

THRILLING SPORTS

JAN.

10¢

FEATURING

PIGSKIN PRESSURE

A Complete Football Novelet

By JACKSON V. SCHOLZ

WINGS OF STEEL

A Larry White

Hockey Novelet

By PERRY

DIXON

THE PRO PARADE

By
STEVE OWEN

Coach of the
N.Y. Football Giants

TEN COMPLETE
STORIES IN
THIS ISSUE!

A THRILL

**Missing
Inside Front
Page**



Be a wholesale manufacturer. Let the storekeepers sell your product. Frazier and Karick lined up 580 dealers their first two weeks in business and had an output of 150 pounds a day.



YOU can be one of a country-wide Chain producing Vita-Seald — the one, standard National Brand of Potato Chips, known everywhere as the most delicious of Potato Chips and at the same time, famous for its health-giving qualities due to our unique method of extracting excess grease and retaining the 9 vital minerals so essential to good health.

I'll Start YOU in the Potato Chip Business

and show you how you can "coin money" right in your own kitchen

NOT long ago it took a lot of money to break into the Potato Chip business. Now, you can start with so small an investment you'll be surprised and "raring to go." You don't need a store or factory. Start right in your own kitchen and *profit*. My compact, efficient, Vita-Seald Machine represents years of engineering experience. This machine with its high-speed slicer and oil extractor, is all you need to turn out delicious, golden brown Vita-Seald chips which are the rage of the Century. No wonder they sell like hot cakes wherever introduced. When you get your Vita-Seald equipment, you are ready to start making money the very first day. I supply you with everything necessary including beautiful, embossed Vita-Seald trademarked bags and free advertising material. But I do not stop at that. I also furnish you a book of instructions telling exactly how to start and build a business which will produce profits to satisfy any man's ambition.

I'm Talking

to Men and Women who want to own a permanent business that can pay

Big Daily Profits from the Start Without Overhead Expense

Think of it! You buy potatoes at 2c a pound and sell them as potato chips at 35c a pound

That's what I call a *business*. Just write to me and I'll give you without obligation, the amazing facts about the sweetest, soundest business proposition you ever dreamed of.

Experience Not Needed

Here's a business where selling is no problem. You don't need to create a demand for Potato Chips. Millions of pounds are sold and eaten daily. All you have to do is make the kind of chip I will show you how to make, and the orders will flock in.

This is where the Vita-Seald secret comes in. When I discovered how to make a greaseless, mineralized Potato Chip, I revolutionized the Potato Chip business and started to build a nationwide chain of small home-factories, all making and selling the same famous Vita-Seald brand of chips. When I start you in business, I give you full rights to the use of the nationally known Vita-Seald trademark. Just think what it means to produce a famous brand of food instead of a nameless product! Already hundreds of Vita-Seald manufacturers are cleaning up big profits—but the surface is hardly scratched. There's room for thousands! It takes lots of chips to supply the appetites of America's millions!

Few people realize what a big profit margin there is in making Potato Chips. Only \$2.50 invested in raw materials brings back \$10.00 in cash at wholesale. Profits roll in day in and day out. There's no limit to the volume you can do nor the territory you can cover—but "start small and grow big" is my motto. Who knows but some day you may be the Potato Chip King of your state!

Don't Buy Anything — Just Write Me Today!

If you think you want a part in this big-profit industry, let's get down to business. I don't expect you to jump in blind. I want you to make a thorough investigation. Put it up to me to explain and prove every detail. But for heaven's sake, don't hang back through fear I'm going to ask you to put up a lot of money. You'll be astounded at the liberal proposition I have to make you. Just send me your name and address on

a card and say, "Show me." I'll then give you the secret of making greaseless, mineralized Potato Chips and every bit of information I have gathered during years of experience in this line. There's no cost or obligation, yet this may prove to be the most important step you have ever taken to insure a future free from money worries. Address your letter or card personally to me:

George H. Hardt — 620 N. Michigan Ave., Dept. E-291, Chicago, Ill.

• EVERY STORY BRAND-NEW •

THRILLING SPORTS

Vol. 6, No. 2

January, 1939

Price 10c

Ten Complete Sports Thrillers

1. PIGSKIN PRESSURE (Football) - - - - Jackson V. Scholz 15
Ken Jenkins Marshals All His Generalship to Loosen Up the Stucky Cog in His Gridiron Machine! A Complete Novelet
2. YOU CAN'T TELL ABOUT HOCKEY - (Hockey) - Jack Kofoed 3
—Especially When a Manager Tries to Spark a Rag-tag Team!
3. OFF THE RECORD - - (Boxing) - - - Bruce Douglas 42
When Connolly Kissed the Canvas He Rang the Register!
4. THRILLS IN SPORTS - - - - - - - - - - - Jack Kofoed 52
Stories About Battling Nelson, Bronco Nagurski, and Boots Poffenberger
5. PITCH AND RUN - - - (Golf) - - - - Ron Broom 55
Young Jackson Takes His Stance for the Longest Drive in His Career!
6. THE PRO PARADE - - (Football) - - - Steve Owen 64
A Famous Gridiron Pilot Plots the Season's Course
7. SLIDE, FATE, SLIDE - - (Baseball) - Robert Sidney Bowen 72
There's More to an Umpire's Job than Calling Balls and Strikes
8. WAY DOWN SOUTH - - (Football) - - Frank Thomas 78
The Football Situation—as Told to Ray Barbuti
9. CIRCUIT CLOWN - (Midget Auto Racing) - Leonard Lupton 81
Midget Cars Sometimes Carry Men with Big Hearts
10. WINGS OF STEEL - - - (Hockey) - - - Perry Dixon 90
The Phenomenal Flash Flames Across the Hockey Rink Like a Streaking Fury on Ice in This Thrilling Novelet!

AND

THE SIDELINE - - - - - A Department 110
Join Our Great New Club for Fans of Every Sport

See Our Special Sport Quiz on Page 71

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Read our companion magazines: Popular Sports Magazine, Popular Western, G-Men, Thrilling Western, Thrilling D Thrilling Adventures, Thrilling Love, The Phantom Detective, The Lone Eagle, Sky Fighters, Popular Detective Ranch Stories, Thrilling Wonder Stories, Thrilling Mystery, Texas Rangers, Popular Love, Everyday Astrolog Novels Magazine, West, Macked Rider Western Magazine, Range Riders, Startling Stories and Black Book Deter

HE THOUGHT HE WAS LICKED--THEN A TIP GOT BILL A GOOD JOB!

MY RAISE DIDN'T COME THROUGH MARY--I MIGHT AS WELL GIVE UP. IT ALL LOOKS SO HOPELESS.

IT ISN'T HOPELESS EITHER BILL. WHY DON'T YOU TRY A NEW FIELD LIKE RADIO?

TOM GREEN WENT INTO RADIO AND HE'S MAKING GOOD MONEY, TOO. I'LL SEE HIM RIGHT AWAY.

BILL, JUST MAILING THAT COUPON GAVE ME A QUICK START TO SUCCESS IN RADIO. MAIL THIS ONE TONIGHT

TOM'S RIGHT--AN UNTRAINED MAN HASN'T A CHANCE. I'M GOING TO TRAIN FOR RADIO TOO. IT'S TODAY'S FIELD OF GOOD PAY OPPORTUNITIES

TRAINING FOR RADIO IS EASY AND I'M GETTING ALONG FAST--

SOON I CAN GET A JOB SERVICING SETS-- OR INSTALLING LOUD SPEAKER SYSTEMS

OR IN A BROADCASTING STATION

THERE'S NO END TO THE GOOD JOBS FOR THE TRAINED RADIO MAN

YOU SURE KNOW RADIO--MY SET NEVER SOUNDED BETTER

THAT'S \$15 I'VE MADE THIS WEEK IN SPARE TIME

THANKS!

I HAVE A GOOD FULL TIME RADIO JOB NOW--AND A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD IN RADIO

OH BILL, IT'S WONDERFUL YOU'VE GONE AHEAD SO FAST IN RADIO.

I'LL TRAIN YOU AT HOME In Your Spare Time For A GOOD RADIO JOB

Many Radio Experts Make \$30, \$50, \$75 a Week

Radio broadcasting stations employ engineers, operators, station managers and pay up to \$5,000 a year. Fixing Radio sets in spare time pays many \$200 to \$500 a year--full time jobs with Radio jobbers, manufacturers and dealers as much as \$30, \$50, \$75 a week. Many Radio Experts open full or part time Radio sales and repair businesses. Radio manufacturers and jobbers employ testers, inspectors, foremen, engineers, servicemen, and pay up to \$6,000 a year. Automobile, police, aviation, commercial Radio, loudspeaker systems are newer fields offering good opportunities now and for the future. Television promises to open many good jobs soon. Men I trained have good jobs in these branches of Radio. Read how they got their jobs. Mail coupon.



J. E. SMITH, President National Radio Institute Established 1914

The man who has directed the home study training of more men for Radio than any other man in America.

HERE'S PROOF THAT MY TRAINING PAYS

	Broad-cast Operator After Twenty Lessons	\$10 to \$25 a Week In Spare Time	
--	--	-----------------------------------	--

"When I had completed the first twenty lessons I had obtained my license as Radio Broadcast Operator and immediately joined the staff of WJBC, where I am now Chief Operator."
— HOLLIS F. HAYES, 85 Madison St., Lapeer, Mich.

"I am making from \$10 to \$25 a week in spare time while still holding my regular job as a machinist. I owe my success to N. B. I. Course."
— W. F. RUPP, 203 W. Front St., West Conshohocken, Pa.

Many Make \$5, \$10, \$15 a Week Extra in Spare Time While Learning

The day you enroll I start sending Extra Money Job Sheets; show you how to do Radio repair jobs. Throughout your training I send plans and directions that made good spare time money—\$200 to \$500—for hundreds, while learning. I send you special Radio equipment to conduct experiments and build circuits. This 50-50 method of training makes learning at home interesting, fascinating, practical. I ALSO GIVE YOU A MODERN, PROFESSIONAL, ALL-WAVE, ALL-PURPOSE RADIO SET SERVICING INSTRUMENT to help you make good money fixing Radios while learning and equip you for full time jobs after graduation.

Find Out What Radio Offers You

Act Today. Mail the coupon now for "Rich Rewards in Radio." It's free to any fellow over 16 years old. It points out Radio's spare time and full time opportunities and those coming in Television; tells about my training in Radio and Television; shows you letters from men I trained, telling what they are doing and earning. Find out what Radio offers YOU! MAIL COUPON in an envelope, or paste on a postcard--NOW!

J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 9A09
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

THIS FREE BOOK HAS HELPED HUNDREDS OF MEN MAKE MORE MONEY

\$3,500 a Year in Own Business

"After completing the N. B. I. Course I became Radio Editor of the Buffalo Courier. Later I started a Radio service business of my own, and have averaged over \$3,500 a year."
— T. J. TELAAK, 637 Broadway, Buffalo, N. Y.



J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 9A09
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Smith: Without obligating me, send "Rich Rewards in Radio," which points out the opportunities in Radio and explains your 50-50 method of training men at home to become Radio Experts. (Please write plainly.)

NAME.....AGE.....

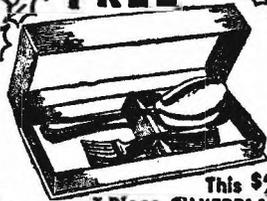
ADDRESS.....

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

\$1 BRINGS YOUR CHOICE
of these Gifts
BUY NOW—
get this SALAD SET
FREE

16 MONTHS TO PAY
 TO HAVE FREE TRIAL
 MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

FREE

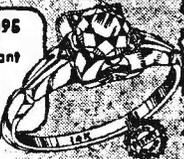


This \$295
**7-Piece SILVERPLATE
 SALAD SET** if you send \$1
 with order, saving us
 C.O.D. charges. Money
 back if not
 satisfied.



\$5250 A351—
 Sworn
 perfect Diamond;
 2 other diamonds,
 14K yellow gold. Af-
 fadavit with purchase.
 \$5.15 a month

A147—Sworn \$2995
 perfect Dia-
 mond Feature. Brilliant
 perfect diamond,
 14K yellow gold
 mounting. \$50 value.
 \$2.76 a month



A50—Bridal Pair
 —Engagement-
 Wedding Ring to
 match. 14K yellow
 gold. 5 dia-
 monds in each.
 \$3.25 a month

4EE—Massive 14K yellow
 gold man's initial
 ring. Diamond and ini-
 tials on black onyx.
 \$1.50 a month



P230—Ladies' Tiny watch, 2 diamonds in
 newest style case—charm and color of
 natural gold. 7 jewels. \$1.70 a month



P514—Small size 20 diamond watch—14K
 white gold—17 jewels. Worth \$65.
 \$4.65 a month



K37—Men's watch—newest style. Roman
 numerals on non-finishable chrome
 case. 7 jewels.
 \$1.40 a month



**613—Benrus 17 jewel Sig-
 net Watch with initials in 10K**
 yellow rolled gold plate case. Mention
 initials. \$2.38 a month



615—Ladies' Benrus Signet Watch, Small
 size, 10K yellow rolled gold plate case.
 Bracelet to match. 7 jewels.
 \$2.38 a month



R129—Lady Bulova—a 17 jewel
 feature in charm and color of
 natural gold.
 \$2.88 a month

Bring Happiness this Christmas
 with a gift of jewelry. It's simple
 —here's how you do it. Put a dol-
 lar bill in an envelope with your
 name, address and the number of
 article wanted. Tell us your age
 (must be over 20) occupation, em-
 ployer and a few simple facts
 about yourself. Information held
 strictly confidential—no direct in-
 quiries made. Upon arrival of
 your order, we will open a 10
 month Charge Account for you
 and send selection for approval
 and your free gift... this \$2.95
 7 pc. Silverplate SALAD SET. If
 not satisfied, return merchandise
 and your dollar will be refunded
 immediately. If satisfied, pay the
 balance in 10 small monthly pay-
 ments. Send Coupon today.

W105—10K yellow
 gold engraved
 Cross with Chain.
 Size illustrated.
 \$1 a month

M211—Bulova
 Minute Man—17
 jewel curved
 watch in
 charm and
 color of na-
 tural gold.
 \$3.28 a month

**SEND
 COUPON
 WITH
 \$1**



**\$3975 R556—Bul-
 ova's newest**
 feature—the Dolly
 Madison. Tiny watch
 with 21 jewel move-
 ment. Case in charm
 and color of natural
 gold. Complete in
 gift box.
 \$3.88 a month



L. W. SWEET

MAIL ORDER DIVISION OF FINLAY STRAUS
 Dept. 729A 1670 BROADWAY, NEW YORK

L. W. SWEET,
 Dept. 729A 1670 Broadway, New York City
 Gentlemen: Enclosed find \$1—send for ap-
 proval and free trial No. _____ with SALAD
 SET Free. If not satisfied, I will return articles
 and you will refund my dollar.

Name _____
 Address _____

Town _____ State _____
 Send trial note with coupon giving age, occupa-
 tion, employer and a few facts about yourself.
 Our FREE Offer expires Jan. 30, 1939.

FREE TO ADULTS
 A Postcard brings out
 \$2 page catalog.
 Send for it today.

THIS MAN'S IDEA IS A GOD-SEND TO FOLKS WHO NEED MONEY

By P. H. Graham

This is a true story. I know this man personally. I know of the folks he has helped with his money-making plans. I know of widows with children to support who thank him for their cash income. I know of men who lost their jobs, but are now making more money than ever before. I can tell you of men and women who live better because of the opportunity this man gives them to add to their earnings. Yes, I know of literally hundreds of folks to whom this man's idea of doing business has been a God-send.

Do You Need Money?

Perhaps you, too, are in urgent need of money to meet pressing bills. You may have some spare time you want to turn into cash. Then you will want to write this man at once. There will be no obligation on your part. Costs you nothing. He will write and tell you about a wonderful opportunity he has for you and how others who were hard pressed have found relief with his common-sense plans.

He is President of a large, million-dollar manufacturing company. He does business in every section of the country—in your very locality. He started a few years ago with an idea. It was this: He said, "I'll help worthy people who are in need of money. My proven business building plans shall be given to the deserving so they, too, can have money." He prospered. His business became most tremendously suc-



ALBERT MILLS

cessful. And today is still growing.

Would Earnings Up to \$40 in a Week Help You?

Right now he needs 300 men and women in all parts of the country. He wants someone in your locality to handle the business there. To everyone who accepts his offer he guarantees a fair, square deal and an amazing opportunity to make money in a pleasant, dignified business. Everything you need is sent to you. You don't risk a penny of your money. He takes care of that. You don't need experience. He tells you the few things you need to do in simple, plain language. Just say you are willing to give his plan a fair trial. I'll be surprised if you don't make up to \$35.00

in a week for your spare time either in the daytime or evenings. If you decide to continue with the business you can devote full or spare time the year 'round and enjoy big cash earnings. Your earnings will be in proportion to the time you can devote. I know of other people who have made anywhere from \$40.00 to \$100.00 in a week.

Your Earnings Can Start at Once

I sincerely ask you to fill out and mail the coupon. You don't obligate yourself or risk any money. You will receive complete details by mail. Then you can decide if you want to start right away and have the money you need coming in at once. It will certainly pay you to give this offer a trial. Better sit down and write your name and address on the coupon or a penny postcard and mail to this man at once. Just address Albert Mills, 9211 Monmouth Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio, and say, "Send me your free proposition."

ALBERT MILLS, President
9211 Monmouth Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio

Yes, I want to make money. Without cost or obligation, send me full details of the wonderful opportunity now open in my locality.

NAME.....

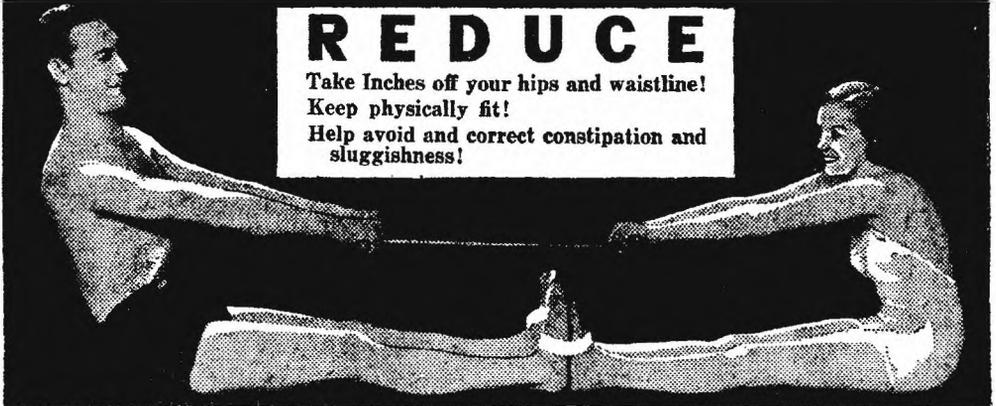
ADDRESS.....

(Please Print or Write Plainly)

COMPANION EXERCISER

REDUCE

Take Inches off your hips and waistline!
Keep physically fit!
Help avoid and correct constipation and sluggishness!



Exercise is FUN if you do it, the Companion Way!

It isn't "work" when you exercise with your room-mate, your girl friend or your wife! Here's a simple, new exerciser designed by the famous physical culturist, Joe Bonomo, that incorporates the best features of the rowing machine and the pulley weights. It combines fun and exercise because it is made for two people to use at the same time. TWO people benefit from its stretching, limbering, strengthening assistance.

Only 10 minutes a day!

It takes but little time and will help to keep you feeling "fit as a fiddle." Watch the energy, pep and vitality come back. Watch the new sparkle in your eyes, the fresh color in your cheeks. By the end of a week you will count those ten minutes a day as time well spent.

Marvelous for Constipation!

With the "Companion" exerciser you will get just the waistline "toning up" that is needed to keep your digestive organs functioning properly. Help your system to free itself from toxic poisons! Relax your tense nerves and muscles! Start to really "live"!

FREE! If you order at once we will include, FREE of extra charge, special Exercise chart giving full instructions; also a large, illustrated Health chart. Shows you what foods to eat . . . what to do to get more out of life. Contains 12 rules for health and a perfect figure.

Send order today! Companion Home Exerciser, complete with foot loops, only \$1. Ready to use . . . no adjustments, no noise, no bother. Sent C. O. D. plus postage or we pay postage if \$1 accompanies order. Use it for 5 days . . . if not delighted, your money back without question. Rush coupon today!



With circulation stimulated, and abdominal muscles freed of cumbersome fat, digestive organs will be able to function better.



Lots of fun and wonderful for reducing waist and hips!

The Bonomo
**COMPANION
EXERCISER**
distributed by
BLEIER & BROWN
1270 Sixth Avenue,
Radio City, New York,
N. Y.

**ONLY
\$1⁰⁰**

**WITH EXERCISE
AND HEALTH
CHARTS**

BLEIER and BROWN,
Distributors of Joe Bonomo Exerciser,
Dept. 5E1, 1270 Sixth Ave., Radio City, New York, N. Y.

Send one Companion Exerciser ready for use, with illustrated Exercise Chart and FREE Health Chart. I will pay postman \$1, plus postage. We pay postage if \$1 sent with order. If not satisfied I may return the Companion in 5 days and receive my \$1 back.

Name.....

Address.....

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

Canada and Foreign Countries, \$1.50 with order.

MASS PRODUCTION

DIESEL ENGINES

Sweep THE COUNTRY

HEMPHILL DIESEL
SCHOOL PRESIDENT SCHOOLS

GREATER OPPORTUNITIES THAN EVER BEFORE NOW OPENING TO HEMPHILL DIESEL TRAINED MEN

Millions have been poured into modern mass production plants. New type Diesels are now on the market for automotive and many uses never before considered practical. NATION-WIDE DIESELIZATION IS HERE.

Five years ago Hemphill Schools predicted leading automotive builders would enter the Diesel field. Hemphill training anticipated these history making advances. Shops, laboratories and theory offered in the Day, Night, and Combination Home Study with later Shop Training Courses, have been kept up to the minute.

Never before have Hemphill Diesel Schools students had greater opportunities before them. Eight completely equipped practical training schools are located in important marine, automotive and industrial centers—in U.S. and Canada—ready and thoroughly able to train men for this specialized field.

No matter where you live, if you are interested in training that will qualify you for this growing, fascinating industry, send for details on WHAT MASS PRODUCTION OF DIESEL ENGINES MAY MEAN TO YOU. Use coupon, no obligation.

HEMPHILL DIESEL SCHOOLS

Send Coupon Today
TO NEAREST ADDRESS

BOSTON, 124 Brookline Ave.
NEW YORK, 31-31 Queens Blvd., L.I. City
DETROIT, 2348 W. Lafayette Blvd.
CHICAGO, 2030 Larrabee St.
MEMPHIS, 449 Monroe Ave.
LOS ANGELES, 2010 San Fernando Road
SEATTLE, 506 Westlake North
VANCOUVER, B.C., 1367 Granville St.

HEMPHILL DIESEL SCHOOLS (addresses at left)

Please rush information on how I may qualify for the Diesel field, and details on your Courses. I am over 18.

NAME _____ AGE _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

Notwithstanding representation to the contrary, the Hemphill Diesel Schools are in no way associated with any other school of even similar name.

m-28-1

Give Me 5 Hours And I'll GUARANTEE to make you a **GOOD DANCER!**

Good dancers "fit in" with any crowd. They are in demand, popular, interesting, sought after. Their manner is charming, their assurance winning.

By **ARTHUR MURRAY**
World-Famous Dance Authority

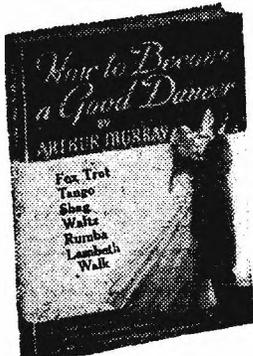
GOOD dancers have great fun, healthful, invigorating exercise that thousands of doctors recommend. They make friends readily, make valuable contacts.

You can easily become a smart, accomplished dancer, do the latest steps gracefully, confidently, with all the swing and pep of youth! For learning to dance with the **MURRAY MAGIC FOOT-PRINTS** is so simple, yet thorough, that you can learn any of the latest steps in one evening right in your own home with or without music or a partner!

Learn Quickly, Easily, at Home

You start at the very beginning—all you do is learn one simple dance step with the **MURRAY MAGIC FOOT-PRINTS**. And if you can follow this popular step . . . you can learn the Tango, Waltz, Rumba and Fox Trot without the slightest hesitation in 5 hours.

And you do it in the privacy of your own home, where there's no one to distract your attention, to keep you from concentrating on learning. You practice whenever you want to, at regular intervals or in spare time. No expensive private teacher to pay. Almost before you realize it, you will be a fine dancer, holding your own anywhere, dancing with all the grace, poise and assurance of an experienced dancer!



**\$10.00 Complete Course
NOW ONLY \$1.96**

Through my amazing new method I have taught many



thousands how to become smart, up-to-date dancers. They don't stay at home now, but go out and have great fun dancing with other finished dancers, knowing what it means to be genuinely popular.

The new simplified method has enabled me to condense my regular \$10.00 course into one volume—and offer it to you for only \$1.96!

5 DAYS' TRIAL

Just mail the coupon. My complete course will be mailed at once. When it comes, pay the postman \$1.96, plus few cents carrying charges. Use the course 5 days. Practice the steps. Note how easily and quickly you can become a finished, popular dancer the Arthur Murray way. If, at the end of 5 days, you are not delighted with results, return the course and your money will be promptly refunded.

That's how sure I am you can become a good dancer through my simple, thorough course. Clip and mail coupon NOW, Arthur Murray, Studios 823, 7 East 48rd Street, New York City.

**ARTHUR MURRAY, Studio 323
7 East 43rd Street, New York City, N. Y.**

Send me your famous course for only \$1.96, plus few cents postage. I understand that if not delighted I may return the course within 5 days and my money will be refunded.

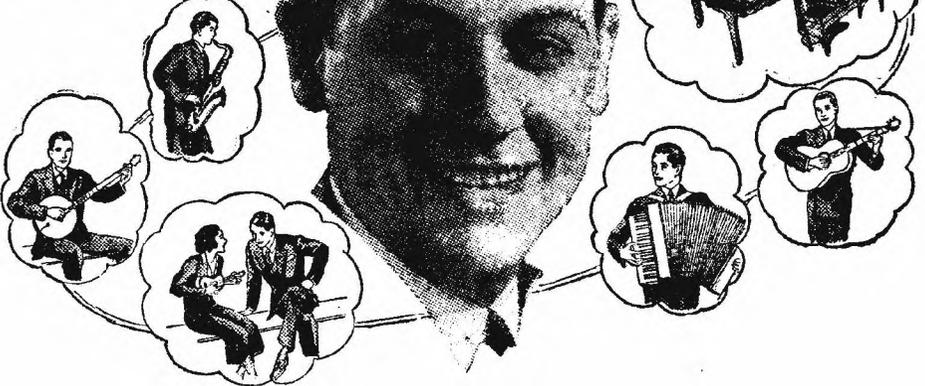
Name.....

Address.....

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

NOTE: If apt. to be out when postman calls, send \$2.00 with coupon and save C. O. D. postage.

WHAT INSTRUMENT DO YOU WANT TO LEARN TO PLAY?



QUICK WAY TO LEARN MUSIC

Thousands have learned to play at but a fraction of the old way costs

Simplified, quick Method brings amazing results—over 700,000 students

Have you ever dreamed of the fun you'd have playing some musical instrument? Pictured yourself doing many of the popular hits, movie theme songs, even classical numbers?

Then here's grand news for you! It's news of an easy, fascinating, simplified method whereby almost anyone can learn to play real music by notes in a remarkably short time! And what's more, you won't need a private teacher. You'll learn all by yourself—right in your own home. And best of all, the cost is only a small fraction of what it used to cost by old-fashioned methods.

No Special "Talent" Needed

You needn't even know one thousandths have learned to play

note from the other, for with the aid of this wonderful U. S. School of Music system of instruction. You learn to read regular notes—and to play them—just as any real musician does. You start right in learning to play real little tunes almost from the very start. Gradually you master more and more difficult ones until—sooner than you ever expected—you find yourself entertaining your friends—playing at parties—and having the best times you ever had in your whole life.

Easy as A-B-C

The success of this U. S. School method of musical instruction is due to two things. One is the fact that it makes

everything so simple—so crystal clear—so easy to understand. First it tells you how to do a thing. Then it shows you in pictures how to do it. Then you do it yourself and hear it. What could be simpler?

The second reason for the success of this system is that it is so fascinating. Learning music this way is like playing a game. Practicing becomes real fun instead of a bore as it used to be with the old way.

Free Booklet and Demonstration Lesson

In order to show how easy—how simple—how pleasant this course is, the U. S. School of Music has prepared for you a free Demonstration Lesson and Explanatory Booklet. No matter what instrument you select to play the Free Demonstration Lesson and Booklet will show you at once the amazingly simple principles around which this method is built. And how it will enable you to become a popular musician in a surprisingly short time—at an average cost of only a few cents a day.

If you really want to learn music—if you want to win new popularity—if you want to enjoy musical good times galore—fill in and mail the coupon below. Don't delay—act at once. You'll not be obligated in any way. Instruments supplied when needed, cash or credit. U. S. School of Music, 29412 Brunswick Bldg., N. Y. C.

What Instrument for You?

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Piano | Guitar |
| Violin | Saxophone |
| Organ | Mandolin |
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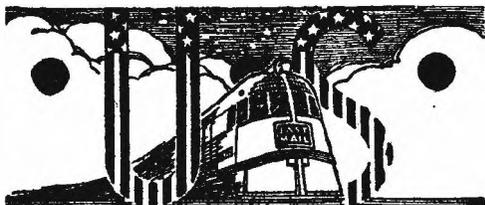
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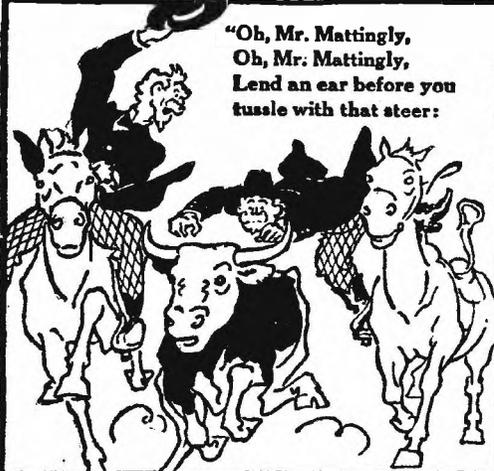
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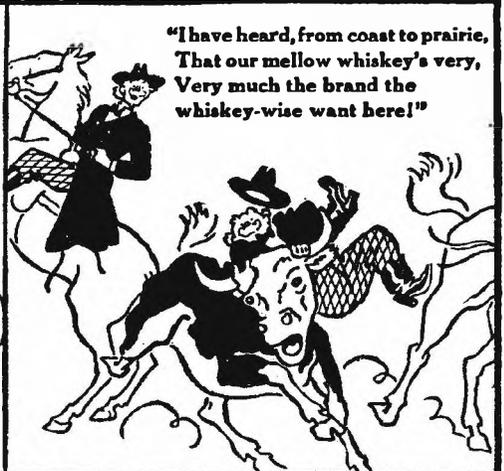
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Jenkins didn't have a chance to escape that tackle

PIGSKIN PRESSURE

Ken Jenkins Marshals All His Generalship to Loosen Up the Sticky Cog in His Gridiron Machine!

By **JACKSON V. SCHOLZ**

Author of "Track Magic," "Luck of the Musketeers," etc.

CHAPTER I

A Tough Nut

A MACHINE of precision cannot run well with sand in its gears. Ken Jenkins was finding that out. He was wondering desperately how to remedy a situation which was developing all the earmarks of an ugly threat. The Elkford College "Stags" were bogging down.

They were going gradually to pieces against a team of lesser skill. Barker Tech had power, but not the

speed and flash to back it up. The Stags should have trounced them by three touchdowns. That was the pre-game dope. And now that 13-7 lead looked mighty big.

The Stags were bogging down, and Ken Jenkins knew the reason. He grappled with the problem as he dropped back to his safety position. His dark, clean-cut features were smeared with grime and sweat. His face, framed in the helmet, possessed a certain hawklike alertness, but the eyes beneath the straight black brows were worried.

A COMPLETE FOOTBALL NOVELET

Elkford College, Small But Scrappy,

Tech had the ball on her own forty-three yard line. They had marched it from the twenty in two first downs. Another of their lumbering power plays netted three more yards. With bungling confidence they then tried to send a man on a long sweep around right end, but Steve Agnew, left end for the Stags, refused to be blocked out of the play.

He drifted to the left with the Tech interference, found his opening and flashed through to smear the runner for a five-yard loss. Jenkins breathed a sigh of relief. It didn't look as though Tech had the stuff for another first down in *this* series.

Tech had the ball on its forty-one yard line, third down and twelve to go. They battered their way through tackle for five yards, then fell back to kick.

It was a poor punt, high and wobbly. Jenkins moved up under it. He heard the pounding feet of the Tech ends while the ball was still tumbling lazily toward him. He signaled for a fair catch, and made it good. The ball went into play on the Stag thirty-six yard line.

"I'd have *run* with that ball!"



Ken Jenkins

Duke Smythe was sounding off again when he should have kept his trap shut. Maybe he *would* have tried to bring the pigskin back. Maybe he might even have been successful, but it was not, at this point, a matter for discussion. Jenkins ignored the remark and stepped into the huddle.

"You'll take it off left tackle, Al," he said. "Formation 'D'."

Al Saber, fullback, grunted. "Oke." But before they could break for their places in the line, Duke Smythe piped up again.

"I think you're wrong on that one, Ken. They're hep to that play. Better try me or Dolly with that number seven double reverse. They'll fall for that."

There it was again—Duke Smythe trying to run things. He'd been pecking away like that since the start of the second half. Huddles, of course, were for that sort of thing, to some extent; but there was such a thing as carrying it too far. Jenkins snapped back for the first time.

"I'm runnin' this squad," he said tightly. "Al takes it on formation 'D'."

"But look, Ken," Smythe protested. "If you—"

"Shut up, Duke!" That came from big Jug Hogan, Elkford center.

Brick Glendon, right end, spoke up. "Maybe Duke's right. If—"

The referee's whistle interrupted him. The official jerked the ball from the ground and paced five purposeful yards toward the Elkford goal. Placing the ball once more on the ground, the referee faced the official scorer and gave the folded-arms signal for a delaying-the-game penalty. There was some angry muttering when the Stags went into their huddle five yards back.

"All right, gentlemen," said Jenkins sweetly. "We have the rest of the afternoon to talk things over. Are there any more suggestions?"

Indignant silence.

"All right," he rapped. "Get in there and do as I told you!"

Pulls Itself Up by Its Own Bootstraps!



Jenkins whipped the ball to the coffin corner

THE forwards stepped to the line of scrimmage. The backfield took the shape of a diamond. The ball was snapped to Jenkins. He spun about and faked a pass to Dolly Swartz, who seemed to be on his way for an end excursion. But it was Al Saber who actually took the ball as he came charging in from deep fullback position.

The linesmen opened a hole off tackle. It was Duke Smythe's job to get through that hole ahead of Saber, with the idea of mowing some sort of path through the Tech backfield. But Smythe didn't move quite fast enough. His delay was almost imperceptible, but it was just sufficient to ruin the timing of a play which depended upon speed.

The Tech secondary defense closed in to plug the hole. Smythe made a great show of trying to tear his way through, but he couldn't even get out of Al Saber's way. The effort went for no gain.

In a certain sense of the word it was a vindication of Smythe's prophecy that Tech was hep to that play. On the face of it, however, Jenkins knew that this wasn't so. He knew that Tech was vulnerable in that spot. He knew that he had called the proper play.

He realized, too, that Duke Smythe had not made the sole contribution to the play's failure. The entire formation had moved sluggishly, quite as though they were only half convinced that they were running the proper signal.

That was the whole thing in a nutshell. It had been going on all during the second half. Smythe had been continually horning in with his suggestions, deliberately creating a feeling of uncertainty among the other members of the squad. It was the sort of thing which was bound to affect the coordinated timing of this delicate gridiron machine.

Back in the huddle once more Jenkins called for a sweep around the right end. Smythe gave a snort of alarm, but had nothing to say.

"Any suggestions, Duke?" Jenkins demanded sharply.

"Not I," said Smythe with the relieved air of a man washing his hands of all responsibility. "You're running this team."

The end run was not a spectacular success. The interference in front of Dolly Swartz was not the low-hitting, accurate sort which had showed earlier in the game. Swartz also missed a fine chance to cut in to a nice wide opening. He was tackled heavily after a four-yard gain.

Third down and six to go. Ken Jenkins called for a kick. They were still enough in their own territory to justify a little caution, particularly in view of the squad's wobbly condition. Smythe made the punt and got off a good one. The ends got down under it fast, and Steve Agnew nailed the runner on the Tech twenty-five yard line.

Tech pounded through for another pair of first downs, using straight power plays against the Stags' weakening defense. A fumble stopped the march. Elkford recovered on its own forty-eight yard line. Jenkins called for time out.

There had to be a showdown, or the miracle team of Elkford College was in for a shellacking in its first game of the season. It was a squad unprecedented in the little college, a team which had sprouted magically from the unfertile gridiron soil of a fourth-rate football school.

It hadn't been recruited, it had merely happened, as such things will every now and then, like a rabbit emerging from a magician's hat. The Elkford student body was still in a happy daze over the phenomenon. They regarded their football team with the amazed pleasure of an old goose which had suddenly laid a golden egg.

And now, in their first game of the season, the Stags were bogging down for no reason visible to the naked eye. It was a responsibility which cut deep into Jenkins' hide. He was captain and quarterback of the team. He was more than that—a great deal more, but not even his own teammates suspected it.

He loved football, but he hated

trouble. He was finding, now, that football and trouble went hand in hand. To enjoy the first, he must accept the latter. He had two brief minutes to snap a slipping team back to its fine, high standard. He drew the men about him with an imperative gesture of his arm.

HIS eyes flashed. "Listen hard, you birds, and think fast," he said harshly. "Duke's got the idea he wants to run this team. I've got the idea *I* want to run it. You can't win this game with a pair of bosses, so it's up to you to make up your minds and to do it damn fast!"

He stared hard-eyed around the circle of faces, then punched more words at them before anyone had a chance to speak.

"We had a football team during the first half. This half, thanks to the *outside* advice, we've got a fine bean-bag squad. If you want to play real football, you can take that Tech beef trust in your stride. If you don't want to play, they'll tramp you into the dirt. And now it's time to decide who you want to call the signals. All those who want me to carry on, raise your hands."

His suggestion was met by angry glares. They didn't like that sort of talk. They didn't like to be treated like a kindergarten class.

"Vote!" Jenkins gritted. "I mean business!"

Slowly, resentfully the hands came up. Duke Smythe was the last to make the gesture. His eyes burned hotly, and his heavy, handsome features were pale with anger.

"Thanks for the vote of confidence," said Jenkins with an edge to his voice. "And now let's see if you've got that much confidence in yourself. We're repeating formation 'D', with Al taking the ball off left tackle."

The referee called time in. Cold perspiration mingled with the honest sweat on Jenkins' face. Had he put it across? Had he cleared the hurdle which might make the difference between a licking or a win? He'd know within the next few seconds.

The ball was snapped, and things

moved so fast in the Elkford backfield that Jenkins almost gummed things up himself. He managed to get the ball to Al Saber, however, socking it hard in his belly as he ripped past. The linesmen exploded into the surprised Tech forward wall before the Tech huskies knew what had hit them. There was a hole big enough for a hay wagon.

Duke Smythe couldn't stall on that one. He charged through in front of Saber, blocked off a defensive half-back, and Saber bored through for eight yards before the fullback dived in to nail him. Jenkins felt the weakness of relief surge over him. He *had* managed to blast a little sense into their heads! Enough, he hoped, to last the rest of the game. After that? Well, he didn't care to dwell upon that now.

He pulled a quarterback sneak to get the remaining yards necessary for a first down. The ball was on the Tech forty-one yard line, and after that he didn't give his men a chance to think. He called for a tricky double lateral on the next play. It clicked with precision, and when the Tech boys were all through falling over their own feet, another eleven yards had been reeled off for the Stags.

Another pass on the first down. Jenkins flipped that one himself behind nice protection. He drilled it through into the big hands of Steve Agnew. The Tech safety man caught Agnew on the seventeen-yard line. Tech fell for the old mousetrap play on the next formation. Their right tackle came obediently through into the Stag backfield, where he was promptly cut down by Dolly Swartz. The Tech tackle left a fine large gap in the line. Jenkins and Saber flashed through ahead of Duke Smythe to clear a path to the nine-yard line. Second down and two to go.

Jenkins massed his men for an obvious smash at the line to gain a first down. The power play started with terrific force. The Tech defense surged in to check it, but the ball never reached the line of scrimmage. Duke Smythe kept it, instead, behind the line. He whipped a low, level pass

which found Brick Glendon all by himself in the coffin corner. Smythe converted the point after touchdown, and the score was 20-7.

The Stags maintained their speed and craftiness throughout the rest of the game. They worked smoothly and efficiently behind Ken Jenkins' leadership. Even Smythe played the brilliant game of which he was capable. He was too smart to do otherwise, whatever sly plans were percolating in the back of his head.

THE Stags collected another touchdown before the game was ended, serving notice, thereby, that the surprise team of Elkford College was quite as imposing as it claimed to be.

The squad was jubilant in the dressing room. Even Duke Smythe appeared to share in the elation, but Ken Jenkins, watching him carefully, was not fooled. Several times he caught Smythe's glance. It was filled with shrewd speculation.

"The season is still young, my friend," it seemed to say. "Lots of things can happen before it's over."

CHAPTER II

The Coach's Secret

A CLOSE observer, too, might have noticed something wrong with the expression of the coach, "Old Jake" Travis. His rugged face, cut on the leonine pattern, held but a lingering resemblance to the king of beasts. Formerly it must have been there; one could be sure of that. But his shrewd old eyes held the traces of a beaten look—that certain pathetic lack of confidence which often remains as the aftermath of some deep hurt.

Everyone who knew Old Jake understood the reason for that look. The football world still remembered him as one of the grand old men of the gridiron. Football history was filled with his accomplishments—the immortal teams he had developed; the incredible victories to his credit.

He had brought the teams of great Mohawk University to their present prominence. He had given the best years of his life to that school. And then they'd dropped him.

Why? The old, old story of alumni pressure. Old Jake had had a few tough years. He'd been saddled with mediocre material that even his genius could not make into stars. Injuries had cut deep into his victories. Things had broken wrong, and the all-powerful alumni had squawled to high heaven.

"The old boy's shot his wad! He's through! Get us a younger man!"

And that's what happened. They got in a younger man. Old Jake was tossed into the discard. There was no place for him now in a real football school. Elkford hired him because they weren't particular. They'd never had a football team of any fame, and they never expected to have one. Old Jake was good enough for them.

And now this team had sprung up like a mushroom over night. By another quirk of irony, Mohawk U. had placed Elkford on its schedule for this year. Mohawk needed a breather before its big game with State; they wanted a soft game for their boys to loaf in. They hadn't anticipated Elkford's present team.

It was a setup which should have ironed the lines of worry from Old Jake's face. It was hard to understand the expression of distaste which lurked behind the smile he held for his boys' success.

Ken Jenkins was the only one who really knew the secret. It was a secret which caused him lots of worry. Not for himself, but for the coach. He'd lived and boarded at the old man's home since his freshman year. He held a deep and lasting affection for Old Jake, and an even deeper concern for the coach's present problem.

Jenkins rather dreaded the interview which he knew must come. The coach, too, seemed reluctant to approach the main issue when the two were alone in the coach's small living room that evening.

"You had some trouble on the field today, Ken."

Jenkins was willing enough to discuss that. "Yes," he said. "It looked bad for a little while."

"Better tell me about it. Not that I have any particular right to know."

Jenkins tried to ignore the coach's open note of bitterness. "It was Duke Smythe again. He can't get over his big-shot complex. If he's not boss of everything, he doesn't want to play."

"He's a trouble maker," the coach admitted. "I saw you force a show-down, and call for a vote of confidence. That was a clever way to handle it. I was proud of you."

"It worked that time," said Jenkins thoughtfully. "But it may not work again. I made an enemy of Duke, and he's a bad man to have against you in this school."

"You're as well liked as he is," the coach observed.

But Jenkins slowly shook his head. "I'm afraid not," he said. "I'm not his type. It's an effort for me to mix with people; Duke eats it up. He has the sort of personality that forces people to recognize him. He's ambitious. He didn't care so much about being top man on the football team till he found how strong the club would be. Now he wants to run the squad. He wants to call the signals."

"I—I could have handled a situation like that at one time," the coach said bitterly.

ONCE more Jenkins ignored Old Jake's reference to his own obsession of incompetency. He wanted to stay on the subject of Duke Smythe.

"Why do you suppose a guy like that came to a one-horse school like this?" he wondered. "He never misses a chance to brag about all his dad's dough, and about his two-hundred-acre estate somewhere in the Hawaiian Islands. Why didn't the guy go to some big place like Mohawk?"

The next minute he could have bitten off his tongue for that break. The coach saw his flush, and smiled a little bitterly.

"That's all right, Ken. Duke probably came to this school because he wanted to be a big frog in a little puddle. I know the type."

"Yeah," said Jenkins thankfully, still flustered. "I guess that's right."

There was an awkward silence. The coach drew on his dead pipe and brought strangled, rattling sounds from the bowl. He struck a match and lighted it.

"And now," he said from behind a cloud of smoke, "let's quit beating around the bush. You won a great victory today, son. Your natural ability as a field general showed to its best advantage. Your plays showed a touch of genius. I guess I ought to know."

"You helped with those plays," said Jenkins doggedly.

"You're quibbling," the coach said gruffly. "You scouted Tech yourself, and diagrammed both our defensive and offensive plays. It's a pity we didn't discover this talent of yours before your final year in school."

Jenkins couldn't answer that one. For the last few years he had found a great deal of pleasure in diagramming new plays merely for his own amusement. Before the start of the present season the coach had found one of these diagrams which had dropped from Jenkins' notebook. Immediately the older man had sensed its value. One thing had led to another, and now ninety percent of the Stags' plays were those worked out by Ken Jenkins himself. At the moment, though, he could find no joy in this. The coach, however, could.

"It resolves itself into the fact that you licked Tech single-handed," he stated flatly. "I intend to see that you get the credit."

That was just what Jenkins had feared. He bounced to his feet, faced the coach, tense and pleading.

"Please, Coach, *don't* do that! I don't want the credit! I want you to have it. Can't you see that it means nothing in the world to me, and everything to you?"

A trace of the lion showed itself for an instant in Old Jake.

"Why should I take credit for something I haven't done?" he demanded fiercely. "I'll admit I've lost my grip. I'm not worth a damn any more as a coach. But I hope I've at least managed to salvage a little self-respect."

"But, Coach, you've got the wrong slant on the thing," Jenkins insisted.

Doggedly the coach shook his big head. "No, Ken. You've got to take the credit for what you've done. I've been a fool to keep my mouth shut as long as this."

Jenkins took a walk across the room and back, gathering his resources to combat the coach's attitude. He resumed his chair and spoke quietly.

"Frankly, Coach, I don't want all that responsibility. If folks knew how much I've had to do with the team, it would put me in a tough spot. After all, I've got my school work to consider, and the more time I give to that the better off I'll be."

Old Jake growled beneath his breath, but Jenkins went on to clinch his point.

"I don't want the student body holding me responsible for the team. That's your job. You seem to think you're through as a coach. Well, how do you know you are? If there's anything left in you, a team like this ought to bring it out. And if you admit now that someone else is doping out the plays for the squad, you're cooked for good."

There was a long silence. The coach's pipe went out again.

"What do you suggest?" he asked at last.

"Just let things ride as they are," said Jenkins, relief in his voice. "You never can tell what's likely to come of it. And if, at the end of the season, you still insist on telling my part in it—" Jenkins shrugged—"then there probably won't be anything I can do about it. At present, though, we've got plenty of trouble ahead with Duke Smythe."

JENKINS scored a bull's-eye with that prediction. Smythe didn't let any grass grow under his feet as he started his campaign. There was nothing open about it—at first. Smythe was too cagey for that. He was a smooth worker with a dangerous amount of patience.

Ken Jenkins, of course, had the temporary advantage of being in the driver's seat. His leadership had scored

a decisive victory in the first game of the season, and the student body would be slow in forgetting it. Jenkins' big difficulty, though, was the thing he recognized himself. He was quiet, retiring, almost shy. He hated to force himself upon people. He much preferred to sit on the sidelines and listen.

But not Duke Smythe. Smythe was never content unless he was in the thick of things. He had the suave personality and the persuasive force which makes friends. He could make a big noise, and make it sound convincing. He had money, lots of it. And one was always conscious of his background. He was a Smythe, from a long, distinguished line of Smythes. He made that point quite clear.

And he had two more things to his advantage. He could really play football. He was the Stags' only real triple-threat man. He was indispensable to the squad. The other angle was that, aside from Jenkins, Smythe was the logical man to call the signals. The rest of the squad was green and inexperienced. All they possessed was talent.

Elkford's second game was against Matson College, a contest which promised to be a setup for the Stags. The intervening practice sessions ran smoothly enough. Jenkins mapped out an effective defense against the Matson style of play, and added a higher polish to his own offensive plays.

The coach called the final scrimmage practice on Thursday. The squad was too small to have any real strength in second-string men. That was Elkford's most glaring weakness. In order to get any hard scrimmage work, it was necessary to shift a few men from the first to the second team.

Jenkins was running the second team that day because he had a better grasp on the Matson offensive plays. Smythe, in all his glory, was strutting about as he called the signals for the varsity. The scrubs had the ball now. They were making little or no headway against the varsity, but the coach kept them plugging away.

"All right, gang," Jenkins told the

wearry scrubs as they went into the huddle. "We'll try that lateral to the left again."

The play started with an unbalanced formation on the right, a reasonably deceptive formation, inasmuch as the Matson team ran several plays from the same spread.

The ball was snapped to Jenkins. He made a half pivot and slapped it in to the midsection of the left half, who sprinted toward the right. But, instead of continuing with the end sweep, the left half pulled up short and, well protected by the line, shot a lateral back across to Jenkins.

Jenkins hooked it out of the air, and headed around the short side of the line. It was evident enough, however, that he wouldn't get far, because the varsity hadn't been badly fooled.

Smythe, in particular, seemed to be waiting for something of this sort. He sidestepped the scrub who made a clumsy attempt to block him, and came boring in toward Jenkins, wide open.

Jenkins didn't have a chance to escape that tackle, and something in Smythe's eyes warned him that it would be a vicious one. He tried to sidestep, but Smythe had every advantage of momentum and speed. He crashed savagely into Jenkins' knees and, as Jenkins hit the ground, he felt a sharp stab of pain flash up his felt leg.

It was worse when he tried to stand. The agony of it made him slightly giddy. Duke Smythe reached down to give him a supporting hand.

"Oh gee, Ken," he stammered. "I'm sorry!"

It was the proper thing to say under the circumstances, but the glint of satisfaction in the fellow's eyes belied his words.

The coach came barging up just then. "Are you hurt bad, Ken?" he demanded anxiously.

Jenkins tried his leg. "It doesn't feel so good," he admitted.

LD JAKE wheeled fiercely on Smythe. "You didn't have to hit him *that* hard!" he said harshly.

Smythe showed deep concern. "I— I must have forgot myself," he said.

"But it didn't seem like a very hard tackle."

As they rushed Jenkins to the gym, he tried to keep the tears back. It wasn't the pain that made him feel like that, it was the bitterness of his disappointment, and the dull clamor of his anger. For all he knew, he might be badly hurt. He might be out for the remainder of the season. Smythe might have achieved his end by means of that one deliberate tackle. It was a tough thing to face.

CHAPTER III

Duke Makes a Guess

IT wasn't as bad as it might have been, however. The doctor's report was encouraging.

"Nothing torn in there," he said, "and no dislocation of the knee. It's a nasty bruise, but rest will fix it up."

"How much rest?" Jenkins demanded anxiously.

"A couple of weeks, at least. I won't permit you to play in either of the next two games."

Jenkins swallowed that as gamely as he could. He consoled himself with the fact that it was better than being out of the game for good. Smythe, of course, would get his break. But even that might not prove disastrous.

Jenkins watched the Matson game from the sidelines. His brain was tuned to its highest speed. Each play recorded itself indelibly upon the negative of his mind. He tried his best to be fair. He tried to give Smythe all the credit that was due him. If Smythe were the better man, then Ken Jenkins had steeled himself to step aside. For the sake of Old Jake, the best possible Elkford team had to meet the powerful Mohawks.

He watched the brilliant Stags crush the Matson aggregation under a score of 28-9. But, at the end of the game, he knew an infinite feeling of relief. The coach confirmed his judgment later.

"Matson never should have scored,

and we should have had two more touchdowns," he said flatly. "Duke's a great player, but he can't play and run a team at the same time. He thinks too slow. He'd find tough sledging against real competition."

This was borne out the following week when the Stags met a smart, fast Aggie squad. Smythe made several blunders which were almost fatal, blunders so technical in their nature that probably the squad itself was unaware of them. At any rate, the Stags came out on the long end of the score. They won, 14-12. They got the breaks, it is true, but the breaks don't show up on the scoreboard.

Jenkins' fight, then, had only started. He accepted that fact by the time he was able to wear a uniform again. Duke Smythe had had time to entrench himself. He had led the Stags to a pair of victories. He'd been top dog for two whole weeks. It was a hard thing to combat.

When Jenkins took command once more friction developed on the squad. It was probably the sort of friction that could be stamped out by a hard-boiled coach, but Old Jake seemed no longer to possess those qualities.

So things went from bad to worse. The next game against the Crawford College "Larks" should have been a breather. As it was, the Larks began to loom as real opponents.

Smythe unlimbered his needling campaign early in the first half. He shot off his mouth in the huddle. He offered advice at every opportunity, of which he found plenty. He usurped the privilege of bossing his team while on defense.

"Watch out for a pass!" he'd yell. Or, "Move in a little closer on the end there, Brick!" Or, "Get through there, men, and break up that kick!"

Jenkins didn't dare call for a vote this time, because too many of the squad were strong for Smythe. The first half, as a result, was a pretty sad affair. Instead of a score which should have been lopsided, the count read 7-7.

The Stags, wrangling among themselves, went stamping into the dressing room, and there they met a person whom they had really never

known before. Old Jake faced them with fire in his eye. He was no longer the half-apologetic coach to whom they were accustomed. He was a roaring lion of a man who shocked them all into stunned disbelief.

"And I thought you were a football team!" he thundered. "My mistake, you false alarms, you're nothing but a rattle-brained bunch of clucks!"

After this comparatively mild opening Old Jake really got down to business. He scorched the hide off their backs with one of those good old-fashioned between-half tirades that are most effective when properly timed.

THIS one was timed to the second. The squad progressed from the stage of goggle-eyed wonder to that of flaming anger, but there were no comebacks. Old Jake dominated them completely as he stood before them on spread legs, arms akimbo, his shaggy head thrust forward.

Ken Jenkins wanted to yell from sheer joy. Old Jake had found himself at last! He was out of his slump, back again in harness. The utter collapse of a fine team had turned the trick. It had fanned a dormant spark into its old-time flame. But Jenkins didn't yell with joy. He took the tongue-lashing with the rest. Smythe alone stuck out his neck, a stupid blunder for a man of his shrewdness.

"But look Coach," he protested. "We were playing those birds along the wrong lines."

Silence clapped its lid upon the room. The coach slowly wheeled toward the source of the disturbance. His voice dropped to disarming mildness.

"I was about to get around to you, Duke," he said. "I've got the idea that you didn't like the way the team was being run. That's too bad. I assure you that you won't be bothered like that in the second half. You'll be on the bench."

Duke Smythe rocked back on his heels as if he'd been clipped with a straight left. Then his jaw clamped and the light of arrogance flared swiftly in his eyes.

"You're crazy!" he exploded. "You've got to have me in there!"

The coach took two steps toward the rebel. His words fell like brittle bits of ice upon the heavy silence.

"One more peep out of you, my boy, and you're turning in your suit. Just one more little crack, Duke, and you're through for good."

Smythe drew a quick breath, but he expelled it without further words. The color slowly left his face. His eyes flashed hatred, but they shifted under the hard stare of the coach.

Old Jake ignored him then. He faced the shocked remainder of the team. He went to work on them again and when they headed for the field, every man among them was willing to tackle the Larks without any "outside" help. The final score was 21-7—and not in favor of the Larks.

It looked like the end of the depression. Old Jake had regained his touch. The Stag eleven awoke to new life under his driving hand. He and Ken Jenkins still worked together on the plays, and Jenkins felt the effect of real genius. He was glad and proud to sit at the feet of a real master.

Nor was there further trouble from Duke Smythe, and no more dissension in the ranks. Smythe acted like a sullen animal, but he played football just the same. To all outward appearances, he was willing to collect his glory as an outstanding star, rather than as leader of the team.

The game preceding the all-important battle against the Mohawk "Lancers" was a tough one. The Stags met Mid-Northern University. Elkford's 9-3 victory drew headlines in the papers as the "Wonder Team." The sports scribes hailed Old Jake as of yore.

"Who said he was through?" they wanted to know, forgetting that they'd first broadcast the announcement themselves. "The old master is still among the greatest. His teams will still make football history. His game against the Mohawks promises to be the outstanding dramatic event of the season. We'd like to see him win. We'd like to see him lick the school that kicked him out."

Yes, everything looked mighty rosy now. It was even conceded that the Stags had an outside chance to come through against the undefeated Mohawk powerhouse. Ken Jenkins and Old Jake Travis scouted one of Mohawk's night games and decided that the team was not unbeatable. Yes, everything was looking up—until two days before the crucial game.

It was really Jenkins' fault. He got careless. An idea for a smart defensive play popped into his head as he was leaving class. He sat down immediately on the steps of the Engineering Building, and started to diagram the play before he should forget it.

HE worked feverishly for several minutes before he became aware of someone standing behind him. He whirled quickly, instinctively covering his sketch with his hand. Duke Smythe was grinning down at him.

"Looks interesting," said Smythe. "Let's have a look at it."

Jenkins rose to face him, ignoring the outstretched hand. He stuffed the diagram in his pocket.

"It wouldn't interest you," he said.

Smythe's lips curled at one corner. "But I'll bet it would interest our great coach," he retorted. "I've been an awful sap. I had a hunch all along that something was screwy. Now I think I know what it is."

With an effort Jenkins kept the sudden alarm from his face. "Don't overstrain that mighty brain of yours," he said. "It'll crack some day."

"No strain at all, I assure you," Smythe replied easily. "It's just a matter of a little common sense. Washed-out coach, super-brilliant quarterback; two plus two equals four. Simple, isn't it?"

"Simple is the best word I can think of," Jenkins snapped. "Do you have many brainstormers like that?"

"No, not many," admitted Smythe. "This is the best one I've had in years. Well, be seein' ya in the backfield." He gave an insolent flip of his hand, and strolled off with the pleased air of a man who has solved a weighty problem.

Jenkins stood for several moments frozen to the ground. Slowly a clammy fear twisted its way into his heart.

CHAPTER IV

Triple Blackmail

JENKINS' first wild impulse was to reach the coach as quickly as possible. But he checked himself in this, realizing that it would be wiser to let Smythe make the first move. Maybe the guy was just talking through his hat.

He wasn't, though. Smythe reached the coach before the workout that afternoon. Jenkins could tell that by the grim, hard look on Old Jake's face, by the smug expression worn by Smythe. Jenkins didn't have a chance to get the lowdown until he hurried home from the training table after dark.

Old Jake was waiting for him. All of his regained confidence had oozed away. His shoulders wore the tired slump of age, and the lines of his face sagged dismally. His first words betrayed his feelings.

"I was a fool, son, to believe that we could put it over."

Jenkins hated himself quite thoroughly at the moment. "It was all my fault, Coach," he admitted bitterly. He told, then, what had happened on the steps of the Engineering Building.

"Don't take it so hard, Ken," advised the coach, pulling himself together. "Maybe it's all for the best."

"What happened?" Jenkins demanded bluntly.

"Duke merely asked me if you had been diagramming the plays for the team. Unfortunately, I don't happen to be a liar. I told him we'd been using your plays most of the season."

"And then?"

"You ought to be able to guess the rest—just a little fancy blackmail. Duke runs the team in the Mohawk game—or else."

"What did you tell him?" Jenkins

asked, although he knew the answer.

"I told him to go to hell," the coach said simply. "I told him that I'd announce the fact myself. I'll make a public statement tomorrow."

Jenkins sat miserably slumped in his chair, searching vainly for some word of consolation. This was the end of things as far as Old Jake was concerned. The coach went on slowly as though wanting to get everything off his chest.

"I think I'd have given you the credit, anyway, if I hadn't found myself. But now, knowing that I *am* capable of turning out a team as good as this, I was willing enough to take the credit for the earlier games. But by admitting now that you had run the team in those games, nobody would ever believe that I'd hit my stride again. It will be hard to prove it next year after most of this team graduates. I'll have no material to work on."

Jenkins merely nodded dumbly.

"And the final touch of irony is this," the coach continued. "I've just received a provisional offer for a fat contract with a top-notch school. They will take me on if I have an undefeated season. But even *that* wouldn't stand up if Duke Smythe spilled what he knows."

Jenkins felt icy fury mounting in him. He came to his feet. "Maybe Duke won't spill it," he said softly. "I'll have a little talk with him."

The coach showed quick alarm. "Take it easy, son," he warned. "You'll do more than talk when you look like that."

"I'll talk first," said Jenkins harshly.

Old Jake also came to his feet. "Now look, kid," he said. "I want you to promise that you won't start anything."

But Jenkins was already heading for the door. "I'm not promising a thing!" he flung back across his shoulder.

As he strode swiftly toward Duke Smythe's rooming house, he allowed his anger to boil unchecked. He hated trouble. Certainly he was not the sort of person to go looking for it, but now he was not governed by any previous rules of conduct. He was just a nor-

mally quiet person ravaged by a consuming rage. That made him twice as dangerous.

He had no definite plan of action. The only clear thought in his seething brain was the primitive desire to smash Smythe with his fists. Common sense or reason did not enter into it. It didn't occur to him that Smythe, outweighing him by fifteen pounds, might do his share of the smashing.

REACHING his destination, Jenkins decided to use the element of surprise. He knew the location of Smythe's room, and he managed to slip quietly up the stairs without being seen. He grunted with satisfaction to note the light coming from the transom. That meant that Smythe was in. Jenkins was reaching for the door-knob when he was arrested by the sound of voices coming from the room.

The transom was open just a trifle, and the voices reached Jenkins clearly. The first was a nasal, unpleasant voice, filled at the moment with a taunting quality of satisfaction.

"Well thanks, Duke, old boy, for the handout. It'll come in mighty handy. I knew you'd be glad to help out one of your dad's old pals. He's such a fine man, too. Funny you don't want me to tell your pals around here what a fine guy he is."

"Okay, Snipe," Smythe rasped. "You've got your blackmail dough. Now get out!"

"Sure, Duke, sure. I'm goin'."

Jenkins didn't go in for eavesdropping, but this was one of those times when it couldn't very well be avoided. The words had the quick effect of clearing the haze of anger from his brain. Once more he was a quick-thinking quarterback who could change his plan of attack when the going was hot.

There was no chance to make a quick getaway from his present questionable position; so, when the door of Smythe's room came open, Jenkins was strolling casually down the hall as though he were one of the roomers going out for some reason or other.

He heard Snipe descending the

stairs behind him. On the porch Jenkins lifted a foot to the railing and pretended to tie a shoe lace. When Snipe passed him Jenkins glanced up to see a weasel of a man, sharp-featured and furtive-eyed. The football captain lowered his foot, and followed close upon Snipe's heels.

A plan of action had formed swiftly in his mind. He was certain that he'd stumbled upon something valuable, something he might use. It promised to be a dirty, unpleasant business, but Ken Jenkins couldn't be too particular at the moment.

He waited for a dark, tree-shaded stretch of walk before he closed in on Snipe. Snipe gave a startled upward glance as Jenkins ranged alongside. The gridiron ace didn't waste either time or words.

"What have you got on Duke Smythe?" he demanded bluntly.

Snipe stepped back with a snarl. He reached for his hip pocket, but Jenkins' arm flashed out in time. His powerful fingers closed around Snipe's wrist just as a blackjack appeared in his hand. Jenkins gave a quick twist, and the ugly weapon dropped to the ground.

"Talk fast, Snipe!" he suggested softly.

A string of vicious oaths came from Snipe's lips. Jenkins whirled him about and brought the captured wrist up into the middle of Snipe's back.

"Talk fast, Snipe," he repeated. "Or your arm's a goner."

"I'll talk!" whined Snipe. "Ease up, mister, I'll talk!"

Jenkins did so. "What did Duke Smythe pay you to keep your mouth shut about?"

"Duke Smythe! That's a hot one!" grimaced Snipe. "His name ain't Smythe any more'n yours. It's plain old *Smith!* His dad was Foggy Smith. He cleaned up a million or so bootleggin' beer in San Francisco. Then he ducked out to Hawaii, bought some land and set himself up as a gentleman by the name of 'Fordham Smythe'."

"I see," said Ken Jenkins grimly. "And how do you fit into the picture?"

"I used to work for Foggy. I found

out that his kid was in this here school, posin' as the son of some rich blue blood. I happened to be passin' through, and decided to collect myself a little dough. That's all there is to it."

"But that's enough for me," said Jenkins exultantly. "On your way, Snipe. And you'd better get out of town before Duke finds out you've squealed."

Snipe accepted the advice like a scared rabbit. Jenkins watched him scuttle away, then returned to the distasteful task of facing Smythe. He rapped on the man's door.

"Come in!"

SMYTHE turned in his chair, still in a mean humor. "Well, what do you want?" he demanded as Jenkins walked into the room.

"I just had a little talk with Snipe," said Jenkins without preamble. "He spilled the works. He told me you were the son of Foggy Smith."

Duke Smythe sat frozen in his chair. The color drained from his face, leaving it a pasty white. For a moment Jenkins almost felt sorry for the man, as the carefully built fiction of his identity tumbled about his ears. It was amazing that any person could attach so much importance to a family background. The fear and hatred of a cornered animal glittered in Smythe's eyes. He ran the tip of his tongue across his dry lips.

"You dirty rat," he said hoarsely. "And now you'll queer me in this school."

Jenkins almost balked at the job ahead, but he forced himself to see it through. A man of the type of Duke Smythe could only be handled through the medium that he understood. At that moment Jenkins was quite willing to fight fire with fire.

"Now listen to me, Duke," he said steadily. "I don't care if you're the son of an Australian bushman. It seems to make a lot of difference to you, but it doesn't to me. I *do* care, though, when you start wrecking the life of as fine a man as Old Jake Travis. Beating those Mohawks will either make or break him. And we

can't beat 'em with you running the squad."

"And so?" Duke Smythe breathed.

"And so you're laying off the coach. You're going to play the game, and you're going to keep your dirty mouth shut. Keep that bargain, and the school will never know of Foggy Smith. Not through me, anyway."

Smythe gathered himself in his chair as though to spring. Jenkins moved in a step, hoping that he would. Jenkins must have read that in the other's face, for his muscles gradually relaxed. A look of crafty venom crept into his eyes.

"The coach will never win that game," he said between his teeth.

CHAPTER V

In the Mohawk Camp

KEN JENKINS felt weary and mentally unclean as he left Duke Smythe's room. His sense of victory was not clearly defined. Smythe's last words kept ringing in his ears. The man would carry out his threat if humanly possible, and he would do so in a manner to reflect no blame upon himself.

Jenkins found the coach still up, smoking his pipe in solitary misery. He looked up dully as the gridiron ace entered the room.

"You saw him?" asked the coach.

Jenkins nodded, and forced a grin he did not feel. "It's all fixed," he announced. "Our friend the Duke has seen the light. He won't talk. He'll keep his trap shut. And how!"

The coach sat up with a jerk which almost strangled him on a mouthful of smoke.

"Wha—what's that you say?" he spluttered.

"Duke Smythe is muzzled," Jenkins asserted positively. "He'll play against Mohawk, and he'll keep his big mouth shut. That's definite."

Old Jake digested the words slowly. His ruddy color began to return, the sagging lines of his face smoothed out, the dullness left his eyes.

"I—I can't believe it, Ken," he said. "It seems impossible. How in the world did you put it across?"

"I'm sorry I can't tell you that," said Jenkins. "I can only tell you that I stumbled on something hot through sheer, bullheaded luck. It was a break, pure and simple—but it worked."

The coach drew in a big mouthful of smoke, and expelled it gustily.

"Okay, son," he said. "I won't ask questions. I'll take your word for it. But—but I guess you know how much it means to me."

"It means a lot to me, too, Coach," Jenkins admitted.

And from all appearances it meant a lot to the Elkford student body. For the first time in history they were taking a place in the football limelight, and they liked it. "Beat Mohawk" was the password of the sizable cheering section that accompanied the team to the enemy stadium.

The squad was beautifully on edge, and every man was trained to the minute, perfectly conditioned by a trainer who was a master at his work. And the coach was his old dynamic self once more. He played upon the emotions of his men as a musician plays upon the chords of a fine instrument. The Elkford squad was packed with T.N.T. as it swung onto the field.

Ken Jenkins sensed the temper of his team, and found it good. They were nervous and slightly fidgety, of course, but that would wear off with the first few plays. None of the Stags had ever played before a massed crowd of this size. The great bowl with its colorful throng was an impressive sight.

The Mohawk Lancers came upon the field, sleek and powerful in their oiled silk pants and orange jerseys. They were cocky, too, and slightly contemptuous of this tiny school which conceded itself a chance to win.

At the summons of the referee, Jenkins went to the center of the field. He shook hands with Archie Driscoll, the Mohawk captain.

"Call it, Jenkins," the referee said, as he flipped a coin into the air.

Jenkins said, "Tails," and the coin came up heads. The air was still, so Driscoll passed up the choice of goals and elected to kick. Jenkins chose to defend the north goal. The two captains shook hands again and parted.

The breathless kickoff silence settled over the vast crowd as the teams took their positions. The referee's whistle shrilled. The Mohawk line moved forward. A toe thudded dully on the leather, and the ball soared in a tumbling arc down the center of the

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field. Jenkins scarcely had to move to take that kickoff. He took it on his five-yard line, and leaped into fast motion as his interference formed ahead of him.

He heard the impact of charging bodies as the orange wave closed in. A big form dived at him, but Jenkins swerved clear. He twisted through for five more yards before a pair of Lancers hit him like a ton of bricks.

But Jenkins' tough body could take a lot of that. He rose swiftly from the ground. The ball was on the twenty-four yard line. He moved toward the huddle, thinking hard as he went.

HE didn't want to put his men on the offensive yet. They were still too jumpy for accurate ball handling. A little defensive work would go far toward quieting their nerves. He called for a quick kick. Dolly Swartz was good at that. He didn't rattle easily.

The Stag line held and Swartz got off a good one. It caught the Mohawk crew flat-footed. It soared over the head of the safety man, and took a lucky bounce which sent it tumbling toward the Lancer goal.

Steve Agnew and Brick Glendon, the two ends, were down under it like a pair of antelopes. They reached the ball so close behind the safety man that he dared not pick it up. Agnew fell on it just to make sure.

The linesman marked the ball on the twenty-one yard line. His two assistants came scampering down with the chain, and the surprised Lancers went into an angry huddle. They'd been outguessed.

The huddle broke and they came up to the line fast. The ball was snapped. A spinner play smashed hard at left tackle, but it failed to crack the Stag line. "Jumbo" Katz at tackle, and "Stew" Beaver at guard refused to be opened up. They got the jump on the Lancers. They slashed in fast to smear the play.

Mohawk tried the other side of the line, but with no better results. The Stags were keyed up to a snarling, fighting pitch. There was evidence of

slight bewilderment in the Mohawk camp. They'd been hunting rabbits and had suddenly flushed a bear.

The Lancers kicked on the third down. It was a nice spiral, and Jenkins had it well covered. He caught it on his own thirty-yard line and brought it back ten yards before he was run out of bounds.

With the ball ten yards in from the right side of the field, Jenkins called for a sweep around the left end. The Stags were all absorbed in the game, by this time. Their world had narrowed down to the confines of the gridiron. They could be trusted with the ball.

Al Saber carried it, with the rest of the backfield ranging ahead as interference. The Mohawk end was too smart to be boxed in on the play. He drifted out as he should have done, but Jenkins whipped through and cut him down before he could do any damage.

The run went for five yards, due entirely to brilliant blocking, and not to any sluggishness on the part of the Lancers. They were big and they were fast. Five yards was a big gain through a team like that.

On the second down Jenkins sent Duke Smythe inside left tackle on a lightning cutback. Smythe found the hole and crashed into the Mohawk backfield like a thunderbolt. He ground off four yards before they downed him. He didn't dog it an inch of the way, and that set Jenkins to thinking.

Third and one. Jenkins was glad, then, that Old Jake hadn't tied him down to any definite rules for running the team. This early in the game, with the ball in their own territory, it might be wise to kick on the third down. But, wise or not, Jenkins decided to try for that extra yard. A first down at this time would be a great moral boost to the Stags. It was worth going after.

Jenkins called for a kick formation, and saw the Mohawk safety man fall back. Dolly Swartz stood back, his hands outstretched. But Jug Hogan, center, snapped the ball to Al Saber instead. Saber battered hard through the right side of the line and gained

the yard with some inches to spare.

But there was no triumphal march to the goal line. The Lancers were shaken loose now from some of their cockiness. They began to rate the Stags for what they were worth. They dug in and bared their fangs, and Ken Jenkins soon found out why Mohawk, thus far, had had an undefeated season.

He hammered at their line again, and found it solid as a wall of sandbags. He called for a short pass out into the flat, but a Lancer back flashed through to knock it down. Another end sweep went for a three-yard gain. Then the Stags were forced to punt.

The Lancers unleashed their power and the Stags, still fresh, held them fairly well in check. But the Stags were battling against the greatest team they'd met that year. They were fighting a polished aggregation of recruited talent. They were struggling against tremendous odds. Jenkins knew he couldn't have asked for a finer, gamier squad to lead. But how long, he wondered desperately, could they hold out against that constant brutal hammering?

AS the scoreless half continued, the Lancers began to pour in their reserves, men quite as good as the ones whom they replaced. But Elkford couldn't do that. Their reserves were pitifully weak. They had a splendid first-string team, but on it they had to center all their hopes.

And, over and above this worry was the constant threat of Duke Smythe. The man was still as dangerous as a cobra. He was playing great football, it is true, but that was understandable. At heart he was a grandstander. He loved the crowd's acclaim as he loved the lifeblood in his veins. The man was in his element on the gridiron.

Jenkins knew, however, that when the time arrived, Smythe would carry out his threat. The game itself meant nothing to him. All he wanted was personal glory. When the chance offered Smythe would do his stuff, slyly but effectively. And such a chance, sooner or later, was almost bound to occur.

The Elkford goal was threatened twice that half. And each time, as the Stags dug in on the defense, Jenkins watched Smythe like a hawk. At one time he saved a touchdown by making a tackle which Smythe should have had. But Jenkins kept his mouth shut. After all, he couldn't prove that the man had slipped on purpose.

Jenkins ran the team with the delicate touch of a fine driver in heavy traffic. With Smythe effectively subdued, his word was law. The Stags obeyed him without question, leaning heavily upon his uncanny judgment. The half ended with neither goal line crossed.

Old Jake and the trainer worked frantically over the weary Stags during the fifteen-minute rest period. Up to this point the Stags had been lucky as regards injuries. None was serious, only minor cuts and bruises to be treated.

The coach didn't say a great deal between halves. It was the things he left unsaid that kept the spirit of the squad at fighting pitch. He sent them back into the game with the flaming belief that they still could lick the Lancers. The Lancers, of course, chose to doubt this. Their attitude was grim and business-like.

"Enough of this fooling around," they seemed to say. "Now we'll get down to work."

That third quarter was a savage, brutal thing. Once more the powerful Lancer squad bore down with its crushing weight. They opened their bag of tricks against a battered and weary team. They pounded and struck with everything they had, but the steel in the souls of the Elkford men refused to snap.

Jenkins never knew how the valiant Stags withstood that constant onslaught. They moved to the line of scrimmage on shaking legs, but once there the spirit of the devil got into them.

The game seesawed back and forth in midfield, and while the play was there for the Stags, Duke Smythe remained a star. Jenkins didn't have to watch him then. It was only when a score was threatened that Smythe was

an unknown quantity.

Old Jake had to gamble as the third quarter drew toward its close. He had to yank those of his first stringers who were in the worst condition. He had to let them rest up a bit for the final quarter. He took out four men from the line, and Smythe and Dolly Swartz from the backfield.

The Lancers were quick to find the weakness of the substitutions. More Mohawk reserves flowed in, and they started their march toward the Elkford goal. They almost got there, too. They carried a power-sustained drive to the sixteen-yard line.

The Stags rallied desperately to hold them on the first down. The Lancers smashed through the line for five yards on the second. They fumbled on the third, but managed to recover with a six-yard loss.

The Stags did their best to break up the place kick, but the Mohawk forward wall was impregnable. The ball sailed between the uprights, and the score read Mohawk 3, Elkford 0.

The quarter ended shortly after that, and the Elkford first-string team once more went into action. The few minutes' rest had helped them, but not enough to cause concern to the Lancers. Considerable of the fire left the Mohawk offensive. They seemed content to protect their three-point lead, secure in the belief that the Stags had shot their bolt. Jenkins sensed this, and got the idea over to his team.

"They're easing up," he panted in the huddle. "That means they may get careless. Watch close for the breaks. That's what we've got to have, a break."

IT came in the course of another quick kick. This time the ball rolled all the way to the Mohawk six-yard line. And the Stags, fighting like a pack of fiends, held them there on downs.

The Lancers kicked, and Jenkins ran it back to the thirty-one yard line. The time was desperately short. The big clock mounted atop the stadium showed three minutes left to play.

"It's now or never," Jenkins told the tired Stags. "We're takin' to the air!"

The Lancers, seized with quick alarm, snapped back upon their toes. They smothered two short passes, but failed to intercept. Third down coming up, and Jenkins' mind was racing with dizzy speed.

There was one remaining play that stood an outside chance of clicking. The Elkford passes all day long had been short things across the line or out into the flat. Jenkins hadn't shot a single forward, and that's one of the things he hoped to gamble on. The play was touchdown strategy saved for an opportunity like this. Jenkins' throwing arm had been hitting on all cylinders. So that didn't worry him.

But the receiver? Ah, that's where his most desperate gamble centered. The man scheduled for that pass was Duke Smythe. It would be the break Smythe had waited for all afternoon.

But would it? The man was a grandstander. If he had a spectacular chance to win this game; if he could make a hero of himself before these massed thousands, would his ego outrace his hatred in that crucial moment?

Jenkins made his decision, and closed his mind to the awful possibility of guessing wrong. He called the touchdown play and snapped the squad into action before Smythe had a chance to think.

The Stags, keyed to their final effort, moved with swift precision. The ball snapped back on a direct pass to Al Saber. Saber charged convincingly for the left end, drawing the Mohawk team in that direction. As he flashed past Jenkins, the ball made its lightning exchange. Jenkins sprinted to the right, swerved from the path of a Lancer tackler, came to a jarring halt, and whipped the ball with all his strength toward the right-hand coffin corner.

He stood then, frozen into a pillar of sweating agony. His eyes watched the flight of the ball, tried at the same time to follow the swiftly moving men upon the ground.

The Lancers hadn't been entirely fooled. An orange jersey was sprinting wildly toward the spot where the ball must land. A second Lancer came

cutting in from another angle.

Where was Smythe? Ah! There he was, traveling with his long, ground-covering stride. Was he loafing? It seemed that way to Jenkins. True to form, Smythe would never reach it! A wave of nausea swept over Ken Jenkins.

He tried to close his eyes, but they remained pried open to see the dreaded outcome. Three men seemed to reach the spot at the same instant. All three soared into the air, but Duke Smythe outjumped them with a mighty bound!

The ball reached his fingertips! His hands were on it! He clutched it to his body, and the score was made! Never nimble-witted, he hadn't had

time to think!

They missed the after-touchdown point, but a fleet of tanks couldn't have scored against the Stags in those last remaining moments. The score remained 6-3. . . .

Yes, Duke Smythe was a hero, but he didn't act like one. His eyes were filled with baffled rage.

And Ken Jenkins alone could understand it. He'd outsmarted him, and Smythe was well aware of it. In a moment of grandstand frenzy Smythe had done Old Jake Travis and Ken Jenkins the greatest favor in his power. Being the hero of the season would never compensate Duke Smythe for that. He'd been soundly beaten, and he knew it!



IN THE NEXT ISSUE

TEAM GAME

An Exciting Complete Basketball Novelet

By SEABURN BROWN



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YOU CAN'T TELL ABOUT HOCKEY



Bruce hooked the puck away from Grogan

—Especially When an Old Time Manager Tries to Spark a Rag-Tag Team into a Championship!

By JACK KOFOED

Author of "Hoofbeats in the Dust," "Red Lightning," etc.

WHEN President Thompson, of the Cyclones, of the Middle Canada League, hired me to manage his hockey team I knew I had stepped into a ton and a half of trouble, F.O.B. the infernal regions.

Thompson was so sour he would curdle fresh milk just by looking at it, and so tight-fisted it was reported that he had once squeezed the buffalo clear off a United States nickel. You've seen the type. He was long and gaunt and

always wore a frock coat and an air of piety. He had a nose like an auger, eyes like holes burned in a blanket, and a mouth that would make a wolf trap look like something for the baby to play with. Besides, he had a team that couldn't finish better than last in the Saskatoon Amateur League.

His forward line was so full of holes it looked like a piece of Cluny lace. His defense men didn't know enough to put on their skates without help, and in-

stead of buying equipment for the goalie, Thompson should have bought him a mattress to fall on.

There were a couple of good men, I'll admit; but only a couple. One of them was "Duster" Bruce, who had been playing on the Cyclones for ten years.

When I suggested to the boss that he would have to buy a few players if we were going anywhere except in reverse he pretty nearly hit the ceiling. His money flowed like glue when it came to getting players; and his idea of the proper price for the greatest hockey star in the world ran about seven dollars.

We were in his office when we talked about those things. It was the sort of office you'd expect a fellow like Thompson to have—dull and gloomy, and with mottos like: "Honesty is the best policy," and "Optimism, without effort, is merely a state of mind, and not fruitful."

"You'll have to pry yourself loose from some of that mildewed money in your pockets," I told him. "The sporting writers here have you tabbed right. They say you pick up a lot of kids, and pay them with peanuts, or take in old men who'll work of twenty bucks a week to keep from going to a home for the indignant poor or pushing a W.P.A. shovel."

Thompson scowled at me. He was used to bullying people, who were afraid of him, and he didn't like that kind of talk.

"My club's all right," he said. "It's the dopes I've had managing it. They couldn't run a street car, let alone a hockey team. You better win with the men you've got or you'll be looking for a new job yourself."

WELL, I wasn't afraid of the old buzzard, because I had made him give me a two-year contract, even though it hurt him right down to the corns.

I had won a couple of championships in that league, and he needed one to protect his financial interest in the Cyclones. He did not care anything about a championship for itself—but he did care a lot about the additional profit one would bring.

"I'll do the best I can," I said, "but it's like asking a man to grab the Indianapolis race with a nineteen-twelve model-T. If you'd ever enlisted in the Army you'd have joined the Pawnbroker Highlanders—no advance without security. There's Duster Bruce. He's been the best center in the league for ten years, and you pay him a salary that would make a street peddler go on strike. Give him a raise, and he'll play the best game of his life for us. If the shock don't kill him."

"Raise? He'll get no more raise than a brick in a bucket of water. Nobody else will, either. Do you think I'm made of money?"

"All right," I said, "but save your tears if we finish last again."

I wasn't figuring on any last place stuff, because I wouldn't have taken the job and spoiled my reputation as a winner unless I had a few irons in the fire. But there was no use letting on to Sourpuss Thompson. A magician doesn't get any credit when he explains how his tricks are done.

Now, I am pinning no Distinguished Service Medals or Croix de Hockeys on myself, but I did make good with the Cyclones. I did have a little bit of luck. I picked up Savage for the nets, and he wasn't like the fellow we had before, practically shutting his eyes and screaming every time a puck was hit at him. Savage knew something about saves.

Then I dug Pierce Kelley out of retirement, and he did a grand job along with Jim Cates on the defense. As a matter of fact, I made a new team, and Thompson still hadn't taken the rubber band off his bankroll.

With the end of the season just around the corner we were in first place by a whisker, but we had one game with the Reds, and two with the Silver Skates—and we had to win at least one of them to grab off the championship. The Silver Skates were only a couple of percentage points back of us, and they were a rough riding gang, who always did their best in the clutch. I didn't look forward to meeting them with any degree of pleasure.

Professional hockey players are the most enthusiastic players in the

world. They get so wrapped up in the game that when things go wrong they fight with sticks and razor sharp blades, until the casualties look like a battle at Shanghai. But trouble came rumbling along, even before we faced the Silver Skates.

Toward the end of the season Duster Bruce cracked wide open. He had been playing from 'way back when Lester Patrick was a kid, I guess, but it wasn't old age that hit him between the eyes. He was as hot as the thermometer at Moose Jaw on December 17th, which is about thirty below zero; and I couldn't quite figure out why. But the lines in his face were growing deeper and the gray at his temples whiter, and he was about as fast on a pair of skates as the Toonerville trolley.

A good manager always has to be a combination of nurse, valet, slave driver, pal and detective. But most of all, he has to gain the confidence of the men who work for him. Duster had always liked me. I called him in one night, and asked what was the matter.

"It's dough," he said. "Nothing else. That's the cause of most of the trouble in this world, isn't it?"

I AGREED with him, but I said: "I know Thompson's not payin' you what you're worth, Duster, but a lot of people do live on the three thousand smackers the old man's givin' you. After all, it's better than a punch in the nose."

"Not to me it's not," sighed Duster. "I never went in for that wine, woman and song thing. It—it's Maureen."

"Oh, your daughter?"

I knew all about her. A darling if there ever was one, black hair, blue eyes, sweet disposition. I hadn't seen her since she was about twelve or thirteen, I guess, but nobody could forget her.

"Yes. She's eighteen now," Duster said, "and the prettiest thing you ever saw in your life. Two years ago she had a fall that affected her spine. I've spent pretty nearly everything I earned on doctors. Now I've found a specialist who is certain he can fix her

up—but he wants twenty-five hundred dollars for the job. I haven't got that kind of money, Pete, but I've got to find it someway. I can't pass up anything that would help my little girl. I've been thinking about it so much that—that. . . . Well, I just can't get my mind on the game. It worries me. My contract is up at the end of this season. What's going to happen to me—to us?"

That was a problem I couldn't answer. I regretted all the money I had tossed away on bangtails that ran the wrong way of the track. If I had been out of hock myself I would have loaned Duster the money, given it to him—anything—but all the dough I had you could have parked on a mosquito's nose. That's the way about money. You don't think about it until you haven't any. Then it's too late.

"Well, there's one thing sure, Duster," I said, "if you get in there and play the way you really can play the old man won't give you the gate. He might even come through with a raise. I'll try to needle him into it."

"That's swell of you," the veteran agreed, "but I can't stop thinking about Maureen. And that slows me down. Worry can do an awful lot to you."

Couldn't it, though! Duster Bruce proved it in the game with the Reds. He just couldn't untrack himself, and botched up our attack until it made tears come into the eyes of every rooter.

The Reds were pretty bad, too. They occupied the spot we had been in the previous season. Three times our forwards swept down the ice and fed the puck to the veteran right in front of the net—fed it to him with the goalie clear out of position. And three times he missed when a kid could have scored from his position.

It was kind of pitiful. The fans, who had cheered Duster Bruce through one season after another hooted him now. Maybe they don't mean to be deliberately unkind; maybe they think it's fun—but no one who hasn't felt himself coming down to the end of his career can know what

those jeers mean. How they cut to the quick.

I could see that feeling in Bruce's eyes. I felt like getting up and yelling at the crowd to shut up, and telling them just what was the matter with Duster. But a guy can't do that. He just has to sit on the bench and grit his teeth and hate everybody.

I DIDN'T believe for a minute that the old guy was all through. He wasn't. But his nerves were all shot. He was pressing so hard he could not do anything right. If his kid could get fixed up with that operation he would be all right. I was sure of it. But how could that be arranged? I had no idea at all.

Even the opposition players felt sorry for Bruce, but in a professional competitive game you can't allow your sympathy to get the better of you. No, you have to do everything you can to make him look bad, if it means winning for your side.

The Reds did exactly that—and the Silver Skates would be even tougher, because they were so bad, but it wasn't due to anything Bruce did. As a matter of fact, I took him out and sent Heenan in to replace him.

I had a hunch what was going to happen after that game. I felt it in my bones. Old Sourpuss was going to give me bad news in wholesale lots.

Thompson sent for me after the game. He sat back of his desk, smoking a cigar, with a face on him that would have sent little children into crying convulsion fits.

"You sure looked like champions tonight," he said. "Champions of the mumbelty-peg league."

"We won, didn't we?" I asked.

"Yes—and how! If your gang plays that way against the Silver Skates we'll lose about twenty-two to nothing."

"We won't. But you're so smart, tell me what you would do."

"I'll tell you. Release Bruce."

I howled like a timber wolf.

"That's swell! That's just wonderful. Here's a fellow who has given you everything he had all these years, and you want to kick him into the

street. What's your heart made of? Cement?"

"Soft-heartedness," said Thompson, "is something I can't afford to have. It costs too much money. Bruce goes."

I sat down on his desk, which I was pleased to see annoyed him, and stuck my forefinger under his nose.

"Who was it gave you the only class your lousy team ever had before I came here? Bruce! Who dug Bill Tomlinson out of a little town you never heard of and worked with him day and night until Tomlinson was the best shot in the league—yes, and the best hockey player you ever saw. Bruce! Was it Duster's fault that Joe inherited all the money in the world and retired?"

"I'm not paying for past performances," Thompson said. "Ever hear that song, 'It's not what you used to be—it's what you are today?' That's the theory I work on."

"So does a shark," I told him. "Suppose you let Duster go. Then what happens? Heenan never saw the day he could fill one of Bruce's shoes. He just can't carry the load. Suppose he could. What would we do if he got hurt?"

"We'll buy. . . ."

"Buy!" I echoed scornfully. "Do you think anybody will sell you a star for a package of canceled postage stamps? That's all you'd ever spend. Besides, you have probably forgotten that the league rules won't let us play anybody who isn't on our reserve list at this stage of the season."

THEN the old phony pulled in his horns to the extent of admitting that he had no idea what the next move ought to be.

"You're the manager," he said. "What'll we do?"

"Keep Bruce."

The old man fairly gibbered with rage. He banged his fist on the desk, and yelled. He looked so funny that I'd have laughed if the situation hadn't been so serious.

"I won't do it!" he shouted. "I've used him up and I'm not going to pay him any more."

When he became as noisy as that I knew he was licked.

"You'd send your old mother to the poorhouse if she couldn't pay her board," I told him. "All right. Fire Duster. I'll let the papers know you went over my head to do it. And if we lose the championship this town won't be big enough to hold you."

That stopped Thompson. I don't think he really cared what the papers said about him personally, but there might be a repercussion that would hurt him at the box-office, his most vulnerable point. But if Duster Bruce lost us the championship he would have a good excuse.

He agreed to keep Bruce, but I knew it was only a temporary reprieve. Unless Bruce came through with a sensational performance he would be let out at the end of the season. That would finish Bruce. He had never done anything in his life put play hockey. What would he do when his hockey playing days were over? I didn't know. Neither did anybody else.

I took a walk to cool off. It was a snow-blanching night of ringing pavements and eager lights. The yellow lights of trolley cars, sliding along the snow-packed streets. The pleasant lights from pleasant houses. Far off at the end of town the glare of a distant foundry.

Did other people, who had regular jobs that were not dependent on winning games, have the kind of problems that harrassed me? I supposed they had. But it burned me up to think of Duster Bruce being kicked off like an old shoe, and his little Maureen with her need of an operation.

Somebody bumped into me, and said: 'Hello, champ. You look like you're in a fog. What's worrying the old brain pan?'

It was Dick Wasdell, of the *News*, columnist and hockey expert and a swell guy. He had been around for years, and was one of Duster Bruce's best friends. I was sure of his sympathy, so I told him what had happened.

Wasdell let loose a long, astounded

whistle.

"You're not going to stand for that, are you? Why, it's the crime of the century. Release Bruce? Thompson can't do it!"

"He won't right now, but as soon as the games with the Silver Skates are over, he will. I know the old curmudgeon."

The newspaperman meditated. "We've got to do something—as much for Maureen as for Duster. Something that will make Thompson not only keep Bruce, but give him a raise and maybe a bonus."

"Dick," I said, "you're a good fellow. Your heart's in the right place, but that crack makes you a fit subject for the psychopathic ward. It would be easier to have the Swiss Navy sink England's Grand Fleet than do what you have in mind."

"Maybe not." Wasdell was thoughtful. "I've got an idea. It might work. It might not. But what can we lose by trying?"

WELL, I had to admit nobody ever lost anything that way; but there is such a thing as running your head against a stone wall. It wouldn't bother me to bother Thompson, if you know what I mean, but I couldn't see where Wasdell had any chance of success. Still . . .

"What is your idea?" I asked.

"I'll give you the details later. But the first thing will be to send Duster back into the lineup."

"That doesn't sound smart to me," I objected. "Bruce is so upset he won't be able to play well no matter what we do. And if he messes things up the way he did against the Reds—well, nobody in town will raise a squawk if Thompson does release him."

"He's got to be in there!" Dick Wasdell insisted.

What was I to do? If I used Heenan we couldn't go anywhere but down. If I used Bruce we'd probably be in the same fix, and besides he would wash himself out of a job. But, if I benched Bruce, Thompson would have as valid a reason for releasing him as though he had played badly.

"All right," I gave up. "I've got just

as much choice as the fellow who couldn't make up his mind whether he ought to cut his throat or blow out his brains. Bruce will be in there if you insist. But what happens after that I don't know."

"That's swell," said Wasdell. "Maybe we'll pull this out of the fire yet."

Yeah, I thought, and maybe if I walked up to J. P. Morgan and asked him for a million dollars he would give them to me.

I went down to the garage to get my car, and drive home. The streets were pretty slippery. The sky had clouded over, and it was snowing heavily. Maybe I didn't have my mind on my work. Anyway, the first thing I knew the old bus was skidding across the snow. There wasn't anything to do about it. A man is utterly helpless in a situation like that. I saw a telegraph pole looming up in front of me—and that was the last thing I remembered until I woke up in the hospital.

Dick Wasdell was sitting beside my bed, reading a newspaper. He grinned when he saw I was looking at him.

"You're a pretty lucky guy," he chuckled. "Anybody else would have been killed in a smashup like you had. There isn't a piece of your gas buggy left that is bigger than the palm of my hand."

I asked him weakly what day it was. Sometimes a fellow lays around for weeks in a coma after a crackup, and thinks he has been in bed for a day or so.

I wondered if I had missed the game my team was to play with the Silver Skates.

"It's Thursday," he said. "The Cyclones play tonight, and you won't be there to see it. Too bad, eh?"

The way I felt I knew the bed would hold me for a couple of days to come. And that big stiff said I was lucky! Flat on my back, with the games that would decide the whole season's work all ready to come off. Of course, Bigbee, my team captain, was a smart fellow, but there is nothing so satisfactory as doing things yourself when they need doing. I'd have to give him a special order about keeping Bruce in the game.

DICK WASDELL held up the newspaper in front of me. In black headlines across the first page the message stared out at me:

DUSTER BRUCE BREAKS NOSE; VETERAN HOCKEY FORWARD FALLS ON ICY PAVEMENT

Things happen all at once, don't they? Particularly if they are bad.

"Looks like your plan is all washed up now," I said to Wasdell weakly.

"No," he answered. "We'll play 'em the way they lay. You just make sure that Bigbee doesn't bench the Duster. That's all. We'll squeeze out of this."

"Yeah, like pouring kerosene on a fire. But, all right. There's nothing else for me to do."

The first game was scheduled for that night. All we had to do was win one of them; but taking even one from the Silver Skates under current conditions looked like something in the shape of a miracle. They were riding the crest, and the betting odds were 8-5 against us.

My head ached like the devil, but I had the nurse turn on the radio. It was the best medicine I could have had. You can have Jack Benny and Benny Goodman and Tito Guizar for radio entertainment. I'll take the description of that game.

Bruce was a rocket on the ice. He never played better in all his born days. They say a mule deer can do forty-seven miles an hour, but the Duster would have made one of those animals look as though it were standing still. He scored three goals. He did everything a human being could do.

The announcer raved. He had been watching hockey for years, but he had never seen anything like that. The only sad part of it was that the rest of the team didn't do so well, and we lost 4-3. But it tipped everybody off to the fact that the Cyclones were push-overs for nobody, including the Silver Skates. We were still in the running.

An hour after the game was over Thompson came busting into my room, in spite of the loud protests of the nurse. He was boiling up and running over.

"I'd like to shoot that Bruce!" he

yelped. "Of all the doublecrossing, mercenary men I ever came across in all my life—"

I sat right up in bed.

"I always thought you were nuts," I said, "and this proves it. The radio said Duster played the greatest hockey any man ever did. And you want to shoot him. What's the matter with you?"

"I'll tell you what's the matter! After the game he sent that nosey newspaper guy Wasdell to me with an ultimatum. An ultimatum—to me!"

"What was it?"

"Bruce's kid is sick or something. He said that unless I gave him a bonus of twenty-five hundred dollars to pay for her operation, and signed him for three years at ten thousand a year he was going home tonight, leave the club flat; not play in the last game. See what that would do to me? Why, the ungrateful—"

"You ought to talk about gratitude," I said, and sniffed. "All you're thinking about is the fact that you'd have to refund plenty of dough on that last game if he didn't play. What did you do?"

"What could I do?" Thompson mourned. "I had to give it to him."

WELL, I just fell back on the bed, and in spite of my aches and bruises, I nearly laughed myself to death. It was all Wasdell's doings, but what he had really done I hadn't the faintest idea.

That made Thompson so mad that he walked out on me. It was a pleasure to see his back instead of his complaining face; but it didn't help me to straighten the tangle in my mind.

I lay there and tried to figure out what had happened, but it was over my head. What had Dick Wasdell done that made Duster Bruce such a humdinger on the ice? There was something funny in the background, but I couldn't put my finger on it. Well, if he kept it up and won the championship for us I'd be the happiest guy on earth.

They wouldn't let me go to the second game, either, so I decided to pull a Knute Rockne, and give the boys a

pep talk. I didn't include Bruce, and he wasn't at my bedside when the rest of the team gathered around me.

None of what "die for dear old Rutgers" stuff. I told them what winning meant to Bruce and to me. I pulled out all the tremolo stops on the organ, and really went to town. A couple of them were shedding salty tears before I left off. It wasn't a bad oratorical job at all—and I felt pretty sure they'd be in there swinging from the shoe tops to beat the Silver Skates that night.

You can imagine how I felt at eight-thirty the next night, propped up in bed in my pajamas, with the radio on the table next to me. My heart was in my throat. Now, don't think I'm any more selfish than the next guy, but winning that game meant a lot to me. Duster Bruce was all right, but maybe I wouldn't be if I lost.

My contract called for a fat bonus if we grabbed off the championship. The only reason Thompson put that in was because he figured, when he signed the contract, that nobody could make a winner out of the collection of stumblebums he had on his team. But I had given him a winner, and deserved the bonus. And now just one game would decide whether or not I got it—and baby, did I need that cash!"

Well, from the start Bruce took up where he had left off in the first game. Within a minute he hooked the puck away from Grogan, of the Silver Skates, and went flashing down the ice cutting in and out—and then shot it into the cords from an almost impossible angle.

That was the beginning of a hilarious evening for us. The other boys were apparently inspired by the veteran, and maybe by the tear-jerking speech I had given them. They rode roughshod over the favorites, scoring at will.

When the Silver Skates became rough they roughed them right back, and their body-checking was enough to make an ambulance practically a necessity. The visitors started a fight, and my lads waded into them with hockey sticks. Grogan was the first to get it, and he didn't play any more that night.

The police finally broke it up, but no-

body was sent to the penalty box, because everybody, regulars and spares, had been involved. So the referee could do nothing but pass the thing by as though it had been just a pleasant little interlude, and let the game go on. Oh, it was a beautiful evening, and when, with two minutes left to play the Cyclones led 9-1, I shut off the radio, and lay back to relax and contemplate what a beautiful place this world was after all.

A LITTLE later Dick Wasdell came in. He was grinning like a Cheshire cat.

"Come on—spill it," I said. "I've been in the dark long enough."

"Sure you have," he agreed, "but before I take off the wraps here's a telegram for you."

I opened it. The message was dated from Matomeh, Ontario; and Matomeh was Duster Bruce's home town! Wouldn't it be the darndest bit of luck, if after what had happened, Maureen had died? I was almost afraid to read it. When I did I couldn't understand it, anyway. It said:

SURGEON SAYS MAUREEN WILL BE PERFECTLY NORMAL AGAIN. IT WAS MARVELOUS THAT YOU GOT THAT BONUS AND RAISE FOR ME WHEN I WAS PLAYING SO BADLY. HOWEVER, WITH THIS OFF MY MIND I'LL BE RIGHT BACK IN FORM FOR YOU NEXT SEASON. WE HAVEN'T A RADIO HERE AND I DON'T KNOW HOW THE GAMES WITH THE SILVER SKATES TURNED OUT, BUT I HOPE WE WON.

DUSTER.

I laid the telegram on the bed cover, and looked up at Wasdell.

"Maybe that auto accident made me balmy. According to what I heard tonight we beat the Silver Skates, nine to one, and Duster Bruce was the star of the battle."

"Dead right."

"Now I get a wire from Duster, and he's at Matomeh—and doesn't even know whether he won or not."

"Right again."

"All right," I said. "Call for the strait-jacket. Let them take me off

to the booby hatch, where I belong. You can't make two and two add up to nine."

"You can in this case. That wasn't Duster Bruce on your forward line tonight. It was Bill Tomlinson!"

My jaw dropped like an elevator in Radio City.

"Tomlinson!"

Wasdell patted my hand.

"Take it easy, fellow. We had to take desperate measures. It's all right, too, because Tomlinson is on the Cyclones' reserve list, and was eligible to play. He would do anything for Duster, and when I told him the spot we were in, he agreed to play. He is built just like Bruce, and having been taught by him, has all the little mannerisms that characterized the old timer.

"If nobody could see his face, I got an idea, nobody could tell him from Duster. That's why I invented the broken nose. It gave Bill a chance to cover his face with so many bandages that J. Edgar Hoover himself couldn't have told who he was. He didn't talk to the other members of the team, because he was supposed to have had his teeth knocked out. So the only people who know that Tomlinson instead of Bruce was in there are you and me, and the two men themselves.

"Of course, Duster is too conscientious ever to have agreed to anything like this—but I'll tell him that you'll lose your job if it is ever found out, and he'll keep his mouth shut. It wasn't hard to make Duster believe he ought to go home—and that you had given him permission."

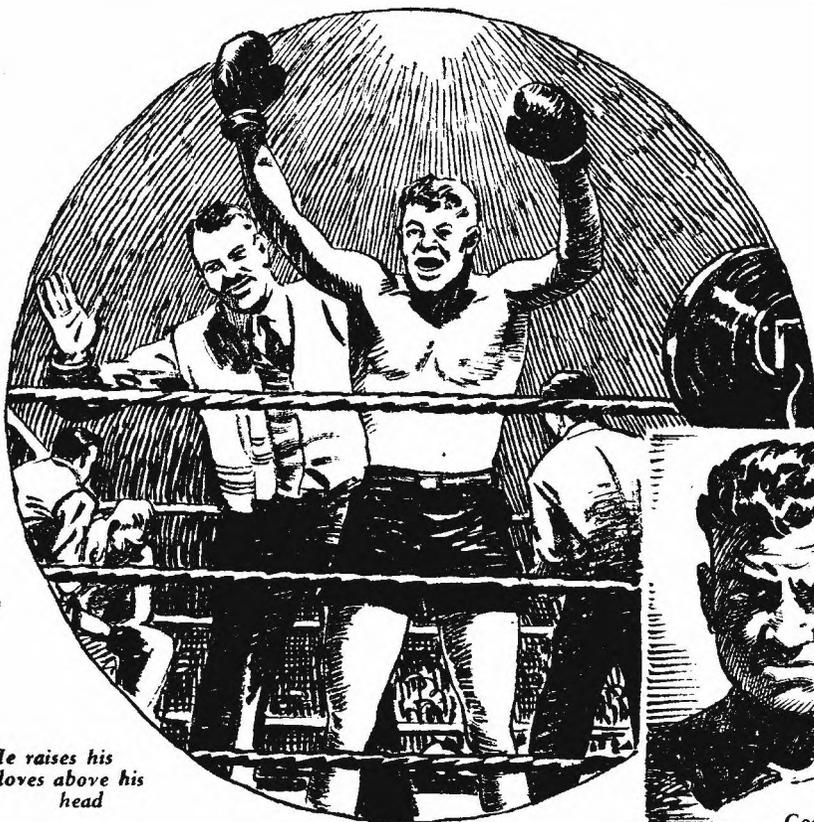
I did have strength enough left to light a cigarette.

"It certainly turned out all right," I said, "but there's still one thing I don't get. You like Bruce well enough, but I didn't think enough to go to all the trouble of framing this thing up. Give."

Dick Wasdell turned a deep pink.

"Well," he said, "I might as well be honest. Maureen promised to marry me if her operation was a success. And naturally a man would be glad to do a favor for his father-in-law, wouldn't he?"

OFF THE RECORD



He raises his gloves above his head



Connolly

It's Tough for a Comeback Slugger to Cash in, But When Connolly Kissed the Canvas He Rang the Register!

By BRUCE DOUGLAS

Author of "Two-Timing Trouble," "Lion Heart," etc.

YES, boys, I seen your Red Streak sports edition tonight. And I seen that article about how the Boxing Commission has barred Slugger Connolly and his manager Cat-eye Feeney for life. And now you're interviewin' other box-fight managers for expressions of opinion? I been expectin' you. Get this:

I raise no question as to the wisdom of the Boxing Commission taking whatever action they deem necessary to maintain pure and undefied—no, wait a

minute; that word is filed—undefied the high standard of honesty and sportsmanship for which the fistic arena is justly famous and of which it is justly proud. On the other hand, I am ass—ass-tounded to learn that Cat-eye Feeney has been guilty of conduct other than that becoming a gentleman of the first water.

What the hell does Ed Nash mean by a gent of the first water? If he don't quit hittin' the bottle an' write so that I can read the words, I'll be lookin' for

another press contact man.

Anyhow, that's for the record, boys. Off the record, it's a different matter. Off the record, the whole thing is one whale of a belly laugh!

Cat-eye Feeney and Canvasback Connolly, eh? Cash-box Connolly, they used to call 'im, the calculatin' cabbage-ear, the cautious cash-collectin' canvasback, the cleverest kayo-receivin' cauliflower that ever cast a cackleberry in the center of a canvas circle. Him an' Cat-eye Feeney—there's a pair! Choosin' between those two birds would be like nailin' a couple o' polecats into a crate an' tryin' to decide which was puttin' up th' biggest smell.

But the wow about this business is that the Boxing Commission is wrong, as usual. Cat-eye Feeney has been gettin' away with murder for years, right under the noses of the Commish, an' they do nothin' about it. Then when Cat-eye is innocent as the new-born lamb, pure as driven snow, lily-white as that gal from Astolot, N. J., the Commish turns around an' bars him for life!

What I mean, Cat-eye has been playin' Brigham Young around the squared circle for lo, these many years. But this time he got it done to him, an' done proper. An' to top it off, the Commish bars him! Ain't it a wow, boys? Moreover, I'm laughin' up my sleeve at the finger I had in that pie.

What's that? Well—strictly off the record, understand? Okey-doke; here goes:

ME an' Cat-eye has been unfriends ever since ten years ago in the Spokane Sports Club when he hit me in the groin an' I come back to give him a rabbit-punch for the ten count. The referee didn't see either one of them friendly gestures, of course. Who ever heard of a referee seein' anything except his pay check after the fight? Anyhow, the both of us quit collectin' cauliflowers soon after that brawl an' started out as trainer-managers.

And we've been cuttin' each other's throat ever since. It's a sort of private feud, if you get what I mean. I'd rather have a boy out of my stable lick one of Cat-eye's mugs in a prelim or semi-

final for a twenty-five dollar purse than win twenty-five grand in an important brawl if Cat-eye wasn't on the losing end. And with Cat-eye it's mutual.

And if we can slip something slick over on the other guy, it's gravy, see? Like when Cat-eye slips a boy into my stable that is all eaten up with superstitions, and would of cleaned me proper if I hadn't trumped his ace.

But Cat-eye wasn't responsible for me gettin' tied up with this Canvasback Connolly blister. It was my tender heart an' trustin' disposition that did that. No foolin', I'm one of them guys that believes that stuff about there's some good in the worst of us, a man may be out but he's never down, and appearances sometimes gang up on a guy.

Try me with a story about how you've repented an' are tryin' to reform, an' I'm a fall guy every time. So when Connolly buttonholes me on the way to the Spokane Sports Club one night with a story about how he's turned over a new leaf, I'm ripe for pluckin'.

Not that I give him the glad eye from the start. Nothin' like that. When I see his finger in my coat lapel and follow along the arm to find out who it is, I let out a beller.

"Canvasback Connolly!" I shouts, jerkin' away from him. "The kid kayo casher-inner! Where you been pearl-divin' these last two years? An' will you turn loose of my coat before I get arrested for consortin' with suspicious characters?"

"It's Slugger Connolly," he opines, with a kind of whine in his tone. "Listen! Don't hit a man when he's down, it ain't sportin'. I've been away buildin' up a new name. Livin' down th' past, see? All I need is a break—"

"A break, yeah!" I sneer. "You'd break any manager that touches you with a ten-foot pole, an' get him disbarred to boot! Try your song an' dance on somebody else. Me, I'm already dry behind the ears."

"But listen!" he pleads. "How can a man turn over a new leaf an' try to live down the past if nobody gives him a break?"

I'm about to turn loose with another snappy comeback when I notice that

the cuff of his coat is plenty frayed. And that weasel face of his is sorta pinched and scrawny like he wasn't used to three squares a day any more.

"You mean," I inquires, sorta subdued, "that you ain't spent these last two years pearl-divin' in prearranged pushovers?"

"Not any!" he says, virtuouslike. "I've been fightin'—wherever I could get a match, which ain't frequent. What I'm tellin' you, I've reformed. Now I'm back to try to wipe out the stains on my good name in the place where it got soiled!" He looks at me like an early Christian martyr pleadin' with a lion an' hopin' for a miracle but not expectin' one. "Besides," he adds, "there ain't no percentage in pearl-divin'. The fans get onto you too quick, an' you can't keep it up."

I SHOULD of knowed from that last crack, of course. But I didn't. He's still the same old Cash-box Connolly who'd sock his own grandmother on the point if the price was right. But I'm lookin' at that frayed cuff and that pleadin' expression and thinkin' how hard the world is on a guy that's made a slip-up.

"Listen, guy," I growl, "I ain't no Santa Claus. Besides, I've got palookas in three brawls on the card tonight, an' I've got to be goin' on in."

We're in front of the Spokane Sports Club by this time; an' I'm about to drop this bird an' head for the dressing rooms. But just then the door opens an' Marty Dugan comes out. Marty is runnin' the sports club. It's after Louie Merkel has went to 'Frisco and before Marty moved on to New York. Marty collars me with both hands.

"Listen!" he yelps. "I've got to have a middie for the third frame. Hardpan Hicks is down with the flu."

"Well, why tell me about it?" I come back. "You know that the only middie in my stable is in the fifth bout tonight. You don't want 'im to fight twicet in one night, do yuh?"

"You got to help me out!" Marty insists. "Ain't I done plenty for you? Get somebody! Get anybody! If I don't have a boy to throw into the third against Slaughterhouse Jones, he'll be

claimin' a forfeit an'—"

"Wait a minute," I cuts in. "Slaughterhouse Jones—ain't that this Janazersicz middie that Cat-eye Feeney picked up when that carnival stranded in Lewiston, Idaho?"

"Yeah," Marty says.

"Then it'll be Cat-eye who's claimin' that forfeit!"

"Sure it will."

Just then I feel a tugging at my sleeve. I look around an' find Canvas-back Connolly still there.

"Let me have this bout!" he begs. "It's my chance! You can pick up a manager's cut an' be doin' Mr. Dugan a favor at the same time!"

Well, I'm already hatin' to see Cat-eye pick up a piece of unearned change. And I do owe Marty a bunch of favors. But I ain't at all sure that bringin' Connolly under his roof will be doin' Marty a favor. Still, I'm about half convinced. I turn to Marty.

"How about him?" I ask. "He's been hittin' me to get him a match. Shall we let him go on against Janazersicz?"

Marty backs up a couple paces when he recognizes Connolly and is about to protest. But I cut in.

"He ain't had time to fix a flop," I suggest.

Connolly commences to whimper. "I tell you I'm on the level! I'll fight this bozo square, an' lick 'im!"

Marty gives me the nod.

"Okay," I says to Connolly. "You get your chance. But get this, feller: You got to win, see? I'll string along with you as long as you show me square, hard fightin'. But the minute you try any fancy tricks, you're through. Get me?"

The sheer joy with which Connolly prances into the dressing rooms an' starts strippin' down for that fight goes a long way to lull whatever suspicions I've got of him. He's just bubblin' over with gratitude.

"I'll win this bout!" he exults. "Give me trainin' space an' trainin' grub, an' I'll win every bout you line up for me. I'm out to clean my rep. I mean it!"

"You think you can win?" I asks, lookin' him over sort of anxious. "You in trainin'?"

"Trained to a gnat's eyelash!" he

yelps. "Don't you worry about this Slaughterhouse Jones. I'll lay him like a strip o' carpet!"

"Be sure you don't lay no egg instead," I growl, an' go out to have a look at the crowd.

THE squawk that Cat-eye Feeney puts up when he finds out that I'm the one who's been picked to supply a substitute to fight his Slaughterhouse Jones—and who it is that I've picked—goes a long ways toward bringin' about the dee-bacle that he's now in. He files an official squawk, see? He thinks he's got a chance to take a whack at me because I've got Connolly in my stable; so he lays it on thick about Connolly's ill-smellin' repute.

So when the Commish starts investigatin' this recent mess, Cat-eye is officially on record as statin' that the boy is crooked long before he ties up with him, see? What's that? Did I have a hand in bringin' them old records of Cat-eye's squawk to the attention of the Boxing Commission? You don't expect me to answer t h a t one, do you, boys? Ain't I got Constitutional rights like anybody else?

Anyhow, Cat-eye's protest is overruled, an' Connolly goes on in the third frame with Slaughterhouse Jones. Connolly looks good. He looks plenty good. He's got the legs of a runner and the chest and arms of a fighter, and there ain't a spare ounce of fat on him. But hell, what difference does looks make? Connolly always did have the build an' the science; but look at the dives he took to build that bum rep of his.

To be a real fighter, a man's got to have the love of fightin' in him. He can't have his eye on the odds, the purse, an' the gate, an' still be a fighter. So the only thing I'm countin' on is that this time it's to Connolly's advantage to win. He knows he ain't got a chance to go into my stable unless he does show me a win. And he ain't had no opportunity to get paid to lose.

At least that's what I think. Though I've got a sorta doubt, even at that, an' am wonderin' whether maybe this ain't a job that Cat-eye has cooked up on me. If Connolly should take a runout powder after that big squawk Cat-eye

put up, it won't look so good for me. So I'm watchin' Connolly like a hawk when the gong rings for the first round an' he steps out to meet Slaughterhouse Jones.

This Jones is nobody's pushover. He's a chunky, square-built Slovakian, built like a brick smoke-house. He's got a string of wins behind him, mostly by the kayo route; and in a few more bouts he'll be out of the prelim class an' ready to go out on the road for a build-up.

I happen to know that Cat-eye has been handlin' him careful, considerin' him one of the best bets in his stable. Hardpan 'Hicks has been one of his build-up set-ups; that's why Cat-eye squawks so about the last minute change. But if Cat-eye's squawk is a fake, then there may be something putrid somewhere in Denmark. So I'm watchin' careful.

But I don't need to have worried. Jones is tough; but Connolly takes him right in his stride. In the first canto, Connolly lands three good stingarees. A left to the chin before the starting gong has got through wastin' its sweetness on the desert air. A hard right to the bread basket in the middle of the round. And a right cross to the jaw just as the finish gong goes. It's Connolly's round on points by a mile. Slaughterhouse Jones scarcely touches him, Connolly doin' circles around him like a willow the wisp.

IN the second, Connolly opens up a gash over Jones' right eye, draws claret from his nose, and floors him twice for an eight count. And in the third, he knocks him out. A left jab to the puss that opens him up. A plexus right that doubles him up. And a left hook to the button that undoubles him an' lays him flat in the canary cage.

Just like that. As clean a kayo as you ever seen in the ring. And Connolly without scarcely a scratch on him.

The fans go wild. Ever notice how quick the fans can do a right-about? They've been hootin' an' catcallin' ever since they recognize my boy. He's been announced as Slugger Connolly; but they bring up them old names and

all through the bout are yellin' "Can-vasback" an' "Cash-box" an' makin' sarcastic bets about what round he'll do his flop act in. But the more the fans are down on a fighter, seems like the greater is their swing his way when he does something they like. They're howlin' their heads off.

I climb into the ring and am at his side as soon as the referee has got through raisin' his right glove.

"Listen to that!" I yelp, drapin' an arm over his shoulder an' wavin' out toward th' crowd. It's the first music of that sort that Connolly has ever laid ear to. He'd ought to be gettin' a plenty big thrill out of it. "Listen. They're yellin' for yuh."

He turns to me with a question in them close-set little eyes of his.

"Do I get a contract with yuh?" he demands.

I clap him on the back.

"Sure! Long as you put out stuff like that, I'll string with you. But just listen to that crowd! Ain't that sweet music?"

He puts on a smirk an' raises his gloves above his head, shakin' hands with himself. The crowd doubles its bellerin'. An' all the time Connolly is talkin' to me.

"Sweet music? Hell, yells don't butter no parsnips. The dirty so-and-sos; they'd be yellin' twicet as hard if I'd got knocked out."

An' with that he wraps his robe around him an' crawls through the ropes.

Cold-blooded? Once again I ought to of knowed. Talkin' about butterin' parsnips when the crowd is splittin' the welkin for 'im. But again I miss the danger signal.

And the first thing Connolly asks me when he comes out of the showers and gets on the rubbing table is how much the bout paid tonight and what was his split.

WELL, like the sentimental fool I am, I go the whole hog. I swallow this Connolly's bait, hook, line, and sinker. I don't even stop there. After I'm hooked, I follow along the line, jump into the boat, an' ask to be put in the fryin' pan. And boyoboy, did I

almost get into that fryin' pan, or did I!

What I mean, I fall hard for Connolly's line about him bein' a reformed character, wantin' only to go straight an' build up a nice clean name for himself. So, after tyin' him up with a contract, I center my attention on buildin' up that name for him. After three more bouts in Spokane—which he wins all three with kayos—I turn the management of my stable over to Deadpan Ragan and start out with Connolly on a build-up tour.

We do the whole West Coast. Two bouts in Seattle. One in Portland. A stop-off for a Fourth of July pushover of a local yokel for a sweet purse at Yreka, California. Then on to the South Slot Arena in San Francisco, where he takes four in a row. After that, Hollywood, San Diego, and back for a big wind-up bout in 'Frisco.

Not that he wins all of them bouts with kayos, of course. But out of eleven bouts on the road, he wins ten, seven on kayos. And that decision he lost in Hollywood, you'd of thought it was a popularity contest instead of a fight, with the referee readin' the score on the applause machine.

The only fly in the ointment is that Connolly keeps his mind always on the sheckels. After every bout he's figurin' out his cut before he even gets his clothes on. And before every bout he's beggin' me to turn loose of some of his dough so that he can bet it.

I've got him sewed up on that count, though. I've signed him into a contract where he don't get nothing but a pin-money allowance for twenty bouts, the loot to be handed him in a lump sum after the twentieth. I don't like to see my fighters laying their dough on themselves. It makes 'em too nervous, too keyed up. Besides, when I wrote up that contract, I wasn't any too sure which side Connolly would be layin' his dough if I give it to him, and I wasn't takin' no chances.

But he's always beggin' for it. And when he don't get it, he's always addin' it up an' announcin' to the penny just exactly how much he's got comin' from the pot. By the time we push over the Snoqualamie Slugger in the return engagement in 'Frisco, it amounts to a

lumpy sum. After the expenses are counted out and the winnings split even, he's got close to ten grand left.

And a few months before, he was a penniless bum. You'd think he'd be grateful to me. But he ain't. He's always griping about how much bigger his pile would be if I'd let him bet his dough on those matches.

And then comes that telegram from Cat-eye Feeney. It's waiting for us at the hotel when we get back from the Arena. I tear it open, read it, and wave it under Connolly's nose.

"Lookut!" I yelp. "Cat-eye Feeney wants a return engagement for his Slaughterhouse Jones. Jones has been out buildin' a rep at the same time you've been gettin' yours. Marty Dugan will give us a Saturday night headline spot with a split on the gate."

"Take it!" Connolly snaps.

IM plenty surprised. Generally that lad wants to know the whole story down to the last nickel before he agrees to anything. And here he is jumpin' at this bout without even gettin' the figures.

"A purse of two thousand to the winner," I go on, "and the fighters' end of the gate split sixty-forty, winner take sixty."

"Take it!" Connolly comes again. He grabs his hat. "Come on. We'll walk over to the telegraph office an' shoot 'em a wire."

On the way over, I'm doing a lot of thinking. The way Connolly jumps at a chance to go back and strut his stuff in Spokane looks good to me. After all, he's worked hard to cancel out those earlier mistakes of his. And it's natural that he'd want to have a sort of triumph right on his home grounds. By the time we reach the telegraph office, I'm sorta mushy about it.

"Feller," I says, slappin' him on the back, "I've been ridin' you with a pretty tight rein. I can understand how maybe on this homecoming bout you'd like to have a little of your dough ridin' on your shoulder. Cat-eye offers to cover anything we want to put up at even money. So if you'd like, I'll loosen up an' lay two grand—a grand apiece—"

Connolly has his hand out so quick it takes my breath.

"Gimme it!" he grates. "I'll lay it myownself. I might be able to get better than even odds."

Well, I'm gaspin'; but havin' made the offer, I can't back out.

"Hell," I growl, "you don't think I got it in my clothes, do yuh? If you want to lay your own dough, I'll write you a check when we get back to the hotel."

I write out the telegram to Cat-eye, and another one to Marty Dugan, and send 'em. Then Connolly pulls another surprise on me.

"You go on back to the hotel," he orders. "I'll join you there in a little. I've got a couple things to buy in a drug store."

I look at him pretty sharp. "No liquor—" I says.

"Razor blades!" he snaps back, an' I go out.

But I'm sorta suspicious. So I hang around the entrance of the hotel. In about five minutes, Connolly comes out of the telegraph office and heads right back to the hotel without stopping at no drug store.

He's been sending some sort of telegram he don't want me to know about.

DEADPAN Ragan meets us at the station when we roll into Spokane. He's worried. You can't tell it by his looks, of course. He could of won a million on the Irish Sweeps or be mournin' the loss of a dear relative and you couldn't see the flicker of a difference on that motionless mush of his. But I've been workin' with Deadpan for a lengthy string of moons, and I can tell.

"How's tricks?" I ask, after disengagin' my fingers from his bear trap an' makin' sure none of 'em is broke.

"Fine!" he answers, and begins reelin' off the history of all the bouts my lads have been in since I left. Since he's wrote all this info to me from time to time, and besides it's been in the papers, I begin to wonder why he's goin' over it all again. Then I notice that he's got them expressionless orbs of his fixed on Connolly all the time he's barkin' this spiel. I get it.

"Connolly," I says, "you oughta stretch th' kinks outa your legs after all this train ridin'. Suppose you take a slow jog-trot to the Sports Club, an' Deadpan an' me will follow later in a taxi."

Connolly leaps at the chance. When he's gone, I turn back to Deadpan.

"Well?"

"Boss," says Deadpan, "I'm worried. There's things goin' on that I can't understand."

"That ain't surprisin'," I come back. "You never was no T. A. Edison."

"Edison?" Deadpan puckers his brow. "You mean Gallopin' Tim Edison, a bantam that fought Flicker Finley for the title back in—"

"Skip it!" I bark. "What's worryin' you?"

"Well," Deadpan says, "when word was gave out that the go between Jones an' Connolly was arranged, bettin' started with odds of two to one on Connolly."

I let out a sharp cry of pain.

"So that's why Cat-eye wanted to bet even money!"

Deadpan bats his eyes. I explain.

"Still an' all," I say, "them odds is about right. Ain't Connolly won ten out of eleven starts since he left Spokane?"

"Yeah," Deadpan nods. "But why did them odds shift over in less'n a week until they was two to one on Jones?"

"Two to one on Jones!" I yelp. "An' Connolly kayoed him in their last brawl! That ain't possible!"

"It's true, just th' same," Deadpan insists.

I ponder a minute.

"How much bettin'?" I demand.

"Lots of it. There's Jones money all over the streets, beggin' to be took up at two to one."

"Then it must be educated jack!" I exclaim.

Deadpan nods.

"That's what I been thinkin'."

We grab a taxi. Instead of goin' straight to the Spokane Sports Club to see Marty Dugan and get the fight papers signed, we drive out to the edge of town where I've got trainin' quarters for the boys in my fight stable. I set

Deadpan down in a corner of the office while I go through the pile of mail that's accumulated.

IN that mail there's a letter from a member of the Boxing Commission. It's a personal letter, understand, not an official notice from the Commish. In it this member says he's been noticin' the heavy bettin' that's been goin' on. He says that on their performance the odds oughtn't to be no worse than even money, if that, and the two to one dough on Jones has made him curious. The letter don't actually mention disbarment; but it finishes with a hint that if Connolly don't live up to his recent good record, there's liable to be a lot of interest took by the Commission in them screwy odds.

A warnin', see? I'm on the spot. And to cap it off, in comes Skeeter McGee with news that changes suspicion into certainty. I done Skeeter a big favor some years ago, an' he's grateful. So when he begun to smell skunk in this set-up, he follows his nose. His report don't leave nothin' to doubt.

Canvasback Connolly has went back to his old tricks. He's made contact with the old crooked bettin' ring that handled him when he was pearl-divin' here in Spokane. And the amount of money they're puttin' out on Jones, at any odds they can get, proves that they know they ain't really riskin' that dough by bettin' it.

To cap the climax, Skeeter reports that he just seen Connolly in a hash-house conference with Ed Walsh, who heads that crooked bettin' ring.

Deadpan Ragan jumps to his feet an' heads for the door.

"Wait!" I yelp. "Where yuh goin'?"

He whirls about, scowlin'.

"Goin' to fix that doublecrossin' son of a bee so's he won't be able to step into a ring for six months!"

"No!" I beller. "You can't do that! If we pull out now, don't it prove to the Commish that we was plannin' a dirty dive but got scared out by this letter? No, we're stuck. That bout has to come off as scheduled."

"Then how—?"

"I dunno how," I growl, "but the bout has to be fought. Gimme time, an'

I'll try to think of something. Mean-time, Connolly ain't to be allowed to find out that we suspect a thing. Get it?"

DURING the days leadin' up to that fight, I think so hard I make some fresh grooves in my brain so deep you could drive a truck through 'em. But I get exactly nowhere.

I'm stuck. Just plain stuck. If I don't deliver Connolly in the ring Saturday night ready to fight, then the Commish will bar me on suspicion of havin' planned a frameup an' bein' scared out by that letter. An' if I can't think up some way to stop Connolly from doin' his dive, then I'll get barred for pullin' the frameup. And I can't think of a thing.

For a while I'm almost desperate enough to get a gun an' threaten to shoot Connolly if he don't win. But I know I can't make that bluff stick. So when the gong goes for the first round that night, I'm still plumb helpless. I watch Connolly go out to meet Slaughterhouse Jones, knowin' what is goin' to happen, but unable to stave it off.

Connolly takes the first round on points. This Jones has improved a whale of a lot since the two boys last met. But so has Connolly. I can just see him decidin' that he'd better go slow an' make it look right. Connolly don't need no attention at the end of the first; so I just give him a word of encouragement and step out of the ring.

In the second stanza, the two boys trade a lot of pretty fair fisticuffs. Just before the end of the second, Connolly appears to stumble as he steps back out of the way of a swing. It leaves him wide open for a second. Jones sees the openin' an' sends in a sizzlin' left. Connolly stumbles and goes down to a knee, comin' right back up. Technical knockdown. The round goes to Jones.

"Tough luck," I says to Connolly as I wipe his face with a towel. To keep him from knowin' that I've got any suspicions, I'm actin' more than usual clubby an' sympathetic, see? "What did you slip on?"

"Felt like a banana peel," Connolly comes back. I look out into the ring.

There ain't even a big speck of rosin he could of slipped on.

"Tough," I says. "But you can take this guy easy. You know that. Just watch his left an' wait for an openin'."

In the third, Connolly gets the worst of it. And in the fourth he gets knocked down just before the bell. It's easy to see how he's workin' it. Makin' each round look tougher than the last. Actin' more tired between rounds. So that when he takes his final dive, it'll look natural.

At the end of the fifth, after he's been floored twice, I notice him lookin' over the crowd. One eye is sorta puffed up; but the other one appears to be countin'. Imagine that! Even in the midst of the brawl, Connolly is estimatin' the size of the gate!

And that's what gives me my idea!

The idea comes too late to use just then, because the gong goes for the sixth. All through that frame, I'm holdin' my breath, prayin' that he won't do his final swan-dive in that canto. He don't. He loses the round by a mile; but he comes back to his corner under his own power. And then—I spring it.

"**F**ELLER," I says, makin' my voice mournful an' apologetic, "I got a confession to make to yuh. I oughtn't to of did it; but at the time it looked like I was doin' you a favor. Who'd 'a' thought that this Jones could of improved like he has? When I done it, I thought naturally you had this fight in the bag."

"Done what?" Connolly lams me with his one good eye.

"Bet that money," I says.

At mention of money, Connolly is all ears. "What money?"

"Our money. All of it," I admits. "I knowed you wanted to lay dough on this fracas; an' I got to thinkin' that maybe it wa'n't right to prevent you from bettin' your own money. So I bet it. I done more than that. I put your nine thou in with twenty-one of my own an' laid it all on your nose. It was that two-to-one stuff that got me. I was goin' to surprise you—divide the winnin's even with you, thirty grand apiece. That meant you'd get thirty-nine grand. But as it is, I guess your

original nine grand is gone down the spout, an' we're both broke. I'm awful sorry, feller. I meant well—that's all I can say."

Connolly sits up straight on his stool like he'd got a poker rammed down his back. You can just see the wheels buzzin' in his head, calculatin' the dough.

"Thirty-nine grand!" he yelps. "You mean I was to drag down thirty-nine grand if I win?"

I nods mournful.

"An' now we're broke!" I almost sob out them words. "Can yuh ever forgive me, fella, for riskin' your nine grand?"

The ten second whistle blows. Connolly is bouncin' around on his stool, he's that anxious.

"Thirty-nine grand!" he mutters. "Hell, this fight ain't over yet!"

Comes the gong. Connolly scoots out of his corner like he's been shot from a catapult. He takes Slaughterhouse Jones plumb by surprise. Jones has scarcely got up and taken a single step when Connolly is all over him. I'll bet that Jones musta thought that Connolly had sprouted more arms than an octopus. Then pillows was smackin' in from all directions.

The crowd wakes up an' climbs up on the chairs, howlin' for blood. They've been booin' Connolly for the last four rounds. But now he's turned into as vicious a fightin' machine as you ever seen in a ring. The welkin rings an' the rafters shake as the crowd begs for a kayo. An' Connolly sure obliges 'em! He opens Jones up with a right cross, sends in a left jab to sorta feel out the distance, then comes through with a right uppercut that he lifts from two feet behind him an' one inch from the floor.

It goes *plock*—like that. Slaughterhouse Jones arches back like he was in the Olympics fancy divin' contest. Time he hits the floor, he's as stiff as a wedding shirt. Honest, you could of laid him between two chairs an' stood on him, an' he wouldn't of bent.

The minute the ten-count is finished an' his mitt has been lifted by the referee, Connolly pulls another surprise on the fans. He vaults over the ropes,

goes runnin' down the aisle, an' disappears straight out the front entrance in nothin' but his ring togs!

IT'S two hours later when Connolly shows up in my office out at the trainin' stable.

"Where yuh been?" I growl.

"Had some business to attend to," he explains lamely. "You got them bets collected? Where's my dough?"

I hold out a check to him. He looks at it, then lets out a yelp.

"Then thousand eight hundred? What's the big idea?"

"That's all you got comin'," I grates. "Your nine grand, plus your cut on what we made tonight."

"But the bet, the bet!" he yowls.

"There wasn't no bet," I state. "I wouldn't bet a plugged nickel on you, you dirty, doublecrossin', nose-divin' welsher! That's your payoff. Your contract is over there in the fireplace. You're through. Understand? Now get to hell out of here before I take my story to the Boxing Commission an' get you barred for life!"

Connolly just stands there for a minute, digestin' what I've told him. Then his face contorts with rage. He picks up the phone an' calls a number.

"Hello," he says. "This is Connolly. Slugger Connolly. What sort of managin' contract will you offer me? Yeah, I'm free."

He listens a while, says a few more words, an' sets the phone down with a grin on his pan.

"To hell with your contract!" he says. "I've got a better one out of Cat-eye Feeney. And you won't take nothin' up with the Boxin' Commission, either! You've got nothin' but suspicions to go on; an' if you damage my reputation I'll slap a damage suit on you so quick it'll make your eyes water!"

I just sit and gawp at him.

"A contract with who?"

"With Cat-eye Feeney!" he boasts. "What do yuh think of that?"

For a minute I just sit an' stare. Then a slow grin spreads over my pan.

"With Cat-eye Feeney!" I drawl.

"Well, ain't that just denduh! Go right ahead, feller. You're right about the

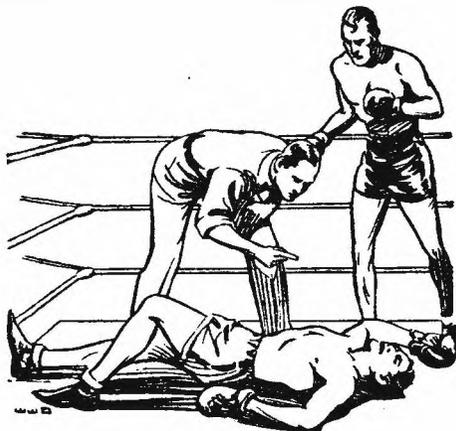
Commish. I won't breathe a word to 'em. Not a word."

WELL, that's about the whole of it. Off the record, y'understand, boys. Strictly off the record. When Connolly jumped out of the ring an' disappeared right after the fight, he musta been squarin' himself with Ed Walsh, promisin' to do his dive next time an' let them gamblers make a bigger pile than they lost. He could of argued that after this win they wouldn't have to offer no two for one dough on the other guy to get their bets laid. I dunno. Anyways, he pulled it in the

first bout after he took on Cat-eye Feeney as manager. An' he was in such a hurry to take his dive as soon as the fight started that he got himself an' Cat-eye both barred.

By the way, boys, that reminds me. You might make an addition to that statement I give you for the record. Point out that aside from droppin' the decision in a popularity contest in Hollywood, while Connolly was in my stable he won every brawl I signed him up for. Includin' the last.

Funny how a fighter can change his style so quick when he gets under a different sort of manager, now ain't it?



Next Issue: *CAMPUS KAYO*, a Larry White Boxing Novelet by PERRY DIXON—and Many Other Stories

Chemist Praises



Charles Lewis,
Chemist, New York

Many physicians advise building up your alkaline reserve when you have a cold. Luden's have an added alkaline factor.

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Thrills in Sports

by **JACK KOFOED**

FAMOUS SPORTS COMMENTATOR

THE DURABLE DANE'S DINNER COST \$50,000

BATTLING NELSON was to fight Jimmy Britt—and Battling Nelson felt a supreme contempt for the clever Native Son. Bat was rough and tough and he disliked Jimmy because that young man wore a high stiff collar and an Ascot tie when he dressed up. It was even reported that Britt had once worn a top hat.

"Well, top hat or no top hat," said Nelson, "I'll knock him back to the wrong side of the railroad track where he belongs. Imagine a prizefighter puttin' on the swell!"

He was talking about that with some friends at dinner-time. Dinner was at five o'clock, because Bat was due in the ring at ten. There was a fine rare steak, vegetables and a salad. The steak tasted swell. Nelson

There was nobody in the world he would rather lick than the Native Son—not even Joe Gans. And pretty soon he was in the ring where he wanted to be.

He put down his stringy head and plowed in. Britt began to hit him on the jaw—rapierlike shots—but Bat went on steadily and with unblinking eyes. He was used to punishment. Sooner or later Jimmy would tire, and then he'd take him apart.

Britt didn't know anything about those two steaks. If he had he would have started on the body sooner. But in the sixth he was a little weary of bouncing his fists off the concrete emplacement that masqueraded as Battling Nelson's chin. So he switched to the mid-section, and whipped in a roaring blow that landed exactly where he wanted it to.

Nelson had been hurt before, but never like that. He became so intolerably sick he could hardly stand up. He couldn't breathe. Fortunately the round was pretty nearly over, and he went back to his corner, with knees that wobbled under him.

Those two steaks! Why had he been such a pig? He could take anything Britt shot at him, no matter where the punches landed . . . but the steaks were not tough enough for that!

There were fourteen rounds still ahead, and while the Dane was the most durable man in the ring he didn't see how he was going such a distance if Jimmy kept banging at his stomach.

Britt was a smart boxer, but he didn't realize how badly he had hurt his bristly haired opponent. He took shots at the body occasionally, but mostly he fired at the jaw. Whenever he did land in the region of the stomach Nelson felt as though someone had driven a knife into him. But he was an actor as well as a stoic. He realized that if Britt knew what shape he was in the body attack would become more strenuous, and then for the first time in his life he wouldn't be able to go the route.

Jimmy never did find out. At the end of the fight the referee held up his hand, indicating him as the winner. For the only time in his life Nelson did not quarrel with a decision that went against him. He knew he had been licked—but he felt that he was lucky to be on his feet.

It was the most expensive steak Battling Nelson ever ate, and cost him at least fifty



Battling Nelson

was hungry, and he was interested in telling everyone what he was going to do to Jimmy Britt.

He still felt hungry when he had finished the steak, so he ordered another. You had to build up for a twenty-round fight, but he had knocked Jimmy out in shorter time than that before, and he would again unless the dandy ran away all the time.

Some hours later the party went to the arena. Bat was anxious to get into action.

thousand dollars. It cost him that much because his defeat at the hands of Britt convinced promoters and public that he was all washed up. A year of hard work was re-

quired to wipe out that impression.

You might note that the Durable Dane never again ate a big meal before entering the ring!

NAGURSKI USES HIS HEAD—AND SAVES AN ARM

WHEN Bronco Nagurski lowered his helmeted head, and thundered into the line it was a sight to behold. He was the toughest man in professional football to stop on power plays. His 240 pounds hit tackles and guards and defensive backs like a gigantic thunderbolt. Don't take my word for it. Ask anybody who ever played against him.

But Bronco left football flat, and turned to wrestling. There's more money in it, and more action twelve months of the year. In a little while he was recognized as champion of the world, which isn't quite as amazing as it sounds, because there must be at least half a dozen men who are regarded as champions in different parts of the world.

Nagurski is now on a world tour, but it is doubtful if he runs into more trouble anywhere than he did in Honolulu when he met the Hawaiian champion, Oki Shikina. The Bronco had no high regard for Shikina, who

yellow man couldn't get out of the way, and Nagurski hurled him to the floor, and pinned his shoulders to the mat.

There was a roar of appreciation from the Americans. Bronco grinned, and waved at them. They wanted action, and he would give it to them in the next fall. Oki was pretty well battered. His eyes showed he had been hurt even if his impassive face betrayed no emotion.

When the bell sounded for the second brush the Minnesotan rushed out with tremendous speed and determination. But the wily Oriental had apparently expected that. He slipped aside, and with the most amazing dexterity and quickness clapped on a Japanese arm bar. Nagurski experienced the most excruciating pain. It felt as though the muscles of his big arm were being torn loose from the bones. A little more pressure and—*crack*—his arm would go. It might ruin his whole life.

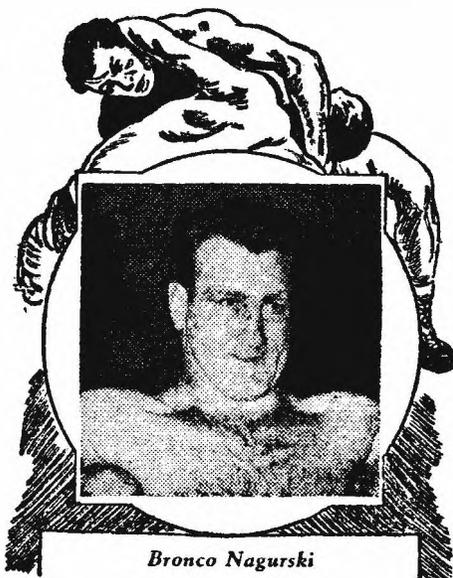
No use fighting against that. After all, there was another fall, and it would be bad generalship to hold out until he was in such a weakened condition he would be useless for the final struggle. He surrendered, and then it was the turn of the Japanese to voice their exultation.

The Bronco knew he was in a tough spot. The title he prized so highly hinged on the next fall. He had to win it—and to do that he must keep Oki from applying that devastating arm bar again.

The bell sounded for the third time. Nagurski came back more carefully, his body shining with sweat, his eyes narrowed to slits. Shikina was fiddling around for his pet hold and moved with the quickness of a striking cobra. They were against the ropes when the Japanese got it—fast—like that! The Bronco slid through the hemp strands, and Oki had to let go.

Nagurski crouched out there for a moment, tense, anxious. Then he leaped in suddenly. No wrestling holds now. Don't give the smaller man a chance to get his grip. He slashed away with vicious forearm blows. They landed with jarring, stunning force on Oki's jaw and head. The Japanese reeled under them. He tried to protect himself . . . then to fight back. But he was helpless against the rush of the giant. His tricks could do him no good now. Shikina staggered—and suddenly the big American seized him, lifted him high in the air and threw him down in a tooth-jarring body-slam.

Dazed, Oki rolled away, seeking shelter beyond the ropes, but Nagurski was on him before he could move a foot. The incredibly powerful hands of the American seized him again. He tried to writhe out of them—but they lifted him as though he were a baby . . . higher . . . higher. . . . Shikina grabbed aimlessly at head, shoulders, anything that



was smaller and lighter, and seemed almost frail compared with the hairy giant from the States. Of course, you always have to be careful with a Japanese. They are tricky fellows, and know torture holds that can break bones like match sticks.

Bronco went out to end the affair as quickly as possible. He had a reputation to uphold before his fellow Americans who crowded the Civic Auditorium. But Oki was a slippery fellow. For half an hour they struggled, with neither gaining a decisive advantage. Then Nagurski fell back on his football training. He hurled his huge body forward in a series of shoulder butts that soon had Shikina wabby and groggy. The

would break the impact of the fall, but it was useless. Nagurski pitched him down, and hurled himself on top of the helpless man.

The referee patted Broncho's shoulder. The Minnesotan arose, wiping the drench of sweat out of his eyes.

POFFENBERGER GOES "POOF!" IN A CRUCIAL GAME

WHEN the Detroit Tigers start their spring training trip this year one of Delmar Baker's principal headaches will be a chunky young man named Cletus Poffenberger, which is no manner of a name for a big league pitcher, even though they try to take the curse off by calling him "Boots."

Nobody ever had more confidence in himself than Mr. Poffenberger. Why, with less than two years of minor league ball behind him, he introduced himself to his Detroit teammates by saying in a loud and authoritative voice: "You better get used to me. I'm gonna be around here for a long time."

Maybe so, and maybe not. Boots has plenty of stuff on the ball, and lots of courage in his heart. He has one gift too many—what the French call *joi de vivre*—or the joy of living. He wants to have fun even if it means breaking training, and managers won't stand for that.

Poffenberger has had so many escapades in his brief span of major league ball that already they are comparing him to Rube Waddell, Bugs Raymond, Rollie Hemsley and other irresponsibles of baseball history. Does that bother Boots? Not so you could notice it. Baseball is the only game he ever played or wanted to play—and the fact that he was good enough to come from a whistle stop to Detroit in two summers indicates that he is pretty good. But he thinks he is even better than that.

What has been his greatest thrill so far? Well, if a thrill means a joyful tingling of the nerve centers I suppose his first major league victory gave him that. But sometimes a thrill has a sad connotation, and one that punched his reflexes all over the lot came when he pitched against Boston.

The Red Sox have some powerful hitters in their lineup—Foxy, Cronin, Higgins, Cramer, plenty of them who can belt either right-handers or port-siders. Boots likes to pitch against fellows like those. The tougher they are the better he likes to tangle with them. So, when Cochrane, who was still managing the team, told him he was going to pitch, a wide grin spread all over his round face.

Warming up, he felt that he had a lot of stuff. Poffenberger always had stuff, but this time he had control, too, and the lack of it is the only thing that ever bothers him. He throws a dippy-do with plenty of hop on it, but sometimes even he is surprised to see where it winds up. But not that day. Boots felt he could throw the ball through the eye of a needle.

For six innings he held the Red Sox in the palm of his hand. And how he rode them! He is a natural-born jockey. As each batter came up he ribbed him with the best

"Baby," he said to his fallen foe, "that's the closest call I've had in many a day. If I hadn't been near the ropes when you clamped that arm bar on me, there would be a new heavyweight champion of the world right now!"

brand of Poffenberger wit—and when the baffled hitter dragged his unwilling heels back to the dugout after being retired, Boots kidded him some more. The rookie was having the happiest day of his career.

Cronin was up first in the seventh, and Joe hadn't hit a ball out of the infield. That pleased Boots, because Cronin is manager of the Red Sox, and Poffenberger has no great love for bosses.

"They tell me you used to be a right smart



hitter," he said. "I've seen better ones in the Eastern Shore League. See what you can do with this one."

He dished up a fast ball, and Cronin slapped it against the fence for a double.

"Oh, well, everybody gets lucky once in a while," said Boots. "If you had to bat against me every day you wouldn't hit .120."

Cronin hooted. "After today Cochrane will probably send you back to Class D League where you belong."

It's a funny thing about baseball. Up until this moment Cletus Poffenberger had been at his best. He had everything—and in the wink of an eye he lost it all. When the Red Sox didn't hit they just stood there and waited for him to hand out a base on balls. Boots tried harder than ever. He put everything on every pitch—and the only result was that the Detroit outfielders ran around with their tongues practically hang-

(Concluded on page 113)

PITCH AND RUN



The low whistling drive split the fairway

Young Ted Jackson, Fighting Golf Pro, Takes His Stance for the Longest Drive of His Career!

By RON BROOM

Author of "Bluegrass Magic," "Straight Up," etc.

THE kid in question was Ted Jackson. He had come up the hard way, there at the Brookfield Country Club—from caddie master to assistant pro. And now, at twenty-three, he had the first real break of his life almost within his grasp. Busy in the caddie house, the slender golfer was praying silently for it to happen.

"I've got to have that job," he kept telling himself. "I can handle it and I've got to have it."

Brookfield's nationally famous professional, Walter Riegel, had already left on a world exhibition tour, after resigning. Jackson was in line for the job. Or at least, Harvey Hall had told him confidentially that he held the inside track. Round, red-faced and jovial, Hall was a member of the board of trustees. In Ted Jackson's estimation, he was just about the swellest old boy who ever spent a lifetime dubbing drives and laughing about it.

Upstairs in the cocktail lounge, a

one-man minority was hard at work tossing a monkey wrench into the machinery that had all but picked Jackson as Riegel's successor. And the four or five assembled board members listened to him.

There were several good reasons for listening to big, black-haired, thick-shouldered Alan Collier. As club champion, he commanded a certain attention. As the arrogant son of the even more insufferable J. H. T. Collier—whose swollen bank account had held the club together through more than one financial crisis—Collier rated as a "sacred cow". Brookfield was in no position to ignore the utterances of a Collier.

And then, the trustees also listened because it wasn't physically possible to avoid it. Collier's blatant opinions rolled off his glib tongue in a drumming voice that threatened the plaster on the walls.

"Get a big-name pro!" the husky golfer barked. "A Manero or a Picard—somebody like that. What the devil? The salary won't break us up." (It wouldn't—as long as the J. H. T. Collier purse strings dangled loose in customary fashion.)

"It's given Brookfield the world's best publicity to have a man like Walt Riegel," Collier added as a clincher.

"Possibly, possibly," Harvey Hall commented. A prominent attorney, formerly corporation counsel for the city, he was the only board member who consistently ventured to cross bats with either Old Man Collier or his son.

"But Riegel wasn't around here more than six months out of a year," Hall went on. "We trustees agree with the theory of the U. S. G. A. moguls. The theory that a club would be better off steering clear of the prominent pros who spend most of their time away at tournaments. Now, a young fellow like Ted Jackson will—"

"Nuts," Collier interrupted, in a snorting tone. "Do you want to be taking your lessons from a runny-nosed young squirt who was toting your bag not five years ago?"

"I've had a few of his lessons," Hall

remarked drily, "and I rate him a fine teacher as well as a swell kid you can't help liking. He's a natural student of the game. And that isn't all, Alan. He's not a youngster any more. He's married and they have a baby. His wife's only nineteen, and she's been in bad health for a year. Ted needs the security and the salary of a steady job like this one."

"What is this—a charity institution?" Collier growled.

THE real reason for his rebellious stand stuck out too plainly to be missed. He wanted to hobnob personally with a great pro, wanted to hear the great one praise his shots. Riegel had done that—to the considerable benefit of the Riegel bank account. He'd catered to the big fellow, toiled with him, changed him from an overgrown, lazy son of a wealthy dad into a ball pounder who could take the beautiful Brookfield layout to pieces. And Collier obviously wanted still more of the same ego-tickling tonic.

"I still maintain," he went on, pointedly, "that a headliner must have the job. A golfer good enough to handle any member. Otherwise, how are the top-fighters of the club supposed to dig up enough stiff competition to keep improving?"

"I've seen Ted Jackson play some fine golf," Hall said. "He picked up a lot from Riegel. I've seen him match tee shot for tee shot with Riegel in practice rounds."

Collier laughed, loudly and sarcastically. "Don't be idiotic about it. I can take that squirt out and bring him in so many holes down that you couldn't keep track of them."

His expression showed that he relished that sudden notion—and that he was giving birth to another idea.

"Listen, gentlemen," he said, standing up. "Do it this way, if you're determined to consider Jackson. Give the squirt the job right now on a strictly temporary basis. A trial basis. And I'll go downstairs and take him out for a round. When I'm through with him, you'll hide your blushing faces."

The serious expressions and the nods of the board members indicated that they would agree on the compromise. Harvey Hall didn't waste his breath opposing the trial-basis idea, but he did try to stave off the impending match.

"Ted's been so busy since Riegel left that he hasn't had time to play golf," he protested. "He's been worried half sick over his wife, and family finances, and how his application for the job is coming out. The least he deserves is a week or so to brush up his shots."

"Too thin," Collier remarked. "I've heard lots of better alibis than that one. No, you better tag along and watch the club champ hand the proposed club professional a nice, juicy walloping."

Fifteen minutes later they were walking down the fairway of the first hole, with a cluster of trustees and other members for a gallery. Alan Collier was striding straight ahead. He was out two hundred seventy yards from the tee, in position for an easy pitch to the green of the comparatively short par-four hole.

And the slender, compactly built young pro, his short-cropped brown hair tight to his head in spite of the breeze, was heading over toward the rough at the left. Made tense by the strange and sudden turn of events, he'd hooked his drive badly.

His mind was on a couple of things Harvey Hall had come around to tell him.

". . . so for a while, at least, you'll be on a temporary basis in the job. I did my best, Ted, but you know how near gospel a Collier's word is around here. Now loosen up, and take it easy on this round with Alan."

Hall hadn't commented on the full significance of the match. Rather, he'd tried to pass it off lightly. But Ted Collier wasn't dumb. The big-wigs didn't follow a round of golf unless they had a real reason to. The whole situation was plain enough to him. He had to play at least even golf with Collier—or else. And he hadn't had time for a serious eighteen holes for almost a month!

JACKSON'S ball was in the thick, lush grass that covered a good part of the rough of Brookfield's almost too well-watered course. His mind in a turmoil—he was glad even for a crack at the job, yet realized how far he was from being established in it—he found it hard to concentrate on his recovery shot. The heavy grass helped muss up the shot, and the ball stopped fifteen yards short of the green.

Smiling broadly, Collier set himself for his favorite shot—a towering pitch that would drop straight down and stick. The ball did just that. It bit deeply into the soft, moist green, leaving a mark, and hopped once. It stopped a scant three feet from the pin.

Jackson's third was eight feet past the hole. He missed his game putt by an eyelash, and the hole was Collier's.

At the next tee, the broad-shouldered club champ's drive was straight, but fifteen or twenty yards shorter than it should have been. Jackson spotted the trouble—just a little careless mistake he'd seen Collier make occasionally in the last few months.

"What the devil?" Collier growled. "That ball was well hit, and it died like a chunk of lead."

Jackson automatically responded with a suggestion, and was wishing the moment the words were out that he could drag them back. But he was a natural golf teacher, and he picked out those flaws mechanically.

"I think you played the ball a little too far forward off your left toe. Sometimes that costs some distance."

Collier glared at him. "You're telling me how to play golf?"

Ted Jackson pressed his lips together. He said nothing more as he teed his ball. For just an instant, the whirling mixture of thoughts in his brain centered on the pleasant feeling it would be to bounce a fist off the cocky Collier jaw.

Shaking his head, Jackson tried to concentrate on the white ball. He had one vital job to do, right now—to play better golf than the big, black-haired club champion. Momentarily, he got himself in hand. His backswing was

slow and flat, his rhythm perfect through the ball. The low, whistling drive split the fairway and stopped thirty yards beyond Collier's ball.

"Nice poke," murmured Harvey Hall.

"Accident, maybe?" queried Collier.

The champion's high-arching approach bit into the green, and dribbled to a quick stop sixteen feet to the left of the cup. Jackson's second was good, too, though no closer, and they halved in fours.

Jackson began to realize fully how taut and jumpy he was. Every shot was hard work. He knew he wasn't hitting the ball the way he would have after a few days of thorough practice. His swing felt about right—fluent enough, and pretty much in the groove. Yet it wasn't precisely the same liquid swing which, on more than one early-morning occasion alone or with Walt Riegel, had whisked him around the beautiful Brookfield layout in sixty-eight sparkling strokes.

And by the time he'd dropped the short third hole to a birdie two, and the par-five fourth to another birdie, he realized, too, that Alan Collier had never been hotter.

COLLIER always acted as though he could play Brookfield with his eyes closed. And he probably could have, Jackson thought. Collier had almost lived on the Brookfield course for six years. He'd never shown an inclination to play his golf elsewhere. His game, it was apparent, had been tailored strictly to fit his home course.

The tailoring job, by Walter Riegel, was almost a perfect one. Down to the last blade of grass, the twenty-seven-year-old scion of Collier Appliances, Inc. knew where to plant each drive for the most advantageous approach to the green. Riegel had struggled patiently with him until he'd literally memorized every shot on the course. He had power off the tee, but his most polished department was his iron play to the cup.

There was no green on the beautiful course that would not hold a high, back-spinning approach with the tenacity of flypaper. Plenty of moisture

accounted for that. Under Riegel's guidance, Collier had become a pitch-shot master. He basked in the luxurious knowledge that it was almost a grueling effort for him to hit a bad shot on Brookfield.

Going to the seventh tee still three down, Jackson was fighting desperately to get back to normal. The champion cracked out a two-hundred-eighty-yard wallop that did not bend an inch either way. Jackson's tautly smacked tee shot was straight, but off to the right. The ball took a bad hop on an undulation in the turf and trickled into a virtually unplayable lie between two trees at the edge of the fairway.

It cost Ted Jackson a shot to get out of there. Still grinning in high enjoyment, Collier arched another of his flawless mashie masterpieces to the green. Even putting carelessly, he had his par to go four up.

The round was a nightmare for Jackson from there on. He was caught in the dilemma of a physical battle with Collier and a mental struggle with himself. Even great golf champions sometimes had off rounds, he knew; but he wondered if the long-faced trustees happened to be keeping that fact in mind. Harvey Hall hadn't changed expression. The rest of them, plainly, were highly impressed by Collier's demonstration.

It wasn't a fair shake, and yet there was nothing to be done about it. The automatic-stroking club champ seemed to coast along, halving the next three holes. Then Jackson faltered again in his tense struggle for control.

A par four gave the club champ the eleventh, and he closed out the match, at six and five, by canning a ten-footer on the twelfth green. Jackson was thankful when Collier suggested that there was no need of finishing the round. Without a word, the youngster clamped his teeth together hard and strode off toward the clubhouse. Behind him, he heard Collier's supercilious voice.

"Do you understand more clearly now, gentlemen? That's the fine young golfer you are hiring tempo-

rarily as club professional. I trust you'll be holding another business meeting soon."

Dinner at the little rented bungalow that evening was a strained affair for Ted Jackson. He hadn't had the heart to tell Mildred his appointment as club pro was temporary—painfully temporary. He'd simply told her the board was giving him a crack at the job. The news had seemed to perk her up. It was easy to see what a let-down it would be for her when Alan Collier finished putting over his campaign for another big-name pro.

HE sat alone for a long time on the front steps, after Mildred went to bed. It wasn't pleasant to think about the brand of golf he'd played. Even covering the last five holes in even fours, which would have been plenty tough to do, his card for the eighteen would still have been a fuzzy seventy-nine.

With a little practice, or even a little advance notice on what was up, he might have played a lot better golf. But that didn't erase the fact that Alan Collier had mauled him to the tune of six and five. Maybe a return match would turn the tables—He knew, even as the thought hit him, that he didn't stand a Chinaman's chance of wheedling Collier into taking him on again. Not a chance in a million.

A car drove up then. Ted Jackson recognized the round, shadowy figure coming up the walk as Harvey Hall.

"Chin still up, kid?" was the first thing Hall said.

"Not very high," Jackson admitted.

"I can't blame you much." Hall sat down beside him, slapped a friendly hand on the youngster's knee. "It was a frowsy thing all around. A bum deal without an ounce of fairness about it. I did what I could to stave it off, but it couldn't be done."

"Thanks plenty for trying," Jackson said warmly. "Maybe you've taken too much stock in me. From the looks of the golf today, I seem to rate as a false alarm."

Hall looked at him keenly. "Forget that kind of talk. With a week to

brush up in, you'd have handled that black-thatched mama's boy like Gene Sarazen would handle me."

Jackson shook his head doubtfully. "I'm not so sure. He's a fat-headed cookie—but he can play the Brookfield course. Well, I'd sure like another crack at him, just the same."

"Why not try it?"

"Fat chance! He'd laugh in my face and say once is enough, if I suggested it. He'd probably add a remark about being particular about his golfing company. So, he'll have me out of this job in a hurry, and you know it. And when I go, I'd be willing to bet it will be clear out, not even back into the assistant pro job."

Harvey Hall was scratching his head thoughtfully. "I don't deny any part of that," he said slowly. "Just the same, I think Collier might possibly be wangled into playing you another eighteen holes, some time."

"How?" Jackson asked in disbelief.

"Suppose you leave that to me to work out." Hall changed his tone of voice. "In the meantime, Ted, I've got another suggestion, and I don't want you to turn it down. I'm interested in you not only in a personal way, but because right now, at least, you're Brookfield's professional—and Brookfield has always been my pet pride and joy. I think our pro needs to get around and about a little."

Ted Jackson looked at him curiously. "Meaning just what?"

"I want you and Mildred and the baby to go out to the Coast for a month and stay with my brother Phil. He's got more room than he knows what to do with. Train fare and expense will be on me. I want you to play a lot of golf—on every course in that town. Play golf and rest up, and forget your troubles. You've let worries wear you to a frazzle. You can't afford to let yourself go down any more. If you do, you'll be a nervous wreck."

JACKSON shook his head slowly. "You know we won't permit you to—"

"Yes, you will," Harvey Hall cut in, with a gruff growl. He stood up. "I'll get a return on my investment, don't

you worry. Incidentally, I've already phoned Phil about it. Now, you get in there and pack your duds and get out of here tomorrow. And don't argue!" He strode down the walk, and drove away.

Jackson did a lot more thinking before he dropped off to sleep that night. It seemed too much of a good thing, even from as swell a friend as Harvey Hall. But, eighteen hours later, the Jackson family was busy unpacking in the vast east wing of the Philip Hall mansion out in the big Coast city.

Jackson's golf came back to normal with a rush. His scoring was much better than he'd hoped for, even on the most difficult layouts he visited.

He was thankful to have Mildred and little Tommy with him. Especially when he began to read the weather reports from home. The town was catching a siege of late summer heat—up around the hundred-degree mark; in fact—and was praying for the usual early fall rains to come along and break the torrid spell. Heat like that would have wilted Mildred just when she was beginning to make good progress. They owed Harvey Hall a debt they surely could never pay with anything more than gratitude.

They'd been over there just two weeks, half the stay Hall had suggested, when a brief, enigmatic telegram came from him.

COME HOME FAST. DON'T DELAY. MAYBE EVERYTHING WILL BE FORGIVEN.

"Maybe everything will be forgiven." Ted Jackson tried to interpret that. It was a cinch the board of trustees couldn't have made his appointment permanent; not after that unforgettable round of golf, and over the opposition of a Collier. It seemed to mean just one thing. Somehow or other, Harvey Hall must have done the impossible and talked Alan Collier into playing another match.

Amazingly, it worked out just that way. Jackson found himself on the first tee again with the loud-talking, cocky club champion. No rain had fallen during the past fortnight, and

the sun was still searingly hot. The gallery—most of the trustees again, plus a few stray members—sweltered in shirt sleeves.

Alan Collier drove magnificently. His screeching tee shot rolled a few yards past the three-hundred marker on the slightly downhill fairway. Collier looked at his opponent and unlimbered his sarcastic tongue.

"I'm mortified and ashamed of myself, Mr. Temporary Club Pro, but that's the very best I can do. You'll just have to overlook my bad ones."

The way Collier accented the word "temporary" dug deep into Ted Jackson. But this time, the champion's insulting attitude left him in an icy calm. Kneeling to plant a red peg in the turf, Jackson knew suddenly that on this round he wasn't going to have to fight himself. Good golf might beat him—but jumpy nerves would not.

The sharp crackle of the ball off the face of his gleaming black driver was the sweet music that meant yardage. The low ball rolled, and kept rolling, until, it was down alongside Collier's.

"That's the best I can do, too, Mr. Fat-head," Jackson was tempted to say. Instead, he kept his lips tightly closed.

His drive was the longer, by a yard. Both golfers asked their caddies for No. 7 irons. Jackson backed away a few steps, and watched Collier arch one of his crisply hit pitches.

THE ball dropped near the pin. Instead of biting in, hopping feebly and dying right there, it bounced, bounced again, and rolled clear across the green.

"What the devil!" Collier growled, looking disgustedly at his club as if it had deliberately failed him.

Jackson blinked at the unexpected antics of the ball. Collier didn't miss an approach that badly once in a hundred times. He studied his own shot, thoughtfully. Then he handed the "seven" iron to the caddie, and took a No. 4.

The green was protected at each side by traps. Jackson gambled on the flat alley of grass between them. His

back swing was very short, his swing clean but not forced. The low ball dropped ten yards short of the green, and rolled true between the traps onto the green. He was twelve feet from the cup with that smartly played pitch-and-run shot.

Irritated, Collier chipped fifteen feet past, coming back onto the green. He missed his putt, and conceded the hole. Jackson stepped up to his ball, anyhow, and rammed down the twelve-footer. Drifting over alongside Harvey Hall, as they walked to the next tee, Jackson's voice was perplexed.

"What ever happened to that green?"

"The same thing that's happened to every one of them."

"Fast as lightning," Jackson agreed. He wrinkled his forehead puzzledly. "I can't see how he ever happened to decide to play me again. Or play anybody, for that matter. Because he must have noticed how badly the course was drying out."

"The greens didn't really get into this lightning-fast shape until two or three days ago," Hall explained. "He's been doing most of his golfing for a week from that shady practice tee behind the clubhouse, with a boy shagging balls for him by the hour."

Jackson stepped onto the tee. He hammered another long, straight clout. Then he went back to Hall, who was standing off away from the other.

"Well," Jackson said, "that first hole doesn't prove a thing. I've got a lot of golf to play yet, to keep from getting my ears knocked down again."

Hall grunted. "I'll tell the cock-eyed world you have. I'd say this setup is a square shake all around. The greens are just as fast for you as they are for Alan. You'll have to be a wizard with that putter, as well as your irons."

Collier's lusty drive came to rest far down the fairway. They started walking. The puzzled expression stayed on Jackson's face.

"Don't hold out on me," he said to Harvey Hall. "You still haven't told me how you talked him into another match."

There was a twinkle in the plump attorney's eyes. He drew a long, deep breath, before he finally answered.

"I wasn't going to tell you till later, but I might as well. Ted, he's a gambler by nature. The dyed-in-the-wool variety. Well, it was the one way to put it over. And besides, I get a big kick out of a bet myself, now and then. So I made a friendly little wager with him that you could pin his ears back."

Jackson's mouth opened in surprise. "Just exactly how much of a 'friendly little wager' was it?" he asked, suspiciously.

Hall grinned faintly. "You're a persistent young monkey, aren't you? Well—okay. It's two-fifty a hole."

Ted Jackson blinked, and shook his head. There was no decimal point in the two-fifty.

HALL hastened to explain, but not at all convincingly.

"You see, I figured I might as well give you a chance to pay back expenses on that Coast trip, so you'd feel better about it. You're so darned conscientious about details." He gestured toward Jackson's ball. "Now, step up there and poke that pill like you meant it."

For a moment, Jackson wavered mentally under the impact of this additional load on his wiry shoulders. Then, in the manner of erasing chalk marks from a blackboard, he thrust every other thought from his mind but this business of playing golf.

His ball was a few yards back of Collier's, about one hundred thirty from the cup. Although the green looked as it always did, he knew a high iron landing on the fast surface probably wouldn't stay there. Deliberately, he played the ball low and short, for a roll. The long run took it nicely onto the slick green, hole high and twenty feet to the left.

Collier looked a trifle doubtful as he addressed his ball. Jackson noticed that he was stubbornly sticking to the "seven" iron he had used so successfully a thousand times on that same shot. The rainbowing ball dropped scarcely two feet from the pin. In different weather on juicy greens, it

would have been a marvelous piece of golfing artistry, leaving Collier a short putt for a birdie. But on the hard green, it scurried away like a rabbit, clear to the far margin.

The champion shook his head angrily. The great Walter Riegel had taught him how to play that hole—taught him just one way. That one way hadn't worked as it should. But Collier was no coward. He putted boldly, and came up to within a foot, and earned himself a half on the hole.

But Ted Jackson could see the worry in the champion's expression. It came out as they were playing to the green on the long par-five third hole. Jackson had twenty yards left to get there on his third strike. He played the shot with a driving iron, using it in an elongated putting stroke to roll the ball up. Collier tried an ordinary chip shot—and rolled clear across the green. Jackson's curling nine-foot putt dropped into the hole for a birdie that put him two up.

It took Collier only that long to show by his expression and his actions that he knew his finest weapon was harmless on greens of this kind. He began to try unfamiliar pitch-and-run shots, copying Jackson's delicately surveyed approaches.

One or two of Collier's run-ups worked. Most of them rolled wild, leaving him at a disadvantage on the greens. Jackson found himself almost admiring the black-haired champion's courage. Whatever else the cocky fellow might be, he was not a quitter. He was making a grim, desperate scrap of it, but dropping farther and farther back with each stroke.

Jackson was four up going to the eighth tee, five up as they finished the short uphill tenth. The little gallery was following his demonstration of smart, brilliant golf with admiration that no one of them tried to conceal. There was a buzz after each slashing tee shot Jackson clouted, a hum of talk after each deadly accurate pitch-and-run approach. Here was a golfer, they were learning, who instead of a one-course champion, was an all-around master of the game.

Slowly, Alan Collier began to show

signs of getting the "feel" of the roll-up approaches. But the breakdown of his short iron game had done mental damage that worked on his other shots. He was uncertain on the tees. His putts were doubtful pokes, made overly cautious by a fear of the lightning-fast greens.

THE artistry of Ted Jackson's pitch-and-run touch improved with the surge of his confidence. He won the long eleventh by sinking a roll-up approach from twenty yards away for an eagle three.

On the twelfth, Collier nervously smacked his second far over the green into a tight clump of trees. Coolly, his job almost done, Jackson laid his own second six feet from the pin. Collier played out gamely, failing by a yard to reach the margin of the green. He chipped for the pin, and rolled six feet to the left. Then he turned to Jackson, put out his hand.

"Sort of looks like that's about enough of that for today."

The conquered champion strode off in the direction of the clubhouse. Harvey Hall was bubbling over when he got to the conqueror.

"Seven and six, you plastered him! Wow! Walt Riegel himself never put on a show like that for my fellow blue-noses!"

Ted Jackson grasped Hall's arm, and his fingers dug in hard. He grinned like a schoolboy.

"Lady Luck was sure with me today! Or us, rather." He hesitated, then added, "I'm not so hot at putting things into words. If I tried to say 'thanks' to you the way it ought to be said, I'm afraid I'd wind up away out in the rough."

Hall chuckled happily. "Forget it, forget it. We're all square. I've been waiting all my life to see a Collier squirm, haven't I? I knew exactly how it would go. Alan Collier is champion of his own back yard. Past master of Brookfield. But as we found out today, Brookfield with hard, fast greens is an entirely different course."

Jackson nodded. Walking toward the clubhouse, he found himself won-

dering about several different things. He wondered if his life from now on was going to consist of an everlasting feud with the Collier faction. And he was still puzzling over the excessively sun-baked condition of the Brookfield layout. Finally he put his thoughts into words.

"It doesn't seem possible that ten days of even the most scorching weather could have taken such a wallop at the course. Not if it's been watered anywhere near the usual amount, that is."

Hall was smiling, a bit mysteriously. "That's just the point. The city water supply began to take a terrific beating as soon as the hot spell came along. It was so bad that the supply needed for home consumption was endangered."

"So?" Ted Jackson urged, smelling

a mouse.

The smile broadened. "So, as sort of an adviser emeritus to the City Council, a citizen named H. Hall urged a two-week emergency measure limiting the water supply for such big non-commercial users as parks, golf clubs and so on. With no publicity—for Chamber of Commerce reasons."

Jackson's mouth hung open in blank surprise as the words came home to roost. And he was still tongue-tied when the caddie master called out to him as he entered the clubhouse shop.

"Hey, Ted—Alan Collier just came fogging in here a minute ago. He says, real quiet-like—almost decent, even: 'Listen, bud. Sign me up for some lessons with the new club pro. Lessons on pitch-and-run shots. I've already had the first one.' That's all he says, and then he walks out."

●
IN THE NEXT ISSUE
●

BASKET WEAVERS

A Special "Inside Facts" Article

By

GEORGE KEOGAN

Famous Basketball Coach of Notre Dame University

**ENRICHES THE FLAVOR
OF ANY TOBACCO**

HONEY IN
THE BOWL
(Yellow)

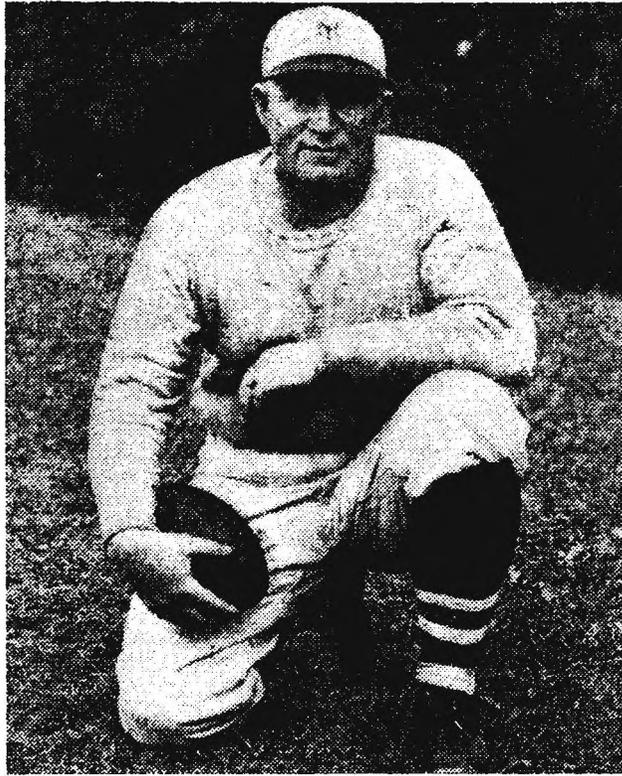


**YOUR
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REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.



Steve Owen

ONE OF FOOTBALL'S FINEST!

Editorial note: Steve Owen, big and tremendously powerful, getting a little gray around the temples and thicker in the mid-riff, has been one of football's great figures for years. His life as a player continued far beyond the usual span, and now as coach of the Giants he is still in the forefront of the game. Owen is an enthusiastic disciple of professional football as he should well be, since he is one of the men who made it the tremendous artistic and financial success it has become.

The PRO PARADE

Especially Written for THRILLING SPORTS

By STEVE OWEN

Coach of the New York Football Giants

IRAN into Bill Abbott, former sports editor of the old *New York World*, one day. We got to talking football, naturally.

"Which team," I asked, "drew the biggest attendance in New York this past season?"

Abbott laughed at me.

"You're kidding, aren't you, Steve? There isn't any doubt about the answer. Fordham, of course. The Rams were 'way out in front."

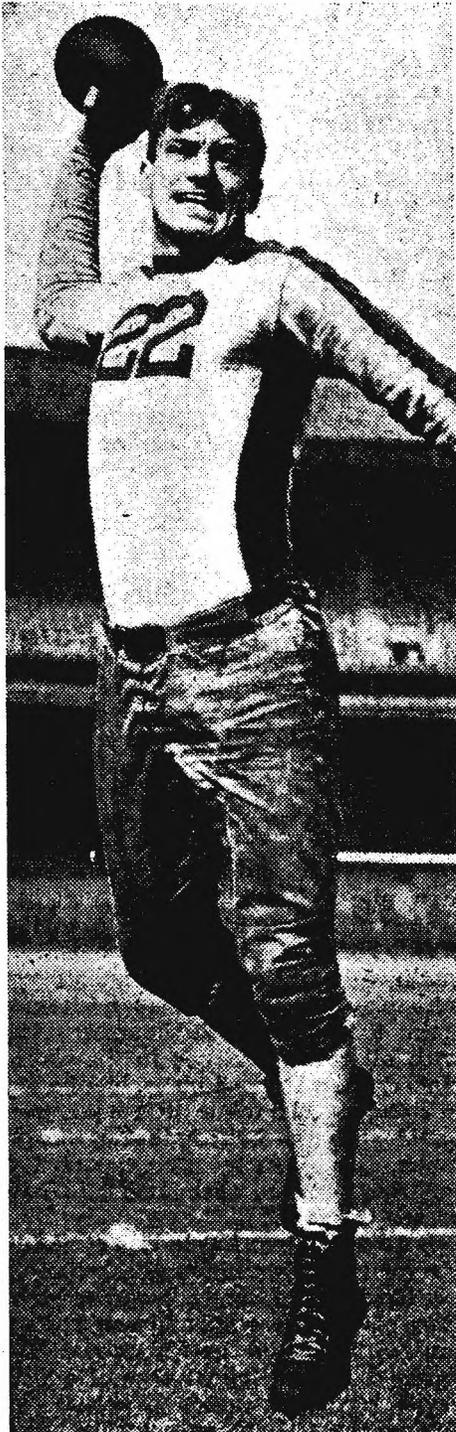
"You're wrong," I told him.

"Wrong? Well, Owen, if I had a million dollars I'd like to bet I'm not. If Fordham didn't lead, tell me who did?"

"The New York Football Giants!" I said. "We outdrew every college team in the Metropolitan district. And it wasn't so long ago that practically everybody said it couldn't be done."

The tremendous interest in professional football is not centered in New York; not by any manner of means. It

A Famous Gridiron Pilot Gives 'Em the



Ed Danowski—considered the most accurate passer in pro ranks



has become general throughout the country. This is natural. The pro team is made up of stars. There isn't a weak spot in any squad, compared with college standards. Some may look spotty when pitted against outstanding elevens in the league, but they all have plenty of what it takes.

Some may point out that early season contests with college All-Star teams have not always turned out to our advantage. That is easy to explain. In the first place, our opponents are crack players, a good many of whom have already signed with professional clubs. In the second place, we have had too little practice. Both sides, in a manner of speaking, start from scratch when they get together. But no individual college team can match the power in line and backfield, a National League club can.

Important Pockets

It's a tough job getting any squad whipped into shape in a short time. Take, as an example, the Philadelphia Eagles. They played an All-Star college team directed by Heine Miller. The men assembled for the first time at one o'clock in the afternoon. They had no signals and no plays. Miller had

Once Over—and Plots the Season's Course!

written these out on cards, which he gave to Glenn Frey, former Temple quarterback, one of the All-Stars.

Frey put them in the pockets of his football pants, and did a great job of handling the All-Stars. In every huddle he would take out the cards and, after consulting them, decide what he should do. For three periods this attack bothered the Eagles no little.

At the start of the fourth period Frey began to tire. He signaled for relief, but Miller shook his head. Half a dozen times Frey motioned that he wanted out, but Heine refused.

When the game ended Frey began to bawl Miller out for not relieving him.

"Why didn't you send in a substitute?" he demanded.

"I couldn't," explained Miller. "You're the only guy in the squad with pockets in his football pants—and what good would those signals be without a pocket to put them in?"

Gridiron Post-Graduates

Pros are the post-graduates of the gridiron. They have been playing the game for years. They know what it's all about. When my men reported at the Blue Hill Country Club at Pearl River, New York, I didn't have to waste weeks teaching them the fundamentals of blocking, tackling, ball handling. They knew. Once the boys were in condition, my job was to get them mechanically perfect in the plays we would use during the season.

Look at my veterans, for instance. Dale Burnet has been playing for fifteen years in the college and pro game. He has been one of the best pass receivers and blockers in the league for many seasons, and is second high scorer for the time he has been with us—notching 142 points. Captain Mel Hein was All-America center when he was with Washington State, and has been All-League center for five seasons.

Ed Danowski, who starred at Fordham, is the most accurate passer in pro ranks. Yes, I know there's a fellow named Sammy Baugh around, too, but in two and a half years, Danowski completed 119 out of 248 passes, and had less than half as many intercepted as

Baugh has. Even the young fellows who have come up just this season—Falaschi and Mattos and others—have a full background of football. There isn't much I need to do with them along the line of fundamentals.

We went to work in mid-August under a blistering sun, nearly a month before the collegians started. That meant we were in excellent shape and well grounded in running off our plays by the time the first scheduled game arrived. Because of these conditions, the pro coach with seasoned men—men who have starred at their universities—can concentrate on the machine, rather than on the development of individuals who may become stars at a later date.

A Big Surprise

We play a hard game. Don't let anybody tell you differently. Ask the young fellows, who have just come off the college gridirons. They'll give you all the testimony you need on that score, and it is as much of a surprise to them as it is to you.

I'll never forget Chris Cagle. He had been the outstanding All-American of his year at West Point, a triple-threat man, and an amazing ball carrier in a broken field. Cagle expected to ride roughshod over the professionals. He had heard some silly talk that the men who play for money take it easy to spare themselves. So he trotted out with all the confidence in the world. Nobody had stopped him while he was in college. Though a little light, compared with the behemoths in the pro ranks, the ex-Army star expected to run rings around them and still have breath to spare.

Between halves Cagle was a picture. He sat on a bench in the locker room, his head in his hands, blood dripping from his nose, so tired and battered and bruised he could hardly move. The Army flash had taken more of a beating in twenty minutes of actual play against the professionals than he had in nearly a whole season among the collegians.

"They told me it would be soft," he mourned. "Good Lord!" His voice was vibrant with feeling.

Not So Subtle

The boys are hard-boiled. They don't fool around. They can't afford to. If they are to hold their places in the game, they have to keep pressing all the time. To point this with a story:

Bill Hewitt is captain and end of the Philadelphia Eagles, and a darned good one. He likes to battle with officials when he thinks they are in the wrong. And who doesn't when rulings go against them? On one occasion the referee annoyed Hewitt no end. Instead of standing behind the team on offense, he insisted on taking a position practically next to Hewitt. While there, he twice called the Eagles' captain off-side.

Hewitt asked him to get back where he belonged. The official wouldn't do it. An argument developed, and that got nowhere. Hewitt adopted more subtle methods; though subtle may not be the exact word to fit the situation.

In the huddle he called for a wide end sweep with the referee as the objective. When that gentleman had been knocked down twice, he decided that Hewitt was right, and stayed where he belonged thereafter.

Precision and timing are gained only by constant practice. That is where the coach of a professional team has the advantage over the collegiate tutor. He can concentrate on his plays and their smooth functioning, instead of having to correct flaws in Jones' punting and see if Smith can't be made to toss a pass right. Because a college coach has spent three years stressing fundamentals on some rugged young fellow, that chap comes to us with no need for further instruction along those lines.

Now, in the All-Star game with which we opened the 1938 season they point out that we won only by a score of 6-0, represented by two field goals by Ward Cuff from the 43-yard line. That is no overwhelming margin, I'll admit, but several points might well be taken into consideration. In the first place, the All-Stars were made up of tremendous fellows. Wojiechowitz, Franco, Souchak, Merrill, Davis, the best men who had come from the college teams of 1937.

Out of Form

They were powerful on the defense, as they were bound to be. Every once in awhile we would wind up most impressively, and it would look as though we were going to chase the All-Stars right out of the park. But right in the middle of the windup something would go wrong. A couple of times receivers dropped forward passes that were right in their hands, and the blockers missed their assignments or the ball carriers fell down on the job.

Some of the reporters seemed to think that I had the jitters about it, but I hadn't really. My fellows were just out of the training camp. They were a couple of weeks away from the form they should have. That was all right with me. You can't keep a man or a team at top form indefinitely. It is easy to get them there, but keeping them up is another matter.

For the prestige of the Giants and professional football I wanted to win. Winning was enough. A lopsided score didn't matter. If I could save some of that scoring punch for the Bears and Packers and Redskins, I couldn't ask any more.

If you didn't see the game maybe you read about it. Your reaction probably was that cuff was as great a placement kicker as anybody ever saw; that Danowski could pass with anybody that ever lived; that Hein and Del Isola were whangees on the defense, and Hank Soar was a tough guy to stop.

Right on all counts, but there is a lot more to the Giants than those fellows, good as they are. Some men are slower to get going than others. You'll hear plenty later from some of them who did not exactly shine at the Polo Grounds.

A Career of Football

Some players want to make a profession of football, even after their playing days are over, just as I have. They want to coach. Sammy Baugh, the passing ace of the Washington Redskins, has expressed that desire more than once. Cliff Battles, his great teammate of last year, has already quit the playing field, though he is still good enough for anybody, in order to become Lou

Little's assistant at Columbia.

Any manager hates to lose a man like that, but Ray Flaherty, who coaches the Redskins, realizes that it is really a good move for Battles. Cliff Battles has been around a long time. He can't go on forever, and this is a fine chance for him. I would feel exactly the same way if one of my veterans found a similar opening.

I have mentioned several times about short careers in football. All athletic careers suffer from that handicap, but after all, a football player takes more of a beating than competitors in most other team games. I have played and coached more years than I like to think about, and have come to the conclusion that the average fellow starts to play the game too early. By the time he gets into the professional game he has usually had four years in high school and four more in college, perhaps a year or two extra in prep school.

A boy of fourteen or fifteen is too young for a game of such hard physical contacts. He doesn't know how to take the shock of falls or tackles. While coaching and supervision in the high schools has improved greatly in recent years, I don't believe that even such improvement can make up for too early a start.

Too Early a Start

It is my belief that if a youngster didn't start to play football until at least his last year in high school, he would last much longer and suffer far fewer injuries. It is likely that boys would develop more slowly in college, and you'd hear less of sensational sophomore and junior players, but that slower maturity would enable them to last longer when they tried to make their living in the professional game.

I'm not saying this from a selfish viewpoint, but for the benefit of the boys themselves. It was rather distressing to learn, through tests made at Columbia University, how many youngsters who had been athletic stars in their early boyhood are suffering from various disabilities. They had simply put too great a strain on bodies that had not grown strong enough to stand it.

Cagy and Aggressive

To get back to the parade of the professionals. The National Football League, as you probably know, is divided into an Eastern and a Western Division. We play interdivisional games throughout the season, but at the finish the victors in each part of the country meet for a game to decide the National championship.

It is a terrific grind. There are no weak sisters among the teams because every one is spending money and effort in order to strengthen line and backfield. Whenever there is a let-down, a team that you figure to beat rises right up and smacks you down.

I've been asked, of course, how I figure this year's race. Frankly, I think the Giants will be much stronger than last year. In 1937, too big a percentage of our men were new to professional football. They had not worked together enough to get the smooth performance they should have. But it's different now. My fellows have become seasoned. I have signed some other swell performers, who will fit into my plans, and get better as the season goes on.

Take my first-string lines. At the wings are Poole and Howell, big, rangy fellows; fast, smart, hard tacklers and excellent pass receivers. At tackles I have Ed Widseth, of Minnesota, who has been the outstanding man in college ranks at the position for two seasons, and "Ox" Parry, the big man from Baylor. They are both strong, cagy and aggressive.

The guards are Orville Tuttle, of Oklahoma, and John Del Isola, from Fordham. A coach couldn't reasonably ask for anybody better than those fellows. And at center is Mel Hein. Our field captain is the best pivot man in the game, and the whole league recognizes that fact. Hein isn't only a great mechanical player, he has the spark, the inspiration that every leader must have to succeed.

Granite Blocks

There's a line anybody could be proud of. Talk about blocks of granite! There isn't a weakness from end to end

—and I have some powerful reserves to back them up. Maybe I shouldn't talk so cheerfully. Maybe I should adopt the pessimism of Gil Dobie, but I can't do it. You can't make a professional team win by driving a defeatist complex into them.

I have no apologies to make for my backfield either. Among them are "Tilly" Manton, of Texas Christian, Ward Cuff, from Marquette, "Tuffy" Leemans, of George Washington, "Feets" Barnum, of West Virginia Wesleyan, Hank Coar, of Nebraska, Nello Falaschi, of Santa Clara, Ed Danowski, of Fordham, "Harry the Horse" Mattos, of St. Mary, and our old standby, Dale Burnet.

Looks like an All-American list, doesn't it? It is exactly that. From Burnet, who has been with us for eight years, to Falaschi and Mattos, who just joined us for training in late August, they are all fine football players.

Manton is the greatest point-after-touchdown specialist in the game. He has booted twenty-seven consecutive points after touchdown—as this is written—and has yet to miss. Sometimes that point is tremendously important. Falaschi showed about everything a fellow could in the stiff college competition they have on the Pacific Coast. Watch his smoke this year.

Watch Barnum, too. That fellow was made for professional football. They call him "Feets," because of his huge pedal extremities, but he certainly knows how to handle them. He can punt for anybody's money; and when it comes to either ball carrying, blocking or passing, he'll do until some one better comes along.

Red Skins Tough

Danowski, Cuff and Leemans have been familiar as pro players for some seasons now. They are still just as good as they ever were. I figure we are twenty-five percent stronger in actual playing ability than we were a year ago—and twenty-five percent is a lot, if it really works out that way.

Naturally we have to figure the Washington Redskins as our strongest foes in the Eastern Division. Last year they won the National Champion-

ship, and the exceptionally brilliant play of Sammy Baugh and Cliff Battles were the deciding factors in the playoff with the Bears. We know just what the Redskins, under the astute coaching of Ray Flaherty, really have. They are champions, and you can't take that away from them.

A squad has to have more than a little power to win even a few games in our league. To wangle out a championship it must possess just about everything. But a squad is not a static thing that remains good because it was tops last year. It is made up of individuals, who change from time to time. That's why a team is a riot one week and a washout the next. The Redskins are going to be tough—maybe the toughest foes we have.

But, here's a queer thing. Talk with our fellows. Ask them how they figure Washington this year. They'll tell you Washington is twenty-five percent weaker than it was in 1937.

Why?

Cliff Battles. Remember? He will be teaching the Columbia squad to play instead of cracking lines himself. Without him in the backfield those Redskins won't be what they were. That's the idea around our camp, anyway.

Hard to Replace

Perhaps it does not seem reasonable that the loss of one man could do so much to a team; but you don't know Battles. Off the record, he was one of the greatest backfield men of all time. There wasn't anything he couldn't do. When you really come down to cases, Battles was one of the greatest football players of all time. A fellow like that can't be replaced offhand. His going leaves a hole that looks like the Grand Canyon.

True enough, Sammy Baugh is a deadly and sensational passer and more than fair as a ball carrier, but Battles was the real bulwark of the squad. He could hit a line like a stone from a slingshot, skirt the ends, pass, kick, receive. But he was something more than a great mechanical player. He had spirit. He could transfer it to others.

In short, Cliff Battles was the spark-plug of the Redskins. They are going

to miss him; more than they believe possible now. Still, they're powerful enough, even without him, to give anybody trouble. I'm not underestimating them.

A separated shoulder put Baugh out of action in the very first game of the season. That hurts, too.

As a whole, the league should be better rounded than ever. The Chicago Bears and Green Bay Packers always come up with plenty. Last year the Bears won the Western Division championship, and if it had not been for Baugh's uncanny passing and Battles' Trojan work, the Chicagoans would probably have won the National title. There is no reason why they should not be as strong this year, so I'm looking for a storm cloud that may develop into a real tornado right out of the West.

Bolstered Tail-Enders

This is true all down the line. Detroit and Chicago's Cardinals have added strength. Even the Philadelphia Eagles will furnish more contention than they have since coming into big time.

Coach Bert Bell has plenty of added strength. It appears that Dave Smukler's trick knee is all right again. That will help them no end, for Smukler is a fine back. I've seen him do some great things, and given the proper blocking, he is a hard man to stop.

The Eagles were the tail-enders last year. They surprised us by beating us in the first game of the season in 1937, but after that were never as impressive. Bell, though, has stiffened the points that were his biggest trial last season—the tackle spots. A team can't be great without a strong line, and a line can't be strong unless the tackles are top notch. In getting Drew Ellis, who was All-American at Texas Christian in 1935, and Ray Keeling, the two-hundred-and-sixty-six pound giant from Texas University, he has bolstered his weaknesses.

His team proved that conclusively in the opening game with the champion Washington Redskins, which it lost 26 to 23 in the last moments of play through a 62-yard forward pass.

The Five-Man Line

While there is much talk in college and professional circles about its efficacy, the five-man line is still largely a myth.

A year ago, when Coach Homer Norton brought his Texas A & M team to New York, the five-man line was given a lot of advance publicity. Norton, one of the most astute coaches in the game, was among the first men in football circles to employ the abbreviated forward wall.

The five-man line is practicable only against a team that passes on three out of four downs. In Texas the five-man line was the only defense that could possibly stop the wild use of the overhead attack. When a team has a good passer, and can afford to send two ends and three backs down the field, you need at least five men to defend against the pass.

No five-man line can stand up against a strong running attack. There must be seven men on the offending line, and seven men can easily play hob with five. The five-man line necessitates large gaps along the forward wall which are inviting to a rugged fullback who knows how to leave his mark and hit hard.

Whatever success the five-man line has had so far, in the comparatively few instances in which it has been used, has been due to its novelty. In professional football, where the pass is used on every possible occasion, the five-man line has a better chance to flourish. Even here, though, its effectiveness of necessity must be brief, because powerful backs will rip any five-man line wide apart.

This season, with a noticeable return to the old smashing fullback style of play, the five-man line will be used less than it was last year. There is nothing like a sudden thrust inside tackle to close up any widely distributed forward wall.

Any coach will admit the usefulness of a five-man line in certain sections of the field, as when you have the opposition backed up to its own goal line, or when the opposing team is passing desperately in the closing minutes of play. But at such moments any defense

can well afford to be generous and spread itself. As a regular diet, though, the five-man line will be a rarity this season.

But, no matter what happens on the field, I'm in favor of competition. The stronger the contention, the greater the interest of the public. They do not want one-sided races. They do not like one team to dominate the situation. I hardly think they'll see anything like that this year. While my feeling is that the New York Football Giants are good enough to hold their own with anybody, I'm not claiming championships.

Words never won games yet, and it's a sort of tradition in football to pull a long face about your team, anyway. I am not doing that, but I think the professional parade will be a close, well matched one. It's bound to be, and if we fight our way through to the top of the pack it's a proud man I'll be. We have a combination of youth and experience that seems ideal.

The game, as a whole, is getting bet-

ter; faster, more interesting. I believe the few differences in rules between the pro and college game reacts favorably to us. We have caught the fancy of the public with our perfectly balanced style of play and fighting spirit. Naturally, that pleases me. I'm a professional, the manager of a professional team that is judged on the reaction at the box office as well as the number of games we chalk up in the victory column.

We have taken hold because we have given the public what it wants—a clean, fast, dramatic game by men who are experts at it. Nowhere in the country is the enthusiasm for professional football greater than in New York. So, if it's in the wood we're going to give the metropolis a National championship to carry through 1939.

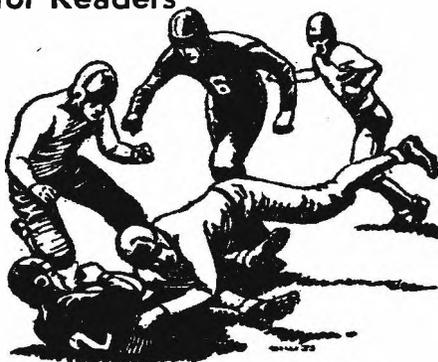
This is not a promise, because no one knows what Fate will bring. But I can speak for every man on my squad when I say we'll be fighting as hard as we can to be at the head of the pro parade when it finally comes to a halt.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR SPORTS?

A Special Quiz for Readers

HERE are some problems we've dug up to test your knowledge of the sports world. Wrestle with them for a while and don't pole-vault for the answers—but if you strike out or don't think you've hit the bull's-eye, then take a hurdle over to Page 113 for the correct answers.

- If you were the referee of a pro football game, and the quarterback of the offensive team received the ball, ran to a point a yard behind the line of scrimmage and then threw a forward pass to one of his ends for a touchdown, what would you do?
 - Permit the score to stand?
 - Penalize the offensive team ten yards for throwing a forward pass from less than five yards behind the line of scrimmage?
 - Penalize them fifteen yards?
 - Award the ball to the defensive team?
- Only two men in baseball history, playing in 100 or more games, have ever hit .400 or over in three seasons. They are:
 - Babe Ruth;
 - Tris Speaker;
 - Ty Cobb;
 - George Sisler;
 - Harry Heilmann;
 - Nap Lajoie;
 - Rogers Hornsby;
 - William Terry.
- Pierre Etchebaster is a name well known in:
 - Jai-alai;
 - swimming;
 - court tennis;
 - billiards.
- In rowing, the No. 1 man in a shell is:
 - The captain;
 - the coxswain;
 - the stroke;
 - the bow.
- The 150-pound man who played end for Yale, and about whom it was said not a yard was gained around his end, was:
 - Ted Coy;
 - Larry Kelley;
 - Frank Hinkey;
 - Albie Booth.



SLIDE, FATE, SLIDE!

Umpire Regan Finds Out That
There's More to His Job
Than Calling Balls
and Strikes!

By
**ROBERT SIDNEY
BOWEN**

*Author of "Ghost Hitter," "The Glory Glider,"
etc.*

WHENEVER I go to a ball game and listen to the hair-curling razz that the umpire gets on a close decision, it's about all I can do to stop myself from ripping up a chair and swinging it left and right at the belly-aching fans. You see, I used to earn my living with a mask and chest protector, and I know how darn hard an umpire tries to be fair and call them as he sees them. So that kind of razzing used to burn me up, and it still does. No matter how hard an umpire tries to be honest there's always somebody who's sure you called a play wrong on purpose.

As a matter of fact, taking a page out of my own book of experience, there is a very prominent man in our government who'll believe to his dying day that I called a play wrong for a definite reason. But, so help me, when it's my turn to face Saint Peter I'll still swear that I called the play as I saw it.

Here is what happened.

It was during spring training some years ago, and I had been assigned to the Cleveland Bears to work in their



*Trent whacked a whistling single dead over
third base*

exhibition games as the team made its way north. The Bears had a problem that year in regard to third base. An automobile accident the fall before had removed their veteran third sacker, Bill Cox, permanently. You can't play the hot corner very well on a wooden leg.

Well, anyway, the berth at third base was wide open when the spring training season started. By the time I reported south for umpire duty Manager Steve Hall's selection had narrowed down to two young lads fresh up from the Texas league. One was a tall, good looking kid by the name of Paul Trent. The other was named Frank Arron, and he was built more on the chunky side.

Which would get the job was the talk of the camp when I arrived, and so I took a look for myself. Frankly, it looked like a toss-up to me. Both kids tried hard and were on their toes all the time. Arron was a shade the slower of the two, but he equalled things up by his steadiness around the bag. The Trent kid was inclined to take chances, but when he did make good on them he made good in a big way.

However, there was one thing about both of them that veteran baseball eyes couldn't help seeing. This was that neither of them showed any sign of going on to greatness once they had made the big time. In other words, they were a couple of fair to middling ball players, and that was about all. The best of the crop available for the job, but neither of them the spring training flash type that sent the ball scribes racing for the telegraph offices.

On the field they were about even, but off the field my money was on Trent. I got to know him fairly well and although I didn't say so to him—or to anybody else, for that matter—I sort of hoped Hall would eventually pick him. Now don't get me wrong, Arron was a good enough kid, but there was something about young Trent that made me cotton to him.

ONE day when it wasn't my turn to go out to the park, and I was killing time hanging around the hotel lobby, a fine looking old gentleman came over to me and bowed.

"You're Mr. Regan, the umpire?" he asked.

"That's right, sir," I admitted.

"My son's spoken of you, Mr. Regan," he said. "I'm very glad to meet you. I'm Senator Trent."

That the kid was an honest to goodness senator's son handed me a jolt for a second, but I didn't show it.

"Glad to meet you, Senator," I said. "Down to watch your son try to make the club?"

"We come south every year, anyway," he said sort of absently. Then, giving me a keen look: "You've been around baseball quite awhile, haven't you, Mr. Regan?"

I admitted I had, and he cleared his throat.

"Tell me," he asked, "what is your opinion of my son, Paul?"

"A fine lad, Senator," I said, and called it honest.

"No," he shook his head. "I mean, as a ball player. Do you think he will become a member of the Cleveland Bears?"

This was crowding the plate, and I backed off.

"You should ask Manager Hall that one, Senator," I said. "I'm only an umpire."

He gave me the kind of a look he might give some one of the opposition who had made an obvious crack.

"Naturally, I realize that," he said stiffly. "I'm simply asking for personal opinion. Frankly, I do not hope that my son makes the team. However, it has been his desire for a long time to try, and I do not want to take steps to deny him the opportunity. In fact, Mr. Regan, my son and I have recently reached a decision. If he makes the Bears' team this year, well and good. But, if he fails, if he is sent back to a small club for further seasoning again, he has agreed to abandon his idea of becoming a big league player, and to follow me into political life."

"And you don't want him to be a big leaguer?" I echoed. "Why?"

"That is both easy, and difficult to answer," he said. "Easy, because I'd like to have him in politics with me. He has been trained for such a career, and is the type for it. Not because I'm his

father, mind, but he would be a good man in public office."

"And it's difficult?" I encouraged when he paused.

He screwed up his face a bit and drew designs on the carpet with the end of his cane before he continued.

"I had a brother who once tried out for baseball," he said slowly. "He was neither good nor bad as a player. As a result he more or less clung to the fringes for a few years and then was finally dropped. Really wasted years, if you get what I mean. I'd move heaven and earth to prevent such a thing happening to my son. I've seen him play, naturally, and although I'm no judge of a player I fail to see the potential greatness in his ball playing that I see in his political attributes. That's why I'm asking you, whom he regards as a friend, what you think, Mr. Regan?"

THERE I was cornered again.

"I don't like to call a decision on that one, Senator," I said slowly. "You can't tell about a young ball player. Your son may never set the league on fire, but that doesn't mean he won't make the Bears."

"Ah!" he practically leaped on me. "Then you do consider him just another average ball player, eh?"

"I didn't say that," I told him quickly. "I understand how you feel, but I know how he feels, too. I don't want to say anything that would affect things one way or the other. Nothing I could say would, anyway."

He looked plenty sad. It was almost as if he'd hoped that I see things his way, and maybe fix it with Hall to have the kid packed back to the Texas league, so he'd give up base ball and really go places as a politician.

"I quite understand, Mr. Regan," he finally smiled. "And thank you for letting me ask the questions. It has been a pleasure meeting you."

With that he walked off, leaving me feeling kind of sad, believe it or not. Maybe it was because I had a hunch that Paul Trent would probably duplicate the big league experience of his uncle even if he did make the third base berth on the Bears. But, of course,

I couldn't have told the old man that in justice to the kid. Hell, I'm always right on a baseball field, but a hotel lobby is something else again, if you get what I mean.

But meeting the old gent and talking with him sort of got me. I didn't sleep so good that night. For some cockeyed reason I got to thinking that maybe the kid's destiny had been right in my hands in the hotel lobby, and that I'd dropped it like a hot cake. With his old man to back him, he'd go far in politics. Even I realized he was the type, though knowing him only a short time.

If he stuck to baseball, in a few years he might be right back where he started. Yeah, the thing that kept me awake was, should I kept my hands off, and my mouth shut, or should I have a little aside talk with Clip Hall, who was one of my best friends, even if he was a ball club manager?

I MADE my decision the very next day. Rather, the kid himself made it for me. Young Arron was playing third that day, and Trent was on the bench. It was another day off for me, so I was parked on the Bears' bench watching the practice game myself. Along about the sixth inning or so Trent slid down to where I was sitting.

"Dad was telling me he had a talk with you yesterday," he said, and grinned.

"That's right," I grunted, and watched the umpteenth homer go sailing into the lagoon close by right field. "We spoke a few words. A fine man, your father."

"Dad's okay," he nodded. "He'd be tickled pink if I went into politics. I guess I'd like to tickle him pink, too. And there's no doubt that I'd like it, myself. Only . . ."

"Only what?" I prompted after a pause.

"Only I've got to make sure about this base ball angle," the kid said, deadly serious. "If I can make the grade, I want to—more than anything else, I guess. But if I can't it'll still be okay. I'll have no kick and no regrets. But I do want a fair chance."

The way he spoke the last made me

straighten up a bit and look at him.

"Maybe I don't get that," I said.

"No offense," he said quickly. "It's—well, Dad can sway the Pyramids when he bears down on his oratory. And, you're a close friend of Manager Hall. So—"

"You can stop right there, kid," I cut in and poked a finger at him. "I like you, see? But I'm not having a thing to do with whether you make the Bears, or don't make them. You're right on your own about that, and no matter what happens there'll not be me to thank or curse for a single thing. And that's flat."

"And that's oke by me," he grinned, getting up. "All I wanted to know. Thanks."

So that was that.

For the next few days training went on as usual, both Trent and Arron getting an equal share of work playing the hot corner. And as I watched both of them I was glad it would be Clip Hall and not me that made the final decision. I mean there just wasn't any choice.

And then some of the other clubs training nearby came over to our back yard for the inter-club exhibition games. Arron worked in the first against the Boston Eagles. He collected himself two hits, turned one of them into a run, and played errorless ball in the field.

Two days later the Bears met the Phillies, and Trent took third. He got three hits, knocked in two runs, and made one bad play that went for an error. Had he made that one play good, he would have been the hero of the game. So when the Detroit Lions came to town the two kids were still even up in their chances on staying with the club.

The morning of the Lions' game I learned that Hall was going to decide one way or the other before nightfall. Arron was to play the first half of the game, Trent the last half. As a matter of fact, I heard Hall telling both kids that this game was it, as far as they were concerned.

When I was picked later to work behind the plate I darn near begged off. I don't know why I didn't want to work, but it was as though I would be

on the spot along with those two kids. Just what kind of a spot was something else that I couldn't figure out.

ANYWAY, that's the way I felt, but by game time the feeling had worn off. I took my stand behind the plate with no more qualms than I ever had. Buck Higgins was pitching for the Lions, and Speed Masters was shooting them across for the Bears. Both were number one twirlers, and even though it was just another spring practice game the chips were down.

Higgins and Masters hated each other, and both teams would fight to the death for anything they could get. In other words, it was scheduled to be the kind of a game that was anything but an umpire's dream.

For the first two innings the other eight players on each team could have gone to a movie and they'd never have been missed. Yeah, it was six straight strike-outs for both Higgins and Masters. In the first of the third, though, the Lions' first baseman rammed a scratch single just over second. The next Lion up bunted toward third.

Young Arron came in fast and got hold of the ball without any trouble but his throw to second was bad. They made the force out all right, but a good throw might have resulted in a double play. However, no real damage was done. The next Lion fanned, and the next popped out to Masters.

In the last half of the inning Arron came up for his crack at the ball. Maybe he knew that he had to do something to wipe out the memory of that bad throw and said a few beads while he was waiting for the first pitch. Anyway, he connected on the very first one, driving a clean single to right center. Another scratch single got him down to second.

As I saw it he could have gone on to third and maybe made it. But the kid used good judgment in not taking the chance, particularly when being tagged out would have made him look very bad. He stayed at second, and at second he died, because Higgins pulled up his socks and put on the pressure.

That was the last chance young Arron got to do anything in that game.

In the fourth the Lions pushed over a run to take a one-to-nothing lead. But the ball didn't come into Arron's territory at any time. And in the middle of the fifth young Paul Trent took his place.

Up to then I had been keeping my eyes on the ball players and the field. But while Masters warmed up for the last of the fifth I took a casual look at the crowd. There were no stands at that field, so the spectators had been roped off. They were the usual Florida sunshine crowd complete with cameras and everything.

I just gave them a look, and started to put on my mask when I spotted a familiar figure. Yeah, it was Senator Trent, and I suppose the lady with him was Mrs. Trent. He was looking toward third base when I saw him, so I hastily shoved on my mask for fear that he might turn and catch my eye. Just why I did that is something else I couldn't figure out at the time.

A couple of minutes later the game got under way again. Some people laugh at such a thing as fate, but me—I believe in it right down to the ground. For two innings Masters and Higgins pitched flawless ball.

Then in the next inning a Lion poked a scratch single over second, just like that first Lion had. Yeah, and so help me, the next batter bunted toward third. In came young Trent, scooped up the ball and whanged it to second. The force out was made, but the throw wasn't good enough to make it a double play. That was tit for tat, and how.

HOWEVER, when Trent came up for his first turn at the bat he broke the deadlock between himself and Arron. He struck out like a swinging gate. Honest, that kid was so eager his bat didn't come within two inches of the ball.

I didn't look at him as he turned and walked back to the bench. I didn't dare to because I felt sure he could have read in my eyes that I figured he'd kicked his chance right out from under him. At least Arron had collected himself a single. And Clip Hall was the kind of a manager who would for-

get all about a fielding error if you gave him a hit or a run.

But, of course, Hall kept him in there. He didn't take him out no matter what he'd decided in his mind. And Trent got another chance at the plate in the last of the ninth. The score was still one to nothing in favor of the Lions, and both clubs were bearing down as though victory meant the World Series.

The First Bear up sent a dribbler between second and first. The second sacker could have gobbled it up with his eyes closed. But he played it at top speed, with the result that the runner quit cold when he was still only half way to the bag. And then Trent came walking up to the plate.

He leaned into the very first pitch and whacked a whistling single dead over third base. If the Lions' left fielder hadn't had wings on his feet the hit would have gone for two bags. Trent didn't try to stretch it for the very simple reason that everybody in the park, including himself, saw that he wouldn't have stood a hope in hell.

Well, it was one down, one on, and a Bear heavy hitter at the plate. Higgins got two strikes on him, and then let loose with a wild pitch. Trent could have gone down to second on his hands and knees, but he did it on his feet instead. But that was as far as he got for the moment. The batter tried to whale the next pitch right out into the ocean. All he did was create a miniature cyclone with his swinging bat. Out two!

Viewing the next Bear batter with the old professional eye, I figured that all left for me to do was to call three strikes. Then I could call it a day's work done and leave the rest of the worrying to Clip Hall.

However, the well laid plans of mice and men often go screwy, as the saying is. Or maybe Higgins suddenly got kind-hearted without realizing it. He pushed a ball over the plate for his first pitch that even I could have belted, mask, protector, and all. And the lad at the plate did just that. He cracked a smacking single out between center and right.

At the crack of the bat everybody

went into motion. The Lions' fielders came hell for leather over after the ball. Higgins came pounding in to back up the catcher, just in case. And young Trent dug in his spikes and flashed for third. Well, the Lions' center fielder must have been Jessie Owens in disguise. He covered ground in less time than it takes to tell about it, scooped up the ball and spun around to heave it in toward the plate. Young Trent was just rounding third. I groaned aloud as I saw him come racing in toward home.

IUT the corner of my eye I saw the Bears' third base coach try to wave the kid back, but I guess Trent didn't see him. Or maybe he was just too damn eager to make up for striking out. Anyway, when I saw that he was going to try to beat the throw I felt suddenly queer in the old stomach. From experience I knew that it was going to be just about one of the closest plays I'd ever had to call. Yeah, and it was up to me to call it one way or the other on young Trent of all people. If the kid made it, he'd be the hero of the game, even if the Bears eventually did lose. And if he didn't, he'd be the goat sure as the Lord made little apples.

I mean, it was that kind of a play. A daring one that gets you acclaim if you're successful, and gets you hell if you fail. In other words, if I called Trent safe he'd get the berth at third. If I called him out, he was through in the big leagues. Did I want to see the kid stagger through a few years in baseball, and then be canned, as he undoubtedly would be? Yet, there was a chance he might make good in a big way. Or did I want to kill his hopes as far as ball playing was concerned, making his old man happy?

Yeah, I was on a spot. And I don't mind admitting that as Trent came sprinting down the third base path, while the ball came whistling in from short center, I prayed that he would trip and go flat, or else the ball would sail by a couple of miles wide—anything to let me skip calling a play that was going to be hairline close.

But there was no such luck for me.

Both Trent and the ball arrived together. Trent hit the dirt fast, and the Lions catcher snaked the ball on the first bounce, whirled and slapped it down. I was right over the play and saw the ball smack down on the kid. I call them as I see them, Mister. I raised the old thumb, and the kid was out.

For a couple of seconds he lay there in the cloud of dust, looking up into my face. Then slowly he got to his feet, a sort of sad half-grin on his face.

"Okay," he said in a low voice. "What the hell's the use of arguing? You've called it."

"As I saw it, kid," I said evenly.

He didn't make any reply to that. Instead, he made a half-hearted swipe at the dust on his uniform and walked to the bench. The last I saw of him was when he climbed into the bus that took the team back to the hotel. I never did see him again. But I did hear from his old man. About a couple of weeks later I received a letter with six inches of movie camera film enclosed. Here's the letter:

Dear Mr. Regan:

I wish to thank you from the bottom of my heart for doing something which in my opinion required a very high type of courage. I realize that men in your profession have a code of their own, and for that very reason I doubly admire you for what you did. Though you did not say so, that day in the hotel lobby, I somehow felt that deep down you understood how sincerely I wished only happiness for my son. And when I developed the few feet of motion pictures my wife and I had taken of the game I realized at once that you really had decided to help a most grateful father.

In sincerest gratitude,
Senator Charles Trent.

Yeah, the strip of film enclosed showed the kid sliding into the plate. His ankles were over it, but the Lions' catcher hadn't yet nailed him with the ball. I never did try to find out, but I've always believed that the kid had his old man stick in that bit of film so that I could see for myself.

And that's how it goes. Be honest, and there'll always be somebody who takes it with a wink. So, better go easy with your lip at the next umpire you razz. I might be the lad in the seat next to you!

Here's the Football Situation **WAY DOWN SOUTH**

Analyzed by

FRANK THOMAS

Coach of University of Alabama

as told to

RAY BARBUTI

Former Olympic Champion and Syracuse
Football Captain

NORTH—South—East—West—the thwack of leather against pigskin brings cheering crowds to their feet in high-pitched excitement. Football is in the air—and when the autumnal season rolls around, the gridiron game is still undoubtedly the one that attracts the greatest interest of the American sports fans all over the country.

Football arrived in the South later than in any other section—but once it took a firm foothold, it did so with a bang! It's a long cry from the days when the University of Virginia, back in 1890, sent a team North to play against Princeton. The North set the South back then to a tune of 115-0!

It's true that sixteen years later the late Dan McGugin brought Southern football into the limelight briefly with his great Vanderbilt team which defeated the famous Carlisle Indians of Pennsylvania. And after the War, little Centre College, with its All-American quarterback, Bo McMillan, now head coach of Indiana, created a sensation by knocking over a number of top-flight teams, including Harvard. But despite these flashes of brilliance, and a few sectionally great games, the South hadn't really arrived nationally.

Breaking Into Big-Time

It wasn't until 1925 that the South could be said to have broken into foot-





Frank Thomas



ball big-time. That was the year of the great Alabama Crimson Tide coached by Wallace Wade, Duke's present mentor, which was invited to the Rose Bowl. Alabama defeated the University of Washington, the Pacific Coast Conference champion, and reigned supreme over U. S. football. Since then, Southern football has proved its mettle repeatedly. It has sent powerful teams to the Rose Bowl seven times in the twelve intervening years; teams good enough to be invited to play the cream of the West's crop. The South has begun to dominate the football map after years of obscurity.

Of course, there are a number of factors responsible for the tremendous development of Southern football, but one of the chief reasons, I believe, is the greater number of good high school teams, better coached. That's very important, you know. It's a tough problem for a college coach to try to turn

green players into a championship team. By the time he's taught them the fundamentals of the game, they're about ready to graduate. This way, we are provided with more seasoned players to work with. Spring practice has naturally aided in this respect, too. We've been given more of a chance to whip a squad into shape.

Football in the South

There's one question I've been asked innumerable times. How does Southern football differ from football in other sections of the country? Well, that's a tough one to answer, since it's so general. Of course, the South is noted for its open, passing game, but when you come right down to it, football is football wherever it's played. A coach has plenty of problems in any section of the country, and when he's playing against any specific team, those problems become definitely pointed. You have to

Especially Written for THRILLING SPORTS

be on your toes in football today with all its modern variations, and meet strategy with strategy.

As far as the players are concerned, it takes plenty of vitality and endurance to play football anywhere—whether it be the high temperatures of the South or in the lower temperatures of the North. And the outstanding quality in any football player is still—gumption, and plenty of it!

There is one thing that the Northern spectator will immediately notice, though, as marking a distinct difference in football in the South. It's frequently played down here under a hot sun, with the fans sitting in shirt sleeves!

Southeastern Conference Hopes

But any way you take it, Southern football wins respect from coast to coast. And there are a number of fine teams this year for the eyes of the nation to center on. In the Southeastern Conference, of which Alabama is a member, there should be some extremely interesting battles.

Louisiana State has a fine squad and should come through on top this year, with Bussey shining in a star backfield. Vanderbilt, Tulane and Auburn also look very capable and will be dangerous opponents to face. But Tennessee, I think, will prove to be the dark horse of the Southeastern Conference, and might upset all calculations. With the aid of Bob Cafego and several of last year's sophomores who weren't quite experienced enough, Coach Neyland's squad should go places.

The Crimson Tide

Although Alabama has been given the No. 1 spot by everybody in this section, we hardly hope to be as good as last season. We'll have a good team, all right, but the probabilities are that our 1938 record will not be on a par with last year's. We started off on the right foot, fortunately, by defeating Southern California, regarded as potential winners of the Pacific Coast Conference championship. That was a victory we wanted badly. It makes up somewhat for last year's defeat at the hands of the 1937 Coast Conference champs, California, in the Rose Bowl game; a defeat due mostly, I feel, to

unfortunate fumbles at critical points in the game.

Nevertheless, it will take some going to equal last year's team. Alabama during its 1937 season was undefeated and untied, and piled up 225 points to 20 for its nine opponents! That's a mighty good record for any team.

Some Kicking!

There were some pretty close shaves last season, I must admit. We had several games of the type which drive spectators wild—to say nothing of the coach! In the Tulane game, Sandy Sanford, our sophomore end and great field-goal kicker, booted a last-minute score over the goal posts, giving us the victory by the slim margin of 9-6!

Then in the last game, the one with Vanderbilt, we were behind, 7-6, at the close of the fourth quarter, and things looked bad. The ball was in our possession on Vanderbilt's 14-yard line, but over at the edge of the field and in danger of being lost on downs. There was nothing to do but take a chance. I called on Sandy Sanford again. . . .

It was a 45-degree angle—a difficult place-kick—but that youngster evidently didn't find it so. He calmly kicked the pigskin right between the goal posts, giving us the victory over Vanderbilt, 9-7, and putting Alabama in the Rose Bowl! Sandy's teammates were all so enthusiastic and thankful afterward that they gathered around him in a body and swore that they would all marry him if he could cook!

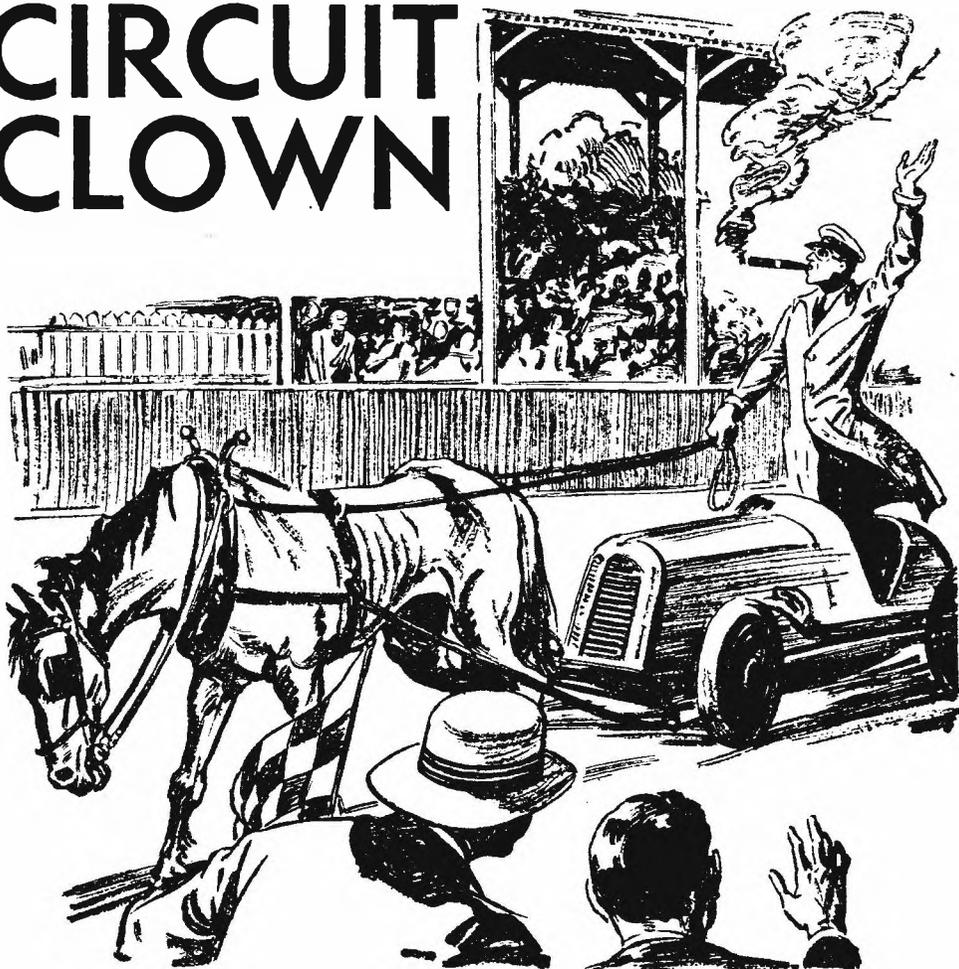
Unpredictable Predictions

To get back to this season there's the perennial pastime of picking teams in the order of their finish. How will Alabama wind up the season? How will the other teams in the Southeastern Conference finish? Well, that's a mighty tough problem, but I'll take a shot at it in a general way.

The battle for honors should be confined, I think, to Louisiana State, Tennessee, Vanderbilt, Alabama and Tulane, pretty much in that order. In the second half of the first ten should come Auburn, Georgia Tech., Georgia, Mississippi and Mississippi State.

But don't forget one thing! You never can tell about football!

CIRCUIT CLOWN



A decrepit horse in the autumn of his life was towing the midget jalopy past the grandstand

Midget Autos Sometimes Carry Men with Big Hearts and Rare Brands of Humor!

By LEONARD LUPTON

Author of "Money Driver," "Spinning Wheel," etc.

THE crowd of several thousand people surged upward suddenly and a good part of the women in the crowd covered their eyes and screamed. That passing second, when every gaze within range focused on the midget racing car, saw the crowd caught between horror and hysteria—and then suddenly, laughter whipped both ugly emotions.

The midget car, which had been ca-

reening wildly along the straightaway, dodging in and out like a trooper chasing a Sunday driver, and leaving behind it billowing rolls of hideous, black smoke, now slammed against a convenient bale of hay, and was still. But not so its driver!

From the cramped confines of the little car, a towering bulk of a man popped into view. Dressed in a long dust-coat, and wearing the cap and goggles of a

bygone era, this stoutish gent very carefully removed from between his teeth, the cigar which he had been smoking *a la* Barney Oldfield. But Oldfield, in his heyday, had never smoked such a cigar as this. It was a cigar to end all cigar smoking. It was as long as a hammer handle and rounder than most, and from the lighted end poured enough volume and intensity of smoke to suit a sky writer.

Very carefully placing this monstrous weed on the ground, the midget car pilot snuffed the end, and then tucked the remaining bulk down into a plaid vest pocket. Having attended to this detail, the driver reached for a handkerchief to mop a fevered brow. The handkerchief was a red-checked tablecloth, and those who could see it, howled appreciatively.

Having secreted that vast yardage around his person again with a deft magician's touch, the pilot proceeded to raise the hood of the car and examine the motor. And then, as the crowd roared, the unsmiling pilot removed a cord from about his neck, wrapped it carefully about the top of the object beneath the hood—and yanked.

Most of the audience had seen someone, at sometime, try to start an outboard motor and could anticipate what was coming. Undaunted by failure, the pilot tried again; but the fifth or sixth consecutive and unsuccessful try found his temper shortening. The seventh assault upon the motor was a grim and terrible business—and as the crowd hooted its mirth to the heavens, the pilot flung the starting cord away and jumped up and down in an outburst as violent as anything ever accomplished by a professional temper-loser.

In a final outburst of rage the pilot kicked his car with a vicious intensity known to most motorists at some time in their lives. The success of this particular kick was startling. The car started to move, picked up acceleration and, driverless, rolled along the edge of the track.

The pilot sprinted after it. He made the camel-back with a valiant try—and the front wheels lifted off the ground. Moving upward rapidly over the camel-back, the pilot did a chute-the-chutes

into the bucket seat, and set out in a final burst of determination, to win this race at all odds.

But so nicely was the whole thing timed, that just as the pilot got his hard-luck jalopy back on the track and set to go, the leaders came down on the flag, jockeying, and a bright blue midget car, several laps to the good, thundered over, the winner.

One by one the others came in and the hard-luck driver disappeared at the far end of the field, rolled down the back stretch—and stalled. The crowd waited, and then suddenly a great hoot of laughter and applause greeted the most unusual clowning ever seen on a midget race track.

The crowd, completely mad, was up on its feet paying the homage of cheers and applause to the hard-luck driver of the hard-luck midget car. They ignored the winner and the place and show cars. They were ignoring everything by this time, except the pilot who was now coming slowly down past the grandstand.

The crackpot driver had had a decrepit, work-worn horse hidden at the far turn, and now this grayish animal, in the autumn of his life, was towing that midget jalopy down past the stands while the driver stood on the seat and bowed to the fans!

AS the laughter and applause boomed through those stands, Harold Hanson, whose business was booking acts of all kinds into night clubs, fairs, and expositions, turned to his companions and said:

"You see, gentlemen? He steals the show. This is a good example of what happens every time he puts on the act. He is the new sensation of outdoor show business, and if you are planning midget races for your fair this year, Mr. Ferenec, you have in Bud Bensen, the circuit clown, one of this year's outstanding attractions!"

Charles Ferenec, head of the local county fair, was a capable executive, not given to much talking. He turned now to the two men with him.

"You've seen it, gentlemen," he said. "What do you think? Should we have midget races? And should we book

that clown? Or don't you think—" he stopped short on the query and stared hard at the accident-scarred features of Doc Skeeter, who had learned his trade on the brick saucer at Indianapolis. Skeeter's face was set in amazement.

"What's the matter, Doc?" Ferenc asked.

Doc Skeeter shook his head. He ran his hand over his chin and shifted the soggy cigar in his teeth.

"Just kind of a shock," he said. "Maybe you guys think it's funny, but I don't. Do you know, any of you, who that clown really is—or was?"

Harold Hanson, the booker, replied. "Personally, I don't. Fellow you've met somewhere before, Doc?"

"Someone I've met—yeah, you might say that!" Doc's lean face, with the white scars showing against the tan of it, twisted grimly. "He happens to be a guy by the name of Bensen, all right. But they didn't call him Bud Bensen then. They called him Leadfoot. Does that click?"

The others shook their heads; said that it didn't.

"You'd remember a Lindbergh or an Ederle or a Man-O-War—all champs in their own class," Doc said bitterly, "but you'd forget the guy who was tops in my racket! Bensen was a champ in the big buggies, but after the last hospitalization he went through, he disappeared. And now he pops in with these damned midgets. It's a hard thing to believe."

"Nerve go back on him?" Ferenc asked.

Doc Skeeter spat.

"You've been readin' books?" he asked savagely.

Hanson, who was trying to do business with Ferenc, interrupted.

"Shut up, Doc, you're talking to a gentleman now. What do we care who or what Bensen used to be? Right now he is the A-1 clown in the outdoor field, and as I've been telling Mr. Ferenc—"

Charles Ferenc was looking shrewdly at Doc Skeeter. He turned to Hanson, then.

"I think I'll take the act," he came to a quick decision, "if the committee will agree."

Hanson, knowing Ferenc's power, grinned with pleasure and appreciation.

"You'll have the most sensational feature you've ever put on," he promised.

Bud Bensen wiped the makeup from his face. The smile came off with the grease. Looking in the small mirror before him, the clown grimaced. Outside he could still hear the faint echo of that thundering applause, and the light in the eyes reflected back at him was sardonic.

"What a lousy, lousy, damned racket," Bud Bensen said. He pushed his hands through his black hair in which the gray streak stood out no matter how he brushed it. And the lines around his cold, blue eyes were as old as that gray streak. He looked more than twenty-eight by almost twenty years. Hospitals, often enough and long enough, can take it out of a guy.

As he got out of his grotesque clothes and zippered a lumberjacket into place, Bensen's eyes were still sardonic. He threw away the treated, patented cigar which had laid the fog of smoke. He folded the plaid vest. He slammed the cap and the old-fashioned touring goggles, and the ancient linen duster into a bag. He crammed the tablecloth handkerchief on top of them, and before he closed the bag he made a final gesture. He took three fingers, twice, of the best whiskey money could buy. And then he jammed the bottle down in on the top of the props for his act and snapped the bag shut.

HE smacked his lips.

"Well, Foley," he said to his mechanic, "another day another drink."

Foley said: "You mean another dollar."

"I guess I know what I mean," Bensen said. His lips twisted. "Didn't you see Hanson up there in the box, booking us into the fair-grounds? That was Ferenc with him—big shot of the County Fair Committee. And the two guys with Ferenc and Hanson were a couple of fellows I used to know. One was Wheelan, who used to be a race promoter; and the other's name is Doc Skeeter. There's a guy, Foley, who is worth what I'm getting; and why?"

"All right," said Foley. "Why?"

"Because he could take one of these damned midgets and barrel it around that track out there in a way to bring those hicks to their feet screaming, just the way they screamed at me—only different. Do you see, Foley?"

"You mean he'd *thrill* 'em?" asked Foley. He scratched his tow head and stared at Bensen from devoted, cow-like eyes.

"Yeah," said Bensen, "thrill 'em is right."

"You mean he ain't got no nerves?" said Foley. He added quickly: "Not that you couldn't do it, too, Bud! You ain't afraid. I know that. I know that you ain't afraid."

Bensen lit a normal looking cigar. His teeth marked it deeply.

"Very sure of that, hey, Foley? Well, it's the truth. I'm *not* afraid. But I'm a business man; an actor. A regular damned trouper, that's what I am. Up in the chips, see? A comedian, along with all those guys on the radio. But you know what, Foley?"

Foley picked up the bag. He started toward the door. The truck, painted bright red, was outside; and the midget was chocked in place on the truck. Foley threw Bensen's bag in the back of the truck and then at last he spoke. He spoke without looking at Bensen, while he was getting behind the wheel of the truck.

"Yeah, I know what, Bud. You'd give the whole business a toss-over for the thrill of barreling around there in real competition. You'd give up your rep and your money for the sake of hearing them cheer you just once more, instead of laugh at you!"

Bensen got in beside Foley, and the truck started to roll.

"I would like hell," Bensen jeered. But it didn't sound right, even to himself. Dumb as he was, Foley had a sort of animal-intuition. The accuracy with which Foley could read his thoughts, sometimes scared Bud Bensen. It seemed to Bud that there was no privacy left in the world; he had to be almost careful of what he *thought*. Bud had a hunch that some day this intuition, this mind-reading of Foley's, was going to get them both in a jam.

Foley was swinging the truck out onto the macadam now, nosing toward town, and as he made the turn he spoke again. "I wonder what this Doc Skeeter was doing, hanging out there in the stand with Ferenec and the booking agent. Maybe he's going to have a crack at this midget racing, after all."

Bensen didn't say a word. But he batted his eyes. He had been thinking exactly the same thing!

The fair was more colorful than ever that year, and everywhere a person looked there were posters up advertising Bud Bensen's act. There was a write-up in the local paper every night for a week; and the county weeklies gave it a spread, too. At the bottom of most reports there was a supplementary paragraph which read: "In addition to this feature attraction of Bud Bensen's act, the Saturday midget auto races will also have as an extra attraction, the performance of Doc Skeeter, famous speedway king, who will enter the ranks of midget racers for the first time on this important occasion."

FOLEY was working on the midget car when Bud Bensen walked in with the first newspaper account. The midget was really powered with an out-board motor, and Foley was swearing, as usual, as he tinkered it to peak performance for Saturday's act. Foley never spoke of the attraction as a race; it was always an act. And Bensen had come to think of it that way, too.

"What have you got?" Foley said, glancing at the paper in Bensen's hand.

"Doc Skeeter is in," Bensen said.

"That guy we saw in the stands that day? I figured something like that. Ever bad blood between you two?"

"Nix on that. I hardly knew the guy, and never got a chance to see much of him when we were riding the big cars."

"He was mostly behind you somewhere, huh?" Foley said.

Bensen jerked his neck out of his collar impatiently. He had just been thinking *that*, too.

"Foley," he said queerly, "sometimes I wonder. Have you got second sight? I mean—do you know about things before they happen?"

"Nuts, boss!" Foley laughed. Would I be greased to the elbows? I'd be where the horses are! You wouldn't kid a guy?"

"No," said Bensen. "I wouldn't kid a guy. But everything I think of, it seems like you know I'm thinking of it."

"I just put myself in your place," said Foley. "Like now. If I was you, I'd be itchin' to shake this clown act for just once. On account of I used to know this Doc Skeeter on the bricks and the boards, and used to run him ragged to the pits, I'd just have to shake this clown act and show the Doc this ain't the lousy racket he thinks it is."

Bud Bensen didn't say anything. And he was past being surprised. Foley had hit it right. He had fingered the idea. He had pointed it out as unerringly as if it had been chalked on a pit slate. Or as if he had been in the Eagle House bar the night before, instead of sleeping in the stall with the midget racer.

For that scene in the Eagle House bar had been brief and pointed. Bensen had been four blocks from the bottle in his bag and the thirst had got him. He had stopped by for a quick one, and had found Doc Skeeter dangling from the elbows.

In the old days it had been: "Well! You old son-of-a-gun—"

It was different now. Doc Skeeter turned and looked. His lip lifted a little. He turned away and looked in the mirror on the back bar. He seemed to be talking to the bartender, but his gaze sought out Bensen's in the mirror fringed with the bar frost of stale beer and epsom salt.

"I used to know a guy," Doc Skeeter said, and his long fingers curled around his glass. "They called him Leadfoot. *There* was a racing man! Don't ever know what become of him. I hear tell this circuit clown has got something of his look. But it must be just a passing resemblance. Because it's bad enough for a big-timer to wind up with the midgets—look at me!—without a man clowning his way through life with one of these damned little scooter cars!"

Bensen didn't choke on his whiskey. It went down as smooth as oil. He flipped a half buck on the bar and turned on his heel. He heard laughter as he walked out; Doc Skeeter's laughter. Bensen shrugged. It was the way he had known it would be.

NOW, talking to Foley, he spat the two words like an epithet. "Circuit Clown!"

Foley dived back under the hood. His shoulders bulged over. The car was so small, so ridiculously small! Bensen, who had known the best in the old days, looked at it somberly. He thought: "I could damn' near break it across my knee!"

"Huh? Oh, yeah, talkin' to yourself. Hey—you been on the midway yet? That carnival has got one show there —" Foley came up all grease, and rolled his eyes. "Fan dancer!" he explained.

"I saw the first one, in Chicago in thirty-three. How about that trick starter, now? Some day I'm going to kick this mill near the end of the act, and she ain't gonna perk. It worries me some."

Foley wiped his forehead with his wrist and left grease in his eyebrows. He went on casually. "It's some carnival, all right. They got a free act."

"Somethin' for nothin' is usually worth just that," observed Bensen, slurring his words. He kept thinking about Doc Skeeter. He suspected that Foley knew what he was thinking. But Foley was concentrating on the carnival midway.

"This free act," Foley said, "is something. You ought to see it tonight."

"I'll see it tomorrow night after the race," said Bensen.

"You better see it tonight," said Foley. "The guy might break his neck before tomorrow night."

Bensen, who had once lived dangerously, perked up. "Really dangerous, is it? Or do they dress it up and sell it?"

"They sell it—but it's dangerous. Aerial stuff; high wire, swaying pole, and so on. Three men and a girl. One of the men is the real act. You'll die laughing."

"Laughing? At a dangerous act? Some guy risking his life to amuse me—and me laughing?"

Foley went back, head first, under the ridiculous hood. His voice came back muffled by metal.

"This guy," he said, "that does all the big-time stuff, takes all the chances—he's the clown in the act."

Bensen didn't say anything for a little while. He kept looking at the back of Foley's head, but Foley stayed under the hood.

"What the hell!" Bensen said.

But he was on the midway at eleven o'clock that night, wondering why Foley had baited him into being there; wondering what it had to do with a midget auto race, and with Doc Skeeter, and with his own act on the track.

At the end of the midway two steel poles, braced by cables, went up for fifty feet. Two more, inset, went up from these—and then a long pole, slim and somewhat flexible, towered to the heavens above all the rest of the rigging. This last pole was not rigged by cable. Looking up at it, Bud Bensen could only guess its purpose. He had not spent much time on midways.

There was a long announcement, and then three men and a girl came out of a tent behind the rigging, and started up the poles. They ranged themselves on the trapezes, four of which hung from the cross-bar, and went into their act.

The girl was good to look at. Two of the men were big-chested and lumpy. The third man was Bud Bensen's own size, neither tall or short, and of only medium girth. He wore tramp shoes, tramp pants, a boiled collar and no shirt or hat. He was in the way of everyone else in the act, and in the trapeze routine he clumsily aped the regular performers. He stood back, once, to watch the star of the troupe leave one trapeze, swing through empty space, and catch the other.

The crowd howled as the comedian attempted the same stunt. But to Bud Bensen, watching, there didn't seem to be anything amusing in the act. Bensen was acutely aware of the fact that the troupe worked without a net.

The tramp went through some violent motions, swinging on the first tra-

peze, let go, spread-eagled through the air, seemed about to miss the second trapeze which the other performer had caught so gracefully, and then, just as he was about to drop to the ground so far below, the tramp's fingers brushed the bar. The right hand slipped, but the fingers of the left hand caught, clung desperately—and the despondent figure drooped at arm's length, hanging by one hand and looking like anything but the handsome and daring young man on the flying trapeze!

The same general routine followed, straight up to the high perch act. The regular performers were smooth and graceful; the clown was ludicrous. But at the climax of the act, the clown had topped them all, was at the top of the pole and turning one-arm aerial cartwheels to the thundering applause of the crowd.

BUD BENSEN turned away; then turned back. The crowd was drifting to other sights as the troupers reached the ground and started toward their tent. Bud followed. He stopped the clown and held out his hand.

"My name is Bensen. I clown the midget race tomorrow. I wanted to tell you that I enjoyed your act. And I want to ask you something."

The aerial clown turned. His painted smile was ludicrous compared to the gaunt weariness of his eyes. He was still trembling a little from relaxed tension.

"Thanks," he said to Bud Bensen. "Glad you caught the act and liked it. I'll be around to the race tomorrow. What did you want to know?"

Bud hesitated. And then he plunged. "What I wanted to know," he said, "is how you could be so clumsy, aping the star of the act, and still not get hurt?"

The clown aerialist smiled wearily. He had heard the question before. Any real trouper knew that the clown was the star of the act.

"Son," he said, "I don't know how it is in your racket, but in my racket before you can clown a performance on the high perch, you've got to be able to do it perfect *first!*"

"You really mean that you are the best performer in the act; that you had

to be, before you could take the chance of being funny and *almost* missing all the time?"

The clown shook his head.

"Let's not say that I have to be the best," he said. "Let's just say that I have to be as good!"

But Bud Bensen understood now. He knew why Foley had talked him into coming here. He shook hands with the clown.

"Thanks, fella," he said solemnly. "I'm kind of new around show business—I don't know about these things."

"You and the rest of the world," said the clown to himself wearily as he went into the tent to change.

Bud Bensen always started with the field. His cap and his goggles and his dust-coat marked him out, and his flaming cigar was the tip-off that he was the clown; but his midget car was as good as the rest, and usually he drove half the race before his many self-caused troubles started.

This day, at the county fair, the field swept once around the track, came down in perfect alignment upon the starter's flag. They got off to the first lap in a flurry of dust and cheers, and Bud Bensen, driving in fifth position, rocketed along with the other. He wore his ancient goggles and his cap and his dust coat, but today Bud Bensen wasn't smoking his big cigar.

With his hands locked on the wheel of the midget racer, Bud was coming around the far curve, his gaze sorting the cars out, picking up Doc Skeeter's white wagon.

Doc, driving the midget with the big numeral 3 on the hood was jockeying through the field, fighting for a better position. The Doc looked a little out of place in the miniature gas buggy. But the way he broke through the jams, skittering high to the outside and slamming his way down in for position, showed Bensen that Doc was the same master of the brake and wheel that he had been on the big tracks in the big cars.

"I wonder," the clown said to himself, "if he's remembering those other days—or if he believed what he said in the tavern the other night?"

The memory of that scene came back

to torment Bensen. He could see again the expression on Doc Skeeter's face. He could see the curl of the lip and feel the lash and the sting of Doc's words.

Doc was ahead there somewhere now, driving hard, fighting his way through the pack. Bensen's fingers twitched on the wheel. In the old days Doc Skeeter had usually trailed from this stage of the race to the finish.

But now Doc was up front and Bensen was the circuit clown—the boob in the old-fashioned goggles and the dust-coat who was here to give the crowd a laugh, instead of a thrill.

CLOWN BENSEN settled lower in the seat. His eyes, behind those ridiculous goggles, were narrowed now. There was a crimson midget in front of him, and as Bensen pulled out, made his bid to pass, the surprised driver of the crimson car pulled over for him.

Bensen worked his brake, slued the front end around and gunned for the opening. The motor roared as he gunned it, and he was driving head-on into an opening with inches—in the fractions—to spare.

The crowd came up, and although he hadn't time to see it, a mob expression crossed the face of the crowd; that curious co-mingling of expectation and horror which a race track crowd registers when a crash is imminent.

There was a roaring interval of suspense as nerves strained taut, and then Bud Bensen drove his snorting midget into that slim opening. As the margin of safety closed to whistling sound on either side of him, he drove through!

He came out of the pocket verging on a skid, but he used the throttle instead of the brake and kept the little car roaring toward the curve. He came down on the curve close, unable to straighten without turning, and the red demon he had outdistanced took this opportunity to shoot wide and come in.

For one terrible second the two cars hurtled toward each other, and the crowd at the fence started backward away from the threatening crash.

There weren't any laughs in Bud Bensen's act now. But there were plenty of thrills.

For the circuit clown was in there

fighting for the safety of his neck right at the minute; he was battling it out with the red midget, and if he mis-gauged by a half inch it might be curtains.

The driver of that red car wanted to get by, wanted to regain his lost position. But wisely he wanted to do it all in one piece. When it became evident that he wasn't going to get by without crashing in the effort, he grabbed at his brake and pulled his gas wagon over into a sideslip that spun him toward the fence.

Bensen was skidding too, now, kicking the dust high. For a couple of flash-bulb seconds it seemed as though the two skidding cars would go into the fence together, anyway.

But the old skill was still in Bud Bensen's hands. He had the feel of his car; he seemed to breathe with the pulsing of the motor. Under his hands that twisting, skidding machine of destruction seemed suddenly to move with an intelligence of its own!

Coming down off the curve, Bensen pulled out of the skid and got rolling. He went into the stretch barreling, and the red car was hopelessly outdistanced now.

But somewhere ahead, Doc Skeeter in the white midget with the numeral 3 painted large upon its hood was driving down upon victory in the dashing style of a born racing man. And to wipe away the memory of that curled lip and the spoken word, Bud Bensen had to overtake Doc Skeeter. He had to prove to the big-time driver that being a circuit clown wasn't the lowliest job in the world—that you had to have the stuff.

The memory of that aerialist, the clown who had aped the actions of the man on the flying trapeze, and missed horrible injury each time by the timed flicker of an eyelid, kept recurring to Bensen.

"Before you can clown a dangerous act," he kept reminding himself, "you've got to be able to really do the stunt you're burlesquing—at least, in a dangerous act, you have! And this racket is as dangerous as any of them. Don't they call a midget track a Suicide Saucer?"

THE crowd, probably too thrilled to notice that the clown act hadn't started yet, was on its toes screaming at Bud Bensen as he fought his way toward the two leading cars. They knew great driving when they saw it, these midget race fans; and Bud Bensen, who had been Leadfoot on the boards and the bricks, was giving them as fine a sample of big time stuff as they had ever seen.

But Bud Bensen wasn't thinking about this; he was trailing a ghost. He was trailing the wraith of a memory which would haunt him forever if he didn't do something about it. He was trailing the specter of Doc Skeeter's curled lip and biting words. It would follow him into his old age and shadow his dying if he didn't wipe that crooked smirk from Doc's mouth and make Doc swallow those venomous remarks!

Skeeter must have sensed something of this; must have known that it was time for Bud Bensen to start his clowning. For now Doc flung one quick glance backward to size up the situation—and then hunched over the wheel again and begin pouring it in.

Doc hadn't taken the lead yet; there was one car ahead of him. But with Bud Bensen coming in on his tail, Doc started to jam. His little midget was a tip-top racing machine, and when he asked for more he got it. The white car snaked up toward the fence and started to pull past the rear wheels of the leading car.

Clipping close to top speed now, the track rocketing rearward under his whirling wheels, Doc Skeeter pulled abreast of the leading car and hung there for the stretch.

Bud Bensen came down upon them fast. He saw the turn shaping up and knew what was coming. It would be the three of them jamming in—but there wouldn't be three of them jamming out!

Each man knew that! And yet the three cars went into that curve with rubber shrieking and dirt flung high to cloud the issue.

The crowd sent one long shriek of excitement out across the track. There was a scramble forward and a scramble backward as the crowd rocked and

struggled to see what would happen. But in all that noise there was none of the sound which Bud Bensen was paid to create. There was no laughter.

In the stands Charles Ferenc, head of the fair committee, spoke angrily.

"This isn't part of the clown's act—he's racing! He hasn't got a laugh yet!"

Harold Hanson, who had booked the act, gnawed his lip, but his eyes were aflame.

"But listen to the crowd—" he said tersely.

"I know, but his contract specifically states—"

"The hell with what his contract states," snarled Whelan, the race promoter. "He's got the crowd on its feet screaming. It's sensational. Look at that jam!"

They all looked. Doc Skeeter was making his bid for the lead; but Bud Bensen, whose contract called for laughs, was in there delivering thrills. Side by side with Doc Skeeter, Bud Bensen was making his own bid!

The crowd couldn't tell what was happening in that corner in the few seconds it took to happen, but Doc Skeeter knew that Bud Bensen wasn't clowning now.

Skeeter went in wide and skidded short for the infield and the rail position. His back wheels flicked dirt; his head was hunched low. Tires screamed at the spinning torture. The leading car, in an end-for-end spin, was swinging wide. Doc saw his chance and went through. The car which had skidded wide seemed to lash out at Bensen.

BUT the clown wasn't driving now. Instead, the guy called Leadfoot was wheeling that midget into the curve. When the dust settled, the leading car was against the outside fence, stalled, and Bensen was pouring it in, chasing Doc Skeeter toward the far curve which would let the both of them into the stretch.

They had been signaled that this was the last time around. It had to be now! Skeeter was first in and first out and he threw plenty dirt, but Bud Bensen fought his way through. He took a short skid, where Doc Skeeter went

wild, and as the dirt fell back they were side by side, nosed for the stretch, and all that was needed was the gun.

The crowd surged against the fence. One long screaming line, laughter forgotten, they shouted themselves hoarse, and Bud Bensen, circuit clown, needed his jalopy home!

As he came down under the flag with seconds to spare, Bud Bensen started to brake down. He had to let her roll—and in the stand, Ferenc, who had paid for laughs, was swearing hard.

"The hell with his winning! I got a half dozen daredevils to deliver the thrills! He was paid for laughs!" Ferenc was shouting at the agent. "I'll have him kicked off the circuit. I'll—"

But he stopped his swearing and his threats, then. For the crowd was on its feet, roaring! But this time, the roar was one of laughter!

For Bud Bensen, circuit clown, had crashed into a bale of hay, setting his jalopy and the hay, too, on fire. As he hopped back out of the flames, smoke was coming from his ridiculous clothing; and a wild-eyed mechanic, by name of Foley, was pursuing him with a fire extinguisher, and pumping the fluid where it would do the most good. Other attendants were rescuing the midget car.

Ferenc relaxed. Laughter grew louder all around the field, as Bensen slowed down and shed his dust coat. The seat of it still smoldered as he flung it to the ground.

"What happened—get a short circuit or something?" Foley gasped.

But Bensen grinned and winked.

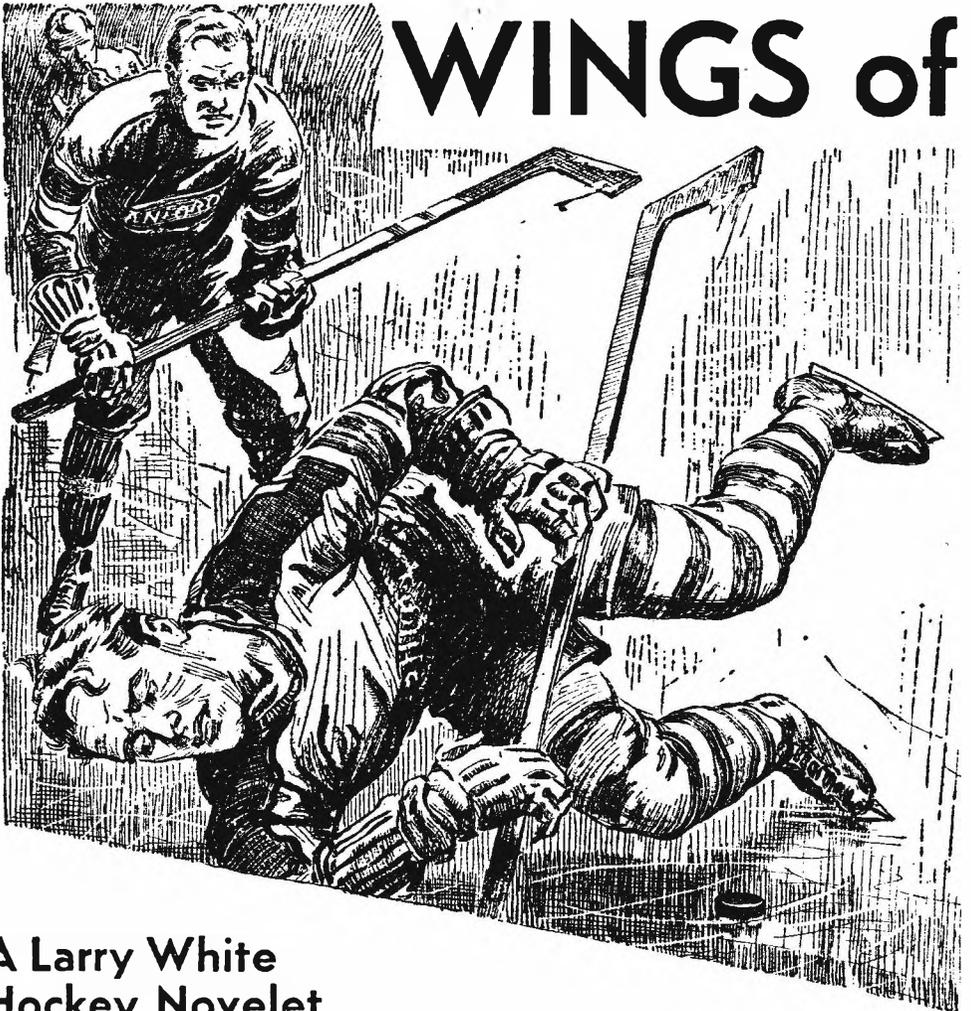
"I remembered just in time," he said, "that I was supposed to be funny. So I used the match that I had for the prop cigar to set the coat on fire. I thought it would get a laugh. The breeze from Doc Skeeter's passing car fanned it to a bigger blaze than I bargained on."

"You crazy fool!" scolded Foley. "You took a bigger chance doing that, than you did winning the race!"

Bensen grinned. He thought that at last he could think and say something, and Foley wouldn't know what he was talking about.

"Clowns always do!" he said, and chuckled as Foley looked blank.

WINGS of



A Larry White Hockey Novelet

Hamlin slammed into

CHAPTER I

Off Form

A BITING wind swept down from the snow-capped peaks of the White Mountains, and whined through great leafless elms outside Ashhurst Prep's small ice plant. It seemed to be trying to pierce the brick walls of the building to lend its voice to the half-hearted cheer of Ashhurst students who watched their puck-ragging sextet fight to stave off an upset at the hands of Colebrook Seminary.

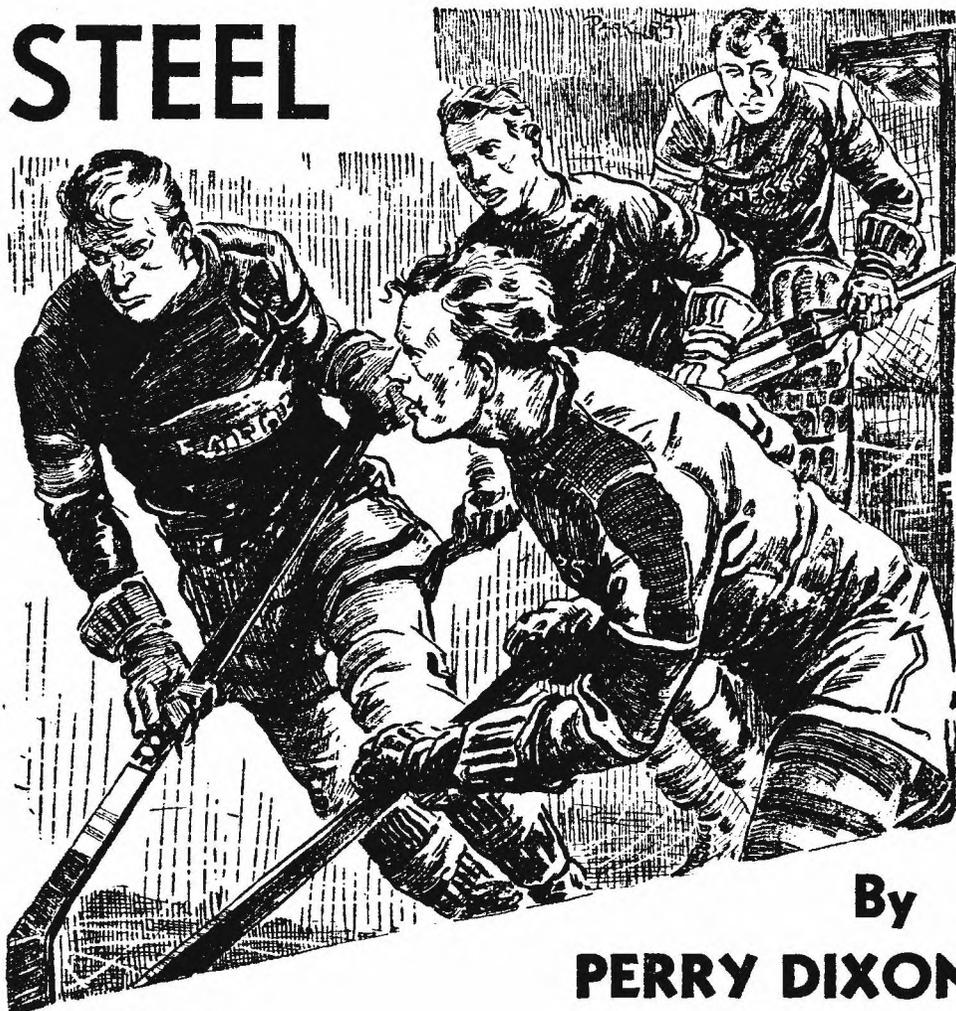
The underdog from the north had come to Ashhurst licking its wounds—the result of a 9-0 defeat at the hands of Canford—and it was venting its fury on Larry White and his mates, holding a 1-0 lead midway through the second period.

Larry White, old Springvale High star, one hundred and seventy pounds of fury on the ice, slid over to Dick Hamlin after the Colebrook score and said anxiously:

"What's the matter, Dick? You're not right. What's been worrying you the last week? Listen, feller, we've got

The Phenomenal Flash Flames Across the

STEEL



the Purple defense

By

PERRY DIXON

Author of "Gridiron Feud," etc.

to snap out of it or this bunch is going to beat us. It's up to you and me, Dick. Bingo's playing a solo game. We—"

"I'm okay, Larry," Dick Hamlin said, but his voice was stretched a little thin. He skated to his position, did not look at Larry when the teams got ready to go again. Larry White knew that Dick Hamlin was not all right.

Behind the Ashhurst bench, Tub Morrison knew it too. Dick was all right physically, he could see that plainly enough. The dark-haired fellow who shared a big room with Larry and himself at Ma Coleman's was ap-

parently being ridden ragged by a mental hazard. For several days now, Dick Hamlin had not been himself.

The Colebrook center ice, playing well over his head, whisked the puck away from Larry White at the scramble and started away. He rifled the biscuit over to a wing in the left lane, and the forward wearing the Colebrook brown and white evaded Bingo Trumbull's poke-check with smart carrying, driving along to the Ashhurst cage where Tarzan Willis waited with his jaws clamped hard together.

Tarzan watched his defense crack

Hockey Rink Like a Streaking Fury on Ice!

and then took a hard shot straight in the chest. He batted it out.

Bingo Trumbull pounced on the rubber. Bingo whirled, swung by a Colebrook forward and cut down the right alley. An enemy forward rode him hard. Larry White, down the middle, signalled, banging his stick against ice when Bingo seemed to be trapped. He would have a good shot at the Colebrook cage if Bingo only slid the puck over to him.

But Bingo was a spotlight worker—he refused to pass.

A Colebrook forward sailed in and Bingo started skating backwards. Colebrook's center stole the puck from under his nose.

Larry White blazed down ice to break up the enemy attack. Near the blue line he caught the Colebrook carrier and stole the puck away with a pretty sweep check. Out of the corner of his eye, he glimpsed Dick Hamlin over in the left lane. He rifled the biscuit to Dick Hamlin just as the Colebrook defense crashed into him. Spinning around, eyes darting to the Colebrook cage, he didn't see the expected scramble.

Instead the Colebrook forwards were sweeping toward the Ashhurst cage with only Bingo Trumbull dogging them.

Tarzan Willis got set. The attack on the cage was terrific but he staved it off. Larry White and Bingo shouldered the brunt for Ashhurst, and it was Larry who grabbed the puck when it got loose inside his blue line and stick-handled it like a demon down the middle lane. Bingo Trumbull paced him and Bingo was in position to take a bullet pass in the right lane close to enemy pay dirt when Larry White hit Colebrook's desperate backline.

BINGO was Johnny-on-the-spot in such a situation—the spotlight again—and he got the biscuit against his stick and slammed it at Colebrook's goalie. He got the rebound and smashed it back. The disc skipped over the cage guardian's broad stick blade and slid into the cage for the first Ashhurst score.

Ashhurst Prep's rooters yelled Bingo

Trumbull's name to the rafters. The grandstander's face beamed. Over in



center ice, Larry White eyed Dick Hamlin. Again Hamlin was loath to meet his glance. The whistle blew just after the next face-off and Ashhurst's sextet went off the ice and to their locker room. Colebrook's rooters yelled derisively as Ashhurst Prep's war song boiled from the stands across ice.

"O-o-old Ashhurst's sons are fighting,
They're al-l-lways in the fra-a-a-ay.
So pep it up. Who-o-op it up!
For this is Ashhurst's da-a-a-a-ay!"

Coach Jean Beauvain, old Ontario league star, flayed his ice stalwarts sourly as they slumped in varied posture of fatigue on the long wooden bench. "Sacre bleu! What ees it you play out there, hockey? Ha-a-ah! What will Canford do to you fellers? Hamlin, maybe it is some girl you think of when you play out there, non? Bingo, you forget there is other players out there with you all the time—"

"It was me who tied the score," Bingo broke in with a thin smile, "Somebody has to play for Ashhurst."

"So? An' who got the biscuit an' brought it down the ice! If you had not scored, I would have kicked you off thees team, eet was so easy!"

Beauvain stormed on.

Larry White sat beside Dick Hamlin. His friend was silent, staring at the floor. Tub Morrison, the student manager came in, stood back of Larry and Dick. He put one hand on Larry's shoulder and with the other poked

Dick in the ribs.

These three—Larry, Dick and Tub—had been inseparable after their first week at the school. Others at Ashhurst called them The Three Ashhursters. The majority of the student body looked to them to fight their battles against the proud Pundits, the blue-blooded fraternity that aspired to wield complete political power over all student activities.

"Nice goin' Larry," Tub said, "Dick, I bet it's that math exam you're worrying about. Why do they teach that Arabian arithmetic here anyway?"

Tub Morrison's sally got only a weak smile out of Dick Hamlin. Tub shoved three caramels into his mouth. Larry, grinning, said: "Lay off that stuff, Tub. You'll be too fat to catch for Ashhurst when the baseball season rolls around."

Jean Beauvain had keen ears. "Baseball?" he boomed. "Now it ees hockey we play. Or ees it? Go out there an' show me eet ees not baseball you have been playing tonight! I am not sure. I bet you fellers somehteeng! If Colebrook wins tonight, you weel hear Canford laughing all the way here!"

The eyes of the Ashhurst sextet gleamed. The mention of their arch-rival steeled their jaws and brought a lift to their drooping shoulders. Again Beauvain boomed: "Porter, you will start in place of Hamlin nex' period. Hamlin, you do not show me much tonight. You don' look like you like to play hockey, an' when a feller he does not like to play, he ees not ver' good player. Alright—eet ees time to—"

Bingo Trumbull grinned, slapped Frankie Porter, a fellow Pundit, on the back. It was a kick in the teeth for Larry White. Tub Morrison drew in his breath and strode out of the locker room. Dick Hamlin got up and started peeling off his spangles. Beauvain roared at him: "This game is not over, Hamlin. Maybe it weel be I'll need you. You go out to the ice an' sit on the bench until I—!"

DICK HAMLIN cut in. "I'm not quitting, Beauvain. I just feel a little sick tonight."

Larry White reached out a quick

sympathetic hand. Dick said with a brief warm smile: "It's nothing, Larry. I'll get over it. Something I ate, maybe—"

The Ashhurst sextet fought furiously throughout the final period against Colebrook. They checked the visitors' slashing attacks on their cage and kept driving at Colebrook's citadel, Larry White and Bingo Trumbull acting as spearheads. They played with the imagined laughter of Canford students, so eloquently hinted at by the fiery Beauvain, ringing in their ears. They played hard and they played hockey—not baseball.

Larry White scored the deciding goal a half minute before the whistle shrilled. He grabbed a rebound from Tarzan Willis' big stick, circled the Ashhurst cage and ripped through Colebrook's frantically forming defense to get down to Colebrook pay dirt without a brown and white player near him. He smashed a hot one at the visiting padman which sang as it hit the twine behind the madly lashing Colebrook goalie. Score: 2-1.

But in the dressing room, the Ashhurst icers were anything but elated. They had barely eked out a win over lowly Colebrook, and it was only a few days to the crucial game at Colbert college with their ancient rival, Canford Prep. Colbert was lending its big rink for the classic that would settle the question of hockey supremacy among the preparatory schools of the state.

There was no doubt that Canford had the outstanding sextet. But Ashhurst, which had started off the season rather tamely, had suddenly developed into championship timber. The cause of the change was not far to seek. It was the spark Larry White had injected into the team.

The former Springvale high school star, who had gained tremendous popularity and glory on the gridiron in the season just past, had been delayed in coming out for hockey due to a football injury. Handicapped though he was by a late start, he had shown a pair of fleet steel wings and an ability to handle the puck which had soon won him a place on the varsity. Suddenly Ashhurst had found itself. With

White as the spark-plug, the sextet had started to go to town.

Now Canford, eager to avenge a beating on the gridiron the previous autumn, was boasting of what its team would do to Ashhurst on the ice. Up at Canford signs were to be seen all over town: POOR ASHHURST PREP! CANFORD CAN CAN-NEM! CANFORD — STATE CHAMPS! They would stop the widely heralded ice demon, Larry White, on the rink. They would make Bingo Trumbull look like a grammar school kid. They had beaten Hollis Prep six to nothing. Ashhurst had defeated the same school but by a three to one count. Canford would teach Ashhurst hockey.

Ashhurst Prep had been resigned to a licking at the hands of their bitter rival. At rallies the cry had been: "Hold them to a small score! Battle them every inch! Play a defensive game!" Now, held to only two goals by the weak Colebrook team, the prospects looked none too bright.

The Ashhurst players peeled off their ice togs and hit the showers. Beauvain sat on a wooden bench, significantly silent. When Jean Beauvain could not find words, it meant he was thoroughly disgusted.

Larry White dressed hurriedly, left the big brick building with Tub Morrison. They said little until they reached their boarding house. Dick Hamlin was already there, his eyes fixed on the pages of a math book. But Larry and Tub knew that the good looking fellow was seeing nothing on the printed page before him.

"How you feel, Dick?" Larry asked quietly.

"I'm all right," Dick mumbled. He threw the book to the floor and got up. "Who won, Larry?"

"We did," Tub replied, "Say, what's eating you? For a week now you've looked like a guy that's getting ready to go to the gallows. If it's that math, forget it. I'm a wow at it. I'll plug it into you until you'll make at least ninety in that exam. Larry and I—"

Dick Hamlin said a little irritably: "Lay off, Tub. I'm not worrying about math. Nothing's wrong—nothing. I

think I'll take a hike around the campus before I turn in. See you later, fellows."

LARRY glanced at Tub, knew that the chunky student manager shared thoughts akin to his own. It was not like Dick Hamlin to want to be by himself. Always he had asked Tub and Larry to join him when he had gone out for a walk.

"Dick," Tub suddenly said. Hamlin, wrapping a big coonskin coat around him, turned.

"You're the money bags of this outfit, Dick," Tub said, "How about a couple of bucks until I get my allowance—?"

"S-Sorry," Dick said apologetically, "I'm down to my last dime, Tub. I—I've spent every cent my dad sent me last week."

Larry White's lips tightened. He dug down into his pocket and pulled out a thin sheaf of bills. Peeling off a dollar that he could ill afford to part with, he handed it to Tub Morrison. Unlike Dick Hamlin, Larry had no rich father to appeal to when the wolf knocked on the door. Larry knew that Dick had received forty dollars from home only a few days ago. He had not seen him spend any of it.

"See you later," Dick Hamlin mumbled and went out.

"He's a different guy, Larry," Tub said. "Imagine it. He wouldn't lend me any dough."

Larry's heart felt clamped. "He must have had a good reason, Tub," he said.

CHAPTER II

Bad Company

TWENTY four hours later, Larry White got a shock. He kept a date with Barbara Langley down at the Ashhurst sweet shop. Barbara was the daughter of the math prof and the sweetest thing in the whole place to Larry White. Her eyes were of the same shade of blue as the ribbons tied around the candy boxes that were piled on a table near the door. From the

first time they had met, they had been attracted to each other and it was one more reason why Bingo Trumbull tried to make things as unpleasant around Ashhurst for Larry White as he could.

Babs looked a little worried over something. She seemed at a loss for words. The only thing she had said since meeting Larry had been: "You played a dandy game last night, Larry."

Larry White was something of a John Alden when it came to dealing with the disstaff side. Girls scared him a lot more than a formidable adversary on the athletic field. But Babs was different and when he saw that the girl was evidently steeling herself to tell him something, he coaxed her to come right out with it.

"I—I shouldn't tell you this, Larry," she said at last, "because I know Dick Hamlin is such a good friend of yours. But the other night I saw him just off the campus talking to—to Tony Vareen."

Larry White lost the taste for the sundae he had ordered. He dropped his spoon, gulped. After a long stunned silence he choked out: "Y-You haven't told anybody else Babs? Only me? Y-You're sure it was Dick? It might have been—?"

Barbara shook her head. She was very sure. Larry's lean jaws got a little white. Tony Vareen. Six miles away was the tavern bearing the neon-lighted sign: VAREEN'S — DINE AND DANCE. The place was taboo to Ashhurst students. It was a beer joint and was also reputed to be a gambling den. Vareen's reputation for arranging bets on college and prep school athletic contests was a sour one in the northern part of the state.

Barbara said: "You know I wouldn't tell anyone else, Larry. Larry, do you think Dick's been—?" She did not finish the sentence.

A vague fear ran through Larry White's wiry frame as he suddenly got up from the table. "Babs, if you don't mind—I'd like to go and see Tub. We've got to find out—sorry, Babs. Maybe tomorrow night we can—"

"I understand," Barbara Langley said, "I hope everything will be alright, Larry."

Dick Hamlin was preparing for bed when Larry got back to Ma Coleman's. Tub Morrison was already wrapped in his blankets but he lay on his back, his eyes watching Dick Hamlin's every move. Dick said to Larry: "Been out with Babs? When a guy goes out a cold night like this to see a girl—ho-ho!"

The dark haired Hamlin's laugh was contagious and Larry relaxed under its warmth. The lack of guilt in Dick's eyes, however, was a puzzle to him. He said: "Is it a girl that takes you out on cold nights too, Dick?"

Hamlin drove a brief startled glance flat against Larry's expressionless face. He forced a grin, went on with his undressing.

With the lights out and darkness wrapping old Ashhurst's ivy-covered buildings in an icy cloak, Larry White lay staring wide-eyed at the ceiling. Sleep escaped him. He thought of an article that had appeared in the school paper, *The Mountaineer*, just a few days ago. It voiced the sentiments of Dean Featherstone, commonly known at the school as "Gladstone," with regard to gambling on sporting events at Ashhurst.

"Betting on games at Ashhurst no doubt is indulged in. The instinct to gamble is inherent in the human race and, as long as it is confined to the student body and involves only small amounts, there can be no harm in it. However, a student of any institution who deals with professional gamblers forfeits his right to be a part of that institution. Any student of Ashhurst can expect immediate and final dismissal if caught in such an act."

LARRY WHITE listened to Dick Hamlin's regular breathing. It told him that the fellow's conscience was sleeping just as soundly. Nevertheless, Dick Hamlin had been with Tony Vareen, had undoubtedly kept an appointment with the man. If that information ever got to the Pundits, Larry White knew that the whole world would hear about it. Bingo Trumbull would broadcast it all over the state.

Bingo Trumbull had held the spot-

light at Ashhurst until Larry White had arrived from Springville High. Bingo was a big fellow who had been over-indulged by his parents. He did not like to play very well unless he could be cock-of-the-walk, and he had resented Larry White's sudden rise to the heights at Ashhurst. Since then he had been ever on the alert for a chance to put the skids under Larry White and the other two "Ashhursters."

Around midnight Larry fell asleep, his roily mind giving way at last to the demands of a healthily weary body. But his rest was troubled, and in the morning he had to drag himself to classes.

Hockey practice that afternoon gave Coach Beauvain a headache. The Green Ashhurst stick-handlers looked bad in the cage-sniping session. In actual practice the second stringers checked the proud first team dizzy. Larry White could not seem to get going and Bingo Trumbull, at right wing, purposely made him look worse than he really was.

It was Bingo, on a pair of solo dashes, who drilled a couple of goals past the second string goalie. A wingman can make a center ice look foolish, make his passes seem wild. Bingo was an expert at that sort of skullduggery, having practiced it all his life. When the session was over and the team was in the locker room steeped in the smell of steaming bodies and liniment, Beauvain laced it into them.

"I am ashamed to take this team to Canford," he spat out. "You play like washerwomen. Maybe I save expense for the Athletic Association an' send one man only to Colbert. Bingo Trumbull—he make goals an' also tend goal, too. Maybe you forget you have five other men on thees team, eh Bingo? You ver' smart boy, yes?"

"Somebody's got to score goals," Trumbull retorted. "If a guy doesn't get any help—"

Larry White's fists balled and he was conscious of Dick Hamlin's steady gaze. Beauvain went on: "Tomorrow we have practice all the afternoon, so! Maybe in two days I show to you how for handle the stick an' teach you all

over the game. Faugh! White, you can play hockey better than you show out there. What is wrong with you? Where is the feller who scored four goals against Dexter? An' two against Hollis? You find him again, White!"

When Larry caught up with Dick outside the gym Dick asked: "What's bothering you, Larry? You're away off your game." With words a little edged Larry said: "Maybe you could answer that, Dick." He immediately wished he could recall those words and hurriedly added: "Forget it, Dick. Let's find Tub!"

MORE practice the next day. An extra half hour of it. Jean Beauvain drove the prep school stickhandlers to a fine fury with his lashing tongue. Aroused, the varsity took it out on the second stringers and with Larry White and Bingo furnishing the spark, the Ashhurst sextet began to click. The first line forwards ripped Beauvain's sub backline to shreds and banged four goals into the cage.

Bingo Trumbull got a nasty spill in the last play of the practice session at the hands of a zealous sub and Bingo got up and took off his gloves. Larry White held Bingo back when the big blonde fellow made a leap across the ice.

Beauvain yelled at Bingo: "You thenk you play ring-round Rose Marie, Trumbull? Sometimes this game, she get rough. You go an' get a shower an' she will cool you off. Huh, you beeg tough feller, non?"

Bingo sucked a thumb that had been slashed by a skate blade and skated toward the runway. He told the second stringer that he would settle things later.

In the locker room, Tub Morrison chewed on a caramel and eyed Dick Hamlin. Then he averted his puzzled glance, called out: "Too bad about you getting hurt Bingo! I was wishin' it was your throat that was cut."

Bingo tossed his skates into a locker and whirled toward Tub. Larry White and Dick Hamlin edged close to Tub and their eyes held Bingo at bay. Jean Beauvain stabbed a finger at the grinning Tub Morrison and roared: "You

make trouble in these place, hah? What we want in here with a manager? Nex' time you start fight I weel throw you out, Morrison." When Beauvain turned away, Larry White caught a flash of the coach's face. He was sure that the Frenchman was laughing.

CHAPTER III

Disgrace!

THE blow fell four hours later. Larry White came in from a brief visit with Babs Langley at the sweet shop and Tub met him at Ma Coleman's door. Tub's rotund face was a little white. Tub could not speak for several seconds. Finally he blurted out: "Something's happened, Larry. The Dean's sent for Dick. There's an ugly story going around. They say Dick and Varen—"

Larry looked scared. He told Tub then about Barbara seeing their pal with Tony Varen. Tub plopped down on his bed and whistled his consternation.

"Well, we've got to stick by Dick no matter what he's done," Larry said gloomily and he, too, sat down to wait.

A half hour went by before Dick Hamlin came back to the room, his face white. Larry and Tub looked at him, their eyes harboring the question he had expected. "I'm in a jam, fellows," he said. "It looks as if I'm through at Ashhurst. Don't ask me to talk about it. You'll hear the lurid details soon enough."

Ashhurst students did not delay in spreading the story. Dick Hamlin would not only be taken out of the Canford game, he would also be thrown out of school. Dean Featherstone had come into possession of a check that had Dick Hamlin's signature on it. It bore the stamp "Insufficient funds." The name of the payee was Tony Varen. Gossip supplied the morsel that Dick Hamlin had either been betting with Tony Varen or had owed him money for beer. The Pundits, with Bingo Trumbull leading the ballyhoo, called for Dick Hamlin's scalp in righ-

teous indignation.

In their room the three close friends sat looking at one another. "You admit you signed that check, Dick? You told the Dean so?"

Dick Hamlin nodded. "That tells you everything, Larry. I owed Varen dough and I paid it. I thought I'd thrown that check away but I guess I crammed it into my pocket. It fell out somewhere. Somebody found it and took it to Featherstone. I'm sorry, Larry. This'll kind of break up—"

"Trouble is," Tub Morrison said glumly, "You got too much money from home—"

"Lay off, Tub!" Larry said. Dick got into his coat, snatched up his hat and went out. For a long time after he had gone, Larry White and Tub Morrison sat staring dumbly at each other. Larry suddenly said: "Somethin's wrong, Tub! Varen's too smart to get mixed up with an Ashhurst student. He would know that he couldn't collect if—"

"Dick has a rich father," Tub countered, "Rather than let any trouble start about his son, a man would—"

"Maybe" Larry said, his eyes narrowed, "but I still think Varen is too smart for that. I think I'll go and take a walk. I've got to think things over." He got up and reached for his coat. Tub sat where he was, steeped in misery. Ten minutes after Larry closed the door behind him, Tub decided to go out and get some air himself.

A HALF hour later, Tub Morrison paused beneath a big tree and stared over at the big house where Dean Featherstone lived. He saw Larry White coming down the steps and he angled toward him. He called out: "Larry—what you been doing here—?"

Larry came up, his smile cutting the murk. There was a sharp glint in his eyes as he said: "I've been talking with the Dean. He showed me the check. It was signed D. Hamlin, all right. The old boy promised me that Dick could go to Colbert with the team. Listen, Tub! Dick Hamlin wouldn't do anything crooked if he died for it. We both know that. One more thing I'm sure

of too. I think I can put my finger on the guy who took that check to Old Gladstone. And if things are the way I think they are, Dick will play against Canford!"

Tub Morrison said: "I'm going crazy, Larry. Cut out the riddles. What did you find out?"

Passing the house where the proud Pundits lived, Larry said: "You'll know soon enough, Tub. I've got to—" A voice hailed them from the porch of the big square house. Larry turned to see Bingo Trumbull, Al Joiner and Frankie Porter huddled together.

"You ought to think before you pick your company, White," Bingo called out tauntingly.

Tub whirled toward the group but Larry laid a restraining hand on his pal's arm. Calmly he went up to Bingo and said: "I'll settle with you later, Trumbull. I won't forget. I'll bet that bearskin rug you're wearing that Dick Hamlin plays against Canford!"

"Taken, White!" Bingo smirked. "Have you bet with Tony Varen, too?"

"Sock 'im, Larry!" Tub ground out, straining at the bit.

"Not yet," Larry said easily. "It would be a nice way to get me off the hockey team, too. Bingo would take two black eyes to do that." He turned away and trudged toward the village, hoping his hunch had been correct.

Ashhurst students were stunned when they heard that Dick Hamlin was going to accompany the team to Colbert. During the last practice session a group of students laced it into Dick and his playing suffered. Beauvain told Porter, after the gruelling workout, to be ready to start at wing in place of Hamlin. Bingo Trumbull openly gloated, wondering how much his bearskin coat was worth in the open market. He told Larry that he would have it appraised.

"Yeah? It's going to be cold in February," Larry retorted.

Dick Hamlin was completely mystified over being permitted to go to Colbert at all. He pumped Larry and Tub, but all Larry would say was: "Maybe they figure on giving you a second chance, Dick. Just sit tight."

Two hundred students went to Colbert College. Those who could not stand the rail tariff went in every sort of conveyance they could muster. Deals were made with farmers around Ashhurst for the hire of their big sleds. Four of them started out at five in the afternoon and the band went along in one of the hay-packed steel-runnered vehicles. The snow-whitened countryside echoed to the blasts of horns and the beating of drums.

Coach Beauvain put his sextet on the train at six o'clock. Those of the student body who had to stay behind gave it a great send-off. There was a suppressed note in the celebration, however, for Ashhurst's faithful knew that the team's morale was at low ebb. Canford's Six had been written up in the papers as the strongest team among the prep schools of the East. Ashhurst's practice sessions had been ragged and the team was expected to play a strictly defensive game.

IN the way to Colbert Dick Hamlin sensed the tension in the day coach and he could fairly taste the resentment of the players. He sat with Tub Morrison for awhile and then got up and left his seat. Passing Larry White on the way down the aisle, he said: "I'll be right back. I want to see someone."

Larry slid into the seat vacated by Dick and hung his coat on a hook. "They're treating Dick pretty rotten," he said to Tub. "He feels it plenty."

Tub Morrison's eyes strayed to the notebook that was sticking out of the pocket of Larry's coat. He read a name written across the front and swung toward Larry. "That's Dick's English notebook," he began. "What're you doin' with it, Larry? My gosh, first Dick goes haywire, then you steal notebooks. Wonder am I all right?"

"I managed to get it just before I left," Larry said. "I've got a darned good reason, Tub. When we get to Colbert, Tub, you take care of Dick. See that he goes right to the rink with the rest of the team. Tell him I had to go to a drugstore to get some aspirin—tell him anything, Tub, but keep him under your wing."

"Listen, Larry," Tub said, startled, "you won't have much time to fool around when we get there. You've got to play or we won't have a chance at all."

"If Dick isn't in there with me, it won't make much difference," Larry said, and Tub read the resentment that burned in the old Springvale High star's eyes. "Please do what I ask, Tub. Take a look at Bingo and his crowd. They feel pretty happy."

Colbert's big ice plant was filled to capacity fifteen minutes before the prep school classic got under way. Canford's rabid rooters had banked themselves on the north side of the rink and were raising bedlam. This was their night. The Ashhurst Six were already licked. Rumors had been rife for several days that Larry White's football injury had caught up with him again, had slowed him down. Trumbull was a solo player. The smooth-working Purple outfit would stop him cold. Hamlin was not going to be at wing. In warming-up practice the Canford forwards had put on a cage sniping exhibition that had the coach of the Colbert hockey team licking his chops. The roaring from the Ashhurst side of the ice was getting weaker and weaker.

Beauvain was talking to his outfit in the locker room and he was not pulling his punches. As he launched his tirade, he kept looking at the clock on the wall. "Go out there an' take your licking," he stormed pessimistically. "I weel consider it a win if you hold them to five goals." His eyes strayed toward Dick Hamlin. The good looking youngster was not in uniform and he sat with Tub Morrison staring at the drab wall of the room. "Underdogs you are, an' you lose nothing," Beauvain went on. "Macklin an' Truman start in the back-line. Porter an' Trumbull at the wings. White at—" The coach got up and began to pace the floor. "Where is White? Have none of you seen him? Does he forget we play Canford tonight?"

DICK HAMLIN raised his head and looked toward Tub. His eyes held a question but Tub simply shook his head. Time dragged and a

stunned silence fell over the Ashhurst dressing room. Beauvain drew a sleeve across his worried brow just as a buzzer sent its raucous warning into the place. A big Colbert hockey player came in and shook hands with Beauvain. "They're ready to start, Frenchy. Take 'em out to the slaughter."

Bingo Trumbull banged his stick against the floor. "I get it!" he ground out. "The great White's run out on us. He won't play without Hamlin. He's going to let Canford have a good feed. The great school hero—Larry White!" His voice was full of venom.

Dick Hamlin was up, eyes blazing. Tub Morrison lunged toward Bingo but the coach and three players grabbed him. The Ashhurst coach must have been heard out in the stands yelling: "Sacre bleu! If it was not bad enough! You want fight, hah? Out there you get plenty fight!"

"Well, where *is* White?" Trumbull clipped as he barged out of the place with the Ashhurst squad.

Hamlin stayed in the locker room. "Tub," he shot at the chunky student manager, "where's Larry? He'd never —"

Tub groaned and kept shaking his head. "The last time I saw him he was talking in riddles, Dick. He was carrying your English notebook in his pocket. You answer that one."

CHAPTER IV

A Surprise

ASHHURST'S sextet went out onto the ice and a great round of applause soared toward the roof. Canford's students tore it apart with a plethora of sound when their purple-spangled men skated out from the bench. There was the flash on who was the highest scorer in the state. Whizzer Melotte. His wingmate, Hobe Pierce, was not far behind in shelling enemy citadels.

The defense men looked like giants to the Ashhurst adherents although they weighed no more than Beauvain's two backliners. The chunky youngster

at center, Nels Johansen, for two weeks had been telling everyone what he would do to the great White. The Canford goalie seemed to fill the mouth of the purple cage.

Ashhurst rooters lost their voices when they saw the man at center ice for Ashhurst. It was not Larry White. A shocked ripple of sound went through the section and then the whispering that had originated in the locker room reached the Green sextet's backers and told them that Larry White had run out on Beauvain and the school. "He wouldn't play because Hamlin's off the team. White has walked out on Ashhurst. Larry White quits!"

Rabbit Lowe was in at center for the Green when the ref dropped the puck to the ice. A brief, breathless lull hung over the arena as Nels Johansen and White's sub pounced upon it. The echo of the opening whistle's shrill blast still brushed against the rafters when the Purple center stole the rubber disc and broke away. The vaunted Purple offensive formed and the great Melotte was going toward the Ashhurst goal, streaking along the left lane.

A pass drifted over to him and Melotte took it prettily and then crashed through the Green defense to fire a shot at Tarzan Willis in the Ashhurst cage. Willis saved, banged the rubber biscuit out to Bingo Trumbull who whirled in a shower of ice splinters to start an attack on the Purple cage. Hobe Pierce of Canford hook-checked the puck away from Bingo and banged it across to Johansen near the blue line. Again Willis got set to stave off the threat. The Purple center almost fractured the Green goalie's breastbone with a high drive and the puck bounded out to cuddle against Melotte's war club. Melotte fired and just missed the score.

A mad scramble ensued in front of the Ashhurst citadel and it was Porter, the Green's left wing, who got the disc and angled for the boards. Bingo was pacing him but Pierce bunted the Ashhurst star off balance and was taken out of the play. Lowe tried to get down with Porter but Johansen sty-

mied him and Porter came to grief at the Purple backline.

Canford got possession with Whizzer Melotte leading the torrid drive down ice. Pierce and Johansen were showing their heels to the madly driving Green forwards and it was Pierce who took Melotte's bullet pass at the blue line and crashed the disc at Tarzan Willis. The goalie saved, banged the puck toward Bingo Trumbull who was taking the brunt of the fierce Canford attack. Bingo was pinched by the Purple wings at mid-ice and Melotte, after a neat sweep-check, was banging away at Ashhurst's goalie again. It was an attack that could not be stopped for long. Ashhurst's supporters anticipated a crushing defeat as the great Melotte lashed the rubber biscuit past Willis for a first score.

IT went on with an inferior Green sextet battling to hold down the count. Trumbull snagged a loose puck after a Purple offensive had been smeared in front of his cage, and he wheeled and set sail for Canford pay dirt.

The rapping of a stick in the left alley told Bingo that Porter was there waiting for the pass. But Bingo elected to handle the whole Ashhurst drive himself. He drove at the Canford defense and was caught in a perfect hoist. Pierce came in fast and hooked the disc away from Bingo's stick; then he was away, zigzagging through the desperately forming Green defense like a frightened rabbit. He banged the rubber over to Melotte and Porter was on the Purple star in a flash. Melotte fired at Johansen going down the middle and the center caught Tarzan Willis flatfooted and smashed the puck past him for a second score.

Canford's cheering section was going mad. The Green team looked ready to throw in the towel at the face-off. Again Johansen stole the rubber biscuit but he was checked before he could get away. Pierce lost the rubber when Port and Trumbull boxed him but it was Melotte in there again to sweep the disc up and blaze his way toward the Ashhurst goal. Tarzan Willis put on a show that dragged verbal thunder

out of the throats of the dejected Ashhurst contingent.

He saved a third score by his impersonation of Horatius at the bridge, but the groaning Frenchman on the Ashhurst bench knew that his goalie was only bringing a temporary halt to the massacre.

"White," he breathed dejectedly. "I would not believe this of that keed if I don' see with the eyes myself."

For three more minutes Ashhurst fought doggedly. They kept on the defense and strove to stop the terrific drives of Melotte and Pierce. The period ended with the Purple knocking at the gates of the Green citadel. Ashhurst students got up and gave a booming cheer of encouragement as the jaded and battered Green sextet dragged themselves off the ice.

In the locker room the Ashhurst stickhandlers were silent. The trainer took an inventory of Beauvain's six and told him that there were no injuries. The pungent odor of liniment hung over the place but it was not strong enough to cut the gloom.

"Only two goals," the coach said. "They are not so good as I theenk. Trumbull, maybe you steel forget you have five players out there with you. We have the chance for to score an'—" Beauvain brought his shoulders up eloquently and eyed his drooping sextet. "You go out an' fight. You show these White we don' need him. We—"

"That's not fair, Coach!" protested Tub Morrison. "Larry wouldn't—"

"No?" Bingo sneered. "He's yellow. He couldn't take a lickin' along with the rest of us. He'll crow about the shellacking we're going to get. He'll say that because he wasn't in there—"

The door opened and Larry White stood on the threshold, grinning. There was a big husky fellow with him and right away Tub Morrison saw his resemblance to Dick Hamlin.

"So!" Beauvain stormed. "You theenk you come an' play, yes?"

"Wait, Coach," Larry said, seeing the look in Beauvain's eyes. "I had to find a man—this big guy here. Dave Hamlin. He was over at Lee, the next town, and I had to go after him. It means that Dick will be in there for

the next period. I'll be at center, Coach."

DICK HAMLIN was off the bench and staring at his brother. "Dave—you—don't say a thing! Listen—"

"It's okay, kid," Dave Hamlin said, going over and putting an arm around his brother's shoulders. "You shouldn't have taken the rap for me. Honest, I thought the check was good. After that last jam with Tony, I guess you went to him and told him to tip you off if I got into another. Listen, all you guys! I wrote that check. Dick took the rap because he thinks I'm a tin god. Didn't want me kicked out of Colbert. I've talked to Dean Featherstone and have made a clean breast of the whole thing.

Dick Hamlin looked a little sick. He could not look at either Larry or Tub. Bingo Trumbull was scowling as he kicked a wet towel into a corner.

"After I saw that check," Larry White said, moving toward Dick Hamlin and his brother, "I knew Dick hadn't signed his name to it. The D on it was not like the ones he writes in his notebook. I remembered how Dick used to brag about his brother up at Colbert. He thought he was the greatest guy in the world—still thinks so, eh Dick? He did not want us to think the idol had feet of clay, but we'll never think that. Hamlin here, didn't even know that Dick was in a jam. I had to find him, Coach."

Ashhurst's Six had shed their weariness magically. Beauvain grinned broadly and yelled: "Now we got out an' show them fellers! *Voila!* Into your spangles, White. You, too, Hamlin. We show them!"

Dave Hamlin said: "Go out an' beat 'em, kids. That Canford outfit is too cocky. They're over-confident. Give 'em enough rope and they'll hang themselves!"

"Yeah?" Bingo snorted. "Two goals behind and you think we'll beat 'em? Maybe you think White's another Hobey Baker!"

"What I'd like to know," Hamlin said to Larry, "is how did that check get to Dean Featherstone over at Ashhurst?"

"Stick around," Larry said, "and maybe you'll find out." He went over to where Tub Morrison was helping Dick get into ice togs and he sat down beside the younger Hamlin. "From now on, Dick—no secrets. Don't forget that. No secrets among us three."

The word spread like a bushfire and hit the gloom-shrouded Ashhurst contingent. Larry White and Dick Hamlin were in for the Green! Canford's supporters wondered at the sudden rejuvenation of the Ashhurst rooting section until they saw Beauvain's sextet come back onto the ice. White in at center for Ashhurst! Hamlin at wing! The announcement brought howls of derision from the Purple backers. Let them come! Now proud Ashhurst would not even have an alibi!

CHAPTER V

Fire on Ice

THE whistle shrilled and the ref dropped the rubber disc to the ice.

A full-throated blast of sound burst forth when Ashhurst's center ice stole the puck and broke away. With Johansen riding him hard, Larry White drifted a pass over to Dick Hamlin on the left wing and the dark-haired kid took it, evaded his check, and slammed into the vaunted Purple defense. He came to grief and lost the disc but Bingo Trumbull was in there fast and he hook-checked the rubber right from under a Canford wing's nose and whirled on glistening blades to try a long shot at the enemy goal.

The rebound came out with five players battling for possession at the Canford blue line. Larry White knifed in and rocked a husky backliner off balance and stole the rubber again. In a shower of feathery ice he described a tight half circle and slammed the disc at the squat Canford net guardian. The goalie made a miraculous save and sent the puck spinning toward Hobe Pierce, and the Canford flash dashed for Ashhurst ice with Whizzer Melotte angling for the right lane.

Trueman, Beauvain's left defense, tried to split the blistering offense and

found himself on the ice. Macklin forced Pierce to the boards but lost him there and the disc went across ice to smack against Melotte's stick a foot outside the Ashhurst blue line.

Melotte seemed to have a perfect shot at Willis when a demon on blades came in and messed up his try. Larry White pounced on the puck, stick-handled it around the Ashhurst goal and drove for enemy pay dirt. Johansen got him in mid-ice when he drove the Ashhurst flash slam bang into Melotte and Pierce. There was a mad scramble when the disc rolled toward Canford's cage and Bingo Trumbull got in close to his own net. He wheeled, went down ice on a mad solo dash, and ignored Dick Hamlin streaking down the left alley.

Trumbull crashed into the Canford backline but came to grief when the Purple defense got him in a perfect hoist. Dick Hamlin fought for possession, ganged by four Canford huskies. He slid across the ice from a sweet check and then Canford was coming down with a terrific attack that broke the Green backline to bits.

Larry White mumbling things about Bingo Trumbull, shook off the slower Johansen and he was in there fighting like a maniac when a rain of rubber splattered Tarzan Willis. Melotte barely missed.

Pierce got a rebound and the puck crashed against Willis' chest. Tarzan batted it out with his glove and the rubber arched toward Larry White. He spun around, caught it as it hit the ice and rifled it to Dick Hamlin who had been hovering close to the right lane boards.

Canford's right wing was on Hamlin before Dick could set sail down ice and then another battle ensued for a loose puck that spun toward center ice. Johansen was on it but Larry White, covered his man like a blanket, poke-checked the Canford center dizzy and stole the disc an inch outside his own blue line. He whirled, spraying ice into the angry face of the Purple center, and headed for the Canford cage with a burst of speed that lifted the crowd off their seats.

(Continued on Page 104)

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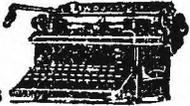
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(Continued from Page 102)

There was but one defense man down there between Larry White and the Canford citadel and the former Springvale High star feinted him out of position, drove by him and crashed a shot, up high, at Canford's goalie. The puck banged against the cords for a score and Colbert's arena plunged into wild hysteria.

The Purple Six gritted their teeth and waited for the face-off. "Lucky stiff," they muttered. "We'll roll 'em now!" But Canford didn't know that they were stacking up against an inspired combination that refused to be licked. Dick Hamlin, all worries banished, and Larry White, imbued with a spirit that was dynamic, fought the proud Purple every inch of the way.

Canford's rooters sensed that an entirely different team was out there on the ice for Ashhurst. They shrieked their warnings to the infuriated Purple, but to no avail. Canford's fighting Six only knew that they were top heavy favorites, that they were expected to lick Ashhurst by at least seven points. They began to wonder why they were not doing it, and their game suffered.

DESPERATION having its way with them, the purple threw caution to the winds and drove a four-man offensive at the Green citadel, but Beauvain's backline smeared it. Beauvain's wings checked the puck ragers dizzy and after Tarzan had driven a long angle shot back into Melotte's face, Larry knifed in and hooked the rubber biscuit from under Melotte's nose. The Green ace pivoted, seemed to fly as he ate up the distance to Canford's cage. One defense man drove at him but Dick Hamlin evaded him near the blue line.

The Purple left defense was trapped near the boards by Bingo Trumbull and Larry White, sending up a spray of ice chips as he put on the brakes, banged a hard smash at the Purple net guardian. It came back but Dick Hamlin took it on his blade and fired at the corner of the cage. A frantic goalie lashed out with his big stick but the puck bounded over it and slid in for a second score.

Canford was stunned. Ashhurst's

rooting section roared with glee and showered paper over the seats. Melotte of Canford slammed his gloves down on the ice and Larry White and Dick Hamlin grinned widely at each other before the face-off.

Ashhurst's inspired sextet employed katy-bar-the-door tactics for the remaining two minutes of the period. Again and again Melotte and Johansen and Pierce stormed the Green's citadel but were stopped cold. Defense men were called into the offensive but the Green were not to be denied. The whistle blew with the count still knotted. Beauvain said gleefully in the time-out period: "Good work, boys! I did not think you could do this!"

Larry White and Dick Hamlin were sitting side by side. The former grinned at his pal. "They won't beat us, Dick. We've got 'em worried. They'll get careless. This Whizzer Melotte is the one we've got to stop. He's a sharpshooter. Pierce is three steps slower than I thought he was."

Bingo Trumbull was surly. "I've been used to playing with Porter most of the season," he complained to Beauvain. "With him out, I have to change my whole game. I'd hate to think what would've happened to a Pundit if he'd been caught near Varen."

"Looks like the sour apples, Trumbull," the coach bit out. "Hamlin sees cleared— or maybe you have forget, oui? Somebody almos' wreck this team. It was wan big rat who gave to the Dean something he found. I would like to know who would do this ver' rotten thing!"

Bingo bit at a bandaged finger and subsided. Beauvain raised his voice to the players. "The hardes' part comes soon. Dissension is no good for the team. Porter, you go in for Trumbull when we go out there."

Larry White heard a snicker. He was sure it came from Tub Morrison, whose mouth, as usual, was crammed full of caramel. Bingo threw his stick against the wall.

"Okay, I'm through playing," he raged. "But maybe you'll need a good spare before it's over, Beauvain."

(Continued on Page 106)



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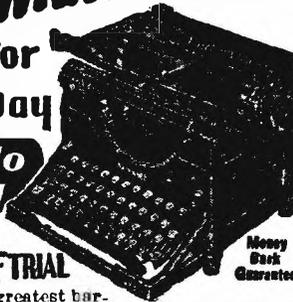
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(Continued from Page 105)

The Coach retorted calmly: "You quit the football team, too, Trumbull, because you could not run it. After two more years at Ashhurst maybe you get wise to yourself. All right, we go!"

PLAY started again with Canford deadly serious about swamping the upstarts from down Ashhurst way. Whizzer Melotte became a man possessed when he got his stick blade against the rubber biscuit. He speared through three madly checking Green players and got in at Tarzan Willis. Larry White came down like a demon and his groping stick stretched for the puck seconds too late. Willis blocked the cage, banged the rubber out with a big glove. It spun toward end ice.

Coming around his own net, Larry met the puck, cuddled it to the business end of his stick, and began to weave a zigzag course toward the enemy cage. Off to the right a stick rapped ice and, without looking, the Ashhurst flash shot the rubber to Dick Hamlin. Porter drove into check the Canford right winger. Dick crossed the blue line and hammered the biscuit at the goalie. But the rubber came out again to smack against Whizzer Melotte's stick.

Larry hook-checked it away from him, then felt a husky body smash into him. He slid across the ice with his breath knocked out. The whistle shrilled and Canford was penalized for an illegal body check.

The first penalty of the game. The Purple were showing their desperation. Desperation was the keynote of their play for the next five minutes. They launched four-men drives at Ashhurst's cage. They had to score again. They had to save face.

The last period became a torrid, nerve-jangling battle that had haughty pros out of their seats and howling with the rest. Barbara Langley, thrilled with Larry's great play, laughed delightedly when she saw Dean Featherstone get up and yell: "Hold 'em, Ashhurst!" and mash the hat of a rooter in front of him.

The Purple adherents screamed for

a score when Ashhurst's defense, Macklin, faded in front of a Canford four-man drive. Melotte was in there with Willis getting set. The rubber biscuit sped toward him with smoke on it. Tarzan growled and batted it out. Hobe Pierce got it on his blade and lifted it back at him. The going was terrific and the Colbert arena was going crazy.

Again Tarzan saved. He banged the disc out toward a Green stick-handler and a Purple check lunged at Dick Hamlin. Larry knifed past Melotte, caromed off a Canford backliner and took Dick's desperate shot at top speed. It was the break—Larry knew it! He was out ahead of Canford's desperately driving wingman and of a backliner who had left his position to add power to the Purple attack on the enemy cage.

Ashhurst's loyal sons jumped off their seats and put on blistering verbal heat. Melotte was outskating all the other Purple players in an effort to cut Larry down. Porter was trapped at mid-ice and taken out of the play. A single Canford defense man, somewhat jaded, got set to stop the Ashhurst bid for a score. He charged in and for a brief instant Larry White put on the brakes.

Then he was wheeling past the surprised backliner and charging Canford's cage. Melotte bored in, his stick reaching out. The sweep-check failed and Larry White put everything he had in the drive at the net. The goalie lurched to the left, his big wooden stick blade banging to the ice at the extreme end of the cage. The rubber disc hopped over it and rolled in for a score.

Colbert's arena was rocking. Whizzer Melotte and his mates ground their teeth with helpless rage and Melotte roared: "We've got time enough to tie again! We'll drive the Ashhurst team and the puck into their cage."

CANFORD threw defense tactics to the winds. They had nothing to gain by keeping their backline where it was. Thirty seconds before the whistle five men massed for a sudden-death score when Pierce got the biscuit on a rebound from the Canford net. Larry

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(Continued from Page 107)

White and Dick Hamlin met the attack full tilt and spread it wide. Larry followed the puck carrier to the Ashhurst blue line and fought for possession there. Hamlin and Porter banged their way into the melee and the wild scramble ended with a save by Tarzan Willis that was miraculous. Melotte was driving in again with the puck when the whistle blew.

Ashhurst fans swarmed down on the ice trying to get at Larry. Beuvain got his players into the dressing room, however, and slammed the door. Larry and Dick did a dance wrapped in a steaming hug. Tub Morrison whooped and in a minute the whole Ashhurst squad were doing a war dance around the three close friends.

Beuvain grinned. "Go ahead—whoop it up. You are the mos' fighting bunch of *enfants* I have ever handle. *Voila!*"

Bingo Trumbull watched with a sickly smile on his face. As soon as he could be heard he said: "Somebody I know here won't feel so good tomorrow. I guess they forgot my father is on the Board of Trustees. He was a Pundit when he was at Ashhurst—he started the frat. He built the Ashhurst rink! He's going to find out why the Pundits are being discriminated against. Maybe when he's through there'll be a new hockey coach."

The coach got up with his French blood at bubbling temperature. "Whimpering grammar school kid," he said to Bingo. "So your father ees here, ees he? How you like I tell him what kind of son he has? How you like I tell him you took that check to the Dean—the one Hamlin's brother at Colbert give to that Tony feller? That was wan scurvy trick, yes. It mean that Canford beat us ver' easy."

Trumbull suddenly looked scared. "Th-that's a lie. You can't prove it!"

Larry White cut in evenly: "There was a smear of blood on the corner of that check when I saw it, Bingo. You cut your finger in practice. That means you picked the check up off the locker room floor where Dick had dropped it. You could have brought it to Dick but—"

Bingo protested his innocence too violently and Tub Morrison, quoting from a Shakespeare lesson not too well learned, said: "Methinks he protests too much, Larry."

Frankie Porter cast a dour look at Bingo. Pundit Porter had real stuff in him. "I wondered why you bet with me that I'd play against Canford, Bingo," he said. "I think I'll get a new roommate."

"Look here, I—" Bingo began, then lapsed into shamed silence. Larry White knew that the spoiled kid had shown his guilt to everyone in the locker room.

"That coat of yours'll feel pretty good on the way home, Bingo," he said. "You made a bet and lost. Hand it over!"

Bingo did. Larry's coat was tossed to him. It betrayed many signs of much wear. Nobody spoke to Bingo Trumbull and he knew that he would be in a sort of coventry for some time. He was not sure what the Pundits would do to him.

On the way back to Ashhurst Dick Hamlin was a little embarrassed. Larry put an arm around him and said: "That brother of yours is a great guy, Dick. You didn't say half enough about him, huh Tub?"

"Gosh no," Tub mumbled, shoving a caramel into his cheek with his tongue. "I wish I had one like him."

Young Hamlin smiled and the warm glow that ran through him was evident in his eyes which seemed a little shiny, too. In a voice that was unnaturally thick he said: "Thanks, Larry an'—an' Tub. I won't forget what you said. No secrets among us. We all share our troubles as well as the good things. I guess they won't seem like troubles when the three of us work on 'em, huh?"

"Right," Larry said. "As long as we stick together, we can lick—well, anything!"

Tub Morrison swallowed a mouthful, cleared his throat and burst into song so loudly that a conductor jumped.

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Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared N. L. Pines, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Publisher of Thrilling Sports, and that the following is to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor and business manager are:
 Publisher, Better Publications, Inc., 22 West 48th Street, New York, N. Y.; Editor, Edward McCrae, 22 West 48th Street, New York, N. Y.; Managing Editor, none; Business Manager, H. L. Herbert, 22 West 48th Street, New York, N. Y.
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N. L. PINES, Publisher.
 Sworn to and subscribed before me this 3rd day of October, 1938. Eugene Wechsler, Notary Public, commission expires March 30, 1939.

The SIDELINE

WELL, readers, here we are once again with another New Year approaching, and another cycle of seasonal sports commencing. As we have tried to do in the past, we are planning to make the coming year as enjoyable as possible for you in the one way we can—that is, by publishing the best in the world of sports fiction!

We are continually adapting and revising for the improvement of **THRILLING SPORTS**, guided to a great extent by your letters of encouragement and criticism.

To you new readers and to those veteran fans who haven't written in, we ask one thing:

Throw yourself into the spirit of the magazine, join our **THRILLING SPORTS CLUB**, get together in our columns with sport fans from all over the world! Make this really *your* magazine!

You'll get a great kick out of it—and we'll appreciate it a lot. We want to know what you like and what you dislike. We want to know what you think about various sports, personalities in them, and controversies about them. That's the only way we can continue to make this the best sports magazine in the country, suitable to *your* tastes.

Many Treats in Store

There are many treats in store for you in the coming year. Baseball, football, boxing, basketball, hockey, swimming, tennis—all the sports you can mention—are on our calendar for 1939.

Fiction and fact—both. We find that most of our readers like variety, not only in their sports, but in the types of stories printed. So we'll have headline personalities in the different sport fields greeting you with their intimate, experienced knowledge of the game they're expert at—and we'll have first-rate fiction novelets and stories written by leading authors.

In the present issue, for example, there is Jackson V. Scholz, famous Olympic sprint champion of former years and long-time outstanding sports fictioneer, with a football novelet which we hope you've enjoyed.

Then there are Steve Owen, the N. Y. Football Giants' mentor, and Frank Thomas, Alabama's great coach, to say nothing of Jack Kofoed, famous sports commentator, who has been with us since **THRILLING SPORTS** began.

The Star Parade

Leading off our star parade in the next issue is George Keogan, noted basketball coach of Notre Dame University, with a swell article, **BASKET WEAVERS**, which

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has many an anecdotal thrill and intimate inside scenes to regale you.

Basketball is in the air—and this article by a national figure in the game will put you in the proper frame of mind to participate and watch contests in whatever section of the country or the world you're in.

Then, for the fiction feature, we're proud to present as exciting and absorbing a novellet about the same sport that we've ever read—**TEAM GAME**, by Seaburn Brown.

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There's "Scoots" Ryan, who would rather coach the State basketball team than be president, as capable a coach as ever directed a team. And there's Ken Davis, the six-foot-four star forward of the State team, as sweet a basketball player as any coach would like. There's a lot behind the development of Davis—a lot that you'll find unfolding as the story progresses.

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(Concluded on page 112)

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(Concluded from page 111)

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On hand, too, in our next issue, will be Jack Kofoed with his inimitable **THRILLS IN SPORTS**, and various other excellent features and stories of every sport. Remember, we strive for the best and only the best in the sports field!

Let's hear from each and every one of you. Excerpts from some of your letters will appear in a forthcoming issue.

And—keep those membership applications pouring in! Thanks—be seeing you.

—THE EDITOR.

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CHARLES ATLAS

I'll Prove in the first 7 days YOU can have a Body like Mine!"

No other Physical Instructor in the World has ever DARED to make the offer he makes in this announcement!

DON'T get the idea that it takes a lot of time and hard work for you to get smashing strength and powerful muscular development! And don't fool yourself into thinking that you need dumbbells, stretchers or any other such contraptions.

Both of these ideas are all bunk—and I have PROVED it. All I need is 7 days to prove what I can do for you! And I don't need any apparatus either. In fact, I have no sympathy with apparatus at all—I don't believe in it. It is artificial—and it may strain your heart or other vital organs for life!

NATURAL Methods Are All I Need

On this page you will see an actual photo of how I look today. This picture has not been changed in any way. No muscles have been "painted on." This photograph is the camera's honest proof of what I have done for MY body. I myself am ready to prove what my secret of Dynamic Tension can do for yours!

To look at me now you wouldn't recognize me as the same man I used to be. Then I was a physical wreck, a 97-pound weakling—flat-chested, spindly legs, arms like pipe stems.

I was worried—and I had a right to be. I decided to study myself, to do something about my body. Then I made a discovery. I found a new way to build myself up. A way that was simple, natural, quick and sure! "Dynamic Tension" is what I called it. I put this secret to work. And in a short time I had the kind of body you see here—the body which has twice won the title of "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

This Secret Has Helped Thousands

Thousands of other fellows now know this secret, too—and know from their own personal experience what Dynamic Tension has done for them. When they turned to me for advice, they were just as frail and puny as I once was. Now they are life-sized examples of what a man can and ought to be—with mighty energy, tireless endurance, and muscles that stand out like bridge rafters all over their bodies.

I have written an interesting booklet, filled with pictures, which tells my story—and theirs. I would like to send you a copy of it entirely free.

Let Me Send You My FREE BOOK

I'd like you to know what Dynamic Tension has done for me—what it has done for others—and what it can do for you! This little coupon will bring you my free book which tells all about it. There is no cost or obligation of any kind—and no one will call upon you.

I just want to put into your hands proof that I can do for you what I have done for so many thousands of others: give you broad, powerful shoulders, biceps that bulge with smashing strength, a chest which stands out solid and muscular, and an evenly-developed body that will make others look like dwarfs next to you.

Will you gamble a stamp to win a body like mine? Then mail this coupon TODAY. CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 77-A, 115 East 23rd Street, New York.

FREE BOOK

Gamble a stamp today. Mail coupon for free copy of my new book, "Everlasting Health and Strength." It shows you from actual photos how I have developed my pupils to my own perfectly balanced proportions. Where shall I send your copy? Write your name and address plainly on the coupon. Mail it today to me personally.



THE STERLING SILVER CUP BEING GIVEN AWAY

This valuable cup stands about 14 inches high on a black mahogany base. It will award it to my pupil who makes the most improvement in his development within the next three months.

**CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 77-A,
115 East 23rd Street, New York, N. Y.**

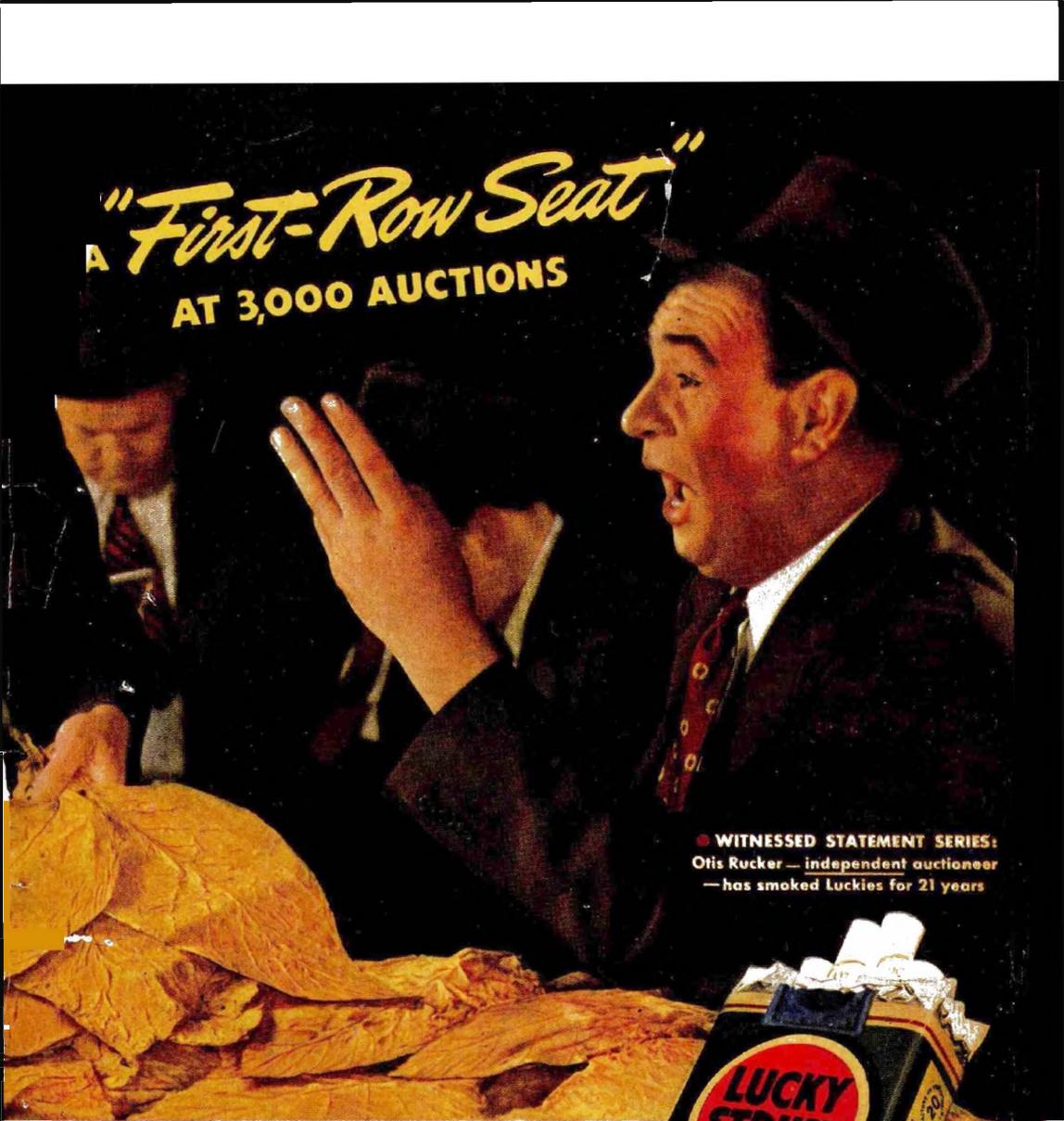
I want the proof that your system of *Dynamic Tension* will make a New Man of me—give me a healthy, husky body and big muscle development. Send me your free book, "Everlasting Health and Strength,"—and full details of your 7-DAY TRIAL OFFER.

Name.....
(Please print or write plainly)

Address.....

City..... Stat.....

A "First-Row Seat" AT 3,000 AUCTIONS



● WITNESSED STATEMENT SERIES:
Otis Rucker — independent auctioneer
— has smoked Luckies for 21 years

OTIS RUCKER, Independent Expert Since 1909, says: "I Smoke Luckies Because They Buy Fine Tobacco"

"I've been an auctioneer and warehouseman since 1909," says this typical expert. "I started smoking Luckies when they were introduced in 1917. The finest tobacco goes into them. Most my friends in the tobacco business smoke them, too." worn records show, in fact, that among *independent* buyers, auctioneers and warehousemen, Luckies have *twice* as many ex-smokers as have all other cigarettes combined. Luckies give you the finest tobacco. And they are *kind* to your throat! Their exclusive "Toasting" process takes out certain irritants found in *all* tobacco. Try Luckies for a week.



Words Show That - WITH MEN WHO KNOW TOBACCO BEST - IT'S LUCKIES 2 TO 1