not obnoxious. Sure and deft and poised and smart. And

rugged, too. Another Frankie Albert, this Danny Kurtz.

And what was he doing here, with these uniformed plough jockeys?

In the dressing room, Steve asked Danny that.

Danny shrugged. "I like the school. It's got the teams because it's a big school, not because it pays the most. And it's a good school. And Barney Kellner, for my money, is the best in the business."

"You're kidding," Steve said. "Look at the material he's had."

"Sure. And three national titles in ten years with those elephants. What would he do with good boys?"

"He'll never get them, with his kind of ball."

Danny smiled. "Oh, Steve, relax. Stop worrying about your fragile brother, and relax."

On his bench, Curt sat, bushed. "I'm beginning to think, Steve," he said quietly, "that you might have been right."

Steve said nothing. He was bushed, himself. But it was still warm. With cooler weather coming, things might improve.

The cooler weather came. The next week, Steinkamp gave them Ohio State plays. State followed the Warner system, more or less, and Steve was at one of the wingbacks.

Properly played, the Warner system is powerful off the flanks or on spinners or off tackle.

Danny sent Jensen into guard on a delayed buck and the big blond made seven yards the first play. Danny sent Steve off tackle, and the startled Steve made it a first down.

Steve said, "You trying to make a running back of me?"

"You're my utility man," Danny kidded him. "You can do anything."

On the next play it was Curt on a naked reverse, all alone around right end.

All alone, and Arndt was waiting, along with some other varsity eager beavers.

Curt went down. And when the pile

was unpled, again, Curt jumped up. Steve tried to read his face, but there was nothing there.

Jensen deep again, and Jensen going wide, around the same end. Steve took care of Arndt and Curt was out ahead of Jensen as they got past the line.

Steve was on the ground, and watching when Curt cut the legs from under Stryker. Jensen went for nine full yards and it was only a yard to a first down. Steve gave them that, off guard.

Danny said, "Get out there, this time. Get moving."

They were all out there, and the frosh line gave Danny beautiful protection. The pass went to Curt and two men hit Curt as he caught it. One of them was Stryker.

Curt didn't jump up, this time. He was limping, a little.

Steve said to Danny, "The kid's hurt."

Danny's voice was mild. "I've got eyes, Steve. I won't use him—this play."

It was Jensen wide, again, Steve in front of him, Curt a decoy.

Steve took care of Fisher, and Jensen made six yards.

"This is the kind of ball I like," Jensen said. "Wish Barney would use this formation."

"You tell him, some time," Danny said. "He's always open to intelligent suggestions. Especially from freshman."

"Wise guy," Jensen said.

"Correct," Danny said. "How's our blocking suit you these days, Swede?"

"I've seen worse. What's all the yak-yak about? Let's go, let's go!"

THEY went. They went to a touchdown, eventually. It didn't add up. It wasn't the first touchdown they'd scored against the varsity, not by a jugful. And freshman teams aren't that good, not against the kind of stuff this varsity had.

It must be Danny. It must be that old Kurtz magic, Steve thought.

It had to be. Because the Northern varsity beat a very fine Ohio State eleven on Saturday, 21 to 10.

This week, Tech plays. Tech was a razzle-dazzle outfit, with breakaway backs and the country's leading collegiate passer.

Danny ran Curt ragged, this week, sending him wide, with the blockers mopping up ahead of him. Curt went for tremendous yardage, that week. Danny threw that pigskin around, too, tellingly.

Steve said, Thursday, "You're killing the kid, Danny."

"Justifiable homicide," Danny answered. "Barney wants this Tech game."

"And what about Curt?"

"What about him? Is he special? I'll run this team, Steve."

Steve looked at him, and Danny met his gaze without flinching. "That's right," Steve said finally. "You're running the team."

But he didn't feel quite the same about Danny, after that. Though he couldn't help admiring him.

Tech came up with their ace passer and their breakaway backs. Tech went back home on the short end of a 28 to 13 score.

"It beats me," Steve said to Curt. "The varsity doesn't look that good against us, and we're punks."

"Are we, Steve? Name one."

"You know what I mean. We're young and green."

Curt handed over the sports section of Sunday's paper. Under a prominent columnist by-line, Steve read:

But prospects for next year are even brighter. At Northern, Coach Barney Kellner has the finest freshman team the school has ever seen. Standouts are Jensen, at full, Donny Kurtz at quarter, Nystrom and Harlow at the ends. On defense Presko and Sivers are coming along very well. But the pair who really look good are the local Winter brothers. And the amazing thing about that is the way Steve Winter has developed into a running and pass receiving sensation. At Morton High, local fans will remember—

Steve said, "That's where they'll remember you, from Morton High, all right. Because you probably won't live to be a soph."

"Ah, Steve, cut it out. None of them scare me, none of them."

"You sound like a club fighter, now, a

punchy one. I know you're not scared. But have you ever thought of the future? You could build up the kind of rep at a razzle-dazzle school that would pay dividends the rest of your life. Think of yourself."

"You never give me time to," Curt answered. "You're always doing it for me."

Presko came in and said, "You guys going to dinner? It's almost one o'clock."

"I'll wait for Danny," Curt said. "You guys run along. We'll meet you there."

"Danny, Danny, Danny," Steve said. "A lot of good that guy will do you. He'll run you into the ground."

Curt was smiling. "Steve, do me one favor, just one. Shut up."

Steve stared at him for seconds and then turned without a word. He went out with Presko.

Presko said, "Read the paper, today?"

"I read it."

"I'm coming along very well, it says. Me and Sivers. Like when they talk about actors, and call them 'adequate.' Well, they won't be using Curt on offense forever. I'll see some action, next year."

STEVE wasn't listening. Steve was remembering the "Shut up."

It turned warm again, that afternoon. Monday was a light day, but Tuesday was murder. Tuesday they scrimmaged the varsity, and Steve was the work horse.

Curt wasn't used hardly at all, and Steve remembered Curt's waiting for Danny, Sunday. Steve also remembered the columnist's account. And while he was in a remembering mood, he thought back to Morton High.

He wondered if he would have made a running back, at Morton High. He wondered if Curt would have been as sensational, without his help. For the first time since infancy, Steve thought about himself.

He said to Danny, "What have you got against me? It's hot, you know."

"I know. You want to call them, Steve?" Cool, the eyes and the voice.

"No. There are other guys in this backfield is all I'm saying. I could use a breather."

"Then you'd be blocking. That's almost as much work, you know. *Almost*, Steve."

Jensen said, "Why not play the glamour boy? Use him up. He won't be around, anyway, next year."

"Don't worry about me," Curt said. "I'll be playing ball when you're back to pulling a manure spreader, muscles."

Jensen's face was hard. "I said it to your brother about you, and now I'll say it to your face. You're yellow, Winter."

Steve started for him, but Curt beat him to it. Curt's right hand flashed out and caught Jensen flush in the mouth.

Jensen went down, blood all over his mouth and chin. Jensen scrambled to his feet, spitting out a tooth—and the squad was between them.

Barney came out, and Steinkamp.

Barney said, "What's the matter?" He was facing Curt.

Curt said, "A little misunderstanding, and I lost my temper, Coach."

Steve said, "Coach, it—"

But for the second time in a week Curt said, "Shut up, Steve. Keep your nose out of this."

Jensen said, "I called him yellow, coach. I guess I was wrong."

Barney's glance came back to Curt. "He's kind of big for you to be swinging on, isn't he?"

"Nobody's too big for that, Coach. I do my own fighting."

"Not around here, you don't." He said to both Curt and Jensen, "Report at my office tonight, at eight o'clock." He looked at Steve. "You, too." He looked at Danny. "And you, Lippy. How dumb do you greenies think I am?"

Jensen went out to get his mouth taped up. Fuller came in for him.

Danny said, "And just as I was getting to like the place. Well, let's get to work."

In the *Campus Grille*, at supper time, Steve said to Curt, "That was bright, slugging Jensen."

"I'm not brighter than you, Steve, and

you were on your way to doing it. Steve, don't make me say 'shut up' again. Just figure I'm a big boy, now."

Jensen came over to their table. Jensen said, "Shake hands, Curt. Being a farmer, you know, I'm kind of—"

Curt said, "You're a hundred percent. You're not the only guy who was wrong about me. My brother shares your errors. Sit down and let's plan a good one for the inquest."

Then Danny was there. Danny said, "I think I can work a deal with Tech."

"Not for me," Curt said. "I like it here."

"Me, too," Jensen said. "Outside of a certain mouthy character. And I'm even getting used to him."

"Don't mind me, Swede," Danny said. "It's all for your own good." He looked at Steve. "What do you think of Tech?"

"I like it here. I'm developing into a running and pass receiving sensation it says in the papers. I might not get the same ink at Tech; it's too far away."

Jensen said, "We ought to think of what we're going to say, though."

"I know," Danny said.

NERVOUSLY they sat on a bench, in the locker room, the four of them. Jensen went in, first. Jensen didn't come out by the time Danny was called.

Curt said, "He's probably sending them out the side door, with a train ticket. You'd think he'd drop back to say good-by." Steve said nothing.

Ten minutes later, Curt went in, though Danny hadn't come out.

Steve sat on the bench, his hands moist. He'd fallen for the place. He liked the kind of honest, rough football they played and he liked the campus.

Then his turn came, and he went in. Only Barney was there, behind his desk.

Barney looked at his hands, and rubbed them together. He was frowning. He said, "You freshmen make the mistake of thinking I miss what's going on around here. Why'd you come here, Winter?"

"Because my brother wanted to."

"And why'd he want to?"

"It's something I don't know, Coach. This isn't his kind of—I mean, he's not geared for this kind of ball."

"What kind of ball?"

"The power stuff. You've always had big, rough teams and Curt's more the—flashy type."

"Always had? At Texas Christian, did I have? You're young, Winter, and you have some things to learn. I mould my teams around my material and up here that's the kind of material I've been getting. Until this year. This freshman team, I don't mind telling you, is the greatest freshman team I've ever seen. This team is going to be one of the all-time great collegiate teams. But I didn't think I'd have to explain myself to a freshman. If you weren't so valuable to me, I might not be doing this. Now, why did your brother come up here?"

"I honestly don't know, sir."

"Well, I do. He was very frank about it, a lot franker than he'd likely be with you. I took the trouble of making recordings of what the lads had to say. I want you to hear them. They don't know I made them, and if they find out, I'll know you talked. So keep this to yourself."

Steve nodded, and Barney snapped a switch.

Jensen's voice: "There's nothing wrong, coach, nothing. We were just kidding each other, really. Why, coach, Curt and I are buddies. Why, we're like—like brothers. Coach, if I couldn't play at Northern, I'd—"

Barney snapped it off, smiling. "Jensen's a sentimental lad. And as close to Nagurski as a man can get."

Now Danny's voice: "Well, Steve's a fine boy, don't get me wrong, coach. I wish I had a team of guys like Steve, or a family of them. But he's kind of punchy about Curt. You see, their mother's dead, and Steve's built up this mother complex and little Curt mustn't get bruised or hurt his little pinkies. In high school, you see, coach, Steve was the blocking back for Curt. Well, you read these Rover Boy books too much, you get the idea a blocking back takes the beating."

What Steve kind of overlooks is that for every block he throws, Curt gets tackled by at least two men. I mean, any running back knows he takes twice the beating a blocking back does, and the extra ink doesn't make up for that, but with Steve—"

Again, Barney smiled. "I could have run out of records, listening to Lippy. Finest quarterback in America today. You can quote me on that."

And now Curt's quiet voice. "Coach, it isn't anything I can tell him. He's—special, in my book. But he's got the idea I'm fragile, or something. I guess you know the schedule Morton High plays, and I guess you know they were laying for me, all along the line. I never even had a twisted ankle. But that isn't why I came here, just for the power ball."

"Why was it, then?"

"I don't want you to think I'm apple polishing."

"I'll decide that. Go ahead."

"I think you're about the smartest coach in the country. And I wanted a

smart coach, smart enough to see how really terrific Steve can be if he'll get out of my shadow. Danny and I agree on that, and we may have worked out some—ways of bringing Steve to your attention. I can't tell him to quit mothering me, because he enjoys it. I thought, if we built him up, a little, he'd grow out of this complex. And make you one rip-roaring football player."

Barney snapped it off. Steve looked at the floor. Barney said quietly, "We understand each other, now?"

"Yes, sir. I—well, I'm growing up."

"Okay, Steve. The gang will be waiting at the *Campus Grille*. Mum's the word, though."

"Sure. Thanks, Coach. You won't have any more trouble with us."

"I know it. But the opposition will. How I feel for them."

Steve went out, heading for the nucleus of what was going to be the greatest collegiate team in America. He felt fine, and for the first time in years, not at all like a worried mother.

ADVERTISEMENT

Do We Have To Die?

Thirty-nine years ago in forbidden Tibet, behind the highest mountains in the world, a young Englishman named Edwin J. Dingle found the answer to this question. A great mystic opened his eyes. A great change came over him. He realized the strange power that knowledge gives.

That Power, he says, can transform the life of anyone. Questions, whatever they are, can be answered. The problems of health, death, poverty and wrong, can be solved.

In his own case, he was brought back to splendid health. He acquired wealth too, as well as world-wide professional recognition. Thirty-nine years ago, he was sick as a man could be and live. Once his coffin was bought. Years of almost continuous tropical fevers, broken bones, near blindness, privation and danger had made a human wreck of him, physically and mentally.

He was about to be sent back to England to die, when a strange message came—"They are waiting for you in Tibet." He wants to tell the whole world what he learned there,

under the guidance of the greatest mystic he ever encountered during his 21 years in the Far East. He wants everyone to experience the greater health and the Power which there came to him.

Within ten years, he was able to retire to this country with a fortune. He had been honored by fellowships in the world's leading geographical societies, for his work as a geographer. And today, 39 years later, he is still so athletic, capable of so much work, so young in appearance, it is hard to believe he has lived so long.

As a first step in their progress toward the Power that Knowledge gives, Mr. Dingle wants to send to readers of this paper a 9,000-word treatise. He says the time is here for it to be released to the Western World, and offers to send it, free of cost or obligation, to sincere readers of this notice. For your free copy, address The Institute of Mentalphysics, 213 South Hobart Blvd., Dept. A-18, Los Angeles 4, Calif. Readers are urged to write promptly as only a limited number of the free books have been printed.



True Stories of Exciting Gridiron Action

By JACK KOFOED

Famous Sports Commentator

SAMMY BAUGH DOESN'T KNOW THE MEANING OF "QUIT"

SAMMY BAUGH was a tired old man. For fourteen seasons he had been a professional star, the greatest passer of all time. Over the years no one matched him. Before that long span among the paid performers had been four years at college and other years in high school. Twenty-two years or more, and Baugh was still the star of the Washington Redskins.

Win or lose, the lean Texan was always in there pitching; the cool field general, who never allowed himself to be upset by shifting tides of fortune.

Washington played the Los Angeles Rams in the last battle of the '49 cam-

against. The big Los Angeles forward wall, headed by Dick Huffman and Fred Naumetz, ripped the Washingtonians to shreds. They kept breaking through so fast the Texan was hustled and harried in his passing. They held so well that their own forward passing stars, Bob Waterfield and Norman Van Brocklin, had all the time in the world to get their throws away, and they were throwing to some of the best receivers in the business.

Tommy Fears caught ten passes to set a new record for a single game, and to bring his total for the season to 77, also a high mark for the league. Bob Shaw bagged three touchdown passes. Altogether the Rams ran up the staggering total of 53 points, which sounds more like a basketball than a football score.

But, Sammy Baugh never quit. He doesn't know the meaning of the word. Outmanned, outfought, the Redskins kept trying, even though they knew they had no real chance to win. The Texan, even with his line cracking under the furious impact of the opposition, threw three touchdown passes. He scored another tally himself on a quarterback sneak from the one yard line.

paign. The Rams were the Western Division champions, a roistering, smashing ball club, the second best in the land. Sam knew his team was over-matched, but there was no sign of anything but confidence in his manner.

I saw Baugh more than fifteen years ago when as a bright college quarterback he was the terror of the Southwest. I have a picture of him now . . . still slim, tanned, with crowsfeet around his keen blue eyes. He fades behind his faltering line, with bruising giants, thirty or forty or fifty pounds heavier than he, rushing at him. There is no nervousness about



Baugh soon found out what he was up

him. He eyes the setup with the calmness of a man sitting on the sidelines.

No one can ever count the slim cowboy out of competition. The score may be lopsidedly against him, as it was that sunny Saturday when the Rams washed over him like ocean waves. His team may be winning a tight one or an easy one, but there is never any change in Baugh. He is the master tactician, the cool field

general, the best passer of all time.

In picking the greatest football players of all time you can't pass him by. He might not own the bruising power of a Bronko Nagurski or the hip-slide running skill of a Red Grange, but in sheer all around value Sammy never had a superior. Even now, as a man getting perilously close to forty, he is still one of the best on the gridiron.

THE TERRIFIC BRONK AND THE AGILE ECKIE

NAGURSKI was the most terrific character in sheer smash and go football ever saw. He ran his own interference, as you might say, flattening everybody in the way. When he was at Minnesota coach "Fat" Spears was asked how he managed to get so many tough young men on his team.

"Well," he said, "every summer I drive through the farm country I stop and talk to boys working in the fields.

that he is not in action any more. He busted up too many rugged young men, because he was the most rugged of them all.

There was just one time Nagurski looked bad, and it was one of those shots in a thousand. The Green Bay Packers and Chicago Bears were playing, and that was as close to murder as you could get without knocking somebody off.

Clark Hinkle played fullback for the Packers, and Clark was as close to being a Nagurski as any other pro I ever saw. The Packers had the ball at midfield when Hinkle slanted off right tackle. A hole opened up, and he blazed through. But, up came Nagurski like a herd of thundering wild horses.

The Bronk hit the ball carrier . . . and that was like a ten ton truck hitting a cement wall. Hinkle seemed to anticipate what was going to happen. As the Bronk's shoulder hit him, and hurled him back at least five yards, Hinkle spun, churning his legs. When he landed on the turf, he kept running . . . right through that hole for a fifty yard gallop and a touchdown.

Stanley Frank, who worked with me on the old New York *Post* years ago, tells a story about the bruiser that is typical.

Some of his team-mates asked him how he managed to keep in such perfect condition for so many years.

"I plough," Nagurski said.

"Nuts," replied an unbeliever. "We have all ploughed at one time or another."

"Without horses?" asked Bronko Nagurski mildly.

If one of the physically biggest of the great stars was Nagurski, the smallest was Walter Eckersall. Football fans



I ask them where they live, and if they point with their hands I can't use them. If they point with the plough, then they have a chance to play on the same team with Nagurski."

This may sound like kidding, but it isn't. There just never was anyone like the Bronk. He was a tremendous back, and just as good a tackle. If he stood by himself at ball carrying, he was equally able on defense. His six feet two inches and 230 pounds were all muscle and dynamite. The pros probably feel happy

of today don't remember Eckie. He played with Chicago forty-seven years ago, and that is ten centuries so far as sporting memories go.

They didn't have the forward pass in Eckie's day, but the tiny Chicago quarterback could do everything else. Probably his best game was against Michigan. He was a senior then . . . that was in



1905 . . . and Fielding Yost's "point a minute team" was regarded as the greatest ever put together.

The battle was even because the Chicago line played over its head, and little Eckersall's punting matched that of the great Johnny Garrels. There was no score, but everyone expected Eckie and his boys to crack before the finish and let the Wolverines chalk up another of their expected victories.

They didn't. Late in the second half there was still no score. Chicago, however, was on its one yard line, and with Michigan hitting like fiends, a fumble might be expected, and a fumble would

mean the ball game.

Eckersall dropped back in punt formation. Little as he was, he had been in there from the beginning. He should have been worn out, but he wasn't. The defense spread, and Eckie didn't kick. Starting from behind his own goal line, he ran . . . twisting, turning, shaking off tacklers, and was not stopped until he reached midfield.

That about finished it. There wasn't much time to go, and it seemed certain the game would end in a tie. Bezdek hit the line a couple of times without being able to gain, and this time Eckersall had to punt.

He booted off a good one, against the wind, right down to the Michigan goal line. The safety man was a substitute named Clark. He saw the ball skittering toward pay dirt, and figured it was going to roll over. If it did, it would be brought out to the twenty yard line. That would be better than trying to run it from the few inches that separated it from the goal line.

At the last instant Clark saw that the ball was not going to roll over. He scooped it up. The instant he did, he was hit by two Chicago players, Speik and Catlin, and knocked across it, himself.

That meant a safety, and a 2-0 defeat for Michigan, the first the team had suffered under the coaching of Fielding Yost. The biggest gun in that triumph was 145 pound Walter Eckersall, who, even if he is forgotten by this modern generation, was one of the greatest quarterbacks of all time.

ARMY'S AMAZING RECORD IN 1944

IT MAY be there have been better college football teams than the 1944 Army squad, spearheaded by Doc Blanchard and Glenn Davis, but if scores mean anything, the outfit was in a class by itself.

A pretty good team from North Carolina opened the season, and were swarmed under 46-0. That was just a warmup. Davis and Blanchard, working behind a mighty line, were not yet heated up. Brown was next, and Brown went down 59-7.

The story began to get around that the cadets from West Point really had something. "Mr. Inside" (Blanchard) and Mr. "Outside" (Davis) were just getting under a head of steam.

The Panthers of Pittsburgh came in, and went home smarting under a 69-7 trimming. It was even worse for the Coast Guard Academy, which was ground into shreds 76-0. Then, Duke, with a really fine squad, went down to defeat 27-7.

When the soldiers played Villanova,

Coach Red Blaik did his best to keep the score down. He used substitutes frequently. The second half was cut from fifteen minute periods to ten, but Army won 83-0.

It was different, the unbelievers said, when Notre Dame came to town. Maybe the Irish weren't as good as they had been in the past, but they were rugged, and had been coached how to stop the mighty line thrusts of Doc Blanchard. As a matter of fact, Blanchard was used principally as a decoy that afternoon, while Davis and the other backs ran

wild. The answer? Army 59, Notre Dame 0.

There were only two games left, with the University of Pennsylvania and Navy, both of whom figured to offer tough opposition. Tough? Penn was kicked full of holes 62-7, while Navy, always at its best against its service rival, fell by 23-7. Count it up.

Strike an average, and you'll see that Army won nine straight games by an average score of 55-4 . . . and it will be a long time before another team matches that record.

NOTRE DAME PULLS A GAME OUT OF THE FIRE

THE GREATEST finish made in a football game? That's a tough one. There have been so many. But it seems to me that the one Notre Dame made against Ohio State in 1935 equalled any others, perhaps surpassed them all.

For three periods the Irish had been pushed all over the field by the mighty



men of Ohio State. They were trailing 13-0 when the last phase began, and there was no reason to believe the lead would be overcome.

What causes a team to find itself suddenly in the midst of mediocrity? What makes men, without any apparent reason, find the spark of inspiration? No one has ever had the answer to that . . . even though it has occurred so often.

Early in the period Notre Dame, rushing and passing, scored a touchdown,

but missed the conversion. Again, when they had possession of the ball, they again hammered to the one foot line. Miller fumbled, State recovered, and it looked as though the great chance had passed. Driven back by a fine punt, the Irish started all over again, with Pilney throwing one pass after the other, and a second touchdown resulted.

Again the point was missed . . . and Ohio State, with only a minute left, held a precious one point lead. That looked like enough. They had the ball . . . and sixty seconds left to go. It seemed as though one of the great potential finishes of all time was bound to peter out.

Halfback Beltz took the ball. Just straight running plays now. No passes. No chances. Just keep kicking those seconds away. But, the furious Irish were in there with jarring tackles. Beltz fumbled, and Notre Dame had the ball, but still forty two yards from the touchdown they wanted so much.

Pilney faked a pass to Milner, and went skittering around left end, shaking off one big tackler after the other until

(Concluded on page 129)

BEST SHOTGUN BUY!

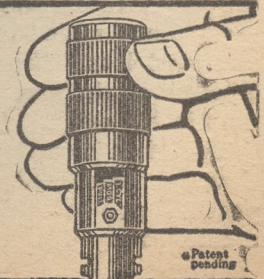


3-Shot Repeaters with C-LECT-CHOKE*

See them at your dealer's . . . Send for FREE catalog

Any choke desired, instantly, by twist of the fingers . . . 20 ga. Model 185K, only \$26.95 with choke (\$27.80 west of Rockies) . . . 16 ga. Model 190, only \$28.95 with choke (\$29.95 west of Rockies).

O. F. MOSSBERG & SONS, INC. • 2611 St. John St., New Haven 5, Conn.



*Patent pending

CHUMPS can't be CHAMPS



Wade swivel-hipped it to
the forty-five before he
was spilled

By H. C. BUTLER

Turning the terrible Vikings into a winning team is Big Ed Wade's worrisome problem, and those rookies don't help any!

BIG Ed Wade crashed through from his position at right guard and nailed the ball carrier for a two-yard loss. Then he got up slowly, wincing slightly at the aches and soreness in his body.

Trudging wearily back to his position, he wondered how much twelve years of pro football really took out of a man—and decided it was plenty.

Twelve years of bone-jarring play had left Ed Wade a shell of what he had once been.

Grunting a little, Wade crouched in the line and looked over the enemy backfield. This was a pre-season practice game, a warm-up drill for the real thing next week. Coach Hec Anson had divided the squad into two teams, and they'd been slugging it out for almost

an hour. Wade wondered impatiently when the whistle would blow and end the agony.

The next play started as a sweep, but didn't get far. Wade charged through the opposing line, escaped a block, and dived for the churning legs of Lou Gunner, the Vikings' ace halfback. He dropped Gunner to the earth with a thud that echoed in the empty stadium.

The two men got up together, and Gunner's face was twisted in anger. He was a big man, dark, with steel-gray eyes set too close together in his head. His face seemed to widen at the jaws, giving it a bulldoggish appearance. Now, his eyes, like cold steel balls in his head, flashed hatred at Wade.

"Don't you ever let down, wise guy?" he snapped. "This is just a practice game. Save those hard tackles for when it counts!"

Wade turned around and glared at Gunner. He was Gunner's size—a little heavier, in fact—weighing about 200 pounds stripped. His face was heavy-featured and square, and would have been handsome if it hadn't been for a lumpy nose that he'd broken in scrimmage two years before.

"I haven't learned how to let down yet, Gunner," he said easily, and walked away. But the exchange of words had sharpened Wade's thoughts. He found his mind racing back to the day he had first joined the Vikings, twelve years ago. . . .

He had been a glory boy in those days. With a brilliant college record behind him, he'd come up to the pro league and set it on fire. Weighing less than he did now, he had been a romping, rampaging halfback who scorched the gridiron grass when he ran.

YES, it was something. In his first year he gained more yardage than any of the veterans, and in his second he set a new league record for yards gained by rushing. The sports writers were generous, and the fans more so—and Wade became the glory boy of the

Vikings, the people's choice, the kid who could lug a pigskin like no other men had ever lugged it.

That had been more than a decade ago. He had hung onto his reputation for some time, but finally, as in all things that grow old, the luster began to rub off. Wade was the first to sense it. After eight years of big-time football, he had begun to slow up. He no longer ran with the same speed, or dodged tacklers with the same finesse. He was getting heavier and slower—and he was feeling it in his legs.

Funny, Wade thought, how you always feel it in the legs first. In the early days he'd been able to romp around a gridiron all afternoon, like a frisky colt, without feeling any weariness. Now it was a chore—a chore that left him with tired, aching legs, and the sore muscles of age.

In his ninth year the Vikings began to realize that Big Ed Wade was no longer the Wade of old—and they did something about it. Not wanting to lose his fight and competitive fire, they had shifted him into the line. At guard, they reasoned, he wouldn't have the need for as much speed. He had always been a deadly tackler—and playing in the line would preserve him for a few years more.

It had been a tough pill to swallow—this going into the line after being top man on the totem pole. But Wade had complied willingly. Despite the aches and pains the game gave him now, he still loved football with the passion of a young boy. It was one of the qualities he hadn't lost over those hard years. He still had team-spirit and fight, which was more than he could say for the rest of the Vikings.

Wade hated to think of it, but he had to face facts. The Vikings, in the past few years, had become lethargic. They had always been a good mechanical team, ending each season near the top. But they had lost the team-spirit and fighting qualities that had once made them champs. They seemed satisfied, now, to

end the race as runners-up, instead of finishing on top.

How it had come about, Wade wasn't quite sure. It had been gradual. Old players leaving, new ones coming in, had done the damage. They became a mechanical team, going through the motions like some electrically controlled robot. But there was no spirit in them—that little extra spirit that would have taken them to the top of the heap.

Then, last year, old Doc Cranbrook, the owner of the Vikings, had pulled the prize football boner of all time. In his desire to produce a championship team, he had opened wide his pocket-book and bought himself a new backfield. In a sense, it wasn't a new backfield—except to the Vikings. Cranbrook had picked up, from other teams, four tried-and-proven "name" players. Four topnotch backfield men who, it seemed to him, would be sure to help the Vikings' cause.

It was too bad, Wade thought. Not that he blamed Doc Cranbrook. The owner was sincerely trying to buy himself a good football team—and rather than take chances on rookies coming up, he had purchased players who had proved themselves. Players with names—Lou Gunner, Jock Langly, Barth Hegan and Bull Finnian—names that had set the football world on fire.

Only, Wade knew, they would kindle no flame for the Vikings. Twelve years of the pro game had endowed Wade with football sense that was second-nature to him, and as soon as he saw the new backfield of Gunner, Langly, Hegan and Finnian play, he had seen what was lacking.

For they were exactly like the rest of the Vikings! They were robots, going through the motions, living on their past reputations, dogging it! Doc Cranbrook's dollars had brought him four players who would add to the lethargy of the team, rather than snap them out of it!

It wasn't only a bad situation for the Vikings. It cut viciously across Wade's

personal ambitions too. He had been playing now for five years with a team that had never quite made the championship. And he had a burning ambition to play on one more title-winning club before he bowed out.

BOWING out was close at hand, too. Wade knew it. He didn't have enough left in him to take much more of the pounding punishment he had taken for twelve years. This was, very likely, his last season. So if he was to fulfill his ambition, the Vikings would have to cop the title this year. And the prospects didn't look bright.

Hec Anson's shrill blast on the whistle snapped Wade out of his reverie. With a sigh of relief, Wade trudged toward the runway that led to the locker room. He limped slightly from a blow he'd received on the knee, and his body was covered with a weird assortment of aches and pains. As he walked through the runway he felt the lump on his nose tenderly. It was a habit, feeling his nose, which he had acquired at the time he broke it in a frantic goal-line stand two years back.

Gunner, standing just inside the locker room, saw him. A lopsided grin spread over his face; then, contemptuously, he spat a stream of tobacco juice on the floor.

"You're gonna have more of them broken noses if you ain't careful, wise guy," he said heavily. "You been around a long time Wade, and you ain't got many good tackles left. Why waste 'em on a practice game?"

Wade spun around, reddening. He had never liked Gunner. The big full-back was a born trouble-maker.

"I've got plenty of tackles left," he said slowly.

"Yeah?" Gunner chewed his tobacco calculatingly. "I dunno. You been around twelve years. You ain't no glory boy, like you used to be. Just a broken down backfield man who can't stand the gaff."

Wade felt anger burn red-hot inside

of him. He had taken his switch from the backfield to the line gracefully, seeing the reason for it. But to have Gunner rub it in made him seethe.

"Look, Gunner," he said hotly. "Maybe I've slowed up. Maybe I'm not what I used to be. But there's one thing I've got that you lost a long time ago. That's fight. You don't know the meaning of the word any more, Gunner. You don't know what it *really* is to play football!"

"No?" A nasty grimace crossed Gunner's heavy-jowled face. "Maybe you're the only guy who thinks so. Maybe I play the game all right for Hec Anson—and maybe I play it all right for Cranbrook too."

"Maybe. But you don't play it well enough for me. If I was managing this team—" Wade stopped, feeling suddenly that he hadn't better say it.

"Yeah, go on," prodded Gunner. "If you was managing this team—what?"

Wade decided to give it to him—the thing he had been thinking about for a month.

"If I was managing this team," he said steadily, "I'd bench you and the whole Viking backfield. They're all lazy, and you're the worst. I'd take a chance starting our rookies in the opening game next week, instead of you guys. Mulligan, Terry and Wright—those kids would have fight anyway. They might not be as mechanically perfect, they might not have your smoothness. But they'd be in there fighting—and would probably end up doing as well as you guys could do!"

Wade felt suddenly better for having said it. The Vikings had gobbled up three promising backfield men, hot off college gridirons this year, and he had thought for a long time that the Vikings would be better off starting the rookies and building for the future than to hold onto men like Lou Gunner, who could only pull the team down.

He was a little surprised when Gunner didn't answer, but the big fullback's silence was explained a second later when Coach Hec Anson appeared. He

was a small, roly-poly man with an apple-shaped face and puffy cheeks that made him look like a well-fed banker instead of a football coach. He shook his head at Wade sadly.

"It might be interesting for you to know that you're not coaching this team," he said softly. "Step into my office, Wade—I'd like to talk to you."

WADE threw a glance at Gunner, saw a grin on the fullback's face, then turned and walked into Anson's office. Anson followed him in, waddling like a duck on his short legs.

Wade looked him over. Anson had come to the Vikings last year, along with Gunner and his crowd. He had been another of Cranbrook's investments in a good football team that hadn't panned out. Whereas Cranbrook believed him to be a tough, hardboiled coach who would make the boys play ball, he had turned out to be a guy with a weak, wavering personality that was always being swayed by Gunner's bluster. On more than one occasion Anson had sided with Gunner in an argument, simply because the big fullback had him bluffed.

"This is going to be brief," Anson said abruptly. "All I want to say is that I've noticed your antagonism toward Gunner and some of the other boys. I don't like it. Gunner's a name player, like you are—or were. He's good. He's playing on the same team with you, and you might as well get along with him. If you continue to disrupt the team, you're through around here."

Wade looked at Anson in sudden amazement.

"Disrupt the team? Why—"

"You're on your last legs, Wade. You know it and I know it. I haven't got much replacement in the line, so you're staying in there. However, if you continue to cause dissension on the team, I'll have to bench you. You understand?"

Wade's jaw went tight. He felt suddenly shaken, as though someone had

hit him a hard blow. The unjustness of Anson's words cut through him like a knife, but it told him just about where he stood with the Vikings, too. He held himself in, fighting to keep his words calm, as he said:

"I understand—a lot of things."

The following Sunday the Vikings opened the regular season against the Bears. Ed Wade went into the game with mixed emotions. He was angry at Hec Anson for his accusation that he was creating dissension on the team, and his morale was low because the rotund manager had told him he was almost through as a player.

So Wade entered the Bear game with a double purpose—to disprove both points by playing a bangup game and sparking the team to victory.

Wade's plan worked—for awhile. Alert and aggressive, he played like a demon in the line. Consistently he opened gaping holes in the Bear forward wall, to let Gunner and his cohorts romp through. In the first quarter the Vikings scored two touchdowns to make it 14-0, and both scores were set up by Wade's inspired play.

During that time Gunner said nothing to him, but the calculating manner in which he kept watching Wade meant one thing—he was waiting for Wade to do just one thing wrong. It happened in the second period.

It was a smash over guard by Gunner. Wade dove into the Bear line to open the hole, but this time he didn't. His foot slipped on the turf and he went down, with the Bear guard rising over him to stop the rampaging Gunner in his tracks.

Gunner got up slowly, a smirk on his heavy-jowled face.

"Where were *you*, wise guy?" he snapped at Wade.

Wade spun on him, face anger-filled.

"I've been opening holes for you all day!" he reminded Gunner, bluntly.

Gunner just shrugged, half lazily.

"You play like mad for one quarter, don'tcha?" he rapped back. "But after

that you bog down. Why don'tcha admit you're washed up and take up something easy, like checkers?"

Wade let the taunt roll off him, although it hurt. He went back into the line, face grim, determined to show Gunner some football. But luck had turned against him.

In the last minutes of the first half, it happened again. The Bears had the ball on their own thirty. With the minutes clicking away, they had taken to the air. Two long passes went bad, and Wade guessed the next play.

With the Viking defense spread, it would either be a smash at the line or a short pass over center. Wade saw the play get under way with Jargo, the passer, taking the ball from center. Jargo headed for the center of the line, then, pulling up short, he tossed a short pass over the line.

Wade had crashed partly through the Bear forward wall. He leaped as high as he could, trying to bat down the bullet pass—and it worked. The pig-skin hit his fingers, bounded to one side incomplete.

IT WAS a nice play, but Lou Gunner didn't think so. He bore down on Wade, steely eyes glinting.

"Smart boy, ain't you? Did you know that pass was headed right for me? And you bat it down!"

Wade felt hot resentment surge through him, but he didn't have time to reply. The Bears were lining up again, and he went back into the line seething with anger. He was still seething, a moment later, when the gun ended the half.

But Gunner's remarks on the field were nothing to what Wade received in the locker room. Hec Anson called him to one side, a frown on his roly-poly face.

"I see you and Gunner were chewing out there again, eh?" he said with meaning.

Gunner, hearing his name, lumbered up.

"The guy's washed up," he said bluntly. "He don't open no holes out there at all."

Wade clenched his fists at his side.

"I've been opening holes big enough to drive a truck through!" he shot back.

Gunner just ignored him, chewing methodically on his tobacco.

"And that pass he knocks down! Right in my hands for an interception!"

Wade felt hot blood race up his neck at the unjust accusation. But Hec Anson's voice cut him down before he had a chance to reply.

"I told you once before, Wade, that I wouldn't tolerate dissension on the team. I don't like bickering between players on the field. Since you and Gunner don't get along, I can do only one thing. You sit on the bench for the second half, Wade. Maybe you'll be sitting there from now on!"

Wade stood rigid, not quite believing it. Then the unfairness of it bore down on him. So after twelve years it was going to be like this! Because of a weak coach who chose to interpret everything wrongly, he was going to have to sit out the season so that lethargic guys like Gunner could play!

It was a sad commentary on the state of the Vikings, he thought. They would go on from here, playing football like mechanical robots, with no heart in it. And maybe, through sheer mechanical perfection, they would win some games. But they wouldn't win enough to finish on top. In the close games, the lack of spirit would show up.

Wade felt a feeling of despair slide through him as he took a place on the bench for the second half.

He watched with gloomy eyes, running his fingers over his broken nose exploringly, and it was just as he had thought. Gunner and his cohorts went through the motions, but there was no spirit, no drive. They didn't score any more points, while the Bears swept over for two touchdowns. It was only because the Bears messed up one conversion that the Vikings were able to escape with a

14-13 victory.

Time didn't improve Wade's chances. He spent the second game on the hard board bench too. It was a battle with the Rams, which the Vikings lost 6-0. From beginning to end it was a dull slug-ging match between the thirty-yard stripes, and Wade was certain the Vikings could have romped off with a victory if they had only had a fighting spirit. But they played like machines—machines with no hearts.

The third game was worse. Mostly because of a weak Lion defense, the Vikings piled up 20 points. But they lost 21-20, and Wade could see several instances where a little team spirit and drive would have meant victory instead of defeat.

Wade went into the locker room suffering physically from the defeat. Looking back over twelve years, he couldn't remember the time when his morale had been as low. He had just finished dressing when the locker room attendant plucked at his sleeve.

"You're wanted in the front office, Mr. Wade," he said.

Wade gulped. He started automatically for the office of Doc Cranbrook, his heart doing acrobatics in his chest. What now? Was this the end of the line? Had things gone so far that Cranbrook was going to give him his release? He felt sick inside at the thought of it.

CRANBROOK sat beside a highly-polished desk in the front office. He was a big man who looked like a business executive. Slightly bald, with graying hair above his ears, he wore rimless spectacles and a chilling smile. He motioned Wade to a chair.

"You've been with the Vikings for twelve years, haven't you, Wade?" he asked.

Wade nodded. He suspected there was an extra ounce of kindness in Cranbrook's voice. And he thought, this is the build-up. This is it.

"You must know the team very well—and you certainly know football." Cran-

brook steepled his fingers. "How would you like to try coaching the team?"

It was like an avalanche coming down on his head. Wade felt his heart do an agonizing jump. Coach the Vikings? It didn't sound believable. He fought for words a moment, finally muttering: "I'd like it a lot."

"As you know," Cranbrook said crisply, "I'm determined to have a winning team here. Frankly, I don't like the team's record this year, and I don't like the way it's being coached. One thing I'd like to make clear. I'm not attaching blame to anyone but myself. Last year I bought Gunner, Langly, Hegan and Finnian, because I figured they were proven players who would help us. I also bought up Hec Anson, because he appealed to me as an efficient man. I was wrong on all five of them!"

Wade sat there. He didn't know what to say, and Cranbrook saved him the trouble.

"I know a little about football," he went on, talking rapidly. "I can see that Gunner and the other three backs are not giving it all they've got. They're dogging it—playing like a bunch of chumps. And in my book—if you'll pardon a play on words—chumps can't be champs. Moreover, Anson is too weak to correct the situation. A good coach gets the best out of his men, and Anson isn't doing that."

"But—" Wade started to say something, forgot what, and stopped.

"That's where you come in, Wade," Cranbrook said. "You're the only fighting football player on the squad. You're in there all the time, giving it the old try. I like that." He made a sweeping gesture with his hand. "I'm giving Anson his walking papers tonight. I want you to take over the team, Wade. I'll be relying on you to make those guys play football!"

Wade couldn't find words at first. He mumbled some kind of thanks, but his mind was all mixed up. Cranbrook just nodded.

"And another thing, Wade," he said.

"You have some good games left in you yet. In order to spark this team and get them fighting, you might want to play yourself at times. So I'm signing you to a player-coach contract."

Wade felt his head spin. A player-coach contract! That was a first class rarity in pro football! A thing that happened only on occasion. The last one he could remember was when Dutch Clark coached and played for the Detroit Lions.

In a semi-daze, Wade signed his name to a legal-looking document and left Cranbrook's office. Going down the corridor, he wasn't sure whether he was happy or not.

Secretly, he had always hoped for a coaching job in football to finish off his playing days. But this particular coaching job was going to be the toughest in the league.

He was going to have to wake up a sleeping team and make it play football. That was always difficult. But worse than that, he was going to have to change the playing pattern of Gunner, Langly, Hegan and Finnian. How Gunner and his cohorts were going to respond to his orders was the key question.

Wade found out the following Sunday. By that time the news of Anson's release and Wade's promotion had broken across the sports pages. And when Wade strode into the locker room, Gunner showed immediate insubordination.

"Hi, coach!" he said acidly. "You gonna let me play today?"

Wade stopped in his tracks. He had expected something like this, and he was ready for it. He had decided the only way to handle Gunner and his crowd was to be tough—tougher than they were. He met Gunner's steel-ball eyes in a level gaze.

"Let's get one thing straight," he said curtly. "You're going to play on this team only if you get in there and fight. If you and the rest of your hotshot backfield refuse to fight, then we've got the rookies—Mulligan, Terry and Wright—who can replace you. Anyway,

there'll be changes made until this team starts winning. Now get out there and win a game for a change!"

HE STOOD there, waiting for a re-tort. But it didn't come. Gunner just grinned lopsidedly, spat tobacco, and turned away. Wade went into his office satisfied that he had won the first round. But he wasn't kidding himself. He knew the first round was always the easiest.

The second round took place on the field against the Jets. And Wade lost that one. He could see right after the kickoff that he was going to lose it, because Gunner and the other three backfield men were as listless as wet dish rags.

Whether it was a deliberate attempt at letting down, Wade didn't know. But he watched the Vikings plod through a spiritless first half that was as dismal as anything he had ever seen.

Gunner was going nowhere fast. He kept hitting the line, trying the ends, gaining a little but not nearly enough. And the defense lagged too. The tackling was ragged and there was no charge in the line.

Once, during the dreary showing, Wade chanced to glance at the three new rookies on the bench. Mulligan, Terry and Wright were all kids, fresh out of college, with the spirit of winning football still in them. And they were watching the game with a sort of tense agony at the showing of the Vikings. Wade knew how they were feeling.

Between halves, with the score 10-0, favor the Jets, Wade toyed with the idea of putting the kids, and himself, in the lineup. But he held back temporarily. He was going to give Gunner's crew all the opportunity he could to either right themselves or fade out of the picture.

They faded fast. The second half was equally dull, and when it was over the Vikings had lost 24-0.

It was a stunning defeat for Wade. He had coached his first game, and his team

had lost. But worse than that, in losing they had seemed less spirited than ever. They looked dejected and beaten—a team that couldn't come back.

Wade went to his apartment that night feeling low inside. He spent a week thinking over his problems, and he found that the picture of the three rookies sitting tense-faced on the bench kept coming back to him. And then, the morning of the game with the league-leading Bisons, he made his decision.

It was an important game, this one with the Bisons, which made it all the more a fantastic decision to make. Wade kept the entire team in the locker room until all were dressed. Then he stepped up on a bench and looked down at them.

"The lineup for this afternoon's game is going to be changed," he announced matter-of-factly. "I didn't like the way you played last week. You showed absolutely no fight, and I'd rather have a fighting team than a mechanically perfect one any day. So I'm taking out the men who don't want to fight, and I'm putting in those that do. That means Gunner, Langly, Hegan and Finnian are out today. In their places I'm putting our new rookies, Mulligan, Terry and Wright!"

Wade saw Gunner stop chewing his tobacco suddenly, and the big fullback's steely eyes narrowed.

"Mulligan, Terry, Wright—and who else?" he demanded.

"And myself!" said Wade evenly.

Gunner's heavy jaw set.

"You? In the backfield with the rooks?"

Wade nodded. His hand went to his lumpy nose, a trifle nervously.

"I used to be a backfield man, in case you don't remember," he said. "I figure even an old man with three rookie youngsters can do a better job than guys that don't have their heart in the game!"

Gunner made no answer to that, but the expression on his face belied his anger. As the team walked down the run-

way, Wade heard some muttering and covered-up conversation, but he had made up his mind. The three rookies, with his experience as ballast, couldn't do any worse than Gunner's gang had done the week before!

Wade lined up to receive the kickoff with a tingle of satisfaction surging through him—and he wondered at it. He felt almost the same as he had twelve years ago, when he'd played his first big-time game. It was a curious, nervous feeling that died away at the instant the Bisons kicked off.

THE ball came in a gentle arc straight for Wade's arms. He gathered it in, crossed diagonally toward the sidelines, letting his interference form ahead of him. His interference took him to the thirty, where he lost it. He swivel-hipped it to the forty-five before he was spilled. Nice start for an old man, he thought.

They went into a quick huddle, pounded out of it to their positions—and Wade felt a sudden thrill at the spirit these rookies showed. Mulligan's blue eyes were glinting, Terry's fine lips were drawn grimly, and Wright kept slapping everyone on the back. They were eager, ready to go. This was their big chance, and they weren't going to muff it.

They didn't. Mulligan took the oval on a reverse for eight yards. Terry made it first down on the Bison 40. Wright threaded a needle with a pass that got seven more and then Wade tried it, on an off-tackle slant. Two rookie backfield men slammed through the line ahead of him, tumbled the Bison secondary like tenpins—and Wade was away for a touchdown!

The kick was good to make it 7-0, with the game only a few minutes old!

When they lined up for the kickoff again, the kids were talking it up. They were full of the old college try that Gunner and his bunch had lost so long ago.

Wade found it was a pleasure playing with these men. They infected the en-

tire team, so that the line showed spirit too. And Wade, running the ball for the first time in several years, was having the time of his life.

His legs were old and they tired easily, and his bones ached from the jarring contact of the game, but he found himself loving it as he had twelve years ago. And he brushed the weariness away and kept running the oval.

By the end of the first quarter, they had scored 14 points!

As the teams changed sides Wade walked over to the bench. Gunner's steely gray eyes drifted up to him.

"Fourteen points!" he scoffed. "We could have doubled that!"

Wade looked at him, rubbing his nose as he did so.

"I'm willing to bet on that," he said levelly. "Go on in and try it next quarter."

He made the changes then, ordering the rookies out and Gunner, Langly, Hegan and Finnian into the Viking backfield. Then he watched tensely from the bench.

It was something to watch. Four minutes after the period started, Gunner got the ball on the Viking fourteen. From there he started to roll. He took ten on a line plunge, hit tackle for seven more. Finnian took it over guard for fourteen, and a pass Langly to Hegan, made twenty.

And before many minutes were gone, Gunner was lugging the pigskin over from the three-yard stripe for another score. The point was wide, making the score 20-0!

Wade wondered about it—and hoped. He couldn't be sure from the bench, but he thought he saw a little extra spirit in that drive down the field. A little more than sheer mechanical play—a little of the something Gunner and his gang had lacked before. But he wasn't sure.

He became less sure as the period wore on, because after that first splurge they failed to go anywhere. In fact, the Bisons, fighting bitterly to come from

behind, uncorked a long pass in the closing minutes of the half to give them their first TD. The conversion, splitting the uprights, made it Vikings 20, Bisons 7 as the half ended.

Between halves, Wade caught Gunner to one side. "What was wrong, chum?" he needed. "You guys didn't score as much as the rookies did. You letting them show you up?"

Gunner looked darkly defiant.

"Don't go comparin' those rookies with us!" he snarled.

"I am, though. They scored fourteen points, you scored six. They held the Bisons to nothing, you let them score. It looks to me like I'd better go along with the rookies. They'll start the second half, Gunner." He walked away, then, knowing that he was leaving Gunner in a seething rage.

WADE went into the lineup with the rookies in the second half, and it felt good. The second period layoff had helped him, and he didn't feel as tired as before.

They started off as they had in the first quarter, full of spirit and drive. They lugged the ball from their own twenty to the Bison three—and then got a bad break. A fumble on the Bison three was recovered by the Bison center, and that stopped the threat.

Later in the third period they got a similar break when a bad pass from center lost them the ball on the Bison six. Wade shrugged it off grimly. It was one of those things. The kids were playing their hearts out, they were full of fight, but this period they just weren't getting the breaks. And then the breaks came—for the Bisons.

Two recovered fumbles, a few quick passes that struck like lightning, and the Bisons had scored two quick touchdowns! What was worse, they converted the points to make the score Bisons 21, Vikings 20 as the third quarter ended!

It was a shattering blow. The game had been sewed up, until those two quick, lucky scores—and now the whole com-

plexion of the game had changed. And when Wade passed the bench as the sides changed, Gunner made the most of it. "You're tossin' this game away with those rooks!" he said. "If you wanta win this, put us back in there!"

Wade thought he saw a determination in Gunner's steel eyes he hadn't seen before. "That's the kind of talk I like to hear," he said. "Can you pull it out of the fire?"

"Try us!" said Gunner curtly.

Wade tried them. And Gunner and his gang went into the game with more eagerness than Wade had seen in a long time. In fact, they were over-eager, because Langly fumbled on his own fifteen and the Bisons recovered!

It was a break and the Bisons took advantage of it. A line plunge took them all the way on the first try, and the conversion made it Bisons 28, Vikings 20!

And then the roof fell in. On the kick-off Langly got smashed down and didn't get up. Wade felt a cold chill go through him as they carried Langly off with a broken leg!

It meant one thing. Someone would have to sub for Langly. Either one of the rookies—or himself! Wade hesitated only a second, then he grabbed his helmet and ran out on the field.

Gunner looked at him dully, face sober. "You and me together, eh?" he said. "Take the first one," Wade clipped. "I'll block."

Gunner looked uncertain as they got into position. It was a smash over tackle. The hole opened and Wade tore through, took out the opposing halfback with a vicious block and Gunner went clear to midfield. Back in the huddle Gunner looked at him with steel eyes.

"Nice block, Wade," he said.

"I'll take it this time," Wade answered. "Number nine."

Number nine worked. Gunner smacked down two would-be tacklers and Wade raced on aching legs to the Bison thirty.

From there it was easy. Gunner first, Wade next, pounding, slashing, driving. It was Gunner who took it over from the

nine yard stripe, with Wade knocking the safety man out of there. The extra point made it Bisons 28, Vikings 27.

Gunner grinned at Wade.

"Can we do it?" he asked.

"Let's go," said Wade.

They went. There were three minutes left when the Vikings got the ball again on their own thirty-five. Wade hit the line twice for eleven yards each, and after the second smash he got up slowly. His legs felt numb under him, and his body ached from the bruises covering it.

But he couldn't stop now. Not now!

He took two men out of the play on the next one, with Gunner slanting off tackle. And on the next play he felt like his body was going to fly apart as he dropped a mean block on the Bison linebacker, with Finnian making nine yards behind him.

THEY drove forward, relentlessly, as the clock ticked away. And finally they had it on the Bison 20, with less than a minute to go!

"Take it, coach," said Gunner gruffly. "I'll knock them guys over for you!"

Wade nodded. Take it, he'd said. Run with it. Run with it even if your legs were falling off.

He took it. He ran. He saw Gunner toss a block at the quarter, and he slipped by for eleven yards to put it on the Bison nine. Thirty seconds to go!

"You this time, Gunner," Wade said.

Gunner tried it. Wade tore into the line, joints aching at the contact. He blocked a man out of there as he went down, and Gunner stumbled to the four.

The clock kept ticking. Less than ten seconds remaining! Time for one more play! They were off to the side in no position for a field goal.

"It's this time or never!" said Wade. "Take it, Gunner!"

Wade saw Gunner's eyes drift up to him. "Is that an order, coach? You deserve the touchdown yourself."

Wade took the honor. He waited for the ball. It spiraled back. Wade grabbed it, started forward. He hit the line and

hardly knew it, because of the numbness in his legs. Arms were sliding off him as he ripped through, and Gunner was taking out three men at one time with the most terrific block he had ever seen.

He went over standing up and it was 33-28! They missed the point, but they didn't care. It was a sweet victory they carried back to the locker room.

Doc Cranbrook, the owner, came down, and when the shouting was over, he pulled Wade aside. His voice was business-like, but his smile softened it.

"A great game, Wade!" he said. "You had those boys fighting out there! I could tell it." A sly look spread over his face. "I think your idea of using the rookies was a neat bit of psychology."

Wade grinned, rubbed at his nose. "I did a lot of thinking last week," he said. "And I finally figured out that if I benched Gunner and his bunch, and put the rookies in, it might make them mad enough to fight when I put them in later. So I hit on the plan of playing the rookies first, and then alternating the backfields each period. I figured it would get them in the mood to try to outdo each other, and it did."

Wade didn't see the big form of Gunner loom next to him until the big fullback spoke.

"I've got some apologizing to do, I guess," he said. "Me and the boys were dogging it a little. I know that now. We were plenty sore when you took us out of the lineup, and we decided right on the bench that if we got into the game we were going to show you something." He grinned sheepishly. "For my part of it, I relearned a lesson. I found out what I'd forgotten—that the only way to get a thrill out of football is to keep fighting. I'm playing it that way from now on."

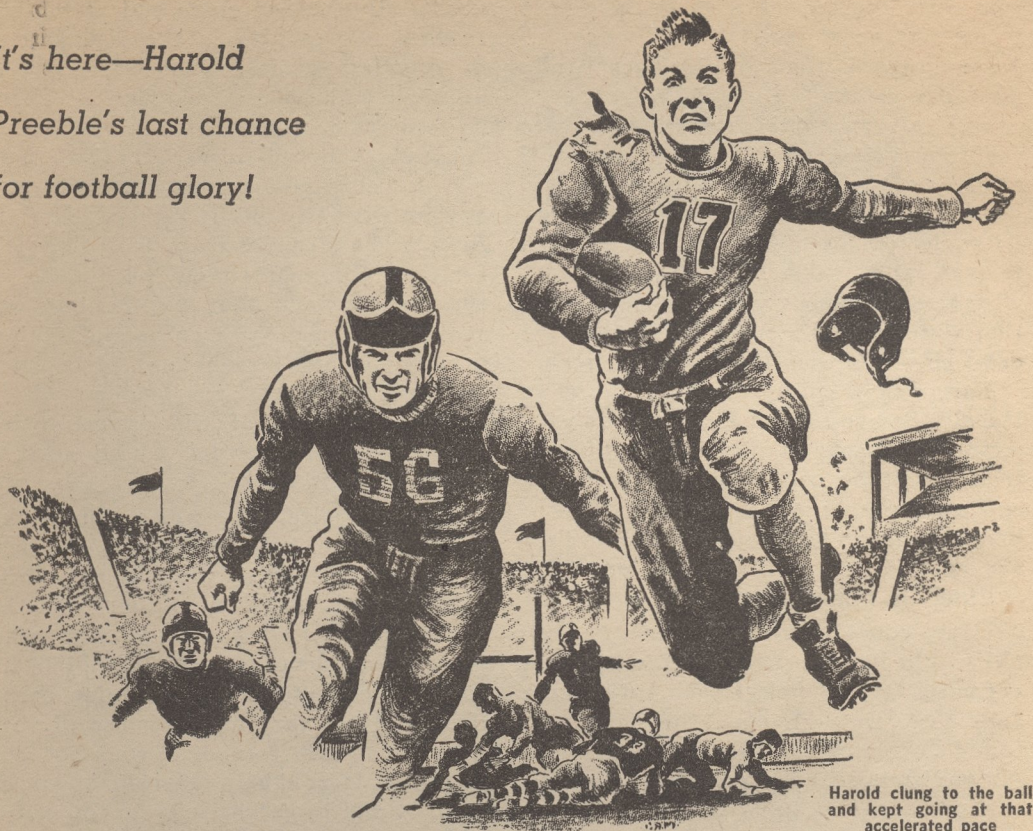
Wade grinned. He was feeling very good inside. And why not? He had two good backfields now, instead of none at all, so from here on in how could they lose? He knew, now, that he was going to realize his ambition to be with a championship team, all right.

He would be managing it!

It's here—Harold

Preeble's last chance

for football glory!



Harold clung to the ball and kept going at that accelerated pace

THE GREAT MOMENT

By HARRISON HENDRYX

AS THEY carried Regasi from the field on a stretcher, Harold Peebles sat forward eagerly on the bench and tried to catch the eye of Tanner, the "Old Man."

Maybe now, he thought. Maybe he'll pass over Malone.

In his mind he was already hearing the coach bark, "Peebles!" He was already visualizing the way he would grab a headguard and race onto the field, with the fans checking his number "68" in their programs, murmuring, "Peebles." Those comparatively few among them who knew him would say, "Yes, a good

man, Peebles. Surprisingly good, really, despite the fact he's never appeared in a game before. One of those things, you know. Just never did get the nod. Fate, I guess you'd call it."

He could see himself cracking that impregnable Northern line then, or rather shifting through it with characteristic mind-over-muscle finesse, succeeding where Regasi and McClennan and the others had failed. And then that greatest moment of all when the voice of the P.A. system would blare his name to the far corners of the stadium: "Number Sixty-eight—that was Peebles

who just scored; Harold Peebles who made that great run."

He guessed that would show Julie Jane Appenbury a thing or two.

So I've been wasting my time out here for four years, have I? Four years of sweat and lumps, futilely beating my head against a wall, and for what? Well, listen to 'em yell! Yay Peebles! Listen to that loudspeaker, Julie Jane! That's what! And now how do you feel about that time wasted? It's a little different now, eh—now that I'm a raving hero?

This mental mirage was so strong in Harold, had so moved him with its glittering prospects of glory, that without realizing it he had come off the bench and was prancing toward the row of helmets on the grass before Coach Tanner, lifting his legs high in warm-up, flailing his arms as he went.

"Hey, you—Peebles! Siddown!" Harold would have recognized the unpleasant voice of Backfield Coach Bull Buhle anywhere, through even the most profound of muses. "Since when does Malone sound like Peebles?"

It arrested Harold's warm-up in mid flail. He returned slowly to his spot on the bench, crushed. Of course, he thought, it would be Malone. Malone was third-string quarterback, whereas he was fourth due to Hinkleman's being declared ineligible last week. Fourth, fifth, or whatever you chose to call it, he was the end of the line, the last resort, as it were, since after him there were no more.

IN THE other hand, with Brown forced out of it by a bad shoulder and Regasi prone on a stretcher, it occurred to him that he was second now only to Malone. The thought rekindled his excitement. If something would just befall Malone now—something trivial, such as a broken leg or like injury—why, the throne spot would be his at last.

It would have to happen fast, though, he realized with an anxious glance at the clock on the scoreboard, for there

were only three minutes and thirty-five seconds left to play in the last quarter of this last game of the year. Three minutes and thirty seconds . . . Three minutes and twenty-five . . .

Harold hunched forward on the bench, his slightly myopic eyes narrowed and a gleam with an unholy, feverish kind of light as he strained them to follow the fortunes (or misfortunes, he hoped) of the number "17" that was Malone out there. The game was of secondary importance to him now, though he was not unaware of the scoreless deadlock which still existed nor of the opportunities for last-minute heroics which such a deadlock kept alive.

A sandy-haired sliver of a man of the studious type, his personality was perhaps best typified by the fact that none of his associates had ever shortened the Harold to "Hal" or any similar and more manageable handle. The Peebles he could do nothing about, of course, other than to curse the curious whim of that one among his forebears who had attached it. Harold being Harold, however, saw nothing of eccentricity in the name, as might be imagined from this consuming desire of his to spread it liberally amongst the cash customers via his prowess in action and the P.A. system.

"If only Malone were of a more destructible nature . . ." he muttered now, watching the slim but sturdy-legged frame of the third-string quarterback bounce springily from the ground after a pile-up, his jersey already torn half away from one shoulder to expose the pad beneath.

Harold had not always been the vulgure he appeared at the moment. In fact, though there had ever lurked within him the dream of one day getting into a game and racing wild over the yard lines to cover himself with glory, he had been as good a team man as the next up until Regasi's abrupt and horizontal departure from the scene. And this, climaxing a combination of circumstances which had eliminated three of the four quarterbacks who had stood

between him and the fulfillment of his dream—or anyway that part of it which would finally let him see action, whether glorious or not—had proven just too much for Harold. With Malone the only barrier left in his path, Harold sat the bench like a vulture on a dead limb, watching, waiting, hoping the man would somehow fall.

He saw him get up from beneath another pile, and more of his shoulder pad was visible now. He hadn't sprung up so quickly on that one, Harold thought. Had he staggered a step then?

"Peebles!"

Harold stood up and sat down again, confident he couldn't have heard aright. He glanced out at the field and did not see Malone in his accustomed spot in the huddle.

He thought he could glimpse him doubled over there in the middle of the ring of players.

Malone must have been hurt on that play, all right—must have suffered some sort of delayed reaction, Harold thought. Yes, time was out. And there was McClennan, the captain and left halfback, standing with an official on the sideline over before the Old Man's place at the head of the bench, no doubt requesting a substitution for Malone.

"Peebles!" the call came down again, and Harold, still in an unbelieving daze, fairly bounded from the bench.

He saw Coach Tanner beckoning impatiently now, waving him toward McClennan on the field. Harold began his warm-up antics again, paused to gather up a six and seven-eighths helmet, then raced after McClennan and the official who were already moving back toward the huddle.

"Take it easy," McClennan said and grinned a trifle. "You won't need that helmet."

"No?" Harold said. "No, of course not." He forced a return grin, realizing the big captain was just trying to ease the tension for him. "I might as well use it anyway, now I've got it. For the sake of conformity, you know."

HE CHUCKLED aloud—it came out as more a high-pitched cackle, though Harold wasn't aware of it—and he tightened the headguard strap. Tension? That would show them how much tension was in him. He could laugh. The first appearance of his career, and in the closing, crucial moments of the season's big game, and he could laugh.

You see that, Julie Jane. Like a veteran. The big moment, and he laughs. Hah! Why, this is easy. I was born for this.

As they neared the huddle now, the feeling of importance in Harold was a swelling thing difficult to contain. He would get right in there and spark them, start a drive, carry them through this stubborn Northern outfit. He would—

"You don't seem to understand," McClennan was saying. "I'm sorry, Peebles, but—well, you and Malone are about of a size."

"Size doesn't make the man," Peebles broke in platitudinously, with a determined jut of his chin.

"I know but—" McClennan threw up his hands, "but they don't have any spare jerseys on the bench to fit you guys with clothes-pin builds, so we got to have yours. Malone's got to have it, you understand? He's got to have your shirt. His is ripped half off him."

"My—my shirt?" Harold said, his voice between a croak and a whisper, and everything that had been building in him since he'd popped off the bench drained out again in one swooshing instant of time. "Oh," he said, and it was pitiful, like a moan.

"Get inside the huddle there and change with him," McClennan said.

Harold did as he was told, got down on his knees in the huddle opposite Malone and changed shirts with him. He didn't say anything; he couldn't have if he'd tried. His throat felt as if somebody had just garroted him with an old rusty piece of wire—barbed wire.

He tucked the torn shirt under the collar of his shoulder pads as best he

could and trotted back to the bench then. He kept his head up with a will, his shoulders back. He took off his headguard and dropped it where it belonged, conscious of the grins along the bench, and sat down. Then he was aware that the fans were giving him a hand. And there was no laughter.

It occurred to him then that he and Malone looked something alike, were "about of a size," as McClennan had said, and that most of the fans, unable to see what had taken place because of the screening huddle, had simply regarded it as a normal substitution. Number "68" for number "17." Peebles for Malone.

"Well, my shirt got into it, anyway," he thought sardonically. "The good old sixty-eight that I had such hopes for. Maybe Malone can win it some bouquets." Harold glanced at the clock. "He's got a little better than a minute left to do it in."

But Malone couldn't and didn't. In fact, on the second play thereafter he fumbled the ball and Northern recovered.

Harold sat back on the bench and let the breath go out of him in a weary, ragged sigh. There went his last chance for even a bit of second-hand renown.

You were right, of course, Julie Jane. I was just beating my head against the wall all the while. I never had a fool's chance. Never. Ever. Though it's taken me till now to see it. Me, the guy who would give them the shirt off my back, and did. Or didn't you see that? Oh, quite a business it was. No, not you, they said—your shirt. But the shirt was really no better than the man, it turned out.

"Well, all right—Peebles!" he heard Coach Tanner growl. "Anybody! Anybody who can hold a ball!"

And Harold knew then what it was. The Old Man could tolerate anything but a fumble, and the man who fumbled came out, always. Malone was already on his way, and there was only poor Harold Peebles to replace him.

IT WAS merely a gesture now, of course. An adherence to policy you might say. And, as Tanner had called it, anybody would do. Even Peebles. For with but fifty-three seconds of ball game left, Northern would have time for only two or three more plays at most.

Harold did not leap from the bench now, but came off it in a deliberate manner. Northern had called time, anyway, to formulate their strategy for these closing seconds, and Harold could feel little of the frenzied excitement that had gripped him such a short time before.

"Tell Mac he's to trade defensive posts with you," Coach Tanner said. "He'll play safety; you'll cover the left halfback zone. And if we just should happen to get the ball again, McClennan is to call the signals. You got that?"

Harold nodded calmly. He turned then, picked up a headguard, and trotted out there. The Old Man had certainly made it clear that he didn't want any sad-apple ballplayer by the name of Peebles messing things up at this late stage, Harold thought with a touch of anger.

Well, hang onto your bench, Coach, because anything can happen with Peebles the Putrid out here now. And the way I feel, I don't much care if it does.

Northern came with an unbalanced line to the left which, from the defensive team's standpoint, was to the right and on the side away from Harold. They threw everything and every man to the strong side, and Harold swung over to do what he could, but it was Gray, the right half, who stopped the play after twelve yards with a jolting tackle.

A good gain, ordinarily, but with the time on the scoreboard clock fast running out, it wasn't enough. They still had thirty-seven yards to go till pay dirt and would have to take it in much larger than twelve-yard chunks to break this scoreless tie. There was, in fact, probably time enough for only one more play.

Moving back to position, Harold felt the torn jersey slide down over one shoulder pad, exposing it and cramping somewhat the movement of his right arm, and with his left hand he jerked it up and tucked it beneath the collar of the pads again.

Then Northern was over the ball in that same unbalanced formation. The ball went back and once more, to a man, they swung toward the strong side. Harold started to suck over again, then abruptly turned and beat it back toward his own deserted territory. Call it intuition, a hunch, the word of a little bird, or whatever, in plain language Harold smelled a rat.

He acted none too soon, as it happened, for the Northern man who suddenly detached himself from the mob swinging the other way was a speed merchant of the very first water. He ran like a man who'd been eating bluegrass since he was foaled—bluegrass instead of Krispy-Krunchies for breakfast; bluegrass for lunch, for dinner—and he almost ran fast enough.

Harold Peebles was the difference. Harold beat him to the pass that shot swiftly crossfield, knocking it into the air enough so that the Northern speedster could only brush it with his fingertips as he hurtled past, digging divots from the grass with each step as he frantically tried to brake his speed.

Harold pursued the ball, bunted it with one shoulder, got his hands on it,

[Turn page]

WHAT ALL AUTO MECHANICS WANT TO KNOW

1800
PAGES



This Big Practical Book gives full information with working diagrams covering the principles, construction, ignition, service and repair of modern cars, trucks and buses.

Diesel Engines, Hydramatic & Fluid Drives Fully Explained.

A complete Guide of 1800 pages, with over 1500 illustrations showing inside views of working parts, with instructions for service jobs.

IT PAYS TO KNOW

How to fit pistons—How to locate engine knocks, How to fit connecting

rod bearings—How to service main bearings—How to recondition valves—How to

time valves—How to adjust fan belts—How to adjust carburetors and chokes, How

to rebuild a clutch—How to service automatic transmissions—How to service brakes—How to adjust steering gear—How to cope with ignition troubles—How to service distributors—How to time ignition—How to "tune up" an engine.

\$4 COMPLETE - PAY \$1 A MO.
TO GET THIS ASSISTANCE FOR YOURSELF SIMPLY FILL IN AND MAIL COUPON TODAY.



AUDELS, Publishers, 49 West 23rd St., New York 10, N. Y.
Mail AUDELS AUTO MECHANICS GUIDE (\$4) for free examination. If O. K., I will send you \$1 in 7 days; then remit \$1 monthly until \$4 is paid. Otherwise, I will return book promptly.


Name _____
Address _____
Occupation _____
Employed by _____

Free for Asthma

If you suffer with attacks of Asthma and choke and gasp for breath, if restful sleep is difficult because of the struggle to breathe, don't fail to send at once to the Frontier Asthma Company for a FREE trial of the FRONTIER ASTHMA MEDICINE, a preparation for temporary symptomatic relief of paroxysms of Bronchial Asthma. No matter where you live or whether you have faith in any medicine under the sun, send today for this free trial. It will cost you nothing.

FRONTIER ASTHMA Co. 789-D FRONTIER BLDG.
462 NIAGARA ST. BUFFALO 1, N. Y.

Start Full or Spare Time Business at Home



METALIZE BABY SHOES for BIG STEADY PROFITS

No waiting. Cash can start coming in very first day. Money making WARNER SUCCESS PLAN shows every step. Learn quickly, easily without previous training or experience. Plan backed by old established company. Your home is your headquarters. This is too good to pass up since facts cost nothing - now or ever. Don't wait. Send name and address on postcard today to Ray Brandell, Mgr.

WARNER ELECTRIC CO.,
1512 Jarvis Avenue Dept. 24-T

FREE OFFER

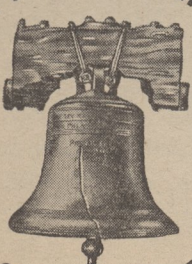
of COMPLETE Money Making Success Plan

We show you how to start—how to get orders rolling in...how to do the work; how to pyramid your profits.

Send No Money
Just your name and address on Postcard.

Chicago 26, Illinois

SAVE FOR YOUR INDEPENDENCE



BUY U.S. SAVINGS BONDS



TOOTHACHE?

Quick relief with Dent's. Use Dent's Tooth Gum or Dent's Tooth Drops for cavity toothaches. Use Dent's Dental Poultrice for pain or soreness in gums or teeth. At all drug stores.

"Since 1888"

DENT'S

TOOTH GUM
TOOTH DROPS
DENTAL POULTICE

FREE—Amazing Book on RHEUMATISM, ARTHRITIS

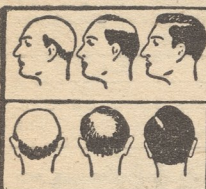
If you suffer the aches, pains and discomforts of Rheumatism, as manifested in ARTHRITIS, NEURITIS, SCIATICA or LUMBAGO, send today for the FREE Book. It reveals important facts about why drugs and medicine give only temporary relief without removing causes. Explains fully a proven, specialized system of treatment that may save you years of distress. No obligation. Write for this FREE Book today!

BALL CLINIC, Dept. 504, Excelsior Springs, Mo.

"How to Make Money with Simple Cartoons"

A book everyone who likes to draw should have. It is free; no obligation. Simply address **FREE BOOK**

CARTOONISTS' EXCHANGE
Dept. 711 Pleasant Hill, Ohio



For bald-headed and thin-haired.

We can help you obtain the world-renowned COMOS HAIRBALSAM. On receipt of your request, we will send you with pleasure all particulars, fully free.

COMOS MAGAZINE, Box 335
Copenhagen — V., Denmark 8, Europe

OLD LEG SORES

Easy to use Viscose Home Method. Heals many old leg sores caused by leg congestion, varicose veins, swollen legs and injuries or no cost for trial if it fails to show results in 10 days. Describe your trouble and get a FREE BOOK.

T.G. VISCOSE COMPANY
140 North Dearborn Street Chicago 2, Illinois

PRAYER IS A TREMENDOUS MIGHTY POWER!

Are you facing difficult problems. Money Troubles? Family Troubles? Poor Health? Drink? Unhappiness of any kind? If you are, and if you believe in the POWER of PRAYER, we invite you to clip this MESSAGE now and mail with 10c stamps or coin so we can rush FULL INFORMATION to you by AIR MAIL about our remarkable NEW WAY of Meeting Life's Problems through PRAYER.

Life-Study Fellowship, Box 6011, Noroton, Conn.

RUPTURED?

Get Relief This Proven Way

Why try to worry along with trusses that gouge your flesh—press heavily on hips and spine—enlarge opening—fail to hold rupture? You need the Cluthe. No leg-straps or cutting belts. Automatic adjustable pad holds at real opening—follows every body movement with instant increased support in case of strain. Cannot slip whether at work or play. Light. Waterproof. Can be worn in bath. Send for amazing FREE book, "Advice To Ruptured," and details of liberal truthful 60-day trial offer. Also endorsements from grateful users in your neighborhood. Write:

Cluthe Sons, Dept. 33, Bloomfield, New Jersey

bobbled it, and finally clutched it to him when it had dropped to the neighborhood of his shanks. These juggling activities had all been performed on the dead gallop, and now that Harold held the ball securely at last, he had enough presence of mind to keep going at that same accelerated pace.

The bulk of the Northern team was hopelessly out of it, of course, the interception of that pass wide in the flat leaving Harold with some sixty odd yards of naked grass between himself and the desired goal line. But there was behind him a man who could run, as has been suggested, like he should have been equipped with a saddle and jockey...

HAROLD whisked over the midfield stripe, trampled beneath his churning cleats the forty, the thirty, the twenty-yard lines, drinking in the sweet shrieking bedlam of sound that came down from all sides. He heard the gun which meant the game would be over upon the completion of this play as he passed the ten, and then heard another sound behind him, or sensed that he did, and remembered the Old Man's antipathy to fumbles, hugged the ball with both arms.

It was as well he did, for when the fleet Northern man hit him an instant later, Harold became air-borne. The world canted at a crazy angle and he flew over it for a number of yards, looking down as though seeking a place to land, before crashing in a skidding, teeth-rattling heap in the end zone, his nose digging a long, narrow furrow in the earth.

Harold got to his feet and brushed particles of soil from his nose. He pulled the torn jersey back into place, fondled the ball that was still firmly in his possession, and listened to the almost horrendous din his timely touchdown run had created. And then as full realization of the feat hit him, he grinned.

Well, this is it, Julie Jane. Like I always dreamed it would be. Listen to

'em holler! Just listen to 'em! And what do you say now, you coaches? You still think Peebles can't play? Wait'll that loudspeaker informs one and all it was Peebles. That's what I want to hear. That'll be the moment. I'll have had it then—all there is.

The voice of the public-address amplifiers cut through and over the sounds of the crowd: "Number Seventeen—that was Malone who just scored. Hank Malone, a sophomore, from Brooklyn, New York."

Harold just stood there, too shocked by the announcement to think clearly. Then he remembered the torn jersey, of how he'd changed with Malone, and how later, when he had gone into the game with the jersey held in place by his simple measure of tucking the torn flap beneath the collar of his shoulder pads, no one had even thought of it.

"No!" he protested finally. "I'm Peebles! Not Malone! Peebles! Harold
[Turn page]

Contribute to Your Local COMMUNITY CHEST

Give



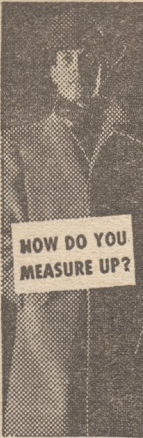
enough!

FOR ALL
RED FEATHER SERVICES

**PROMOTE HEALTH, WELFARE
and RECREATION!**

FIND OUT FREE!

**HAVE YOU
GOT WHAT
IT TAKES?**



SUCCESS
HOME
STUDY
WILL TO
WIN
CHAR-
ACTER
HEALTH

HOW DO YOU
MEASURE UP?

...to become a
**CRIMINAL INVESTIGATOR
FINGER PRINT EXPERT?**

FREE BOOKLET OFFER

Everything to gain...nothing to lose. The famous, fascinating **BLUE BOOK OF CRIME** will give you examples of "what it takes" to track down outlaws and thieves. Read this exciting story of the triumph and battle of law and order against crime. **THEN** decide for yourself if you have what it takes for exciting, steady, "good pay" work. **OUR GRADUATES ARE KEY MEN** in more than 800 Identification Bureaus. Institute of Applied Science has been teaching finger print and firearms identification, police photography and criminal investigation for more than 80 years. No obligation. No salesman will call.

GET THE FACTS... FREE! Mail Coupon Today!

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE, Dept. 7968
1920 Sunnyside Ave., Chicago 40, Ill.
(A Correspondence School Since 1916)
Gentlemen: Without obligation or expense to me, send me the famous "Blue Book of Crime" absolutely free.

Name _____
Address _____ RFD or Zone _____
City _____ State _____ Age _____
You must state your age.

Learn BAKING At Home

Baking is one of America's high industries in wages. Nearly depression-proof. Thorough basic home course lays sound foundation. If you have aptitude, write for **FREE BOOKLET, "Opportunities in Commercial Baking."**

National Baking School, 1315 Mich. Ave., Dept. 1808, Chicago 5



AMAZING OFFER — \$40 IS YOURS

for selling only 50 boxes of Christmas Cards. And this can be done in a single day. Free samples. Other leading boxes on approval. Many surprise items. Write today. It costs nothing to try.

CHEERFUL CARD CO., Dept. AM-12, White Plains, N. Y.


**FREE SAMPLES
PERSONALIZED
CHRISTMAS
CARDS
STATIONERY
NAPKINS**

MAKE MORE MONEY

Taking Orders For The NIMROD Line

Earn more money every day in the year representing an old established firm with complete line of fast selling necessities: Shirts of all kinds, Ties, Underwear, Hosiery, Jackets, Sweaters, Pants, Shoes, Uniforms, etc. Every item guaranteed. Experience unnecessary. Write Quick for **FREE Sales Equipment.**

NIMROD COMPANY
4922-ED, LINCOLN AVE., CHICAGO 25, ILL.




BE A Nurse

MAKE \$35-\$45 A WEEK

Practical nurses are needed in every community...doctors rely on them...patients appreciate their cheerful, expert care. You can learn practical nursing at home in spare time. Course endorsed by physicians. 51st yr. Earn while learning. High School not required. Men, women, 18 to 60. Trial plan. Write now

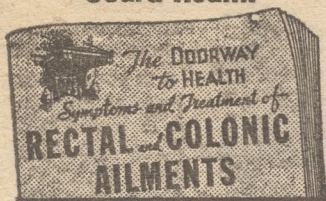
CHICAGO SCHOOL OF NURSING
Dept. 4211, 41 East Pearson Street, Chicago 11, Ill.
Please send free booklet, and 16 sample lesson pages.

Name _____
City _____ State _____ Age _____



Dangers Of Delay On Chronic Ailments

**FREE BOOK — Tells How To Help
Guard Health**



Many facts about colon disorders, headaches, constipation, nervousness or stomach, liver and bladder conditions are explained in a new 40-page **FREE BOOK**. Write today. Thornton & Minor Clinic, Suite 1156, 911 E. Linwood, Kansas City 8, Mo.



DO YOU
WANT TO

STOP TOBACCO?

Banish the craving for tobacco as thousands have with Tobacco Redeemer. Write for free booklet telling of injurious effect of tobacco and of a treatment which has relieved many men.

In Business Since 1909

300,000 Satisfied Customers

THE NEWELL COMPANY

153 Clayton St., St. Louis 5, Mo.

**FREE
BOOK**

NERVOUS STOMACH

ALLIMIN relieves distressing symptoms of "nervous stomach"—heaviness after meals, belching, bloating and colic due to gas. **ALLIMIN** has been scientifically tested by doctors and found highly effective. More than a ¼ billion sold to date. At all good drugstores everywhere.

ALLIMIN Garlic Tablets

STOPS FOGGY WINDSHIELDS NEW Chemical Mitt

Amazing Discovery! Autoists will over new FOG-STOP Windshield Cleaner. Simply glide over windshield chemically-treated Mitt—at once glass sparkles crystal clear. Hurry! mist, frost, sleet, snow disappear like magic. Stops fogging. *Sells like wild!*

SAMPLES FOR AGENTS Sample offer sent immediately to all who send name at once. Hurry. Postcard will do. **SEND NO MONEY—just your name.** KRISTEE CO., 1493 Bar Street, AKRON, OHIO



AGENTS — BIG MONEY in GLASSES

AMAZING NEW DEVICE TESTS EYES AT HOME!

Save up to \$15. Satisfaction guaranteed. Send for

FREE SAMPLE

KIT, take orders,

make big, fast

profits, in a new

field. Virgin territory. Spare or

full time. No experience or capital

needed. Write today!



CLARK OPTICAL CO., Dept. A-179, 1148 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago 22, Ill.

MAKE MONEY with Bostonian SHIRTS

TAKE orders for old, reliable line finest quality dress and sport shirts. All styles... fabrics... colors... sizes. Sensational

LOW PRICES. No experience needed.

FREE Samples of actual fabrics and big Style Kit waiting for you! Send no money

but rush name **NOW!** **BOSTONIAN MFG. CO.,**

89 Bickford St., Dept. J-59, Boston 30, Mass.



Peebles, a senior, from Birch Creek, Iowa!"

But his voice was washed away by the greater sound all around. And then the team raced up and made a fuss, pummeling him till his back ached with their well-meant blows, and Gray and Vermecetti, the big center, bore him aloft on their shoulders.

McClennan laid a warm and friendly hand on his knee. "That was really something, Hal," he said. "About the prettiest sight I ever hope to see. No foolin'."

"Thanks—Mac." Harold swallowed hard and looked up at the still raving stands.

It doesn't matter so much about that mistake over the speaker Julie Jane. The straight of it will come out sooner or later, anyway—in the newspapers. Meantime, this is enough. Pretty near more than enough, I'm afraid. And me a grown man!

Harold Peebles made like he was sleeving sweat from his face with the torn jersey—only it wasn't sweat.

**BEST FOOTBALL FICTION IN CURRENT
ISSUES OF OUR COMPANION MAGAZINES!**



**EXCITING FOOTBALL
FIVE SPORTS CLASSICS
POPULAR SPORTS
THRILLING SPORTS**

NOW ON SALE EVERYWHERE

THRILLS IN FOOTBALL

(Concluded from page 109)

he had eaten up thirty-two yards of territory. Then, when hit, he was hit so hard Andy was unconscious when they carried him off the field.

Pilney had been the greatest figure in the game. His elimination made Notre Dame's thin chance seem even weaker. Bill Shakespere came out to replace him, but anyone would tell you Shakespere was no Pilney.

There was time for only a few plays. The first, a pass, was almost intercepted by Beltz, who was fighting mad because of his fumble, and wanted to make up for it. Notre Dame was on the ten yard line. Shakespere took the ball on a handoff from Mike Layden, and faded all the way back to the thirty.

It looked as though he were trapped, but somehow he got the ball away in a high arc. It was far over to the right. Wayne Milner, racing like a madman across the field, was just a step ahead of the defense.

He leaped into the air, and it seemed took that ball on the tips of his fingers. For an agonizing moment the pigskin juggled there. Ohio State fans prayed that it would fall to the ground; Notre Dame men hoped the end would hold it for the fractional bit of time that would make it good.

Milner held it . . . and the Fighting Irish had scored the greatest pull-it-out-of-the-fire victory ever seen on the grid-iron.

THE BEST OF INDOOR SPORTS IN—

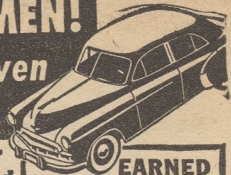
VARIETY CROSSWORD PUZZLES

Packed with Entertaining Puzzles
from Cover to Cover

NOW ON SALE—25c AT ALL STANDS!

MEN! WOMEN!

New Car given as Bonus!



TAKE ORDERS for
Nationally Advertised

NYLONS

GUARANTEED NINE MONTHS

Sensational Guarantee creating a tremendous demand for Wilknit Nylons! If they run, wear out or even snag from any cause whatever . . . within NINE MONTHS . . . depending on quantity . . . they are replaced FREE OF CHARGE. No wonder it's easy to quickly build up fine, steady, year-round income. Earnings start immediately. Look at these exceptional figures—Ralph Shearer made \$67.11, first week—Mrs. Paul Estes, \$42.92—Mrs. Ivey Gentry, \$3.37. Doris Jensen in addition to making as much as \$17.00 in a single day, earned two cars as EXTRA BONUS. Learn how you can make money in your full or spare time without a bit of previous experience.

SEND NO MONEY... Just Hose Size

When you send for Selling Outfit, I also send your choice of Nylons or Socks for your personal use. Don't lose a minute. Rush name on penny postcard for full money-making facts on Sensational Sales Kit. Send hose size, too. **Lowell Wilkin, WILKNIT HOSIERY CO., 711 Midway, Greenfield, Ohio**

EARNED
TWO NEW CARS

... and as much as \$120.00 in one week
That's the exceptionally fine record of Chas. Mill with the famous Wilknit hosiery line. Offer of New Chevrolet as a bonus open to EVERYONE. Send name for facts FREE.

Learn Profitable Profession in 90 days at Home



MEN AND WOMEN, 18 TO 60. Many Swedish Massage graduates make big money! Large full time incomes from doctors, hospitals, sanatoriums, clubs or private practice. Others make good money in spare time. Prepare for future security by training at home and qualifying for Diploma. Anatomy charts and 32-page Illustrated Book FREE!

The College of Swedish Massage
Dept. 063P 41 E. Pearson, Chicago 11

BE A DETECTIVE

WORK HOME or TRAVEL. Experience unnecessary. DETECTIVE Particulars FREE. Write **GEO. T. H. WAGNER, 125 W. 86th St., N. Y.**

High School Course at Home Many Finish in 2 Years

Go as rapidly as your time and abilities permit. Course equivalent to resident school work—prepares for college entrance exams. Standard H. S. text supplied. Diploma. Credit for H. S. subjects already completed. Single subjects if desired. High school education is very important for advancement in business and industry and socially. Don't be handicapped all your life. Be a High School graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation.

American School, Dept. H858 Drexel at 58th, Chicago 37

SUFFERERS
FROM

MAKE THE ONE
SPOT
TEST

PSORIASIS
(SCALY SKIN TROUBLE)
Use **DERMOIL**



Prove it yourself no matter how long you have suffered or what you have tried. Beautiful book on psoriasis and Dermoil with amazing, true photographic proof of results sent FREE. Write for it.

Don't mistake eczema for the stubborn ugly, embarrassing scaly skin disease Psoriasis. Apply non-staining Dermoil. Thousands do for scaly spots on body or scalp. Grateful users, often after years of suffering, report the scales have gone, the red patches gradually disappeared and they enjoyed the thrill of a clear skin again. Dermoil is used by many doctors and is backed by a positive agreement to give definite benefit in 2 weeks or money is refunded without question. Send 10c (stamps or coin) for generous trial bottle to make our famous "One Spot Test". Test it yourself. Results may surprise you. Write today for your test bottle. Caution: Use only as directed. Print name plainly. Don't delay. Sold by Liggett and Walgreen Drug Stores and other leading Druggists. **LAKE LABORATORIES, Box 3925, Stratford Station, Dept. 250, Detroit 27, Mich.**

SEND FOR
GENEROUS
TRIAL
SIZE

©1935
LAK LAB.

IF IT SLIPS... IF IT CHAFES... IF IT GRIPES... THEN

THROW AWAY THAT TRUSS!

Why put up with days . . . months . . . YEARS of discomfort, worry, and fear—if we provide you with the support you want and need? Learn NOW about this perfected truss-invention for most forms of reducible rupture. Surely you keenly desire . . . you eagerly CRAVE to enjoy most of life's activities and pleasures once again. To work . . . to play . . . to live . . . to love . . . with the haunting fear of Rupture lessened in your thoughts! Literally thousands of Rupture sufferers have entered this Kingdom of Paradise Regained . . . have worn our Appliance without the slightest inconvenience. Perhaps we can do as much for you. Some wise man said, "Nothing is impossible in this world"—and it is true, for where other trusses have failed is where we have had our greatest success in many cases! Even doctors—thousands of them—have ordered for themselves and their patients. Unless your case is absolutely hopeless *do not despair*. The coupon below brings our Free Rupture Book in plain envelope. Send the coupon now.

Patented AIR-CUSHION Support Gives Wonderful Protection

Think of it! Here's a surprising yet simple-acting invention that helps Nature support the weakened muscles gently but securely, day and night. Thousands of grateful letters express heartfelt thanks for relief from pain and worry,—results beyond the expectations of the writers. What is this invention—how does it work? Will it help me? Get the complete, fascinating facts on the Brooks Air-Cushion Appliance—send now for *free* Rupture Book.

Cheap—Sanitary—Comfortable

Rich or poor—ANYONE can afford to buy this remarkable, LOW-PRICED rupture invention! But look out for imitations and counterfeits. The Genuine Brooks Air-Cushion Truss is never sold in stores or by agents. Your Brooks is made up, after your order is received, to fit your particular case. You buy direct at the low "maker-to-user" price. The perfected Brooks is sanitary, lightweight, inconspicuous. Has no hard pads to gouge painfully into the flesh, no stiff, punishing springs, no metal girdle to rust or corrode. It is GUARANTEED to bring you heavenly comfort and security,—or it costs you NOTHING. The Air-Cushion works in its own unique way, softly, silently helping Nature support the weakened muscles. Learn what this marvelous invention may mean to you—send coupon quick!



E. E. BROOKS, Inventor

SENT on TRIAL!

No . . . don't order a Brooks now—FIRST get the complete, revealing explanation of this world-famous rupture invention. THEN decide whether you want to try for the comfort—the wonderful degree of freedom—the security—the blessed relief thousands of men, women and children have reported. They found the answer to their prayers! And you risk nothing as the complete Brooks is SENT ON TRIAL. Surely you owe it to yourself to investigate this no-risk trial. Send for the facts now—today—hurry! All correspondence strictly confidential.

FREE! Latest Rupture Book Explains All!

SENT YOU IN
PLAIN ENVELOPE JUST CLIP and SEND COUPON →

Brooks Appliance Co., 183H State St., Marshall, Mich.



PROOF!

Read These Reports on Reducible
Rupture Cases

(In our files at Marshall, Michigan, we have over 52,000 grateful letters which have come to us entirely unsolicited and without any sort of payment.)

Never Loses a Day's Work in Shipyard

"A few weeks ago I received the Appliance you made for me. I put it on the afternoon I received it and wouldn't do without it now. My fellow workers notice how much better I can do my work and get around over these ships—and believe me, the work in a Navy shipyard is anything but easy. You have been a life saver to me. I never lose a day's work now. One of my buddies was ruptured on the job about two months ago. After seeing my Appliance he wants me to order him one." J. A. Comer, 1506 Green Ave., Orange, Texas.

Perfect Satisfaction in Every Way

"I am happy to report that the Appliance that I received from you more than a year ago has given perfect satisfaction in every way.

"In fact, I am not sure I will ever need another one, but I am asking you to send me the best grade as marked on the order blank, then if I should ever need it I would have it. I think I would want to use it when I go for long walks or work at heavy work of any kind, just for protection." H. M. Herron, Mouthard, Ky.

MAIL THIS COUPON NOW!

BROOKS APPLIANCE CO.
183H State St., Marshall, Mich.

Without obligation, please send your **FREE**
BOOK on Rupture, **PROOF** of Results, and
TRIAL OFFER—all in plain envelope.

Name

Street

City..... State.....

State whether for Man ☐ Woman ☐ or Child ☐

\$100⁰⁰ A WEEK in CASH
PAID DIRECT TO YOU

FAMILY HOSPITAL PLAN

SAVE MONEY!

There's a big advantage to buying this policy by mail. This method of selling is less costly for us—and that's another reason why we are able to offer so much protection for so little money.

Policy Pays for a Day, a Week,
a Month, a Year—just as long as
necessary for you to be hospitalized!

JUST LOOK

The Large Benefit This Low
Cost Policy Provides!

This remarkable Family Hospital Policy covers you and your family for about everything—for every kind of accident—and for all the common and rare diseases, and there are thousands of them. Serious diseases such as cancer, tuberculosis, heart diseases, diseases involving female organs, and abdominal operations are also fully covered after this policy is in force six months. Suicide, insanity, and venereal diseases are understandably excluded.

The money is all yours—for any purpose you want to use it. There are no hidden meanings or big words in the policy. It is the kind of protection that will stand by you when emergency comes. We urge you and every family and also individuals to send for this policy on our 10 day free trial offer—and be convinced that no other hospital plan offers you so much for your \$1.00 a month!

TWO SPECIAL FEATURES

MATERNITY

Benefits At Small Extra Cost
Women who will some day have babies will want to take advantage of a special low cost maternity rider. Pays \$50.00 for childbirth confinement either in the hospital or at home, after policy has been in force 10 months. Double the amount on twins.

POLIO

Benefits At No Extra Cost
In lieu of other regular benefits policy pays these benefits if polio strikes—For Hospital Bills, up to \$500.00
For Doctor's Bills while in the hospital, up to \$500.00
For Orthopedic Appliances, up to \$500.00
TOTAL OF \$1,500.00

3¢ A DAY IS ALL YOU PAY

for this outstanding new Family Protection

Wonderful news! This new policy covers everyone from infancy to age 70! When sickness or accident sends you or a member of your family to the hospital—this policy PAYS \$100.00 PER WEEK for a day, a month, even a year . . . or just as long as you stay in the hospital. What a wonderful feeling to know your savings are protected and you won't have to go into debt. The money is paid DIRECT TO YOU to spend as you wish. This remarkable new Family Hospital Protection costs only 3¢ a day for each adult 18 to 59 years of age, and for age 60 to 70 only 4½¢ a day. This policy even covers children up to 18 years of age with cash benefits of \$50.00 a week while in the hospital—yet the cost is only 1½¢ a day for each child! Benefits paid while confined to any recognized hospital, except government hospitals, rest homes or sanitariums. Pick your own doctor. Naturally this wonderful policy is issued only to individuals and families now in good health; otherwise the cost would be sky high. But once protected, you are covered for about every sickness or accident. Persons covered may return as often as necessary to the hospital within the year.

This is What \$100.00 a Week Can Mean to You When in the Hospital for Sickness or Accident

Money melts away fast when you or a member of your family has to go to the hospital. You have to pay costly hospital board and room . . . doctor's bills and maybe the surgeon's bill too . . . necessary medicines, operating room fees—a thousand and one things you don't count on. What a Godsend this READY CASH BENEFIT WILL BE TO YOU. Here's cash to go a long way toward paying heavy hospital expenses—and the money left over can help pay you for time lost from your job or business. Remember—all cash benefits are paid directly to you.

PAYS CASH BENEFITS REGARDLESS OF ANY OTHER HOSPITAL INSURANCE YOU NOW HAVE!

Examine This Policy Without Cost or Obligation—Read It— Talk It Over—Then Decide

10 DAYS FREE EXAMINATION

You are invited to inspect this new kind of Family Hospital Plan. We will send the actual policy to you for ten days at no cost or obligation. Talk it over with your banker, doctor, lawyer or spiritual adviser. Then make up your mind. This policy backed by the full resources of the nationally known Service Life Insurance Company of Omaha, Nebraska—organized under the laws of Nebraska and licensed in other states. **SEND NO MONEY**—just your name and address! No obligation, of course!

FREE INSPECTION . . . MAIL COUPON

The Actual Policy Will Come to You
at Once Without Cost or Obligation

THIS POLICY IS SOLD ONLY BY MAIL!

The Service Life Insurance Company
Hospital Department L-17, Omaha 2, Nebraska

Please rush the new Family Hospital Protection Plan Policy to me on 10 days Free Inspection. I understand that I am under no obligation.

Name.....

Address.....

City or Town.....State.....

SERVICE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

Hospital Department L-17, Omaha 2, Nebraska



NOW MAKE HUNDREDS OF USEFUL THINGS FOR YOUR HOME
with this Amazing **NEW Low-Priced**

BURGESS

Electric
**JIG SAW
SANDER
FILER**
WITH BUILT-IN AUTOMATIC
BLOWER

\$13⁹⁵
ONLY COMPLETE

with POWERFUL BUILT-IN MOTOR, "Every Direction" Saw Blade Adjustment, Selector Blade Guide, Built-In Cooling Fan, Air Vent, 3 Saw Blades, 3 Sanding Discs—FULL-SIZE project pattern.

**Complete Portable Home Power Tool
at Sensational Low Price!**

BUILT-IN AUTOMATIC BLOWER—To clear away sawdust and filings.

POWERFUL BUILT-IN ROTARY MOTOR—Means fast, easy sawing or filing.

"EVERY DIRECTION" JIG SAW—Special blade guide faces any direction to cut extra long pieces.

LARGE CUTTING TABLE—Large, firm, working surface tilts 45°.

BUILT-IN COOLING FAN WITH AIR VENT—Cool, efficient operation.

3400 R.P.M. SANDING DISC WITH ADJUSTABLE TABLE—Revolves at constant high speed. Table tilts 45°.

PORTABILITY—Used in kitchen, study, garage or workshop. Cushioned base protects working surface and provides quiet operation.

UL APPROVED 6-FOOT PLASTIC CORD SET—Plug into 115-125 Volt AC outlet.

BURGESS GUARANTEE—Manufactured and guaranteed by Burgess Vibrocrafters, Inc., Chicago 1, Illinois.

Sold by Leading Hardware and Department Stores
If not available at your store, MAIL COUPON TODAY

BURGESS HANDICRAFT STORES, Dept. TF-11
182 North Wabash Avenue • Chicago 1, Illinois

Send me my Burgess Electric Jig Saw, Sander, Filer with automatic blower, built-in rotary motor, 3 saw blades, 3 sanding discs and FULL-SIZE project pattern.

I enclose Check ☐ or Money Order ☐ for \$13.95. Burgess will pay delivery and handling charges.

Send C.O.D. ☐ I will pay postman \$13.95 plus delivery charge. (Illinois residents add 2% sales tax.)

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ Zone _____ State _____

GUARANTEED
BY BURGESS

CREATIVE
FUN FOR
FATHER
OR SON

PRECISION-BUILT:
STEEL AND
ALUMINUM
CONSTRUCTION

A POWERFUL
BUILT-IN ROTARY
MOTOR

JUST PRESS
THE BUTTON
AND SAND,
SAW OR FILE

(Larger, Sturdier—8"x77/8"x113/4")

**It's Easy and Fun to Make Many
Attractive, Useful Things!**



Make hundreds of useful things with this New 1951 Burgess Electric Home Workshop. A powerful tool for your home projects, yet completely safe for the youngster to use. Make many decorative things with the skill of an expert. A full-size shoeshine box pattern comes with the saw and other patterns as shown are available.

Your Burgess Electric Jig Saw need not be bolted to a work bench. It's a complete portable home power tool in itself. And, what could be a more perfect gift for a friend or relative? Now is the time to place your order—Today!

READ THESE AMAZING FEATURES AND ORDER YOUR BURGESS ELECTRIC JIG SAW TODAY!

Yes, now you can have this wonder tool of the year. A highly functional, precision-built tool, portable for use in any room. Get one for your home and saw, sand and file wood, metal, plastic and many other materials. This sturdy tool saws wood up to 1/2 inch and light metals up to 1/8 inch. Use it anywhere you want without worry of marring the working surface.



Shoe
Cleaning
Box



Tackle Box
or
Jewelry Box



Magazine
Rack



Book
Ends



Two-Tier
Flower Box



Pipe Rack
and
Humidifier



Knife and
Pot Holder Rack

BURGESS HANDICRAFT STORES

182 North Wabash Avenue • Chicago 1, Illinois