

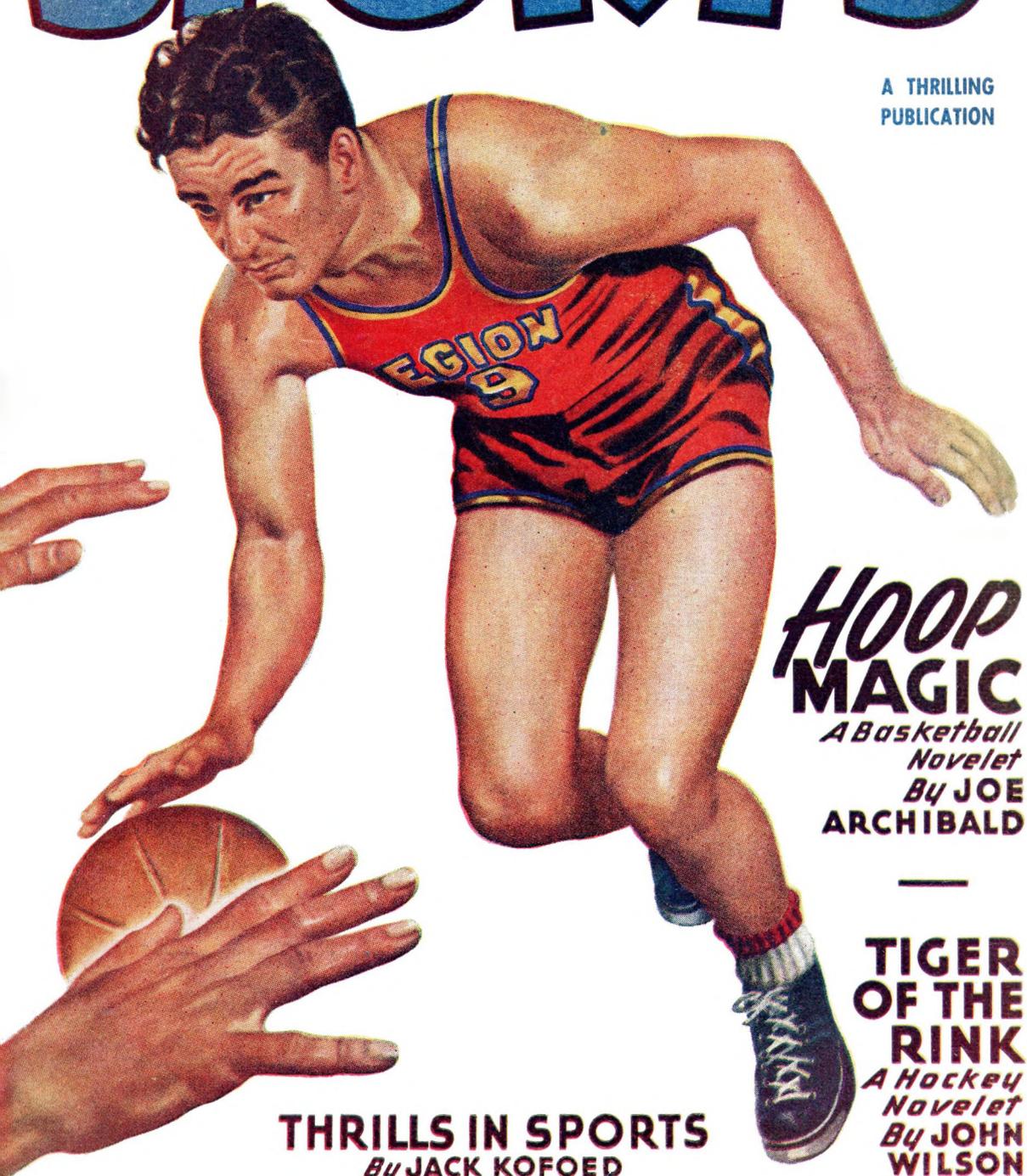
15¢

EXCITING

WINTER
ISSUE

SPORTS

A THRILLING
PUBLICATION



HOOP MAGIC

*A Basketball
Novelet
By JOE
ARCHIBALD*

**TIGER
OF THE
RINK**
*A Hockey
Novelet
By JOHN
WILSON*

THRILLS IN SPORTS
By JACK KOFOED

WHOSE LEGS ARE THESE?



10 OF HOLLYWOOD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL BRUNETTES ALL HAD MOTIVES FOR MURDER!



Detective George Raft invades fabulous Hollywood glamor spots in search of missing brunette movie star who witnessed the crime.

RKO
PRESENTS

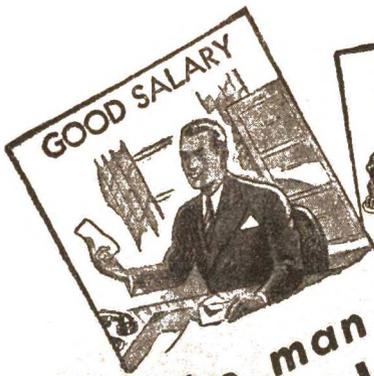
GEORGE RAFT
LYNN BARI

IN
NOCTURNE

with
VIRGINIA HUSTON • JOSEPH PEVNEY
MYRNA DELL

Produced by JOAN HARRISON • Directed by EDWIN L. MARIN
Screen Play by JONATHAN LATIMER





To the man who wants to enjoy
an ACCOUNTANT'S CAREER



IF you're that man, here's something that will interest you.

Not a magic formula—not a get-rich-quick scheme—but something more substantial, more practical.

Of course, you need something more than just the desire to be an accountant. You've got to pay the price—be willing to study earnestly, thoroughly.

Still, wouldn't it be worth your while to sacrifice some of your leisure in favor of interesting home study—over a comparatively brief period in your life? Always provided that the rewards were good—a salary of \$3,000 to \$10,000?

An accountant's duties are interesting, varied and of real worth to his employers. He has *standing!*

Do you feel that such things aren't for you? Well, don't be too sure. Very possibly they *can* be!

Why not, like so many before you, investigate LaSalle's modern Problem Method of training for an accountancy position?

Just suppose you were permitted to work in a large accounting house under the personal supervision of an expert accountant. Suppose, with his aid, you studied accounting principles and solved problems day by day—easy ones at first—then the more difficult ones. If you could do this—and if you could turn to him for advice as the problems became complex—soon you'd master them all.

That's the training you follow in principle under the LaSalle Problem Method.

You cover accountancy from the basic Principles right up through Accountancy Systems and Income Tax Procedure. Then you add C. P. A. Training and prepare for the C. P. A. examinations.

As you go along, you absorb the principles of Auditing, Cost Accounting, Business Law, Statistical Control, Organization, Management and Finance.

Your progress is as speedy as you care to make it—depending on your own eagerness to learn and the time you spend in study.

Will recognition come? The only answer, as you know, is that success *does* come to the man who is really *trained*. It's possible your employers will notice your improvement in a very few weeks or months. Indeed, many LaSalle graduates have paid for their training—with increased earnings—before they have completed it! For accountants, who are trained in organization and management, are the executives of the future.

Write For This Free Book

For your own good, don't put off investigation of *all* the facts. Write for our free 48-page book, "Accountancy, The Profession That Pays." It'll prove that accountancy offers brilliant futures to those who aren't afraid of serious home study. Send us the coupon *now*.

Over 2300 Certified
 Public Accountants among
 LaSalle alumni

G. I. APPROVED

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY

A CORRESPONDENCE INSTITUTION

417 South Dearborn Street, Dept. 2329-H, Chicago 5, Illinois

I want to be an accountant. Send me, without cost or obligation, the 48-page book, "Accountancy, The Profession That Pays," and full information about your accountancy training program.

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

Position _____ Age _____



EXCITING SPORTS

Vol. 8, No. 1

A Thrilling Publication

Winter, 1947



A Complete Basketball Novelet

HOOP MAGIC

By JOE ARCHIBALD

When the heat's on, court star Al Pryn wilts under the pressure—and Coach Herb Cope has to risk his reputation by trying a Spartan remedy which brings some odd results!..... 11

OTHER COMPLETE NOVELETS

- TIGER OF THE RINK**..... John Wilson 48
Bobcat star Becker found himself slipping, no longer a terror on skates—and it was up to him to do something about it or face ruin as a contender!
- THEY DO COME BACK**..... T. W. Ford 70
Grief takes the spirit out of fullback Red Tarmonde and slows him down just before a critical game, forcing him to face the most gruelling test of his career!

SHORT STORIES

- PINCH PITCHER**..... Robert Sidney Bowen 27
The odds in this game were a League pennant against a man's life.
- ONE MORE MILE**..... Richard Brister 39
Greg Swenson dons spiked shoes to get more reality in his writing.
- WEIGHT FOR BABY**..... William O'Sullivan 60
A bantam crew of oar-pullers must prove pint-sizers can be great.
- WINNER FAKE ALL**..... Tom Thursday 83
Mayhem Murphy, welterweight wonder, is knockin' 'em all around, until—
- PIGSKIN PATTEN**..... Robert S. Fenton 89
"Too tough to be human," they called Quarterback Marty Patten.
- MY BROTHER JOHNNY**..... William Campbell Gault 97
Middleweight top-notch Johnny Brenner finds the game plenty tough.

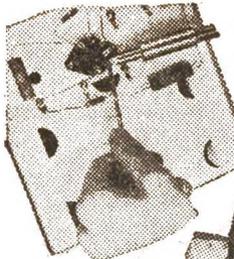
SPECIAL FEATURES

- THE CHEER LEADER**..... Cap Fanning 6
- THRILLS IN SPORTS**..... Jack Kofoed 35

EXCITING SPORTS published quarterly and copyright, 1946, by Better Publications, Inc., 10 East 40th St., New York 16, N. Y. N. L. Pines, President. Single copies, 15 cents. Manuscripts 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.

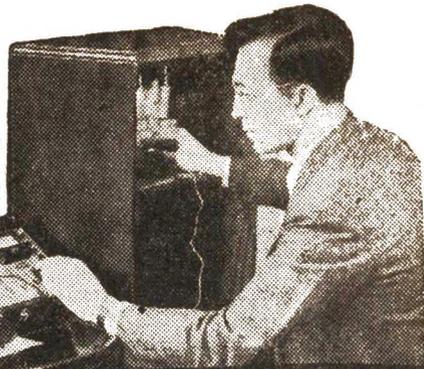
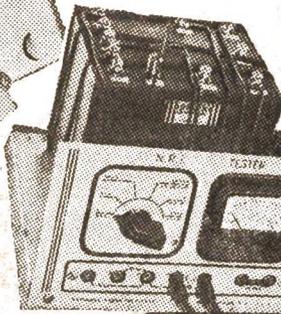
Read our companion magazines: Popular Football, Exciting Football, Thrilling Football, Popular Western, Thrilling Western, G-Men Detective, Popular Sports Magazine, Thrilling Detective, Thrilling Love, The Phantom Detective, Sky Fighters, Popular Detective, Thrilling Ranch Stories, Thrilling Wonder Stories, Thrilling Mystery Novel Magazine, Texas Rangers, Popular Love, West, Black Book Detective, Startling Stories, Range Riders Western, Detective Novel Magazine, Thrilling Sports, Rio Kid Western, Masked Rider Western, Exciting Western, Exciting Love, Everyday Astrology, Popular Crossword Puzzles.

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.



KIT 1 I send you Soldering Equipment and Radio Parts; show you how to do Radio soldering; how to mount and connect Radio parts; give you practical experience.

KIT 2 Early in my course I show you how to build this N. R. I. Tester with parts I send. It soon helps you fix neighborhood Radios and earn EXTRA money in spare time.

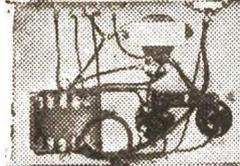
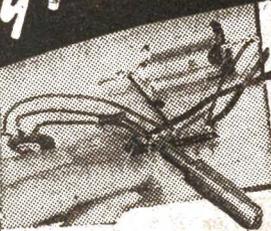


Be a RADIO Technician

Learn by PRACTICING in Spare Time

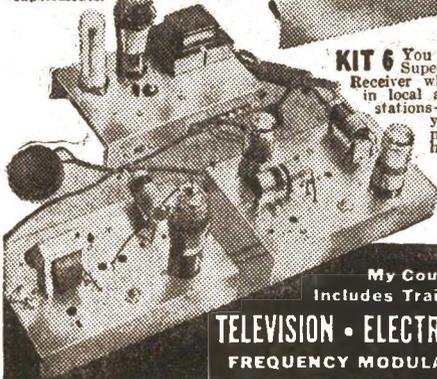
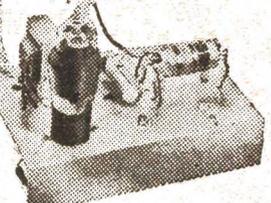
with **6 BIG KITS** of **RADIO PARTS** I send you

KIT 3 You get parts to build Radio Circuits; then test them; see how they work; learn how to design special circuits; how to locate and repair circuit defects.



KIT 4 You get parts to build this Vacuum Tube Power Pack; make changes which give you experience with packs of many kinds; learn to correct power pack troubles.

KIT 5 Building this A. M. Signal Generator gives you more valuable experience. It provides amplitude-modulated signals for many tests and experiments.



KIT 6 You build this Superheterodyne Receiver which brings in local and distant stations—and gives you more experience to help you win success in Radio.

Do you want a good-pay job in the fast-growing Radio Industry—or your own Radio Shop? Mail the Coupon for a Sample Lesson and my 64-page book, "Win Rich Rewards in Radio," both FREE. See how I will train you at home—how you get practical Radio experience building, testing Radio circuits with 6 BIG KITS OF PARTS I send!



Many Beginners Soon Make Extra Money in Spare Time While Learning

The day you enroll I start sending EXTRA MONEY JOB SHEETS that show you how to make EXTRA money fixing neighbors' Radios in spare time while still learning! It's probably easier to get started now than ever before, because the Radio Repair Business is booming. Trained Radio Technicians also find profitable opportunities in Police, Aviation, Marine Radio, Broadcasting, Radio Manufacturing, Public Address work. Think of even greater opportunities as Television, FM, and Electronic devices become available to the public! Send for FREE books now!

Find Out What NRI Can Do For You

Mail Coupon for Sample Lesson and my FREE 64-page book. Read the details about my Course; letters from men I trained; see how quickly, easily you can get started. No obligation! Just MAIL COUPON NOW in envelope or paste on penny postal. J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 7809, National Radio Institute, Pioneer Home Study Radio School, Washington 9, D. C.

Sample Lesson **FREE**
64 Page Book



Mr. J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 7809
National Radio Institute,
Washington 9, D. C.

Mail me FREE, Sample Lesson and 64-page book. (No salesman will call. Please write plainly.)

Age.....

Name.....

Address.....

City.....State..

(Please include Post Office zone number)

My Course
Includes Training in
TELEVISION • ELECTRONICS
FREQUENCY MODULATION

Approved for Training under GI Bill

THE CHEER LEADER



A Department for Sport Fans Conducted by CAP FANNING

WITH the successful debut of the All-American Football Conference already an accomplished fact and both professional big leagues drawing crowds which have set the teeth of college football moguls on edge, it seems a good time to look into the whole business of the development of professional sport on the American athletic scene.

By and large Americans, in keeping with their parallelism to the Romans of old, demand perfection of their favorite performers on any field of so-called play. And perfection can be achieved only by constant practise and competition on a solid basis of talent.

Such practise and such competition automatically exclude any other gainful means of self-support—save for part-time efforts. Which means that the star performer in any of our leading sports, unless he happens to be independently wealthy, must receive some sort of remuneration (that's happy lettuce, son) for his efforts.

Big Salaries for Players

College athletic boards have long since recognized this, and with the great post-World-War-Two sports era upon us, are in most cases frankly paying huge salaries to star performers on the gridiron. So that amateurism, in football, basketball, and a few other undergraduate sports, has become a purely nominal affair.

This is no new story in this country, where sporting contests are taken with the utmost seriousness by paying spectators and newspaper readers and radio listeners alike. Whenever a sport began to draw money at the gate, its pristine simon purity bailed out without benefit of parachute.

Boxing, never truly a college favorite, since it attracted public interest before our institutions of learning became sporting page rather than education page famous, was the first to go. Early in the last century, it was a hit or miss affair, both here and in England.

Husky fellows from city or country were egged into challenging rival sluggers from the next ward or village. What few pros there were supported themselves chiefly by giving instruction to "gentlemen" boxers (the young men with plenty of long green)

and fighting for purses put up by their patrons.

Cash and Carry

Interest grew—and the gentleman boxer became very much a thing of the past—this despite the claim of a sporting British peer to have whipped John L. Sullivan in an off-the-record bout. The village clouter quickly succumbed to barnstorming pros and, ultimately, boxing went whole-hog cash-and-carry, which it still is despite amateur championships and the Golden Gloves donneybrook.

Next to go in a horse-drawn era was horse-racing. Once called the "sport of kings," it was found that all too frequently stable boys could give their employers fifty pounds and still bring their mounts in a number of lengths ahead. Exit the "gentleman rider" save in steeplechase contests, which few professional trainers or riders want any part of. Jump racing across country offers far too much opportunity of crippling injury to horse or rider or both.

Sixty or seventy years ago, while baseball was in its diapers, it was far from an unheard-of occurrence for a good college nine to knock over a team in what were then termed the big leagues—namely the National and the American Association, which competed annually for the Temple Cup in a pre-American League World Series.

College ball players were given the equivalent of sums offered gridiron specialists today—if they could pivot well at second, hurl the new-fangled curve from the mound or drive out enough base hits. There was as little difference between college and pro ball as there is today between the same brands in football.

But people were willing to pay to see ball games and the pros put on better and better contests. The result, of course, was big league baseball as she is currently played—possibly the best ball game there is.

Perfectionism Wins

Golf was the next to go—although the game demanded professional instructors from the first and was the first popular sport to

(Continued on page 8)



AUTO BOOKS ON APPROVAL



SEND NO MONEY. Just mail the coupon for a complete set of Six Big Auto Books. 20th Edition. Whether you are a mechanic or helper, expert or apprentice, auto owner or driver, take immediate advantage of this **FREE EXAMINATION OFFER.**

MAKE GOOD MONEY NOW HOLD A PERMANENT JOB

America wants its automobiles kept in good repair. Men with "know how" are in demand, at big pay. These books will help you get and hold an important job, or give you a chance to go into business for yourself now or later. Any man who has tried to improve himself can learn auto serwing and repairing by this quick reference method. Use the **JIFFY INDEX** to find easily understood answer to any auto problem. These wonder books prepared by eleven of America's great automobile engineers. Many hundreds of valuable illustrations. Send the coupon **TODAY.**

CAN YOU FIX IT?

These wonder books tell step by step **HOW** to make difficult repairs and adjustments, how to keep a car at maximum efficiency, including latest improvements in car design and operation. Engine troubles and how to correct them well covered.

6 BIG VOLUMES

2800 pages, 2000 illustrations, wiring diagrams, etc., including Diesel engines. Beautiful modernistic, washable cloth binding.

[A year's consulting privileges with our engineers now given with these books without extra charge.]
Vocational Publishers Since 1898

AMERICAN TECHNICAL SOCIETY, Dept. A-248
Drexel Ave. at 58th St., Chicago 37, Ill.

I would like to examine your Six-Volume Set of Auto Books. I will pay the delivery charge only, but if I choose I may return them express collect. If after 10 days' use I prefer to keep them, I will send you \$2 and pay the balance at the rate of only \$3 a month until \$24.50 has been paid. Please include consulting service as offered above.

Name
Address
City State.....
Please attach letter stating age, occupation, employer's name and address, and name and address of at least one business man as reference. Men in service, also please give home address.

INVENTORS

Learn how to protect your invention. A specially prepared booklet containing detailed information concerning patent protection and procedure with "Record of Invention" form will be forwarded to you upon request—without obligation.

CLARENCE A. O'BRIEN & HARVEY JACOBSON

Registered Patent Attorneys
78-A District National Bldg. Washington 5, D. C.

Fit-Rite makes False Teeth **TIGHT**
Makes loose dental plates fit snugly and comfortably.
LASTS for MONTHS!

Simply squeeze on dental plate and put it in your mouth. Hardens and becomes part of plate. Money-back guarantee.
Generous package of Dental Plate **FREE** Cleanser with each order. Send \$1.00 or mailed parcel post collect.
Fit-Rite Co., 1573 Milwaukee Ave. Dept. 2-82, Chicago, Ill.



AMAZING WATCH VALUE!

Shock Proof! Dust Proof! Elegant Chrome Case!

A fine quality watch at a bargain price! Keeps accurate time, clear, easy-to-read numerals on face; moderately designed, highly polished chrome case. Complete with watch strap.

\$ 8 50

5 Day Money Back GUARANTEE
Send no money—wear at our risk. We guarantee satisfaction or your money back. Simply send us your name and address. Pay Postman C.O.D. plus a few cents postage. Immediate delivery, but hurry—the quantity is limited.

John MULLINS & Sons. - 84 Myrtle Ave., Brooklyn 1, N.Y.



THE CHEER LEADER

(Continued from page 6)

feature "open" tournaments—where pros and amateurs competed for money or a cup or both. Today, the winner of the amateur crown, as against the open or PGA victor, is pretty small potatoes compared to his rating in the days of Jerry Travers, Walter Travis, Chandler Egan and the like. Again, professional perfectionism wins the nod.

It is in tennis that the amateur-professional duel reached its most involved peak of absurdity, however. Since the game, while new as an outdoor contest (the original tennis, an indoor game, was played in France almost four hundred years ago) was essentially aristocratic in origin, its board of governors fought bitterly and with protracted success against the invasion of pay-for-play.

Twenty years ago, Bill Tilden, a talented and conscientious writer who never employed a ghost for his material, was banned from amateur competition on the eve of a Davis Cup challenge round at Auteuil near Paris because he had sent his employers, a press association, a report on a tournament in which he was competing.

When Tilden Turned Pro

The French, who were openly paying their ace, Henri Cochet, in cash, hit the ceiling, for Big Bill was the chief gate attraction. Ultimately they forced the American association to reinstate Bill in time to play—thus adding a final Gilbert-and-Sullivan touch to the whole absurd affair.

In 1930, Tilden turned pro and thus set the stage for the modern development in tennis—which sees the pros, headed by virtually every truly first-class player in the world, from Budge to Sabin, making money all year round, while the association cashes in only on a few big tournaments. Open events cannot be far away despite the stuffy efforts of the old guard to block them.

Basketball, currently drawing crowds from coast to coast, is the one major American sport in which the spectre of open professionalism is not yet plaguing amateur promoters. But wait—give the game time.

The game has and has had its share of pro teams, such as the Original Celtics and others. They have not prospered like their colleagues in other sports for one very simple reason—the game has not been a major sport long enough.

Only in the last ten or a dozen years has the hoop game become a national attraction. But it is one now—and pay-for-play success cannot be far removed in the future. It's unavoidable!

This observer is all for the pros. Only by being paid and paid fairly can the competitor

(Continued on page 110)

IMAGINE THEIR JOY

WHEN THEY FOUND THEY COULD PLAY

This easy as A.B.C. way!



LEARNED QUICKLY AT HOME

"I didn't dream I could actually learn to play without a teacher. Now, when I play for people they hardly believe that I learned to play so well in so short a time."
*H. C. S., Calif.



INVESTMENT PAID BACK A THOUSAND FOLD

"Anyone with musical ability should make good with your course. My little investment paid back a thousand fold. I have been playing for 4 years now. Today I play in one of our top bands."
*J.M., San Juan, P.R.



PLAYS AT DANCES

"I have completed your course and your lessons have been most satisfactory. I can play all of the popular songs. I have also earned money playing at dances."
*E. N. J., New York.

PLAYS ON RADIO
"As a proud student I can't keep from telling you that as a result of my course I have a good position playing from KYMS, Hot Springs, Ark., every morning."
*J. B., Okla.



INVITED TO PARTIES

"I enjoyed taking this course and I get a lot of pleasure out of it. I have made much progress and have many invitations to play at parties. I owe you much for making this possible."
*K.U., N.Y.

Thousands Have Learned to Play Quickly, Easily At Home

WHAT instrument would you like to play? We'll show you how you can learn to play it—quickly, easily, in spare time at home for less than SEVEN CENTS A DAY! Never mind if you don't know one note of music from another—don't worry about "special talent."

The truth of the matter is that thousands now play who never thought they could! Yes, men and women everywhere are enjoying the thrilling satisfaction of playing the piano, violin, guitar, saxophone or other favorite instrument. Some of them are playing in orchestras and over the radio; others are teaching music, making

money in spare or full time. And thousands are playing for their own enjoyment and the entertainment of their friends.

It all came about when they wrote to the U. S. School of Music for the Free Booklet that shows you how EASY it is to learn music at home this modern way. No tedious scales, no tiresome exercises. You learn to play by tuning—start right in almost at once with the melody of a simple tune! It takes only a few minutes a day and the cost is trifling; you save the expense of a private teacher. Does it sound too good to be true? Mail the coupon and get the FREE PROOF! (Our forty-ninth year—Est. 1898.) U. S. School of Music, 2942 Brunswick Bldg., New York 10, N. Y.

NOTICE

Please don't confuse our method with any systems claiming to teach "without music" or "by ear". We teach you easily and quickly to play real music, any music, by standard notes . . . not by any trick or numbers system.

SEND TODAY → FOR COMPLETE DETAILS

● You'll open your eyes when you find how quickly and easily you can learn to play your favorite instrument. Don't doubt; don't hesitate. Send for the fascinating illustrated booklet that answers all your questions; let the free Print and Picture Sample show you how this method actually works. If interested, mail the coupon NOW.

*Actual pupils' names on request. Pictures by professional models.

FREE! Print and Picture Sample

U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC

2942 Brunswick Bldg., New York 10, N. Y.

I am interested in music study, particularly in the instrument checked below. Please send me your free illustrated booklet, "How to Learn Music at Home."

Piano	Saxophone	Modern Elementary
Guitar	Trumpet, Cornet	Harmony
Hawaiian Guitar	Reed Organ	Clarinet
Violin	Tenor Banjo	Practical Finger
Piano Accordion	Mandolin	Control
		Other Instrument

Have you instrument?

Name (Please Print)

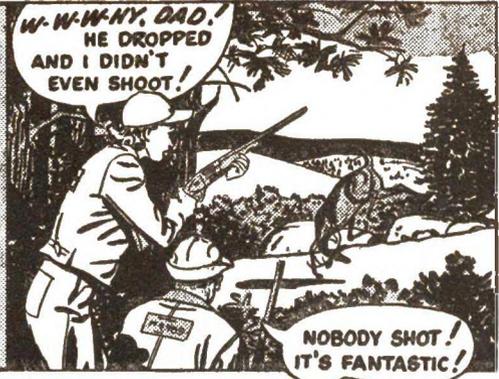
Address

City State

NOTE: If you are under 16 years parent must sign coupon.

Save 2c—Stick coupon on penny postcard.

HERB'S ARROW HIT THE MARK AND THEN...



NOBODY SHOT!
IT'S FANTASTIC!



REMARKABLE!
LOOK, HERE COMES
OUR ROBIN HOOD



DISCOVERED BENEATH
MY BACKWOOD'S BEARD.
AND AREN'T YOU PAUL
LAURIE, THE FAMOUS
HUNTER?



FINE! AND SAY...
IT'S NEAR DINNER
TIME. WHY NOT
JOIN US?



COME ALONG
AND USE
MINE



LOTS OF MY
FRIENDS USE
THIN GILLETTES.
THEY'RE MIGHTY EASY
ON YOUR FACE



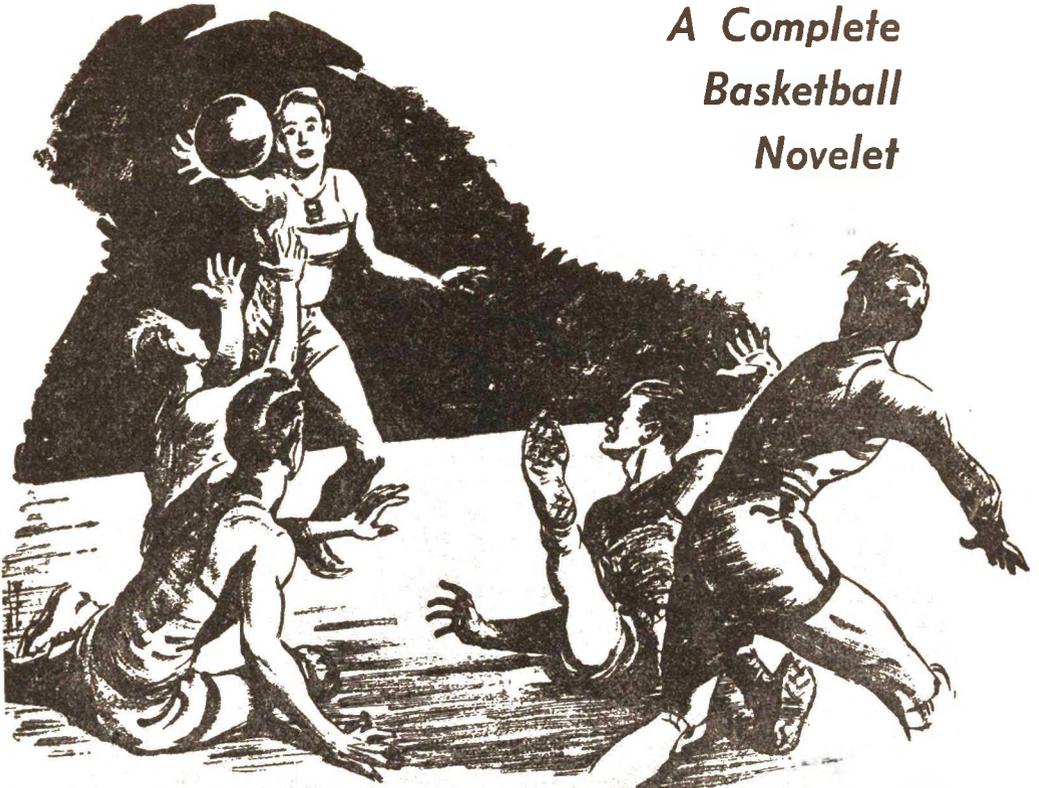
WOULD I!
AND HOW!

WONDERFUL...
HE'S KEEN

TAKE ALONG
SOME THIN
GILLETTES,
PAL



*A Complete
Basketball
Novelet*



Harry DeRochamont snatched the ball, whirled and bulletted a long one to Fendler

HOOP MAGIC

By JOE ARCHIBALD

When the heat's on, court star Al Prynn wilts under the pressure—and Coach Herb Cope has to risk his reputation by trying a Spartan remedy which brings some odd results!

CHAPTER I

Second-Rate Star

EVERY member of the faculty at Tulare University, particularly the psychology professor, wondered why Herb Cope, the Varsity basketball coach, had not entered the banking business. If he had, they were very sure he would never have advanced money to a person simply because they possessed material collateral.

Cope, when a new court prospect ap-

peared at Tulare, always looked straight at the man's face before he surveyed his physical attributes. He could be six feet, three inches tall, and be built like a Grecian god, but Cope would be little impressed if he could not catch an expression of self assurance in his face.

Cope, at the moment, was highly interested in the Tulare student playing right forward for the jayvees. The guy puzzled him. Al Prynn had the physique and the finesse of a real basketball player and you could count on the man playing a whale of a game for the first ten or fifteen minutes.

After that he faded. His spark seemed to go. He started looking around for help.

That is why he was playing with the jayvees in practise this afternoon in place of Harry DeRochemont. Harry was a capable operator with the glory of the Bulge whirling around his head. He had been away two years and had lost a little of the edge he'd shown against Nebraska State and Missouri A & M. He was not the same old Harry, but still had enough left so that Cope could build the team around him.

For two long years there had been a court depression at Tulare, and the students would not soon forget the terrific beatings handed the Purple and Gold by the Cornhuskers the previous season. Cope knew that psychology had been the sixth opponent on the floor against his team. Harry was gone and there wasn't a player on the campus who believed he could fill his shoes or win a tough game without him. Herb Cope had thought Al Prynn could take over, but he had been wrong.

Tulare had played two games and had won both by narrow squeaks, against little Ames Tech and Harwitch Teachers. A tough one was coming up on Wednesday night, the first real test. The Minneapolis U. Gophers had a honey of a quintet featuring "fire house" basketball, using a fast break and switching from a zone to a man-to-man defense. Cope was working his aggregation overtime to get them ready.

The scrimmage had been going on eleven minutes, and Al Prynn began looking toward the coach. He was dribbling along the sideline and the sweat was pouring off his face. He stopped quickly and pivoted, trying to pick out a jayvee mate jockeying for position.

THE Varsity had the scoring zone blanketed and he feinted a pass to his guard cutting in behind him, then fired a long one to the Varsity hoop. It banged off the backboard and Harry DeRochemont got it and broke down the court, his team revolving beautifully around him. Al Prynn and the jayvee center drove in to throw a block but DeRochemont grinned and spun around them with the grace of a ballet dancer and suddenly bounced a pass through the legs of the rangy jayvee left forward who'd rushed out of his defense zone.

Pete Fendler, Varsity forward, took the

pass and leaped high to toss in another basket for Cope's first line.

Al looked toward Cope, at the clock fastened high on the gym wall. Cope sent in a man to take Al's place.

"What's the matter, Prynn, you been drinkin' a lot of beer?" he said. "Or won't your union give you permission to work overtime?"

"I got an ankle that aches," Al said. "What a player that DeRochemont is, Coach. Without him—"

"Quiet," Cope snapped, watching the play for flaws that would have to be corrected. Ten minutes later he called them off the court for a skull session. When they had showered, they went upstairs to Cope's big office and stared at the diagrams he hastily limned on the big blackboard.

"You have to change tactics sometime in the middle of a battle," Cope said. "Often it is because of the types of players you have to work with. We're going to forget the three-player set and two-men shifting and work on the five-man transitional. I know you've had a tussle with math but just the same we'll work on angles. We'll begin with the scissors maneuver from a four man line and roving center."

The team gave Cope strict attention. They listened to a lecture on steps and pivots, and dribbling; back passes, underhand, hook, bounce, and bullet passes. For the last few minutes, the coach refreshed their memories regarding fouls and how many close games had been lost by one loss of temper.

"Infractions of the rules on a court cost more than they do on a gridiron, you know that," Cope cautioned them. "One or two free throws mean points nine times out of ten. Harry," he shot at DeRochemont, "You're a little too long-shot crazy. Ease up!"

"Sort of a disease, Coach," Harry said with a grin. "In that repple-depple near LeHavre we fired at a hoop three and four hours a day. I'll try and curb the impulse."

The war, Herb Cope told himself, had ruined a lot of athletes and had made some. He wished Al Prynn had gone to war. It was where you got jobs that had to be finished. . . .

Ten thousand fans packed the Tulare gym when the Gophers' starting quintet huddled on the sideline. The Purple and Gold were already deployed and awaiting the whistle. DeRochemont was starting. Pete Fendler was the other forward. Joe

Tresher passed to Al Pryn, now under the basket, and the ball arced over and dropped through



Tresher and Hymie Rudnick were the guards. Lew "High Pockets" Kleck was at center.

The Gopher center outreached Kleck and his left forward got the ball, banged it to the floor twice, three times, pivoted and fired to his team-mate, Rossi, after a Tulare guard made a futile pass at him. The home team spread quickly into a five man defense, but Rossi was already down to the foul circle. Rudnick and Tresher worried him there.

Rossi bounce-passed to his center, DeVanny. DeVanny fired to his forward, Janzek, and then there was a wild rhubarb under the basket. Out of it came Harry DeRochemont with the ball and he belted it down at Fendler. The Tulare attack formed and the gophers retreated stubbornly, contesting every inch of the way.

Fendler thought the way was clear after taking a back hand from Rudnick and whanged the ball at Kleck, but the long arm of a Minneapolis boy named Mannister broke up the drive and then the Gophers were pounding back.

It was a typical slam-bang Gopher attack. They played rough but kept within the law. Hymie Rudnick jet-bombed off the court to deflect a pass, Mannister to Rossi. Harry DeRochemont snatched the ball and whirled almost before it was in his hands and bulletted a long one to Fendler who'd anticipated the interception.

The Tulare forward took it, looped it over in a beautiful arc and it dropped through the twine for the first two points of the game.

MINNEAPOLIS U. came storming back, and DeRochemont hacked Rossi in mid-court. Rossi took advantage of the personal foul and dropped both throws and the score was tied. Cope squirmed on the bench. Al Prynn looked at him hopefully, wondering if he was going to get in there.

Five minutes clicked swiftly by. Five minutes of play in which both teams had seized the chance to size up each other's method of play. From now on the fur would fly. Tulare was out in front by a 3 to 2 count.

Janzek of the visitors had the ball. Herb Cope leaned forward, watching DeRochemont. DeRochemont was his high scorer, but he'd pull him out in a half-second if he caught another deliberate infraction on his part.

Cope swung his glance away from the

forward and watched Rudnick and Harry Janzek. Janzek got past the guard and bounced a pass through Kleck's long legs to Rossi, who fired from fifteen feet out and caged the pumpkin before the big crowd could get their lungs ready for a mighty roar.

The Gophers quickly broke up a Tulare offensive a few moments later by a pass interception. M.U. advanced cautiously, penetrating the Tulare zone defense, two men going into one side of the zone and a single man into the other. Janzek, at the front line of the zone began shooting short and fast passes to his mates inside.

Rossi, the best shot, lingered out in mid-court to await a return pass from within the zone when the Tulare defense closed in to smother the ball. The pass came back to Rossi and he set himself for a shot with Rudnick drifting out fast to smear the try. The ball sailed over his fingertips and swished through the hoop for another Gopher score.

Herb Cope lost some of his tension a few moments later when the Tulare quintet rallied, their offense sharpened and revolving around Harry, "the Horse," DeRochemont. It swept up and down the court featuring snap passes that spun back and forth with a speed that made the crowd roar. The attack picked up four more points before it was stymied by an outside ball call by the referee.

DeRochemont put up a howl and denied Rudnick was walking, and not long after the argument was quieted, DeRochemont committed his second infraction. The Gopher that had been sinned against stepped to the free throw line and added another point for M.U.

"Warm up, Al," Cope said.

Prynn got up and took off his jacket, flexed his arms and legs. He seemed eager to get in there. He went over and reported to the scorer, then lingered along the sideline until the official would beckon him in. He went in there when the scorers signaled for the substitution.

DeRochemont grinned at him and slapped him on the shoulder.

"Eat 'em up, Kid," Harry said.

Prynn, as always, began to play a slashing game and Cope watched his every move. A Gopher guard had the ball at his hip and stood like a statue for a brief moment while his mates revolved around him, picking their spots. They came slowly at first, passing and cross-passing, using

hard passes that gave Tulare little chance of interception. They smashed across mid-court and then accelerated their drive in Tulare territory, with Rossi as key man.

Rossi got a backhand pass from DeVanny and Tresher broke for the Gopher star. Rudnick followed suit, and M.U. suddenly shifted to a bewildering passing attack that ended up with the Gopher center sprinting diagonally across court and throwing a side-arm shot to Janzek who was coming fast from the corner to a position under Tulare's basket.

Prynn came out of nowhere, hooked the ball out of the air and whirled to race down court without an M.U. man within twenty feet of him. He let go a gentle looping toss that went through without kissing the rim.

The game went into the second period, getting hotter by the moment. Tempers flared and free throws became numerous. Janzek went out with a bad ankle and a forward named Albrecht came in for the Gophers.

Al Prynn began to steal the show. For seven straight minutes he was the Tulare defense and offense. He smashed a Gopher guards down play wide open, bounce-passed the ball through DeVanny's legs to Rudnick, shook off his guard and came around to get a bullet throw from Kleck and threw for the hoop from fifteen feet out.

The ball swished through, and M.U., ten seconds later, had the ball and was smashing toward the Tulare basket again. Al Prynn stole the ball out of the hands of Bost of M.U. before the offense hit home territory and then the fur started flying.

ON THE bench, Harry DeRochemont nodded.

"He don't know how good he is, Coach," DeRochemont said.

Cope did not commit himself. There was a terrific melee under the Gopher hoop and the ball squirted out of bounds. The official ruled that Rossi was the last player to touch the ball and then Cope leaned forward to watch the next play.

He had been stressing out of bounds plays. He watched his players jockey for position for the double-crosscut. Kleck and Al Prynn were widely spaced at mid-court, parallel with each other, the gopher guards sticking to them close. Rudnick was just back of the foul line in a position for a shot at the basket.

Prynn streaked for the lefthand corner

and Kleck for the right, crossing in front of each other at the free throw circle. Fendler could pass to either man and he elected Al Prynn and fired a pass by Rudnick's cover man that had smoke on it, then cut to his left and eluded his own guard. Prynn took the pass, dribbled around a harrying Gopher defense man and tossed the ball through the twine with a sweeping overhand.

M.U. pulled no punches when they got possession of the ball, but Al Prynn was a monkey wrench. He kept throwing himself into the Gopher offensive machinery. Time after time the visitors got desperate and tried long arching shots that banged harmlessly off the backboard. They forgot to be polite and handed Tulare two more points on the penalty platter.

Al Prynn began to take the lumps. He came out of one scramble with his ear as red as pimiento and a few seconds later, while charging into Gopher territory, was pilled by a sneaker that somehow got between his legs. He went down heavily with the whistle shrieking in his ear.

The white-knickered man tapped him on the arm as he got up.

"Take two," he said, then stabbed a finger at Rossi so that the bench officials could put the black marks up against the Gopher. Rossi stormed at the arbiter, and DeVanny came hard on his heels.

"One word out of you guys, and I'll throw both of you out!" the ref yelled.

Al Prynn toed the line, his knees slightly bent, ball held extended, and gauged the distance. Then he threw both foul shots in quick succession and the score was Tulare, 19—M.U., 14.

"A sweet ball player," Harry DeRochemont repeated.

"He could be," Cope said.

A minute and a half later his team walked off the floor, and he gave Prynn a pat on the back on the way to the locker room. There, Cope, in his usual mild manner, pointed out the mistakes his team had made. He particularly checked up on the personal fouls recorded against them, and warned each player of his standing in that respect.

"Fondler," Cope said calmly, "over-dribbling. Hurrying your shots. Rudnick, turning your head to follow the ball when on the defense. Kleck, you're shooting off-balance. DeRochemont, you know how I feel against deliberate infractions."

He suggested the general strategy for the team's attack in the next half, cited

some mistakes on the part of the Gopher play and tried to make sure they'd take advantage of them when they went out on the court again.

"Be careful of their out-of-bounds play under the basket," he said. "Get ready to switch in a hurry."

CHAPTER II

Test of Courage

WHEN the third period started, Prynn was still at right forward, Kleck at center, and Fletcher at left forward. Herb Cope decided to play a new pair of guards, Ernst and Harbolick. The Gopher coach had Janzek's ankle ready and he was paired off with the belligerent Rossi again. Mannister and Bost were the guards, and there was a new pivot man, Red Bjorklund.

It was apparent, after three minutes of play went by that the M.U. coach had threatened to take some Varsity scalps during intermission, for the Gopher attack began to take the show away from Prynn and his mates. A set play rang up two more points for the visitors.

Another offense featuring a scoring play for a fast cutting guard, worked beautifully after an interception on the part of Bjorklund, Mannister taking a pass from Rossi and dribbling to the basket and registering a snowbird.

The Tulare offense started fading. Al Prynn looked toward the scorer pleadingly after getting up from a bad spill out of bounds. Al wanted help and the S.O.S. was right in his eyes. His points needed filing or were out of line and his spark was woefully weak.

Herb Cope had seen it coming. He waited until Al got another chance to handle the ball. It came in mid-court as he collaborated with Fleck and Ernst on a version of guards down play. The bounce pass hit him in the stomach and his hands came up too slow. Rossi took the carom and wheeled like a frightened rabbit and fired cross court at the speedy Mannister who had quickly switched to offense. Mannister tossed the ball in and M.U. was out in front by a point.

Cope sent Harry DeRochemont in. He replaced Harbolick and Ernst with Rudnick and Tresher while first aid was given

a Gopher player. Bost, of M.U. was on the floor with a wrenched knee.

Al Prynn took his place on the bench, breathing hard.

"They're hot as pistols, Coach," he said apologetically. "Be tough to stop 'em."

"DeRochemont will try," Cope snapped.

He set his teeth tight so that the words would not get loose he would later regret. He liked Al Prynn, and so did Kay Lindell, his niece. Maybe a man could not be blamed for a complex. Perhaps it was something he had been born with like a tendency to tuberculosis or hay fever. A complex, a strange quirk in a man's mind, was much harder to cure than a tangible ill, Cope realized. The cure was in some other man's brain if he knew how to reach it.

Tulare rallied to tie it up as the third period ended, using a play made famous by the Original Celtics, an offense designed to click against a team employing check on block players.

Harry, the Horse, DeRochemont was X-4 in Cope's analytical head as the action swirled in close proximity to the M.U. hoop. X-1 was Rudnick breaking to the left. Rudnick saw that Harry's guard had left the Horse and was coming to cover him. His own guard was having to take Harry, but was behind the star Tulare play maker. It was feint and deception, and dizzy maneuvering.

Cope mumbled, as if he was a swami directing the play. "X-five pass to Harry. Fendler pass to Harry who is under the basket. X-three, Tresher holds—follows in toward the basket. X-one follow in from the side. No check by the offense. Fendler pass to X-1, Rudnick who is under the basket—now!"

The field goal was made and Tulare's rooters ripped up the pea-patch.

"That Harry!" Al Prynn said. "A sleight-of-hand artist. Now you see him, now you don't. Two guesses who has the ball? Take a card, any card. He drives them crazy."

"Shut up," Cope said.

The last period was a ding-dong battle that left the sets cold. Ten thousand spectators were on their feet most of the time while the battle raged up and down the floor.

Rossi played on borrowed time and finally he was given his quota of violations and tossed out. Rossi had handed Tulare three charity tosses and that was

to be the difference. The Gophers rang up a long shot sixty seconds before the final gun, but they went back to Minneapolis, losers by a point.

HERB COPE met Kay the following afternoon downtown and asked her into Louie's Coke Den for a brief chat. Kay Lindell was his sister's daughter, and she worked in the registrar's office at Tulare. She was small and brown-eyed, and deadly serious about the things in life that really counted. She thought Al Prynn counted.

"Looks like you're making a comeback, Unk," Kay said after sampling a sundae. "Al played a nice game while he was in there."

"While he was," Herb growled. "That guy functions in spurts like a spray gun. One minute he's a king and the next a bum. You kind of like the big mug, don't you, kid?"

"I'm interested, of course," Kay said, and kept her eyes on the cherry balanced on the dab of whipped cream.

"He lacks something very important to a guy who would have to support you," Cope said.

"You coaches!" Kay said a little impatiently. "You judge men by the way they hold a bat, or kick a football, or sink a foul shot—"

"Sure, the way they act in sports is the way you can figure they'll click outside when they have to buck the world," Cope countered. "I never was a man to put the score above the development of character."

"You should write a book, Unk. In other words, Al would starve me if I ever married him."

"He'd start something and drop it. He'd be a big success on Monday and he would get fired on Saturday night, kid."

"You're being silly, Herb."

"Okay, drop it," Cope said, then grinned. "He's got another year after this one, so I'll start worrying about the son-in-law after the orange blossoms, Kay. In that time maybe you'll get to know the fellow you'll really go for."

"Aren't you sure of yourself?" Kay said with a smile, and attacked the sundae as if it had been Herb Cope.

On his way back to the campus, the basketball coach suddenly remembered a note he had received that morning informing him of Gil Ernst's low marks in chemistry. He'd have to send for the

player in a hurry, he thought. And then it occurred to him that he was just in front of Schuyler Hall, Tulare's biggest dorm, and he remembered Ernst lived there. He went into the building and up to the second floor and met a couple of juniors. Ernst they said, was in room 27.

Ernst was not absorbed in a chemistry book when the coach entered. He was working a crossword puzzle.

"You're in the doghouse with McCa-rney, Gil," Herb Cope said. "He's notified me you'll be off the team if you don't show improvement within the next week. Here you sit around doing puzzles."

"I was just going to start studying, Coach," Ernst said. "Believe it or not I just happened to pick up this puzzle Al Prynn started. You know he rooms with me now."

"He does, huh? A puzzle Prynn started?" Herb Cope shook his head. "I wonder does he ever finish anything he starts?"

Ernst grinned, but made no comment.

"Yeah," Cope said. "I'll bet his attic back home is filled with model airplanes he started but never finished. He started to build a boat and then forgot about it. What do you think of Al, Gil?"

"A strange duck in some ways, Coach," Ernst answered. "Seems to think a man has only so much to last so long. He can look good doing a certain thing if he doesn't stretch his luck too far. Al Prynn's philosophy seems to be to quit while he's looking sharp because if he stays at something too long he might taper off and be just ordinary. It's the best way I can explain it."

"As good a diagnosis as any, Ernst," Herb Cope continued. "He's a fast starter but a poor finisher, like a golf player with a terrific drive off the tee, but a very poor approach to the green. No confidence in himself beyond a certain point. He's never allowed himself to know just how good he is at anything."

"Everybody has their screwy points, Coach," Ernst said and picked up a book.

"Sure," the coach said. "I see you're going to study, Gil, so I'll get out. Get those marks up because we've got a tough schedule coming up. On Monday night, we play Kentucky College, don't forget."

COPE went to his quarters and found George Maxon, the football coach, and Ted Valo, mentor of indoor track, lounging around and aching for a gin

rummy game. After awhile the subject got around to Tulare athletics, past and present, and Herb brought up Al Prynn's name.

Maxon riffled the cards noisily and put the pack down.

"That guy? No courage."

"What gives you that idea?" Cope said.

"He pitched for me a couple of games, didn't he? Against St. Thomas he goes along nicely for five innings. They get three hits off him. Then in the sixth, he walks a player. The next batter singles and there are men on first and third. He gets the jumps and walks the third batter and the bags are loaded. The next man smacks him for a scratch hit and a run scores. He has a three run lead, but he fades right there. He looks over to see if somebody isn't going to get him out of the spot."

"I see," Cope said.

"Against Illinois, he goes along for seven and has a one run lead. Then they start working on him. With one down and the bags loaded, he looks for help again. He can't stand up under pressure." Maxon picked up the cards and started dealing. "Me, I give up, but I wished I'd tried a certain experiment. Make him do the relieving instead of having to look for relief. I got a hunch next year I'll do that, Herb."

"Yeah," Cope said. "I'd like to see how that would work. He gets rid of a burden. He would act if you gave him one off another man?"

Valo shook his head.

"No competitive spirit, George. If a man hasn't got it you can't create it. What's the score here?"

Kentucky College had a team of sharpshooters, and oddly enough their standout performer was named Hatfield. Before the game had been under way three minutes, the big crowd in the gym knew they were all the real McCoys. Kentucky played a tight man-to-man defense and up to now Tulare attacks had been exploded at the foul line.

Hatfield was spearheading another Kentucky attack. He passed to his eely forward, McSain, who rifled across court to Boyle. Boyle dribbled past the harrying Tulare guard, Harbolick, making a sound like a burp gun. He lined to Hatfield who had cut across court and was waiting under the basket. The forward lofted it in for a score. The game see-sawed back and forth after Tulare tied it up with a long

shot from Harry DeRochemont and a pair of free throws by Tresher.

In their back court, just before the first five minutes clicked off, Kentucky uncorked a lightning attack. Hatfield passed out to Drucker after feinting to McSain. Drucker whirled past Harbolick of Tulare and rifled to Hatfield across court. The sharpshooter was racing at top speed for the Tulare basket. He leaped high and came down with the ball and then went crashing out of bounds.

Harry the Horse DeRochemont was on the floor, too. The whistle rang in Herb Cope's ears and he banged his fist against his knees. Hatfield grinned when he got the word to take two. After he dropped both charity throws through the hoop, he started toward DeRochemont. Players moved in and prevented a rhubarb.

"Be lookin' for me, pal," Cope heard Hatfield say.

The game waxed fierce. Mountaineers thrive on feuds. The Cope offensive began to find chinks in the Kentucky defensive armor and Fendler and DeRochemont and even Tresher got through to score for Tulare. Hatfield fired in two from almost impossible angles. McSain, his scoring mate, dropped a field goal through the hoop without swishing the twine and the spectators gasped.

Tulare uncorked a screen block play with Kleck, the wiry center as the blocker. It moved with neat precision through Kentucky's man-to-man defense and ended up with Fendler, designated as X-4 on Cope's chart, firing through to score.

The half ended with Kentucky out in front 24 to 20, and with Hatfield and Harry DeRochemont threatening each other as they walked off the floor.

COPE said very little between the halves. He reminded DeRochemont that he had but one violation left before he would be heaved out of there.

"That Hatfield is a sniper," Harry said. "Look what he did to my ear with an elbow in a mixup under our hoop, Coach?"

"What did you do to Hatfield, Harry?" Cope looked toward Al Prynn who seemed to be eager. "That wide open passing attack they've got can be a boomerang. I want to see more interceptions from now on. Get in there and break it up!"

Harry the Horse grinned. "I will or I'll break up that Hatfield."

DeRochemont was a battler. He had been to war.

When the second half started, Al Prynn was in at right forward for Tulare, and Harry the Horse growled down his rain barrel on the bench.

"That Hatfield will think I'm afraid of him, Herb," he said.

"I'm giving you a good cooling off," Cope said, and watched Tulare drive toward the Mountaineer's citadel with a savage albeit well-balanced and well-thought-out attack.

Al Prynn was the key man, the others revolving around him. It was a play that had been perfected by a great California coach, and was designed to get through the front line defense and drive number four man into the basket for a shot. Al Prynn was the executioner.

Al Prynn was in mid court now, rifling a short one to Rudnick who was in there for Tulare. Rudnick drove toward the pass, got it, pivoted, and fired back to Fendler. Prynn quickly evaded his guard, bounce-passed to Kleck and then moved in on the Kentucky basket. Kleck passed to Tresher who had spun away from a defender and made for the foul line. Tresher passed to Al Prynn, now under the basket, and the ball arched over and dropped through.

Tulare started intercepting the Mountaineer's long passes. They converted two steals into scores. Hatfield & Co. got desperate and risked infractions to keep the score down.

The pace got terrific and Herb Cope began to fight nerves. Al Prynn had been in there for nine minutes and he had dominated the play, but now he was wilting. Prynn was in the center of the court trying to pass the ball, but the Mountaineers seemed to have turned into so many octopi and he was stymied. Fendler and Kleck, working with him, yelled for the ball, but it was slapped out of his hands when he fainted and back-passed to Kleck.

Desperately, the Tulare guards switched to the defense as Connerton of Kentucky whirled and raced for the Tulare basket. McSain got behind Rudnick and took a bullet-pass that banged Rudnick's legs. McSain fired from twenty feet out and the ball plunked against the backboard and went in.

Prynn was ragged on an offensive play a half a minute later and let Hatfield steal the ball. Hatfield to McSain close to the sidelines. Three long steps, a dribble, and

McSain flipped it up and over through the twine.

"Get set, Harry," Cope said, and ground his teeth. "The flash is out of the pan!"

CHAPTER III

Counter Measures

DEROCHEMONT checked in with the scorers, waited on the fringe for the call. He was in there and battling Hatfield with the last period already two minutes old. The crowd tensed for a personal battle. Hatfield tripped The Horse when a Tulare guard's down play seemed insured of success.

DeRochemont limped to the foul line and dropped one of two in. Followed a mad scramble under the basket as Kentucky tried to gain possession for a fast sortie. The ball rolled out of the mass of players and was pounded upon by Fendler. He raced down court, banged the ball down, and bulletted a pass across court to the speedy Kleck who was a step ahead of Boyle of Kentucky.

Kleck cut in and then found himself covered, and back-flipped the melon to Harry the Horse. Harry whirled around his cover man and threw to Fendler who had broken free and was in position for a shot. Fendler leaped high and tossed the ball and it bounced off the rim. Kleck barged in and went up high and tapped it back in.

Tulare was hot again. The Mountaineers, with Hatfield the chief offender, began to feature body contact. Harry the Horse was tumbled in midcourt by Hatfield when Tulare was in striking distance of the enemy hoop once more. DeRochemont got up and laughed at the Mountaineer commando.

"I've been to the beachheads, sweetheart, and this is patty cakes as far as I'm concerned," Harry said, and stepped up and dropped two more points in for Tulare.

Hatfield went off. The Kentucky drive was blunted and when the gun banged, Tulare had won the game 51 to 46.

Cope did not completely share in the jubilation in the locker room. He knew a team could not afford to give teams like Nebraska, Missouri and Iowa Tech from five to seven free throws in a single game.

DeRochemont was an asset and a liability all at the same time. The Horse liked rugged going and provoked it and he'd get it from the top flight quintets. Prynn was a smooth relentless worker when he was in there. Al kept his temper and let the other team give out with the alms. But when he'd had enough of it, well—he'd had enough.

In his quarters that night, the coach caught up with his reading. He glanced quickly over the summary of the Nebraska-M.U. game. The Cornhuskers had routed the Gophers 62 to 37 on the Minneapolis court. He centered his attention on the pro game. The Tulsa Sooners, the sports expert said, looked like the top team in the Midwest if not the entire country.

Arnie Farrel had spent a lot of his money getting O'Dell and Briganti from the once proud Celtics of Gotham. Arnie could afford it. The big fellow had it and he liked to bet with it. Once they had tried to pin a scandal on Arnie in Chicago, just after the Canton Giants had upset a highly favored St. Paul team in the latter's city.

Arnie got into the clear, but the moment any of his friends were caught too close to a Simon Pure gym, they were quickly run out of town.

Cope despised men of Arnie Farrel's type. Once they had nearly ruined the national game, had practically wrecked basketball at an Eastern college. Here it said that Arnie was developing farm clubs for the Oilers. He was keeping his eyes peeled on the Hutchinson City Grays, a fast pro team. Hutchinson City was just twelve miles from the seat of Tulare University.

When the next practise session got under way, Cope picked up the whip. He sent the squad through drills 10 and 11 until the oil shine of sweat was on their faces. Number ten had them running around in a circle and feeding each other the ball and making preparatory passing motions at the same time.

It stressed ball receiving technique and perfect timing. Number eleven had five men lined up on each side of the court and one from each side alternated in the cross cut play toward the basket. Cope finished up with ten minutes of scrimmage and called it a day.

Tulare went up to Mason City to play Iowa Tech and was beaten by four points in overtime. The Purple and Gold rode

over Rossiter and Fellsburg Teachers, and managed to outscore Southern Kansas 63 to 59. They were beaten by Notre Dame's title seeking quintet 74 to 49, as had been expected.

Missouri, a team Tulare always liked to beat, came to the home court on one snowy afternoon and threatened to blast the Purple and Gold off the court in the first ten minutes with as smooth an offensive as Herb Cope had ever seen. He'd started with Kleck at center, Tresher and Rudnick at guards, and Al Prynn and Fendler at forward spots.

The zone-defense was shattered for seven big points in less than five minutes, and Cope debated on switching from man to man. Then Al Prynn and Rudnick began to see the loopholes in the Missouri attack and started slipping through them.

THE Missouri attack tapered off, and Tulare began to come back into the ball game. They scored from the back court when Fendler fired out to Kleck, and then began a bewildering backward passing attack that developed into a bounce pass through a Missouri guard's legs to Al Prynn at the foul line.

Al dribbled toward the sideline, feinted his guard out of position and shot a one-armed overhead pass at Rudnick directly across court. Rudnick under-arm flipped to Kleck cutting in behind the passer's guard and the center threw a beauty through the hoop.

A guards down play worked prettily. Tresher was the man under the basket when the final pass whisked ahead of the stabbing fingers of a Missouri defense man and he left the floor, and rolled the ball through.

Sixteen minutes. The score was now Tulare 24, Missouri 21. The visitors organized and started to click in high once more, principally because Al Prynn was looking for a substitute to come in and take the pressure off. Al looked bewildered and he failed to hold a ball that bounced off a Missouri receiver's hip. The visitors recovered and bore in toward the basket. Harry the Horse got the nod from Herb Cope.

"Keep those brass knuckles in your pocket," the coach snapped at Harry.

DeRochemont was the difference from then on. The long shot man was at the peak and his luck was with him. He caged shots from far out that opened the mouths of already gasping Missouri

players. He broke their hearts and he laughed at them. When they put on a last ditch fight, Harry was waiting. He gave them four free throws that were good for three points but Tulare walked off with a 51 to 44 win and the student body left the gym talking of the Big Five title.

Herb Cope had no such delusions of grandeur. He knew DeRochemont might never click with such reckless abandon again. He had to have a steady efficient operator in there from start to finish against the Nebraska five. In the gym he looked askance at Harry the Horse. Harry was rubbing his ankle.

"Get that ankle looked after," Cope said. He called to the trainer.

"Just a little sore, Coach," DeRochemont said. "That Missouri waltz king, Helka, heeled it. That's why he got two free throws the last minute."

The Nebraska Cornhuskers were due in on the Saturday night, following a breather with Storr College upstate. Herb Cope had a week to get ready. On Monday afternoon he drilled his team mercilessly, kept Al Prynne in there until the forward was stumbling over his own feet. He asked Al when he took Prynne out for a rest.

"Did you ever let yourself go, kid?"

"Huh?"

"Just what I asked. Maybe you'll play the game with Kay the same way, Al. When the chips get down, you'll look around for another man to take over."

"You know me better than that," Al said.

"Do I?" Cope got up and went out onto the court and picked up the ball. He called Ernst over. "Here's the way I've taught you to hold that melon when shooting. Palms off the ball, Gil! Palms off the ball!"

"Hello, Flash Gordon," Harry the Horse

said when he walked off with Al. "Accent on the flash."

"I get primed and then the edge goes off," Al said lamely. "I got just so much and when I've let go—"

"In the Army they would hand you over to the nogginologists," DeRochemont said with a grin.

On the Wednesday preceding the all important game with Nebraska, Herb Cope was adding up in his office. He sat with his chair tipped back, abstractedly looking at the diagrams on the blackboard, regarding the fortunes of the Tulare team in retrospect.

Al Prynne was on his mind. He thought of the baseball coach's observations, a remark made by Valo, the track mentor.

Prynne was an intriguing guinea-pig, a challenge to Herb Cope's reputed ability to get the most out of every man. Maybe, he suddenly decided, he could talk just once more with the enigma. Maybe Kay would do the talking for him.

Cope called Kay on the phone.

"No," she said. "I'm interested mostly in Al's marks, Unk. He won't make a living tossing a basketball around, when he gets out. Don't tell me you're losing your punch. Not after what Nibs Holman wrote in his book about you. 'Herb Cope, mentor at Tulare—can make a basketball player out of material that doesn't seem to be there!' No, I won't do the work you get paid to do, Unk. Anyway, Al might get mad at me."

"Okay," Herb said. "Okay, Kay. Wait until you want to borrow ten bucks again."

HE HUNG up, bemoaning his niece's apparent lack of interest in things athletic. Five minutes later the phone rang. It was Kay and right away she

[Turn page]

Many Never Suspect Cause of Backaches

This Old Treatment Often Brings Happy Relief

Many sufferers relieve nagging backache quickly, once they discover that the real cause of their trouble may be tired kidneys.

The kidneys are Nature's chief way of taking the excess acids and waste out of the blood. They help most people pass about 3 pints a day.

When disorder of kidney function permits poisonous matter to remain in your blood, it may cause nagging backache, rheumatic pains, leg pains, loss of pep and energy, getting up nights,

swelling, puffiness under the eyes, headaches and dizziness. Frequent or scanty passages with smarting and burning sometimes shows there is something wrong with your kidneys or bladder.

Don't wait! Ask your druggist for Doan's Pills, a stimulant diuretic, used successfully by millions for over 50 years. Doan's give happy relief and will help the 15 miles of kidney tubes flush out poisonous waste from your blood. Get Doan's Pills. (Ad.)

used a woman's wiles. In an appropriate voice she informed him that there was a movie downtown she just had to see and would he take her?

"Oh, yeah? Where is that big moment of yours? He faded out this fast?"

"Herb—that wasn't nice!" Kay said. "Al had to drive over to Hutchinson City to see a friend of his. He's a good guy, Unk."

"Sure, I'm a sucker!" Herb Cope said. "I'll do anything for a sister. It'll help me get my mind off that big lug!"

Kay thanked him sweetly, and hung up.

The picture was not up to expectations and they left early.

"That's your toughest game coming up, Unk," Kay said while Herb walked her home. "You win it and might get the title."

"The pressure will be on my team every minute," Herb said. "Your boy friend is going to take a lot of lumps."

"Why don't you like Al?"

"Where did you get the idea I didn't? It's just that he's a riddle. Sometimes you can cure a kid of biting his fingernails by bawling him out or showing him a picture of Venus de Milo. Others, well, you have to put something that's bitter on their fingers. What is he doing in Hutchinson City?"

"He did not go into detail," Kay said. "He had to see somebody."

"Okay," Herb said, the germs of an idea stirring inside his head.

By the time he fell into bed, they were taking root. There was a wicked looking grin on his mouth when he finally got to sleep.

* * * * *

In ten minutes the game would start. Herb Cope put a foot up on a bench and rested his arms on his knee and looked the squad over. All that day he had said little and the players had been buzzing about it. Herb Cope was no clam.

"I don't like to have to say this," Cope said, face deadly serious. "But there's rumors going around. This is an important conference game and there's talk that Arnie Farrel has two grand on Nebraska. Arnie seldom loses the big bets, they tell me. A friend from Hutchinson City told me he saw a Tulare student going into the Eagle Hotel there, and it just so happened that Arnie was stopping there that night. I don't know who it was but if anything

goes wrong tonight—"

"You don't think any of us would throw it?" Kleck said angrily.

"Did I say they would?" Cope asked. He turned and watched Al Pryn timer tighten a shoelace. He looked long at Al and the forward's mouth tightened.

"I was over at Hutchinson City the other night!" Pryn timer said.

"You were?" Herb Cope seemed surprised. He singled out Harry the Horse and DeRochemont smiled swiftly.

"How's the ankle, Harry?"

"I think I can go with it, Coach."

"Listen, Cope," Al Pryn timer snapped and got the coach by the sleeve. "If you think for one second I—"

"Drop it!" Cope said. "It's just that things look pretty fishy if we lose by too many points. You know, you start in with a molehill and the dirt starts flying and the dirt piles up into a mountain. Tulare supporters expect us to take this one."

"Yeah?" Al Pryn timer said, and walked away, muttering.

"It's just as if he came right out and said it," he barked when he ran into Fendler.

"How much did you get, Al?" Fendler asked with a wide grin. "I'll take half to keep my mouth shut. Let's go out and knock the Cornhuskers off."

When game time came, Cope sent DeRochemont and Fendler out as the forwards. Ernst and Rudnick were to start as guards, and the ever dependable Kleck was taking over at the center spot.

Al Pryn timer was burning as he sat on the bench, hardly taking time out to size up the big Nebraska quintet, LeBrun, Angevine, Toucetta, Hulm, and Ingram.

THE gym was jam-packed at the tip-off. Hulm outreached Kleck and pushed the ball to his left guard, Angevine who passed back to LeBrun. Toucetta and Ingram cut for the corners, and Hulm hovered around the free throw circle.

LeBrun started the Nebraska set play, bouncing the ball to Toucetta who was cutting in behind Ernst, the Tulare guard. Toucetta pivoted and raced along the sideline with a lightning dribble. Hulm cut down the middle of the court, Fendler and Rudnick worrying him to death.

Harry the Horse moved in to cover Hulm, but Toucetta jumped into the air after faking a pass to the Cornhusker and shoved a one-hand push shot towards

the basket. It hit the rim and rolled and then dropped through, and Harry the Horse cut Hulm down while the points were registering. Hulm easily dropped in the charity shot.

The big home crowd groaned, but even as the disappointed roar soured toward the roof, Fendler shot the ball in from out of bounds under the basket to Kleck at the center line. DeRochemont cut across court, took a short flip from Kleck and got set twenty feet out and fired in two points for Tulare before the Nebraska defense was back down court.

Now the going stepped up. The heat was on. For two minutes the game saw-sawed, the Cornhuskers and the Purple and Gold exchanging long shots that clicked.

Nebraska stole the ball, but Angevine was over-anxious and was called for walking with the melon. Cope saw Kleck signal for a block play, but it did not transpire. Rudnick whipped the ball at Kleck and away Tulare went in a slam-bang, fast breaking drive down court.

Ingram of Nebraska stole Kleck's pass to Harry the Horse, and three men, two passing short quick tosses, the third trailing, swept toward Rudnick. The Tulare guard held his ground and stalled them off, refusing to tip his hand, waited for his own mates to maneuver into position. Ernst came in and took care of one man. Harry the Horse the other, but this Cornhusker had the pumpkin, and he pivoted and shot it to the trailer. He blocked the Horse out long enough for his man to get the shot away and it was good.

CHAPTER IV

The Right Remedy

AFTER a guards down attempt had come to grief close to the Nebraska hoop three minutes later, Harry the Horse pulled up lame.

"Shoot him!" a wag in the seats yelled, and Al Prynn peeled off his jacket. DeRochemont hobbled off the court and drew a tremendous hand.

"You got to have what it takes in there, son," he said to Al. "This is big time!"

Cope replaced Ernst with Tresher, and play was resumed. Nebraska moved from out of bounds and tried to score with the

double cross-cut, but LeBrun's pass cutting across the foul circle was taken by Rudnick, and the cross-cutters, Angevine and Toucetta pulled up and quickly switched to defense.

Rudnick slammed a bounce-pass to Kleck who had taken the position vacated by Toucetta, and the big center fired to Al Prynn speeding toward Nebraska's hoop. Al nailed the high pass, leaped and rolled the melon in.

From this point, Al Prynn began to sparkle. He was everywhere when he was needed in those places, offensively and defensively. He caged three field goals in five minutes, and registered a charity toss. He had LeBrun locked up and the key in his pocket. The Cornhuskers began to belabor him.

Herb Cope watched the blistering action, his teeth biting hard against his cud of gum. He had forgotten to chew.

Prynn at the top of his form was a thing to see. Now Al was coming out of the corner on an out-of-bounds play, and taking a hard pass from Tresher at the edge of the foul circle. Kleck and Rudnick broke for the basket with all the speed they could muster, and crossed each other just before they reached Prynn.

Al fed the ball to Kleck, and Tresher returned quickly to the court to receive the throwback in case of a muffed basket. Kleck, however threw it in, and Nebraska was trailing.

The clock said three minutes short of the half when Al began to fade. Al looked for help, but the scorers and Herb Cope paid him no heed. Harry the Horse nudged Herb.

"He's bushed, Coach."

"He'll stay in until he has to crawl," Cope snapped. "He's got worries inside his head. He's got more than the Cornhuskers to lick. This makes or breaks a basketball player, Horse."

The Cornhuskers took advantage of Prynn's relapse. They began a tricky, revolving offense that started paying off. A hot shot artist was in there in place of Angevine, and he soon displayed his talents. He caged three shots, not one of them being from less than twenty feet out.

Tulare was heavy-footed, and their key man was bewildered. Al Prynn had a couple of lumps the officials hadn't seen. He had a rib that felt as if it had been splintered and was digging into his flesh in a dozen places. During a rhubarb under the Nebraska hoop he had whanged

his head against a Cornhusker's knee.

Herb Cope caught Al's eye once and gestured viciously for him to stay in there and punch. Nebraska was surging ahead. A set play gave them two more points, and with their luck holding, they tried their long pass again.

They got within sniping distance and shook the hot man loose. He fired and missed but the whistle told Herb Cope that he would get a free throw. Rudnick had hacked. The Cornhusker added another point, and then he joined his mates, a minute before the end of half time, in a three-two five man defense formation, and let Tulare come for a sudden death attempt to narrow the margin.

Al Prynn cut inside Cornhusker territory with seconds to play, tried to bounce-pass to Fendler, but found he was covered like a blanket. He banged the ball down once, fired a one-handed pass at the basket that bounced off the backboard and came out to start a wild scramble. Rudnick had the ball and was cutting in toward the hoop when the gun went off.

In the locker room, Tulare players expected Herb Cope to tie into them, but he didn't.

"You played good basketball," the coach said. "They're getting the breaks so far, but they generally even up. Your main trouble is tightness. Relax, relax. This is only a basketball game."

He did not mention Arnie Farrel, but they all knew that name was jumping up and down inside his head. Nebraska had a seven point lead, and it seemed that Arnie's two grand was already in his pocket.

Cope watched the trainer rub Prynn's ribs. The flesh over them was discolored. Harry the Horse tested his ankle and Prynn watched him hopefully. DeRochemont sat down, and shook his head.

COPE avoided Prynn's glance.

"Nebraska doesn't like defensive play," he said. "They like to shoot a lot, and rush up and down the floor. They're cocky, specialize in the spectacular, so during the next two periods, slow up your play, keep possession of the ball as much as you can, and waste no good scoring opportunities. Go unorthodox if you want, and trick them into a lot of mistakes!"

"Give me a chance at 'em, Coach," Harry the Horse pleaded.

"On that ankle? No, Harry. It's up to Al here. It's all up to Al."

The forward threw a towel against the lockers, yanked his purple and gold jersey over his head. His mouth set tightly and the skin around his lips was very pale. Al Prynn seemed to be holding a torrent of words in check. And there was doubt swimming in his eyes.

"Harry can't go in there," Cope said to Kay's man. "Jostyn, as you know, has just got over the flu and is still in bed. It is all up to you, Al!"

"I see what you mean, Cope!" Prynn snapped.

At the end of five minutes of the third period, Herb Cope wondered if he hadn't blundered. Al Prynn was not relishing the going. His team had followed his intermission instructions but Nebraska was stealing the show. Prynn looked uncertain, even a little scared, while the crowd poured it on.

"How much did Farrel bet on Nebraska?" somebody yelled, and Al Prynn, about to back-hand to Ernst, heard the cry, and froze with the ball.

"Let me in there, Coach," Harry the Horse said.

"Shucks," Cope said, and clenched his fists when LeBrun of Nebraska tried a long shot. It failed, and a few minutes later, the Cornhuskers started cracking up. A neat shot from an angle by Kleck further disconcerted them, and every man started firing when they got into any part of Tulare territory.

The game began to lift the spectators off the seats. Penalties piled up, with Tulare getting the lion's share of the free tosses.

Hulm of Nebraska fell heavily and sprained a wrist and had to go out. Ernst of Tulare twisted a knee and Harbolick took his place. Al Prynn was playing in his sweat, and his lips began to slide away from his teeth. He looked over at Cope and then started a comeback.

Tulare tried to beat the Cornhusker defense down court with a fast break, but Harbolick threw the ball away. And then Herb Cope squirmed on the bench when his players, taking him at his word, began a style of play reminiscent of his sandlot and hoop-nailed-over-the-garage-door days. The unorthodox play drove Nebraska crazy, and splintered its meticulous defense, disconcerted its precise timing.

Al Prynn, playing the greatest game Herb Cope had ever seen on this court, was the spearhead and the spark. The

weariness seemed to have gone out of him and his legs were springs.

He worked a tip-off play that caught Nebraska flat-footed, and Ingram fouled him as he made the basket. Al Prynn stepped up to the foul line and sank another one for Tulare.

He shot a meaningful glance toward the coach just before the Cornhuskers swarmed for a vicious drive at the home hoop.

In mid-floor, Nebraska stalled. Al Prynn was the monkey-wrench, stealing a bounce-pass from LeBrun to his trailer, Toucetta. He banged his way toward the foul circle, eluded his cover man and fired back to Fendler. Fendler threw to Rudnick breaking for the basket along the sideline, and then Al Prynn outstepped his guard, got under the basket to take Rudnick's bullet toss. He leaped, dropped it through, and Tulare was out in front by a point.

Fourth period. Tresher and Ernst were on the bench, still breathing hard. Kleck had given way to Willie Rhodes. Al Prynn was still in there giving the fans a treat they hadn't enjoyed in many moons.

There was a cut on Al's leg, a big bump over his right eye, but he kept to his knitting and no longer looked for relief. He seemed oblivious to anything happening outside the court.

A Nebraska replacement outfoxed his guard and raced to the Tulare basket to score on one of the most beautiful individual plays of the contest, but less than sixty seconds later, Al Prynn came flying out of a whirligig of players under the Cornhusker basket to tap in a ball Rhodes had fired off the backboard.

TULARE returned to orthodox play, and the Nebraska quintet, still wary of haywire basketball, seemed jittery as they fell into a three-two defense.

Slowly Al Prynn and his mates worked the ball into Nebraska territory, using short low passes, freezing the ball. The clock was a big factor now. They kept passing back and forth with the restraining line giving away stubbornly, inch by inch. A Nebraska player lunged at Al Prynn, and in pivoting away, Al stepped outside. The whistle shrieked.

Nebraska went to work out of bounds, and Tulare quickly fell back into its zone defense, and set it well out to stymie even a long try on the part of the Cornhusker hot-shot maker.

Two minutes to play!

Al Prynn was grinning now like a kid that has found a brand new golf ball in the rough. He looked three inches taller and twice as strong as he'd been at the start of play.

Tulare had a three-point advantage with just sixty seconds to play. A Nebraska player stole the ball and pounded up the court, found Rudnick harrying him, and fired a long shot. It was wide and went out of bounds.

Here Tulare started an offensive that was deliberately slow. They passed from one to the other, maintaining a tight formation, with the desperate Cornhuskers fighting hard. LeBrun knew there were but seconds to play and he broke the Tulare attack with a deliberate thrust of his foot, hoping the official would not see it.

The whistle blew.

"Take two," the man with the white knickers said to the gasping Al Prynn. Tulare rooters knew it was over.

The gun went off just as Al Prynn dropped in the second charity toss, and the Nebraska players trotted off disconsolately. LeBrun, of the Cornhuskers, grabbed Al Prynn around the neck as the court rapidly filled.

"You're one dream of a ball player, mister!" he said.

The Tulare gym was a madhouse and Herb Cope hustled his squad to the privacy of the locker room. They put on a demonstration there. All except Al Prynn.

He stood and stared at the coach. Herb knew there was going to be an explosion.

"Well, does that answer your question, Cope?" Al snapped above the roar. "You see any signs of anyone throwing the game for Arnie Farrel?" He threw his jacket against the wall, and sat down to tear off his soaked uniform.

"Well, take your basketball team, Coach! I hope you win the conference crown."

"Look, Al—!"

"Bah!"

The forward suddenly looked at Harry the Horse.

DeRochemont was hopping up and down with Hymie Rudnick. There didn't seem to be a thing wrong with the Horse's hoof. Al Prynn shifted his surprised glance to the coach, and Herb Cope was grinning.

"Coach," Fendler said. "Did Arnie really bet two thousand on Nebraska?"

"He might have," Herb said, and kept

watching Al's face. "A Tulare friend of mine did take a quick trip to Hutchinson City. His girl told me so."

His grin widened.

Harry DeRochemont came over and appraised Al Prynne.

"I knew you could play it all the way and better than any of us if you took a notion, kid. You're about the best that Tulare ever saw or ever will see. The trouble has been you never gave yourself the chance to prove it. So Herb here—"

"Coach, you old schemer!" Al Prynne said. He smiled guiltily and got up. "You realize what a chance you took? I could have washed this game out and they would have found out sooner or later that Harry's ankle was okay."

"You never had enough responsibility put onto your back, Al," Cope said. "You never had to complete anything you started. Maybe your folks are to blame and should have forced you to finish your cereal in the morning. Anyway, I never let a basketball championship interfere when I have a man who has to be made into believing in himself."

"Out there in the world you'll be working under pressure most of the time, and

you'll get real mental hazards to overcome and not like I cooked up. You won't be able to call for help when the chips are down. You'll have to see it through, the way you did it out here on the court. And brother, you'll see it through. I know that now."

"Funny," Al Prynne said, after shaking Cope's hand. "It happened all of a sudden. The tougher it got the better I liked it. You know something? I must be good!"

"Well, Kay thinks so, Al," Cope laughed, and walked away thinking of two lines of wisdom he had absorbed when he had gone to college.

"To succeed in life is the natural way to live. To fail is to follow lines of greater resistance."

Harry the Horse let out a roar from the shower.

"Arnie will send a couple of torpedoes out to murder you, you doublecrosser, Al!" he whooped.

"Let's spend that two hundred he got first, guys!" Fendler yelled.

Al Prynne laughed. Leaving the gym, Cope knew he had the conference title in his pocket.

He'd made a star over night.



Reb Mowry, baseball's problem boy, was out for the laughs—win, lose, or draw—and it took plenty of woe before he learned to knuckle down and play ball in

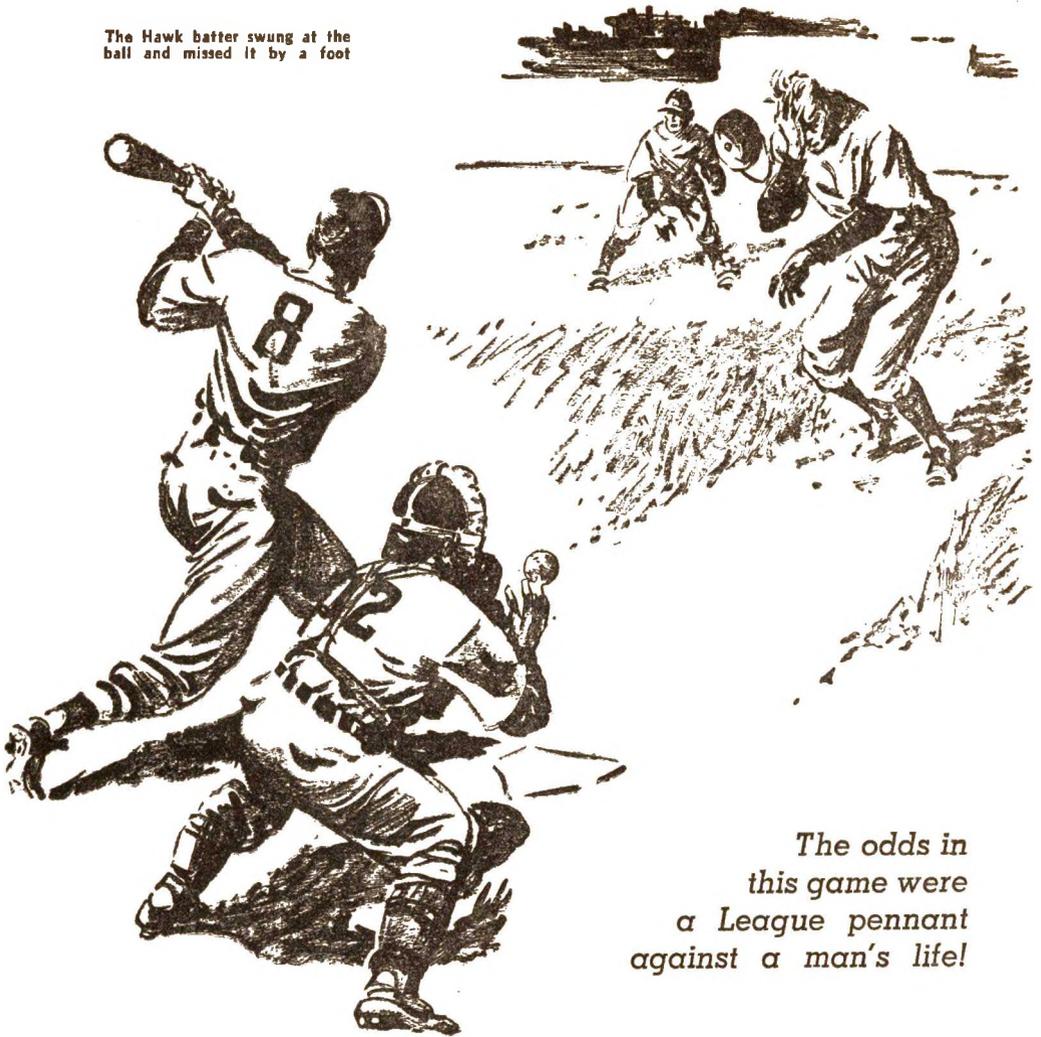
BASE HIT BLUES

An Exciting Novelet of the Diamond

By JOHN WILSON

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE—PLUS MANY OTHER
TOP-FLIGHT STORIES OF EVERY SPORT!

The Hawk batter swung at the ball and missed it by a foot



*The odds in
this game were
a League pennant
against a man's life!*

PINCH PITCHER

By ROBERT SIDNEY BOWEN

WE WERE on the rattler heading north to open the season. It was the start of my third year as manager of the Bisons and I was feeling good. That is, pretty good. I had trimmed off all the dead branches during the last two weeks in Florida, and the squad was in good physical trim. Yet there was just one small fly in the ointment. His name was T. J. Bedford, he had about three million bucks in the bank. He was my boss and sole owner of us Bisons.

I had thought it one swell break when he had hired me to manage the ball club for three years. But I didn't really know

him then. But I soon found out. He was the kind of owner who gives you carte blanche for running the club, then turns around and drives you nuts by sticking his nose into everything. He was worse than an old woman.

Of course I reminded him of the terms of the contract but he'd only smile and say he was just trying to be helpful. Sure, I could have told him what to do with his job, if I'd wanted to, but club managing jobs don't grow on trees!

Anyway, he was on the train with us. He had flown down just for the ride back, so he'd said. I knew different. He wanted

to find out what was what; why I hadn't made more winter trades, why I had let Joe Beeswax go, and all the rest of it. He wanted a full report on everything, so that he could point out all the mistakes I'd made.

Oh, yeah, I almost forgot! This'll give you a better picture of T. J. Bedford!

All his life he had manufactured ladies lingerie, and four years ago he had been bequeathed the Bisons by his brother, the late Frank Bedford one of the finest men the national pastime ever knew. It's been said that T. J. Bedford saw his first big league ball game after his brother was dead.

Yep, he was on the train and I was expecting a summons to go back to his private car. It came when we were about half way between Washington and Philadelphia.

He greeted me all smiles, waved me to a chair, and offered me a cigar; one of the two for a nickel variety. I passed it up for my pipe, and waited.

"I wish to win the pennant this year, Mr. Hicks," he suddenly said out of a clear sky.

"We stand a pretty good chance," I told him. "We've got a good ball club."

"I hope so," he murmured and scowled. "But I can't help wondering. I was talking with a friend of mine just before I flew from Boston. He knows quite a bit about baseball and he seemed to think that several of the Bisons are too old to be playing baseball. He was surprised you hadn't picked up some younger players during the spring training season. May I ask why?"

"Sure you may," I came right back at him. "Those that were good were still too green to be in the big time. I farmed them out for more seasoning. Your friend is wrong. Most of the Bisons are right in their prime, and this should be their best season."

HE STUDIED his cigar a minute and I guessed what was coming. It came.

"What about Williams?" he murmured. "I believe he's thirty four. My friend said—"

"Williams won sixteen and dropped eight last year," I cut in. "If he can do the same this year, I'll be satisfied."

"To be sure, Mr. Hicks," he purred. "But I won't be satisfied unless we win the pennant. My friend is certain we can do it if we get the pitching, but he is equally

certain Williams is too old to give it to us. It would have been nice if you'd picked up a pitcher to take Williams' place. My friend says there's a young chap named Tracey who could do wonders if he was only given the chance. My friend saw him down in Florida and says that he has everything."

"Is your friend in the business?" I asked as calmly as I could.

"Oh, no," was the answer. "He makes shoes. But he is very much interested in baseball, and sees quite a number of games during the season."

I kept my temper. There are maybe twenty million guys like the boss' friend. They know all about baseball, because don't they see at least a dozen games a year, besides reading the box scores in the sports pages? I suppose that makes baseball the big thing that it is, but it can still burn up a manager plenty. Particularly when one of those twelve game a year experts is in a position to pump all his dopey theories into your boss' ear.

Sure, I had taken several looks at that spring camp flash, Tracey, and he did have the makings of a pitcher. But not for a couple of years yet. He had plenty of smoke but very little control, and no head at all when there were runners on the bags.

"Maybe in two or three years," I told Bedford. "Tracey isn't ready, yet."

My boss looked at his cigar some more, and put on one of his famous I-was-only-trying-to-help smiles. Then he raised his eyes to mine and there wasn't any kidding in the look he gave me.

"You're the club manager, Mr. Hicks," he said. "I shall continue not to interfere. However, this is the last year of your contract. I—I want very much to win the pennant this year, Mr. Hicks."

Well, I didn't have to have the engineer of that rattler run back and clout me over the head with a driving wheel to get what T. J. Bedford meant. If the Bisons didn't cop the flag that year, "Paddy" Hicks would be out of a job. Even working for flannel-mouth Bedford was better than that. Then too, there was my rep. In twenty one years of managing ball clubs big and little, I'd never been fired. I'd always resigned for something better.

"If we don't win, you can hire a new manager," I told him.

"Yes, yes, of course," he murmured. "I hope you're right about Williams, but there's no room for sentiment in business."

And big league baseball is certainly a business."

With that crack still in my ears I went back to my car and sat watching the Maryland countryside fly by without seeing it. In a way, the boss' parting crack had some truth in it. A ball club manager shouldn't have any sentiment, but Jake Williams was more than just a thirty-four-year-old twirler.

He was one of my tangible contributions to baseball. I had "discovered" him years ago, and got him his first job throwing toward the plate for spot cash. He'd become hotter by the year and soon he was in the big time, holding his own with the best of them. He'd been up there for nine years, now. This was his tenth year, and the goal of his life's ambitions—to pitch big league ball for ten years, which is a long time for any pitcher.

Sure, I wanted to see him hit that mark, and maybe that's why I hadn't traded him down the river. And besides, he'd won sixteen last year, which was something.

During spring training, though, I had noticed that he wasn't the old Jake Williams. His pitching seemed to be okay but the man, himself, had changed. He'd lost his famous grin hardly appeared and took no part in the usual training camp horsing around. At times he was sulky and moody.

I tried to find out what was wrong, but he wouldn't tell me. Finally I concluded the change was due to his realization that this was his last year in big time. His ten-year goal was going sour in his mouth. Anyway, I stopped asking questions and gave my attention to the rest of the club.

NOW as I sat staring out of that car window I got to worrying about Williams. If he didn't turn in some wins we were sunk so far as first place was concerned. And if we didn't hit first place there wasn't going to be any renewal of my contract. Yeah, that put a different light on things. Back in spring training camp, if I had known that a new contract for me depended on the Bisons nailing first place or Williams having a good season in his tenth year, why maybe I'd have done things different.

"Shucks!" I said, and went forward to the dining car.

Well, we opened the season against the Detroit Eagles and took them to the cleaners—their team not being much better than it was the year before. The next day I pitched Williams and we won again.

But we won because in the last of the ninth, with us trailing by three runs, Patterson belted one over the wall with the bases loaded. In other words Jake Williams was the luckiest guy in the world. The Eagles hammered him at will, and from where I sat it looked like Jake was simply going through the motions and letting the other eight guys do all the work.

I kept him in the full nine innings because I expected him to snap out of his trance every new inning. If there ever was a fellow who played ball right up to the hilt it was Jake Williams. He was always right on top of the other team every minute, and bearing down for all he was worth. But not this, the start of his tenth season. He was bad, very bad. Something was gone, missing. It was the old spark of fight, it seemed to me. I cornered him in the locker house after he'd taken his rub and climbed into street clothes.

"What was wrong out there, Jake?" I asked.

He looked down his nose at me from his six feet-two. "Nothing," he grunted. "We won it, didn't we?"

"Patterson won it." I reminded him. "You almost booted it away. Listen, Jake, you're different this year. Why not tell me about it? I'm your friend".

"There's nothing to tell!" he snapped. Then as the red zoomed into his cheeks, "Should I go out there and throw my arm away in only the second game of the season? Don't be silly. I'm no rookie. I know what it's all about!"

Of course that line of talk told me more pointedly than ever that something had changed in Jake Williams. But I had sense enough not to press the issue. I just let it go, and hoped that maybe it was just family trouble which would be straightened out soon. If you don't think women folk can raise the devil with a ball player's nervous system then you're crazy, brother!

Anyway, the season got rolling merrily along and we managed to win our share of games and stay in second place, a couple of games behind the leading New York Hawks. T. J. Bedford was too busy turning out ladies' step-ins, and such, to bother me very much. However, I was still worried, even though he wasn't around. It was about Jake Williams. He just wasn't the pitcher he'd been in any year of his big league career. He wasn't even close. And the funny thing was that he hadn't

lost his stuff, like sometimes happens to the best of twirlers.

Riggs, our catcher assured me of that.

"He's got the same hooks and speed he always had, Paddy," Riggs told me the day Jake lost his fourth straight after three lucky wins. "It's him, not his arm. It's—it's like he's afraid, too yellow to fight back at the batters. He won't bear down. And his fielding? Well, you've got eyes! If a ball doesn't come right to his feet he hardly reaches for it. There's something gone screwy in Jake's head, is my guess."

That was the opinion of the rest of the squad, too. The Jake Williams we'd known just wasn't any more. Something had gone screwy in his head. He got to spending most of his time alone with himself whether we were home or on the road. I tried and tried to get close to him like I used to be, but it was no soap.

Then when the season was about two thirds over we were still right on the coat tails of the Hawks, what should happen but one of those few and far between baseball miracles! The Hawks brought up this young Tracey from one of their farm clubs and put him to work.

Of course the fates would have it that he did better than all right. He was a long ways from perfection, and he was still wild. But he was something the hitters had never seen. Anyway, he cut them down like nobody's business. I won't even mention the letter I got from T. J. Bedford after Tracey knocked off four wins in a row without a loss. It was most discouraging, and each night when I climbed into bed I really didn't care much whether or not I woke up next morning.

HOWEVER, it takes eight ball players besides the pitcher to win ball games, and my gang were scrappers. They went after everything and usually got it. So when we started our final swing around the loop, we were still in second place, and only one full game behind the Hawks. I was pleased but not happy.

The reason is obvious. I mean, Jake Williams was no help at all to the club, and it was past the dead line to make a trade or buy in somebody to take his place. True, we only trailed the Hawks by a game as we started our final swing around, but though we would meet a lot of push-over clubs, we still had to go through a three game series with the Hawks on their home grounds. And even when we had a world of good pitching the

Hawks were one mighty tough ball club to beat.

Well, I won't waste time describing our swing around the loop. I'll just say we won all those we expected to win, with the exception of one game. Yeah, maybe you guess right about that. I took one more chance on Jake Williams, and sent him in against the St. Louis Ravens. I did it to give him practise, and maybe snap into his old self with a win. It didn't work. He pitched four very nice innings and then the Ravens surprised everybody including themselves by going on a hitting spree, Jake couldn't take it. He folded up like an old army cot, and I had to yank him—after it was too late.

Anyway, we marched into the Hawk's home grounds for the final series trailing them by two games. Yet at the start of that series, I didn't feel half so bad as maybe I sound telling about it. I mean by playing a brand of ball that was way over their heads, my team stayed right up there in the race in spite of Jake Williams letting us down. And for the series with the Hawks I had my three best pitchers well rested and set to twirl the best ball of their lives.

On a hunch that came to me the night before the first game, I decided to send my pitchers against the Hawks in reverse order. That is, the third best first, the second best next, and Holland, my top man on the mound, to pitch the final. It was a gamble to be sure, but what else is ball club managing when you come right down to it?

We took the first by a two to one score, and that put us only a game behind them. I stayed up all night that night battling with my hunch. I knew perfectly well that Holland could beat the Hawks, so should I send him into the second game to tie the lead up, or should I gamble again and use my second best pitcher? I gambled, and after a game that took twenty years off the wrong end of my life, we came out on top six to four.

So that left but one more game to play, the winner to nail the flag to their pole. A regular story-book finish to the season, except that I didn't have a pitching staff full of broken arms like is usual in those fiction yarns. No. I had Holland, the best twirler in the league to send against the Hawks. If we couldn't beat them with Holland on the mound, then we deserved to lose the flag, and me my job.

And speaking of my job, that came into

the picture again about an hour before game time. It so happened that T. J. Bedford pried himself away from his factory of women's unmentionables long enough to fly down for the final game. Or maybe he flew down to add his weight to the taught strings of my nervous system. Anyway, he showed up. One hour before game time he came barging into the small room I used in the Hawks' locker house.

"Do you know who is pitching for our opponents, Mr. Hicks?" he demanded before I even had chance to greet him.

Well, to be frank, I didn't know and, added to that, I didn't give a hoot. No, not when Holland was going to pitch for us.

"It doesn't matter who they pitch," I told him. "Holland is going to win the pennant for us today."

"They are going to use that chap, Tracey," the boss said as though I hadn't uttered a word. "Tracey, whom you cast aside in favor of this Williams. You'll remember I spoke to you about that on the train up from Florida?"

I held my temper under control, but, boy, how I did yearn to smack him right square in the middle of his flabby puss.

"Yes, I remember," I said as quietly as I could. "And I also remember your saying you wanted to win the pennant this year. Well, that's what we're going to do for you today."

BEDFORD looked at me for a moment. A nasty look had come into his eyes.

"I certainly hope so for your sake, Mr. Hicks," he said. "If you lose today—if this young fellow, Tracey, beats you—then definitely you are through as manager of this ball club. Win, and I'll offer you another three-year contract."

"And maybe I'll tell you what to do with it!" I almost said.

But I didn't, because I knew if we won the pennant we were sure to repeat again next year, and maybe the next. And I'm funny that way. I like to manage winners.

"We'll beat Tracey easy," I answered, just as he was leaving.

Well, like it has to happen eventually, the game got under way. The stands were packed of course and every fan was at fever pitch. No matter whether it was the catching of an easy pop fly or a beautiful strike out by Holland or Tracey, the cheers that went up from that mob must have shaken the windows and closet china miles away. For three innings both teams

played the kind of baseball you see maybe once or twice in a lifetime. Absolutely airtight. Neither I nor the Hawks' manager could have asked for better from our players. It was over and above perfection, if you get what I mean.

I said three innings, but it wasn't quite that. Holland had two out on the Hawks when Tracey was up at the plate for his first licks.

Holland toyed with him for a couple of balls, and then slammed two strikes right down the groove, neat as apple pie.

The next pitch was a beautiful hook for the inside corner. I knew it was going to be that one and so I was marking the old S.O. on my sheet when I heard the crack of the bat meeting the ball. I jerked my head up just in time to see the ball hit the dirt about four feet to Holland's right, and maybe another four feet in front of him.

It was a cinch for our short stop to nail, but maybe Holland was too keyed up to think about anything save that hopper from Tracey's bat. Anyway he made a flying dive for that ball, but caught his spikes in the ground before he could get started. He tripped and down he went like two ton of brick on that twisted ankle. I heard the bones crack way over in the dugout.

The short stop threw Tracey out at first but he could have circled the bases and scored, for all I'd have known. Holland's ankle giving way was like a battleship salvo going off in my head. A couple of seconds went by before I could move a muscle. I simply sat there on the bench while stark realization brought the whole world down around my ears. Then I snapped out of it and ran out on the field with Doc Baker, our trainer, and the rest on the bench.

Holland's face, white with pain, told me the worst, and I didn't overestimate it. His ankle was puffed up like a balloon and Doc Baker had to cut the shoe and stocking off with a knife. When the stretcher bearers carried Holland off the field he was crying like a baby, but not from pain. The kid's heart was busted into a million pieces.

And that was that!

The fates, or whatever you want to call it had up and knocked the props right out from under me. Holland's twisted ankle had taken the pennant away from us just as surely as though the Hawks had scored a million runs. I didn't have a relief pitcher worth five cents left. Sure,

two of my boys had already trimmed the Hawks, but they weren't the iron man variety of twirler. Either one of them needed at least three days rest before he could go out and even beat a high school team. Nope, I didn't have anybody to fall back on, and maybe I felt even more bitter as I walked over to the bench because I knew mighty well that what had happened wouldn't make any difference in T. J. Bedford's book. The Hawks could have machine-gunned the lot of us and T. J. would have blamed it on me.

"Paddy, send me in there."

I came out of my thought trance to see none other than Jake Williams standing in front of me. His face was almost as white as Holland's had been, but his eyes were blazing with—well, maybe you could call it a mad light. I started to push past him.

"We're still fighting to win!" I growled.

Jake grabbed my arm and spun me around like I weighed seventy-five pounds instead of one hundred-seventy-five.

"Send me in, Paddy!" he shouted. "I'll beat them even if it's the last thing I do! Honest I will."

A HOT retort rose to my lips but something in Jake's eyes stopped it.

"What make's you think you can beat them?" I demanded.

"I've beat them before—"

"That was last year," I cut him off. Then before I could clamp down on my tongue, "You haven't got the courage this year."

He didn't get sore as I expected him to. He went off whiter around the corners of the mouth, but he didn't take his eyes off mine.

"Maybe you're right," he said in a far away voice. And then viciously, "But I've got all the courage I'll need today. Listen, Paddy, so help me, I'll pitch the best game you ever saw. I'm begging you to send me in. Please!"

I think there were tears in his eyes, but there certainly were in his voice. I don't know how to put it in words but he seemed to change as he stood there in front of me. I suddenly had the weird feeling that it was last year, or the year before, and I was looking at the Jake Williams of old. Maybe that did something to me. Or maybe it was just a case of there not being anybody better to pitch.

Anyway, I gave him the nod.

"Okay, you pitch," I said, and went

on over to the bench.

The team's spirit had taken an awful licking on account of Holland's accident, so Tracey promptly hung up three more strike-outs in our half of the fourth inning.

When the P.A. system announced my pitching selection, there was a stunned silence for a moment or two. Then you would have thought the park had suddenly blown up. I guess every Bison fan in the place wanted personally to climb down out of the stands and beat my ears off. As for the rest of the team they gaped at me hard until they realized it was no mistake. Then without a word, they went out onto the field, sowing all the pep and animation of a sack of drowned cats. As for myself, I crossed my fingers, mumbled a prayer or two, and sat down on the bench to await my fate.

With the stands still roaring out angry thunder, Jake took his warm up pitches and faced the first Hawk. So help me he whiffed three strikes past the guy before he could hardly settle himself in the batter's box. That show of pitching shut off the roars like somebody had slammed a door on the park.

There was absolute silence when the second Hawk stepped up. Jake kept right up there on top of him and finally forced him to pop out to first. The crowd thunder started up again, but there was a new note to it. The fickle bums were scrambling up on Jake's wagon now. When he fanned the third Hawk, he promptly became theirs for life.

Naturally I was practically beside myself with joy, and the rest of the team was tickled pink, too. They crowded around Jake as he came into the bench, but we could have spoken our praise to a stone wall for all the impression it made. Jake shrugged us off, took a sip at the water cooler, sat down and stared out over the field.

As I looked at him, it struck me he had aged twenty years out there on the mound. The lines on his face were deep, there was hardly any color in his cheeks, and his hands resting on his knees trembled ever so slightly. A ten-year veteran though he was, the tension of a blue chip ball game was getting him. At least that's what I thought at the time.

Well, with their old pep back in place again, my club went out to the plate to do their stuff, and in spades. They did collect two hits off Tracey that inning but some beautiful playing by Tracey's mates

stopped us from pushing a run across. Soon Jake went out to the mound again. He walked one man but he was the only Hawk to get to first, and he died there. Jake was a master on the mound. Even his best year I had never seen him show such pitching. But between innings he sat there like a wooden Indian, yet with the worst case of shot nerves I ever saw. It was useless to try and talk with him. He just didn't hear us, so we all gave it up. And what the devil! So long as he continued to give us that kind of pitching, we didn't care how he acted.

Well, as you can check by the record books—it was goose eggs for everybody right up to the first of the ninth. Then and there the youngster, Tracey, began to crack under the terrific strain. He gave our first man a walk. Then a single pushed that lad around to third. Tracey got hold of himself and fanned the next two Bisons. But that brought Patterson up, and when the chips are down, there isn't a better man at the plate than Patterson. Against any kind of pitching, too.

HE LOOKED over two of Tracey's offerings, and slapped a hard one on the third pitch. The ball went screaming over second for a clean single. Our man on third scored, and the Bison fans and Bison team went stark, raving mad with joy. The next lad up popped to third to end the inning. However, one run was in the bag for us, and that was all we cared about.

So, up came the last of the ninth. Jake took quite a time leaving the dugout and going to the mound, and the expression on his face took away a lot of the joy that was in my heart. He looked ready to come apart in small pieces at any second.

The tension of the game had knocked him forty ways from Sunday, and he was due to crack wide open. As a matter of fact I toyed with the idea of lifting him and taking a wild gamble on Bayles, who had won us the first game. But I decided against that. Maybe because by then Jake was out on the mound and tossing his warm up pitches across.

Slow motion is greased lightning compared to the way he tossed those warm-ups. He was as listless as all get out, and acted like he was dead on his feet. However, when the first Hawk stepped up to the plate I could sort of see Jake snap out of it, and the old battle light to leap into his eyes. At that exact moment there was

some kind of a row in the back of the dugout. I heard my name mentioned and a lot of hot arguing. In a dim sort of way I realized that somebody wanted to see me, and see me bad, but one of the club cops wasn't going to let that happen.

Anyway, I didn't even bother to glance around. All my attention was on the game and I wasn't seeing anybody until the ball game was over. I just kept my eyes on Jake and watched the two balls and three strikes go snaking across the plate. The second Hawk was a tough baby in any man's ball park. He connected with the first pitch and sent it two miles. One mile up and one mile down into the left field stands, on the wrong side of the foul line as far as he was concerned. My heart was a frozen chunk of ice all the time that ball was in the air, and I'm not kidding.

Well, Jake got two strikes on the man and then a scratch single dribbled out between first and second. Jake tried to go for it but he wasn't quick enough. He tripped a little and stumbled to one knee. I held my breath because he took an awful long time in getting up. Finally, though, he was back in the box. He studied the next hitter, and once again the row broke out behind me.

"I tell you I must see Hicks!" a voice cried. "It's suicide!"

The club cop bellowed something that I didn't get because I'd stopped listening then. Jake had thrown his first ball to the next batter. The Hawk at the plate did the obvious thing. He laid a beautiful bunt along the third base line. Jake rushed over but he didn't seem to be able to bend down and get his hands on the ball. The runners were safe all around. We were all of us on our feet by then yelling encouragement to Jake and pleading with him to finish off the Hawks.

Well, the next Hawk caught hold of one and lifted high into right field. The ball was caught but the Hawk on second tore down to third with time to spare. And so it was one more out to go. Jake stumbled a couple of times as he went back on the mound. From his movements you would have thought he was paralyzed drunk. I guess everybody in the park noticed the way he wobbled toward the mound. Anyway, a silence like the middle of Grant's tomb on Sunday night settled down over the field. You could have heard a pin drop on the grass out in center field.

The first pitch was a strike that the hitter took with his club on his shoulder. The next was a ball that might have been a wild pitch if Riggs hadn't been the best catcher in any league. Then a second ball missed the outside corner. And a third did the same thing. Even by then there was silence all over the place. Jake put a whale of a lot of stuff on the next pitch, and it went flashing through for the second strike.

Three and two! Yeah, the old fiction story situation, I guess you'd call it. But I wasn't thinking about any fiction stories then. I was thinking of maybe a prayer I'd forgotten that would help. And so was every other Bison, I'll bet. You could have shot off a cannon right there in front of the dugout and none of us would have noticed.

Every one of us was out there on the mound with Jake Williams. In spirit, anyway.

FINALLY, Jake took a quick wind up and pivoted toward the plate. The Hawk on third quit the bag in a flash and started pounding down the base line. I watched that ball every inch of the way, and although it traveled like greased lightning it seemed like a year before it got to the batter. There it snaked down toward the outside corner. The Hawk hitter swung and if he'd connected they'd still be looking for the ball.

But he missed, missed by a foot, and we all went crazy.

Suddenly, though, I realized that Jake was flat on his face in front of the mound. As he had let that final pitch go he'd toppled over as though somebody had clouted him from behind. When we reached him he was out cold and hardly breathing.

The next few minutes are pretty much of a blur to me because the whole park went haywire. With the aid of all the cops, though, we managed to get Jake into the clubhouse, and there Doc Baker went to work on him. Jake sure did look awful as he lay there on the rubbing table, so still and so white.

Then a hand grabbed my arm and hauled me out of the way. A little frozen faced gink pushed past me and took Jake right out of Doc Baker's hands.

"Hey, what—?" was as far as Doc got.

"Get out of my way!" the little gink yapped. "I'm Doctor Curtiss. Been this boy's physician since he was a pup. Won-

der he didn't kill himself today, the blasted fool! Here, give me a hand, if you want."

Yeah, I recognized the voice. It was the little gink who had caused all the row in back of the dugout. But he was top man, now, and none of us tried to stop him. Not even Doc Baker. Finally he stepped back from the table and nodded at Doc Baker.

"He'll come around soon," he said. "Best get him to a hospital, though. A miracle if there ever was one. I thought my warning had made him realize."

"Realize what?" I said finding my tongue. "I'm Hicks."

"I know you are!" he snapped. "Ever since you sent him in, I've been trying to get to you. Did you want the boy to kill himself?"

"Huh?" I gulped. "You mean he was sick?"

"Sick?" he barked at me. "He's got an aggravated case of athlete's heart—had it for a year. When I gave him his regular examination, last winter, I found that his heart was developed to twice its size. I told him he could play no more ball. Violent exercise could cut him off just like that. But, the fool wanted to play for another year. Some stupid goal of ten years. Well, I told him if he took it easy he might last, but it was a gamble. Real violent exertion might have finished him. Well, all I can say its a miracle it didn't happen today."

The little gink started to say more, but I didn't pay any attention. Jake had come around. His eyes were open and he was looking at me with the single question bubbling out of them.

"Did we win, Paddy?" he asked in a whisper.

"We did," I told him. "You won us the pennant, Jake." I stared at him. "So that is what's been wrong with you all season! And you begged me to let you pitch, knowing that maybe—"

I couldn't finish. I don't know whether I wanted to cry or hit him.

"Maybe I wouldn't have begged you, Paddy," he said weakly. "Only I heard what T. J. Bedford said to you before game time. Well, the team needs you, Paddy. They didn't need me. They proved it all season. Shucks! It was worth the risk!"

There's sentiment in big league baseball? What in the world gave you that idea?

THRILLS IN SPORTS

By JACK KOFOED

FAMOUS SPORTS COMMENTATOR

HARRY GREB AND MICKEY WALKER PLAN AN UNSCHEDULED BOUT

BEFORE Jack Bulger died, Mickey Walker was a home boy. He didn't go for the bright lights and gaudy gals. His idea was to become the greatest fighter the world had ever known. Pound for pound, he didn't fall far short of that ambition, either. But when Bulger passed on "the toy Bulldog" began to hit the gay road.

It didn't affect him much at first, because he was young and strong. But nobody can mix pugilism and night life and be a success. One of Walker's favorite spots was Texas Guinan's club, the most famous of all prohibition-day speakeasies. Mickey was welterweight champion of the world then. Harry Greb, the middleweight king, also favored Guinan's and spent a small fortune there.

Well, the two were matched for a fight that was one of the most talked of in an era of exciting fights. Greb, the playboy, had wasted his substance in riotous living, and Jack Fugazy, the promoter, said:

"Look, Harry. You've seen Young Griffo and other busted down ex-pugs panhandling dimes on Broadway. Get wise to yourself or you'll wind up that way. You're getting fifty thousand dollars for this bout. Buy an annuity and protect yourself."

"Nuts!" laughed Greb. "I'll spend my dough as I get it." Perhaps fortunately for him, Harry died while still a money maker, so he never knew the humiliation of poverty. But that's another story.

He and Walker staged a bitter, bruising battle. It was close all the way, but the referee and judges decided upon the bigger man as the winner. That pretty nearly broke Walker's heart. He thought he had won. He was sure he could beat Harry Greb any time they met.

Several hours after the fight they both showed up (with different parties, of course) at Tex Guinan's place . . . Greb to celebrate, Walker to drown his sorrows.

There was a certain tension in the air. No one was quite sure what would happen. As a matter of fact nothing did until about five o'clock in the morning. By that time most of the customers had departed. Walker, still roiling with the bitterness of defeat, walked over to Greb's table.

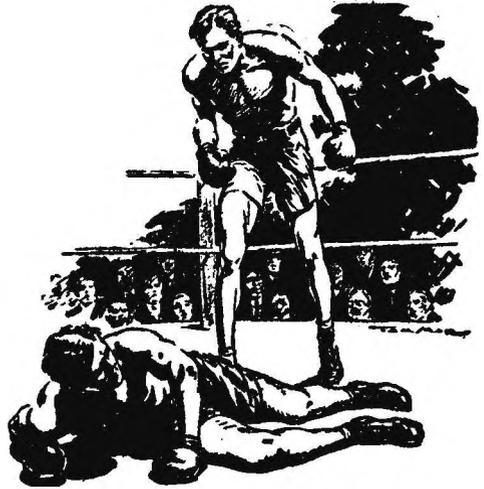
"You're the luckiest guy in the world," he

said. "No matter what the officials said I licked you tonight and I can lick you for money, marbles or chalk any day in the week."

"If you're lookin' for a fight," Greb answered, "you can have it right now. We got fifty grand apiece for the one we had a few hours ago. Let's do it all over for nothing."

"Why not?" said Walker.

They . . . and their friends . . . went into



the dawn's early light. They took off their coats and rolled up their sleeves.

Then, around the corner, strolled a big Irish cop, club swinging. He was grey haired and a little paunchy, but there was a look of determination about him.

"What's goin' on here?" he demanded. Then he recognized the belligerents. "Oh, it's you guys, huh? Didn't you have enough of punching each other tonight?"

"No!" exclaimed Walker and Greb in unison.

The policeman twirled his club.

"It's a bit old I am for this sort of thing," he said, "but just start somethin' on my beat and I'll knock you both flatter than a flounder. You get paid for this kind o' thing. Why do you want to give it away? Now shake hands and get goin' or I'll bop both of you."

The middleweight champion of the world and the welterweight champion of the world looked at the man who was as old as both of them put together. They grinned.

"Okay," said Walker, holding out his hand. "I still know I can whip you any time I start

... but I don't want to mess around with that big Irishman."

So Greb and Walker locked arms and strolled away from what could have been one of the most spectacular unofficial battlegrounds in the history of the ring.

MICKEY REACHES FOR ONE TAB TOO MANY

NOW, this story may not be a thrill in sport, but it was a thrill of a momentarily shocking kind to Mickey Walker. After one of his fights he took a crowd of friends to Guinan's. At that stage of his career Mickey always wanted to pick up the tabs of everyone he knew. He was generous and had plenty of money.

At the next table sat George Perry, one of the great playboys and spenders of the prohibition era.

When it was time to leave, Mickey said: "You've been nice to me, George. Let me

take your check."

"Sure," said Perry. "Waiter, give Mr. Walker my tab."

The champ nearly dropped dead when he was handed a bill for \$15,000! Perry's party had been running for three or four nights with a continuous flow of champagne. Startled as he was, Mickey began fishing for his checkbook when George intervened.

"Forget it," he said. "I just wanted to teach you not to go grabbing for tabs until you know how much they are. Waiter, give me Mr. Walker's too!"

SAM LANGFORD CHALLENGES JACK JOHNSON TO A FINISH FIGHT

TALKING about the near fight on the street between Walker and Greb reminds me of the feud between Sam Langford, now blind and poverty stricken, and the late Jack Johnson, who was then heavyweight champion of the world.

Johnson possessed great respect for Sam's fighting ability and would not risk his title against the smaller man. Langford followed him all over the United States, challenging on every occasion. The champion refused to accept.

They happened to meet in a Boston saloon one night.

Langford said: "Mr. Johnson, you won't

gimme a chance in the ring. All right. That makes you scared o' me."

"I'm scared of nobody," Jack answered.

"Thass swell, thass really swell," said Sam. "There's a nice cellar underneath this place. We'll go down there, lock the door, and lay the key on the top step. The man who opens the door is champion of the world. No rules ... anything goes. What y' say, Mr. Johnson?"

The champion of the world didn't even answer. He put on his hat and left. Chances are he wouldn't have been champion any more if he had gone into the cellar with Sam Langford.

HERE ARE SOME ODD HAPPENINGS THAT PROVIDED THRILLS!

ODDITIES in sports usually provide thrills. It seems to me that one of the strangest was the football game between West Virginia and Drexel in 1945. The Hillbillies were penalized 192 yards, but beat Drexel 42-0 in spite of that. ... And, then there was a race at Jamaica, a four horse race. It ended with two of the thoroughbreds running a dead heat for first place and the other two a dead heat for show money. ...

One of the strangest oddities came when Sammy Baugh, for my money the finest passer in football history, dropped back of his own goal line to throw a forward pass. The Redskins were playing Cleveland for the professional football championship. Baugh, whose accuracy over the years has been amazing, hit the goal post with the ball for the first and only time in his life, and his error cost the game.

"CRAZY LEGS" HIRSCH SHOWS THE RAMS SOME FAST STEPPING

NO ONE thought the College All Stars had much of a chance to beat the Los Angeles Rams. The Rams had won the professional football championship the season before when they represented Cleveland. Sparked by brilliant Bob Waterfield, they seemed almost unstoppable.

But the All Stars had a big, fast charging line ... and a guy named "Crazy Legs"

Hirsch. That was the difference.

Hirsch had played with Wisconsin and, as a Marine trainee, with Michigan. He could break fast, and that "Crazy Legs" nickname was not given in jest. When he had the leather tucked under his arm he really could step.

Even a fair back would look pretty good behind such a forward wall the All Stars

boasted . . . but Hirsch wasn't just a fair back. He was something extra special.

Midway in the second period he broke loose. He straight-armed and swivel-hipped away from tacklers. The downfield blocking of his mates was something to see. The Rams were proud champions. They had expected to knock over the impudent collegians . . . but the impudent ones knocked them off their feet and those who remained couldn't catch up with Crazy Legs.

He was too fast for them . . . and they weren't as slow as molasses, either. Hirsch went 68 yards, and crossed the goal line standing up. Pat Harder kicked the goal, and the All Stars led 7—0.

That's the way the score stood until the third period was under way. Otto Graham faded back, and unloosed a long pass. It travelled forty-four yards . . . and who do you think was on the receiving end? You're right. It was Hirsch again. He went high into the air, snagged the ball, side-stepped a couple of anxious and burly Rams and started off again.

Pay dirt was only eighteen yards away and that was a soft touch for Hirsch. The Los Angeles tacklers couldn't get near enough to stop him and Crazy Legs went over for the second time. Again Harder booted the extra point . . . and the score was 14—0.

It remained that way right down to the finish when there were only a few moments left to play. Even the most rabid Los Angeles rooter had given up. It was too late to snatch victory from defeat . . . but there was the matter of pride. It was bad enough to be beaten, but not even to score was worse.

Driven deep into their own territory with the goal posts at their backs, the Rams called on Kenny Washington, the Negro star, to make some desperate last ditch passes. Even the great Waterfield had been unable to pierce the All Stars' defense with his flips, but Washington might come up with a touch-down pass.



Kenny dropped back of his own goal line. The pass from center was a little high. He fumbled, recovered . . . but before he could break loose was nailed by Paul Walker for a safety and a final tally of a 16—0 upset.

This only added insult to injury . . . and Crazy Legs Hirsch had gobbled all the headlines in a sensational upset. But don't forget one thing. If it hadn't been for the powerful line plays of the seven mules up front, even Crazy Legs wouldn't have been able to make those touchdowns against the raging Rams.

THE CATCHER HAD ONLY TWO HANDS!

THE Montreal club in the International League is a farm for the Brooklyn Dodgers, which may explain one play that cropped up in the Royals' park last season, though Brooklyn isn't what it once was as a developer of screwy incidents.

Lew Riggs, recently of the Cincinnati Reds, and Earl Naylor, who had played the outfield for Philadelphia, each singled. The next batter up hammered a screaming drive into the outfield.

Riggs and Naylor were off, running as fast as they could.

Lew is the older man and a little heavier of foot than he used to be, but Naylor is fleet as a gazelle.

The outfielder chased the ball, recovered it and pegged it to the infield, where it was relayed to the plate. By this time the two Montreal players were thundering down the third base line, Naylor practically stepping on Riggs' heels.

The ball thudded into the catcher's glove. Riggs slid to the right of the plate, Naylor slid to the left. Lew was tagged out, but Earl was safe!

HERE'S ONE TIME BYRON NELSON MISSED LIKE A DUFFER

NOBODY can tell what will happen in golf. Byron Nelson is the game's greatest master. When he went out to play Porky Oliver in the quarter final round of the Professional Golfers' championship, he was an overwhelming favorite to beat the chubby little man from Chicago.

But Oliver was hotter than a two dollar pistol on the first eighteen holes. When they

went to lunch, he was four up. It would have been a convincing lead against anyone else . . . but not against Lord Byron.

Nelson is used to victory. On the first nine holes of the afternoon test, he won five and halved four to make the turn one up. On the thirtieth he won another and was two up with only six holes to play.

"There he goes again!" the gallery said.

"Nobody can stop Byron now."

But Porky is the sort of chap who doesn't know when he is licked. A birdie and a par evened the count. He surged ahead on the thirty-fourth, but Nelson came back on the next to square things again.

Now, here was the home hole and nothing to choose between them. Both seemed to be cool enough, but tension was dragging at their nerves. The finishing hole was a tough par five. Both hit fine drives. Oliver's second was long and straight, but Nelson hooked into the trees.

"Okay," said Lord Byron's admirers, "here's where he comes up with one of those miracle shots. He always does in a pinch."

But then came anticlimax. The great Nel-

son dubbed his out completely and his fourth was short of the green. Though he ran his next stiff, Oliver, who was on in three, trun-



dled his putt to within an inch or two . . . and Nelson conceded the putt and the match!

I think that moment when Byron paused to consider how to hit his shot out of the trees . . . and then missed like a duffer . . . was one of the real thrills of golf.

A DRAMATIC MOMENT IN THE RAMS-ALL STAR GAME

MARKING back for a moment to the Rams-All Star football game, there was a moment of drama that almost escaped at-



tention. Lagging by two touchdowns, Coach Adam Walsh called Tom Harmon into the Rams' backfield. They needed someone at that stage to shake loose for a touchdown,

and give the professionals a needed hypo.

Harmon was a sensational ball carrier. His college career had been studded with brilliant runs and touchdown plays. Tommy might be the answer to the Los Angeles prayer.

The Rams called on Tom the very first play after he came on the field. The ball went to him and he started fast. But the All Star line surged in, overwhelmed him. Down went Harmon under the avalanche. When he rose his arm was ripped and blood covered.

So, after one ineffectual play, Tommy Harmon went out of the game, and did not come back. There is drama, sometimes, in failure.

CARNERA TAKES A WHIRL AT THE GRUNT AND GROAN

PRIMO CARNERA never was a good fighter even when he was heavyweight champion of the world. He became a drawing card because he was a physical monstrosity. Because he was a physical monstrosity he drew several million dollars through the turnstiles, but never received very much. The racketeers took most of it.

Primo was an unlettered plasterer from Sequals, Italy, who understood little of the American language, and nothing of sharp practises. He went up like a rocket and came down like a stick. When he returned to Italy, he brought little with him but a frayed reputation.

The war was bad. There were days when there was little food. Primo dreamed again of America. That had been the land of milk and honey. He had been acclaimed and there were fine things to eat and drink. Above everything else he wanted to go back. But there didn't seem to be a chance.

Carnera was washed up as a fighter. He tried once or twice . . . this man who had been a champion . . . against younger men of no reputation in Europe, and suffered only defeat. But he could not go to the United States as a working man. He had fed on

glory. He couldn't live without a touch of it. But how . . . how could he get it?

Then, the answer came. Wrestling. They needed new names . . . new faces; new in wrestling, if not in boxing.

Primo went to the West Coast. He had not appeared there very often as a fighter, but his name was known. He had been heavyweight champion of the world. That was enough. He was still a drawing card.

They put him on with a big ex-Coast Guardsman, Tommy O'Toole, a handsome fellow, who looked like Gene Tunney when Tunney was climbing the pugilistic heights.

Primo didn't know too much about wrestling . . . hardly more than the primary holds. He was too slow for boxing. The younger fellows could plaster him on the chin without any trouble. But he was still enormously strong . . . still eager for the plaudits that had come to him in other years. He wondered about this game that was so new to him. Would the crowd boo him? He couldn't stand that. He had come to America, not only for the money he needed, but for the cheers his soul needed even more.

Now wrestling is a funny business, if you

(Concluded on page 113)

Just as Wilson made his desperate final leap for the tape, Swensen lunged forward, too



ONE MORE MILE

By RICHARD BRISTER

Greg Swenson dons spiked shoes in order to get more reality into his sports writing—and then faces his toughest test!

GREG SWENSON found Pop Malone down beside the scarred cinder track. The grizzled, weather-beaten old Irishman was barking crisp instructions to a group of perspiring, lean-shanked milers, who had trowelled holes in the cinders and were practising sprinters' starts.

The coach's round, freckled face twitched with faint annoyance when he saw Greg. Then he shrugged his fat shoulders.

"S'pose you'll be wantin' a story on the

team's chances," he said. "But to tell you the truth, I've got no more idea how they'll pan out than you have. It's too early in the season for predictions."

"I know, Mr. Malone," Greg said soberly, "I'm not here for the Standard today. I—uh—I was wondering if you'd let me check out a suit and some spiked shoes, and—uh—sort of fool around."

"Sure, I know, son." Pop Malone's freckled face grew faintly annoyed, and he sifted a plump hand through his sparse red hair. "So you can get the feel of the

sport for the college paper. I've been expecting this, Swenson, since the football season."

Greg frowned. He lived, ate, breathed, and dreamed sports writing and since he meant to make it his life career after college, he was leaving no stone unturned to inject a ring of realism into his stuff. During football season, last fall, he had asked the head coach for permission, and then had taken part in a couple of scrimmage sessions. He had gotten in there with the scrub squads and garnered the first-hand experience he'd wanted.

Greg was sober-minded and thoroughgoing. He also was tall, stringly-built, with a somewhat prominent nose.

The nose was much less prominent when he retired after ten minutes of play with it spread all over his face. Greg had taken a merciless kidding from the whole campus regarding that broken nose. The students put him down for a simpleton. Only a simpleton, they figured, would sacrifice his good looks on the altar of realism.

Greg's splayed-out beak proved it to the complete satisfaction of the campus scoffers—though they read Greg's authoritative sports writings with a keener interest during the rest of the season.

That's why Pop Malone was staring at Greg's battered nose with misgivings, and Greg said anxiously, "I'll try not to throw a monkey wrench into your practise sessions, Mr. Malone, if that's what's worrying you."

"Well, now, son," Pop hesitated. "It ain't only just that. You ain't exactly the athletic type, y' know." His watery, gray-blue eyes scanned Greg's spindly frame. "I'll admit I admire your spunk in this sport writin' business. But I can't see where it's necessary for you to bust your neck tryin' out everything first hand."

"You don't get the point." Greg's manner became eager. "First-hand knowledge helps. Topflight sports writers try out at about every sport there is. That's what makes their stuff authoritative. And I aim to be topflight."

POP MALONE ran a hand through his wispy carrot-colored hair.

"You mean to fool around some with every event?" he asked.

Gregg nodded.

Malone frowned in a worried fashion. "I wouldn't be responsible for you, Swenson. A thin fella like you can bust a leg in the pole vault, Swenson. You would

kill yourself tryin' to throw the hammer."

"Let him start out with the mile, Coach," a new voice, with a sour twang, cut in abruptly. Greg swung around. Harry D'Arcy, Pop's number one miler, was coming toward them from the cinder pathway. D'Arcy was a short youth, with knotty, muscular legs and a small sullen mouth. A crew cut accentuated his big ears. He scowled at Greg.

"Swenson's taken some swipes at me in the Standard, Coach. It's easy to criticize from the sidelines. Let's see how good he is."

"There was nothing personal in what I write, D'Arcy," Greg said. "I covered last year's track meets as I saw them. I try to be fair."

"You called me a front runner, Swenson. That's the same thing as sayin' I don't have the moxie to win from behind. I won't forget that in a hurry." D'Arcy turned toward Malone. "Why not shove him in today's trials, since he's so doggone anxious." He smirked at Greg. "That is, if he's got enough courage to run a full mile."

Greg flushed with anger. He'd never had much to do with D'Arcy, but he'd heard rumors about the man's peacock pride and acid tongue. He came from a wealthy family, to judge by the way he dressed. Everybody said he was spoiled and lazy, that nothing but his natural ability had made him the best miler on Pop Malone's track team.

Greg gave him a straight hard stare. "It'll be a pleasure, D'Arcy." He turned back to the coach. "Is it oke by you, Mr. Malone? I might do all right. I used to run quite a lot as a kid."

"How's that, Swenson?" Pop Malone's watery eyes took on a glitter of interest.

"Not officially," Greg said hastily. "I grew up on a farm. I had to clean out a dozen stables and milk six cows before school every morning. That meant getting up mighty early, because the school was a couple of miles from our farm, and we didn't have buses. So I used to run those two miles every weekday, and save a half hour of sleep every morning." Greg grinned. "It got to be kind of a habit. I live off campus here to save money. I still run in to campus most mornings, except when someone gives me a lift to town."

"So?" Pop Malone looked at him with shrewd speculation. "Suppose you go to the fieldhouse and check out a set of

spikes, Swenson. I'll postpone the time trials for the miles till you get back."

"And hurry," jeered Harry D'Arcy. "I can hardly wait."

Pop lined them up the minute Greg came trotting out from the fieldhouse. There were Adams and Wentz, the two sophs, Greg and the strutting Harry D'Arcy. D'Arcy tried to grab the pole position for the start, but Pop stopped him.

"Give that pole spot to Swenson, Harry," the coach said. "He oughtta have at least that advantage, since he's never run in a race."

"Oh, sure," D'Arcy answered. "Let him have it. It won't do him any good."

"We'll see," Pop Malone said.

Greg was thinking, The old boy thinks I might have something.

Apparently the ever-hopeful coach had set a great deal of store by Greg's account of running to school, all those long-ago mornings. It was a shame to disappoint him, Greg thought. And yet not a shame, because he really wanted no part of a berth on Pop Malone's track team. He was kept busy enough, working for his meals, writing for the "Standard," and handling a tough academic schedule to boot.

Pop was slowly lifting his tiny .22 pistol. It crashed. Greg was down in the starting crouch like the others. He came ploughing up out of those holes in the cinders as fast as he could. It was all new to him—this crouching start—and he made a botch of it.

He stumbled over his own ungainly feet during the first awkward strides. He saw Harry D'Arcy zoom out like a comet in the outer lane, yards ahead of Adams and Wentz. Suddenly he cut over into Greg's pole position.

D'Arcy's knotty legs flashed with graceful ease, and his flying spikes gouged dirt from the track and sent a spray of black particles back into Greg's straining face.

As the cocky star rounded the turn, he flashed a triumphant grin back at Greg, and Greg dug in hard to overtake him.

But he was fourth in the running, trailing the whole gang. When he tried to step out after Harry D'Arcy, Danny Adams swerved in front of him, and Wentz had him boxed in the outer lane. Greg was neatly frozen in that tight little pocket all the way around that first turn.

THINGS loosened up in the far stretch, though. He put his chin down, pumped his sticklike arms, and pounded past the two Sophs. He didn't stop spurt-ing until he was ten yards behind D'Arcy. The spray of cinders from D'Arcy's flying spikes didn't bother him at that distance.

Greg smiled grimly, and kept his thin, hard-muscled legs chugging beneath him as effortlessly as he could manage.

Going past the starting position to complete the first lap, he was still right there. Pop Malone cupped his mouth with his chubby hands.

"Lean forward!" he yelled. "Swing those arms!"

Greg did lean into his steps a bit, and found that it made running less taxing. He swung his arms in a longer arc with each stride, but it bothered him, and he decided to take that up later. Mostly he was here for the experience, to run one mile race under competitive conditions, so that forever after he'd be better qualified to write about milers.

He saw D'Arcy glance back, surprised at the interest Malone had taken. Harry D'Arcy's thin mouth looked sullen, and his chunky legs labored to step up the pace.

Greg grinned blandly and stayed right there, ten yards back. He was thoroughly enjoying himself. His lungs felt free; he was breathing nicely through both his nose and mouth. His lean legs weren't even beginning to feel the strain of the pace D'Arcy was setting.

Maybe he'd gotten more out of those childhood romps to school than he had imagined. He was thin, with a minimum of weight to carry, but barrel-chested. And he was in good shape for running, because he'd been running into campus from his rooms on the outskirts of town at least twice a week for the past several months.

He stayed right on D'Arcy's heels around that whole second lap, and well into the third.

Midway through that third lap, a fiery poker jabbed him in the ribs and almost doubled him over.

He kept coasting along, gagging for breaths, feeling sick and dizzy. The cool green grass infield looked peaceful and inviting, and he wanted desperately to step off the track and flop down for a rest.

But he knew what a tongue-lashing he'd get from D'Arcy if he quit. So he kept on going. It was brutal for about fifty yards;

then suddenly the pain sifted away, and he felt free as a bird. Second wind was the answer, he knew. He tried to close up the gap D'Arcy had piled up between them, but he couldn't do it. His legs were getting wobbly.

He ran it out to the starting point. As he passed Malone, the coach called out.

"You can quit, kid, if you want to," he said.

But the main idea was to get the feel of running a complete mile race. Greg stayed with it. He finished that final lap in a painful shambling trot, and stumbled over the finish line a full hundred yards back of the strutting D'Arcy.

Adams and Wentz had both forged past him in the last thirty yards and made him look even more silly.

Harry D'Arcy had donned his sweat clothes, by the time Greg rolled over the finish line. His small mouth was twisted into a sarcastic grin.

"Maybe you're a front runner, too," he suggested to Greg. "You can hardly call that a sprint finish."

Greg was too busy puffing to talk back to the grinning star. Surprisingly, Coach Pop Malone talked up for him.

"Take it easy, Harry," the coach said. "The kid did darn' well, considering it's the first time he ever ran the full distance. If you ask me, he deserves a medal for sticking it out to the finish."

As for Greg, he was surprised. He stared at the coach.

"Huh?"

Pop smiled at him. "You may not realize it, Swenson, but you just turned in a miraculous performance. You've picked up a picture stride and a set of iron lungs, somewhere. I want you out for my team!"

Greg gulped, because he'd never thought of himself as an athlete. But then he shook his head firmly.

"Nope, I guess not."

"Why not?" Pop cut in quickly. "You look like a natural runner from where I'm standing, kid. And I can sure use every possible point, this year. Guess you know why, don't you?"

Greg bit on his lip. "You mean because you're retiring after this year, Mr. Malone? And that Midwest jinx still has you stymied?"

"That's right," Malone answered with a nod.

As sports editor of the "Standard," Greg knew the set-up from A to Z. After twenty-three years coaching track here at

the University, Pop was finally going to rack up. And in all those twenty-three years, the old boy had never tallied a win over the Midwest tracksters.

SLOWLY the old Irishman explained the situation.

"We've got a better squad this year than they have, Swenson," he said. "But I've fielded better teams in the past—and what happened? Injuries to my most consistent point winners. Upsets that cost me additional points. And why upsets? Because the gang always goes out there against Midwest with that doggone jinx in their heads, and they just don't hit that old stride. The jinx tightens 'em up. Anyhow, I'd sure like to bust that old jinx, in my last year here at the University. Sort of clean that handicap off the slate for whoever takes over."

"I get what you mean, sir," Greg said.

"Will you take a crack at it, Swenson?" Malone went on hopefully. "There's just a chance you'll come along fast enough to cop a point or two against that Midwest bunch. And I'm in no position to pass up any chances."

Greg groaned inwardly. It was hard to turn Malone down, but he had no choice. What Pop didn't know was how great a sacrifice Greg's folks were making, to see Greg through college.

The farm back home wasn't much, but it provided a bare living to Greg's father and mother. Greg's dad couldn't afford to hire a hand to take over the chores Greg had done, before he'd come here to the University. So that meant his dad was working doubly hard. And the only reason Greg had agreed to let his folks make such sacrifices for him was because he figured a college education would enable him to take the load off their backs, once he'd graduated.

That's why he was so grimly in earnest to make good at sports writing.

His main idea was to turn out such good stuff while in college that some big city daily would grab him up right after graduation. He could not afford to wait for success. He was grimly determined to get into the big chips fast.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Malone, but I guess not," he said with a sigh. "There'll be the baseball games to cover. And the golf team. I'm afraid I just couldn't fit both jobs in—and certainly not do 'em both justice."

"You really mean business about that

newspaper career of yours, hey?" Pop Malone said. "Can't say as I blame you. You're all right, son. You'll get there, I reckon."

"Uh—is it all right to fool around a bit with the other events, Mr. Malone? I'll keep out of the way."

"Sure, kid, help yourself." The old man smiled at him gravely and trudged across the green infield toward the shot put circle.

Harry D'Arcy, who'd stayed within ear-shot of the whole conversation, stepped over beside Greg.

"I figured Pop was wasting his time," he said blandly. "It's a little easier to write about how a race should be run, than to run it yourself, isn't it, Swenson?"

Greg looked at him wearily and wondered how much better a miler D'Arcy would be if he wasn't such a foul ball. But in all honesty, he had to admit that the guy had a point.

"That's right," Greg told him. "It's a lot easier, D'Arcy."

Greg turned abruptly toward the other end of the field. He'd fool around with the discus a bit, he thought, and then maybe look in on the high jumpers. . . .

Greg was on hand early to cover the dual meet with Davidson. Pop Malone handed him the surprise of his life, and a tough decision to make, all in one bundle. Greg gasped, listening to Pop's bland announcement:

"I've entered your name in the mile, Swenson." For the first time, now, he understood the old Irishman's mysterious willingness to have him fooling around during the past couple weeks' practise sessions.

"But holy smoke, Mr. Malone, I'm in no shape to run."

Malone's watery eyes blinked amusedly at him.

"That's where you're mistaken, Swenson. During the last week, if you'll just think back, you've run trials with the two-milers, with the half-milers, the quarter-milers, and the sprinters. You think it was just an accident that I happened to put you in those time trials this week?"

"B-but—"

"Now, wait up, son. Your only objection to running was that it'd take time from your sports writing job. All right, you haven't lost any of that. You're down here to cover the meet, today. You can take five minutes out to run in the mile, and never miss it." He chuckled. "Here's

your chance to get the real feel of running in competition."

"We-e-ell, sure." Greg couldn't help grinning at the neat way the old fellow had tricked him. The idea of running in an actual meet did hold a terrific appeal. It was just the sort of experience he'd wanted.

BUT it was silly. He'd make a fool of himself, in there against experienced runners like Harry D'Arcy. Pop must have read his mind.

"You won't come in last, if that's what you're thinking," the old man said shrewdly. "You're in better shape than you realize. So how about it?"

Greg chuckled nervously.

"Sold. But I'm warning you now, Pop, it'll be just for this one."

"Better go in and get into running duds, son. We'll take that up later."

Harry D'Arcy shot a sour glance Greg's way, when Greg trotted over to join the others at the starting position.

"What kind of a grandstand stunt do you call this, Swenson? I thought you'd had plenty last time."

"Pop's idea," Greg said. "I didn't even know he'd entered my name."

D'Arcy's short laugh had a harsh twang. "Maybe you'll wish he hadn't. This isn't time trials!"

Greg shrugged, then the official was bustling about them like a worried old hen, eager to get the race started promptly.

Greg drew the second lane from the pole. Danny Adams, Wentz, and Harry D'Arcy crouched in their holes on the outside. Leech, Davidson's top runner, was between Greg and Danny, and two other Davidson starters were lined up outside D'Arcy, crowding the narrow cinder pathway.

The official barked terse instructions. His gun hand lifted. Greg dug ahead in a sprinter's start the moment that crashing explosion punished his eardrums.

He surprised himself. The fooling around during the past week had done things for him. He got out there fast, swept down the brief straight stretch and held onto his second place spot around that first turn.

Leech was out front, Greg was next, then Harry D'Arcy, chugging along on his knotty legs right behind.

They moved around the first lap that way, in a tightly gathered bunch. Nobody dropped back till the end of the half, and

Greg realized that the crafty Leech was setting a slow pace. The Davidson star was a sprint finisher, and stood a much better chance of coping first place in a slow race than in a fast one.

Midway through the third lap, Harry D'Arcy came chugging up powerfully, sped past Greg and Leech, and knifed in sharply to take the pole—and the lead—around the turn.

Danny Adams, Wentz, and the two other entrants from Davidson, were falling back in the ruck now. Greg's lungs were beginning to burn a little, and his thin legs were wobbling. But the pace had been slow, and he found that he could hang on behind Leech without too much trouble.

They went past the starting post again, and the gun banged in their ears. The crowd let out a roar of excitement, spurring them on to a blistering last lap. Harry D'Arcy had enough of the peacock in him to respond at once. He stepped up the pace another notch, and forged out fifteen yards ahead of Leech and Greg.

Greg heard his name being yelled out from the crowd alongside of the track. It came to him with a real shock that he was doing okay. He stood a fine chance, on the basis of the race he had run so far, of scoring a point or two for the squad.

He could understand the crowd's amazement at the race he was running. Greg knew the answer—all those years of running to school as a kid, plus the practise races he'd run this week under Pop's watchful eyes.

He felt excitement drive through him. He put his head down, swung his arms harder, and swept into the far stretch, not two yards behind the high-stepping, dirt-kicking heels of Leech.

The Davidson speedster heard him coming. Leech glanced back, then dug in hard to fight off Greg's challenge. They dueled it out all the way down the far stretch.

Greg couldn't quite pass him before the turn. But their spurt pulled them up close to Harry D'Arcy. As they swept off the turn and into the homestretch, there wasn't fifteen yards of daylight between the three of them.

Greg's name was the only one on the crowd's lips now. He was the underdog. The dark horse. The crowd was pulling for him to break that ribbon. If Greg came in first, it would be the sensation of the season. And Greg knew from his own

experience how sport crowds thrive on sensations.

It came to him with a quick thrust of alarm that it was going to be hard to quit running, after doing so well out here today. The thought nagged at him, because he certainly did mean to quit. But there was nothing to do but to run the thing out as well as he could, and worry about consequences later.

HIS lungs were a mass of flame now, and his legs felt as if they were tied loosely to him. But he still had a bit of reserve strength inside him. He gritted his teeth and dug in for all he was worth across those final few yards.

A few yards ahead, he saw Leech pull up even with Harry D'Arcy. Harry shot an angry glance over at the Davidson runner, then suddenly flicked out an elbow, trying to harry the man and break up his smooth stride. It was the rottenest kind of unfair tactics, but Greg knew the crowd wouldn't understand D'Arcy's intention.

As it turned out, Harry's unsportsmanlike gesture back-fired. His own rickety legs got tangled up, badly. He tripped, stumbled, waved his short arms in a frantic attempt to regain his balance. Greg, who was coming up directly behind him, could not have helped bumping into him to save his life. He hit D'Arcy a glancing blow with one leg, then plunged dazedly past him, his bleary eyes focused on Leech, and that beckoning tape just beyond the enemy mile.

There was a startled roar from the crowd, and judging from the way their eyes were focused, Harry D'Arcy must be in serious trouble, Greg reasoned. Then he forgot all about that, and plunged toward that tape, going all the way out in one last attempt to nick Leech. He came up even with the man, matched him stride for stride right through the finish.

Somebody caught him around the waist, just in time to keep him from falling, and led him to the cool green grass of the infield.

Then the big horns boomed out the results:

"Winner in the mile—Gregory Swenson of Danton. The time: four minutes, thirty-one and three-tenths seconds! Second place; Leech, of Davidson. Third place. . ."

Greg was gasping like a gaffed sunfish. He heard the crowd yelling wildly. But

they were no more startled than he was. He'd won the first mile race he'd ever run. Of course, the time was pretty punk, but he'd been victorious!

He heard a gasp from the students around him, then everybody started to crowd over toward the finish tape.

"What's wrong?" Greg asked nervously.

"It's D'Arcy, Swenson. He took a header after you bumped into him. Looks like he's busted his arm!"

Greg stood up just in time to see Pop Malone leading a white-faced, trembling D'Arcy toward the fieldhouse. Harry D'Arcy's right arm was twisted grotesquely below the elbow, and his steps were uncertain, as if he was on the verge of fainting any moment.

Greg bit his lip and ran to catch them.

"I'm sorry, Harry. Is—is there anything I can do?"

"Forget it," D'Arcy scowled at him. "If you weren't so blame clumsy this wouldn't have happened."

"Stop that, Harry," Pop Malone snapped out grimly. "Swenson didn't bump you on purpose, and you know it. Here, one of you fellows, help him into the dressing room, will you?" Pop turned soberly toward Greg. He looked pretty low. "See what I mean by the Midwest jinx now, do you, Swenson? I was counting on D'Arcy for five sure points in the mile. Now I might as well kiss them goodbye. He couldn't run worth a darn with his arm in a sling."

"I guess it was my fault, Mr. Malone."

"It was his fault. I saw him try to elbow Leech. He covered it up pretty neatly, but I've been watching mile races since before he was born. No, it wasn't your fault."

"If I wasn't going to be so busy covering the ball games from now on, I might help out," Gregg said. "But no, it's out of the question."

Malone looked straight at him.

"Listen, kid, you're the greatest natural runner I've ever seen. I'm not kidding. I know all about your crowded schedule, but s'pose I work out a training routine that will take only a couple hours a week. That's all you'd need, so long as you keep running into town from your rooms every morning. I'm not asking you to run in any other meet but the Midwest. But if you could just manage that one, we'll have a chance."

"But the ball games?" Greg said dizzily.

"There's no ball game scheduled the day

of the Midwest meet, Swenson."

"No, that's true."

"You're going to be the hottest thing in the sport pages as a result of the race you've just turned in, Swenson. Whoever heard of a guy winning the first mile he ever ran—against college competition? You'll be the talk of this state by tomorrow morning. The fans won't take it too kindly if you don't give them at least one more chance to see you in action, during the season."

The devil with that! Greg was thinking. He didn't owe them a thing. His main job at college was to continue improving his knowledge of all sports, and his writing about them. He had to make good, so he could pay off for his folks' sacrifices. You had to stick to one goal if you were determined to succeed.

"I had that Midwest meet pretty well developed out on paper," Pop Malone was saying glumly. "I figured we'd take 'em over this year. It looks close, on paper, but without a miler we wouldn't have a chance." His watery eyes scanned Greg's face and Greg felt sort of selfish.

"All right," he said, "I'll run in the Midwest."

ON THE day of the meet, Greg felt very self-conscious as he lined up alongside of Danny Adams and Wentzy, for the start of the Midwest dual. Pop Malone's prediction about the publicity Greg would get had been an understatement. His freakish win of the first mile he ever had run had made him a headline fixture for days. A much larger than normal crowd had turned out to see if he was just a flash in the pan, or if he could repeat that freak stunt.

Greg certainly hoped he could repeat today. Because the meet had panned out just the way Pop Malone had predicted. Coming into the mile, Midwest had a one-half point edge over Danton. And since the mile was the final event on the roster, it would take a first place to nudge Pop into the victory column, and break that twenty-three-year-old jinx.

For Pop's sake, Greg certainly hoped to come through. He looked at Wilson, the Midwest star miler, and felt his stomach tremble with a queazy sensation of weakness. Wilson was just under six feet tall, with a rangy, graceful build, and long sinewy legs that suggested plenty of durability and power.

He had a mark of four-twenty behind

him, and the best Greg had managed in trials, was four-twenty-six. Greg felt like a lamb being led to the slaughter, and wished it would start. Too much depended on him, today. He was sweating freely, growing more nervous every moment.

At last they were ready. The line-up of tense runners crouched in their holes. Greg watched the starter's gun hand come up.

"On your marks, gentlemen."

Greg pushed his spikes against the back of his holes, and tried not to tremble.

"Now set!"

Greg came up on his arms, leaning far forward. He glanced across and saw Wilson, the Midwest star, shifted forward, looking like nothing so much as a coiled spring, ready to go out like a bullet at the sound of that gun.

Crash!

Greg chugged out of his holes, his thin legs driving, driving. He wanted to grab the lead at the start, run his own race as long as he could, as pace setter. But Danny Adams seemed to have other ideas. Greg's chunky teammate got off even faster and drummed down to the turn like a man on his way to a fire. He held the pole around the turn, and Greg had to content himself with second position, behind Danny Adams.

He saw with a quick backward glance that Wilson, the Midwest star, had fallen in right behind him. Wilson was moving along with the long-striding grace of a western horse, and looked quite unruffled by the proceedings so far.

Danny stayed up in front for two solid laps, and it was a dull race to the halfway mark. They didn't change positions until the far stretch of the third circuit. And then Wilson came drumming up beside Greg and spurted to swing past him.

Greg had learned a few things in his few short weeks under Pop Malone's tutelage. One was the importance of keeping a steady stride. He chugged along steadily and let Wilson move past him.

Wilson started to pass Danny Adams, but saw the turn coming, and fell in close to the cement rim of the track behind him.

Greg stayed right behind Wilson around the turn. Wilson made his bid for the lead the minute they hit straight going, and forged past Danny Adams.

Wilson kept moving out fast, opening up a wide lead, and it made Greg nervous. He finally decided he had to do something

about it. He saw Danny beginning to wobble a bit. Greg cut to the side and swept past his weary teammate.

"Take it, I'm done," Danny panted, and Greg shot a wondering glance at him. He couldn't figure how Adams had misjudged his own endurance so badly, to fold up even before the start of the gun lap.

Greg didn't worry about it. He pinned his eyes on the gracefully-pistoning legs of Wilson, and concentrated on staying within shooting distance of the sweet-striding Midwest runner. Going down past the starting position to finish that third circuit, he had a flicking glimpse of Pop Malone, standing at the forefront of the crowd.

There was a big, ruddy-faced man there with Pop, dressed in a natty looking sports outfit. The ruddy face seemed strangely familiar to Greg, though he could swear he'd never seen that man anywhere before.

But Pop Malone seemed to think Greg ought to know the fellow, for the old coach cupped his chubby hands. "Show him a race, son!" he bellowed. He was nodding to the big, ruddy man who stood with him.

Then the gun banged for the big final lap, and Greg was too busy trying to stay with the sprinting Wilson to worry about who Pop's guest was.

WILSON was going into the next-to-last turn as if he'd just started this race, instead of being near the end of it. Greg ground along stubbornly in the man's wake, holding on like a terrier holds on to a piece of wood in its master's hand. But he was feeling the pace now.

Sweat streamed down through his thin brows, stinging his eyes. The slowly unwinding treadmill of the track beneath him began to grow hazy. The faces of the rooters who lined it on either side began to lose their sharp outlines.

And he was tired. He felt as if he would give a solid year of his life if he could just lie down on the grass and rest his heaving lungs for a couple of minutes. His feet were flapping around loosely beneath him, and his arms were swinging in jerks, having lost all sense of rhythm.

He saw Wilson pulling ahead down the far stretch, and somehow, Greg found strength from some hidden reservoir to stay with the Midwest star. He found it by thinking of Pop Malone, who was hanging up a long coaching career at the

end of this season, and who so desperately wanted to crack that Midwest jinx.

Not a great deal for Pop to ask, Greg thought grimly, and kept his legs driving, driving, knowing that if he could somehow overtake Wilson, between here and that ribbon, Pop's career would wind up in a happy ending.

He came into the final turn only six yards behind Wilson, and realized weirdly that he'd gained on Wilson! He kept chugging hard around the turn and he was only five yards back as they steamed into the hundred-yard homestretch.

Then Wilson glanced back, as the crowd let loose a torrent of yells. The Midwest runner seemed surprised to see Greg still so close behind him. He turned and raced for that ribbon as if a pack of savages were chasing him.

Greg felt his lungs start to burn in protest at the continued torture. He kept going. He focused his bleary eyes on the man in front of him and pounded ahead like a man in a dream. He stayed with Wilson, even gained a bit on him. But it was not enough. Fifty yards from the tape, he had a brief lucid moment, and he saw Pop Malone again, at the side of the track, and that same big, ruddy-faced man standing with him.

Then suddenly loose cogs in Greg's spinning brain meshed, and he recognized that big, red-faced fellow. It was Dan Walsh, the "Beacon's" ace sports writer, whose syndicated column was distributed in papers all over the country. Dan Walsh had long been Greg's personal hero, but the only picture he'd ever seen of the man was the blurred half-tone likeness printed with the man's daily column.

Otherwise Greg would have known him sooner. As he flashed past the man now, he saw Dan Walsh wave one big arm toward the tape, and herd the man's booming voice urge him onward.

"Go it, kid. Take him!"

To Greg, it was almost the same as if the Deity had appeared in a vision before some devout missionary and issued some of His own instructions. If the one-and-only Dan Walsh wanted to see him win this race, then he'd have to win it.

He put his head down on his chest, flailing both arms, and burned the wind in a last desperate spurt toward that beckoning ribbon. He staggered. He was not entirely sane, in this moment, but he was conscious enough of what was going on to see the struggling figure of

Wilson slowly pulling back toward him.

He staggered blindly through the final five yards. He saw the straining Wilson leap for the tape just as he made his own lunge for it, too. Then the race was over.

He stood panting in the infield, and the bad news came over the big loudspeakers.

"Results of the mile: a tie for first place between Swenson of Danton and Wilson of Midwest. Time: four minutes, twenty-three seconds flat."

A tie! Greg groaned. A tie in the mile just never happened. That meant—if Pop's bunch had been just that miserable half a point back, and Wilson and Greg divvied the two first places, with four points apiece—then pop would still lose the meet, by that same rotten half point! Talk about jinxes! Greg swore violently under his breath, and flopped disgustedly down on the grass.

It was the wild roar of the crowd that brought him lurching erect, a few moments later. He peered over the heads of the crowd just in time to watch Danny Adams romp past the finish line a half stride in front of one of the two Midwest runners who'd fallen into the ruck at the midway mark.

Greg suddenly let out an Indian whoop and went looking for Pop Malone.

"Boy!" he gasped. He found the old coach, dancing an elated Irish jig with Greg's favorite sports writer.

"How's that for a finish, Coach? Danny's one point for third place gives you the meet by half a point. I never thought about that third place point till the crowd started yelling, but there goes that old jinx down the drain, by golly!"

IT TOOK the delighted old Irishman some time to quiet down.

"Shake hands with Dan Walsh, Swenson," he said. The watery eyes twinkled. "Dan's been following your stuff in the Standard. And he likes those realistic touches you've been getting into it. Right, Dan?"

Walsh's big hand gripped Greg's firmly. "I can line up a job for you on the Beacon when you graduate, Swenson. Your stuff in the Standard can stand up against the best I've seen in the city papers. You're a real comer, kid."

"I don't get it." Greg's head was spinning like a runaway top. "How'd you happen to see what I've been writing?"

Walsh chuckled. "Pop sent some clips

(Concluded on page 112)

TIGER OF THE RINK

By JOHN WILSON

Bobcat star Becker found himself slipping, no longer a terror on skates, and it was up to him to do something about it—or face complete ruin as a sports contender!

CHAPTER I

On the Way Out



THE great roar began to swell, tearing across the rink and breathing confidence on Tiger Becker, going in on the Rocket goalie. Tiger was swarthy, thick-necked, and had carved his name deep into the ice

and the hearts of the Bobcat fans, where it would stay for some time. They were with him now, begging for the tally, and Tiger pushed himself hard to achieve what he had once done with a rhythmic easiness.

It was the clutch minutes of the game, the Bobcats trailing, 3 to 2. Weaving inside the defensive network, Tiger nursed the rubber ahead of a choppy, deceptive stroke. Exactly as he anticipated, his wing-mate, Mickey Scanlon, drifting with the play, suddenly let the ice splinters fly from his runners and jerked a half stride ahead of his check. It was a delayed thrust, deftly calculated to carry Scanlon across the mouth of the goal.

Tiger had seen Scanlon get the red-light on similar breakaway tactics. At close range, the guy's stick carried the sting of a cobra bite. "Give 'im the pass," Tiger thought. "It's the safe thing to do and take the load off your own shoulders."

But Tiger Becker couldn't bring himself to do that, not this time. He could not stall any longer the needling shower of doubts pock-marking his play. He needed this goal to bolster what was left of his

sagging confidence and prove that he was still the Tiger of the rink. There were a lot of reasons why Tiger wanted to make this one good.

Tiger was breathing heavily but tension made him forget that and the aching weariness gnawing at his legs. He plunged ahead, swooping in on the Rocket net-minder. It was Tiger's intention to feint the goalkeeper, holding the shot till the final second, then fire into an unguarded corner of the cage. The goalkeeper leaped to meet Tiger, forcing him to shoot hastily. Tiger got the shot away, a hard, flat one, and went whipping around the netting. He heard the "whoosh" go out of the crowd's holler, and felt an empty, angry frustration.

A Rocket defenseman snagged the rebound, launching a down the ice formation. The red-shirted Rockets jammed inside the blueline. They couldn't quite split the Bobcat backliners and a wild, swirling fracas exploded in front of the cage. A Rocket wing bursting into the scrambled pack, scooped the biscuit, and back-passed.

The big red attack caught its precision again, uncoiling a triple-pass, from wing-to-center-to-wing. Tiger, covering the wing lurched in, his stick lashing frantically. It was bait and his check spun, stepping into the clear and stranding Tiger. The wing tore in and Roy Gillis, the Bobcat goalie, couldn't handle the dark bullet that angled into the webbing. The shot drew the red-light, and the score jumped, 4 to 2.

BITTERLY Tiger's shaggy head wagged from side to side.

"Well, there's your answer," a voice was saying inside of him. "You wanted to find out how much you've slipped and now you

A COMPLETE HOCKEY NOVELET



As the rubber skittered in front of the cage, Tiger followed it in, burst through a couple of black-shirts, and sent the puck easily home past the goalie

know. Nobody could have missed seeing that wing make a monkey out of you."

He looked up and saw Hoot Beneau and a flock of replacements coming on the ice, and Tiger knew the evening was finished for him. That was one for the book, the last chapter, pulling him out while the chips were down. Tiger Becker, man of Bobcat legend, and hockey lore, going to the bench because he had flopped in the clutch.

There was applause for Tiger. He was a great man and even his recent performances could not entirely dim his roaring feats in the minds of the fans. He dropped down on the bench, and the stocky, red-faced man, Nipper Gannon, slapped him on the shoulder.

"I figured you were a little tired, Tiger. Wanna get some fresh stuff in there. No use crying about this one. It looks gone."

Tiger ran his hand across his brow, smearing the moisture, and noticing the hand was shaking a little.

"Yeah, Nipper," he said slowly. "That was the best thing to do."

He sat there, silent and rigid, and watched the last two minutes of the game spill away. Mickey Scanlon switched over to Tiger's left wing, and Hoot Beneau replaced Mickey at the other forward. Tiger grimly admitted to himself that this was a stronger, faster hitting combination. With each passing game, Nipper was gradually working Scanlon into the left-wing spot, and pushing Tiger further into the ash-can.

Tiger pinned his stare on Scanlon, watching him sift in and out of the defense, and he couldn't hold back the resentment. Scanlon, a rookie, was a slender kid, though, big and powerful around the shoulders. He was good enough to ship a steady, hard-shooting veteran like Hoot Beneau to the second-string line. But that, of course, was a bit of diplomatic stuff on Nipper Gannon's part. Hoot would be back with the first line, teaming up with Scanlon. You simply didn't rush Tiger Becker out of his job, and leave his boots to be filled by a raw, new guy. Much better to do it with grace, and be sure Tiger was finished.

And this was a bitter cut. Tiger had always sworn he would go out with them cheering. A foolish thought, the kind they all seem to believe. He had tripped up badly along the way, and the wine had tasted good.

At this moment, Tiger was harshly

aware that he was headed for the same rocky finish as the others who figured it couldn't happen to them. And in this spot, he could not help but feel a mixture of anger and bitterness toward Mickey Scanlon. Here was the point of the pressure. Here was another man stepping into the limelight that had beat upon Tiger these many seasons.

Tiger leaned forward on the bench. The Coliseum rocked beneath the rising and falling roar of the crowd. Scanlon had poke-checked the disc loose along the boards, and getting good support, was riding in there, trying to split the back-liners. He was hoisted, dumped on his back. A moment later, Scanlon was in the middle of things again, and the defense once more caught him.

The Rockets were stalling now, packing their defense, and settling back to rip the Bobcat down ice charges to pieces. Scanlon and Beneau stormed the rubber into the scoring zone.

The jam was on. Scanlon piled into the scramble, flipped the rubber to the other forward. A back-liner belted Beneau, but not before he slithered a pass to Scanlon. The rookie whipped around the cage, kicking up a spume of ice shavings, and wheeling across the face of the goal. He fired and the net-tender dived but the rubber was in there and the red-light was glowing.

It wasn't enough. The Bobcats dropped the tilt, 4 to 3, but not before Scanlon had thrown another scare into them. It took a magnificent save by the Rocket goalie to turn him back.

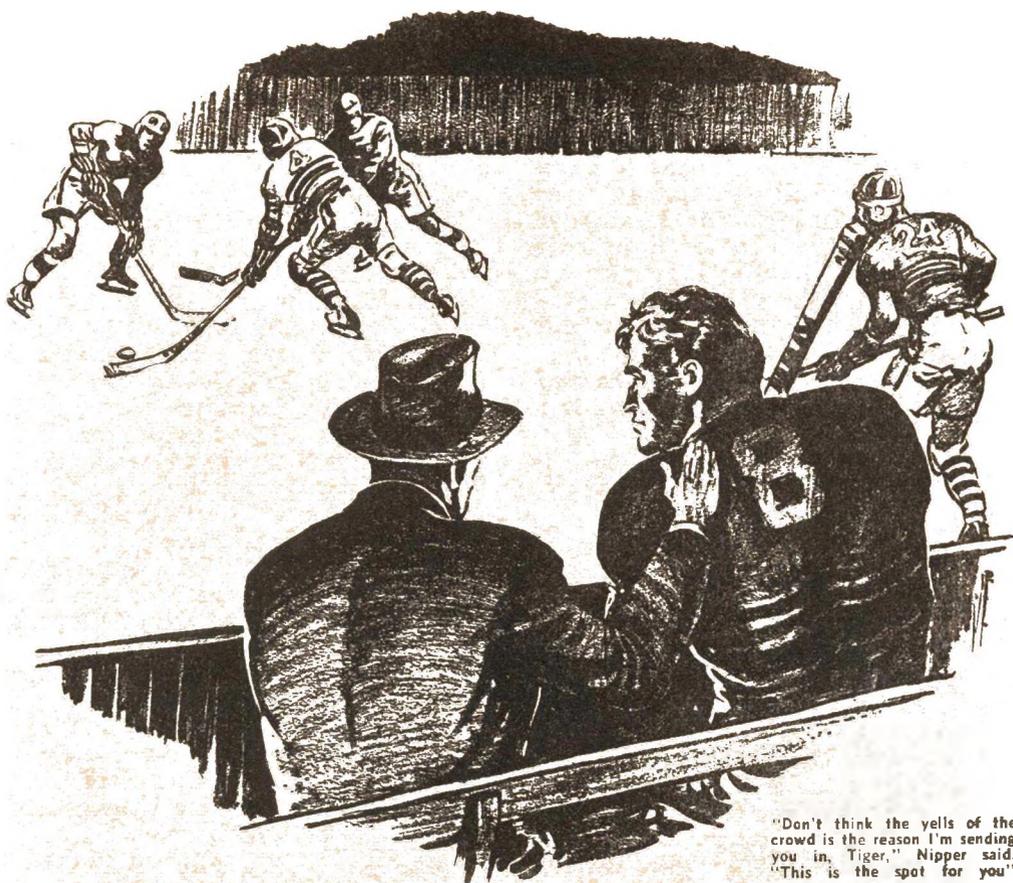
Tiger looked at Nipper, and the little manager's face was white and strained.

"We make 'em close, but can't seem to win," Nipper said. "We gotta do something soon."

"We've been through all this plenty of times in other seasons," Tiger said. "It all goes in streaks. We're due for a change."

It was a weak reply and Tiger knew it but it was better than seeking out what was in Nipper's mind.

IT WAS hot, and a sullen atmosphere prevailed in the dressing room. The defeat, the fourth consecutive one for the Bobcats, dropped them into the league basement, and a raw irritation showed on their faces. But Tiger was quick to notice that there was nothing of that attitude about Mickey Scanlon's demeanor. The player was whistling quietly, almost hap-



"Don't think the yells of the crowd is the reason I'm sending you in, Tiger," Nipper said. "This is the spot for you"

pily. And Tiger, stripping off his harness, wondered why Scanlon had to be assigned to the locker next to him.

Scanlon stopped whistling, looked at Tiger.

"Well, old man, I guess we just didn't have it in there tonight," Scanlon said. "But there's always a next time. At least, till we get kicked out the play-offs."

Maybe it wasn't meant to be personal, the way Scanlon said that. Maybe he was simply trying to perk Tiger's spirits up. Tiger didn't mean to put a snap into his tongue. But it was there just the same.

"Good that you can take things that way. Some of us can't get used to a licking."

Scanlon laughed a little.

"You gotta relax in there. That's what is the matter with this outfit. They blow a close one and everybody gets all hot and bothered about it. That's no way to break outa slump."

"I'm sure glad for the advice," Tiger said. "It sounds good coming from you, old pal."

The muscles tightened along Scanlon's jaw, but there was no anger in his voice.

"It's all in the way you look at things. Now take that last time I went in on the goal. I shoulda gotten the light but the bum in the cage pulls a save like he never made in his life."

"He's been making those kind for ten years," Tiger snapped.

Scanlon shrugged.

"Maybe so, but when they beat me, I feel they're lucky. And that's how I intend to keep on feeling."

He was a cocky character, this Mickey Scanlon. And for the moment, Tiger remembered that he himself had been no shrinking violet when he first hit the big time. But the years have a way of practically rubbing out those memories, and Tiger could not feel kindly toward this brash and confident kid.

Tiger was going into the showers when Nipper stopped him.

"You wanna stick around while I finish some paper work, Tiger? Then we'll go have a sandwich and beer and forget

about this one."

"Sure, Nipper," Tiger said. "Good idea."

Nipper's brows were knitted and Tiger grew more worried. Nipper's health had slowly been going down-grade, and he was taking the string of defeats hard. The two of them, Tiger and Nipper, were a regular daily-double in the friendship department. It was Nipper going to bat for Tiger in the front-office, and Tiger for Nipper on the ice. Back down the years, Nipper as a player had spotted Tiger in a northern Canadian loop, and recommended him to the Bobcats. The friendship had carried on from there. And now Nipper was in a tough spot.

CHAPTER II

Tough Choice

GLOOMILY Tiger Becker stayed under the warmth of the showers, soaking and bathing himself. A voice piped through the room.

"Hurry it up, Tiger."

There was a trace of urgency in the voice and he put the soap down and stepped into the outer room. A tall, dark-haired man was waiting for him. He was Lou Shaw, of the *Morning Call*, and one of the best hockey scribes in the business.

"What's doin', Lou?"

"Something that'll interest you. Get dressed and we'll talk 'bout things."

"Sounds important, huh. Okay, you can bounce along with Nipper and me. We were goin' for a beer anyway."

Shaw shook his head.

"Shucks, no. That won't work out in this case. I wanna see you alone."

He looked at Lou, puzzled and not knowing quite what to make of what was in the scribe's mind. Tiger didn't notice Nipper, standing at the edge of the row of lockers, talking to Mickey Scanlon. But Nipper's ear was apparently bent.

"Never mind about me, Tiger," Nipper said. "You and Shaw go along."

It was a situation that couldn't be helped and Tiger wished that Shaw had been a bit more tactful about his approach.

"Okay," Tiger said. "I'll be with you in a few minutes, Lou."

He dressed quickly and went with the hockey writer to a coffee shop around the corner from the Coliseum. They sat down in a booth.

"What's all the top-secret stuff about, Lou?" Tiger said.

Lou smiled.

"I thought you might like to know that you're practically manager of the Bobcats," he said. "I filed my story before the game tonight."

"I've heard those rumors before," Tiger remarked quietly. "But never put much stock in them."

"It's no longer much of a rumor, old pal. The Big Boy gave Nipper his notice to get the club into the play-offs or get out. I happen to know he definitely wants you for the job and will make an offer as soon as possible under the circumstances. You gotta remember that Nipper has stood on a dime a long time and done nothing much. A change won't hurt the club."

There was a little silence.

"I'm sorry you filed that story, Lou," Tiger said. "It isn't gonna do the club much good thinking that I'm on Nipper's neck for his job."

"It's a beat for me just like it was when I first called the turn on you as a great puck-ragger," Lou said. "But listen, Tiger, you ought to be glad to have somebody in your corner. I believe you'll make a great manager, a better one than Nipper. The club owes you the job and I for one, wouldn't like to see you drop out of things without getting what's coming to you. Believe me, it's happened too often in the past."

Maybe Lou had the right idea. Tiger Becker had given his years, his best to the Bobcats, and it had paid the club handsomely at the box-office. And now, heading for the hockey barnyard, he'd often thought of hooking on as a manager. It was a dream, a vague sort of dream, and he had never allowed himself to think of it as anything but that.

"You've been pretty fine to me, Lou," Tiger said. "And thanks plenty for the backing. But it wouldn't work out. There's too many other things."

The hockey writer gave him a quick glance.

"It's because things have been peaches and cream between you and Nipper. A different kind of relationship than ordinarily exists between player and manager."

"Loyalty," Tiger said shortly. "That sounds corny, huh. But I'm not going to be the one to bust Nipper outa his job."

"I see."

The waiter brought them hamburger

sandwiches and coffee. The talk drifted. Tiger lighted a cigarette.

"Mary will be waiting, Lou," he said. "I'm gonna hustle along."

"You've certainly gone conservative in the last couple of years, Tiger," Lou said. "The Tiger I used to know got around and spent his dough and always found his fun."

AT THIS, Tiger grinned a little, remembering easily and painfully the pocket of gold he had sprinkled along the Great White Way. That was before he had met Mary, and when little Mary Ann arrived, the old glitter quickly tarnished and there was something shiny about the future. Unfortunately, there was only a shredded bank book and a dim hockey outlook. Managing the Bobcats would solve a lot of things, no doubt about that.

"I'm poorer but happier," Tiger said. "And I'm not kidding myself."

"Somebody is gonna get Nipper's job," Lou said, almost teasingly. "How about that?"

"I can still push that disc, Lou. We'll worry about things when they happen."

The *Morning Call* writer cocked an eye.

"Remember me, Tiger? You don't have to string me along. We both know this guy, Mickey Scanlon, is terrific and going to be around a long time. There's not going to be much room left for you, Tiger. You'd better think things over carefully."

Tiger lived on Long Island, owning a brick bungalow and a towing and wrecking service. On paper it looked fine except that the bank owned most of the papers. A Canadian by birth, Tiger still got in most of his pre-season licks in Ontario.

A little more than an hour after leaving Lou Shaw, he was walking into the tiny houselike structure that stood along the curve of the drive-in to the Towing and Wrecking Service station. It wasn't much compared to some of the big chain-stations, being small but adequately fitted to handle the town's business. It was a source of income when the time came to cash in his hockey chips.

It had been months ago, that the insurance people were around, looking over the place. At the time, it seemed a certainty that a deal would be consummated to handle the repair jobs the insurance people turned over on a regular contract basis. But the deal quickly developed one snarl after another.

First, the insurance people wanted Tiger to add more help, and he had put two more men on. They suggested additional facilities and that called for more tools, more space, more of almost everything.

He would have to post a bond to guarantee his work and a time-limit. All this was okay with the bank, but they wanted to see something in black and white from the insurance people. And how could Tiger show them that, when these other things needed attending to before the insurance outfit signed a contract?

Mike Malecki was Tiger's night man, and Mike grinned when he saw Tiger come in.

"How'd you do tonight, Tiger? You get three or four?"

Mike always talked of goals like they were base hits.

"Not even a whiff of one, Mike."

"You lose then," Mike said, a little alarmed.

"Again."

Mike shook his head, dismayed. "They can't expect you to win 'em alone. Don't they have anybody else on that club?"

"That's the trouble, Mike. They've got somebody else."

Mike didn't say much more but Tiger knew he had a pretty good slant on what things were all about. Whenever possible, he'd been getting to the games. Certainly, he realized Tiger was in the gloaming of his career, and that Mickey Scanlon was his successor.

"You hear anything more about that insurance tie-up?" Mike asked.

"Same as before. Hot and cold. Right now it's cold."

"There must be a way to raise the dough," Mike said. "If we could do that, there wouldn't be much to worry about."

Tiger nodded.

"That's the problem, old pal. A little thing called cash."

He checked on the day's business and it wasn't too good. Then Tiger ambled down the street, playing all the angles in his mind and wondering how he could get his hands on the money to meet the improvements demanded by the insurance people. And his thoughts always stopped at the same point. Manage the Bobcats.

Tiger paused on the steps leading to the brick bungalow, looking into the shadows of the trees along the street.

How had he worked himself into such a jam? Even the house carried a good-sized

mortgage, and every month what with the dough he was pouring into the business, he was straining harder to make ends meet.

Things might have been different if he had done all these things five or six years back when he was in his prime and the dough kept rolling in from breakfast food endorsements, radio appearances, and movie shorts. Why had he waited till the last minute to try and save everything?

SOMEHOW, it seemed a more expensive proposition trying to be a good, average husband than running around and not giving a hang what happened next.

There was a lighted lamp in the living room and in the kitchen where Mary was cooking. There'd be an after-game steak. But he had no appetite tonight.

He went into the kitchen and Mary's big, brown eyes were smiling, and she came toward him. He kissed her, held her a moment, looking over the shiny, tightly brushed brown hair. Mary always listened to the radio accounts of the game and she did not bring up the subject.

"I'll put the steak on," she said quietly. "You're a little later than I expected you to be."

"I ran into Lou Shaw. We had something to eat so I'd rather skip the steak, Mary. Just a cup of coffee."

While Mary was heating the coffee, Tiger went into the room where little Mary Ann slept. She was three years old and looked like her mother for which Tiger was grateful. He had hoped for a boy but Mary Ann had more than amended his wishes.

One thing, he thought, tightening the covers around her, she'd never have to worry about a puck-scarred beak like he owned. She would go to college and marry some nice chap, who wouldn't be a hockey player. Yes, it was just as well, she was a girl. Old Doc Crandall had said, "It would be very dangerous for Mary to give birth again."

When Tiger returned to the kitchen, he saw the worried glance Mary gave him. Then she was her smiling self, putting her hand on his shoulder.

"We've been a lot of trouble to you, haven't we, Tiger?"

"No," he said. "You've been wonderful. It isn't your fault that I waited so long to see daylight."

"You've been a good husband, Tiger,"

she said. "The best in the world and Mary Ann and I are the luckiest people in the world to have you."

Something tightened inside of Tiger. He turned his face away, and never had he felt the frustration that tore through him now. Never could he let them down. And it came at this moment, that he knew he wanted Nipper's job, managing the Bobcats.

His family was more important than Nipper's friendship. Nipper was well-heeled, had saved his dough. And now his health was beginning to crack. It would be foolish passing up the job, and letting sentiment ride him out of it.

"Lou Shaw told me they're going to stick me in as manager of the club," Tiger said. "Of course, it depends on how things go and whether we make the play-offs. But there doesn't seem to be much chance of that."

Mary was silent a moment. She knew the close affinity that existed between her husband and Nipper.

"Are they going to fire Nipper?"

He tried to keep his voice calm.

"What difference does it make? If it isn't me, it will be somebody else getting the job. But I'm going to make it my business to be there first."

"Yes, of course. But there are so many angles, Tiger. I guess, though, it's entirely up to you—"

He cut in, not wanting to hear more. And for once there was a trace of anger in his voice.

"I know what I'm doing, Mary. That job belongs to me."

She said no more.

Tiger read Lou Shaw's story in the *Morning Call* the next day. It said that Nipper was going to step down from his job and that Tiger was slated to replace him if the club failed to make the play-offs. The piece spoke glowingly of Tiger's record with the Bobcats and expressed the opinion that Tiger would be as popular a manager as he was in the role of the club's greatest star.

Lou Shaw quoted the well-worn "authoritative source" as saying, "the club has floundered too long under Nipper Gannon's leadership."

Shaw had pulled no punches, though Tiger knew him to be on friendly terms with Nipper. There had, however, been a barrage of criticism directed at Nipper from many quarters during the last couple of seasons.

CHAPTER III

Apple of Discord

WHEN Tiger walked into the dressing-room the next evening the backfire of Lou Shaw's story was obvious in the tone and manner of the Bobcats. It was also in their faces, the way they stared at Tiger, uncertain of their relationship. And yet, beneath the thinly-veiled tension, was an intangible resentment because the Bobcats thought highly of Nipper.

Tiger stepped in front of his locker, and Mickey Scanlon was standing there, a grin tugging at the corner of his mouth.

"Hullo, manager," Scanlon chortled. "Gosh, I'm gonna have to be careful how I act around you, Tiger. I was thinking maybe I should put a big, red apple in your locker but the blamed thing is locked." The grin widened. He pulled a shiny, red apple from his own locker. "Here you are, Tiger! From me to you."

There was that about Scanlon, no hint of inhibitions and a load of laughter in his heels. Thinking about the incident later, Tiger was sorry he had not gone to work with both fists on the man. But the way Scanlon had pulled the stunt gave the impression of being more good-natured than smart-alecky.

"You keep that apple, kid," Tiger said. "You might be getting hungry one of these days."

"Not me, old man," Scanlon snapped. "There's no scars on my kisser yet."

That wasn't funny. It stung, burned, and Tiger swung around knowing that another exchange of remarks would make it difficult for him to control the angry tumult pushing up inside of him.

Tiger got into his togs, and waited to go through the dasher door and do business with the front-running Falcons. It was almost time to go out there, and Nipper putting in an appearance, walked across the room to Tiger.

"I'm using a different front-line tonight, Tiger," he said. "Gonna start Scanlon at the left wing."

The bluntness rocked Tiger a little. It was plain as could be that this was Nipper's method of revenge for the story Shaw had broken. He had been on the starting line, shoving off with the roar of the crowd, these many seasons. And to-

night, Nipper was throwing the towel in his face, and making his words a broadcast around the room.

"Okay, Nipper," Tiger said. "You're callin' them."

Nipper was edgy.

"I'm glad you see it that way, Tiger. For a moment, I thought you and Shaw were running the team."

"I didn't tell Shaw to write that yarn. That was entirely his own idea."

"You got together with him while my back was turned," Nipper said sharply. "The pair of you planned things. I see why Shaw didn't think it convenient for me to be around."

"I'm sorry you look at it that way."

"How else did you expect me to feel about it?"

There wasn't much Tiger could say to that. The heat was on Nipper and he knew it, and the story had brought a painful climax. His anger had washed away his reasoning.

The Bobcats clumped on the ice to play the Falcons. They finished their warm-up, and Tiger slouched down on the bench and watched Mickey Scanlon go into the left wing position. He tried to lose his thoughts in the action, but they kept swirling.

Tiger wondered whether the price of Lou Shaw's story would be his hide.

The Falcons didn't waste any time in feeling-out tactics. Swiftly, they organized and worked inside the blue-line. The drive culminated in a double-pass, and blazing close-in shot. Roy Gillis slapped the rubber down and the play moved into a scrimmage. The Bobcat backliners, mainly "Ducky" Lambert, hoisting and rattling the Falcon forwards, broke the back of their renewed charge.

Then there was Mickey Scanlon, checking hard, and continuously mixing with the Falcons, and giving slight regard to the long minutes ahead on the ice.

Twice in the next couple minutes, he attempted to blitz the defense, pulling solo flights, and on each occasion being stopped short of the goal.

It was great and exciting stuff and brought waves of excitement from the crowd. But it wasn't exactly smart hockey and Tiger knew it would soon extract the moxie from Scanlon.

"He's traveling at too fast a gait," Tiger thought. "He hasn't learned to pace himself, and realize that every check he throws doesn't have to belt the Falcon into the gallery."

THE whole play of the Bobcats seemed lifted. They were a fighting, inspired bunch, and Tiger believed that much of their new-born impetus was the direct result of Lou Shaw's newspaper blast at their boss. Nipper, popular manager that he was, stood on the spot, and the Bobcats were battling desperately to save his job for him.

Ducky Lambert jabbed the rubber to Scanlon along the sideboards, and Scanlon sparred for an opening. There wasn't any. He tried to shoot through the wall of maroon-shirts, and got a rough going over. The pounding didn't knock an ounce of iron out of Scanlon. He came roaring back, pitching into a free-for-all, and finally hooking the rubber and going in to score.

Tiger's relief jobs on the ice were short, intended to allow Scanlon to catch his breath. Tiger played hard, determined to cover his check, and make no slip-ups that might diminish the Bobcats' lone goal margin.

But he was hardly the old Tiger Becker, swashbuckling and forever dangerous. He could not rid himself of the thought that he was not only fighting the opposition but his own team, too. A tight compressing thumb seemed to bear down on him, washing away the old fire, and making him experience a helpless anger that blindly sought an outlet.

He guarded his every maneuver, holding on in there, as a fighter desiring to avoid a knockout and last the full distance of the fight.

A new front-line brought Tiger on the ice in the opening minutes of the final period. The Falcons battling desperately, wove a forward loose out of a three man formation. Tiger streaked toward the boards and puck-ragger. He tried to poke-check the rubber, missed and tossed a body-check. Other Falcons piled into the scrimmage. There was a face-off and, momentarily, he had kicked the fuse out of the goalward sweep.

The Falcons quickly regained possession of the puck, and the lightning struck with a rapidity that jerked the fans out of their seats. A sudden stab at the Bobcat cage, and Roy Gillis cleared the smoker, laid it on Tiger's stick.

Tiger shook off one icer, hesitated, then whipped a pass to his forward.

The breaks have a sticky habit of plaguing those who fight them hardest. And here were the fates, throwing their

luck against Tiger.

The Falcon forward, slicing in, grabbed the rubber, whirled and let loose a tricky shovel-shot from long range. It connected, drawing the red flare.

Fury burned inside of Tiger. He snagged the face-off, spun and twisted, flashing straight down the ice. The back-liners rode with him, crowding and squeezing him off the target. He went down in a tangle of flashing steel and swinging sticks. There was a sharp tingle in his right wrist and for a moment, he thought the thing was busted. Then he was up, bouncing into the play and battling to smash in on the Falcon goal.

A moment later, Mickey Scanlon returned to the ice. There was a tangle in front of the Falcon cage, and Scanlon stroked the rubber, banging it into the webbing.

The Bobcats walked off the ice, victors in a stunning 2 to 1 upset.

In the dressing-room, the trainer worked on Tiger's wrist, and bandaged it. Although the wrist was badly bruised and swollen, Tiger was comforted to learn no bones were broken. He saw Nipper go into a huddle with the trainer, and a few minutes later, Nipper called him into his office.

"I'm sorry about your injury," Nipper said. "But I'm afraid you won't be much good to us for awhile."

"It's nothing serious," Tiger said. "I've been in there with a lot worse than a slap on the wrist."

Nipper looked at him thoughtfully.

"I was thinking," he said at length, "that if I sent you down to the Hornets, it might give you a chance to pull yourself together."

Tiger's eyes blazed angrily. Send him to the Hornets—the minors! So this was Nipper's method of protecting his job. Get rid of him on the thin alibi that the wrist injury made him useless to the team. Let the fans forget him.

"It's not even clever, Nipper," Tiger said. "It would be much simpler to try putting a hole in my head."

The Bobcats' manager stirred restlessly.

"No, Tiger," he said quickly. "I'm not trying to pull that kind of deal. Whatever the personal differences between us, I wouldn't go that low. I figured I'd be helpin' you, letting you work out of your slump with the Hornets. A couple of good games under your belt and maybe you'd be old Tiger again."

"I can still lug that puck," Tiger said. "I'll get going."

HE SAID that more hopefully than with belief.

"We still gotta go on results," Nipper said. "Even with you, Tiger."

"Yeah, of course. But the whole business is mixed up plenty. You got it in your head that I got together with Lou Shaw and crossed you. Why don't you go to Lou Shaw and get the truth from him?"

Nipper smiled a little.

"You do want my job, don't you, Tiger? You want it with all your heart."

There was no denying that. He wanted it because the pressure was on him to keep the Towing and Wrecking station going. He wanted it for the security it meant to his family.

"Yes, I want it, Nipper," Tiger said. "But not bad enough to get it in the way you think."

Nipper shrugged.

"I wasn't much wrong in any case, then. I don't hafta go to Lou Shaw. But if I can help it, I'm not gonna let them ride me out of the job on a plank. Shaw or you or anybody else isn't gonna put me on my back."

"I never wished that," Tiger said. "I hope you make the play-offs."

"It's a funny thing, you havin' to play to keep my job for me," Nipper said. "Against yourself, you might say. Every time you score, you knock yourself that much looser from the job."

"That still isn't enough to keep it from being a fair fight," Tiger said. "At least we know how we stand with each other."

"That, we do," Nipper said. "But I'm not going to pull my punches in beating you on this thing."

The season wore rapidly on. Tiger's role in the Bobcat upward surge was almost strictly confined to the bench. His appearances on the ice were seldom and short.

For awhile, the fans hollered for him because he had always been a colorful and fighting player. But the calls grew fainter, and Tiger discovered how short and twisted was the memory of the fans. The glory that once belonged to him quickly tarnished in the light of acclaim that rang down around Mickey Scanlon's ears.

The restlessness drummed inside of Tiger. He saw Mickey Scanlon skating the Bobcats into the play-offs, blackening his own chances of becoming manager.

More than that, though, Tiger knew Scanlon was pushing him out of the big time.

Tiger had by now become adjusted to the fact that Mickey Scanlon was a sure-fire star, and did not begrudge him the acclaim any more than he did Nipper's ringing answer to his critics. At heart, Tiger was a team man. But it was just as human, too, feeling the pinch of his pride being kicked full of holes.

There was little sensational about the upward climb of the Bobcats. It could be said they had begun to win more games than they lost, and slowly lifted themselves to a position where they could challenge a notch in the play-offs. The grim, down-the-stretch battle cost the Bobcats the temporary services of Hoot Beneau. The veteran forward, playing the best hockey of his career, ripped a cartilage loose in his knee.

Nipper did not replace Hoot with Tiger. Instead, he reached down into the Hornets, farm club of the Bobcats, and came up with a rookie wing. But the rookie was no Mickey Scanlon, and could not provide the same stick magic that Hoot had worked.

Tiger noticed that even Mickey Scanlon broke a little under the bitter, ding-dong march toward the play-offs. Grim, hard-pulling lines formed around his mouth, and no longer was Scanlon quite the laughing, hell-for-leather player of the early season games. The skin stretched tight across his cheek-bones and he looked tired and drawn. In spite of himself, the play-off fever had gotten under Scanlon's skin. And that was ironic because Tiger recalled how Scanlon had once derided the thought of cracking under the tension.

CHAPTER IV

The Right Answer

AS THE days rolled on, there still was no place on the ice for Tiger, even when one of the spares cracked a shoulder and was finished for the season. Nipper merely juggled his spares, and fitted the pieces together and somehow the Bobcats miraculously clutched and clawed and hung on to a one game lead over the Nighthawks, their rival for the play-off notch.

Bobcats against Nighthawks. The howl of the jam-packed Coliseum pounded in

Tiger's ears, and it was an old, almost forgotten echo. He no longer felt a part of the drama, the crowd and the Bobcats. The game itself would go far toward deciding whether he became next manager of the Bobcats or was finished as both a player and possible manager.

There was the shrilly blast of the ref's whistle, and the dropping of the puck. Sticks lashed and gleaming steel blades dug into the ice. Hoot Beneau, his leg not completely mended, had insisted on going back into the line-up for this one. He hooked the black biscuit, flipped a pass to his centerman, swinging down on the left of him. Then Mickey Scanlon, shooting along the boards in a fast-breaking attack, took the pass in stride.

Tiger got a glimpse of the Nighthawk backliner, slashing in on Scanlon. At the last instant Scanlon slid the rubber to Hoot, cutting around him. The backliner threw a check, and it was a rattler, flattening Scanlon. He got up, badly shaken, and the Nighthawk strategy appeared to be to keep heavy pressure on Scanlon right from the outset.

Scanlon fought back into the play, swirling deep in Nighthawk territory. A pair of Nighthawk huskies caught him amidships, dumping Scanlon again. Scanlon ripped off his gauntlets and suddenly began throwing punches.

Tempers, hot and wavering, let loose and brawls began popping all over the ice. It took a couple of bluecoats to quell the warfare. But the ref had the last word, banishing Scanlon and "Ducky" Lambert to the cooler. The Nighthawks lost one man.

The Nighthawks lost no time turning on the heat. Their attack roared into high gear. They split through the defense, hammering a relentless barrage at Roy Gillis. The Bobcat goalie pulled roar after roar out of the throats of the fans, making a series of magnificent saves. Incredible as the performance was, it wasn't good enough to prevent a Nighthawk from sliding one into the webbing.

Smart cookies, these Nighthawks, Tiger thought. They had reckoned with Scanlon's greenness, and suckered him into a scrap and a penalty. When Scanlon and Lambert returned to the ice, play evened off again, and the Bobcats held the Nighthawks at bay.

Midway through the opening period, Nipper sent on a new frontline, but Tiger wasn't a part of it. Tiger thought back

bitterly to his conversation with Nipper and passed it off as so many sweet words. One thing, Nipper had made good his threat not to pull any punches in going all out to hold his job. He had left Tiger to rot on the bench.

The Bobcats went into the dressing-room, trailing, 1 to 0. There was nothing much said, just sullen, battered men, who had thrown everything into the game and found it was not enough.

Clumping back out there, Tiger's glance settled on Mary, sitting at rinkside, near the Bobcat bench. There was a worried frown on her face, but it quickly disappeared when she caught Tiger's eye. She smiled, waved.

The Nighthawks swiftly carried the mail to the Bobcats. Ducky Lambert smeared a rush and Dink Andrews came in to corral the biscuit. He swished it to Hoot Beneau, and the Bobcat frontline zipped into motion, snapping the puck ahead, and driving into the teeth of the Nighthawk backliners. Then it was Hoot, trying to crash forward. The guards hit him, knocking him loose from the disc. The play moved toward the opposite end of the rink. But Hoot, sprawled on the ice, did not get up. The bad knee had folded under him, and his face was a mask of agony.

They carried Hoot off the ice, and in the tense stillness that followed, a bellowing voice from the gallery split the air.

"Give us the Tiger. Put Tiger in there."

That started it, and the call echoed and finally crashed in an almost solid mass appeal for Tiger.

Nipper's face was hot and strained. He turned to Tiger.

"Don't think that noise is the reason, I'm sending you on. This is the spot for you."

"Yeah, I bet," Tiger said. "Sometimes you can be very funny, Nipper."

HE CLIMBED over the rail, and he was laughing a little to himself.

"Now, Nipper is in a hole," he thought, "and he wants me to save the thing for him. He picked me for the fall guy and he's got no other choice but to use me and hope I'll save his shaky job."

Tiger tossed a quick look at Mary. She was standing, her face white.

Then alongside of him, Tiger heard Scanlon's voice, angry, lashing.

"Just feed me that thing, see, Tiger?" Scanlon snarled. "I'll plow through these

bimbos and bust a couple of 'em wide open doin' it."

"You ain't burned out enough," Tiger said. "Go ahead, kill the last spark."

Almost before Tiger could get the feel of the frozen brine under him, a black-shirted rush broke down the right lane. Tiger's check cut sharply inside of him, nailing a pass. The Nighthawk wing raced in, drilling a sizzler at the cage. Roy Gillis threw himself in front of the rubber, blocked it with his chest. Tiger grabbed the rubber, whirled, giving his front-line mates time to swing into formation, and swept down the ice.

It was Scanlon going in, slapping his stick on the ice. The thought flashed in Tiger's mind that the thing to do would be to use Scanlon as the decoy, and flip to Dink Andrews, angling in.

Nevertheless, he rifled the pass through, and Scanlon by-passing science tried to bull his way past the backliner. He lost the disc. Andrews, whipping in, hooked it free again, and got away a shot. It almost caught the Nighthawk goalie napping, and he went to his knees to make the save.

The rubber skittered in front of the cage, and Tiger following in split through a pair of black-shirts, swinging and driving the puck easily into the cage. The red-light blinked and an explosion of noise rocked the Coliseum.

"That's the old Tiger spirit. C'mon you Tiger."

Tiger of the rink. The tally, an easy set-up, temporarily flushed the bitterness from Tiger, and filled him with the old win-or-nothing spirit. He knew the whole load was on him, and that if the Bobcats were to win, he would have to carry much of the burden. If nothing else, Nipper would owe his job almost directly to him and that in itself would be satisfying.

The Nighthawks stiffened, fought back fiercely and with renewed fury. They loaded into Tiger, battering and smashing his jabbing thrusts beyond the blue-line. Mickey Scanlon, forever seeking to blast his way into the cage, was repeatedly checked and hoisted out of the play.

"Look, Scanlon," Tiger said finally. "You're burning up too much lead and too fast. Start feinting and kidding these guys a little. Stick around for the finish."

There was doubt in Scanlon's stare. And Tiger knew that Scanlon was wondering if he was simply trying to grab off a hunk of glory. Or was Tiger actually giving him

sound advice. "Okay," Scanlon said, hesitating. "We'll see what makes."

The action was rough, gruelling. The teams battled into the third canto. Tiger kept probing the defense, looking for an opening and being slammed back. He was lapping up a lot of punishment that ordinarily would belong to Scanlon, who hung back, waiting for the call to let loose.

The Nighthawks unloosed the full might of their powerhouse in a determined attack to smash through for a counter. They finally punched a hole in the defense, and the puck carrier, whirring in on Roy Gillis, failed to get the red light. Ducky Lambert pounced on the disc, flipped to Tiger.

Tiger leaped clear of slashing sticks, crashing momentarily into the clear, and pulling Scanlon along with him.

"Now," Tiger blurted. "Let's go."

They shuttled the rubber from one to the other, swooping into Nighthawk territory. The enemy defense laid back, bent like a bow, and poised to zoom forward.

Scanlon took the puck in, throwing a sharp feint, and half-circling around the defenseman. He faked to Tiger, and rode in close, sinking the rubber in a corner of the wicket. It was Bobcats—2; Nighthawks—1.

Scanlon came away laughing, and waving his stick in Tiger's direction. "Very nice, old pal," he said. "Nice, indeed."

IN THE closing minutes, the Bobcats threw five forwards on the ice, jamming and desperately trying to blast the game into a deadlock. Tiger plunged into the fracas, squeezing the defense tight, and poke-checking the disc. He took it down the ice, going the full route, and putting away the shot. It was the game, 3 to 1.

Tiger stepped to the edge of the rink, looking up at Mary. She was shaking her head in glad relief, smiling, and he knew there were tears on her cheeks. Then he couldn't see her any more because Nipper was in front of him, pumping his hand.

"What a guy you are!" Nipper snorted. "You got too much pride to tell me why you really wanted to be manager. So I get the details from Mary. Look, I got the dough for that business of yours. I got—"

"But you kept me glued to the bench," Tiger said. "You waited to use me till you practically had no other choice."

Nipper laughed.

"Ask Mary. Go ahead, ask Mary

(Concluded on page 113)

WEIGHT FOR BABY

By WILLIAM O'SULLIVAN



"Okay, gang," Chick Furey pleaded. "I want ten big ones for Babe!"

Pitted against the country's best oar-pullers, Cornell's bantam crew has to prove that pint-sizers can be great!

THE great day that they had worked for, looked forward to, talked about, was at hand. And now there was something wrong with it.

Chick Furey, Varsity coxswain, knuckled his scrappy, freckled nose and slanted an inquiring look at the stroke, Al Corman. "Bat" Levinsky, Number Two Oar of the Cornell Varsity crew, looked up at them from his bench seat in the Big Red's boat-house on Lake Cayuga's shores.

"Where is Hank Gooch?" Levinsky continued to regard his mates with worried dark eyes. "He and Blinky Lash have both been acting funny, lately. You noticed?"

"Blinky" Lash was the Cornell crew

trainer; and Hank Gooch had been acting coach while "Babe" Blades, Cornell's "Grand Old Man of Rowing," was snipping loose the red-tape ties that had held him on as a U. S. Navy Physical Ed. Officer these last five months of his four years of service.

"Hank and Blinky have steadily been souring on us," Corman said, slowly, his gray eyes bothered. "In fact, from the time it was sure Babe Blades would be back for the outdoor work, they have been—well, sorta funny about us. Swell acting coach and trainer, I'd say! Right?"

The spunky coxswain brushed his crew-cut, carroty hair nervously with his right hand.

"Almost as if they were ashamed of us, of a sudden," he murmured. "Heck, what if we are a bit light? Weight isn't everything." He waited for agreement, but got none. "There have been lots of light, but good, intercollegiate crews, haven't there?"

"Sure!" Al Corman chimed in, hopefully. "Lots of light crews!"

Levinsky, who was also the middleweight on the Cornell boxing team, looked around the walls of the room, at the veritable gallery of photographs of Cornell crews of fame and glory. And of years past. Big, broad men—big like the hills around Ithaca, and tall like the trees.

"Maybe," said "Battling" Levinsky practically. "But not Cornell crews. Like Babe Blades' own original gang, and like Babe Blades himself, the Cornell crews have all been big. My idea is that Hank Gooch and Blinky Lash felt all right about us until they heard for sure our regular coach, Babe, was coming back. Now? Well, for my dough, they act plain ashamed of us."

Standing there in the dressing-room of the Boat House, they were more the build of two muscular track men, and a springy gymnast, than two Varsity oar-pullers and their coxswain. No lank giants of long arms and power-thewed legs, certainly.

They wore the gray sweatshirts called for by the tangy spring air over their crew garb, as they waited for the word to come from outside.

"Crab" Krantz, from his vantage point of a window, let out a yell.

"Boy, what a mob! Hey, I think he's coming now—the Grand Old Man of Rowing himself! Anyway, the band is striking up."

LEVINSKY, Corman and Furey went over to where their mates were waiting impatiently, crowded around the window, watching for the first glimpse of the towering, broad, shaggy-white maned "Grand Old Man of Rowing." Babe Blades, ex-super oarsman, ex-Olympic stroke, ex-Navy, and once again Crew Coach at Cornell.

Outside, a knot of college officials stood apart from the alert newspapermen and their accompanying photographers. Everywhere the Red-and-White banners of Ezra Cornell's great school snapped and fluttered, and the band was sounding the famous Alma Mater anthem: "Far Above Cayuga's Waters."

On the lake side of the boat house, Babe Blades' famed coaching launch waited, moored to the wharf, paint-sharp and its mahogany hull polished like a fine piece of furniture.

Somewhere nearby, a student cheer-leader raised his voice to pipe: "Hip—hip!"

And the hundreds of students massed there roared:

"Cor-r-NELL! Cor-r-NELL!

"Cornell, I yell! I yell like hell!

"CORNELL!"

A sleek official automobile slid to a stop in the driveway. A huge figure of a man was stooping low to step out of the rear door—a man who towered five inches more than six feet, and with the gray, piercing glance of an eagle and a thick thatch of white hair making his sunburned face seem even darker than it was.

Cornell's Grand Old Man of Rowing was back from the wars!

Hank Gooch popped into the dressing-room.

"Okay, men!" he yelled. "March to the shed and get your shell and shove off! Babe Blades is back. He'll want to see his Varsity, his big boat. Make it a good show, fellers. Hike!"

The crowd—and legendary Babe Blades—had come around to the waterside, were watching when the Varsity stepped along in quick-time, rhythmically, perfectly, Chick Furey strutting like a bantam fighting-cock at Al Corman's right.

They stopped precisely on command, lowered the sleek racing shell into the water, deftly hefted their twelve-foot sweeps and stepped down in perfect form into the splinter of racing boat.

Coxswain Chick Furey gripped the tiller-handles smartly, the megaphone already in place in its miniature size.

Then Babe Blades said something, something heard by them all, and an embarrassed silence held the onlookers when the crewmen started, looked around briefly, then pushed away into clear water.

"Okay, men, let's make this good!" Chick Furey, in the sternsheets, growled. "Ready, all? Str-r-roke! Ah—str-r-roke! Ah—str-r-roke!"

Their rhythm, their swing, their lay-back, all was good. But they weren't happy about any part of it. Babe Blades' words had come clear to them, there at the shove-off.

"Good looking Junior Varsity, Hank," the famous old Red coach had said. "A little light but good for Junior Varsitymen. What's the big boat like?"

Two days later, Babe Blades held his first meeting with his men—Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Frosh. The last two crews he

quickly turned over to Hank Gooch and got them away. He waited until the room was clear of all save the Varsity men, to speak.

"Fellows, I want to thank you all for coming out for crew," he said. "I just wish there was as much glamour, as much interest, in crew as in baseball and track. Or even lacrosse. I guess maybe I've been a little spoiled by the overwhelming manpower we had in the Navy, and perhaps I'm remembering the old-time crews we had right here on Lake Cayuga. Frankly, I had hoped for a boat of—er—slightly larger size. For my Varsity.

"In time, I suppose I can get more weight, more size, more heft. This is not a complaint, you understand. I am merely—warning you, sort of. I mean, I do not look for an undefeated season. You do your best, I'll do my best. Now we are going back to the practise tank for some fundamentals. When we are ready, we'll hit deep water again. Okay, men—let's get going."

They looked at one another wryly, the Varsity, and boated up in the anchored tank-barge in regular order:

Al Corman, Stroke; Bill Luce, Number Seven; stuttering "Ki-Ki" Kiley, Number Six; "Dumbo" McCooey—he of the loving-cup ears and owlish, dark eyes—Number Five; blond "Happy" Larsen, Number Four; "Swede" O'Toole, Number Three; sleek-muscled Dave "Bat" Levinsky, Number Two; bald-headed "Crab" Krantz, Bow; and Chick Furey, Coxswain.

"You know, we would do much better maybe with midget paddles." Levinsky, with a wink at Crab, said overloudly. "Canoe paddles, like. Or even maybe as long as a rowboat oar. Whatcha say, pal, hah?"

BLADES raised his gaze from Corman and lanced a steady look at Bat Levinsky.

"What's that? Something wrong with the sweeps?"

"With us," Levinsky answered, brightly. "The oars ain't too big. We're too small."

Some of the others grinned covertly as Babe Blades' eyes iced up. But Levinsky blandly assumed his slide seat, hummed cheerfully, then let his voice raise into song:

"Small fry! . . . Da-dah-de-dah-dah-dah-daaa, small fry! . . . De-dah-de-dah-dah-dah-daaa. . . ." His good voice hiked up into a comical falsetto, "SMALL fry-y-y-y! . . . Cha-da-da-dah!"

"Ah, we can sing, anyway!" Blades said sourly. "Well, well, how nice! Well, that's something at least isn't it?"

"Uh-huh," Bat said cheerfully. "Singer's Midgets A-Sea, Coach. That's us."

"Save your breath, because you're going to need it, that's me!" Babe Blades snapped. "Coxswain? Get your men in order! Take a look in that mirror there in front of you, boys, and you'll perhaps agree there isn't much to sing about. Not with Penn, Harvard Navy, Syracuse, Columbia and the Poughkeepsie Regatta coming up. Get 'em in hand, Furey. We've got a lot of work to do. A lot of work. I think you'll agree, by the time I'm through with you, that you won't have any spare breath for smart songs. All right, now, Furey—just get them under way with a medium stroke, while I have a close-up look."

Chick chewed his gum while the old coach spoke, then slid the wad into his cheek and rapped the sides of the anchored barge with his tiller-grips.

"Ready, Cornell?" he barked. "Come on, hike those slides back evenly! Crab! Don't let your blade touch that water—just hold it clear. All-l-l-l RIGHT—stroke!— Ah, stroke!— Ah—stroke!"

For a long time, the sharp voice of the famed old coach was the only sound that interrupted the timed bark of the coxswain's beat—that and the swish and gurgle and splash of the water as the muscular, but light, Varsity oarsmen worked like eight rhythmic automatons, slides gliding back evenly under them as they leaned forward, scull-blades reaching back for the new bite of water, then the eight men throwing smoothly back in precision, their wrists snapping the sweep handles to muscle-taut mid-riff.

"Stroke— Ah—stroke!— Ah—stroke!"

In the dressing-room, later, Bat unhappily broke the silence of the eight tired, dejected athletes.

"Sma-a-lll fry," he croaked. He threw his towel down and groaned. "Brothers, I do feel like small fry, after that work-out! Woo-ee!"

Al Corman shook his head.

"That was a rugged practise. Rugged! You gotta give the Great Man credit—he sure knows his oars. Here we were, thinking we were smoothies from now till then. Babe Blades found maybe twenty-forty things wrong with us. Gung-gung!"

"I w-w-wonder w-what Bub-Bub-Bub-Babe really th—hinks of us?"

"Wanna know?" Bat Levinsky chuckled.

He got to his feet and folded his arms in imitation of Babe Blades' famed stance, and peered beneath a savage frown.

"You, Corman! CORman! Come out from under that bench, you li'l rascal, you! I see you! And Kiley? Don't try to walk around the rim of that inkwell on the table—you might fall in and get drown-ded, you might, you little-bitty imp! Here, Varsity! Here, li'l Varsity! Time for Pappy Babe to tuck y'all inter beddy-by for your li'l sleep!" He shrugged. "That's what the Great Man thinks of us. 'The Rover Boys in a Racing Shell.'"

Nobody said anything, and Bat blinked.

"Well, whaddya say? Am I right?" When another long silence held, he blinked his dark eyes.

"Haven't you little men any tongues, even?" he asked. "I— Oh. Oh! Oh-oh!" He sat down and started searching for a sock that he hadn't lost.

Babe Blades was standing there, staring, his gray eyes looking not a bit amused.

"Are you through, Levinsky?"

Bat flushed and tried a grin.

"I dunno, Coach. Am I? I mean, I was only kidding. Just a little fun with the lads. Ha-ha-ha! No harm, Coach."

Babe Blades shrugged.

"All right, we might as well admit it. I think you are small, for a Varsity boat. Too small. You know the old story about the good big man and the good little man. You know who wins. Right, Levinsky?"

DAVE, alias "The Battler," thought about it. "I know who they say wins, in that set-up." He grinned. "I read some place that the odds favored Willard against Dempsey, something like four to one. But Willard, outweighing Jack Dempsey by sixty-eighty pounds, didn't feel so good when the fourth round came up. In fact, the round came up but he didn't."

"An exception," Babe Blades said.

"And then, Jack Johnson was going to be knocked cold by Jim Jeffries, wasn't he, at Carson City? Jeffries outweighed him plenty."

"Another exception."

"And Gentleman Jim Corbett knocked out big John L. Sullivan, who outweighed him, didn't he? They did all right, for smaller guys."

"But they were all heavy compared to you fellows," Babe argued. Now—"

"Corbett wasn't," Bat said. "But maybe I'm prejudiced, Coach. You see, my name is David."

"So?" The huge coach frowned. "So what?"

Bat grinned.

"I imagine that's what maybe Goliath said, when he squared off that day, so long ago. 'So what? This is a little guy.' Boy, I'll bet the bookies took a shellacking on that fight. We're light, maybe, Coach, but we're willing."

"Penn is heavy and willing," Blades said. "So is Navy, so is Harvard, so is Columbia. Ever hear of California, or Washington? They're willing, too. Now, I didn't mean anything personal when I referred to your lack of size and weight. It was just a warning. Don't get too high on our chances. We'll do our best but don't get over-optimistic."

It was Chick Furey who answered that.

"I guess there isn't much chance of that, sir, with you here to remind us. Any further orders, sir?"

Blades colored slowly and bit his lip.

"Eat up," he said. "I intend to work you. Cornell hasn't boated a bad crew during my memory and I don't intend to break that habit. We may not sweep the river but we'll do what we can, I know. Same time to-morrow, men. Good night!"

Bat dropped down on his seat and sighed, after Blades had pulled away in his car.

"Good night!" he said. The others were all dressed and about ready to go. "Hey, gang! Don't leave me alone! Wait for Baby, wait for Baby!"

Chick and Al Corman and Ki-Ki Kiley waited and it was a glum foursome that plodded up the hill later and on to Fraternity Row.

"We'd row better with a lighter shell," Corman suggested. "I wonder if Babe is going to do anything about that?"

Bat snorted.

"Heck, his big worry now is, one of us may get caught in the slide seats and he will be held for manslaughter or something." He scuffed at a loose stone with his foot. "I can drop-kick a stone, anyway. Lookey!" He kicked another.

"Watch it," Chick counseled. "There's a car parked ahead there!"

Bat Levinsky drew his foot back to kick one more stone.

"Aw, I couldn't reach that far, not if I wanted to. I—" He kicked, the stone raised, sped in swift flight, "—ain't big enough to kick two feet distant. If you don't believe me—"

He broke off, his face a mask of incredulous disbelief when a shattering tinkle of glass announced that the kicked stone had smashed the windshield of that shiny car.

Chick Furey blinked.

"Sweet Joe!" he snapped. "It's Babe Blades' car! Brothers, leave me depart from here, but quick!"

He broke into a sprint, Ki-Ki and Al on his heels.

A nearby door opened and an irate roar filled the street.

"Hey, you! What's the idea?"

"Gee, Coach, it was a mistake. Honest, it was! I—well—" Bat looked at the coach, then sent a swift glance at his speeding mates. "Hey! Wait for Baby!"

He lowered his head and went sprinting along the street after them.

Before practise the next day, he managed to have a private word with Babe Blades.

"Honest, Coach, I didn't do that on purpose. I mean, break your windshield. I want to pay for it."

"You probably will," Blades said severely, and waved him away. But there was a glint of something other than anger in those gray eyes. "You probably will pay for it!"

THE gang stood around hopefully, eying the perfect weather and water conditions. But they were herded back to the practise tank again. Babe Blades got them started, spent perhaps twenty minutes in carping and complaining and growling, pointing out faults in style and in posture and in timing.

"Keep them at it, Furey," he said. "A good, moderate beat. Say about twenty-eight to thirty to the minute. Lotsa beef in it. None of this agitating the water. I want those sweeps pulled! Keep them at it."

The varsity was sweating, gasping and bug-eyed with near exhaustion when Hank Gooch came in some twenty-five minutes later. In the sternsheets, Chick Furey was croaking:

"Ah—stroke—Ah—stroke—Ah—stroke!"

Crab Krantz earned his nickname again by catching a crab—fouling his back-sweeping blade into the water and nearly throwing himself out of the brace-moored barge.

Gooch blinked his mild blue eyes.

"What gives?"

"Let 'er run!" Chick Fury barked. He looked at the assistant. "Mr. Blades told us to hold a steady thirty, and went away a few minutes." He looked at his watch. "Twenty-five minutes ago."

Gooch shrugged.

"Lay off for a bit," he said. He cleared his throat and considered things. "Er—Babe drove away, up the hill, twenty minutes ago. He left word for me he had business to at-

tend to, and wouldn't be back. Run a sprint, Chick, and call it a day."

"My aching back," Bat Levinsky moaned. "In case you see the Great Man, tell him my offer to pay for his windshield is off. And he'd better park his buggy in the garage or he won't have a window left! Is that supposed to be funny—leaving us this way?"

"He's a peculiar Babe," Gooch said.

"You mean 'baby,'" Bat growled. "A cry-baby. Cry-Baby Blades! 'Someone stole my dweat, big mens,'" he lisped. "'Cwy-Baby Bwades won't play wif dese li'l mens!' Bosh, says I! Come on, gang. Let's tie into a sprint!"

They did, their rage with the coach pouring new power into the upswept beat until it hit and held, for a brief moment, at 42. They left it off again, wordlessly, when Chick Furey barked, "Let 'er run!" They climbed out and went silently to the dressing-room, showered, lay back for the muscle-toning of rubdowns and as silently filed out of the Boat House and trudged slowly away.

Bat turned into Mother's Kitchen, holding it at the doorway.

"Me, I'm gonna fill up on milk and bread. So Cry-Baby Blades will have some more weight to work on. I mean, off!" He shook his head ruefully. "Boy, my saying 'Wait for Baby' is sure backfiring on me. On us. It should be 'Weight for Baby.' For Cry-Baby Blades. This is sure going to be a corned-up crew season!"

"I got a good mind to quit," Al Corman said. "Imagine! Babe isn't even interested enough to stay and watch us work out!"

"You mean Baby," Bat corrected him. "Well, I'm not quitting. Not for the likes of him! Boy, it would serve him right if we lost every race. I wish we would!"

"You're a liar." Chick Furey grinned. "And not a convincing one, either."

Bat shrugged.

"Yeah, I guess I am. But the results will be about the same. After all, Baby Blades is a little bit right. We are light."

Chick and Al and Crab followed him in, leaving the others standing outside, disconsolate, dejected, disillusioned.

The Big Red Crew was a small, blue crew that night.

And the Syracuse race was only a week away!

* * * * *

The Big Red Frosh and Jayvees rocketed the hopes of the Cornell rooters by winning their races, the Frosh putting on a belated spurt that gave them the decision by a half-

length in the two-mile fixture, while the Junior Varsity had a handy five-length lead in the grueling four-mile distance.

With a chance to sweep the day, Cornell's Varsity got away to a sprinting start that brought a roar from the massed spectators. But at the two-mile mark, the Orange sweep-swingers were beating a steady stroke that slowly, but surely, cut the lead down, whittled it even closer, and brought the two racing shells into the last mile on even terms.

Syracuse's coxswain called for a sprint to put his shell out in front and suddenly something went wrong in the Big Red boat.

The stroke seemed spasmodic throughout the shell, the erstwhile smooth precision of the eight slender, synchronized sweeps coming apart at the seams. Like a multi-legged water-bug suddenly feeling the chilling touch of death in its legs.

ABRUPTLY the Syracuse shell shot ahead a length, two lengths, and then the Big Red was caught up again, was swinging with cohesion and desperation. But it wasn't to be.

Syracuse won by nearly a length, in good time.

Babe Blades measured out sympathy to his charges sparingly.

"It was just a question of too much weight," he finished his talk. "Too much weight."

Bat Levinsky's eyes grew pin-points of flame in their dark depths.

"You mean the shell, Coach? Our shell is too heavy for us?"

Babe Blades swiveled his gray eyes.

"Oh. That's the alibi, eh? The shell is too heavy! That's a new one!"

Bat shrugged.

"Oxford, over in England, has specially-selected shells, for lightness. Lighter than the ones we have by maybe fifty pounds."

"That's what you think, you mean? Do you know the weight of the shell you used today?"

"Two hundred eighty-five and three-quarters pounds," Bat said calmly. "Dry, of course."

Someone laughed, and Babe didn't like it.

"You're at Cornell, not Oxford."

Bat shrugged.

"The Oxford Varsity weighs an average of One Fifty-four," he said. "Not long ago, they averaged One Eighty."

"You're racing Penn, Annapolis, Harvard, Columbia—not Oxford."

Bat considered it, seemingly oblivious to

the coach's hard eyes.

"I guess," he said, "the difference is, Oxford races with what it has, and not what it wishes it had."

A tight silence fell over them all. Blinky Lash blinked so rapidly that his lids seemed like minute shutters gone crazy. Hank Gooch cleared his throat nervously. Babe Blades, after a hard stare at Bat, rubbed his square jaw, his eyes coldly reflective.

"You like to talk, don't you, Bat?"

"When I think I'm right, yes."

"Uh-huh." Blades considered a bit more. "You know, I think I'll put you up front, where you'll at least have an attentive audience. It must be sort of hard on you, sitting away back there among working men, unable to shoot your mouth off. I think you'd better change places with Al Corman. We'll put you up where you and Chick can be real cozy-like. I've noticed you're pretty friendly, anyway. Think you'd like that?"

Bat swallowed.

"You mean—Stroke?"

"I mean Stroke."

The youthful Levinsky looked as though he would rather be anywhere than where he was, at the moment. He opened his mouth to say something, pursed his lips, re-opened his mouth and finally shut it tight. Stroke was a terrific responsibility. The stroke took the pace from the cox, moved with a studied rhythm, built confidence in the men behind him, won races; or—lost them.

Babe Blades turned to Gooch.

"Levinsky at Stroke, Corman back to Number Two. Well—that's all, I guess. We'll see if Bat can't maybe talk the next race into the bag for us."

Bat looked at Al Corman two or three times, as they dressed to go out. The ex-stroke was thoughtful, and a bit too quiet about it all. But Gooch came close to Bat, when he was ready to leave.

"Don't take it so hard. Babe is making the shift because—"

"—because he wants me to make a donkey of myself!" Bat said bitterly. "Because I argue with him, he is putting me into the slot to take the blame when we get licked again!"

Gooch shook his head.

"Al Corman came apart in that sprint," he said, his voice low. "He was so anxious that he tried to raise the beat fast—too fast—when he saw Syracuse coming up. Babe asked Blinky who was in the best physical condition of the Varsity and Blinky picked you. Look, Babe isn't as hard-headed as you think. Suppose he had made this change just out of

the blue? Al would be a little hurt, wouldn't he? And maybe sore at you? This way, Babe has what he wants—another Stroke, anyway, to try out, and Al thinks you got stuck with it as a punishment.”

“Aw, Babe hates us all!” Bat said, dejectedly.

Hank shook his head.

“He just wishes you had more weight. But at that, I think you lads surprised him against Syracuse. We'll see how it goes against Columbia, this next week. Cheer up!”

But Bat Levinsky was far from cheered as he followed the gang out of the Boat House and up the hill.

SHIFTING Levinsky to Stroke had a surprising effect on the Big Red Varsity.

Bat himself, after the first few days, shook off the feeling of strangeness that sitting out front gave him. And the rest of the crew, to a man, put every ounce of power into every stroke, in an effort to back up their buddy and thus give the Bronx cheer to Babe.

The coach noted the improvement in a time-trial with characteristic and caustic comment.

“Well! Chick and Bat have managed to talk up a few seconds better than usual,” he said. “See if you can talk yourselves into a win over Columbia, on the Harlem, boys!”

Tight-lipped and hard-eyed, the lightweight Varsity hit the water of New York's East River behind a victorious Frosh outfit from Cornell, determined to show Babe Blades a thing or two.

With their usual fast start, the beat hitting up to thirty-nine and holding it until the Light Blue fell a length behind the pace, the Big Red shell forged ahead and slowly widened it to two lengths at the two-and-a-half-mile mark.

And then Columbia's bigger boat made its bid.

Bat was watching through sweat-coated lids.

“Here they come!” he barked.

Chick Furey bent low in the sternsheets and coaxed his men along.

“Lay into it, Babies, lay into it! Stroke—Ah—stroke! Ah—stroke! You, Crab—feather that blade right! Stroke!”

Gradually, he raised the beat, raised it again when the prow of the Light Blue shell breasted him, crept slow to Stroke, to Number Seven, to Number Six!

“Okay, Big Red!” he yelled. “Ten for old Cornell! Let me have it, Babies—Stroke—Stroke—Stroke—Stroke!”

Cornell held it even, Bat and his mates behind him fighting the pace gamely, giving each bladeful of water a full, surging heave and somehow managing to synchronize the slides, the oars, the rise and fall of their backs as they lay into it.

Then Chick Furey seemed to go berserk.

The eight-oared shell veered abruptly off line, cut at a diagonal toward the center and rougher water, then straightened again. The spunky little cox sobbed through his tiny megaphone:

“Let 'er run, Cornell! Let 'er run!”

Stunned, the oarsmen feathered their blades up, tired eyes looking their inquiry from straining, sweating faces. There was a slight bump, a grating rasp, and the shell seemed about to spill. Bat blinked his eyes at the vagrant, bobbing length of wharf-piling that drifted back in the wake of the Big Red shell.

Then Chick Furey was hammering his tiller-grips and screaming for the sprint, the fast, space-eating sprint that couldn't possibly catch the surging Light Blue that was riding its sudden stroke of fortune and hammering for the finish-line.

“Let it run!” Columbia's coxswain daringly, tauntingly, screamed. “Let it run, men!”

He twisted his head to watch the desperate pace of the Cornell oarsmen as they fought to overtake the Columbia boat that was coasting to the finish. The river was a bedlam of whistles and horns and bells and from faraway came the triumphant roars of the Light Blue's loyal supporters.

It was Columbia by half a length; and coasting!

Later Babe Blades looked into the dressing-room.

“Couldn't talk the shell over that drift-log, eh, Bat?” he said. “Too bad! Maybe if you had a lighter boat, now, you could have bounced it over?”

Something that was beyond hate welled into the eyes of the tired Cornell crewmen. Bat managed a laugh.

“No,” he said. “But with a lighter shell, we would have been faster, would have been past that drifter instead of being on it when it bobbed into the course. That's for sure.”

Babe Blades smiled thinly.

“Always an alibi, eh, Bat?”

“Always a reason why we lose,” Bat corrected him. “We know we are good, even if you don't know it.”

Blades shrugged.

“Why didn't you keep plugging? You might have sunk, sure. But also, you might

have made it. And won. This way, you didn't have a chance. How about that, Bat?"

"This is a crew, not nine separate individuals," Bat said flatly. "What Chick Furey calls, we do. Maybe we are a crew without a coach, but we're not going to let Chick down by making him a Cox without a crew. Shucks, we could go out there right now and beat them!"

"You had your chance. That's what goes into the records."

BAT came to his feet, his hands bunching into fists.

"I thought you were a fighting coach! I thought you were The Grand Old Man of Rowing. I thought you were the legend of rowing, at Cornell. Well, it's your loss if you aren't, and not our loss. If you can stand to lose every race, I guess we can stand to lose races that we know we should have won. You want us to quit, don't you?"

"Will you?" Babe Blades asked, his eyes sharp. "If you quit, it might attract a lot of attention, and maybe I'd get some good, big men to drop track and baseball and help me out."

"Why don't you quit," Bat snapped. "Then maybe we can get us a coach to help us out? It's no secret that you are having trouble with the director of athletics. I guess we can see why!"

Blades bit his lip and colored slightly.

"You mind your business and I'll mind mine, Levinsky."

"When are you starting?" Bat asked.

Anger flared bright in the Grand Old Man's eyes but he fought down whatever it was he had in his mind to say. He turned on his heel and walked out.

Hank Gooch was in charge when Monday practise opened for the race against mighty Harvard, the East's big crew, at Boston. Babe Blades didn't even show up at the Lake Cayuga Boat House.

It was even rumored that Babe Blades had left Ithaca.

When the crew entrained for the Harvard race at Cambridge, Al Corman moved over to talk with Blinky Lash.

"What's become of Babe Blades' famous pep-talks before the races?" Corman asked. "Doesn't he think we're worth even that?"

Dumbo McCooley yanked at one of his protruding ears.

"Yeah!" he said. "I read where his speeches even topped Knute Rockne's acts, before the big Irish football games. You know, where he'd have the boys crying, or

fighting mad, or something?"

"Babe's a funny guy," Blinky murmured, batting his eyes rapidly. "A very funny guy."

Bat Levinsky was listening.

"Ha-ha-ha," he chortled. "I'm moved by your sapient observations on the great man, Blinky. Ha-ha-ha."

They picked up their shells at the Harvard Boat House, and Bat gave a mock groan of dismay when he hefted, with the others, the big eight-oared practise boat.

"Brothers, I feel like I'm trying to salvage the Normandie."

"Hey!" Al Corman said. "Here comes Harvard! Gee, look at the size of those goons! Too bad Babe isn't here. He'd be happy to see them. Listen, maybe that is just a collection of basketball centers, out for a row?"

"They are picked for the Intercollegiate Regatta, at Poughkeepsie," Chick Furey said. "To beat the West Coast entries. But what the devil! Size isn't everything, is it, Bat?"

Not even Bat Levinsky had anything to say to that. . . .

Later that night, lurid rumors started to fly around the Cornell camp:

Babe Blades had been injured, badly, in an Airline accident. Babe Blades was dead. Babe Blades had quit his job, was to coach Harvard. Babe Blades had gone back into the Navy.

"Here it comes!" Corman said, wise-eyed. "The old Babe Blades hipper dipper! The great psychologist works on his guinea pigs! Hah!"

The only thing certain, at bedtime, was that nobody had seen Babe Blades around his Cornell charges at any time. . . .

There was another story being circulated among the Cornell men, near race time.

"Babe was working on a racing shell, holly-stoning it, or something, for smoothness. There was an accident, or something. He broke his leg or his arm or his back. Or something."

Swede O'Toole, Number Three Oar, was telling it. Bat Levinsky laughed.

"Leave it to you, you big lug, to bring a tragic story in. I mean, supposed-to-be-tragic. You're going to be a sensational columnist, like your old man."

Swede shrugged, his blue eyes puzzled.

"The funny part of it is, I heard the Harvard coach talking about it with one of his assistants. Now, would he stage a thing like that for us to hear?"

Bat stared.

"What boat would Babe be holly-stoning?"

"A shell, I guess."

"What shell?"

Nobody knew.

IT WAS a stunned gang of Big Red oarsmen that saw a varnish-new shell waiting for them when race time came around. They were still unconvinced when they stooped to heft the shell. Then Bat barked his astonishment.

"Hey! It really is lighter!"

Corman chuckled.

"Lending credence to the story that The Great Man has been injured. In our behalf, we are supposed to think. Hah! The old hipper-dipper."

But when they lowered the racing craft into the water, Bat and Chick stared at a dark, forbidding stain that fouled the otherwise spotlessness of the inner deck.

Swede O'Toole saw, bent over, touched his finger onto the dried red stain.

"Blood?" he asked, doubtfully. "Where's Hank?"

But Gooch was very mysterious about it all.

"I dunno," he said flatly, as if he did know. "The shell is a bit lighter, yes. Hope it will help." He looked at the giant Harvard oarsmen and shook his head. "Well—this is it, lads."

They rowed slowly out, passing near some pleasure boats that rode at anchor near the starting point. The voice of an unidentified radio commentator came clear to them over the radio on one of those yachts:

"... one of the most dramatic stories of Intercollegiate rowing history," the crisp voice was saying. "As the Cornell crew rows out to the starting line, it is a sad, disconsolate crew, with their beloved coach, that Grand Old Man of Rowing, lying in a nearby hospital close to death, his bed propped, at his insistence, so that he can see his men match strokes with mighty Harvard's pride of the East.

"Babe Blades fought the director of athletics at Cornell to get special equipment for his men, threatened to quit, and finally, this week, did quit, in protest against the Cornell Brass Hats' attitude toward his light but spunky crew.

"Blades came back when Cornell gave in. He has worked night and day in an Eastern boatyard getting the new shell and the new, lighter sweeps ready for his men. He was critically hurt when a nearby derrick broke, killing one man and injuring the great Babe severely. He tried to keep the bad news from his men but one look at their faces as

they rowed out to the starting line has told us that they know all. . . ."

They looked at one another in perplexity. Al Corman shook his head.

"Would any man dare carry a pep-talk that far?"

Bat looked at Chick.

"How fast do you think you can get us down this four-mile stretch, fella? I think the gang is with me. All you got to do is start us off. We'll do the rest. You steer and we'll row. Because we got to get there fast! If this is a gag—then Babe will be in a dying condition shortly after I arrive! If it isn't—" He shrugged. "If it isn't, we want to get there in time."

He couldn't say any more.

The eyes of all of them in that Big Red boat were turned in uncertainty, inquiry, speculation, on the sun-struck windows of the hospital tower beyond the banks of the Charles River.

Up there was the Grand Old Man of Rowing. Or was he? And if he was, was he laughing? Or was his face twisted in pain, his eyes hopeful, but weak with suffering in that square, bronzed old mask?

The Big Red Crew didn't know. But it was going to find out.

It was a roaring, drama-touched crowd that rocketed the noise from bank to bank and high above the river, as the Harvard giants showed a form and a speed that was almost unmatched in Harvard rowing history. Almost unmatched.

Because Cornell's light, spunky crew was matching the proud Crimson stroke for stroke, prow for prow, mile on mile. And there was this queer thing about it all.

While Harvard's cocky coxswain was barking his beat, pleading with his men, pouring praise and encouragement and caution onto them, Chick Furey sat tight-lipped in the sternsheets of the Big Red shell, pounding the beat with his tiller-grips, his eyes hard as his tight-shut mouth.

It was when Harvard made its big bid, halfway through the last mile, that Chick Furey uttered a plea for the first time.

"Okay, gang, give it some weight for Babe!" he said. "Give it some weight for Babe! I want ten big ones, ten big ones for Babe Blades! Let me have it, you lop-eared, sweating bantams! Stroke! Stroke! Stroke! Stroke! Stroke!"

THE river was a screaming welter of ships' whistles and bells, and from the banks came the added din of automobile horns and the screaming excitement of the

packed masses of rowing enthusiasts. For a brief moment, the strains of a faraway band came clear to the men from Lake Cayuga—to the gang of average-sized men who were fighting the giants of Harvard to a standstill—

"Far above Cayuga's waters
 "With its waves of blue. . . .
 "Hail to thee, our Alma Mater,
 "Hail, all hail—Cornell!

"Ten for Babe! Gimme ten for Babe!
 Lay into it, Cornell! Ten for Babe!"

Across the finish line the Big Red shell shot, leading Harvard by nearly two lengths and without slackening its pace, the shell prowled for the Boat House. Once there, the athletes scrambled upside the wharf and sprinted for the dressing-rooms, not even honoring the victorious cox with the time-honored dunking.

Cornell's Big Red Crew that had gone places against Harvard was going places again, this time, on its own.

Babe Blades' one free eye twinkled out from the maze of bandages that swathed his face. He let his single-orb glance travel over every one of them.

"I didn't want you to know," he said slowly, his voice weak. "I figured you'd be so happy to hear about me you'd take it easy and lose the race."

The crew shuffled around in embarrassment. Bat Levinsky acted as spokesman.

"If we'd known—I mean, your trouble with

the athletic director— Gee!" was what he said.

Babe restlessly moved his splinted left-arm. "You have your troubles, I have mine. Besides, I didn't want to admit to you that my—er—opinions of a light crew had hurt your chances. The director turned me down flat—at first." The Grand Old Man of Rowing blinked his good eye. "I still claim I am right about the weight angle, though."

"You mean, we should be a lot heavier?" Bat asked, for them.

The bandaged head shook, and they could visualize the ghost of a smile on that mouth under the gauze mask.

"What I forgot was," Babe said slowly, "some men—you men, my men—carry your weight where it should be—in your hearts. Thanks for a great race, boys. I saw every foot of it! This is a really fighting crew!"

Bat grinned.

"Aw, that's all right," he said. "We were just in a hurry to get over here and tell you."

"Tell me what?" The gray eye was watchful. "That you are sorry?"

"Shucks, no," Bat grinned. "That the sweeps are six inches too long and about a quarter-pound too heavy, still. Babe, we gotta get some coaching cooperation if we're going to win at Poughkeepsie! Look, we're going out and buy up a flower store. See ya—Baby—er—Babe, I mean!"

The chuckle that sounded from the depths of those bandages was the chuckle of a man who is getting well and can hardly wait for the day.



It takes a cop, a psychiatrist and a holdup man to cure "Rattlebrain" Ray Killifer from thinking a fight is lost every time he gets hit on the bean

IN

THE GLASS HEAD

A Complete Boxing Novelet

By ROGER FULLER

COMING NEXT ISSUE

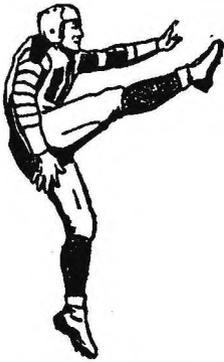
THEY DO COME BACK

By T. W. FORD

Grief takes the spirit out of Fullback Red Tarmonde and slows him down just before a critical game, forcing him to face the most gruelling test of his football career!

CHAPTER I

Lost Zest



THE driving shoulder took him in the hip. Arms manacled his knees and brought them together sharply and "Red" Tarmonde hit the ground hard with his shoulder and the pigskin clamped under one arm. The whistle sounded. He jumped up briskly, clapped the third

stringer, who'd brought him down, on the shoulder. Vaguely Tarmonde recalled he was a blocking back, a green kid who sometimes saw a few minutes of action in the closing quarter if Lonmouth was ahead.

"Nice tackle. That's hitting a guy where he lives, Al."

Tarmonde spoke easily, with no hint of the bleak bitterness inside him in his quick curt voice. That boy's name wasn't Al. Subconsciously the star, Red Tarmonde, noted that the kid had a small white scar on the bridge of his nose. "Mule" Hassett had a scar there like that too. "Mule did have," Tarmonde corrected himself mentally with a twinge of sadness.

He started to limp on his left foot as he headed back for the Varsity huddle. He had received a bad crack in that knee in last Saturday's game with Penn State. It wasn't bothering him now. But he wanted to get out of this scrimmage session. He had no more taste for it. Then Head Coach Dana Charles blew a long toot on that horn he kept on the rail of the portable coaching platform at the side of the field. Which meant that the

scrimmage session was ended. The Varsity was dismissed. Fullback Red Tarmonde hit for the fieldhouse at a sharp trot, relief stamped plainly on his face.

He was dressing in the fieldhouse, trying not to look at that 218 locker three down from his, the locker that had been old Mule's. A scrub manager came over and said Dana Charles wanted to see him. Red grimaced and steered through the easy disorder of the dressing quarters, redolent with the odor of wintergreen and sweaty equipment. It was noxious to his nostrils now. His eyes cut away from a diagram on the skull-drill blackboard. He had seen those things once too many times. Now he wanted out from all of it.

In the head coach's office were several sports writers plus that fellow, James, of *Eye*, the national picture magazine. Red felt their gaze run over the whipcord pattern of muscles of his rangy bare shoulders. Sure, he looked all right. But he himself knew the looks were misleading because something was gone from his legs. And maybe from his heart too.

"The key man," said burly, genial Dana Charles dramatically. Charles was one of those big men always found in tweeds, a pipe usually thrusting from the corner of his mouth when off the field, habitually affable. Beneath the layer of geniality was iron and ruthlessness, too. He had electric blue eyes and a sense of the dramatic that less kind critics labeled "pure ham." The portable coaching platform he used on the field was typical of him. Charles, Red knew, would have unhesitatingly dug up his grandmother on Christmas day if it were necessary to get his name in the papers just once more.

RED said hello and the questions came. The same dumfool questions so stereotyped they sounded like weary

A NOVELET OF THE GRIDIRON

Red staggered but lunged on fiercely



echoes of other interviews. How did he feel? What did he think of Lonmouth's chances against the Northern Aggies this week? Would they be able to hold Pat Lamanna, the Aggie pile-driving plunger?

Red fed back the routine answers, wooden-faced. He said he felt okay. He said the Aggies were a big strong bunch, unbeaten, but that Lonmouth was confident. He said Lamanna sure could punch blazes out of a line. He felt like adding that anybody save a dope-headed bunch of reporters would have known the answers.

"As Red Tarmonde goes, the team goes!" said Dana Charles in that stagy baritone as Red turned away.

"How about that Hutch Pickins, the Aggie end?" called one writer. "After what he did to your half-brother last season, you and he have a little feud to settle, haven't you?"

Red came around fast, big mouth flattening in his swarthy V-shaped face. That wasn't supposed to be public knowledge. Last year, his half brother, Norry Case, had played at Bender. And in that Aggies contest, Norry had been carried out with a broken jaw after being hit by this Hutch Pickins, crack end, in the third quarter. There had been some rumors of slugging. Norry himself had told Red it was just one of those things, a pure accident. And now, Red recalled saying to one of the squad earlier in the week that this Pickins, last year, had played against his brother and put him on the shelf for the season.

Red threw Dana Charles a dirty look. Somehow, the publicity-hungry head coach had picked up the tidbit, dug up the whole story, then dropped a hint here, a tip there.

Red breathed in hard, china-blue eyes narrowing, then let the scribes have it.

"I'm out there to play football and the devil with any feuds," he blazed. "This happens to be a game—not war! What do you sports writers want all the time—gore? Pickins is just another corking good end to me." He stalked out.

Behind him, Dana Charles chuckled and nullified the effect of the speech.

"Sure, he isn't sore. Not really. Not much!"

Yanking on a shirt back at his locker, Red decided not to eat at the training table that night. He had all the football he could stand for one day.

"And let Charles pull one more of his

cute little tricks and he's going to get my suit flung in his big bare face!" he muttered. "He—"

"Oh, Red!" Charles came down the locker aisle with James of *Eye Magazine* in tow. "Say, Mr. James would like to get those fresh romance shots now. The whole thing won't take more than a few minutes."

Red's under jaw thrust out as rebellion seethed in him. This picture magazine-publicity stunt was just another of those things that had sickened him on the game. Selecting a number of grid stars across the nation, *Eye* planned a spread of photographic strips purporting to show a typical day in the campus life of each star. Red had been photographed in action, in scrimmage, in chemistry laboratory, in his fraternity house. And finally he had been lensed returning a coed date to her dormitory in the moonlight. James' office had considered those final shots disappointing. They wanted new ones.

Red was about to tell them to go jump in the lake, when Charles spoke suavely.

"I told you about it as we took the field yesterday, Red," he said. "You said okay. Remember? It was snowing."

Mention of the snow recalled it to Red. Red had not been listening to the coach, actually. The snow had reminded him of Mule Hassett and that Indian Tech game three years ago. How Mule had rallied the Big Gold for a fourth-quarter, eighty-yard drive to win. Mule was that kind of a guy, the breed you can count on when the chips are down.

"You said you'd do it," Charles prodded him.

The big triple-threat fullback shrugged, nodded. But he couldn't help think what Mule, with his dry wit, would have said about such publicity hokum.

Red and Dana Charles drove down to the coach's home, James and his camera crew following. Charles said they had decided to take the new shots at his home. Red nodded absently, his thoughts on Mule Hassett again. Perhaps if Mule were in that backfield with him again as in the old days, things would be different. Maybe, then, he would still have liked the grid game.

Brothers could have had no closer bonds than the two of them. They had met when they were both working to start themselves through college. Taken an instant liking to each other. Stocky, stubborn Mule, the more mature of the two, com-

plemented the impatient, more mercurial Red himself. Mule was always the same, even, steady, regardless of how tough conditions might be. Rocklike, he kept plodding, ignoring obstacles. And always there was the leaven of his casual dry wit that could strip the awe from a situation. On the gridiron, he was magnificent in a quiet unspectacular way—a great blocking back.

When the team was in a hole, it was old Mule who could put the heart back into it. When old Mule said it was time to get going, the team knew he meant it. As if it were only yesterday, Red could still hear him saying: "Let's get our traveling shoes on, gang," or, "How about earning our pay now, gang."

And the team would start marching.

With the war, Mule had made the Naval Air Force, gone out to the Pacific. A G.I., Red had plugged it out in the bleak Aleutians. Discharged, he had returned to college for the spring semester. Due for release late in the summer, Mule had written he'd be back to play football again. And then, a few days later, he was reported missing on a routine mission flight from a carrier. Now he was officially considered as dead.

WITHOUT Mule back there, football had become another game for Red. It was more than just the lack of Mule's man-breaking blocking. The game seemed unimportant. He couldn't get hot over whether they won or lost. There was another factor, too.

"Here we are," said Charles as they drove up before his comfortable gray fieldstone and white-trim cottage on the heights. They all went inside. With James, were two camera men plus one sleek blonde, a Miss Winters. Red noticed gratefully that the lights were already set up.

He said hello to her casually, then did a double-take as Valerie Winters shrugged out of the fur coat to reveal herself in a very sophisticated black cocktail frock. Red noted she had a surprisingly well-curved and provocative body for a co-ed. Soon they were on the divan, holding hands as they feigned conversation for the camera men. After that they danced to the music of the coach's radio for more picture shots. To Red, it seemed to drag on forever. Again he thought of what Mule, were he still alive, would say to this.

Finally they moved over to the front door where Red was to say good night to his supposed date. The cameras clicked. James called out instructions. Red put an arm about her shoulders. Then, to his surprise, she pushed up her sleek blond head and kissed him very thoroughly. He had been around somewhat. But that kiss made his ears burn.

"Great, great!" applauded James. "That's the stuff we want."

As a matter of courtesy, Red offered to escort her to her dormitory or sorority house when the camera men started to pack up their equipment. Later, thinking about it he remembered she gave him a peculiar look. Then Dana Charles put in quickly:

"Miss Winters goes downtown, Red. I'll see that she is taken care of all right. That's all, kid. Wasn't hard, now, was it?"

CHAPTER II

Revolt

LATER, while walking down the path beside the gorge to his fraternity house, Red Tarmonde again was assailed by the phoniness of the whole thing. Somehow he couldn't escape the reaction that it was not real, that it wasn't on the level. He was supposed to be a star. And he knew he wasn't. More than that, he didn't care that he wasn't.

Down at the Alpha Gamma house, a number of the old grads were already back. The Northern Aggie game was the big home-coming game of the season for the alumni. And they had started to drift in for the Saturday contest. Hardly was he inside the door when he was grabbed by some fraternity brothers and steered into the library to meet the returning firemen.

There was "Pudge" Davidson, the great '24 tackle and Hollis Clyde, a star Lom-mouth ball carrier back on the '29 team, as well as two other ex-players among the old-timers. They pumped his hand and clapped his back, told him they were expecting great things of him this Saturday.

"You sure turned on a Garrison finish against Penn State," Clyde assured him. The others chorused his opinion enthusiastically. They'd all had a number of highballs with dinner.

Red donned a prop grin and said something about being lucky. Tried not to mind their whisky-laden breaths. He told himself that he would probably act the same way, like a big overgrown kid, when he returned as an alumnus. They were wrong about that Penn State game though. Actually, they had kept him shackled for three quarters. Then, in the final period, State players had made two mistakes at crucial moments. And he had galloped for a couple of touchdowns. Had looked like the old pre-war Red with all his former razzle-dazzle. But you didn't get breaks like that on consecutive Saturdays.

Pudge Davidson remembered one of his games against the Aggies. How he had blocked a kick. He began to shift furniture around and to set his friends as enemy players. Another of the old grads hooked onto Red's arm and kept insisting that they had to beat those Aggies.

"Slug 'em if you got to—they're no good, anyway," he babbled on emotionally. "Slug 'em! That's what we did in the old days. We—" And then Davidson, flattening one of his paunchy friends with his charge, leaped high, tripped on the back of the sofa, and almost knocked out his brains in the fireplace.

Red seized upon the confusion as an opportunity to duck upstairs to the quiet of the study he shared with Wayne Sloane. He dropped into a chair when the slim bespectacled Sloane walked in.

"And how is Lonmouth's great big happy fullback," he sang out sarcastically. "You look just packed with glee, sweet-heart! Tell me, sometimes don't you feel like a piece of prize livestock going on exhibition in the stadium on Saturday afternoon, though?"

Red scowled. The worst of it was, Sloane was right. He forced a grin.

"I'm all right, you jealous little hunk of sunshine," he said. But Sloane, the campus playboy, had him correctly figured. He felt as if he were being used. Used by Dana Charles and everybody else right down the campus. Used to play a game he had come to hate, a game he was nothing but a fraud and a sham in any longer.

Dropping onto a window seat, Wayne Sloane's narrowed eyes studied Red through a cloud of cigarette smoke. Sloane was jealous. He knew Red was a good egg and a nice guy in general. But ever since the grid star had become engaged to Cynthia Sloane, Wayne's second cous-

in, Wayne had begun to dislike him.

Wayne kept telling himself Red was a fortune hunter, counting on landing in a cushy berth in his wealthy father-in-law's company following graduation and the marriage. And Wayne Sloane had been counting on the exact same thing himself. Before Red had entered the picture, Wayne and Cynthia had been tacitly engaged.

Wayne had guessed it was nothing more than Red's athletic prowess, the grid glamour haloing him, that fascinated Cynthia. It had blinded her. If that were gone, if she looked at him as an ordinary human being, that would fix him with her. Wayne had wondered how Red could be forced to quit football.

The smart Wayne had been working on it, too. He had sensed more than once this fall that Red was dissatisfied, that the game had lost its lure for him. And he had been directing at him those well-aimed barbs to augment the dissatisfaction.

Wayne Sloane started off again.

"Gosh, Red, for a smart guy you sure are dumb at times," he said. "You go out on that field and work like a galley slave all week. You give up half your life. And then comes Saturday. And what? You get banged around so a few thousand cheering idiots can have a Roman holiday!"

"You want to take my place?" Red asked, trying not to let it get under his skin.

"Not me!" Wayne made a grimace of disgust. "I came to college to get a degree and have some fun, not to drown myself in sweat every day for a fool game and a bunch of rooters who'll name you 'Mud' if you should fail to deliver!"

"Maybe I just like the game," Red came back weakly.

Young Sloan sneered.

"If you got something out of it for yourself, it would be different. But you're just working for a lot of other Joes. You're working to help pay off the mortgage on that stadium. You're working so the student body and the old grads can share in the false glory! Yep, you're working so Dana Charles can hold down a nice fat-salaried job. That's all. If you couldn't pack that leather, Charles wouldn't give you the sweat off his forehead!"

RED rose, feigning a grin.

"You got a smooth line, Joe. No

wonder you can work with the women." He picked up a sports jacket. "Speaking of that, do you know a little blond number in this town named Valerie Winters? No? Well, you ought to. Guess I'll take a walk."

He cut across one end of the campus and struck out up the river road in the sharp night air, sweating things out all over again. But he couldn't escape the feeling of the senselessness of it all, that it was all so phony.

"And I'm the biggest phony in the whole setup," he bit off aloud on the night air.

He was a faker, he knew, because he wasn't the great back he had once been. He wasn't what the fans thought he was any more. There was no sense in trying to deceive himself about that. He had lost that extra bit of explosive speed, that sudden spurt, the lightninglike break and half-twist that used to carry him out of a tackler's clawing arms.

Something had gone in his legs. He supposed it was the result of that injury to his knees he had suffered clambering out of a landing barge up there in the Aleutians.

Anyway, now he was just a pretty good back, not the shooting star of old. But everybody, his team-mates, the rooters, thought otherwise. That was the phoniest part of the whole business.

Friday afternoon was light with no scrimmage. Afterward, Red hustled down to the hotel to meet Cynthia and her father who'd arrived on the late afternoon plane for the big game.

Cynthia was tall with long shapely legs and dark-red shoulder length hair. She was a nice kid and it was nice when Red held her in his arms. There was a moment of exultation. And then, breaking off a kiss, she was talking about the game, and the old sour dullness was back inside him.

"Everybody on the plane was talking about you, Red. They said you were the one man who could beat the Aggies. And you've just got to!"

He wanted to ask why he had to. He didn't though.

Old Man Sloane came in and shook hands.

"Boy, I just bet a couple of thousand on you and Lonmouth. Now you protect my investment! Hah-hah!"

Red had that old feeling of being used. And he was sick to death of football.

At dinner he tried to steer the conver-

sation away from the game. But Cynthia herself always brought it back enthusiastically. A truth began to dawn on him slowly. Once he said quickly, quietly to her:

"Cynth, don't be too surprised if tomorrow I'm maybe—well, maybe not the big hotshot everybody expects. I—I'm not feeling so good."

Her eyes sprang wide as if in pain.

"Why, Red, you're always the star."

The old man broke in then. But Red hadn't missed her reaction. Shortly afterward, pleading nerves, he left, taking a bus up the hill. At the top, he glimpsed the white walls of the stadium bathed in the bluish moonlight. And that reminded him of Mule Hassett again. He had tried not to think of Mule all day.

Now he could see him as he had seen him actually so many times in a game. Wearing that crooked grin when things looked bad, breaking the tension with some irrelevant remark when a rival started to drive deep.

"Looks like rain maybe tomorrow, don't you think?" he'd say.

Or Mule would mock a particular opponent by feigning terrible fear of him.

Red remembered how he'd come trotting back after breaking up a play in backing up the line, straightening that white-crossed helmet of his, rubbing the little white scar at the bridge of his nose.

That white-crossed helmet was Mule's only affectation. He had taken a couple of strips of adhesive tape and slapped them over the top of his headgear in a big "X." He said it made him feel lucky.

"Those were the good days, Mule!" Red caught himself saying as he got off at the corner and walked down toward the frat house.

It was about an hour later. In the study, Red was trying to concentrate on a textbook. Then Wayne Sloane came in with a queer look and tossed an afternoon edition of a Chicago paper on the table.

"There's your Valerie Winters, chum!" He pointed to a picture on the third page of the tabloid. It showed a curvaceous figure in a scant show girl's costume.

Red tensed as he read the caption:

VALERIE WINTERS

Underneath the picture the story said the "shapely" night club dancer meant to sue her playboy husband for "heavy sugar." Lips thinning, Red read on. This was her third wedding. She had separated,

some months before, from her latest wealthy husband after only a few weeks of marriage. There was a picture of him, a half-bald middle-aged man.

Red's big fist crushed up the paper. Then he had grabbed his coat and was half out the door when Wayne called to him. Downstairs, he borrowed somebody's car and headed for the heights where Dana Charles lived.

This was the straw that broke the camel's back. He felt cheapened and tricked. Blast that Charles! Bringing up a cheap little hussy to pose as a co-ed for those publicity photos! Even as he drove recklessly, Red knew that it in itself wasn't too important. But it was another piece of the phoniness. And he had had all he could stand of it.

He was going to tell Charles that he would not play tomorrow, or ever again!

The big bluff coach looked only mildly surprised when he led Red into the living room.

"Got a little case of pre-game nerves, eh, Red? Well, sit down and talk awhile. We—"

"Listen!" Red broke in harshly. "Look at this!" He shoved out the crumpled newspaper.

Dana Charles took it, smoothed it, then smiled when he recognized the girl.

"She sure does prove why cameras were invented, eh?"

Red knocked the paper from his hand, temper rapidly shooting to the blowoff point.

"That's just some more of your cheap tricks, Dana. Some more of the rotten phoniness of the whole situation! I'm sick of it—"

"Are you crazy?" Charles broke in sharply. "What's the harm in it?"

"It's just another fake, passing her off as a co-ed, Dana! I don't want any more fakes! I'm finished. I'm quitting!"

THE coach put his pipe on a table. "What's all this 'fake' talk, anyway?"

Red breathed hard through his lips.

"You know what I mean. I'm a fake myself. I haven't got the old stuff any more. You know that too. So I'm not going to be a phony just to make you look good!"

Charles' eyes narrowed.

"Yes, your legs have lost something. You don't jump out of your tracks and leave them helpless the way you used to.

But you're still one big hunk of football player for my money! And you play tomorrow, by jinks, or—"

"For your money," Red mimicked him. "Sure. That's right. For your money—to make money for you! To make you look good on your high-salaried job! You'd tell me anything—and then send me out there if I was half dead—if you thought I could help you look good!"

Dana Charles' beefy face reddened. But he spoke in a low half-pleading voice when he answered.

"Red, you can't let me down!" he said. "Just give me that Aggies game, anyway. Shucks, I've had some bad luck with business investments. And when my wife walked out last year, I had to give her a big hunk as a settlement." He wiped his mouth. "If I can knock off the Aggies, they'll give me another two-year contract. Give me that break, Red!"

"Play Irvine at the fullback post," Red snapped. "He's faster than I am now. You know it, too."

Charles shook his head.

"Too young, too green. And he isn't the passing threat you are, Red." He wiped his mouth again. "You gotta work with me, Red. I've tried to build you, to make you a bigger star. This publicity stuff was all along that line. I've tried to—"

Red Tarmonde half turned toward the door.

"Save the sob act, Dana! You start an old helmet at fullback if you want. But not me!"

"Walk out on me now," burst the head coach in a sudden roar, "and I'll break you on this campus! I'll tell them you quit—a quitter!"

Red came back slowly.

"You tell them the truth, that I'm not a first-class back any more. You tell them—"

"Like blazes! I'll say you're a quitter, you—"

Dana Charles threw up his guard and tried to duck too late.

Red's big fist bludgeoned him alongside the jaw and the hefty coach crashed down to his knees. Charles, cursing, got half up, then shook his head.

"All right, Red, you win," he said heavily with a beaten air. "Have it your own way. Walk out." Red was already headed for the door. "Walk out—on the team."

That stopped Red. As Charles knew it would. Red knew he was not the star they thought he was, that he could not give

them the help they so confidently expected. But leaving them flat was another matter. He eyed Dana Charles, standing there with the pitiful slump of defeat. Red compromised.

"All right, Dana. My last game. I'll be out there. But don't use me unless in case of emergency. Don't play me unless you have to. You got that?"

CHAPTER III

Boy with the Scar

WHEN Red Tarmonde entered the locker room Saturday forenoon, the head coach gave him the confidence-exuding smile he always had on tap for game day. He acted as if there'd been no break between them.

"He thinks he's going to sweet-talk me into something," Red muttered. "He's wrong."

But it wasn't that way. There was a slight gasp of surprise when Charles announced his starting Varsity with Irvine at the deep spot in the line-up. Out on the field, the Aggies won the toss and chose to receive, to go on the offensive at once on the gray windless day. At the same moment, the jammed stands buzzed loudly and excitedly as the public address system informed them Irvine would start at fullback for the Big Gold. Not Tarmonde.

Back to their twenty-nine the Aggies returned the kick-off and promptly unleashed their heavy artillery. Bull-like Lamanna went gouging the line and skidding off the tackles. Tanklike forwards opened holes with precision timing, and blockers that seemed to spring out of the earth. Lamanna roared through for another fourteen. A trigger pass out into the flat put the ball, after the run, on Lonmouth's twenty-five.

Then the pall of gloom was shattered by a cheer. On the next play, a Lonmouth end sliced in and flopped on the ball as Lamanna fumbled en route to the line. The Big Gold started to march, "Tack" Worms driving them from the feeder spot in their T system. They picked up two first downs, aided by a penalty against the Aggies. Then Irvine the fullback was almost on the loose in the enemy secondary but delayed a brief instant too long in reversing his field. A few seconds later, he committed himself too soon on an in-and-

out play, tipping it to the Aggies, and was smeared. Ben Irvine was too green and the drive bogged.

After Lonmouth punted, it was all the Aggies. They ripped across midfield with slashing power spearheaded by Pat Lamanna. Lonmouth adherents were up rooting as Irvine jumped to intercept a pass. He was hit as he landed and the trainer went out. Three minutes later, Irvine was being helped off with a broken collarbone, through for the season.

Red stole a look down the bench. But Dana Charles was giving final instructions to Lassiter, a third-string fullback, as he went in. When Lonmouth tried to take the offense that time, they were weaker than ever. Soon, the Green machine was headed for the Lonmouth goal-line like a juggernaut amok again.

A fumble deep in Lonmouth territory stemmed the tide that time. And the Gold got its second bad break of the day. On a sweep, Lassiter was thrown hard and sustained a knee injury. Two plays later he was hobbling so he had to be helped off. Red figured his time had come and half rose.

But Dana Charles was already sending in another sub. And out on the field, the backfield was being shuffled with a blocker going over into the Number Four spot. The offense was pitifully ragged as the crippled team, minus its supposed star, lost its spirit. Soon the Aggies had the ball and were rolling. Lamanna torpedoes for the last eighteen yards to a touchdown as the period ended. Shortly after taking the kickoff, maimed Lonmouth had to punt. And Lamanna and company started to go for another in big jumps.

Red Tarmonde found himself up and pulling off the yellow parka. Maybe there was too much football in his blood. Maybe it was because he couldn't hit a man when he was down. And Charles was flat now.

"You'll only take a beating now," Charles said from right beside him. "You'll look bad, Red. This one is already sunk. I'm not asking you to dump away all your prestige."

Red spat cotton.

"Go to blazes," he said, and trotted out.

There was a terrific din from the stands as they saw the mysteriously missing star appear at last. Some of the bitter discouragement faded from the faces of the Gold team. Tack Worms grabbed his shoulder.

The newest Aggie drive was halted cold for one play. Then that flailing-legged Lamanna pierced the line twice on his terrific cutbacks for heavy gains. Red ran up from his defensive halfback position.

"I'll back up the line," he told them. That substitute blocking back just wasn't good enough for the job. Straightening his helmet, Red thought of how Mule Hasset used to back up that line like an iron man. He remembered what Mule had said before he went off to fight.

"I'll always be pulling for you wherever I am, Red," he'd said. "And I know you'll be doing the same for me."

Red hoped he was right, then the next moment remembered Mule was dead. Somehow, in the back of his mind, the thing had never seemed quite possible.

"Hello, Big Boy," greeted one of the Aggies mockingly. "We thought you were afraid of us!"

It was the great Lamanna slashing off tackle on a reverse. Red eeled away from a blocker, drove in hard, banged out one of the interference and hit Lamanna enough to knock him off stride. Tack Worms came up fast and pinned him. A pass in the flat for a first down.

Then Red, smelling the next one, was in there and dumping Lamanna for a two-yard loss. Tackling Lamanna was like diving under a brick pile. A minute later when he bumped Lamanna out of bounds on a reverse for no gain, Lonmouth took the ball on downs.

AFTER Worms tried the middle, he sent Red on a double reverse. Faking a pass, Red raced for five yards, electrifying the crowd. And then he was dropped as he tried to hip-swivel clear with a change of pace. When he went to the other side on an in-and-out play, he lost a couple of yards as he just failed to slip off the flank. If he needed any further proof, he had it then. He no longer had his old stuff. He no longer had the incentive, either.

The rest of the half was all Aggie. Again and again Red stopped Lamanna short. But he couldn't hold a whole team. The Green machine went over for their second touchdown and made it 14 to 0. Following a Lonmouth push that bogged in its tracks, the Aggies added another score. It became 20 to 0 when they failed on the try for the extra point. And the half ended.

Going back to the field for the third

period, Dana Charles told Red he didn't have to go back in there now. Red said he would play it through. He could at least sweat it out with his teammates. Overconfidence, a natural letdown with victory assured, betraying itself in fumbling and offsides, kept the Aggies machine from building the score in that period. But the Lonmouth offensive was still impotent.

Red did break out for twenty yards once. But on the next two plays he was trapped deep behind his line as he tried to unleash passes. The Aggies took over with Lamanna out for a lengthy breather.

In the final minutes of the quarter, Lamanna returned to spark another drive. And then, one of his line plunges boomeranged as Red hit him and the leather shot upward out of Lamanna's hands. Another Lonmouth back plucked it out of the air and took it all the way back to the Aggie forty-five before he was overhauled.

A substitute came racing in for Cardoza, Lonmouth's blocker back. "Chick Becker," somebody said. The weary Red glanced up and recognized him as that third-string kid who'd brought him down on the last play of Thursday's scrimmage. The chap with the little white scar on the bridge of the nose like Mule had. He gave Red an odd look.

Tack Worms tried to pep them in the huddle, telling them it was their big chance. But on a cutback, Gans, at the running halfback spot, got nowhere. It seemed like the same old story. Then somebody said, like an echo out of the past:

"Let's get our traveling shoes on, gang! Let's march."

Mule Hasset! It was Mule's old war-cry. Red blinked and jerked his head around, saw it was the new blocker, "Chick" Becker, who'd spoken.

"Yah, that's the stuff! Let's march!"

Kilson, Lonmouth's left end, had taken it up. Red remembered Kilson, a returned G.I., was on that old team, a sub, with Mule. For a moment the illusion that Mule was back strengthened.

Worms called for a pass. Red faded to the flank, twisted as if to reverse. Shark-like, Hutch Pickins came in but Red sidestepped, calm now. Then he left the ground and heaved and it connected for eight. Worms battled his way over the middle for a precious two yards and a first down as the third quarter ended. They swapped goals.

"All right, gang, let's earn our pay

now!" It was Chick Becker sounding off again.

Red stared. Again Becker had repeated a pet line of Mule's. Strange, Red thought. He rubbed his head where a dreamy feeling persisted. Hitting Lamanna, the pile-driver, clouded a man's brain. He tried hard as Worms sent him off the end. But that Hutch Pickins dumped him on his ear so savagely his vision blacked out for several moments.

"We gotta pitch," said Worms in the huddle.

Red nodded, eyes lifting to the top of the bent Chick Becker's helmet opposite him. Red blinked. Again he had that illusion of Mule being back, working alongside him. For, plastered across the top of that helmet was the big "X" in adhesive tape the way Mule used to have it.

Red swept out, arm cocked, seeking a receiver. He cut deeper, twisting, darting like a jack-rabbit. Nobody uncovered. It was run or get trapped. He hit for the line and Lamanna closed on him.

Then Becker cut over, yelled something and stretched Lamanna flat with a terrific block. Red was through and running—running hard.

And all the time, thinking of how that block was like something old Mule himself might have thrown.

HE RACED a tackler for the sideline but lacked the extra spurt to make it. An arm hit him, a hand ripped at his shoulder. Caught, he kept driving, dragging the man with him. He threw him off just as a second Aggie banged him. Staggering, but lunging on fiercely even though held, the Lonmouth ace picked up five more before going down. And he was on the enemy twelve.

A moment later an offside penalty against the Aggies made the score almost a sure thing. Gans bombarded tackle for two. A short flip over center was slapped down. Then they gave it to Red and two Aggie linemen seemed to have him trapped in his own backfield. Becker mowed down one of them. Red got off the flank, was grabbed. But he kept fighting, wrenching and digging for inches. Only Mule could mow down a man like that with a block.

"You gotta run behind Mule," he kept telling himself.

Then he was stepping over the double-barred goal-line, carrying one man on his shoulders. Somebody cracked his legs

from under him and a third man came down on his head when he hit the ground. Red was in such a fog he never did remember Lonmouth making the try for the extra point. And successfully. It was now a 20 to 7 ball game.

The odds were heavily against them pulling this one out, Red knew. Yet he felt heartened, his body strangely lightened in contrast to the leaden load of fatigue of a few minutes ago. It was as if he were being lifted, held up by some unseen presence. He knew he was a little out of his head.

The Aggies struck for two quick first downs after the next kickoff. Then the smaller Lonmouth line steadied, stiffened. Twice Red hauled down Lamanna, allowing a total of less than four yards. It became fourth and three to go. The Aggies were overlong in the huddle. Lonmouth was tense, wondering and fearing what would come next. And then Becker's cheery voice sang out, dissipating the tautness:

"Looks like rain for tomorrow, gents!"

"Good old Mule," muttered Red. Mule always could loosen up a team with some casual irrelevant remark like that.

It was a pass. With Lamanna hedged in, the Aggies gambled. And the alert Tack Worms, coming up fast, intercepted, got away from the intended receiver, and slanted toward the right-hand sideline. Red slid over outside him, running parallel, setting it up for a lateral. Three Green tacklers closed in.

There was a lateral, but not to the dangerous Tarmonde they were watching. It went to "Truck" Kelly, the center, running inside of Worms. And Kelly reversed his field, crashed through one tackler, and went all the way for Lonmouth's second score. They converted the placement for the extra point. Score, Aggies—20; Lonmouth—14.

CHAPTER IV

In Spirit—and in Flesh

FIGHTING time as well as the green-shirted enemy now, Lonmouth slammed the big Aggies back on their heels after kicking off to them again. Red, still in the backer-up spot on the defense, caught Lamanna in mid-air as he came over tackle and bounced him off the sod. The Aggies had to take time out for their

star. And now, stronger than ever, Red Tarmonde had that sensation of some other presence on the field, right amongst the Big Gold team.

"We supplied the danged ball," Becker said drily. "Let's take it away from them."

Good old Mule, thought Red. Trust him to come out with a hunk of humor-flavored logic like that. The simple thing.

And Lonmouth did just that, intercepting a long pass in a three-man scramble. The horn tooted, though. It was ruled illegal interference with the receiver, and the Aggies were given the ball down on Lonmouth's forty. But on the next play, Truck Kelly mauled through the middle, broke up a lateral in the backfield, and held onto the ball as he fell.

"All right. Now let's earn our pay, gang!"

"Okay, Mule," muttered Red through a cut lip. Tack Worms shot Red a funny look. It had been Chick Becker who'd said that, of course.

But when Worms fed it to Red on the in-and-out play, the big fullback went to town. He lacked the blinding speed to go wide outside but bulled his way past the flank.

The man with the "X" helmet shot ahead to lay out a defense back. Red was hit, tore away one leg, staggered on, was hit again, and dug for three more, with two men clinging to him barnacle-fashion. Gans on a delayed guard buck for two yards. And then Red again, wriggling and stiff-arming off tacklers as he faded to fire a bull's-eye pass down the center slot for eight more.

Up in the press coop, the experts exchanged puzzled glances. This Red Tarmonde was not the breakaway flash they had known. But he was running and gaining, fighting always for extra yardage, refusing to go down till a second, often a third man, had crashed him.

That was the story. No sensational dashes, no phantom-like weaving through a broken field like the Tarmonde of old. Tough and experienced, he was making steady gains. He was back, feinting a pass. Then a lateral to Gans who boomed through the line for six.

Then it was Red again, fighting past the great Pickins, refusing to be downed till he had picked up five for another first down. Once more he ran, took it to the enemy eight. Twice the Big Gold was stopped. Desperate, Worms fed it to Red again. Again the man with the white "X"

on his helmet blocked out ahead.

"Gotta go when Mule clears the road," Red mumbled, sliding out behind the tackle, almost out cold on his feet. That stronger power, unseen but present, forced him on.

As he hit the five-yard line the gun ending the game fired. Red was double-teamed, got away from one. Another bounced off his shoulders. He was hit in one leg. And then he catapulted himself to dive into the end zone as one tackler dropped off him for the tying score.

The stadium had a vacuumlike feeling as they lined up for the try for the extra point. By contrast, a tomb would have sounded like bedlam. And then Kilson, in the backfield to make the placement kick, toed the ball up squarely and clearly between the uprights.

That made it Lonmouth—21; Aggies—20. The game was over.

The stadium rocked with the furious storm of triumphant sound then. Lonmouth players who'd been almost walking on their knees a few moments before were capering, cracking each other's backs, doing somersaults. And then they saw Red Tarmonde solemnly, calmly, walking back toward the middle of the field as if for a new kickoff.

He was out cold on his feet!

Later, Red was surprised to find himself up on a rubbing table in a small room off the main dressing-room. He pushed up on an elbow, opened his mouth to speak. The team physician pushed him back flat and told him what he wanted to know.

"Yes, we won, boy. Don't worry." He turned to speak over his shoulder to Dana Charles. "No concussion. He'll be all right shortly."

Red managed a scowl for the coach.

"You let any blasted reporters in here and I'll—" He broke off, wondering where Mule was. Mule would be in here with him, ordinarily. Then the cobwebs thinned in his brain and he remembered about Mule.

"Anything you say, Red," Dana Charles said. "We'll burn down the stadium if it'll make you happier!"

They helped him shower in the private bath behind the office of the head coach. He felt very somnolent, as if he'd been wakened in the middle of the night, as he pulled on his clothes. Hutch Pickins, the great Aggie end, came in, smiling around the court plaster on his nose. He shook hands warmly.

"Just wait, Red, till our gang gets home and finds that scout who said you were washed up! You were a whole squad out out there, kid!"

Red said thanks, remembering that phony feud between them Dana Charles had tried to cook. It was unimportant now. He had something—something big—he had to think out.

One of the assistant coaches went down a side corridor with him and outside they slipped into an Athletic Association station wagon and roared away in the twilight. Red insisted on getting out a few blocks from the frat house. His head was clearing fast. Entering through the kitchen, he went up the back stairs and reached his study unnoticed.

Then he got down to that thinking. . . .

THE door had opened and Wayne Sloane was standing there in the dimness for several minutes before Red realized it. Sloane tittered.

"You sure don't look like the conquering hero," Sloan said. "Come on, get ready to go down and wallow in your glory, kid. You—"

Red hit his feet hard, jabbing a hand sharply against the sneering Wayne's chest.

"The devil with the hero business! But I played one danged good game of football out there today."

"All right. Don't blow your top. I was just saying—"

"Shut up and listen," Red cut in. "When you get down to the hotel, tell Cynthia I'm mighty sorry but we made a mistake. Get it? Tell her I won't be seeing her be-bore she leaves town. Tell her she's a sweet kid but—"

He shook his head, then picked up his coat and headed for the back stairs again. Outside in the frosty air, he headed toward the Heights where Dana Charles lived. Though his left thigh was sore and he had a lump on the side of his head and adhesive tape encased bruised ribs, he felt lighter, somehow more relieved, than he had in weeks.

He hadn't wanted to hurt Cynthia; but she'd get over it shortly. He knew now her feelings for him had simply been an infatuation with a glamorized athletic star. Some day she too would know it. He felt cleaner that he had broken it off. Some of the phoniness was gone from the picture.

All that was left was to settle with

Dana Charles for that latest deception of his with Becker and the white "X" on his helmet. The "X" like Mule used to wear. Red didn't expect to find Charles home. He meant to just wait around and rest till the head coach came back.

But the bluff burly Charles was there. And alone, sitting before the fireplace with a highball. He said he was just catching a deep breath before attending the Alumni banquet.

"Red, you sure showed 'em today, kid. You were simply solid!"

"Save it, Dana. You tricked me again, didn't you? With Chick Becker, I mean. You—"

"Sure I know you meant him," Charles snapped back.

Red's hands fisted up.

"Go ahead, grin. It worked. When I was half out near the end, I thought it *was* Mule himself. But before we get down to the rough business, I want to know one thing. How the devil did you know the things Mule used to say to the old team out on the field? How did you know what to coach Becker to say?"

Charles sipped his drink.

"Because I made them up myself—those things Mule Hasset used to say!"

"What?"

"On my word of honor, Red. I'm always looking for a player of Mule's type on a team—the iron man, the steady guy, the one who *never* cracks under pressure. You don't always find them. A team will listen to a guy like that. So, when I do find one, I make him my alter ego on the field. I teach him those cracks to steady the boys under pressure, to bring them off their heels and start them driving for the win. Mule—well, he was the best alter ego I ever had."

"I'll be doggoned!" Red dropped on the arm of a leather chair, feeling slightly foolish.

Charles pursed his heavy-lipped mouth, studying the rug.

"I know folks think I'm a big thick-skinned slob, a loud mouth. But I know things. I know how you felt about Mule—and vice versa. I thought if you had the outward signs of him on the field, you might catch fire. You did, better than even I planned."

Red walked over to a window. "Guess I did. Somehow—"

The coach put a match to his pipe.

"Sure, Red, you've lost that explosive speed that made you a gliding ghost. But

you're a football player to the fore. Only you'd lost incentive. I guessed it was because Mule hadn't come back. So I tried to give you back your incentive—and win my football game, I admit. Now go ahead and pop me on the nose again!"

Red turned, trying not to grin.

"Just one more thing, Dana. That kid, Becker, threw some blocks out there old Mule himself couldn't have improved on. How—"

Charles nodded with the smug smile.

"I know. You see, young Becker has always hero-worshipped you. So when I sorta hinted to him that you said anybody with two cents' worth of sand could be a blocker—well, I guess it did something to him."

"Dana, you big fraud! You overstuffed nam! You'd drag your dying mother out of her bed and parade her on the sidelines if you thought it would spur a team on to one more touchdown. Why you—" But Red was chuckling then. "Think we can take that forward passing circus from Bohane next week?"

Dana Charles started across the room when the hall phone rang. He went to answer. And Red Tarmonde's face sobered again.

There was something else that had happened on that field he could not understand. That strange feeling of an unseen presence.

"Sure he's here—right here!" roared Dana Charles from the hall. Then he was beckoning Red wildly from the doorway. "Hurry up! Long distance for you, kid. They've been trying to trace you all over

the campus. It's a call from the San Diego naval base."

Red picked up the instrument and identified himself. There was a clicking. And then a familiar, even, never-excited voice came over the wire.

"Hey, Red, what took you so long getting started in that game today? You gave me heart failure till you woke up. Why we used to—"

"Mule!" coughed Red. "Mule—holy cats—is that you?"

"Keep your shirt on. Of course it's me. Hey, stop babbling, kid. Let me talk—I'm paying for the call. No, I'm not phoning from Heaven either."

Mule filled in the blanks.

Two days ago he had been picked up off that atoll in the Pacific where he had landed when his plane had been forced down weeks ago. They had flown him into the West Coast.

"Got here just in time to hear the game over the radio, Red. I was pulling for you all the way—but hard! Sometimes I felt as if I was right there on the field myself. I—Hey, what's the matter?"

Red had slumped down hard on the hall bench, a little dizzy for the moment. At last he understood that strange sensation of an unseen power, a strength, out on the field. Somehow, Mule had projected his presence, his personality at least, several thousand miles. Old dependable Mule had been there in spirit.

Red Tarmonde bounced off the bench with a wild banshee-like cry. Old Mule would be back on the team and in flesh, too! Very soon, now!



Harvey Dix, Rookie Outfielder, Proves That He's Got
the Stuff for the Major Leagues

IN

THE BIG TRY

A Thrill-Packed Baseball Novellet

By T. W. FORD

NEXT ISSUE



"I will sign for Mayhem," Matilda cries snatching the pen and turning toward Dilly

WINNER FAKE ALL

By TOM THURSDAY

Mayhem Murphy, the welterweight wonder is knockin' 'em all around until his wife Matilda begins signing testimonials!

IT'S about a year before Pearl Harbor and I am taking a midwinter vacation around Miami and Miami Beach and the main idea is to forget a boxing character by the name of "Foul Blow" McCoogan. This McCoogan person is being primed by me to win no less than the welterweight championship of the world and is getting along fine and likewise dandy until we decide to visit Canada and upset the advertised pushovers in the Dominion's territory.

We get by the first two Canadian canvas-crashers with no trouble at all and then are matched with an unknown gent entitled Raoul LaMont, the Canuck Bone Crusher. I have never heard of this LaMont zombie as a sequel to either Dempsey or Tunney and naturally figure that he will fall over like the water at Niagara. McCoogan, believing the same, does some heavy training on a full case of dark ale and a complete set of sirloin steaks and thinks he is in very fine condition.

Well, in the very first round I can see that Raoul LaMont is no toy to play with and when I note that he knocks McCoogan down for a six-count with a right to the jaw I give my battler the old zoom-boom signal.

Now this signal merely informs McCoogan that the job is going to be very rough, indeed, and for him to put on the foul blow act. McCoogan is very delighted to get the floppo signal and so the next time LaMont belts him, this time on the chin my masterman drops to the canvas, registers great pain and wriggles all over.

This is my cue to hop up to the ring and yelp, "Foull!"

Now it seems that the referee does not believe in awarding fights on fouls and remarks that if my brat does not arise and shine promptly and immediately he will give LaMont the nod as winner. In this attitude the referee is backed up by the cash customers and I can see we either got to fight LaMont or all of the spectators who are present.

We choose LaMont and the Canadian chooses McCoogan.

In fact, Brother McCoogan is hit so hard with both a right and left to the chin and stomach that it requires eighty-nine cents worth of ammonia and the same amount of smelling salts to bring him back to North America.

Later that evening I inform McCoogan that I have grave doubts that his mother ever raised him to be a successor to John L. Sullivan or even Little Eva. I also tell him that jobs cutting down trees are plentiful and kiss him good-by. Personally I have decided to depart hence from that territory having heard rumors that they have what is called snow and ice in that land and I cannot bear the thought of same. Besides I have not observed any palm trees or orange blossoms in dear old Canada and so I shove off for Florida.

A week later I am nestling in the white sands of Miami Beach, enjoying the sunshine and watching the bathing cuties go into everything but the water, when I am tapped on the shoulder by one named Fairytale Fogarty. This Fogarty lad is quite famous around fisticuffing and newspaper circles, having a fine record for telling yarns that would have made the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen toss their wonder stories into the ashcan.

NEEDLESS to say I do not hop up to shake hands with Fogarty.

"I am very happy to see you," I say, and

I regret very much indeed that I am very short of moola. G'by."

"That is a very impolite way to greet an old pal," says Fairytale Fogarty. "Especially when I have come to offer you the next welterweight champion of all the world."

"I doubt very much if I would be interested in the next welterweight champion or the Bank of England," I say. "In fact," I say, "I have just unleashed Foul Blow McCoogan."

"Where is McCoogan?" inquired Fogarty.

"I hope he is now chopping down tall trees in Ontario or maybe Quebec," I answer. "At least you can bet he is not chopping down any fighters."

"Very unfortunate," concedes Fogarty. "But it shows I got here at the right time. Now this new champion I have just discovered is a natural. With your expert training and astute managing he should win the crown in less than a year."

"I have about decided to forsake the manly art of busting beezers and become a small, independent grocer," I say. "In fact, I think that is a very good idea. I can always eat; that is, if the ants and cockroaches will be so kind as to leave me something on the shelves."

"Now this forthcoming champion of the whole world is a very remarkable specimen of manhood," says Fogarty. "His name is rather distinguished. It's Archibald Van Puyster."

"You mean you got a Hollywood actor?" I ask.

"I had the great pleasure of seeing him in action," says Fairytale Fogarty. "This morning, over in Miami, I see a large crowd, surrounding two men. One is a small lad, in comparison, while the other looks like a cross between Gargantua and Frankenstein. The little feller is knocking the big man down again and again. Suddenly another big goof rushes out of the crowd and gangs up on the little lad. But this does not stop the little lad. No, sir; he goes after the second giant and knocks him unconscious with one punch to the jaw. Soon he has both men on the pavement, out cold."

"Ah!" I says. "How much were the gate receipts?"

"So having heard you are in town, I take the little lad to one side and tell him he is wasting time and talent driving an ice truck," continues Fogarty. "I tell him how great you are as a trainer and fighter manager and he admits that he never heard of you. I ask him if he has ever heard of Winston Churchill and he admits he may have."

"A very smart beezark," I say. "And now, if you don't mind, I will go into the ocean and see if I can still swim."

"I will have Archibald Van Puyster over at Bill Gore's gymnasium tomorrow morning and I invite you to see the future welter-weight champion of the world in person."

"I would not be interested, if he was in four parts," I say. "Good afternoon."

"Good afternoon," says Fogarty. "I will see you tomorrow at the gymnasium."

Well, the next morning I find myself in the vicinity of Bill Gore's gym and I just happen to walk in, seeing that I am on a vacation and have nothing else to do.

As I enter the training quarters I hear a thump from near the middle, where the ring is, and I note a large gent resting on the canvas, his hands folded over his chest and very much at peace.

A smaller lad is standing over him with a right glove cocked with another portion of the same treatment.

"Good morning," says Fairytale Fogarty. "You are a wee bit late. You should have been here when Archibald knocked over the two others. Of course he is very crude, indeed, and he has to take ten punches to land one, but one is all that is essential, as you can note by gazing at the floor."

"Who were the gents he upsets on their rear-housings—Rip Van Winkle, Methuselah and Old King Cole?" I say.

"I will admit that the first two are just a couple of old-timers, trial horses that are about through. However," says Fogarty, "if you will study the face and general physique of the eminent lad now dozing on the canvas you will observe that he is no less than Barney Bohunkey, the logical contender for the heavyweight crown."

This is very startling news and I am aware that Barney Bohunkey has never been defeated by anyone except blondes, brunettes and redheads. More, when Barney Bohunkey meets the champ I am positive that he will knock him flat.

"Well, now, this is a very interesting situation," I say to Fairytale Fogarty. "My interest in Archibald Van Puyster is very much aroused. In fact, I think I'll let him sign my Special Contract Number Two."

"You will please include me in that Special Contract Number Two," says Fogarty. "The inclusion will amount to fifty-fifty with the general take or the cash earned. Although very painful, I will remind you that I discovered Archibald Van Puyster and will attend to all the publicity, which I assure you will be very excellent."

I AM about to holler murder in assorted colors when Archibald walks over with a positive peroxide blonde hanging on his right arm. I note that Archibald has a puss as expressive as a door-knob.

"Oh!" says Fogarty. "I want you to meet Miss Matilda Minky, Archibald's fiancee."

"Pleased tuh meetcher," Miss Matilda Minky says with a smile. "Ain't Archie wunnerful?"

Archibald sticks out his big right paw, squeezes my hand like an automatic dirt scoop-shovel and says something that sounds like "muyah." I gather the immediate thought that Archibald has not been invited to join the "Information, Please" or "Round Table" programs.

In fact, I feel that he is not too bright and I am well pleased with the feeling. I especially detest fighters who can figure gate receipts which is very annoying, indeed. And I super-especially detest blond dolls who want to marry or even look at any boxer under my wing. They always get the idea that a manager is gypping their boy friend, such as taking the big end of the winnings, and little items like that. The fact that they are usually right is most irksome and annoying.

Well, to make a short story shorter, I will say that I decide to manage Archibald Van Puyster, give Fairytale Fogarty his cut of all future purses and try to keep Miss Matilda Minky out of my hair. The fact that I have a head that could pass for a billiard ball is beside the point because she even gets into my bald spot.

I train Archibald for about three weeks and from a crude iceman he begins to show signs of fistic ability and also acumen. I do not want to make a Fancy Dan fighter out of him, a clever boy like Corbett or Tunney, because I find that he has a lethal left and a ruthless right.

The boys in the gym tell me that they would rather box a stick of TNT or a half-starved family of lions. As I was saying, he is not too bright and I have to show him the same tricks over and over again before they register. Now and then I lose my very calm and even temper and let go with a few choice remarks that irks Matilda Minky more than it does Archibald.

"Yuh gotta remembah that Archibald is a gent and should not be talked to in the manner you are usin'," says Matilda Minky.

Comes the time when I think Archibald Van Puyster is ripe for his first fight. Fogarty presents him with a new name and it is no less than Mayhem Murphy, the Wiscon-

sin Wildcat. Fogarty gives him that name and state, no doubt, because he hasn't any Irish blood in his veins, while the nearest Archibald ever come to Wisconsin is Tampa, Florida.

However, Fogarty does very well with the newspaper build up, saying that he comes from a refined and noble family and that the reason he is taking up the rough business of boxing is because he wants to work his way through Yale, Harvard and maybe dear old Oxford. Fogarty claims Archibald is very intellectual and pays close attention to all affairs of the mind. Personally I note that he pays no attention to any one but Miss Matilda Minky.

I arrange with Major Peeples, a local matchmaker and fight promoter, to have Mayhem Murphy go to war with a guaranteed set-up entitled Freddie the "Flopper." Now, this Freddie the Flopper gets his appetizing name because, in a fight, he is always willing to meet the floor halfway. But if Freddie the Flopper can get in a few first socks himself he is very happy and his playmate is liable to do all the flopping.

The night of the brawl Freddie the Flopper is innocent of the fact that Mayhem Murphy, formerly Archibald Van Puyster, carries a battleship in his right and a bomb in his left. In brief, three seconds after the bell, Freddie the Flopper is down and completely out and has lost all interest in the art of self defense.

Fogarty leans over to the boys in the press box and announces that they have just observed the very next welterweight champion of the entire world. The newspaper lads consider the remark quaint and ask Fogarty how much Freddie the Flopper received for diving into the tank.

I match Mayhem Murphy with six other canvas divers in and around Miami during the next three weeks and he kayos them as soon as he locates their chins. Meantime, Matilda Minky decides it is time that she married her he-man and promptly does so. While courting she only took half of his earnings, but, as a wife, she decides that he should turn over all his dough to her for safe keeping. She keeps it long enough to rush to a hat or suit store and blow it in.

Within the next three months I pilot Mayhem Murphy right up to a shot at the champion, a character named "Special Delivery" Sosin. This merry mullah is also a terrific puncher and the match attracts international attention. Fairytale Fogarty surpasses the very best fiction writers in passing out news to the sports writers and, although they all

know he is a liar, they like his stuff, and so do the readers.

THE betting is eight to ten in favor of the champ and the Garden is a sell out. Naturally Matilda Minky is in the dressing-room and, when we get the call for the ring, she even carries a bucket and acts as a second.

"Sugar Boy," she says, "you will bust this person very hard and then have dinner with your baby girl at the Stork Club."

Well, as you read in the papers, it was the upset of the century. In the first minute of the first round Mayhem Murphy walks out, touches gloves with Special Delivery Sosin, and then belts him with a right and left. The champ does not return to New York for at least forty-five minutes.

"See?" says Matilda Minky. "What did I tell ya? Okay, Sugar Boy. Git dressed and we blow to the Stork Club."

Down in the dressing-room we meet a dapper young squirt with a fountain pen in one hand and a flock of papers in the other.

"Ah, congratulations!" whinnies the lad. "All hail to the new champ! I knew he could do it—Now—eh—ah—please accept this check from the makers of Leander's Luxurious Lozenges."

Matilda Minky grabs the check out of my hand.

"What is this?" demands Matilda Minky. "And why ain't it in cash?"

"Why, you're Mrs. Mayhem Murphy!" goes on the lad. "This is, indeed, a pleasure. You are much prettier than your pictures in the papers. You should really sue them, my dear Mrs. Mayhem Murphy. And now I will explain," goes on the walky-talky. "My name is Alonzo P. Dilly, and I have the high honor of representing Leander's Luxurious Lozenges, Nature's Gift to Mankind."

"Look," says Matilda Minky. "I don't get all this here double-chatter. What is this chunk of paper for and why ain't it in real dough?"

"It will be a pleasure to explain," says Alonzo P. Dilly. "You see, the new champ has taken Leander's Luxurious Lozenges for the last two years."

"Who took what?" mumbles the new champ, edging over.

"I get the ideoar," cuts in Matilda Minky. "You are gonna give the champ five hundred bucks for taking them pills, huh?"

"Who took what?" repeats the champ. "I ain't never took nothin'."

"Shut up, Sugar Boy," reprimands Matilda Minky. "For this kinda dough you have

taken pure arsenic and gained weight."

"Just a minute," I say. "As the manager of the new champ—"

"Shut up, stupid," says Matilda Minky. Then she turns to Alonzo P. Dilly. "What does Sugar Boy gotta do for this piece of paper?"

"That is a certified check, my dear Mrs. Murphy," says Alonzo P. Dilly. "It is the same as cash."

"Mebbe 'tis; mebbe 'tain't. My thoid husband used to hand out them checks hisself, which is why he now has only two more years to break big rocks into little ones for New Josey."

"That is a very good check," I say. "It is the same as mazuma."

"Whether 'tis or whether 'tain't, you ain't gettin' a piece of it," she snaps.

Alonzo P. Dilly spreads a paper on the table and hands a fountain pen to the new champ.

"All you have to do to get the five hundred dollars is to sign right here," smiles Alonzo P. Dilly.

"I will sign for him, because the champ has not practised writing his 'X' for some time," I say.

Matilda Minky yanks the pen out of my hand very rudely, indeed.

"I will sign same," she says and does, while I turn back to Mayhem.

Well, that is all settled and, before leaving, Alonzo P. Dilly gives Matilda Minky three boxes of Leander's Luxurious Lozenges. They come in a cute little silver covered box and look very pretty. Later, however, I hear that Alonzo P. Dilly had come all prepared to give the five hundred moola to Special Delivery Sosin, figuring he was a cinch to win over my entry. He was very much surprised to get the news that Mayhem Murphy had won so quickly. And so was I, the fight racket being what it is—if it is.

That night I get a chance to read the testimonial which was supposed to have been written by the new champ and it was the very best of baloney. Fairytale Fogarty got one peek and admitted that whoever wrote it had more imagination than he had. It states that, before taking large gobs of Leander's Luxurious Lozenges, the champ had been weak, delicate, troubled with lumbago, whooping cough, dizzy spells, liver trouble, gall stones, ringing in the ears, fainting fits, etc., etc., and even etc.

Within the next few days the new champ signs testimonials for everything except automatic girdles and self-lighting cigarettes. Matilda Minky takes charge of all the checks

although I let forth with a loud howl that I am entitled to a fair cut of all profits. Her answer indicates that I should consider myself very lucky and fortunate to be the manager of Mayhem Murphy and if I did not care for that I could oblige her by placing my neck on a subway third rail.

WE ALSO get an offer from a vaudeville circuit for the champ to go about the country and show the folks what good, clean living can do toward making a man a man, instead of a panty-waist. Matilda Minky thinks this is just the thing and we sail forth to make a bum out of Edward G. Robinson and Clark Gable. The champ is to do some shadow boxing and spar a little with any of the hometown boys who thinks Mayhem Murphy is a cream puff smothered with salami.

We open in St. Louis and the act goes over big, like the R.A.F. After the first show I buy some of the St. Louis papers and am dazed and even dazzled to see the full-page advertisements, with a picture of the champ, along with the signed statement that he owes his success as champion to taking Leander's Luxurious Lozenges. In the same spread is Matilda Minky, with her arms around the champ's neck, looking up at him like a sick swan.

Well, we play the vaudeville circuit for about five months and soon the sports writers and the boxing commissioners begin to yelp that we should quit the ham acting and do some fisticuffing.

Personally I can see no contenders on the boxing horizon that could possibly maltreat or even annoy Mayhem Murphy. However, the sports editors and commish claim there are two newcomers who should be given a chance at the welterweight title.

One of the would-be contenders has the tasty title of "Ruthless" Roberto and the other answers to the call of "Horizontal" Horowitz. So we return to New York and the commish decides that we should fight Ruthless Roberto, as they believe he is a shade better than Brother Horowitz. I have no idea who this Ruthless Roberto may be and care less because I know the champ will bop his ears off in less than no time, if not a few seconds before.

When the boys weighed in I get a very large surprise. Ruthless Roberto walks over to me.

"I should bust you on the beak but I feel, now, that I owe you a great favor," he says. "You ditch me in Canada, and tell me to chop down big trees, while you go to Florida and

get warm. Well," says Ruthless Roberto, "you do me a favor, although you do not know it, and so I will not bust you on the beak."

Right away I see through the heavy mustache and recognize my old palsy, Foul Blow McCoogan. He looks very fine, indeed, and I hope he may last at least two rounds with the champ, as I always like to give the cash fans a run for their moola.

Well, you all know about that terrible first round and what happened to Mayhem Murphy. You have also read the awful things the sports writers and general public said about me and also Mayhem Murphy. They accused me of taking a bribe from the gamblers to have the champ lay down in the first round, and call us both a pair of very horrible crooks. This was all libel and I am now suing all the papers and see how they like it.

What actually happens is a big surprise. When the time comes for the main bout to go on, in the Yankee Stadium, you remember, I am at the ringside seeing that Ruthless Roberto does not have any time-bombs in his right glove or concrete in his left. The champ comes up from the dressing-room with Matilda Minky, Fairytale Fogarty and a couple of handlers.

I get one look at the champ and he seems very pale. I ask him how he feels and he says that he thinks he has a stomach ache. For once in his life he has done some real thinking. He really has a very first class pain in the stomach.

At the bell he leaves his stool like a great-grandfather and begins to slowly walk around Ruthless Roberto. Roberto naturally thinks

the champ is playing possum, waiting for a chance to unleash his famed kayo socks, and likewise plays ring-a-round-a-rosy. Some smart smick in the cheap seats lets out a yell.

"Start fightin' before the lease expires!" he chirps.

Roberto decides to take action before the fans shower him with pop bottles and cushions. He lets go with a very light tap to the champ's jaw and do you know what? The champ makes one horrible face, drops to the canvas, and rests on his back. That's all, folks.

We rush the ex-champ down to the dressing-room and find out what ails him.

"I got a fierce stommick ache!" moans Mayhem Murphy.

"I know what happens to Sugar Boy!" says Matilda Minky. "Just before the fight I give him a box of them Leander's Luxurious Lozenges and the big dope musta ate the whole woiks!"

Shortly after I am passing the dressing room of the new champ, Ruthless Roberto, formerly McCoogan.

"Hi yah, Big Shot!" he calls. "If you wanna chop down some of them big trees in Canada I will give you a note to my ole timber boss. Haw!"

Before I have a chance to answer the door pops open and in comes Alonzo P. Dilly.

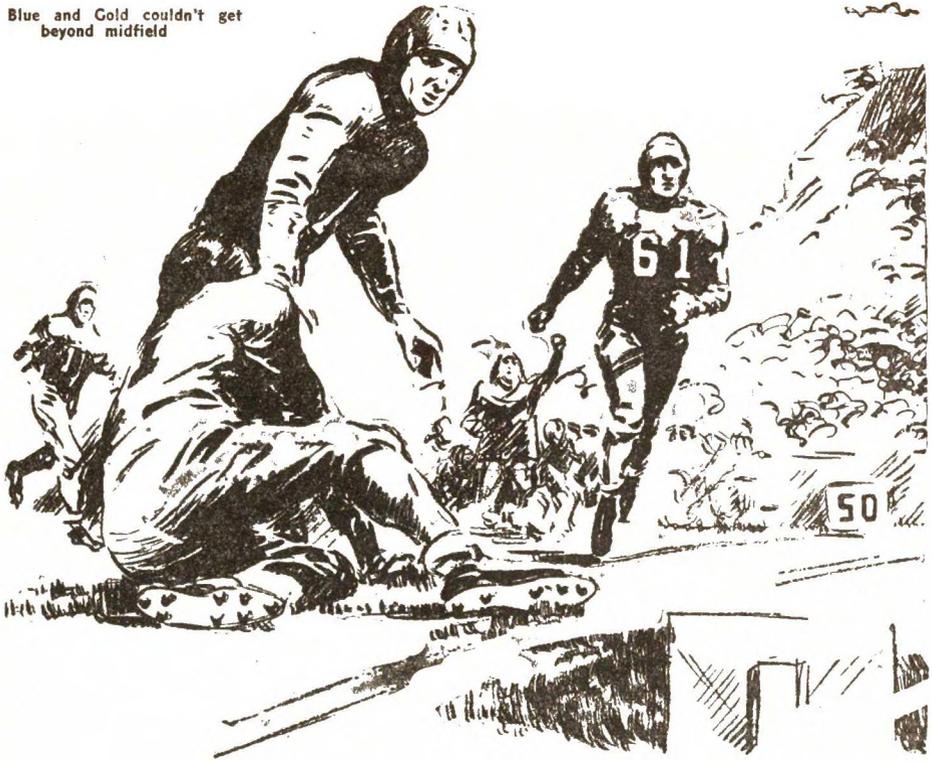
"Ah, congratulations!" he whinnies. "All hail to the new champ. I knew you could do it! Now—eh—ah—please accept this check from the makers of Leander's Luxurious Lozenges."

Period.



Starting a new fight club in a machine-controlled city is a desperate gamble—but one ex-fighter, his girl and her dad are willing to take the chance against loaded dice in OPENING ATTRACTION, a gripping complete novel by Roger Fuller featured in the Winter issue of POPULAR SPORTS MAGAZINE—now on sale, 15c at all stands!

The Blue and Gold couldn't get beyond midfield



PIGSKIN PATTEN

By ROBERT S. FENTON

"Too tough to be human," they called quarterback Marty Patten — and in that big game a man's life depended on his kindness!

THE ball was on Northern Aggie's eighteen-yard line, and the Traip University's quarterback rested on one knee and watched the trainer toil over the halfback Patten had been working to death all the way from Northern's forty-nine. Marty Patten sleeved sweat from his face, and sensed the feeling that was running through the concrete stands.

Two years of war had made him tougher than formerly, and in those days before he got into an armored unit, he had never been considered a Rover boy. A week ago, after the game with Wayne, one writer had called him "Blood and Guts" Patten. The Traip field general would swap two broken legs and a fractured skull for a touchdown.

Marty leaned over Mike Monesky.

"How does it go?" he asked.

"Give me the ball, Patten."

The trainer argued that Monesky should go out, but the Lith protested vehemently. He got to his feet and walked around. Monesky was a husky boy who hadn't been to war and he wanted to impress a man who had been. The coach took him by the arm.

"What is the date, Mike?"

"November fourteenth," the halfback grinned.

"All right, you stay in. We'll see after the next couple of plays." The coach eyed Patten dubiously, and walked off the playing field.

The Aggies were out in front by a 3 to 0 score and there were only twelve more minutes left to play. Back on the thirty-four,

Monesky's running mate, Osterman, had wrenched his shoulder and he was through for the day. Coach Brideman's top reserves were riddled by injuries and would not be available until the big Wayne game. But he had to have this one, or it would matter very little whether they beat Wayne or not.

Marty Patten was twenty-three. Quite an age for a college junior. A lot of Traip fans said he ought to be with the pros. They said he was too tough to play with schoolboys, that if the truth were known, he'd just about settled the battle of the Bulge with his smashes at the Nazi line. Patten had played football over there with the armored outfit while sweating out a Victory from LeHavre. A fellow who'd been to war shouldn't be allowed to run a college team, the timid ones said.

Northern Aggies lined up in a 6-3-2 defense, their ends wide, all set to drive in hard and fast. Marty called his signals and they meant Monesky again. The big Lithuanian smashed at the Aggie line, a reverse outside tackle, and he pumped and clawed his way into the Aggie secondary for six big yards.

MARTY slapped Monesky on the rump and grinned wide.

"A human eighty-eight, pal. Only thirteen more to go. We got to score here, you know that, Monesky?"

"Yeah, Marty, yeah." The Lith spat out some grass, his face had been ground in that deep.

Monesky set sail once more. On a half spin, he faked to a wing back and drew the Aggie tackle across the line into blocking position and then completed his pivot and drove at the spot vacated by the tackle. The hole closed and Monesky had to ream it wider, and took a beating getting another three yards. He was groggy when he got up, and the stands roared.

The ball was on the Aggie ten. Northern employed an eight-man line.

Well, Patten thought, he'd give the Lith a breather. He set up a single wing formation which looked like a double reverse to the defenders. He took the ball from the center and sneaked into the Aggie line for a yard and a half, just enough for first down and goal to go. From here on in it had to be Monesky. Marty Patten liked it on the ground. Touchdowns from forward passes never gave him much of a lift. He never had been a passing quarterback, even though he could throw that ball and hit a sparrow on the wing.

From the nine, he sent Monesky roaring into the Aggie line. Three times. The Lith got seven in three tries. He had to be helped to his feet once more. Two Aggie players also called for repairs and time was out.

Marty Patten looked up at the massed spectators on the home side of the midfield stripe. He wondered if that little blob of red was Kit Barry's hat. She always wore red hats. She had written him letters all the time he'd been overseas, and they had a sort of understanding. Kit took care of the switchboard at the Mohawk Hotel in town and also gave piano lessons.

"No, Marty, I'm not ready to commit myself," she'd told him a few days ago. "And anyway, I wouldn't until you were finished college and knew just what you were going to do."

Nells bells, he knew! He wanted to be a surgeon. After Traip, he'd play pro ball for a year to get a full poke, so the way would be a little easier. He'd ask her again when the Wayne game was wrapped up. He'd wear her down. He generally could soften an objective. His name was Patten.

"I got one more play in me, Marty," Monesky said.

The game was resumed, and the Aggies threw eight men into that forward wall of purple again.

There was very little room in which to work. This had to be a straight power smash, employing bone and muscle and courage and very little intelligence. Monesky went in with his head down, behind four Traip blockers, and he had to go up and throw himself into the end zone for the score. Monesky was helped off the field before the try for point and he drew a tremendous cheer.

The Traip booter, Ekstrom, split the up-rights, and the score was 7 to 3 in his team's favor.

There was seven minutes of play left, and the Aggies, with five replacements, started moving slowly up the field again, after the kickoff. Their power back, Trucker, kept skewering through the Traip forward wall, and into the secondary.

A chunky halfback named Jost took his turn and helped pile up the yardage. Traip was backed up on their thirty-four with four and a half minutes to go when Marty Patten, backing up a jaded line, came in and got Trucker and pitched him over his head. The Aggie back went out, and the crowd began to boo, the same crowd that had been yelling, "Hit 'em again! Hit 'em again! Harder—

Harder!"

Jost couldn't do it alone. The Aggie quarterback began pitching and his third try was intercepted by Traip on the twenty-seven and run back to midfield. The game ended with Traip freezing the ball on their own thirty-eight.

Monesky was on the table in the gym when Marty Patten and the rest of the team poured into the locker room. The trainer was doubtful about his appearing again until next year. He was looking at Patten when he said that and the first string quarterback grinned.

"Want to make a bet, Doc? I've heard medics talk through their hats before. Without that baby, we couldn't get in sight of Wayne's twenty-yard line. Talk to this guy, Coach."

"I'll be in there," Monesky said. "Just give me a nose mask and tape up my knee."

BUT the Traip coach had different ideas on the subject.

"I'll be the judge of that," Brideman snapped. "A game of football isn't worth crippling a man, Patten. If we have to go out there next week with Northey and Aschman in the backfield, okay."

"Look, I got a bet with that Wayne coach. He's the only brother I got. Always I got a kick out of knocking his pins out from under him. Big brother Charley. Always I had to wear his old pants and shoes and use his bicycle when he outgrew it."

"You're both alike in one respect," Bride-man said. "You'll do anything to win."

"What does a loser ever get?" Marty asked.

"He's on a spot up there, isn't he, kid?" the big Traip center said as he peeled off. "This is the only decent team he ever built, and it is up to us to spoil it. I understand his contract rests on that game in two weeks. I've heard other things. Like if a guy doesn't play his way—"

"The rotten papers again," Marty growled. "You mean that prima donna halfback he glued to the bench?"

"Yeah. Harry Webb. The coach up there says he is yellow. Claims he shied at the Aggie line, and lateraled to a wing back who got nailed for a seven-yard loss."

"Observers claimed there was a hole he could have blasted through," Marty Patten said. "I don't blame Charley for benching him. It took a lot of moxie to do it. That Webb is the best passer in the conference. I've seen some fellows who looked big and brave over across, and all of a sudden, when

the chips were down, they hunted for a truck to dive under. You have it or you don't."

"Like Monesky," a Traip tackle drawled.

"Like Monesky," the quarterback said coldly.

It was a picture the newspapers liked. They did not get one like it very often, if ever. The Patten boys. Marty Patten, the brains of the Traip Varsity. Charley Patten, the coach of Wayne. In a family affair, anything could happen. The war-veteran was building himself up for the attention of the pro managers. Charley Patten's job depended on his stopping brother Marty. The human interest angle was there, and there were other angles, too.

Marty Patten took Kit Barry out that night. They drove far out into the country and had dinner at a place called The Willow Tree Inn. There was an orchestra at the inn, and when it played, the lights were dimmed just right. From the window with the checkered curtains, you could see the autumn moon. This was the time and place, Marty thought, to throw the works with all the tricks in the bag.

"I know what's coming," said Kit, smiling.

"So you figured I was going to make a pass, Kit," Marty said. "Okay, I throw it anyway. Why wait until we're old and gray? There's a couple other fellows going to Traip, and they are married. We've got a car and a weekend. Let's drive to your place and you can pack a bag before we drop in at the parish house."

"Time out," Kit said. "No, Marty."

He reached for her hand and she withdrew it swiftly.

"I'm not sure, Marty, not the least bit sure, I ever will. I'm afraid of you."

He laughed, but she remained deadly serious.

"It's not only the way you play football, the way you tear everything out of a man that he has in him, and when he's thoroughly spent, hardly give him a look when he's taken off," Kit said. "You admire brute force, a certain kind of courage."

"There is only one kind," Marty argued.

She shook her head. "There is another, Marty. I wonder if you ever heard about it. You do something for someone that requires more than the type of courage that has brass knuckles to it. By doing it, you lose something you want very much. An ambition, or a great personal satisfaction. Maybe it should be called by another name. Unselfishness. No, let me finish, Marty. Why do you want to be a surgeon? Is it because

you can cut men open and see what makes them tick? To see if they have a heart and all the stuff they need physically to batter their way to where they want to go? I've seen you close up, Marty. You dissect men with your eyes and you don't need a scalpel. When I am sure you possess the right kind of courage, I'll say what you want me to say."

IT WAS a jolt to find out Kit thought that of him.

"I'm too tough," Marty said dryly. "Maybe I'll read this Sir Walter Raleigh thing over again, where he spreads out his coat to keep somebody's feet from getting wet. He did it for a dame, didn't he? He might have got pneumonia and gone home and died, and the dame would have married some dizzy duke and forgot Raleigh until his picture came out on a can of tobacco. Look, this is Nineteen Forty-Six, and you either grab what you want or there'll be a dozen other babies grabbing for it. You'd get what I mean if you got into a raid on a nylon counter, Kit."

"I wish you'd understand," Kit said. "I'll never be able to explain what I mean, because it is something you do instinctively when the time comes. You forget to weigh material things because it is an action sponsored by the heart. I've got to be sure my man has a heart."

"Maybe Charlie and me left ours in the bottom of a coal mine along with our old man," Marty said. "We never asked any quarter from each other to say nothing of begging it of strangers. You've read the criticism of the Wayne coach. He's losing out up there because he drives too hard and hates weakness in the men he has on his team."

"Webb was Wayne's best player last year," Kit reminded Marty. "Why was he such a flop this year? Because he resents being used as a human battering ram every other play? Maybe he wants to be treated as a gentleman."

"Yeah, his old man is president of a chain of grocery stores, isn't he?" Marty answered. "Doesn't matter much to Webb whether he gets a reputation or not. His future is solid. Mine looks a little uncertain at the moment." He did not ask her if she cared to dance, but eyed his wrist-watch when he ordered dessert. "I guess I'd better do some cramming tonight, Kit."

"Yes, Marty. Your studies come first, of course."

"On the way home, Marty Patten said very

little. He tried to understand what Kit had been driving at, and wondered if a situation would ever arise to bear out her judgment one way or the other. It had to come right from the heart, she'd said. Heart? That was a muscle, too, and it could be as weak as the structure around it.

None of it seemed to make sense. A man was made up to be a certain individual. He was destined to be a grouch or a comic, a tough guy or a softy, a go-getter or a bum. Kit did not seem to be satisfied with the way Marty had been shaped, and there was nothing he could do about it, unless he kept driving and driving until he broke her resistance down. The moon looked dull and brassy and the air had too much of a chill.

Traip, the next Saturday afternoon, beat Wallace in a breather, and Coach Brideman held his first stringers out for the greater part of the game. Even as the big Blue and Gold team trotted to the locker room, winners by 28 to 0, the big game ballyhoo was touched off.

The fans, pouring out of the seats, talked about the odds. If Brideman's team was in condition, a Traip supporter should be satisfied to put down three to win two. If Monesky was not in form, then you could bet two to one on Wayne.

The Traip eleven knocked off practice on Thursday afternoon.

"No more scrimmage," Brideman said. "Just a signal drill Friday morning."

After classes on Friday afternoon, Marty Patten went over to the Mohawk and Kit seemed glad to see him.

"Sorry, I haven't called you, Kit," the quarterback said. "Brideman's been driving us like mules. And the work I had to make up in lab should have happened to a quiz kid. Well, the Wayne team got in a few minutes ago and are on the way to the country club."

"The hotel is full up already," Kit told him, and turned her head away and began manipulating the plugs. A few moments later, she said, "John O'Hara registered an hour ago."

"O'Hara?" Marty said. "I better look sharp tomorrow." John O'Hara was manager and part owner of the Detroit Cougars, the pro team that could be very good to a quality player.

"There'll be a lot of money bet on Traip," Kit said. "It's too bad that has to be, Marty."

MMARTY looked at the girl and smiled faintly.

"You can't stop people betting on any-

thing, not even college football," the player said. "Well, I'll call you later, Kit. Maybe we'll have time to see the last show at the Colonial."

"I'm on duty until nine, Marty. I don't know if I can make it."

"We'll see," he said, and moved across the lobby. Somebody yelled at him.

"Marty, you old hot shot!"

He turned quickly, immediately recognizing the voice of his brother, Charley. Charley was ten years older than he. He had a few gray hairs around his ears, and the squarish face so characteristic of the Altoona Pattens. "We'll beat out your brains tomorrow."

"With what? That bunch of meatballs you coach?" Marty was laughing.

"Come on along, kid," the State mentor said. "I'm going up to have a quick one with O'Hara. The big guy wants a shot at my fullback, Masterson, and I promised him I'd lecture the back on the virtues of playing with the Cougars, to say nothing of the clams he would get for signing."

"I'd beter buzz along, Charlie. This won't look nice to the newspaper boys if they happen to be prying around, and when don't they?"

"Oh, they're not that narrow-minded, Marty. Just a couple of minutes. It wouldn't hurt you to talk with O'Hara."

"Okay," Marty said.

Kit raised her pretty brows a trifle when she saw the Traip quarterback go into the elevator with the Wayne coach. For another two hours she kept glancing toward the elevators and thought Marty should have more sense than to stay that long with O'Hara and the rival team's coach.

When she saw Marty come out of a lift and walk across the lobby and out to the street, she sighed with relief. She looked around for a sign of Danny Russell, football writer for the Globe. Apparently, she thought, he would be out at the country club talking to the Wayne players.

"That O'Hara is betting plenty on Wayne," she heard the room clerk say. "The word is getting around fast."

"Maybe because the papers say Patten is going to put Webb in there this afternoon," a guest said. "Whatever differences he had with the guy, are ironed out, it seems."

"I'll go along with O'Hara," the room clerk answered. "He seldom picks a loser."

Kit heard another voice then, and she knew right away that Russell had been around.

"Yeah. Maybe that's why he has been

entertaining the Patten brothers in his room this afternoon. Maybe we ought to keep that in mind."

"O'Hara is considered an all right guy, Danny," the room clerk said. "You newspaper guys are suspicious of your own mothers."

"You ain't kiddin'," Russell said. "We'll just wait and see."

That night, Marty met Kit outside the hotel and they went over to a drugstore and had cokes. "Danny Russell knows you were with O'Hara," Kit said. "It doesn't look good to him, Marty."

"That punk," Marty shrugged. "His thoughts never get tired. They must smell bad to him at times." He tapped his knuckles against the top of the table. He was as nervous as a cat. "O'Hara asked me if I was thinking of playing pro ball. I said I figured to—maybe. For a year, perhaps two, no more. He said for me to see him first because he was also interested. That's all O'Hara said to me."

"Pro ball is rough, Marty," Kit said, puzzled by the quarterback's restlessness. "A surgeon needs a pair of good hands, Marty. If a man's fingers are stepped on by two hundred pounds wearing cleated shoes, he can't qualify as a surgeon."

"It's the chance a man takes, Kit. Tomorrow is going to be tough. Charley told me Webb might be in there and he's the best passer in the State. There'll be a bed check at ten, and I'd better be there."

"I hope Traip wins," Kit said.

"Don't let O'Hara hear you say that." Marty grinned at her. "He's bet everything on State but the Cougar franchise. I'd beter see you home."

AT HER door he kissed her lightly.

"Like a big brother, Kit. Maybe when I find out what it is you couldn't find in me, I'll see what can be done about it. I'm a pretty tough guy and you're a soft little mouse, and maybe things would not work out, not yet."

"We'll see, Marty. Until I'm sure, I won't be looking around." She gave him a nice smile and closed the door.

Walking across the campus, Marty remembered the things Charley had told him about Webb. Webb had rebelled against Charlie's driving methods and lack of polish at the tag end of last year's football season, and had led the opposition since September of this year. Webb, Charley had told him, had been spilled hard in the first scrimmage of the year, and had not seemed quite right

thereafter. He had not seemed able to function with normal coordination, had lapses of memory.

"Marty," Charley had said. "I'm in a spot up there. I may be crazy, but I've heard of fellows walking around with a skull injury for months without keeling over. The trainer insists there is nothing wrong with Webb. Webb claimed I was trying to get rid of him for awhile when I suggested he have his own family doctor check up. I've been playing a big guy named Masterson in his place, and they're accusing me of shunting Webb into a minor role because this Masterson has a rich father who has a lot to say about hiring coaches at State. Every time I put Webb in, I get the shakes, Marty."

In his room, Marty Patten weighed his brother's story, pro and con. He had to look out for Charley. Charley was tricky and he would do almost anything to gain an objective. In the Army, the Traip quarterback had become very familiar with snow jobs.

Looking back, Marty Patten remembered the run-arounds he and Charley had given each other, whether the race was for a ticket to a circus or the favors of a local belle. Sure, Charley could be laying one of the nicest booby traps he's ever seen, and he could very well be caught in it. The Webb controversy looked slightly on the limberger side, and Marty told himself he wouldn't fall for Charley's smooth line.

"Imagine the big bum," Marty said, just before he fell asleep. "And right in front of O'Hara."

He thought it over again in the morning. There had been many conflicting stories coming down from Wayne about Webb and his brother Charley. It was possible the halfback had taken a bang on the head, but had long since thrown off the effects. Maybe Charley was playing the angles with a certain alumnus, and perhaps he wasn't.

You had to look out for a Patten when something big was at stake. They always fought with every weapon at their command. Just the same, Marty went over to the city hospital and asked some questions. "There have been times when a fracture was hard to find," a doctor said. "Most generally though, a Roentgenologist can detect the slightest crack."

Leaving the hospital, Marty Patten felt like a village zany. What difference did it make if Webb was right or not? If he went into a football game he'd be smacked down with the rest of them, and just as hard. And if he found out brother Charley had been

ribbing him, he would hit the big boy right on the nose.

The Traip-Wayne game proved to be an even closer battle than anticipated. From the opening kickoff, it was apparent that a break would win it. The Blue and Gold could not get inside Wayne's thirty during the first fifteen minutes. Wayne got as far as Traip's twenty-four, nearly clicked with a long pass, then fired another that Osterman nailed on his seventeen.

Seven minutes after the second period started, Traip got the big break. A punt boomed off Monesky's toe hit on Wayne's twenty-one, and the Wayne halfback, Tarbell picked it, lost it, and failed to reach the ball before a lunging Traip tackle.

Marty Patten tried to work a center alley pass but the ball was grounded. He had to call on Monesky. The big back was playing with a taped knee and thus far had failed to live up to his press clippings.

"It's up to you, Mike," Marty said. "We score now, or never. Charley hasn't sent Webb in yet, but he'll use him."

"Okay," Monesky said.

THE play was a cross buck. Northey carried out his assignment and smashed into Wayne's right side, and Monesky powered his way to the sixteen-yard line. Monesky, from a double wing picked up four more on a reverse inside tackle. Outside, he got a first down on the Wayne eight. The stands were quaking, and blue and gold banners fluttered like a million butterflies.

Mike Monesky limped to his position. His rugged face was grayish in the sun. Marty's signals meant that Mike was to try again. The Traip plunger gave all he had left on a spinner and churned his way inside the Wayne five-yard line. Mike stayed down, his teeth grinding against the pain that shot from his knee and up into his hip and the pit of his stomach. They brought out a stretcher and took Monesky off. Marty's voice cut through the cheers.

"You fellows carry it the rest of the way. You, Osterman. You, Aschman. For Mike Monesky!"

Aschman grinned. "For Patten, you mean. Old Blood and Guts. If Monesky stays in a wheel-chair the rest of his life, this victory will square up everything."

"You want out, Aschman?"

"Hand me the ball, sweetheart," the burly right half said.

Aschman hit Wayne in the middle, his cleats tearing up the sod. He squirmed and pumped and churned through a mass of

legs and arms and scored for Traip.

They lined up for the try for point. Wayne's forwards sifted through and a big guard blocked the placement.

Wayne began moving after the kickoff. They ground out yardage to their thirty-eight, then fumbled. Marty Patten decided to gamble for the clincher. He fired a pass to his left end, O'Malley, but a Wayne back intercepted and walked the tightrope to mid-field. The clock said nine more minutes to play. Wayne's heavy duty man, Masterson, got fourteen yards on two tries. A pass over the line put the ball on fading Traip's twenty-seven. Traip asked for time out.

Marty rested on one knee and watched replacements trot away from the Wayne bench. A tremendous yell broke from the visiting cheering section. The name Webb rolled out across the field.

"Charley's throwing the works here," Marty told himself. "Webb is going to pass." He kept his eye on the big Wayne back. He wondered what was going on inside his brother's head, if there was anything amiss between Webb's ears.

"Hit him with all you've got," Marty said to his linemen. "They're not giving me a snow job. Hit that baby like a ton of bricks."

The Traip quarter dug in on the defense. The crowd stopped yelling. They were tense, and they watched Webb. The ball was snapped, and Marty felt a sudden trembling in his legs. The Traip forwards banged their way through and rushed Harry Webb. Webb kept fading. He looked trapped. It looked like a tremendous loss for Wayne.

Then Webb tucked the ball under his arm and cut wide, snake-hipping out of the way of Traip tacklers. He reversed his field and cut toward the sidelines behind two alert blockers.

Northey wiped out half the interference with a shoulder block, but Webb was still at top speed when Marty Patten crossed over to head him off. On the seven-yard line, the Traip quarter knew he could get Webb with a lunge and rocket him out of bounds. The one remaining blocker was five feet behind Charley Patten's ace passer.

Marty Patten got set for the tackle when a cold hand closed over his heart. It would have to be a vicious diving tackle. His feet slipped, and he went down, and Webb went into the end zone and scored standing up.

Traip players bore down on Marty Patten as he got to his feet.

"You didn't even make it look good," Northey flung in his face.

"You double-crossin' crumb!" a Traip end

roared. "So you talked with O'Hara, Patten. With your dear brother, Charley!"

"Look," Marty choked out. "They said this Webb wouldn't run with the ball. He's supposed to have a cracked skull."

PLAINLY Aschman was infuriated by what Marty Patten had done.

"If the coach doesn't drag you out, we will!" he threatened as Wayne cheers drowned out all other sounds in the stands. Marty saw the second string quarter trotting out and he stumbled toward the bench, wondering if Charley was grinning over on the Wayne bench. Brideman frowned as he threw a blanket at his first string quarter.

"I don't like what I saw, Patten," he said. "I don't like what I've heard. What's your cut with O'Hara? What are you to get from your brother for saving his job at Wayne?"

"That's a rotten lie!" Marty said. "Get on your feet and I'll knock you down, Brideman."

"Sit down," a Traip player bit out. "Or we'll all drag you into the gym, Marty."

He sat there and watched Webb run up to the ball to try for that all important point. Charley's ace booted it, and then he kept on stumbling forward. As the ball split the uprights for Wayne's seventh point, Webb pitched forward on his face. Players swarmed toward him. Charley Patten came tearing across the field.

"What hit him?" Brideman gasped out.

Marty Patten suddenly felt good. Charley had been leveling. Not a hand had touched Webb before he'd fallen. During that run for a touchdown, Webb had been roughed up a little cutting through Traip's ragged defense.

A doctor leaned over Webb. He called for a stretcher.

"All right, Brideman, I got soft," Marty said. "I pictured myself ruining Webb for life, or killing him, just as I was about to get him, and hard. Charley told me last night what he was afraid of. For a while I figured he was kidding me. I wasn't sure out there a few minutes ago if his story had been on the level."

"Forget it, Marty," Brideman said. The coach's voice was thin in his throat. "You certainly were sticking out your neck, after the stories that have been going around. Your brother having to win this one—O'Hara and you in a hotel room—and all that dough O'Hara had on Wayne! Go on out and finish up Marty. You've only got two minutes and a half. Kid, you showed courage—more than just the kind that

comes out of brawn."

Northey and Aschman and four linemen surrounded Marty when he took the field for Traip. "Looks like we didn't know from nothing, Marty," Aschman said.

"I'm a softy," Marty Patten said. "I should have knocked Webb's brains out. It was the chance he took."

Marty got Wayne's boot on his eleven and tried to get upfield over the twenty. The visitors, however, were not going to be denied. They bumped him out on the eighteen. Once more it was the tough Marty Patten, throwing his big guns at the Wayne forward wall. Osterman and a second string back, McBride tried, but they could only get eight yards in three tries.

Marty faded back and threw a pass, stopping the clock. It nearly clicked, but it was just a little low and the end couldn't quite scoop it off the turf. The crowd was pouring out of the stands. The shadows were stretching out and the sun was low in the west.

The gun went off and Wayne was the winner, 7 to 6.

Charley Patten came running. He got Marty by the arm and spun him around.

"Since when did you read Merriwell, Marty? You should have knocked him silly. Don't you remember the tricks I used to pull on you? Suppose I'd been kiddin'?"

"Yeah? And why did you keep Webb out until the last quarter, Charley? Why did you risk your job that wasn't too solid under you anyway keeping Webb sitting on his pants for most of the year? I'll tell you, big shot. We're not as tough as we think. What's the word from Webb?"

"Won't know for a while, Marty. They took him to the hospital. I'll see you at the Mohawk in about an hour."

"Yeah," Marty said, and thought of Kit. She would have seen Monesky being carried off. She'd remember how he had sent Mike in there again and again with only one good leg under him. Maybe they had Monesky in the hospital, too. He caught at Brideman's sleeve as the coach stepped into the locker room.

"How's Mike Monesky?"

"He'll be all right, Marty. A torn ligament is about all," the coach said. "I guess they'll think about your brother, Charley, in a different light up at Wayne. Not because he beat Traip."

AN HOUR later, in the lobby of the Mohawk, Charley Patten talked with Marty.

"They found a slight fracture in Webb's skull, after all this time," Charley said. "I kept telling them to go easy, Marty."

"You had me on a spot out there," Marty said with a grin. "In the space of less than a second I had to make up my mind. I told myself you wouldn't stop at nothing to get what you wanted, you big lemonhead, and that maybe this was a snow job, and forever after I would be hearing your horse laugh, Charley."

"To think my own brother doubted me," the Wayne coach said with mock indignation. "Don't forget, I've been away from the coal mines for a long time, kid. You know I think I am getting the instincts of a gentleman."

"On you they should look good," Marty said, and suddenly got up.

Kit Barry, in a short fur coat and little red hat and skimpy tweed skirt, was moving swiftly across the lobby. On her face there was a peculiar smile he had not seen for a long time.

"Excuse me, Charley," said Marty. "I'll see you later."

Kit slid her arm through Marty's.

"Let's go for a little walk," she said.

They walked up the street, swung toward the campus a few blocks away. "You seem different tonight, Kit," Marty said.

She drew his arm against her.

"Now, I am sure, darling. I've found out all I need to know. There is a long weekend ahead of us, and we could drive up to Charlesville."

"That is where they specialize in weddings," Marty said, staring at Kit.

"Of course, Marty. Like I said, it would happen in spite of yourself. With all you had to lose, with all those ugly rumors wound around you like ropes, you used the kind of courage I was talking about the other day. It did not require brute force. It had to come from the heart."

"Let's face it," Marty said. "It could have gone the other way."

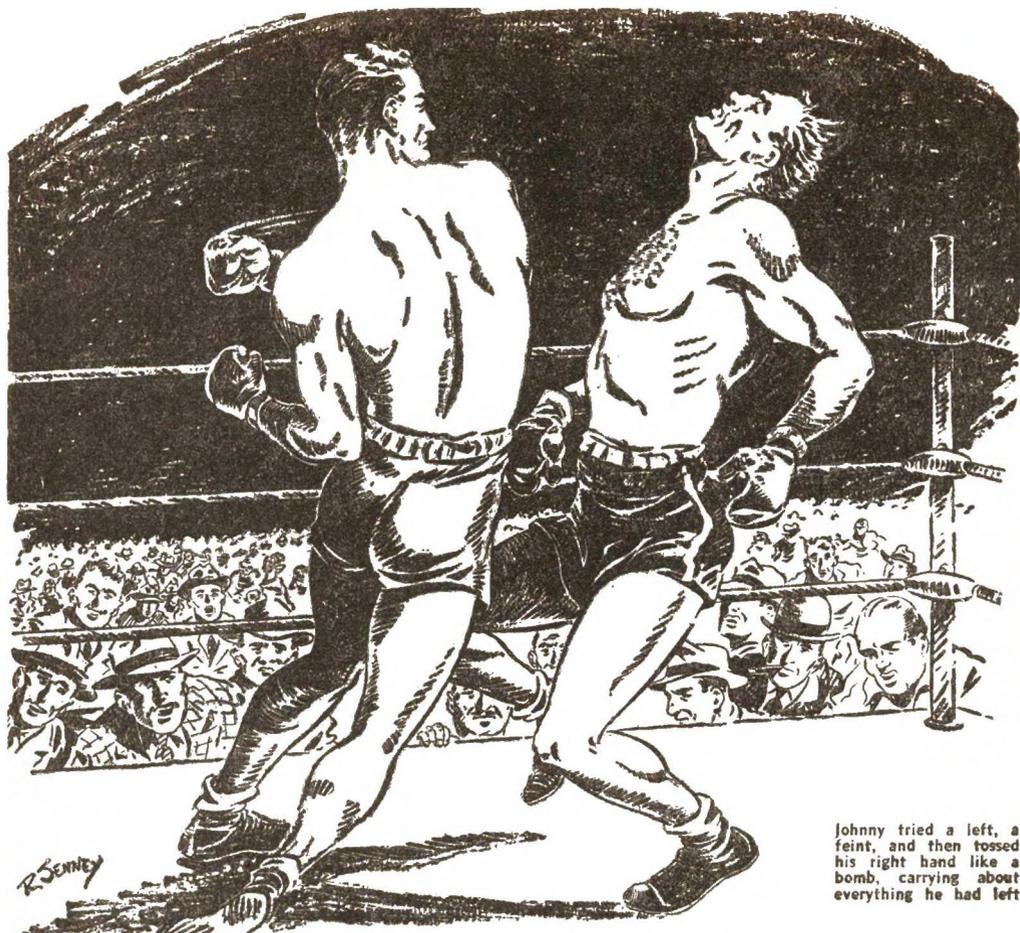
"No," Kit said. "I know what I know. Marty, are you backing out now?"

"What?"

"We could start early tomorrow morning. I'll have my bag packed. In a few years I can hear a nurse saying, 'Ca-a-alling Doctor Patten! Call-i-ing Doctor Patten!'"

Marty knew there was only one play to make here. It was a quarterback sneak into the shadows under the elms with Kit tucked under his arm. The kiss he gave her really was a spinner.

Kit called for time out.



Johnny tried a left, a feint, and then tossed his right hand like a bomb, carrying about everything he had left

MY BROTHER JOHNNY

By WILLIAM CAMPBELL GAULT

Middleweight top-notch Johnny Brenner finds the ring game tough when he's haunted by fear of "Spoiler" Ames!

MOST people don't understand Johnny. I know the newspaper boys and Artie Lenz doesn't. Artie thought Johnny was afraid of the Spoiler Artie is our manager.

"The Spoiler" is Greg Ames, the middle king, and he's called the Spoiler, because that's what he is. Inside a ring, and out, he's a very nasty man to tangle with. Lots of men, and women, have found that out. He hasn't got any ethics you could notice and he's got a right hand you can't help but notice in a ring.

Artie was up at our apartment this nice summer afternoon, and Artie was talking.

"They're saying, Johnny, that there's only one description for a challenger who turns down a title fight."

Johnny was at the piano, just kicking a melody of his own around, and Johnny smiled.

"Are they?" he asked.

"It would be the biggest gate the field has ever known," Artie went on. "It would set you and Danny both up for the rest of your lives."

"Would it?" Johnny said.

"Johnny doesn't need to worry about me," I put in. "I'm saving my own money."

"That's my boy," Johnny said. It was an overused saying, I know, but Johnny has said it since he was twelve and I was nine. And he meant it. He likes to feel that he's always watching over me, and I know he likes it, so I let him think so.

"Did you see what my boy did to Sailor Burke?" Johnny asked. "You were in his corner, I know, but did you see the fighting heart of him as he tied into that poor Sailor?"

"Play me a tune, Johnny," I said.

So Johnny played me "Stardust" and "Deep Purple" and "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes."

Even Artie shut up when Johnny played those. If Johnny hadn't decided to be the world's best middleweight, he probably would have decided to be the world's best sentimental pianist. Johnny is a sentimental man, though the reporters say he has a comptometer for a mind. Reporters are not sentimental, I've learned.

Artie looked a little hot.

"Okay," he said, "I can't compete with a brother act. Your answer is no, then?"

"Not an unqualified 'no'," Johnny said. "For a million dollars and the Democratic nomination for president, next term, I might reconsider."

"I'll tell them that," Artie said, but I guess he was joking.

When Artie left, Johnny played Night And Day and Me And My Shadow.

"You play a lot of piano, Johnny," I said, when he'd finished.

"Yes," he said, "I certainly do. I'm really talented." He went over to stand by a front window, to look out at the street below.

"Don't you want the title?" I asked him. "Isn't that something to try for?"

"I guess I want the title, all right," he said.

THERE was a silence, while we thought our private thoughts.

"You're not afraid of this guy, are you, Johnny?" I asked then.

He turned around and looked directly at me.

"I don't know, Danny," he said. "I just don't know."

"Would you like *me* to fight him?" I asked.

"No," he said. "He'd murder you, kid.

He'd scramble your brains, and break up your face. He'd butt you, and thumb you, and slam you in the groin. There is nothing rotten in the trade that guy doesn't know. I'll never want you to fight him, even when you're ready. And kid, you've got a lot to learn."

"I'm willing though, huh?" I asked him.

"You sure are," he said. "You're a good workman."

He opened a window, and stuck his head out. When he brought it back in, he said:

"Let's take a drive in the park. Let's go out in our expensive jalopy and impress the citizens."

We'd just bought a new Caddy convertible, but I didn't think it was a drive in the park he wanted. I think he wanted to talk to Jane, and probably alone.

"I think I'll stay home," I said, "and practice that piece you're trying to teach me."

"Okay," he said. "I'll see you for supper."

The piece he was trying to teach me was called "Twinkle Toes" and was really very simple, being about lesson four. But I seem to have too many thumbs for the piano.

I quit, after a while, and read a book about Mickey Walker I was trying to finish. But it didn't interest me as much as it had before Artie's visit.

I started thinking about Johnny. About how he had always hand picked his opponents, and mine, too. How he had always avoided the hitters, when he could, and the arguments he and Artie had had about that. I remember what Johnny had said, one day.

"This is a business, just like any other, and we're in it for the profit. To keep our profits up, we have to keep winning."

That all made sense all right. Then, what was wrong with it? I knew something was wrong with it. Johnny had done very well. He wasn't marked, except for a small scar over his right eye, and he would never be punchy. He had made a lot of money, and taught me how to hang on to mine. He was a mighty fine brother, and the smoothest middleweight in the world, and he could hit. If he fought the Spoiler, he might win the title, but he could lose more than the title would ever repay. Why should he stick his neck out?

I didn't know why, but I knew he should.

When he came back to the apartment, right before we went out for supper, he

was looking unhappy.

"Women are funny, aren't they, kid?" he said.

"I guess so," I said. "I mean to find out, some time."

"Don't," he said. "You'll be wasting your time. If you don't fall in love, stay clear of them."

"Well," I said, "we'll see."

"They've got opinions on everything. Even on fighting, about things they don't even understand."

"You and Jane have a fight?" I asked him.

"We had a discussion," he said. "And you know how she always wanted me to give up the ring?"

"That's right."

"Well, now she thinks I should fight the champ before I retire. She says I owe it to the fans."

"HmMMM," I said, thinking that over, and trying to fit it into my own sentiments on the matter. Jane was a bright kid, even if she did sing for a living. She was bright and straight and pretty, and I'm glad she was Johnny's girl.

"She sounds like those sport scribes. They sing the same song."

"Some of them are pretty smart, Johnny," I said.

"Oh, they're brilliant," he said. "That's why they work for forty, fifty dollars a week. They're mental giants. I don't know what the game would do without them."

"Neither do I," I said.

HE LOOKED at me disapprovingly. "I was being sarcastic."

"Oh," I said. "But, still—" And I stopped.

He looked at me closely.

"Don't say it," he said finally. "Not you, too, Danny. Let's drop the subject."

We went out to eat. I had a small steak and a big glass of milk and a quarter of a cold crisp head of lettuce and some Frenchfries and rye rolls, I also had some ice cream. Johnny had a cup of coffee and some criticism for the waiter. He was owlier than I'd seen him for a long time.

There was a piano in the place, and I asked Johnny if he'd play me a tune, and he grumbled a little, but he went over.

He played "Chloe" and "Me And My Shadow" and some others, all old, but all good.

[Turn page]

"YOU ARE UNDER ARREST"



**There's a Thrill
in Bringing a
Crook to Justice
Through
Scientific**

CRIME DETECTION

I have taught thousands of men and women this exciting, profitable, pleasant profession. Let me teach you, too, *in your own home*. Prepare yourself in your leisure time to fill a responsible, steady, well-paid position in a very short time and at very small cost. What others have done you, too, can do.

53%
of all
**American
Bureaus
of
Identification**

Be A
**FINGER
PRINT
Expert**

Employ I.A.S. students or graduates. "I will teach you Finger Print Identification—Firearms Identification—Police Photography—and Criminal Investigation." That's what I told the men who now handle jobs in Identification Bureaus throughout the nation.

And now I repeat, **THIS** time to **YOU** . . . Just give me a chance and I'll train you at home to fill a good position in the fascinating field of scientific crime detection. It is not expensive or difficult to learn. Now is the time to start. Many new Bureaus of Identification are being established since the war. Many industrial plants now fingerprint their employees. The need of more Finger Print experts is evident. Fit yourself now to hold down a fine job as a recognized expert in Crime Detection.

FREE! "BLUE BOOK OF CRIME"

It's a thriller, filled from cover to cover with exciting information on scientific crime detection. It tells about some of the most interesting crimes of modern times, and how the criminals were brought to justice through the very methods which you are taught at I.A.S. The book will tell you, too, how at a cost so low you shouldn't even think of it, you can get started on this important work without delay. Don't wait. Clip the coupon and send it along today.

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE
Dept. 7962, 1920 Sunnyside Ave. Chicago 40, Ill.

CLIP AND MAIL COUPON NOW

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE, 1920 Sunnyside Ave., Dept. 7962, Chicago 40, Ill.
Gentlemen: Without obligation, send me the "Blue Book of Crime," and complete list of Identification Bureaus employing your students or graduates, together with your low prices and Easy Terms Offer. (Literature will be sent **ONLY** to persons stating their age.)

Name

Address

R.F.D. or Zone

"You do what you think best, Johnny," I said, when he came back to the table. "Whatever you do, that's what's right to do."

"Thanks, Danny," he said. "That's my boy."

"Let's go over and hear Jane sing tonight," I said. "I haven't heard her for quite a while."

"You heard her last Friday," he pointed out.

"That's quite a while," I said. "C'mon! Say you will."

"Okay, Cupid," he said. "I'll make it up with her. But she ought to mind her own business."

I said no more.

Jane sang at the Golden Grotto, which is a fancy spot, but she is about as good as they come in the torch field, and the best is none too good for her.

We got there just before she came on, and the headwaiter gave us our special table, right near the stage. She sang "I'll Walk Alone," and the hand she got rattled the silverware. She looked over at Johnny, when she'd finished, and winked.

"How many of you would like to hear Johnny Brennan play 'Dianne?'" she asked the crowd.

The way it sounded, I guess they all did.

Johnny went up to the white piano and gave them "Dianne." Then he played and Jane sang "Paper Doll," and they brought down the house.

Just as the applause died down, some drunk in the back hollered:

"When you going to fight the champ, Johnny?"

Johnny seemed to stiffen, and he glared out toward the dimness of the far part of the room, and there was one of those silences.

"As soon as they make it worth his while," Jane called back quickly. She turned to Johnny. "Isn't that right?"

Johnny looked at her, and back at the crowd.

"No," he said very distinctly. "No, it's not right." And he walked off the stage.

Jane flushed. She gestured to the regular piano player, and he ran through some chords, and then she gave them "People Will Say We're In Love." I guess they forgot about the drunk and what Johnny had said after that.

We sat at the table, after the show was

over, drinking a beer apiece and waiting for Jane. She always came to our table after her show. But we waited quite a while.

"I guess she's not coming," Johnny said finally. "Let's get out of here."

We did.

It was after that Johnny started to be somebody else. He didn't play the piano, and he didn't kid with me, or spar with me. We sat around the apartment or went for drives in the car and went out to eat, but he wasn't very good company.

I finished the *Life Of Mickey Walker* and started *The Story Of Ruby Bob*, which is about Fitzsimmons, of course. I finished that, and read about John L.

Artie came over one day.

"I guess you're reading the papers," he said.

"I'm reading the funnies and the headlines," Johnny said.

"The sports writers aren't being very polite," Artie said quietly. "They're suggesting a lot of things that aren't true. Johnny, forget I'm your manager for a few minutes. Just think of me as a friend."

"I'm listening," Johnny said.

"Okay. You made quite a lot of money in this racket. You always put on a good fight, and the fans were willing to pay to see you fight. Now they want to see you fight the champ. Don't you think you owe them that?"

JOHNNY shook his head. "I don't owe them a dime."

"Not in money, Johnny. Don't you owe the sport some loyalty? Don't you owe the fans one good show? And something else—this Spoiler is bad. He's bad for the sport and he's a bad example for the kids in it. They figure the champ can't do wrong, and they tend to imitate him, to figure that's the way to get up there."

"Maybe it is," Johnny said.

Artie was chewing a dead cigar now, rolling it in his mouth, and looking annoyed and disappointed and uncertain.

"You got to have some heart in this business," he said. "It isn't all as mechanical as an adding machine."

"I've done all right," Johnny said. "And so has Danny."

Artie stood up, then. He looked down at Johnny for a few moments.

"If you can't understand what I'm try-

ing to say, you're not the guy I thought you were," he said.

He left us, with that.

Johnny looked over at me, and away.

"Did you mean all those things?" I asked him. "About not owing the fans anything, and about the champ having the right way to get to the top?"

He smiled sadly, and shook his head. "You know I didn't, Danny. You know what the title means to me, and the game."

"You scared of him?" I asked.

He didn't look at me. "I—guess I am."

"Play me a tune," I said.

He shook his head. "Not today. I think I'll go out and get some air."

He got something besides the air. He didn't come back again until early the next morning, and when he did, he was dead drunk. It was the first time I had seen him drunk since he was sixteen.

I put him to bed.

In the next week, I put him to bed three times. It made me sick, inside. It made me hate Greg Ames even more than before, and I knew I'd have to do something.

I had a conference with Artie, and told him what I wanted.

"Ames'll murder you, kid," Artie said.

"You're the kind of guy he built his rep on, climbed to the title on. Willing guys are his meat."

"Fix it up," I said.

We were at breakfast, two days later, when Johnny saw it in the paper. He handed the paper over to me. "Read that," he said.

Danny Brennan, the willing, tow-headed brother of the leading middleweight challenger, is to get a crack at the title, according to word from Ray—

"Is that true?" Johnny asked me.

I nodded.

"Call it off."

I shook my head.

"I'm going to fight him?" I said.

"Danny," he said. "Look at me. Have I ever steered you wrong?"

"No." I paused. "But I'm going to fight him. For both of us, Johnny."

Johnny sighed. "He'll—" He shook his head. "You're not going to fight him. I guarantee you that."

"You're talking foolish," I told him. "It's all arranged."

He didn't talk much to me from then on.

[Turn page]

MIDWEST RADIOS

at Greater-Than-Ever VALUES

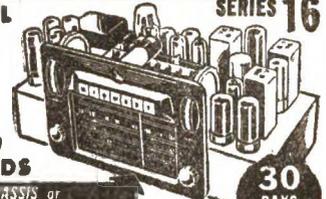
BIG, POWERFUL

**WORLD-
RANGING
CHASSIS**

with F M
(Frequency Modulation)

5 WAVE BANDS

SEPARATE CHASSIS or
COMPLETE CONSOLES AVAILABLE



SERIES 16

**30
DAYS
TRIAL**

**The SYMPHONY GRAND
A M - FM
RADIO-PHONOGRAPH CONSOLE**

A magnificent radio and musical instrument that is completely new—from the ground up. Big, powerful

Series 16 Chassis brings in long wave, short wave and FM reception...an automatic record-changing phonograph...and scores of NEW Post-war features. **EASY TERMS**

SEND FOR
**FREE
CATALOG**

BUY DIRECT FROM FACTORY and SAVE!

FILL IN COUPON AND MAIL TODAY OR JUST
SEND YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS ON A POSTCARD

MIDWEST RADIO CORPORATION
Dept. 18-B, Cincinnati 2, Ohio

Gentlemen: Please send me your new FREE Catalog and details of Your Liberal 30 Days' Trial!

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____

ZONE _____

STATE _____

LEARN AT HOME TO MOUNT BIRDS



Animals, Heads, Fishes, Pets; to TAX.
Be a Taxidermist. Profit and FUN.

Hunters, save your valuable TROPHIES.

Mount: birds, squirrels, serpents. Learn to

TAX for Leather and Furs. Wonderful HOBBY

Have a HOME MUSEUM. —BIG PROFITS

mounting for others. INVESTIGATE NOW.

FREE BOOK With 100 fine

game pictures. **NOW** absolutely FREE. Write TODAY.

Send Postal TODAY for FREE BOOK. State AGE,

N. W. SCHOOL OF TAXIDERMISTRY, Dept. 4172, Omaha, Neb.



BE A Nurse

MAKE \$30-\$40 A WEEK

Practical nurses are needed in every

community... doctors rely on them...

patients appreciate their cheerful, expert

care. You can learn practical

nursing at home in spare time. Course

endorsed by physicians. 48th yr. Earn

while learning. High School not re-

quired. Men, women, 18 to 60. Trial plan. Write now!

CHICAGO SCHOOL OF NURSING

Dept. 421; 100 East Ohio Street, Chicago 11, Ill.

Please send free booklet and 16 sample lesson pages.

Name _____

City _____ State _____ Age _____

WETS!



HONORABLE DISCHARGE RING

HERE'S A VALUE! Handsome, hefty Genuine Sterling Silver HONORABLE DISCHARGE RING, yellow gold finish, for only \$1.98 plus tax. Beautiful Discharge Emblem on handsome scrolled mounting. A magnificent ring you'll wear for life.

SEND NO MONEY Mail your name, address, and ring size today. Your Genuine Sterling Gold Finish Discharge Ring will be sent to you **AT ONCE**. Pay your postman only \$1.98 plus tax and postage. Wear the ring 10 days, and if not delighted, return it and your money will be refunded at once. Yes, your satisfaction guaranteed! **ORDER TODAY.** Send strip of paper for size. **CHARLES STEWART, 616 Walnut St. Dept. H-205 CINCINNATI 2, OHIO**

TOOTHACHE?

DU TO CAVITY

GET QUICK AMAZING RELIEF by placing Dent's Tooth Gum—or Drops—in cavity of aching tooth. Cavity toothache frequently strikes when you can't see dentist. Be prepared! Ask your druggist for either complete aid package. Follow directions.

DENT'S TOOTH GUM TOOTH DROPS 25¢

LEARN MEAT CUTTING

At Home — In Spare Time

Get into the vital meat industry. Concise, practical Home Training based on 25 years proven instruction method used at National's famous residential school. Prepares you for bigger pay as Meat Cutter, supervisor, market manager or more money in your own store. Go as rapidly as your spare time permits. Diploma. Start NOW to turn your spare hours into money. Send for FREE bulletin today. No obligation. National School of Meat Cutting, Inc., Dept. TG-23, Toledo 4, Ohio

GOOD MONEY FOR YOUR SPARE TIME!

Be our Dealer in your locality for **STRONG UNION MADE WORK AND SPORT GARMENTS.** No experience necessary. Easy work. Millions of workers buy work uniforms. We supply everything needed. Write immediately for FREE Catalog.

ROBT. STRONG GARMENT CO., 319-337 W. Van Buren St., Dept. M-2, Chicago, Ill.

RHEUMATISM

ARTHRITIS-NEURITIS-SCIATICA

If you suffer the agonizing pains of these diseases when the usual remedies have failed, learn about a new trustworthy, modern, non-surgical treatment method. This marvelous treatment is completely explained in the Ball Clinic's FREE Book. Write today. No obligation. **BALL CLINIC, Dept. 504 Excelsior Springs, Mo. 102**

He went to see Artie, and when he got through, I didn't have a fight with the champ.

Johnny did, but still he wouldn't talk to me any more than was necessary. I sparred with him. That was Artie's idea, because I'm something on the Spoiler's style, a borer, a mixer with a hook.

I sparred with him and ate with him and lived with him. And he'd say, "Pass the salt" or "Has the laundry come back?" or "Is that hook all you've got to show me?" But he didn't say anything nice, and he didn't play the piano, and he never saw Jane.

I think he hated us all, but nobody more than himself.

He came along nicely. He'd move around me, in the ring, like he moved around a melody on the piano, just playing, and then he'd move in for the business. I thought he had all he'd need.

The scribes didn't think so, though. They said he'd lost his confidence. They said he was haunted.

I REMEMBERED Baer before the Louis fight. Baer, the heaviest hitter of his time, and what a shell he'd been against the Bomber.

I thought, A guy can be licked before he ever puts the gloves on.

I began to wish I had insisted on my right to the fight.

Artie got him some really heavy brawlers, some light-heavies, and Johnny made them look awful bad, left-handing them to death, moving around them like a patch of light, spearing them.

Once in a while, one of these lugs would bring a haymaker home, and Johnny would go down. He'd look thoughtful, for a while, after that.

The odds, a week before the fight, were two to one, favoring the champ, and that's where they stayed. I didn't bet a dime.

The night before the fight, Johnny said something nasty to me.

"I guess you know I wouldn't be climbing in there with that butcher tomorrow night, if you hadn't got big ideas."

"I'm willing to fight him," I said.

"Whatever happens to me," he went on, "you can figure would have happened to you, only worse. They wouldn't release you from that contract unless I signed."

"Maybe I'd have made it a better fight," I said.

He didn't even listen. "One more mistake like that and you'll be on your own," he said. "You can wind up on Queer Street with the rest of the punchinellos who do their own thinking with limited equipment."

"Artie thought it was all right."

"Artie is a trainer," he said. "That manager is a courtesy title, only. Artie will never get by on his brains, not anywhere."

I shut up, and let him stew in silence. I couldn't stop him from brooding, but I could keep him from hating me any more than he did, I hoped.

Jane called up, next morning.

"How is he?" she asked me. "How does he feel about me?"

"I don't know," I said. "Why don't you talk to him?"

"No," she said. "Not today. This is his battle."

We went over for the weighing-in, that afternoon. This Spoiler was a muscular gent, with a battered face, and long arms. He looked Johnny over appraisingly, and he looked confident. He said nothing. He always did his talking with his fists.

We went back to the apartment, and Johnny tried to nap, but he just laid on the bed, staring at the ceiling. About four hours before the fight we went out, and he had a small, rare steak.

He didn't say anything. In the dressing room, later, he growled at Artie. He bawled out one of the seconds. But to me, he said nothing, nor did he look at me.

It isn't worth it, I thought. No fight's worth this.

The Stadium was a sell-out, and Johnny's cut would be a fortune. Even knowing that didn't help him any.

Then the prelims were over, and the call came, and we were walking up the aisle. Johnny went first, in the old blue robe. Then Artie and the second, carrying the pails and sponges and Artie's kit. And me, I came last, wishing I was somewhere else.

They gave him a good hand. It was a warm night, with a million bugs around the cars, and the lights looking like stars around the stands. They climbed up, the three of them, under the ropes, and I handed up the stool from down below.

There were some boos with the Spoiler's cheers, but he didn't seem to mind. He

[Turn page]

Now for EVERY WORK SHOP!

NEW Invention Electroplates by BRUSH

Easy to Plate CHROMIUM GOLD, SILVER, NICKEL, COPPER

For Pleasure and Profit!

If you have a workshop—at home or in business—you need this new Warner Electroplater. At the stroke of an electrified brush, you can electroplate models and projects—you can replate worn articles, faucets, tools, fixtures, silverware, etc. with a durable, sparkling coat of metal . . . Gold, Silver, Chromium, Nickel, Copper or Cadmium. Method is easy, simple, quick. Everything furnished—equipment complete, ready for use. *By doing a bit of work for others, your machine can pay for itself within a week.* So make your shop complete by getting a Warner Electroplater, right away. Send today for **FREE SAMPLE** and illustrated literature. **ACT AT ONCE! Mail Coupon.**

WARNER ELECTRIC CO., DEPT. L-40
1512 Jarvis Avenue, Chicago 26, Ill.

FREE Details & Sample!

WARNER ELECTRIC CO., 1512 Jarvis Avenue, Chicago 26, Dept. L-40
Gentlemen: Send Free Sample and Details to:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____

“GET ON”
Uncle Sam's
PAYROLL

START \$1,756 to \$3,021 Year
Prepare NOW For 1947 Examinations

VETERANS GET SPECIAL PREFERENCE
Railway Postal Clerks
City Mail Carriers
City Postoffice Clerks
Postmasters
Stenographers-Typists
Messengers, Etc.
32-Page Civil Service Book
FREE
Mail
Coupon
today—
SURE
★

FRANKLIN INSTITUTE
Dept. C94
Rochester 4, N. Y.

Rush to me, entirely free of charge, 32 page book with: (1) A full description of U. S. Government jobs; (2) A list of U. S. Government jobs; (3) Tell me how to prepare for a job.

Name.....
Address.....
..... Vet?.....

COUPON

DRAW for MONEY!

Be An ARTIST!

Trained Artists are Capable of Earning \$30, \$50, \$75 a Week

It's pleasant and interesting to study Art the W.S.A. way. **COMMERCIAL ART, DESIGNING, CARTOONING** all in ONE complete home study course. No previous Art experience necessary—hundreds have profited by our practical methods since 1914. **TWO ART OUTFITS** furnished. Full information in **FREE BOOK "Art for Pleasure and Profit."** Write today. State age.

FREE BOOK gives details

WASHINGTON SCHOOL OF ART,
 Studio 682H, 1115 15th St., N. W.,
 Washington 5, D. C.

Name Age

Address

City State

SHORTHAND in 6 Weeks at Home

Famous Speedwriting system. No signs or symbols. Uses ABC's. Easy to learn; easy to write and transcribe. Fast preparation for a job. Surprisingly low cost. 100,000 taught by mail. Used in leading offices and Civil Service. Write for free booklet to: **Speedwriting, Dept. 9002-7, 28 W. 42 St., N. Y. 18, N. Y.**

BE A BAKER *Learn at home*

National Baking School announces their home study course in commercial baking. Baking is now one of America's high industries in wages. Not a seasonal business, but year-round good field for trained and experienced men. If you have the desire and aptitude, send for **FREE Booklet, "Opportunities in Commercial Baking."**

NATIONAL BAKING SCHOOL
 1235 S. Michigan Ave., Dept. 1943, Chicago 8, Ill.



SUIT YOURS *AS A BONUS*

AND BIG MONEY IN SPARE TIME, TOO

We want you to wear this fine made-to-measure suit. Make it yours by sending a few orders, and earn **BIG CASH PROFITS** in spare time. Your suit will help you get more orders with scores of rich, quality fabrics, tailored-to-measure to newest styles. Also Ladies Tailored Suits—complete line. Write today for **FREE SAMPLES**. No experience, no money needed. For quick action tell us about yourself. **J. C. FIELD & SON, Inc.,** Harrison and Throop Bldg., Dept. P-1877, Chicago 7, Ill.




WHY WEAR DIAMONDS

When diamond-dazzling Zircons from the mines of far-away mystic Siam are so effective and inexpensive. Thrilling beauty, stand acid, true backs, full of **FREE** exquisite mounting. See before you buy. Write for **FREE** catalog.

National Zircon Co., Dept. 4
 Wheeling, W. Va. **FREE!**

Asthma Mucus Fought Easy Way

Coughing, gasping, wheezing, recurring attacks of Bronchial Asthma ruin your sleep and energy because you can't get air in and out of your lungs properly. But now it is no longer necessary to suffer from these terrible attacks without the benefit you may receive from a physician's prescription called **Mendaco**. The very first dose of **Mendaco** ingredients circulate thru the blood, to the Bronchial tubes where they usually quickly help liquify, loosen and remove thick strangling mucus, alleviate coughing and promote freer breathing and more restful sleep. Get **Mendaco** from your druggist today. Take it exactly as directed for 8 Days under our guaranteed trial offer. See how quickly you improve. Money back unless completely satisfied.

looked ready and not worried about a thing.

Artie went over to examine his bandages.

"Johnny," I called.

He didn't look down.

I reached up and touched his shoe, and he looked down, scowling.

"You can take him," I said. "You're the best man, for your weight, in the world."

He took his eyes away, saying nothing.

The murmuring all around died down, now, and they were getting their introductions, up in the ring.

"Danny!" somebody said, and I turned. It was Jane.

"Bring him over after the fight, won't you, Danny?" she said. "Either way, win or lose, I want him there with me, to-night."

"I'll try," I said.

"I thought I could watch it," she said, "but I won't. This is a terrible thing we've maneuvered him into, Danny. This is cruel."

I didn't have any answer for that, and she left.

The quiet was solid, now, and the lights over the ring were brighter and Johnny was stretching on the ropes.

The bell, and he turned, as the champ came out to meet him.

JOHNNY put a left in Greg's face, and moved around him, to the right, away from Greg's right. Johnny's grace was a thing to see, and the speed of his left hand like a snake's strike.

The Spoiler was taking his time, sizing Johnny up. Then he closed, and he brought his hook in with him.

I could see that hook clubbing in there, low, dangerously low, and then the champ stepped clear, to try a right.

It missed by a good five inches.

Johnny kept circling to the right, his left moving in and out, his right cocked, up there near his chin. Greg circled with him. Johnny tried a right that was short. Then he tried another right that wasn't, and Greg's head bobbed back.

Johnny got a dose of confidence, and moved in.

I saw the Spoiler's hook go home to Johnny's midriff, and I saw the top of his head come up to crash Johnny's chin.

Artie screamed, "Foul!" and I was shouting something I don't remember

now. The stands were a cyclone of sound, as Johnny faltered.

The Spoiler was moving in to spoil.

Johnny took most of it. His chin was buried, but Greg landed a heavy right to his mouth, as Johnny went into the ropes. Then Greg was pounding both heavy hands to the midriff, while Johnny tried to drape his weight.

Johnny's stomach turned red, and his knees sagged—and Greg stepped clear.

The champ stepped set his feet solidly beneath him, and brought a right hand up from the canvas.

It was a bullseye, and I could feel it, fifteen feet away.

Johnny stumbled back three steps, and crashed.

The ref's white arm waved the champ back, and then rose and fell, as he began the count over Johnny.

At "eight" Johnny hadn't stirred. At "nine" the bell rang, ending the round.

Artie and the second went out to drag Johnny in, as the ref came to our corner.

Artie had the salts, and in a few seconds Johnny was shaking his head, to clear it.

"That's his round," the ref said. "I saw the foul. But is he able to continue?"

It was Johnny who answered.

"This is a title fight, Mike," he mumbled. "I'll be okay."

"No," I shouted up. "Don't be a fool, Johnny."

Artie looked doubtful.

"Shut that kid up," Johnny said.

The ref went over to warn the champ and his manager.

Artie looked down at me.

"Throw in the towel," I told him.

The warning buzzer sounded, and Artie and the second climbed down out of the ring. Johnny looked down at me, and he was grinning, for some unknown reason.

"Don't worry about me, kid," he said.

I worried about him. Because the champ came out, ready to put over the big one, and the champ was fresh as a daisy.

Somehow, Johnny made him miss the clincher. Johnny draped and wrestled and tied the champ up. In the middle of the round Greg brought that hook in too low again, and I could see Johnny's knees quiver.

But he hung on, looking sick, looking finished. And the fans, who had booed

[Turn page]

150 DIAGRAMS and HOW TO READ THEM **150 DIAGRAM BOOK** **FREE**
For Examining My **New 7 Volume Set on ELECTRICITY**

HERE'S a valuable book of 150 Electrical and Radio wiring diagrams with charts and instructions. Practical information you need to win security and promotion. It's yours FREE merely for examining my 7-Volume Set on Applied Practical Electricity on 7-day's free trial. This 7-Volume Set COVERS EVERYTHING ELECTRICAL from HOUSE WIRING to ADVANCED AC-DC MOTORS and EQUIPMENT. Thousands of diagrams and photos... written so both "beginners" and "old-timers" can easily understand.

7-DAY'S FREE TRIAL I want to send you the 7-volume set AT MY RISK, postpaid, for 7-day's FREE examination. I'll also send you the FREE book of 150 Shop Prints which you are to keep as my gift regardless of whether or not you return the 7-book set. (No salesman will call.) **Offer Limited—Send Coupon Now!**

Send No Money

COVERS: HOUSE WIRING, B.C. MOTORS, A.C. MOTORS, STATOR WINDING, SYNCHRONOUS MOTOR, TRANSFORMER RATIO, WIRELESS AND RADIO, WIRELESS AND RADIO

FREE COUPON NOT AN ORDER—JUST A REQUEST TO SEE BOOKS

E. W. Cooke, Dir., Cayne Electrical School, Dept. 17-18
500 S. Paulina Street, Chicago 12, Ill.
Send me the new 7-volume set "Practical Electricity." Also send the book of 150 Shop Prints which is a FREE gift to me regardless of whether or not I keep the 7-volume set. I'll also return the 7-book set in 7 days and keep the 150 Shop Prints book as a gift from you and owe you nothing or pay \$3 within 7 days and \$9 a month until \$21 is paid, or I'll send the cash price of \$18.75. You see FREE Consultation Service and Technical Bulletins included.

NAME _____ Age _____
ADDRESS _____

TOWN _____ Zone _____ STATE _____
 Check here if you want to save \$1.25 by paying the postman the cash price of \$18.75 on delivery. Same 7-day's examination and Money-Back Guarantee.

LAW...

STUDY AT HOME Legally trained men win higher positions and bigger success in business and public life. Greater opportunities now than ever before. **More Ability: More Prestige: More Money** We guide you can train at home during spare time. Degree of LL.B. We furnish all text material, including 14-volume Law Library. Low cost, easy terms. Get our valuable 48 page "Law Training for Leadership" and "Evidence" books FREE. Send NOW. G. I. APPROVED. **LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY, 417 South Dearborn Street** A Correspondence Institution Dept. 2329-L Chicago 5, Ill.

Store Route Plan PAYS BIG MONEY

SELL COUNTER CARD PRODUCTS Build a good-paying business of your own! Call on dealers of all kinds; show nationally-advertised Aspirin, Vaseline, Cosmetics and 200 other necessities. Big 6c and 10c retail packages, high quality. Attractive counter displays sell products fast. We look after you every step. Write! **World's Products Co., Dept. 73-K, Spencer, Ind.**

BEHIND YOUR CONSCIOUS MIND

? Do you use just your thinking mind? If you do, you are missing 90 per cent of your possibilities. Those occasional hunches are the urges of a vast sleeping force in your inner mind. Learn to develop and direct it. Push obstacles aside and master life with an energy you have overlooked. Send for FREE SEALED BOOK. It tells how to obtain these teachings. Address: Scribe S. K. E. ?
? **The ROSICRUCIANS** ?
? SAN JOSE [AMORC] CALIFORNIA ?

LATEST STYLES
EYE-GLASSES



TRY *by MAIL* NOW
SEND NO MONEY

TEST YOUR OWN SIGHT at Home with our

16 DAYS' TRIAL OFFER **GLASSES** **NEW LOW PRICES**
As Low As **MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE!**

FREE If you're not 100% satisfied with glasses we make we will refund every cent you pay us. **Repairs 48 CENTS**
CATALOG and scientific test chart. **Mr. Service**
U. S. EYE-GLASSES CO. 3557 MILWAUKEE AVE., DEPT. 2-82, CHICAGO, ILL.

I Guarantee Complete Satisfaction of Your MONEY BACK

Save money. Send for **FREE** List of Fine Diamonds. Wonderful values. Hundreds of Beautiful Gems.

GENUINE DIAMONDS **Out of Power LOW PRICES**

Exquisite Settings

Unredeemed loan pledges and big buying power enable us to offer Fine Diamonds at Prices far less than original cost. Send you **FREE** for **INSPECTION AND APPRAISAL**. Write for **FREE** List.

PRUDENTIAL LOAN ASSOCIATION
133 N. Clark Street Dept. 75-B Chicago 2, Illinois

SEE the World in Pictures!



ENTERTAINING, UP-TO-THE-MINUTE PHOTO FEATURES ON EVERY PAGE!

NOW ON SALE—10c AT ALL STANDS

Buy Your Extra United States Savings Bonds Now!

Greg three minutes before, were howling at Johnny now. They've got short memories.

Johnny wrestled out the round, and came back to his stool looking like a ghost. His eyes were glazed, and blood was seeping down from a cut over his right eyes. His face was as white as his stomach was red.

I thought, it's my fault. It's Artie's and Jane's and the scribes' and the fans', but mostly it's mine. Because he wanted to save me from this punishment he was taking.

Artie worked on him like a beaver, kneading his legs, the back of his neck, mopping his face with a cold wet rag, washing out his mouth. Artie put colloid on the cut, and Johnny's legs jerked.

The third was a little better. The champ tried to come in and work on Johnny's middle, but that left of Johnny's was shaping up again, and Johnny's legs were steadier.

In the middle of the round, Greg came in under the left, to try the hook. For the third time, it was low.

BUT Johnny had stepped away, and tried a swinging right. Greg avoided it with a backward jerk of his head. Then Greg came in again—as Johnny's arm swung back.

Johnny's elbow smashed Greg's mouth. The mouthpiece went flying as Greg's manager started to protest. But the ref had seen the first foul, and he pretended not to hear. But that hadn't looked like the old Johnny up there.

Greg stopped, blood trickling down over his chin from the side of his mouth. Then he went charging in, and Johnny landed with a straight right. Greg stopped again, puzzled, and Johnny moved around him, the left landing lightly. Some of the spring had come back in Johnny's legs.

They were in a clinch at the bell. If it hadn't been for that first round, Johnny'd be doing all right, I thought. He'd have the first one on a foul, and the second, with maybe this one a draw. But this wouldn't be any decision fight. The champ had never fought one of those, not as a pro.

And he had taken too much away from Johnny, that first round. The moxie wouldn't be there, I thought.

Johnny looked better. His color was coming back, but the red belt was still present. He was talking to Artie, saying something I couldn't hear, and Artie kept nodding. In the other corner, the champ's noodle was putting in his beef to the ref.

The fourth was an alley fight. They met at ring center, throwing leather, and then Greg bulled in, hooking. Three times, I counted blows that looked low to me.

Johnny stepped free and tried an over-hand right. It caught the champ smack on the nose, and blood was flowing again. The champ tried a right of his own.

I saw Johnny stumble back into the ropes, across the ring, and I saw the Spoiler's broad back as he went in for the kill.

I couldn't see what happened, then. Johnny's chin was buried, so Greg pounded them in low. Johnny tied him, finally, but when the ref broke them, Johnny couldn't get away.

Greg landed with a hook—and then swung a looping right.

For the second time, Johnny went down.

I saw the ref's white arm go up and down like a semaphore, and I heard the count, and Artie talking to himself. That could have been it, right there.

At "six" Johnny was still quiet. At "seven" he stirred, and at "eight" he was climbing to his feet.

Greg came rushing in, ready for the finisher.

But not ready for the uppercut Johnny brought up with him. It was a clear button shot.

The champ went back and over and skidded along the canvas on the seat of his trunks.

But he was up at "three," looking plenty mean, so Johnny got on his bicycle as the crowd went crazy.

Johnny was still in retreat at the bell.

I could hear his voice this time.

"I've taken all he can throw, twice," he told Artie. "I think this one's mine, Artie." Artie looked at the second and shook his head.

"Punchy," he said.

But I guess they don't understand Johnny. They don't know him like I do. I read all the accounts of the fight, next day, and none of the scribes could see that Johnny found himself in that fifth.

But I could see it. I could see the con-

[Turn page]

107

Learn this Profitable Profession

IN 90 DAYS AT HOME

MONEY-MAKING CAREER OPEN to MEN and WOMEN, 18 to 50



Hundreds of men and women between 18 and 50 make \$10 to \$20 in a single day giving Scientific Swedish Massage and Hydro-Therapy treatments. There is big demand from doctors, hospitals, sanatoriums and clubs. Graduates earn large full time income from these in private practice in their own offices. Others make good money from home treatments given in spare time. Learn this interesting, money-making profession in your own home, through our home study course. Same instructors as in our nationally known resident school. You can win independence and prepare for future security by qualifying for our Diploma. Course can be completed in 3 to 4 months. Many earn while they learn. Begin your training at once.



Anatomy Charts & Booklet FREE

Enroll now and we will include, at no extra cost, many needed supplies. Fit yourself to help meet growing demand for Scientific Swedish Massage. Send the coupon at once for complete details. Anatomy Charts and 32-page Illustrated Booklet. FREE, postpaid.

THE COLLEGE OF SWEDISH MASSAGE
Dept. 763-B, 100 East Ohio St., Chicago 11, Illinois

Please send me FREE and postpaid, Anatomy Charts, 32-page Booklet and complete details on Home Training.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

PICTURE RING \$1.

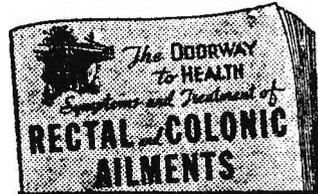
Exquisite Picture Ring—made from any photo. **SEND NO MONEY!** Mail photo with paper strip for ring size. Pay postman only \$1 plus postage. Hand tinted 25c extra. Photo returned with ring. Money back guarantee. **SEND PHOTO AND RING SIZE NOW!** PICTURE RING CO. DEPT. G-26, CINCINNATI, OHIO

DETECTIVES

TRAINING—SECRET INVESTIGATIONS—FINGER PRINTS
Easy Method—Short Time, Home—Travel—Secret Code—Booklet FREE—WRITE, INTERNATIONAL DETECTIVE SYSTEM, 1701-T Monroe St., N. E., Washington, D. C. 18.

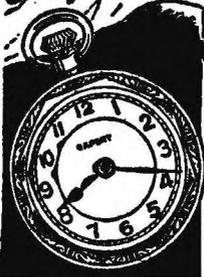
Dangers Of Delay On Chronic Ailments

FREE BOOK—Tells How To Help Guard Health



Many facts about colon disorders, headaches, constipation, nervousness or stomach, liver and bladder conditions are explained in a new 40-page FREE BOOK. Write today. Thornton & Minor Clinic, Suite 256, 926 McGee Street, Kansas City, Mo.

Imported SWISS POCKET WATCHES



WRITTEN GUARANTEE WITH EACH WATCH

Handsome, dependable. Swiss watches are renowned as excellent timekeepers because they are made by master watch craftsmen. Sturdy. Fine-constructed. Genuine chrome case.

WEAR 10 DAYS AT OUR RISK!

If not completely satisfied, return for refund. SEND NO MONEY. Simply pay postman \$8.50 plus 10% tax and postage on delivery. Cash

orders sent postpaid. An exceptional bargain. United Products Co., 7941 S. Halsted, Dept. PW-508, Chicago 20, Ill.

SEND FOR THIS

FREE!

Make money with horses. Every farmer, every lover of horses should have a copy of this booklet. If you want to know how to break, train and make money with horses, write today for full information. FREE, together with my special offer of a course in Animal Breeding. If you are interested in Gaiting and Riding the saddle horse check here. Do it today—now. You'll never regret it.

BERRY SCHOOL OF HORSEMANSHIP
Dept. 822 Pleasant Hill, Ohio

Men Who Get Up Nights Often Lose Their Pep

If you have to get up 3 or more times a night, your rest is broken and it's no wonder if you feel old and run-down before your time. So if you Get Up Nights or suffer from Bladder Weakness, Painful Passages, Backache, Leg Pains, Nervousness, Rheumatic Pains, Circles Under Eyes, or Swollen Ankles due to non-organic and non-systemic Kidney and Bladder Troubles, you should try Cystex (a physician's prescription). Usually, the very first dose of Cystex goes right to work helping the Kidneys flush out excess acids and wastes which may have caused your trouble. Trial Offer: To prove what Cystex may do to bring you joyous help from the pains and distress due to above mentioned Kidney and Bladder troubles, get Cystex from your druggist and give it a fair trial exactly according to the simple directions. Unless completely satisfied and delighted with your rapid improvement, your money back is guaranteed. So don't suffer another day without trying Cystex.



HUNTING and FISHING

is a monthly magazine crammed full of hunting, fishing, camping, dog and boating stories and pictures, invaluable information about guns, fishing tackle, game law changes, best places to fish and hunt—countless ideas that will add more fun to your days afield.

Special Trial Offer

Send 25c in stamps or coin and we will send you Hunting & Fishing for six months.

HUNTING & FISHING MAGAZINE

267 Sportman's Building
Boston Massachusetts

fidence back. I could see it in his eyes and in the sure, quick way he moved. I could see it in the moxie he was putting into his left. It wasn't so much a jab, now, as a straight left, and Johnny's shoulder was in it.

His right was short and swift—and pure murder.

Blood smeared Greg's face in the sixth, and mixed with the sweat on his matted chest. Greg started to blow, in the seventh.

I think Johnny could have ended it, in that round. I'm not sure why he didn't. I don't like to think of Johnny as cruel. I kept remembering that this Spoiler had ruined many a young fellow for life, that he had butted and thumbed and used the laces. That he had specialized on groin pummeling and kidney punching. But even remembering that, I began to feel a little sorry for him.

Johnny's left was cutting him to shreds, and Johnny's right was heavy enough to cloud his brain, but not heavy enough to put him down. Johnny, it looked like, didn't want to put him down just yet.

IN THE eighth, it went on, and Greg was stumbling, half blind, dead weary.

I thought, whatever else he's been, he's the champ, and it's not right to see him go out like this. Put him away, Johnny. Put him away, quick and clean.

And Johnny moved around him. With grace and confidence and skill, looking like the champ he was soon to be. Johnny stopped, and set his feet.

He tried a left, a feint, shifted—and tossed a right hand like a bomb.

Greg went down, and out, spread-eagled on the canvas. The ref could have counted all night.

But I was sweating. I was counting every one with him, and holding my breath.

Then he went over to raise Johnny's right hand, as they dragged Greg to his corner. The crowd began to mob the ring. . . .

In the dressing room, the scribes were gone, and the back-slappers were gone, and there was just Johnny and the second and Artie and me.

We should have been happy, only there was this coldness in Johnny's eyes.

"How would you like to have been in there?" he asked me.

"I wouldn't have been," I said. "You told me I wasn't ready for him, and I knew it. I just did it to get you in there. It was a trick."

He stared at me. "I took that—for a gag? I was tricked?"

"You won," I said.

"I took my life in my hands, because I thought you'd have to—"

"You won the title," I interrupted him.

"If I'd have known that," he said, "you, my little trickster, would have had—"

"You're middleweight champion of the world," I pointed out.

He stopped talking, at that. Some of the light came back to his eyes, and his face relaxed a little.

"And Jane told me, before the fight, that she wanted to see you tonight, that she had to see you, win or lose. I guess she must love you."

He looked at me strangely.

"I'm champ," he said. "The best in the world for my weight."

"Of course," I said.

"And Jane loves me?"

"Looks that way."

"What are we waiting for?" he said, and he headed for the shower. "We'll have to go over there, right away."

"Johnny," I said.

He stuck his head out of the shower stall, "Yeah?"

"When we get there, Johnny, would you—"

He smiled then, and I knew he was all right, everything was all right.

"Sure, kid," he said. "I'll play you a tune."

TRUE PICTURE-STORIES OF THE WORLD'S
GREATEST HEROES
IN

REAL LIFE COMICS

Approved by Parents and Teachers

NOW ON SALE EVERYWHERE
ONLY 10c AT ALL STANDS!

AUTHENTIC WESTERN
SADDLE RING
FOR MEN & WOMEN! PURE STERLING SILVER



Postpaid We Pay Tax

First time at anywhere near this low price! Authentic replica of romantic western saddle. Handsomely formed from solid Sterling Silver by Navajo Indian craftsmen. Massive style for men, dainty style for women. A gift of distinction. A pleasure to wear. Sent on approval.

SEND NO MONEY! Just clip this ad your name and address. Pay postman only \$4.95 plus few cents postage on arrival; or send cash and we pay postage. Wear this sensational ring for 10 days. If not delighted, return for full refund. **ORDER NOW! USE COUPON BELOW!**

10 DAY TRIAL ORDER COUPON
ARIZONA CRAFTSMEN ROOM 806B
1904 FARNAM ST. OMAHA 2, NEBRASKA

SEND Sterling Saddle Ring as I have indicated below.

C.O.D. Cash Enclosed, Send Postpaid

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____

Men's Women's Ring Size _____

LAW STUDY AT HOME for PERSONAL SUCCESS and LARGER EARNINGS. 38 years expert instruction—over 108,000 students enrolled. LL. B. Degree awarded. All tests furnished. Easy payments. Send for FREE BOOK. AMERICAN EXTENSION SCHOOL OF LAW Dept. 73-T, 646 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, Ill.

ANY PHOTO ENLARGED
Size 8 x 10 Inches or DOUBLE-WEIGHT PAPER **57¢**



Same price for full length or bust form, groups, landscapes, pet animals, etc., or enlargements of any part of group picture.

Original returned with your 3 for \$1.25 enlargement.

SEND NO MONEY Just mail photo, negative or snapshot (any size) and receive from enlargement, guaranteed (deluxe, on beautiful double-weight portrait quality paper. Pay postman 57c plus postage—or send 50c with order and we pay postage. Take advantage of this amazing offer now. Send your photos today.

PROFESSIONAL ART STUDIOS
100 East Ohio Street Dept. 407-B Chicago 11, Ill.

do you WORRY?

Why worry and suffer any longer if we can help you? Try a Brooks Patented Air Cushion. This marvelous appliance for most forms of reducible rupture helps hold nearly every rupture securely and gently—day and night—at work and at play. Thousands made happy. Light, neat-fitting. No hard pads or stiff springs to chafe or gouge. Made for men, women and children. Durable, cheap. Sent on trial to prove it. Never sold in stores. Beware of imitations. Write for Free Book on Rupture, no-risk trial order plan, and proof of results. All Correspondence Confidential.



This Easy Way
TEACHES GUITAR
 AT HOME IN ONLY
 30 Days Or Money Back



Astounding new Jim Major Home Method teaches you to play guitar easily, quickly, without long hours practicing scales or exercises. *No musical knowledge necessary.* Play many popular songs, hymns in very short time. Limited time offer: 30 lessons, complete course for only \$1.69. Send no money . . . pay postman \$1.69 plus postage. (Cash with order we pay postage.) Money back guarantee. Send today to Jim Major, Room 15-B7, 230 East Ohio, Chicago 11, Ill.

BUY FROM THE OLDEST ESTABLISHED
 FIRM IN THE UNITED STATES SELLING
EYE GLASSES BY MAIL

As Low
 As
\$1.95
 For
 Satisfaction



Write Today for Free Catalog. Send No Money.
ADVANCE SPECTACLE COMPANY
 537 S Dearborn St., Dept. T-2 Chicago, Ill.

STAMMER?

This new 128-page book, "Stammering, Its Cause and Correction," describes the Bogue Unit Method for scientific correction of stammering and stuttering — successful for 46 years. *Free — no obligation.*

Benjamin N. Bogue, Dept. 4275, Circle Tower, Indianapolis 4, Ind.

GET IT
FREE
 BOOK



Read **EXCITING SPORTS** Every Issue!

THE CHEER LEADER

(Continued from page 8)

who helps to draw huge gate receipts to the arena get his just desserts. And only by being paid can he afford to play with the expertness that makes the spectators dig down for the price of the tickets . . . unless, of course, his old man has a lot of the long green.

The professional form of any game is the only democratic form—which pays off on merit rather than on the ability to purchase equipment and the time to use it correctly.

LETTERS FROM READERS

FOR some reason, all the letters received this month offer (from themselves) and demand (from the Cap) all-time all-star baseball teams. So we've selected the pair which seem to us the most interesting and are running them herewith—the Cap will offer comment at their conclusion. So . . .

SEEN IN ACTION

by John Quinan

Dear Cap: For various reasons you hesitate to name your all-time, all-star baseball team. Here's mine and it should lead to some interesting controversy. I think this team could hold its own at the plate, in the field and on the bases, with any combination namable. Here it is without respect to batting order—

Ruth, left field
 Cuyler, center field
 Paul Waner, right field
 Terry, first base
 Hornsby, second base
 Cronin, shortstop
 Hack, third base
 Hartnett, catcher
 Warneke, Hubbell, Grove, Lyons, pitchers
 Dickey, Foxx, Frisch, Vaughan, Ott, utility

These players are picked from those I've seen in action and picked from their records, plus spirit and pressure play. I hate to leave out the names of the following—but they just missed—

Medwick, Stephenson, Combs, outfielders
 Gehring, Herman, Appling, Lazzari, infielders
 Cochrane, Hemsley, Rick Ferrell, catchers
 Wes Ferrell, Root, Derringer, Ruffing, Passeau, pitchers.

All of these are ten year men or better and that should be a minimum requirement for any all-time, all star lineup. —TWA in flight, Chicago Ill.

CULLED FROM THE RECORDS

by Marvin Pheffer

Dear Cap: I have been a reader of your **CHEER LEADER** for some time now and I have been particularly interested in your most recent selection of an all-star team from both leagues. I am not going to criticize your selections, but I would like you to print your selections for an all-time, all-star team.

My own selections follow—

Lou Gehrig, first base
 Nap Lajoie, second base
 Hans Wagner, shortstop
 Red Rolfe, third base
 Ty Cobb, left field
 Tris Speaker, center field
 Babe Ruth, right field
 Bill Dickey or Mickey Cochrane, catcher
 Christy Mathewson, Cy Young, Walter Johnson, Herb Pennock, pitchers.

—1057 Boynton Avenue, Bronx 59, New York.

Okay, fellows, you asked for it. The Cap will now climb out onto the limb and get busy sawing himself off. In response to

both letters, and as a veteran spectator of some twenty-seven seasons, he will first pick a team of the ablest performers he has seen, complete in some cases with alternates and with utility men. Then he will follow with his all-time, all-star selection.

So, here goes with the best viewed in action, all of them at least ten-year men.

- Gehrig, first base
- Hornsby, second base
- Bancroft, shortstop
- Traynor, third base
- Dickey and Hartnett, catchers
- Cobb, left field
- Speaker, center field
- Simmons, right field
- Alexander, Grimes, Grove, Ruth, pitchers
- Collins, Cronin, Foxx, Greenberg, Heilmann, Paul Waner, Zach Wheat, utility.

Well, that's the way the Cap saw them—and the names of those who just missed are legion. Furthermore, the Cap did see the Babe pitch when he was winning fame as the best southpaw hurler in the American League. He was something, as Ed Barrow has stated on more than one occasion. Barrow rated him the best portsider he ever saw, and he handled Pennock and Gomez among many others. At any rate, that would be quite a dream team.

This all-time job is a lot tougher—so much so that we are going to list more than one man per position when a choice is doubtful. Sisler and Gehrig, first base
Lajoie, Hornsby, E. Collins, second base
Wagner, shortstop
J. Collins and Traynor, third base
Dickey and Hartnett, catchers
Cobb, left field
Speaker, center field
Ruth, right field
Alexander, Grove, Johnson, Mathewson, Plank and Young, pitchers

For utility purposes, the Cap nominates any batboy in either league. Who needs any more ball players than the above?

Probably, by the time the baseball season rolls round again, you lads will want the Cap to pick out an all-time, all-star football team. We are going to work on it now.

OUR NEXT ISSUE

THREE fast paced, action-packed novelets are on deck for the forthcoming appearance of **EXCITING SPORTS** on the stands. First up is **BASE HIT BLUES**, by John Wilson, which tells the story of Reb Mowry, catcher, who refused to fit into the pennant-winning conservatism of the Wolverines and had to go a long way down the scale before he learned to play to win as well as merely to play.

Then comes **THE GLASS HEAD**, by Roger Fuller, which gives us a vivid picture of what can happen to a fighter who loses his nerve.

[Turn page]

HERE'S A NEW AND VITAL BUSINESS!

LEARN ELECTRICAL APPLIANCE REPAIRING

Offers Big Money — Independence

If you are mechanically inclined—can hold and use tools it will pay you to learn electrical appliance repairing. Operate from your garage, basement, etc. Work as many hours as you wish—the appliance repairman is his own boss. On many types of repairs it is usual for a repairman to charge on the basis of \$5.00 to \$6.00 an hour!

No Previous Experience Needed

Profusely illustrated our new course shows you in simple, easy to understand language plus drawings and photographs, how to make each repair on refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, motors, fans, irons, etc., etc. Explains and gives you a working knowledge of electricity, welding, nickel plating, etc. Shows you how to build the power tools you need and how to solicit and keep business coming to you. Not a theory course but an honest to goodness practical course written by and used by repairmen the country over. Price of course is so low that the savings on your own household appliances will pay for it. Act now! Send today for FREE literature. **Christy Supply Co., 2835 N. Central Ave., Dept. D-2204, Chicago 34, Illinois.**

High School Course at Home Many Finish in 2 Years

Go as rapidly as your time and abilities permit. Course equivalent to resident school work—prepares for college entrance exams. Standard H.S. texts supplied. Diploma. Credit for U. S. subjects already completed. Single subjects if desired. High school education is very important for advancement in business and industry and socially. Don't be handicapped all your life. Use a High School Graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation.

American School, Dept. H-288, Drexel at 98th, Chicago 37

BE A DETECTIVE

WORK HOME or TRAVEL. Experience unnecessary. **DETECTIVE Particulars FREE.** Write to **GEO. R. H. WAGNER, 125 W. 86th St., N. Y.**

SIMPLE EASY INVENTION TRIMS HAIR AT HOME!

SAVES BARBER BILLS

Trim hair as it comb! Easy! Quick! Keeps men's, women's children's hair trim, neat, fresh, without touching all the time. Trims, opens, thins out uneven hair. Use like ordinary comb. Safe. Simple.

No experience required. Fine for boys, undergrads! **Send the whole SAMPLES FOR AGENTS** (Sample order sent immediately) **FREE** with your name at once. A penny postal will do. **SEND NO MONEY.** Just your name. **MINTEL CO., 1475 8th St., ANKON, OHIO**

STOP Scratching

Relieve Itch in a Jiffy



Sufferers from the torturing itch caused by eczema, pimples, scales, scabies, athlete's foot, "factory" itch, and other itch troubles, are praising cooling, liquid **D. D. D. Prescription**. This time-proved medication—developed by Dr. D.D. Dennis—positively relieves that cruel, burning itch. Greaseless and stainless. Soothes and comforts even the most intense itching in a jiffy. A 35c trial bottle proves its merits or your money back. **Ask your druggist today for D. D. D. Prescription.**

What To Do For Pains of ARTHRITIS Try This Free

If you have never used "Rosse Tabs" for pains or arthritis, neuritis, rheumatism, we want you to try them at our risk. We will send you a full-size package from which you are to use 24 Tabs FREE. If not astonished at the palliative relief which you enjoy from your sufferings, return the package and you owe us nothing. We mean it! SEND NO MONEY. Just send name and address and we will rush your Tabs by return mail. ROSSE PRODUCTS CO., Dept. 828, 2708 Farwell Ave., Chicago 45, Illinois.



DO YOU WANT TO STOP TOBACCO?

Benish the craving for tobacco as thousands have with Tobacco Redeemer. Write for free booklet telling of injurious effect of tobacco and of a treatment which has relieved many men. Caution: Use only as directed. 30 Years in Business

FREE BOOK

THE NEWELL COMPANY
153 Clayton, Sta., St. Louis 5, Mo.

USED Correspondence Courses

Complete HOME-STUDY COURSES and self-instruction textbooks, slightly used, rented, sold, exchanged. All subjects. 100% satisfaction. Cash paid for used courses. Full details & 100-page illustrated bargain catalog FREE.

Write Nelson Co., 1139 S. Wabash Av., Dept. 06, Chicago 5, Ill.

AIR RIFLES BENJAMIN AIR PISTOLS

ARE IN PRODUCTION

ORDER BENJAMIN AIR RIFLES & BENJAMIN AIR PISTOLS from your DEALER. Send for our FREE FOLDER and Complete Specifications TODAY. Both Calibre Benjamin H-O Pellets are available now.

BENJAMIN AIR RIFLE CO., 876 MARION ST., ST. LOUIS 4, MO.

THROAT MISERY

FREE CHART

For unpleasant hawking, coughing, caused by colds, sinus and catarrh—use this "old stand-by method" that thousands for 70 years have used... HALL'S TWO-METHOD TREATMENT. Loosens and helps clear up phlegm-filled throat and nasal congestion or money back. Ask your druggist. Write for FREE Vitamin and Health Chart today! F. J. Cheney & Co. Dept. 112, Toledo, O.

TOMBSTONES

DIRECT TO YOU \$9.95 up

Genuine Beautiful Rockdale Monuments, Markers. Satisfaction or MONEY BACK. Freight paid. Write for our FREE Catalog and compare prices.

EASY Terms

ROCKDALE MONUMENT CO.

Dept. 895 JOLIET, ILLINOIS



DRESS for YOU FOR ORDERING 3!

Thrilling new plan! Your choice of gorgeous new dress in your favorite style, size and color given to you for sending orders for only 3 dresses for your friends or family. Write for big Style Presentation today. Because of today's conditions we may not be able to send the Presentation at once—but get your name on our list to be one of the first to receive the new line when ready.

HARFORD FROCKS, INC., Dept. A-5015, Cincinnati 25, O.



Ray Killifer is the fighter, and it takes a lot of fights, a psychiatrist and a extra-curricular scramble to prove to him that any blow that lands above his shoulders is not necessarily fatal.

Our third leader is THE BIG TRY, by T. W. Ford. In a series of swift, hard-hitting and color diamond scenes, Harvey Dix, Sachem rookie right fielder, proves that he belongs up in baseball's big time. We have a hunch you'll get fond of Harvey before you're finished.

As added attractions, of course, we offer a choice selection of stirring short stories, to say nothing of special features by veteran ace sportswriter Jack Kofod and, of course, Your Cap. A gala issue all around. So long until then.

—CAP FANNING.

ONE MORE MILE

(Concluded from page 47)

of your stuff down to me. Didn't he tell you?"

Greg sent a grateful look toward the old Irishman.

"Walsh and I've been friends for years, Swenson," Pop said. "I didn't mention it to you, because if he hadn't liked what you did, you might feel disappointed."

"Thanks," Greg said, gulping.

"Forget it. Oh, and by the way, you'd better find Danny Adams and thank him for holding that early pace down for you. I told him to do that. I'd seen you work out with my sprinters, and figured you could turn loose a sprint finish that would bust Wilson's appercart, if Danny held the pace down for you. And you did. But I never figured Danny to cop third place to win this meet for me."

Greg looked over Pop's shoulder and caught sight of Harry D'Arcy stalking sullenly off the field, his arm in a splint. This should have been Harry D'Arcy's big day, Greg thought, and felt a surge of sympathy for the cocky star.

But D'Arcy had looked for trouble and found it, so it wasn't Greg's worry. It occurred to him pleasantly that in his own efforts to help Pop out of a tough spot, he had unwittingly smoothed the way for his own eager ambitions. He heard big ruddy-featured Dan Walsh's voice. "Well, Swenson, how about it?" Walsh asked. "You want to work for the Beacon?"

Greg grinned, thinking how proud his folks would be when they heard this news.

"You bet, Mr. Walsh," he told the big man. "You're doggone tooting!"

TIGER OF THE RINK

(Concluded from page 59)

whether I meant to play you tonight. I had to find a way to get the Tiger spirit back in you. And how it came back! Yeah, never tease a tiger. That's it, hah!"

The Bobcats and fans were milling around Tiger.

"Gents, there's gonna be a party tonight," Nipper said loudly. "We're in the play-offs and we're gonna win the championship. Maybe we didn't show those newspaper boys something."

A tall, wide-shouldered man in a gray tweed suit stepped alongside of Nipper. He was Harry Conover, owner of the Bobcats.

"I'll take care of the party, Nipper," he said.

"Good enough," Nipper said. "We'll toast to next season's manager—Tiger Becker, yep." He looked directly at Tiger. "On account of my health, Tiger—I'm getting out for at least awhile. It would have been rough the other way."

It was all somewhat confusing to the fans, looking on. But clear, indeed, to Tiger.

He started toward the dressing-room, knowing that he would make the same trip for many seasons to come.

THRILLS IN SPORTS

(Concluded from page 38)

know what I mean. Carnera grappled with this big, young O'Toole, and found him strong and agile and wiser in the tricks of the game than Primo was himself. The plasterer from Sequals had to depend on his great strength rather than skill. The show wasn't important . . . the money was peanuts compared with what his fights had drawn.

But he was terribly concerned because he was on the downgrade, and wrestling was the brake that would keep him from slipping into oblivion. So, when he pinned Tommy's broad shoulders to the mat, and the crowd broke out with a cheer, Primo's gargoyle face beamed with joy. For a moment he had the greatest thrill of his life.

It was a little sad . . . because everyone else knew it didn't mean anything. Primo Carnera was still on the skids.

•
More

THRILLS IN SPORTS

Coming Next Issue!

NEW SECURITY PLAN PAYS HOSPITAL

& DOCTOR BILLS . . .

Costs only 3¢ a day!



**PROTECTS YOU
IN CASE OF
SICKNESS
OR ACCIDENT**

INDIVIDUAL or FAMILY

Insure NOW, before it's too late! Protect your savings against Hospital expense. Here's an amazing offer of safe, dependable coverage under America's most popular Hospitalization Plan. Family or Individual eligible. No Medical Examination. When sickness or accident strikes, you may go to any Hospital in U. S. or Canada under any Doctor's care. **YOUR EXPENSES WILL BE PAID** exactly as Policy specifies. Many exceptional coverages included. The Company is under supervision of the Insurance Dept. No agent will call.

CASH BENEFITS INCLUDE

Hospital Room & Board Sickness or Accident Per Day
Up to **\$6.00**
Doctor Visits In Case of Accident
Per Visit **\$3.00**
Surgical Operations
Up to **\$150.00**
Time Lost from Work In Case of Accident
Per Week **\$25.00**
Accidental Death
Up to **\$2000.00**
Physical Disbursement. Up to **\$2000.00**

MAIL COUPON AT ONCE!

NORTH AMERICAN MUTUAL INSURANCE CO.
Dept. TG-2, Wilmington, Del.

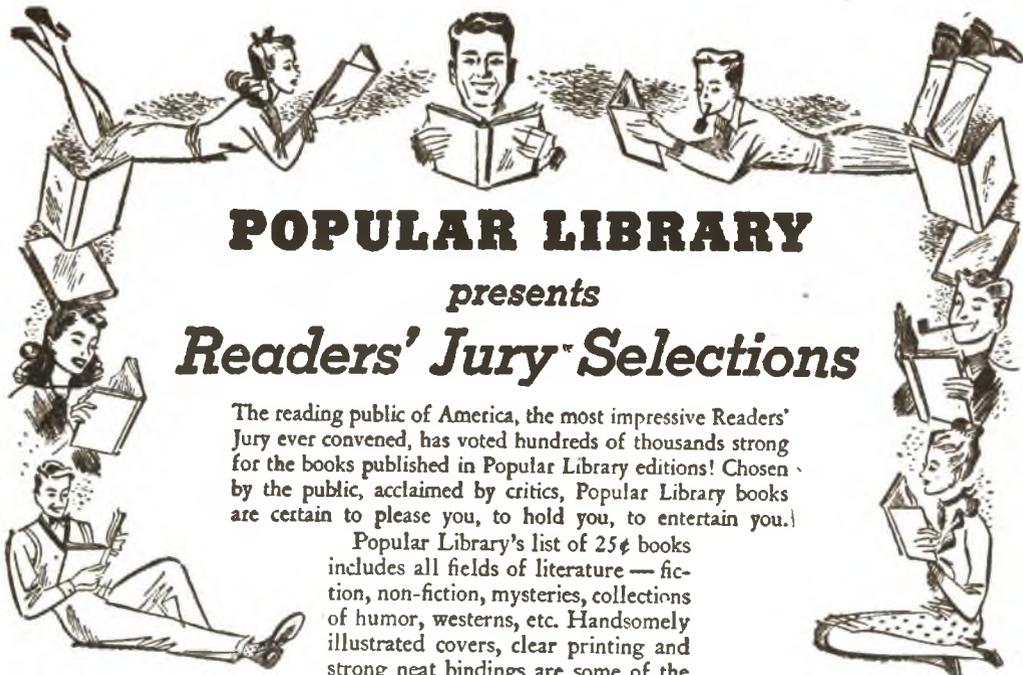
Please send me, without obligation, details about your "3¢ A Day Hospitalization Insurance Plan"

Name.....

Address.....

City.....

State.....



POPULAR LIBRARY

presents

Readers' Jury Selections

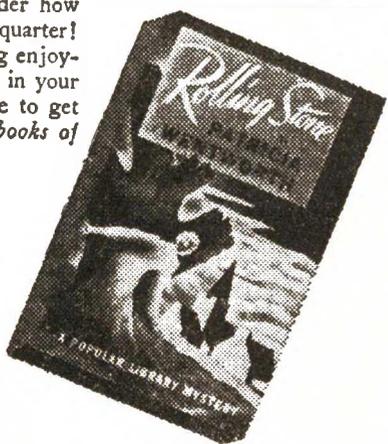
The reading public of America, the most impressive Readers' Jury ever convened, has voted hundreds of thousands strong for the books published in Popular Library editions! Chosen by the public, acclaimed by critics, Popular Library books are certain to please you, to hold you, to entertain you.

Popular Library's list of 25¢ books includes all fields of literature — fiction, non-fiction, mysteries, collections of humor, westerns, etc. Handsomely illustrated covers, clear printing and strong neat bindings are some of the pluses which make you wonder how you can get so much for only a quarter!

For a few hours of reading enjoyment, for a permanent place in your library or for a gift, be sure to get Popular Library editions — *books of proven merit.*



Peter Telbot, unofficial operative of the Foreign Office, becomes a member of a gang of picture thieves so that he can unmask their leader in "Rolling Stone" by Patricia Wentworth.



Coming back to take over an inherited range, Walt Devon plunges into his blazing action in this colorful novel of the Old West—"Timbal Gulch Trail" by Max Brand.

POPULAR LIBRARY

BOOKS OF
PROVEN MERIT
25¢ AT ALL STANDS

POPULAR LIBRARY, 10 E. 40th St.
New York 16, N. Y.

A Few Forthcoming Titles

- DUEL IN THE SUNby Niven Busch
- THE CASE IS CLOSED.....by Patricia Wentworth
- CRUCIBLE.....by Ben Ames Williams
- CONGO SONG.....by Stuart Cloete
- LUMMOX.....by Fannie Hurst
- THE RIGHT MURDER.....by Craig Rice
- ROMANCE IN THE FIRST DEGREE.....by Octavus Roy Cohen
- TROUBLE SHOOTER.....by Ernest Haycox
- DIVIDEND ON DEATH.....by Brett Halliday

"Make Me Prove . . .

I CAN MAKE YOU COMMANDO -TOUGH

inside and out . . . in double quick time
—OR IT WON'T COST YOU A CENT!"

says *George F. Jowett*
whom experts call the
WORLD'S GREATEST BODY BUILDER

Thousands of Jowett pupils are in the U. S. and British forces knocking Jess and his pals—happy with their swift, powerful bodies. Let me prove to YOU how in double quick time I can put inches of dynamic muscles on your arms! Add inches to your chest! Broaden your shoulders! And power-pack the rest of your body—so quickly it will amaze you! My methods can give you the entire world over. Give your fighting chance to do it for you.

Give me 10 Minutes a Day Learn My Time Tested Secrets of Strength

I'll teach you the "Progressive Power Method" through which I rebuilt myself from a physical wreck the doctors condemned to die at 15, to the holder of more strength records than any other living athlete or teacher! "Progressive Power" has proven its ability to build the strongest, handsomest men in the world. And I stand ready to show you on a money back basis—that no matter how flabby or puny you are I can do the same for you right in your own home. Through my proven secrets I bring to life new power in you inside and out, until YOU are fully satisfied you are the man you want to be. **MY TIME TESTED METHODS RE-BUILD YOU.**

PROVE TO YOURSELF IN ONE NIGHT
Send only 25c in full payment for my test course "Moulding A Mighty Arm." Try it for one night! Experience the thrilling strength that will surge through your muscles.

READ WHAT THESE FAMOUS PUPILS SAY ABOUT JOWETT



A. PASSAMONT, Jowett-trained athlete who was named America's first prize-winner for Physical Perfection.

REX FERRIS, Champion Strength Athlete of South Africa. Says he, "I owe everything to Jowett's methods!" Look at this chest—then consider the value of the Jowett Courses!



JOWETT'S PHOTO BOOK OF FAMOUS STRONG MEN!

This amazing book has guided thousands of weaklings to muscular power. Packed with photos of miracle men of might and muscle who started perhaps weaker than you are. Read the thrilling adventures of Jowett in strength that inspired his pupils to follow him. They'll show you the best way to right and muscle. Send for this **FREE** gift book of **PHOTOS OF FAMOUS STRONG MEN.**



BUILD A BODY YOU'LL BE PROUD OF

Send for These
FIVE Famous Courses
NOW in **BOOK FORM**
ONLY 25c EACH
or **ALL 5 for \$1**

At last, Jowett's world-famous muscle-building courses, are available in book form to all readers of this publication at an extremely low price of 25 cents each! All 5 for only \$1.00. You owe it to your country, to your family, and to yourself, to make yourself physically fit now! Start at once to improve your physique by following Jowett's simple, easy method of muscle-building!

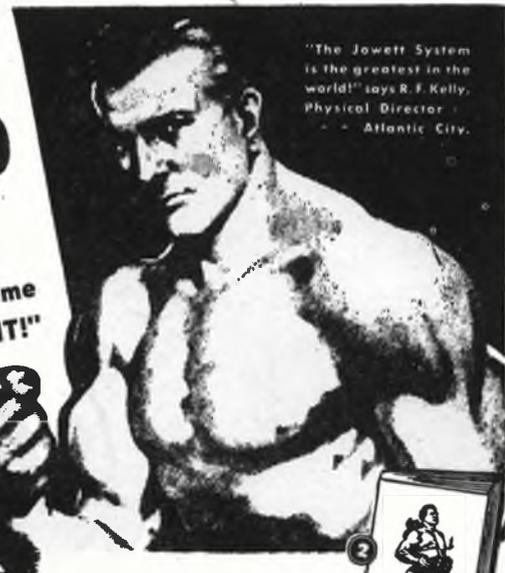
10-DAY TRIAL OFFER!

Think of it—all five of these famous course-books for only **ONE DOLLAR**—or any one of them for 25c. If you're not delighted with these famous muscle-building books—if you don't actually **FEEL** results within **ONE WEEK**, send them back and your money will be promptly refunded!

Don't let this opportunity get away from you! And don't forget—by sending the **FREE GIFT COUPON** at once you receive a **FREE** copy of the famous Jowett book, "Nerves of Steel, Muscles of Iron."

JOWETT INSTITUTE OF PHYSICAL CULTURE
230 Fifth Ave., Dept. TP-72, New York 1, N. Y.

"The Jowett System is the greatest in the world!" says R. F. Kelly, Physical Director - Atlantic City.



FREE GIFT COUPON!

Jowett Institute of Physical Culture
230 Fifth Avenue, Dept. TP-72, New York 1, N. Y.
George F. Jowett: Your photograph looks good to me. Send by return mail, prepaid, the course checked below, for which I enclose (). Include **FREE** book of **PHOTOS**.
 All 5 courses for . . . \$1 Molding Mighty Legs 25c
 Molding a Mighty Arm 25c Molding a Mighty Grip 25c
 Molding a Mighty Back 25c Molding a Mighty Chest 25c
 Send all 5 C.O.D. (\$1 plus postage.) No orders less than \$1 sent C.O.D.

NAME.....**ABB**.....
Please Print Plainly
ADDRESS.....

POPULAR *Protection Plan* HELPS PROVIDE

CASH TO PAY BILLS

When Sick or Accidentally Injured
and Unable to Work!



Popular "SERVICE"
GOLD SEAL POLICY
Only \$1 A MONTH!

AGES 15 to 69
NO MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Benefits THAT ARE BIG ENOUGH To Be WORTHWHILE!

IF YOU'RE INJURED accidentally and unable to work, policy provides disability benefits, according to type of accident and injury, for periods up to 24 months, varying in amount from **\$30 to \$100⁰⁰* PER MO.**

IF YOU'RE SICK and unable to work, policy provides disability benefits, according to type of illness, for periods up to 3 months, **\$20 to \$100⁰⁰* PER MO.**

For ACCIDENTAL DEATH or INJURY policy provides cash benefits in varying amounts, according to type of accident and injury sustained, from **\$200 to \$4000***

PLUS HOSPITALIZATION PLAN

Hospital Benefits are in addition to disability benefits, subject to terms of policy, and cover both sickness and accident. They include \$5 per day for hospital room for 30 days in any one policy year . . . PLUS up to \$85 for various specified hospital expenses, such as X-Ray, Oxygen Tent, Laboratory Fees, Drugs, Dressings and Ambulance. MATERNITY, limited to \$50.00, effective after policy is in force for 10 months.

*These are the "highlights" of the policy.
For full details, write for the policy itself!*

THE SERVICE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

773-H SERVICE LIFE BUILDING OMAHA 2, NEBRASKA

Accidents at the rate of 20 per minute! 3 million persons regularly confined by sickness! Someone rushed to the hospital every 3 ticks of the clock! . . . At this rate, no one can afford to be without SICKNESS-ACCIDENT & HOSPITALIZATION insurance. Here is a popular protection plan, issued by an old-line LEGAL RESERVE company for only \$1-a-month, that provides cash benefits that are big enough to be worthwhile . . . CASH when sick or accidentally injured and unable to work . . . CASH to help replace lost income, to help pay hospital bills, doctors bills, for nurse's care, medicines and other pressing expenses.

POLICY SENT FREE! NO COST!

NO OBLIGATION! . . . *Remember, all we can give you here are the highlights of the policy. All are subject to policy provisions. Send for the policy itself. Read it for specific benefits, limitations, exclusions and reduced benefits over age 60. You'll agree this policy offers really substantial protection at minimum cost. Let us send you this policy for 10 DAYS' FREE EXAMINATION. No salesman will call. Just mail coupon below.

FREE 10-DAY INSPECTION COUPON

The SERVICE LIFE INSURANCE CO.

773-H Service Life Bldg., Omaha 2, Nebraska

SEND without cost or obligation your "Gold Seal" \$1-A-MONTH Policy for 10 Days' Free Inspection.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....AGE.....

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

BENEFICIARY.....