

GALA ALL-STAR FOOTBALL NUMBER

10¢

EXCITING

**FIRST
ISSUE**

SPORTS

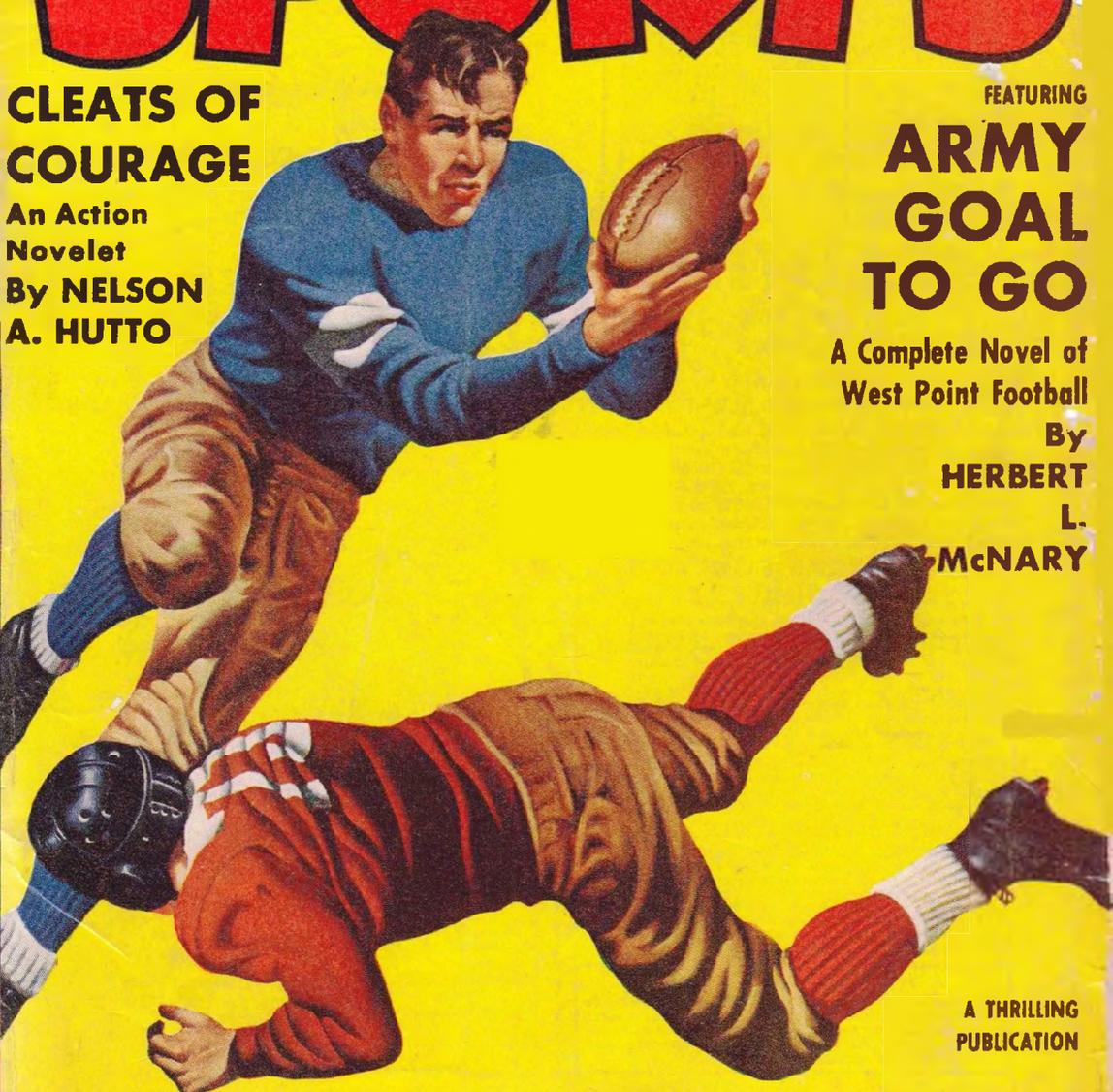
**CLEATS OF
COURAGE**

An Action
Novelet
By **NELSON
A. HUTTO**

FEATURING

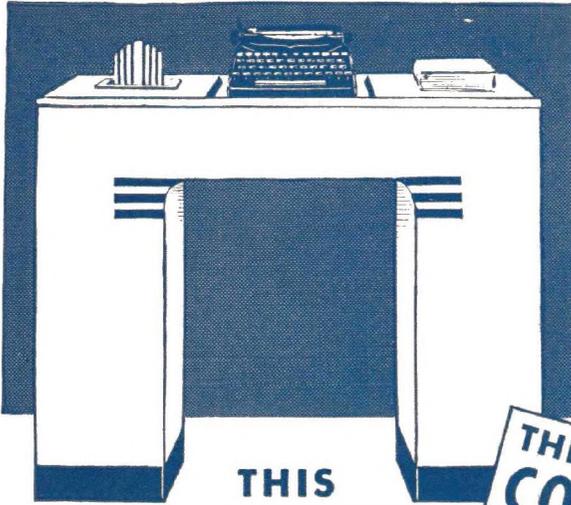
**ARMY
GOAL
TO GO**

A Complete Novel of
West Point Football
By
**HERBERT
L.
McNARY**



**A THRILLING
PUBLICATION**

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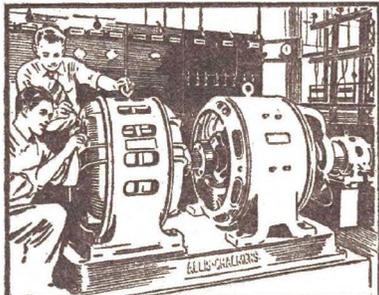
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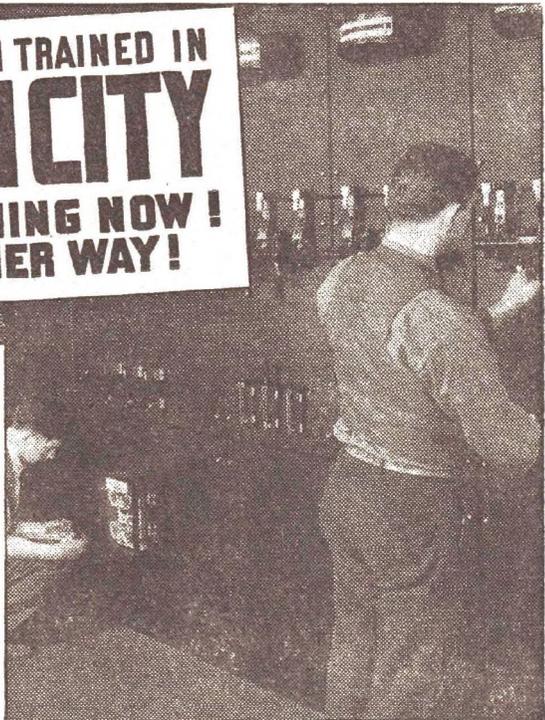
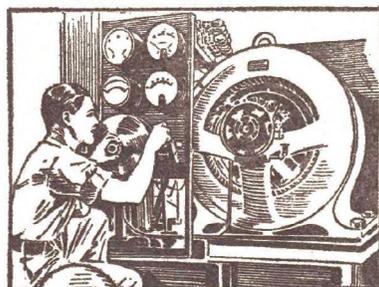
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• GALA ALL-STAR FOOTBALL NUMBER •

EXCITING SPORTS

Vol. 1, No. 1

WINTER, 1941

Price 10c

A COMPLETE BOOK-LENGTH FOOTBALL NOVEL



ARMY—GOAL TO GO

By **HERBERT L. McNARY**

Marvin Clemson Finds Himself the Target of a Football Barrage and a Political Rush Act, but Stands Fast on His Own Defense Line for the Glory of the Team! 16

OTHER EXCITING SPORT THRILLERS

FAMILIES ARE ALWAYS WRONG (Boxing) - - - - - Jack Kofoed 65
"Ripper" Kane, Black Sheep, Kept the Wolf from the Door!

GLEATS OF COURAGE (Football Novelet) - - - - - Nelson A. Hutto 74
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BUSH TRACK BLOOD STAKES (Horse-Racing) - - - - - Jack B. Creamer 90
The Gods of Fortune Frown Heavily on a Crooked Rider

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EXCITING SPORTS published quarterly and copyright, 1940, by Better Publications, Inc., 22 West 48th Street, New York, N. Y. N. L. Pines, President. Single copies, 10 cents; yearly subscription, 40 cents. Entry for second class matter pending at the post office at New York, N. Y. Mails must be accompanied by self-addressed stamped envelopes, and are submitted at the author's risk. Names of all characters used in stories and semi-fiction articles are fictitious. If the name of any living person or existing institution is used, it is a coincidence. December, 1940, Issue.

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Before I completed your lessons, I obtained my Radio Broadcast

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Get my sample lesson Free. Examine it, read it—see how clear it is, how easy to understand. Find out how I train you at home in spare time to be a Radio Technician. Do it now. Mail the coupon.

Many Radio Technicians Make \$30, \$40, \$50 a Week

Radio Broadcasting stations employ operators, technicians. Radio manufacturers employ testers, inspectors, servicemen in good-pay jobs. Radio jobbers and dealers employ installation and servicemen. Many Radio Technicians open their own Radio sales and repair businesses and make \$30, \$40, \$50 a week. Others hold their regular jobs and make \$5 to \$10 a week fixing Radios in spare time. Automobile, Police, Aviation, Commercial Radio; Loud-speaker systems. Electronic Devices are other fields offering opportunities for which N. R. I. gives the required knowledge of Radio. Television promises to open good jobs soon.

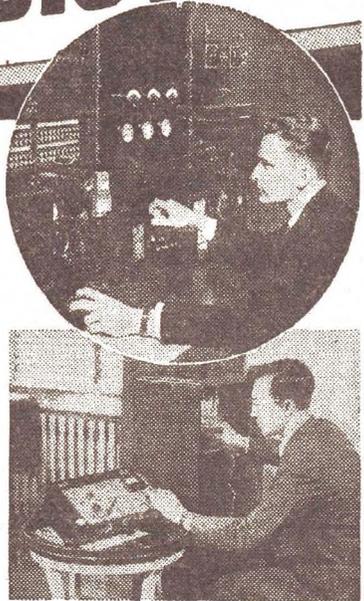
Many Make \$5 to \$10 a Week Extra in Spare Time While Learning

The day you enroll I start sending Extra Money Job Sheets; start showing you how to do Radio repair jobs. Throughout your Course I send plans and directions that have helped many make \$5 to \$10 a week in spare time while learning. I send you special Radio equipment to conduct experiments and build circuits. This 50-50 method of training makes learning at home interesting, fascinating, practical. **YOU ALSO GET A MODERN, PROFESSIONAL ALL-WAVE, ALL-PURPOSE SET SERVICING INSTRUMENT** to help you make money fixing Radios while learning, and equip you for full time work after you become a Radio Technician.

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Act Today. Mail the coupon now for sample lesson and 64-page book. They point out Radio's spare time and full time opportunities and those coming in Television; tell about my training in Radio and Television; show more than 100 letters from men I trained, telling what they are doing and earning. Find out what Radio, Television offer YOU! MAIL COUPON in an envelope, or paste on a postcard—NOW!

J. E. Smith, President
Dept. ON09, National Radio Institute
Washington, D. C.



BROADCASTING STATIONS (top illustration) employ Radio Technicians as operators, installation, maintenance men and in other fascinating, steady, well-paying technical jobs. **FIXING RADIO SETS** (lower illustration) pays many Radio Technicians \$30, \$40, \$50 a week. Others hold their regular jobs and make \$5 to \$10 extra a week in spare time.

Mail Coupon Now!



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Mr. J. E. Smith, President, Dept. ON09

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Table of amount of insurance purchased by a monthly payment of one dollar.

Attained Age at Death	Natural or Ordinary Accidental Death Amount	Auto Accidental Death Amount	Travel Accidental Death Amount
1-40	\$1000.00	\$2000.00	\$3000.00
41-50	750.00	1500.00	2250.00
51-56	500.00	1000.00	1500.00
57-62	300.00	600.00	900.00
63-68	200.00	400.00	600.00
69-75	100.00	200.00	300.00

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Street or R. F. D.

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"The lessons are so simple. I have learned to play by note in a little more than a month. I wouldn't take a thousand dollars for my course."
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Music Lessons for less than 7¢ a day

Here's your chance to learn to play your favorite musical instrument—quickly and easily—in your own home.

YOU thought it was expensive to learn music? That it took lots of money to pay for a private teacher, sheet music and all the other essentials? That it required years of study?

Then here's grand news for you! You can learn to play your favorite musical instrument, any instrument, for less than SEVEN CENTS a day! That's ALL it costs. Not a penny extra for sheet music or anything else. And it doesn't take years, either.

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Actually, you start playing a familiar melody in your very FIRST lesson. Then you go on from one tune to another, until your friends are surprised to hear you play.

You learn to play by *playing*—just as you learned the English language by speaking it. There is no lost time, no waste motion.

You learn by a remarkable short-cut method! A modern, simplified method that skips all the tedious, old-fashioned study and practice. A method that has literally swept the world, enrolling over 700,000 pupils. It's actually FUN to learn music this easy way.

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Look at the notes above—they are F-A-C-E. Could anything be simpler? You are already learning to read music. And it's easy to play, too, for a remarkable invention, the "Note-Finder," tells you just where each note is located on the keyboard.

*Actual pupils' names on request. Pictures by Professional Models.

Here's the Secret

"A picture is worth a thousand words," says the ancient Chinese



proverb. And that is the secret of this easy and fascinating way to learn music at home in spare time. Your lessons come to you in print and picture form. Large, clear illustrations show you every position, every move. And the accompanying text is like the voice of your teacher at your shoulder, explaining, coaching and encouraging you. You can't go wrong.

Send for Illustrated Booklet

See for yourself how easy it is to learn your favorite musical instrument this modern, short-cut way. And how inexpensive. Mail the coupon below, checking the instrument in which you are interested. Do it now. Instruments supplied when needed, cash or credit. U. S. School of Music, 29412 Brunswick Bldg., New York City. Forty-second year. (Est. 1898)

U. S. School of Music, 29412 Brunswick Bldg., New York City

I am interested in learning the musical instrument checked. Please send me your illustrated booklet explaining how I can learn quickly at home, for less than 7¢ a day.

<input type="checkbox"/> Piano <input type="checkbox"/> Violin <input type="checkbox"/> Guitar <input type="checkbox"/> Cello	<input type="checkbox"/> Mandolin <input type="checkbox"/> Saxophone <input type="checkbox"/> Clarinet <input type="checkbox"/> Trumpet	<input type="checkbox"/> Trombone <input type="checkbox"/> Banjo <input type="checkbox"/> Ukulele <input type="checkbox"/> Cornet	<input type="checkbox"/> Piano Accordion <input type="checkbox"/> Flute <input type="checkbox"/> Hawaiian Guitar <input type="checkbox"/> Other Instrument
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Have you instrument?.....

Name

Address

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

Check here for Booklet "A" if under 16 years of age.

The Football Code

BOTH in play and by tradition football is a distinctively academic game—the game of the schools and the colleges. The friends of the game must accordingly rely on the schools and colleges for the preservation of its past traditions and the maintenance of the high standards of sportsmanship in its play, which are to be expected in a distinctively academic game.

The Rules Committee, in the remodeling of the rules that has gradually taken place, has endeavored to prohibit and suitably penalize all forms of unfair tactics and practices. It has also endeavored, so far as possible, without affecting the integrity of the game itself, to remove special temptation or opportunity for unsportsmanlike play. For the benefit of those who are just beginning to learn the game the Committee decided to publish in the official book of rules the following suggestions:

HOLDING

Holding is prohibited by the rules because it does not belong in the game of football. It is unfair play. It eliminates skill. The slowest man in the world could make a forty-yard run in every play if the rest of his teammates would hold their opponents long enough. The game is to advance the ball by strategy, skill and speed without holding your opponent.

Perhaps a good game could be invented, the object of which would be to advance the ball as far as possible with the assistance of holding your opponents, but it would not be football. It would probably become a team wrestling match and, unless drastic rules, rigidly enforced, prevented it, a free fight. If your coach cannot show you how to gain distance without holding your opponents, get another coach. It is fair to assume that he does not understand the strategy of the game.

COACHING ETHICS

Coaching from the side lines or deliberately teaching players to violate the rules is indefensible. The coaching of intentional holding, interference or illegal forward passing such as the "forward fumble" will break down rather than aid in the building of the character of your players. Such instruction not only is unfair to your opponents but is demoralizing to the boys entrusted to your care. It has no place in a game which is presumed to be an essential part of an educational program.

"BEATING THE BALL"

"Beating the ball" by an unfair use of a starting signal is nothing less than deliberately stealing an advantage from the other side. An honest starting signal is good football, but a starting signal which has for its purpose starting the team a fraction of a second before the ball is put in play, in the hope that it will not be detected by the officials, is nothing short of crookedness. It is the same as if a sprinter in a hundred-yard dash had a secret arrangement with the starter to give

him a tenth of a second's warning before he fired the pistol.

TALKING TO YOUR OPPONENTS

Talking to your opponents if it falls short of being abusive or insulting is not prohibited by the rules, partly because it ought not to be necessary and partly because no rules can make a gentleman out of a mucker. No good sportsman is ever guilty of cheap talk to his opponents.

TALKING TO OFFICIALS

When an official imposes or makes a decision, he is simply doing his duty as he sees it. He is on the field representing the integrity of the game of football, and his decision, even though he may have made a mistake in judgment, is final and conclusive and should be so accepted. Even if you think the decision is a mistaken one, take your medicine and do not whine about it. If there is anything to be said, let your captain do the talking. That's his business. Yours is to keep quiet and play the game.

THE FOOTBALL CODE

You may meet players and even coaches who will tell you that it is all right to hold or otherwise violate the rules if you do not get caught. This is the code that obtains among sneak thieves and pickpockets. The crime in their code is getting caught.

The football code is different. The football player who intentionally violates a rule is guilty of unfair play and unsportsmanlike tactics, and whether or not he escapes being penalized, he brings discredit to the good name of the game, which it is his duty as a player to uphold.

National Collegiate Athletic Association
Rules Committee

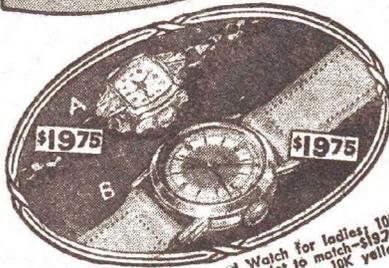


The Rules Committee recommends that copies of "The Football Code" be posted on bulletin boards at colleges and schools. It is hoped that a wider understanding of this interpretation of the game will result in a closer adherence to the Unwritten Rules of Good Sportsmanship. A copy of the Code, printed in large type on cardboard, 14 x 22 inches, may be obtained at sporting goods stores.

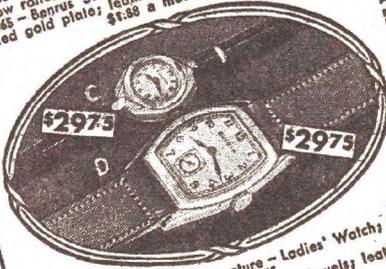


Let me help you give fine
I'll trust you - I'll give you
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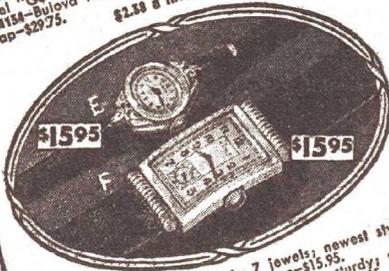
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E-9159-Ladies' Kent Watch; 7 jewels; newest style 10K yellow rolled gold plate case-\$15.95.
F-K190 - Men's Kent Watch; 7 jewels; sturdy; new style; 10 yellow rolled gold plate case-\$15.95. \$1.50 a month

\$48.50



A245 - Engagement Ring; large diamond and 2 other diamonds; 14K yellow gold.\$4.75 a month

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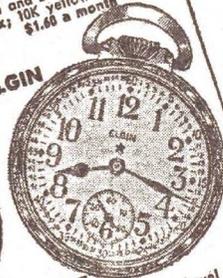
A84/C75-Bridal Set; 8 diamonds; both rings 14K yellow gold. \$3.15 a month

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THE CHEER LEADER

A DEPARTMENT FOR READERS

WE feel almost like one of these notables you see in the movies smashing a bottle of champagne on the bow of a new ship about to be launched. For, with this issue, we're sending out to the world of sport-loving fans a new magazine.

But instead of champagne, we're splashing around some printer's ink, and leading off with a nice big "Rickety-ax-co-ax" for this new addition to our splendid group of sports magazines—**EXCITING SPORTS!**

We're dedicating this issue to the sport most prominent in the public eye just now—football. And the spirit of this, and our companion magazines, can be best expressed by the Football Code, printed on Page 8.

Needless to say, the Football Code typifies the clean, honest sportsmanship that our publications have always represented in every field of athletic endeavor.

Our Companion Magazines

We are proud of this addition to our family of magazines, and we feel that a word or two about the issues of our companion magazines now on the stands will not be amiss. If you like football, and you feel you want to read more—both fact and fiction—about the sport, we think you'll find exactly what the doctor ordered in the following array of magazines:

THRILLING FOOTBALL—A magazine chock-full of football action, gridiron tidbits and inside tips, featur-

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POPULAR SPORTS — Another guaranteed-to-entertain magazine, endorsed by thousands and thousands of fans all over the country, featuring in the current issue a complete book-length football novel, **THE FALCON SQUADRON**, by the aforementioned Jackson V. Scholz, whose name on a story is a mark of distinction.

Coming Soon!

POPULAR FOOTBALL — A new magazine, also making its debut, packing a storehouse-full of grid fiction, fact and features, including many an interesting item on pro football statistics, and starring: **DAMN YANKEE, QUARTERBACK**, a complete, full-length colorful novel of Southern football, by Ross Russell; **GRIDIRON GHOST**, an action-packed novelet by Duane Yarnell, and a special advance **ALL-AMERICAN SELECTION** by a guy who ought to know, Ray Barbuti, former All-American, Syracuse captain, Olympic champion, football referee and what-not.

Write and let us know what you think of **EXCITING SPORTS** and our other publications—that's the only way we'll be able to tell whether you and we are cheering for the same team!

—THE EDITOR.

P. S. In writing this magazine, address The Editor, **EXCITING SPORTS**, 22 West 48th St., New York, N. Y. A postcard will do as well as a letter and criticism is as welcome as praise.



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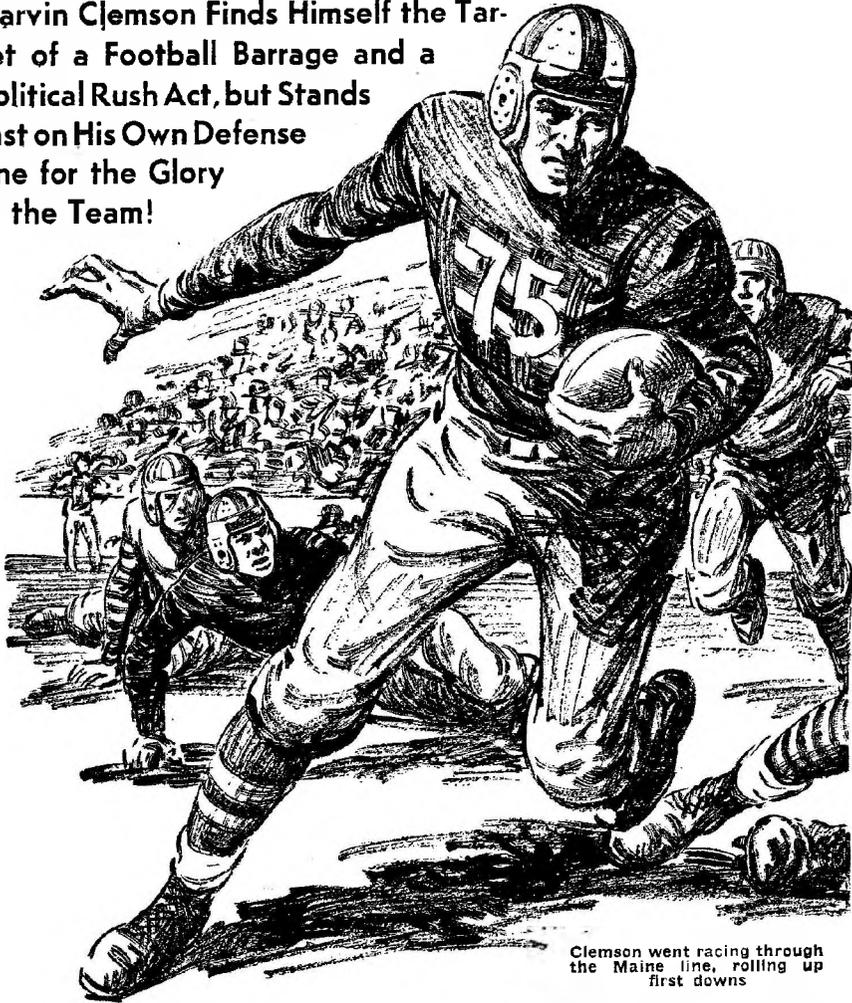
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Marvin Clemson Finds Himself the Target of a Football Barrage and a Political Rush Act, but Stands Fast on His Own Defense Line for the Glory of the Team!



Clemson went racing through the Maine line, rolling up first downs

CHAPTER I

An End Goes Down

A PERSON could guess the season of the year from the slanted rays of the sun. Or from the cool breeze that whistled down the Storm King slopes to swirl among the gray buildings of the U.S.M.A., better known as just West Point. Or one could make a more accurate guess by observing the painted leaves that make the Hudson one of the scenic beauties of the nation in September. But a cadet privileged to be in the vicinity of Michie Field knew the season because of the thud of boot against the pigskin.

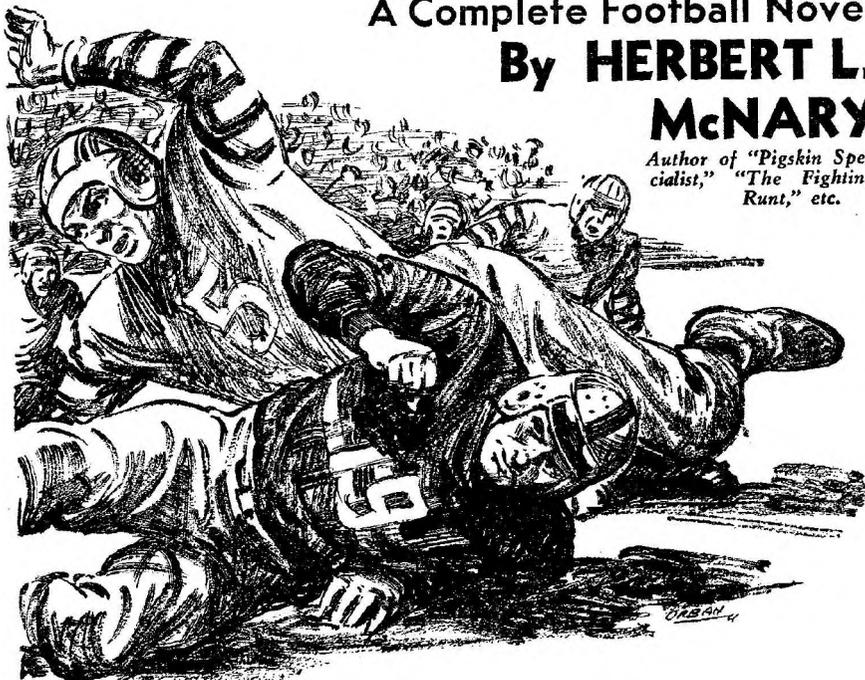
The two scrimmaging elevens faced each other again. A good part of the twenty-two men were fighting for the privilege of being in the starting line-up for the opening clash with Maine on Saturday.

Someone said the Black Bears had a good team this year and that Maine had started practice early and was in mid-season form. But maybe this was all propoganda to make Army get off to a flying start. Anyway, regulars studied both Teams A and B. But last year's whale of a Plebe team was infiltrated with stars, and a couple of upper classmen had cleared up scholastic penalties that had thrown them for a loss twelve months ago.

ARMY—GOAL TO GO

A Complete Football Novel
By **HERBERT L.
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Author of "Pigskin Specialist," "The Fighting Runt," etc.



Of course, there were players who didn't need to worry about their jobs. Backs like Kirk Danning and Craig Randall for example. But a fellow like Marvin Clemson—well, it was too bad about good old Clem. Not a better mug at the Academy.

The ball snapped back to Team A and passed in a swift reverse from Randall to Danning—along with some dirty looks. Interference that included a guard out of the strong side formed in front of Danning. It rolled like a Panzer attack on Marvin Clemson whose job it was to knife through and get the ball carrier, or, failing that, to slow up the interference so a wing back could grab the elusive Danning on his way through.

And even a wing back had to be careful because Danning could pass from

the hip like an old-time Western bad man jumping the draw.

Marvin Clemson had reconciled himself to fighting off the interference. But suddenly he saw daylight and went through.

His long arms clamped about Danning and dropped him for a yard loss. Clemson extended his hand.

Kirk Danning took the hand and allowed himself to be pulled to his feet. His dark features were wrinkled in a phoney frown betrayed by the twinkle of deep brown eyes.

"Now I ask you, is that the way to show up a roommate?"

There was no answering humor on Marvin Clemson's grim, serious features. The gray eyes looked at and through his roommate.

"Who do you think you're fooling,

The Gridiron Becomes the Testing-Ground of a

Kirk? Not me. And certainly not the coach. I only tackled you because you tossed yourself in my arms like a heavy drag. That isn't—"

"Yeah, I know," cut in Danning. "It isn't Army." Danning looked to where the coach and an assistant were explaining a mistake to a tackle on the other end of the line, and he resumed the argument.

"Marv, you're a swell guy. But someone has to tell you the facts of life. You were first-string end last year, weren't you? You were the receiving end of the Danning-to-Clemson passing combination that sank the Navy. So why should you let the coach shove you out of the picture this year without a fight?"

A slow, patient smile spread over Clemson's long features. He and Danning were of the same age, but Clemson always felt much older than this impulsive youth who considered himself so worldly wise.

"Kirk—" But Clemson's preaching tone got him no further.

"Don't tell me," interrupted Danning. "I know *just* what you're going to say. A soldier obeys orders without question. I'm not a soldier. I'm the son of a politician. My father and I are a pair of lice because I'm sponging on the government under false pretenses. I don't intend to stay in the service any longer than I have to. My father has other plans as soon as I get a commission. Football publicity is essential to those plans. Go ahead, say it."

Clemson smiled briefly and plucked a blade of grass as he waited for the coach to start the scrimmage again.

"There's nothing for me to say. You've said it all."

Clemson's assured manner irritated his roommate.

"So what?" persisted Danning. "I'm a louse. Well, if you'd open your eyes to what's happening in the world to-

day you'd see that a smart louse is better than a dumb cluck—"

"Did I hear you calling yourself a louse, Mister Danning? It's about time the opinion became unanimous."

Craig Randall came over and dropped on the grass beside Clemson, by this act vaguely aligned himself with Clemson against Danning who remained standing, hands on his protruding hip pads.

Randall's blond features were as cold as a granite façade. No one would doubt Randall's courage, but one could see in him the type of officer who would order his charges into battle without the slightest compunction over the possible slaughter involved. If the Army needed cold, ruthless, inexorable officers, here was the man.

Randall was a two-year veteran of the varsity. He might have been captain if he were not so unpopular. But his unpopularity with Danning amounted almost to a feud because of Gloria Dawn, the New York night club singer. But Clemson considered this rivalry a symptom rather than a cause.

Somewhere Clemson had read that people who resemble each other are destined to be unfriendly because each sees mirrored in the other his own worst faults. Both these men had plenty of faults. Each was tactless, self-centered and independent, but Clemson saw one essential difference. Randall was aware of his shortcomings and almost proud of them, while Danning's were rough spots that the Point should wear off.

Clemson blamed Danning's father for Kirk's faults. But he felt that no one was to blame for the features that made Randall unpopular but the man himself.

The whistle shrilled. The man who blew the whistle, Coach Hanlon, wore the customary costume that was more baseball than football, but even the slackness of a sweat shirt could not hide the military trimness that was Major Pat Hanlon, U. S. A.

"All right—let's try that again. And, Danning—don't run into Clemson. You're not fooling anyone."



Fighting Cadet Torn by Conflicting Loyalties!



MARVIN CLEMSON

BOTH teams lined up and the same play got under way. Clemson watched the interference form. His hands were up for protection. Suddenly he was bumped from the side and thrown off balance. Before he could recover, the swarm of interference charged over him, Danning lugging the ball behind the screen of gold-striped black shirts.

The yearling playing left end, Jannick, was flattening out a secondary. But before taking out the secondary he had swerved neatly and cleverly just enough to throw Clemson off balance. Now Jannick came back to Clemson. There was apology in his tone, but in his eyes a glow of pleasure over a performance well done.

"Sorry about that. But you know how it is."

Clemson patted the shoulder of the yearling who was taking his job away.

"Forget it. Darn neat play, the way you canceled me out. Keep up the good work."

Clemson meant every word he said. In that, perhaps he differed from a

player like Kirk Danning or Craig Randall. The whistle shrilled. Hanlon called in an end to replace Clemson.

Clemson flushed slightly. So, after being a regular the previous year and one of the stars of the Navy game he wasn't even sure of being second string this season.

"Tough luck, Clem," said Randall as Clemson passed him. "If there were any justice in the world Danning would be dumped."

Clemson did not answer. Randall's professed sympathy was born of resentment for Danning.

"Clemson, come here a moment." The coach called him and then seemed to forget him while he followed the play. But Major Pat Hanlon was not the type of man to do things without a motive. Now he halted the play, called in a number of substitutions and gave the ball to Team B. Clemson looked at the coach wonderingly.

"Coach, you have only three men in the A backfield now."

"What? So I have." Clemson did not observe the quick gleam in Han-

lon's dark eyes. "Fill in at right half, will you? Can't waste time."

Team B ran off four plays and failed to gain the necessary ten yards. Ordinarily this would mean nothing in practice, but Hanlon let Team A take over. Danning came over to Clemson, grinning.

"Wouldn't it be swell if you really were a halfback? You'd be playing and at the same time be keeping Randall on the bench. I'd like that."

"Less talk and more action," snapped Hanlon. "Danning, show a little ball-carrying on Forty-seven and forget that passes look pretty in the news-reels."

The play referred to was a pass play with a ball-carrying alternative. And Danning always preferred to pass.

The ball came to Danning on a direct pass from center. Clemson, playing just back of the line, hit the opposing tackle from the side and pinned him, and Danning sliced through for a sizeable gain.

The coach said something to Condon, and the quarterback called for number Thirty-six. Clemson stared in surprise. The play called for Randall—now Clemson—to take on a fake reverse and then pass.

The ball came back to Danning who in turn gave the oval to Clemson. Clemson raced wide, wheeled and let go with the ball. Tearing down the far side of the field, Kirk Danning glanced over his shoulder, reached up and grabbed the ball and was racing for the goal line when Hanlon's whistle brought him back.

"Nice work, Clem," panted Danning as he came back. "Taking over my job, eh? Couldn't have thrown a better pass myself."

"Really?" declared Clemson. "Your abnegation overwhelms me."

Clemson would have felt better pleased if the compliment had come from the coach. But it appeared as though Major Hanlon had hardly noted the pass. He made more substitutions and Danning went out. A few minutes later Hanlon called off the practice session.

"Hey, Clem." Clemson lifted his head. Danning was calling from where he stood by a large, shining

black car. "Come a-running. We got company."

CHAPTER II

Blackjack Danning

MARVIN CLEMSON did not go "a-running." Even in football regalia a cadet needed to preserve some form of dignity. But he did walk briskly, with new life in tired limbs that had been asked to give more than their usual stint today on the practice field.

And as Clemson drew nearer the car and caught a flash of color his breath came a little faster. Then he checked himself slightly. This might be the night club singer, Gloria Dawn. A gloved hand was waving in his direction. His first guess was better. Maybe this was Danning's sister Maureen, after all.

It was. Maureen, dark like her brother and tall for a girl.

"Hello, Marvin." Her smile was bright and her voice cheery and intent as if she, like himself, might be trying to pierce a veil that hid the inner thoughts each might have of the other—like thinking one thing and saying something else.

"How come you have to work overtime while this lug of a brother of mine gets off early?" Maureen chafed him.

Another voice spoke up from the front seat, a booming voice. "I'll have to do something about that. Send a wire to our senators tomorrow."

Marvin Clemson didn't dislike Jack Danning, "Blackjack" or "Boss" Danning to many people. He just didn't understand him. And if the politician had some bad qualities Kirk might have inherited he must also have some of the good qualities inherited by Maureen.

But Clemson was staring at a third passenger. It was his own father, chairman of the Department of Conservation of his home state.

"Dad! Well, of all things. How did you manage to escape from your desk?"

An elderly man, slighter and grayer than Jack Danning, flushed with pleasure. "Had to come down to New York

to represent the Governor at a luncheon tomorrow—”

“And,” interrupted Jack Danning, “Maureen heard about it and made up this party. Most efficient secretary I ever had, even if she is my own daughter. Know what?” His voice was booming again as he pointed at his daughter. “There’s the *real* political boss of our state.”

“You mean,” said Maureen, “I’m the only secretary you ever had who dared speak her own mind.”

Danning laughed heartily. “Kirk, I only wish you had half your sister’s spirit. Hope this place is putting some into you.” He glanced toward the somber gray battlements of the distant village, the Plain that had echoed to the tread of immortals, the Battle Monument high above the Hudson and framed in the glory of autumn foliage. He looked toward these—and saw them not at all.

The dark eyes that turned back to Clemson were calculating. “It’s a swell build-up for a career. I can help you the way I have your father, when you get your commission.”

“When Marvin gets his commission,” said Maureen sweetly, “he intends to make his own career—in the Army. You seem to forget that. It is a pity Kirk hasn’t the same intention, or would be at least honest enough to declare his intention of resigning at the earliest possible moment after graduating.”

“Oh, wait a minute,” exclaimed Kirk Danning. “Here is the coach. I’ll call him over.”

But he didn’t need to call. Major Hanlon was headed for the car.

“Sorry to hurry you lads, but you’re heated up, and there is a chill off the river.”

“Coach,” said Kirk, unheeding, “I think you met my father at the Navy game last year. This is my sister, and this is Clemson’s father.”

Major Hanlon was pleasant to Maureen and to her father he was civil. Somehow one could sense the Army man’s dislike of the politician. But there was a surprising warmth in his greeting to the elder Clemson.

“It is a real pleasure to meet you, Commissioner. Naturally, I have

known about you and your flood control work for a long time. I don’t need to tell you what a high opinion the Army has of your work. I certainly hope that you call on the Superintendent. He will be delighted to see you.”

CLEMSON shared his father’s embarrassment, the more so because it was obvious that the Dannings, with the exception of Maureen who appeared greatly amused, did not like the reception. After all, Boss Danning and his son were accustomed to being top men. Commissioner Clemson was merely an invited guest, a poor relation so to speak.

Maureen saved the situation slightly. “Your father,” she said to Clemson, “is a dear, while mine is an old bear. Come on, Dad, let’s move on or the Army will have a pair of sick players on its injured list.”

Clemson didn’t like to see her leave so abruptly. “Are you going to be around?” he asked hopefully.

“I might stay over at the Thayer if that brother of mine invited me to the hop.”

Almost before he realized it Clemson was saying, “I’d like to invite you.”

Kirk Danning laughed. “That’s what she was fishing for. First, you try to take my job. Now you steal my drag. My own sister! Well, she’d better have a friend!”

All laughed except Kirk’s father. He was frowning.

“What do you mean—take your job? On the football team? Remember, Kirk, it is imperative that you star on the gridiron. You are to be second to no one.”

“Kirk was joking,” said Maureen. But Clemson saw the political boss give Commissioner Clemson a queer glance.

Marvin Clemson was still wondering about that look as he and Clemson joined the other players in the dressing room. Naked men were emerging from the showers to dry and climb into the cadet uniforms that seemed to transform them into another world. Well conditioned bodies stiffened as they donned dress uniforms and gray trousers which had been prescribed by the gray signal flags.

A few minutes ago they had been

members of a squad where yearlings might be regulars and first classmen lowly subs, but in cadet uniform the first classman was king again and the yearling just little better than the lowly plebe.

At 6:15 the first call sounded for supper. Barrack buildings emptied gray-clad, hungry youngsters. Four men abreast they moved across the parade ground and into the massive stone building that was Washington Hall. Hats and coats were placed under chairs.

"Take seats," was snapped by the first captain, and the cadets fell to.

But this was just another supper to Marvin Clemson. It had been a provocative afternoon. He seemed definitely eliminated from his old position at end. He had been stuck unexpectedly into the backfield. His father had made an unheralded visit. He had seen Maureen Danning again. And finally—there had been that odd reaction of Kirk Danning's father to a careless remark about football practice.

Supper over, the cadets marched back to their barracks. Automatically Clemson ran a scrutinizing glance over the room shared by himself and Danning. The card on the door proclaimed him orderly for the week. To him would go the demerits for any untidiness. Anything out of order could be quickly spotted by an inspector, for one room was like another—iron cots, desks, tables and chairs were all standardized. So were the clothing and limited toilet articles in the metal lockers. The floor was as bare of rugs as the walls were of pictures.

Kirk Danning threw himself on a cot which happened to be Clemson's and lit a cigarette. He shot a provocative glance at Clemson.

"Well, why not say what you're thinking? According to your notion, regulations are imposed to teach us discipline." He blew a cloud of smoke ceilingward. "You're all wrong. Regulations are a challenge, a test of ingenuity, something to sharpen your wits. Because it is by your wits you have to live in this world."

A knock sounded on the door. Danning sprang to his feet, snubbed his cigarette and quickly shoved the butt

inside his shoe. The he desperately fanned the smoke.

The door opened, but instead of an inspector, Major Hanlon entered. The coach was in his regular army uniform. He sniffed slightly and then produced and lit a cigarette of his own.

"If tac drops in," he said tartly, "you can honestly say I was smoking. Danning, would you mind calling on a friend. I have something to say to Clemson."

DANNING appeared glad to escape, but at the door he raised his clasped hands in a gesture of good luck. One could guess what the coach was going to say. He was sorry, but he believed he had better ends than Clemson.

"Clemson," began the coach as the door closed, "building a football machine is something of a problem. A coach is given material and it is up to him to distribute it properly and obtain the right balance. In the real sense 'machine' is a misnomer. A football squad is composed of humans, men with their individual characteristics, their own temperaments, their likes and dislikes and their outside influences."

"If you are trying to tell me," said Clemson, "that I have to give way to Jannick, I can assure you that a good soldier obeys orders."

"He must do more than that," said the coach a bit severely. "First of all he must be a fighter, a fighter for the common cause. You have given Kirk Danning some coaching in passing and blocking—for which I doubt he is properly appreciative—and I have seen you throw passes to him. Clemson, just why have you been an end your first two years at the Point when you played in the backfield at high school?"

Clemson was a bit taken back. Then he laughed. "On the team we had I had to play about everywhere."

The coach looked at him carefully. "We know that a backfield star receives more public attention than does a lineman. Kirk Danning is far more interested in that form of publicity than you are. I believe I can venture to say that Blackjack Danning is more concerned about his son getting headlines than Commissioner Clemson would be."

Clemson laughed lightly. "I guess you're right." Then he became aware that the coach was staring at him closely. He became uneasy. "I don't exactly follow you."

The coach hesitated. "Never mind," he said. "I was merely speculating. Speculating as to why you came out for end instead of halfback. Speculating on what you might do in the backfield. That wasn't forgetfulness on my part, having only three men in the backfield and asking you to fill in." The coach smiled. "It was an experiment. I'm trying others. I'm starting you in the backfield Saturday."

"The backfield?" repeated Clemson incredulously. "You mean in Randall's place?"

Major Hanlon rubbed his chin and rose. "I don't know. Maybe in Randall's place. Maybe in Danning's." His manner became suddenly military. "It makes no difference to you, does it?"

"Yes, sir," said Clemson. "I intend to obey orders, sir!"

But Major Hanlon was speculating again. "In Danning," he said, "I have a good passer and in you a good receiver. Now I discover suddenly that you can pass and Danning can receive. That situation has many possibilities. Trouble is," he added, "those possibilities are not all confined to the gridiron. Well, good night."

And Marvin Clemson stared at the closed door, wonderingly.

CHAPTER III

The Men From Maine

UT in the center of Michie Field two football players stood surrounded by a quartette of officials. Both players were engaged in their first official acts as captains. Captain Ben Gunlund, Army's great center, and Captain Benton of Maine were about to call a toss for the first time in their gridiron careers.

Over on the sideline, in the group standing around Coach Pat Hanlon, Marvin Clemson was ready to start his first game as a halfback. Back on the bench sat his roommate, the man he

had ousted from a starting position.

Somewhere in the stands was Maureen Danning. What would she think about seeing her brother replaced? Clemson nervously bent for a blade of grass. Yeah, what was her old man going to think when he read the papers? Clemson was more than willing to see his roommate and friend starved if that was what the senior Danning wanted, but Coach Hanlon didn't seem to see it that way.

Gunlund came running back to the sideline. He had called the toss and had chosen to receive.

The teams ran out onto the field and out to their positions. Cheer leaders grabbed their megaphones. A solid mass of gray that was the Cadet Corps sprang to attention as a man. Heads bared for the "Long Corps Yell," in salute to a new season, a successful season that must end with the sinking of the Navy.

"Rah! Rah! Ray! Rah! Rah! Ray!
West Point! West Point! AR—MAY!
Ray! Ray! Ray!
Rah! Rah! Rah! Rah! Rah! Rah!
West Point! West Point!
Team! Team! Team!"

Craig Randall moved over beside Clemson.

"Sure sounds good to hear that cheer again and know that you are down here taking it. And am I glad you're teaming up with me!"

Clemson would like to have said he wished he could say the same. But he kept his counsel. Craig Randall was his teammate. That and that alone counted. Never must he think that he disliked Randall as much as he liked Danning.

The whistle blew. The game started. A new season was underway—and the ball was coming down to him!

Clemson's hand felt clammy. Suppose he fumbled? Maybe he should signal for a fair catch. No, that would be the rankest confession of uncertainty. But what if he couldn't run? There was no feeling in his legs.

The ball landed in his arms. As from afar off he heard the solid yell of the corps. He move forward. He twisted away instinctively from a diving black jersey. Another Black Bear loomed up

before him. Clemson dropped a shoulder and charged into him.

He might have swiveled by for extra yardage, but there was joy, an assuagement in the bruising bodily contact.

He rose to his feet, all the tightness gone. He felt cool and collected and ready. He had brought the ball back to the twenty-six-yard line. Not too good, but well enough for the opening play. Army huddled. Condon nominated a reverse with Randall feeding the ball to Clemson.

Army came out of the huddle in a double wingback formation. The ball shuffled between Randall and Clemson, and the latter followed his interference over the tackle and crashed through a wingback for six yards. Army then picked up a pair of yards on a line buck by Osmanski from fullback position.

Army out of the huddle again. The reverse once more with Clemson carrying. Behind the Army interference he rolled across for a first down. The Cadet Corps exploded as the stake holders moved forward. A first down was a first down.

Condon deployed his attack in what appeared to be another buck with Osmanski carrying. Instead, Osmanski slipped the ball to Clemson who raced wide, picked up speed and circled the end. Tearing down the sideline with a neat change of pace, Clemson crossed midfield and was roaring along for a touchdown when a desperate safety dived to hit him amidships. He held his feet but stepped outside.

A wildly howling corps cheered him as he sailed across the goal line, but he had to come back to Maine's forty.

CONDON now mixed his plays, with Clemson doing the carrying and rolling up first downs.

"Nice going," Randall told him crisply. "If you haven't beaten out Daning I'm no judge of football."

But as Clemson cut over tackle to plant the ball on the Maine seven-yard line Randall sang a different tune.

Scowling in the huddle, he beefed at Condon. "What am I—along for the ride? How about giving *me* a chance to carry the ball?"

"I'm calling the plays," snapped the jutting-jawed quarterback. "And I'm

calling the way Coach told me to."

Randall's blue eyes flashed, but he did not argue with Condon. Clemson shot a puzzled glance at the quarterback. There had been something almost cryptic in the latter half of the quarterback's statement, "I'm calling the way Coach told me to."

Army lined up again. From the corps rolled the adjuration. "Touchdown! Touchdown! We want a Touchdown!" The Army mascot mule with its rider had galloped down behind the Maine goal posts and appeared to be waiting expectantly.

The ball snapped back to Clemson in a direct pass. He swung to his right with Condon and Osmanski clearing out ahead of him. Randall was supposed to blot out the tackle with a diving block. But Randall failed to throw a good block. Maybe he was peeved.

And maybe Clemson had anticipated something like this. At any rate, as the tackle broke through and reached for Clemson, the tall back twisted away from the clutching hands without losing stride, circled the tackler and cut through the vacant spot. A charging secondary closed the alley, but Clemson bounded off him, pivoted, kept his feet and lunged over to score Army's first touchdown of the season.

Army players were slapping him on the shoulders. "Nice going, Clem." "The Galloping End." "Betcha can play any place on the team. That's the Army way."

The teams lined up for the try. With Condon holding, Osmanski booted the ball over the cross bar to make the count seven.

Army players ran back up the field. Over in the stands of Michie Stadium, named for the Point's first football hero, the corps was standing. The cheer leaders had just called for the "The Gridiron Grenadiers."

"Roll that score.....way up!
Roll that score.....way up!
They will never want to play us any
mo-or-or-e,
Ya-ha-ha-ha! Ya-ha-ha-ha!
We're the heroes of the Gridiron
Grenadiers."

Army lined up to kick off, but play was delayed as Major Hanlon sent in several substitutes. Only Osmanski



The door opened, and the upper class-
man saw Clemson and Danning strug-
gling for the package

left the backfield, however.

Franku came out of guard position to kick off, and the ball sailed deep. The Black Bears failed to make headway rushing the ball, but a swell kick got behind Condon, putting the Army back on its eighteen.

Army huddled. Once again Condon called a reverse with Randall supposed to feed to Clemson. Clemson saw spots of anger glow in Randall's cheeks.

Army came out of the huddle and shifted. The ball snapped back to Condon who tossed to Randall who was moving toward Clemson. Clemson crossed by Randall and reached for the ball. But there was no ball!

Clemson hesitated and then went on, doubling over as if he had taken the ball from Randall, trying his best to deceive the Black Bears.

But alert defenders had spotted the play. The Maine line swarmed in on the unprotected Randall. Trapped, Randall swerved deep in an effort to get around the charging Black Shirts, but an avalanche descended upon him and he was thrown for an eight-yard loss.

No one said anything to Randall for disobeying orders. Not even Condon or Captain Gunlund, but the silence spoke volumes.

The eagle-eyed Major Hanlon hadn't missed the play. The whistle shrilled. Clemson looked up to see Kirk Danning rushing in, adjusting his helmet as he ran. For a moment Clemson felt a sinking sensation in his stomach. Was the coach blaming him?

THERE was a smile on Danning's lips and in his eyes as he reported to the referee. The latter turned to Army.

"Danning in for Clemson. Clemson replacing Randall. Randall out."

Randall flushed and turned to leave. Kirk Danning couldn't restrain himself.

"Boy, is this the happiest moment of my life," he said to Randall.

"Penalty for talking," snapped the referee and dived for the ball. Danning endeavored to argue that he had only spoken to Randall who was leaving the game, but the referee pushed him aside and measured off the yardage that put Army back in the shadow of the goal.

Army had to kick. And with Os-manski out, Condon elected himself to kick the punt. He got off a wobbly boot, and Maine had the ball inside Army's forty. A first down put the ball on the twenty-eight. The inspired Black Bears came out of a huddle and completed a deceptive forward pass.

With a back racing for a touchdown, Marvin Clemson dashed across for a shoestring tackle that stopped the runner on the four-yard line. Here the powerful Army held and took the ball on its two-yard line.

This time Condon got off a good kick. But a mousetrap brought the inspired Black Bears back across the midfield stripe, and once more Army was on the defensive. There didn't appear to be any serious cause for worry, but first impressions count. There were sport writers in the stands from the New York papers ready to give their opinions of Army's chances this year, and a poor send-off might mean one of those seasons where everything seems to go wrong.

Maine picked up seven yards on a lateral. Maybe Army was weak on open plays. A pass had almost scored. A lateral had clicked.

Clemson called Danning over. "I think this is another forward, but they will probably try your side this time. They have more room. If you tail that wingback but not too close, sort of hang back, you've got a chance to intercept."

Maine came out of the huddle. The ball snapped back. "Pass!" shouted warning Army linesman as the Maine passer faded.

Clemson dropped deep to cover his man and also to back up if a completed pass went over Danning's head. But the pass was to Army's left. The ball left the passer's hand. Clemson saw Danning put on a burst of speed just as he had advised. Danning went into the air and intercepted the pass.

Clemson waited for nothing more. He put on a burst of speed all his own and raced up the field. Off to his left Danning had touched the turf and was cutting for the side line. Abreast of the scrimmage line, Danning reversed his field and danced past a diving secondary. Only the secondary remained

between Danning and the goal line.

And as Danning charged, a swiftly flying cadet raced down on the Maine safety. Marvin Clemson was a down-the-field end again. The safety saw the two men charging. His uneasy glance shifted from ball carrier to potential blocker. He dropped back. Danning slowed slightly and swerved toward Clemson. And Clemson put on an added burst of speed and crossed in front of Danning and screened him.

The safety made a belated effort to get around Clemson as the latter left his feet. True, the safety avoided the block, but he could only make a twisted, out-of-position dive at Danning. And the latter pulled in his hip and raced free for an eighty-yard touchdown!

Clemson was first to congratulate his roommate. "Swell, Kirk! Great. I'm tickled to death."

And Clemson meant every word. The touchdown held greater significance for him than it did for the corps. As a soldier he had accepted the coach's orders to replace Danning without question, but he couldn't be happy about it. He couldn't help wondering what the substitution might mean to Danning's pride.

But now the buoyant, mercurial Kirk Danning was in the clouds again as a result of the touchdown. It seemingly never occurred to him that Clemson had made the touchdown possible. That he had diagnosed the play and had instructed Danning what to do, and then had gone down the field to Indianize the lone man who stood between Danning and the goal line.

But Danning had forgotten; so had Clemson. He was far happier than if he had made the score himself.

An Army sub, one of those one-play boys, came jogging in from the sideline to boot the kick for the extra point. The ball snapped back, was placed down, and the long-legged, gawky cadet sub put the ball between the posts as neat as anything an engineer could ask for. Then he turned and jogged off the field.

Maine now received. But it was a deflated group of Pine Tree State boys who spread out for the ball. A moment ago they had been in the clouds as they saw an opportunity to equalize the

score. And now, still stunned, they saw the board reading 14 to 0.

The quarter almost ended, Hanlon made many changes. Clemson and Danning, however, remained in the game and Randall stayed on the bench.

Maine soon surrendered the ball, and Army took over. Condon and his successor tried a variety of plays under conditions which in a more important game would look like poor judgment. Clemson and Danning alternated on most of the plays and might have done much better if the Army generals had stuck to ground-gaining plays.

Shortly before the half ended Clemson gave way to Randall, and now Randall and Danning combined in plays that hardly aroused the watching experts.

The half ended without further scoring, and the gridiron gladiators gave over Michie Field to the bands and cheering sections. In the dressing quarters the players dropped down for a needed rest. Injured men, none seriously, inspected their bruises.

Coach Major Hanlon moved among the players, but made no general comment until the warning came to return to the field.

"Just a word before you go back," declared the major. His dark eyes ran over his charges. "A score of fourteen to nothing isn't impressive, but it is satisfactory. While you are out there playing Maine, I'm playing Yale and Notre Dame and Navy. As soldiers you should not need to be told to obey orders from your superior. In the game your superior is your quarterback who in turn is acting under my orders. Please remember that what might not seem the right play this afternoon may be the basis of what may be the right play a month from now. All right, let's go."

CHAPTER IV

Commissioner Clemson Threatened

ARMY took the field again. The starting backfield this time was Condon, Osmanski, Danning and Randall, the one the experts had selected as

Army's first-string backfield.

Maine received, hit the rugged Army eleven's forward wall three times without much result and then kicked Army's ball.

Danning faded with ball in hand and whipped a pass to an Army end that proved good for twenty yards. Danning went back again with ball in hand. Calmly he beat off the Black Shirts and shot the ball down the field, this time to the left end, but the ball was slapped down.

Randall came back, his jaw hard. "What's the matter? Want me to wear a red light? I was in the clear."

"Sorry," said Danning, "I didn't see you. As a matter of fact, I never could."

DANNING chuckled at his own wit while Randall burned. But, following a line buck by Osmanski, Danning threw a perfect pass to Randall, and the latter made a first down.

But now Maine made a substitution. A right end whose play in the first half had been outstanding was returning to the game. Kirk Danning dropped back to heave another pass, but this Maine end crashed through with surprising speed and power and smothered Danning for a loss.

Maine had obviously played a trump card. The end had been kept on the bench awaiting Army's expected air attack, and now he was in the game with instructions.

But Major Pat Hanlon held an ace himself. A slow smile played on his lips. Events appeared to be working out according to plan.

Condon, acting under instructions from the bench, continued to call for passes as frequently as possible, but the big right end smothered Danning repeatedly before he could find an available receiver.

Maine took over the ball and rolled up two first downs before being forced to punt. Major Hanlon looked over his bench and called Clemson to his side for brief instructions. When a break came he slapped Clemson on the shoulder and sent him in.

"Clemson in. Randall out."

Osmanski hit the line for a four-yard buck. Army huddled. Clemson gave his instructions to Condon.

"Coach says to use me on passing plays."

Danning bridled. "What's the matter? Doesn't he think I'm good enough? Why doesn't he give me a little protection?"

"Maybe you had better ask him," said Clemson quietly, and went to his position.

The ball came back to him and he faded. There was no bruising end to crash in on Clemson. An end came in, but Clemson easily evaded him. Far down the field Jannick was legging it as he had been doing fruitlessly for several plays. Now he turned his head—and saw a ball spiraling down on him.

Jannick reached up without changing stride and took a ball that for all its speed landed as light as a feather. And the end who had beaten Clemson out of a job now tucked one of Clemson's passes under his arm and a moment later enjoyed the thrill of his first Army touchdown.

Up in the press section the scribes blew on their fingers. Dan Nowley, noted sports writer, tapped out the following which was to be read by many thousands among whom would be Kirk Danning's father.

In line with an air-minded Army, we have been banking on the Point this season to take to the air and rely on the good right arm of Kirk Danning. Well, Kirk seems to have a balky motor. In the third period, Marvin Clemson, hitherto considered to be on the receiving end, calmly came off the bench and in a "That's-the-way-to-do-it" fashion, whipped as pretty a touchdown pass as Navy would never like to see.

Marvin Clemson threw more passes. Long ones, short ones, shovel and flat heaves and the score mounted against the tired Black Bears. Until finally Pat Hanlon seemed satisfied. He pulled Clemson out of the game to send him on the trail of other regulars already in the showers, regulars that included Kirk Danning.

As Clemson clunked into the dressing room he could head the conclusion of the Rocket yell.

Hoo-rah! Hoo-rah!
Ar-MAY! Rah!
Clemson! Clemson! Clemson!

Kirk Danning was already completely showered.

"Well," he blurted out as he saw Clemson enter, "is the one-man show over?"

Clemson sobered. "No," he said in an almost weary tone. "It isn't over. There is more to come. A lot more."

He pulled his perspiration-soaked jersey over his head. This was only the first game. There was a long season ahead to the Navy game. How was it all going to work out?

Marvin Clemson, unquestionably the outstanding surprise and player of the Maine game, felt not the least bit like a hero. He returned to his room after killing as much time as possible, expecting to have an unpleasant scene with Danning.

But he had not counted on the recurring disposition of Kirk Danning. Danning was stretched lazily out on his bunk, hands under his head, day dreaming. The moody look in the dark eyes had given way to bright speculation.

"Hi, Clem," he said twisting his head. "I'm an awful heel not to have congratulated you. That was a swell job." There was not much sincerity in Danning's tone; the apology was just incidental to what was in his mind.

"Of course, you were lucky not to have to contend with that big ape I had barging in on me, but on the whole you did swell. Do you know what it means? It means you've beaten Craig Randall out of his spot. Danning and Clemson—that's the backfield combina-

tion from now on."

"Don't you think the coach will have something to say about that?" observed Clemson dryly as he removed his coat and looked at his reflection in the mirror. He could stand a closer shave for the hop tonight. How was Maureen going to take his stealing the spotlight from a Danning?

"Oh, don't worry about Pat Hanlon. Pat's had this in mind all along. I can see his play now."

"Then you can do more than I can," declared Clemson. "He's planning something, but what it is I don't know."

But, Danning wasn't listening. "Won't Randall be burned up when he finds himself permanently benched? He's got another shock coming, too. Know who he's invited to the hop tonight? Gloria."

Clemson turned. "You mean that night club singer? Is she back in New York?"

"She's opening soon. She has been doing radio work. She's over to the Thayer now. I've three dances on her card. Boy, will Randall burn up."

"I thought you were growing cold on that dame."

"I am, but I like to worry Randall."

Clemson crossed to the bunk and sat on the edge. "Listen, Kirk, we're in our third year at the Point. You're missing plenty. Will you try to do me a favor and stop thinking of West

[Turn page]

Mr. R--- makes a Confession



3 Feel like a million this month. Ex-Lax worked fine. Didn't upset me or keep me awake last night... Boy, watch me tear into my work today!



1 Almost got fired today. Boss caught me napping at my desk. The trouble is I need a laxative. But I hate to take the awful stuff.



2 Tom told me to try Ex-Lax home. and I bought a box on my way in for the night. A cinch to take — it tastes just like chocolate!

The action of Ex-Lax is thorough, yet *gentle*! No shock. No strain. No weakening after-effects. Just an easy, comfortable bowel movement that brings blessed relief. Try Ex-Lax next time you need a laxative. It's good for every member of the family.

10¢ and 25¢



Point in terms of me and you and Randall before—”

“Before what?”

Clemson shrugged his shoulders. “I don’t know. I just feel as though we’re heading for trouble.”

And now it was Danning’s turn to become paternal.

“Clem, you and I are as different in our make-up as earth and water. You fit into all this. You wallow in it. Drag in your chin, Mister Ducrot. How many gallons in Lusk Reservoir. How many days, O Celine? One demerit for dusty rifle. Two demerits for bed in disorder.” Danning deliberately mused up the bed clothing.

“We passed all that,” declared Clemson. “You got through it all right.”

“Not the way you did, Clem. You took it in stride. You take everything in stride. Do what the coach says because a good soldier always obeys. I’m different. I’m like my father. We had to fight for everything we got in a game where you make your own rules.”

Clemson shook his head. “Well, I hope everything works out for the best.”

Marvin Clemson might have had cause to worry if he could have witnessed what was happening many miles away.

COMMISSIONER CLEMSON was entering the almost palatial home that sat back from a parkway drive. Jack Danning was in the study. Before him was a heap of evening newspapers. Danning removed the glasses which he wore in the privacy of his study and waved the commissioner to a seat.

Danning’s many enemies liked to picture him as an ignorant man because of his limited schooling. But that study was lined with well selected books, and Jack Danning knew the contents of most of them.

“Commissioner, have you read the papers? Well, I have. The reports on the Army game are all about your son.”

“I’m pleased to hear it,” said the commissioner. Commissioner Clemson was not a vigorous man, but many a politician had made the mistake of underestimating the firmness behind

the almost gentle manner.

“Well, I’m not pleased,” snapped Danning. “I smelled a rat when we were at the Point. Marvin is an end. Why is he playing in the backfield?”

“He was a back in high school,” replied Clemson, a bit surprised.

“But why is he playing a back—now?”

The commissioner’s lips tightened before he spoke. “Don’t you think you had better ask that question of the coach?”

“I’m asking you,” snapped the political boss. “And I am also telling you something. When I want something I go after it. The ends justify the means. That’s my philosophy and the events of the world convince me more and more that I am on the right track.

“I have plans for Kirk. I’m certain that a West Point commission is going to be a tremendous asset in what is shaping up for us. But he needs more than a commission. He needs the kind of publicity football can give him. I don’t want your son taking the play away from him. To further my plans, Kirk must be starred above all other players. With Marvin in the backfield, he is sharing if not hogging all the glory.”

“I don’t see that there is anything I can do about it,” said the commissioner mildly.

“Well, I do. You can tell him the spot you are in.”

The commissioner paled slightly, but his gaze and voice remained steady.

“I wasn’t aware that I was in a spot,” he said quietly.

“No?” The political boss leaned across his heavy mahogany desk. “Listen. I made this governor, but he is inclined to forget it. A jolt or two won’t hurt him. You did a fine job on last year’s flood damage—”

“Thank you.”

“But the governor took the credit. In the haste of getting things done contracts were drawn up quickly. You signed those contracts. A number of boys on the hill would like to make the governor squirm a bit. Naturally, he would have to have a goat.”

“And I would be the goat,” added Clemson as the big man paused.

"I don't have to tell you how certain I am that you could be. You've seen enough investigations. Now you understand why I want you to tell Marvin to be sensible."

The commissioner rose. "Your request isn't worthy of a serious answer," he said. "Good night."

CHAPTER V

A West Point Hop

EVEN in keeping a date, a cadet had to subscribe to that inflexible regimentation that was so much a part of his Academy life. Together with other cadets fortunate enough to have "drags," Marvin Clemson headed this Saturday night for the Thayer-West Point Inn, the only hotel within the Reservation.

He was one of those who waited in the lobby and looked eagerly at each descending elevator in the establishment presided over, as far as cadets and "femmes" were concerned, by Mrs. Grundy. Here as elsewhere there were "limits" prescribed for the cadet. The dining room, lobby and balcony overlooking the lobby was as far as a cadet could go.

Clusters of girls, all in evening dress, waited in the lobby. Clemson noted the frequent glances sent his way. He was being recognized, pointed out as the hero of the game. Danning or Randall would have loved this attention, but Clemson felt embarrassed.

And as if the thought of Randall made Clemson shift his attention, he looked toward the balcony stairs and saw Randall. The first classman was intently watching the balcony and the elevators, and seemed far more nervous than some of the yearlings keeping their first dates.

But just then another elevator poured forth its bouquet of femininity, and Clemson saw Maureen Danning. She had a girl with her, a tall blonde, who was to be Kirk Danning's drag for the hop.

Clemson went forward to meet Maureen. She introduced Grace Hollowell

and then demanded, "Where is Kirk?"

"He should be along any minute," explained Clemson, but his glance was drawn to the waiting Craig Randall. Maureen was wondering about Kirk, and Randall was wondering about the dilatory Gloria Dawn. And Clemson was wondering if there might be any connection. No two ways about it, that Danning guy would get himself bumped out of the Point if he didn't cut out his monkey-shines. Ten to one he was with Gloria Dawn right now.

And then Kirk Danning bustled in the front door. "Hi, sis. Hi, Grace. Sorry to keep you waiting. Had to crawl, a plebe."

But out of the corner of his eye Danning was watching the balcony. Clemson followed his glance and saw Gloria Dawn make her appearance. Clemson heard some girl within ear-shot say, "There's Juliet on her balcony."

The remark was exaggeration. But there was something about Gloria Dawn that set her apart from the general run of debs and college girls in the lobby, sophistication, a year or two in age, perhaps a professional attractiveness. Yet she wasn't theatrical. She saw Randall and came down to him. And immediately several stags moved toward the stairs.

And on Kirk Danning's face was the smile that was supposed to belong to the cat that swallowed the mouse.

The quartette headed for Callum Hall in the cool of the autumn evening. Danning and Miss Hollowell moved ahead, and Clemson was alone with Maureen.

"I don't know why I am going to the hop with you," she said playfully, "after you stole the spotlight away from my brother."

"It was just the breaks of the game."

"Well, if Army gets a few more breaks like that it is going to be just too bad for the Navy."

"If you don't mind," said Clemson a bit uneasily, "can't we talk about something else than football?"

Maureen looked at him with searching eyes. "Yes, of course. But what else is there to talk about at this season of the year?"

Clemson found plenty to talk about. His work at West Point, rumors that classes were to be graduated ahead of schedule, world events of great moment—and soon they were at Cullum Hall.

HERE again regulations governed. A hop consisted of a dozen dances. No more, no less. But they were fairly long dances. The card system was still in use, and Clemson and Danning got busy filling cards.

Danning caught up with Clemson. "Leave the fifth vacant. You have that with Gloria."

"How do you know?" asked Clemson, surprised. Danning had not been near her since they had left the Thayer.

"I dropped in here first and picked up a card," grinned Danning. "And by a very strange coincidence I happened to meet Gloria."

"Those strange coincidences are going to get you into a peck of trouble one of these days," grumbled Clemson, but Danning merely laughed at his fears.

The strains of the first dance sounded and Clemson returned to Maureen. He would have preferred going out on the balcony, a delightful spot at this season of the year. Later, of course, they would all go out when the brilliantly lighted night boat gliding along the Hudson would swing its searchlight beams upon the cadets and their guests.

The evening passed swiftly, too swiftly, for Clemson, and before he knew it Danning was reminding him that this was his dance with Gloria Dawn. Clemson crossed to where she was standing by Craig Randall. Randall gave him a dark look.

"I'd like to know how you got your name on Gloria's card," he complained. "What is this, another one of those Danning-to-Clemson passing combinations?"

"Criss-cross might be the better word," suggested Clemson as he glided Gloria out onto the rapidly filling floor. She was a beautiful dancer, and for a moment Clemson was conscious of this fact alone. She broke the spell.

"You don't like me, do you?"

Her frankness failed to embarrass him. "Since we are letting our hair down," he said bluntly, "I don't. It is nothing personal. For all I know you're a swell girl and kind to your mother. It's just that you're not Army—if you know what I mean."

"Oh, but I'm crazy about uniforms."

"You're only crazy about attention, the spotlight, publicity. That's your business. Trouble is, both Randall and Danning have a yen for the same thing, but it isn't *their* business. You can be the means of their getting into trouble, and getting into trouble at West Point means the end of a career."

"You've got poor little me all wrong," she protested, giving him the full benefit of her widening blue eyes. "And I really like you. You're the serious, hard-to-get type."

"Well, if you really like me that much," said Clemson, "will you do me a favor? Will you please forget all about West Point until after the Navy game?"

She laughed. "You slay me."

"Not a bad suggestion," observed Clemson dryly. He was pleased enough to turn her back to Randall when the dance ended.

But altogether too soon the orchestra was playing "Army Blue" and then drifting into the strains of "Auld Lang Syne," and the hop was over.

Clemson had an hour in which to escort Maureen back to the Thayer Hotel and then get himself back to his room. And every cadet used the last second of this privilege.

"It was a wonderful time," said Maureen as they walked under the autumn moon. "I kept my promise not to talk about football, but now I must break that promise. A politician's daughter learns to be a good eavesdropper, and I overheard Craig Randall make an unpleasant remark. Maybe he wanted me to hear it. He intimated that you have always been a better back than Kirk and that you concealed your ability on advice from your father."

"Why should my father give me such advice?" asked Clemson.

"At the request of *my* father, perhaps. Kirk, don't misunderstand me. You see, even before I became my father's secretary I knew what was going

on behind the scenes. I know the inside of so many deals and trades, pull and pressure. People in public life have a different viewpoint about things—”

“Not my dad,” protested Clemson. “In the first place, I don’t believe that I am as good a back as Kirk. And in the second place—well, there just isn’t any second place.”

She patted his arm. “I’m glad to hear that, Marvin. I would like to hang on to a few old-fashioned ideals.”

They reached the Thayer, said their good nights, and the two cadets started back, Kirk Danning reluctantly.

“If you’re planning a secret rendezvous with Gloria,” said Clemson, “my advice is to forget it.”

Danning fell into step beside his roommate. “Maybe you were planning a secret date yourself,” he rejoined. “All she talked about was you. What kind of a heel are you, anyway? First you take my job away from me, and then you take my girl.”

While Danning was not speaking seriously there was an undertone of resentment that irked Clemson.

“You don’t have to worry about Gloria as far as I’m concerned,” he said tartly, “and you won’t have to fear about my taking your job away from you if you knuckle down.”

“Oh, so that’s Pat Hanlon’s game, is it? He’s using you to spur me on. I’m too inflated with my own ability—”

“I don’t know what Major Hanlon’s plans are,” cut in Clemson with some heat, “but I do know that you act like a jackass sometimes. If your father wants you to make a flashy football name for yourself, why don’t you try to do it?”

“Don’t worry about that,” said Danning carelessly. “I guess Dad will manage to scrape along somehow.”

CHAPTER VI

The Heavily Twins

YALE possesses a beautiful Bowl, and the Bulldog invariably has a topnotch football team, the kind of a team that can take it on the chin for

three periods and then come back in the fourth quarter to rip the opposition to pieces. This year the Blue boasted a great team, a well balanced team with a strong line, a pair of top rank ends and a well balanced backfield. And as usual, Yale could throw in reserves that could play almost as good as the first string.

So you couldn’t blame the experts for picking Yale. And most of the fans entering the score-guessing contest had picked Army on the short end of the score.

A densely packed Bowl watched the corps march in. This was the best part of the show. The game, well, Army ought to put up a good contest. Sports critics expected the Army to be tough. But the Blue had generated more power than the Boulder Dam. That would mean a battle of lines. Nothing very spectacular. Rush and punt. Yeah, Army had a pretty good passer in Danning, but their attack must be weak. Hadn’t they pulled an end into the backfield?

“Yeaaaaa, Army!”

“Bulldog! Bulldog!”

The two teams ran out from their sideline huddles. Yale with its blue jerseys and white helmets, Army with gold helmets that gleamed bright in the sunlight.* And experts noted that the starting halfbacks for Army were the same pair that had started against Navy the year before—Danning and Randall.

Marvin Clemson remained on the bench, sitting beside Major Hanlon. Yale had won the toss and elected to receive. So the cadets would start off on the defensive. For the past week Army had held secret maneuvers. But a good general tests the opposition before throwing in his best weapons.

The powerful Blue drove up to its forty-yard line before a tightening Army line compelled a kick. The punt sailed deep, and both of Yale’s great ends were down like a pair of dive bombers to flatten Condon. Straight running plays from a double wingback failed to pick up worth-while yardage, and a return punt gave Yale the ball again.

Yale made another first down before punting into the end zone. Condon

pulled a quick kick out of the bag, booting the ball himself. Jannick raced down to touch the ball on Yale's six-yard line.

And now an exchange of punts gave Army the ball on its forty. The cadets had time to breathe, room to open up.

Danning faded. "Pass." There was nothing very deceptive about the play. A long heave to Jannick was knocked down.

Army huddled again. Yale's center dropped back into a 6-3-2 defense. Danning faded again. "Pass." A heave down the alley was slapped down. Army out of the huddle again. The team shifted to the right. Danning back again. A third heave sailed into the flat. A racing Yale defender cut across and whacked down the ball.

The Yale student body cheered. Was this Army's air attack?

Osmanski dropped back to punt. Yale's star right end, Toby Wendall, came in like a projectile, leaped high and partly deflected the ball, and Yale took over on its own forty again.

The Bulldog opened up. Alternate smashes off the tackles, mixed with spinners and an occasional short pass, rolled back the Army. Yale ploughed over for the first touchdown.

The Yale side of the Bowl went wild. Roll up that score, Bulldog!

Clemson looked at Hanlon. The coach had not changed his position. His sharp eyes were still fixed on the play out on the field.

Army received. The slippery Condon slithered and wriggled back to the thirty-seven before a wave of blue engulfed him. Hanlon slapped Clemson on the shoulder.

"All right. In for Randall. Pass from the reverse. The halfbacks are playing the ball, so shoot fast and run fast. Okay. And remember we're playing Navy out there."

Clemson grabbed his helmet. Playing Navy. Clemson knew what the coach meant. He was gambling on this unorthodox reversible backfield of Danning and Clemson. If it worked against Yale it should click against Purdue, Notre Dame, Harvard, and Navy.

The referee's whistle shrilled. "Clemson in for Randall."

RANDALL removed his helmet. His jaw hardened. Taking a man out after the opposition had scored made it appear that the man removed was at fault.

Clemson took over. The first play sent Osmanski into a pile-up at guard for only a gain of a yard. Yale was still playing its 6-3-2.

Army huddled. "Passes," said Clemson. "On the reverse. Halfbacks are playing the ball, so passes will be fast. Receivers sprint with ends converging."

Army came out of its huddle. Danning took the ball and started wide. He slipped the ball to Clemson on a reverse. Clemson picked up speed, running wide and deep. Yale shifted with the ball and closed in on Clemson. Suddenly the latter braked and wheeled.

Clemson took quick aim and fired diagonally. On the far side of the line racing at top speed, Danning the erstwhile passer, turned his head, measured the ball, shifted direction slightly but did not slacken speed. He reached up, grabbed the spinning pigskin without breaking stride and set out for pay dirt.

He was past the halfback who had been caught flat-footed. The cadets were on their feet, hailing a touchdown. A length-of-the-field run seemed certain, but the Yale safety seemed to come from nowhere. A diving shot hit Danning across the thighs and spilled him. But the pass had been good for twenty yards.

Army came out of its huddle. Clemson took the ball again on almost the identical play, but this time the plan called for a cut back inside end. Clemson only picked up three yards, but he carried the ball wide.

The next reverse found Clemson wide again. Once more he braked. Once more a bulletlike heave sailed true to the speeding Danning who sprinted free again before the Yale safety crowded him enough to allow a back to pull him down from behind.

A cut-back and another Clemson-to-Danning heave had the ball on Yale's eight-yard line. Yale took time out. A new halfback came in with instructions. Army players relaxed on the grass. There was definitely a new

spirit, a new lift. The score read 7 to 0 against them. Five minutes ago Army looked like a beaten team. But now even the spectators could sense that a new force had come into the game with Marvin Clemson. Army was on the move.

A whistle shrilled the players back onto their feet. Army came out of its huddle.

Yale dug in, players slapped one another on the pants and clenched fists. Fight. Hold that line.

Army shifted. The same play. Only this time Danning did not slip the ball to Clemson. Clemson cut past the end, hands open. He sprinted for the coffin corner. Inside the end zone he turned and reached up. It was like plucking a ripe apple off the tree. He took the passed ball without a hand being laid on him.

Osanski missed the point, and Yale took new courage, but it soon ebbed. The quarter ran out and there were two exchanges of punts before Army took the ball with respectable yardage behind their backs to warrant risky passes. Then Army opened up.

Clemson and Danning shuffled behind the line. Reverses were beautifully masked. Clemson fired passes and Danning received. Then Danning heaved his twister and Clemson knuckled onto the ball. Danning raced thirty yards on one pass for a score, and Clemson sprinted twenty-two for another touchdown.

The half ended with Army leading, 20 to 7, over a previously unscored-on team. And a joyous, happy squad of Army players burst into the locker-room.

Major Hanlon made no attempt to deflate them, but he was too level-headed to be stampeded. Army owed its lead to a surprise attack. But a surprise is short-lived. Army had scored three touchdowns in a little more than a single quarter against one of the best teams in the country. But there were other touchdowns to score and other games to play.

Hanlon started his Clemson-Danning interchangeable backfield combination in the second half, but the first pass from Clemson to Danning almost resulted in an interception. Danning

threw a pass to Clemson, and this in turn was knocked down.

ON the bench, Major Hanlon shook his head knowingly. A good general planning an attack always figures out the defense the enemy may use and then plans to overcome that defense. Yale was shooting in its ends to hurry the passer. And the halfbacks were playing deeper and covering the receiver.

Well, Hanlon expected this. His program called for shooting Clemson and Danning into the line on what seemed a pass play. If the Yale ends charged to hurry the passer, there would be no pass, and either Danning or Clemson would carry inside. And with the halfbacks playing deep they could not back up the line in time to stop a sizeable gain.

But to have this alternative play work and thereby keep the opposition guessing, both Clemson and Danning in turn had to do some good blocking. Each in turn must take out the tackle effectively. And the block must be unexpected enough not to tip the play.

With Army's passing game spiked for the time being at least, the game reverted to a battle of lines. Half-way through the period Randall came back into the game with other substitutions. But Yale also made substitutions.

Clemson and Danning returned for the final quarter, and once again their passing game clicked. And just before the game ended a heave from Clemson landed in Danning's arms behind the Yale goal line.

It was a happy corps that marched out of the shadowed Bowl.

But Coach Hanlon wasn't satisfied. Sure, the passing was all that could be expected. But the pair would have to improve on their blocking and all-around defense play. Improvement should come with time, however. Yes, all in all Hanlon had something in the Clemson-Danning combination. But he had better keep his fingers crossed. Any coach would rather have a good average team than a supporting cast to a star. And now Army had not one star, but two stars. How was that going to work out? Maybe Danning, Senior, could have told.

 CHAPTER VII

Newspaper Headlines

KIRK DANNING had the Sunday papers spread out on his cot. How Danning could get hold of Sunday papers when as a cadet his finances should be confined to boodle checks was just one more puzzler for Clemson. Maybe Danning had smuggled the papers in from New York the night before. And that brought up something else.

"Hey, Clem. Know what Nowley calls us in his article? The 'Heavily Twins'. Get it? We heave passes. Neat, huh? Listen to this."

He read aloud from the sports page:

A good passer who can also run, block, kick and carry out the other assignments of a halfback is a threat that keeps the opposition guessing. So it is easy to imagine the amazement of a team that has to face not one but two triple threats. Both Clemson and Danning appeared to be good blockers and capable on the defense.

Army used the pair on interchangeable plays which were more or less in the experimental stage, but it is easy to foresee that Major Pat Hanlon is bringing a new secret weapon into gridiron warfare, so here is a warning to Navy to be prepared for the Heavily Twins—Marvin Clemson, the converted end, and Kirk Danning, who revealed that he could catch passes as well as heave them.

"That's what Nowley says about us," gloated Danning, and then scowled slightly. "I notice, though, that he puts your name first."

"What difference does that make?" demanded Clemson, folding the newspapers. They would have to be disposed of before inspection.

"Nothing. Nothing at all. Maybe it just sounds better that way. Clemson and Danning—Danning and Clemson. This is going to be bad news for Randall. It means he is all washed up as a starting back. He'll just love playing second fiddle to me."

Clemson gave him a sidewise glance. "Referring to football or to something else?" he asked dryly. "Or am I getting too personal hinting at where you were last night?"

"You don't have to hint," declared

Danning with a pleased grin. "Sure, I saw Gloria. We only get to New York legitimately a couple of times a year. You didn't think I was going to bring you along, did you? She's too much interested in you as it is."

Danning looked at another paper. "Speaking about New York, I learned that Diggy Sears is getting a boodle package this week. Haven't been in on a good boodle party this year. Are you in, or are you too sanctimonious to risk punishment duty?"

Clemson flushed at the challenge. "You can count me in," he said.

After all, Clemson didn't observe the thousand and one West Point regulations because of fear of demerits. He obeyed the rules because he subscribed to the honor system. But tradition said there were some violations every cadet tried to get away with. One of these infractions was attending "boodle parties" held clandestinely.

Tac didn't turn his head, but if cadets were caught they served their punishment without loss of prestige. If anything this improved their standing with their fellows.

"Okay, you're in," accepted Danning with the nonchalance of a veteran rule breaker. He cut articles out of the paper.

"Got to send these to the governor. Funny about my dad. He's been the field general in deals that make history, but he thinks more of a touchdown by me than he does in putting over a senator. He's hipped on this publicity stuff for political reasons. A great guy, my dad."

Clemson didn't dispute this observation. Boss Danning might be a great man according to some standards, but he was also a ruthless man. And he was spoiling his son. Too bad Kirk didn't have some of his sister's spirit.

MONDAY was the day in the football week when players licked their sores and had Saturday's performances hauled over the coals. Major Hanlon was no exception to the general run of football coaches in that no victory satisfied him. Sure, Army had performed well against Yale, but Army could have done better.

For a good part of an hour the corps

squad listened to their mistakes and then poured out on to Michie Field for a workout.

"Clemson and Danning," snapped the coach, "go over to the pits and get some blocking practice."

"There's a thirty-minute egg for you," grumbled Danning as he and Clemson headed for the pits. "Not one word of praise for what we did Saturday. What do we get? 'Go over to the pits and get some blocking practice.'"

Clemson chuckled and threw an arm about Danning's shoulders. "He's just letting a little air out of us before we swell up and bust over our publicity. And besides, if we're going to be filling in for a guy like Randall, we can stand some improvement in our blocking and defensive play. Craig may have personal faults, but you can't take away from him the fact that he is a good blocker."

"Was a good blocker," corrected Danning whimsically. "Our friend Randall is *tout fini!*"

Kirk Danning took to his blocking instruction with new-found enthusiasm, perhaps spurred on by the thought that Randall was being replaced.

But Major Hanlon had no intention of keeping them on fundamentals. Just as Kirk Danning had predicted, the phrase of "Heavily Twins" caught the football public's fancy. Sports writers dropped up to the Point at the request of editors. Danning and Clemson were snapped in action.

The coach had reason to feel satisfied with his experiment of interchangeable backs, and now he was ready to junk his attack for a new repertoire of plays which sports writers said would be thrown at Harvard Saturday in an Army *Blitzkrieg*.

Craig Randall was the forgotten man. And this wasn't a role he relished playing. For two years he had been in the starting backfield. And now in his final year at the Point he was being replaced.

Apparently he never reasoned that Army had a much lighter line this year than in the two previous years that he had backed up this line. For two years Army had been able to put up a stubborn defense against the best attacks in the country, and in its turn

stage a powerful drive. This year Hanlon had to plan on speed, open plays, a war of movement.

And Randall failed to make allowance for the liberality of writers who invariably poured out the adjectives on a novelty. Heavily Twins. Interchangeable backs. This wasn't sound football. It was showmanship. Publicity. For whom? For a bird like Kirk Danning, of course.

And Randall was the kind of a guy who spoke as he thought. He didn't mince words. With so many writers around looking for material, some of this caustic criticism was bound to reach their ears.

CHAPTER VIII

The Crimson Tide

THE Army-Harvard game is always one of the football highlights of the season. The seats for the traditional Harvard-Yale game are monopolized by the large body of alumni, but old John Public gets a crack at the Harvard-Army ducats, and this week the demand amounted to a stampede.

Any curious party seeking the cause of the added interest could put his finger on the Heavily Twins combination, or at least on the publicity accorded Danning and Clemson.

From the days of the Centre football brilliants and Red Grange, the football public has demanded its seasonal sensation. And when Nowley called the interchangeable backfield and passing combination of Clemson and Danning the "Heavily Twins" he rang the bell.

The corps detained at the Back Bay yards and formed for its parade through the streets of Boston, a march that would be concluded in the Harvard Stadium. But the members of the corps football squad did not have to march. They would relax and lunch at a suburban country club.

And shortly after one o'clock the early arrivals at the Stadium looked down upon a gridiron glistening under a post-meridian Indian summer sun and watched the corps squad scurrying

about under punts and passes, garbed in their moleskins and silks and the gold-striped black and gray jerseys.

And nine of every ten spectators thumbing through the large programs were endeavoring to locate Danning and Clemson. The pair were near the sideline, alternately throwing passes, and as each man pulled the ball out of the air a ripple of applause ran through the stadium.

Looking at Kirk Danning's pleased expression, no one could doubt that he enjoyed this attention, but Marvin Clemson felt conspicuous. He likened himself to an exhibit in a side show of freaks.

And chasing down under looping punts was the forgotten man of the squad, Craig Randall.

"Hey, Danning and Clemson—would you come over here for a minute. This is a radio pick-up and I would like to introduce you to our radio audience."

Clemson's first inclination was to ignore the request, but when Danning immediately crossed over to his "waiting public," Clemson had to string along.

"What are we supposed to say?" grinned Danning. "Hi, Maw, it's a tough fight, but I expect to win."

But the sprightly young announcer had his own ideas of the interview. Taking the microphone from an assistant, he went into a huddle with the two football players.

"Ladies and gentlemen of the radio audience, we are fortunate in having with us two of Army's great stars, Marvin Clemson and Kirk Danning. This past week you have been reading about them because of their brilliant play in the Yale game. You have heard them called the Heavily Twins and may have assumed that they greatly resemble each other. They are both tall, well built men, but Kirk Danning is dark with black hair and brown eyes while Marvin Clemson has light brown hair and gray eyes. Boys, just why are you called Heavily Twins?"

Danning responded. "Because we both heave passes as well as catch them. We sort of duplicate each other's assignments on the same plays."

"I read somewhere," declared the announcer, "that while the ordinary

football backfield is composed of a quarterback, fullback and a right and left halfback, when you play Army has two left halfbacks. Isn't that something like a man with two left feet?"

Clemson chuckled. "Guess that's the way it looks to the coach sometimes."

"That is not quite correct," explained Danning. "We each play a double role in the backfield, but since we duplicate each other's style so much we interchange assignments."

"And that," said the announcer, "confuses the opponents."

"Sometimes," declared Clemson, "it confuses us."

The announcer's assistant pointed to his wrist-watch, and the announcer quickly thanked the pair for the interview and went into his commercial.

Danning said to Clemson as they strolled away, "Well, we've been on the air. We're getting popular."

"Yeah," drawled Clemson. "Too popular."

AS the muffled beat of drums could be heard from beyond the stadium, the attention of the spectators shifted from the players. The corps would be marching across the Lars Anderson bridge and in a moment would be swinging under the steel stands and onto the gridiron.

Silently and without orders the Army football players began to drift from the gridiron. For the next few minutes they would fade out of the picture. The corps would take over.

The swelling of applause increased with the louder beat of the drums. The corps was marching in. Danning and Clemson paused for a moment to watch. The sight of the finest drilled body of men in the world made Clemson's blood bubble with pride to think that he was a part of it.

Into the stadium they marched in columns of four, lines as straight as the chalked stripes of the gridiron about to feel the impression of their well polished shoes. Every muscle functioned as if controlled by a master switch. The cadets were graded into companies according to their height, dipping slightly from the flankers toward the shorter men in the middle. So gradual was the variation that an optical illusion made

the cadets appear all of the same height although they ranged from the maximum of six feet six to the minimum height allowed of five feet four.

Uniforms of West Point gray, flowing capes piped with a thin line of red, and visored caps undulated as they swung into platoons. Company after company marched in lines so precise that watching spectators broke into spontaneous applause. They traversed the full length of the gridiron, passed under the goal posts, came about and marched up the field again. Companies halted.

Marvin Clemson took a quick breath and his eyes glowed.

"Doesn't that do something to you?" he demanded of Danning.

"Yeah," yawned Danning. "It makes me feel glad that I'm on the football team so I can get out of hiking. What are you in the corps? Just a number."

Clemson's face sobered. Danning was moving along into his third year at the Academy and he still had not caught its spirit. Clemson sighed.

"C'mon, let's join the squad," he said, "before the coach sends out a searching party."

Behind them the corps was breaking squads and jogging in quick time for their seats in the stadium. The Harvard band in crimson sweaters and white trousers was forming to march onto the field. Latecomers were hustling for their seats.

"Oh, Clemson!"

Clemson turned in the direction of the voice and saw George Parkhurst, his father's secretary in the Department of Conservation. And somehow seeing the lean visaged secretary was like receiving a telegram late at night. The immediate reaction was one of impending bad news.

"George! My father—he is all right?"

"Yes, of course. I just ran up here for the week-end. You know I was born in Boston and have relatives here." But the explanation was so obviously a subterfuge, the secretary decided to state his purpose frankly.

"As a matter of fact, I wanted to see you, Marvin, but your father doesn't know anything about this. Is Kirk Danning your friend?"

Kirk had passed on. Clemson looked

Longest Goals From the Field That Won 1939 Games

Yards

- 47—Merlin Hathaway, Cortland Thr.—vs. Amer. Int'l.
- 47—Albert Walton, Bishop—vs. Texas Coll.
- 46—Warner Keaney, Rhode Island—vs. Mass. State.
- 45—Pat Eaton, Nevada—vs. Calif. Ag.
- 37—James Franklin, Muhlenberg—vs. Albright.
- 37—Ernie Poore, Fresno State—vs. Texas Mines.
- 35—Roger Hightower, Flagstaff Thr. vs. Nevada.
- 34—Robert Kunz, St. Lawrence—vs. Alfred.
- 33—Pat Eaton, Nevada—vs. Chico State.
- 33—William Flaherty, Niagara—vs. Detroit Tech.



after him and back to George Parkhurst with a puzzled frown. "Of course. My best. Why do you ask?"

PARKHURST shrugged his shoulders. "I only know that Boss Danning has put pressure on your father. The way he does on other people in public life when he wants something. I thought Kirk might have put him up to it. But of course the idea might be entirely that of Boss Danning."

"What idea?" demanded Clemson, puzzled and apprehensive.

"That of persuading you not to take the publicity that might go to Kirk. I don't suppose your father has informed you that he has been threatened by Boss Danning."

"Threatened?" exclaimed Clemson. "What could he threaten him with?"

"With almost anything. In politics you don't have to prove your charges. I have an idea he threatened to have an investigation over the flood damage emergency contracts. Oh, they were perfectly regular. But they were drawn up hurriedly. And when a man like

Danning wants to get someone it is easy to make charges and hold an investigation that will make innocent acts appear to be dishonest. I have seen it happen too many times. The public is always ready to believe the worst."

"And because I'm sharing the spotlight with Kirk, his father will take it out on my father?"

"That's the substance. Knowing your father as well as I do, I suspected that he would not speak to you. But, Marvin, you can't let anything happen to your father. Not at his age. Not after all the splendid years of service he has given to the state."

"What do you want me to do? Quit? Lay down?"

Parkhurst squirmed uneasily. "When you have been in public life as long as I have and have seen what I have, honor has a somewhat elastic meaning. You learn to do the expedient thing. After all, which is more important—making touchdowns for Army, or preserving your father's reputation and health?"

Marvin Clemson's face revealed his strain. It wasn't a question deciding the answer. There could only be one answer. It was the matter of conflicting viewpoints. People like George Parkhurst and Boss Danning, yes, and most likely Maureen Danning, possessed their own peculiar viewpoint. They did the political thing.

On the other hand, what was this intangible thing called honor? Marvin didn't know and neither did his father except that if a man lost it he lost everything.

Clemson said, "I've got to go now. We'll be taking the field in a minute. Thanks, George, for telling me."

Clemson continued on to the ivy-covered field house and joined his mates who were making final check-up of equipment before taking the field. Craig Randall saw him enter.

"Well," Randall exclaimed, loud enough for others to hear, "where have you been? Giving out another exclusive radio interview, or taking care of your autographs? Aren't you afraid Danning will get jealous if you get all the attention?"

Clemson shot a quick look at Danning. The dark frown revealed that

Randall had scored just as he had intended to. Randall was resentful over being displaced. From his point of view he was the victim of a raw deal. And he knew how to fight back.

CHAPTER IX

Fair Harvard

TWO football squads broke onto the field and rushed to their benches. Cheer leaders sprang into action.

HARRRRRRR-ward! HARRRRRRR-ward!

HARRRRRRRRRR-ward!

Team! Team! TEAM!

On, brave old Army team.

On to the fray.

Fight on to victory.

For that's the fearless Army way.

The captains came back. Gunlund had won the toss. Starting elevens huddled briefly for last-minute instructions from the coach, and then broke for places. Army dropped back to receive. Danning came over to Clemson.

"How about pulling that you-to-me if either of us gets the kick?"

"Okay, but we'll be shot at sunrise if we flub it."

The whistle shrilled. The crimson line moved forward. The ball took off as a Harvard toe thudded against the inflated pigskin.

Kirk Danning, with the sun at his back and an east wind from off the Charles blowing against him, shifted slightly toward the goal posts. He reached up and took the kick.

Danning broke sharply toward his right, wheeled and darted toward his sideline. He seemed to be cornered as the Crimson tide swept in upon him. He halted abruptly, wheeled again—and sent the ball arcing across the field less than fifteen yards from Army's goal line.

Clemson had fainted a shot at a charging Crimson. Now he grabbed the across-the-field heave and broke into full speed. Man after man fell behind his speeding legs as he tore along the field. A safety cut across to head him off.

Clemson reversed his field with the

Crimson herd pounding at his heels. Ball under right arm, left arm out in front of him, Clemson swept down on the safety—and hip-swiveled at the last second.

The safety left his feet in a desperate dive and his hand caught Clemson's foot. Clemson stumbled, recovered, but lost his speed. A diving tackle from behind hauled him down on Harvard's nineteen.

Up in the broadcaster's glassed-in booth atop the colonnade an announcer was excitedly describing the play.

"... and the frequently asked question this past week—which of Army's reversible backs, Clemson or Danning, is the better—seems on the way to being answered. Clemson's run was beautifully executed. A thing of beauty." Then as if an afterthought. "Although Danning's desperate lateral when he found himself cornered made Clemson's run possible."

"Desperate lateral?" As if Danning had not conceived the play. And on the Army bench Major Hanlon rubbed his chin. It took more than two ordinary men to pull a play like that. It required a pair who were perfectly attuned. Two men, each the complement of the other. If they could go through to the Navy game like this.

The teams lined up. Army out of the huddle and shifted. Harvard moved over. The ball came to Clemson. He and Danning slid by each other, headed toward opposite wings. Clemson faked handing the ball to Danning, streaked wide—and suddenly braked. The ball shot from his hand. It streaked above the stretching Harvard hands and landed in Kirk Danning's hands where he stood behind the goal line.

Danning's part of the play seemed so brief as to almost escape attention. Everyone had seen Clemson running with the ball, but the announcer had to identify Danning as the receiver.

The kick was good, and Army led the Crimson Tide, 7-0. Dartmouth had taken almost four quarters to score on Harvard, while Army had clicked on two plays.

A fighting, angry Harvard team took over the ball. Mixing their plays expertly, Harvard moved up the field. At

mid-field a cleverly executed mousetrap sent Harvard's Phil Norton through.

DANNING drifted with the decoy and turned in time to see Norton come through without a hand on him. He saw something else. Three Harvard interferers were charging down upon him.

Danning had to make a split-second decision, whether to try to knife through the interference, or to break up the interference and leave Norton to Condon. He decided on the latter choice. Slowing up the interferers as much as he could, Danning let drive for them and spilled two as he went down himself. The third interferer tripped and left Norton to face Condon. The Army quarterback made a game try, but the slippery Norton evaded him to go over for a score.

Harvard kicked the extra point to tie the score. Army spread to receive.

Danning turned to Clemson. "Shall we try that you-to-me again?"

"Let's fake it this time," suggested Clemson.

The ball came sailing down ahead of a Crimson wave. Clemson took the ball on the run, braked and faked a lateral, and then broke from a standing start. Threading along the sideline, swerving toward the center and then reversing his field again, Clemson pulled the spectators to their feet with his second long run. A desperate dive knocked him outside on Harvard's thirty.

Army came out of its huddle quickly. A reverse found a Harvard end on top of Danning before he could get away his pass. He broke away, but was dropped for a two-yard loss. Condon called the same play, but in reverse. Clemson found no Harvard end stalking him. He had time for a good bead, and he fired the ball to Danning. Danning grabbed the ball, but was tackled almost in his tracks.

The stakes moved forward. Again Clemson faded and again a pass, this time to Condon, clicked. Danning faded. His end was playing him beautifully and Danning's hurried heave went over Clemson's head into the end zone.

Army lined up again. Clemson faded,

beat off an end, started to run, and then whipped the ball into the end zone where Jannick and Danning both leaped for the ball. Jannick got it.

With the quarter almost over and Army leading, 14 to 7, Major Hanlon made substitutions. Harvard took over the offensive, but a strong defensive team with Randall in the backfield stood off the Crimson thrusts.

Army took the ball late in the second quarter and started a drive. Hanlon sent Clemson and Danning back into the game. Condon called for passes, and once again the breaks of the game gave Clemson the more spectacular plays. Two of his passes were good for better than twenty yards, but a long end-zone heave from Clemson to Danning was nullified by an off side.

Harvard came back strongly in the second half, and Condon wisely did not risk any pass plays, with Harvard keeping the ball in Army territory. Stopped several times short of the Army goal, Harvard came back grimly. Hanlon rushed in subs, and Randall went in while Clemson and Danning came out.

Sitting on the bench, the pair saw Harvard push down hard to the goal as the quarter ended. The teams shifted, and Harvard banged over for its second touchdown. But Harvard missed the extra point, and Army led, 14 to 13.

Army received, but soon lost the ball, and once again the Crimson staged a determined march, only to be halted twice inside the Army twenty. A third time Harvard came down the field only to be stopped. But this time a sub came off the Harvard bench and booted a field goal from the twenty-three to make the score, Harvard-16, Army-14.

Major Hanlon turned to Clemson and Danning. "All right—get back in there."

With Army trailing and the Heavily Twins in, almost any spectator could guess what was coming—an air attack. Harvard made substitutions and played its defense accordingly.

"Watch Clemson and Danning. Rush them and cover them."

Neither Danning nor Clemson attempted to rely on deception. Both were rushed. Both had to shoot fast and trust to the other. There was no

time for long passes. So they alternately raced past the line of scrimmage and turned to leap for balls that smacked into their hands. Some smacked out because of the necessary speed. But yard by yard Army moved up the field. And when they lost the ball and a punt sent them back again, they started once more.

Only a moment or two of play remained. And the short passes were taking too much time for the resulting yardage gained.

Clemson looked at the clock. The ball came back to him on Harvard's thirty. Clemson turned and raced back at full speed. Harvard linesmen chased him. Clemson wheeled and raced toward the sideline. He reversed and tore back again. He was now almost twenty yards behind his line of scrimmage. He started running again—and then halted. His arm drew back. It was a long pass that left his hand.

Down in the shadows Danning was waiting and hoping in the end zone. The ball was high, very high. He went into the air along with a Harvard back. And Danning's fingers closed over the ball and held!

Final score—Army-20, Harvard-16.

CHAPTER X

A Boodle Fight

IT was a tired but happy group of Army players who trudged into the dressing quarters provided by Harvard. At least, Kirk Danning was tired. Clemson wasn't so certain about his being happy. Kirk was receiving his share of congratulations, but he wasn't taking them with usual delight. He seemed to be nursing a peeve. Was it because the better breaks had gone to Clemson? The latter wondered.

The football players had been invited to a dance at the Copley Plaza that night, but even here the lion's share of attention went to Clemson. Clemson, staring beyond the fringe of admirers, saw that Danning was piqued. Danning soon walked out on the party.

Clemson felt genuinely alarmed. The corps, including the football players,

had to be on the train by midnight. And if Danning were nursing a peeve there was no telling what he might do. If he missed the train he could forget about football for good. And he would probably blame Clemson.

But Clemson breathed a sigh of relief when Danning climbed aboard at the last minute. He ignored a seat beside Clemson and went forward into another car.

Sunday should have been another day. But not for Danning. He had his usual allotment of Sunday papers, but he wasn't using his scissors as he had after the Yale game. Finally he threw the papers into a disordered heap.

"Clemson! Clemson!" he growled. "Anyone would think you were the only player in the game. I'm going out. Too bad a guy can't get drunk in this dump."

Clemson didn't say anything. He let Danning go, feeling that eventually the mood would wear off.

But the mood lingered, and Clemson suspected fuel was being supplied by Craig Randall. Someone was circulating rumors of a split between the Heavily Twins, and one of the New York gossip columns hinted at trouble. Who was responsible for these rumors? It was not Clemson's nature to accuse anyone without proof, but his suspicions pointed to Randall.

The air of tension existed. It was something more than lack of conversation. After all, a West Point football player is busier than a traffic cop with the hives. Reville at 5:50 A. M., breakfast and inspections, classes at 7:50, dinner, classes, practice, supper and study and a welcome taps at 10:00. There wasn't much time for social activity.

But Kirk Danning, ordinarily so garrulous and effervescent, was so quiet that his moody silence appeared especially significant. And now he was little more than civil with Clemson. The latter sought for some way to ease the tension. The opportunity came on Tuesday night.

Both were at their tables studying, Clemson intently, Danning indifferently, when their door pushed open.

"Psst!" It was Diggy Sears. "My boodle came. My room after taps."

And Diggy's red head vanished as suddenly as it appeared.

Clemson was less anxious to attend the party now than when Danning had mentioned it the week before, but if one went without the other this fact would give credence to the rumors of ill feeling. He made no comment. But out of the corner of his eye he saw Danning covertly studying him.

Taps sounded. That meant putting books away, undressing quickly and turning out the lights and being in bed when the inspector made his rounds. Clemson put away his books, removed his shoes, snapped out his light—and climbed into bed. Silently he watched as Danning did the same.

Both were in bed, fully dressed except for their shoes. And both were breathing deeply when the door opened and a flashlight beam swept over them. Ten minutes later they rose silently from their cots and slipped noiselessly out into the corridor in their stocking feet.

A LONG the corridor other doors were opening. Ghostly figures stole into Diggy's room where a faint glow revealed a mound of candy, cake and assorted good things. The source of illumination appeared mysterious until one discovered that an electric light bulb was suspended through the leg of a pair of trousers.

"What protection have we, Diggy?" demanded a cadet.

"I put a plebe on watch," answered Diggy. "He'll sneeze if tac shows up. And can he sneeze! It's better than a bugle. Come on, you guys, pitch in. Only leave some of those cigarettes for me."

"Cigarettes?" repeated Danning avidly.

"Yeah," said Diggy. "But none for you. You're in training. And we got Notre Dame and Navy to beat yet."

Gobs of cake with frosting an inch thick were passed out to the accompaniment of muffled "ahhs" and "umms." It was like stolen fruit. No goodies ever tasted so good as in a boodle fight.

The stack of food vanished like an April snow drift as the hungry kaydets dug in. Suddenly the wordless munching was interrupted by a loud sneeze

heard through the slightly opened door.

"Tac," hissed Diggy. "Snap out the light."

A hand reached for the light, but Marvin Clemson reached for something else. He wanted to keep Kirk Danning from smoking a lot of cigarettes. He was just an instant ahead of someone else in grabbing for the cigarettes, for his hand brushed an arm as he drew it back.

"Wise guy, huh?" The voice was that of Kirk Danning.

But there was no time for dispute. Kaydets had to escape or go upon the quill sheets for punishment duty. Once again like ghosts in the night they slipped out into the corridor and vanished. Clemson followed on Danning's heels.

"All right," said Danning in the comparative safety of his room. "Divs on the cigarettes. You know I had my eye on 'em."

"In the morning," agreed Clemson. "Let's get into bed."

"Now," demanded Danning, advancing in the almost complete darkness.

"You can have them all, if you let me ration them out to you," whispered Clemson, backing away.

Suddenly Danning made a dive for the package. Clemson pulled away and as he did he tripped over a chair and tangled in it. He fell with a crash. In a desperate effort to protect himself, he pushed out his right hand and his whole weight landed on his thumb.

The sudden pain was forgotten in apprehension of what seemed a far more impelling danger. A quick patter of feet in the hallway ended before the door which was jerked open and the glare of a searchlight flooded the room. The subdivision inspector stood at the door.

The subdivision inspectors are chosen from the first classmen, and the Heavily Twins had the misfortune of being surveyed by Meaty Bowers, one of Craig Randall's few friends.

"Out of bed after taps without permission. Not wearing clothes that would be worn under ordinary circumstances in which you expect to spend the night. Falsely giving the 'All

right.' And smoking." Meaty rattled off infractions of regulations, annoyed that he could not find more.

"No 'all right' was given," corrected Clemson. "And no one was smoking."

"Answering a superior," gloated the inspector.

Clemson made no further comment. The futures of himself and Danning were in Meaty's hands, and he did not expect to be dealt with lightly.

Sure enough, they were put in for everything Meaty Bowers could think of and perhaps the overzealousness of Randall's pal worked in the favor of the Heavily Twins. In their reports, "belly-aches," Clemson and Danning admitted all but the smoking and the "All right." This last would be the most serious of offenses. A check up at taps either finds the cadets already asleep or brings the undoubted "All right," from one of the roommates.

But the punishment was severe enough. It included six demerits, confinement to quarters for a month and punishment tours in the Area.

For Kirk Danning the confinement to quarters was the bitterest dose. He had been collecting demerits and even punishment tours since his plebe days; but being confined meant that he was out of circulation. There could be no dates, no hops, no visits to the Thayer. This meant that for a month, for practically the remainder of the football season, Craig Randall would have the field to himself as far as Gloria Dawn was concerned.

But while Marvin Clemson regretted the restrictions imposed by confinement to quarters, his immediate concern was the punishment tours. For it is required that an Area bird must carry a rifle "in prescribed position."

And this isn't a simple task—with a *sprained thumb!*

CHAPTER XI

The Purdue Game

BLACKJACK DANNING didn't as a rule make known his wishes a second time. He informed Commissioner Clemson of this when he called

on him in the latter's office.

Said the party boss, breaking out one of his own cigars and crossing his legs in a piece of state property with a proprietary attitude:

"Commissioner, I told you what I wanted several weeks ago. I gave you time to think it over. After the Yale game it seemed you had done what I said. Now—" He paused suggestively.

"I haven't seen Marvin," declared the commissioner firmly. "In my letters to him I made no reference, directly or indirectly, to our former conversation."

Blackjack squinted through a cloud of smoke. "Maybe he is a mind reader, or maybe he isn't. That Heavily Twins stuff was okay—just what the doctor ordered. The only bad part was it gave your boy the better publicity. And now it's growing worse. It may already be too late to undo the damage. But I want my son to get all the publicity possible. Your son stands in the way. I never find it necessary to make a second request, Clemson. Or don't you know?"

"I wouldn't be qualified to answer," the commissioner replied, shrugging disinterestedly.

Blackjack's jaws hardened. "You read the papers after the Harvard game. Who is getting all the headlines? Your son! If you haven't changed your mind about what I told you, I'm giving you a last warning. You'd better tell that kid of yours to get smart in the Purdue game—or a legislative investigation is going to break wide open in this state. That's all. Good morning."

And down in a New York night club the Clemson-Danning combination was being discussed from another angle. Columnist Jack Salz was quizzing Gloria Dawn.

"What about this tip, Gloria, that you had something to tell about the jam that put Clemson and Danning on the carpet?"

Gloria shrugged her silken shoulders lazily. "I am fond of both of them, and I see them often. But I wouldn't for the world say anything that might hurt them."

"You wouldn't by chance be playing one against the other?"

Gloria's eyes widened. "Why, how could you think of such a thing?"

Salz could think of plenty of things, and Gloria wouldn't be the least upset if he mentioned her name. Gloria made no mention of Craig Randall. Craig definitely was not headline material at the moment.

A JAMMED Michie Field greeted the appearance of Purdue. The Boilermakers came east with their customary powerful and heavy team, which this year was paced by Bill Kozlowski, leading choice for All American fullback.

The Bull quickly justified the selection. A hurried punt gave Purdue the ball in Army territory soon after the game began, and Kozlowski started blasting at the Army line like a one-man *panzer* attack.

Clemson had the tough job of backing up the line, and smacking Kozlowski head-on was like running into a brick wall. It loosened every joint in his body. Time after time Kozlowski's churning legs drove through the hole he had found. On Army's fifteen Clemson asked for time out.

"We're playing him wrong," he said in the huddle. "He charges too low head-on for us to stop. Start hitting him low and from the side, slowing him for the guy backing us up."

Play resumed. Again Kozlowski banged the line. But this time Clemson used the new tactics, closing fast and hitting him from the side. Kozlowski stumbled, and before he could recover, Osanski banged him. The Bull fell like a toppled oak for no gain.

But after a reverse failed Kozlowski carried again. This time he came through the opposite side of the line. Kirk Danning, who had yet to match power with the giant, charged in for the tackle—and bounded back as from a locomotive.

Kozlowski gained momentum and churned onward for a touchdown. Danning dragged himself to his feet, shaken in body and injured in spirit. He looked challengingly at Clemson as if expecting to be criticized for not playing the Purdue fullback properly. But Clemson said nothing. Army dug in hard, and Jannick got through to

spoil the kick with a flying leap.

Army received, with the score 6 to 0. Clemson saw the ball swerving down toward him. He faced in, took the ball and immediately crossed over his left foot and raced wide. He had fooled the end. He was outside him. Clemson legged it for all he was worth. No fancy broken-field running for him. He would settle for as much straight yardage as he could get so Army would be in a position to throw passes.

With the corps madly cheering him on, Clemson reached the forty-yard stripe before a pair of Purdue tacklers toppled him.

As Clemson put his hand down to lift himself, he winced. He had forgotten his injured thumb.

Army came out of its huddle, and Danning heaved a pass to Clemson. The pass was not too good. Clemson had to dive for it. He took the ball almost off his shoes, rolled to his feet, and with a corps howling wildly, raced for pay dirt. But a shrilling whistle brought him back to where his knee had touched the ground.

Osmanski went into the line to pick up two yards, and then Clemson faded on a reverse. But the Boilermakers had guessed the play. Clemson found his receivers well covered, especially Danning. Clemson fought off Purdue linesmen, and then saw Jannick break away fast from his coverer.

Clemson pulled the string. A beautiful pass saw the ball spiraling high and far like a punt. Out in the clear, Jannick turned his head and saw the ball dropping toward him. He reached up and out and took the ball without breaking stride and broke for the goal. He crossed yards ahead of a panting safety.

Clemson trotted down after the ball. Kirk Danning waited for him.

"What's the idea of changing the play? Afraid to let *me* score the touchdown?" Danning demanded angrily.

"Jannick was in the clear," was all that Clemson said. He hurried on to join his mates. The score was tied, and now Osmanski drove the ball over the cross bar to put the Army out front, 7 to 6. Army had come right back to take the lead.

Purdue received and started banging away, with Kozlowski doing most of the carrying or figuring in the interference. But Army's line yielded stubbornly, and after Purdue made two first downs an offside penalty forced a punt.

Condon made a nice runback, and Army was in a position to mix its plays. A pass play with Danning on the tossing end found Clemson out in the flat, but Danning elected to heave the ball to Jannick. This time the end was outfoxed and a Purdue back intercepted.

Clemson would have been perfectly justified in demanding of Danning why *he* had over looked *him*. But there was no need rubbing it in.

PURDUE cashed in on the break and started a drive from midfield. The quarter ended, and Major Hanlon made some substitutions. Several new men went into the line and Randall came running out for backfield replacement.

"Randall in at right half," intoned the referee. Clemson jerked off his headguard and started for the sideline, but the referee had not finished.

"Clemson left half. Danning out."

Maybe Danning believed he was being punished for having his pass intercepted. Clemson figured otherwise. Hanlon perhaps felt that the Clemson-Randall combination was better defensively than a Danning-Randall pair.

Purdue rounded the end for a two-yard gain. Randall came over to Clemson.

"I knew Danning would hang himself if given enough rope."

"What do you say if we just play football," suggested Clemson.

Randall merely raised his eyebrows. "Still sticking up for that false alarm? You'll learn. But don't worry about my playing football. Now that I've got another crack at this job I'm going to keep it."

No one who watched Randall play could doubt his sincerity. He backed up the line like a suicide squad. He tackled viciously. He asked no quarter and gave none. He snarled at the Purdue players and defied them to do their worst.

But Purdue moved stubbornly on. Deep in its own territory, Army held

three times. With three minutes to go, Major Hanlon made many changes. Clemson came out and dropped on the grass in time to see the Purdue quarterback send a field goal sailing over the bar to make the count Purdue-9, Army-7.

Hanlon sent Danning back into the game in a desperate gamble. Kirk threw six passes, but only three of them found a pair of Army hands and the half ended 9 to 7.

Players trudged into the dressing room and dropped on benches or on the floor. Major Hanlon passed among them, scrutinizing their physical condition. He passed before Clemson.

"How are you—all right?"

"Fine," said Clemson. But a moment later he would have changed his answer. He put a hand on the bench to lift himself—and almost cried out with pain. His sprained thumb had been injured again and he couldn't remember how. Maybe when stopping the Bull. Clemson considered his swelling thumb and debated whether or not to tell the coach. But he returned to the gridiron without saying anything.

Purdue received to open the second half and started to bang away for another score. But Army forced exchanges of punts and on one Condon slithered back to Army's thirty-five. He immediately ordered passes. Clemson pulled the string on the first toss, forgot about his thumb and saw the ball fall just out of Danning's reach.

Two plays later Danning went back to pass—and was smothered by a Purdue tackle for a seven-yard loss. Army shifted and Clemson faded. Once again his swollen thumb spoiled the toss. The ball sailed and took a weird dive away from Danning, making it appear that he had misjudged the throw.

Danning came back, enraged. "What's the crazy idea of throwing curves? Is this baseball or football?"

"It sailed," explained Clemson and went into the huddle.

Army had to punt, and several minutes passed before Army had the ball near midfield. Danning dropped back, fought away harrassing Boilermakers and threw a long ball. Marvin Clemson cut in behind the Boilermakers' secondary. Not risking trying to grab

the ball with both hands because of his injured thumb, Clemson thrust up his left hand. The nose of the ball smacked against the palm of his hand. Clemson steadied, balanced the ball, and tucked the pigskin under his arm.

A Purdue tackler leaped for him. Clemson pivoted and shook himself free. He danced away from another tackler. He cut for the goal line. Cornered, he reversed his field and was almost free. But a diving tackle cracked him down on the ten-yard line.

THE corps was still cheering that one-handed catch. To Clemson that one-handed stab had seemed necessary because of his injured thumb. It never occurred to him that others might think differently, might look upon the one-handed grab as a grandstand play.

And though widely separated from each other, the expressions of Kirk Danning and Coach Hanlon reflected almost similar thoughts. Danning's lips tightened and his eyes became sullen. Cheers for Clemson. Who had thrown that pass? Anyone else could have caught it—and with two hands.

Major Hanlon's leathery features clouded. A pained look crept into his dark eyes. Rumors and gossip. Hints of jealousies. Failure to throw passes. One-hand catches. The major shook his head and his eyes narrowed as he watched his team try to gain those ten yards for a very important touchdown.

A reverse with Danning carrying only picked up two yards. An Osmanski buck gained less than two. Condon called on Danning to pass, but the nearness of the end zone afforded little room and a well covering Purdue defense slapped down the toss. One play left and eight to go for a goal. Condon called for a pass and nominated Clemson to toss it.

Clemson faded. The heave would have to be good. But his injured thumb would handicap him less on a short pass than a long one. Every available receiver was covered. Desperately he swerved away from defenders and sought a receiver, Danning preferably. He saw none. But he saw something else. A lane to the goal line with the pass coverers playing deep.

Clemson put on a burst of speed. A fast man, anyway, he had the added advantage of being quick on the gun. He could break away from a standing start.

Clemson was at the line of scrimmage before the startled defenders sensed that he intended to carry and not pass. He swerved from a pair of clutching arms. A diving linesman hit him, but he staggered free. Arms tightened about his waist, but he jerked free and lunged over the goal line.

Score, 13 to 9. And while the corps was still cheering, Osmanski made the count 14.

One man at least on the Army bench was not smiling. Coach Hanlon sat with chin in his hand. A pass had been called for. Of course if a passer found his receivers covered he could run. But the coach wasn't sure.

Purdue received, and as its powerhouse started to turn on the juice, Hanlon shot in rugged reserves. Randall went into the backfield. So did a sub named Wallace. Clemson and Danning returned to the bench.

The quarter ended with Purdue still banging away. The final quarter found the Boilermakers drive burning out, but Hanlon still played a defensive game and arranged his team accordingly. Clemson and Danning were still on the bench when the game ended with the score unchanged at 14 to 9.

CHAPTER XII

Danning Meets the System

DANNING hurriedly dressed by himself and Clemson did not see him again from the time they left the bench at the game's conclusion until he encountered him in their room.

"Well, I won't need the papers to see who was the big shot in the Purdue game," said Danning hotly. "If that wasn't the most selfish, grandstanding exhibition of football ever turned out on the gridiron, I'm an ape."

Clemson colored slightly, for Danning had seemed to get a rum deal. "It was just the breaks—" he began, intending to mention his sprained thumb.

"Oh, sure. The breaks. And in the

Harvard game it was just the breaks. And if we lose against Notre Dame and the Navy while you make an individual bid for All-American honors, I suppose that will be a matter of breaks."

"Kirk, you're getting unnecessarily worked up."

"Worked up? Why shouldn't I? I suppose you didn't deliberately fail to throw me passes. And when you did throw them I suppose you didn't put a lot of dippy-doo English on the ball to make a monkey out of me. I suppose you didn't make one-handed stabs of my tosses as though I didn't throw them good enough for you to get two hands on them. And I suppose you didn't carry for the last touchdown instead of passing as you were supposed to do. You and your always obey orders stuff!"

Clemson wasn't angered. He felt sorry for Kirk. Danning had been spoiled. Clemson held out his swollen thumb.

"There's the explanation for most of what happened this afternoon. I sprained it the night of the boodle fight when we struggled for the cigarettes—"

"Oh, so now it's all my fault. I made you sprain your hand."

Clemson shook his head wearily. What was the use? In his present frame of mind Danning would distort any explanation. Clemson went over to his table and opened a book on calculus. One thing about being confined to quarters, a man had a chance to hive, to bone up on his classwork.

But Danning didn't follow Clemson's example. He polished his shoes and brushed his sleek black hair, primping up ostentatiously.

"Where are you going?" Clemson asked mildly.

Danning brushed his hair again. "Randall's invited Gloria to the hop. She wants me to spare her the agony of a wasted evening."

So that was the significance of the scented orchid letters. "I wish she'd mind her own business," exclaimed Clemson.

"Maybe you'd like to tell her to."

"Maybe I would," agreed Clemson. This publicity-seeking dame was going to sabotage a military career before she got through.

"Sure, you would," drawled Danning. "You'd like to tell her a lot of things. You're not kidding me, brother. You're carrying a torch for her yourself."

This charge was too ridiculous to be even worthy of an answer. But there was an issue of grave importance.

"You can't go to the dance," reminded Clemson.

"I can see her without going to the hop."

"You're confined to quarters."

"Yeah? Well, I first have to be caught."

Some instinct prompted Clemson not to argue, that to do so would most likely remove Danning's last lingering uncertainty. Clemson shrugged and turned back to his book with an attitude of, "Well, it's your own funeral."

But out of the corner of his eye he saw that Danning was stalling. Again he brushed his hair. Once more he polished his shoes. Behind his book Clemson's pulse sang. This was far more important than a football game. He was watching a struggle of forces.

The spoiled, pampered son of Black-jack Danning was fighting against the West Point system, the honor system. The Academy imposed its many rigid, seemingly harsh regulations, but supervised them with only a routine checkup. A cadet was on his honor. His "All right" was never challenged. Kirk Danning had had more than two years of this system. Was it winning?

Clemson's breath came quicker as he observed Danning move about the room. Anything to stall. Finally the tension snapped.

"You'd just love to have me go, wouldn't you?" growled Danning. "You wouldn't hesitate a moment reporting me and getting me slugged. Yeah? Well, I'm not giving you the satisfaction. There'll be plenty of chance to see her without you giving me the needle."

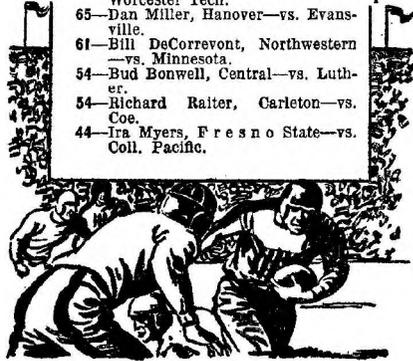
Fighting words. But Clemson could have thrown his arms about his roommate for joy. Kirk Danning, the cadet, had licked Kirk Danning the son of the political boss.

But Marvin Clemson did not raise his head from his book. He was only hoping the victory would be permanent.

Longest Touchdown Runs From Scrimmage That Won 1939 Games

Yards

- 82—James Smith, Illinois—vs. Wisconsin.
- 76—Clyde Sarver, Bluefield—vs. New River State.
- 75—George Rempfer, Ellendale—vs. Maryville Thr.
- 75—Ted Thornton, Valley City—vs. Dickinson Thr.
- 74—Jud Hudson, Davis-Elkins—vs. W. Va. Wesleyan.
- 68—Joseph O'Grady, American Intl. vs. St. Anselm.
- 65—Donald Allen, Mass. State—vs. Worcester Tech.
- 65—Dan Miller, Hanover—vs. Evansville.
- 61—Bill DeCorrevont, Northwestern—vs. Minnesota.
- 54—Bud Bonwell, Central—vs. Luther.
- 54—Richard Raiter, Carleton—vs. Coe.
- 44—Ira Myers, Fresno State—vs. Coll. Pacific.



WEST Point had a breather on Saturday in which Major Hanlon made generous use of substitutes, but on Monday the Army settled down in earnest for the two objective games of the season, that with Notre Dame and the classical climax with Navy.

Major Hanlon took Clemson aside on Monday. "I think it important that you and I have a little heart to heart talk. Nothing disturbs me so much as uncertainty about the men under my charge. Understanding the natures of Kirk Danning and Craig Randall, I have been more or less prepared for temperamental or jealous actions that might throw a monkey-wrench into my football machine. But you were one man I felt I could tie on to."

"I'm sorry if I have shaken your confidence in me, Coach," said, Clemson uneasily.

"I won't go that far," corrected the coach. "You will recall that when I visited you in your room with the suggestion that you try out for the backfield, I voiced the hope that your performance would in no way be marred by outside influences. You see, I know what it means to hold appointive office, as your father does, in a state where a man like Kirk Danning's father has so much influence—"

"Nothing," interrupted Clemson, "that Boss Danning could or would do would have any bearing on my playing for West Point. I know that to be my father's wish under any circumstances."

"That's just what I'm afraid of," declared the coach, his brows knitted. "Maybe you're leaning backward because of that, and taking it out on Danning—"

"If what happened in the Purdue game is bothering you," Clemson said, "I think I can ease your mind. I played most of the game with a sprained thumb. I know I should have told you, but the injury occurred accidentally the night Kirk and I were caught after the boodle party. I hurt it again in the game, but didn't know it until after I told you I was all right."

"I see," said the coach, relieved. "That probably explains a lot. Well, let's hope we have no further complications for the Notre Dame game. I'm sick and tired of all this gossip and rumor stuff."

On Tuesday night Marvin Clemson returned to his room after a permitted visit to the library. The room was in darkness. Disturbed, Clemson snapped on the light. Kirk should be here unless, like himself, he had obtained permission to be absent.

Clemson's glance, searching the room, fell upon an orchid piece of paper beside Danning's books. Clemson did not mean to pry, but some fear of impending events made him cross to Danning's desk, and phrases of feminine handwriting caught his attention.

—I'll be parked at the end of the road.
Don't fail me as you did for the dance—

Clemson got no further. A knock sounded on the door. It was a messenger, with permission for Clemson to see his father.

His father here? One of the penalties of being confined to quarters was the loss of the privilege of having guests. However, the regulations provided for seeing "unexpected guests in the cadet reception room for not over one half-hour with permission of the officer in charge."

Marvin Clemson entered the reception room, eyes wide with apprehension and ears ready to hear almost anything except good news. His father's face was drawn and serious, but he appeared to be in good health.

THE commissioner wasted no words. "Marvin," he said, "I flew here by plane and I am taking a night train back. For reasons of my own, I have told no one of my coming. George Parkhurst informed me that he saw you at the Harvard game and discussed a meeting between Kirk Danning's father and myself."

"Yes, he did," admitted Marvin Clemson.

"He spoke without consulting me." The commissioner's voice sounded hard, but softened at once. "But I suppose he believed he was acting for my best interest."

"I'm sure of it," said Marvin, still wondering what prompted his father's flying visit at this time.

"The threat of that meeting George had reference to," continued the father, "has become a reality. Tonight's papers back home will carry the story of a legislative resolution asking for an investigation of last year's flood contracts. I wanted to be the first to tell you. It may still be only a threat. But if Jack Danning thinks I will calmly resign he is mistaken. He may find that I can give him more than he bargained for."

"I am certain of that," said Marvin. But he was not certain. His father might use brave words, but he knew that in an investigation of this nature the cards were stacked. A public official was judged irrespective of evidence, and an appeal to the courts rarely helped. Kirk Danning's father had Marvin Clemson's father by the throat.

And it was because he read this knowledge in his son's eyes that the

commissioner sagged a little.

"Marvin," he pleaded sincerely, "I don't profess to be informed on football. Conservation is my work—or has been—but I have been somewhat disturbed by what has appeared in the press. Nothing that you've done has indicated it, but I want you to promise that no matter what might happen to me that you will not compromise with self-respect."

His father spoke calmly, without hint of melodrama, and Marvin answered him in like vein.

"I don't believe I would under any circumstances, but after being a West Point Cadet—well, Dad, compromising with my self-respect now is just impossible."

The father breathed deeply. "I believe that, but it is reassuring to hear you say it. And now let's talk about more pleasant things. We might as well make the most of this half-hour visit."

The commissioner smiled warmly and Marvin blinked a bit. A right guy, his father. Depriving him of his rank of commissioner would be like taking his life away, but he could think first of his son.

The result was that even though his father had been the bearer of bad news, Marvin returned to his room actually encouraged for having seen his dad. But that buoyant spirit sagged again as he entered the room that was still empty for the want of Kirk Danning.

If Kirk was slugged and dropped from the team for being absent in violation of his confinement orders, Boss Danning would certainly go to town on Commissioner Clemson. But it was characteristic of Clemson anyhow to wonder what he could do to help his roommate.

There wasn't much he could do. An inspector might drop around at any moment. He might do no more than query. But Clemson couldn't say "All right." There was no excuse in the world that justified a false "All right," the very foundation of the West Point honor system.

There was only one thing he could do. Quickly Clemson undressed. With his clothes and others available, he created a fairly presentable dummy in

his own bed. Then he climbed into Danning's bed. But not to sleep.

MINUTES ticked away, and then Clemson heard footsteps in the hallway. A knock sounded on the door. If cadets are asleep, naturally they are not expected to answer "All right." The door opened. Would the inspector, whoever he was, be satisfied?

Through his slightly opened eyes Clemson saw the beam of the flashlight. He moved his hand and stirred as one might who is asleep. The light was playing over the cot. Now it moved to the other cot. Was he correct in assuming that the beam lingered?

The light snapped off. The door closed.

Clemson waited a considerable period and then rose, demolished the dummy and retired to his own cot. Despite his intention to remain awake, Clemson fell asleep and so had no knowledge what time Danning returned. And when reveille snapped him to his feet at 5:50 the next morning, Kirk Danning had no explanation to offer for his absence. Clemson did not question him.

Clemson had his own worries. Had last night's inspector noted the absence? Would he report it? And if he did whom would he report—Danning or himself?

But as the day passed and recitation class succeeded recitation class and no summons came from the Honor Committee or the Tactical Department or, most dangerous of all, from the Office of the Superintendent, Marvin Clemson breathed easier.

He was still upset, however, when he reported for practice, and gummed some of the new plays Major Hanlon had devised to be used against Notre Dame. It was the next afternoon before he felt better.

But the following afternoon when he reported for practice, Major Hanlon was waiting for him. The coach wore a stern and somewhat perplexed expression.

"Clemson, you are ordered to report to the Office of the Superintendent."

The suddenness of the statement caused Clemson to blanch, and then as he realized that this act suggested guilt, he became even more confused.

Through blurred eyes he saw Major Hanlon's face harden. The coach was believing the worst, not that he had committed some violation, but that he had betrayed the trust placed in him.

With heavy heart Marvin Clemson turned about and began the long walk to the Administration Building built against the side of a hill.

Marvin Clemson stood before the superintendent. The general considered him gravely.

"An inspector's report stated that you were not in your room Tuesday night. In view of the fact that you had been given permission to see your father in the Cadet Reception room your absence seemed explained. Because of your good record, I suppose, this explanation was assumed immediately. You were not in your room when the inspection was made, were you?"

"I wish, sir, not to answer," stated Clemson. How could he deny without involving Danning? If he said he was in the room, then it could be assumed that Danning was out—and further investigation would verify that.

The superintendent continued. "The absence might have gone unnoticed but for the fact that a car, driven by a woman, was involved in a hit-and-run mishap. In checking back, the police located someone who saw a car of that description parked earlier just outside the Reservation. He took notice because he was certain that a cadet sat in the car with her. When the police informed us, the report of the inspector assumed a new significance. Were you that cadet?"

Clemson sagged slightly. It seemed as if an ironic fate were piling up mishaps. If he denied being the cadet involved, again additional checking might easily reveal that Danning, not he, had been missing from their room.

"Again, sir, I prefer not to answer," he said in a low voice.

The superintendent's grave features did not alter their expression. He could attribute Clemson's silence to a chivalrous desire not to involve a lady. But that did not ease his own difficulty.

"Very well. You understand that your case will be dealt with. You are already confined to quarters. Mean-

while, you will be denied other privileges, including presence on the football squad."

"Yes, sir. I understand."

Marvin Clemson left the Administration Building to begin the long walk back. His case was not hopeless. He had admitted nothing. And of course Kirk Danning would come forward and clear him by confessing that it was he and not Marvin Clemson who was in the parked car.

Not that Clemson would be happy at being cleared. It would mean that the punishment being considered for himself would fall upon Kirk. Danning might be dismissed. But sometimes dismissal was the making of a man who was never cut out to be a soldier. No, there was no doubt in his mind. Kirk would clear him.

But Kirk Danning did not come forward. Even in the solitude of their own room, Kirk said nothing. No word of thanks to Clemson for taking the rap. No suggestion that he would not stand for it. No word at all. Just silence.

It seemed to Clemson that his world was crumbling. Of course he keenly missed being with the squad when it left to play Notre Dame, but he missed worse of all Kirk Danning's failure to speak. How could Kirk be so brazen as to leave for the Yankee Stadium, knowing that one word from him would have cleared his roommate?

CHAPTER XIII

Notre Dame on the Air

THE corps was marching into the Yankee Stadium. Marvin Clemson knew that, because some friendly disposed member of the regular signal corps detachment stationed at the Academy had hooked up a loud speaker connection to a radio in such a manner that Clemson could hear the game without leaving his quarters.

It had been in the Notre Dame game a year ago that Clemson had been given his first real chance to star. He had scored on a pass from Danning and had completed other important passes in the game. His eyes filled with yearn-

ing as he listened to the broadcaster and pictured what was going on.

"... Army's ball. After Notre Dame made three successive first downs and seemed well on the way to a touch-down, Army's defense stiffened and forced a punt. Randall goes into the right side of the line. Army opens a hole, but Savarella comes up fast to hold the gain to one yard . . . Danning on a reverse picks up two. We thought for a moment he was going to pass, but his receivers were well covered. Danning, we believe, undoubtedly misses Clemson on the other end of those bullet-like passes for which they are known."

It seemed odd to hear his own name coming over the air, as if this "Clemson" was some unknown stranger.

The announcer continued to report the progress of the game. Army wasn't doing so well. The Fighting Irish bottled up the cadets' running attack and grounded the air force. In their own offensive the boys from South Bend pierced the front line of Army defense repeatedly, only to run out of fuel in reaching distance of the end zone.

"Fumble! I think Army recovered. No . . . Yes . . . Yes! Jannick recovered the fumble on Notre Dame's fifteen-yard line. There is a real break for Army. . . . Now Army comes out of its huddle . . . It's Danning on a beautiful reverse . . . He's running wide . . . He's cutting through a hole—no! He was tackled right at the line of scrimmage."

Clemson paced nervously up and down the room, pounding a fist into the palm of his hand. "Army out of the huddle again. It's a pass. Danning is fading back. He is taking plenty of time, plenty of time—he throws! A beautiful pass into the end zone—Oh! Oh, that was too bad. Randall had that ball right in his hands and it slipped through. No fault of Randall's, of course. That happens to the best of players."

But between the words one could almost pick out, "That would not have happened if Marvin Clemson had been on the end of the pass."

With two more downs remaining, Condon called for a pass and then a field goal, both of which failed—and

Army failed to capitalize on its break.

As though encouraged by this failure, the Fighting Irish turned on the heat. Army battled for every inch of ground and got a moment's breather when the quarter ended. But as the teams shifted, Notre Dame retraced the ground over which it had just advanced and despite a stubborn goal line resistance banged over for a touch-down.

A 7 to 0 score loomed mighty big as Army tried repeatedly to get into pay dirt by the air route and had nearly all of Danning's heaves slapped down.

The half ended without further scoring, and Marvin Clemson had a chance to hear the corps take over with its songs and cheers, something he usually missed because between the halves he would be in the steamy dressing quarters having bruises attended to instead of lying here on his cot miles from the game, staring at the ceiling and with an ache in his heart no trainer could rub away.

The Army team's the pride and dream of ev'ry heart in gray,
The Army line you'll ever find a terror in the fray.

And when the team is fighting for the Black and Gray and Gold,
We're always near with song and cheer, and this is the tale we're told:

Clemson heard the long whistle and then:

Rah! Rah! Rah! BOOM!
On, brave old Army team!
On to the fray,
Fight on to victory,
For that's the fearless Army way!

MARVIN CLEMSON sat there on his cot and beat time with his finger. Suddenly he rolled over and buried his face in the pillow.

The fearless Army way. No more for him. When the court-martial passed upon his case he would probably be dismissed. One last look at the tall gray buildings, at the Battle Monument with its names of West Point heroes—perhaps to sit for the last time on the white marble bench and read:

Life is the greatest of all games
Play it with Courage, Wisdom and Loyalty
To the Memory

of Cadet
Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Jr.
Class of 1933
Erected by the Corps of Cadets
MCMXXXII

Erected to the cadet who had lost his life as a result of a great and daring play on the football field against Yale. There would be no such shrine in the hearts of the corps for Marvin Clemson.

And perhaps he would walk at last along Flirtation Walk. Walk alone—a one-way walk—on feet that would keep on going. Eyes that would not turn back until all that was West Point was hidden from view—forever.

And the word of one man could save him from this. Kirk Danning had only to speak.

The radio increased in volume. The teams were coming out for the second half. Army was receiving. A fighting Army team.

"Army is staging a glorious comeback. Osmanski hits the line again for seven yards. The Army fullback is hitting the South Benders like an eighty-ton tank. And he is getting plenty of assistance from the Army line.

"Danning through a hole off left tackle, and it is another first down for the Army. Just listen to the corps cheer! Now Army comes out of the huddle . . . It's a shift to the right. Randall takes from a single wingback and tries to go off tackle, but he is held for no gain. Randall doesn't seem to have much luck on the offensive, but we know he is trying.

"Army out of the huddle. Osmanski again. Plowing, plowing. How that big fellow is driving. He picks up six yards. Now Notre Dame is changing its defense. It is using a seven-man line. Here is a good spot for a pass."

Clemson was thinking the same thing. So was Condon.

"It's a pass. Danning fades. He is hurried. But he gets it away. *And Randall is in the clear!* Oh, just off the tips of his fingers! What a tough break for Army."

Clemson leaped to the floor. He had been reaching for that pass, so well could he imagine it. He saw the setup as clearly as if this were television. Defense drawn in. Out in the clear. And

Randall, short and stocky, unable to reach the ball. Another chance gone.

Osmanski banged through for a first down, but it was the last one he made in this drive. Notre Dame tightened its defense at the risk of weakening pass defense.

COACH HANLON made many changes as the valiant cadets wore themselves to the point of exhaustion in a futile effort to overcome that seven-point lead. Notre Dame played a waiting, defensive game. Marvin Clemson heard the gun sound the end of the game, the end of Army's undefeated season.

Next to the Navy game, this Notre Dame contest was the most important of the season. And prospects did not look any too bright for a victory over Navy. The defeat revealed that unless Army possessed a deceptive air attack that would keep the opposing secondary deep, its running attack lacked balanced strength.

The corps returned to the Point deep in gloom, gloom that was shared by Kirk Danning. He offered no comment to Clemson, and the latter had no way of knowing what thoughts went on behind that deep funk.

Was Kirk remorseful for letting another take the rap for him? Or was he bitter because, given an opportunity to play a whole game without the aid of Marvin Clemson, he had been unable to score or to throw a single touch-down pass? Clemson, studying him covertly, could not tell what went on in Danning's brain. It did seem, however, that Danning appeared bewildered.

The corps looked forward doubtfully to the all-important game with Navy. But Marvin Clemson had something more immediate and more terrifying to anticipate. In a day or two his case would be decided. And the betting was two to one that he would be chucked out.

But when the bat board handed down its finding, the punishment was not dismissal although it was the next thing to it. Marvin Clemson was given enough demerits to make his total one less than the amount that would mean automatic dismissal.

This meant that from now on if he had so much as a dusty rifle, a loose button or a blot on his classroom paper he would be overboard. Worse, he might lead a perfect existence, but if Kirk Danning slipped on some apparent trifle while Clemson was orderly, the latter would receive that fatal demerit. He would be dismissed, not for the offense for which he had been judged, but for "deficiency in conduct," perhaps months from now when pigskin and moleskins would be packed away in camphor.

CHAPTER XIV

Maureen Intercedes

BUT Marvin Clemson had someone working for him without his knowledge, someone who knew nearly all the parties concerned and had the ability to discern moods and characters. This someone took the problem of Marvin Clemson's dismissal from the West Point football squad apart and found that the pieces did not fit.

So the superintendent had a lady visitor, a slim brunette dressed attractively but in good taste. The mink coat that she threw back from her shoulders was worth a second lieutenant's year's salary. She introduced herself as Kirk Danning's sister.

"You did not need to come to me for permission to see your brother, Miss Danning," declared the superintendent.

"I understand," said Maureen calmly, "but I wanted to see you before visiting my brother. My visit also concerns Marvin Clemson. I am certain that a grave mistake has been made."

The superintendent raised his eyebrows. "His case has been thoroughly reviewed, Miss Danning," he said. "Clemson had every opportunity to speak for himself."

Maureen fixed a steady glance upon the superintendent. "But *did* he speak for himself? I believe that is quite important. Did he admit whatever he was charged with?"

"As a matter of fact, he did not. However, that is not so unusual as it

seems. A cadet is not expected to mitigate his own offense at the expense of others."

But Maureen seemed pleased. Her eyes were bright and her cheeks glowed. "General," she said, "I hope I am not being too forward, but I would like to know the facts on which charges were based against Marvin Clemson. I think it most unfortunate if a mistake has been made. I am sure the Academy can not afford to lose at this critical time a man like Marvin Clemson. And if a mistake has been made I may be able to help."

The superintendent stroked his chin. Maureen Danning's request was most irregular, but—He made his decision and nodded.

When the superintendent finished, Maureen announced that she was ready to see her brother. The superintendent sent on word ahead as she went to the cadet reception room.

Kirk Danning entered the reception room. "Hello, Sis. Something wrong at home?"

"Something is wrong here," she corrected. "I came to find out whether you are a man or a mouse."

He flushed. "You would say something like that. I knew you'd figure that Marvin was taking the blame for something I did."

"Why shouldn't I?" she demanded quietly. "Kirk, we both inherit some of our father's many qualities. I like to think that I inherit his ability to size up people."

"And I suppose I inherit all Dad's bad qualities."

"Some of them, I'm afraid. Kirk, we have a wonderful dad, a man with many sides. But he has had a hard life—harder than we know because he has done everything possible to spare us from any unpleasantness. In your case he has probably done too much."

"Sure, say it. I'm spoiled."

"No one can spoil you but yourself. You only have to find yourself. And I was hoping you would do it here." She paused, but he had nothing to say on this point. She went on.

"Kirk, Dad has done a very mean thing in his mistaken idea of what is for your good. Oh, I can understand him. His life is made up of trades and deals.

What was more natural than that he would want to interfere in your football playing?"

"How could he do that?" demanded the brother a trifle sullenly.

"How? Because Marvin's father has an appointive position. And through that position Dad could compel Marvin to let you grab the spotlight. At least, that is what Dad imagined. But Commissioner Clemson refused to be threatened. And even to save his own father, Marvin refused to be anything but a good soldier. That's the difference, I am sorry to say, between you and Marvin."

KIRK was digesting information in the light of past events. "You mean Dad has been holding a club over Clem's father's head?"

"Holding? He's been swinging it! And on top of everything, Marvin becomes involved in this car mess. Only you can clear it up."

"How?"

"By telling the truth! By telling that it was you and not Marvin who was parked in that car."

Danning shook his head. "Sis, that's what burns me up. It wasn't *I* who was parked in the car. And it was Clem. I saw him."

Maureen stared at him. "Kirk, you're not telling the truth."

"Gee, Sis, why would I lie to you? Listen, the girl was Gloria Dawn. I know I've been carrying a torch for her, but I wasn't ga-ga over her. I knew she couldn't be trusted as far as I could toss the Administration Building. I guess it was the idea of giving Craig Randall competition that appealed to me. But Clem was the cadet that really clicked with her. I guess you can understand that."

"Perhaps," declared Maureen a bit sharply. "But I can't imagine her type appealing to him."

Danning smiled briefly and went on. "She wrote me a letter saying she would be parked outside the reservation in a maroon car that Tuesday night. I lost the letter and Clem found it."

"How do you know he found it?"

"Because it was placed on my desk, where I know I didn't leave it. Besides, he went there, didn't he? That's what

burned me up. After all he said about not breaking confinement *he* was missing. So I went. And I saw the pair of them in the car."

"Did you speak to them?"

"No. When I got back to the room Clem was in bed."

"How could he get back and into bed before you?"

"Gosh, I don't know. You're worse than a Philadelphia lawyer. I didn't *rush* back. And I had some trouble ducking the sentry. But Marvin Clemson isn't taking the rap for me. He went to see Gloria and was spotted."

"I'm all confused," she declared. "I know there is something radically wrong. I'm positive that Marvin Clemson would never do anything that would mean running the risk of dismissal from West Point, because you see, Kirk, Marvin *is* West Point."

Kirk Danning looked hard at his sister. His shoulders straightened imperceptibly.

"Sis," he said softly, "you care a lot for that guy, don't you? Well, don't worry. I'm sure everything will work out all right."

DEEP gloom like a dense fog off the Hudson settled over the Military Academy and descended upon the corps squads despite Major Hanlon's valiant efforts to bolster morale. Practically every expert in the country was picking Navy to beat Army. And they must be right. They were right about Notre Dame, weren't they? Sure, but they missed on the Yale game.

Yeah, but in the Yale game Army had flashed the Heavily Twins. And the interchangeable backfield had *Blitzkrieged* Harvard and Purdue. But Clemson had been missing in the Notre Dame game. And Clemson would be out of the Navy game.

No cadet quibbled over the punishment. No cadet knew the full story, but every cadet knew enough. Clemson had been confined to quarters. An inspector had found him absent. There could be but one result, the infliction of whatever punishment the bat board deemed proper.

But the justice of the bat board's decision did not alter the fact that without Marvin Clemson in the Army back-

field the chances of defeating Navy were very slim.

However, the game itself had become a matter of secondary importance to Clemson. Kirk Danning gave him greater concern. What kind of a man was Kirk to go along as he did, mingling with his fellow cadets, taking part in the all-important week of practice, aware of what people were saying—and all the time saving his own hide at the expense of another?

At least, he could say something in the privacy of their room, figured Clemson. Even if he called himself a heel, or admitted that he didn't have the courage to confess that another was taking the blame for him, Clemson could have felt somewhat compensated for being barred from football.

But all Danning talked about was the game. Brazenly he explained Major Hanlon's new plays to Clemson.

"Just in case the bat board changes its mind and you get a chance to play," he explained.

Clemson looked at him sharply, but Kirk's face was a blank.

But there were other occasions when Clemson surprised a puzzling expression. Danning would be staring at him, but his expression would change instantly as soon as Clemson caught him.

CHAPTER XV

Reprise

THE superintendent had an early visitor. Figuratively speaking, the key was about to be turned in the West Point lock. The one day of the year that every cadet lives for was at hand. The corps and every attached soldier or civilian employee that could get away was ready to move on to Philadelphia.

"Cadet Kirk Danning, sir," announced the tall, uniformed cadet, saluting. "I do not believe it proper, sir, that one man should accept the blame for another. And for the best interest of the Academy, sir, I ask that Cadet Marvin Clemson be absolved of the bat board finding, and that those charges be placed against me."

The superintendent stared hard and long. "Your presence here is not entirely unexpected in view of the interview your sister requested of me. Why have you waited so long in coming forward?"

"For several reasons, sir. I felt that Cadet Clemson might insist on assuming the blame. I regret to say that my father is holding the threat of a legislative investigation over Cadet Clemson's father. Another reason, sir, is that a lady is involved. I think this letter will explain everything. I have taken the liberty to delete the signature and other names."

The superintendent read Gloria Dawn's orchid missive asking Danning for a date outside the Reservation.

"At least," he said, looking up, "this is concrete evidence. It also explains, I suppose, why both you and Cadet Clemson have been so guarded in your admissions. Your case will be considered properly next week. You understand, of course, that you cannot go to Philadelphia."

"Yes, sir," said Kirk Danning.

Up to the very last moment Marvin Clemson wondered if he would be denied the privilege of going to Philadelphia. Not to join the corps squad, of course. That would be impossible. But to be with the corps in uniform. To march into the Municipal Stadium. To cheer his erstwhile teammates. That, at least, would be something.

And so, there were tears in his eyes and a lump in his throat when he received orders to join his company.

The corps entrained, after having already sent the "Long Corps" yell booming back from the rocky palisades of the Hudson as the team departed:

Rah! Rah! Ray! Rah! Rah! Ray!
 West Point! West Point! Ar—MAY!
 Rah! Rah! Rah! Rah! Rah! Rah!
 West Point!
 Team! Team! Team!

Marvin Clemson had remained behind when that call had gone forth. But now he was with the corps. He would see the game.

The special train rolled into Philadelphia, and the corps detrained and formed in column of squads. Another regiment would be marching today. A

regiment in long, dark blue overcoats and wearing white caps, the Regiment of the Naval Academy.

The corps was ready for the starting command. A car pulled up alongside of Company B. Major Pat Hanlon in military uniform stepped out and spoke to the cadet captain. The latter turned.

"Cadet Clemson—fall out."

Wonderingly, Clemson stepped from the ranks. Major Hanlon indicated the car. At once a whisper passed through Company B and was passed along the gray line.

"Clemson is going to play. Clemson is going to play. Clemson is going to play!"

CLEMSON settled into a seat beside the coach, still too dazed to grasp what was happening.

"Is—is that right what they're saying?" he asked of the coach. "Am I going to play?"

"Yes," said the coach, not too enthusiastically.

Clemson digested the news. Play? But he hadn't even practiced for over a week. Maybe that was why the coach was upset.

"I know the plays," Clemson suddenly informed. "Danning described them to me. I am sure I can team up with him all right."

But the coach was looking hard at him. "You won't team up with Danning," he said shortly. "Danning is back at West Point."

Marvin Clemson's lower jaw fell open.

"Danning—back at West Point?"

"He went to the superintendent this morning and cleared you. Pity he didn't do it earlier so you would have had a chance to work out with the team. I half-suspected you were accepting the blame either to protect him or protect your father."

Clemson sank back on the cushions. "I didn't exactly assume any blame. I merely failed to make denials that would have involved Kirk Danning. I didn't do that to protect him or my father. I did it—I don't know if I can make you understand, sir—but with Kirk the West Point system was like a bad vaccination. His father arranged to get him appointed because he believed

a West Point commission would be an asset in launching Kirk in the political career he had planned for him."

"I'm not surprised at that," declared the coach grimly.

"Well," continued Clemson, "I was hoping that Kirk would fool his father. I was beginning to believe that the system might work and that he would really become Army, the way his sister wanted him to. But failing that, I hoped that West Point would make a man of him. That is why I didn't clear myself at his expense. I wanted Kirk to come forward and clear me. He has finally done so. Isn't that more important than a football game? Or am I wrong?"

"No," said the coach quietly, "I don't believe you are wrong."

Major Hanlon ushered Marvin Clemson into the dressing quarters of the corps squad unannounced. Perhaps as a master strategist he was counting upon the effect of a dramatic surprise. For more than a week he had been trying to snap his squad out of the loss of spirit occasioned by the removal of Clemson from the team. And now these same players looked up from climbing into football regalia to find Clemson in their midst.

Silence greeted his appearance for a moment. And then came a yell.

"Clem, you old son of a gun."

"You're back!"

"You're going to play!"

"Bring on the Navy!"

Clemson laughingly acknowledged the reception. After a bit the coach stepped in.

"We're getting Clemson," he said, "but unfortunately we are losing Danning. Unavoidable circumstances compelled him to remain at West Point."

Questioning glances were directed at the coach, but he had no further information for the players. They could draw their own conclusions. But for one thing, the pre-game tension was snapped. Players climbed into their leather harness and moleskins with actions that were something more than going through the motions. Marvin Clemson got his suit from an assistant manager and found a locker.

A few minutes later he followed his mates out onto the fresh gridiron

for a warm-up. The players would need it. This late November Saturday had the real chill of winter under the leaden skies.

The concrete seats were rapidly filling with as colorful a crowd as one could find anywhere in the land. Military and naval uniforms were a dime a dozen. Generals and admirals were in full regalia. Nearly all of official Washington was up here, and boxes decorated with national colors indicated where the President and Vice-President would sit.

Pennants and chrysanthemums and brightly colored hats revealed the presence of the many feminine guests. Clemson, looking up on the Army side, realized that Maureen Danning was there. Probably she had no advance word that Kirk was not going to play. And surely she must be surprised at seeing "75" out on the white-striped turf again.

Clemson and his teammates limbered up with easy punting, and then, he tried out his arm. He shot some short forwards to Randall, but the latter seemed in a daze. So much so that Clemson commented on his strange manner.

"I don't feel so hot," declared Randall. "Must be something I ate. I think I had better talk to the coach."

Clemson saw Randall go over to where Major Hanlon was talking to Captain Gunlund, and a new worry brought a crease to Clemson's forehead. Army would be under a severe handicap without Kirk Danning in the backfield, but if Craig Randall also was not up to snuff, Army had better prepare for a defeat right now. Craig Randall might not be the type of guy a man would pick for a friend, but he was a good football player, a man who could be relied upon in a crucial game such as this contest due to start soon.

Clemson continued to throw passes and jog up and down the field. He needed more of a workout than did the other players, and was one of the last to quit the field. Major Hanlon stopped him.

"Clemson," he said gravely, "you know we don't make a practice of forcing a cadet to involve others. Sometimes, however, silence, leads to a greater error. I wish you would tell

me the facts of the matter that brought you before the superintendent."

"I think I can talk," said Clemson, "now that Kirk has come forward to take the blame. Both of us were absent from our quarters, but I had permission to see my father. A letter to Kirk from a girl asking to meet him outside the Reservation seemed to explain his absence. The inspector's report that one of us was absent seemed to be explained by my permission to see my father. But when this girl became involved in an accident, the subsequent investigation indicated the possibility that I was the cadet seen with the girl."

"You accepted the blame?"

"I didn't deny it, because that would accuse Kirk. I wanted Kirk to come forward of his own volition."

The coach looked off into space. Suddenly he glanced at his wrist-watch.

"Excuse me," he said quickly. "I must speak to the superintendent."

CHAPTER XVI

Ahoy, Navy!

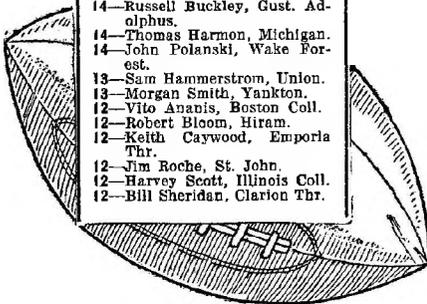
THE Middies were first to parade into the stadium. This regiment of massed dark blue overcoats topped by white caps might be training for the sea, but today they were as fine a marching body as any nation could boast. The middies filled the empty block of seats reserved for them and looked down to await the arrival of the corps.

To the beat of the drums the corps entered. And if the squads of gray marched in slightly better form it was because the cadets were the nation's military pride. The gray-caped column swung into company front and faced their side of the field. At a signal the corps crouched to the ground. At another signal from the cheer leaders the corps voiced its salute to the Navy.

Rah! Rah! Ray! Rah! Rah! Ray!
 West Point! West Point! AR—MAY!
 Ray! Ray! Ray!
 Rah! Rah! Rah! Rah! Rah! Rah!
 West Point!
NAVY! NAVY! NAVY!

**Players Scoring Most
1939 Touchdowns**

23—Lloyd Madden, Colorado Mines.
 19—Don Leiberum, Manchester.
 15—George Morris, Baldwin-Wallace.
 14—Russell Buckley, Gust. Adolphus.
 14—Thomas Harmon, Michigan.
 14—John Polanski, Wake Forest.
 13—Sam Hammerstrom, Union.
 13—Morgan Smith, Yankton.
 12—Vito Ananis, Boston Coll.
 12—Robert Bloom, Hiram.
 12—Keith Caywood, Emporia Thr.
 12—Jim Roche, St. John.
 12—Harvey Scott, Illinois Coll.
 12—Bill Sheridan, Clarion Thr.



Navy acknowledged the cheer, and at another signal the corps, by company, jog-trotted to their seats to the rhythmic beat of drums.

Middies, cadets and spectators settled down expectantly. The knickered officials appeared on the field. Then came a cloud of blue topped by black helmets. The middies welcomed them with a rousing cheer that was thrown back from the opposite side as the corps squads rushed on for its most important entry of the season.

The amplifying system clicked. "Attention, please. A last-minute change in line-up for Army. Liscomb at left half. Clemson at right half."

Almost any announcement is hailed with cheering, but the sporadic applause and swelling murmur that greeted this announcement proclaimed the astonishment of all spectators, including the corps. The return of Clemson they had been prepared for. But where were Danning and Randall?

Navy had won the toss, which probably accounted for the starting of Liscomb. He was a better than average defensive back and a fair blocker. Not so good as Craig Randall, however.

Good night, Navy! Good night, Navy!
 Good night, Navy! The Army's going to win!
 Army team is going to win, going to win, going to win.
 Army team is going to win, going to win today!

But Navy felt differently. The powerful Navy team took the kick-off and started banging away at the Army line with Navy's great back, Angus MacArthur, sparking the attack.

Army finally halted the drive and took over. Osmanski ran into a stone wall. Liscomb failed to shake free. Clemson threw passes, but his receivers failed to get in the clear. Navy took over and started driving again.

The "Long Fight" came from the Corps in a drawn-out chant.

A A
 R R
 M M
 Y Y
 AR MA AY!
 Ray! Ray! Ar-may!
 Rah! Rah! Hoo-rah!
 West Point!
 Fight! Fight! Fight!
 FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

The Army fought, but MacArthur circled an end and raced forty yards to put the ball on Army's eight, and in three plays Navy banged over.

Not satisfied with seven points, Navy dominated the play, and in the second quarter went over again.

Tired Army players clunked into the dressing room with the score 14 to 0 against them. Army was an offensive team—and its best guns had been spiked.

OUTSIDE, the corps and the regiment had taken over. The spectators applauded the card tableaux of the Middies. But the main attraction was the game.

The squads returned for the second half. Army made several changes in the line-up that awaited the kick-off. Army received, and on the next play Clemson tossed a forward from his five-yard line. Condon cut behind center to grab the ball for a twelve-yard gain. Clemson fired another pass to Emerson, Army's left end, but the corps groaned as the ball slipped through Emerson's fingers.

A line play and a short pass only totaled eight yards, and Army had to kick. Navy drove up the field, but not with its first-half power. The fourteen-point lead allowed Navy to relax.

Army continued to gamble on an

open game. Several times Clemson passed his team deep into Navy territory, but the killer pass failed to find a pair of Army hands.

The whistle shrilled. Army was sending in a substitute.

"Flagler out. Danning in!"

Danning? Marvin Clemson stared. Danning had been left behind at the Point.

Army came out of its huddle with Danning standing aloof. Osmani drove hard into the right side of the line, but was piled up. The whistle blew a second time. A Navy man was hurt. Navy took time out. Clemson dropped back to Danning.

"How did you get here?" he asked anxiously.

"By special plane." Danning was staring hard at Clemson as if trying to read his inner thoughts. "Orders came from the superintendent. Clem, did you tell?"

Clemson blinked. "Tell what?"

Danning's lips tightened. He didn't like this stalling.

"About what really happened that night when Gloria came up," he said curtly.

"Oh," said Clemson. "Yeah. I told the whole story to Hanlon. He asked me."

"You were a fool," exclaimed Danning. "You shouldn't have done it." His dark eyes were smoldering.

Clemson stared at him in amazement for a moment. He didn't understand that Danning actually thought he was guilty. Then:

"Suppose we just play football until the game is over," he said.

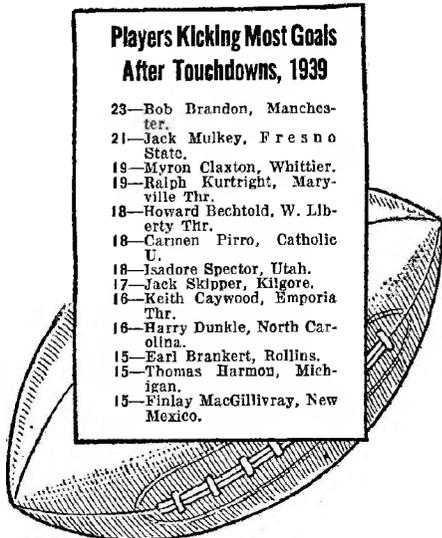
"Okay," agreed Danning looking around. "What happened to Randall?"

"Took sick just before the game," explained Clemson. "Let's go."

Army huddled. Condon figured that Navy would be watching Danning closely. That meant attention might be relaxed on Clemson. So Condon called for a reverse.

Clemson gave the ball to Danning and raced wide. Sprinting along the sideline, he turned. Over his shoulder the ball was descending toward him. Clemson stretched out his hands and grabbed the ball. Almost instantly a Navy man crashed him. Clemson

Players Kicking Most Goals After Touchdowns, 1939

- 
- 23—Bob Brandon, Manchester.
 - 21—Jack Mulkey, Fresno State.
 - 19—Myron Claxton, Whittier.
 - 19—Ralph Kurtright, Maryville Thr.
 - 18—Howard Bechtold, W. Liberty Thr.
 - 18—Carren Pirro, Catholic U.
 - 18—Isadore Spector, Utah.
 - 17—Jack Skipper, Kilgore.
 - 16—Keith Caywood, Emporia Thr.
 - 16—Harry Dunkle, North Carolina.
 - 15—Earl Brankert, Rollins.
 - 15—Thomas Harmon, Michigan.
 - 15—Finlay MacGillivray, New Mexico.

nearly went down, but he recovered and shook off the tackler. Another middy lunged for him, and Clemson pivoted and broke away. A third Navy man hit and held on. Clemson was almost away when a fourth Navy man crashed him.

The pass had been good for fifteen yards. And now Army lined up again. This time Clemson faded. Navy was playing a pass defense. Clemson fainted and then whipped the ball to Danning. Navy tackled just before Danning took the ball and Army was allowed the yardage on interference.

"Make it a long one this time," urged Clemson, as they huddled.

The ball snapped, and Clemson broke from behind the line. Now he was like an end again, going down under a punt. He sprinted straight down the field while a safety drifted with him. Clemson glanced over his shoulder and gauged the ball. Then Clemson did a strange thing. He seemingly raced away from the ball.

The Navy safety saw Clemson and saw the ball. His instructions had been to play Clemson, but it takes a pile of will power to overlook a pass interception. The safety set himself to intercept. And then Clemson wheeled sharply. He only had to watch the eyes of the safety to judge the posi-

tion of the ball. He saw the safety's eyes tighten. He watched the fingers start to curl, and Clemson looked over his shoulder. He reached up and batted the ball above the startled safety's head.

Clemson lunged past the safety, caught the ball on the run and lit out for the goal line. With the corps screaming madly, Clemson crossed standing up!

CLEMSON came back to the racing cadets. Danning was first to reach him and pound him on the back.

"Man, that was quick thinking. That was a play!"

Clemson grinned. "Let's get this extra point. We need every one."

But luck failed the cadets, and the boot sliced wide of the posts. Navy led by eight points. It would take more than a single touchdown to tie or go ahead, and time was running out.

Navy took over and held the ball until the turn of the quarter.

With only a quarter remaining, Army opened up. Condon called repeatedly on his best weapons, Clemson and Danning. But Navy was deployed for an air attack. Clemson and Danning clicked, but they couldn't string enough completed passes together. Army took time out because of an injury to Jannick. That made the situation tougher. Jannick had been the best decoy.

"Listen," Clemson said to Danning, "we're covered too closely. We've got to work faster. Count seven from the exchange—and bank 'em."

Army came out of the huddle. Clemson took the ball from Danning, counted seven and let go as if he were trying to throw out a man at first. Danning, sprinting fast, turned as if he had eyes in the back of his head and took a ball that slapped into his hands with a smack that could be heard all over the stadium. The pass was only good for six yards, *but it was good!*

The same play again, and this time Danning smacked a ball chin high into Clemson's hands for a seven-yard gain.

The stakes went forward and Army huddled again. *Smack!* Six more yards. Osanski picked up a yard. *Smack.*

Clemson took a bullet heave for another first down. Navy took time out.

ssssssssSSSSSSSS—Boom! Ahhhhhhhh!
 U. S. M. A. Rah! Rah!
 Hoo-rah! Hoo-rah!
 Ar—MAY! Rah!
 TEAM! TEAM! TEAM!

The whistle shrilled. Army came out of its huddle. Clemson crossed up the Navy by tossing a down-the-alley pass to Emerson for fifteen, and the end almost got away.

BUT on the next play Clemson and Danning went back to the quick passes. Six and seven yards at a time the Army marched up the field behind the dive-bombing attack of the Heavily Twins. Then Clemson had the ball knocked out of his hands on the one-yard line.

"Just as well," he said to Danning. "You have a touchdown coming to you. Count six on this."

They snapped into play.

"One . . . two . . . three . . . four . . . five . . . six." Danning turned, took the ball off his chin and lunged over the goal line!

Army got the extra point on a nice kick by Condon, but Army still trailed by one point, 14 to 13. And only a few minutes of time remained.

Navy used up as much of that time as it could and then punted. Army started all over again, with Danning and Clemson alternately firing and receiving passes with enough other plays mixed in by Condon to keep the Navy guessing.

And now in a race with the clock Army marched. Stubbornly Navy battled to hold the Army, but the stakes moved forward relentlessly until a Clemson pass to Danning put the ball on Navy's two-yard line. Navy took time out.

Danning dropped down to his knees beside Clemson.

"Clem, the next play is the one that counts, but before it happens I have to ask you something. Why did you tell the coach about that night in the car with Gloria?"

"He asked me to."

"Yeah. But why didn't you refuse to tell? You could. You should have let

me take the rap. You're a better soldier than I am. You didn't have to tell him that you were in the car."

"That I was in the car?" exclaimed Clemson. "Why should I say that? I never left the room." He saw the look on Danning's face and added, "Except when I had permission to see my father."

"Your father?" repeated Danning. He removed his helmet and looked around in a daze. The two groups of players sprawled on the grass. Beyond were the rising tiers of humanity, deepened by the shadows.

"That's right," said Clemson. "When I came back, you were gone. I saw a letter on your desk that explained your absence. I made a dummy in my bed and climbed into yours, but whoever made inspection that night must have got wise that one of us was missing. That letter—"

Danning was staring. The whistle shrilled. Danning rose uncertainly.

"But, Clem! I lost that letter. Then I found the letter on my desk, and you were gone. I went to the car or near enough to see you—I mean a cadet. Who—"

The whistle shrilled again. A sub was running in.

"Osmanski out," called the referee. "Randall in."

Army huddled. Clemson cut the buzz of conversation.

"Listen, if the coach sent Randall in at fullback it must be for only one reason—to let him score a touchdown."

He turned to Danning. "Kirk, you've got to help me open the hole."

Randall was standing away from the huddle, but he could hear, and a queer gleam of appreciation came into his eyes.

Army came out of its huddle. Condon motioned to the cheering corps to quiet down so signals could be heard. Navy dug in. The ball came back to Randall. Danning cut across and joined with Clemson. Together they smacked the straining line of gray and blue. A crack bulged — and Randall shot through!

The corps went wild. "Good night, Navy! Good night, Navy!"

Another sub came in. Randall turned

and jogged off the field. Tears were streaming down his face as he heard the locomotive yell, finishing up with his name.

"Ar — may! Randall! Randall! Randall!"

Condon booted the extra point. But it wasn't needed. With only a moment of play left, the game was as good as over.

Navy was banging away hopelessly at a strong Army line as the gun sounded.

Major Pat Hanlon took Danning and Clemson aside. "You deserve an explanation," he said. "While each of you thought you were protecting the other, Craig Randall was the cadet who actually was with Gloria Dawn. He found your letter, Danning, and went to your room to tell you what a double-crosser she was. Not finding you, he left the letter and went to head you off. He found Gloria, told her that if she ever came near the Point again he would fix it so she would never get a singing job. He saw her leave, so naturally never imagined that you, Clemson, assumed the blame of having been seen with her because you thought you were protecting Danning. But when you showed up at the game and Danning didn't, he knew the truth.

"I had to piece the story together, and when I did, I gave the facts to the superintendent. He ordered Danning flown here. I benched Randall until his case would be taken up, although I imagine he'll be absolved because he was not confined to quarters. It's all been pretty much of a mix-up, due to all this close-mouthed stuff. Anyway, I decided to let Randall go in for a last play."

"Yeah," said Danning, squaring his shoulders and looking straight at Clemson. "I guess that's right. Clem, hurry and get dressed so you can take care of Maureen while I tell my father a few things."

CLEMSON gazed at his roommate's face with shining eyes. "What, for instance?" he asked.

Danning's eyes were moist as he stared back, and the muscles ridged in his lean young jaws.

"That he'd darned well better call off this dirty mud-slinging investigation on the dad of my best friend in all the world."

"But, Kirk, how about your publicity—your political future?"

"There isn't going to be any. I'm finishing at the Point to get my commission—so I can keep it! You and I are going to carve out our own careers in the service—together. I'm going Army."

Coach Major Pat Hanlon watched as the two cadets headed for the dressing rooms. There was a satisfied smile on his face.

"Yes," he murmured to himself, proudly. "You're all Army—even Randall."

That evening, while Kirk was ironing out the differences between his father and Commissioner Clemson,

Marvin was busy telling Maureen Danning a few things she had been waiting a long time to hear.

"As soon as my confinement punishment expires," he said, "I'd like to take you to another hop. There are lots of things at West Point I'd like to show you. The Battle Monument, Flirtation Walk, the Kissing Rock—"

"I'd love to see Flirtation Walk with you," said Maureen. Her eyes were bright as she added, "And I know what that means."

Marvin Clemson took a deep breath. He glanced across the room to where his father and Blackjack Danning were cordially shaking hands under the eye of a grinning Kirk. At last things were falling into proper relationship. For when a girl walks along Flirtation Walk with a cadet it means she is engaged to him—or is willing to be.

*THE FALCON SQUADRON, a Complete Gridiron Novel by JACKSON V. SCHOLZ, Featured in the December issue of Our Companion Magazine POPULAR SPORTS—
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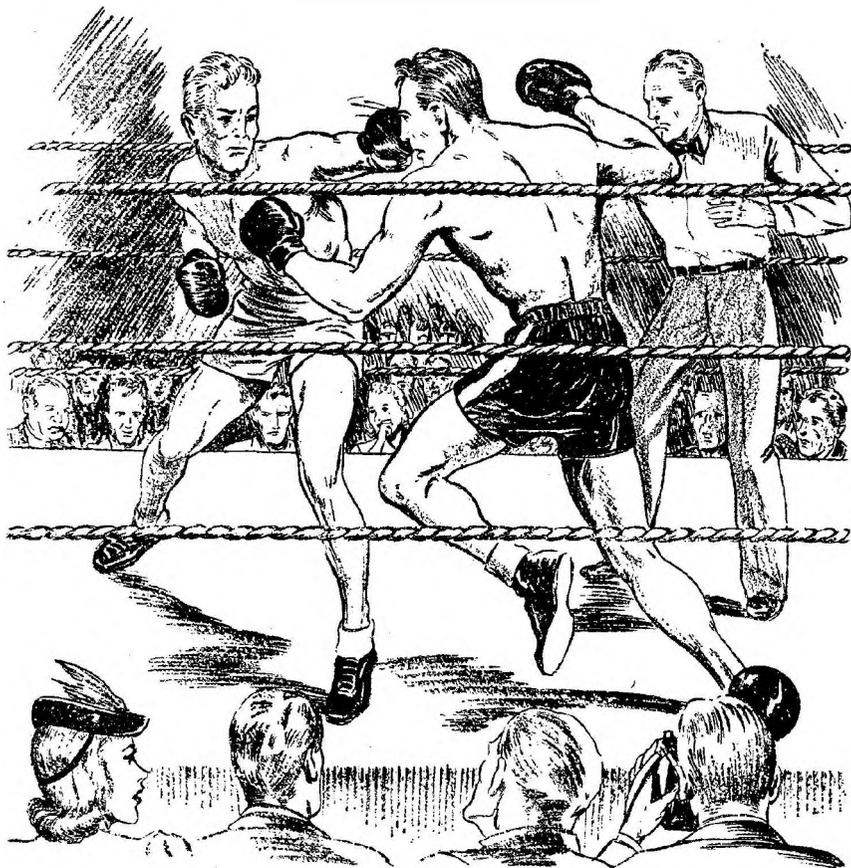
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FAMILIES ARE ALWAYS WRONG

By JACK KOFOED

Author of "Thoroughbreds Don't Quit," "Ninth Inning Stuff," etc.



Then a hard and accurate left jab struck him squarely on the nose.

"Ripper" Kane Was a Black Sheep, but His Two Dynamite-Filled Hands Certainly Kept the Wolf from the Door!

WHEN "Ripper" Kane came out of Madison Square Garden, where he had just knocked out Tom Halliday in the first round, he bought a newspaper from the stand on the corner of Forty-Ninth Street and Eighth Avenue. Most of the fight crowd had dispersed, but the crippled newsdealer was still on hand.

It was too early an edition to include an account of the bout, but there was a banner across the front page of the tabloid that said:

HAPPY BETHUN INJURED! CALLS OFF HOGAN MATCH!

Hogan was the middleweight champion of the world. He had been champion for five years, and some of the experts said he was getting a little rusty in the joints. "Happy" Bethun had been considered pretty lucky to get the shot at him, but his luck didn't hold out. He had broken his fist in training that very afternoon.

"After what you did tonight, Ripper," the newsboy said, "they ought to stick you in there against Hogan."

Ripper laughed. He was a good looking boy, with black hair and blue-gray eyes. There was nothing of the fighter about him, except those eyes, and maybe the square, rugged build of his shoulders.

"That's just what they're going to do," he said. "I signed the contract for a title shot next month just before I came out."

The boy chortled his glee.

"That's swell," he enthused. "A month from tonight you'll be middleweight champion of the world. I always said you would be. Now it's comin' true."

"Maybe," said Ripper. "That Hogan's a tough guy to stop."

"Not for you. Sixteen straight wins—and you finished Tom Halliday in a round. You'll do the same to that phoney champ."

Ripper patted the boy on the shoulders.

Thanks, Tony," he said. "You'll have a chance to see it. There'll be a ticket for you."

He put the fist that had knocked out Tom Halliday into the right hand pocket of his pants, and felt for the forty twenty-dollar-bills that represented payment for his victory. It was a lot of money, but he knew he would not keep it long.

His family would find plenty of ways to spend it. They always did. They depended on him to bring in the wherewithal for their necessities and pleasures.

Kane had never thought too much about it before. Taking care of them had been just a part of his life's routine, like eating and riding on the subway. After all, they were his people.

It was fun fighting. He liked it. Even when the going was rough he liked it. Not that he had a tough time with Halliday. Tom was an old fellow. He had lost some of his speed and timing, though he was still considered a good trial horse for the youngsters.

HALLIDAY knew Kane could hit. He had tried to make a running fight of it, but with little success. Ripper crowded him into a corner, feinted, and let go the old haymaker. Halliday took the count of nine, pulled himself together, and rose. He was bunched up and cool, in spite of his shakiness.

But he hadn't anything left. It was just a bluff on his part. Too bad the old guy had to be finished so quickly, but that's the way it was in the ring. You had it for awhile, and then suddenly you didn't have it anymore.

Ripper opened Halliday up with a left just above the belt line and knocked him out with a short, jolting right. It felt good—a punch like that. The jar of it ran up into your shoulder.

When Ripper pulled his bathrobe around his shoulders, Damon Harris, of the *Globe*, stood up at the ringside, and said:

"You'll do the same thing to Hogan." And Harris was considered the best judge of fighting flesh among the sports writers.

At that moment Ripper Kane didn't know anything about Happy Bethun's injury. But after he had dressed, Bill Swanson, the matchmaker, called him into the office and offered him five thousand dollars to take Happy's place. From eight hundred to five thousand in a week! And not only that. He had a chance to win the championship of the world. It was too good to be true.

Ripper walked across Eighth Avenue to Broadway. A girl had just turned out the lights in the cashier's cage at the Republican Theatre, and locked the door behind her. She was a very good looking girl, with level, amused eyes and brown hair.

They linked arms without a word

and went into a cafeteria next door. He ordered a steak, because he had not eaten much since breakfast. She had coffee and toast.

"I know you won," she said. "The manager has a radio in his office, and he told me. You're pretty good, aren't you?"

He grinned at her.

"One round," he said. "They seem to think I'm all right." He wanted to hold back the news of his match with Hogan. That *would* surprise her.

"What if your people find out about you?" she said suddenly.

Kane's smiling face became serious. He began cutting the steak, which was not as tender as it might be, into small segments.

"I don't see why they should," he said. "What connection could they find between Ripper Kane and their fair-haired boy? The only time any of them look at the sports pages is to see who won the polo matches at Westbury. Fighting is too far beneath their dignity for them ever to think about it."

Kay McCoy crumbled a piece of toast in her slim fingers.

"You're awfully foolish, Wally," she said. "Did you ever get a really honest picture of your folks? Well, I'll give it to you. They're a fine old family—real blue bloods. The Scotts—the Virginia Scotts. Proud, but broke. Your father looks like General Lee, and never did an honest day's work in his life. Your mother is a gentlewoman. That means she is on a pedestal and her men folk defer to her.

"If they don't, she wears them down with tears and fainting spells. And your brother and sister. They're lazy conceited snobs. They're too good to work, but not too good to let you supply them with money. Don't stop me, Wally. You know I'm right."

RIPPER knew she was right, but listening to her say things like that seemed disloyal. The family had always meant much to each other. They were so proud of their ancestry—their name—the position they had once held in the world. A Scott had even been an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. There were bishops and gen-

erals in the family dating back to colonial days.

But look at them now. They were poor, in a genteel sort of way, and horribly ashamed because they were. But nobody did anything about it except Wally, and he was a prize-fighter, who hid his identity under the name of Ripper Kane. It might seem funny to some people, but it really was sad, and almost tragic.

Kay understood. She looked at things realistically and wasn't sorry for them. She was just angry that the entire burden should be thrown on the boy she loved.

"Yes," he said moodily. "I guess you're right."

"I'm not blue-blooded," continued Kay. "I come from the West Side. My father was a letter carrier. We didn't know anything about society, and we worked for what we got. We didn't sponge on one another, or make one person in the family the goat for others. Your people are doing exactly that to you."

Ripper Kane pushed back his chair, and picked up the checks.

"Let's get out of here," he said.

Out on Broadway the after-theatre crowd swarmed along the sidewalks. The street was jammed from curb to curb with taxies and automobiles. Over the hum of traffic rose the shrill whistle of the traffic police.

"Conceding all this," said Ripper, "what can I do about it? They depend on me. I'm fond of all of them, even though I have to admit you're saying nothing but the truth about them."

The girl sighed.

"There's only one thing to do, Wally," she said. "Make a clean break. Your brother is only a year younger than you. Your sister has a college education. Let *them* do something. You've said you wanted to marry me. But we'll never get married as long as you have your family hanging around your neck."

They stopped at Fiftieth Street to wait for the red light. Ripper flashed a look at the pretty, intent face beside him. Kay always reached into the heart of things with calm directness.

"On top of that," Kay said, "whatever your brother and sister do is right.

Whatever you do is wrong. You're the family patsy—so you work in Wall Street during the day and fight under another name at night. Because they know your salary isn't enough to keep them going, you pretend you make more by dabbling in stocks. It would kill them to know the money you spend on them was earned with your fists."

"It would break Mother in pieces if she knew it," he said.

"No, it wouldn't, not in the long run, anyway. She would get used to it as she has gotten used to doing without all the things she used to have."

"I—I'm afraid not."

"What about us?" Kay said almost angrily. "You're spoiling our lives acting this way. We have a right to be together—to do the things we want to do. But it will never be possible as long as you go on this way."

HE nodded.

"I know," said Ripper in a low voice. "I don't care about myself, but it isn't fair to you. I'm going to change it. Look. Tonight I've had my big chance. They're giving me five thousand dollars to fight Johnny Hogan next Friday!"

"Darling!" cried Kay, throwing her arms around his neck. Several people laughed. The policeman on the corner looked scandalized.

Ripper squared his shoulders embarrassedly.

"I'll take you home right now, and break the news. It—it won't be easy."

Kay squeezed his arm. He knew what she was afraid of. When Ripper's father talked about loyalty and duty in his Fourth of July oratorical voice, and his mother wept, he might quit—quit before tears as he never had before fists.

"You won't let them talk you out of it, will you?" she asked anxiously. "Our whole life together depends on this."

"No," he said quietly. "I won't let them talk me out of it."

But in his heart, he was not sure. The family was—well, it was something deep in him. It always had been. It could not be shaken off so easily. And Kay had the proper angle about Tom and Nola always being right, and he wrong in his parents' judgment. He

could visualize his mother's tears, the depressed droop of his father's shoulders and the excited protests of his brother and sister when he told his story.

What would become of them? He was a traitor to his family. They would be forever damned socially by the profession he had adopted. It would occur to none of them that they had a duty as well as he. No, they'd never think of that.

He walked home slowly, trying to formulate a plan of attack in his mind. Tonight he had gone into Tom Halliday without a flicker of concern. But it was a different matter with his mother. How could he fight her utter defenselessness?

The Scotts had a third floor apartment in a walk-up on Eighty-Sixth Street. It was a brownstone house done in the miasmic architecture of the '90s. The furniture was old-fashioned, the rugs scuffed. Ripper did not like it any better than they did, but Tom always needed new clothes, and Nola's closet was stuffed with gowns and slippers. He couldn't buy those things and pay for a better apartment, too. But if he married Kay, he couldn't keep on supporting the family in that manner.

Ripper walked slowly upstairs. He hated to face what lay ahead and thought himself a little cowardly hoping his parents were in bed, so he could put the task off until morning. He knew it wouldn't be any easier then, but any sort of delay would be welcome. If they were in bed he could make that an excuse.

BUT they weren't in bed. They were waiting for him when he opened the door. He paused for a minute, looking into the living room.

His mother was a charming, dignified woman, bearing in her face and manner all the fine traditions of the old South. But Ripper noticed she was beginning to look a little old. There were lines coming into the soft skin of her face.

There was a little droop to the corners of her mouth.

His father had a beard cut in the imperial manner of Louis Napoleon's. But his slippers were shabby and the col-

lar and cuffs of his dressing gown were frayed.

They deserved more of life, these two. They were fine and patrician— But, no, it wasn't fair to admit, even to himself, that they were parasites. They had never done anything, or achieved anything in their lives. For years they had lived off the fortune their ancestors had earned. Now, they were living on him. They were draining out of him all he needed to begin life with Kay.

It had seemed easy to tell the girl he loved that he would end the impossible situation, but standing there looking at them, Ripper didn't know if he would be able to do it.

Mrs. Scott looked up.

"Is that you, Wally?" she asked in her soft, drawing voice.

He pushed aside the portieres.

"Yes, Mother," he said.

Colonel Scott rose with immeasurable dignity in spite of the slight creakiness of his joints.

"My boy, my boy," he said. "I'm glad you're here. I don't know what we would do without you."

"What is it now?" Ripper asked.

That approach meant that new demands were to be made.

"Everything. Everything in the world. I hate to trouble you, Wally," his father said in an almost casual voice that implied he practically never did. "But you'll have to do something. First of all your brother married a chorus girl this afternoon!"

"Tom—married?" Ripper was incredulous.

It was ridiculous. Tom didn't have a penny of his own. He didn't have a job. Married!

"Yes," his father said solemnly. "They're out celebratin' somewhere. They'll be back later."

"But—but he couldn't do a thing like that," Ripper protested.

"I know," said the old colonel. "That is what makes it more difficult. She hasn't a job, either. Don't be angry, son. Tom is young, and she is so very beautiful."

Young and beautiful. So was Kay. Ripper wanted her probably a thousand times more than Tom wanted his chorus girl. But he had waited. He

had a duty to his family. Tom didn't wait. He went ahead and took what he wanted. Kay was right about them. Selfish. Utterly heedless of everybody and everything, so long as they got what they wanted. But the old folks took it casually. Tom could do no wrong.

"And, Wally, listen," his mother said. "This has upset Nola no end. She feels that, living as we do, there is no chance for her to meet an eligible man—"

"And what am I to do?" Ripper interrupted. "Get her one?"

"No, but if she could go to Palm Beach for the winter— You know, Wally, Father and I don't care anything about ourselves, but Nola is pretty and should have her chance."

THE injustice of it all crowded up into Ripper Kane's throat, and for a moment he couldn't say anything. Tom and Nola! They should have their chances. What about his own life? What about Kay? Tom and Nola were young. Let them go out and make their own way, as he had done. They weren't any different. He worked in Wall Street during the day. He trained, or fought at night. And every penny he made went toward keeping this household together.

It wasn't fair and it wasn't right. He'd tell them that, too. As long as he lived he would take care of his parents and protect them from the world they were unfitted to grapple with. But Nola and Tom, and his chorus-girl wife—let them go out and fight for things the way he had.

His mother was looking at him now as though she sensed the revolt brewing under the surface. But she had quelled other revolts with her helplessness. This one would be smoothed out, too.

"What do you want me to do?" Ripper asked sharply.

"I'm—I'm not quite sure, son," the colonel said. "Whatever it is, I'm certain you will carry it through in the true Scott fashion."

The Scott fashion. The Scott tradition. The Scott—Oh, damn it all, he was sick of everything about the Scotts! He wasn't a Scott, anyway—not now. He was a prizefighter named

Ripper Kane, and in love with a mailman's daughter. How that would stick in their craw if they only knew it! And they were going to know it in just about two minutes.

"Listen to me, Wally," his mother said. "I know what must be done. First of all, we'll have to arrange to send Nola to Palm Beach. I know you have had your hands full, dear, but you are a man, and have a habit of getting things done. Look at this place—shabby, with a horribly middle-class shabbiness. It is impossible for her to bring anyone here."

"If it's good enough for you and Dad, it's good enough for her," said Ripper, getting the words past the lump in his throat with a real effort.

His mother rose, and stood in front of him. She put her hands on his broad shoulders. There was a hint of tears in her eyes, a quiver to her sweet lips. Now, the batteries of sentiment were to be turned on him, and never, in all his life had Ripper been able to fight them.

"It's not good enough for her," she said. "The one chance of our escaping all this is a proper marriage for Nola. It cannot be arranged while she is here. There isn't any other way out, son."

"And Tom. You haven't forgotten Tom?" She completely missed the sarcasm in Ripper's voice.

"No. I haven't forgotten Tom. Though I do not approve of his marriage, but that marriage has made a Scott of the lady. It is obvious they cannot live here with us. We are not equipped to care for them."

"So I'm to send Nola to Palm Beach, and get an apartment for Tom and his bride."

"Yes. You must do those things. Father and I do not care what happens to us. We are concerned only with—"

"I know," Ripper snapped. "With the kids—the precious kids. So the one way out is a proper marriage for Nola, is it? Well, that's not the way at all. There's another way. Let them go out and work as I do. They want to live as though the Scotts still owned plantations. Well, the Scotts don't anymore. And it's time Tom and Nola found it out. They've loafed and

sponged on me long enough."

"Wally!" Mrs. Scott's eye blazed. The colonel stopped his restless pacing, and chewed on his cigar. They looked at their son as though he had suddenly gone mad. "What are you saying?" his mother asked.

NOW was the time to tell them—to settle the whole thing while his determination was born on the wings of anger. Ripper knew he could not do it any other way. He could not bring the look of hurt surprise into their eyes deliberately. It had to be this way or not at all. And right now Kay was hoping he would not let her down. No, he wouldn't let her down. He opened his mouth to tell them—and the telephone rang!

"I'll get it," he said shortly, picking up the receiver.

"This is the Forty-Seventh Street Police Station," a matter-of-fact voice said. "Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Scott and Miss Nola Scott were injured in an automobile accident. They're at the Polyclinic Hospital. You'd better go there."

Ripper hung up the receiver. He kept his expression under control, and his voice quiet.

"It was for me," he said. "I've got to go out for a little while. Business. We'll talk about the other things later." He couldn't discuss that now. Maybe he never could, even after what Kay had said. He was really sunk.

At the Polyclinic he learned the story. An automobile had crashed into the taxi in which the three were riding. Tom had a broken arm; his brand new wife a fractured ankle; and Nola a gash in her shoulder that required a dozen stitches. All were suffering from shock. Nothing critical, of course, but it was the same old story. Expense. Doctor and hospital and surgical fees. But he couldn't walk out on them now, even for Kay.

Since the children were not in danger, the old folks took the news without hysterics. Everything would be all right. They'd have the best of care. Wally would see to that.

When Ripper saw Kay and told her what had happened, he saw the keen disappointment in her face. He had

failed her. He hadn't lived up to his promise.

"I'm sorry," he said. "But you see how it is, darling. There's nothing to do but wait until they're better."

She kissed him.

"Of course," Kay said bravely. "I understand. Don't let it worry you. Get in shape to beat Hogan, and after you've beaten him we can talk about it some more."

Ripper gave up his job and trained as he never had before. He tried to shut himself away from the problem that harried him. But it wasn't so easy. Maybe, if he won the championship, he'd have enough to take care of all of them. But he knew that wouldn't be enough for Kay. It wasn't a question of money to her. It was the principle. She didn't want him to be a doormat for his family, no matter how rich he became.

WEEKS later Ripper returned to New York to weigh in at the Boxing Commission offices. Hogan was there. He was a husky fellow who looked like a football player in spite of his years in the ring. He was in very good humor.

"It's just your bad luck I'm feeling good, kid," he said. "I'm going to get married right after the fight. And because I don't want to keep her waiting, I'm going to make the fight short. If it wasn't for that, I might let you go a few rounds just to make you look good. He flexed his big muscles and grinned, as he stepped on the scale.

"Don't worry about me," said Ripper, who had heard that kind of talk before. "I don't scare easy."

That was all. The challenger went to a hotel room to eat and relax before going to the garden. He called up Kay. She was going to see the fight. The theatre manager had given her the night off, because not many cashiers have challengers for the middleweight championship as sweethearts.

"Don't worry," she said to Ripper. "Just go in there and beat Hogan. Everything will be all right."

When Ripper stretched out on the bed he was sure she was just talking that way to keep up his courage. Kay was a great girl. Much as she wanted

him to stop being a stooge for his family, she'd let the whole thing ride just so he could have a clear mind for the job ahead.

To settle this, though, Ripper knew he would have to be disloyal to one side or the other. There could be no compromise. And when they told him it was time to go on, and he walked out toward the center of the ring, he was just as undecided as he had ever been.

Hogan was already in the ring, smiling and bowing, the most confident fellow who ever stepped through the ropes. When Ripper entered, Johnny came over and shook his hand heartily.

"Better postpone that wedding till tomorrow," Ripper said. "You'll probably be taking a nap in a little while, and won't wake up in time for the ceremony. Who's the lucky girl?"

"Nobody you'd know," said Johnny Hogan. "She comes of a good family. But I'm braggin' tonight, so I'll tell you. Her name is Nola Scott—one of the Scotts of Virginia, suh!"

Ripper took hold of the ropes to steady himself. His ears must be playing tricks on him. It was impossible. It just couldn't be.

"Nola—Scott?" he said huskily.

"I've got to tell you about it before I lick you," said the champion, who was so full of exuberance that he couldn't help talking. "Last Friday, after watching you put Halliday away, I went for a little ride. And I guess I drove too fast. I usually do. Well, I knocked over a taxi. For a minute I was panicky and drove away. Next morning, a girl came to see me. She had seen it, and took my number. Said I'd have to fix things up, or she'd turn me in. Her name was Kay McCoy."

"Go on," said Ripper, who was past surprise now.

"Well, I went to the insurance company first, and the hospital afterward," Hogan went on. "The insurance people didn't want any publicity, so they're settling the case for fifteen thousand dollars. At the hospital I saw Nola, and we fell for each other right away. So we decided there wasn't any use waiting. . . ."

WHEN Ripper walked back to his corner, his knees were shaking.

The whole thing was crazy. He looked down at the first row, where Kay was sitting, and she shook her clasped hands at him. Then, he knew it must be so. She had seen them talking, and probably guessed what it was about.

"I told you it was going to be all right," she called.

But while he sat there in the corner waiting for the bell, he wondered. Maybe the financial end was settled. He and Kay would be able to get married now, but what about Dad and Mother? They'd find out about him now, and it would simply kill them to learn that he was a prizefighter, and that their adored Nola had married another one.

The bell rang then. No time to think of anything now but winning the middleweight championship of the world. No time for anything but the job of beating Johnny Hogan.

Ripper covered the distance between himself and Hogan in three leaps. His left hand whipped out in a destructive arc that ended against the champion's stomach. Breath spurted from Hogan's lips, dragging a half-smothered grunt of agony with it. He pitched forward to his hands and knees. His chest worked spasmodically, sucking air into his lungs. He opened and shut his mouth like a fish out of water. The referee started to count.

The champion pulled himself together in a bunched-up heap as the referee reached eight. Then he was on his feet, his face expressionless.

The crowd found its voice and shouted hysterically. Hogan retreated. Ripper waded in, supremely confident of his ability to break through the other man's defense.

One more wallop in the same spot and they could sweep Hogan up and carry him out. Then a hard and accurate left jab struck him squarely on the nose, bobbing his head back. And a terrific right-hander smashed against the point of his chin.

A velvet curtain seemed to drop before Ripper's eyes. He fought furiously with himself, but a weakness enveloped him from head to heels. His arms dropped to his sides.

Men and women were on their feet, screaming violently. Their hearts beat

faster for what they saw. The animal that lies in everyone rose to the surface then. Mild little men at the ringside fought their own fights—living the desperate life of the two in the ring.

Ripper pulled himself together somehow. He didn't know how or why. What untapped reserve of power kept him on his feet no one could possibly know. He should have gone down under the drumming fists, but he didn't. The bell ended the first round.

The men went groggily to their corners. Ripper's right eye was closed. Under it was a purple swelling like a little balloon puffed by an invisible blower's strength. The skin became tight and shiny. It looked as though it might burst, and drip black blood down on his cheek.

Ripper's second worked on it with ice wrapped in a towel. After a bit he discarded the towel, and began a smooth, downward pressure. Magically, the swelling melted under the iced fingers. The rest period was half gone, and the balloon was only a small, blue-tinged lump.

THE eye, though, was still tightly shut. The second, his mouth pursed like an old maid's, flipped the remaining bit of ice into the bucket and went to work with his bare hands. Only twenty seconds left to get the eye open.

He pried slowly and evenly. Of all the thousands there, he seemed the most unconcerned. Five seconds more, but his fingers did not accelerate their motion. Four seconds! Was the eye opening? It couldn't be. Miracles were not performed that way. One second! The bell!

And Ripper Kane sprang to his feet with hardly a trace of the black-blooded disfigurement that he had brought to his corner with him.

Luckily, the swelling had come down under Doc's skilful manipulation. Ripper had once seen him lance a puffed eye with his pocketknife and suck the blood from it so that his man might go back into action.

These thoughts—impressions rather, since they did not take definite shape in his mind—came and went as Doc Buckley finished his operations, and

Ripper moved forward.

Hogan came charging in. Ripper slipped and sidestepped and blocked. He was a master of technique. He made the champion seem clumsy. Hogan raged with anger. He stormed in the clinches. But he was getting a little slower. After all, he wasn't as young as he used to be.

"It looks as though you won't get married tonight," Ripper said, poking his left into the body.

"Won't, hey?" grunted Hogan. "What'll you bet?"

The referee broke them apart. They boxed at long range for a moment. Ripper shook the champion up with a hard right cross. They went into a clinch again.

"I want to tell you something," the challenger said. "That girl you're going to marry, Nola Scott—"

"What about her?" Hogan growled, trying to pull his arms away.

"Don't you see a . . . sort of family resemblance between us?"

Hogan peered at Ripper. His jaw slackened. It was obvious that he did.

"Well, I'm her brother," said Ripper, "and I'm giving you your wedding present right now."

He hooked a vicious uppercut at Hogan's jaw. The leather-covered fist landed with a thudding smash. Hogan's startled expression smoothed out. His knees buckled, and he fell flat on his face. The referee took one look at him and said:

"That's enough."

He and Ripper carried the ex-champion to his corner. Then, Ripper walked back to his own. Kay was waiting there. She put her hands on

his cheeks, and kissed him.

"I told you everything was all right," she said happily. "Your sister to be married—fifteen thousand split between her and Tom. Now, we can be married, too."

"Yes," he said. "Yes, it's all right. There's only one thing wrong. Dad and Mother will be horribly broken up. Me a prizefighter. Nola marrying one. They won't be able to stand it."

Kay laughed.

"You think so? Look!" She pointed. Ripper turned, and saw his mother and father standing at the ringside, smiling and waving.

"What—what is this?" he choked out. "It can't be. This is quite impossible."

"Oh, no, it's not," said Kay McCoy. "You didn't understand the setup. That's all. I did. Your parents have always thought Tom and Nola could do no wrong. That's usually the way. So, when Nola decided to marry Johnny Hogan she made them believe prize-fighting was a very fine and manly profession. Well, if it was good enough for their daughter's husband, it must be good enough for you. So, everybody's satisfied—except—"

"Except—" Ripper prompted her.

"Me," said Kay. "And I will be as soon as I'm Mrs. Wallace Scott, or Mrs. Ripper Kane, if you like that better, Champ."

By this time Ripper had his gloves off, and he took Kay in his arms.

"Baby," he said, "I'll bet the five thousand I won tonight that we beat Nola and Johnny to it. And from now on you're the only one I'll be a patsy for!"

"I Talked with God"

(Yes, I Did—Actually and Literally)

and, as a result of that little talk with God some ten years ago, a strange new Power came into my life. After 48 years of horrible, sickening, dismal failure, this strange Power brought to me a sense of overwhelming victory, and I have been overcoming every undesirable condition of my life ever since. What a change it was. Now—I have credit at more than one bank, I own a beautiful home, own a newspaper and a large office building, and my wife and family are amply provided for after I leave for shores unknown. In addition to these material benefits, I have a sweet peace in my life. I am happy as happy can be. No circumstance ever upsets me, for I have learned how to draw upon the invisible God-Law, under any and all circumstances.

You too may find and use the same staggering Power of the God-Law that I use. It can bring to you too, whatever things are right and proper for you to have. Do you believe this? It won't cost much to find out—just a penny post-card or a letter, addressed to Dr. Frank B. Robinson, Dept. 135, Moscow, Idaho, will bring you the story of the most fascinating success of the century. And the same Power I use is here for your use too. I'll be glad to tell you about it. All information about this experience will be sent you free, of course. The address again—Dr. Frank B. Robinson, Dept. 135, Moscow, Idaho. Advt. Copyright 1989 Frank B. Robinson.

CLEATS OF COURAGE

By
**NELSON A.
HUTTO**

Author of "Show-off Quarterback," "Forward's Comeback," etc.

Johnny Coe Smashes His
Way to Gridiron Revenge
When He Humbles the
Mighty Powerhouse That
Hadn't Any Use for Him!

CHAPTER I

Football Pawn

THE shadows of the stadium had long since covered the field. But the Bourland Tigers weren't through yet. They were still out there, performing a polite bit of mayhem called scrimmage.

Twenty-two of them, a sweating, grunting group of helmeted giants, crashed together as a line buck was aimed at the goal line.

A small man with close-cropped sandy hair dived into the heap. Slowly, the pile disintegrated and left the small man standing there, holding the ball. He glared from flintlike eyes.

"So you let those punks tally!" he said icily. "Okay, that means we may have to turn on the lights."

His voice was like a lash. An explosive mite of a guy was Mel Stover, the head coach.

He turned toward the sideline and yelled:

"Coe!"

Johnny Coe keened his ears, wonder-



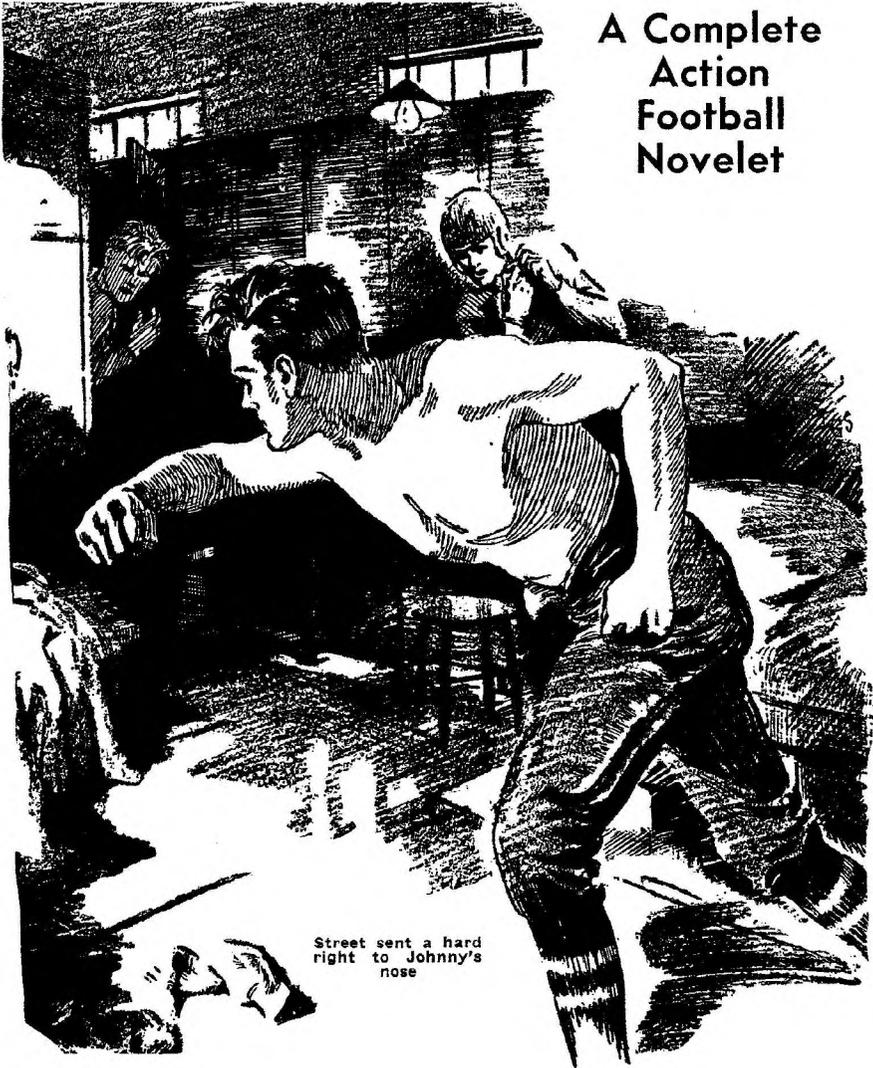
ing if he had heard correctly. Again Stover's call lanced the air:

"All right, Coe. Do you want to play this game or not?"

Johnny leaped then. He'd been wanting nothing so much as a chance to play football. But he'd been thinking that perhaps he would never play any more. Wondering, in fact, if Stover knew he was still around the place.

The coach ordered Johnny to replace Al Mattox, the regular tailback. Then he walked to the twenty yard line and put the ball down. He looked scornfully at the first string team, who had just been scored on by a mixed collection of scrubs.

A Complete Action Football Novelet



Street sent a hard right to Johnny's nose

"The goal is up yonder, a matter of eighty yards," Stover said. "We'll quit—when you've carried it over."

Johnny took his place in the huddle. He was a terrier among mastiffs. Barely five-ten and not heavily built, he looked almost ludicrous, standing there with Bourland University's array of prize beef.

"Bump" Sheridan, the quarterback, turned to Johnny.

"We don't seem to be so good," he sneered. "Suppose you take it, fancy pants—on number twenty-two."

Johnny grinned with enthusiasm, his

white, even teeth shining above his square-chiseled jaw.

"Open up, you mugs, and we'll go in early," he enthused.

He was feeling very good about it. Not only was he getting a taste of scrimmage, but he was going to carry the mail. Johnny was first and always a ball-toter.

The ball came spiraling back. Johnny cuddled it up to him and got going. A nice hole opened off tackle, and he cut through it like an arrow in full flight. Somebody flattened the backer-up, and he pulled out wide. He was on his own now, and that was real-

ly the way he liked it, out there in the open. His cleats splatted the turf with a soft, rhythmic tattoo he loved to hear.

HE pulled a change of pace on the defensive halfback and left the guy clawing the twilight air. He saw he could not circle the safety, so he cut back to the middle and ran straight at the last defender. He let him come up close, and then he pulled his hip away and slapped a neat straight-arm into the guy's puss. He was in the clear now, running at top speed. He crossed the goal line and stopped, turning to eye the pack far down the field.

Stover marched out, beefing.

"Okay, okay," he said. You were lucky though. I ought to make you do it over."

They broke for the gate, and Johnny followed, feeling at peace with the world. It was amazing what just a little action could do for a guy. Five minutes ago he'd been feeling lower than a lizard's belly.

One of the scrubs passed him.

"You needn't change your hat size, Coe," he said. We didn't try very hard. We were tired of the damn scrimmage anyway."

"Run along, small fry," Johnny said, but his stride slowed a bit as he went on toward the clubhouse.

He walked by Mel Stover, who was waiting at the sideline for the student manager. The coach gave Johnny a cool glance and said nothing. Johnny went on, shrugging. It had been nice to get out there and feel the old leather in his mitts again.

He couldn't figure, though, why he wasn't getting more of it. He still remembered that his suit, which should be streaked with grime and sweat, was still conspicuously fresh and clean.

A massive figure loomed beside him. It was "Ox" Moroney.

"Tough workout, eh, kid?" he said.

Johnny squinted at Moroney, who was six feet-three of reinforced concrete.

"You know I had no workout, Ox," he said without rancor. "Sometimes I wonder if I will ever get a real workout."

Ox grinned. His nose being very flat and his black eyes very small, his grin was not a cheering spectacle "Yeah," he said, "I got an idea Stover ain't going to use you much. He likes his football rough and his players rugged."

Johnny caught the note of triumph in Ox's voice. The big man, it seemed, would not forget. In their high school days Johnny had been the star; Ox, a lumbering, overgrown kid who stumbled over his own feet. Ox had never liked that. He had even chosen to make it a personal issue.

But now their roles were apparently reversed. Ox was no longer awkward, his strength had become matured and well coordinated. Playing his second varsity year, he was an important cog in Mel Stover's steam roller. Whereas Johnny, newly recruited from a junior college, was just another back lost in the shuffle.

It was sweet revenge to the big guy, and he was losing no opportunity to gloat.

"I still don't get it," Johnny said. "Stover invites me here for pre-season practice. He seems to think I can play him some football. But since I'm here, I lie around on the grass so much I'm getting stiff in the joints."

Ox's black eyes narrowed craftily.

"Stover always has a reason for everything he does," he said.

SOMETHING in his tone caused Johnny to glance up sharply. Ox affected a confidential air.

"Just as an old friend, kid, I'm going to tell you," he confided. "Stover brought you here for a special purpose—to keep you away from Driskell. At Bourland you won't do him much good. But at Driskell you might do him some harm. He wanted to make sure you weren't playing with those babies when we meet 'em this year."

Johnny felt as if a heavy weight had landed on his head. It would be like Ox to have his little joke. And yet, now that he thought of it, the thing checked entirely too well.

He had meant to go to Driskell. After two All-Conference years at Ashland Junior, he had been sought by several major schools.

Driskell had been his choice.

Then Stover's man had made a personal call. He had talked glowingly—of Bourland University, of Mel Stover, whose great team was due to make football history in the mid-west. It had all sounded very nice indeed. And Johnny, always a small town boy at heart, had believed him. He had packed his grip and ridden back with Stover's man.

He had received a warm greeting and a bright new uniform—but that was all. Ten days had gone by. The ball club was rapidly taking shape. But Johnny Coe was no part of it. His sortie today had been his single scrimmage.

Yes, he thought, it tallied in every way. Bourland was steeped in the tradition of power-football. Her teams, guided these years by Mel Stover, had always been big, bone-crushing elevens. Certainly, there was no place in such a set-up for nimble-footed Johnny Coe.

"Don't worry, pal," Ox was saying. "You'll get to strut your stuff a little. You're sure to play in the first game." He chuckled. "Stover puts 'em all in the first game—so they won't ever be eligible to play for anybody else." He seemed to think it was very funny.

But it did not sound funny to Johnny. It sounded rotten. He kept trying to tell himself that Ox had made up the whole thing, just for the hell of it. But yet—

He still had that queer feeling when he stepped inside the lighted dressing room. . . .

They were finishing supper when Stover got up and signaled for their attention.

"No skull practice tonight," he announced. "If any of you want to go to town, take in a show or something, the evening is yours. But be in bed by ten-thirty."

He sat down then.

"Now ain't that nice," Bill Bean, a big tackle, said to Johnny. "As if anybody wanted to go anywhere—except to a nice, soft bed."

But Johnny was not tired, and he figured a show might be just the thing for his jumpy nerves. He sought company for the excursion, but everybody

agreed with Bean. Two long workouts in one day had them all ready for the covers. Stover's offer, it appeared, had been just a bit of subtle irony.

So Johnny started out alone. He walked along the dark walk of the big campus. The sprawling buildings, save for the dorm where the football men were encamped, were black and lifeless. Two more days, and they would be dotted with lights, seething with activity. Thousands would be enrolling for another session.

BUT tonight all was quiet, and to Johnny it was depressing. He walked through the entrance arms and turned toward the lights of town. A big roadster was crawling toward him, and Johnny skipped across the street to get out of its way. Suddenly, the car drew up to the curb, and a voice called Johnny's name.

He stopped. A figure emerged from the roadster. A short figure with a familiar stride.

"Bert Baker," Johnny said wonderingly. Baker should be miles away, in the old home town, looking after his bowling alley.

The short man grabbed Johnny's hand.

"Hop in, kid," he said. "Might as well ride."

They got in the car. Baker turned it around and shifted the gears.

"This is pure luck," he said. "I had no idea how I was going to get to you."

"Unravel the mystery, Bert," Johnny said. "What are you doing up here?"

The other did not reply at once. They rode a few blocks.

"Do you like it here, Johnny?" Baker said. "Do they treat you nice?"

Johnny hesitated only for an instant.

"They're okay," he said.

"You can't fool me," Baker said. "You don't like it. You won't ever like it. That's why I'm here. To give you a chance to get away—before it's too late."

Johnny leaned back and tried to piece it all together. Baker was an old Driskell man, a quarterback of former days. He had sold Johnny on going there. And now, in some way sensing Johnny's bum deal at Bourland, he had

come back to take him to Driskell after all.

"It won't do, Bert," Johnny finally said. "I promised to play football at Bourland."

"Get wise, kid," Baker said softly. "You won't ever play any football at Bourland. Stover just wanted to steal you away from Driskell. I could have told you that, only you left town so quick."

Yesterday Johnny wouldn't have believed it, but now the whole pattern lay clearly before him. All the rumors he had refused to believe came back to him—the whisperings that Stover was a man who would do anything to win. That to lose made him mentally and physically sick. Yet, he had lost last year—to Driskell. That must have been a bitter dose indeed. And now he was laying his plans in advance. Johnny saw himself as just another pawn in Stover's elaborate strategy—for the coach's revenge on Driskell.

Johnny sat there a while, listening to the purr of the motor.

"We better go back and talk to Stover," he said.

Baker laughed.

"For a guy who's been around, Johnny, you're a simple soul. We go back, and Stover would clamp you in a locked room and have his gorillas toss me out on my ear."

Again there was only the hum of the motor. Then Johnny spoke.

"Well, I'm not leaving anything behind but a busted suitcase and a change of shirts. Let's travel."

They traveled. Soon, they hit a ghostly ribbon of highway, and the roadster ate up the miles.

BAKER chattered merrily. He pictured Stover's dismay and Jim Hardeman's surprise. The Driskell coach knew nothing of this, of course. It was Bert's own idea. But Hardeman would be glad to see Johnny. He would treat him right. It would be different at Driskell.

He talked on, but Johnny wasn't listening much. He drank in the rush of cool air and tried to think. But the air was like a drug, and Johnny's thoughts were all jumbled.

Only once he spoke.

"Well, I'll be—" he blurted suddenly.

"S'matter, kid?" Baker asked.

"I did leave something, after all. My gold football—on the dresser."

"Forget it. You can send for it after Stover cools off."

It was a hundred and fifty miles to Driskell, and they made it in three hours. Baker pulled up in front of a little hotel in the sleepy college town.

"Pile out, kid. We'll catch a few winks and see Jim Hardeman in the morning."

CHAPTER II

Fancy Ball Carrier

JIM HARDEMAN was a big man with a leathern face and a straight, thin mouth. He sat and looked at Johnny with sober gray eyes.

Baker had told his story and gone. Jim Hardeman had shown little emotion during the recital. He would not, Johnny guessed, be a man to show emotion. The coach finally spoke quietly. "You'll have some catching up to do, Coe. Our system is—well, different from Bourland's."

"I'll hustle, Coach," Johnny said promptly. "I'll learn."

Hardeman didn't reply. He penciled a slip and handed it over the desk.

"This will get you your outfit. Equipment room to your right down the hall. Morning practice in half an hour."

The equipment gave Johnny a mild surprise. One leg of the pants was split up above the knee. The jersey had once been purple. The pads were well broken in. Only the shoes were new.

He lugged the stuff into the dressing room. He saw at once that it was much smaller than Bourland's and that the lockers were old and battered. He had never quite realized till now the vast difference in the two schools. He had noticed, of course, that Driskell's campus was smaller, her buildings less imposing. But he had attributed that to its age, not its limited resources. Driskell was an old school, and a proud

one. But, Johnny was now certain, not a wealthy one.

The players were already dressing. A broad, underslung youth with rope colored hair and eyes the color of the sky, stepped up to Johnny.

"You're Coe," he said. "Baker told us to expect you. I'm Nordstrom, unofficially known as Swede." He turned and bellowed: "Hey, you guys, this is a new back. Johnny Coe."

They looked around, and a short, lumpy guy with a pugnacious jaw remarked:

"Unfortunate that he isn't a guard. We could use a good guard."

Swede Nordstrom grinned at Johnny.

"That's Frenchy DuBois," he said. "He's really French, and speaks good English. Also, he's a guard and he really doesn't think we need any guards so long as he's around."

A lean, wiry man with a mop of black hair squinted at Johnny.

"Did you bring us a diagram of all Stover's plays?" he queried.

"That," said Swede, "is Muddy Street. He thinks he's a running back. He also thinks he's funny—which he is not."

"We're glad you're going to be with us, Coe," a tall, hungry-looking individual piped. "Or maybe you won't be with us long."

"Legs Reardon," Swede informed. "He makes lousy cracks and plays a lousy end."

"I ain't so good, Captain, that I can show up two weeks late," Reardon retorted.

Johnny colored a little, but managed to grin. He was due a bit of ribbing, he supposed. He couldn't expect them to fall on his neck with joy.

"Don't mind me now," he said. "I'll be meeting you later."

"You better get on that harness now, Coe," Swede said gravely. "Coach hates the sight of anybody coming out late."

JOHNNY blinked and turned to his locker thoughtfully. There was something different here, an atmosphere unlike any he'd ever seen in a dressing room. An easy freedom, and

yet a dead seriousness. He had a feeling these guys would play football up to the hilt. And that they would personally take care of anyone on the squad who failed to do likewise.

He put on his well-worn outfit and went out with them. After the preliminary warm-up, Hardeman came up to him.

"I'm giving out some new plays this morning," he said. "Just stand back and keep your eyes open. Get an idea of how we do things."

Johnny found that it was indeed different from Bourland's way. Where Stover's team hammered along one line of attack, Driskell used three formations, with a bewildering variety of plays. Yet they worked tediously to make each play move with precision. The Driskell offense was based on swift, rapierlike thrusts that threatened to come from any quarter at any time. Hardeman's men must not only learn many plays, but learn each one well.

They shifted to more contact work that afternoon, and then Hardeman ordered a scrimmage. Johnny was looking on, sure that he would not get any of it, when the coach said:

"Warm up, Coe. Warm up good. Then play safety on defense."

Johnny trotted up and down with boyish enthusiasm. Action the first day. He could not ask for more.

He grabbed a helmet and dashed out. He was back there with a motley mixture of subs. The tentative first team, clad in white jerseys, was still on the offense. They had the ball on their forty.

Johnny watched them come out of the huddle. He felt a tingling sensation. He hoped a play would get through to him. He wanted very much to make good from the first.

There was a mêlée in the line, and then, suddenly, "Muddy" Street emerged with the ball, coming through a wide swath in the line. Somebody bumped the halfback, and Johnny knew at once that he had his wish. It was up to him to stop the runner.

Street was pulling for the sideline. He was a fast guy, all right. Johnny moved up, deciding that a block out of bounds was the thing. He drove him-

self at the flying target. He felt momentary contact, but he knew in a sickening instant that it was not enough. He had missed! Without seeing it, he knew that Street had hurdled him, regained his stride, and was still going. He bounded up in time to see Street steam on over the goal line.

Johnny walked back ruefully, scarlet with humiliation. He guessed it was because of his long layoff from actual playing. He had done hardly any blocking or tackling since last season.

Street came by then.

"Nice tackle, Coe," he said. "Did you learn that at Bourland?"

"Let's hope that's the way *they* make 'em, pal," Johnny said solemnly.

He had a respite while the line held on two plays. Then he saw the ends break away, and he knew it would be a pass.

The receivers came fanning out. Johnny picked up one of them and raced to the right. Then the ball winged its way—straight into the spot Johnny had left open. "Legs" Reardon, coming out of nowhere, cut across sharply. He took the ball in his long fingers and loped on down the field unmolested.

REARDON came back grinning apishly.

"You were sucked over, Coe. They didn't teach you much at Bourland, did they?"

Johnny got it then. These guys had been riding him in earnest. They did not think so much of a man who went to Bourland first, then took them as second choice. They had him tabbed as a tramp athlete. And they did not yet even believe he could really play football.

Johnny's square jaw tightened. That meant they would have to be shown!

There was a fake at the line, and then the pass came again. Johnny spied Reardon feinting for the same cut, and he had a hunch. He made a brief start at the end, then reversed quickly and glued himself to the wingback, who was racing deep. He looked up and the ball was there. Johnny leaped a mile in the air, snared it away from the wingback and hit the ground running.

The cool leather felt good. New confidence surged through him. He had a consuming desire to go places.

He slewed away from one tackler and out-ran another on a wide arc. One of the subs put an awkward block on a guy, and Johnny turned a corner on a dime and got outside to the sideline. He threaded down the chalk, and then two white-jerseyed men barred his way, Johnny slowed, wriggled, then spurted, slithering in his own incredible way right between the two of them.

He slanted again, out-speeding two other men, and then Muddy Street was the only one left. Johnny put on an extra notch of steam. Their paths were closing to a point. Street dove at him.

Johnny stopped dead, pivoted on a hinge, and left Street groveling in the grass. He kept running. He ran till he reached the end zone.

He walked back, feeling like he had done a pretty good job of it. Nobody seemed impressed, however, and Hardeman sent in a man to take his place. The coach gave him a narrow look. "You look kinda winded, Coe," he said. "Better get yourself in better shape."

Johnny shrugged and sat down. It seemed that an eighty yard run through a broken field might entitle a man to a few deep breaths. But what the devil. Hardeman hadn't said anything about his missing that tackle.

They put him in a room with "Sim" Speer, the quarterback. Speer called the signals, and was the brain of the ball club. It would be Speer's duty to teach Johnny the little things he'd missed. Jim Hardeman, with only one assistant, had no time to give one man individual instruction.

After supper, Johnny lost the quarterback and was walking down the hall toward their room. He was passing an open transom when he heard:

"All right. Maybe he is a fancy ball lugger. We got a ball club. We don't want any stars. These stars always break up a good ball club."

"But he certainly can pick 'em up and lay 'em down, brother," was the reply.

A third voice cut in:

"I dunno about these fancy ball car-

riers. I've always figured they got a little yellow streak. It gives 'em that extra instinct to keep from being hit."

Johnny's face was pale as he moved on down the hall. He was glad he hadn't recognized any of the voices anyway. He would almost have to admit he had been an eavesdropper. Yes, he would certainly have to confront the guy who accused him of being a little canary-colored—and smash the guy's puss.

CHAPTER III

Cross Fire

SIM SPEER got him out early the next day. The senior quarterback took an old ball and handed it to Johnny.

"Do you know how to spin?" he asked.

Johnny shook his head.

"I never was a spinner back."

"On Hardeman's team you gotta be everything," Speer said. "We shift around a lot, for deception. Every back has to learn to spin, to buck, or punt—even pass a little. We don't have any specialists. It's the Hardeman system."

Johnny nodded solemnly. He figured the Hardeman system must be all right to put out consistently winning ball clubs with less than forty men and none of them very big.

Speer made a center of himself, and Johnny spun until he felt dizzy. Speer was like an old maid about his footwork. Johnny thought he would never get it right. But he must have finally, for the quarterback said:

"That's okay. We'll do it again tomorrow. "We'll do it until you can spin in your sleep. You gotta brush up on your blocking, too. All Hardeman's men are blockers."

It was a week of tough, grinding work, but Johnny loved it. He felt that he was learning more than he had sometimes learned in a whole season. And then the week was gone, and they were playing the opener against Cranston.

Johnny sat on the bench and watched

Driskell click off a couple of touchdowns in the first quarter. The backfield, made up of Speer, Street, "Red" Sone, and Dick Hibbard, worked with the precision of a fine watch. Sone was really the buckler and Hibbard the wingback, but as Speer had said, they sometimes shifted assignments.

After the second score, Hardeman began substituting players, but Johnny did not go in. He had been alternating mostly with Street, but when Street came out, "Hub" Allen went in. Hub was slow, but steady and dependable.

The subs put on a drive of their own and scored just before the half. It was the third quarter when Hardeman called Johnny's name.

"Go in for Hibbard," he told him.

They gave Johnny the ball immediately. It was a spinner, with him coming around and taking it from Sone. He cut outside the tackle and made eight yards before two Cranston men stopped him. He was surprised at the heartiness of their tackling. The way Driskell had been moving, he'd supposed Cranston wasn't so much. But these guys weren't pushovers. And they hadn't stopped fighting.

They ran a straight slant, and Johnny and Reardon were to get the tackle. Reardon was to take out the secondary, and it was Johnny's task to lead-block. But the big tackle side-stepped away and nailed Street at the line of scrimmage.

Reardon gave him a hard look.

"Charge fast, Coe," he snapped.

"Those guys don't wait for you to come up and flatten 'em."

Properly chastised, Johnny went back to the huddle.

"Double wing, unbalanced to right," said Speer. "Double reverse."

IT was Johnny's number. He sneaked around and took the ball from Street, who had just received it from Sone. Speer had already taken out the end, and Winters and DuBois were leading the way down the field. They handled the secondary expertly, and all Johnny had to do was run. He did that with enthusiasm, stepping forty-seven yards to a touchdown.

He grinned at DuBois.

"Heck, you don't have to be a ball-toter to go behind you guys," he enthused.

"You are getting the general idea," DuBois said calmly.

They kicked off, and Cranston started passing. They completed several nice ones, too, and they were on the Driskell twenty, their farthest advance in the game. But Street and Speer knocked down a couple, and two line plays ran straight into Sone's arms.

"We got enough scores on these birds," said Speer. "Let's kick."

Johnny crouched and waited. He must have waited too long, for the end was skimming around him almost before he knew the ball was snapped. He swiveled quickly and drove at the end. Two big hands clamped on his shoulders and rode him into the ground. The end, using the leverage, threw himself at Street. The ball bounced off his chest toward the Driskell goal. The end promptly grabbed it and started to run. Street quickly recovered himself and snagged the end's ankle. But it was Cranston's ball on the Driskell eight.

Johnny saw Hub Allen coming out, and he wanted to go off and crawl in a hole. Hardeman didn't even look at him. The coach was concerned over a possible Cranston score. But after four plays the visitors were back on the eighteen, and Driskell again had the ball.

Then Hardeman did turn to Johnny. "You were watching the wrong man, Coe," he said softly. "Never relax *mentally* in a ball game."

That was all. But Johnny wouldn't have felt any worse if Hardeman had just come right out and called him a dumb cluck.

They were undressing when Street came up to Johnny.

"That was a hell of a block you put on that end," he said.

"I'm sorry, Muddy—" Johnny said.

"You're sorry!" Street snorted. "I know what's wrong with you. You're a dude, a grandstander. You can run with the ball, but you can't get out there and do your chores. You've got to have the spotlight."

Johnny straightened, his eyes sud-

denly blazing with blue fire.

"Now look here, Street, you don't have to get tough," he snapped. "I came here to play football, and I've been about as welcome as a guy with smallpox. If you feel that way, it's okay. But I'm sticking, and I'm going to make the damn ball club. And, I might add, you aren't too good to play with me."

Street's mottled face worked, but he couldn't seem to think of any words. He turned away, and Johnny's indignant gaze followed him all the way to the shower.

Swede Nordstrom regarded Johnny with a thin smile.

"You're okay, kid," he said. "Muddy's always a beeper. Don't let it get you."

"Thanks, pal," Johnny said coolly. "I feel a lot better already."

There was another week of work, and Johnny dived into it with new enthusiasm. He felt that he was really getting to be a ball player. Hardeman must have thought so too, for he put Johnny in there to start Saturday and kept him in for more than half the game.

FOOTBALL, he was discovering, was a lot more than tucking the leather under your arm and cutting down the field. He'd always thought himself too small to do much blocking. But he found that correct timing could do a lot to make a block stick. He had a busy day carrying out his varied assignments, and reveled in it.

He did some running too. He raced for one touchdown, and set up two other scores with nice dashes through the secondary.

Then, in the third quarter, Hardeman took him out, giving him a brief, satisfied glance. The Driskell team went on to another tally, thus disposing of Pawton 26 to 0. And Pawton had been rated fairly tough.

When he came to the clubhouse on Monday, he found a group of men gathered around the bulletin board. He stepped closer.

"What makes, rubbernecks?" he said blithely.

Legs Reardon lifted a lugubrious

face. "Read it, pardner," he said. "You'll be interested—personally."

It was a clipping from a sports page. Johnny read it and felt the crimson creeping up his neck. It seemed, according to the scribe, that Mel Stover was raising a wolfish howl up at Bourland.

He was alleging a dirty frame-up existed between the Driskell authorities and one Johnny Coe. He was promising, furthermore, that this dastardly treachery would not go unavenged. That his team would tear the Driskell men into small pieces and strew them all over the field. As for Coe himself, he had best not show his face during the contest. To do so would be to invite murder, which was too good for the traitor.

"In short," said Reardon when Johnny had finished reading, "your transfer has given Stover a rallying cry for his precious butchers—as if he needed any after the way we did 'em in last year."

"That is typical Stover ballyhoo," Frenchy DuBois said. "He likes to play bad man and scare little children."

Reardon shook his head glumly.

"Mebbe so." He turned to Johnny. "Have you forgotten that we play 'em Saturday?" He paused and added impishly, "We have to play 'em up there too. Boy, will you be popular!"

It was that night that Johnny wrote for his gold football. He didn't know just why he did it. Getting Bourland on the mind maybe.

Anyway, if he waited too long, it might be lost.

He penciled a short letter, addressed it to Stover and laid it on his table. Then he went out to supper, and after he got back decided to go on down town and mail it.

The next morning the campus was rife with a rumor. Johnny didn't know, however, what the rumor was. He only knew that people looked at him in shocked silence. Chance acquaintances passed him by, and in the bookstore he could feel a battery of stares in his direction. After a couple of classes of this, Johnny cornered Swede Nordstrom.

"What's up, Captain? Am I poison or something? Folks don't seem to like

me around here."

Nordstrom looked at him sorrowfully.

"It's a dirty lie, Johnny, but you know how those things spread around." He gulped and went on, "Well, it's a report that you're Stover's spy. That you're sending him the dope on Driskell. Of course, on any coach but Stover nobody would believe it, but—"

JOHNNY felt the blood leaving his face. Something constricted inside him, and his fist knotted. He walked off in a daze. He cut a class and went to his room and walked from one end to the other. It was the letter, of course. Somebody had seen the letter addressed to Stover, and had put out the lying story. He'd been a chump to leave it there on the table. And yet no honest person could really think—

He tried to figure who could have seen it. Sim Speer hadn't been in the room, he knew. Besides, Speer was a man, not a snake. If he could remember anybody in the hall, or—

He stopped, clamping his fists together. Muddy Street! Street had been loitering out there when he left for supper. He had no proof, of course. He could not accuse Street. But he had his own ideas.

Hardeman was waiting for them in the dressing room that afternoon. The coach's face was harder than Johnny had ever seen it before, and his gray eyes were chips of granite. When the entire squad was present, he spoke.

"I don't know whether anybody here is responsible for that malicious rumor about Coe," he began. "I don't think a Driskell man would do it. But if so, if it was any of you and you're a man, you'll step out here right now."

Nobody moved. It was so quiet, they could hear the water dripping in a shower.

"All right," Hardeman said. "Now, let's forget it. Out on the field! We've got work to do."

Johnny didn't do so well in practice. He moved around like a drugged man. Hardeman put him in a scrimmage, probably hoping to loosen him up in the heat of action. But it was no good. Finally, the coach took him out.

Back in the locker room, Muddy Street spoke to Johnny.

"What the hell's wrong with you, Coe?" he spat out. "We got a ball game Saturday. And you act like you was walking in a dream."

He really didn't mean it as seriously as it sounded, but Johnny was in no mood to be tolerant. He looked at Street, his face tensely drawn.

"You just can't figure it out, can you?" He moved in close. "You know what I think. I think you saw that letter and started that slimy report—"

Street swung instinctively. He caught Johnny right on the nose. Johnny took it and stepped in angrily. He shook off a glancing left and kept going. He drilled a right into Street's face and hung a left hook into his midriff. There was a sudden slack look on Street's face, and his guard was low and loose. Thoroughly maddened, Johnny came on, lifting a right from the floor. It caught Street firmly on the jaw. He spun sideways and crumpled heavily to the concrete floor.

Players crowded forward. Quickly, they picked up the fallen man and draped him on a bench.

Then Hardeman came in the door. He pawed his way into the circle.

"What's going on?" he demanded.

Nordstrom nodded at Street.

"I think he busted a shoulder, Coach—when he hit the floor," he said.

Hardeman kneeled and made a quick examination. He got up, nodded.

"Right, Captain." Then he turned, his eyes boring into Johnny who stood there, wide-eyed, his rage completely gone. The coach said evenly, "You don't seem to get along, Coe. You get flighty and ruin things." He paused, then resumed, "Maybe a little responsibility will sober you. You'll take Street's place Saturday."

CHAPTER IV

Bloody Showdown

THE gold football came back next day. It came first class mail, and a note was with it. The note was from Al

Mattox, the Bourland captain. It said:

We're out for you, Coe. You better not play much Saturday. You might not look pretty when it's over.

Johnny put the football in a drawer. He had never known till now that a thing like that could mean so little. As for the letter, he didn't give a damn. Nothing could make him feel any worse.

His teammates were trying to be decent about everything. But Johnny could see the resentment in their eyes. Everything had been all right till Johnny Coe arrived. They could not quite dismiss that thought.

But they laid aside personalities in the two days left to get ready for Bourland. Johnny went into the tailback slot, and on the field, the other three backs worked with him as smoothly as if nothing had happened.

It was the morning they were about to leave for Bourland that the college news writer confessed. He went to Hardeman and admitted almost tearfully that he had seen the letter and started the rumor about Johnny. He said he had only meant to stir up a little sensation.

There was another rumor then—that Hardeman told the guy to get out quick, before he choked him. And Johnny figured that was one rumor that was true!

But the damage was done, and Johnny got little consolation. He already knew he'd been wrong about Street. He knew that from the way the guy clipped him instantly when accused. And now, as he looked toward the bench where Street sat—his right shoulder too heavily padded to get inside his sweater—he felt utterly miserable.

There was only one way to put things right, he knew—and that was to beat Bourland!

The mad throng of Bourland partisans jammed the stands. There was a continuous babble up there—the cry of the pack who had come to see slaughter. Stover had continued to egg them on. If Driskell won, he announced, his men would stay on the field and scrimmage under the lights

till nine o'clock.

They deployed for the kickoff—the purple of Driskell, and the crimson of Bourland. The red line, strung out to follow the kick, looked like an army of giants imported from some fabulous land. Johnny had really forgotten they were so big.

There was the tense moment when the ball rose and soared, end over end, and then Johnny saw it was coming straight to his hands. He took it and started up the middle. He got up to the thirty and started to swing wide, but then two red jerseys trickled through and hit him. They hit him

THE Bourland team was running a steady stream of gab at them. All Stover-rehearsed stuff. Each one picked out his man and handed out quiet, individual insults. But Driskell didn't seem to notice. They sliced and speared their way, outguessing Bourland at every turn, and they were soon on the eighteen yard line.

Then Speer, who never carried the ball, did carry it and went over for the score. The line held while Speer kicked the point with cool deliberation. Driskell was ahead 7 to 0.

It was a brilliant offensive drive, but it had not been made without cost.



Yards

- 90—Salter to Gallo—Western State vs. Weber.
- 88—Baker to Honey—Lincoln vs. Morgan.
- 80—Kunkel to Nolen—Trinity vs. Southwestern.
- 70—Kuhn to Grabusky—Leb. Valley vs. Moravian.
- 64—Gilman to Fangle—Pacific U. vs. Linfield.
- 62—Berta to Madden—Colorado Mines vs. Colorado State.
- 54—Schillo to Walk—Leb. Valley vs. Delaware.
- 51—Wexler to Gustafson—Pennsylvania vs. Yale.
- 50—Harper to Goodenough—Talladega vs. Fisk.
- 50—Bumpus to Lechner—Springfield vs. Durant Thr.
- 49—Williams to Cremens, Boston U. vs. W. Maryland.
- 47—Pritchard to Irwin—Va. Mil. Inst. vs. Vanderbilt.

1939 Touchdowns on Longest Forward Pass Plays That Won Games

very hard, and he got up shaking off a dizzy feeling.

One of them was Ox Moroney. He grinned his gargoyle grin.

"We were easy on you that time, kid," he said. "We don't want to put you out right at first. That would spoil all our fun."

Johnny paid him no heed. He would get lots of threats today. But talk wouldn't bust any bones.

They sent Johnny through on an in-and-outer the first play. Reardon and DuBois pinned Moroney to the ground, but "Bump" Sheridan and Spavek, a guard, got together and brought him to a jarring stop.

Bourland had already started their dirty stuff, and Driskell felt their wrath.

Johnny already had a swelling eye and a cut on his cheek, but he was still in one piece and feeling good. True, he had been forced to use all his skill at times to avoid fists and knees, but he was bearing up pretty well for a little guy, he figured.

Bourland received, and the steam roller got under way. It was mostly Ox Moroney and Al Mattox carrying, with Sheridan and Spavek leading the way. It was slow, slobby stuff, but it was power.

Down near the goal line, the Driskell forwards, taking a terrific beating, held

firm. It was too close to carry out, so Johnny punted to the fifty.

As the second quarter opened, the Red team started rolling again. The continuous pressure of weight pushed the Purple back, and from the four yard line Moroney threw his bull head down and punched through the line for a touchdown.

Mattox had time enough for the kick, but he missed. Driskell still held a narrow margin of one point.

They took the ball, and for a while it looked as if they would duplicate their first touchdown drive. But the strain of battling superior poundage was taking its toll, and near the twenty they bogged down.

Johnny was feeling a little battered. His old pals of Bourland were getting in their licks right along. Every time he wiped a hand over his face blood came off with it, and he thought his nose was busted. What worried him, however, was his ankle. Somebody had twisted it back there, he didn't remember when, and it was throbbing now and feeling a little weak.

Bourland threw everything at them but the stadium, but the Driskell line still knew how to fight. Twice, the big team pounded their way inside the twenty, but each time there was Du Bois and Red Sone and Nordstrom and some other boys who always hurled themselves into the breach. The half ended, and amazingly enough Driskell still led 7 to 6.

They slumped in the dressing room, too weary to say a word. Hardeman went around, giving everybody a careful checkup.

Johnny was walking around to keep his ankle from getting stiff.

"You okay, Johnny?" the coach asked.

Johnny hesitated.

"I think my right ankle needs a little more tape," he said.

HARDEMAN taped it heavily, after giving it a close look. But there was nothing there yet to show injury. Then Hardeman spoke to his charges.

"You boys did all right out there," he said proudly. "But they'll be a lot

tougher this half. They'll be hard to stop. I think you'll have to score again to win. You can use your judgment, Sim, but I think the short punt stuff will go best against their set-up.

"Stover will send in fresh men next quarter. Then he'll put the regulars back in. You boys will have to take 'em all. You won't get much relief."

He was right. Stover put his bruisers in there for the third quarter. They were as big, maybe bigger than the first string. They were not fast, but they were very tough, and they knew their orders— to soften the opposition.

They finally put out "Frosty" Kimball with a twisted knee. Then somebody kicked Dick Hibbard in the head, and he went out like a light. Johnny was sure the foot had been aimed for him in the mix-up. But Hibbard had caught it, instead. Hub Allen came in for him.

The third quarter was a stalemate, as far as scores were concerned. Then the fourth period arrived, and with it the Bourland regulars, fresh and rested.

They opened up with everything they had, and human courage and desperation were not enough. Inch by inch the Purple gave ground until there was no more to give. Mattox stomped across from the two yard line. This time he kicked the goal, and it was 13 to 7.

"Five minutes left," Sim Speer said in the huddle. He called Johnny to take a wing and carry on a reverse.

Johnny was a little slow getting around, and the whole side of the Bourland line piled him up. Somebody whacked his face again, and he felt the blood oozing from a fresh cut. He got up groggily. Speer's voice came as from a distance:

"Ninety-two pass. Pick any man in the open, Johnny."

Johnny shook away the haze in front of his eyes and fixed them on the ball. He took it and began fading. DuBois came out of the line and did some great blocking. Red Sone was also on the job. Johnny had a lot of time. His eye photographed the field in one split instant, and he spied Legs Reardon. Then he threw.

Miraculously enough, it was a per-

fect pass, sailing like an arrow from a bow. Far down the field Reardon gathered it into his lean fingers and kept going. His long stride ate up the chalk lines, but Bourland overhauled him on the thirteen yard line.

Bourland called time out. The Driskell men seized the opportunity to rest, then Speer called a huddle.

"We're going to run it," he snapped. "We might pass again, but not unless we have to. If we lose the ball on downs now, it's all over." They listened as he went on: "You'll carry it, Johnny. We'll do the cleaning up."

"My ankle isn't so good, Sim," Johnny said. "I can't get up any leg drive." He paused. "I'll tell you what—lemme take that blocking slot. I can move enough to do that. Somebody else can carry it."

THEY all looked at him. They noted that his face was a caricature of broken flesh and bone. His body looked beaten, too, like a doll about to fall apart. They glanced at each other. They were all pretty well shot, but they just now realized what Johnny Coe had been taking all day.

"You got guts, Johnny," Speer said slowly. "You got too much guts for a man your size. Now, listen to me. You get in that running slot. *We're* going to do the blocking. *We're* going to blast those bums outa there, and all you have to do is trot right behind us."

They lined up with something almost fanatical in their eyes. The ball floated from Nordstrom's hands. Then there was a kind of an explosion. It tore at the vitals of the Bourland line and ripped it apart. And Johnny Coe came charging through the gap. He got six yards—big yards.

"Same thing," Speer said.

They went right back and did it again. They went to the three yard line this time. "It works," Speer said tersely. "Let's try it some more."

It was deceptive in a way. Bourland certainly didn't expect a straight power plunge—not for the third time in succession. But they dug in frantically, almost affected by panic.

Johnny wobbled back to his position. The ball came at him big as a balloon.

Players Kicking Most Field Goals, 1939

- 6—Ken Cook, San Jose State.
- 5—William Schnebly, Wilberforce.
- 4—James Franklin, Muhlenberg.
- 4—Ralph Kurtright, Maryville Thr.
- 3—Cullen Barnett, Sam Houston Thr.
- 3—James Brock, Kansas State.
- 3—Pat Eaton, Nevada.
- 3—Allen Elliott, Xavier (New Orl.).
- 3—Jay Graybeal, Oregon.
- 3—Robert Nelson, Baylor.
- 3—Niles Perkins, Bowdoin.



Instinct told him to get his feet moving, to drive in spite of those hot knives that kept piercing his leg. In spite of those hammers drumming his brain.

He bent and got going. He caught a vision of a lot of white chalk under his cleats. And then everything went black. . . .

He woke up lying on one of Bourland's nice rubbing tables. Muddy Street was standing there. A look of concern on his face broke into a grin.

"H'lo, punch drunk," he said.

Johnny sat up. He found there were a lot of little bandages at various places over his anatomy.

"Hey," he said suddenly. "Did we win? Did you kick it, Sim?"

"You think I'd miss that one?" Speer said injuredly.

Johnny thought of something then. He looked at the well-wrapped ankle.

"Say, can I walk on that thing?" he gulped out. "I gotta go somewhere."

They all looked puzzled.

"I played some football today," Johnny explained. "Now I want to watch some. Didn't Stover say he was going to scrimmage his punks till nine o'clock?"

THE PRO GAME IS TOUGHER

By **BYRON "WHIZZER" WHITE**

PITTSBURGH PIRATE STAR AND FORMER ALL-AMERICAN

as told to **RAY BARBUTI**

FORMER SYRACUSE FOOTBALL CAPTAIN AND ALL-AMERICAN BACK

MANY of my friends have asked me from time to time if professional football is easier to play than the college game. It most certainly is not. If there is any difference, the pro game is tougher on the contestants. Opportunities to loaf on the job are few since the bench is loaded with men eager to take your job away from you.

If someone does replace you in the line-up, he will do his darndest to keep you on the bench. If he can remain as a regular on the team it means that he will in all probability receive larger pay checks the next fall. If on the other hand he plays in only a few games he is of little value to his team. His next step, then, if he still stays with the game, is to play semi-pro ball where the checks are fewer and much smaller.

Clear-Cut Action

Those of you who have witnessed both college and pro games will undoubtedly agree that there is a smaller amount of sloppy tackling and blocking in the professional game. How often have you seen three or four college tacklers miss their man when they have had their hands on him? I've seen it time and again. There is little hand or arm tackling with the professionals. Their aim and their timing, together with their tremendous weight and great speed, make their actions more clear-cut and decisive.

There isn't a great amount of scout-

ing of opponents done in professional football. In college, on the other hand, the assistant coaches generally look over the coming opponents and arrange practice sessions to cope with that particular type of offense.

I can distinctly remember a blackboard drill we were having in our locker room one week before our traditional game with the University of Denver on Thanksgiving Day—particularly because of a certain humorous remark. The assistant coach, who had scouted Denver in all of their games, was outlining plays on the blackboard when he turned to a senior who had spent his entire career on the bench with the exception of two minutes in one game.

"Joe, suppose Denver lines up in this formation, what would you do?"

Joe grinned, but answered without hesitation.

"I'd move near the end of the bench, and if it was raining I'd put rosin on the seat of my pants to keep me from falling off!"

Defensive Power

As a professional, I attended similar blackboard drills, but seldom have gone over the opponent's defense as thoroughly as we used to in college. The professionals generally go over the type of plays the opponent will use, and then they leave it up to the player himself to diagnose and defend against it properly.

As a general rule each man, even

Defensive Power Holds the Scores Down!

"Whizzer" White Says:

"The future of pro football is well secured. Even though it will not replace the college game in the eyes of the football-loving public, I think that it is here to stay."



without all of this preparatory work, plays a better defensive game than the college player who is so thoroughly drilled in his opponent's procedure.

Low scores are the result of greater defensive power. Although the pro rules permit a more open game than college rules, their scores are comparatively smaller. From this, one may deduce that the college teams are much stronger on the offensive—but the real cause must be assigned, rather, to the greater *defensive* power of the professionals.

Forward passing is used to a much greater extent in pro football where it is necessary to open up the stubborn defenses. Forward passing is permitted by the rules anywhere back of the line of scrimmage, and this fact also encourages more passing. A good pro quarterback will call for a pass anywhere on the field, even though he is inside of his own 10-yard line. College quarterbacks rarely do this.

There are more accurate passers in the pro game, of course. The great number of excellent passers in the pro game makes pass defense a difficult problem. Some of those boys can drop a ball right into your vest pocket from thirty yards!

This Matter of Fumbling

Fumbling is not very prevalent in the pro circuit for two important reasons. First, the ball is usually handled by thoroughly experienced and capable hands which hold the ball as if it were their last nickel. Second, a fumble often means the ball game under National League rules which permits the defense to pick it up and ad-

vance it. This differs from the college rule which awards the ball to the defense at the point of recovery.

Many college games have been won or lost by one point. Just the difference of not converting the point after touchdown. The paid players seldom miss in this attempt. The field goal is also a very important part of their game. When it's the fourth down and they are anywhere inside of enemy territory with plenty of yardage to make, they will try a field goal. Forty-yard field goals are not uncommon. I believe that college teams are missing a good bet by disregarding the field goal.

Linesmen Play Longer

When I was a student at the University of Colorado, I almost always played the full sixty minutes of every game. This was necessary because of the limited number of players on the squad. While with the Pirates I never played for an entire game. Most all coaches of pro teams substitute frequently. As a general rule the linesmen play for a major part of the game because they do less running than the backs and consequently need less rest.

The future of pro football is well secured. Even though it will not replace the college game in the eyes of the football-loving public, I think that it is here to stay. The size of the crowds attending these games is large and increasing every year. Strangely enough, attendance is increasing at college games also, proving that the growth of one has not been at the expense of the other. There is plenty of room for both!

BUSH TRACK BLOOD STAKES

By JACK B. CREAMER

Author of "The Philadelphia Scribbler," "But Why Florida?" etc.



The two horses
tore down the
stretch, neck
and neck

Danny Kurland Stakes All on a Single Race, and Learns that the Gods of Fortune Frown Heavily on a Crooked Rider

DANNY KURLAND'S good bay mare, Mary Lou, was on top by five lengths as they rounded the far turn. Behind him—coming like the wind—was a rangy, handsome black stallion. It was Sam Marden's Black Bomber, the owner up. Like thunder off the water, the ebony stallion's hoofbeats rolled up. The home-stretch straightaway came into full view. Danny took the wraps from his hands and set the mare down—hard!

Mary Lou responded with all she had. But it wasn't enough. She was a game old mare, but her heart was all

she had to offer now. The boundless power of youth, encased in a glistening, coal black hide, surged by. Mary Lou quickened her stride in a courageous final effort.

Danny hadn't the heart to lay his bat on the mare. She was doing her best. A few more moments of struggle, a dozen desperate strides and the race was over. Black Bomber was in front and going away; Mary Lou second.

At the first turn the jockies finally pulled their horses to a walk and turned to jog back. Sam Marden's face bore a triumphant sneer as he took the

prancing, sweat-lathered stallion in hand. Kurland pushed his peaked cap back on his forehead to expose a freckled, sweat-stained face and a glimpse of bright orange hair. He patted his mare's hot, wet neck.

"I thought for a minute there you were going to make it a real horse race," Marden called to him.

"At least I rode an honest one," Danny shot back.

"What kind of a crack is that?" Marden's face clouded angrily.

"I never delayed a start on purpose," said Danny, controlling his voice so the other riders wouldn't hear. "My mare's old and can't carry weight like she used to. You deliberately made your mount act up at the post and delayed the start fifteen minutes. Standing with my weight on her back tired Mary Lou. Your horse is young. He can take that kind of treatment, but it's not fair to my horse"

"So what?" Marden demanded. "You can't prove anything like that. The judges would laugh in your face."

"No," said Danny, "I can't prove anything—at the moment. You've pulled that same trick on me all through the county fair circuit, and I haven't finished better than second money all summer. I haven't had a chance. Your horse doesn't belong on the bush tracks, anyway."

"What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean. I've been away from the big time ever since I put on weight and started barnstorming the bush tracks with Mary Lou three years ago. But Colonel Sykes was at Hialeah that day last winter when you got ruled off the track for using a hand buzzer. Your horse may be Black Bomber now, but he was down in the stud book as Midnight when you were outlawed."

MARDEN scowled darkly. "That's none of your dirty business," he snapped. "But what of it? These bush tracks don't belong to the Association. Anything with four legs is eligible here. At least my horse has four legs. Yours runs like she's only got three."

"Mary Lou's got better blood in her veins than you have," Danny said cold-

ly. "So has the black stallion. You don't deserve to own a horse like that. Some day I'll beat you and get a big enough stake to buy him. Maybe next week at the Branchfield fair."

"I thought you'd duck Branchfield." "Why?"

"Martha Knight lives there, doesn't she?" Marden pointed out sarcastically.

"Well?" Danny's face flushed.

"You been stallin' her for three years now. She's liable to be sore, waitin' all that time for a guy to get enough dough to marry her on." Marden's face took on a salacious leer. "Say, she's a pretty cute dish. I bet a guy with enough dough could beat your time with her easily."

"Why, you rotten—" Danny began hotly, then broke off.

They were back at the judges' stand now. Greyhaired old Colonel Sykes, Danny's trainer and sidekick, had hold of Mary Lou's bridle. . . .

* * * * *

Danny pulled his shabby roadster and battered trailer into the Branchfield Fair Grounds and made for the long, low barns below the grandstand. Parked outside a row of stalls was a shiny, streamlined trailer, hitched to a smart new convertible. That was Sam Marden's rig. Danny scarcely noticed it, for standing by the corner of the barn was a girl—a trim looking girl with hair the color of fresh straw and eyes like the morning sky over Santa Anita. Danny yanked on the emergency brake and vaulted over the door.

"Martha!" he called out.

"Danny!" the girl exclaimed. "I thought you'd never come."

"I've been away three months and the last half hour seemed longer than all the rest."

"Hello, Colonel." Martha planted a friendly kiss on the old man's forehead.

"You're lookin' fine, Martha," Colonel Sykes said admiringly.

"I feel fine," said the girl, showing a broad, charming grin. "And, Danny, I've got the grandest news. I just learned it yesterday, and I could hardly wait to tell you. Remember the Linson farm, right next to Father's—the one we always dreamed about? Well, it's for sale now. Squire Linson told me yesterday, and it's so cheap, Danny.

Only fifteen hundred dollars for a down payment, and Squire Linson will take a mortgage for the balance of—" She stopped short at sight of Danny's clouded face. "Why, Danny, aren't you excited over the news?"

"Yeah, sure. It's swell." The little jockey ran a worried hand through his hair.

"What's wrong, Danny?" she asked softly.

"Nothing's exactly wrong, but everything's not right either. I thought for sure this year I could make the stake we've been waiting for, but it just was not in the wood, I guess. The colonel and Mary Lou and me tried our best. I didn't have the heart to tell you in my letter, but we haven't done better than second money all through the bush track circuit. Second money don't pay much more than the feed bills."

"But, I don't understand," she protested. "Mary Lou is such a grand horse."

HE nodded.

"Sure she is, but Sam Marden's horse is better," Danny said sadly. "He's a four-year-old, and strong. I'm too heavy to be riding catch weights anymore, and Mary Lou can't stand up under my weight for a delayed start. Marden's deliberately held up the start of every race we've been in. It takes too much out of Mary Lou, and he knows it. There never was a gamer mare than Mary Lou, but Marden's horse is way out of his class on the bush tracks. He's got all the competition whipped four way to Sunday—all except Mary Lou. And he's not taking any chances on letting her beat him with a fair start."

"That's a rotten trick."

"Sure it is, but I can't do a thing about it. I know he delays the start on purpose, but I can't prove anything to the judges." Danny's small fists were clenched tightly. "If I could only think of some way to get the drop on him."

Martha squared her shoulders, trying to conceal a heavy sigh. She managed a thin smile.

"Oh, well, that's just racing luck, Danny," she consoled him. "It doesn't really matter so much. There'll be

other farms besides Linson's. It wasn't so nice, anyway. Maybe next year we—"

"Next year! Next year!" Danny burst out. "That's what we've been saying for three years now. This time there isn't going to be any next year. Mary Lou is getting old and I'm getting heavier. Anyway, it isn't fair to you. You've waited long enough for a bum like me to make himself worthy of you."

"Danny, don't talk like that. I don't mind waiting."

"Well, I do! It's either make or break this time. All I've cleared is a hundred bucks out of the season. The odds'll be high against Mary Lou in the County Fair Handicap tomorrow, and every penny of that hundred is going to be on her nose. If we win, the five hundred dollar purse and the bet will make a down payment on the farm. If we lose—you're free."

"That's sucker money, Kurland, but maybe it'll teach you a lesson."

Danny wheeled suddenly to face Sam Marden. He turned back when Martha tugged at his sleeve.

"But, Danny," she said. "I don't want to be free."

"Well, maybe I do," he said. "I can't make you wait forever."

"Don't worry, Kurland," Marden cut in. "You will be free at that rate. Why don't you get wise to yourself and quit racing that old turkey, and sell her for a brood mare."

"She's not through yet," Danny snapped. "There's one good race left in her an honest race. There'll be plenty of time to breed her after that, on the Linson farm."

Marden chuckled scornfully.

"Sure. Why not?" he scoffed. "I'm thinking of buying the Linson farm, myself, when the season's over. Your mare's well bred. I might even buy her. She and my black stallion would make a nice start for a stud farm."

Marden's arrogant calm was infuriating. Suddenly, a wild thought flashed through Danny's mind. Mary Lou and Midnight to start a stud farm! His mind raced madly with the idea. Why not? He'd need more than just a farm. He'd need stock. Tomorrow's race was make or break, wasn't it? This was his last

chance at a stake. Why not go the whole hog? Why not winner take all? Winner take all, it was!

"MARDEN," said Danny, slowly measuring the words to keep his excitement and temper from spilling over, "Marden, you'll never have enough money to buy Mary Lou, but I'll give you a sporting chance to win her. My mare against your horse in the County Fair 'Cap tomorrow. The first to finish walks off the track with both horses."

"Danny!" Martha clutched his arm. "Danny, you don't know what you're saying!"

"Yes, I do. If Mary Lou loses tomorrow, I'll be washed up anyway. But she won't lose—she can't! Not tomorrow. What do you say about that, Marden?"

"Well—" Marden said hesitantly.

"Listen, kid," Colonel Sykes cut in, "you can't do a thing like that. You haven't got a chance. That horse set a three-year-old record at Empire last season. He's a high class stake horse. You're just cutting your own throat."

"It's my throat, isn't it?" Danny shot back. "And Mary Lou's got one more good race in her. I know she has. She must have!" Danny's tongue raced along ahead of his thoughts.

"A good race isn't good enough, kid," Sykes said. "For Pete's sake listen to me! Marden'll pull a delayed start on you just like he's been doin'. Mary Lou'll be tired before the race starts. Be sensible, kid!"

"I am sensible!" The little jockey's face flushed to the color of his burnished hair. "Sensible enough to know the end of everything when I see it! Sensible enough to know what's fair to a girl and what isn't! There's no other way out. It's all or nothing. All or nothing, understand! Let's hear the word, Marden."

"Well, my horse against yours is mighty high odds in your favor, Kurland," Marden said slowly. "Even so, it's a sucker bet on your part. I'll take it. . . ."

Danny dropped his coffee cup in the saucer and stood up slowly. His eyes were downcast, he looked tired.

"I'm not hungry, Colonel," he said.

"It's two hours yet to post time. I'm going to take a walk. You get Mary Lou ready and I'll meet you in the paddock."

"Wait a minute, Kid," Sykes said. "You can still call that bet off, you know."

Danny shook his head.

"No, Colonel. Maybe I was a little crazy yesterday, making a bet like that. But it's too late to back out now. I've got to go through with it. It's my only chance—for everything."

He walked over behind the grandstand slowly and sat down in the shade. Sitting alone in the grass, Danny wasn't ashamed of the tears that welled up in his eyes. It was hard, going on like this for years and seeing all the things you wanted continually beyond your grasp. How long could a man go on being a failure without giving up? Today's race looked like the answer.

There was a rustle in the grass suddenly.

"Danny!" He lowered his head to hide his tears from Martha. Her soft hand touched his cheek. "Danny, I don't want to be without you. I want to be with you—with you and the Colonel and Mary Lou—always. With Sam Marden's horse too—whatever his name is. But even if you don't win, I want to be with you."

DANNY blinked his eyes and his lips tightened.

"If I could only think of something—some way to get the drop on Marden," he said wearily. "All summer I've tried and it's no go. With a fair start, I'd have an even chance. But Mary Lou can't stand a delayed start. If I can only think of something—something!" He pounded his fist into the soft turf, wracking his brain for an idea. . . .

When the call came to mount, Danny felt his knees almost buckle under him. Ten years of racing experience lay behind him, yet a five hundred dollar bush track race made him panicky. But the stake was more than money. This was for blood stakes, for everything he ever dreamed about, and the odds were a thousand to one against him. Talk travels fast among gamblers, and the bookies were quoting ten to one on Mary Lou. Still, he found no way to

beat Sam Marden at his game.

Jamming his tattered silks into his breeches, Danny raised a foot for a leg-up. Colonel Sykes grasped the foot and tossed him neatly into the saddle. The little jockey tugged his peaked cap down smartly over his eyes, reached into his boot and drew out a wad of bills.

"Here," he said, handing the roll to the trainer. "Put this on Mary Lou to win."

"Kid, don't be a fool," Sykes protested. "That's all you've got in the world."

"I know it," Danny said softly. "This race is the last one for my colors. It's all or nothing. Put the whole works right on Mary Lou's nose."

The bugle sounded the call to the post, and the horses filed out of the paddock one by one and paraded down the track. Colonel Sykes walked over to a corner of the paddock where Martha stood nervously twisting a handkerchief.

"Martha, don't ask any questions and don't argue," he said quickly. "Just do as I say." He pressed the money into her hand. "Put this money on Midnight to win, understand? Midnight, to win, and get the money down before the books close."

"But, Colonel, Danny—" Martha protested.

"Never mind Danny. This is for his sake. I know these horses by heart. It's the only way to save him. Remember now: Midnight to win!"

The field of ten horses were racketing and milling around the starting line as Danny walked Mary Lou up into No. 1 position on the rail right under the judges' stand. The Branchfield track had no expensive starting gate with padded stalls. They employed a web barrier to get the horses away. Danny, his heart pounding and his jaw set grimly for the end of everything, kept his eye on Marden and the black stallion.

Just as the horses were ready, Sam Marden relaxed his hold on Black Bomber for a split second. The handsome black bolted under the wire.

"Hold your horse for a clean break, Marden!" the starter bellowed. "Take him in hand and walk back under. No,

Marden! Come up slow. I won't let you run at it. We want a quick, clean start, hear!"

A quick clean start! Danny laughed bitterly within himself at the words, as he saw Marden surreptitiously jab his off heel into Black Bomber's ribs to make him lunge again. No one who wasn't on to his game would have noticed it. Danny wanted to shout, to tell somebody what Marden was doing, to tell the judges. He looked up and realized that he couldn't even see the judges. He was too close under their feet, right under the stand on the rail.

He was on the rail right under the judges' stand on the rail! Wait a minute! Why not? All's fair in love or war. And this was both!

WITH a deft movement, Danny slid his left foot out of the stirrup and let it dangle. A little stretching and it reached the top of the rail. He scarcely dared to breathe as he slowly shifted his weight from Mary Lou's back to the foot that rested on the rail. There! At last! His weight was off the mare's back. She was resting easily now as easily as though she were in her own stall!

Danny wanted to laugh out loud, to shout to the world that he had a fighting chance now. He had a chance to show what Mary Lou could really do. It was his chance to make or break his whole life. Let Marden hold up the start as long as he wanted now. Mary Lou was resting. There was no real weight on her back to tire her now.

For twenty minutes, Marden, a self-satisfied leer on his face, teased and prodded his horse back and forth beneath the web barrier. The judges fumed and bellowed. The other mounts pranced restlessly, as Marden tried to convince the judges he was trying his best. For twenty minutes Danny Kurland's heart beat high against his ribs, while—unnoticed—he kept his weight on the rail.

Suddenly, the leer left Marden's face. Danny knew that sign. Marden was through with his dirty work and ready to race. Danny pushed back into the saddle and set his feet in the stirrups. For a split second the field faced the barrier together.

"Let 'em go!" the starter yelled. The bell rang and the webbing sprang up as they got off. Danny dug his heels into Mary Lou. She lurched forward, took the rail and shot to the front.

As they rounded the first turn, Danny was still on top by three lengths. Running an easy fourth was Black Bomber, already lathered with sweat.

Down the back-stretch Marden started moving up—past the third horse . . . past the second. He was less than three lengths behind Mary Lou now. Danny still kept his mare under wraps. Let Marden come on with Black Bomber, he thought. There'd be a fresh horse to meet his challenge this time.

But the race was far from over. Three eighth's of a mile was left to go—the far turn and the home-stretch. The home-stretch where races are won or lost and destinies decided. Halfway around the far turn Marden went to the bat. Danny could hear the leather flailing Black Bomber's hide and the ominous hoofbeats drawing closer. He took the wraps from his hands, eased up on Mary Lou's neck and set her down hard for a real ride. With a few quick strides she drew half a length away from the challenger.

Marden was cursing like a madman as his whip rose and fell on the black stallion's hide. Another eighth of a mile and they were neck and neck, driving hard without a hand's breath to choose between them!

Danny watched Marden out of the tail of his eye. The jockey's face was blue with rage. Suddenly, he shifted the reins to his right hand and leaned toward Danny. With the speed of a cat, his left hand shot out and grasped the number cloth beneath Mary Lou's saddle.

THE straightaway stretch blurred before Danny's eyes as he felt Mary Lou slow down and struggle against the hold that had her pinioned. The clouded events of the past two days swam through his mind in that moment. What a cruel end to a long struggle! His one last chance to win had gone and everything that mattered with it. Danny felt suddenly sick. Doggedly, he got hold of himself. All hope wasn't gone yet. There was a

way. There's always a way to beat a crooked game.

Danny hunched up high on Mary Lou's neck, taking his weight completely out of the stirrups for an instant. Marden fell back into his saddle, clutching the flapping white saddle cloth which had slipped clean out from under Danny's saddle!

Mary Lou was half a length in front. With a violent oath, Marden dropped the cloth and began hand-riding his mount again. Black Bomber responded with a mighty lunge. The finish line was a scant hundred yards away. The horses were head and head again!

Fence posts were whipping by like the click of movie film. A lump came in Danny's throat. Panic swept over him then. After all the desperate, bitter fighting, did fate still hold defeat for him?

Black Bomber drew half a length ahead. Danny raised his whip high. It cut into his heart as he brought it down on Mary Lou's rump. But it did the trick—the impossible trick. Mary Lou forged ahead, her nose even once more with the black stallion's.

The crowd of five thousand strong was on its feet roaring. Never in the history of the County Fair Handicap had these farmers seen such a hard, close finish. Both animals driving, straining every nerve and muscle, neither giving an inch.

A bare ten yards from home, Danny gripped with his knees, raised the reins, came down hard with his bat and fairly flung Mary Lou under the wire. A split second later Black Bomber's head crossed the line!

* * * *

Danny walked Mary Lou slowly around the cooling circle. Back of him, biting nervously at his white mustache, Colonel Sykes led Black Bomber, which belonged to Danny now. After each turn of the circle, they stopped at the water bucket, and the gray-haired trainer cleared his throat to speak, but each time he lost his nerve. How could he explain what he'd done? How could he justify putting the money on Marden's horse, Black Bomber, nee Midnight. He hadn't the heart to rob the

red-headed jockey of the jubilant smile that filled his face.

At a cheer from the distant grandstand, they looked out across the track. A wild-eyed, ewe-necked black was running away from the field in the last race of the day. It was the Agricultural Sweepstakes, a comedy event for rank horses owned by the farmers of Branchfield County.

Five minutes, which seemed like an hour to the colonel, went by. Fortunately, Danny kept up a steady fire of blithe chatter—talking about plans for the future, wondering what could be keeping Martha.

There was no use putting it off any longer, Sykes thought. Danny would have to know sooner or later. Martha would show up at any minute. The colonel took a deep breath as he started to tell the worst.

"Danny," he said slowly, for every word was going to be painful, "I don't know what ever possessed me to—" His jaw sagged suddenly. Around the

corner of the barn came Martha, her pockets bulging with greenbacks, her fists full.

"Colonel!" she shrieked. "You old dear! You were positively psychic. How in the world did you know that Squire Linson's old carriage horse, Midnight, was going to win the Agricultural? And such a price, too. Twenty to one! Danny, look! Two thousand dollars!"

She flung her arms around the little jockey, scattering bills over the ground. Colonel Sykes was discreet. He had reason to be. After all, he had forgotten that Martha didn't know that Black Bomber's real name was Midnight.

His gaze avoided Martha and Danny, but his practised old horseman's eye ran from the shiny black hide of Black Bomber to Mary Lou's dull bay and back to the black stallion again. In his mind's eye he saw a picture—a beautiful picture of a spraddle legged dark bay colt with black points.

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BIG TIME FOOTBALL

By

BERT BELL

President and Coach of the Philadelphia Eagles

as told to

JACK KOFOED

YOU know, getting a football team into the spot where it has a chance to win a championship, brings up just about the same problem as the big league baseball people have. You've got to have organization, money, and scouts who know top flight players when they see them.

All-America stars have a pretty good idea of what they're worth. They want cash, and plenty of it. Not that I blame them. Nobody lasts too many years in this game, and they've got to get it while they have a chance.

Texas Players

We reach all over the country to get our men, but we have dipped more deeply into Texas than any other section of the country. They raise great football players down that-a-way. O'Brien came to us from Texas Christian, so did Drew Ellis, one of our tackles, and Allie White, a guard. Rankin Britt, who stands six-feet-two and weighs two hundred and ten pounds, graduated from Texas Agricultural and Mechanical. Another guard, Emmet Kriel, graduated from Baylor, and Jake Scheule, halfback, from Rice.

We never skip the Lone Star State, but we don't overlook the other places, either. "Wimpy" Giddens came to us from Louisiana State, Chuck Gainer from North Dakota, Dave Smukler from Temple and Franny Murray from Pennsylvania. East, West, North or South, it doesn't matter so long as the boys are great football players. We'll reach into any section to find the men we want.

Of course, all the other teams are doing the same thing, which makes the competition tough. This competition has developed another angle. We start practice now in the middle of July. Early work has become a necessity, because we have a big squad that must be weeded out. There are boys who



BERT BELL

made good in college, but obviously will fail to make the grade professionally. Some of the veterans may be starting to crack.

It's necessary to find out all these things in time. We have to get the starting team set as soon as possible, because plays must be timed to seconds and fractions of seconds. This is possible only through constant work.

Narrow Margin of Error

The coaching staff works on developing plays and variations of plays. There must be the narrowest possible margin of error. So when other people are taking it easy at the beach and in the mountains, the professional football player is getting himself fit for a long and arduous autumn.

You see us in action when the winds are chill, and the ground is beginning to harden. We look like a football team. But for months we've been working to get that way. Through blistering July, August and September days we've been scrimmaging, mechanizing the plays.

There isn't much need of doing anything on such fundamentals as blocking, tackling and catching punts except brushing up on them. All the men have played football for five, six or even a dozen years, and know all about them. But no one can stall or take anything for granted. Every man knows he will hold his job only as long as he is better than the others who are contending for it.

There are a lot of headaches in professional football, and a lot of fun, too. There isn't anything I would rather do, though, and if I can keep my Eagles flying high that's all I ask.

The "Inside" of a Gridiron Campaign!

Dan Salter, the Umpire-Baiting Second-
Baseman, Learns Something
About Baseball from the
Man Behind the Plate



Dan swung at a slow pitch, missed completely

BLIND MAN'S BLUFF

By M. D. SULLIVAN

Author of "The Football Twins," "Spikes Out," etc.

HE was a bit nervous, considering the arrogance of his jaw, and that this was his first game with his new team, the Hutchinson City Crowns. During the visitors' half of the two innings that had gone by, he'd paced his lithe frame around his slot at second base like a caged tiger that wasn't used to his surroundings.

But he'd handled the only chance that came his way, a blistering liner hard and to his left, with the nonchalance of a big-leaguer slumming among these Class-A players.

When sitting on the bench while the Crowns were at bat, he talked a little too fast, and a little too much. It didn't fit with his hard, large baseball hands,

nor his sturdy body. His build said "Baseball class!" But his haunted blue eyes and fidgety action said, "But there is a catch somewhere."

Dan Salter's record said there was a catch somewhere, too. Baseball fans with memories for things could tell you all about him.

"He's twenty-one and came up from the sandlots," they'd say. "He tried out with the Giants when he was a shortstop. That was two years ago. He hit a slump and went to the bushes. The Cubs started him last season, and he was a prairie fire at second base. And like a prairie fire, he burned out, top. Another bad slump, and back to the bushes."

But there was more to it than that.

"I dunno the reason," the fans would tell you. "He's got spunk, boy how he's got spunk! Ain't an umpire in any league can put it over on him. He tells the best of 'em off. But there's something wrong with him, though."

It couldn't be Dan Salter's eyes that were wrong. His eyes were good. While he was talking overtime on the bench in the last half of the second, his glance swivelled around and peered into deep brown eyes that were set in dusky-cream skin which was made to fit in with a frame of red-gold hair. The girl he was staring at had a firm young mouth and a dipsy-doo of a nose.

Salter's eye's sparked on that combination, and he hardly noticed that it was surrounded by other combinations that were the wives of some of the players. "Lefty" Howe had seen the girl, too.

His knees came straight when Lefty's did, but he didn't notice that the tall pitcher stood up because the girl was smiling. It seemed to Dan only natural that she should smile, and only natural that he should be walking over to that box.

"Hello, Mary, how is it?" Lefty Howe greeted her.

"Yeah. Hello, Mary," Dan chimed in with the reception. "Remember me?"

"Say!" Howe snapped. His gray eyes were a bit ugly now. "What is this?"

Dan's eyes were a bit frightened, but not of Howe. He seemed to suddenly realize that Mary was sitting in a box

with some of the team's wives. Her hands were holding a green-leather cigarette case. But she wasn't wearing gloves, and there was no gold band on the finger of that left hand. His eyes cheered up again.

"I know Mary," he said to Howe. He grinned, and his teeth were very white against the tan of his cheeks. "Don't I, Mary?"

HER eyes put him on trial, but they suspended sentence.

"Of course," she told Howe. "After all, Mary Jones is a very common name, Lefty. A lot of people know folks named Mary Jones." She looked at Dan again. "I hope you'll like it here at Hutchinson City . . . Mr. Salter."

The haunted look sneaked back into his eyes again.

"Maybe I will," he said. He chewed his gum rapidly, took a swift look at Howe, at the batter, and turned his eyes back to the girl again. "Of course, I have to train the umpires here a bit. But after that, I'll probably like it."

The girls in the box and Howe laughed at that. But Mary Jones just sat and looked. Dan figured quickly that perhaps she hadn't known his name solely for his reputation for fighting the umpires. All the fans knew it. And the papers. One time he'd been in a newsreel because of it. It was the time he'd slugged it out with "Chesty" McCoon at the Polo Grounds, and had been suspended a month and fined the limit.

"Umps are my specialty," he explained to her with a grin. But his eyes were serious about it. "I don't take any stuff from those blind men."

Dan thought then that he had got Lefty Howe wrong. The big pitcher was laughing.

"Yeah, Dan is a card with umpires," he said. "Aren't you, Dan?"

The new second-baseman tried a modest shrug.

"I'm no doormat for a has-been ball player to make wrong guesses on," he said. "They call 'em wrong on me once, and that's all. I cut 'em down to size. The 'Robber Barons,' I call them, but I spell it b-a-r-r-e-n. Get it?"

Howe laughed some more, but he was almost alone this time. Before Dan

could figure it out, there was a lot of yelling out on the field. A couple of Crown players were running around the bases and the ball was being relayed in from center. Dan's number was sliding into the hole on the scoreboard on top of the bleachers.

"Hey, I'm up!" Dan did a clever pantomime of a man covered with confusion. He ran over and picked up a bat from the line by the dugout, winked at "Fish" Taylor, the Crown manager, and strode to the plate.

There were Crown runners on second and third, and Dan figured the Bison City pitcher would bait him with a few bad ones. He might even walk him. There were two out, and Bison City strategy might figure to fill the bases and try for any bag with the next man up. He'd wait for a few.

The club felt good in his hands, and his eyes were eager. Dan knew Mary Jones was watching him. He knew, too, that a lot depended on the start he got here at Hutchinson City. Nobody else knew it, of course, but Dan Salter was a little worried. It was time he got going places in a great big way. Forward, not backward.

The pitcher went into a short wind-up. He unsprung the coils of his arms and legs and threw. But Dan wasn't paying him any attention. He had to go forward, not backward, he thought. The two times he'd been up in the majors, he'd had tough luck. One reason was because the umpires ganged up on him, as usual. It was funny how umps would gang up on one guy that way.

There was the sound of the ball plunking solidly into the catcher's mitt. The man in back of the catcher did a little shimmy with his fat hips and pointed at a bit of fluffy cloud in the blue sky.

"Strike one!" came the mournful howl.

Dan hadn't given this ump any attention, up to now. It was his first time up, and the first time he'd taken a close look at this man. Now, he made up for his earlier neglect.

DAN banged the bat hard on the dirty-white rubber that was the plate and stared past the catcher's masked grin. The umpire was square

and burly in his black workclothes, and somehow the face that looked at him through the mask was as hard and leathery looking as the catcher's.

"Whaddya mean 'strike'?" Dan blazed. "That ball was high! Peel the skin off your eyes, Pop."

The umpire should have flared up with that one. They usually did. Instead, this umpire just yawned and looked bored. Then the catcher was in his crouch to give the next signal, and you'd have thought Dan Salter was a post, for all the attention the umpire gave him.

The pitcher studied Dan and the catcher and the runners on the base paths as if they were some sort of bugs and he was a scientist who knew all about these bugs. Then he scuffed his feet around the box and looked at third, and then at second—

"Strike one!" Dan growled deep in his throat. "Why, that old buzzard." Sure, it had been close, but so was tomorrow close. And any boob knew the difference between today and tomorrow, didn't he? It had been close, but high. Then Dan remembered that bored yawn when he had been beefing. "A tough guy, huh?"

The Bison hurler had a nice change of pace, and he used it now. The wind-up was about the same, and the pitch about the same. Only this time the ball was bigger and invited a swing. But it sort of floated, so that Dan's anxious cut threw his timing off. He swung and swung hard. Suddenly, he realized he was away ahead of the pitch, and he tried to slow it. Then the ball had plunked home again, and Dan was leaning on the end of his bat where he had jammed it into the dirt to keep from losing his balance. He had swung clear around, and while it was a nice, classy swing, it was a clean miss, too.

"St-rike Tuh!" the umpire yowled, and did the little wriggle and the hand-stabbing again.

Dan's eyes glared at the face behind that mask, but he saw nothing of mockery there. That first beef he'd made had probably done some good. This umpire wouldn't try to pull anything.

Down the line, the coaches were talking it up, were calling to him through cupped hands.

"Tough luck, Danny boy!" they shouted. "Tough luck! This guy hasn't anything but a number on his shirt and a change of pace!"

"And a cousin for an umpire!" Dan yelped.

The fans who heard it laughed, and Dan felt better. He banged the plate hard and looked over at the bench. But Fish Taylor wasn't one to tell a man with Dan's experience what to do. With Fish, who was an old-timer, Dan was a veteran in way. Anyway, with two out, there wouldn't be any signal for a bunt.

Dan felt suddenly heavy and lifeless when his eyes saw the big "2" under the "Strikes" on the scoreboard. He was in a hole, and no mistake. Not that this time at bat meant the entire game. What if he did strike out? What if—

He shook his head and his eyes didn't feel good when he shifted them over at the umpire. Dan meant them to be mean looking. But they were more like the eyes of a puppy of good blood and bad habits, and who has been spanked for those bad mannerisms. He took his stance again and gave the next pitch his entire attention.

The pitch came and went by. It was a ball, low and outside. Dan felt some of the weight lift from him. He moved around in the box, stepped out of it to rub some dirt on his hands, and came back in again. The next one the Bison pitcher tried was a fast-ball, hard and high and with a hop on it.

"Ball—Tuh!"

EVEN a blind man could have got that one, Dan thought. No credit to the ump for that.

The next one was good, and Dan swung hard. The shock of the bat meeting the ball sent a pleasant sensation up his arms and into his shoulders. The almost-solid crack of it was good on the ears. But it was a high foul that climbed over the stands and out of sight.

The next wind-up was a bit longer than the others, and Dan had time to wonder why the runner on third didn't make a break for home. He had a chance for a steal, if he was a fast man.

(Continued on Page 102)

STAY

a wage-slave

IF you wish

BUT-

DON'T you wish you were like some of your friends who are forging ahead while you stay put? Like it or not, people size you up by what you earn. Is their sizing flattering to you? —Why not *plan* to get ahead, to make more money, to get a raise? If you don't know how, perhaps we can aid you as we have so many others. Chances are good that we can help you *boost yourself up* in ways you never thought of. —Thousands will gladly tell you how our planned training helped them—directed their work along *charted* paths to business success, bigger earnings, 10%, 20%, 50%, some even 100% and 200% greater income . . . At any rate, let us send you the inspiring book "Ten Years' Promotion in One." It's FREE! It will surely help you *plan* your next raise whether you ask us to *help* you plan or not. Write us today for the book—the coupon is for your convenience.

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Dan could have made it. Sure, it would have been close, but he could have made it. Trust these Hutchinson City punks to loaf around and let *him* take the rap for sending a run in.

The pitch came, and it started wide, very wide. Dan eyed it, then dropped his bat slack, and the ball broke in a gorgeous curve for the plate. Dan swallowed hard and wished for one frantic moment that he hadn't dropped his bat down. But he hoped it was wide of the corner. He looked and was sure that it was.

"St-rike Three!" came the umpire's bellow. A howl of disappointment came from the fans.

Dan threw his bat away from him, far away from him. He stalked the umpire, stiff-legged, his jaw thrust out.

"Strike three, did you call it, you kettle-headed donkey?" he roared. "I don't know what keeps me from taking a poke at you!"

Off came the ump's mask, and Dan knew he was right. This man was an old ball player, and probably a tough one, too. He had probably done his share of umpire-fighting in his day. And now that his playing days were over, he was making it tough for everybody else. But in a way, this one was different.

This one was stalking right back at Dan, the way Chesty McCoon had done that time—the time Dan had socked him, and been suspended. That had hurt him, that suspension. He'd lost his batting eye, somehow. And while the fans laughed and cheered while he rode the umps, they rode *him* when he went into his slump. He didn't want that to happen again.

The umpire was standing toe-to-toe and eye-to-eye with Dan.

"I don't know what keeps you from taking a poke at me, either, Salter," he was bellowing. "If I knew, I'd fix it so it wouldn't keep you from doing it. I want you to take a poke at me, you big-mouthed imitation of a baseball player! I know you, Salter. I've heard all about you. And I'm not having any! One more crack from you and you're off the field. Any more name-calling and you'll be carried off!"

"Oh, yeah?" Dan didn't take a step

back, but he was thinking fast. What was it Fish had said. He told him the Crowns needed a second-baseman, *on* the field. A suspended second-baseman is no good to a team. Dan knew what he meant by that. "Yeah?" he bel-lowed again.

"Yeah," the ump told him. His voice was not a bit excited, but his eyes and face were plenty nasty. "Now take your teeth out of my face and go play baseball for a change. Try using your glove and your head some, and give your mouth a rest."

Dan felt his anger rise, but something else rose with it, too. Something strange to Dan Salter. Caution, it was, that rose with his temper. Caution and beyond that the fear that for some reason things weren't going as they should have been. Other fellows that he could play rings around were up in the big-time, while he had the hard luck to be with Hutchinson City.

IT was hard to eat crow in front of this whole crowd, and especially with Mary Jones over there in that box. He'd done a little talking about softening up the umpires, and Lefty Howe had given him a plug on that. And now, here he was having to take a lot of mouthwash the very first time he went after the umpire. And having to walk away from it, too.

But Dan was thinking fast, and an idea came to him. He raised his eyes to that box, squinted as if to make out a signal being waved to him. Then he straightened, and his face eased in a tight smile.

"Okay, Pop, your life is saved," he told the umpire. "My girl friend over in that box—Miss Jones, to you and other fallen players—is giving me the high-sign to lay off the bloodshed." He turned away, and said, over his shoulder, "Buy yourself some glasses, though, will you?"

That was all right to say. Anybody could say that. Then he went out to his position, keeping his eyes carefully away from the dugout and Fish Taylor. His first time up, he struck out. Nice! But that was an umpire for you. For Dan, it was, anyway. All his baseball life, the umpires had plagued him.

His eyes were clouded until he saw

some of the other players laughing and looking his way. He cheered up immediately then and kidded with them about the umps in this league. His fielding was what it had to be. Dan Salter's trouble never lay in that department. He did everything with a careless grace that made it all look incredibly easy—though he did plague the umpires in that, too.

He would hold his throw to first so that the umpire had to watch the runner's last step, his last despairing leap for the bag. Or, taking a bullet-throw from the catcher, when a man was stealing, he'd hold the ball until the fellow had gone into his slide, even though he'd been caught feet off the bag. There were other tricks in the gentle art of giving the umpire headaches, and Dan knew them all. The umpires started it all, didn't they, by picking on him all the time?

But he kept strictly away from that field box and from Mary Jones. Once, he waved his hand in her direction. That was after he had busted out a double that scored a man clear from first. And he'd marked up four put-outs, and five nifty assists. He was slightly ashamed of his taking that stuff from the umpire, in the second inning, after all his talk. So he kept clear of where she was sitting.

He gave the umpire behind the plate—"Pop," he'd dubbed him—a nice going-over in a quiet way. Things like stepping aside and looking at him, when he was at bat, and saying:

"Don't you want to brush the plate off? It must be very hard for you to see it." Or, "Look, Pop, would it make it easier for you to call them if I stood straight up?"

They were things he couldn't flare up over, but that you could see were getting under his skin.

Then, late in the game, he saw that Mary wasn't sitting in that box. Lefty Howe saw him looking.

"Oh, yeah," he said blandly. "I forgot to tell you. Mary wants you to come around to the apartment tonight. If you've got nothing to do, and if you feel like it."

Reflex action brought Dan's head around in a quick twist, but he did his

(Continued on Page 104)

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(Continued from Page 103)

best to appear blasé.

"I can break my other date," he said, with a yawn. The "other date" was seeing a movie—alone. "You going to be there?"

The pitcher nodded, and a few of the players near by laughed. Dan looked around, but they were staring up into the stands then. He turned back again.

"Huh?" he asked Howe.

"Yeah, Howe said. "Quite a few of us are going. I'll pick you up in the hotel lobby, after dinner."

DAN went over and dropped down next to Taylor and talked about what a good season it ought to be for the Crowns. Taylor didn't say much, and then Dan talked faster. He laughed about a few of the really good plays he had made, and then went out for the first half of the ninth.

There wasn't any second half of the ninth for the home-team Crowns. They took the game by a score of 6-to-3, and Dan had nipped a late rally to close the game.

He was feeling good, when he raced off the field with the others. All the other players seemed to feel good with him, laughing and looking at him and telling him how fine he did with the umps.

Dan was feeling even better when he went through the shiny little hall of the neat apartment house behind Lefty Howe and waited outside the door.

The ring of the bell was a faint burr through the noise of loud voices the other side of the door.

"We must have come late," Dan said. "The others are all here."

"Yeah?" Howe said.

He went in when Mary opened the door. Dan looked good in his gray pencil-stripe suit. He made a neat little bow to his hostess. He'd planned to shake her hand a bit longer than was necessary, but he didn't have the chance. Mary was smoking with one hand, and her other hand went under Howe's elbow.

"We're all in here," she said, leading the way across the little foyer.

Mary Jones was fairly accurate about it. They were almost all there—almost the entire Crown team, and their wives.

Dan went around grinning and nodding at the players, bowing to their wives. And they were all looking at him and grinning back. Dan felt good because he figured he'd made an impression in Hutchinson City. With the team. And with Mary. And then Mary Jones was saying something to him.

"I want you to meet my father, Dan," she said, bringing someone up from behind him. "I think he owes you a vote of thanks. It's something to do with my saving him from bloodshed this afternoon."

Dan wheeled, his eyes flying wide. It was Pop—the umpire!

He stood in a daze and stared, while the others roared their laughter. All but Mary and Pop. Then, slowly, he got it. It was a gag. A dopey gag, and he'd fallen for it. He, Dan Salter, big league stuff, had been taken for a swell ride by this bunch of bush-league stiffs! Of course, the umpire wasn't Mary Jones' father. How could a wrong-number like an umpire have a right-number like Mary for a daughter?

They'd taken him for a ride, but he caught on, and he tried to pass it off with a laugh.

"Glad to see you among civilized people, Pop," he jeered. His face was still red, so he laughed to make believe he was in it with the rest of them. "If you'll wait a few minutes, I'll go out and get you some dog biscuits to nibble on."

Then the laughing was all over, and Lefty Howe was saying things and trying to get at him. But Pop was shoving Lefty away and saying:

"Take it easy, take it easy! Just remember you are in my home, Lefty. I can still handle my own affairs." He looked at Mary. "You want this—er—guest to stay?"

Her face was white, and it made her eyes even larger than they were. But they were steady, steadier than her lips.

"Not particularly," she said. "However, if he insists on staying. . . ." She turned away.

Dan stood stock-still and tasted the bitterness of it. This was no gag. This was the real thing. He turned his head and on the table by the wall was a framed photograph of Pop, and a woman who looked like Mary would

look if she were dressed in the fashions of ten years before.

There were many other things, too. Things like a plaque shaped to look like a baseball, and with a lot of names on it. The largest name said: "Home-Run Jones." There were other things. A horsehide baseball mounted on a stand with names like Amos Strunk, Chief Bender, Eddie Collins, Home-Run Jones, and others written on it. Dan saw them all.

Sure, Home-Run Jones, the old slugger was an umpire now. Dan turned around and stared at the lot of them. And they were eyes that were bitter again, haunted again. He started for the door, through the aisle that the gang in the room cleared for him. But he stopped at the hall to have one last say.

"It's just the sort of cute trick you'd expect an umpire and his family to play at home," he said slowly. "Phoney to the last!"

He crashed the door shut after him.

"He's right!" Mary told them all angrily. "Absolutely right! Oh, yes, he's too—too sure he's right and everyone else is wrong. But it was a mean trick to ask him here tonight into this trap. It was mean of Dad to let you do it, and meaner yet of me to carry it out when I realized what you were all doing. I think," she said, her voice very even, "I'd like it if you all left."

Dan was gone, the rage ever mounting in him. But he didn't know that Mary had ordered the tricksters out of the house. He couldn't have seen the sheepish, half-pleading look in the umpire's eyes when he faced his daughter later.

The veteran player put his hand on her arm.

"It's—it's all right, Dad," the girl said. "It's just that—that I hate to see anybody hurt like he was. Dan needs help, Dad."

Umpire Home-Run Jones's eyes opened wide.

"Sweet day in the morning!" he breathed. "Don't tell me you feel sorry for that bully-boy! Mary, Dan Salter is headed wrong, and you know it."

"Well, there's no sense in hurrying him along, is there?" she asked, her
(Continued on Page 106)

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(Continued from Page 105)
voice quiet. She fixed her hair with nervous little gestures and lighted a cigarette. "Anyway, you *did* call a sour one on him today."

The umpire flared up at that.

"Listen, are you a ballplayer's wife or something?" he demanded.

"No," she told him, with a mocking grin. "I'm a ballplayer's daughter."

He grinned with her.

But he wasn't grinning next day when Dan swaggered truculently to the plate.

"Where are your glasses, Pop?" he taunted. "You know some very funny parlor tricks, but you're supposed to be earning your living now."

Dan took an assortment of pitches that included a few bad ones, but two strikes were inserted, also. The umpire's fists were ready when Dan swung. It was a bouncer to short for a close out at first base.

And then it was the base-umpire's turn to take it. Dan and the other man-in-black yelled and shouted over the decision. Gradually, the teams collected about the wrangling men. Dan shoved the umpire and then he was walking away toward the clubhouse amidst the roaring laughter of the crowd. He had been thrown out of the game.

Fish Taylor wasn't laughing, however. He looked after Dan, shook his head, and then signaled the bench for a utility infielder. The Crowns lost the game because of an error chalked up to Dan's substitute. The manager had plenty to say in the showers later, and Dan said plenty in return. The sporting pages took it and rolled it along from there. Dan Salter was quoted as "Declaring War On The Umpires!"

HE carried out the declaration, too. If his batting average slumped, his baiting-average picked up. He baited the arbiters at every possible turn. He heckled them from the bench, rode them hard afield, and did his bit at the plate. The Crowns hit the road for a trip, and Dan was hit the news reports for being ejected from three games in succession. It was good copy, until the fans saw that the Crowns were sliding out of the first division and into the second. And sliding fast.

Rumors of a trade were in the air when the team came home, and it didn't take any great guessing to figure that Dan Salter would be on his way again soon. Sure, he was colorful. But the color that paid dividends was the fat, black color of the team standing.

Umpire Jones was thinking about all that in the clubhouse office, when Dan Salter walked in the day after the team's return from the road trip. The second-baseman stopped when he saw who it was, but he managed a grin.

"Is Fish around?" he asked.

"Is it that bad, Dan?" the umpire said.

"I'm gonna quit!" Dark sultry eyes passed over the umpire's face and went around the room. "They're riding me too hard in this league."

"Yeah?" Pop Jones—the name Dan had tagged him with had stuck—asked. "Funny how they pick on you in every league, isn't it? It's tough, too, because that means you leave all of your fighting to be done with the umpires, so you don't have much left to give your team."

Dan's eyes were jeering. He dropped into a chair and leaned forward in mock interest.

"Tell me some more, Pop. Go on."

Pop turned a page of his newspaper and squinted his eyes, held the paper off a bit and squinted again. He twisted to get into a better light.

"Darn this print," he muttered. "They blur newspapers up so, of late."

Dan's eyes narrowed, and in a few minutes he climbed to his feet. He walked carelessly over behind Pop Jones and looked over his shoulder.

"Where is it blurred?" he asked.

The umpire put the paper down suddenly and met the player's eyes. Then he looked swiftly away. Dan whistled.

"Well, well, well!" he said. "So now we are hearing the truth. I always said you were blind."

The veteran met his eyes squarely.

"What are you talking about?" he demanded.

Dan shook his head.

"I thought they had tests for eyesight in all leagues. But I'm darned if you can even read newsprint. No wonder I can't get a square deal."

"Shut up, will you?" the old umpire

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(Continued from Page 107)

said hurriedly. "Someone is coming." He had a frightened look in his eyes, and Dan recognized it. He'd seen that same look in his own mirror enough. "Keep your mouth shut!"

"You gotta quit," Dan said. "Pop, you gotta. You're blind as a bat. Just a blind man, faking it as an umpire. And they tell me I imagine things!" He laughed. "A blind man bluffing his way as an umpire!"

The footsteps that had sounded down the hall ceased abruptly, and the door swung open. Fish Taylor came into the room.

He glanced at Dan, but spoke only to the umpire.

"Hi," he greeted him. "How are things? Mary well?"

DAN SALTER blinked, and his eyes shifted from the umpire. He cleared his throat and started to say something, but he shut his mouth again. Taylor looked at some papers on his desk, then seemed to notice Dan for the first time. "Something you want, Salter?"

Dan met the umpire's glance briefly. After a moment, he spoke.

"No," he said. "I just came by and saw Pop. Guess I'll be going."

Taylor grinned mirthlessly. "Just how do you mean that 'going' word, Salter?" he asked.

Dan ignored him and walked out. But he waited until Pop came along and signaled the man aside.

"For what you did to me," he said, "I ought to have you busted right out of your job. But I won't."

"Do you mind if I ask why?" Pop Jones queried.

"Do you mind if I don't answer?" Dan retorted. He stared at the umpire coldly, waited a moment. Then: "You'll have to come out from behind the plate. You'll have to handle only the bases from now on."

"Just what good will that do?" Pop asked guardedly.

"The decisions aren't so close as they are at the plate," Dan told him. He eyed the umpire with distaste. "Listen, I should think you would quit of your own accord. You were a ballplayer once, yourself. A great one. Why don't you quit?"

"Maybe I should," Pop said slowly. "Somehow, though, I'm not like you new lads coming up. I can't quit so easy."

"Is that a crack? Because I talked about quitting? I have reason. So have you."

"Well, quit then," Pop said shortly. "Me, I'm sticking until they throw me out!"

"Well, then you're shifting to base umpiring from now on," Dan said. "I'm warning you! You can swing it. They'll do anything you ask. Get them to shift you, do you hear?"

He walked away, shaking his head. "Imagine the nerve of him, trying to ride a bluff like that. A blind man's bluff, and him an umpire!" But Dan's eyes were more than a little awed. . . .

When Pop Jones walked on the field that afternoon and took up his position as base-arbiter near third base, the fans looked for a pleasant day of excitement, and perhaps even some fisticuffs.

Mary Jones hadn't been in evidence at the ball park since the day that Dan had permitted her to watch while he broke her father to his bit. But with the return of the team from the road, she came out to the ball park. The second-baseman came near Pop.

"How much of this does Mary know?" he asked softly.

"None," the umpire told him.

"Then she isn't going to know of it," Dan said. "You'll make up your mind to quit before she learns of it. You've got to do that, Pop."

Things went smoothly for a few innings, and then there was a close one at second, when a visiting Camden player stretched a long single into a very close decision at second. He came in with spikes riding high and a cloud of dust swirling around him. Dan, who took the throw-in from left field on the bounce, stepped nimbly aside and reached his glove down to tag the man out. But the movement caused him to stumble, and he had to jab twice at those flying legs.

POP JONES blinked and looked levelly at Dan, then held his hands palms down and bawled:

"Ye're safe!"

Dan gave a bellow of rage and slam-

(Continued on Page 110)

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(Continued from Page 109)

med his glove down hard and walked close to Pop. His eyes were savage.

"You're as blind as—" He stopped short, and the stands watched with interest when he turned swiftly away and rifled the ball to Lefty Howe, on the pitching mound. He said over his shoulder to Pop, "Now you know what I mean, pal?"

"What's wrong, Dan, you sick?" the Camden runner on second asked. That was a sad mistake.

Dan charged the man and made a swing at him that was blocked.

"One more yap out of you, you spike-stabbing mug," he roared, "and I'll bust you into small pieces! And another thing: keep those spikes of yours clear of my frame or I'll whale some sense into your head."

Pop got between them, but when the flare-up was over and peace established again, he spoke to Dan.

"Finally finding out who to fight, eh, Dan?" He walked quickly away, however.

Dan's rage was towering. So tall was it that it lent inches to his reach when he went high for a hard smash headed for center. He snared the ball, got it and doubled the runner off second easily. He was so mad that he fed the plate umpire a dose of abuse, and then hammered a long smash out of the park. As he came past Pop, he said:

"That's one way to be sure they don't call 'em wrong on you! Belt it for a homer."

"That's one way," the old home-run clouter agreed with a slight grin. But when Dan came out to his position for the next inning, he told the player:

"Listen, won't it look funny if you ride Pete Miller, umpiring at the plate, and lay off me? What will the crowd think? It will make them suspicious."

Dan frowned. "Yeah," he agreed. "I guess I better start giving you the business again. It will ruin my act if I don't." Instead, he came to the plate for his next licks and Pete Miller scratched his head and stared when the second-baseman took a close one for a third strike and went back to the dug-out with no more than some evil looks.

He avoided the eyes of his mates, but he forgot himself so far as the manager was concerned.

"What are you looking at?" he snarled when Taylor started twisting his head and looking long at him.

"I dunno," Taylor said equably. "You tell me."

"You're looking at a sucker," Dan told him.

But the league began to get a different idea of who the sucker was, and it wasn't Dan Salter. Usually, it was the opposing pitcher. For with his rage necessarily diverted from the umpires, it was transferred to the luckless hurlers who faced this thwarted player. But the habits of years don't change without some effort. Dan was almost not capable of the effort later that month in a tight game with the Bisons.

There was a man on third, and two out, when the next Bison batter hit a screaming liner low and to the right of second. It was a miracle catch to make, but lately Dan Salter had been a miracle man. Also, there were a few big league scouts in the stands to watch that play. A miracle would help with them, too.

Dan was off to his right instinctively with the crack of the bat, and he made a diving, stabbing stop of the ball just as it was merging with the grass for a mighty bounce into center. If the ball were caught, it would be an out with no runs scored and the side retired. But if it had got away, it would be an easy double, and no doubt about it.

The stands came up with a mighty roar and then checked it when the Bison players set up a howl that it was a good stop, but that it was not an out.

"Salter got it *after* it hit the ground!"

(Concluded on Page 112)

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(Continued from page 111)

they claimed. "The run scored, because it's a hit and not an out!"

THE Crown players ganged around and argued long and loudly with Pop Jones, but the arbiter listened stonily, his eyes on Dan. Finally, he said:

"Tell 'em, Dan. I got my ideas, naturally. But you know better than the rest of us. Or—you should."

The home bunch gaped at Pop, and then at Dan. But there was something going on inside the crack second-baseman that he fought, tried to deny, but couldn't.

"I'm calling it a hit," Pop said shortly. "Also, I'm calling that stop one of the greatest plays I've seen in years. It's tough, the way you boys look at it," he went on, eyeing the rest of them. "But the way I look at it, it's anything but tough. It's a swell, a very swell play. But it's also a hit. How about it, Dan?"

Dan looked at Pop briefly, and then nodded.

"That's the way I see it." He looked at the ball, eyed the telltale streak of green that told its own story, then peered at Taylor and the rest of them. "Pop sort of has the right of it. I didn't claim otherwise, did I?"

When the gang had gone, he stared at Pop.

"Who said anything was wrong with your eyes?" he muttered.

"You did," Pop told him. He studied his man carefully. Then he drew a long breath and let the ballplayer have it. "You did, Dan, and I let you think it. I thought maybe you'd have a chance to work out your own trouble better if you sort of had a little sympathy for some one other than just yourself. I sort of think, too, that now you see what I meant when I said you left all your fight with the umpires, and got yourself so sorry for Dan Salter it was getting you down."

Dan listened, but he didn't say anything. He made a neat catch of a towering fly ball for the putout, and then skidded the ball neatly for the pitcher's box. He turned to Pop.

"That sounds swell, Pop," he said. "Just swell. But I was sort of interested in your record, and I looked up

some old papers in the library, to read about Home-Run Jones. Some day you might tell me about the time you took on four World's Series umpires single-handed!"

The veteran turned crimson, but he chuckled when Dan guffawed with pleasure at his discomfiture.

"Listen, Dan," he said. "It's one thing to honestly back your opinion up and they'll even forgive you if you forget yourself in the heat of battle and start a ruckus. But that's not the same as making a habit of picking on umpires until it queers your game and messes you up entirely. Umpires call 'em like they see 'em, always!"

"You old faker!" Dan said. "Pulling that blurred print stunt on me."

"Is it my fault that you were born with a native belief that all umpires are suffering from bad eyesight and a severe attack of dishonesty?" Pop asked, smiling. "You were ready to believe it, so I let you." He eyed the player. "I think you've learned something, son. If I'm right, I'd like to see you at my apartment again. This time on our invitation; not Lefty Howe's."

"Our?" Dan echoed.

"Mary and me think a lot alike," the umpire explained gravely.

Dan tried to force a wide yawn.

"I think I can break my date to-night," he said.

Pop nodded soberly.

"That's the beauty of making a date to take yourself to the movies. You can break it so easy." His very good eyes suffered the glow that was Dan Salter's brand-new smile. "Come early, because Cy Mason, the Giant scout, will be there."

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ARE YOU
**"FLYING
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioning | <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Engines | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Marine Engines | <input type="checkbox"/> R. R. Signalmen's |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Lighting | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigeration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Boilers | <input type="checkbox"/> Foundry Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary Engineering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Auto Engine Tune-up | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit Growing | <input type="checkbox"/> Heating | <input type="checkbox"/> Mine Foreman | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet Metal Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Auto Technician | <input type="checkbox"/> Heat Treatment of Metals | <input type="checkbox"/> Highways Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Navigation | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Electric |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aviation | <input type="checkbox"/> House Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Locomotive Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Patternmaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Engines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bridge Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Machinist | <input type="checkbox"/> Management of Inventions | <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Fittings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building Estimating | <input type="checkbox"/> Management of Inventions | | <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing | <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Drafting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Poultry Farming | <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Engineering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Engineering | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Practical Telephony | <input type="checkbox"/> Surveying and Mapping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coal Mining | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Works Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Telegraph Engineering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Engineering | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio, General | <input type="checkbox"/> Tangle Designing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contracting and Building | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio Operating | <input type="checkbox"/> Toolmaking |
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BUSINESS COURSES

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> College Preparatory | <input type="checkbox"/> Foremanship | <input type="checkbox"/> Railway Postal Clerk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> Cost Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> French | <input type="checkbox"/> Salesmanship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Correspondence | <input type="checkbox"/> C. P. Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> First Year College | <input type="checkbox"/> High School | <input type="checkbox"/> Secretarial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Lettering Show Cards | | <input type="checkbox"/> Illustrating | <input type="checkbox"/> Sign Lettering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cartooning | <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Service | | <input type="checkbox"/> Managing Men at Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish |
| | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Management |

HOME ECONOMICS COURSES

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Dressmaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Home Dressmaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Tea Room and Cafeteria Management, Catering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foods and Cookery | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Dressmaking and Designing | |

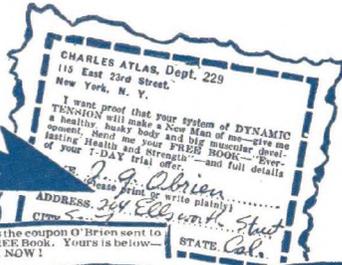
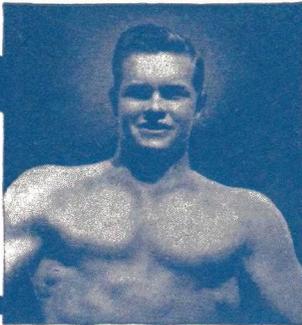
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HE Mailed This Coupon

J. G. O'BRIEN
Atlas Champion
Cup Winner

This is an ordinary snapshot of one of Charles Atlas' California pupils.



...and Here's the Handsome Prize-Winning Body I Gave Him!

J. G. O'BRIEN saw my coupon. He clipped and mailed it. He got my free book and followed my instructions. He became a New Man—and also won one of my Atlas-Champion, Sterling Silver Cups for his physical improvement. NOW read what he says:

"Look at me NOW! Dynamic Tension WORKS! I'm proud of the natural, easy way you have made me an 'Atlas Champion'!"—J. G. O'Brien.

Let Me Prove I Can Make You a New Man

Would you like to have a handsome build—greater physical development—a strong, muscular body? Then listen to this:

I, myself was once a skinny weakling of 97 lbs. I didn't know what real health or strength were. I was afraid to fight, ashamed to be seen in a swimming suit.

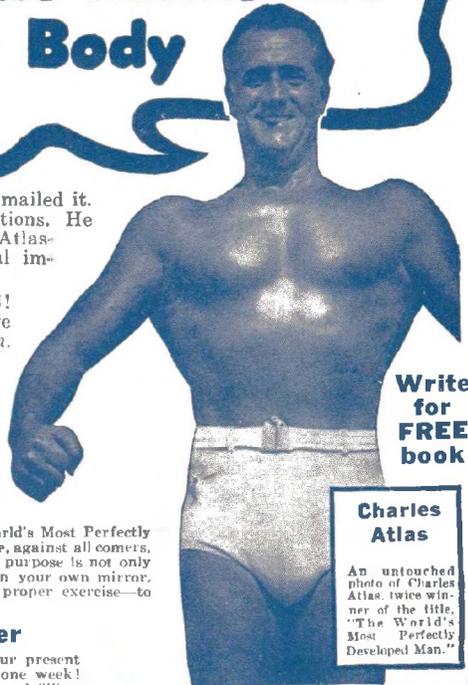
Then I discovered the secret that changed me into "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man," the title I won twice and have held ever since, against all comers. My secret is **Dynamic Tension**. It is a natural method. Its purpose is not only to give you the powerful, rippling muscles you'd like to see in your own mirror, but also for those whose systems are sluggish from lack of proper exercise—to help them tone up their entire body, inside and out.

Accept My 7-Day Trial Offer

Do you want a better build? Are you dissatisfied with your present physical development? All I ask is a 7-DAY TRIAL. Just one week! In even that short time you will notice your chest hardening and filling out with solid muscle—or the 7-Day Trial Costs you nothing. Surely this is proof enough that by continuing with my "Dynamic Tension" method I will make you a **New Man**—give you bodily power and drive, and put you in magnificent physical condition which wins you the envy and respect of everyone.

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Let me show you the results produced for other men! I'll send you FREE my famous book, "Everlasting Health and Strength." It shows actual photos. Write your name and address carefully on coupon. Mail to me personally today. I'll rush your free copy to you AT ONCE! Charles Atlas, Dept. 7712, 115 East 23rd Street, New York, N. Y.



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An untouched photo of Charles Atlas, twice winner of the title, "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

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I want the proof that your system of Dynamic Tension will help make me a New Man—give me a healthy, husky body and big muscle development. Send me your FREE book, "Everlasting Health and Strength," and full details about your 7-DAY Trial Offer.

Name
(Please print or write plainly)

Address

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

IS YOUR Rupture GETTING Worse?

It is a terrible thing to feel that your rupture is getting worse, growing larger and larger, without your *seeming* to be able to do anything about it! Haunting fear destroys mental peace and makes many *despondent*. Inability to be active takes the *physical joys* out of life.

Yes, it is terrible . . . but far more a tragedy when it is all so *absolutely needless!* Now please—and again please—do not think that this is an attempt to capitalize on your misfortune in an effort to just sell you something. We simply have information for you that has brought deliverance and joy to about 3,000,000 persons: men, women and children . . . *facts* that have satisfied thousands of doctors . . . *facts* we want *you* to consider, to your everlasting good!

STOP IT, STOP IT!

AS sure as you live and breathe, if you have a reducible rupture, you can *stop your rupture worries* and once again find the world, your work, your pleasures so full of joy and happiness that you will be an utterly new person . . . alive, vivid, energetic and happy past all the old nightmare fears that have been making your existence a bad dream.

There is no claptrap magic about the famous Brooks Air-Cushion Rupture Appliance. It isn't something experimental. It has been used and improved for years. Over 9000 doctors (who know about rupture) wear the BROOKS, or recommend it to many, many thousands of patients. What is the Patented Automatic Air-Cushion? Just this:

It is the part of the BROOKS Appliance that holds back your rupture—the most important part of any truss. It is a yielding, air-filled rubber chamber designed to a shape that clings, that holds with complete security *without gouging in*. Understand that—*without gouging in!* Ill-fitting, incorrectly designed trusses, as you know all too well, *do gouge in*.

Now, here is what happens. The Brooks Air-Cushion *avoids* spreading the rupture opening and making it larger, the way some trusses do. Well, when the BROOKS permits the edges of the rupture opening to remain as close together as possible, Nature has the best chance to stop in and close the opening. Mind you we don't guarantee this. But if you have reducible rupture, the BROOKS is designed to work with nature. And thousands of BROOKS users have reported the abandonment of any truss.

YOU CAN BE SURE OF NEW FREEDOM

The very day you put on a BROOKS Patented Air-Cushion, you feel that you have been reborn to the full joys of Life! Men, women and children can know this indescribable thrill. Now why—why does the BROOKS give you such exceptional results? Why is it so often most outstanding



X Where's YOUR Rupture?

in its accomplishments? Because the cling of the Air-Cushion makes it hold as nothing else can . . . because the wearer speedily comes to realize that there can be no slipping to let the rupture down . . . that while the BROOKS protects, the dreaded specter of strangulation is banished . . . because the wearer can indulge in every normal activity . . . because physical tasks can be resumed . . . because common sense says that everything humanly possible is being accomplished to improve the rupture condition. And here is another "bonus" a tremendous one to those who have suffered with the miseries of a hard, gouging, burning, galling pad that never lets up, never is forgotten. Your BROOKS will have no springs, no metal girdle, no agonizing pressure devices. Instead there is the utterly comfortable Air-Cushion and a velvet soft body band.

SENT ON TRIAL!

That's one of the best parts of all. You don't have to risk your money to find out just what joy and happiness a BROOKS CAN BRING YOU! You simply try it, and if not satisfied the *trial costs you nothing!* And anyone can afford a BROOKS. It costs no more than ordinary trusses. Every BROOKS is made to individual requirements, made especially to fit *your case*. Therefore it is *never sold in stores*. Guard against imitations. SEND THE COUPON AT ONCE.

BROOKS APPLIANCE CO.

480-T STATE STREET

MARSHALL, MICH.

MAIL THIS COUPON NOW!

Brooks Appliance Co.
480-T State St., Marshall, Mich.

In PLAIN ENVELOPE, please send your FREE BOOK on Rupture, PROOF of Results, and TRIAL OFFER. No one is to call on me personally about my rupture.

Name

Street

City State

State whether for Man , Woman , or Child .

WRONG

Hard pad gouging in keeps Rupture open and prevents natural healing.

RIGHT

BROOKS Air-Cushion does not spread rupture opening. Gives nature a real opportunity!